

The Definitive *Short Circuit* Filming Locations Guide

By Venessa Koch
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Hello, Bozo!

The beloved classic, *Short Circuit*, features the beauty of the west coast with filming locations in Oregon, Washington, and California. This guide is your road map to rediscovering these places and having an adventure worthy of the 1980s.

Locations

This guide is organized into four main regions: Astoria, Columbia River Gorge, Hillsboro, and California. Within each region, locations are listed in their order of appearance in the film with two notable exceptions:

- Astoria kicks off with Stephanie Speck's House, the first place any fan should visit.
- California concludes with the 'Headlights' location, situated just down the road from a very special side trip.

Please note: Set-built locations and unidentified filler/travel shots are not included in this guide.

Images:

- Movie stills in this guide are sourced from [FanCaps.net](https://www.fancaps.net)
- "Now" shots in "Then and Now" images included in this guide were taken by Venessa Koch between October 3rd and 11th, 2023.

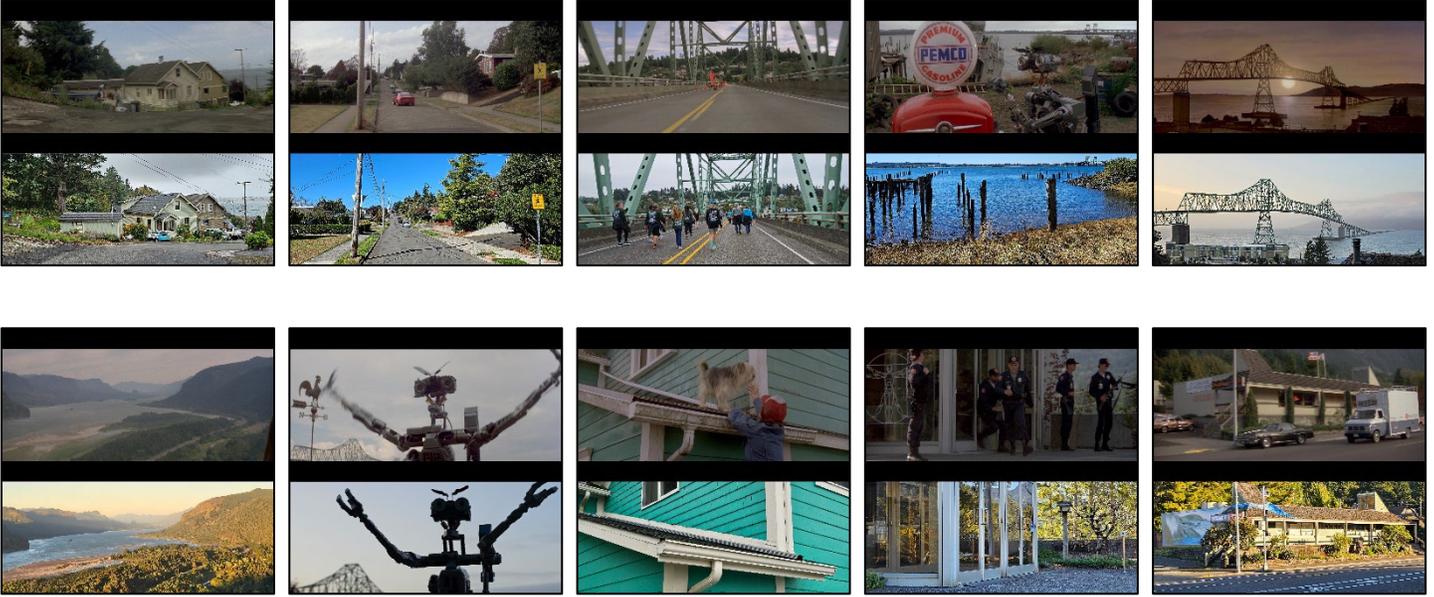
Viewing Locations in Google Maps

Each location lists its address and geographic coordinates as a clickable link. Links redirect to the precise spot on Google Maps.

Quick Tips:

- Respect the Residents and Road Rules: These locations feature a mix of private and public spaces. Please stay on public sidewalks, avoid blocking driveways, and always obey traffic laws.
- Essential Gear: Wear sturdy shoes! Especially if you plan to visit the Vasquez Rocks in California. Some spots require navigating uneven terrain to get the perfect "Then and Now" angle.
- Leave No Trace: Follow Johnny 5's lead and be kind to life. Do not leave any trash or disturb local wildlife.
- Safety First: Be mindful of traffic when photographing near busy roads.

"Then and Now" Photography Tips:



If you are aiming to create "Then and Now" shots but only have one device on hand, split screen is incredibly handy for aligning your photos. [This guide from Wired.com](#) provides instructions on how to set up split screen on any device. Save the movie stills to your device and use split screen to have the gallery app on one side, and camera on the other.

To enhance your experience and elevate your shots, bring props and wear costumes! A model Johnny 5 goes a long way in reliving the scenes.

ASTORIA LOCATIONS

The coastal town of Astoria is well known for its multitude of filming locations from a variety of movies including *The Goonies*, *Kindergarten Cop*, *Free Willy*, and more. If you're up for a good hike in and around town, all the *Short Circuit* locations except for the Astoria-Megler Bridge can be reached on foot. If you choose to drive, be mindful of local parking laws.

Stephanie Speck's House



[197 Hume Ave | 46.1888, -123.84552](#)

This charming Victorian era house is a character unto itself. Built in 1882, it has been restored to its dressings as it appeared in *Short Circuit*. Owned and operated as an AirBnB by Richard Bates, this is an absolute must-see for every fan of the film. As it is a private residence, please respect the property and do not trespass.

Visit [the official AirBnB website](#) to book a stay.

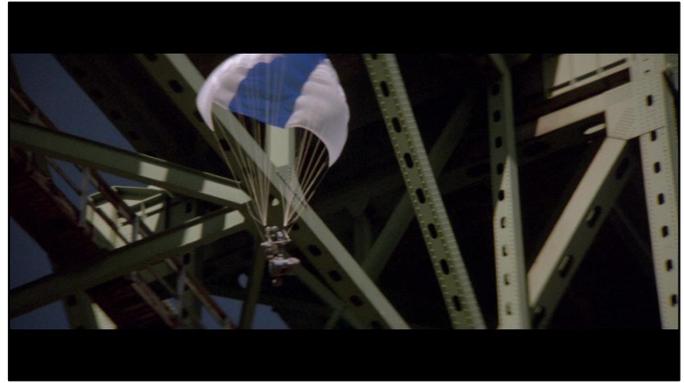
Dr Pepper Gas Station



[710 W Marine Dr \(approximate address\) | 46.17914, -123.85693](#)

Early in his escape from Nova, Number 5 travels along, stops for "input" and questions if one would "like to be a Pepper too". The building, boat, and pumps are no longer present at this location. To match the scene for a "Then and Now" shot, you'll have to find your way around the bushes in this defunct parking lot. Please use caution when climbing over rocks and through vegetation. Do not disturb local wildlife.

Escape Off the Bridge



[Astoria-Megler Bridge, US 101 | 46.19053, -123.84901](#)

The Bridge is one of those iconic, can't-miss locations. It's so big, it's impossible to miss. At four miles long, it is the longest continuous three-span through-truss bridge in North America. Opened in 1966, it is where Nova first catches up with Number 5 after his initial escape.

⚠ IMPORTANT ⚠ - The bridge is strictly for **vehicular traffic only**. There is no pedestrian walkway. Experienced cyclists are permitted but this is a high-wind, high-traffic zone with no shoulder. Crossing by car is the safest way to enjoy the view. Traffic laws must absolutely be obeyed.

The best spot to view matched scene angles from the ground is along the Astoria Riverwalk near the Holiday Inn Hotel.

If you want to experience the bridge on foot, plan your visit for the [Great Columbia Crossing 10k Run/Walk](#) which takes place annually on the second Sunday of October. It is the only day of the year the bridge is closed to cars and opened to walkers and runners.

Number 5 Lands on Stephanie's truck



[261 W Marine Dr, Astoria \(approximate address\) | 46.18951, -123.84848](#)

After his accidental escape off the bridge, Number 5's precise luck lands him squarely on top of Stephanie's Snack Shack lunch truck. In this shot, she is driving eastbound along W Marine Dr and makes a right-hand turn onto Columbia Ave.

Fun Fact: the shots of Number 5 on top of the truck are done with a bit of projection screen trickery.

Extra Fun Fact: the lettering on Stephanie's truck was designed by local sign maker, Arvid Wuonala ([source](#)).

Frank Speeds Over to Stephanie's House



[859 Glasgow Ave \(approximate address\) | 46.17948, -123.85073](#)

Determined to capture Number 5 and collect the reward money, Frank (aka 'The Mutation') roars up a quiet residential street, completely ignoring the 'Slow, Children at Play' signage. The sign is still there, though with an updated design. Frank's 'big red dorkmobile' is a 1976 Pontiac Firebird Trans Am, which is infamously disassembled by Number 5.

Number 5 Escapes in Stephanie's Truck: Part One

This scene takes place across several locations in both Astoria and the Columbia River Gorge.



[169 W Duane St \(approximate address\) | 46.1886, -123.84593](#)

Having learned that "disassemble = dead", Number 5 flees in fear of his life. His escape starts right out of Stephanie's driveway, heading west along W Duane St with Stephanie giving chase on foot.



[407 Floral St \(approximate address\) | 46.18524, -123.85407](#)

The escape skips over to Floral St, where the truck crashes into some garbage cans and a car. Because this specific section of road is not available on Google Street View, discovering it took a bit of detective work including looking for every identifying feature of the neighbourhood within the frames and scouting realtor websites for listings to find likely matches.



[Columbia Ave & W Marine Drive | 46.18985, -123.8479](#)

Number 5's panicked escape leads him to careen down Columbia Ave and make a sharp left turn onto W Marine Drive.



[248 W Marine Dr \(approximate address\) | 46.18934, -123.84894](#)

He continues along W Marine Dr, scattering Stephanie's kitchen in his wake. The second half of this wild ride picks up in Cascade Locks. Movie magic makes the jump instantaneous. In reality, the two locations are 132 miles (212 kms) apart.

COLUMBIA RIVER GORGE LOCATIONS

Heading east out of Astoria, visiting these locations requires a full day and a full tank of gas. Situated about a two-and-a-half-hour drive from Astoria, these locations are spread out amongst the dramatic cliffs of the Columbia River Gorge. It is well worth the road trip to see Number 5's birthplace and take in the spectacular view from Crown Point.

Traveler's Advisory: visiting these locations requires crossing state lines between Washington and Oregon. Travelers can cross at the Bridge of Gods for a small toll (typically \$3 USD for most passenger vehicles). Payment by cash, credit, or BreezeBy is accepted.

Nova Laboratories



[Bonneville Dam | 45.64955, -121.93554](#)

The real Nova Laboratories is situated at the Washington Shore Visitor Center. While all interior shots were filmed on a studio set, most exterior shots were captured right here. The very first exterior shots, featuring the SAINT demonstration, were filmed at Golden Oak Ranch in California. See the California section of this guide for more input.

Visitor Info: There is a security checkpoint on Dam Access Road, please obey all rules and answer security questions honestly. Parking and admission are free. The property is ADA compliant and offers restrooms, water bottle refill stations, and picnic tables. Please note: there is no food available for purchase on-site.

Precise “Then and Now” Spots: You’ll have to explore the grounds to catch every frame, here are the exact spots pin-pointed on Google Maps.



[East end of the main parking lot](#)



[Outside the main entrance of the Visitor Center](#)



[East end of the overflow lot](#)



⚡ **Hot tip!** ⚡ The power transformer that conveyed the lightning strike to Number 5’s generator is on site, but is in a restricted area, please observe from a distance. You can catch a glimpse of it from the main road leading into the parking lot. Here it is as seen in [Google Street View](#).

Number 5 Escapes in Stephanie's Truck: Part Two

As with part one, this scene features a few separate locations.



[410 Wa Na Pa St | 45.66649, -121.89484](#)

Ben and Newton get the call that Number 5 is on the move and they chase off after him. They drive by the Cascade Inn. Though the Inn is currently closed, the building itself remains largely unchanged, offering “Then and Now” seekers a great photo opportunity. The best place to achieve your shot is from across the street in the parking lot of the Shell gas station.

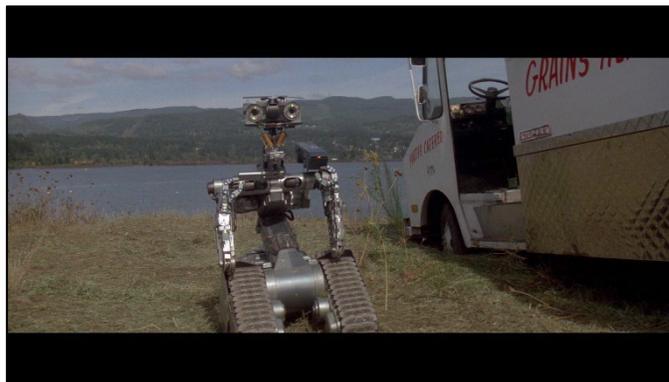


[Rail bridge underpass, SW Portage Rd | 45.66826, -121.89445](#)

Number 5 knocks the signage off Stephanie's truck as he continues his bid for freedom.

Movie Magic: To ensure the truck's signage is convincingly obliterated, the production team used a bit of trickery. The bridge has a real-world clearance of 12 feet, it was shortened to 10 feet to ensure maximum chaos.

Access Note: This underpass is the only point of land entry to Cascade Locks Marine Park, where the remainder of this sequence takes place. A parking fee is required throughout the park and can be paid through the Passport Parking app, by phone, or on-site cash dropbox at the park entrance.



[299 SW Portage Rd | 45.67205, -121.89217](#)

The escape sequence follows Number 5 and Stephanie through Marine Park and comes to a timely, abrupt halt at the end of a jetty. Nova catches up and Number 5 finds himself surrounded as Stephanie helplessly watches them temporarily immobilize him.

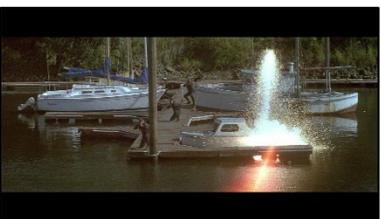
Precise "Then and Now" Spots: As with Nova/Bonneville Dam, there are a few spots to check out to fill out your album.



[Restaurant/Sternwheeler parking lot](#)



[End of the jetty](#)



[Boat docks](#)

Vista House at Crown Point



[40700 Historic Columbia River Hwy | 45.53949, -122.24442](#)

Ben and Newton take a break in their hunt for Number 5 when they receive a call from Marner saying that Stephanie wants to meet Newton at the Black Lion Inn.

Traveler's Tips: The panoramic view from this lofty location makes it an absolute must-see. Drivers who enjoy a scenic, winding route will love the journey to and from the parking lot. As of October 2025, a parking fee or an Oregon State Parks Parking Permit is required.

Important: Vista House closes for extreme weather (heat, cold, high winds) and dangerous road conditions. If the house is closed, the view can still be experienced, but restrooms will not be available. Check current conditions and road closures before visiting.

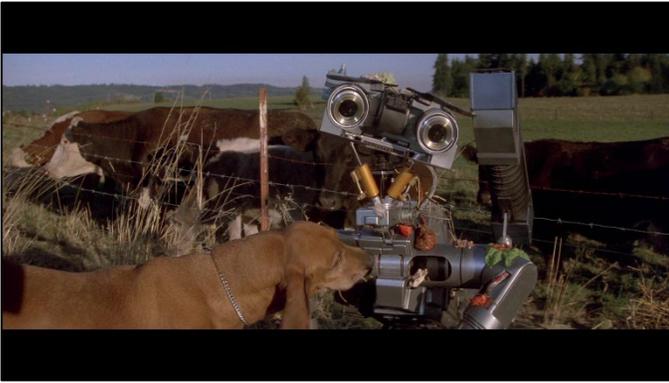
HILLSBORO LOCATIONS

Nestled in the Tualatin Valley, about an hour and a half south of Astoria, these sites make for a fun detour for those travelling between Astoria and Portland. Enjoy the drive and the scenery to go see where Number 5 crashed a cow party, the spot where he tossed his tracker beacon, and a hill made for swerving trucks to the music.

⚠ TRAVELER'S ADVISORY: All the locations in this area are situated along active, high-speed rural roads with **extremely narrow shoulders**. If you stop at any of them, please exercise caution:

- **Safety First:** Always find a safe area to pull over completely. **Do not block or park in private driveways.**
- **Traffic Laws:** Never stand in the roadway or impede the flow of traffic.
- **Visibility:** Be mindful of blind curves and fast-moving commuter traffic.

Cow Road



[NW Germantown Rd & NW Cornelius Pass Rd | 45.57968, -122.87501](#)

After accidentally escaping Nova Laboratories, the newly sentient Number 5 takes a flying leap off a truck and lands in a field next to some unimpressed cows. Getting his bearings, he heads off to explore what the world has to offer.

Number 5 Commandeers the Nova Van



[Somewhere in this region](#)

After Nova captures Number 5 for the first time, he wakes up in the back of the truck and takes matters into his own three-fingered hands. Kicking Ben, Duke, and the driver's seat itself out of the cab, he gets behind the wheel to find his way back to Stephanie. Newton later finds the dejected men sitting by the side of the road, awaiting rescue.

 **Need Input!** This location remains the only unconfirmed site in the guide! While it was filmed along the same rural road network in the Hillsboro region as the others, the exact coordinates have yet to be identified. **Will you be the one to discover them?** If you find a "Then and Now" match for this roadside attraction, contact the author to help complete the guide! Credit will be given in future editions. Links to the author's Instagram and Facebook pages are available at the end of this guide.

Number 5 Ditches the Tracker



[NW 185 Ave & NW Germantown Rd | 45.58112, -122.86758](#)

Discovering that Nova is using a tracker to pinpoint his whereabouts, Number 5 effortlessly removes the device and tosses it into the back of a passing pickup truck. The unsuspecting farmer and his wife lead Nova on a wild robot chase while Number 5 escapes in the opposite direction. Hopefully they took the “grass” out of the glove compartment!

“Who’s Johnny” hill



[NW 185 Ave | 45.58, -122.86764](#)

Free of his tracker, Number 5 blasts the radio (the volume, not with his laser!) and rocks out to El DeBarge’s “Who’s Johnny”, swerving all over the road. Who *is* Johnny? Number 5 decides it’s him when he takes on his cool new name at the end of the film. “Kevin 5” and “Dave 5” don’t quite have the same ring to them.

Did You Notice? In the previous “tracker” scene, Number 5 drives away going south on this very same stretch of road. In this scene, he is driving north.

CALIFORNIA LOCATIONS

While Oregon is home to the soul of the film, a handful of key sequences were captured in and around the Los Angeles area. These locations include Nova's testing grounds, the rugged terrain of the Vasquez Rocks, and a bonus side-trip to meet Johnny 5 himself.

Nova Demonstration Field, The Black Lion Inn, and The Three Stooges



[Golden Oak Ranch](#)

The story begins with Nova trotting out its SAINT prototypes for prospective buyers. These highly capable machines can blow up a tank and make an excellent gin and tonic. The entire opening sequence is filmed within the bounds of Golden Oak Ranch in southern California.

The sequences featuring the Black Lion Inn, Number 5 outsmarting his brothers, the brief chase between Stephanie, Number 5, and Nova, and the final hilarity of the reprogrammed SAINTs behaving like Stooges were also filmed on the ranch.

⚠ Important: Golden Oak Ranch is a private, working movie ranch and is **not open to the public**. Do not attempt to visit in person. Though the ranch is off-limits, these iconic backlot locations can be virtually visited on the [Golden Oak Ranch website](#). Look for the "Natural Areas" and "Rural Sets" to see if you can spot these hidden locations.

Final Showdown with Nova



[Vasquez Rocks Natural Area and Nature Center](#)

Nova finally catches up with Number 5, Stephanie, and Newton. Newton attempts to reason with Howard Marner but trigger-happy Skroeder gets a Chopper Huey in the air and successfully blows Number 5 to smithereens. Or so you would think. Spoiler alert: Nova was tricked, flim-flammed, hornswoggled. As Stephanie and Newton sadly drive off into the sunset, Number 5 pops out from a hidden compartment and reveals he'd rigged up a decoy. They decide to move to Newton's cabin in the woods in Montana and live happily ever after... until the sequel.

The Vasquez Rocks are perhaps best known as the filming location for Captain Kirk's showdown with the Gorn. Many other films and TV shows have made use of this alien-esque natural scenery. Pin-pointing the exact spot for each frame of the sequence in *Short Circuit* requires an in-person visit. Two of them can be viewed from the Photo Spheres on Google Maps Street View:



[Newton's Nova van](#)



[Nova comes charging in](#)

Traveler's Advisory: Respect the rocks and be prepared for desert conditions. Parking, restrooms, and a water refill station are available at the park entrance and Interpretive Center. Sunscreen, sturdy shoes, sunglasses, and a hat are highly recommended as there is very little shade. Stay on the trails and be mindful of wildlife, particularly coyotes and rattlesnakes.

Also Useful: Headlights



[9099 Washington Blvd, Culver City, CA | 34.02467, -118.39241](#)

Newton relearns how to drive after spending ages holed up in his office. In this brief scene, he drives by the real-world Bill Murphy Buick dealership. Bill Murphy was a renowned racer and car dealer throughout the latter half of the 20th century. The dealership has since been demolished and replaced with a parking garage.

Why this is a must-visit location: Culver City is home to many filming studios and backlots, including TriStar Pictures, the production company behind the *Short Circuit* franchise. Located just 1 mile (1.6km) south-east of this location is the [Sony Pictures Studio Tour](#). Open to the public for ticketed tours, visitors gain access to the Sony Museum. Among the museum's legendary artifacts is an original screen used Johnny 5 robot. Wouldn't you like to visit him too?



Safe and happy travels!

Author's Note and Acknowledgements

Forty years ago, Johnny 5 rolled off the silver screen and into the hearts of fans all over the world. As one of those fans, I've long held an appreciation for the real world filming locations from the Short Circuit franchise. The sequel, filmed in my hometown of Toronto, is literally near and dear to my heart. I started a "Then and Now" photography project with those locations and carried on capturing scenes from the first film upon my first visit to Oregon in October 2023.

Over the course of this ongoing journey, it's incredible to see what has changed and what has remained the same even after all these years. Countless hours of research, scrutinizing little details in every scene and frame, endlessly combing through Google Street View and Maps, and collaborating with friends and fellow fans have led to the creation of this guide. My thanks to Richard Bates, Mike Morgan, Virginia Smith, and Josée Millette for all your assistance and being along for the ride.

This guide is more than a map. It's a living archive of a film that continues to inspire friendship and adventure. While I have yet to visit every single location and find that one elusive spot, I hope this guide helps you in your own travels, whether from the comfort of home or an in-person pilgrimage. Remember: be kind, be curious, and always be on the look out for more input.

Venessa Koch | Toronto, ON | January 2026 |  



Richard, Virginia, Josée, Venessa, and Mike