

Hawkins Point

ARCHITECTURAL PRESERVATION  
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Baltimore, Maryland 21202

#2816

Hawkins Point is the southernmost community in the City of Baltimore. It lies on the northern end of the Marley Neck peninsula, bounded on the west by Curtis Creek and on the northeast by the Patapsco River. Much of this land was once a share of territory proclaimed "Cromwell's Inheritance," first patented in 1680. Title to the land was transferred to one Cockey Pumphrey in the early years of the seventeen hundreds. Through marriage, the Hawkins Point peninsula was inherited by Nicholas MacCubbin in 1737. This land was afterwards subjoined with another tract of real estate and together was referred to as "Lewe's Addition." Franklin Chairs, in the mid 18th Century, bought the rights to the western segment of Hawkins Point from MacCubbins' descendants. The portion east of Thom's Cove was patented to Dr. Grafton Johnson in separate transactions, in 1858 and 1859.

Hawkins Point, for many years was employed by Baltimore as a quarantine facility. In 1794, the eastern terminus was consigned for use as an isolation center for victims of the yellow fever epidemic of the preceding year. It was staffed by the Baltimore Health Department and is believed to have been used in this capacity until 1830, when larger facilities were built at the Marine Hospital at Lazaretto Point. Much later, in 1881, the Leading Point section of the peninsula was purchased by the City to construct another such facility for the isolation of both contaminated cargo and the ill crewmen of incoming vessels. However the Federal government assumed control of this and all port facilities under the auspices of the U.S. Health Service in 1921. The station was operated by the government for the next forty years, when more progressive health measures eliminated the use of quarantine facilities.

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Hawkins Point is perhaps best known for its role in the defense of seaports #487  
along the East Coast in the early years of the present century. In 1876 Congress  
passed the Coastal Fortification Act, allotting funds for the building of defense  
installations in major U.S. seaports. The site, theretofore occupied by the  
first quarantine station, was procured by the U.S. Government along with sites  
at North Point and Fort Smallwood, at the urging of General William Craighill.  
The namesake of the fort was General Armistead, a Revolutionary War hero and  
commander of Fort McHenry during the British bombardment in 1814. The fort was  
intended to defend the outer channels of Baltimore Harbor.

The acreage for the fort was obtained from Alcinda Chappel in 1883, formerly  
held by one Dr. Johnston. The fortress was completed in 1898, although its  
builders allegedly encountered formidable difficulty owing to the clayey soil  
underneath.

Thomas Chappel, spouse of Alcinda Chappel, built a chemical and fertilizer plant  
at Thom's Cove in 1884. However in 1903, this property was sold to Calvin  
Davison, son of William Davison, founder of the Davison Chemical Company in  
Baltimore in 1832. A spiteful conflict ensued between the government and the  
chemical company. The government complained over the plant's acid fumes, while  
Davison charged that the guns caused intolerable vibrations. The confrontation  
was impartially resolved when, in 1912, a British tramp steamer, the Alum Chine,  
exploded while loading dynamite across the harbor. Both the fort and the plant  
incurred substantial damages. Davison Chemical Company, shortly after, removed  
to Curtis Bay where it has become one of the world's leading producers of  
industrial and custom manufactured catalysts.

*Fort Armistead was refurbished in 1917 and remained in active service until its decommission in 1921. During that decade Baltimore City purchased the property for use as a public park for \$27,000. The Federal government again resumed control of the site during the Second World War for use as an ammunition dump.* #6112

One other mentionable establishment on Hawkins Point is that of the Hawkins Point Terminal. The terminal was built at the outset of World War II to expedite handling of explosives abroad. It was devastated by fire in January of 1951 and purchased by the Maryland Port Authority in 1958. It was later used by the contractors of the \$45 million Chesapeake Bay Bridge as the assembly point for floating equipment.

Few other remnants of the historical past endure in the Hawkins Point area. The first farmhouses which show on early maps as well as old waterfront buildings are gone. The land was <sup>apended</sup> to the City by virtue of the 1918 annexation, despite vehement opposition of northern Anne Arundel residents. In 1919, the B&O extended a spur into the peninsula to service shoreline plants. This touched off modest industrial growth and curbed agricultural usage in the area. Notwithstanding, massive development of any kind has never occurred, partly because of the hilly terrain. The last major improvement, one with a pronounced impact on the entire region, has been the completion of the Outer Harbor Bridge Crossing and its access roads, from Walnut Point to Hawkins Point.

Hawkins Point is marked by much open space and woodland areas. The principal land owners on the peninsula today are the Chessie System and W.R. Grace Company, formerly Davison Chemical. Only two minor residential pockets are present. Each is situated between Hawkins Point Road and the County Line and composed of detached frame structures dating as far back as the early 1900's.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION:

Hawkins Point is located at the southern most tip of Baltimore City and is situated on the Marley Neck peninsula. It is bounded on the west by Curtis Creek and on the northeast by the Patapsco River. The area was annexed to Baltimore City from Anne Arundel County in 1918.

Hawkins Point contains the largest single portion of undeveloped land in Baltimore City. The central region of the area consists mostly of open space, some of it still densely wooded. At the site of the old Quarantine Station, wildlife is surprisingly abundant, with muskrats, rabbits, and birds flourishing in sight of the busy Inner Harbor. The largest land owners are the Chessie System and the W.R. Grace Company. Much of the Chessie System lands are undeveloped, and only the central fringe of the Grace Company lands have been industrialized. The interior regions have remained undeveloped, with most of the development occurring along the shorelines and its access roads. However, there are pieces of the shore that are undeveloped and have public access; particularly the site of the Quarantine Station, the shoreline around Thom's Cove, and Fort Armistead. The major industrial firms in the Hawkins Point coastal region include the W.R. Grace Company, U.S. Gypsum, the Glidden Company, and Atlantic Cement.

There are only two small pockets of residential development on Hawkins Point. One of these neighborhoods, along Arundel Cove and Bungalow Avenues, is white and lower middle class. It consists of free standing frame dwellings built in the early part of the twentieth century. The houses on the east side of Arundel Cove Avenue are owned by absentee landlords, and are not well maintained. The others, on the west side of Arundel Cove Avenue and on Bungalow Avenue, are owner occupied and well maintained. The only commercial establishment is a used car lot on Hawkins Point Road. The other neighborhood, clustered around the intersection of Hawkins Point Road and Ft. Smallwood Road, is mostly black. The structures, free standing frame houses, also date from the turn of the century. With a few notable exceptions, the houses are not well maintained. There is a small church, an antique shop, a used car lot, and a small city playground in the area. For the past few years, there has been considerable major road work in this vicinity, as the access road to the outer Harbor Bridge has been built behind this neighborhood, and Hawkins Point Road itself is currently being rebuilt. This has decreased the desirability of the area as a neighborhood, although the trend may reverse as the work is completed.

There are no historically significant structures standing in Hawkins Point, with the possible exception of Fort Armistead, built in 1898. The Grace Mansion, off of Chemical Road, is the only larger residential structure extant, and it may soon be leveled for tax purposes. It is of little historical or architectural significance, although it commands an impressive piece of open space.

#### HISTORICAL SKETCH

Prior to the second half of the 19th century, the tip of the Marley Neck Peninsula, in Anne Arundel County, was a quiet agricultural waterfront area facing onto the Patapsco River upon which the commerce of Baltimore City flowed. This tip of land, from Hawkins Point on the east to Walnut Point on the west, was adjacent to, but isolated from, the activities arising out of Baltimore City and the Patapsco River. It was a period of intense growth for Baltimore, and this growth was to have far reaching effects upon Hawkins Point.

Land records reveal that much of this tip of land was originally part of a tract known as "Cromwells Inheritance", patented in Annapolis in 1680. In the early part of the 18th century, the land was held by a Cockey Pumphrey. Pumphrey's daughter, Rhoda, married Nicholas MacCubbin in 1737, and the Marley Neck land came to be included in a larger tract known as "Lewe's Addition". In the mid 19th century, MacCubbin's heirs sold the Hawkins Point land. Dr. Grafton Johnston bought the eastern end, from Hawkins Point to Thom's Cove, taking patents on the land in Annapolis in 1858 and 1859. Franklin Chairs purchased the western tip. At this time, most of the land was still devoted to agricultural activity. The name Hawkins is lost in the past, but it can be traced back on old maps to as early as 1818. The earliest recorded connection of the land to Baltimore City show that as early as 1794 a Quarantine Station was built at the site of the current Ft. Armistead Park for the isolation of yellow fever victims during the epidemic of that year. It was under the jurisdiction of the Baltimore Health Department, and was probably in use until 1830, when larger facilities were built at the Marine Hospital at Lazaretto Point.

The quarantine station was but the first of a series of government facilities to be constructed in the Hawkins Point area. In 1881 the city purchased the land at the tip of Leading Point to construct its own quarantine station for the isolation of contaminated cargoes and sick crewman from incoming vessels. In the early 20th century this station, known locally as "Quarantine", was used to isolate smallpox victims from the city. In 1921, the entire complex was sold to the Federal government when they took over the supervision and regulation of all port facilities under the U.S. Public Health Service. The station was utilized until 1961, when it was phased out and eventually razed as a result of better health standards world wide.

Hawkins Point itself was also to serve a public function, but military rather than medical. In 1876, Congress passed a Military Defense Act, allotting funds for the building of defense installations in major ports. As a part of this, a gun station was built at Hawkins Point, overlooking the channel into Baltimore Harbor, and named after General Armistead, the Revolutionary War Hero.

Constructed out of sturdy granite aggregate concrete, Fort Armistead was completed in 1898. The property had been acquired from the Chappell family, and the government purchased another parcel from them in 1907. The Chappell family operated a chemical plant on Thom's Cove, which was sold to the Davison family in 1903. It was off this plant, in 1913, that the cargo ship Alum Chine exploded while loading dynamite, destroying the plant and damaging the fort. Fort armistead was refurbished in 1917, at the onset of World War I, and remained in active

service until 1921, when the government closed it. In 1926, Baltimore City bought the land for \$27,000, to be used for recreational activity, the area having been annexed to the city in 1918. The Federal government again took control of the property during World War II for use as an ammunition dump until 1947, when it was returned to the city. Once again, in 1954, the government established a defense station there. For five years, four Civil Defense anti-aircraft guns were maintained there.

Few other traces of the historical past remain in the Hawkins Point area. The old farmhouses which show on early maps, are gone, as are the old buildings along the waterfront, including those at Quarantine. In the 19th century there was a ferry landing, hotel, and general store at Sledd's Point, all of which were razed by the Davison Company in the early 1900's. The city annexed the land from Anne Arundel County in 1918, looking towards the future development of the harbor and greater control over the adjacent land and waterways. The annexation, strongly opposed by Anne Arundel County, resulted in few immediate changes for the area. The old Curtis Creek bridge, a wooden structure, was replaced by the city in 1929. In 1919 the B & O built a spur into the point to service the shoreline plants, further encouraging industrial growth and enhancing the values of the property, and agricultural activity diminished. However, much of the central shoreline was not quickly developed for topographical reasons. The Harbor Development Plan, published by the Harbor Engineer in 1927, states that the south side of Curtis Bay is unsuitable for development due to the high bluffs along the shore.

The Davison Company, now a division of W.R. Grace, built a large estate for its president, A.B. Hill, on a knoll south of its Sledd's Point plant in the late 1920's, which was converted to a laboratory facility after World War II. In 1952, Baltimore City Built a large pier on the western end of Thom's Cove, which has since been acquired by Eastalco, an aluminum importing firm. The last major development, and the one that has had the greatest impact upon the interior of the region, has been the construction of the Outer Harbor Crossing Bridge and its access roads, from Walnut to Hawkins Point.

Although Hawkins Point remains largely undeveloped, the city and the industrial companies that hold the land indicate clearly the direction in which it is headed. There are still large tracts of land in a surprisingly semi-rural state, both in the interior and along the waterline. However, the potential for development, which the city foresaw in 1918, is finally at hand.

# VIEW CLEARS WAY TO O.K. HARBOR SPAN

Sun MAY 17 1958  
Opinion Holds Roads Unit Could Approve Proposed Site

By HENRY L. TREWHITT

A legal opinion yesterday cleared the way for the State Roads Commission to offer conditional approval of the city's plan to construct a bridge across the inner harbor.

In effect, the attorney general's office held that the commission could approve the proposed site, then finally authorize the project when toll revenues are sufficient to guarantee retirement of the bonds with which the State's toll facilities were financed.

State highway officials have said the likelihood is that the funds will reach that level by the time the city will want to build the bridge — the mid-1960's.

#### Bonnell Will Back Plan

Robert O. Bonnell, chairman of the State Roads Commission, said he will recommend strongly that the commission offer the assurance approved by the State attorneys, and has no doubt the other commissioner will agree.

#### Carter Is Cautious

The reaction of George A. Carter, director of public works for the city, was one of caution. He said he will withhold comment until he has read the opinion and has talked with officials of the United States Bureau of Public Roads and the Army Corps of Engineers.

The city has sought approval of the inner harbor bridge as an extension of the Jones Falls expressway to link with the proposed Southwestern expressway and thus a future new route to Washington. A point has been reached at which the city must know what route the southern extension will follow before it can proceed further with planning.

As a practical matter, State officials have recognized unofficially that whatever route is chosen would offer the same competition to the toll project at issue, the Baltimore Harbor Tunnel, as a cross-harbor bridge.

In an opinion prepared at the request of the roads commission, C. Ferdinand Sybert, the attorney general, and Charles B. Reeves, Jr., an assistant, cited the restrictions fixed in connection with the bonds sold to finance State toll facilities.

The authorization requested the ruling said, might violate the covenants which bind the commission and the State under a trust agreement with Fidelity-Baltimore National Bank & Trust Company.

That agreement, under which toll projects, including the harbor tunnel, were financed, prohibits construction by the commission of any project in competition with the toll facilities.

#### Violation Suggested

In the strictest sense, Mr. Sybert and Mr. Reeves said, the commission has not agreed that it would refuse to authorize construction of a bridge by the city. However, they continued, a court challenge might bring a decision that approval violated the general intent of the trust agreement.

The trust agreement leaves the way clear for approval under certain conditions, however. These permit the commission to authorize additional construction if toll revenues are sufficient, after diversion of traffic through a competing project, to cover the outstanding toll bonds.

#### Time Held Factor

Traffic engineers who guide the commission under the terms of the trust agreement already have said the proposed bridge would be "part of a highly competitive route."

However, Mr. Bonnell told the Attorney General's office that a safe revenue outlook should be achieved, taking into account diversion of traffic to the city bridge, "by the time indicated by the city of Baltimore for the actual construction of the bridge."

This estimate, according to the opinion, is based upon the condition that "the rates of tolls for the various revenue facilities remain at substantially the present levels."

Against that background, Mr. Sybert and Mr. Reeves held, the commission could give conditional approval, to become final when the traffic engineers say the toll revenue outlook is safe.

#### "Of No Effect"

"If that opinion cannot be given by the traffic engineers when the time for actual erection of the bridge occurs," the attorneys cautioned, "then even this conditional authorization as to location would be of no effect."

Approval of the commission is necessary because the State controls the floor of the harbor. The city is seeking action now so the Bureau of Public Roads can program the bridge for Federal aid.

Unless the decision yesterday proves satisfactory to the city, its engineers presumably will skirt the harbor with the expressway extension, a route which would require more money.

State highway officials have indicated privately that the alternate route would provide the same degree of competition with the tunnel as the inner harbor bridge. They regarded themselves as bound by the trust agreement, however.

Shipping interests have objected to the proposed bridge because Piers 1, 2, 4, 5 and 6 would be cut off from the harbor by the structure.