

HAWKINS POINT WILL BE PUT UP FOR SALE

Pier And More Than 160 Acres Attached To It Included

Hawkins Point, from which the Army shipped hundreds of thousands of tons of ammunition during World War II, will be put up by the Department of Defense for sale at public auction, it was announced yesterday.

The pier itself, built at a cost of \$5,000,000 at the beginning of World War II, was badly damaged in a spectacular fire on January 16, 1951.

The Army delayed decision as to what to do with the pier and more than 160 acres of ground attached to it until yesterday.

Called Ideal Location

The decision to sell it to the highest bidder will make one of the water front's choicest locations available for development by private interests.

Last year one of the nation's leading chemical companies indicated interest in locating in Baltimore if it could have had the Hawkins Point site. At that time the Army had not decided to sell, and the firm located in Virginia.

Joseph L. Stanton, head of the Export and Import Bureau, said the Hawkins Point area could be an ideal location for one or several industries, particularly for one interested in specializing in a single commodity.

Has A Deep Channel

Hawkins Point has a deep channel leading to it and is served by the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad.

Major C. F. Reilly, of the Department of Defense, said the Corps of Engineers has been advised to prepare a report declaring Hawkins Point an "excess" property. This must then go to Congress.

This is customary procedure, he said. After Congress approves the report, Hawkins Point will be advertised by the General Service Agency, custodian of Government property, for sale at public auction.

Only a few months before the 1951 fire—one of the city's worst since 1904—damaged the pier, the structure was declared inadequate for loading ammunition because of its nearness to the city.

Planning Criticized

In a speech at that time, Brig. Gen. Frank S. Besson, Jr., assistant chief of transportation, Department of Army, said Hawkins Point, like many other ammunition piers, was poorly planned when erected. He said it was too close to oil-storage tanks, chemical plants, and shipyards to be safe for loading high explosives.

It has been reported unofficially that fire damage to the pier was principally on the upper surface and that most of the pilings are still in good condition and need only superficial repairs.