



Latest Effort

rwthacker1 to: Nicole C. Oliver

01/30/2012 12:27 PM

History:

This message has been replied to and forwarded.

Hi, Nicole:

Here is a non-highlighted copy of my latest effort to revise Chapter 1. It is essentially the same as the highlighted version that I sent to you last week with the addition of better descriptions of the southern boundary line of the City of Fairhaven and the leveling of "Deadman's Point." It also includes a few minor changes in word selection to better justify the print lines in the sidebars.

Cheers!

Ralph

Chapter 1: Neighborhood Character

Fairhaven's Natural and Historic Context

The area that became known as Bellingham's Fairhaven Neighborhood originally lay around a cove formed by a bluff on the east and a sand spit on the south terminating with a point topped by a low hill. A creek flowed from a lake two miles eastward and entered the cove from the south below the bluff after forming two tidal lagoons. Beyond the bluff and the creek, the terrain rose to hillsides on the east and the south. The entire site was heavily forested and alive with salmon, shellfish, animals and birds.

Human presence in this locale began over 5,000 years ago as evidenced by the remains of Native American fishing camps beside the Padden Creek lagoons. Settlement by people of European origin began in 1853 with the filing of two Donation Land Claims. The first was submitted by John Thomas (who died in 1854) claiming 160 acres lying east and south of the cove that was later to be called "Harris Bay," including the area known as "Dead Man's Point"¹ at its Southwestern tip. The second was submitted by Alonzo M. Poe, who claimed 320 acres lying along the shore of Bellingham Bay just south of the Thomas claim. A. M. Poe built a dwelling near the shore about one-half mile south of Dead Man's Point.

Daniel Jefferson Harris, just turned twenty-one, arrived in the area not long before Thomas died and saw the potential for a local sea port like Sag Harbor in his hometown of East Hampton, NY. Dan Harris² assumed the Thomas claim and lived for thirty years in a cabin atop the low bluff at the mouth of Padden Creek. In 1866, A. M. Poe was issued a patent granting him 303 acres including Dead Man's Point. In 1871, Dan Harris was issued a patent granting him 146 acres that did not include Dead Man's Point but added 34 acres at the southeast corner of the tract for which he had originally filed. In



Property of Special Collections, University of Washington Libraries

Figure 1 Fairhaven Hotel, 1890. Source: Special Collections, University of Washington Libraries.

In order to gain deep-water access, Dan Harris later purchased a plot of 43 acres just west of his claim that included Dead Man's Point from early Seattle developer, A. A. Denny,³ who was a Poe successor.

Dan Harris filed the plat for the "Town of Fairhaven on Harris Bay" on January 2, 1883. That plat consisted of a grid of eighty-five blocks measuring 200' by 200' with forty being divided into eight 50' x 100' lots. Two blocks were reserved for a shipyard just inside of Dead Man's Point and six for a saw mill at the mouth of Padden Creek. However, no land was set aside for public uses and no alleys were included. The plat shows thirteen numbered streets running east and west and seven named streets and two unidentified streets running north

¹ Also known as: "Graveyard Point," "Point Bennett," "Poe's Point," "Commercial Point" and "Post Point."

² Early on, Dan Harris earned the sobriquet "Dirty Dan" due to his habitual lack of attention to personal hygiene.

³ In 1871 Denny and two others filed a plat for the never-developed "Town of Bellingham" below Dead Man's Point.

and south. Only Douglas and McKenzie were called "Avenues." All street widths were set at 80' except for McKenzie Avenue, which was 100' wide. McKenzie served as Fairhaven's main street until the mouth of Padden Creek was bridged in 1889 to join the two sections of Harris Street.

During 1883, Dan Harris built a three-story frame hotel at the corner of Harris and 4th Streets and an adjacent dock. Between 1883 and 1888 he sold 241 lots and then on moving to Los Angeles conveyed most of his remaining Fairhaven property to railroad builder, Nelson Bennett, and mining magnate, Charles X. Larrabee, of the Fairhaven Land Company (FLC) for \$75,000. In 1889 the FLC filed an amended plat of Fairhaven eliminating the ship yard reserve, changing the saw mill reserve to a railroad reserve and adding a second railroad reserve covering all of Dead Man's Point. Neither of these reserves was ever utilized for the intended purpose. The amended plat also excluded the two southernmost rows of blocks and the two blocks located in the bay west of Dead Man's Point, twenty-six in all. It also reduced the lot sizes in thirty-seven blocks to 25' by 100' and designated the street south of McKenzie as Larrabee.⁴ In 1889 the bodies buried on Dead Man's Point were moved to other cemeteries and its hill was later leveled in stages to expand the PAF shipyard to the west.

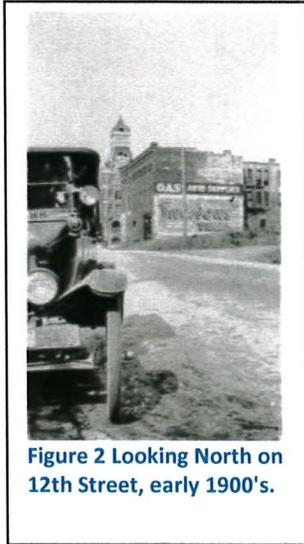


Figure 2 Looking North on 12th Street, early 1900's.

During 1889-90, the FLC built Ocean Dock west of 4th Street and constructed a railroad line that ran south to Sedro Woolley, the Fairhaven and Southern, and north to the British Columbia border, the Fairhaven and Northern. In 1891, the completed line was sold to James Hill and became part of the Great Northern Railroad. For a period of time, two rail lines, the Great Northern and the Northern Pacific) ran on trestles across Harris Bay and another one, the Interurban, later ran along the 9th-10th Street Bluff.

The FLC sponsored a nation-wide publicity campaign touting Fairhaven as the "Chicago of the West" causing its population to soar from 500 to 4,000 between mid-1889 and mid-1890. In late 1890 Fairhaven was chartered as a city incorporating the Town of Bellingham just to the north and extending to Lake Padden on the east and about 1.66 southward to the midpoint of Chuckanut Bay. 1890 also saw the inauguration of municipal water and electric services and the improvement of major streets. In 1891 the Fairhaven Street Railway Company installed two street car lines that met at 11th and Harris (Hence the Terminal Store). The first one ran east and west along Harris Street and north and south along 11th between Ocean Dock and foot of State Street Hill. In 1892 this line was extended up the hill to connect with the New Whatcom line. The second Fairhaven line ran east and west on Harris between 11th and 21st Streets and was later extended to 30th via Donovan.

Most of Fairhaven's historic brick buildings were erected between 1890 and 1903, with heavy reliance on ship ballast for material. The maximum height was four stories except for the iconic Fairhaven Hotel at 12th and Harris with a tower that soared to one hundred feet. Recessionary signs began to arise in Fairhaven in 1891 and the global economic collapse of 1893 ended its dramatic growth leaving most of these structures under-utilized. With his 1891 purchase of Nelson Bennett's interest in the FLC, which he replaced with his own firm, the Pacific Realty Company. C. X. Larrabee thus assumed control of the Fairhaven Hotel. It served as his family's home from 1892 until the 1916 completion of the Larrabee mansion overlooking Fairhaven in what is now the Edgemoor Neighborhood, the development of which was led by C. X. Larrabee's son, Charles F. Larrabee. C. X. Larrabee gave the land for the building of the Fairhaven Carnegie Library and with Cyrus Gates donated land for Fairhaven Park.

In 1903-04 Fairhaven merged with Whatcom to form the present City of Bellingham. Commercial buildings lined both sides of Harris between 12th and 8th Streets. From that point, one and two story wood-frame buildings largely devoted to industrial uses ran down to 4th Street. Harris Bay was rimmed with docks, warehouses and sawmills, many built on pilings. After consolidation,⁵ the area that had been the City of Fairhaven became known as "South Bellingham" or the "South Side," with major employment continuing to be

⁴ Donovan, Wilson and Cowgill Streets were added later using the surnames of three FLC executives.

⁵ With consolidation, all of Fairhaven's streets running east and west became identified as avenues.

provided by the industries around Harris Bay and goods and services supplied by businesses in the commercial district west of the Fairhaven Hotel. During the first half of the 20th Century, as Downtown Bellingham saw taller larger steel and concrete and frame buildings rise, the South Bellingham commercial district remained characterized by its historic two, three and four story unreinforced masonry buildings. In 1928 the Fairhaven Hotel was reduced to a six-story (72 ') structure by the removal of its lofty tower for safety considerations.

In 1921, as autos began to replace streetcars and trains, Chuckanut Drive and 12th Street became Pacific Highway 99, providing Bellingham with a southern gateway. With the completion of Finnegan Way in 1935, this traffic flow was split between 11th and 12th Streets. The increase in automobile traffic created new retail opportunities for South Bellingham and service stations and novelty shops multiplied. However, growing automobile reliance also had a negative impact on South Bellingham, since people who formerly walked or rode street cars to work or to shop could live further away.

Industrial and marine enterprises along Fairhaven's waterfront were long its major economic engine. Starting in 1883, a succession of lumber mills, originally built on pilings, occupied the eighteen-acre section east of Padden Creek. Among the largest of these were Puget Sound Saw & Shingle Company (1897-1903) and its successor, Puget Sound Mills & Timber Co. (1903-33), both owned by Michael Earles, Bellingham Plywood (1941-50) and Washington Loggers (1949-73). In 1960, Uniflite (1957-84) moved its boat-building operation from Bellingham Shipyard into the 100,000 square foot building vacated by Bellingham Plywood and later added three steel frame buildings nearby. This area, acquired by the Port of Bellingham in 1937, has been known as the "Fairhaven Marine Industrial Park" since 1963.

From 1888 to 1965, the section of the waterfront west of Padden Creek was dominated by salmon canning operations, primarily Pacific American Fisheries (PAF), incorporated in 1889. PAF was founded by promoter Roland Onfroy and molded into the largest salmon cannery in the world by Chicago businessman, Edward B. Deming. In its heyday, PAF had three canneries in Washington, one in British Columbia and twenty-four in Alaska, plus shipyards at Dead Man's Point and on Eliza Island and an extensive assortment of fishing boats, tow

boats, barges and fish traps. Its site in Fairhaven was filled with docks, a box factory, processing buildings, an office, warehouses, shops for auto care and blacksmithing and dorms for contract laborers. The PAF can-making facility was located on the shoreline further to the north. Support firms such as a foundry and a machine shop were situated on the south side of Harris.



Figure 3 Fairhaven in the 1970s showing the Monahan, Dirty Dan's and Terminal buildings prior to restoration. Source: Whatcom Museum of History and Art Photo Archives.

South Bellingham's industries remained active during World

War II and beyond. In fact, the immediate post war period is remembered as the locale's most vibrant by life-long resident, Gordon E. Tweit, retired pharmacist and local historian. However, the 1950 closing by Georgia Pacific of Bellingham Plywood, which it had purchased in 1947, began a protracted economic and social decline. All of the mill's machinery and equipment was moved to Oregon and California and many of the employees

opted to follow. The trend continued with the 1953 destruction of the Fairhaven Hotel building by fire, ending the operation of the Boy's and Girl's Club. The decline was further extended by the 1965 decision of the PAF shareholders to liquidate the company's entire holdings due to adverse developments in the canning industry and the promise of more profitable investment opportunities.

PAF sold its Fairhaven real estate to the Port of Bellingham In 1966 and its former headquarters building on Harris between 4th and 5th was remodeled to create the Bellingham Railroad and Bus Terminal by the Port of Bellingham in 1994-95. The Port had constructed the adjacent Bellingham Cruise Terminal in 1989. A further adverse blow was delivered to the South Bellingham community in 1980 when fire destroyed the cavernous Uniflite building. The Port of Bellingham replaced that structure with the four steel-frame buildings which now occupy the FMIP along with the three previously built by Uniflite and the wood frame building that was originally Bellingham Plywood's log deck.

Loss of waterfront jobs and activity and the completion of I-5 in early 1960's drew most of the through automobile traffic away from South Bellingham, causing many commercial businesses to close and leaving only a few basic services. In addition, the age and obsolescence of the many local buildings and the number of vacant lots generated a negative perception in the wider community and precipitated the erosion of property values. The resulting favorable prices for both residential and commercial space attracted faculty, students and graduates from rapidly-expanding Western Washington University (then College). During the Vietnam War era, the South Bellingham commercial district became a center for the counterculture, with new bookstores, artists, improvisational theatres, coffee shops, bars, restaurants and cooperatively-owned businesses injecting new life. Prominent examples were Toad Hall in the basement of the Nelson Block and the Food Co-Op on the first floor of the Morgan Block

In the early 1970's, investor-developer and Bellingham native, Kenneth Imus, began to purchase historic buildings and vacant parcels in the area and to undertake renovation and modest new construction projects inspired by the vision of resurrecting the "Fairhaven Village." Over the next two decades, Fairhaven enjoyed a gradual rebirth as empty storefronts and upper floors in new and renovated buildings became occupied, owners invested in structural and tenant improvements and property in the surrounding residential areas regained value. With the advent of formal, neighborhood planning in 1980, Fairhaven regained its official recognition, becoming one of the City of Bellingham's twenty-three (now twenty-five) neighborhoods. In 1977, seventeen of Fairhaven's early buildings were placed on the National Register of Historic Districts.⁶

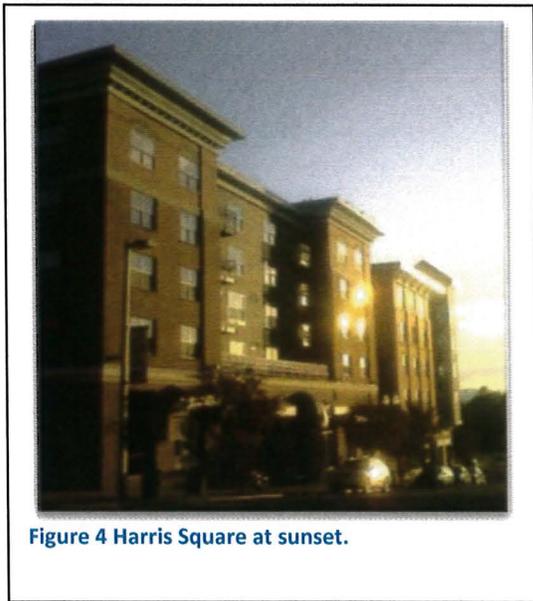


Figure 4 Harris Square at sunset.

From 1995 and through 2005, Fairhaven saw an intensive period of new construction and renovation within and immediately adjacent to the historic district. Most of these efforts have incorporated traditional materials and streetscape features, however increases in height and bulk have compromised the human scale and restricted views. Unfortunately, the following years of economic recession have resulted in a total suspension of new

Fairhaven Today

Fairhaven's Form is Fully-functional. Although its 2010 population of 880 and its area of .3 square miles make it now Bellingham's smallest neighborhood, Fairhaven remains the most diverse. It is *a complete urban village* having a thriving commercial core with mixed-use structures featuring condominiums and apartments bordered

⁶ Exhibit 1 lists the buildings included in the Fairhaven National Historic District Register.

by single-family and multi-family areas and a marine-industrial waterfront and a multi-modal transportation center.

Fairhaven's Ambience is Unique. Although its old-growth forests were completely clear-cut and burned in 1899-90 to facilitate development and the shoreline of Harris Bay has been extended by the deposit of 30 acres of fill, its two-level setting continues to generate a palpable sense of place: the *warm texture and an intimate scale* of a turn-of-the-20th century built environment with spectacular views of Bellingham Bay and *ready access to the shoreline and wooded areas* along Padden Creek.

Fairhaven's Natural Areas include the wooded Padden Creek, the Padden Creek Estuary, the Post Point Great Blue Heron Colony and the restored Post Point Lagoon, which are abundant with wildlife and provide trail access and recreational areas for residents and visitors.

Fairhaven's Public Facilities are Diverse. Fairhaven houses the Bellingham Cruise Terminal and the Bellingham Transportation Center, offering services by Amtrak, the Alaska and local ferries and Greyhound and local buss. Harris Bay provides a public boat launch, a small boat storage and rental service (Bellingham Bay Community Boating Center) and a sheltered anchorage from the prevailing southwest winds for vessels of moderate size. The Bellingham Sewage Treatment Plant is located in Fairhaven and also the Fairhaven Branch of the Bellingham Public Library. Marine Park is located at the foot of Harris Avenue and Fairhaven and Boulevard Parks, situated in the adjacent South and South Hill Neighborhoods, are readily accessible via the South Bay Trail. Fairhaven's children attend the Lowell Elementary School on the near-side of the South Hill Neighborhood, the Fairhaven Middle School on the near-side of the Edgemoor Neighborhood and Sehome High School in the Happy Valley Neighborhood. The nearby campus of Western Washington University is accessible by frequent Whatcom Transit Authority bus service as are both Whatcom Community College and Bellingham Technical College.

Fairhaven's Residential Population is distributed among 139 single-family dwellings, 337 multi-family units and 101 group housing units. The aggregate occupancy rate is 90.5%. Fairhaven Neighbors (FN), recognized by the City of Bellingham as Fairhaven's Neighborhood Association, has been deeply involved in the public process leading to the drafting of the Fairhaven Neighborhood and Urban Village Plan. FN warmly welcomes individuals from Fairhaven's commercial and industrial sectors to attend its monthly meetings and to become members.

Fairhaven's Commercial Sector consists of more than two-hundred retail and personal service firms, most of which are members of the Old Fairhaven Association (OFA). The OFA actively promotes its member's interests via organizing ongoing publicity campaigns, sponsoring frequent community events and participating in public meetings such as the ones that were held by the City of Bellingham Planning and Community Development Department in the preparation of the present Fairhaven Neighborhood and Urban Village Plan.

Fairhaven's Industrial Base, now smaller than in earlier years, includes the Fairhaven Shipyard and All American Marine, situated on land west of Padden Creek formerly occupied by PAF and LFS Trawl, Seaview Yacht Systems and Unicraft, situated in Fairhaven Marine Industrial Park.

Prospects for the Future

The challenge of this plan is to establish a framework within which Fairhaven's growth and development can be managed and its function as an urban village can be enhanced while retaining its unique sense of place and its welcoming sense of community.

Environmental Preservation

- Restore Padden Creek to a prime salmon stream
- Create a 100' pervious buffer on the east side of Padden Lagoon
- Restore the crumbling riprap at the BBCBC
- Naturally filter the stormwater that now enters Padden Lagoon from the conduit under Harris Avenue
- Naturally filter all stormwater that runs into Harris and Bellingham Bays from the POB paved areas

Recreational Enhancements

- Add a pedestrian and bicycle Link from the South Bay Trail to Taylor Dock
- Add a pedestrian and Bicycle Link from the Village Green to the Former Log Dump Site
- Add an access to/from the water at the west end of the link via an underpass or overpass of the railroad Tracks
- Add a small park as a destination just east of the underpass or overpass

Public Facilities Improvements

- Place an ADA Ramp next to stairway from Village Green to Harris Avenue
- Fill-in the missing sections of sidewalk on 11th Street between Douglas and Mill
- Fill-in the missing sections of sidewalk on Finnegan Way
- Add crosswalks at 11th and Douglas, 11th and Knox 12th and Finnegan Way
- Add crosswalks at 10th and McKenzie, 10th and Larrabee and 10th and Donovan
- Add traffic calming measures at 10th and Douglas, 10th and Mill and 10th and Donovan
- Re-engineer the three-way intersection at 11th, Knox and Finnegan Way

Development Opportunities

For the Residential Areas

- The participants in the series of public meetings held in the process of preparing this plan encouraged the development of ***a range of housing types*** that honor the historic architectural tradition of Fairhaven and respect the natural environment, while providing housing opportunities for a diverse mix of incomes and cultures. (OK as is)
- This will include mixed-use structures in the commercial areas.
- This might include some limited single-family infill, the approval of ADU's, and the replacement of aging multi-family dwellings outside of the commercial areas and the possible replacement of single-family dwellings along arterial streets by multi-family and/or mixed-use structures.

For the Commercial Areas in this plan are based on an analysis of the most recently-constructed 500,000 square feet of mixed-use space, from which future market demands should differ little. Contributing to this total are Fairhaven Gardens, the Waldron/Young Block and Harris and McKenzie Squares. These four projects average 64 housing units and 21,000 square feet of commercial space per acre.

The analysis also identified 3.4 acres of vacant land, 0.6 acres of partially vacant land, and 2.6 acres of potentially re-developable land, and concluded the following:

- Vacant 3.4 acres of land could support 218 new housing units and 71,000 square feet of commercial space.
- Partially developed 0.6 acres of land are restricted due to parcel configuration and adjacent uses. They could accommodate development at ½ the rate of vacant areas, or about 19 new housing units and 6,000 square feet of commercial space.
- Potentially re-developable land is characterized by converted single family homes, smaller single-story commercial buildings, and surface parking lots not dedicated to specific businesses. These potentially re-developable 2.6 acres could accommodate an additional 51 housing units, and 12,000 square feet of commercial space, assuming only 1/3 of these parcels will develop in the planning period.
- Adding the vacant, partially vacant, and potentially re-developable capacity together results in a total estimate of 288 new housing units and 89,000 square feet of commercial space within the planning period.

If possible, identify the specific properties that make up the 3.4 acres, the 0.6 acres and the 2.6 acres.

For the Industrial Areas

- The 6.6 acres of privately-owned property on the south side of Harris Avenue west of Padden Creek is now zoned light industrial should be developed for that purpose with the possible allowance of a 54' height limit and the inclusion of some mixed uses.
- The City of Bellingham has reserved the property on McKenzie Avenue west of 4th Street that it purchased in 2006 for the future expansion of the municipal sewage treatment plant.
- The property along Harris Avenue owned and/or managed by the Port of Bellingham includes four acres of vacant land. Average building height on all Port Property should be limited to 40 feet, in keeping with existing structures, except for the possibility of 60 foot variances to accommodate creation of a dry-stack storage facility and/or indoor bays needed to facilitate the repair of larger private vessels.