



Rspnses

rwthacker1 to: Nicole C. Oliver

01/30/2012 12:17 PM

Hi, Nicole:

Here are my responses to your request for identifying "Factual Inconsistencies."
I waited to send them until I could check a couple of items this morning with Jeff Jewell.

Jeff and I both feel very strongly that a more appropriate image than the Fairhaven Hotel could be found to lead off Chapter 1. The Waldron Building might be a good choice. It is still around to be seen, touched and entered and its restoration should preserve it for the life of the revised plan.

In some cases, I have stretched the meaning of "factual" to include "misleading."
I hope you will find my selections and the supporting comments helpful.

Cheers!

Ralph

Chapter 1: Neighborhood Character

Natural and Historic Context

The **Neighborhood of Fairhaven started as Bellingham Bay's second city, a town in its own right** separate from the first settlement at Whatcom and fiercely independent until consolidation into the City of Bellingham in **1903**. From both a historical and physical perspective, Fairhaven reflects a "town within a city" character providing the City of Bellingham with a distinct sense of place for the **south side**.

Fairhaven's origins and early attraction can be **traced to the fresh running water of Padden Creek and a salmon camp at its mouth referred to by the Lummi people as Seeseelichem**. The creek, which today cuts across Harris Avenue near 8th and empties into an estuary on Harris Bay, provided drinking water on a wind protected, deep water moorage for the first European sailors to visit Bellingham Bay in the 18th Century. **East** of the mouth of Padden Creek, the land rose to small hill at the southernmost edge of Bellingham Bay **once known as Poe's Point**.

The name Fairhaven was attached to the first street plan and plat filed on a donation land claim held by a colorful early settler, Daniel Jefferson Harris. The "Fairhaven on Harris Bay Plat" was filed on January 2, 1883 and it was laid out with a seaport function in mind. The **basic grid street pattern** ran the town's main street, modestly named **Harris**, parallel to the shoreline and then configured perpendicular numbered streets beginning at **Poe's**

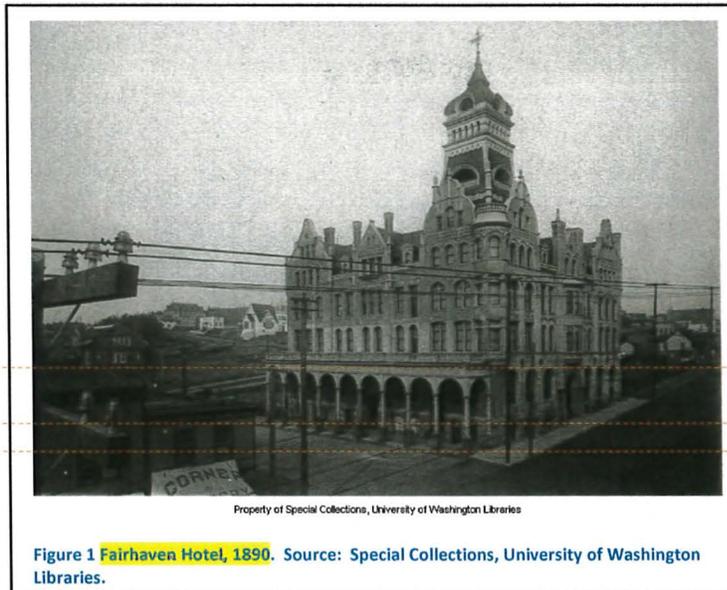


Figure 1 Fairhaven Hotel, 1890. Source: Special Collections, University of Washington Libraries.

Point up from a **series of docks** along the waterfront. In time, the highland at Poe's Point, which had served as the city's cemetery since 1862, was leveled to **create additional wharfs for shipbuilding and landings**.

A railroad era land boom began in the 1880's and continued through the early 1890's as the town began to take on a permanent architectural form morphing from wood frame structures to refined Victorian era brick commercial buildings. While overwater industries and shipping docks lined the small bay, **the hilltop** intersection of 12th and Harris became **the center of the commercial district**. Near where the streetcars from **Whatcom** connected with the waterfront traffic from Fairhaven, a towering Queen Anne style hotel named for the town was completed in 1890. **The Fairhaven Hotel seemed to cap the red**

Comment [RWT1]: The name "Fairhaven" was first given to a town, then to a city and lastly to a neighborhood.

Comment [RWT2]: Better to say "1903-04" as consolidation was a two-year process.

Comment [RWT3]: South Side

Comment [RWT4]: Better to say, "fishing camps" since shellfish middens indicate a wider interest than just salmon

Comment [RWT5]: Archaeological digs found evidence that Native Americans from both inland and coastal groups made encampments beside the two, tidal lagoons formed by Padden Creek before it entered the cove now called "Harris Bay" between the Harris Spit and the opposite bluff. Fresh water could have been obtained only from up-stream. The mouth of the creek was heavily silted by the creek's outflow. Deep water then as now was available only further west or some distance off-shore to the north. The anchorage sheltered from prevailing winds was provided by the curved shoreline of the cove itself, not by the creek.

Comment [RWT6]: Perhaps we should ask Bill James for permission to use this name, and its meaning.

Comment [RWT7]: West

Comment [RWT8]: Originally known as "Dead Man's Point."

Comment [RWT9]: The reference point for Dan's plat at the NW corner of his claim, which means that north-south streets were laid out from east to west not from west to east, which put 1st in the water. If he had started at Dead Man's Point, 1st would have been on land and all of the rest of the streets would have been one number higher.

Comment [RWT10]: McKenzie was 100' wide and all other streets were 80'. Harris became the main street only after the mouth of Padden Creek was bridged in 1889.

Comment [RWT11]: Best not to psychoanalyze Dan Harris.

Comment [RWT12]: No docks until late 1883

Comment [RWT13]: Dan Harris sold four acres for a cemetery to the County not the City

Comment [RWT14]: To create room for RR tracks and to extend the shipyard

Comment [RWT15]: Better to say "hillside" as Harris keeps climbing east from 12th

Comment [RWT16]: All of the major Fairhaven buildings were west of 12th. Early on, Ocean Dock was the center. 11th and Harris may be the best average location

Comment [RWT17]: New Whatcom was in existence from 1891 to 1901. The Fairhaven street car lines were built in 1891-92

brick town that rolled up the shoulder of Sehome Hill from Harris Bay and placed Fairhaven in the foreground for passengers arriving by ship to Bellingham Bay.

The development of Fairhaven was directed in large part by the Fairhaven Land Company owned by Nelson Bennett, an engineer and contractor closely connected with the transcontinental railroads that were reaching Puget Sound from the Great Lakes at the end of the 19th century. Like Tacoma, Port Townsend and the Pioneer Square area of Seattle, Fairhaven was envisioned as a future seaport metropolis where shipping trade, banking, and sophisticated travelers would be concentrated. A serious worldwide economic collapse in 1893 brought the hopes to an end and left behind a legacy of well constructed but overestimated buildings and infrastructure. The earliest authentic layer of Fairhaven's built environment dates to this period and comprises many of the contributing resources in the Fairhaven National Register Historic District (NR 1977).

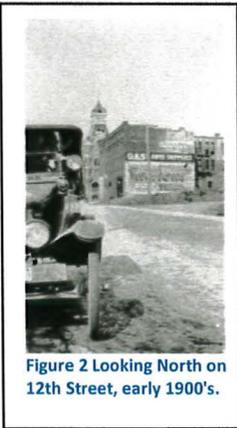


Figure 2 Looking North on 12th Street, early 1900's.

Buildings from this period are constructed on standard city lots 100 feet deep with frontage divided into 25 foot units. The largest of the masonry buildings were constructed on 100 x 100 footprints. The exterior walls were based on granite or sandstone foundations with unreinforced brick walls reaching up to five or six stories. Due to the weight of the masonry and the need to widen the walls at the base as the height grows, few builders were willing to concede high rent ground floor area for hard to reach rooms five flights of stairs up. The height of buildings in Fairhaven's historic district is also attributable to the construction boom and the need for adjacent owners to agree on the engineering of party walls and window access to fresh air and the remarkable view to the bay. The interior structure of the buildings is uniformly Douglas Fir heavy timber post and beam with milled wood joists and floors. Lath and plaster were typically used for finished walls and ceilings. The radiator heat was from coal and wood fueled boilers and lights were gas.

Fairhaven's waterfront proved to be its most important asset during the first decades of the 20th Century as the Pacific American Fisheries Company (PAF) emerged as a giant in the canned salmon industry. Headquartered in Fairhaven, its builders Roland Onffroy and E. B. Demming built a sprawling salmon cannery on pilings just to the west of the Padden Creek estuary, perhaps the largest in the world at the time. Along with warehouses, office buildings, a China House for workers and mechanical shops the complex consumed most of the waterfront and was later expanded to include a massive shipbuilding operation at Deadman's Point (Poe's Point). Smaller canneries, box and can manufacturers, machinery maintenance shops and port facilities filled in the remainder of the shoreline repeating an architectural language that used low pitched gable roofs over timber framed structures with vertical planked siding and industrial scaled double hung windows.

Fairhaven and most of Bellingham's south side settled into a somewhat self-contained district with handmade, wood frame residential neighborhoods like Happy Valley and South Hill growing around the waterfront workplaces on Harris Bay. The commercial district around the Fairhaven Hotel provided localized neighborhood goods and services while downtown Bellingham grew with new institutional buildings, financial and corporate offices, theaters, and entertainment. During the first half of the 20th century, Bellingham saw taller larger steel and concrete frame buildings rise in the downtown while Fairhaven continued to be identified by two, three and four story unreinforced masonry buildings dating

Comment [RWT18]: Better to say, "The Fairhaven Hotel seemed to crown the red brick town that rolled up the southwest shoulder of Sehome Hill from Harris Bay, announcing the preeminence of Fairhaven to passengers arriving by ship and by train."

Comment [RWT19]: Add Charles X. Larrabee. Bennett sold out to Larrabee in 1891 and returned to Tacoma. Larrabee stayed in Fairhaven until his death in 1814

Comment [RWT20]: Better to say, "a legacy of buildings of over-estimated capacity and varying construction quality." The Fairhaven was probably the best built. Several of the early structure used ship ballast for bricks.

Comment [RWT21]: Better to leave out Infrastructure as it includes so many elements for which we have no precise records.

Comment [RWT22]: City lots have no "standard" size. Compare Fairhaven with Downtown Bellingham.

Comment [RWT23]: All lots shown on Dan's plat were 50'x100'. The FLC plat cut the lots on only 34 blocks in half and kept the lots on the rest of the blocks at 50' x 100'.

Comment [RWT24]: Electrification began in 1889-90

Comment [RWT25]: Onffroy was a promoter with only a brief stay in Fairhaven. Deming, already a man of means, built the Co.

Comment [RWT26]: Deming has only one "m"

Comment [RWT27]: Not after PAF got rolling

Comment [RWT28]: The can factory was near the present Blvd. Park (hence "Tin Can Rock") and not a part of the main PAF complex

Comment [RWT29]: Better to say, "west of the hotel." No early commercial buildings were erected east of it.

from the 19th century. **By the 1930's** even the grand Fairhaven Hotel had been stripped of its lofty tower and conformed to a four story height.

Comment [RWT30]: Yes! The tower came down in 1928

As the automobile began to replace the streetcars and railroads, Pacific Highway (99) was improved along Chuckanut Drive in **1913** making Fairhaven a gateway into Bellingham from the south. Instead of serving as a dead end streetcar loop on the south side, 12th Street became a state highway and a windfall for the merchants in Fairhaven. Gas stations and tourist related businesses appeared among the Victorian buildings and the main course of activity and **traffic patterns shifted from east west on Harris** to north south on 11th and 12th. The density of historic commercial and industrial buildings in Fairhaven was **notably diminished by the mid 1930's** due to the neglect of wood frame structures, fires and replacement as PAF expanded and modernized their operations. The brick building at 4th and Harris marks this era, being built in 1935 to replace the PAF's main office building that was lost to fire.

Comment [RWT31]: 1921

Comment [RWT32]: Only minimally. Most jobs were still on the waterfront

Comment [RWT33]: Can we document this?

Fairhaven's shipyards and industries were active during World War II but in the years that followed both the commercial and industrial areas began to decline. As jobs faded so too did the condition of the surrounding houses and residential areas.

Refrigeration and the depletion of salmon on Puget Sound led to the sale of PAF property to the Port of Bellingham as the company focused more on its Alaska operations. Many of the warehouses and industrial buildings between Harris Avenue and the shoreline were removed without replacement as the cannery complex disappeared along with its dependant enterprises.

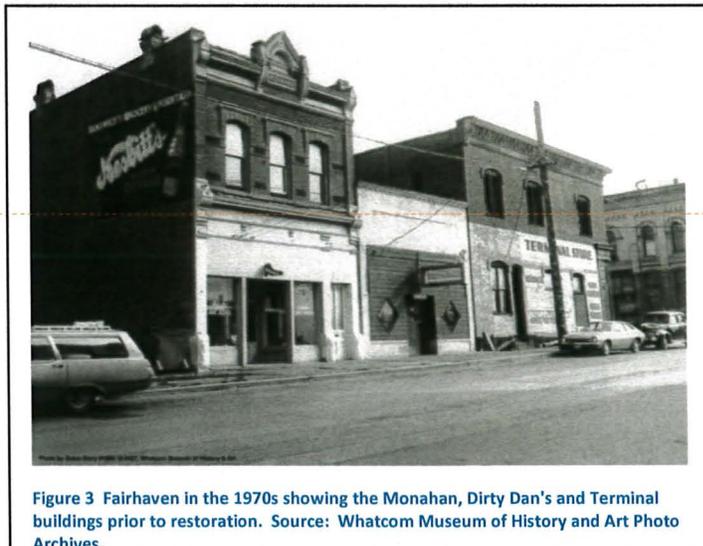


Figure 3 Fairhaven in the 1970s showing the Monahan, Dirty Dan's and Terminal buildings prior to restoration. Source: [Whatcom Museum of History and Art Photo Archives](#).

Comment [RWT34]: Salmon fishing was less profitable after fish traps were banned, but it still continues. PAF's shareholders liquidated the whole operation in 1965-66, including the 24 canneries in Alaska, because they thought they could invest their money more profitably elsewhere.

The loss of waterfront jobs and activity affected many storefront businesses and the age and obsolescence of the buildings eroded property values along with the civic perception of Fairhaven. In 1953 the Fairhaven Hotel was lost for good to a fire and plans began to reroute the interstate highway inland, bypassing Fairhaven entirely. Many of the remaining commercial buildings became vacant and the number of operating merchants fell to a new low with the only survivors being basic services like a pharmacy, grocery, newsstand, taverns, and a few shops.

In the late 1960's Western Washington University (then College) founded a non-traditional resident school called Fairhaven College followed two years later by Huxley College of the Environment. The campus expanded to the south toward Happy Valley and the neglected south side of Bellingham. The growing academic community that developed around the colleges at Western began to occupy and

enliven the moribund commercial district of Fairhaven and students and faculty populated the working class houses and residential neighborhoods. Fairhaven became a center for the counterculture during the Vietnam War era, with coffee shops, bars, and restaurants such as Toad Hall in the basement of Nelson Block, which was linked to the Underground Railroad for young men evading the military draft by slipping over the border into Canada. Artists and cooperatively-owned businesses joined bookstores, local restaurants, bars and art house theatres in reanimating Fairhaven village.

In the early 1970's investor, developer and Fairhaven native, Kenneth Imus, began to purchase and improve several of the important historic buildings in Fairhaven. Imus also collected architectural fragments, building details and salvaged building materials from other locals, which he incorporated into the rehabilitation and in some cases elaboration of his properties. In 1977 the Fairhaven Historic District was formally listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Over the next two decades Fairhaven enjoyed a rebirth as storefronts and upper floors became occupied, owners invested in structural and tenant improvements and the surrounding residential areas regained value.

Today, the industrial fabric of Fairhaven that once blanketed both sides of Harris Avenue below Padden Creek has been largely erased leaving vacant tracks of property on the south side of Harris and a scattering of shop buildings, warehouses and garages located primarily along McKenzie Avenue west of 4th Street and in the South Terminal area. In more contemporary times, the location of the Alaska State Ferry terminal and Amtrak passenger rail station have brought visitors and travelers to lower Harris Avenue and the Fairhaven Historic District.

Beginning in 1995 and through 2005, Fairhaven saw an intensive period of new construction within and immediately outside the historic district. With mostly success, the new construction has contextually reused the historic forms, scale and exterior materials that define the district observing property plat lines, streetscape manners and shared fresh air and views. The density and compact character that Fairhaven's commercial center exhibited during its most active historic period is being revisited and rivaled by the most recent boom.

The Area Today

While Fairhaven is today one of Bellingham's smaller neighborhoods, it is its most diverse. It is a complete, functioning urban village with a commercial core, mixed use residential development, nearby single-family residential, marine industrial waterfront, ferry, bus and train terminals, and intact historic buildings housing a thriving shopping and tourist district.

Today the Fairhaven Neighborhood has a population of approximately 1,017 in an area of .3 square miles (about 192 acres), an area only 4% of its original size. Fairhaven is endowed with a unique sense of place derived from its waterfront location offering spectacular views of and access to wooded areas and the shoreline of Bellingham Bay, and a built environment with a turn-of-the-20th century character, offering a warm texture and intimate scale.

Perhaps more than any other neighborhood in the City, it is a town within a city, with residential, commercial, and industrial properties in close proximity. A combination of

Comment [RWT35]: Ken was born in Bellingham. His family's home was on the north side

Comment [RWT36]: Ken bought vacant parcels as well, e.g., on McKenzie west of the Waldron Building, "the gravel pit" and the connecting lots along the SB Trail

Comment [RWT37]: Better to say, "reduced." What about the Coors Building, Fairhaven Shipyard, All American Marine, LFS Trawl, Seaview Yacht Systems and Uniflite?

Comment [RWT38]: These folks have had a minimal affect on Fairhaven's economy. The Multimodal T C is not a hub for local residents

Comment [RWT39]: Would Dave Ebenal agree?

Comment [RWT40]: True for Fairhaven Gardens and Waldron/Young. Not true for Harris and McKenzie Squares.

Comment [RWT41]: How many of the newer buildings have all four walls made of brick? Most seem to have a brick façade facing the street and siding over wood- framed walls on the other three sides.

Comment [RWT42]: The 2010 Census lists Fairhaven' population as 880.

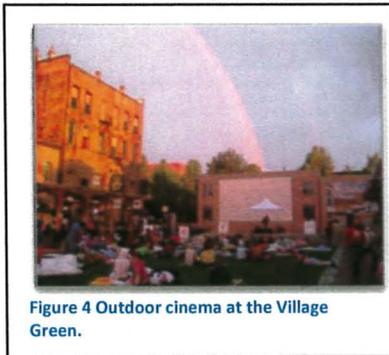


Figure 4 Outdoor cinema at the Village Green.

traditional residential, more urban residential, commercial and industrial areas makes this a **full-spectrum neighborhood**. Carefully planned growth is essential to maintaining the quality of life in these varied areas.

The Fairhaven population has encouraged development of a **range of housing types** that honor the historic architectural tradition of Fairhaven and respects the natural environment, while providing housing opportunities for a diverse mix of incomes and cultures.

Capital Facilities in Fairhaven have created an environment that fosters public safety, support for commercial and industrial enterprises, and lifelong learning through nearby schools and the library.

Comment [RWT43]: Where does the Sewage Treatment Plant come in? What's the difference between Capital Facilities and Public Facilities?

Fairhaven has become a leader in **multi-modal transportation** that includes ferry, bus and rail hubs as well as a pedestrian and bicycle-friendly atmosphere. This plan addresses traffic, pedestrian safety and parking challenges that have evolved through rapid growth in the neighborhood since 2000.

The **natural areas** in Fairhaven are being **preserved**, protected, and restored. Padden Creek and the Padden Creek Estuary are thriving natural systems that are enjoyed by residents and visitors. The Post Point Great Blue Heron Colony and restored Post Point Lagoon area adjacent to the city's sewage treatment plant are abundant with wildlife, and provide trail access and recreational areas for residents and visitors.

The **Fairhaven Historic District** is a thriving and charming commercial destination that serves all the Southside neighborhoods, the wider community, visitors, and is a place where people live, work, visit and explore in comfort and close proximity with each other and with the natural environment. Although numerous significant buildings from the past are now gone, Fairhaven is fortunate to retain seventeen nationally recognized historic buildings from around the **turn of the 19th Century, built during a time of prosperity for Fairhaven.**

Comment [RWT44]: "turn of the 20th Century"

Comment [RWT45]: Phrase "time of prosperity" is questionable. Fairhaven's initial boom was due more to the injection of outside venture capital than to the generation of income from locally-based enterprises.

Public Facilities

Fairhaven houses the Bellingham Cruise Terminal and the Bellingham Transportation Center, offering Amtrak, Alaska Ferry, local ferry, Greyhound and local bus services. **Bellingham Bay** provides a sheltered anchorage from the prevailing southwest winds, but is only deep enough to accommodate **vessels of moderate size.**

Comment [RWT46]: How about the Public Boat Launch and the BBCBC?

Comment [RWT47]: Harris Bay

Comment [RWT48]: Better to say, "vessels larger than typical pleasure craft west of 4th St."

Redevelopment Potential

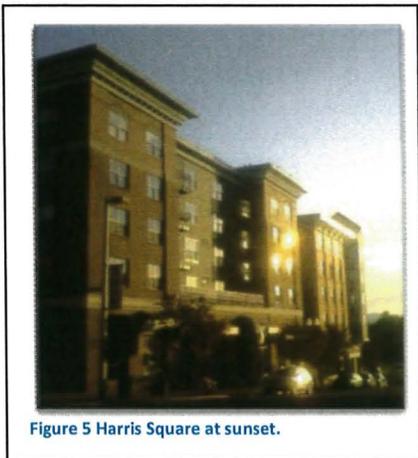


Figure 5 Harris Square at sunset.

The land capacity model for the Fairhaven core assumes future development will not differ greatly in form or intensity from recent development patterns. To establish an estimate for future growth, the most-recent 500,000 square feet of mixed-use construction was analyzed. Included in this total are Fairhaven Gardens, the Waldron/Young block, Harris Square, and the 1440 McKenzie block. These projects averaged 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.

Comment [RWT49]: Is the vacant Haskell property included? What about future development and redevelopment of POB property, e.g. FMIP (see the Waterfront Futures Report)