



WASHINGTON'S LANDING (HERR'S ISLAND)

LOCATION: Pittsburgh, PA

SIZE: 42 acres

FEATURES: Location, City View,
Waterfront

OWNER: Urban Redevelopment
Authority (URA)

CURRENT USE: Upscale Housing,
Marina, and Park

PAST USE: Meat Packing Plant,
Scrap Yard, & Rail

CONTAMINANTS: Petroleum, Heavy
Metals, Organic Waste, PCBs, and
PAHs

TOTAL ACTUAL COST more than \$44
million

TIMELINE

1903 PA Railroad buys a portion of the island
on which to rest livestock.

1966 Packing companies closes.

1987 Herr's Island is renamed Washington's
Landing.

1989 The URA and the state acquire all the
land on the island.

1989 The first tenant, the Three Rivers Rowing
Association, opens their doors.

1990 Clean-up is completed.

1990 Construction of the Washington's
Landing Marina Inc. begins.

1993 The Pennsylvania Department of
Environmental Protection moves onto the
site.

1997 The Village on Washington's Landing is
completed.

HISTORY

In 1753, George Washington's raft capsized, and he landed on a nearby island. He ended up sleeping on Herr's Island, which was later renamed to Washington's Landing because of this historic event. Its renaming marked the island's break from its former use into its new residential use.

In 1903 Pennsylvania Railroad bought a portion of the island to be used as a stop-over for its route from Chicago to New York. By law, livestock was required to have rest, food, and water after every 36 hours of travel. The island also became a site for meatpacking and rendering. It emanated a foul smell which drifted for miles.

TOPOGRAPHY

The site's location on an island isolates it from surrounding communities. It is proximal to the city, giving it a good view of downtown. Access by land is restricted to only one main road that travels to and from the island.

Also, its relatively flat landscape makes it easy for construction.

MARKET CONDITIONS

The developer Rubinoff recognized a market for upscale homes in this site.





Picture courtesy of Google Maps

SITE ASSEMBLY AND CONTROL

In 1978, the Urban Redevelopment Authority (URA) bought .5 acres from the Western Packing Company and, in 1979, 20 acres of the Buncher Company's land. The state bought 2.8 acres for a park and a marina from Inland Products Company in 1981. After delays by the Buncher Co., the City Planning Commission agreed to the rezoning of the northern two-thirds of the island for development. The URA bought Buncher's land in March 1989 after a year of delays.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS

According to an environmental assessment of the central and northern part of the island, waste materials from rendering operations were found on site. These non-hazardous materials give off a noxious odor. Groundwater also did not meet drinking water standards because of the placement of ash, sand, slag, cinders, and other granular materials in the fill.

- An investigation of River Avenue revealed high levels of heavy metals and total petroleum hydrocarbons (TPHs) due to a 550-gallon underground storage tank (UST) abandoned on the site. The UST was drained and disposed, and contaminated soils were covered with crushed stone to be used as a boat storage area/parking lot.
- The southern part of the island contained hazardous waste, including Polynuclear Aromatic Hydrocarbons (PAHs) (maximum of 430 ppm) and PCBs (maximum of 200 ppm). The Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) accepted concentration levels are at a max of 13 ppm for the former and a maximum of 0.1 ppm for PCBs. The PCBs were linked back to old electrical transformers from a salvage plant operating in the 1980's.



To dispose of the contaminated soil, the URA encapsulated the soil underneath what are now tennis courts.

SOCIAL/COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE

Because of its history with livestock, surrounding communities wanted a development that would also remove the stench from the area. Since this site is an island, neighborhood integration was not a primary concern.

PHYSICAL INFRASTRUCTURE

- To create the marina, sunken barges had to be lifted out of the water. A traffic study of the island showed that the road system could not support the traffic associated with commercial buildings. That is why construction focused primarily on residential housing.

- The design and engineering of the tennis court encapsulation cell by Atlas Services Corporation cost \$750,000 with the construction costs of \$2,654,000. The option of shipping the soil off-site estimates as much as \$6 million. By the encapsulation method, millions of dollars were saved.

- 10,000 tons of organic wastes were hauled away, costing up to \$792,000.
- Other wastes like decayed carcasses of animals were taken to an Ohio landfill.

- The design of new roads, a connection to the 31st Street Bridge, and water and sewer lines cost \$150,000. Demolishing cattle pens and a meat-packing plant and building utility lines and a ¼ mile spine road cost over \$1 million. A \$4 million bridge was built connecting Herr's Island



to River Road and East Ohio Street, while \$19,900 was also spent to repair an 85-year-old bridge so the resulting bridge has synchronized signals, minimizing delay.

COSTS AND ECONOMIC STRUCTURE

This project cost over \$44 million, with \$26.5 million from public investment, \$7 million from the City of Pittsburgh, and over \$11 million from the government.

CURRENT STATUS AND LESSONS LEARNED

The site houses the Three Rivers Rowing Association, Washington's Landing Marina Inc, a land-fill tennis complex, office buildings that house the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection among them, and 100 upscale townhouses called The Village.

Investment

\$2,400,000	Washington's Landing Associates I
\$2,900,000	Washington's Landing Associates II
\$1,500,000	Three Rivers Rowing Association
\$3,288,000	Sports Technology Group
\$3,000,000	Washington's Landing Marina
\$2,600,000	600 Waterfront Drive
\$2,900,000	800 Waterfront Drive
(projected)	
\$4,000,000	Automated Healthcare Inc. and
(projected)	Manufacturing Facility
\$21,000,000	The Village at Washington's Landing
(projected)	
\$43,588,000	TOTAL

The URA also plans to improve pedestrian transit by remediating the South Railroad Bridge.

The island's limited access addresses the concern about public facilities. A public park, tennis courts, biking trails, and hiking trails are only easily accessible to island homeowners and local employees, making 'public' a misleading term.

ECONOMIC/COMMUNITY IMPACT

When the meat packing company closed, revenue was lost. Now the island has thriving offices and an exclusive townhouse neighborhood that produces tax dollars.



Financing

\$2,280,590	U.S. Economic Development Administration
\$2,300,000	PA Department of Community Affairs
\$2,400,000	PA Department of Commerce
\$3,140,000	PA Department of Environmental Resources
\$1,850,000	Appalachian Regional Commission
\$4,400,000	City of Pittsburgh CDBG Funds
\$1,301,000	Urban Redevelopment Authority
\$3,248,000	City of Pittsburgh Bond Funds
\$800,000	Port Authority Transit
\$585,500	Urban Redevelopment Authority Program Income
\$1,200,000	Pittsburgh Water and Sewer Authority
\$3,000,000	PA Strategy 21 Funding (park and open spaces)
\$26,505,090	TOTAL

Case Study Completed Summer 2007

SOURCES

Coile, Heather. "Washington's Landing: A Case Study" Apr. 2007. Student Work

Putaro, Sarah M. and Kathryn A. Weisbrod. Brownfield Development: the Implications for Urban Infrastructure. The Brownfields Center: Case Study Site – Former Army Ammunition Plant, in the Hays Community of Pittsburgh. Carnegie Mellon University. Aug. 1998.