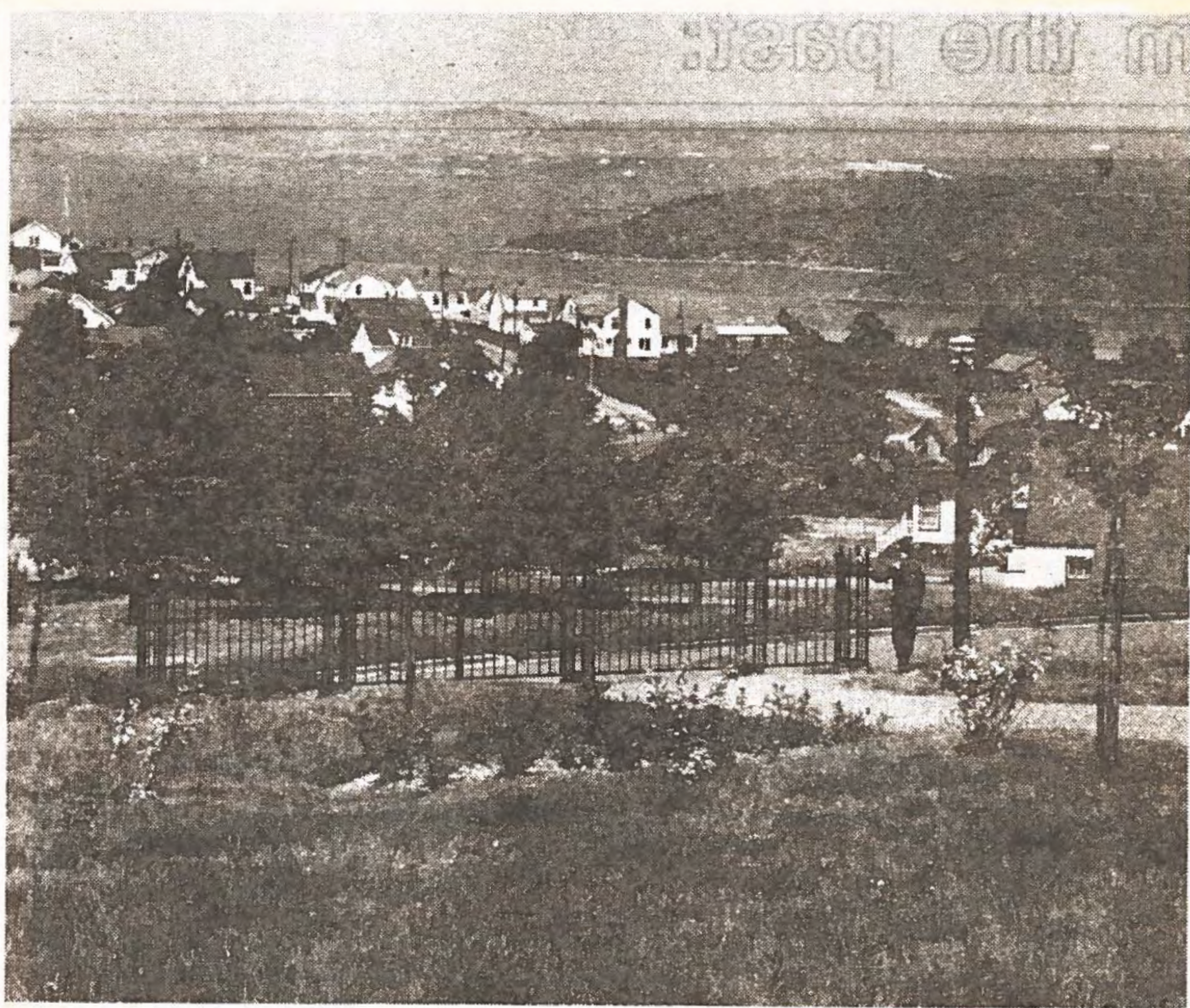


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Library files

► A portion of what is now Fort Needham Park as it appeared in the 1950s. In 1819, two men fought a duel in a secluded field near the fort.



# Time capsule set in tower

Precious objects in a time capsule to commemorate the 1917 Halifax Explosion almost missed their chance for posterity Friday.

A special service was held at the memorial Bell Tower in Fort Needham marking the 68th anniversary of the disaster. During the ceremony, a time capsule was to be inserted in a chamber of the tower at 9:06 a.m., the precise time when the explosion occurred in 1917. The insertion was delayed for about 10 minutes, however, because the capsule was too large.

Janet Kitz, explosion historian, said Alec McCleave, committee member, inserted the capsule a day earlier in a test and it fit perfectly. However, when the 16x16x8-inch capsule was sealed with tape and fiberglass by Halifax Plastics, the extra wrappings made the capsule too large for the chamber.

Members of the Memorial Bell Tower committee acted quickly and had the capsule sanded to fit, and then the ceremony proceeded on schedule.

Halifax Explosion survivor Millicent Swindells placed the capsule in its niche assisted by her granddaughter, Anne Louise Ihaszi.

The capsule will be reopened on

Dec. 6, 2017 - the 100th anniversary of the disaster.

Items for the time capsule were individually wrapped in acid-free plastic bags to prevent them from decomposing.

Mrs. Kitz said memorabilia inserted in the capsule dated back to 1917-18.

The historic objects include: Halifax relief commission reform reports filed by those who suffered from the explosion; menus from Halifax hotels, and the Green Latern Restaurant; a list of identified dead from the explosion from the 1918 City Directory; description of the identified dead; reproduction of photos following the explosion; photos of Richmond School before it was destroyed.

Modern objects include: the story of Mrs. Thompson (Barbara) Orr whose family was killed during the explosion, and who later donated the bells for the Memorial Bell Tower; a videotape of a television show - Halifax Explosion Remembered; newspaper articles pertaining to the Memorial Bell Tower; a 1985 menu from Privateer's Warehouse; a department store catalogue; a 1985 coin; and a copy of The Chronicle-Herald from Nov. 30, 1985.

7 Dec 85





**TIME CAPSULE** — Objects contained in a time capsule commemorating the 1917 Halifax Explosion almost lost their chance for posterity Friday when it was discovered the container's size was just too large to go inside the memorial Bell Tower at Fort Needham. The capsule was to be inserted at 9:06 a.m., the exact time of the explosion 68 years ago, but the ceremony was postponed for 10 minutes while organizers sanded down the fiberglass capsule. Shown holding the capsule before it was placed inside the tower are, from left, explosion survivor Millicent Swindells, her granddaughter, Anne Louise Ihaszi and Alec McCleave, a member of the memorial bells committee. WW/Garland

Mr. Swindells said the glass capsule will be very light like you see. "I would not be surprised to see the capsule being carried by people today in Dartmouth. It is a problem in the traffic problem would be put in the new garage."

The other two would not be surprised to see the capsule in the new garage in Dartmouth, but the work.

Major Savage said he was surprised by the donation when it was made. "Now there is a gift and will be the way of Dartmouth and something about this," he said.

The story's background is that the money was contributed by Mr. Swindells, who added that he is a well-known and very active person.

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Mr. Swindells

how the capsule will be

it is very small

and the capsule will be

it is very small



## ***Bell run set Sept. 7***

Barbara Thompson, who donated nine bells to the United Church in 1920 in memory of her family killed in the Dec. 6, 1917, Halifax explosion, and Edmund Morris, minister of social services and honorary co-chairman of the Halifax Explosion Memorial Bells Committee, will ring the bells at Fort Needham at 9 a. m. Sept. 7 to start the first Memorial Bell Run.

Proceeds from the run, sponsored by Privateer's Warehouse, will be used by the committee to assist in the upkeep of the tower and grounds on Fort Needham.

The run begins at the Memorial Bell Tower and ends at the courtyard at Historic Properties. Registration begins at 8 a. m. and there is a fee.

A number of activities are planned after the run on the waterfront, including presentations and a runner's breakfast.

*30 Aug 85*



# Bells ring on Fort Needham

Bells rang out for the first time from the Halifax Explosion Memorial Bell Tower yesterday in front of a large crowd at Fort Needham.

It was the official dedication ceremony for the new monument which commemorates the terrific explosion

which decimated North End Halifax in 1917. Thousands of people were killed or injured in the largest non-nuclear explosion in history when a Belgian ship, the Imo, collided with a French munitions ship, the Mont Blanc.

The monument is a bell tower made from hydrostone cement and

it contains a time capsule which will be opened in 2017 on the 100th anniversary of the Halifax Explosion.

Under sunny skies a commemorative plaque was unveiled by Premier John Buchanan, Rev. Lawrence Bone and Rev. Donald Campbell. God Save the Queen was sung while the bells played.

The bells were originally donated in 1921 to United Memorial Church in

memory of the Orr family, which lost seven members in the Dec. 6, 1917 explosion. Explosion survivor and family member, Mrs. Barbara Orr (Thompson), played the bells, as she had done in 1921.

The explosion memorial committee will cover the smaller section of the monument with ivy to symbolize the past; the uncovered upper structure represents the rebirth of the city following the explosion.

Members of the Halifax Explosion Memorial Bells committee who, with personal, corporate, federal and provincial funding, were responsible for getting the monument built, said they need a further \$30,000 to pay the \$415,000 bill. Reginald Prest, committee chairman, said that if enough money is found, more bells will be added to the tower so that most music could be played.

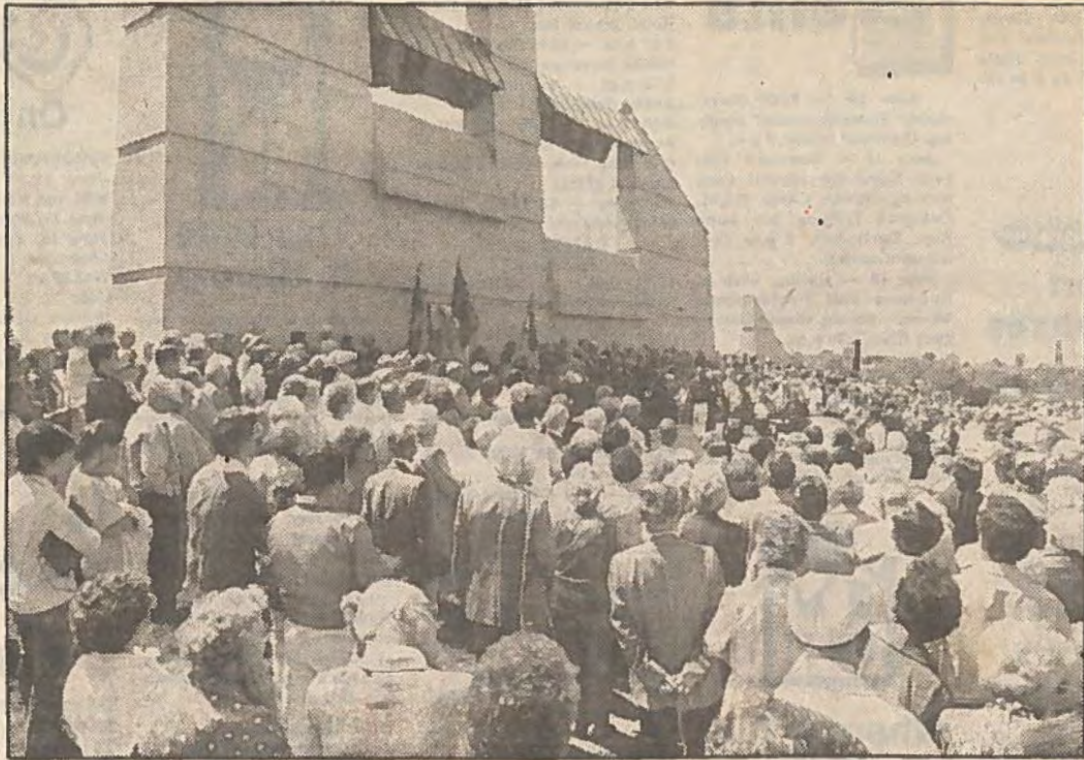
BN June 10/85





**MEMORIAL DEDICATED:** A large crowd gathered at the top of Fort Needham Sunday for the dedication of the Halifax Explosion Memorial Bell Tower. Premier John Buchanan praised the memorial and later unveiled a plaque commemorating the explosion. (Darrow Fendick)





**BELLS TOLL** — Bells tolled Sunday as the Halifax Explosion Memorial Bell Tower was officially dedicated in remembrance of the thousands who lost their lives in the 1917 explosion.  
Wamboldt-Waterfield

## Bells dedicated

### 500 attend ceremony at Halifax Explosion memorial

By Lee MacLean

Bells tolled at Fort Needham on Sunday for the thousands who lost their lives in the 1917 Halifax Explosion, as a \$415,000 Halifax Explosion Memorial Bell Tower was officially dedicated before a crowd of more than 500.

The two-part triangular monument was constructed of hydrostone, the material used in the reconstruction of much of the city's north end after the explosion.

The five-storey structure houses 10 bronze bells originally donated in 1921 to United Memorial Church, Kaye Street, in memory of the Samuel Orr family which died in the explosion. Barbara Orr Thompson, the surviving family member, played the bells at the first dedication and played them again Sunday.

"This is a most auspicious, most historic day, not only for those in Halifax, but for all

of Nova Scotia," Premier John Buchanan said. "This monument ensures that the young people who are here today and their children will always remember the tragic explosion of 1917."

"Only in these streets did war impact in the Western hemisphere... the only children who cried in death cried in these streets," said Social Services Minister Edmund Morris, honorary chairman of the Halifax Explosion Memorial Bells committee.

The idea for the monument got its start when the late Judge Robert E. Inglis came into Mr. Morris' office when the minister was mayor of Halifax and proposed that a permanent home be found for the bells.

Although supported by public and corporate donations as well as federal and provincial grants, the memorial has a \$30,000 shortfall remaining.

*June 10/85*





**MEMORIAL DONATION** — The City of Dartmouth donated \$20,000 to the Halifax Explosion Memorial Bells Committee. At the site of the new memorial tower on Fort Needham Hill are, from left: committee secretary Dick MacLean, Dartmouth Mayor Daniel Brownlow and Social Services Minister Edmund Morris, who is also honorary chairman of the Halifax Explosion Memorial Bells Committee.

Wamboldt-Waterfield

25 April 85





**BELL MONUMENT** — With a few final touches, the Halifax Explosion Memorial Bell Monument on Fort Needham will be ready for a June 9 dedication.

Wamboldt-Waterfield

9 Mar 85



# The bells will soon be ringing - at Explosion monument

by SIOBHAN MOORE  
THE MONUMENT in memory of the 1,630 people who died in the Halifax Explosion is almost ready — 67 years after the event. Thursday the 10 original bells donated by one of the survivors

of the 1917 blast were installed in the three-tiered memorial on top of Fort Needham, a memorial which commemorates one of the greatest man-made disasters in Canadian history.

Barbara Orr, the

only one of her family to survive the 1917 explosion, gave the brass bells to the United Memorial Church on Kaye Street in 1920 in memory of her parents and four brothers and sisters who died in the blast.

Struck in Troy, N.Y., the bells were removed from the church's tower in 1967 by the city because of the weakened tower structure. Left on the church lawn until last year, the historic bells were finally rescued by

the Halifax Explosion Memorial Committee and put in storage at the Navy depot in Dartmouth.

The Bellringers of America, more commonly known as the I.T. Verden Company in Philadelphia, which made the bells for the Ottawa Peace Tower installed new mechanical clappers in each of the bells. Gordon Johnson of I.T. and retired workman Mel O'Leary installed the buffed and polished brass bells Monday.

"It took us between 12 and 14 hours and boy, was it cold," said O'Leary, who came out of retirement to help the memorial committee.

The bells are hung from three beams, which are tiered on an upward scale, the highest point of the monument being 60 ft.

Faith, Hope and Charity is the theme of the monument designed by the Core Design Group, which was awarded the project in December 1983 competition among local architects.

Using circle, triangle and ivy motifs in the design, the finished monument will convey a feeling for the past, with hope for the future, said Core designer Keith Graham.

Four more bells will be struck in Holland and built into the monument by the end of 1985, said memorial

**Continued  
on page 11**



**IT'S COLD UP THERE:** Workers have been mounting the memorial bells donated by one of the survivors of the 1917 Halifax

Explosion since Monday. The Memorial committee hopes the \$330,000 project will open by spring. (Wagg Photo)

DN  
19 Jan 85



# The bells will soon be ringing

from page 10

committee chairman  
Reg Prest.

"There are no (bell)  
foundries left in North  
America, so they'll be  
done in Holland," Prest  
says.

With 14 bells, the set  
will be complete.  
"They'll be able to play  
anything from rock 'n'  
roll to Bach and  
Beethoven," said  
Prest.

Not that rock 'n' roll  
will ring from the  
the Fort Needham  
hilltop. The music will  
be controlled elec-  
tronically from a room  
in the bottom of the  
monument or by a  
remote set in the Kaye  
Street United Church.

Total cost of the  
building to date is  
\$330,000, with money  
coming from the  
provincial and federal  
governments and  
through committee  
fund raising events.  
The committee needs  
\$35,000 to clear the  
costs, and Prest hopes  
to hold a walkathon in  
May.

The bells themselves  
are worth more than  
\$500,000.

The official opening  
of the Halifax Ex-  
plosion Monument  
should be in the spring.

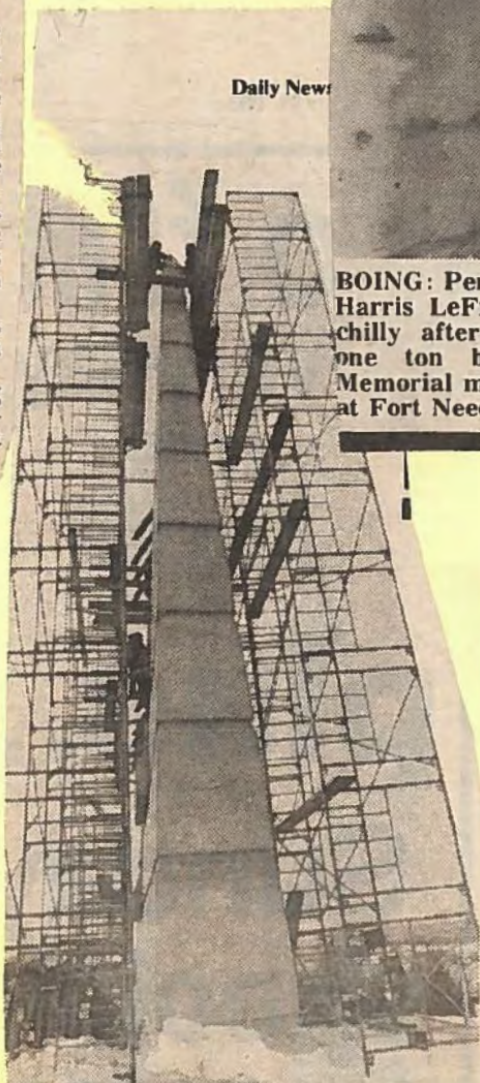


Daily New

**BOING:** Percy Riley (right) and  
Harris LeFresne (left) spent a  
chilly afternoon mounting this  
one ton brass bell on the  
Memorial monument being built  
at Fort Needham by the Halifax

Explosion Memorial Committee.  
When completed, 14 bells will  
hang from the monument, to be  
officially opened this spring.

(Wagg Photo)



**WAY UP:** Dave Bowers and Stan  
Haydn are working 60 feet above  
ground on the nearly completed  
Halifax Explosion Memorial  
monument, to be officially  
opened this spring (Wagg Photo)

Digital copy of 102-1053 Parks Fort Needham Memorial Park provided by Halifax Municipal Archives



# Memorial Bells Tower sod is officially turned

By Jim Gowen  
Staff Reporter

Two-hundred people stood under threatening skies Friday as Barbara (Orr) Thompson — using a silver spade previously used by the Queen Mother to turn the sod for the Halifax Memorial Library — turned the first sod to begin construction of the Halifax Memorial Bells Tower atop Fort Needham hill.

Reginald Prest, chairman of the Memorial Bells Tower committee, and Deputy Mayor Ron Cromwell welcomed the guests before turning the microphone over to former Halifax mayor, and now MLA for Needham, Social Services Minister Edmund Morris.

Mr. Morris, honorary co-chairman, with Judge Robert E. Inglis, of the Memorial Bells Tower committee, spoke of the history of the Halifax Explosion, describing how "in a moment children, women, men at work, members of the clergy, all perished in the explosion,"



**SOD TURNING** — Barbara (Orr) Thompson turns the sod for the Memorial Bells Tower on Fort Needham, assisted by Deputy Mayor Ron Cromwell and Rod Macleod, chairman of the fund raising campaign.  
Wamboldt-Waterfield

and of the importance of the Needham site "overlooking the scene of the disaster."

The fund for construction, which stood at about \$46,000 Friday morning, was swelled by a contribution of \$25,000 in memory of seven members of the Stockall family who perished in the blast.

Paul Stockall, the donor, lost ancestors on both sides of his family. His great grandfather, grandfather, two great uncles, a great aunt and a great-great aunt died in the devastation which flattened the north end of the city. A great aunt on his grand-mother's side was also fatally injured in the blast.

Mr. Morris said the tower would not only commemorate the explosion, but would symbolize the spirit of the citizens of Halifax.

"As a result of the explosion, Halifax became one of the great small cities in Canada," he said.

2 Jan 84



# Site preparation a delicate job

Engineers and archeologists were on the future Halifax Explosion Memorial Bells site at Fort Needham late in the week preparing for what promises to be a delicate excavation job.

Memorial bells committee chairman Reg Prest said every stage of the excavation process, even preliminary site testing, will be closely monitored so that any historic artifacts found at the site of the one-time military installation can be saved for posterity.

"If artifacts are discovered, work

on the monument will cease to allow archaeological investigation," he said.

Observing the preliminary site testing together with volunteer engineers under the direction of memorial bell committee volunteer Frank Harrington, were representatives of the Nova Scotia Museum Archaeology Department, city historian Lou Collins and other committee members.

Historians and archeologists want to determine the exact location of Fort Needham, which once played an important part of Halifax's early de-

fence system.

Meanwhile, donations to the memorial fund are coming in from all across the country and the United States. As committee treasurer Fred Nickerson put it, a lot of people have a heartfelt interest in seeing the project proceed — on time.

The committee has asked donors to include information they might have concerning the dreadful Dec. 6, 1917, explosion that killed almost 3,000 Halifaxians and wartime visitors and reduced large portions of the city to rubble.

Mr. Prest said this information will be included in a time capsule and recorded at the public archives for future reference.

Some of the letters received by the committee indicate many people, with varying associations to the tragic event, still have strong feelings about it.

A letter from Winnifred Bent, now residing at Granville Ferry, Annapolis County, indicates something of the magnitude of the blast.

"I was seven-years old, on the Dartmouth side, near South

Woodside. . . I can still see that awful cloud that formed over Halifax," she remembered.

Mary J. Nicoll of Clyde River, Shelburne County, reported her father was aboard the tug-boat Stella Maris as its crew desperately attempted to tow the blazing Mont Blanc away from the pier. The captain, her father's brother-in-law, was killed along with other crewmen. Her father, one of four survivors from the tug, was seriously injured but lived to see 88 years.

Another Shelburne County resi-

dent, Marion Hogg, reported her mother was working at Victoria General Hospital when the explosion occurred and, after running to the window to see what happened, was severely injured by flying glass. She survived her injuries and lived a lived to the age of 84, but never forgot the incident.

Mr. Prest said the committee was proceeding with plans to unveil the completed monument by Dec. 6, 1984, the 63rd anniversary of the explosion. A sod-turning ceremony has been scheduled for June 1.

APR 21/84





**CAREFUL WORK** — Engineers and archaeologists will keep a close watch for historic artifacts and clues to the exact location of the original Fort Needham as construction of the Halifax Explosion Memorial Bells monument proceeds. During preliminary soil testing, city historian Lou Collins closely inspects piles of topsoil along with Frank Harrington, memorial bells committee; Bill Sutherland, Jacques Whitford and Associates, and John Dow, Whitman Benn and Associates. Wamboldt-Waterfield



Ward 5 Planning Information Office.  
INFORMATION REPORT

To: His Worship the Mayor and Members of Council  
From: Paul Calda, P.Eng., City Manager  
Date: April 16, 1984  
Subject: Fort Needham - Halifax Explosion Memorial

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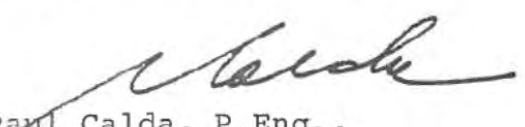
Further to the approved recommendations of City Council on March 1, 1984, staff of the Legal Department is currently working on the documentation for the license agreement between the City and the Memorial Bells Committee. A proposed agreement should be forthcoming shortly for Council approval.

The site has been surveyed and an appropriate legal plan is being prepared for attaching to the license. In an effort to meet construction deadlines so that the memorial will be completed prior to December of 1984, the Committee has been given permission to commence procedures for the soils investigation. This will involve a shallow dig with a small backhoe through the middle and approximately the full length of the site.

In conjunction with the above excavation, staff has met with the Civic Historian and an official of the Nova Scotia Museum (Archaeology Division) as well as representatives of the Bells Committee, to coordinate procedures in connection with the archaeological dig.

The current plans are to initiate the shallow dig on Thursday, April 19, 1984, weather permitting and to monitor this cut with the appropriate archaeological official(s). Any further action necessary will be dependent upon the findings in this initial excavation.

MPW/sfs

  
Paul Calda, P.Eng.,  
City Manager

Prepared by:

M.P. Woods, Development Assistant

Approved by:

R.B. Grant, Director  
Development Department



March 15/84  
Daily News

## Explosive issue of memorial money

### To the Editor:

I was more than dismayed at the actions of city council by stating there would be no funds toward the memorial of the Halifax Explosion.

Having attended two of the public hearings it seemed to me the City Monument Committee became apprehensive toward the Halifax Explosion Memorial Bills Committee when it became apparent the

majority of interested citizens were in favor of the Fort Needham site.

It certainly does not behove council's position for any alderman to state he would not support any donations. I would like to make council aware that many of us lost loved ones and parents during this wartime disaster. I cannot think of any other grant receiving priority over this

memorial.

I for one cannot think of a better way for my tax dollars being spent and suggest council reconsider their positions with a unanimous support towards this memorial and not wait for requests.

Charles Campbell  
109 Main Ave.,  
Fairview.



# Halifax Explosion Memorial Bells: City won't offer funds

By Sheryl Grant  
City Hall Reporter

Halifax city council says it won't provide funding for the Fort Needham monument to the Halifax explosion unless money is requested by the project's organizers.

Aldermen on Wednesday dismissed a request from the city's monument committee that a \$10,000 donation be made to the project, after reviewing comments from the Halifax Explosion Memorial Bells Committee and Needham MLA Edmund Morris.

The bells committee has written to council making it clear it has not asked for funding, while Mr. Morris has said project funding can be handled by contributions and a provincial grant of \$100,000.

The social services minister also labelled the proposed donation an obstacle thrown in to obstruct the project.

"After reading the statement of the minister and the letter from the Halifax Explosion Memorial Bells Committee I wouldn't support any donation," Alderman Tom Jeffrey said Wednesday.

The alderman, who has remained relatively silent on the project during more than two months of debate, expressed dismay at public comments made on the project since it first came to council in December.

"I've never seen such political football in all my life. ... I've never seen so much abuse taken by two aldermen" (city monument committee members aldermen Rick Grant and Gerald O'Malley), he said.

He defended the aldermen's actions on the bells, and their final recommendations the Fort Needham site be approved and the donation made.

His subsequent request the donation be taken off the city's agenda was unanimously approved by council members.

However, discussion on the monument did not stop there.

Ald. Grant said later in the afternoon the squabble over the Fort Needham memorial points out the need for a city policy on new monuments.

He has asked city staff to draw up a document which would expand the duties of the city's Heritage Advisory Committee to include monuments.

His unanimously-approved suggestion brought Alderman Nick Meagher to his feet with a message for would-be monument committees with their eyes on city property.

"The Halifax lands we own are not up for grabs," he said.

"Whoever wants a piece should know they can't have it. We, as the City of Halifax, aren't going to give land away."

The Fort Needham monument site is city property, as are the sites of other city monuments.



—Let the bells ring out!—

# Fort Needham gets nod for explosion memorial

By Sheryl Grant  
City Hall Reporter

At long last city council has approved a proposal to build a memorial to the Halifax Explosion on Fort Needham.

Halifax aldermen voted unanimously in favour of the Fort Needham site Thursday after more than two months of debate.

However, approval did not come without a fight.

The squabble developed early in debate when Alderman Gerald O'Malley refused a request from Mayor Ron Wallace to split the first section of a motion, calling for approval of the Fort Needham site,

from the second part, committing the city to a \$10,000 donation to the Halifax Explosion Memorial Bells Committee.

"The committee had a mandate to bring in a recommendation on the site and not on any donation," Mayor Wallace said. "So, I'm asking you to separate the motion."

"I will not yield to separation of the motion," Ald. O'Malley replied. "If council wishes to separate the motion, it may do so."

The alderman resisted a second request from the mayor in similar fashion.

The squabble grew more heated when Mayor Wallace asked the ald-

erman to explain his intentions, and ended in a bout of gavel-rapping and an order from the mayor for the alderman to sit down.

"No one is stopping them (the bells committee) from proceeding. Stop playing games. You've been playing them too long," Ald. O'Malley replied sharply, while taking his seat.

In the interim, the alderman's refusal to separate the two requests had been met with a ruling from the mayor that the motion be split.

The eventually-approved portion, supporting leasing of the proposed site at the northeast corner of  
See Fort Needham page 2

March 2/84

## Fort Needham site approved

continued from page 1

Needham Park for the monument, also specified that the city guarantee area residents the monument would not result in a deterioration of their lifestyle.

Residents have raised concerns over possible traffic, vandalism, drainage and noise problems.

Aldermen balked at the second half of the motion calling for the \$10,000 city donation to the bells committee.

Council had already been asked for financial help earlier in the evening by promoters of the Parade of Ships planned for the city this summer.

"We're going to have to put the taxes up if we keep doing these things," Alderman Alf Hamshaw protested before asking a decision be deferred.

Despite the deferral, Janet Kitz, bells committee historian, said the monument will be built as planned for the Dec. 6 anniversary of the explosion this year.

She said the committee had slowed its fund-raising drive during council deliberation but will now resume collection of funds. The committee, which did not request the \$10,000 donations from

the city, has repeatedly told the city a start on the monument must be made by April 1 if the project is to be completed in time.

Provincial Social Services Minister Edmund Morris, the originator of the Memorial Bells project, said in an interview this morning the provincial government will contribute up to \$100,000 to match private donations.

"On my honour, I have said city taxpayers not be asked to contribute cash to this project."

"The (Memorial Bells) committee has not asked anyone for city dollars. . . . The province and private contributions will handle the project."

Mr. Morris said Ald. O'Malley's offer to contribute \$10,000 from the city is another calculated effort to obstruct the project and to antagonize other aldermen.

"O'Malley tried to associate with the use of the land a contribution of \$10,000 from the city. . . . In my opinion it was calculated to antagonize other aldermen towards the project."

Mr. Morris also said he is pleased the project has been resolved and the land that was sought will be available



## Mayor expresses confidence

# Bell row can end tonight

By Sheryl Grant  
City Hall Reporter

Mayor Ron Wallace says he is confident a decision can be made this evening on a proposal to build a monument to the Halifax explosion at Fort Needham.

The monument has been a source of controversy since last December. However, Mayor Wallace said Wednesday he does not see the debate on the proposal continuing past this evening's council meeting.

"I'm confident a final decision will be made," he said following a public meeting on the monument Wednesday evening.

Mayor Wallace said he sees no evidence problems will arise as a result of the proposed monument, and that any which might arise can be effectively dealt with.

He personally favours the site and the monument.

"There is an opportunity to use sight, sound and history to create an exciting and impressive reminder of the great tragedy," he said.

Wednesday evening's meeting was surprisingly free of opposition, considering

the controversy which has surrounded the project.

None who rose to speak from the packed house of about 75 concerned citizens opposed construction of the monument on the northeast corner of Needham Park.

However, several residents of the immediate neighbourhood expressed concern that problems which might arise be anticipated and dealt with before hand.

The major concern of area residents is possible traffic and parking problems created by those travelling to and from the monument in cars and tour buses.

"Let's deal with traffic problem now," Tom Khattar, a Union Street resident urged council.

"Let's not wait until there's blood on our hands because someone has been hurt."

Alex McCleave, another Union Street resident, who helped circulate a petition to residents of his street and Young Street, said almost 80 per cent of the 54 households asked said they favoured the Fort Needham site.

However, 34 per cent of those polled said they felt it could worsen the area's traffic problems.

With those concerned, the most favoured solution was a permanent or seasonal traffic barricade for Union Street.

The Halifax Explosion Memorial Bells Committee has expressed an interest in designing an iron gate which could be used if necessary to regulate traffic on the street.

Other concerns involve fears lights to be used at the monument will attract vandals; that the monument will interfere with drainage down Fort Needham which already floods some neighbourhood basements; and that the sound of the bells will disturb residents.

Former area alderman Terry Sullivan raised and dismissed all three points Wednesday.

He suggested the memorial will have a neutral effect on drainage, and that, as a 25-year resident of the neighbourhood where the bells were a familiar sound when located in the United Memorial Church, he could not consider their sound a disturbance.



## Memorial Bell Committee Report - Alderman O'Malley

The matter of the Memorial Bells construction as a memorial to the victims of the Halifax Explosion was discussed previously. A public meeting into this proposal was held on February 29, 1984.

Alderman O'Malley addressed members of Council and advised he wished to present Council's Committee of the Memorial Bells' report at this time.

MOVED by Alderman O'Malley, seconded by Alderman Grant  
that:

- 1) Council instruct the Legal Department to prepare the necessary documentation for Council's approval to have the requested site on Fort Needham licensed to the Memorial Bells Committee, their heirs and assigns, for the purpose of constructing a perpetual memorial to the victims of that terrible tragedy, the Halifax Explosion;
- 2) Halifax City Council, through Section 21 of the City Charter, make a special donation to the Memorial Bells Committee of \$10,000 to assist the Committee in its construction;
- 3) Council make a formal commitment to the residents surrounding Fort Needham to ensure that there will neither now nor in the future, be any deterioration in their lifestyles because of increased traffic, parking, water course change or vandalism;
- 4) Council direct staff to carry out an immediate traffic study of the area and report back to Council the recommendations necessary to ensure that the foregoing criteria of lifestyle is assured.

The Chairman advised the mandate for the Committee was to location only and not on a donation, and requested that the Motion be separated.

A lengthy discussion on the Motion ensued with Alderman Doehler bringing attention to the portion of the motion dealing with deterioration in lifestyles, indicating it may be a restrictive term and questioned whether it might be defined. Alderman Doehler requested that the licensing agreement contain a clause if the City has concerns in the future, that the Committee or its successors must address those concerns in a fashion the City sees fit.

The Chairman advised the effect of the motion would be to the location of the Memorial Bells Memorial and put the Question, parts 1, 3 and 4. The Motion was passed unanimously.

MOVED by Alderman O'Malley, seconded by Alderman Grant  
that Halifax City Council make a donation of \$10,000 to assist the Memorial Bells Committee in the construction and maintenance of the Memorial as proposed.

Cont. →



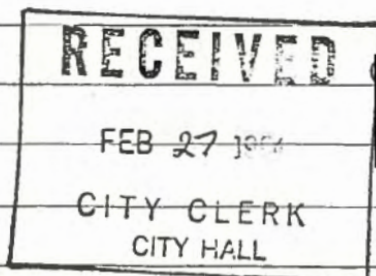
MOVED by Alderman Hamshaw, seconded by Alderman Flynn  
the matter be deferred to the next meeting of the Committee of  
the Whole Council.

The Motion to defer was put and passed with Aldermen O'Malley and  
Grant voting against.



Sir  
 in reply to notice of 23/2/84  
 re Fort Needham Memorial  
 being one of the few remaining  
 survivors of this holocaust I cannot  
 see any other place for it than  
 Fort Needham site as it will  
 over look the site & harbour  
 where it happened & hope  
 Sir that the Aldermen & Mayor  
 will not Play Politics of  
 this very important matter  
 to me we who are very lucky  
 to be alive today with our  
 memories & scars.

Fort Needham Port  
 is the only site for this  
 Memorial for me who  
 survived this disaster

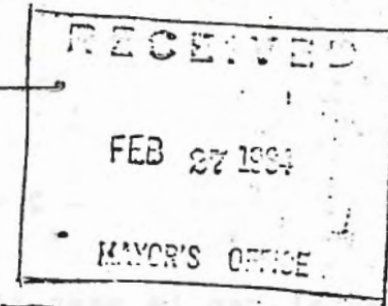


Halifax NS  
 B3K-3m9



*Planning Information*

February 27, 1984



CORE  
DESIGN  
GROUP

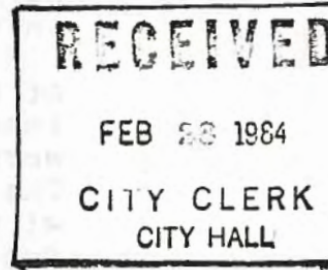


Mayor Ron Wallace  
City of Halifax  
Argyle St.,  
Halifax, N.S.

Dear Mayor Wallace:

ARCHITECTS  
ENGINEERS

In response to the recent debate concerning the location for the December 6, 1917 Halifax Explosion Tower to house the bells, may I take a few moments of your time to express my feelings on this most important topic.



While everyone unanimously agrees that a memorial to this most tragic event is long overdue and worthy of our careful deliberations, the debate over its location is understandable. May I say at the outset my heart is with this site at Fort Needham.

The design of the contemporary structure to house the bells was especially conceived for this site to commemorate a happening - the second largest manmade explosion on earth outside Hiroshima, Japan.

Through the complete integration of site and Bell Tower it is our hope that future generations will look at this exponent of Pristine Architecture and be reminded of the past (our heritage so rich), but be totally aware by its symbolism of the ever living present moment, that the future yet unborn is in good hands.

We as designers stated in the object and purpose of the design with its strong symbolism, that this site at Fort Needham was ideal for the tower location. It is perhaps the first time that a city such as Halifax has had a great opportunity to view its symbolic architecture from a great vantage point, viewed as it will be from so many angles - Nova Lea Drive, Dartmouth Avenue, Devonshire Avenue, from the bridges and within the site itself.

.../2

*Dist'd (Mayor's Office) ch/c/s; Ala.  
P.10; Mr Churchill; Lb. P.10.*

Core Design Group  
Suite 212, Duke Tower  
Halifax, Nova Scotia  
B3J 1N9





The memorial can be seen to rise as an extension of the site with one of its axes aligned with the actual explosion location, growing from the earth as if it were part of the very hill. Embracing and standing for all to see, telling as it will its own story. It will be a stunning tribute to the vision of Haligonians, who will have on its completion, risen to address a moment in their great historic past.

At the risk of being melodramatic, one can imagine the reflections of the sun in the early morning mist, the grey days and in the high noon. The tower will be an emblazoned symbol of hope with its striking appearance growing from Fort Needham, with its bells ringing out across the city tolling for the first time visibly and audibly to its residents below and in Dartmouth, a reminder of the paths we have travelled since that awful day, and how we have got to where we are now.

The choice of site seems to me a totally right decision, facing and looking exactly down to where with the din of a discordant note in our City's past when the explosion devastated the site - a day in Haligonians history when no bird sang.

Sincerely,

CORE DESIGN GROUP

Keith L. Graham, MRAIC  
President

KLG/lt





GEORGE C. THOMPSON  
PRESIDENT

**ACADIAN LINES**  
LIMITED

6040 Almon Street  
HALIFAX, Nova Scotia  
B3K 5M1

210  
**RECEIVED**

FEB 27 1984

CITY CLERK  
CITY HALL

February 24th, 1984

Mayor Ron Wallace  
City Hall  
1841 Argyle Street  
HALIFAX, N.S. B3J 3A5

Re: Halifax Explosion Memorial Bells Committee

Dear Mayor Wallace:

Recently, Mr. R. A. Prest, Chairman of the Halifax Explosion Memorial Bells Committee, discussed with me the activities of the Committee of which he is the Chairman and in particular what possible traffic there might be on the part of tour bus companies on local streets such as Needham or Union, following the completion of the erection of the Halifax Explosion Memorial Bells. I informed him that ACADIAN LINES controls, under the Motor Carrier Act, the operation of Gray Line of Halifax Sight-Seeing Tours. I also informed him that ACADIAN LINES has no control over the movement of visiting tour buses, although we do service such buses at our Garage.

I expressed to Mr. Prest that I believed it was very unlikely that ACADIAN LINES' Gray Line of Halifax Tour Buses would proceed at any time in the immediate area of Fort Needham where the Memorial is to be placed. I showed Mr. Prest the map set up on the Gray Line of Halifax 1983 Season Folder, which indicates that the Buses travel north on Barrington Street, all the way to Kempt Road and are at least three or four blocks away from Fort Needham. I also informed him that it was most likely that such routes would continue for some time.

Following Mr. Prest's visit, I with three of my associated management people, visited the Fort Needham area, travelling on Needham Street (dead end), all the way along Union Street, and including walking to the top and beyond Fort Needham itself.

Enclosed you will please find a copy of our Gray Line of Halifax 1983 Folder, referred to above, showing the complete route outlined in dark blue lines.

For what it's worth, in my view, there is little likelihood of any sight-seeing or tour buses proceeding to Fort Needham, other than a temporary pause on the north part of Union Street to permit tourists to proceed to the top of the hill, which I understand, would permit such persons to see the Memorial when it is in place.

*Dat'd Mayor's Office - Ald. C/m clo.*

*GC 28/84*

*Anna, ~~28/84~~, M. Churchill*



In passing, also after my conversation with Mr. Prest, I checked our Gray Line Folders and found that we discontinued proceeding in a southerly direction on Union Street in 1972 to date.

In my view, when the Memorial has been erected, it will be quite convenient for tour buses to observe same from a number of locations on nearby more important traffic streets such as Barrington, Gottingen and Devonshire Avenue.

Please note below a copy of this letter is being sent to Mr. R. A. Prest.

Assuring you and the City of Halifax of our continued cooperation,

Yours very truly,




GCT:im

CC: R. A. Prest, Esq.  
Halifax, N.S.



**City of Halifax**



February 22, 1984

**PUBLIC MEETING**  
**FORT NEEDHAM MEMORIAL**

Halifax City Council will hold a Public Meeting on WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 29, 1984 at 7:30 p.m. in the Council Chamber, 2nd Floor, City Hall, 1841 Argyle Street, Halifax, Nova Scotia. The purpose of this meeting is to hear from the Public about the proposed construction of an Explosion Memorial with the United Memorial Church Bells. The location of the proposed memorial is on the northeast corner of the Needham Park.

Opinions from interested persons or groups with regard to this proposal may be presented orally at the February 29, 1984 meeting. Written submissions may be forwarded to the City Clerk, P.O. Box 1749, Halifax, Nova Scotia, B3J 3A5.

G. I. BLENNERHASSETT,  
CITY CLERK

122201-A0300 722562

Feb. 22/84



# Council arranges public meeting on bells issue

Halifax city council says it will make a decision on the proposed United Memorial Bells monument in two weeks.

Alderman voted Thursday to set March 1 as its day of decision in a tie vote broken by Mayor Ron Wallace.

Alderman Gerald O'Malley had asked that a questionnaire on the monument planned for Fort Needham be circulated to area residents before a decision is made.

However, council rejected that suggestion in favour of a decision to hold a public meeting on the proposal February 29.

As a compromise council agreed

to issue special notice of the meeting to area residents.

Council debate on the proposed monument has been continuing since last December, despite requests from the Halifax Explosion Memorial Bells Committee for a speedy approval to allow completion of the monument by the December 1984 anniversary of the explosion.

The committee says construction must begin by April 1 if that deadline is to be met.

The council delays in decision-making brought some council members to their feet in protest Thursday.



## United Memorial Church Bells

The recommendation of the Finance & Executive Committee was that the item be held in abeyance until such time as answers to the questions raised at the February 8th meeting of the Finance & Executive Committee are forthcoming and further, that staff prepare a questionnaire on behalf of Council seeking the community's opinion with regard to the erection of the memorial bells on the proposed site.

Alderman O'Malley advised that he prepared a questionnaire which was circulated to members of Council prior to the meeting and MOVED, seconded by Alderman Grant that the submitted questionnaire be circulated to the residents of Needham Street, Union Street, Young Street, Devonshire Avenue, and Novalea Drive between Young Street and Devonshire, east side, and that the item be returned to the Committee of the Whole Council on March 1st for consideration of the result of the questionnaire and final decision.

A discussion followed including whether the Motion should be divided and the Chairman ruled that the Motion should be considered in two parts with the first resolution to be considered reading as follows:

"That the subject of the United Memorial Church Bells be returned to Council at its meeting of March 1st for a decision."

Following a short discussion the Motion was put and resulted in a tie vote, six voting for it and six voting against it. The Chairman voted in favour of the motion and declared it to be passed.

Council then considered the second part of the Motion reading as follows:

"That the petition submitted by Alderman O'Malley be circulated to the residents of Needham Street, Union Street, Young Street, Devonshire Avenue, and Novalea Drive between Young Street and Devonshire Avenue."

Alderman Flynn questioned whether Council should not hold a public meeting on the subject to be held in the Council Chamber on say, February 29th with a public advertisement placed in the newspaper.

Following a further short discussion, the second Motion was put and Lost.

MOVED by Alderman Flynn, seconded by Alderman Hamshaw a public meeting be held on the subject in the Council Chamber on Wednesday, February 29th.

over →

Feb. 16 / 84



Alderman O'Malley proposed an amendment that the residents of Needham Street, Union Street, Young Street, Devonshire Avenue, and Novalea Drive between Young Street and Devonshire Avenue, be forwarded a special notice of the public meeting including the subject to be discussed and an invitation to attend, and Council agreed that the suggestion by Alderman O'Malley should form part of the Motion.

The City Manager advised that staff would immediately deliver notices to every household in the area and advertise the meeting as well.

The Motion was put and passed.



# **O'Malley seeks a delay on proposed explosion memorial**

**By Sheryl Grant  
City Hall Reporter**

The spat over the Halifax Explosion memorial proposed for Fort Needham continued Wednesday with a request for a further delay in council approval of the project.

Alderman Gerald O'Malley first wants answers to the possible effects of the proposed monument on area traffic, the water course down Fort Needham which sometimes floods neighbourhoods and the feeling of area residents.

Both Ald. O'Malley and his Halifax Explosion Memorial Bells Committee partner, Alderman Rick Grant, have asked that a questionnaire be circulated to area residents asking their feelings on the proposal.

A Needham-area residents' committee has also proposed to circulate its own questionnaire.

Residents' committee member Alex McCleave, promising no bias would be built into his committee's questionnaire, said his main concern is the additional

traffic. The neighbourhood already has a traffic problem on Union Street.

The committee wants a council decision soon to enable the memorial to be completed for this year's explosion anniversary.

Committee secretary Dick MacLean said Wednesday construction must therefore start by April 1. He said an agreement between the committee and the United Memorial Church requires the bells to be erected this year.



## United Memorial Bells Monument:

# O'Malley seeks new questionnaire

By Sheryl Grant  
City Hall Reporter

Halifax Alderman Gerald O'Malley says he hopes to have a questionnaire on the United Memorial Bells Monument drawn up for endorsement by city council this evening.

City staff drew up a draft questionnaire last week to be circulated to residents living near the proposed monument site on Fort Needham.

However, Ald. O'Malley said Wednesday the two-page questionnaire is "too verbose" to be effective.

The questionnaire he has in mind would

briefly outline the situation and then ask residents whether they endorse the Fort Needham site, would prefer a reconstruction of the bell tower at United Memorial Church where the bells were originally located, or prefer a third alternative of their choice.

Staff's draft questionnaire asked only if residents approved of the Fort Needham site proposed by the Halifax Explosion Memorial Bells Committee.

The Ward 5 alderman wants the questionnaire mailed out to area residents as soon as possible.

Ald. O'Malley prefers a combination of

the first two alternatives offered by his questionnaire.

"I honestly like the hill, but I don't like the monument. I'd rather see them put a bell tower up there."

Area residents have also asked to circulate a questionnaire of their own.

Ald. O'Malley said he supports the citizen questionnaire and would like to see circulation of both questionnaires within roughly the same period.

The residents are concerned the proposed monument will attract additional traffic to already busy streets.

Ald. O'Malley has voiced a number of other concerns about the proposed monument and has asked that city approval be delayed until his questions have been answered and the city questionnaire has been circulated.

The Halifax Explosion Memorial Bells Committee wants the monument completed for the 1984 anniversary of the Dec. 6 explosion.

Committee members say construction must begin by April 1 if they are to meet that deadline.



COPY

5382 Russell St.  
Halifax N.S.  
February 10, 1984

The Editor,  
The Mail-Star,  
Halifax N.S..

Sir:

The attempts being made to prevent the erection of a memorial to the victims of the Halifax explosion, on Fort Needham, should not be allowed to pass without comment.

A tower erected on the crest of the northern slope of Fort Needham, with access from Dartmouth Avenue, will cause neither traffic nor flooding problems.

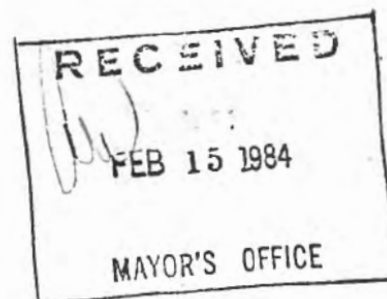
A tower in this location, will overlook the area of Halifax which was devastated, as well as the area on the Dartmouth side of the harbor which also suffered death and devastation, and also the location where the ship collision occurred. The tower will also be visible from these aforementioned places.

This is in marked contrast to erect<sup>ing</sup> a memorial in the ill conceived Seaview park. About the only thing to be said for a memorial in that location, is that it would surely make the Guinness Book of Records for being the most inconspicuous memorial ever erected anywhere in this world.

Some of us survivors of the explosion have memories of relatives killed, of cousins orphaned, of schoolmates missing when classes were re-opened, of some of those present maimed for life, it is sad that this memorial proposal should be made the butt of petty politicking.

Yours truly,

*W. T. Murphy*  
Walter T. Murphy





Centre for Water Resources Studies  
Technical University of Nova Scotia

PO Box 111  
1360 Barrington Street  
Halifax, Nova Scotia  
Canada B3J 2X4

February 13, 1984

(902) 429-8300

Mr. M.H. Frank Harrington FRAIC  
5248 Morris Street  
Halifax, Nova Scotia  
B3J 1B4

Dear Mr. Harrington:

Needham Memorial Bells Committee

Further to your request that I express an opinion about the runoff effects of the proposed structure, and our visit to the site on February 12:

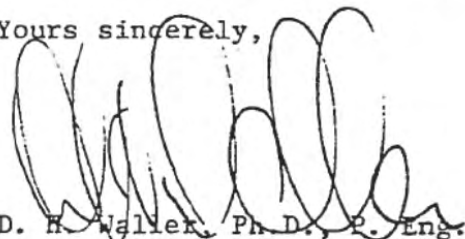
The site of the structure is on a ridge sloping to the north. It therefore appears that the structure will not alter existing drainage patterns, and in particular it will not divert additional water toward houses on the eastern slope of the hill.

The size of the structure is not great enough to generate a significant amount of additional runoff, and any runoff so generated will flow in a predominately northward direction.

For these reasons I do not recognize any reason why surface runoff from the structure should be a matter of concern. I do not know enough about potential ground water problems in this area to be able to comment on these.

I am pleased, on behalf of the Centre, to be able to assist your committee.

Yours sincerely,



D. R. Waller, Ph.D., P. Eng.,  
Director,  
Centre for Water Resources Studies.

DHW/vi



wood5

Supplementary Report  
Committee of the Whole  
February 8, 1984

To: His Worship the Mayor and Members of Council  
From: Paul Calda, P.Eng., City Manager  
Date: February 3, 1984  
Subject: Relocation - United Memorial Church Bells

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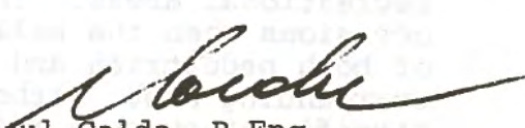
This report deals with the items not answered in the staff Information Report of January 18, 1984.

Answers to questions three and four were provided separately by an Information Report from the Legal Department. In addition, a draft questionnaire has been prepared for Council's consideration. Council might wish to give staff some further direction regarding this item.

With regard to question 11, the only costs that can be envisioned with respect to City involvement relate to future maintenance resulting from any vandalism that might occur, i.e. broken bottles, markings on the proposed structure necessitating removal of same. Also an undetermined number of ornamental plantings are proposed, necessitating minor maintenance in addition to periodic inspections of the bell assemblies.

Presumably the revenues generated from the perpetual care endowment of \$27,900. would be sufficient to cover the above costs. The grounds maintenance could be done by the City and billed accordingly.

The Civic Historian has also indicated that the site of the 18th Century Fort Needham could be in the vicinity of the proposed location for the memorial and has expressed interest in performing an archaeological excavation before the project proceeds.

  
Paul Calda, P.Eng.,  
City Manager

MPW/sfs

Prepared by: *mpw*  
M.P. Woods, Development Assistant

Approved by:  
R.B. Grant, Director  
Development Department





TELEX 019-22641  
TELEPHONE  
902-426-

CITY OF HALIFAX

HALIFAX, NOVA SCOTIA  
B3J 3A5

DRAFT

Dear Resident:

Halifax City Council is currently considering a proposal from the Halifax Explosion Memorial Bells Committee to erect a bell tower at the northeast corner of Fort Needham Park. The tower to be erected on a granite platform has been designed to house a chime of ten bells originally donated in 1921 to the United Memorial Church in memory of the Samuel Orr family. The bells were removed from the church tower in 1975 due to structural problems.

A schematic of the proposed tower as presented in the local newspapers is attached and shows various site elevations. The site overlooks the Narrows where the collision of the Imo and Mont Blanc took place. The narrow angular construction will be 60 feet at the highest point, sloping 150 degrees to disappear into the side of the hill. The principal building material will be monolithic hydrostone, with copper sheathing covering the inclined surface and bell enclosures.

It is proposed that the chimes be able to be played from a keyboard at the United Memorial Church as well as on site at the monument platform. The Memorial Committee has indicated it plans to activate the bells at an annual Explosion Memorial Service and prior to Sunday services between 10:30 a.m. and 11:00 a.m., in addition to Holy Days throughout the year. In other words, the bells would operate at times similar to the hours of operation when they were located in the church tower.

Residents should note that the memorial structure will be located away from and will not interfere with any of the play or recreational areas. The existence of the memorial and the special occasions when the bells are activated will result in some increase of both pedestrian and vehicular traffic to the park and immediate surrounding area, although it might be expected that this would be significant on only a few days in the year.

As part of the review process, a designated area of survey surrounding Fort Needham Park was chosen. City Council has appointed a special committee consisting of Alderman Gerald O'Malley and Alderman Rick Grant to investigate and advise on the proposal. The Committee wishes to inform you of the proposal to obtain your reaction as to its acceptability in addition to any other comments you might have. Your cooperation in this regard would certainly be appreciated.



A self-addressed envelope is enclosed for your convenience.

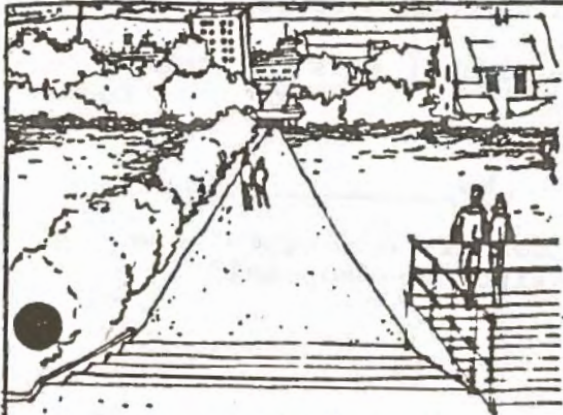
Question: Are you in favour of the proposal as submitted by the Halifax Explosion Memorial Bells Committee to relocate the bells to Fort Needham Park?

YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_

Question: Do you have any areas of concern or suggestions that might be helpful in assessing the proposal?

General Comments:

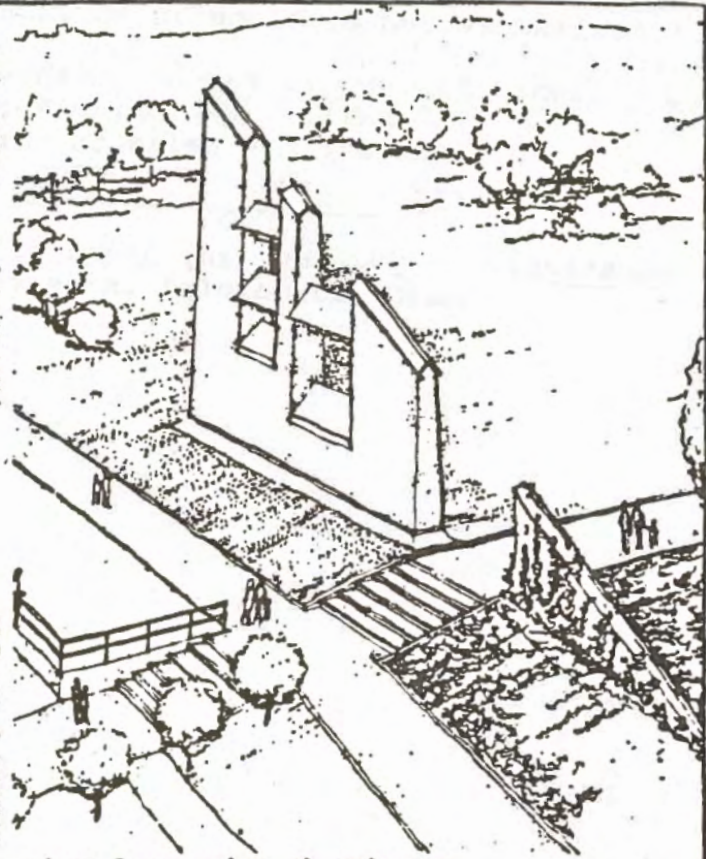




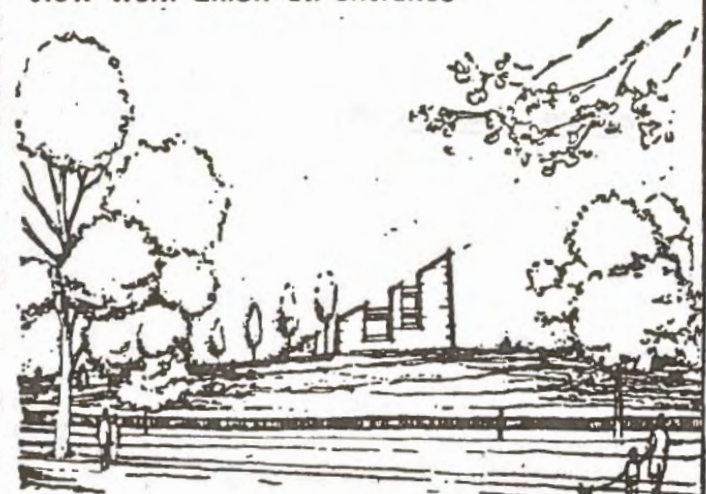
view to explosion site



view from dartmouth



view from union st. entrance



view from gottingen st.



## **Fort Needham's explosion memorial:**

# **Collins wants site excavated**

**By Sheryl Grant  
City Hall Reporter**

Halifax civic historian Lou Collins wants the Fort Needham site, proposed as the location for a memorial to the Halifax explosion, archeologically excavated before the memorial project goes ahead.

Mr. Collins said Tuesday that although the exact site of the 18th century Fort Needham has yet to be pinpointed, aerial photographs indicate it could be in the vicinity of the lot proposed by the Halifax Explosion Memorial Bells Committee as the site of its memorial.

Mr. Collins said he supports location

of the memorial on Fort Needham, but the proposed site must also be recognized for its archeological importance.

"It should be remembered it's one of the last fortress sites we have left," he said.

The fort was built in the 18th century to protect the north end of Halifax during the American War of Independence.

Speculation places the fort, which had fallen into ruin by the War of 1812, just north of the crest at Fort Needham.

Mr. Collins said he has yet to determine an appropriate time frame for the excavation.

However, any choice of time would be governed to some degree by the bells

committee's hope of having the memorial completed for the Dec. 6 anniversary of the explosion this year.

Mr. Collins said he hopes to contact Halifax Mayor Ron Wallace this week with his request for permission to excavate.

He said excavation would not disturb the fort site in a manner which would interfere with construction of the proposed memorial, since it would involve only the positioning of several narrow trenches on the site.

Fort Needham is located across from the Hydrostone housing development built to replace housing destroyed in the Halifax explosion.

FEB 1 / 84



# INFORMATION REPORT

TO: His Worship The Mayor and Members of City Council  
FROM: Donald F. Murphy, Q.C., City Solicitor  
DATE: January 30th, 1984  
SUBJECT: Bells - United Memorial On Fort Needham

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This report is in response to questions 3 and 4 of Alderman O'Malley's letter of January 9, 1984 to the City Manager, a copy of which is attached.

The Fort Neeham Memorial Park was deeded to the City in 1942 by the Halifax Relief Commission and by agreement dated the 25th day of August, 1949, the lands were established as a public park as a memorial to the victims of the Halifax Explosion of 1917 to be used as a public park forever. If the City were to convey the site to a body to be used for the housing of the bells, the transfer would have to be approved by the Minister of Municipal Affairs pursuant to section 401(2) of the City Charter and fair market value would have to be paid for the lands conveyed. (section 401(1))

There is some doubt as to whether the subject lands can in fact legally be sold, leased or otherwise disposed of. While section 401(2) gives the power to the City, with the approval of the Minister, to dispose of lands acquired or used as public parks, section 401(3) prohibits the City from conveying or leasing lands which have been dedicated to the City as a gift for a specific purpose.

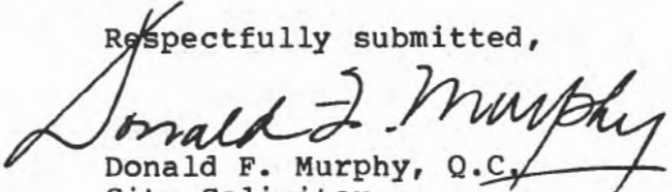
Accordingly, the most feasible approach if ownership of the bells is not transferred to the City would be for the City to grant a license to the owners of the bells to locate them on a specific location in the park. A license could give the owner of the bells the right of exclusive possession of the site, but would retain title in the City.

As to liability, at common law the courts have historically placed the responsibility for protecting visitors to premises against injury on the occupier of the premises as opposed to the owner. While recent cases would indicate that in the future some departure may be made from this doctrine, today the responsibility would still seem to rest with the occupier. In the present case, if the premises were granted to the owners



of the bells under a license for exclusive possession of the premises occupied by the bells, the law would appear to place the responsibility on them to protect the public from injury. Further assurances could be gained by placing covenants in the license agreement requiring the licensee to maintain the premises in a safe condition. Further protection for the City from liability could be gained by requiring the licensee to carry liability insurance with the City as a named insured.

Respectfully submitted,

  
Donald F. Murphy, Q.C.  
City Solicitor

WA/rcb

Prepared by Wayne Anstey, Senior Solicitor



Despite controversy...

# Aldermen seek Fort Needham for memorial

By Sheryl Grant  
City Hall Reporter

Halifax city council will be asked next month to authorize selection of a site on Fort Needham for a memorial to commemorate the Halifax explosion.

Ald. Gerald O'Malley, member of a two-member city committee established to study the memorial proposal, said Friday he and committee partner Alderman Rick Grant will recommend to council in February that a site be chosen on Fort Needham for the memorial proposed by the Halifax Explosion Memorial Bells Committee.

"As the two of us have lived our lives in the north end and lost family members to the explosion, it is only natural that we have very deep emotional ties to the tragedy," he said.

The request is expected to come forward Feb. 8.

The proposed memorial became a subject of controversy late last year when plans to build a monument on Fort Needham, incorporating bells donated to the church in memory of Orr family members killed in the explosion, were announced to the public before being brought to the city.

The city also seemed to see the plans as proceeding without regard for the fact it had already had an official memorial to the Halifax explosion in the form of the Halifax Memorial Library, and had planned to build another at Seaview Park.

When the proposal was finally brought to council, the decision was made to defer the issue until the city had studied the proposal, since the property sought by the bells com-

mittee as the memorial site is owned by the city.

The controversy came to a head in a bout of political mudslinging in December when Social Services Minister Edmund Morris, MLA for the Fort Needham area, accused Ald. O'Malley of obstructing the project for his own political purposes.

Ald. O'Malley denied that claim Friday, saying his efforts for the past several years have been toward finding a home for the bells which have lain dormant since being removed from the bell tower at United Memorial Church in 1975.

The alderman said the Fort Needham site presents some problems, such as the conflict of vehicular traffic to and from the proposed memorial with the recreational uses of the fort, which must be worked out before the go-ahead is given.

"We have waited sixty-seven years. We should take enough time to do it properly," he said.

"We don't want it to decay in a few years."

Council has directed city staff to provide answers for a number of questions on the proposed memorial posed by area residents.

"As soon as these are properly planned we will do our utmost to honour all those Haligonians and others who died and suffered so tragically," Ald. O'Malley said.

He added that despite his committee's planned recommendation for a Fort Needham memorial, the city would not abandon its plans to construct a memorial to the explosion at Seaview Park.



Halifax Explosion Memorial Bells Committee - Alderman Doehler

This item was added to the agenda of this meeting at the request of Alderman Doehler.

Correspondence dated January 11, 1984 from the Chairman, Halifax Explosion Memorial Bells Committee, was submitted.

MOVED by Alderman Doehler, seconded by Alderman LeBlanc  
the matter be referred to the next regular meeting of the Committee  
of the Whole Council.

Alderman O'Malley referred to the matter and to Council's recent establishment of a Committee to work with the Bells Committee and advised that a number of points had been raised and have been forwarded to the City Manager for a report. Alderman O'Malley suggested that referral to the next meeting of the Committee of the Whole would give insufficient time to prepare a staff report.

MOVED by Alderman O'Malley, seconded by Alderman Jeffrey  
that this matter be deferred until a complete staff report is submitted  
to a Committee of the Whole Council meeting.

Discussion ensued with respect to the points raised and forwarded to the City Manager and Alderman Flynn requested that a copy of the points be forwarded to Council members, suggesting the City Manager might jot a possible time frame on the requested circulation of material.

Motion passed with Aldermen Dewell and LeBlanc voting  
against.



## Memorial tower

To The Editor:

Sir, — When I attempted to push the idea of a Halifax Explosion Memorial Tower on Fort Needham nearly a quarter of a century ago, I had no idea it would become a political football.

Growing up along the old Halifax waterfront before and after the Second World War, it was natural for me to hear many first hand personal accounts about the event. My own mother, who was 14 when the blast occurred, wound up in Rockhead Hospital with diphtheria after spending the following night clinging to Citadel Hill in a raging blizzard.

Parenthetically, she also wound up clinging to the same hill during the 1945 Magazine explosions, that time suffering visual damage from the intense flashes of light.

The late J. Frank Willis tried unsuccessfully to interest CBC producers in Toronto in an epic poem I wrote on the subject in 1958. In a letter dated June 8, 1962, he thoroughly agreed with me that it was high time the city took steps to indelibly mark this tragic historic event.

Your newspaper wasn't nearly as enthusiastic. You published an editorial on Dec. 6 of the same year in answer to a letter I had written to you (complete with my own tower design). In response to my lamentations over the lack of such a monument, you stated: "Perhaps that is as it should be."

Obviously, I didn't agree with your editorial of 21 years ago. However, I am in complete accord with your editorial of Dec. 8, 1983.

WILLIAM F. DAWSON

2699 Agricola Street  
Halifax N.S.



## **Fort Needham 'logical' site for memorial bells**

**By Jim Gowen  
Staff Reporter**

The Halifax Explosion Memorial Bells should be located atop Fort Needham, say three former mayors of Halifax.

In an interview, Charles A. Vaughan agreed with Leonard Kitz and John E. Lloyd the heights would be the logical location for a monument to those who died in the explosion.

An approach to city council two weeks ago led to the Memorial Bells Committee's proposal being given to city staff for review. The matter will, on completion of the staff review, be studied by a committee of council before action is taken.

Ex-mayor Vaughan said: "Fort Needham is the logical location for the bells. It is right in the middle of the area hardest hit by the explosion."

Former mayor Edmund Morris has made his feelings well known. Interviewed in his capacity of honorary co-chairman, with Judge Robert E. Inglis, of the Halifax Explosion Memorial Bells Committee, Mr. Morris accused aldermen of playing politics when they referred the issue to staff.

"It's a get Morris campaign," said Mr. Morris, provincial social services minister.

Mr. Morris is supported by a group of elders of Memorial United Church and interested north end businessmen, who together form the backbone of the drive to mount the bells in a tower to be built on the Fort Needham site.

Allan O'Brien, Halifax mayor in the late 1950s, has moved to Ontario and could not be reached for comment on the issue.

In a telephone interview last week, Mayor Ron Wallace said he hoped it could open on schedule, Dec. 6, 1984.

The program must go ahead and it must achieve its objective by the scheduled date due to the existence of an agreement which, if the date is not met, returns the bells to their donors, the elders of United Memorial Church.

The committee has slightly less than one year to complete the project. Members must raise \$100,000 which, according to an agreement announced by Mr. Morris, will be matched by a dollar-for-dollar contribution from provincial funds.

Total monies required are \$200,000 to erect and maintain the monument.

Transfer of Fort Needham land from the city to the Memorial Bells Committee is to be considered by city council early in January.

14 Dec '83



Morris contends:  
**Needham  
should  
be site**

By Estelle Small  
Staff Reporter

The site for the Halifax Explosion Memorial Bells tower should be at Fort Needham, not Seaview Memorial, Social Services Minister Edmund Morris said last night.

See also pages 7,  
12, 13 and 25

He said the proposed Seaview Memorial, a remembrance of the 1917 explosion, is an inappropriate site.

Seaview Park lacks pedestrian access, is on the outer edge of the peninsular city, and is topographically unsuited, he said.

"Compared with Fort Needham, it is relatively a security risk," he said.

Alderman Gerald O'Malley is obstructing the approval for the tower for his own political purposes, the Halifax-Needham MLA said.

The alderman's proposal for the Seaview Memorial would cost taxpayers money, and since the city is unlikely to allocate funds for that purpose, it probably won't get done, Mr. Morris said.

The bells' electrical link to United Memorial Church from Seaview would also be more costly, he said. The site for the explosion's memorial has been referred to city staff.

The \$200,000 bells are a gift to the city from Barbara Orr whose family died in the explosion. Mr. Morris contends their place should be within view of the site of the 1917 explosion. The Fort Needham property, donated to the city years ago by the Halifax Relief Commission, overlooks the Harbour Narrows where the vessels Imo and Mont Blanc collided 66 years ago causing the devastating explosion.

Reginald A. Prest, chairman of the Halifax Explosion Memorial Bells Committee, said in a news release the design was selected because "it makes a dramatic statement suggesting an image of destruction while simultaneously evoking the energetic civic renewal that followed the devastation."

6 Dec 83



# Morris upset by delay

By Jim Gowen  
Staff Reporter

Social Services Minister Edmund Morris says certain members of Halifax city council have embarked on a "get Morris" campaign.

The Halifax Needham MLA, and former city mayor, is upset by what he sees as a conscious effort by municipal politicians to hold up development of a Halifax Explosion memorial at Fort Needham.

"Street-corner politics" are responsible for council's decision to delay construction of the monument, the minister said.

City council, at its meeting Thursday night, delayed its necessary approval to allow the use of part of

Fort Needham Park by the Halifax Explosion Memorial Bells Committee.

Alderman Nick Meagher asked that the matter be referred to city staff for study, and after that be reviewed by a committee of council before approval.

Alderman Gerald O'Malley, in a telephone interview, said the city already has a plan to build a memorial to the explosion in the new Seaview Park. The Seaview memorial would recognize the explosion, Africville and the convoys which were assembled in Bedford Basin during the Second World War.

The province has pledged to match, dollar for dollar to a maximum of \$100,000, funds raised by the

Halifax Explosion Memorial Bells Committee.

The bells group plans to place bells removed from United Memorial Church in a structure to be built on a site on Fort Needham.

Mayor Ron Wallace said Friday: "It is normal procedure to review matters coming before council in this manner. We refer it to staff. However I will press staff to act quickly and I will ask the committee (of council) to act as fast as possible.

"We don't want to do anything to delay the campaign. The monument is a fitting memorial to the explosion and I hope the conclusion, and the opening, can take place as planned on Dec. 6, 1984."

5 Dec 83



## ***Bells committee receives donation***

A gift of \$25,000 has been donated to the Halifax Explosion Memorial Bells Committee toward construction of a monument at Fort Needham to commemorate the 1917 disaster.

Reginald A. Prest, chairman of the committee said the contribution by Allen T. Stockall, Dartmouth businessman, is in memory of eight family members killed in the tragedy.

Both sides of the Stockall family suffered loss. Mr. Stockall's father lost his grandfather, mother, two brothers, a sister and two aunts. Allen Stockall's aunt on his mother's side was also fatally injured.

Names of the deceased family will be recorded in the book of memory.

14 Dec '83



### Halifax Explosion Memorial Bells

Mr. Reginald A. Prest, Treasurer of the Halifax Explosion Memorial Bells Committee, addressed Council and introduced Mrs. Janet Kitz, an historian and a member of the Committee, and requested that she address Council in connection with how the memorial bells came to be.

Mrs. Kitz addressed Council and advised of the events in connection with the Halifax Explosion leading to the donation of a carillon tower of nine historic bells to the United Memorial Church by Mrs. T. W. Thompson. Mrs. Kitz advised the bells were played for many years from the tower of the church until the tower became too weak and the bells had to be removed.

Mr. Prest then presented some of the history in connection with the subject and advised of the makeup and mandate of the Memorial Bells Committee.

Mr. R. MacLean and Mr. Frank Harrington, members of the Committee, displayed plans of the proposed memorial to be constructed at Fort Needham and advised of the process in selecting the proposed site.

Mr. Prest again addressed Council in connection with the proposal advising that the estimated cost of the projects was \$200,000 with an amount of up to \$100,000 being pledged by the Province with the other \$100,000 to be raised by the Committee. Mr. Prest also advised that the Committee will be leaving a trust fund when the project is completed so that there will be no costs to the City. Mr. Prest advised that the Committee was seeking Council's permission for the use of the proposed site at Fort Needham.

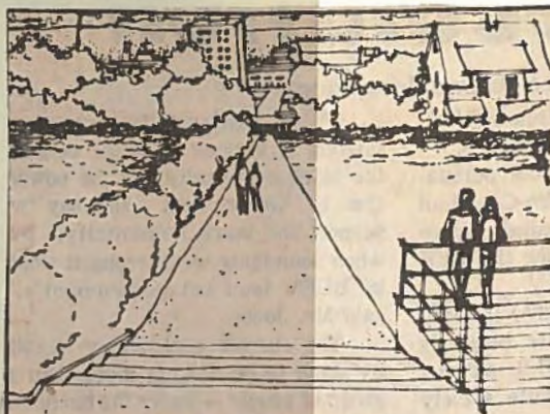
Alderman Meagher expressed appreciation for this evening's presentation and expressed the view there were different things Council should know before permitting such an undertaking on the land in question.

MOVED by Alderman Meagher, seconded by Alderman Nolan that the matter be referred to City staff for review and Council establish a Committee composed of representatives of City staff from the Engineering and Works Department and the City Manager's Office, and Aldermen O'Malley and Grant for the purpose of providing Council with a report on the feasibility of the proposed memorial.

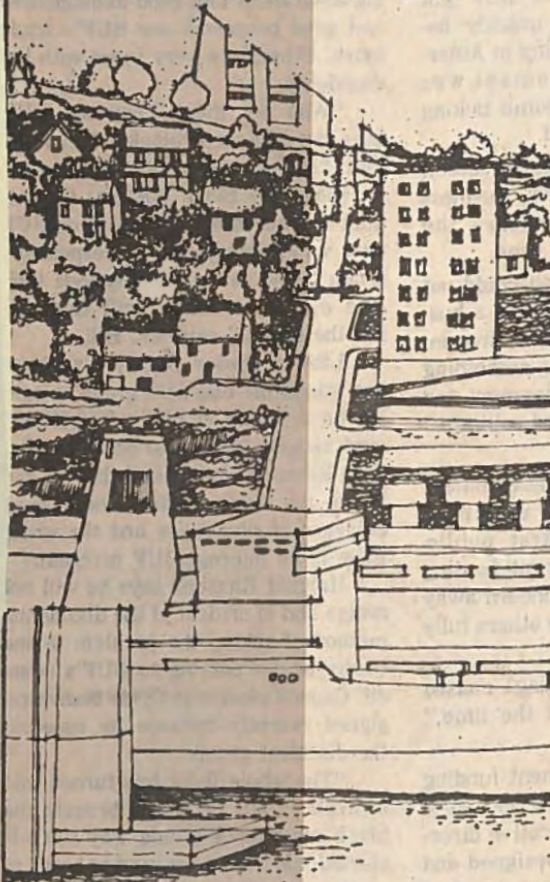
Alderman Meagher expressed the desire that a report be submitted to a meeting of the Committee of the Whole Council as soon as possible.

Following a discussion and questioning of Mr. Prest, the Motion was put and passed.

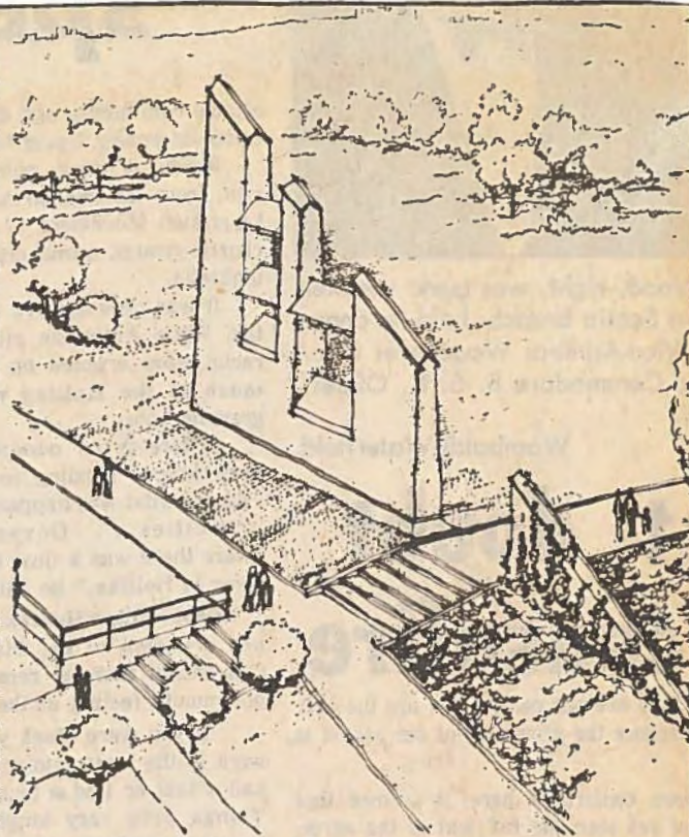




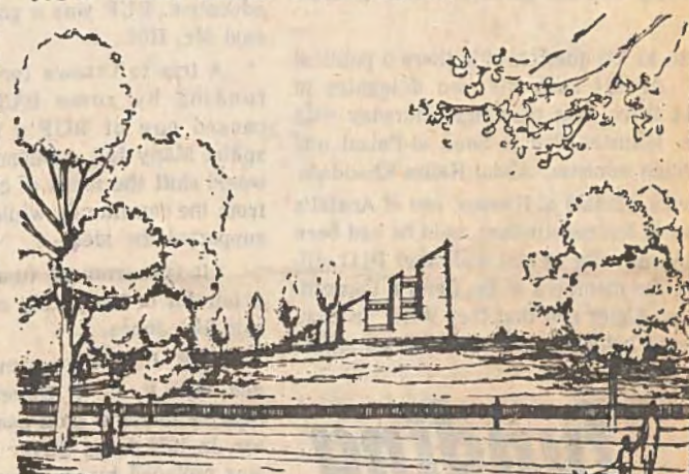
view to explosion site



view from dartmouth



view from union st. entrance



view from gottingen st.

## *Halifax Explosion memorial:* **Project nears fruition**

By Jim Gowen  
Staff Reporter

A project initiated almost 20 years ago is finally nearing fruition as the Halifax Memorial Bells move from the conceptual to the realization phase.

The project is the first official monument to those who died when Halifax was rocked by the Dec. 6, 1917, explosion.

Originally conceived when Social Services Minister Edmond Morris was mayor of Halifax, the project moved beyond the planning

stage July 26 when, on the steps of United Memorial Church, a proclamation was read announcing to the world the beginning of the campaign to erect a memorial tower.

The plan centered around a set of chimes — a carillon, originally donated to United Memorial Church by Mrs. T. W. Thompson.

The carillon had been placed atop the church bell tower where it was played until 1975. At that time the weight of the bells, and the vibrations generated, were found to

have caused structural damage. The tower was weakened to the point where it was unsafe for the nine bells to be left in place.

The carillon was removed from the tower and sat under canvas on the Kaye Street lawn of the church until last July.

The bells were then hoisted on a flatbed trailer and removed to the naval gun factory in Dartmouth for storage and refurbishing, pending their installation in a tower which was to be erected in Fort Needham, overlooking the explosion site.

See Project page 2



# Project nearing fruition

continued from page 1

A design competition was held and recently, at a meeting in the hall of the United Memorial Church, architectural drawings submitted by the successful design team — CORE Design Group — were unveiled for public approval.

The tower is a sloping structure rising 60 feet at the peak and descending in a graceful, gradual curve, to merge with the slope of the hill.

The bells will be mounted along the top of the curve in the stone structure and capped with copper sheathing to protect them from the weather.

Reginald A. Prest, chairman of the Halifax Memorial Bells Committee, said the design was picked

because it makes a dramatic statement, suggesting an image of destruction while at the same time evoking the energetic civic renewal following the devastation.

With an estimated construction cost of \$200,000, the memorial building is to be privately financed. In a statement made at the unveiling, however, Mr. Morris committed the provincial government, to match private donations dollar-for-dollar to a maximum of \$100,000.

Present plans call for the building to open Dec. 6, 1984, the 67th anniversary of the Halifax Explosion.



# Bell tower memorial

## Design commemorates 1917 Halifax Explosion

By Jim Gowen  
Staff Reporter

The proposed design for a memorial bell tower to commemorate the Dec. 6, 1917 Halifax Explosion was unveiled Thursday at a public meeting of the Halifax Explosion Memorial Bells Committee.

Committee chairman Reginald A. Prest said the design was chosen because it makes a dramatic statement, suggesting an image of destruction while simultaneously evoking the energetic spirit of civic renewal displayed following the devastation.

Planned for Fort Needham, on a site donated to the city by the Halifax Relief Commission, the \$200,000 structure would overlook the Narrows, the scene of the 1917 explosion. It is intended for the structure to be visible from both sides of the harbor.

The structure, described by design architects CORE Design Group as 60 feet high at the peak and sloping out 150 feet to merge with the side of the hill, will be built of monolithic hydrostone with copper sheathing protecting the exposed surfaces and bell enclosures.

At Thursday's meeting, Halifax-Needham MLA and Social Services Minister Edmund Morris, honorary co-chairman of the committee, gave a brief history of attempts during the last few years to develop plans for the memorial.

Mr. Morris indicated the provincial government is prepared to match "dollar for dollar to a maximum of \$100,000" the money raised by private sector contributions for the fund required to build the tower.

Plans call for the tower to incorporate a chime



**BELL TOWER** — Plans for a proposed bell tower to commemorate the Halifax Explosion were unveiled at United Memorial Church Thursday night. Frank Harrington, architectural advisor, left, reviews the design with Mrs. T. W. Thompson, centre, donor of the bells and Mrs. Janet Kitz, a historian specializing in the period of the Halifax Explosion. Wamboldt-Waterfield

of bells or carillon. The bells were originally donated to United Memorial Church by Mrs. T. W. Thompson, the sole member of her family, the Orrs, to survive the explosion.

The bells were removed from the church steeple several years ago when it was discovered that the bell tower was unable to support the carillon.



The design of a bell tower commemorating the 1917 Halifax Explosion was announced last night.

The design suggests an image of destruction while evoking the energetic civic renewal following the devastation, said Reginald Prest, chairman of the Halifax Explosion Memorial Bells committee.

The \$200,000 structure, placed on a granite platform, is proposed for the northeast corner of Needham Park. The site, donated to the city years ago by the Halifax Relief Commission, overlooks the Narrows where the collision of the Imo and Mont Blanc took place.

The monument will be clearly visible from both the surrounding area and the harbor shores.

The narrow, angular construction will be 60 feet at the highest point, sloping 150 feet to disappear on to the side of the hill. Several rectangular openings will house bells of the carillon donated in 1921 to United Memorial Church in memory of the Samuel Orr family. Placed perpendicular to the harbor, the form will direct viewer attention to the explosion site.

Monolithic hydrostone - a reminder of the hydrostone homes put up in areas razed by the Explosion - will be the chief building material, with copper sheathing for the inclined surfaces and to protect the bell enclosures.

"Traditional materials will reflect the history and character of the adjacent neighborhood and project a feeling of stability and permanence," Prest said.

Ornamental plantings will complement the structural form, and there will be opportunities for commemorative tree installations around the base.

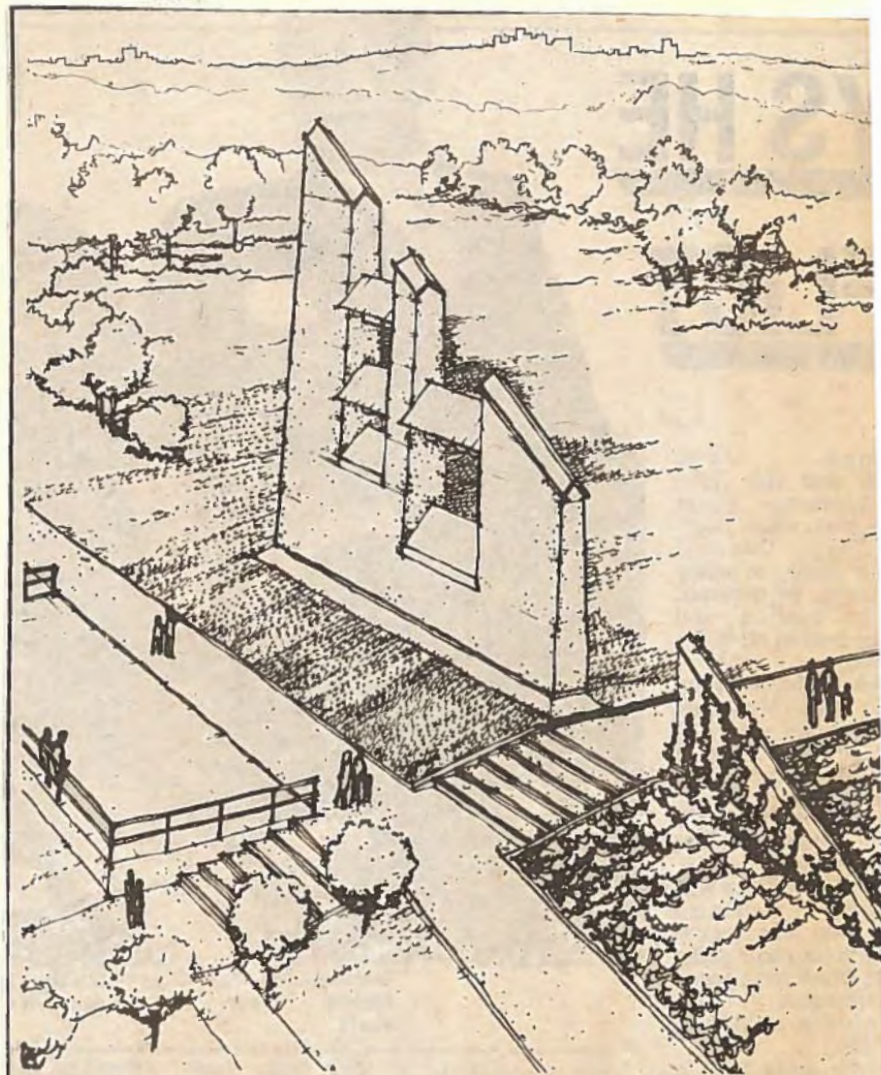
Walkways and paths are to be upgraded in the area and strong lighting installed to highlight the monument.

It will be possible to play the carillon from both Kaye Street United Memorial Church and the monument platform.

Edmund Morris, MLA for Halifax Needham, has confirmed some government funding will be made available. The remainder will be raised from public and corporate donations.

The projected dedication date is Dec. 6, 1985, the 68th anniversary of the Explosion.

Bell tower  
to have look  
of destruction,  
renewal



The design for a bell tower in Needham Park, to house the Halifax Explosion Memorial Bells donated in 1921, is a simple angular structure

which will be made chiefly hydrostone, the material used rebuilding the north end area destroyed in the Halifax Explosion in 1917.



Question Alderman Meagher Re: Installation of Bells, Fort Needham

Alderman Meagher advised that he has heard rumors and read in the press about the possibility of bells being installed on top of Fort Needham. Alderman Meagher noted that Fort Needham is owned by the City and questioned whether the City has been approached on the matter, and the City Manager advised that no such approach has been made to his knowledge. Alderman Meagher said he would like the City Manager to assure that bells are not installed until Council has a full discussion on the subject.





## Memorialized in music

**T**HE BELLS OF United Memorial Church in Halifax are to ring again after being silent for several years. In an announcement during special ceremonies at the Kaye Street church, Edmund Morris, who represents that part of the city in the provincial legislature, said that a bell tower would be erected to house the bells. It is to be a memorial of the Halifax Explosion of December 6, 1917, when the Fort Needham area of North End Halifax was devastated.

The bells were first presented to the church in 1920 in memory of the Samuel Orr family. In more recent years, the bronze bells were removed when it was discovered that they were causing structural damage to the belfry of the church.

The bells, therefore, already have a connection with the Explosion, a fact which renders particularly fitting their use as a memorial of that event.

As well, there are many who possess an appreciation of a true bell sound and who will be happy that Halifax is to have a bell tower with real bells. To be sure, the city already has some fine examples of the bell-founder's art but the trend in recent years toward electronic devices has kept their number at a low level.

It is a matter of general interest that the number of active bells in the city is to be increased with the hanging anew of those of United Memorial Church. The proposal of such a memorial of the Explosion is indeed pleasing.

Mail Star Ed.

28 July 83



# Carillon will toll as explosion memorial

by Brandon Matheson

The Halifax Explosion will have a musical memorial - a bell tower at Fort Needham - it was announced by Edmund Morris, MLA for Halifax Needham.

At a ceremony at the United Memorial Church on Kaye St., Halifax, plans were discussed for an impressive memorial to the Dec. 6, 1917 blast.

The memorial will be a bell tower at Fort Needham, housing a set of carillon bells that were donated to the church in 1920 in the memory of the Samuel Orr family.

Mrs. T.W. Thompson, the former Barbara Orr, took part in the ceremony. The only surviving member of her family after the Explosion, she was the first to play the bells during the dedication in 1920 when she was 14.

**Swept by Tidal Wave**

From a place near the slope of Lower Fort Needham she witnessed the Explosion herself, the burning ships, the great columns of smoke, and the

fleeing men. Then she found herself on top of Fort Needham, probably swept there by a tidal wave.

Injured, wet and unable to walk, she crawled to her house only to find it collapsed in flames. Refusing to give in, she struggled to the house of nearby relatives.

Barbara was later transported to the Camp Hill Hospital in the back of a fish truck. There she lay for days until she happened to see her aunt passing by. She remembers calling out but because she was so dirty and blackened her aunt didn't recognize her at first. It was many months after that before Barbara was able to walk.

The bells dedicated in her family's honor became a familiar sound to the North End reminding all that heard them of the great disaster.

Eventually the church bells had to be removed from the tower due to their vibrations weakening it and for years have lain outside

the church covered by tarpaulins.

During the ceremony the bells were removed by a derrick to be put into storage while waiting for their new home. Before they will be installed the bells will be refurbished and electrified, enabling them to be controlled from both the new site and the organ keyboard in the United Memorial Church.

"I was very happy to at last see the bells become a memorial to the Halifax Explosion," commented Mrs. Thompson, "as well as to my family who lost their lives during the disaster."

Morris said the provincial government is prepared to guarantee funds to supplement private contributions raised by the Halifax Explosion Memorial Bells Committee.

Mr. Morris said the memorial, 66 years after the event, would be widely accepted to mark the devastation area and "to sound out in tribute of the courage of the citizens of Halifax North."



**Edmund Morris discusses the memorial carillon  
with Barbara Thompson**



## ***Explosion memorial to be established***

The Fort Needham area in North End Halifax, the hardest hit part of the city in the Halifax Explosion of December 6, 1917, will be the site of a lasting memorial commemorating the Explosion.

The announcement was made this morning at a special ceremony at United Memorial Church, Kaye Street, by Edmund Morris, MLA for Halifax Needham.

The memorial is planned to take the form of a bell tower which will house a set of bronze bells. The carillon was removed from the tower of United Memorial Church some years ago after vibrations had caused structural damage to the church bell tower.

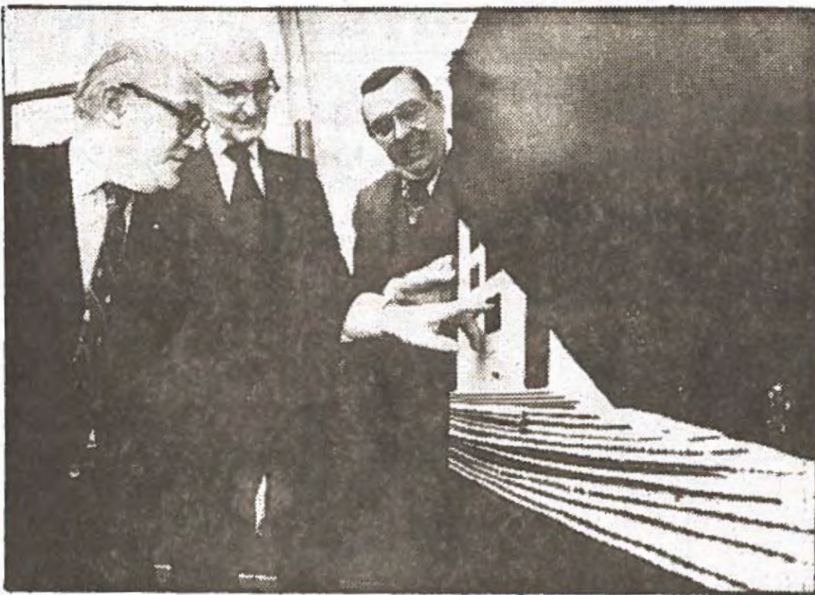
The Halifax Explosion occurred when the Mont Blanc, a French munitions ship and the Imo, a Norwegian vessel carrying relief supplies, collided in the narrows of Halifax harbor near the site of the present Angus L. Macdonald Bridge.

The resulting explosion caused the death of 2,000 people and injured 9,200. Among the families wiped out in the blast was the Samuel Orr family. The bells which will form the carillon were presented to the Church in 1920 as a memorial to that family.

Taking part in today's ceremony was Mrs. T. W. Thompson, the sole survivor of the Orr family. As Barbara Orr she had the honor of playing the carillon at the time of its dedication. She was 14-years-old at the time.

26 July 83





Edmund Morris, minister of social services, left, discusses plans for the Halifax Explosion Memorial Bells Tower with Judge Robert E. Inglis and Reginald A. Prest.

## Campaign launched to raise 1

By JIM GOWEN

In 1977 Edmund Morris was mayor of Halifax. He was also "a northend boy" who grew up in the area hardest hit by history's largest man-made explosion in a non-laboratory environment. Growing up in the area, he was thoroughly familiar with the stories of the Dec. 6, 1917 blast, although it had occurred several years before he was born.

He was also well aware that though there are several small monuments to the explosion in various parts of the city

Fort Needham itself is a living memorial, having been decided to the city of Halifax as a memorial park by the Halifax Relief Commission — there was no clearly defined site which could be referred to as THE memorial to the victims of the explosion.

This fact led eventually to a conversation between Mr. Morris and Dr. Ian MacGregor, an elder of Memorial United Church. Mr. Morris and Dr. MacGregor were friends from their days at Dalhousie University.

As Mr. Morris put it "I

was in law and he was in the medical school but with the enrolment in the Dal of those days, you got to know everyone else." The subject under discussion was a chime of bells, a carillon, which had been donated to United Memorial Church in the 1920's by Mrs. T.W. Thompson (Barbara Orr) in memory of Mrs. Thompson's family, the Orrs, who had died in the blast.

The carillon was originally hung in the bell tower of the church, however, age, vibration and the weather had taken

their toll and the bells were lowered to the ground as the tower was considered to have deteriorated to such an extent it could no longer safely support the 10 massive bells.

Mayor Morris, with both his personal and political feet firmly anchored in the north end, was looking for a memorial which would symbolize the city "rising from the ashes like the Phoenix of mythology."

"After all, except for a few shells on the Atlantic coast of the United States, Halifax was the

only part of the western hemisphere to feel the brunt of the war. In addition, four churches, St. Marks Anglican, St. Joseph's Roman Catholic, Grove Street Presbyterian and Kaye Street Methodist disappeared in the holocaust."

Mr. Morris said "It is appropriate for Halifax, which is becoming one of the greatest small cities in the world, to have a memorial to commemorate to all generations of Haligonians the resurrection of the city after this catastrophe."

Further discussions were held later with

Judge Robert E. Inglis and the elders of Memorial United Church (itself a memorial to the regenerative spirit demonstrated by the residents of Halifax north and created when the congregations of two north end churches destroyed in the explosion combined) with a view to incorporating the bells in a structure dedicated to the memory of the victims of the explosion.

The state of the bells was evaluated by their manufacturer who considered them suitable for continued use. By this time Mr. Morris had left

Wednesday, December 7, 1917

THE MAIL STAR

'Our Little World Exploded'

Feared German Zeppelin

ADVERTISEMENT

The War Newspaper

FOUNDED FEBRUARY 14, 1917

THE

HALIFAX

Digital copy of 102-105-3 Parks, Fort Needham Memorial Park provided by Halifax Municipal Archives

Herold Deaths





Above photo is a view looking north shortly after the 1917 disaster with ruins of the Atlantic sugar refinery in the foreground. Remains of the Hillis Foundry are seen in the distance. Men on left are standing along Campbell Road, renamed Barrington Street.

## d to raise funds for memorial

only part of the western hemisphere to feel the brunt of the war. In addition, four churches, St. Marks Anglican, St. Joseph's Roman Catholic, Grove Street Presbyterian and Kaye Street Methodist disappeared in the holocaust."

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The state of the bells was evaluated by their manufacturer who considered them suitable for continued use. By this time Mr. Morris had left

the mayor's chair and the matter of the bells, and the memorial, went into limbo until July of this year when Mr. Morris — now MLA for Halifax-Needham and provincial minister of social services — met with interested parties to renew the drive for a memorial. An exchange of letters took place and the elders of the church made a provisional offer to loan the bells to the Halifax Explosion Memorial Bells Committee for inclusion in a tower to be erected on Fort Needham, the highest point in the area.

A committee was formed under the chairmanship of north end businessman Reginald A. Prest and having as members Dr. Ian MacGregor, Judge Robert E. Inglis, Roy Wilson, Mrs. Janet F. Kitz, a Halifax historian specializing in the period of the Halifax explosion, R. H. Dick MacLean, Bruce Nickerson, Fred R. Nickerson, Bernard D. Allard, Jean Harrington, Frank Harrington, J. Rod McLeod, William B. Orr, Harold Shea, Terry Sullivan, Charles A. Vaughan and R. Lorne White.

Edmund Morris, and

Judge R. E. Inglis, were appointed honorary co-chairmen of a drive to raise \$200,000 dollars to construct a monument on Fort Needham which would integrate the bells in a permanent structure.

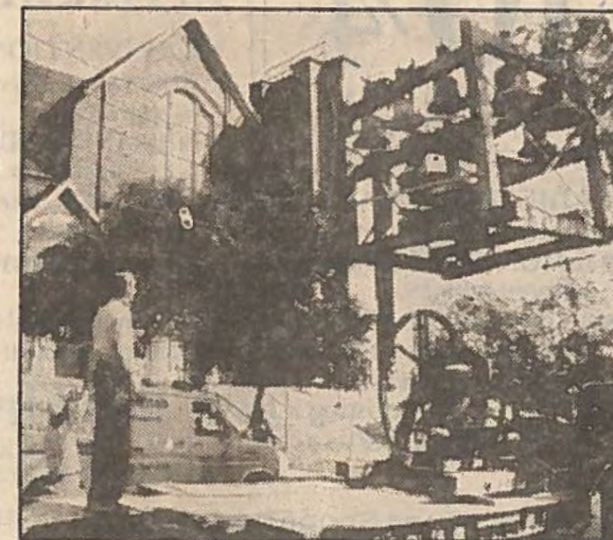
The committee will, in reality, only have to raise \$100,000 as the province of Nova Scotia has made a promise to match funds raised on a dollar-for-dollar basis to a maximum of \$100,000.

The committee functions under a mandate which requires the bells to be erected and in operation on the 67th anni-

versary of the explosion, Dec. 6, 1984.

Should the committee fail to meet its objective or be blocked in its efforts to complete the project by Halifax city council, the bells would revert to the church and, as was pointed out by a visiting British architect this summer, there would be no permanent memorial to those who died in the explosion.

Summarizing his feelings as the campaign to raise \$100,000 begins, Mr. Morris said "This is one of the most evocative things to happen in the north end for years."



Bells are removed from United Memorial Church for storage pending installation in the memorial tower.



House destroyed on north side of Duffus Street.

courtesy C. A. Vaughan

ADVERTISEMENT

# Halifax Explosion Memorial Bells

Digital copy of 102-105-3 Parks, Fort Needham Memorial Park provided by Halifax Municipal Archives

by Core Design Group,  
Keith L. Graham with N. Fowler, J. Rowe, J. Thomson



**Heroic Deaths**  
The heroic, but futile efforts on the part of rescuers from the Navy's de-

the American ship while the  
Highwayman was already  
about trying to snuff her  
All of them died without

By W. J. BILL McCALL  
News Editor, The Mail-Star

News Editor, The Daily News

Fifty years ago today - Dec. 6, 1917 - Halifax was alive with the shipping of a world at war. The National Hockey League, organized in Montreal, was only two weeks old. Nova Scotia was mourning the loss of favorited in France.

We had just "discovered" Brightwood golf hills, slopes overlooking Dartmouth, and we were school kids of that era who were students in schools overlooking the Dartmouth side of Halifax Harbor.

With a crash of sound that still lives in our memory of that fatal day, our world that was the Grade 6 in Old Park School, seemed to explode around us. And we had survived the Halifax Explosion, a calamity brought about by the collision of two ships in the harbor near the Narrows between the City of Halifax and Dartmouth.

**TRAGIC TALE**  
The disaster claimed more than 1,000

HALIFAX, CANADA, SATURDAY, DECEMBER 8, 1956

## The Death Roll Still Grows and the Tremendous Property Loss Is Beginning to be Realized

MR. ROBERT BORDEN arrived in Halifax yesterday afternoon. The Premier, who in Prince Edward Island heard of the terrible disaster which has overtaken Halifax. He could get no definite information as to the cause of the explosion, but he has been assured that the cause of the explosion had been cut off by the force of the explosion. He immediately after the meeting at Charlottetown he left for Pictou and upon his return there this morning he at once cancelled his meetings at Antigonish and Pictou and started for Halifax by special train, where he arrived yesterday afternoon in the midst of a tremendous blizzard. He has come to Halifax for the purpose of consulting with the authorities and of assessing the damage.

with the wreck and found the remains of Mrs. Hennigbery and her other five children.

**Heroic Deaths**

The heroic but futile efforts on the part of volunteers from the Navy's depot ship *Noble* and a party from the HMS *Hillborough* who went to the aid of *Mont Blanc* should never be forgotten. The Canadian sailors died in their small boat as they tried to launch the ship while the *Hillborough* party was already aboard trying to stabilize her. All of them died without

over 200,000 Canadian National operational ground died at it is remembered by the following list of the 226 who were killed.

**Pier 1 GOK**

The significance of this attack on ash will history schools and the creative press the

the harbor lighter *Regius* was destroyed with all aboard. Only the body of one, a German, was found in the wreck of the harbor craft.

A salvage ship, *Stella Maris*, with twenty-four aboard, was towing two boats to Bedford Basin. *Stella Maris* was ordered by a navy officer to —

## By Jim Gowen

By Jim Gowen  
It took a British architect visiting the metro area less than two weeks to identify something missing from Halifax — a Halifax Explosion memorial.

Brian Carter, a member of the London architectural firm of Arub and Associates, is a guest lecturer at the Technical University of Nova Scotia.

Here for two weeks as part of a program sponsored by the university to introduce students to practicing architects who

specialize in various types of design, Mr. Carter saw Halifax had no permanent memorial to the thousands of Haligonians who died in the Halifax Explosion of Dec. 6, 1917.

Breaking his class into syndicates he assigned a project which requires them to design a small building on the Halifax waterfront, in the vicinity of the Maritime Museum of the Atlantic. The proposed building is to include space for displays in two wings, other features the students are

Hour — St. Dennis Hall; 10:25-10:55 Pleasanton — Clawson's; 11-11:30 Tan-  
Front School; 11:40-12 Pope's  
15 Moose-

required to include in their designs are amenities, office space and a viewing area with a view of the harbor. Unfortunately the plans will never go beyond that stage being an academic exercise only.

"The Halifax Explosion had a profound effect on the city so I thought I would like to do something to mark the explosion as a project for my students," he said in an interview.

Mr. Carter said that Halifax provides a wide variety of styles of architecture which would test the budding architect's imagination in blending their design with existing structures.

He said that Halifax had been given a chance extended to few cities. Pointing to the Hydrostone area, completely devastated in the explosion, as an example of the potential available at that time.

Having been involved in many exhibition-type design competitions, Mr. Carter is well qualified to lecture on the subject. His London-based firm is one of the design finalists for an extension to the National Gallery in London's Trafalgar Square. Mr. Carter leaves Halifax today to return to London.

While Mr. Carter is correct in that there is no explosion memorial at this time, there is one in the planning stage. There is a committee called The Halifax Explosion Memorial Bells Committee headed by Halifax businessman L.A. Prest.

This group has taken the carillon donated to United Memorial Church by Mrs. T.W. Thompson, the sole-survivor of the Samuel Orr family, in its memory, and which was removed from the building on structural reasons. The group is now in the process of selecting a design for a memorial in the Fort Needham area.

This memorial will take the form of a tower incorporating the carillon which will be capable of being played either on site or, by remote control, from the church on Kaye Street.

Third Officer Mayers of the S.S. Middleton Castle, which lay about two hundred miles from the communication ship Mont

he tried in vain, to check it. He says he remembers being in the air all right, though while there thought at first he was going to die.

and homeless are in  
tions and homes  
Halifax Herald  
tion regarding  
ens who have  
t their homes

## Engineer Tells Of Relief Train

By ARTHUR BIRKE  
There was a large cloud  
of black and white smoke,  
recalled W. W. McPherson,  
extreme caution from  
Hawser's Station (now  
Timberline) to South Western  
Junction.

Grew members. he said, were able to smell the kumers from the explosion about a mile east of Spencer's Station, of the north end of the island.

Mr. McPherson was stationer on the old Intercolonial Railroad's "night train" out of Brunswick bound for Halifax this December's evening, had a century ago.

"I thought there must be very big fire in the city to cause such a picture," he said.

However, it was not till they reached French Village that they learned of the explosion at Halifax Harbor. The train

Mr. McPherson remem-  
bered one passenger on the  
train.

Byron South Western incident, Mr. McPherson said the train was able to get only a yard south of Willow Creek Junction as the trucks were filled with wreckage.

He said the ground was wet  
in harbor waters blown in  
the air by the blast. Small  
bits of this year's STAR

THE MAIL-STAR  
Survived  
Became

**Tough Air** Mr. Mayers  
narrowing ex-  
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the

...to check it. He says he  
...in the air all right, though  
...at first he was going

**Survived  
Became**

Mr. Mayers  
narrowing exp  
Halifax Explo  
silot in the

a pilot in the  
Armed Forces  
War II. When  
close friends



# Halifax Explosion Memorial Bells

by Core Design Group,

Keith L. Graham with N. Fowler, J. Rowe, J. Thomson

## HALIFAX EXPLOSION MEMORIAL BELLS COMMITTEE

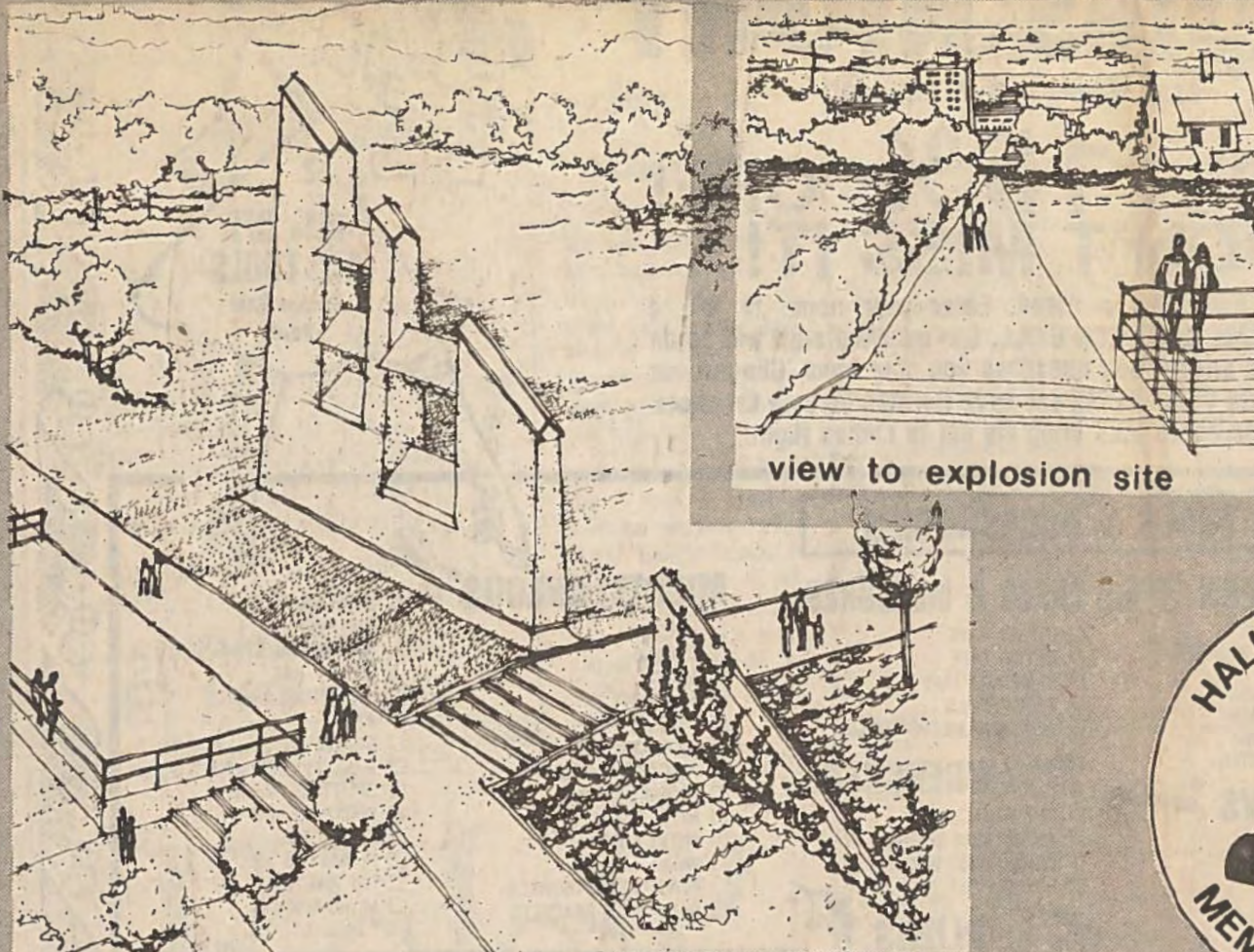
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view to explosion site



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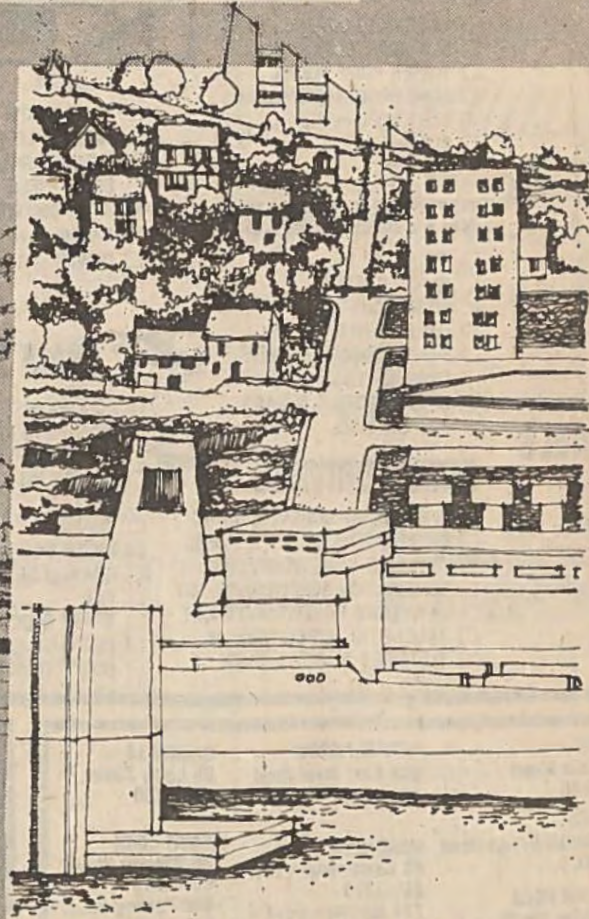
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## Historic Fort Needham treasures secret of its past 'neath grassy knolls

By ELISSA BARNARD

Today Fort Needham is a grassy knoll in Halifax's northend, a pleasant park for children and early-evening strollers.

In the late 1700s, however, it was part of a series of fortifications erected to protect a burgeoning town.

The small fort, which leaves no trace today, was built in the summer of 1778 when the American Revolution spurred increased fort-building in Halifax. Defenses had fallen into ruin since 1763.

Work proceeded rapidly at that time on Citadel Hill, on the defences of George's Island and on batteries in Point Pleasant Park. Fort Massey was also constructed in the Queen Street area.

As an advanced and commanding landward defence for the Naval Yard and to some extent for the town, Fort Needham was thrown up on James Pedley's hill on the east side of the extension of Gottingen Street and almost a mile from the gate of the Naval Yard.

In charge of building the fort was the royal engineer, Captain William Spry, who bought land five and a half miles southwest of Halifax in 1769 to build a country estate. His name comes down to us in the word Spryfield.

Fort Needham was a pentagonal earthen redoubt containing two small barracks to house about 50 men. The fort mounted two guns on the northwest face and two on the south flank and was entered by a wooden bridge placed over a ditch at the centre of a gorge.

An irate James Pedley petitioned for a court to ascertain the damages he had sustained in the expropriation of his hill. The Supreme Court upheld Pedley's claim and awarded him some £ 281 for the value of the land, including damages and expenses.

Thirty years later, the fort was al-

doubt was thrown up on the same spot in the later part of 1807 and early part of 1808. It had four 12-pounder guns and newly-built barracks for 60 men.

Fort Needham, in the important position of commanding the approach to the Narrows and covering the dockyard, served during most of the War of 1812 but was out of repair by 1815. By mid-century, following the development of modern artillery, it was obsolete.

A Halifax farmer, James Hanson, ran into problems in 1861 when he rented for a term of seven years pasture at Fort Needham. A rifle range erected at the fort for militia volunteers made it too dangerous to put his cattle out to pasture. Afraid of wild shots from inexperienced gunmen, men refused to work the land for the frustrated farmer.

Hanson complained to his alderman, from whom he rented the land, saying he would not renew the lease. The alderman went to the Lieutenant-Governor Sir R. G. MacDonnell who condemned the target and had it removed. As soon as MacDonnell left the province, the range was replaced.

Once Fort Needham was no longer a military outpost it became a park for children to play in and a hill from which people could watch events taking place on the Exhibition grounds.

A Nelson A. Smith, who spent his childhood in Halifax's northend in the early 1900s, stood atop the newly-constructed Angus L. Macdonald Bridge in 1956 and reminisced in articles for The Mail-Star about his boyhood.

The young boy spent many summer days playing cowboys and Indians at the fort and during the winter skated on the frozen moat.

Mr. Smith recalled people gathering at the site of the old fort every fall to watch fire-works shot off from the Exhibition grounds and to see men go up in balloons.



**FORT NEEDHAM** — Children today play merrily in the sun at Fort Needham Memorial Park, once the site of a small fort de-

signed to ward off possible invasions by the French and Americans in the late 1700s and early 1800s. (Wamboldt-Waterfield)

others a man attempt to fly a machine heavier than air — "A great crowd gathered on the fort that day. I was with Mother and Dad, and as we stood there with hundreds of others looking towards the Exhibition Grounds, we could see something like a huge boxkite in front of the grandstand. Everyone was excited and talking about the aeroplane."

The plane took off from the race track, circled the Exhibition area and landed in front of the grandstand to cheers and critical comments that such ungodly, foolhardy displays should not

Fort Needham deteriorated to the point of being described by The Mail-Star in 1948 as a hill with banks of "unsightly, rain-scarred earth and rock." In 1949, however, the Halifax Relief Commission proposed to develop a public park at a cost of \$10,000 in memory of those who died in the 1917 Halifax Explosion, a catastrophe which devastated the northend.

The City of Halifax took over the maintenance of the park in 1959 after the Halifax Relief Commission by the Commission. Although the original plans called for a restaurant, this was never

Fort Needham Memorial Park is a large grassy field at the top of a hill overgrown with small bushes and wildflowers. Now equipped with a peaceful baseball field and playground, one can only guess at where the fort stood and where its moat was located.

The spot contains two memorial blocks of stone, one announcing the park's creation and listing commissioners of the now defunct Halifax Relief Commission and the other in tribute to famed British explorer Captain James Cook, R.N., who spent several winters in

There are at least two possibilities for the origin of the fort's name. A royal engineer, John Needham, was commissioned as Ensign in Halifax by General Massey in 1778. Harry Piers, former curator of the Provincial Museum, suggested the fort could have been named after Francis Jack Needham, a captain in the army in 1774, a general in 1812 and named the 12th Viscount Kilmorey in 1818.

Wandering around Fort Needham Park on a hot summer day, it is difficult to imagine the fort or the view of