

# The Hingham Shipyard

**Site Details:** 130 acres, 235 apartments, 150 townhomes, 240,000 ft<sup>2</sup> of retail and office space, 94 condominiums, and a marina.

**Date(s):** 1997-2010

**Funding:** Developer funded.

**Goals:** Site revitalization; historic preservation; rental apartment housing.

**Zoning:** Mixed-use by special permit overlay district



Hingham Shipyard, adjacent to Route 3A.  
Source: Courtesy of the Hingham Historical Society

## Background

During World War II, the Hingham Shipyard was one of the largest shipbuilding centers in the country. However, by late 1945, the shipyard had been shut down and was left largely unattended for the next half a century. For decades, the site was a collection of neglected buildings and dilapidated warehouses. In the 1980s, the town of Hingham created an overlay district to allow for mixed use by special permit in an industrial district on the site to encourage new development.

## Site Development

After a handful of failed proposals by other developers, SeaChain LLC began a successful development process in 1997,



Patriot Cinemas, Hingham Shipyard, 2010

purchasing the site from a hodgepodge of owners and drafting a master plan. SeaChain obtained the initial permit in 2003. Most of the construction was delayed for an additional three years while SeaChain worked out a key land swap deal with the state regarding the MBTA commuter lot in the middle of the development. Portions of the property were then sold off to three other developers. Starting in 2007, the four owners each pursued the development of their individual portions and applied for any necessary modifications independently. The site now consists of luxury apartment homes by AvalonBay Communities, luxury townhomes by Lenar Urban Properties, 240,000 ft<sup>2</sup> of retail and office space as well as rental apartments by Samuels & Associates, and a marina maintained by SeaChain. As the site is technically under one permit, the four developers manage the site's shared elements through a property owners' association.

## Development Process

Originally, both the Hingham planning board and local residents were concerned that the cinema component of the development would not fit in. Originally, a supermarket was slated to be the center of the commercial side of the development; however, the existence of an adjacent Stop & Shop forced the developers to look for a new anchor. Joint public hearings showing successful examples of tastefully incorporating a cinema into existing architecture led to the approval of Patriot Cinema's by abutters and residents. As part of the zoning process, the town asked the developers to commemorate the shipyard's history in some way.



Hewitt's Cove Marina: One of sixteen historical panels at the Hingham Shipyard and anchor near The Launch.

Given the size of the project, a joint hearing process was an efficient way to communicate with the Board of Appeals, the Planning Board, and the public. In addition, a subgroup from these boards as well as the Police Department and the Department of Public Works played active roles in reviewing and commenting on the plans as they developed. The developers also funded improvements to the local main routes and police and fire communications equipment in order to mitigate traffic impacts anticipated by the project. Hingham Shipyard had its grand opening in June 2010, over a year late due to problems obtaining financing and the tough economic environment.



Panels outside retail shops displaying historical facts and pictures about the Hingham Shipyard.

## The Hingham Shipyard and MetroFuture Goals



Hewitt's Landing luxury townhomes and Avalon apartments, Hingham Shipyard, 2010.

### Housing Choices

In all, the Hingham Shipyard brought approximately 500 new residential units to Hingham, ranging from market-rate apartments to luxury townhomes. The development added a large supply of rental apartments that the town had been in need of, twenty-three of which are affordable 40B units.

### Community Vitality

The makeover of the industrial site into a pedestrian friendly community with waterfront amenities has attracted new residents and turned a steady stream of commuters into shoppers. A historic "walking museum," which includes twenty-five historical images of the site, was installed to chronicle and commemorate the shipyard's vitality during WWII. Additionally, a documentary film plays on a continuous loop at Patriot Cinemas.

### Regional Prosperity

The shipyard has attracted residents and commuters who find it desirable to patronize the new theater, shops, and retail stores. The town expected to receive about \$450,000 in annual property taxes from the project.

### Transportation Choices

The MBTA runs a popular commuter ferry out of Hewitt's Cove, adjacent to the shipyard. The federal government appropriated funds to enhance amenities for ferry commuters in conjunction with the new development. Residents of the Hingham Shipyard have easy access to the new Greenbush commuter train station and are just minutes away from Routes 3 and 93.

*"The interpretive element of the Hingham Shipyard is unique. Giant pictures, stands, models and plans of the ships incorporate the significant history of the shipyard, which is essential to the town's character and therefore, added to the success of the development." - Katy Lacy, Hingham*



Retail at The Launch, Hingham Shipyard, 2010.

### Healthy Environment

The new waterfront community offers open public green space, landscaped parks, walkable streets and a unique boardwalk ambiance.

### Contact Information

For more information about the Hingham Shipyard, contact Katy Lacy, Hingham Town Planner, at [lacyk@hingham-ma.com](mailto:lacyk@hingham-ma.com).