

## PENN'S LANDING PLANNING STUDY

*PENN PRAXIS GSFA, THE PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER,  
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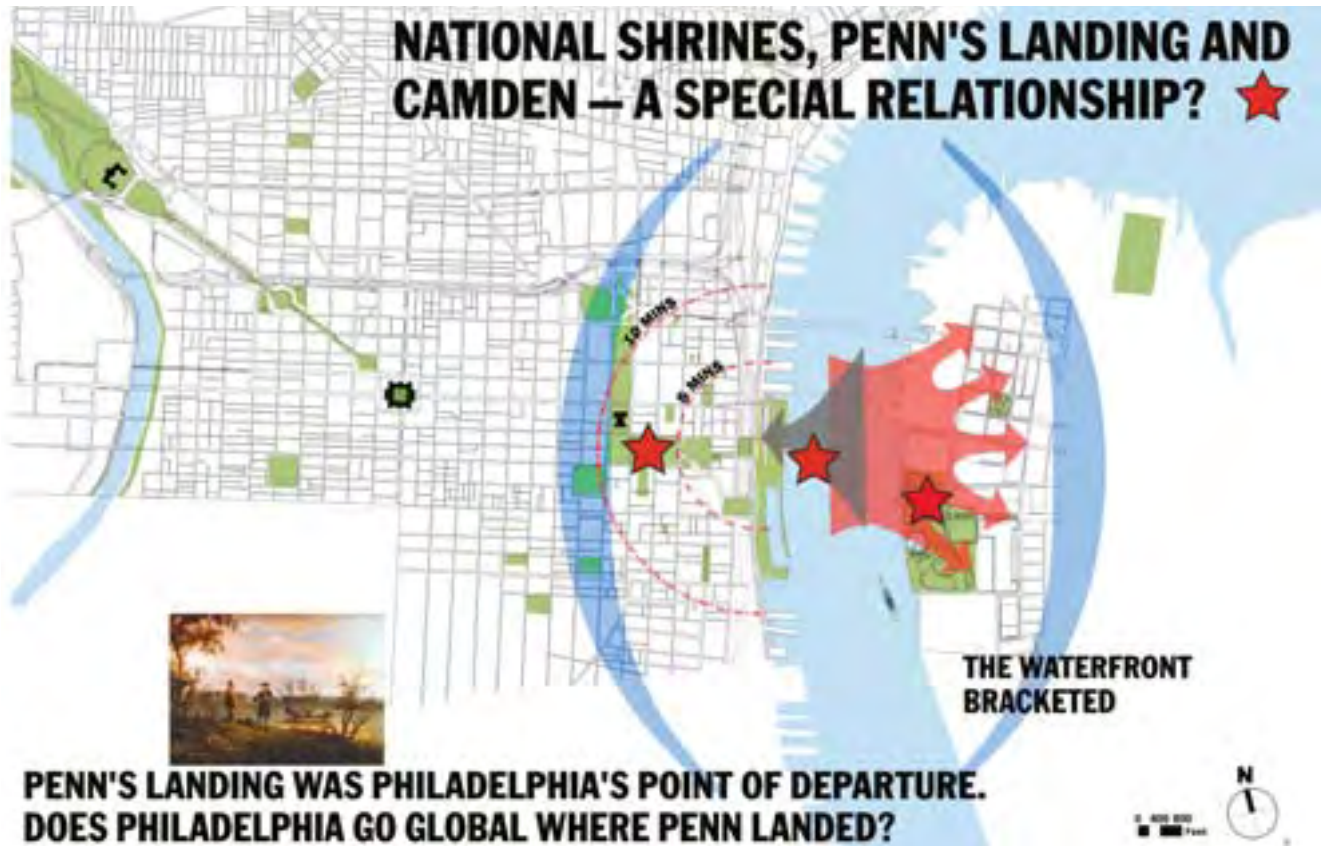
*Architects: Venturi, Scott Brown and Associates, Inc.*

*Location: Philadelphia, PA*

*Completion: 2003*

In 2003, VSBA collaborated in a brainstorming charrette for planning the Penn's Landing section of Philadelphia. As part of our initial investigation, we made a series of analytic maps and diagrams asking questions about the area: What activities exist there now? What should be there in the future? How can Penn's Landing appeal to massive crowds, small groups, and individuals? How can it be linked to the rest of the City, to Camden across the Delaware River, and to the wider region? Basically, how can the patterns we discern in and around Penn's Landing inform its redesign?

Our "Some Things To Consider" report was intended to encompass more broad-based questions and to empower participants in the coming design process to confront a wider array of issues than have been examined so far.



*National shrines and the Camden waterfront -- should Penn's Landing have a special relation with these?  
Penn's Landing was Philadelphia's point of origin -- should the city go global from where Penn Landed?  
How would it do that?*



From "Some Things To Consider," January 29, 2003

What should we consider before making decisions at this important location?

How should we go forward from the many, broad-gauged, sometimes conflicting ideas of the last session, to define directions and suggest principles for a plan?

We suggest starting with an eye-full of reality. What do we have now and how did we get it?

We map what's there, but this is not a camera shot. Our maps go from facts to analysis. In taking the data apart and recombining it in various ways, we hope to get behind appearances. Mapping brings the discussion onto the site. We try to understand the patterns of activities on and around Penn's Landing and to gain a sense of where they are going. Analytic cross cuts and overlays lead, step by step, to synthesis and eventually to designs. Slowly the trends become apparent and this may lead to an understanding of where we should direct them.

The maps can be shared with others -- in this case by a community of interested citizens. Their findings can be formulated as questions for discussion rather than as nostrums. During the process, the factors first defined as "necessary to be considered" may be replaced by others that seem more relevant -- and these too can be subject to debate.

Unsuccessful efforts to develop the site since the 1970s suggest a change of philosophy is needed. Present dreams may not be realizable. Yet consider the case of Baltimore. Most of its success has depended on visitors from Philadelphia. Why can they journey to Baltimore but not cross the I-95 to Penn's Landing?

And compare Penn's Landing with other Philadelphia "lost areas" that seem to have recovered, for example, South Street and Main Street, Manayunk. Granted they are different, but the essence of finding success for each was to attract multilayered patronage, beyond the local users who were once their support. What might this mean for Penn's Landing?

The maps and texts that follow bring up some issues and questions to consider in the planning of Penn's Landing.

## CONCLUSIONS

Penn's Landing could be a central offering of Philadelphia, one deeply tied to its founding myth, multilayered, and reaching from global to local. The region it benefits is vast, and the multiplier effect of tax expenditures to build it must be calculated on the activities it has generated and could further generate all around it.

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What should lie at the heart of Penn's Landing? If investment in Penn's Landing is considered as leveraged over an area larger than its 13 acres, what area should this be?



Pedestrian access -- why is it so unpleasant to cross the I-95? What can we learn from successful long bridges? How can we create a fun, civic bridge 1055 ft. long?

## How should Penn's Landing fulfill the needs of:



**VISITORS:** tourists, suburbanites, Center City and local neighborhoods, special groups including schools, individuals?

**PEOPLE WHO LIVE OR WORK ON THE SITE?**

*How should Penn's Landing fulfill the needs of individuals, small groups, Sunday strollers, and one million people? Of visitors, tourists, suburbanites, Center City and local neighborhood residents, special groups including school kids, and individuals? Of people who live and work on the site?*



*Philadelphia icons -- in a city of many symbols, what should Penn's Landing symbolize?*