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Halifax residents upset as shipyard construction blocks view of historic site

CTV Atlantic

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Some Halifax residents are upset a massive shed under construction by Irving Shipbuilding is obstructing the view of the harbour from Fort Needham.

The memorial bell tower was erected on a hill overlooking the site of the Halifax Explosion and was built in memory of the roughly 2,000 people who died that day.

"It's disheartening. The whole thought process behind the memorial was to look down towards the water," says former councillor Patrick Murphy. "Now you're looking down towards a green super structure, which, that's there, it's not going to move."

On Dec.6, 1917, the Norwegian ship IMO and French ship Mont-Blanc collided in the harbour, resulting in the largest manmade explosion before the atomic bomb.

PHOTOS

Historian Joel Zemel says the view from the Fort Needham bell tower is as important as the bells.



Historian Joel Zemel says the view from the Fort Needham bell tower is as important as the bells.

"There's no excuse for this. There's no excuse for that building going up like that in this area," says Zemel. "It's completely inappropriate. It was the wrong decision."

Irving Shipbuilding says the shed is being built to accommodate its new shipbuilding program. It also says the Halifax Shipyard was in place before the explosion and many workers lost their lives that day.

It says any artifacts found in the construction site are being preserved and the current location was the most appropriate site for a modernized shipyard.

"A poster that was produced after the explosion says we will never rebuild Halifax unless everybody works and we've never had a project I don't think in the city where so many people are employed as that Irving contract," says Halifax Mayor Mike Savage.

"Let's not overstate it, we're moving forward as a city, but we will never forget the Halifax Explosion."

With files from CTV Atlantic's Gena Holley

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