



## TREDEGAR GREEN HISTORY

Detail of Plan of the City of Richmond, Henrico County, Virginia, M. Ellyson, 1856 | VALENTINE RICHMOND HISTORY CENTER

Tredegar Green is situated on the lower slope of Oregon Hill, originally referred to as Belvidere Hill. Beginning in the middle of the nineteenth century, Oregon Hill developed as a neighborhood for workers at the Virginia Penitentiary and in various industries along the James River. The hill originally sloped down to a creek valley traversed by the James River and Kanawha Canal and flanked by Gamble's Hill. The completion of the canal inaugurated a period of industrial development, and over the course of the nineteenth century iron works, an armory, and paper, flour, and textile mills began operating between the canal and the James River.

**BELVIDERE** In 1758, William Byrd III constructed Belvidere near the present intersection of China and Pine Streets, a large mansion with such spectacular views of the Riverfront that Byrd named the house Belvidere, the Italian word for beautiful view. Belvidere burned in 1854, and the subsequent Belvidere subdivision established the present street grid over the mansion site.

**OREGON HILL (ORIGINAL SUBDIVISION)** In 1847, the Harvie family platted the original Oregon Hill subdivision east of Belvidere Street and South of Spring Street. Over time the entire area of Belvidere Hill came to be referred to as Oregon Hill. Roadway improvements in 1936 and the construction of the Virginia War Memorial in 1956 eliminated the street grid and buildings in the 1847 subdivision.

**RIVERSIDE PARK** The City of Richmond completed land acquisition for the park in 1915, and in 1936 the City constructed Riverside Parkway (now Oregon Hill Parkway) through the park to connect to the 2nd Street Viaduct and Lee Bridge.

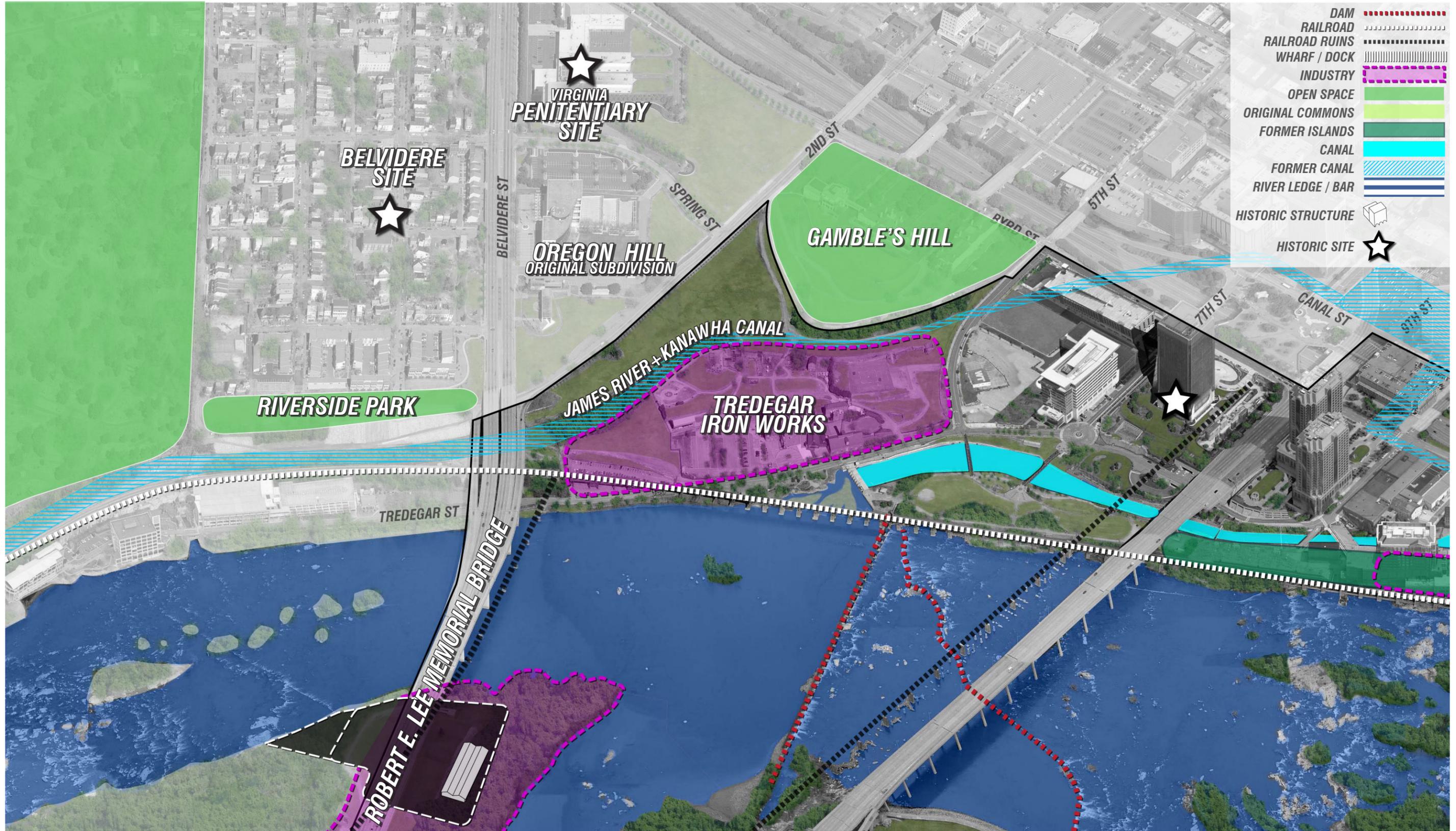
**ROBERT E. LEE MEMORIAL BRIDGE** In 1934, the City constructed the first Robert E. Lee Memorial Bridge slightly to the east of the present structure (completed in 1989). In conjunction with the 1934 construction, the City built the 2nd Street viaduct to continue 2nd Street south from Byrd Street to connect to the Lee Bridge and Riverside Park.

**THE JAMES RIVER AND KANAWHA CANAL** Between 1785 and 1800, the planning and construction of the James River and Kanawha Canal created a level canal bed and towpath between the Great Turning Basin (between 7th and 12th Streets) and the Three Mile Locks (Byrd Park). Construction of the canal effectively dammed the creek below Oregon Hill and created a turning basin known as Harvie's Pond.

**TREDEGAR IRON WORKS** From its founding in 1836 into the twentieth century, the Tredegar Ironworks manufactured all kinds of finished ironwork in a large complex between the canal and the James River. The James River and Kanawha Canal initially transported the raw materials for the ironworks and powered the large waterwheels serving the complex.

**GAMBLE'S HILL** Gamble's Hill took its name from the large Gamble mansion that stood at its crest. By the middle of the nineteenth century, Gamble's Hill was a thriving residential neighborhood.

**VIRGINIA PENITENTIARY SITE** Looming over the surrounding area, the Virginia State Penitentiary complex occupied the site northeast of Belvidere and Spring Streets between 1797 and 1992.



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## “URBAN GREEN” 3 ACRES

Tredegan Green is envisioned as an open public landscape, directly connecting the Virginia War Memorial property at 2nd Street with the Tredegan Iron Works at the James River. The catalytic intervention is the anticipated construction of the 2nd Street Connector that will traverse the steep slope, aligned with the Iron Works fence. Once complete, the 3-acre landscape between the connector and the Lee Bridge will be available for unrestricted public use, primarily as a passive public landscape. With the removal of the existing fencing, vegetation and brick wall, this former NewMarket parcel will expand the public realm by offering an ideal vantage point to view the river from above, and remain a main performance venue for the annual Richmond Folk Festival.

The site is bisected by the dry bed of the James River & Kanawha Canal. The future potential for this industrial artifact is significant; a pedestrian walk could be constructed within or along the canal bed, or the canal could be restored. The 2nd Street Connector is expected to incorporate a culvert structure bridging the canal bed. Preceding studies advocated for the restoration of the canal westward to Maymont Park. Canal boats could carry passengers along a 1.8 mile run between Maymont Park and Tredegan Green. All public improvements to and investments in Tredegan Green should support the goal of westward (or appropriate) canal restoration, as the canal could once again become a functioning connective conduit, a historic blueway.

NewMarket Corporation retains private ownership of parcels between 2nd and 7th Streets. While discontinuous, the arc of the dry canal bed continues around the Tredegan Iron Works, terminating at 5th Street. The canal alignment might be referenced as a site generator for future development as a pedestrian landscape and connector. Between 5th and 7th streets, development has proceeded with a commercial tower and associated parking structures. Future private development trends suggest additional mixed-use towers, incorporating commercial office, hotel and residential uses. Build-out of this block, particularly with a hotel, will heighten expectations for improved pedestrian access along Tredegan Street including continuous sidewalks; an improved streetscape; and greater public access into the development block.

The existing public parking lot will be reconfigured yet remain intact as a key universally-accessible trailhead, allowing pedestrians and cyclists to head off to Belle Isle, Brown’s Island, and beyond. The existing path and bridge connection to Oregon Hill merits greater attention, with the objective of an accessible route connecting Oregon Hill Parkway to Tredegan Street. The recently-completed pedestrian bridge spanning the canal bed is not fully accessible. A universally-accessible route linking Tredegan Street and the Belle Isle Pedestrian Bridge, at the lower end, to the North Bank Trail and Oregon Hill Parkway on the upper end, will greatly improve the public perception that this pivotal connection is both safe and traversable for all.

Construction of the 2nd Street Connector should include a traffic engineering reevaluation of the current one-way restriction where Oregon Hill Parkway meets the Lee Bridge ramps and 2nd Street. As is, vehicular traffic under the Lee Bridge is exclusively one-way westbound, with no provision for eastbound travel between Oregon Hill and the Riverfront at the Tredegan Iron Works. Adjustments to striping and posted restrictions concurrent to completion of the 2nd Street Connector should be made to ensure safe and improved vehicular connections in this area.



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