Radford Comprehensive Plan Updates:
Radford Village Center and Foundry Industrial Area Conceptual Master Plans

Prepared for the City of Radford, VA

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Radford Comprehensive Plan Updates: Radford Village Center and Foundry Industrial Area Conceptual Master Plans

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CDAC team members Lara Browning, Hamad Alsaiari, and Kyunghuee Kim analyze project site.
Acknowledgments

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New River Valley Planning District Commission
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The City of Radford is in the process of updating their 2009 Comprehensive Plan. As part of this process, several conceptual sketches that convey practical, yet visionary ideas for future development and redevelopment were needed. The city requested the Community Design Assistance Center’s help with this. The areas in need of conceptual sketches included the Radford Village Center and the Foundry Industrial Area, both located in the west end of the city.

The Radford Village Center is located roughly parallel to the Norfolk and Western Railway, Bisset Park, and the New River. The Village Center area consists of several blocks southwest of the Memorial Bridge and contains the West End Downtown Historic District. Currently the area contains some vacant/underutilized lots. Many of these lots are located between the West Main Street businesses and the rail line.

The city sees an opportunity to utilize this space to create a more usable open space for pedestrians and shop patrons as well as for limited infill development where appropriate. It is envisioned that the rear facades of these existing businesses will serve as “back porches” to a pedestrian friendly open space. The city requested that CDAC develop a master plan that takes advantage of the topography and river views. CDAC also looked at the potential for updating current parking in the area.
The Foundry Industrial Area consists of approximately 140 acres situated between Bolling and Denby Streets along the New River. Historically, the area has been used for heavy industrial manufacturing. The site may soon be open for redevelopment and the city is considering the opportunity for a light industrial business park. The Design Center worked with the city to develop a master plan of this area that included conceptual building layout and character, proposed trails, sidewalk/streetscaping elements along Main Street, and a potential pedestrian connection from the site to a trail along the river.

The following context map shows the locations of the two sites within the City of Radford, in relation to the New River, and Radford Village Center’s location near Bisset Park.
West Main Street Context Map

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PART 1: FINAL DESIGNS
The design process began with an initial site visit to Radford in January 2015. The CDAC team met with stakeholders to discuss concerns and desires for the project, walked the Radford Village Center site, and viewed the Foundry Industrial Area from its periphery. By gathering on-site data and documenting existing conditions, the team was able to understand the opportunities and constraints of each site. This analysis would later influence the design concepts.

The team worked closely with the stakeholders group to better understand their vision for the community. After careful consideration of all the factors, a set of preliminary conceptual design alternatives was developed. In February 2015, the CDAC team had the opportunity to meet with stakeholders to discuss the preliminary designs for both sites. Based on the feedback from this meeting, the designs were refined and presented to the City of Radford Planning Commission in March. The design alternatives were then revised and combined into a final conceptual master plan for each project site based on the comments made at the meeting.

The final master plans were presented to the City of Radford Planning Commission in May 2015.
Radford Comprehensive Plan Updates:
Radford Village Center and Foundry Industrial Area Conceptual Master Plans

FINAL DESIGN: RADFORD VILLAGE CENTER

The Radford Village Center creates a welcoming atmosphere for pedestrians to enjoy shopping, dining, and views of the river. Leonard Street serves as the pedestrian core with “back porch” entrances to buildings on W. Main Street and new infill along the river. Although some parking is provided along Leonard Street, the narrow drive and parking lots located at the ends of the district create a pedestrian friendly zone and enable the street to be closed for community events and festivals. Wide sidewalks, space for outdoor seating, and flexible plazas form areas that can host a variety of formal and informal events and provide opportunities for gathering. In addition, ample use of plantings and green space balance the use of considerable paving and create a pleasant atmosphere.

Building heights and styles are limited to blend with the surrounding character. The heights of the buildings are designed to create an ideal small urban space that is defined by a certain ratio of building height to width and right-of-way. Typically this ratio is between 2:1 and 3:1, thus when dealing with two and three story buildings, the width of the right-of-way from façade to façade should be approximately 75 feet.

In addition, a farmer’s market structure on the north end of the district relates to the historic train depot and is easily accessed from the adjacent parking lot.

On the following page is the master plan. Arrows 1 and 2 indicate the location and orientation of the perspectives found on pages 14 and 15.
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Radford Village Center
May 18, 2015

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FINAL DESIGN: RADFORD VILLAGE CENTER
Sections
(1) Perspective looking toward the proposed farmers market with Lee Highway bridge in the background
(2) A view of the proposed streetscape looking toward Harvey Street
Radford Comprehensive Plan Updates:
Radford Village Center and Foundry Industrial Area Conceptual Master Plans

**FINAL DESIGN: FOUNDRY INDUSTRIAL AREA**

The redevelopment of the foundry industrial site into a commercial and light-industrial center is predominantly informed by shared outdoor space, limited sized buildings, and views to the river. Thus the key elements of the concept are as follows.

1. Buildings are clustered around shared plaza space and parking to provide ample attractive views from any location within any building.
2. A pedestrian/bike trail that connects to an extended greenway meanders through the site and gives workers a place for passive exercise.
3. Native meadow plantings and natural-looking water features improve the beauty of the site and reduce its maintenance by limiting the amount of open lawn.
4. Where land has been cut for water features it can also be filled through the creation of berms throughout the site. These berms not only improve the topography interest of the area but also prevent the need to remove contaminated soil.

All of these features together can create a commercial and light-industrial center that is attractive to a variety of tenets in a way that can become a source of pride for the city of Radford.

The master plan can be found on the following page. Arrows 1-4 indicate the location and orientation of the perspectives found on pages 19-22.
Final Design: Foundry Industrial Area Master Plan

Disclaimers:

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Design Elements:

- Shared use access
- Native meadow plantings
- Consecutive to extended greenway
- Parking specifics for each building cluster:
  - One space per 500-700 sq ft
- Stormwater treatment ponds/retention
- Buffered pockets/shrub belts
- Areas for added biophoric interest
- Main boulevard entrance and gateway
- Opportunity for future expansion
(1) View of proposed office complex
FINAL DESIGN: FOUNDRY INDUSTRIAL AREA
Perspective Renderings

(2) View of proposed office complex
(3) View of proposed office complex lawn
(4) View of entrance to proposed office park
The Community Design and Assistance Center’s proposals focus on celebrating the character of downtown Radford and expanding upon it. We hope that our designs bring even more attention to the breathtaking natural surroundings as well as the vibrancy of the city. The concepts present a way of extending that identity beyond Main Street. With the introduction of the Radford Village Center site as a new Pedestrian District and farmers market at the former rail station site, CDAC feels that Radford can become a more well-rounded destination with attractions that reflect the local culture and history as well as draw people on a regular basis. In addition, the natural surroundings also become intertwined in the urban fabric through the introduction of naturalistic landscapes within the Foundry site. These two proposals focus on both bringing the city to the river and the river to the city. We feel that this relationship, as a unique characteristic of Radford, should be emphasized and celebrated, truly representing the New River City.
PART 2: PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS & DESIGN
Inventory
The Radford Village Center area is constrained by steep topography to the east, as well as to the west down toward the New River. Also, the site is constrained on both sides by physical barriers: railroad tracks on the river side, and busy traffic along Main Street on the opposite side. Other important considerations include:
1. Existing parking north and south of the district may be tapped into
2. Existing parking lots within the site should be considered to serve residents and current area workers.
3. The intersection of Highway 11 and Main Street, just north of the site, is the primary gateway into the city of Radford.
4. A flat area on the northern half of the site is the former location of a historic train depot which could inspire the architecture and theme of the district.
5. Buildings of note are the two structures that frame Harvey Street, Wade’s Supermarket to the south, and the public library and middle school to the north.

Analysis
There are plenty of opportunities to take advantage of infill and to open up views to the New River along this site that could make it a successful destination. Two primary infill areas (as noted on the map) would create enough space for a formal road framed on both sides with buildings along the existing Leonard Street. Also, by removing the scrub brush growing on the top of the ridge, views to the river can be used to improve the overall atmosphere on the site. Finally, a more formal connection along Leonard Street will allow the development of the “back porches” of existing buildings with a primary gateway emerging where Harvey Street enters the site.

Site inventory and analysis maps can be found on the following pages.
Design Opportunities for Improvement
Gateways
Green Connections
Existing Structures of Interest
Steep Slopes
Green Corridors
Vehicular Corridors

SITE INVENTORY & ANALYSIS: RADFORD VILLAGE CENTER
Site Inventory Map
SITE INVENTORY & ANALYSIS: RADFORD VILLAGE CENTER

Potential Gateway
Potential Linear Street Connection
Pedestrian Connections
SITE INVENTORY & ANALYSIS: FOUNDARY INDUSTRIAL AREA

Inventory
Similar to the Radford Village Center, the Foundry site is constrained on multiple sides. Steep slopes and blocked views of the river define the western edge, while busy traffic along Main Street and existing railroad tracks define the site along the eastern edge. Also, the presence of retention ponds just north and west of the site must be taken into consideration. On a positive note, the site is relatively flat and there are already multiple access points along Main Street allowing for many development options.

Analysis
When considering the development of the Foundry site some key components are informed by the opportunity to connect to an extension of a regional greenway, opening up views to the river, and the potential for interior connections between where Bolling Street accesses the site and another entry drive just north of Denby Street. While opening up views to the river will greatly enhance the beauty of the site, buffers should remain around the existing retention ponds.

Site inventory and analysis maps can be found on the following pages.
CASE STUDIES: RADFORD VILLAGE CENTER

College Avenue: Blacksburg, VA
College Avenue is a primary pedestrian corridor connecting the Virginia Tech campus with downtown Blacksburg.

Important Features:
1. Single driving lane allows for wider sidewalks and a more pedestrian oriented environment.
2. Wider sidewalks provide space for seating and plantings, including stormwater infiltration.
3. The avenue can easily be closed to traffic for special events and festivals.
4. The use of brick and stone reflects the surrounding architecture and general character of Virginia Tech.

Downtown Lewisburg: Lewisburg, WV
Lewisburg has been recognized as a unique mix of local history, culture, and art.

Important Features:
1. Local ownership and buy-in downtown has led to preservation of historic buildings.
2. The preservation of local history and culture is highly valued.
3. Downtown buildings are filled with a variety of shops, restaurants, and art galleries.
4. Live music and other kinds of public performances are a constant presence, drawing people downtown.

North Shore Park: Pittsburgh, PA
North Shore Park contains over 11 acres of public green space at the confluence of the Allegheny and Ohio Rivers.

Important Features:
1. A river walk provides views of downtown Pittsburgh and gives adjacent restaurants access to the waterfront.
2. The great lawn provides a passive recreation space right along the river.
3. Public art and memorials dot the landscape, illustrating local culture and history.
4. Brick paving and simple plantings are an apt application to the site in question in Radford.

Downtown Lynchburg: Lynchburg, VA
A recipient of the 2006 Great American Main Street Award, downtown Lynchburg addressed art, culture, and the James River in one cohesive corridor.

Important Features:
1. Riverfront Parks allows access to the James River adjacent to downtown.
2. The redevelopment of downtown has been guided by design and development standards from the beginning, ensuring that each phase follows the same overall goals.
3. A large downtown Farmer’s Market gives locals a weekly reason to come downtown.
4. Historic buildings have been preserved and re-purposed, creating an environment that is uniquely Lynchburg.
CASE STUDIES: RADFORD VILLAGE CENTER

Scioto Mile: Columbus, OH
The Scioto Mile is a new pedestrian corridor that reconnects downtown Columbus to its waterfront.

Important Features:
1. Wide pedestrian-only zone equipped with special pavers, curbed planters, and bench swings.
2. Clear views to Scioto River.
3. Stitches downtown Columbus to a new restaurant and splash pad development.
4. Serves as a template for future expansion along the river in either direction.

Armory Square: Syracuse, NY
Armory Square was developed in the early 19th century due to its proximity to the Erie Canal and major rail lines. At the turn of the 19th century, the area was densely built up and bustling with activity. As the railroads declined in the 1930’s, the majority of industries and hotels relocated or ceased operation. Between 1940 and 1960, many buildings were vacated or demolished. In the 1980’s Syracuse began revitalizing sections of the city, including Armory Square. Today, Armory Square is the cultural hub of Syracuse.

Important Features:
1. Armory Square retains a significant and well-preserved concentration of historic buildings exhibiting a variety of architectural styles.
2. Mixed use development encourages residents to live, work, and play.
3. New projects must respect the historic character of the area.

The Essence of Athens: Athens, OH
A topical update to their adopted 2003 Athens Comprehensive Plan, The Essence of Athens explores what makes the Athens community a "wonderful, interesting, and rare place" and seeks to implement projects that will ensure that this trend will continue.

Important Features:
1. Public involvement in branding process.
2. Bottom-up, locally-organic recommendations.
3. Works with the current Comprehensive Plan.
CASE STUDIES: FOUNDARY INDUSTRIAL AREA

Virginia Tech Corporate Research Center: Blacksburg, VA
The CRC, located in close proximity to Virginia Tech, spans 230 acres and houses over 160 research and technology companies.

Important Features:
1. The use of one primary arterial street with small feeder lanes penetrate the interior of the campus.
2. Green space and pedestrian trails (including a spur of the Huckleberry Trail, a local greenway) intermingle between the buildings.
3. The campus was planned with expansion in mind, allowing it to grow without losing its intended character.
4. The limited size and height of the buildings, coupled with the ample use of green space, creates a more naturalistic aesthetic.

Progress Corporate Park: Alachua, FL
Progress Park is home to 30 businesses, the majority of which relate to technology or bioscience.

Important Features:
1. The campus is located adjacent to the 7,000 acre San Felasco Hammock Preserve State Park that contains miles of trails for hiking, mountain biking, and horseback riding.
2. Progress Park is laid out along one main arterial drive with separate pedestrian paths that navigate the interior of the site.
3. The park also includes ample green space in order to increase the rural park aesthetic and facilitate future expansion.

Urban Outfitters Corporate Headquarters: Philadelphia, PA
Urban Outfitters Headquarters is built out of the shell of a 100+ year old navy shipyard in Philadelphia.

Important Features:
1. The renovated space allows space for subsidiary companies like Free People and Anthropologie, while also providing space for a cafeteria, coffee shops, library, and fitness center.
2. The headquarters maintains some of the character of the original structure. On the outside, the original facade stands and in the interior, old paint has been preserved and original timber beams span the large open spaces.
CASE STUDIES: FOUNDARY INDUSTRIAL AREA

Alumnae Valley: Wellesley College, MA
MVVA worked with Wellesley College to revitalize the toxic brownfield of Alumnae Valley, an area which previously hosted the college’s power plant, industrialized natural gas pumping stations, and a 175-space parking lot.

Important Features:
1. Reusing contaminated soil to add topographic interest to the landscape.
2. Ecological and hydrological restoration.
3. Reclaiming space for recreational activities.

Railroad Park: Birmingham, AL
Tom Leader Studio spent five years working extensively with a public/private partnership to build this downtown central park and master plan. The park site is a former warehouse and brick-making site and much of the park is formed with materials recovered from historic uses. The park is four blocks long by one block wide and was historically the lowest point in town. The scheme draws on this ample water in creating a large reservoir for irrigation which also discharges through a stream and series of ponds as a summer fountain. The “Rail Trail,” located atop this little mountain range is a series of on-grade and bridge connections which allow train-spotting up close, and views over downtown and of the frequent large music events and parties within the park.

Important Features:
1. Recalls history through material use.
2. Public involvement process.
3. Reusing contaminated soil to add topographic interest.

Gas Works Park: Seattle, WA
Gas Works Park was built on the location of a former coal gasification plant in 1965. A central feature, the boiler house, was converted into a picnic shelter complete with tables and fire grills, while a former exhauster-compressor building was turned into an open-air play barn that houses a maze of brightly painted machinery for children. This ground-breaking project has been celebrated for its ability to garner local support and shift public perceptions of post-industrial landscapes. It is considered revolutionary for its reclamation of polluted soils using the natural processes of bioremediation.

Important Features:
1. Recalls history through material use.
2. Takes advantage of existing views.
3. Ecological and hydrological restoration.
4. Reclaiming space for social activities.
Preliminary Conceptual Designs

Radford Village Center Concept 1
The development of the Radford Village Center into an Arts District is informed by a couple of key considerations. First of all, small urban spaces are often defined by a certain ration of building height to width of right-of-way. Typically this ratio is between 2:1 and 3:1, thus when dealing with two and three story buildings, the width of the right-of-way from façade to façade should be approximately 75 feet. Also, case study research revealed that many successful small town arts districts utilize a mixture of outdoor seating and informal gathering spaces to give visitors ample opportunities to gather and provide venues for special events. With these two ideas in mind some key components of the concept are as follows:

1. A narrow drive and parking, isolated to the ends of the district, create a pedestrian friendly zone.
2. Wide sidewalks, space for outdoor seating, and flexible plazas create an area that can host a variety of formal and informal events.
3. Ample use of plantings and green space balance the use of considerable paving.
4. A farmer’s market structure on the north end of the district relates to the historic train depot and is easily accessed from the adjacent parking lot.
5. Building heights and styles are limited to blend with the surrounding character.

Initial drawings for Concept 1 can be found on the following pages.
Preliminary Concept
Radford Central Depot
March 16, 2015

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DESIGN ELEMENTS:
1. Parking lots: clustered on the east and west ends of the district (approx. 100 spaces each).
2. Hilltop pedestrian promenade.
3. Rain gardens: Spaced evenly across.
4. Public green space: Spaced evenly across.
5. Trolley tracks and bike parking at the side of Market St.
6. Primary pedestrian corridor from Randolph St.
8. Change in paving pattern at intersections and introduction of street trees in planting on side streets.
PRELIMINARY CONCEPTUAL DESIGNS

Radford Village Center Concept 1

Urban Ratio Section

Most small urban spaces are created by a width of right-of-way to building height ratio of 2:1 to 3:1. Thus, when dealing with buildings of two and three stories the width of the right-of-way is set somewhere around 75 feet from facade to facade.
Radford Village Center Concept 2
The development of the Central Depot into an Arts District is informed by a couple of key considerations. To establish a new development in Radford, this development must be visually and physically connected to its surroundings. This posed a challenge, as the site sits behind Main Street and is not easily visible. A great potential for this site, however, is its views since it sits on a bluff above Bissett Park and the New River. Since that is the strongest aspect of this site, this concept sought to maximize views out from the site, while also establishing visual and physical connections into the site. Aspects incorporated into the concept include:

1. A wide pedestrian spine sits at the edge of the bluff and overlooks Bissett Park and the New River below. The midsection of this spine is dedicated open space for users to sit and/or stroll atop the bluff.
2. The pedestrian spine is anchored by a large signature building at one end and a cluster of smaller commercial buildings at the other.
3. An ADA accessible ramp allows users to descend the bluff onto a smaller plaza approximately 20’ below. This lends an option for a more private setting.
4. Ample parking is provided on site for easy access. Large parking areas are provided at both ends of the site as well.
5. Architectural elements, such as brick paving and steel structures, reference a historic materials palette. These elements are drawn out onto Main Street and seek to stitch the two sites together.
6. Small sculptural elements are placed at the terminus of entry driveways. This strategy seeks to draw visual interest into the site and create a pedestrian scale setting within the plaza space that surrounds these features.

Drawings for Concept 2 can be found on the following pages.
Preliminary Conceptual Designs:
Radford Village Center Concept 2

DESIGN ELEMENTS:
1. Pedestrian entrances off of West Main Street
2. Pedestrian thoroughfares
3. Pedestrian promenade
4. Parking lots: 110 spaces on both ends (~40-50 spaces each)
5. Parking lot: 90 degree parking on both sides (~110 spaces)
6. Pedestrian promenade on east and west sides
7. Seating area (~20 feet below promenade)
8. Plaza space (indoor seating opportunity)
9. Outdoor seating area
10. Screening at highway
PRELIMINARY CONCEPTUAL DESIGN:
Radford Village Center Concept 2

Section Location Map

Section A-A
Horizontal Scale: 1" = 20'-0"
Vertical Scale: 1" = 10'-0"

Section B-B
Horizontal Scale: 1" = 60'-0"
Vertical Scale: 1" = 30'-0"

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PRELIMINARY CONCEPTUAL DESIGNS

Foundary Industrial Area Concept 1
The redevelopment of the foundry industrial site into a commercial and light-industrial center is predominantly informed by shared outdoor space, limited sized buildings, and views to the river. Thus the key elements of the concept are as follows:

1. Buildings are clustered around shared plaza space and parking to provide ample attractive views from any location within any building.
2. A pedestrian/bike trail that connects to an extended greenway meanders through the site and gives workers a place for passive exercise.
3. Native meadow plantings and natural-looking water features improve the beauty of the site and reduce its maintenance by limiting the amount of open lawn.
4. Where land has been cut for water features it can also be filled through the creation of berms throughout the site. These berms not only improve the topography interest of the area but also prevent the need to remove contaminated soil.

All of these features together can create a commercial and light-industrial center that is attractive to a variety of tenets in a way that can become a source of pride for the city of Radford.
Radford Comprehensive Plan Updates: Radford Village Center and Foundry Industrial Area Conceptual Master Plans

PRELIMINARY CONCEPTUAL DESIGNS:
Foundry Industrial Area Concept 1

**Design Elements:**
1. Shared plaza space
2. Native meadow planting
3. Connection to extended greenway
4. Parking access to each building cluster
5. 1 space per 500-700 sq ft
6. Stormwater water features/swales
7. Berm for added topographic interest
8. Berm for added topographic interest
9. Opportunity for future expansion

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PRELIMINARY CONCEPTUAL DESIGNS

Foundry Industrial Area Concept 2

The redevelopment of the foundry industrial site into a commercial and light-industrial center is predominantly informed by shared outdoor space, limited sized buildings, views to the river, stormwater collection, and recalling past use through material choices. The key elements of the concept are as follows:

1. Buildings close to Main Street are smaller in scale and much closer to the right-of-way; however, plenty of space is provided between the buildings in order to establish clear views into and out of the campus.
2. Clustering buildings into quadrangles wherever possible will make phasing easier. Also, quadrangles can be combined into one or more larger buildings with a central courtyard, if a potential tenant needs larger buildings.
3. Overlay circuitous pedestrian pathway on top of existing/abandoned railroad lines. Creates a unique experience on site and preserves historic character for future generations to enjoy.
4. Organize stormwater systems to work with pedestrian circulation patterns. Locate main stormwater retention zone in a central location.
5. Use large sculptural elements placed at the terminus of entry driveways. This strategy seeks to draw visual interest into the site, and create a pedestrian scale setting within the plaza space that surrounds these features.
PRELIMINARY CONCEPTUAL DESIGNS:
Foundry Industrial Area Concept 2

DESIGN ELEMENTS:
1. Boulevard entry and gateway (Page Street)
2. West Main Street improvements
3. Shared streetscape/pedestrian corridors
4. Rail line along Page Street
5. Existing rail lines reused as walking paths
6. Berms planted with native meadows
7. Stormwater feature
8. Overlook at stormwater feature
9. Large sculptural element as viewshed
10. Future greenway
11. Parking specific to each building cluster (~1 space per 500sf building footprint)
PRELIMINARY CONCEPTUAL DESIGNS:
Foundry Industrial Area Concept 2

Section Location Map

Section A-A
Horizontal Scale: 1"=40'-0"
Vertical Scale: 1"=20'-0"

Flexible Plaza Space
Abandoned Railroad Tracks Reused as Pathway System Planted with Native Meadow Planting
Stormwater Water Feature
Sculptural Centerpiece
Sloped Lawn Area
Pedestrian/Bike Path
Perimeter Road
PART 3: APPENDIX
APPENDIX: Historic Images
Radford Comprehensive Plan Updates:
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APPENDIX: Historic Images
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APPENDIX: Historic Images

Old Train Depot-

Train Station-1970-

Locomotive House-

East Radford Station-