



# Cambria Iron Works

LOCATION: Johnstown, PA

SIZE: 12 acres

FEATURES: Large Parcel, Flat Land, and riverfront Location

OWNER: Johnstown Redevelopment Authority

CURRENT USE: Mainly Light Industrial Manufacturing

PAST USE: Steel Mill

CONTAMINANTS: PCBs, VOCs, Asbestos, Lead

TOTAL ACTUAL COST: \$9.1 million

## TIMELINE

1848 Cambria Iron Works complex is constructed

1916 Midvale Steel & Ordnance Company buys the Cambria Steel Company

1923 Bethlehem Steel Company buys Cambria Iron Works

1989 Cambria Iron Works is considered a National Historic Landmark.

1992 Cambria Iron Works closes

1998 Johnstown Redevelopment Authority (JRA) purchases several buildings from Bethlehem Steel

2003 Bethlehem Steel files for bankruptcy and the International Steel Group purchases its assets. JRA gains control over 10 acres of land on the site.

## HISTORY

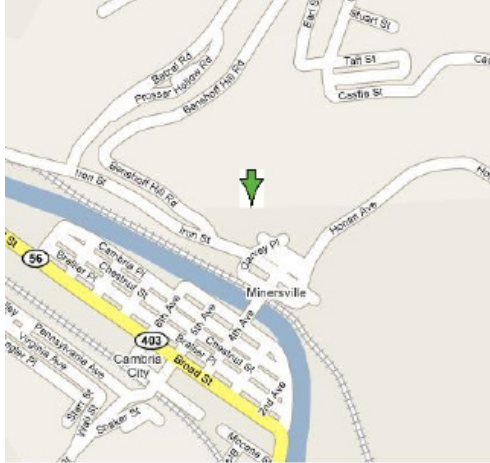
Cambria Iron Works was established in 1848. The facility attracted some of the innovators of the steel industry and it was also the site of several major technological innovations. In 1858, the Cambria Iron Works had become one of the nation's largest producers of rails. And as the mill grew, immigrants mostly from Southern and Eastern Europe, came to Johnstown to work at the steel plant. During the 1970s, Cambria Iron Works cut back its operations for a variety of reasons. The facilities were aging; there was a lack of accessible transportation; there was difficulty in complying with environmental regulations; and as a whole, the steel industry was hit by tough overseas competition. In 1989, the Cambria Iron Works Complex was designated a National Historic Landmark and in 1992, the plant eventually closed.

## TOPOGRAPHY

The 12 acre site is located along a Pennsylvania State Route, a highway owned and maintained by the state. It is also adjacent to downtown Johnstown. A rail service and the Conemaugh river are directly south of the site.



Photo courtesy of wikipedia.org



Picture courtesy of Google Maps

## MARKET CONDITIONS

Over 12000 people lost their jobs when Cambria Iron Works closed its doors in 1992. Johnstown was declared a “distressed community” under Pennsylvania’s Municipalities Recovery Act of 1993. Currently, the city is operating under a state-mandated recovery plan that promotes economic growth by diversifying the employment base. Currently, 400 long term jobs have been provided by the companies operating on the site. There are also 200 construction jobs present since the site is still undergoing redevelopment.

## SITE ASSEMBLY AND CONTROL

The Cambria Steel Company, which was first known as the Cambria Iron Company, was the initial owner of the site. In 1916, the Midvale Steel & Ordnance Company of Nicetown, PA bought the Cambria Steel Company. In 1923, the Midvale Steel & Ordnance Company sold the Cambria Iron Company to the Bethlehem Steel Company. The Johnstown Redevelopment Authority was able to purchase three buildings located in the Cambria Iron Works complex from Bethlehem Steel. Bethlehem Steel filed for bankruptcy in 2003 and the International Steel Group was able to purchase the company’s assets. In 2003, the Johnstown Redevelopment Authority gained title over 10 acres of land within Cambria Iron Works.

## ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS

The soil on the site, which was contaminated with significant amount of asbestos, VOCs, PCBs and lead, was encapsulated. The contaminants found within the buildings were removed.

## SOCIAL/COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE

The Johnstown Partnership, which represents local businesses and officials who work together to promote strategic projects for the benefit of the city and region played a key part in the redevelopment. This group includes the Johnstown Redevelopment Authority, the City of Johnstown, Johnstown Area Regional Industries, the Greater Johnstown Chamber of Commerce, and the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED). Through this group’s efforts, several federal, state, and local agencies have provided both financial and technical resources for the restoration and the reuse of the Cambria Iron Works Complex.

## PHYSICAL INFRASTRUCTURE

Prior to redevelopment, there were several existing structures present on the site. These were the machine shop, a carpenter shop, a blacksmith shop, an electrical storage building, a rolling mill office and guardhouses. The structures were salvaged and upgraded. Some of the buildings are currently in use for industrial manufacturing. Public utilities (water, electricity, etc.) were also readily available on the site; but had to be upgraded. Reuse of the existing infrastructure greatly aided in the redevelopment of the Cambria Iron Works Complex.

## COSTS & ECONOMIC INFRASTRUCTURE

State and Federal funding covered the cost of environmental remediation and upgrading of the existing infrastructure on the site. The public and private sectors financed the remaining costs.

## CURRENT STATUS AND LESSONS LEARNED

The site is currently being used for light industrial manufacturing. The site is only around 70% developed. The tenants of the redeveloped portions of the site are Johnstown Welding and Fabrication Inc., Quality Refinishing & Supply Co., and Samuel Plate Processing Johnstown, LLC.

One of the buildings on the site, the 1854 blacksmith shop, is set to become part of the Southwestern Pennsylvania Heritage Parks. Plans for the site call for the building to remain a blacksmith shop where artisans will perform their craft to let tourists see the steelmaking heritage of Johnstown and the art of blacksmithing.



Photo courtesy of epa.gov

## INVESTMENT / FINANCING

\$1,000,000	US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Brownfields Assessment Grants
\$800,000	US EPA Cleanup Grants
\$550,000	US Economic Development Agency
\$20,000	National Parks Service
\$300,000	US Army Corps of Engineers
\$100,000	Appalachian Regional Commission
\$1205,952	PA Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) Infrastructure
\$100,000	PA DCED Communities of Opportunity Program
\$275,000	PA DCED Growing Greener II Program
\$180,000	Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission
\$135,000	Pennsylvania Heritage Parks Program
\$252,000	PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources
\$460,000	National Parks Service Save America's Treasures Program
\$1,262,025	PA DCED Industrial Reuse Program
\$75,000	PA DCED Employment and Community Conservation Program
\$225,000	Southwest Pennsylvania Heritage Preservation Commission
\$500,000	PA Department of Transportation's Transportation Enhancements Program
\$150,000	PA Department of Environmental Protection Growing Greener Program
\$1,500,000	Building Improvements paid for by private building tenants

Completed by Ronald Papa, Summer '08

## SOURCES

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Walter, Debbie. Johnstown Redevelopment Authority. E-mail Interview. June 26, 2008.

Johnstown Redevelopment Authority. "Cambria Iron Works. June 27, 2008. < <http://www.johnstown-redevelopment.org/CambriaIron.htm>>.

Johnstown Area Heritage Association. "History of Steelmaking in Johnstown." 2008. June 27, 2008. < <http://www.jaha.org/DiscoveryCenter/steel.html>>.