Concrete: What Makes (Rehabbing) It So Hard?
Significance, the Standards, and (Public) Support

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Significance and the Standards
Secretary of the Interior Standards
Definition of Rehabilitation

"the process of returning a property to a state of utility, through repair or alteration, which makes possible an efficient contemporary use while preserving those portions and features of the property which are significant to its historic, architectural, and cultural values."
It’s complicated . . .

Significance, Integrity and Character Defining Features

• National Register Significance
  • Criterion C for Engineering
  • Criterion A for Contributing to a Historic District

• Integrity
  • Ability to convey significance

• Character Defining Features
  • Prominent or distinctive visual aspects that contributes significantly to its physical character
It’s subjective . . . Level of Importance

Average or high importance?
• Bridges of greater levels of importance should be afforded greater efforts at preservation

Important bridge components?
• Some components are more critical to conveying historic significance
Watsontown Bridge

Photo by jtfosterphotography.com
It’s flexible . . . Secretary of Interior Standards Guidelines Hierarchy

• **Identify** character defining features
• Protect and **maintain** those features
• **Repair** In Kind
• When unable to repair, **replace** in Kind
• Replace using **substitute materials**
• **Design of missing historic features**
Penn Street Bridge in Reading
It requires more effort and skill . . . Executing to the Standards

Walnut Lane Bridge over Wissahickon Creek – No Adverse Effect
Public Support/Advocacy

Greater levels of preservation interest = increased preservation consideration

People care about iconic bridges
  - Large span City Beautiful Movement (aesthetics)
  - Bridges with sidewalks that people interact with daily (personal)

Out of State Advocacy Groups
  - Historic Bridge Foundation
  - Historicbridges.org
Thank you!

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