

EAST BRANDYWINE TOWNSHIP

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Historical Commission

To: East Brandywine Township Board of Supervisors

FROM: East Brandywine Township Historical Commission

DATE: November 4, 2010

RE: Historic Hadfield Creamery Bridge on Hadfield Rd.
County Bridge #244; East Brandywine Township Historic Resource #328

Gentlemen,

It has come to our attention that the County's engineer, Ms. Sandy Martin (who is providing contracted services from the firm McCormack Taylor (MKT) to the county), is proposing a plan to demolish the historic Hadfield Creamery Bridge and replace it with a large concrete bridge at a total cost of about \$3.1 million. The Historical Commission questions the wisdom of the apparently unilateral decision to demolish the bridge rather than simply repairing it. We would like to bring the following points to the attention of the Board of Supervisors:

- **The structural condition of the bridge does not necessitate replacement.** The attached email from Ms. Sandy Martin, the County's engineer contains several misstatements of the facts regarding the bridge's condition and relevant transportation policy. Please see the opinion of professional structural engineer Jon Morrison, who has examined the bridge and provided expert comment regarding the structural condition and Ms. Martin's email. Mr. Morrison concluded that the bridge could easily be repaired for roughly \$300,000 to \$350,000.
- **Replacement costs are ten times that of rehabilitation.** At a time when State and Local governments are struggling to balance budgets and Citizens are struggling to make ends meet, tolerance for wasteful Government spending is especially low among the electorate. We are pointing out a potential savings of over \$2.5 million simply by repairing the Hadfield Creamery Bridge rather than replacing it. Certainly these tax dollars could be better used on some other transportation project.
- **Road and traffic conditions on this historic cart way do not necessitate demolition and replacement.** Hadfield Road is a narrow (12-13 feet wide) rural road with very low traffic volume – only 369 vehicles per day. This is below the Federal standard for a "very low volume road". The Hadfield Creamery Bridge is already 4 feet wider than the roadway adjacent to the bridge. There have been no accidents attributed to the bridge, according to the most recent 15 years of available data. Indeed, the current dimensions of the old bridge provide an excellent, slowing, traffic-calming effect, just like features specified by modern traffic engineers.
- **Historic Bridge legally protected by ordinance.** This single-span, through girder bridge, almost 100 years old, is a historically significant Class II historic resource in East Brandywine Twp (HR-328); it is the only one of its type remaining in our township, and one of the few remaining in Chester County. The bridge was originally built to support the creamery on the Beaver Creek Farm, then owned by Thomas Hadfield (the roadway's namesake). The creamery was one of six water powered mills along Beaver Creek in East Brandywine Township. The bridge is the last remaining artifact of the turn of the century commerce that existed along Hadfield Road in the early 20th Century. (See attached transcript of a 1979 interview with Walter Hadfield for more details on the history of the Hadfield Creamery and the historical importance of the bridge.)

November 4, 2010

Historic Hadfield Creamery Bridge on Hadfield Rd.

The County, as owner of the bridge, is governed by our ordinance and will need to obtain a demolition permit if the bridge is to be demolished. As a Class II historic resource, the County needs to show by a preponderance of evidence that rehabilitation of the structure is economically unfeasible. From the County's own cost estimates, rehabilitation of the bridge is economically feasible and, in fact, will save millions of taxpayer dollars.

- **The bridge is a potential candidate for the National Register.** This bridge is virtually identical in size, age and type to the Chandler Mill Bridge in Kennett Township that is currently on the National Register of Historic Places. Our Historical Commission has plans to file nomination papers for the Hadfield Creamery Bridge.
- **Federal and state funding formulas do not require demolition and replacement,** but will pay for rehabilitation. According to FHWA Part 650-405, regarding funding: "...The project requirements necessary to perform the major work required to restore the structural integrity of a bridge, as well as work necessary to correct major safety defects are eligible...." (see attached excerpt)
- **The County has violated Public Participation and Context Sensitive polices mandated by PennDOT and the FHWA.** The County has placed \$3.1 Million on the Transportation Improvement Plan of the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (see attached), and is moving forward with its set plans for demolition and replacement of the bridge without input from the public. The available alternatives were not seriously considered, a cost/benefit analysis obviously was not performed, and there has been virtually no discussion with the community. These actions violate PennDOT's Public Participation Policy, Publication 295, and violate PennDOT's Context Sensitive Policy. Both PennDOT policies are required by the FHWA, the agency that is providing 80% of the funding. (see attached to find the web addresses of these policies online).
- **The bridge is recognized as a scenic resource by the Township.** The Comprehensive Plan recognizes Hadfield Road as one of the few primary scenic road corridors in the Township. The Hadfield Creamery Bridge is recognized in the Comprehensive Plan as a contributing visual feature on Hadfield Road.
- **The neighbors on Hadfield Road and the local community want this historic bridge rehabilitated,** not demolished and replaced with an inappropriate, modern concrete bridge that would be 26 feet wide on a 12 foot wide road. An informal poll of 14 neighbors living on Hadfield Road in the vicinity of the bridge found no one favoring demolition of the bridge. There was unanimous support for repair over replacement.

The Historical Commission urges the Board of Supervisors to communicate, as soon as possible, to the County and to PennDOT that East Brandywine Township wants this historic bridge repaired and restored rather than replaced, and that the Township intends to carefully enforce the provisions of our historic preservation ordinance that protects this bridge.

Very Truly Yours,

John Black
Chair, East Brandywine Historical Commission