

June 18, 2013

Post Office Box 39  
Erwinna, PA 18920

Maya K. van Rossum, the Delaware Riverkeeper  
Delaware Riverkeeper Network  
925 Canal Street, Suite 3701  
Bristol, PA 19007

RE: BURNT MILL BRIDGE, aka Headquarters Road  
Bridge @ Sheephole Road over Tincum Creek  
SR 1012, Section BRC, Tincum Township, Bucks Co.

Dear Ms. van Rossum,

I am enclosing as an attachment an Assessment of the Historical Significance of the above Burnt Mill Bridge. While the bridge has been affirmed by the Keeper of the National Register to be a contributing resource to the Ridge Valley Rural Historic District (NR- 1992), it is my professional opinion that the bridge is individually eligible for the National Register.

Under Criterion A the Burnt Mill Bridge is important for its critical role in the early development and economy of Tincum Township as the only internal bridge crossing for 60 years and for its strategic place in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century image and travel-facilitation which attracted a significant influx of nationally known artists, writers and celebrities.

Under Criterion C Burnt Mill Bridge holds a critical place in the national bridge inventory for its ability to represent a very rare historic bridge type, a multi-span timber beam bridge on substantial stone supports and for the engineered design of the 1812 abutments and free-standing pillars. The bridge served as a prototypical design for medium and large stream crossings utilized by the founding German heritage families, whose members carried cultural, architectural and engineering ideas through migrations throughout the United States and Canada. It is significant to demonstrate the cultural preference and acceptance of open timber bridges on stone supports by the local German heritage builders as a permanent and durable bridge accomplishment. The 1919 deck replacement by renown engineer A. Oscar Martin likewise demonstrates the prototypical "repair" utilized thereafter by counties and even the Pennsylvania Department of Highways decades later. Martin's engineering drawings, both of the deck repair of this bridge and the measured recorded design of a similar timber beam bridge (now gone), provide verifiable period evidence of early stringer engineering, both timber and concrete encased steel I-beam.

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Burnt Mill Bridge and its later companion Harpel's Bridge serve as the only known examples of stone supports for multi-span timber beam crossings in upper Bucks County and, with Burnt Mill, the earliest example in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Both are critical components of several rural bridge collections of national importance for engineering: the Tincum Township wooden bridge collection and Tincum Township rural historic bridge collection. Both collections contain a very broad spectrum of historic bridge technology that contributed to the building of the nation, including rare, earliest, prototypical and one-of-a-kind historic bridge types.

That Burnt Mill Bridge is located in a nearly pure historical context of setting and historical association within the National Landmark potential Tincum Township and the National Register listed Ridge Valley Rural Historic District, coupled with its placement over a PA designated Exceptional Value Stream, demonstrates its crucial role in the Federal designation of the Lower Delaware in the Federal Wild and Scenic Rivers program.

Any significant alteration or destruction of the Burnt Mill Bridge would significantly impact the nation's body of knowledge on rural bridge technology and quality of life.

Sincerely,

Kathryn Ann Auerbach  
Historic Preservation Consultant  
610-294-8035  
[kauerbach@frontiernet.net](mailto:kauerbach@frontiernet.net)

attachment