



For Immediate Release

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WRA's Manayunk Bridge Trail Receives 2016 Preservation Achievement Grand Jury Award

(Philadelphia, PA) WRA's Manayunk Bridge Trail project was recently selected by the Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia (PAGP) to receive a 2016 Preservation Achievement Grand Jury Award. The award was presented to WRA at the 23rd Annual Preservation Achievement Awards on Wednesday, June 8th, at the Union League of Philadelphia.

Each year, the PAGP presents the Preservation Grand Jury Awards to celebrate the highest level of achievement in historic preservation for: historic building restoration, rehabilitation, or adaptive re-use; preserving/protecting historic resources in the built environment; sympathetic new construction or additions associated with historic properties; education or advocacy efforts related to historic preservation; and documentation of significant historic resources in the built environment. Winners for this year's Grand Jury Awards were selected by a board of nationally recognized preservation professionals based in New York City.

The Manayunk Bridge project came into being when the need for an active transportation (walking and bicycling) bridge over the Schuylkill River between the City of Philadelphia and Lower Merion Township was identified as a critical gap in the formation of The Circuit, a region-wide system of trails. Re-use of the Manayunk Bridge, originally built by the Pennsylvania Railroad in 1918 and currently owned by SEPTA, provided an opportunity to not only make that connection, but also rehabilitate and celebrate a structure that has been the icon of the community for generations.

WRA was the prime consultant and was responsible for project management, civil/structural/electrical engineering, architecture, landscape architecture, and project approvals. The project, led by WRA's Wilmington, DE office, was exceptionally complex because of the number of stakeholders (the firm essentially had nine clients for one project), six funding sources with varying grant requirements, and a compressed schedule. The design was required to accommodate modern active transportation needs while harmonizing with the historic nature of the National Register listed bridge; extensive photorealistic design studies were used to test concepts and obtain approval from the Pennsylvania Historic and Museum Commission. Furthermore, working on a historic structure with limited record drawings required flexibility in design and close coordination with the owner and contractor during construction to address unforeseen field conditions.

The completed Manayunk Bridge Trail has proven wildly popular with the communities it connects and with the region in general. Lower Merion Township residents can shop and dine in Manayunk and vice versa, spurring economic growth and encouraging more responsible transportation options. The project has been called the "crown jewel" of the Delaware Valley trail network.

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