



# 31st Street Bridge Rehabilitation

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A PHOTOGRAPHIC ESSAY

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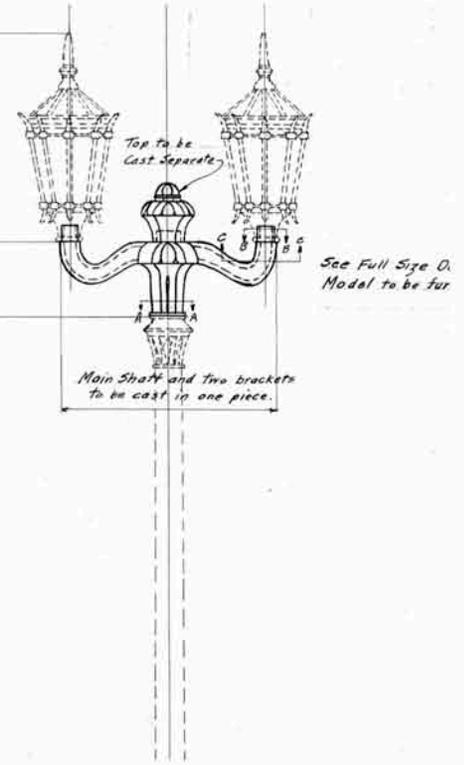
## 31st Bridge Rehabilitation

The story of the 31st Street Rehabilitation is a story of a region rediscovering the historic character of its bridges and other infrastructure that define so much of the visual character of the city.

Advocates within city government and historic preservation organizations have been struggling for years to find ways to save the character defining features and reclaim them from the modern world of chain link and jersey barriers.

With the advocacy of the Riverlife Task Force and cooperation of PennDOT's staff and the Baker Engineering team, the 31st Street Bridge has been reborn. In addition to revitalization of a key river crossing for vehicular traffic, it now serves and a new generation of pedestrians and cyclists reconnecting the new trails and revitalized neighborhoods along the Allegheny River.



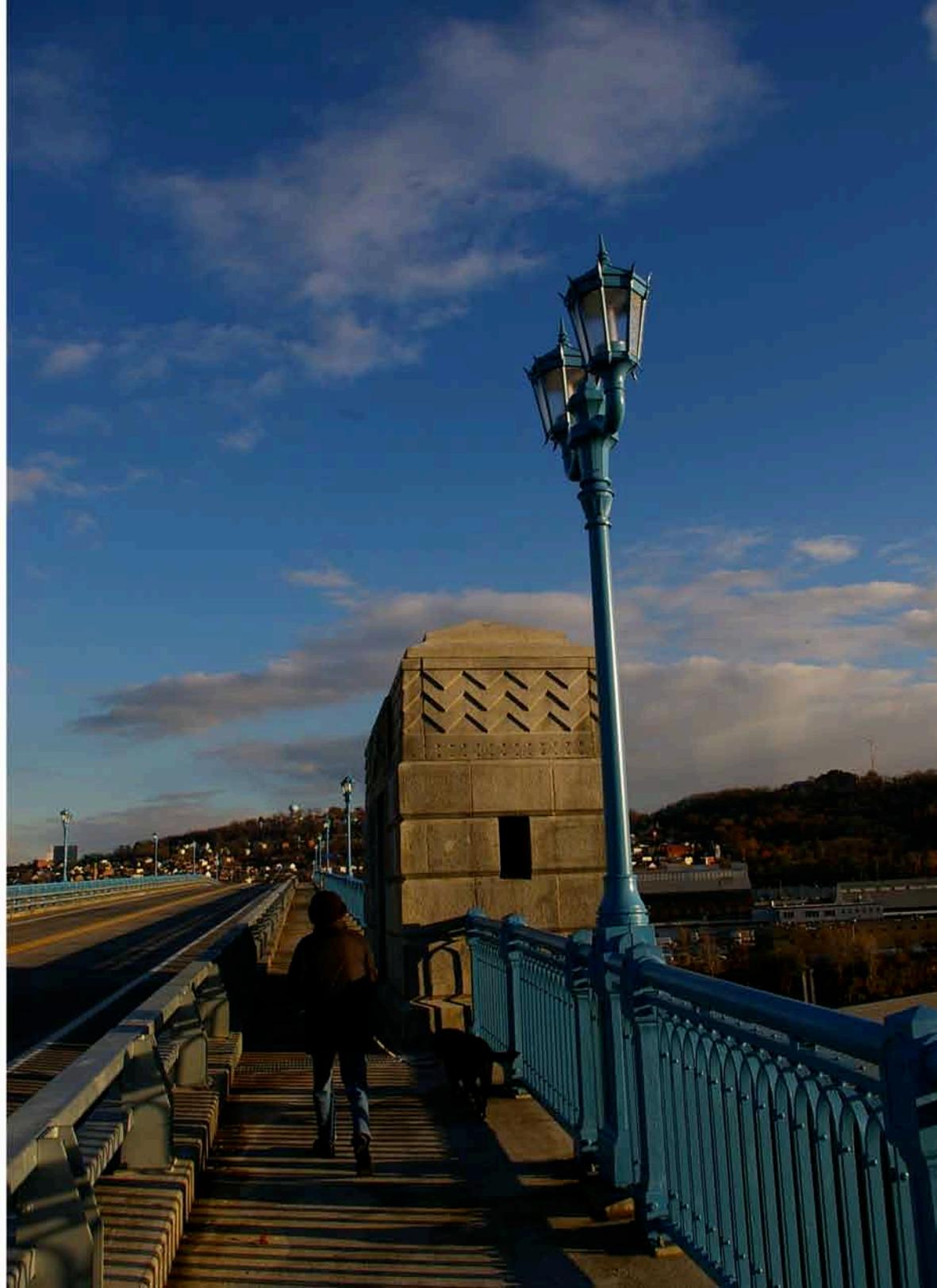




“There is nothing in machinery, there is nothing in embankments and railways and iron bridges and engineering devices to oblige them to be ugly. Ugliness is the measure of imperfection”

H. G. Wells



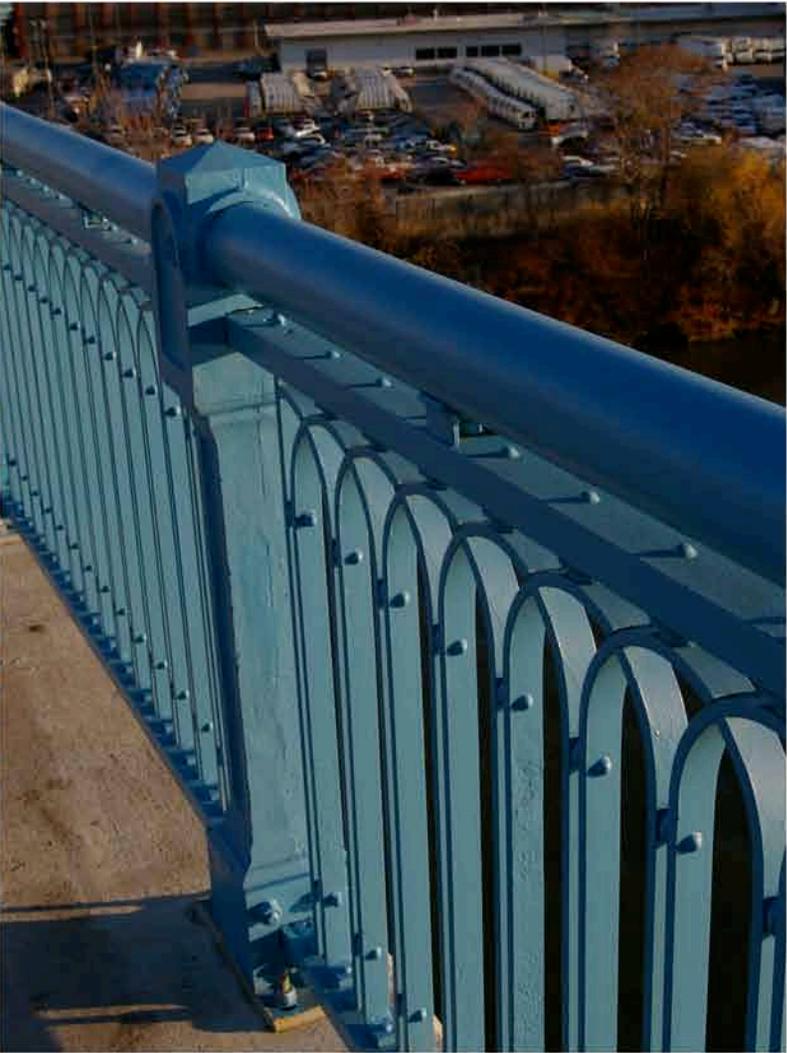
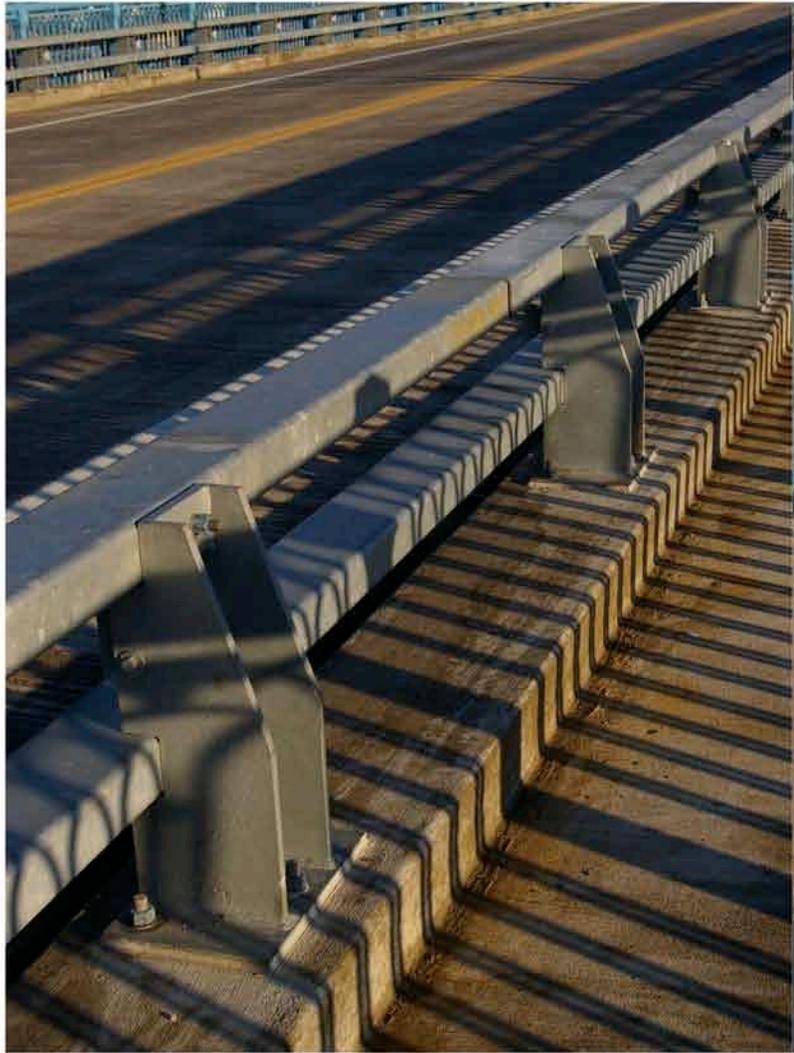


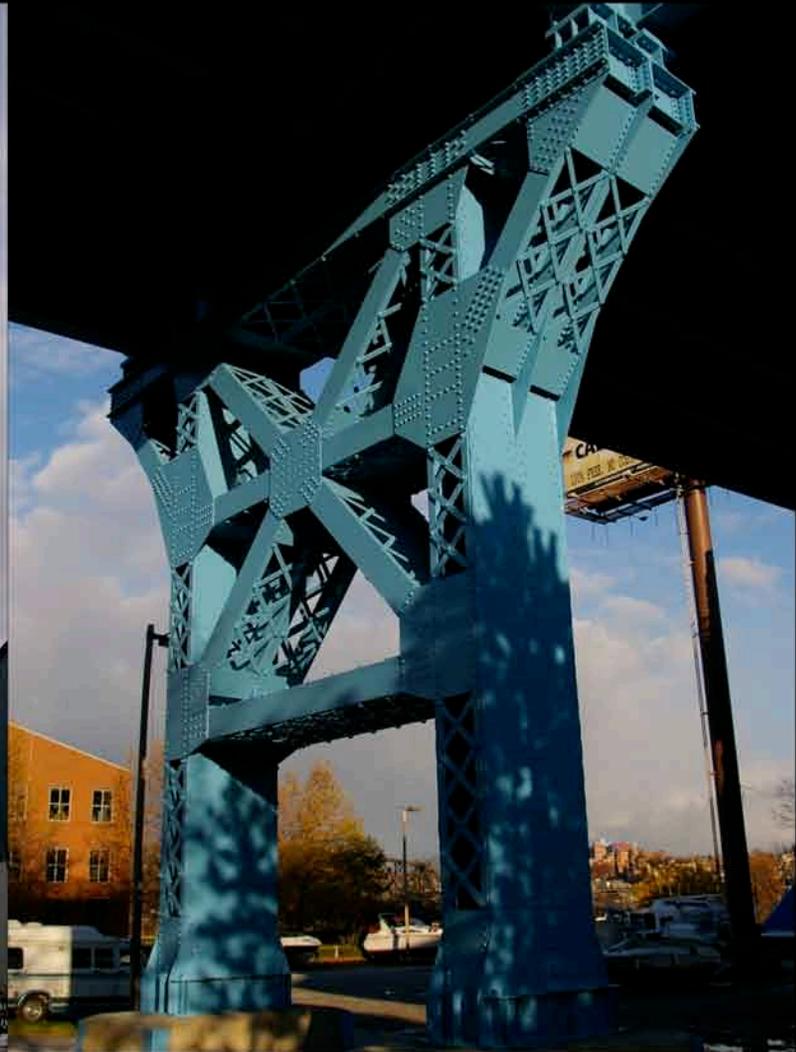








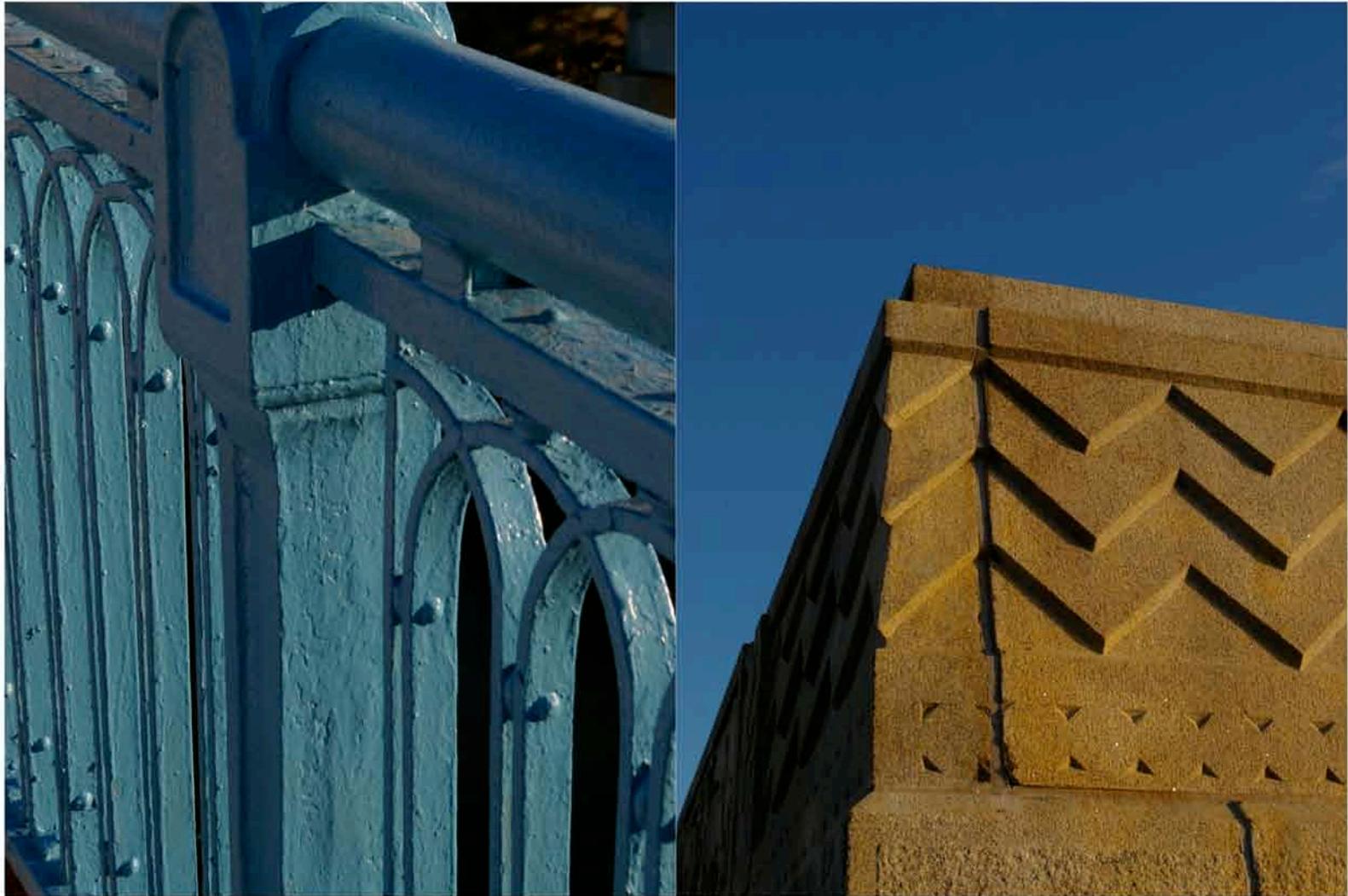
















## 31st Street Bridge History

The top of each outer pylon is ringed with a carved zig-zag motif. Toward the deck, a pair of eagles face inward on either side of bas relief panels. The southeast and northwest outer piers show George Washington in military uniform on horseback. He is led by a scout, presumably Christopher Gist, on foot who carries a rifle over his shoulder and has one hand raised in greeting. Another man is seated on a low stone facing a campfire. Opposite the fire, an indian with full headdress bends to one knee while offering a pipe to the visitors. Behind him, another indian in full headdress stands, holding a spear and carrying a bow over his shoulder. To the right, another indian gallops away on horseback.

The southwest and northeast outer piers depict pioneer farming and early settlement. Seated on the ground, a woman holds her baby close in her arms. A young boy stands behind her pointing at approaching visitors. With them in front of a small farmhouse are a pig and a rooster, while her husband plunges a shovel into the farm ground. Approaching from the right, a long-bearded man leads a double-team of oxen pulling a covered wagon. A woman sits in the drover's seat of the wagon and a dog walks at the side of the front wheel.

The steel superstructure is constructed of riveted plate girders. The three main spans are open spandrel 2-hinged arches having 2 ribs.

- from Pittsburgh Bridges by Bruce S. Cridlebaugh

Vernon R. Covell, County Engineer  
Stanley L. Roush, Architect  
Erected AD 1927-28  
County Commisioners  
Jos. G. Armstrong Chairman  
E.V. Babcock  
James Houlahen 1927  
Charles C. McGovern 1928

Department of Public Works  
Director Norman F. Brown

Contractors  
Dravo Construction Co. Masonry  
Fort Pitt Bridge Works Superstructure



## RIVERLIFE TASK FORCE

PennDOT Baker Engineers  
City of Pittsburgh  
Pfaffmann + Associates