

DOI: 10.24904/footbridge2017.10467

HE KŌRERO TAKIWĀ, HE TAKIWĀ KŌRERO / STORIES WITHIN SPACES, SPACES DEFINED BY STORIES: FOOTBRIDGE DESIGN CONCEPT, CHRISTCHURCH, NEW ZEALAND

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Keywords: footbridge; conceptual design; Vierendeel truss; weathering steel

Taking lead from Maori history, 'Stories within spaces, spaces within stories', is an art bridge that speaks to Christchurch's post-earthquake rebuilding on differing levels, harking back to pre-colonial times by embodying the eel trap form (Fig 1), yet, composed from post-colonial modern materials. With its implications of constraint and sustenance, conceptually encouraging the viewer to pause and consider the relationship between natural, spiritual and human world. From distance the bridge becomes the personification of a sleeping figure on the landscape, both motile skeleton and tactile flesh. Entering the enclosing space within, viewers will discover prompts for stories, and encouragements for reflection. The bridge is at once eel and trap, and the hooks that draw the user within are the bones that the thread hangs off.

This design concept was born in response to the North Frame Pedestrian Bridge (NFPB) design contest. The NFPB located in the heart of the city, along the Avon River in Christchurch, New Zealand (Fig 2), is the largest of a series of projects that aim to lead recovery towards a city that attracts people to visit and live, while retaining its unique identity.



Fig. 2. Eel trap, hinaki in Maori language, from the photograph album of the Whanganui River expedition, 1921, Reference Number PA1-q-257.

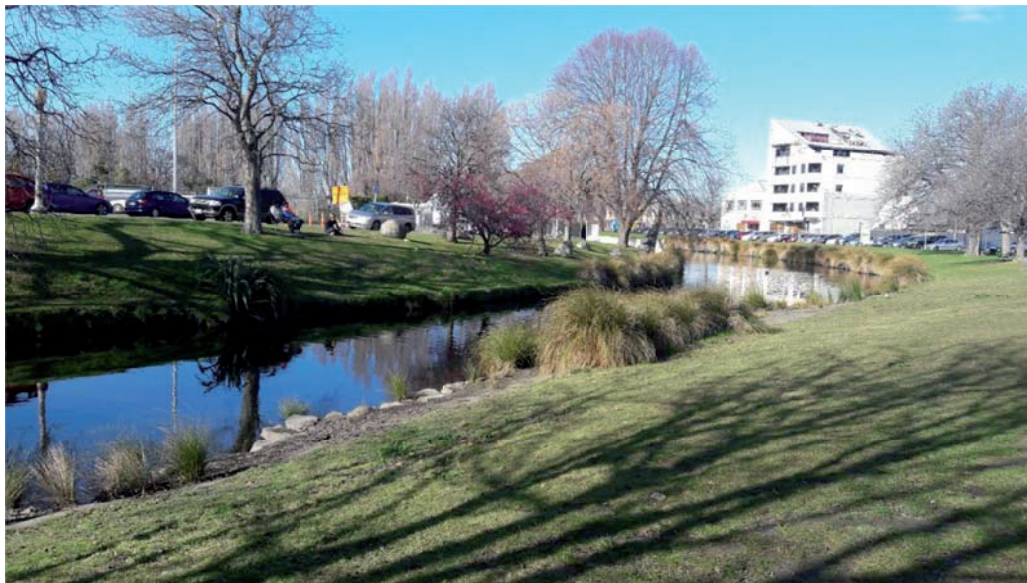


Fig. 1. Photo of the location for the footbridge on the Avon River, Christchurch, New Zealand by Gabriele Granello, 2017.

The structural system is based on a weathering steel tridimensional “Vierendeel” girder/truss, which perfectly integrates with the artistic concept of eel trap usually made of repeated rings, of variable size, connected by an organic net. Further design details could be after the bid disclosure.

This proposal is the result of an established design team of Engineering and Fine Arts departments at University of Canterbury. If successful, it will truly represent and embody the local and global, collaborative voice of the next generation of artists and engineers on Christchurch’s rebuild. By meeting history and local narrative with creativity, more than iconic, the bridge will become an art piece that will color the city.