

Great North Rd, Edmonton Rd bridge, Sculpture design.

Phill Rooke

The concept

When gathering information in preparation for the Ranui Community Centre sculpture I thought about how the area must have been before The Europeans arrived. The enormous trees that covered the Waitakere Ranges and the wide band of scrub land that ran from there down to the coast, no roads and the sound of birds. It is not with a sense of nostalgia that I think about the area but with a sense of wonder at the different life that Maori must have lived there. In the 1940's the first Europeans settled on the Opanuku Stream in the area that was to become known as Henderson's Mill. Their community would have been a small, close knit one of people trying to survive and achieve some advantage in spite of isolation and hardship. Their energy and imagination are similar to that of people living in the area today.

The Drawings

The drawings were done with this sense of history, place, community and change in mind. A sense of spectacle was important to the project but a sense of 'story' was just as, if not more important in developing the concept. I started with some drawings based on the many pictures of the mills, dams and transport that worked Henderson's Mill. Then moved on to drawing the people who lived and worked there. I have included some of these in the concept folio. People became the center of the 'story' that I hoped to evoke in the sculpture.

Lower section

In the early drawings the circular lower section would be of carved timber. The main feature that encircles the base are clothes that might have been worn by the early settlers and timber workers. I have used this motif in previous works where a different sense of history is created when the figures are not personalized (Drawing No 1:1 and 2:1). In the last drawing (Drawing No 3:1 and 3:2) the clothes and figures have been formed by square section stainless steel. The

intervening patterned areas are made from perforated stainless steel or coloured patterns on stainless steel.

Upper section

The upper section of the sculpture would be constructed from welded light gauge square and rectangular section stainless steel, approximately 20mm to 50mm (see drawing for an example of actual size). As can be seen in the earlier drawings this would be largely formed around various symbols and signs from the community and its history. The last drawing (No 3:2) illustrates how these become emeshed in a kaleidoscope of spaces and shapes. These take on significance in the 'story' as the sculpture turns and people spend more time looking into it.

Talking to the Community

As in previous sculpture projects I would consult with community groups and run some sessions with local school children to extend the range of images and patterns in the sculpture.

Position of sculpture/gateway

In the initial concept Drawing 1:1 to 2:1). The sculpture would be situated on the right hand side of the bridge as you approach Henderson. In the initial drawings I had intended that the sculpture would stand on its own foundation which in turn would be supported by the bridge this would bring it to a level above the railing.

In the final concept (Drawings 3:1 to 3:5) the sculpture is in place on the right hand side of the bridge when arriving in Henderson. I have drawn the out line of the sculpture *in situ* in drawing No 3:5. Please note the sculpture in this drawing in only an outline, for a drawing of the sculpture see drawing No 3:2. This sculpture would be situated on the existing flat ground at the beginning of the pedestrian ramp which at present is parallel to the foot path. This concept would require the repositioning of the ramp. In the *Precinct infrastructure Renewal Project drawings* the footpath would become a timber walk way. In my proposal this would be extended as decking out beyond the existing walk way to enable people to move around the sculpture. The timber walk way/decking would gently undulate, rising under the sculpture. Stainless steel elements of the sculpture would extend out

into the timber walkway. The practical railing over the bridge would be maintained and extended around the decked area, with the post of the railing around the sculpture continuing the stainless steel and the sculpture's motif. This gives a sense of uniformity to area and removes the clutter of railing that exists in this area at present.

A stepper motors would be used to turn the sculpture slowly. As evening approaches the interior of the stainless steel upper section would be lit by concealed neon or fibre optic lighting. Some of these features would depend on final budget and costing.

I have taken the view that the work must be a powerful and interesting statement for Henderson .

About the drawings

I have included some of the earlier drawings of the concept to give an indication of the progression to the final drawings.

Early drawings 1:1 to 2:1 I have included some computer generated images of this drawing *in situ*.

Final concept drawings 3:1 to 3:5 these include an in situ drawing

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Drawing 3:1 This is the initial drawing for the final concept. I have retained the initial idea but the lower section is now fabricated from square and rectangular stainless steel sections. The major feature of this section is the ring of life size figures that go around the circular base; these are no longer carved timber but formed from stainless steel. The intervening patterned areas are to be made from perforated stainless steel or coloured patterns on stainless steel.

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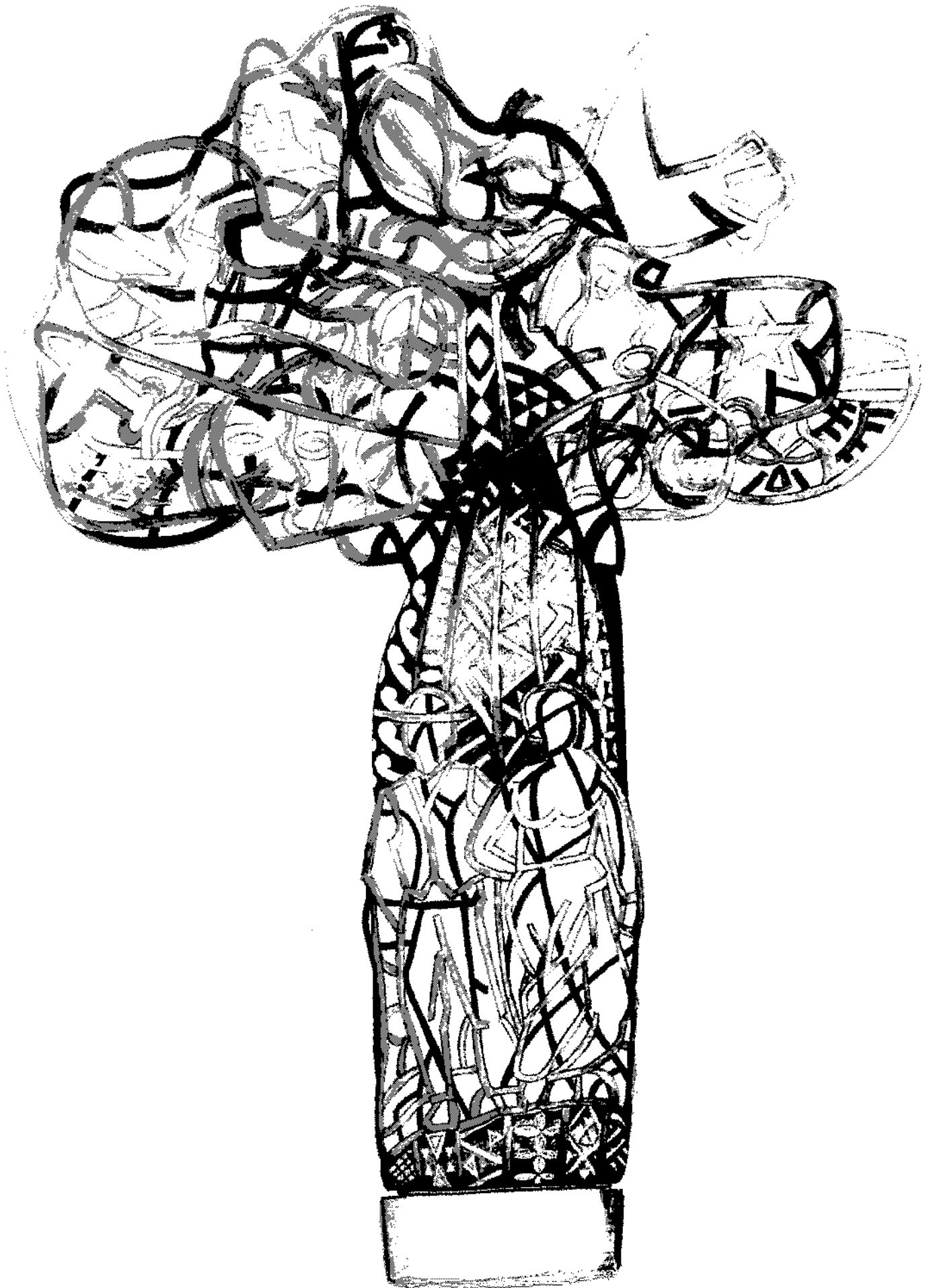


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Drawing 3:2 In this drawing I have developed from drawing 3:1 to give a better indication of the 3D nature of the sculpture. . A stepper motors would be used to turn the sculpture slowly. As evening approaches the interior of the stainless steel upper section would be lit by concealed neon or fiber optic lighting. Some of these features would depend on final budget and costing.

Scale 1:6

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P R O P O S A L

Great North / Edmonton Road Bridge

by

Jason Hall

For

Waitekere City Council

I propose constructing a series of hollow-cast concrete pillars which are intended to evoke colonial gate-posts or flag-poles. These posts will be attached to the outside bridge beams and existing footpath. (See model.) I hope the following notes are of assistance in making your decision.

The colonial gate-post/flag-pole form addresses both the practical and cultural nature of the bridge project.

Flag-poles were among the first objects to be made and erected by early European settlers from the vast timber resources that they encountered in this new land. While the struggle for survival and shelter must have consumed their every resource, still they found the need for the symbolic identification provided by the flag.

As life became easier and settler society more established, they/we began erecting decorative fences around urban property. Consequently the white picket fence and its posts became a symbol of Aotearoa's egalitarianism as typified by the quarter acre section.

My interest in this powerful yet somewhat anachronistic symbol emerged when I observed how closely these most Pakeha symbols relate to Maori pouwhenua. The link is formal (they look similar) and conceptual (both mark off areas of land, and thus indicate cultural practices).

By placing these forms in two rows along the bridge's span, I hope to create a gateway to the township that is sleek and modern, that references the timber industry and which resonates within both Pakeha and Maori cultures.

The posts will be made from hollow-cast concrete. This will keep weight down to a minimum, as well as providing strength and resistance to wear and tear.

The concrete I propose using is a new, yet proven material, containing ingredients that make the concrete "super-white", and which dissolve pollutants on contact. The result is a long-lasting white finish, and a nod to the Waitakere Council's commitment to being an sustainable and environmentally friendly urban authority.

This project drew my attention to the fact that there is actually a bridge under the road. It is such a utilitarian structure that it gives no visible clue as to its true nature. On the side view the graduated height of the posts form a symmetrical arc. The posts address this by mimicking the wires which form the powerfully iconic form of the suspension bridge (or perhaps the toothed arc of a great saw blade). Our bridge however, seemingly hangs from the sky.

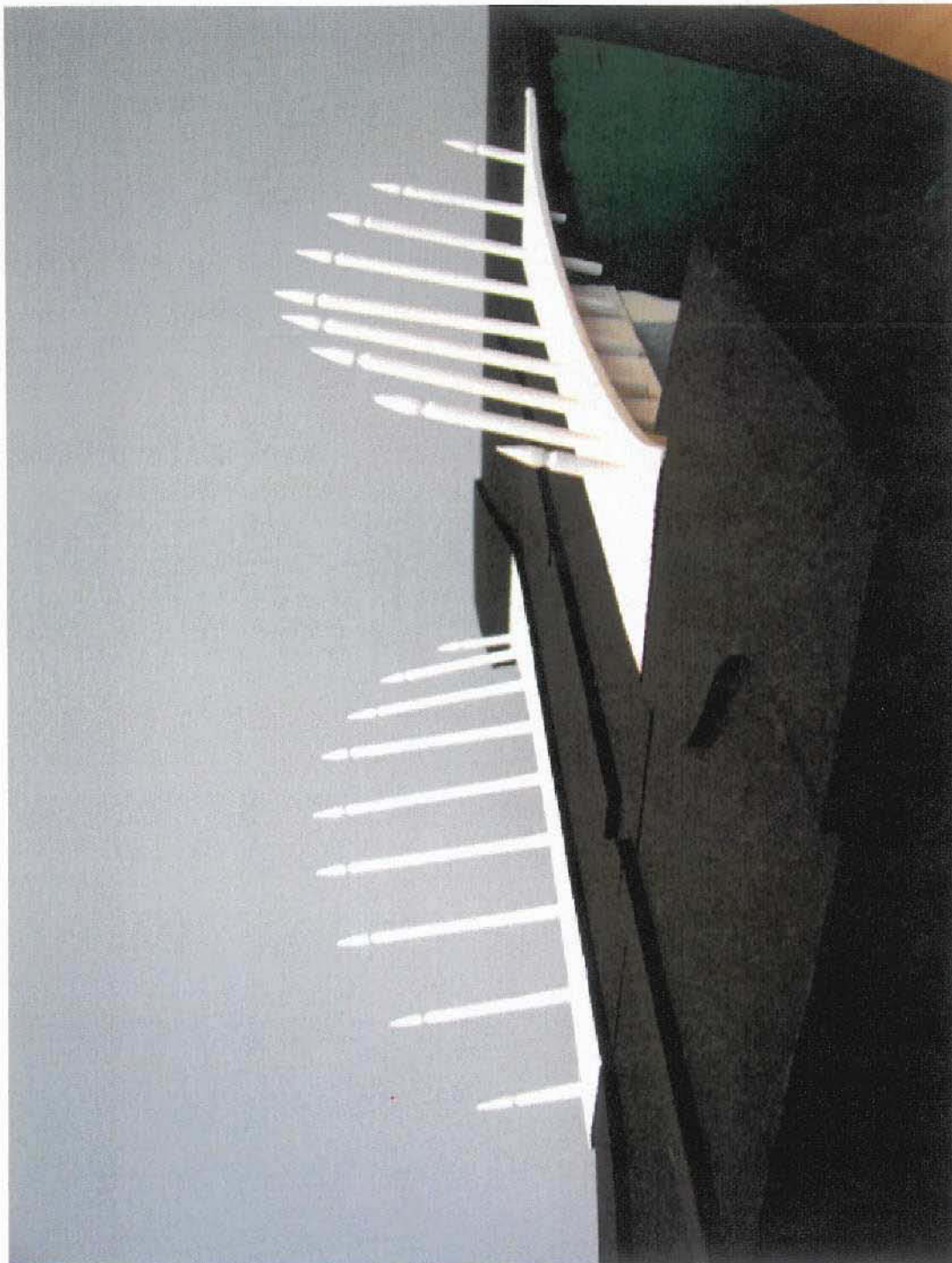
As you travel down Great North Road approaching Henderson and travel across the bridge the sculptures footprint is an asymmetrical arc. The overall form presents the

steeper face of the arc to the people about to use the bridge, visually drawing in and welcoming pedestrians and traffic.

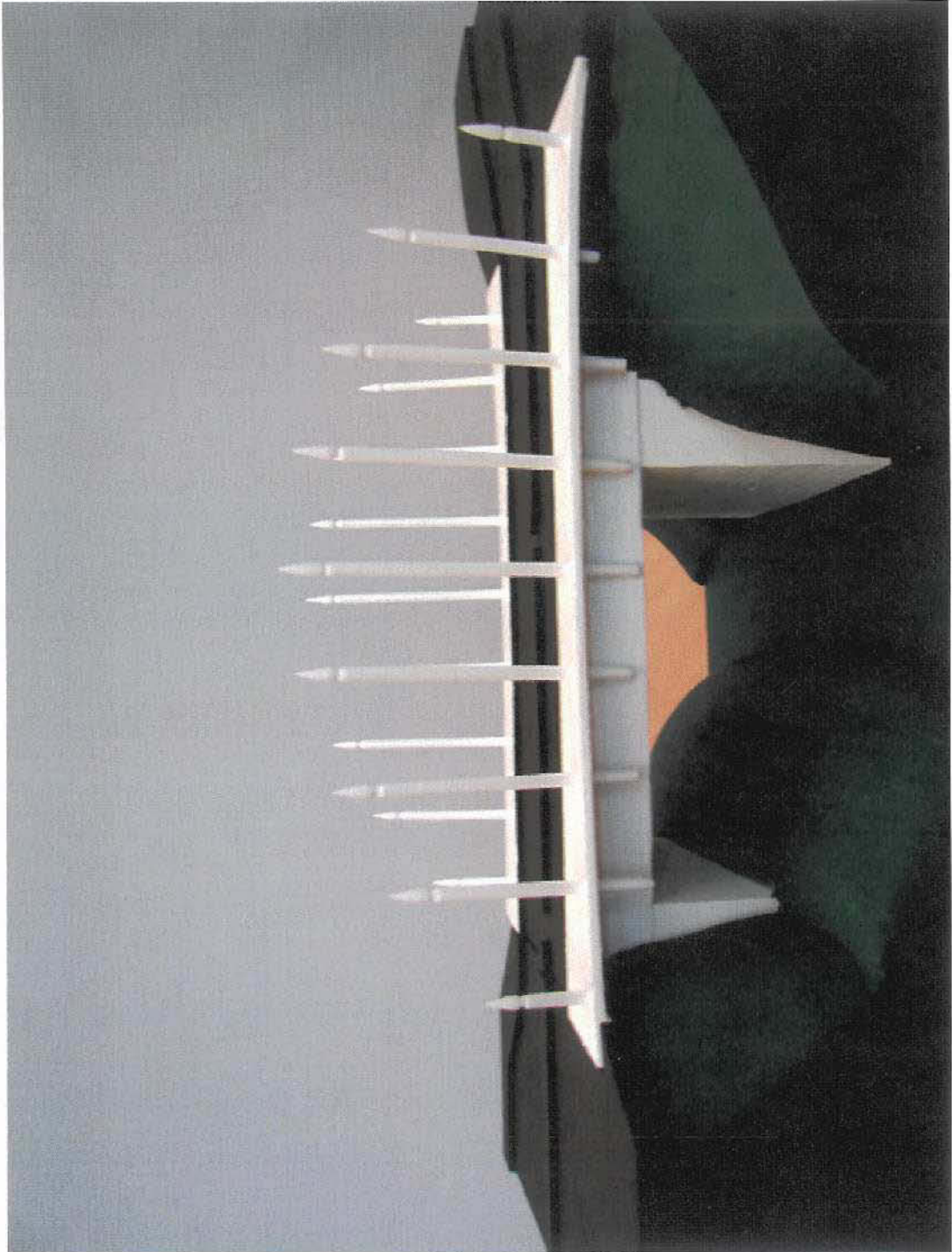
This requires a cantilever system of attachment to the bridge. By utilizing this system I expect to gain at least 400 mm extra footpath at the center of the span, and over a metre at the ends. This will create a more human friendly space for people to gather and enjoy the view of the stream and its native bush. Traditionally bridges have been market and meeting places, and I imagine in the near future people walking a circuit of Henderson for the pleasure of its parks, bridges and restaurants.

As with all urban public spaces, creating a safe environment for people is paramount. The key to achieving this is lighting. I would like to explore the possibility of having the top element of the poles made of a translucent material such as cast glass or blow moulded acrylic resin and lit from within. I like to imagine the poles illuminated, and illuminating the stream.

Jason Hall



A57



A58