

Bridge of Remembrance: World Wars and Earthquakes

William Fulton
Architect, Christchurch, NZ

Abstract

Christchurch, New Zealand, was established in 1850. It was a planned city based on a Roman Grid laid out on a slight rise in the Canterbury Plains formed by the Otakaro (Avon River). The grid of streets crosses the river multiple times. Christchurch is a city of many bridges built over different times, however the one that stands out both for locals and visitors is the Bridge of Remembrance where Cashel St crossed the Avon. The Bridge of Remembrance was constructed in honour of those who served in the First World War. The Bridge incorporates a Triumphal Arch with two minor arches buttressing the main arch and all constructed in stone donated by the Australian Armed Forces and sourced in Tasmania. The architect, William Gummer, was responsible for many of the countries WWI memorials. He incorporated much symbolism in the carved detail including Celtic cross, Rosemary and regal Lions. Subsequent conflicts from the Second World War through to more recently in Vietnam and Korea are remembered with plaques attached to the Arch and Bridge balustrades. In February 2011, Christchurch was shaken by a 6.3 magnitude earthquake that ruptured directly beneath the City. 185 lives were lost, and much of the cities buildings were destroyed or subsequently demolished. Most pre-1930 fabric was lost. The Bridge of Remembrance suffered damage, but it was deemed repairable and was completed for Armistice Day 2015. The Bridge of Remembrance was a symbol of sacrifice against human forces; It is now also a symbol of strength surviving the might of natural forces

Keywords:

Christchurch, New Zealand, Bridge of Remembrance, Canterbury Earthquake.