

## UNIVERSITY FOOTBRIDGE

Across the River Torrens, off Victoria Drive



(CD Ref 2835/93)

Described as a 'brave' design this bridge is reputed to be the first welded steel bridge in South Australia. Although the 1937 plans are signed by Robert Hall Chapman, the chief engineer for the South Australian railways, it is believed that the actual design should be attributed to two other members of that department: John Adrian Fargher and Reginald Bridgland. The design was made for the University of Adelaide by South Australian Railways.

Tentative plans for this footbridge were made in 1928 but the Depression delayed construction until 1937.

In mid 1936 the idea for a bridge over the River Torrens opposite the Victoria Drive entrance was raised again. The proposed plans were sent to the Council who tried to defer the project because its siting within the existing environment appeared awkward.

The decision to defer the project was leaked to the *Advertiser* on 17 June 1936. Not to be defeated by this information nine hundred professors, lecturers and students of the University of Adelaide signed a petition which was sent to the Council by its vice-chancellor, Sir William Mitchell, requesting that the footbridge be constructed.

The project was reviewed. It was then looked at more closely by the city engineer/surveyor whose conclusion was 'that the graceful curves of the double cantilever type, together with the web-like fabrication of its members, make it very sensible for this site, from an aesthetic point of view'. Consequently, the project was approved.

It was made possible then only by the munificence of the Adelaide City Council and a gift of £2000 from the Misses E. and L. Waite. The bridge features balanced cantilever construction

and consists of two identical halves which pivot on two pin bearings. They meet at the apex and are jointed by two lateral shear locks to prevent sideways movement. The two extremities of the steel spans are securely bolted to large concrete blocks built into the ground which act as counterweights to the mass of the bridge and its foot traffic. The internal arch span is 152 feet and the bridge is characterised by a delicacy of design complemented by light balustrading and lamp standards. Opened 9 August 1937, it was fabricated by L. Grove and Sons of Highgate from steel supplied from Perry Engineering.

The structure is a major element of the Torrens Valley, itself an integral element of the City of Adelaide. The bridge was constructed as part of the Adelaide City Council's contribution to South Australia's Centenary and was associated



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with the landscaping and reconstruction of the Torrens Valley banks between Adelaide and Albert bridges.

ACC *Digest of Proceedings*, 27 July 1936, Town Clerk's Dept. (C15) TC docket 1943 of 1936, record series S3; *Advertiser*, 17 June 1936; Cummings, D.A., verbal information, 28 July 1988; Fargher, P., verbal information, 28 July 1988; State Heritage Branch, *Bridges of the City of Adelaide* 1979.

The text in this Information Sheet was copied from the **Heritage of the City of Adelaide: An Illustrated Guide**, (1996). The photographs contained in this Information Sheet are a selection of those held by Heritage Services, in digital format.

The property described in this Information Sheet is included in the Register of State Heritage places. A heritage listing does not mean or imply right of access by the public to such properties.

*The heritage related Principles of Development Control as well as the Precinct specific objectives and Principles of Development Control are contained in the Adelaide*

## Heritage of the City of Adelaide

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*(City) Development Plan. These should be referred to in whole when contemplating any development.*

*Further information on the Heritage Incentives Scheme, an initiative of Council to sponsor timely and appropriate conservation action is available upon request of the Customer Service Centre.*

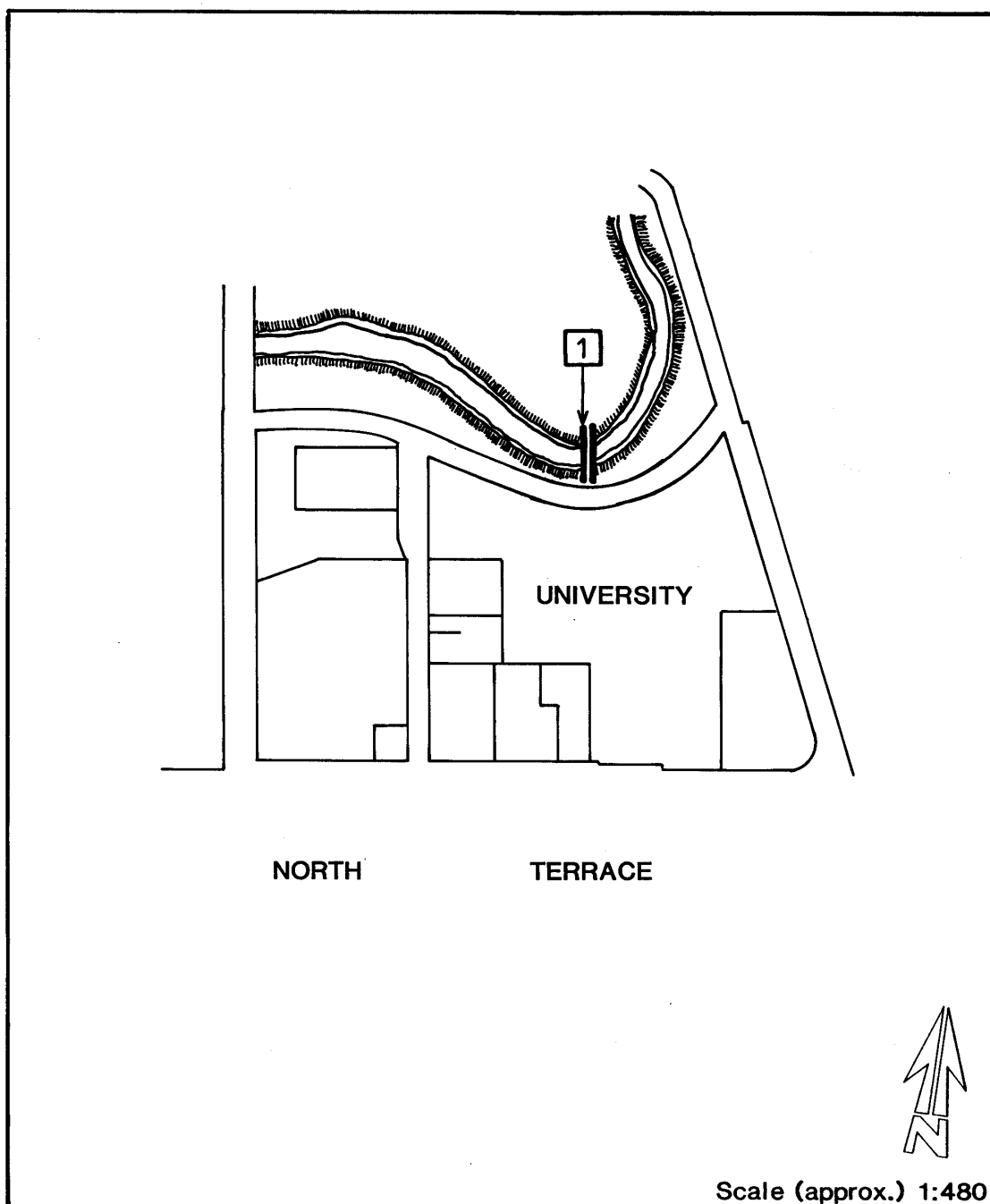


## CITY OF ADELAIDE HERITAGE STUDY

### The City Heritage Register - Definition of Items

Prepared by the Dept. of Planning and Development

|         |                                                  |             |
|---------|--------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| Item    | UNIVERSITY FOOTBRIDGE                            | Building NO |
| Address | Over River Torrens, North of Adelaide University | 123503      |



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#### NOTES:

1. Welded steel frame construction with concrete deck.