

MONUMENT⁸⁵

ARCHITECTURE & DESIGN FOR LIFE

Blue

THE WATER ISSUE

BUBBLE WRAP

PHILIP DREW ON BEIJING'S
OLYMPIC AQUATIC CENTRE

QINGYUN MA
ON CHINA & THE FUTURE

MILAN 2008

THE BLUE PAGES
WATER INNOVATIONS
FOR SUSTAINABILITY

WATERFRONT REVIVAL
WAITANGI PARK, WELLINGTON

BERLIN'S RIVER POOL

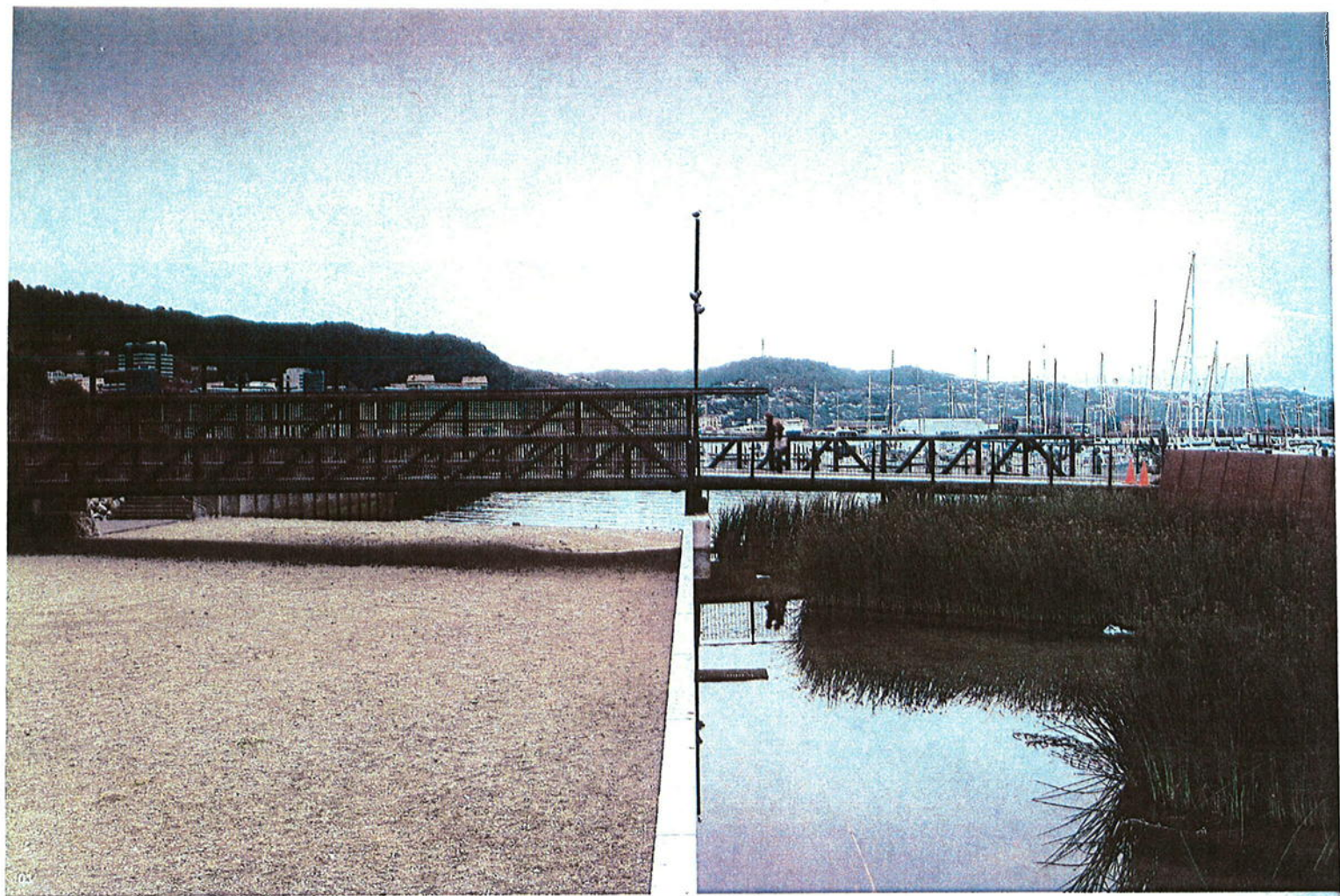
SCULPTURE UNDER THE SEA

EAMES' UNBUILT AQUARIUM

ISSN 1320-4115 • JUNE/JULY 2008
AUS\$16.50 [INC GST] • NZ\$19.50 [INC GST]
PRINT POST APPROVED PP 233867 00013

9 771320 4111004

textpacific publishing





03

back from the brink

TEXT ANDREW BARRIE PHOTOGRAPHY SIMON DEVITT

It was destroyed in the 1850 earthquake that rocked the city of Wellington, then left degraded and polluted. For decades this harbour-front site was a car park known as the Chaffers. Today it is revived in a joint project between landscape architects Wraight & Associates and Athfield Architects. Central to the scheme are water-recycling wetlands, playing fields and promenades reconnecting the city to its harbour. Now known as Waitangi Park, the area is a model for the future of urban renewal.



04

Biodiversity meets beauty

Waitangi Park includes a slew of environmental engineering features, and is one of the first projects in New Zealand to implement such ideas at a large urban scale. Water from an underground stream and stormwater run-off from the surrounding city is collected in a bio-retention system. Wind and solar-powered pumps move the water to tanks where heavy particulates settle out and grease scum is skimmed off. The water is then introduced into a man-made wetland of native reeds and sedges that filter out pollutants through natural processes. It then flows slowly down a slope towards the harbour, passing through a series of densely planted terraces to further polish the water. The sequence of water elements and planting combine with interpretive insertions, not only to make such abstract principles as biodiversity and using renewable energy legible, but also to show they can create a stunning and stimulating place to walk or relax.



05

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY IS now thoroughly mainstream in New Zealand. Ideas and attitudes that were the domain of hardcore greenies a decade ago, have now been adopted by kindergarten kids and suburban mums. I recently observed a group of volunteers at a fundraising car wash being berated by an 80-something-year-old woman: she refused to let them clean her Prius as they weren't washing the cars on the grass, instead letting the soapy run-off go down the drain.

Waitangi Park, recently completed on the waterfront of New Zealand's capital, Wellington, demonstrates environmental concerns are now quite literally at the centre of Kiwi life. Wedged between the harbour and the city, this urban park showcases the way in which sustainable design principles and environmental engineering can be integrated into the urban fabric.

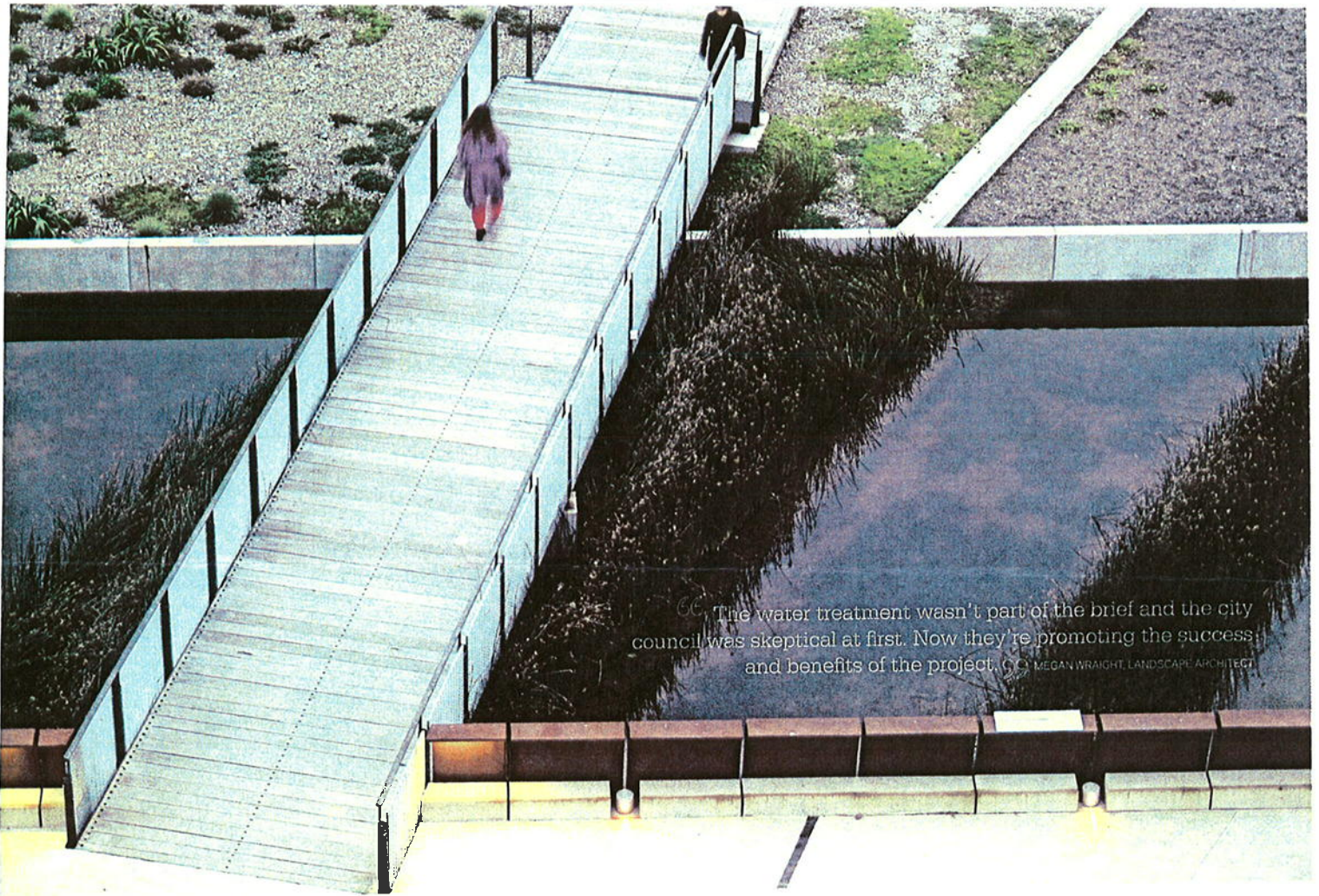
The park was produced in collaboration between landscape architects Wraight & Associates and Athfield Architects, working with specialist engineering and environmental consultants. The previously inaccessible and unloved patch of turf and car park has been reconfigured as an ambitious set of wetlands, waterways, and ponds that collect stormwater from the surrounding city and purify it as it

passes across the site to the harbour. In addition, the park includes two other key features: a network of pedestrian pathways, and a set of recreational areas arranged around a large open green space.

On the steep hillsides that enclose Wellington Harbour, flat open spaces are a rarity, and the park's six hectares are jammed with facilities including a sports field, a dock, playground, toilets and climbing walls. The park has few buildings, but the number of amenities creates a metropolitan density of use.

Tourists strolling the waterfront mingle with boom-box-toting skateboarders in the skate park and local children in the playground. "The goal", says Athfield Project Architect John Hardwick-Smith, "was to give the park a structure that was strong enough to cope with a large number of activities, but skeletal enough to allow for change over time."

Architects like to think of themselves as pacesetters in the search for new ways to live. However, with such rapid social change, architecture often struggles to keep pace not only with radical ideas but mainstream attitudes. Waitangi Park has leapfrogged architecture and landscape design back to the forefront, producing one of New Zealand's most convincing works of environmental and recreational urbanism, a truly 21st century park. **M**



“The water treatment wasn't part of the brief and the city council was skeptical at first. Now they're promoting the success and benefits of the project.” MEGAN WRAIGHT, LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT

- 01 Sub-surface wetland
 - 02 The stream
 - 03 Polishing wetland
 - 04 Storage pond for irrigation
 - 05 Stream discharge points
 - 06 Rocky coast garden
 - 07 Graving dock
 - 08 Street-side promenade
 - 09 The field
 - 10 Children's playground
 - 11 Petanque court
 - 12 Skate park
 - 13 Canoe landing beach
- Stormwater is fed into the park from an underground (off-site) culvert

01, 02 A bridge forms part of the waterfront promenade. A beach was created as a landing place for Maori war canoes often used in the area
 03 The skate park is designed to create intense recreational use around the park's street edges
 04 The rocky coast garden is planted with species sourced from the Wellington region 05—06 The last part of the water purification process is a pond that stores water for irrigating the park

