

# Transforming Falcon Road Bridge

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River of Words – Flanagan Lawrence



Transforming the Tunnel: From 'Bridge of Sighs' to a 'River of Words'

Our design re-imagines an uninviting railway tunnel as a “River of Words,” transforming the space into a vibrant passage where the diverse voices of local residents flow as a brook of stories. More than aesthetic renewal, it is a community-led proposal which re-establishes a bridge of connection while being a design resilient to the forces of decay.

This tunnel has long symbolised both connection and division: a link between two vibrant multicultural neighbourhoods but with marked differences, and on the historical site of a forgotten and buried river, the Falcon Brook. This duality is an opportunity to establish harmony. Our proposal, is a “river of words”: a typographic installation, inspired by the Falcon Brook that once flowed here, celebrating local heritage and featuring the stories, oral histories, memories, and hopes derived through the community engagement we have started and will continue. Our proposal is guided by:  
**EMBEDDING THE COMMUNITY:** The river of words is derived by our engagement which includes large-scale surveying to in-depth oral histories and a paid work placement for 10-15 young people in the borough with an interest in the arts / the built environment to be part of the design team. Our approach, which goes from breadth to depth of engagement, seeks to capture a range of experiences; to shift engagement from informing to partnerships; to create meaningful opportunities for young people.

**RESPONDING TO TECHNICAL CONCERNS:** Our proposal responds to community concerns shared through our initial engagement: that the tunnel is overwhelming, dirty, wet and drippy and feels unsafe; that the communities on both sides of the underpass appear divided; that there are maintenance concerns for the underpass; and that there is a desire for residents' stories to be told by the residents

themselves.  
**CELEBRATING UNIQUE BUT SHARED HISTORIES:** By unifying and celebrating diverse stories where the various borough's communities are represented on their own terms, the design aspires to foster curiosity and understanding, to create a space where all voices are embraced and feelings of belonging can emerge. It is an opportunity to learn about each other's backgrounds and deepen a sense of community.  
**CREATING A BRIGHT AND ARTISTIC PLACE:** Creative expression here inspires interaction and engagement. As commuters move through the tunnel, they will encounter waves of phrases, words, and stories that flow in the direction of the historic brook and mirror the motion of water—letters expanding and contracting in waves, phrases rippling across the wall, and words appearing and fading. Each section of the tunnel will be dedicated to themes that resonate with, and are informed by, residents of the Borough.  
Our 'River of Words' transforms this once-divisive tunnel into a meaningful passage, shedding its past as a “Bridge of Sighs” to become a symbol of shared purpose, pride, and community voices.

Project Collaborators:  
Social Place / Expedition / ARUP  
Light Follows Behavior / Gustavson Porter Bowman  
Mo Amedia / Mark & Theo Chaudoir

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