

**SPEIRS
MAJOR**

Bridge of Aspiration,
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**LIGHT
ARCHITECTURE**

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CLIENT
Royal Ballet School

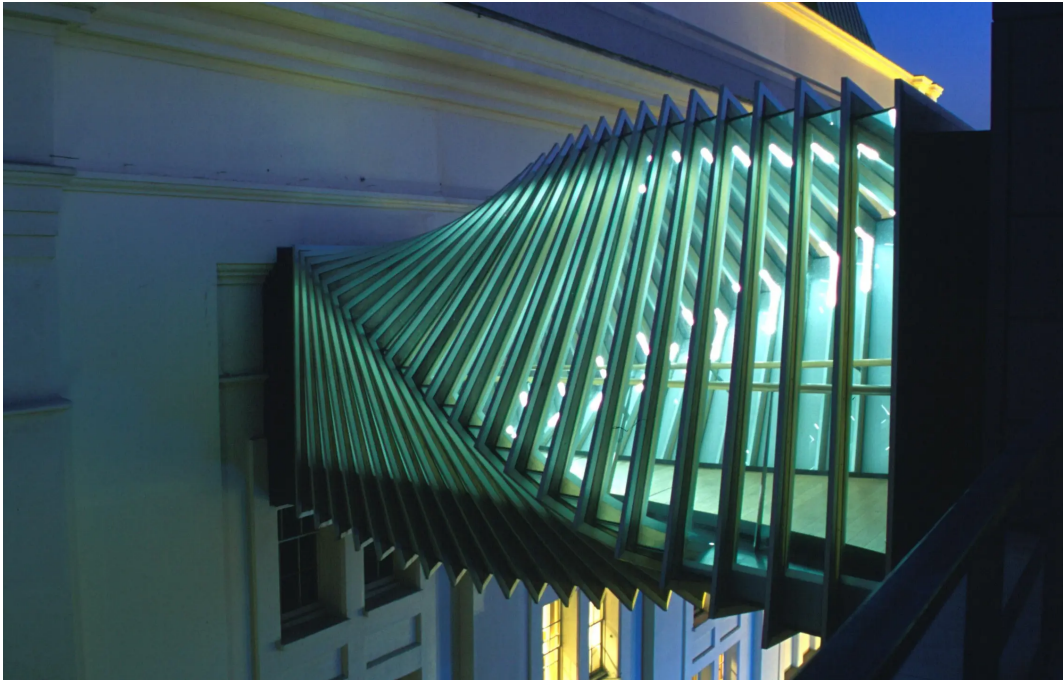
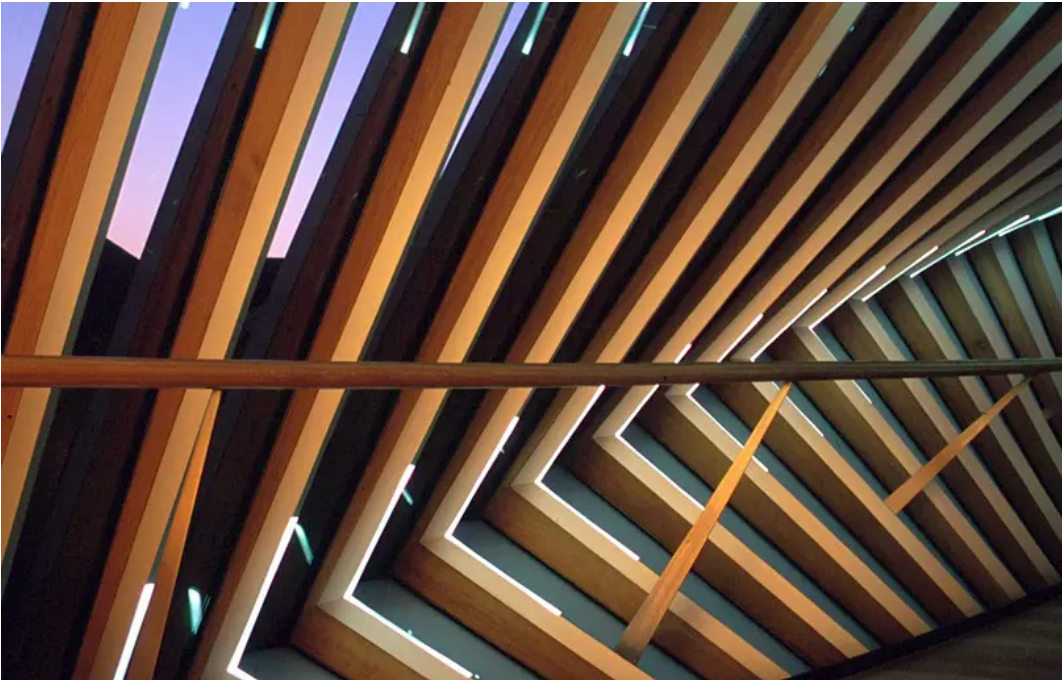
ARCHITECT
Wilkinson Eyre
Architects

STRUCTURAL ENGINEER
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Connecting the Royal Ballet School to the Royal Opera House in Covent Garden, Wilkinson Eyre's bridge is a dynamic, flowing structure evoking the grace and elegance of the dancers who use it.

The bridge is constructed of 23 aluminium frames which twist in a series of 3.91 degree steps, rotating through 90 degrees from end to end to create a concertina effect.

The role of the lighting was to capture and complement this sinuous form, becoming one with the structure. The emphasis was also on the users of the bridge, the dancers who would cross it.

Rather than providing a lighting scheme to be seen from the street, the planning authority wanted the bridge to be an understated element after dark. The award-winning concept graphically traces the series of twists with light using discreetly located, glowing LED elements.

The 57 custom-designed L-shaped luminaires – two square-section, mitred acrylic pieces, each 450mm long – are integrated into the corners of the inner face of the aluminium extruded frames. When switched off, they are invisible. The LEDs – two 1.2W white LED units – evenly illuminate the acrylic using the total internal reflection principle.

Opaque glass on two of the facades provides privacy, so that from outside the dancers appear as fleeting, shadowy forms. The structural beam on the underside has an ephemeral quality, its shadow rendered in a soft, cool glow. As a result of the lighting scheme the bridge not only maintains a soft, subtle and appropriate image after dark but successfully reinforces the architect's playful concept of movement in light.

