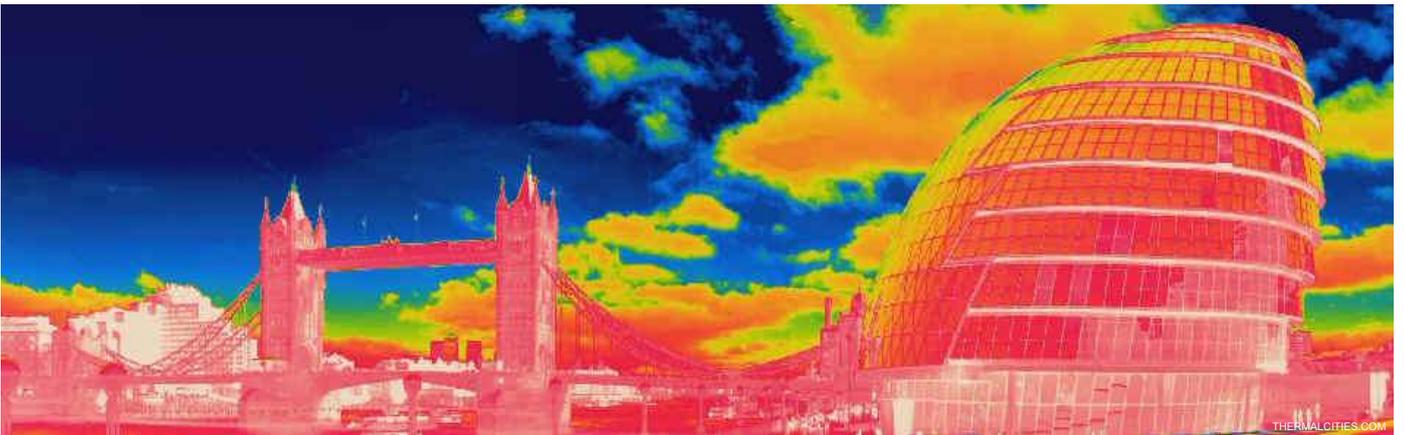


How to resolve the **URGENT** access problem
between Tower Bridge and the southern
Thames Path



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Introduction

Two narrow stairwells, one each side, link Tower Bridge to the southern Thames Path. Shad Thames; City Hall and Potters Field are increasingly popular and these steps are now often over-crowded. The eastern steps also divide the upper and lower halves of the Tower Bridge Experience and the City of London risks legal action in relation to the Disability Discrimination Act if it does not improve this access soon. For the reasons below, now is the time to do something. This paper explores why past attempts to deliver a solution may have failed and proposes how to get the job done.

Important information

- Being independent has allowed this paper to cover its subject in a way that would otherwise have been impossible.
- The primary objective of this report is to catalyse appropriate activity to improve access between Tower Bridge and the Thames Path near City Hall.
- The secondary objective is to try and raise support for a proposed contribution to the 2010 London Festival of Architecture, as detailed in the appendices.
- This paper will be circulated electronically, initially to up to 100 relevant people. These people are then invited to forward the document as appropriate.
- Due to various sensitivities, although numerous people have been contacted and consulted, no individuals are named.

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Summary

Tower Bridge's south east steps connect the two halves of the Tower Bridge Experience. Step free access currently requires a detour of several hundreds of meters. The City of London faces a serious risk legal action for failing in its statutory duty under the Disability Discrimination Act here, as a *reasonable* step free solution looks possible. The disabled, toddlers and pushchair-pushers are denied reasonable step free access on *both* sides of the bridge. The south west steps are now often too narrow for the growing numbers of people using them and as cyclists also carry bikes via these, between the Thames Path and Tower Bridge Road, future accidents look inevitable.

From assorted discussions it is clear that key people in the City of London, Southwark Council and the GLA (The Top Stakeholders) are both aware of the current access problems and see them as a high priority. However, for various reasons, speculated in the appendices, the problems persist. Workable (optimal, sustainable and probably pleasing to all stakeholders) solutions are available (*p5*) and the time to act is now.

This paper recommends that the Top Stakeholders all bear part of the cost to deliver improved access between the bridge and the southern Thames Path. As a beneficiary from such works, by virtue of the increased footfall and resolution of local access issues, it would also be fair to expect Berkeley Homes, the owners of the neighbouring development site to make a significant contribution. Southwark should be able to bring some pressure to bear on this issue, in the context of Section 106 negotiations with respect to planning approval. Funds might also come from EU & UK governmental sources; bodies such as the Heritage Lottery Fund, and sponsors.

Either an appropriate entity ('Action Team') needs to be funded to get on with the job or, alternatively, the Cross River Partnership could be directed to resolve this access issue as a top priority. (Does the GLA via TFL/LDA/Other have a relevant remit?)

Rough estimations indicate that whilst a budget of up to £3.4M is easily justifiable, total costs will probably be less than £2M. If required, there could be just a minimal impact on Shad Thames and Potters Field. The potential south east solution will also require little if any changes to the detailed plans that Berkeley are likely to (or might have already) submit(ted) to Southwark for the neighbouring site and improved access could even be at least partly in place in time for 2012. (*Images pp 14-18*)

If the response to this paper is 'no action', the existing problems will quickly get worse. Stakeholders will then bear a growing risk of legal action; in relation to both the Disability Discrimination Act and with respect to claims, where it might be argued that they have failed in their collective duty of care, to help avoid accidents. Due to imminent and potentially inappropriate construction commitments on the nearby site, the costs of resolving the south west access problem could also skyrocket.

Someone in authority needs to take the lead on this urgently.

This paper focuses exclusively on the urgent need to tackle access between the bridge and the Southern Thames path. For various reasons, improving access to the Northern Thames path is not such a high priority and can be looked at later.

Background – to the access problem – and to its urgency

Step free access between Tower Bridge and the Thames Path/Shad Thames has been an officially known problem for many years. Growing numbers of users, particularly on Festival days, are now also leading to the existing steps becoming an increasingly dangerous bottleneck. A 2005 study commissioned by one of the Top Stakeholders from a leading firm of architects (Haddon Few Montuschi) reveals both a longstanding concern and that at least a part-solution was identified, to augment the south west steps at this time. Subsequent studies have also identified a solution to augment the south east steps.

Since the 2005 report several ‘material’ events have taken place:

- Since 2005 under the DDA, the City of London has had a statutory duty to do what it reasonably can to avoid the bridge ‘discriminating against’ any visitors. London as a whole has also undertaken to become a more ‘accessible city’, specifically in readiness for the ‘spike’ in visitors that will crowd key tourist sites during the month of the Olympic and Paralympic Games.
- The completion of the northern riverside walk between London and Tower Bridges has greatly magnified footfall, just as the Millennium Bridge has increased traffic on the Thames-side walkways in that area.
- Potters Field and the environs around City Hall have become firmly established as major cultural and event spaces, with ‘more to come’ once the neighbouring Berkeley Homes development and nearby ‘Shard’ are complete.

With detailed planning for the nearby Berkeley Home site due for review, and within the context of the growing urgency of this access problem, now is the time to act.

Background – to this paper

A simple desire to make a useful contribution to the 2010 London Festival of Architecture (LFA) resulted in identifying the Tower Bridge – City Hall access issue as a potentially useful theme. Research into the possibility of making this the focus of a LFA exhibition was conducted and numerous stakeholders responded positively. Details on the potential exhibition have now been posted on the LFA website and are presented in the appendices below as ‘1 Bridge, Many People’. Progress to date on the proposed contribution to the Festival is also detailed in the appendices.

It has become apparent that, although many different people are keen to see this access issue resolved, the complex mix of stakeholders that have to be consulted and coordinated to deliver anything useful has got in the way. This is explored further in the next section. This ‘confusion’ (proposed collective noun) of ‘stakeholders’ has also held back developments with the proposed LFA project. This discussion paper is an effort to fashion something positive from the work to date.

This project has no political or any other kind of axe to grind and this paper has been written from a consultant’s ‘helicopter view’. Whilst not in possession of all the facts, there should be enough credible content here to catalyse appropriate action.

What an improved access solution could entail

A solution can be delivered for £1 to £2M. Calculations in the appendices show how a budget of up to £3.4M can be easily justified. *See the images on pages 14 to 18).*

The 2005 (discussed on p4) study referred in passing to ‘natural desire lines’. This is a key concept. People want to stay in sight of where they want to get to. The roughly 500m detour that visitors currently have to make to realise step free access between the upper and lower sections of the Tower Bridge Experience takes them way off of any relevant desire lines. From assorted discussions it seems widely apparent that locating a lift as identified in the images below is the best way to augment the existing south east steps. Given the City of London’s obligations under the Disability Discrimination Act it is surprising that such works have not yet been authorised.

To offer step free access and assist the many pedestrians wanting to get between the Thames Path and busier south west of the bridge there are also at least two seemingly *reasonable* (within the context of the DDA) solutions. For various reasons ramps and in-tower solutions are not practicable, but it would appear that English Heritage and other key gatekeepers would be happy to support a well designed stand-alone lift, to almost mirror that proposed for the south east solution.

If, in these cash-strapped times, this is all that can be afforded, it will at least be better than what exists now. However, in recognition of the special nature of the Tower Bridge - City Hall area, plus the growing number of people wanting to move between these two places, this author recommends a more fitting and ambitious alternative. It would also offer far more capacity and a potentially great architectural addition.

A horizontal walkway, perpendicular to the pavement, above the yard north of the Bridge Masters House, leading to a “vertical access solution”, would solve the problem of otherwise taking people too far away from their ‘desire lines. This would be an appropriately elegant ‘link-bridge’, cut through the existing concrete parapet, south of ‘The Chain’*, that would also likely meet with approval from English Heritage as its impact on the fabric of the Bridge would be clean and minimal.

The other end of this link bridge would stretch to roughly where the South East corner of the existing coffee house is today to link to the new vertical access solution. By installing such a link-bridge there is then an opportunity to develop the vertical access solution in many different ways. This would be a fantastic opportunity for a great architect to create an innovative addition to the Tower Bridge – Potters Field – City Hall area. It would also then be possible to install two lifts. Two lifts would both improve step free capacity and greatly increase the probability of there always being at least some step free access available.

* The Chain is the arrangement of large metal components that help hold the bridge up. The Southern and Northern-most elements look like massive blue girders rising at an angle from the bridge parapets to the top of the secondary towers. These are massive ties that anchor the bridge’s suspension elements.

An elegant arrangement of steel and glass lift shafts and accompanying stairs on the existing coffee house's footprint, linked by a link-bridge above the Bridge Masters house yard to Tower Bridge, would have minimal detrimental impact on Berkeley Homes' current plans. A solution here could also become a great portal to both the bridge and Berkeley Homes' new development to the south. Some cooperation would be required but the net result could be a massive uplift in footfall to the retail and leisure units planned for the Berkeley Homes site.

The one or two lifts here could operate either automatically or alternate between this mode and CCTV/control room control, making use of the existing security suite at the bridge. The lifts here should be accompanied by an additional stairway to augment the existing stairway, which is sometimes an increasingly severe bottleneck. Architects might also include an arrangement of ramps and landings, to further assist able bodied people with pushchairs and bikes to transition the levels without over-burdening the lifts and to embrace the site's position with additional viewing points over the field, river and bridge. This 'new portal' can then acknowledge how important Potters' Field has become as a major cultural and event space.

An added benefit from this solution will be how the 'link-bridge' above the Bridge Master's yard affords currently unseen views of the Chain stretching all the way from the top of the secondary towers, through the parapet and on down into the ground, so as to complete the structural integrity of the bridge (*Image I*).

A fast-tracked solution could be in place in time for 2012. The coffee house would have to be cleared (to a temporary structure, potentially for either a new site on the Berkeley Homes development or back around the finished access solution) and appropriate ground works and services prepared, but apart from this and the cutting of access through the bridge's parapets, everything else could be prefabricated and tested off-site, prior to rapid onsite assembly and commissioning.

A proposed short-list of prospective architects for this job is:

- Marks Barfield Architects (London Eye & Xstrata Aerial Walkway)
- Arup (Inputs to London Eye, City Hall & Millennium Bridge)
- Terry Farrell & Ptnrs (Great with both listed and new buildings)
- Potentially any other that might respond to this paper with a suitable quality 'creative response' that might then feature as part of a Festival of Architecture exhibition (*See Appendix 3, page 10*) if a venue can be found.

Marks Barfield stand out because of both the nature of their past jobs and their novel application of prefabricated construction techniques, which would be ideal for this project. However, Arup are world class architects and structural engineers that 'understand' both the bridge and City Hall, whilst Farrell and Partners have a remarkable sensitivity for listed buildings and have shown through past new-build projects, how their Thames-side locations can be enhanced through novel design. Any of these three should be able to deliver a fitting, 'world class' solution.

Potential next steps

Without immediate follow-up action there is a danger that this paper will be quickly forgotten. To acknowledge the urgency of this opportunity the Top Stakeholders need to meet; to put together an action team, who should then properly apportion responsibilities and clarify targets to see a timely access solution delivered.

Somebody with the requisite seniority within the City of London, Southwark or the GLA needs to take the lead on this. There are at least ten people with the requisite skills and authority in each organisation who will get sight of this paper and should have a sense of duty to try and be the first to make the next move, which will be to invite relevant parties to an afternoon's 'Summit Meeting'. Numerous other people will be sent a copy of this report and inaction will become just as visible as action.

Potential Summit Meeting Representatives

GLA (Subject to remit)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Access ○ Finance (Possible Chair as likely lead budget holder) ○ DFL (Public Realm Design) ○ LDA (With knowledge of 3rd party funding sources)
Southwark	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Access ○ Finance (Budget) ○ Planning 1 (Potters Field Area Remit) ○ Planning 2 (Section 106 negotiations with Berkeley)
City of London	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Access ○ Finance 1 (Budget) ○ Finance 2/Legal/Procurement ○ Bridge Custodian ○ Planning
Berkeley Homes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Dev't Dir/Mgr for local site ○ FD/other with authority to lead BH's Sn 106 negotiations
E.Heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Area rep with responsibility for Tower Bridge
Cross River Partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Someone ideally connected and qualified.

Putting together an appropriately tasked and resourced 'Action Team' now, prior to approval of detailed plans for the neighbouring development site will pre-empt potentially expensive and sub-optimal compromises. If plans for the neighbouring Berkeley Homes site are approved prior to a quick review of a potential optimal access solution, all stakeholders are likely to suffer.

The above process **MUST** have a high level champion and the ensuing summit meeting should ideally be 'process-managed' by a competent consultant; to ensure it delivers the required outputs and becomes a strong foundation to a successful project.

Who in authority will be humble and heroic enough to make the 1st move?

Appendix 1: Rough benefits calculation

Based on the following, it appears highly likely that reasonable additions to the existing access costing up to £3.4 million will result in a clear net benefit for London.

This attempt to estimate the value of improved access between Tower Bridge and City Hall employs multiple transparent assumptions and a simple methodology. To simplify things further this estimation does not account for any additional benefits to visitors to the Shad Thames area; City Hall and the More London development, or any other non-identified beneficiaries, so the total benefits value will much higher.

The average number of users of an improved access solution each year is estimated will be 2.5 million [The improved solution will encompass the existing access that will continue in use, plus any additions. 2.5 million = roughly one use of the access solution every 12.6 seconds, which averages out peak times when, at full capacity, nearly four are entering it each second, with night-times, when almost no-one uses it.]

The average utility value of an improved solution for these people is estimated to be 2 pence. [An estimation of the average each might be prepared to pay for improved access if micro-payments were made for every service we encountered]

The average number of visitors to the Tower Bridge Experience is estimated to be 500,000 and the average additional utility value of an improved access solution to them is estimated to be 12 pence, netted down to 10 pence. [There should be hard data to hand on visitor numbers and trends. The figure used here is a guess. The higher utility value reflects the fact that these users would expect better service having paid to visit the attraction in the first place. The netted down figure, reflects the fact that 2 pence of their improved utility has already been accounted for]

The average number of visitors to Potters' Field and the Thames Path that use the access is estimated to be 1 million and the average anticipated improved utility value brought to these services as a result of the improved access is estimated to be 2 pence. [This is the added utility experienced from the Thames Path and Potters field as a consequence of the improved access being there and is not the same as the utility of the improved access itself.]

The average number of visitors to the proposed new Berkeley Homes development, which will include retail and leisure units adjacent to Potters Field, is estimated to be 1 million and the average enhanced utility brought to this area is estimated to be 5 pence per visitor. [This reflects how superior access is likely to serve increased footfall and retail/leisure spend in this development.]

Based on the above estimations and assumptions the average future annual benefit value of a new access solution will be: $2,500,000 \times 2 \text{ pence} (\pounds 50,000) + 500,000 \times 10 \text{ pence} (\pounds 50,000) + 1,000,000 \times 2 \text{ pence} (\pounds 20,000) + 1,000,000 \times 5 \text{ pence} (\pounds 50,000) = \pounds 170,000$. This does not include reducing the risk of litigation in respect of the existing access, or enhanced utility for other non-identified beneficiaries.

Assuming an average future discount rate of 5%, the present value of an annual £170,000 benefit, based on an annuity calculation, equates to £3,400,000.

Appendix 2: Proposals re. sources and applications of funds.

Within the context of the above rough benefits calculation, the discounted lifetime value of such a project to the proposed key beneficiaries will be at least:

- London as a whole (= users of bridge = £50K/5% = £1M)
- City of London (= Bridge experience visitors = £50K/5% = £1M)
- Southwark (= Path and Potters Field = £20K/5% = £400K)
- Berkeley Homes (= enhanced yields = £50K/5% = £1M)

This may be a useful starting point for negotiations with regard to sourcing cash for an initial 'pot of funds' to which additional funding could then be attracted.

Given the prime location – between London's seat of government and one of its most iconic landmarks – the access solution could be ideal for sponsorship. Sponsors would have to be appropriate and prepared to make a substantial contribution (Say £500K) to have the new access named after them for a finite period (Say 20 years – which at an estimated 2.5 million users p.a. = 1 penny per direct user PLUS the bigger benefit of having the sponsor's name mentioned repeatedly elsewhere, linked to this new access)

Other potential sources of funds are then various charities, including the National Lottery Heritage Fund and regional, central and European governmental funds.

How a budget of around £1-2 million could be allocated.

The Tower Bridge location is special. Not only will any solution have to be 'world class' to fit in with its surroundings and satisfy English Heritage, it will also have to be both highly reliable and satisfy any potential concerns with public security.

A quick telephone survey revealed that an exterior glass and steel 8-10 person lift and shaft for a 6m drop has a ballpark cost range of £100-200K. If we assume £300K for appropriately top end and secure units, 3 units will cost £900K. This would still leave £600K for the construction of a link-bridge, landing platform and stairs for the South Western access, plus £500K for other project costs.

Note that the Golden Jubilee Bridges, where usage for each bridge was estimated would be 3.5 million per year, only have 1 lift at each end. With only one lift for the South Western access and careful design, the budget could be paired down to £1.5M. A basic solution as indicated in Image G could probably be delivered for under £1M.

Given that the value of improved access estimated for this site is well in excess of £3M and given its visibility, if there is to be any 'flexing' of a budget for this project, this paper recommends that it is upwards and that architects are given a freer rein.

Appendix 3: "1 Bridge Many People" – progress and future

The impetus behind this paper was an idea for a contribution to the 2010 London Festival of Architecture. During research for this it quickly became apparent that, whilst many stakeholders would like to see a solution implemented, the problem is seen as hellishly intractable (This paper is a personal attempt to rise to the challenge) . The current description for the original idea on the Festival of Architecture website, at http://www.lfa2010.org/event.php?id=16&name=_1_bridge_many_people_ is:

Pedestrian access between the upstream side of Tower Bridge and City Hall is a widely known problem. Not only is there no step-free access, but the steps are also narrow and a major bottleneck to the masses of able bodied people that negotiate them. "1 Bridge, Many People", will map the constraints impacting any solution and invite architects and engineers to present their "creative responses" to these.

The ensuing exhibition will comprise three sections. Section 1 will "drill into" the Tower Bridge to City Hall access problem. It will identify the numerous considerations that have to be resolved when looking at retrofitting an accessibility solution, in such a sensitive setting. This section will include printed material and, subject to support; a 3D model of Tower Bridge/Potters field, plus additional video.

Section 2 will be the "creative responses" that come in from the architects, engineers and students that choose to respond to the brief as detailed in Section 1. Responses could range from serious to fanciful and from basic sketches through to digital and physical models.

Section 3 will focus on case studies of how accessibility solutions have been retrofitted into architecturally sensitive environments elsewhere. This section could include print and video matter, plus a variety of accessibility artefacts. These case studies could potentially come from anywhere in the world.

This is a very early stage proposal. Several key stakeholders have been contacted and their responses have been extremely enthusiastic. Numerous additional steps will now be pursued to try and make this project happen; formalise the proposal by the March deadline and ensure that the ensuing exhibition is a great success for all concerned.

Following an initial flurry of meetings and telephone calls progress started grinding to a halt when (November 09 on) information promised from 1 stakeholder was not forthcoming. Also, despite making multiple contacts, nobody has yet volunteered a physical exhibition space. Most stakeholders have been very helpful (within the constraints of their authority) and Design for London even hosted a meeting. Through this feedback, the focus of interest has shifted to access between the Bridge and southern Thames path in general. Via the Access Officers at the GLA and City of London there is also a growing body of people interested in 'Section 3' of the original concept. The idea going forward is therefore to try and 'catalyse' both an 'access solution' and, with respect to the LFA, to try and at least mount a small 'section 3' type exhibition, as described above. If through this paper, the proposed shortlisted architects (and possibly others) volunteer to work up some proposals to also feature in the exhibition, so much the better. Anyone got a free venue for the LFA 2010?

Appendix 4: Exploring why nothing has been achieved to date

Although it is impossible to provide an accurate account of why this problem persists, there are multiple plausible possibilities. As others who have dealt with public realm projects observe, their problem is that so many different people have to be consulted.

Even though the Top Stakeholders are aware of an urgent need to improve pedestrian access between Tower Bridge and City Hall, each may be fearful of establishing an assortment of potentially expensive precedents, were it to make the first move. This appendix explores the apparent intractability of these problems to find a way forward.

Most of this section is speculation, based on the nuances of many different conversations and notes. Explored below are the probable 'organisational stances': the perceived 'party lines' that, even if contrary to their own views, individual representatives within each of the Top Stakeholders feel they ought to follow.

Possibly surprisingly, cost is not seen as a problem. The £2M that an access solution will cost is easily justifiable and, given the growing dangers/risks inherent in the existing steps, this is a budget that should be found quickly: even with strict spending constraints, at it will pre-empt potentially far greater costs down the line.

Pervading perspectives?

It is probable that Southwark and the GLA see the onus for resolving this access problem as resting squarely with the City of London. The City is seen as both the bridge owner and responsible for the Tower Bridge Experience tourist attraction. Given that the Disability Discrimination Act requires building owners to undertake reasonable efforts to ensure their buildings are fully accessible, Southwark and the GLA have a strong argument with respect to the Tower Bridge Experience. Step free access between the two halves of the Tower Bridge Experience currently involves a long walk of several hundred meters.

What would happen if a leading barrister broke their hip in a slip and fall on the existing steps? Who would they go after? Although the steps lead to the borough of Southwark, they are part of Tower Bridge. Southwark and the GLA might take comfort from the fact that the City of London is most likely to be regarded as the primary responsible party. However, in seeking to mitigate its exposure to such action the City of London is likely to have a strong defence by arguing that any resolution of the current access problem would require support from the other Top Stakeholders so that it could only ever be regarded as one of several jointly responsible parties.

The Top Stakeholders could try and jointly defend their interests by suggesting it is unreasonable to expect them to work together to collectively resolve this problem, but such an argument comes dangerously close to an admission of collective negligence. Such an argument might also not stand up at all if it can be shown that the Cross River Partnership already has a remit to identify and resolve such problems. (Does it?)

The establishment of a special action team with a remit to resolve this access issue could both clarify an appropriate apportionment of costs across the Top Stakeholders

and other funding sources, and limit exposure to potential future litigation as a result of it representing their timely and best efforts to get a solution in place.

An artefact of legal boundaries?

It is not so much the City of London but everybody else, including Southwark and the GLA that will be the principal beneficiaries of any improved access between Tower Bridge and southern Thames Path. Although a precious jewel, Tower Bridge (unlike the old London Bridge) is not a tradable asset. Whilst of great prestige, the bridge is probably a major administrative and financial burden.

The City of London's view is probably that, within the context of its obligations under the Disability Discrimination Act with respect to the Tower Bridge Experience, a cost benefit analysis of any potential access solutions weighs heavily in favour of doing nothing. Were a broader based cost benefit analysis to be conducted, it would undoubtedly be strongly in favour on one being implemented, because there are so many other benefits to be accounted for.

A rough benefits analysis is presented in the appendix and proposes that any solution with a total cost of up to £3.4M should be of a clear net public benefit to London.

Fear of possible legal ramifications?

Legal counsel for the City of London might be advising staff to not acknowledge the current access issues for fear that this will be seen as a potential admission of liability, both for the costs of resolving them, plus any consequential liabilities with respect to people having 'problems' with the current steps, before access is upgraded.

The City of London and others might also be fearful that, by demonstrating 'reasonable means' were available to resolve the Tower Bridge – Southern Thames Path access problems, potential legal action with respect to the many other bridge to Thames access-ways that could potentially be improved, becomes more likely.

As above, a costs benefits analysis should show that, from a City of London only perspective, there was a reasonable case for doing nothing, bar managing the risks inherent in the existing access solutions as best it could. (This could be achieved by staffing the existing stairs with a 'Steward' to control traffic flow during periods of peak loading.) No other bridge to Thames path access problem within London is probably anywhere near as severe (The next contender is probably North West on Tower Bridge, but these steps are both wider and used less). The Tower Bridge – Southern Thames Path access problems appear to be unique and should not establish any worrisome precedents.

Fear of failure, or ‘Analysis Paralysis’ (see *Wikipedia* entry)?

Nobody wants to be associated with failure, particularly with such a high profile project as one involving Tower Bridge. The ‘loose collective’ of representatives from the Top Stakeholders that has looked at this problem in the past is a system that gives too many people a both the power of veto and the need for yet more analysis.

Without the right setup, the probability of any workable solution being developed to the point of delivery without being ‘knocked back’ by one of the many gatekeepers it has to appease, is too small to be credible. As things currently stand, beyond the legal and financial interests of each of the top stakeholders, an eventual access solution will have to appease: English Heritage; various Access Officers championing the access issue and various Planning Officers or Committees, championing the aesthetics.

An ‘Action Team’ needs to be given full authority, expert support and a realistic budget to get the job done. This ‘virtual’ team could encompass a representative from English Heritage and just one person championing each of the other key inputs of access, budgetary, legal and aesthetic concerns. This team should have the authority to appoint one architect and one contractor and to then champion their interests (such as ensuring they have the rights to work on the bridge and in Potters Field). Most of the team would be seconded from other organisations and would only work on this project sporadically and then only mainly up to the agreed detailed design and budget. A Team Chairman, probably the financial representative, will need to spend a bit more time on the project, both to stay on top of the budget and to act as liaison once the whole team have concluded the final detailed design and agreed a construction budget, to help troubleshoot any problems. The legal representative is needed to ensure that once the detailed design and budget have been agreed, any risk of failure in delivery is clearly born by either the architect or the contractor.

Silos

Like so many other things that, to an outsider (not just Gerry Robinson) seem so obvious, this is a multi-faceted but simple problem that would be hugely worthwhile to fix. Unfortunately the individuals who could come together to authorise a solution have not. This is probably because they always see problems that fall wholly and exclusively within their own remits as priorities, whereas, with all the potential other stakeholders involved, this one is forever being knocked back.

Somebody in high authority in one of the Top Stakeholders needs to make contact with their counterparts in the other authorities to get things moving. For the reasons stated elsewhere in this paper, the time to act is now. A representative from either the City of London, the GLA; Southwark, or even the Cross River Partnership needs to pick up the phone and make the first move. Once this paper is circulated they will know who they are because they will know that, with this paper in circulation, others will be looking at them wondering why they have done nothing. In effect several senior people in high office should be picking up the telephone, thinking that they are about to make the first move on this. That all these people are likely to be busy is NO excuse. ‘If you want to get something done, get a busy person on to it.’

Appendix 5: Images



Images A & B show the south east side of the bridge and an adjacent pedestrian area where it has long been known it would be ideal to place a lift.

Image C shows a rough render of where a glass and steel lift plus access way can be sited to provide step free access on this eastern side.

(Source of original images = City of London)





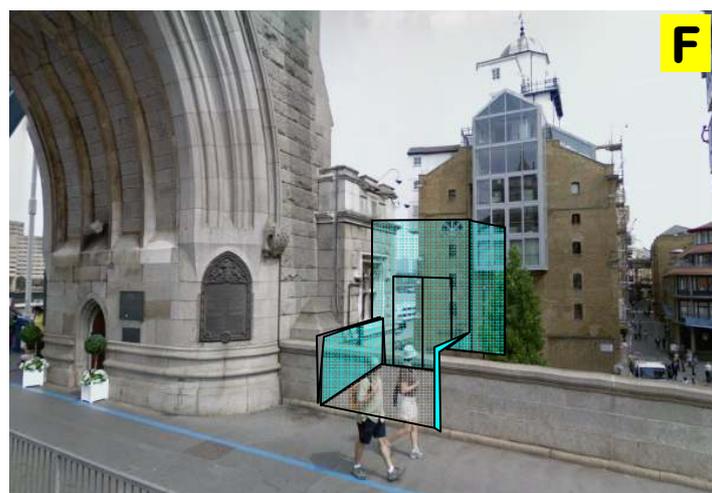
Image D shows typical traffic levels on the bridge and how this, plus the fact that a pedestrian crossing is not allowed here, means the bridge's two pavements each require their own step free access solution to the Thames Path/shad Thames below.

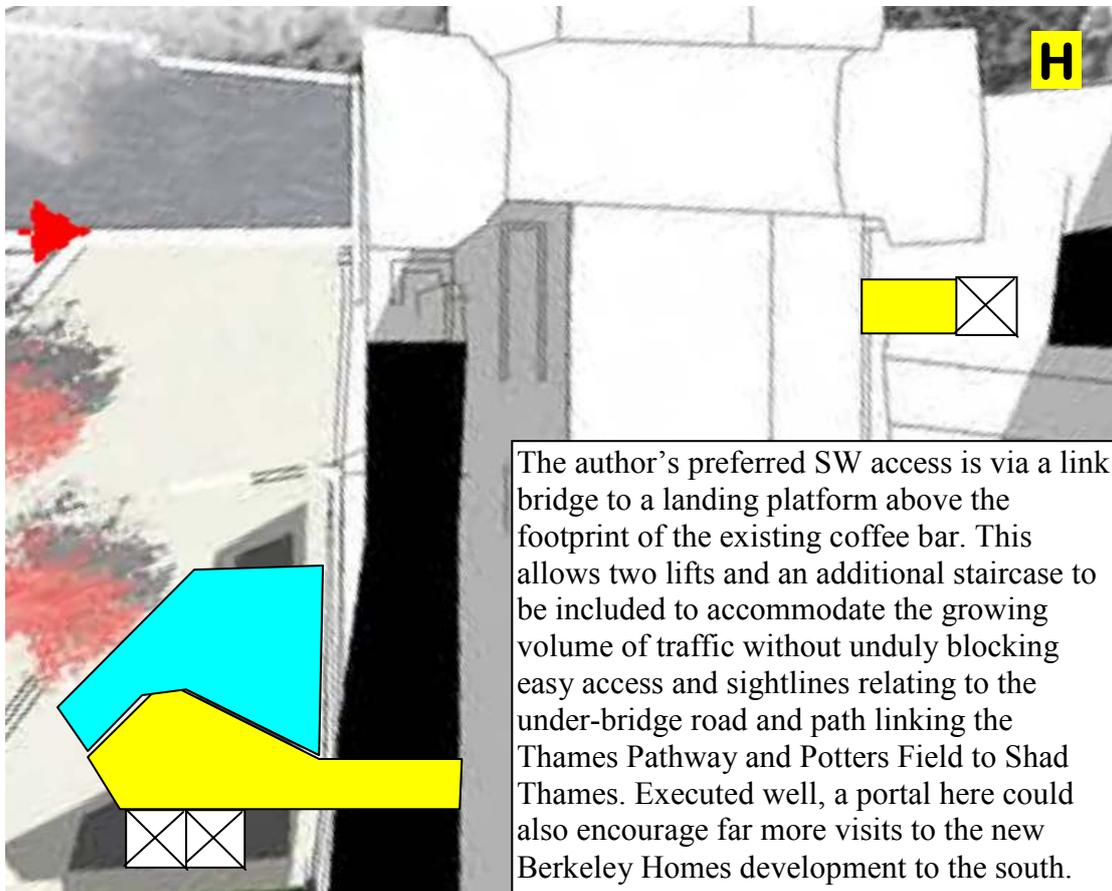
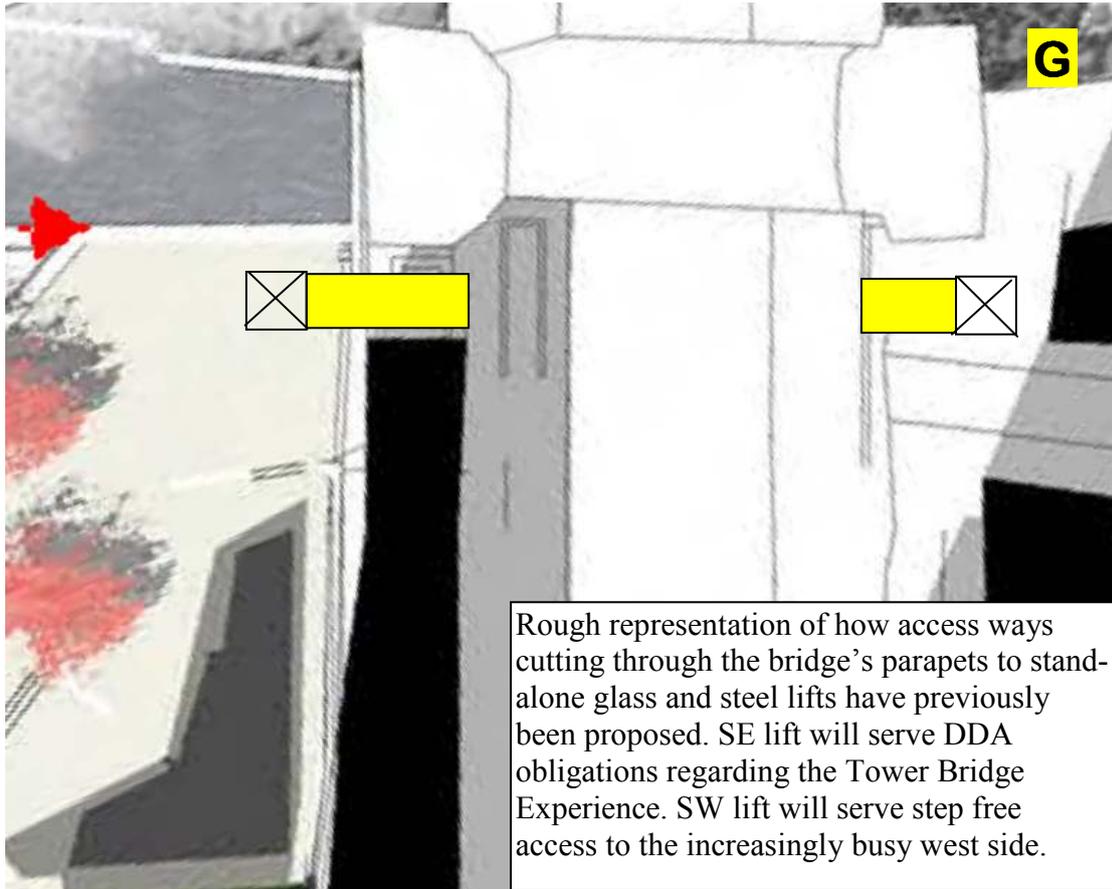
Image E shows the top of the existing steps that link the two halves of the Tower Bridge Experience (plus the blue line to guide visitors) at the south east of the bridge.



Image F shows a rough render of where a glass and steel lift to augment the south east steps could be sited from 'up top'.

(Source of all original images on this page = Google Earth)







'The Chain' extends from tower to parapet down to the ground in the Bridge Master's yard. This is a sight not currently seen by the public due to the high wall and gates on the other sides of the yard. A link bridge could cut into the bridge parapet just North of the vertical drainpipe and pass directly above the yard across to a 'Vertical Access Solution' on roughly the same footprint as the existing coffee-shop. As seen in these pictures, such a solution will

produce no more of an impediment to the yard than already exists and have minimal impact on the Bridge, Potters Field or the development site behind.

As for the existing coffee shop – at the time of writing the (potentially mistaken) understanding was that Berkeley Properties were proposing for this to be demolished and for a replacement to become part of their new development on the land behind.



A new link bridge here would offer visitors the first chance to see how the 'Chain' completes the bridge's structure. It would also provide level access from the pavement on the bridge to a service platform for one or two new lifts (plus additional stairs) roughly where the existing coffee bar sits today. (Image H/M)

A well executed access solution should also enhance the sight of the south bank from the north.



Image K shows the bottom of the south west steps. These steps, which occupy the opposite niche to that shown in image B are an increasingly dangerous bottleneck for the growing number of pedestrians, pushchair pushers and bicycle carriers that use them to pass between the Thames Path/Potters Field and the Bridge.

(All photographs this page & below + composite thermal images on title page = author's own)

