



Living Heart for Bristol

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Road Access to Crown Courts – a Review of Precedents May 2013

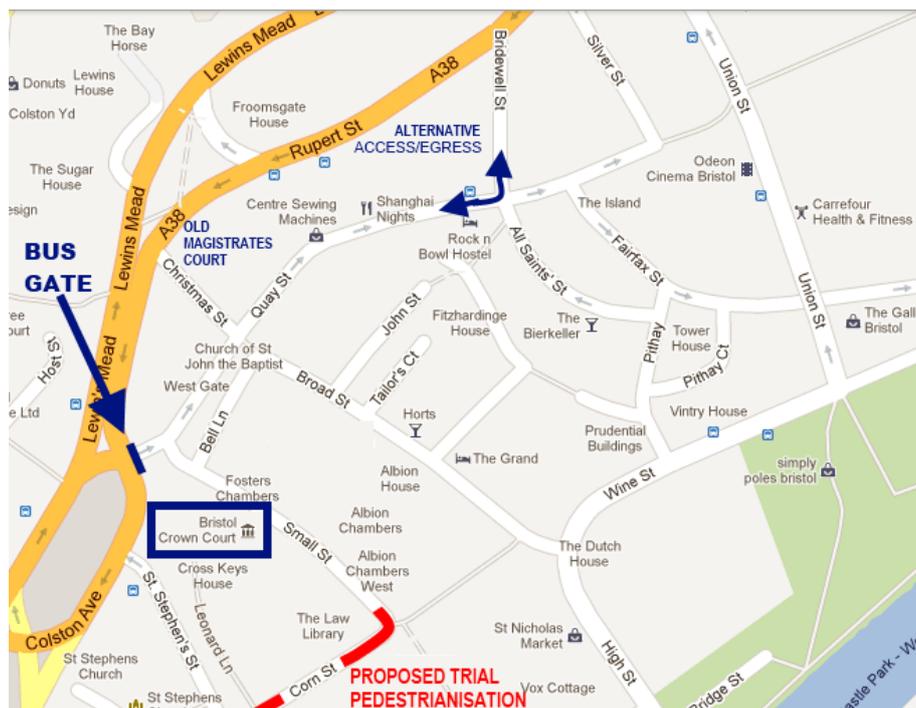
This report analyses the argument that the pedestrianisation of Corn Street cannot proceed for the next two years because of the temporary closure of Christmas Street, linked to the demolition and redevelopment of the Old Magistrates Court. It has been argued that the Crown Court requires two access routes in and out, and that while Christmas Street is unavailable, Corn Street is required. The report concludes that this argument is invalid for the following reasons:

- Christmas Street does not provide a second access or egress route, as claimed
- That several Crown Courts in England have only one access/egress route. The preference for multiple routes is just that: a preference. It is not a requirement.
- That it is possible to exempt emergency vehicles under a temporary traffic regulation order, which would allow for access over a pedestrianised area in an emergency.

The Proposal

As shown on the map below, when Christmas Street is temporarily closed, one of two options will need to follow. Either:

- Quay Street/Nelson Street will need to be made two-way, or
- the bus gate will need to be opened to all traffic.



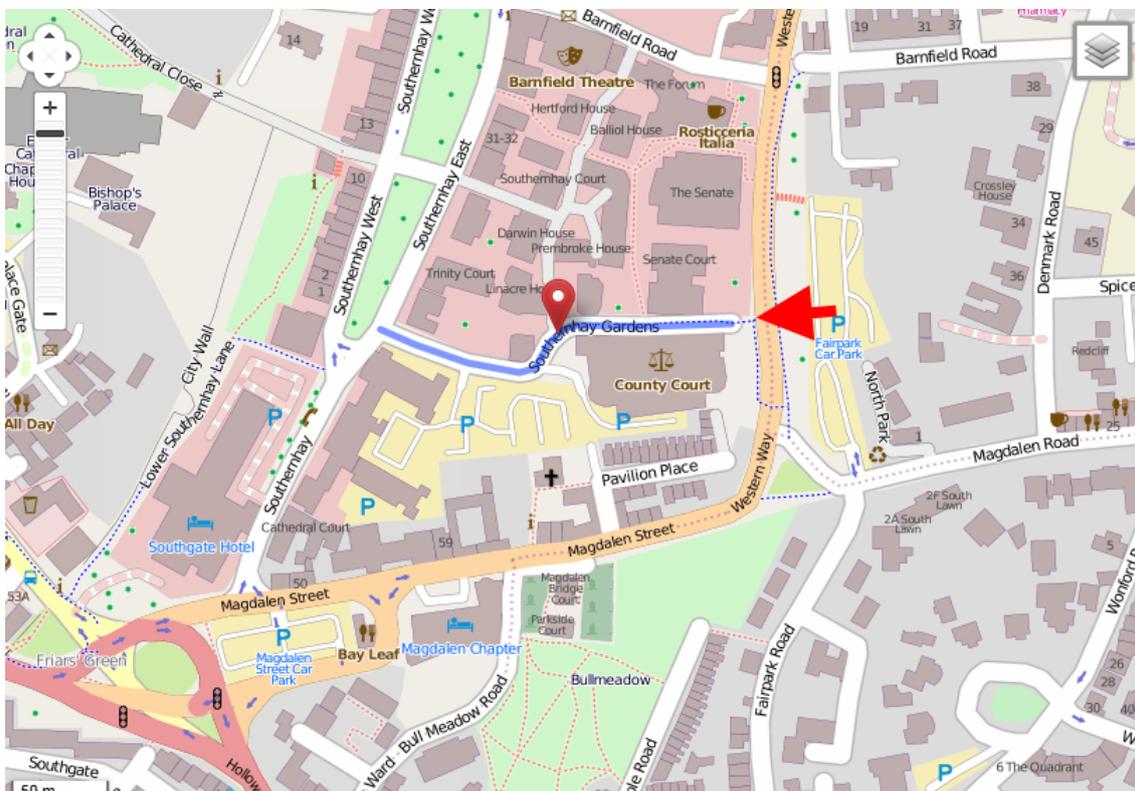
The first of those two options would clearly be preferable, to avoid rat-running. Depending on which is chosen, access will either be via Bridewell Street or via The Centre. Egress will be via Bridewell Street. As can be seen, *Christmas Street does not offer a second access or egress route, since it leads from the same one-way stretch of Rupert Street which also feeds Bridewell Street.* Therefore, the claim that the demolition of the magistrates' court temporarily removes a required alternative route is clearly false.

It should also be noted that temporary traffic regulation orders can provide for an exemption for emergency vehicles, allowing them to drive over the trial pedestrianised area in an emergency.

Vehicle Access to Other Crown Courts

The following shows the results of a brief review of Crown Courts around England, using Google Street maps, Open Street Maps and Google Street View. It is not exhaustive, but has produced four examples of Crown Courts in England which have only a single route in and out for vehicular traffic. The specific circumstances vary in each case: clearly at some point a single route will always branch into several options, but the examples below illustrate how two routes in and out are not provided to all existing crown courts.

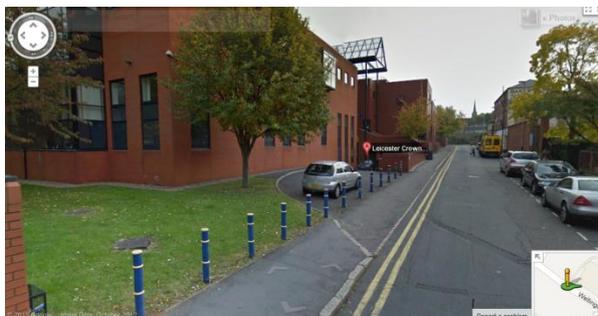
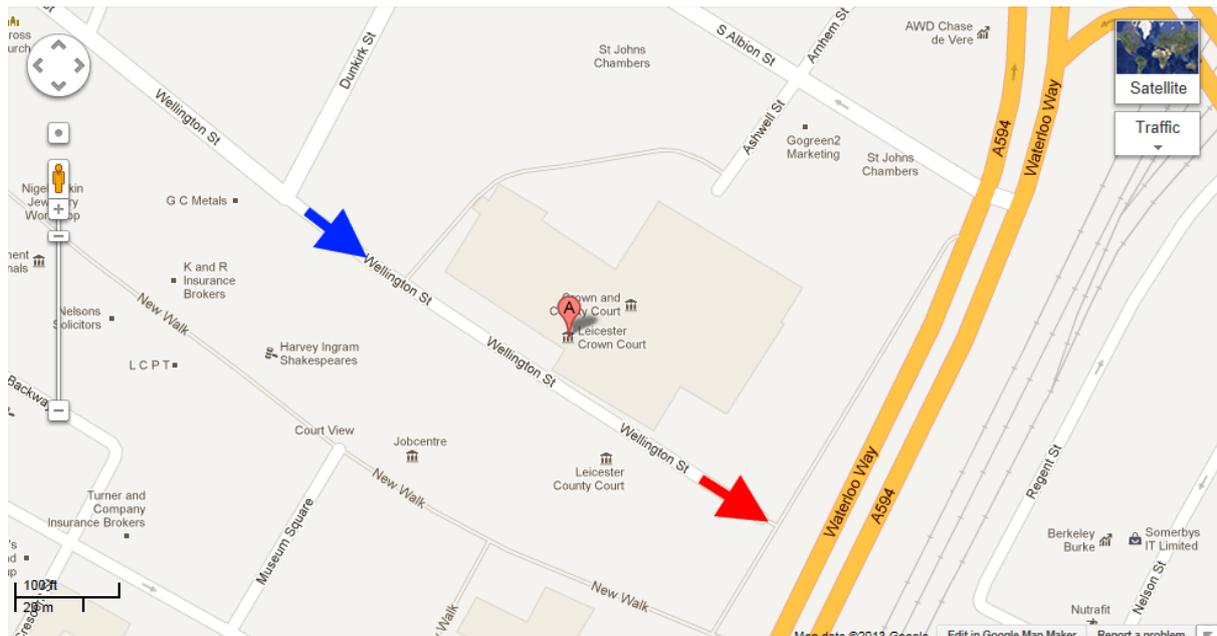
Exeter Crown Court



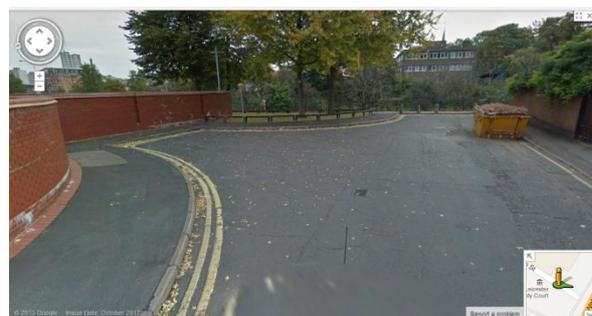
Red Arrow shows direction of photograph



Leicester Crown Court

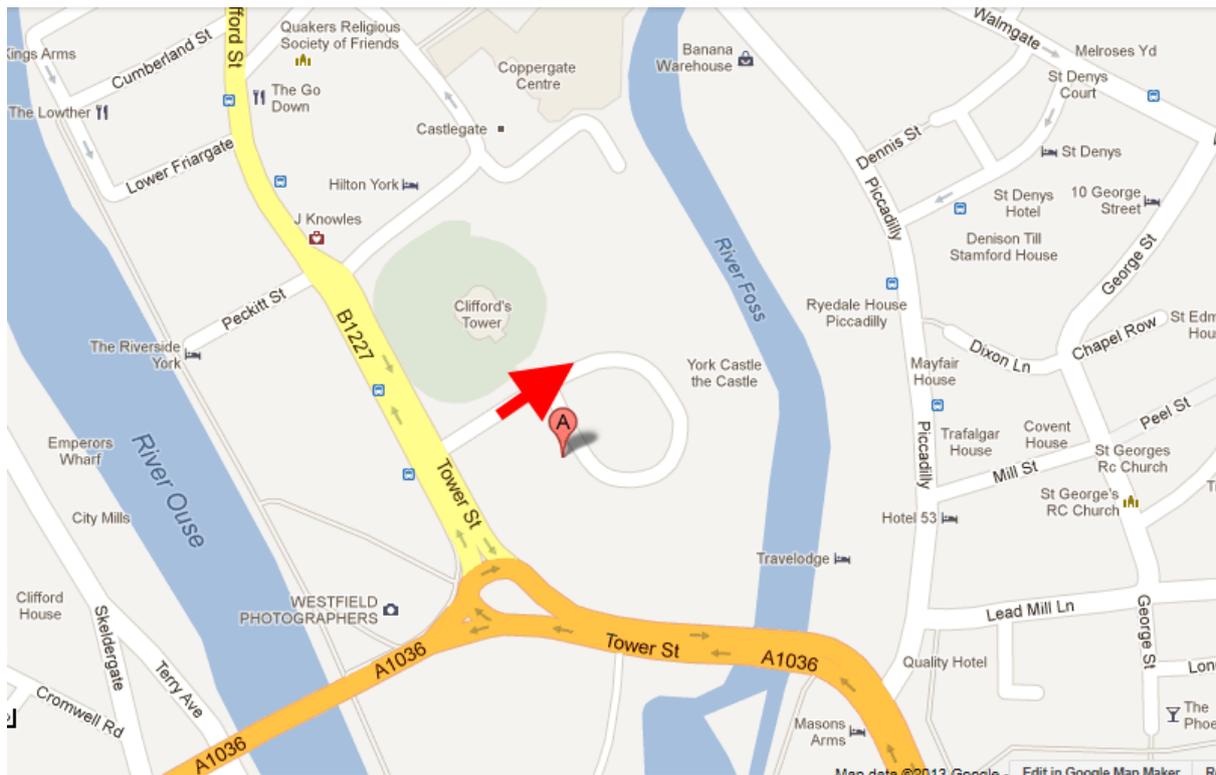


Blue view



Red view

York Crown Court



It may be noted here that the possibility exists for a second emergency access via the car park barrier seen on the left: this would involve driving through an area used by a substantial number of pedestrians.

Conclusion

It is clear that in other parts of the country, vehicular access to courts has had to be adapted to the context in each town or city. The preference for multiple vehicle accesses to Crown Courts is clearly a preference and not a requirement. The trial pedestrianisation of Corn Street was to be an important first step towards the creation of a more liveable pedestrian-friendly city centre. Technical issues of this nature must not be allowed to block or delay it.

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