

LONDON BRIDGE MEDI-CULTURE DISTRICT

03/19 | INITIAL VISIONING DOCUMENT

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 1. INTRODUCTION3
- 2. TOWARDS A VISION.....4
- 3. LONDON BRIDGE: SIGNIFICANCE STATEMENT.....5
- 4. PURPOSE6
- 5. OPPORTUNITIES7
- 6. CHALLENGES.....8
- 7. SUSTAINABILITY9
- 8. IMPACT DELIVERY10
- 9. NEXT STEPS.....11

I. INTRODUCTION

Team London Bridge (TLB) represents over 350 businesses in the area surrounding London Bridge station and is responsible for delivering the London Bridge Plan, which recognises the role of a business area working responsibly in partnership with neighbouring areas. TLB works together with developers, the Council and partners to ensure that new developments are aligned with the ambitions set out in the Plan.

Currently, there are several cultural institutions located within or on the boundary of the London Bridge area. They recognise their thematic overlap and see the benefits of establishing a formal network that allows them to work together. The list of cultural institutions includes, but is not limited to;

- King's College London: Science Gallery London; HABLab; Life Sciences Museum
- The Old Operating Theatre Museum & Herb Garret
- Florence Nightingale Museum
- Royal Pharmaceutical Society Museum

Team London Bridge, in partnership with the above cultural institutions and Southwark Council, recognise the need to develop a vision that brings together the ambitions and expectations of the institutions, through stakeholder consultations that included one-to-one interviews and a focus-group session. This document presents an Initial Vision based on the information gathered throughout the stakeholder engagement and visioning exercise.

Team London Bridge commissioned Barker Langham to conduct stakeholder research into the collective appetite for a formalised partnership between several cultural institutions located in the London Bridge area.

This document summarises the identified ambition to create a unified cultural district, proposes an emergent vision based on the information gathered throughout the stakeholder engagement and visioning exercise, and suggests potential next steps.

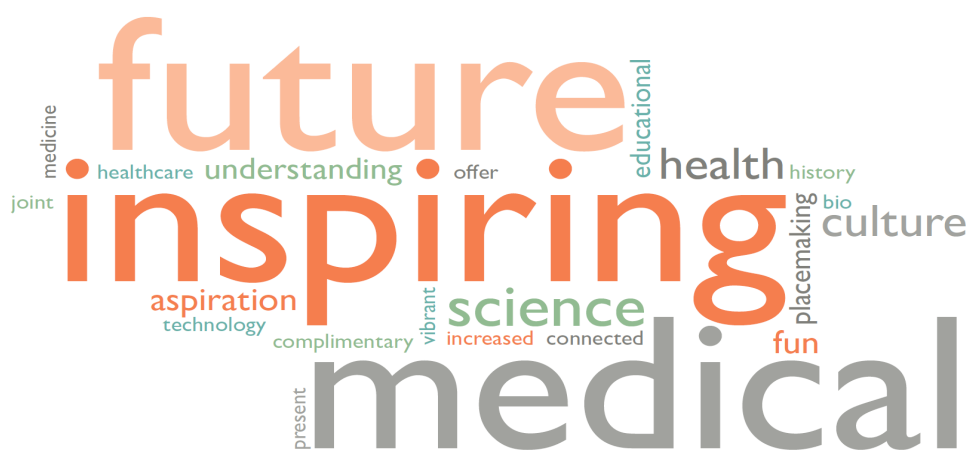
2. TOWARDS A VISION

“The District is the transformational heart of biomedical science; past, present and future.”

“Linking universities, hospitals, museums and more, the District brings together sites of pivotal importance to science and medicine.”

“The unilateral relevance of healthcare, science and medicine is brought together in the historic site of the District.”

“For centuries, the District has been the site of the world’s most significant developments in healthcare, science and medicine; life-changing work that continues now and into the future.”



A vision

“To become the world’s most significant medi-culture district that celebrates its 700 year-long heritage of life-changing work”

Why this vision

For around seven centuries, the district has been one of the world’s most significant sites for the development of healthcare, science and wellbeing. Life-changing work that continues now and into the future.

The cultural organisations located in the area have a strong narrative synergy around these themes. Their current presence in the area is rooted in the historical significance of London Bridge as a hub for medical and healthcare developments. When brought together, they present a varied palette of cultural engagement that tells the story of healthcare, medicine and science. They make the past relevant by evidencing the contemporary value of the medical heritage legacy. They offer the wider public an insight into today’s continuous progress of science and medicine through a cross-fertilisation that drives innovation. When visiting the London Bridge area, one is surrounded by organisations that have been shaped by the past, are concerned with the present and look into the future of healthcare and wellbeing. Visitors to the area should have an opportunity to appreciate, celebrate and engage in this rich narrative.

3. LONDON BRIDGE: SIGNIFICANCE STATEMENT

For the past two millennia, London Bridge and its surrounding area has been a centre of activity. Since the Romans, who built the first crossing, enabling access to the major settlements beyond, the bridge has provided the foundation for the area to prosper.¹ As the primary means of crossing the river Thames for several centuries, London Bridge came to be frequented by thousands of people a day. The bridge was the only entrance to the city of London from the south of the river, and thus became an economic thoroughfare. The multiple trade networks brought people as well as goods to the area, resulting in London Bridge becoming a melting pot of different cultures and customs.

From its foundation as an Augustinian Priory at the turn of the 12th century, Southwark Cathedral was a place for healing and medical care, becoming one of the first hospitals in London.² After Thomas Becket's martyrdom, the hospital was renamed as St Thomas' Hospital, and was based around Borough High Street for the next 750 years while a sister hospital was built by Thomas Guy in the early 18th century. Florence Nightingale established her nursing school there in 1859³ and since then the area has been home to an innovative medical hub.

London Bridge continues to be a significant hub for medical institutions and industry today. Guy's Hospital is one of the UK's leading teaching hospitals and has recently opened a pioneering Cancer Centre on their estate. King's College London's prominent Faculty of Life Sciences & Medicine is based in the adjacent campus, whilst HCA Healthcare UK has two sites in London Bridge and is a leading provider of cutting-edge treatment across the country. The area continues to be a vibrant commercial and cultural district, offering theatre and museums as well as culinary exploration at the wealth of restaurants in and around Borough Market. It is a vibrant, diverse part of the capital, and is recognised for its literary, religious, economic, maritime, medical, political, cultural and culinary significance.

¹ <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Old-London-Bridge>

² <https://cathedral.southwark.anglican.org/about/our-history/>

³ <http://oldoperatingtheatre.com/history/history-of-old-st-thomas-hospital>

4. PURPOSE

London Bridge: A Collective Cultural Offer

A recent Masterplan produced for the London Bridge Campus Biomedical Cluster proposes a major redevelopment of the campus over the next 25 years. The London Bridge Campus aims to attract new talents and firms by providing a platform for collaboration with science, access to existing talent-pools and the existence of excellent accessibility and an inspiring cultural offer.⁴ Moreover, several significant development projects along St. Thomas Street are at various stages of delivery, ranging from being under construction to being in the planning process or at concept stage. The cultural institutions in the area are keen to collectively advocate for the adaptation of spaces dedicated to culture within the proposed development schemes. Currently, Southwark Council acknowledges the strength of the cultural offer in the area as a powerful asset that can draw in biotech companies.⁵

With this ambition Barker Langham were appointed by Team London Bridge to begin outlining a vision for a collective medical district that would celebrate the individual and linked medical narratives of relevant institutions in the area. After consultation with six organisations, we would like to propose the development of a combined offer that is cohesive in genre but distinctive in the specificity of topics and their delivery - ultimately celebrating one or all of the many stories of the area. The methods of delivery for this narrative require further investigation and testing, but the appetite for a clearly linked narrative that presents a compelling story of historical significance and future relevance is clear and should be championed.

⁴ Southwark Council - London Bridge informal summary of development projects

⁵ Southwark Council - London Bridge informal summary of development projects

5. OPPORTUNITIES

Aligning strategic objectives

Currently, the consulted cultural organisations communicate with each other on high-level matters such as planned exhibitions and special events. There is an evident willingness to concretise the already-established relationships in order to develop a formalised partnership that allows for a greater synergy than a collection of individual museums. Such a partnership presents the opportunity to align the individual strategic objectives and develop a simple set of core ambitions that will ensure mutual benefit for all partnering organisations. These individual aspirations have the potential to become the golden strategic thread that creates a combined strategic objective.

Shared space for collaborative programming

Should a shared space for collective programming be developed, the partnering institutions would have the ability to share resources and collections, deliver a collaborative offer of cultural events and combine efforts on educational programmes and audience development. A shared, multifunctional space would not only embody the collective ambition of the institutions and strengthen the efficacy of the delivery of the strategic objectives, but also ensure a tangible manifestation of the partnership and guarantee facilities for the collective production of exhibitions, programmes and community events for local residents.

Reaching wider audiences

There is a clear need to raise public awareness regarding the evident connection between the organisations. The current lack of public awareness concerning the thematic cohesiveness between the cultural organisations is due to the absence of a unified brand identity and communication of the overarching narrative that unites the various partnering institutions. Should these ties be made evident to visitors through the development of the cultural district, there is likely to be an increase in the dwell-time of visitors as a result of the increased combined spatial size of the venues, the offer of a broad cultural package and a lowered threshold to enter the cultural institutions.

Adding value to the London Bridge Campus Biomedical Cluster

The London Bridge area will see itself being transformed significantly over the coming years with the development of the London Bridge Campus Biomedical Cluster. In addition, the wider London Bridge area will see several major architectural schemes being developed, providing office space to companies within the biotech- and medical industries and presenting changes to the urban fabric and public spaces of the area. The district's cultural offer can bring a significant added value to the development of the London Bridge Campus Biomedical Cluster, attracting (inter)national investment and positioning the Southwark Borough internationally as a leading biomedical knowledge research cluster.

6. CHALLENGES

London Bridge is a globally significant, historic and vibrant place of modern commerce, enterprise and creativity. World famous landmarks and cultural institutions are juxtaposed with large business premises, retailers, hospitals, the university and residential communities. This diverse community provides a fascinating destination for business and leisure, however communicating an increasingly complex offer provides a significant challenge. We must understand the different audiences of the 'destination' and prioritise communication messages in accordance to their profiles. In addition, London Bridge Station brings a huge volume of people to the area every day of the week. Capturing the imagination and interest of this transient population within the scope of their daily routine is an enduring issue, but one that is important to embrace if we are to change London Bridge from being an area to 'go through' to an area to 'go to'.

Urban fabric

With over 350,000^{6,7} people travelling through and to London Bridge Station it is recommended to understand how and why people are currently moving in the area. Insight into the flows of different segments such as local residents, office-workers, students, local tourists and international visitors, will provide answers to questions regarding their interaction with the urban fabric and the permeability of certain zones. St. Thomas street has been recognised as a heavily-trafficked road that currently does not invite dwelling. Specific alterations to the urban fabric can be implemented in the proposed architectural schemes in order to evidence the existence of the district and increase the dwell-time of visitors in the area of the district without disenfranchising the local resident population.

⁶ <https://orr.gov.uk/statistics/published-stats/station-usage-estimates>

⁷ <https://www.statista.com/statistics/412735/busiest-london-underground-stations/>

7. SUSTAINABILITY

Governance

Should a unified vision be implemented in London Bridge, we recommend that a governing body is established to be responsible for the management and ownership of the brand identity and all district-connected relationships. Several governing structures have been identified during the one-to-one interviews and the focus group, and it is suggested to further explore the possible involvement of Team London Bridge as an objective coordinator and facilitator of the partnership. Other governing structures could take shape in the form of a Service Level Agreement with one cultural institution taking a leading role, or a joint chairmanship bringing together several institutions acting as one primus inter pares.

Stakeholders

It is recommended that consideration should also be given to the “informal” networks within which the district will operate. The “real” delivery of the district is as much related to inter-social networks as it is to formal networks. Stakeholders that have been suggested by the institutions throughout the interviews are the following:

Stakeholders located in London Bridge

Kings College London
Guy's & St. Thomas' Charity
Guy's & St. Thomas' Foundation Trust
The Gordon Museum
Textile Museum
Borough Market

Other stakeholders

City of London
Great Portland Estates
Wellcome
Heritage Fund
London Museums of Health & Science
Discover Medical London

8. IMPACT DELIVERY

Social

By combining efforts related to audience development, currently difficult-to-reach audiences can be attracted collaboratively, and more elaborate outreach programmes targeted at Black Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) audiences can be produced. Moreover, collectively the institutions can tap onto key priorities of the Southwark Council and give more strength to initiatives that plug into these. In line with the Social Regeneration Indicator 'A Healthier Life' - identified by Southwark Council - the district will play an important role in educating the local pupil-population on themes such as emotional and physical health and wellbeing, potentially lowering the percentage of local cases of childhood obesity.

Economic

The district will add value to the London Bridge Campus Biomedical Cluster by presenting a cultural offer that celebrates the medical heritage of the borough. It will increase the profile of Southwark and build on the positioning of the London Bridge Campus as a medical hub of international importance. The strength of the cultural offer can boost the area to become a magnet for bio-tech companies, delivering an increase in jobs and apprenticeships for the local population, which draws on Southwark Council's Social Regeneration Indicator 'A Full Employment Borough'.

Cultural

The district celebrates the area's significance as a medical hub where for centuries life-changing work has taken place. In connection with the many activities and destinations, it will invigorate the vibrant character of the London Bridge area and underline the London Bridge Cultural Strategy and its mission to "continuously reveal the diverse landscape of London Bridge as the epitome of a global capital".⁸

⁸ https://www.teamlondonbridge.co.uk/gfx/uploads/pres_12032018114513.pdf

9. NEXT STEPS

This Visioning Exercise has been successful in determining the appetite and proposed ambition for a united medical museum district in London Bridge. This document will help to summarise these findings to relevant stakeholders, and recommends the below next steps for the further development of this vision:

Governance and Resources

Understanding the capacity for governance amongst the linked institutions will be key to the successful delivery of this vision. A report should be developed modelling required resources and potential governance structures to ensure the vision is sustainable.

Meanwhile Programme

By way of fostering support and awareness of the unifying vision, a programme of 'Meanwhile' events should be rolled-out across the region. These should be programmed alongside the development of a Prospectus to champion the ambition of the project, and achieve broad stakeholder buy-in.

Audience Engagement

Now that ambition for a unified vision is clear, the next step is to understand the appetite for this amongst current and potential audiences. One-to-one consultations, focus groups, and a broad-engagement survey could be conducted to better understand the audience's current understanding and response to the proposal for a unified district.

Interpretive Masterplan

In order to better understand the potential manifestations of the united vision, an Interpretive Masterplan should be developed to analyse current offers and propose a series of linked interpretive experiences.