

A Bridge over the Ha-Ha...

TPA was recently contacted by the makers of a major feature film. The film makers needed to access the grounds of a Grade 1 listed, 15th Century hall in order to light a pivotal scene.



Picture shows TPA's vehicle in situ ready to cross the reduced span bridge across the Ha Ha

'Access to the grounds of this particular location was a significant challenge', states TPA's Film and TV Sector Manager, 'The building and grounds have a network of tunnels beneath them which impose size and weight restrictions on the vehicles that can enter the area where the scene was to be filmed'.

A 55 tonne crane was needed by the Rigging Gaffer to support the required lighting scheme. However, an assessment by the film's structural engineer meant that the only paved access to the grounds could not be used, for fear of damaging the tunnel network.

There is only one vehicle access into the grounds due to a six foot deep ditch with a wall or "Ha-Ha" which encircles the Hall. The only solution for the film makers to get the scene filmed, as they wished, was to bridge the Ha-Ha.

Working closely with the Executive Producer, Location Manager and the Location owners, TPA proposed a bridging scheme acceptable to all. The solution had to allow access for the heavy equipment, protect the wall within the Ha-Ha and also fit within the budget of the production. However, the complications did not stop there.

'Once we had decided to bridge the Ha-Ha', recalls Longley, 'the grounds keeper at the location mentioned that there was also a network of old mine shafts running under the area where we wanted to install the bridge. This further reduced our options. We also could not excavate, without the presence of an Archaeologist, due to the historical importance of the property'.

Given the uncertain nature of the ground conditions, the installation of a bridge to fully span the Ha-Ha was not possible. The weight of the crane needed to install a bridge to fully span the Ha-Ha would be approximately twice the size of that required by the film makers, for the lights. In addition, the cost of the crane to install the bridge was also prohibitive given the constraints of the location's budget.

An innovative solution was required. By packing the Ha-Ha with railway sleepers and TPA's 'Traxpanels', it was possible to reduce the bridge span hence reducing the weight of vehicles needed to install the bridge and reducing the overall cost to an acceptable level.

Despite all the challenges, TPA's solution was a great success with filming able to take place as planned and within budget.

For any further information regarding TPA's operations within the Film & TV sector, please telephone TPA on 0870 240 2381 or email enquiries@tpa-ltd.co.uk

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