



Field Hospital Access Case Study

Howard S Wright Construction

Seattle, Washington





Situation

The City of Seattle challenged Howard S Wright, a Balfour Beatty Company, hereafter referred to as HSW, with transforming a group of isolated warehouses into a field hospital with wards where people could be treated for COVID-19.

Located in Seattle's SODO District, the experienced team at HSW was tasked with retro-fitting a series of disparate warehouses built in 1930 into a field hospital for the City of Seattle.

The existing sites were not connected to one another, so modular safety access systems needed to be designed and installed within an extremely abbreviated timeline.



Additionally, the warehouses were contained within two city blocks with a steep grade on one side of the properties. The aging sites had limited amenities, so HSW couldn't go below grade in order to modify the plumbing for the more than 30 new toilets and showers that were required.

During the initial waves of the COVID-19 pandemic, HSW was under an emergency deadline to quickly retrofit and connect several properties in one two-block radius. Work Safe Access was awarded the project and partnered with Howard S Wright Construction through the crisis, providing over 23 separate customized modular safety access solutions throughout the project. The access systems were a combination of catwalks, walkways, platforms, stairs, and ramps, complete with safety guardrails.

Project Specs

Work Safe Access provided ADA-compliant customized access systems as part of a project for Howard S. Wright Construction.

This project consisted of multiple interior and exterior platforms and ramps and custom concrete railing and gate.



Unique Challenges

Team Responsiveness, Creativity, and Deep Engineering Knowledge

The warehouse structures were situated adjacent to one another; each building was separate and situated for individual tenants.

The emergency status of the project required the design and implementation of the safety access systems to be built in quick waves. As HSW would retrofit a segment of one or more warehouses, Work Safe Access would assess, design, manufacture, and install access systems behind the HSW team projects.

This meant that Work Safe Access needed to be knowledgeable and constantly aware of engineering plans. Any changes or alterations would mean that Work Safe Access needed to review, assess, and alter access system planning and manufacture throughout the project. Communications between HSW and Work Safe Access was critical for the project success. An understanding of the site, the grades, and retrofitting allowed Work Safe Access to plan, organize, and execute a highly tailored solution to a fluid situation.

A Modular Approach Saved Valuable Time and Materials

Work Safe Access designed custom solutions that provided connected walkways, steps and platforms with guardrails at access points around the perimeter of select buildings where emergency field hospital crew would need ingress and egress.

Through the use of pre-fabricated, interchangeable design components, Work Safe Access was able to quickly manufacture, transport, and install as rapidly as was required for continual improvements over the course of the project. Alterations and changes could be checked in-field, the access systems designs could be augmented within ADA compliance requirements and reshaped to fit the latest project plans without interrupting the flow of on-site production or installation.

Connecting Gaps to Create ADA Access to and from Disparate Structures

Work Safe Access provides IBC and OSHA compliant access systems and its parent company, Welcome Ramp Systems provides ADA compliant systems. Both were involved to provide a mix of public and personnel access. A network of ADA access systems were



needed inside the structures for safe ingress and egress to and from the more than 30 newly constructed toilet and shower facilities. HSW needed to work with the existing pipe structure. This meant that the bathroom facilities were built on platforms. This unusual configuration required ADA access which needed to be designed as a complex network of platforms, catwalks, ramps, and steps with guardrails encasing the whole design.

Externally, ADA and OSHA access was required and acted to bridge gaps between structures and from structures to the street, including a 32' ramp for ADA emergency egress.

Results

Modular Field Hospital Access Solutions

With the threat of a wide-scale COVID-19 outbreak, Work Safe Access partnered with Howard S Wright Construction to modify 90-year-old structures and reshaped them into a functioning, safe field hospital.



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Work Safe Access understands the needs of general contractors and works in lockstep with their clients to ensure each project is communicated clearly and completed safely with expedience and meets the necessary code standards.

During this time of crisis, the team at Work Safe Access dedicated itself to providing around-the-clock service to meet the needs of Howard S Wright, a Balfour Beatty Company, the City of Seattle, and all the citizens who were at risk. King County is able to repurpose the facilities to meet the changing needs of the city. At the time of printing, these facilities were transformed for use as a shelter.

Work Safe Access solutions are designed to provide the safest environment possible wherever safe access is needed.



“Work Safe Access was there when we needed them, even in the middle of a pandemic.

Their ability to understand the nature of this emergency and to meet the extreme demands of the situation was inspiring.

Thanks to an outstanding organization with a top quality product!”

– Lorraine Smallwood
Project Manager,
Howard S. Wright,
A Balfour Beatty company