

DONCASTER METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

PLANNING COMMITTEE - 14th November 2017

Application	06
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Application Number:	17/02001/3FULM	Application Expiry Date:	3rd November 2017
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Application Type:	Planning FULL Major
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Proposal Description:	Change of use of former sorting office site to formation of car park and replacement of existing station car park to create new area of public space
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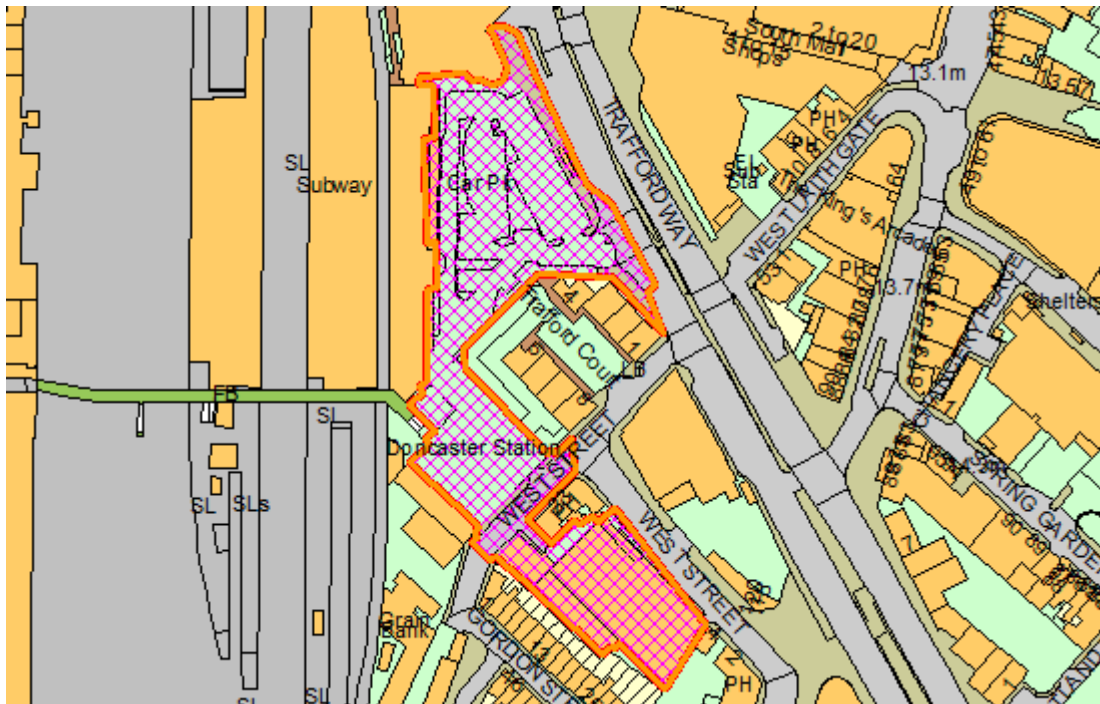
At:	Former Royal Mail Sorting Office And Doncaster Station Forecourt West Street Doncaster DN1 3AA
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For:	Mrs Emma Middleton
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Third Party Reps:	1 letter of objection & 1 letter of support	Parish:	
		Ward:	Town

Author of Report	Mrs Andrea Suddes
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MAIN RECOMMENDATION:	GRANT
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1.0 Reason for Report

1.1 The application is being presented to Planning Committee for determination on account that the application has been submitted by Doncaster Council and the site is part owned by Doncaster Council.

2.0 Proposal and Background

2.1 The scheme proposes a change of use of the former sorting office site to formation of a car park and the replacement of the existing railway station car park to create a new area of public space outside Doncaster Railway Station.

2.2 The site is situated to the west of Doncaster town centre and is dominated by the proximity to the listed station building and Frenchgate shopping centre to the North. The site is limited to the east by Trafford Way, a six lane carriageway that forms part of Doncaster's ring road.

2.3 The land to the front of the station is currently used as car parking, taxi waiting and public pick up and drop off.

2.4 The former sorting office building is now demolished and the site cleared.

2.5 It is also worthy of note that there is also a listed building application currently being considered for removal of the existing canopy and creation of a new canopy to the facade of the Station Building with a new main entrance glazed auto-doors to the Station concourse.

3.0 Relevant Planning History

3.1 17/02535/LBC Listed building consent for removal of the existing canopy and create a new canopy to the facade of the Station Building with new main entrance glazed auto-doors to the Station concourse. Currently under consideration.

4.0 Representations

4.1 This application has been advertised in accordance with Article 13 of the Development Management Procedure Order (DMPO), and includes 2 site notices, press and Public Access. One letter of objection and one letter of support have been received. The comments in objection are regarding the following;

- lack of consideration for disabled users,
- the scheme does not meet the needs of disabled users with a reduction of car parking spaces and the travelling distance from the station to the parking spaces
- Poor design
- Anti-social behaviour in the proposed water feature

4.2 The Applicant has also carried out a public consultation event which was held prior to submission of the application. The events were held at Wabtec, Frenchgate Centre and within the station itself. The event was well attended and the 3 main priorities raised for improvements to the area included;

- Improved access facilities over Trafford Way
- A direct route into the town centre
- A space that is pedestrian friendly and a safe environment for all user groups

4.3 Doncaster Civic Trust has also commented in support of the application stating the following;

“Doncaster Civic Trust welcomes this application for a number of reasons. The proposal to develop the site of the former sorting office on West Street is long overdue, and its use as a car park will allow the creation of a new public space in front of the station. The Trust welcomes improvements to the environment that passengers will experience as they leave the railway station and get their first impressions of the town. The hard and soft landscaping proposed will be a step change from the vehicle-dominated space that has long been an obstacle course for pedestrians. The new direct route towards and across Trafford Way, with narrowing of the carriageways, will enable pedestrians to cross the road more easily, and in one "go". It is very good to see the long-held ambition to have proper access into the town for rail passengers being realised.”

5.0 Relevant Consultations

5.1 Highways: The Highway Officer has raised no objections subject to conditions that the west street car park is brought into use prior to the works on the station forecourt commencing and the site to be used by vehicles to be surfaced and sealed.

5.2 Council’s Transportation Officer: No objections raised as modelling within the Transport Assessment shows that the proposed scheme offers a benefit to pedestrians and cyclists accessing the Rail Station without the impact on general traffic being severe.

5.3 Built Environment (Design): Has commented that overall scheme is supported but raises comments in relation to hard landscaping details which can be easily overcome and made subject to condition.

5.4 South Yorkshire Architectural Liaison Officer: Has advised that the development be designed to Secured by Design and the Safer Parking Scheme standards. The officer has also suggested a meeting to discuss safeguarding the new entrance. This has been relayed to the applicant who has contacted the ALO direct and advised that from early on in the design process the applicant has been liaising with South Yorkshire Police’s Crime Reduction Officer (based in Doncaster) along with colleagues from SYP Counter Terrorism Security Advisors, the North East Counter Terrorism Unit, British Transport Police’s Counter Terrorism Security Advisor, and Department for Transport and Network Rail. A Register of Security Engineers and Specialists consultant has also been employed by Virgin Trains East Coast (whom the applicants are working with) to assist in the production of a Threat & Vulnerability Risk Assessment.

No response has been received following this advice therefore it is assumed that the SYALO raises no further issues of concern.

5.5 Council's Conservation and Design Officer: Although comments are raised with regards to the lack of symmetry of the square, on balance the application is supported.

5.6 Railway Heritage Trust: Fully support the development. The Trust has been aware of, and involved in, the development of this proposal, and considers that it will improve the station frontage, and bring out the heritage features of the station. It will also improve the use of the former post office space to the south of the present car park.

5.7 Council's Pollution Control (Land): No objections raised subject to conditions for any unexpected contamination and material brought on to site.

5.8 Council's Pollution Control (Air Quality): Have recommended provision of charging points for electric vehicles. As such 2 charging points will be installed with a condition ensuring this provision is installed on site.

5.9 No response has been received from the Local Ward Members or Town Centre Manager.

6.0 Relevant Policy and Strategic Context

6.1 The site is allocated as Office Policy Area and Car Park with a unique policy reference number as designated within the Saved Doncaster Unitary Development Plan.

Planning policy relevant to the consideration of this application includes:

6.2 National Planning Policy Framework:

Section 1: Building a strong, competitive economy

Section 4: Promoting sustainable transport

Section 7: Requiring good design

Section 12: Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

6.3 Doncaster Council's Core Strategy:

Policy CS 1: Quality of Life

Policy CS2: Growth and Regeneration Strategy

Policy CS 8: Doncaster Town Centre

Policy CS 9: Providing Travel Choice

Policy CS 14: Design and Sustainable Construction

Policy CS 15: Valuing our Historic Environment

6.4 Saved Doncaster Unitary Development Plan:

ENV 32: Impact of Development on Listed Buildings

TC 11: Office Policy Area

TC 22(9): Identified car park

6.5 Other Policy Considerations:

Doncaster Urban Centre Masterplan

7.0 Planning Issues and Discussion

7.1 The main issues to consider are;

- the principle of the proposed changes in the area,
- design and conservation, and
- highway considerations.

Principle

7.2 The NPPF sets out the Government's commitment to securing economic growth in order to create jobs and prosperity, to build on the country's inherent strengths, and to meet the twin challenges of global competition and of a low carbon future. It further states the Government's commitment to ensuring that the planning system does everything it can to support sustainable economic growth. It also states that planning should operate to encourage and not act as an impediment to sustainable growth. Therefore significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth through the planning system.

7.3 The NPPF also seeks to ensure the vitality of town centres stating that policies should be 'positive, promote competitive town centres and set out policies for management and growth of centres.' It also states that town centres should be recognised as the heart of their communities.

7.4 At a local level, the saved policies of the Unitary Development Plan and the Core Strategy form the statutory development plan for the Borough. The application proposes an area of public space and car park on land that is allocated as Office Policy Area and designated Car Parking as allocated in the Unitary development plan. The station forecourt area is allocated as designated car parking and supporting text to the relevant policy states that car parking should be retained or developed as public car park. However the Doncaster UDP was published in 1998 and since that time the Core Strategy has been adopted which sets out the overall vision and objectives for Doncaster's future. Policy CS 8 seeks to ensure that the town centre will continue to be developed as a thriving and accessible retail, office and leisure destination of regional importance.

7.5 Criteria D) of policy CS 8 supports particular developments that seek to create high-quality public spaces which includes the railway station. Therefore Core Strategy Policy supports the proposal for a public space despite is UDP allocation.

7.6 Additionally, Doncaster Council's Urban Centre Masterplan is a recently published document that looks at investment in the town centre with a vision that includes ensuring that the centre is a focus for business and enterprise. The Masterplan considers the point of arrival as important as it is "the first impression people have of the centre which guides them through the town and the experience that is to follow. "

7.7 It also refers to the railway station as a 'Gateway' in to the city stating that "The City Gateway will provide a vital new arrival statement at the railway station. It will be of a scale and standard that reflects the city ambitions for Doncaster. Virgin East Coast, as the operator of the station, the council and other partners are working together to deliver the quality development by relocating the current car park through strategic acquisitions of empty properties. Aligned to this there will be an improvement to existing infrastructure to increase the accessibility and visitor experience to the urban centre."

7.8 In summary, given more up to date development plan policy in CS 8 and although Doncaster's Urban Centre Masterplan is not a formally adopted policy document; it is an up to date published document of the current situation within the town centre, and therefore should be attached some weight. Therefore in officer opinion the proposal in principle is in accordance with local and national policies.

Design and Conservation

7.09 The train station booking hall and offices is a Grade II listed building. The listing notes that "*the hall was constructed in 1933, in red brick with stone dressing and clay tile roofs. Visually the building has three main parts, with a central block taller than two flanking two storey structures. The central block has a five bay window set in the middle of the façade, with a round clock face set above. On either side is set a three bay window, with single windows in the flanking wings. The outer two storey structures have four bays. Roofs are hipped/pyramidal in design. The building as a whole has a pleasing symmetry and harmony, clearly showing the importance of the central block and the subsidiarity of the two flanking structures. The red brickwork of the whole building is set off and enlivened by white decorative bands.*"

7.10 The proposal to create an area of public realm immediately to the front of the station should be considered against conservation policies ENV 32 and CS 15 that seek to protect or enhance buildings of heritage significance. Core Strategy Policy CS 14 is also relevant which seeks high quality design that contributes to local distinctiveness.

7.11 The land to the front of the station is currently used as car parking, taxi waiting and public pick up and drop off. There is no vegetation apart from some trees on the east side of Trafford Way and some small shrubs within Trafford Court to the south of the forecourt. As most of the area is currently made up of car parking and pick up and drop off areas for the station, pedestrian users of the station and Frenchgate are not well served. The most direct connection is through the Frenchgate shopping centre, requiring the use of stairs or escalators to travel up and over the A630. An additional pedestrian connection is provided through the forecourt area and across the A630 dual carriageway via a staggered pedestrian crossing point. The area can become very congested at times with users ignoring the vehicle demarcations with pedestrians having to navigate through the cars, crossing their path as many as three times to get to the town centre from both the Frenchgate and the Station Trafford Way. The current arrangement and design creates a poor sense of arrival to the town. Beyond this is a dual carriageway which further detracts from the area and the listed building.

7.12 The submitted scheme seeks to realise the aspirations as set out in the Council's Urban Centre Masterplan with the removal of the taxi rank from the front of the railway building and the removal of the customer car parking to be replaced with three connected but distinct user spaces comprising of; a public square- Directly in front of the station building, forming a welcoming, legible arrival space; Drop off loop, taxi rank and car park- the area for those users arriving or leaving by car, and short stay car parking; new temporary car park - providing additional disabled parking and short and long stay spaces for rail users only.

7.13 The proposed square to the front of the station will be a high quality public realm space with trees, planting and water feature. The area has been designed as a gateway into Doncaster, guiding first time visitors towards the town centre via a high quality streetscape. The aspiration for the square is that this will be flexible to allow small scale outdoor events, food stalls, markets etc.

7.14 The movement areas (drop off loop, taxi rank and car parking area), consist of a through route for traffic to the south of the square and a new taxi rank loop with drop off areas close to the station front, allowing rail users to easily navigate the station area. A new car park, set near the station, but away from the main square, provides the opportunity to park for long or short periods.

7.15 The listed frontage is the key façade of the square. The Council's Design and Conservation Officer and Urban Design Officer have both been involved in developing the concept of the forecourt from an early stage. The Council's Design and Conservation Officer has commented on the scheme that whilst the station has a strong symmetrical design the planned public space does not and has made a number of comments in relation to how the current layout has been derived, such as the proposed avenue of trees indicates the way that should be followed and cuts at an angle across the space shielding the building from open views towards the station. The space itself is unsymmetrical as well as other elements around the space.

7.16 Notwithstanding these comments, the officer concedes the need for a way marked route which is understood and is considered important. Although a more symmetrical appearance to the square would have been preferred, due to constraints this has not been possible.

7.17 Additional comments in relation to creating a sense of enclosure to the space, the applicant has confirmed a piece of public art will be designed and installed to shield the space from the dual carriageway. No details have been provided of public art installations and as such will be subject to condition.

7.18 The Council's Urban Design Officer has also commented and overall supports the proposal but has commented on hard landscape features within the scheme. These comments can be addressed via a suitable condition for details of hard and soft landscaping details, including public art installations to be submitted and agreed.

7.19 On balance, the Conservation and Design Officer and the Urban design Officer both support the proposal which is deemed to accord with UDP Policy ENV 32 and Core Strategy Policies CS 14 and CS 15.

Access/Highways

7.20 Policy 14 of the Core Strategy states that one of the components of good design is to ensure that developments take into consideration highway safety, and also considers new developments and its impact on the wider highway network. Additionally Policy CS 9: Providing Travel Choice is also pertinent as it seeks to ensure that new developments provide the delivery of travel choice and sustainable opportunities for travel.

7.21 In terms of the current situation for vehicles and pedestrians; the station forecourt is currently difficult to navigate and can be very busy at times. The current pedestrian connectivity between the station and the town centre is poor. As already stated in paragraph 7.11, the most direct connection is through the Frenchgate shopping centre, requiring the use of stairs or escalators to travel up and over the A630. An additional pedestrian connection is provided through the forecourt area and across the A630 dual carriageway via a staggered pedestrian crossing point. Pedestrians have to navigate through the cars, crossing their path as many as three times to get to Trafford Way.

7.22 The Railway Station forecourt has an exit only connection onto West Street for vehicles, which is a one-way road leading onto St Sepulchre Gate West. Access in to the station forecourt is via the A630 dual carriageway.

7.23 The application proposes a number of small highway improvements within the site. However the highway works within the site comprise part of a wider overall improvement to the highway network around the railway station area in order to improve connectivity in and around the station for both pedestrians and vehicle users. The proposals within the station area comprise of;

- Removing Existing station forecourt parking to create a pedestrian only zone;
- New pedestrian crossing outside station forecourt;
- A one way system from A630 around the Rail station for taxis, pick up and drop off;
- A new 68 space car park at the former Post Office sorting office with one way system;

7.24 The proposed car park site will be accessed via the A630 to West Street. The car park will operate a one-way system with the access on the north east side and the exit on the North West. The one way system will allow vehicle's to enter back onto the road network at St Sepulchre Gate West onto the A630.

7.25 Traffic is taken away from the pedestrian route and separated from it by planting. A single, legible through route will make it easier for passengers to navigate their way to their pick up or taxi.

7.26 An objection has been received that raises issue with a lack of consideration for disabled users for the station in terms of; not meeting their needs; the insufficient provision of car parking spaces and the distances from the station of those spaces provided, as compared to the current situation. The objector states the current situation provides for 6 spaces within 15metres of the station front, plus 6 within 49 metres within the existing car park and 2 within the executive car park at 48 metres. This is incorrect in that there are no longer an additional 2 spaces within the executive car park and 1 of the 6 spaces within 15 metres is for 'drop off' only. Therefore the current provision is 11 designated disabled parking spaces.

7.27 In response to the objector's comments, the applicant has provided a statement to refute them. The main point being that the number of spaces provided within the scheme does conform to guidance for railway station car parks. The Guidance referred to by the objector is outdated and more current guidance has been used to inform the scheme "Design Standards for Accessible Railway Stations Code of Practice Department for Transport and Transport Scotland (31 March 2015)." This guidance states that 5% of car park spaces should be designated for disabled. 18 car park spaces are for near parking, 7 of those spaces are designated for disabled parking equalling 39%. Near parking for disabled is as close as 3m to the station. 63 car park spaces are for long term parking. 6 spaces are designated for disabled parking that equals 9.5%. In addition, those spaces are nearest to the station. Rest places should be available every 50m. Rest places provided within the scheme are of a shorter distance and provide shelter. The National standard asks for an accessible pathway. The pathway proposed from long term parking is both accessible and sheltered offering a direct route to the station. The proposed provision therefore improves upon the current situation.

7.28 Consultation has also taken place with disability bodies and comprised of meetings with representatives of disabled groups including DIAL, Live Inclusive, The Partially Sighted Society and Councillor Ian Pearson who has extensive experience with Railway Station provision.

7.29 The meetings were used to present the proposed Station Forecourt scheme; the feedback from these meetings was largely supportive as the design had largely improved accessibility for disabled users in comparison to the current provision. As a result of the meetings some comments made were then incorporated into the final design. Examples include (but not limited to): level footpaths, at grade pedestrian crossing that is Guide Dog and wheelchair friendly, bollards that are not reflective silver to assist the partially sighted, tactile paving, at grade crossing from the car park, rest spots along the canopy and forecourt, ANPR system to help ensure that the allocated Disabled Parking is used by blue badge holders only.

7.30 In addition, the Applicant looked at various railway stations, particularly on the East Coast Main Line, for examples of best practice to ensure the Doncaster Railway Station forecourt provides excellent accessibility for disabled users. A car parking survey was also undertaken in partnership with Virgin Rail to establish the car parking needs for the station.

7.31 Comments have also been taken in to consideration from the public consultation events held in the Frenchgate Centre and the Railway Station earlier this year with regard to all aspects of the scheme, including footways, pathways and pedestrian areas – including but not limited to widths, gradients, fences and guardrails, road crossings, dropped kerbs, raised crossings and tactile paving.

7.32 The new proposal provides easier access immediately outside the Station and the parking at West Street Car Park has step free connection to the Station Building. The design proposed will offer at grade accessibility to all disabled car park spaces provided and at grade footpaths to the Town Centre.

7.33 The objector also made comments regarding anti-social behaviour as a result of the development. In response to this the scheme has been designed in liaison with South Yorkshire Police's Crime Reduction Officer, SYP Counter Terrorism Security Advisors, and a number of government bodies covering all aspects of security and safety of railway users.

7.34 The application is thereby deemed to accord with Doncaster's Core Strategy Policies CS 9 and CS 14.

8.0 Summary and Conclusion

8.1 In summary, the proposed scheme will not only improve upon the current situation in that will provide an attractive gateway into Doncaster when arriving from the railway station, but it will also provide a safer environment for both pedestrian and vehicle users when navigating the station forecourt area. The application is therefore recommended for approval.

9.0 Recommendation

GRANT Full planning permission subject to the conditions below;

01. STAT1 The development to which this permission relates must be begun not later than the expiration of three years beginning with the date of this permission.
REASON
Condition required to be imposed by Section 91(as amended) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

02. U56212 The development hereby permitted must be carried out and completed entirely in accordance with the terms of this permission and the details shown on the approved plans listed below:
Forecourt General Arrangement Dwg No 29667/002 Rev E
West Street Car Park general Arrangement Dwg No 29667/004
REASON
To ensure that the development is carried out in accordance with the application as approved.

03. U56210 The station car park on West Street shall be brought into use before the main plaza / forecourt works commence in order to provide parking for rail station users during the course of the works.
REASON
In the interests of highway safety in accordance with Core Strategy Policy CS 14.

04. HIGH1 Before the development is brought into use, that part of the site to be used by vehicles shall be surfaced, drained and where necessary marked out in a manner to be approved in writing by the local planning authority.

REASON

To ensure adequate provision for the disposal of surface water and ensure that the use of the land will not give rise to mud hazards at entrance/exit points in the interests of public safety.

05. CON2

Should any unexpected significant contamination be encountered during development, all associated works shall cease and the Local Planning Authority (LPA) be notified in writing immediately. A Phase 3 remediation and Phase 4 verification report shall be submitted to the LPA for approval. The associated works shall not re-commence until the reports have been approved by the LPA.

REASON

To secure the satisfactory development of the site in terms of human health and the wider environment and pursuant to guidance set out in the National Planning Policy Framework.

06. CON3

Any soil or soil forming materials brought to site for use in garden areas, soft landscaping, filling and level raising shall be tested for contamination and suitability for use on site. Proposals for contamination testing including testing schedules, sampling frequencies and allowable contaminant concentrations (as determined by appropriate risk assessment) and source material information shall be submitted to and be approved in writing by the LPA prior to any soil or soil forming materials being brought onto site. The approved contamination testing shall then be carried out and verification evidence submitted to and approved in writing by the LPA prior to any soil and soil forming material being brought on to site.

REASON

To secure the satisfactory development of the site in terms of human health and the wider environment and pursuant to guidance set out in the National Planning Policy Framework.

07. U56281

Prior to commencement of the relevant works, details of hard and soft landscaping along with any public art installations, shall be submitted and approved in writing with the Local Planning Authority.

REASON

In the interests of visual amenity in accordance with Core Strategy Policy CS 14.

08.

Prior to the operation of the development hereby approved, details for the provision of at least two electric vehicle charging points shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. Installation shall comply with current guidance/advice. Such provision shall be retained for the lifetime of the development.

REASON

To contribute towards a reduction in emissions in accordance with air quality objectives and providing sustainable travel choice in accordance with policies CS9 and CS18 of the Doncaster Council Core Strategy.

01. U11798

INFORMATIVE: HIGHWAY WORKS

Works carried out on the public highway by anyone other than the Highway Authority shall be under the provisions of Section 278 of the Highways Act 1980. The agreement must be in place before any works are commenced. There is a fee involved for the preparation of the agreement and for on-site inspection. The applicant should make contact with Malc Lucas - Tel 01302 735110 as soon as possible to arrange the setting up of the agreement.

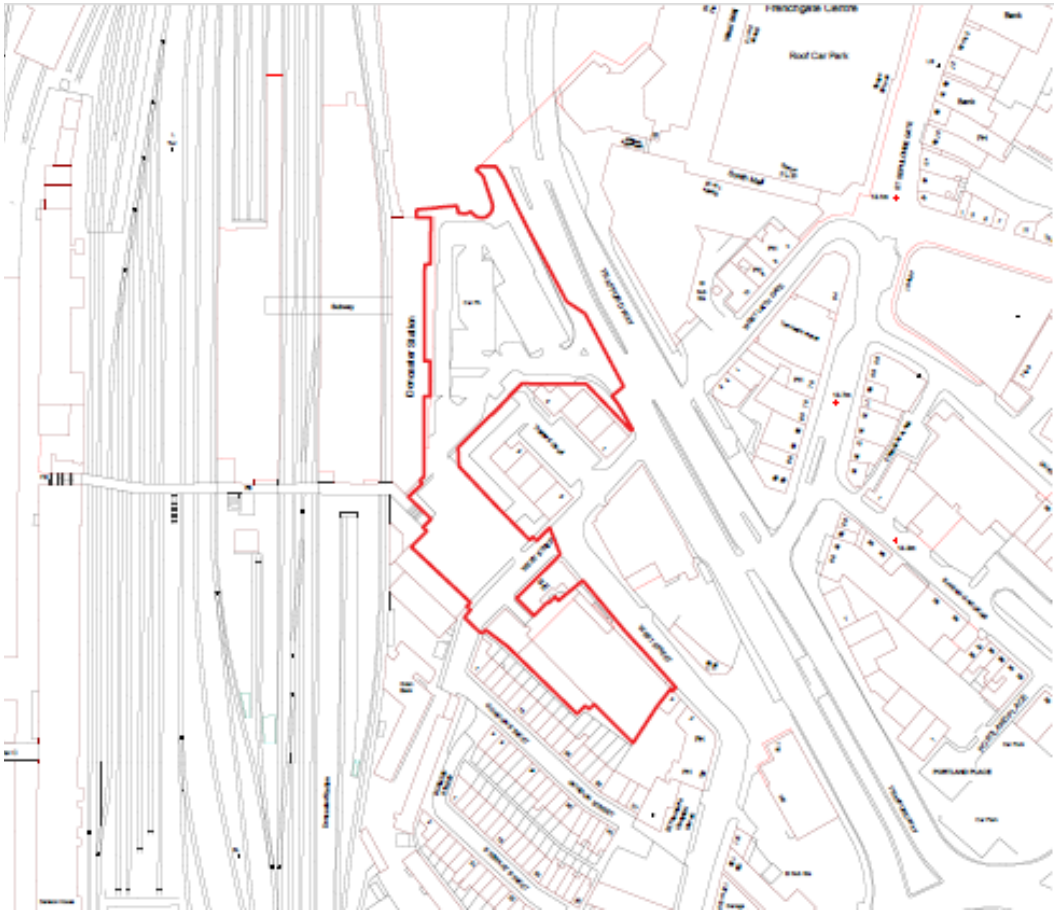
Doncaster Borough Council Permit Scheme (12th June 2012) - (Under section 34(2) of the Traffic Management Act 2004, the Secretary of State has approved the creation of the Doncaster Borough Council Permit Scheme for all works that take place or impact on streets specified as Traffic Sensitive or have a reinstatement category of 0, 1 or 2. Agreement under the Doncaster Borough Council Permit Scheme's provisions must be granted before works can take place. There is a fee involved for the coordination, noticing and agreement of the works. The applicant should make contact with Paul Evans - Email: p.evans@doncaster.gov.uk or Tel 01302 735162 as soon as possible to arrange the setting up of the permit agreement.

The developer shall ensure that no vehicle leaving the development hereby permitted enter the public highway unless its wheels and chassis are clean. It should be noted that to deposit mud and debris on the highway is an offence under provisions of The Highways Act 1980.

Any abnormal load traffic movements during the construction of the development must be notified to DMBC's Abnormal Loads Officer. Details can be found at <http://www.doncaster.gov.uk/services/transport-streets-parking/abnormal-loads>

The above objections, considerations and resulting recommendation have had regard to Article 8 and Article 1 of the First Protocol of the European Convention for Human Rights Act 1998. The recommendation will not interfere with the applicant's and/or objector's right to respect for his private and family life, his home and his correspondence.

APPENDIX 1- Proposed Development Site



APPENDIX 2 Proposed Forecourt General Arrangement



APPENDIX 3 Proposed Visuals

6 Visuals Aerial View



Inside The Square

