

York Station Front Consultation Response

Summary

The core theme of this response lies in conclusion 10. The inadequacy of provision for buses is a slightly different question to the one of whether there should be a bus station, but the two are obviously very closely related.

Conclusions listed here are numbered in the same order they appear in the more detailed sections below. To simplify cross-reference, issues are discussed broadly in the order they appear in the consultation's *Illustrative Masterplan*.

1. *Responses from the various station-related consultations should be coordinated and treated as if this were a single larger-scale consultation.*
2. *Plans for redevelopment around the railway station should be based on a strategic assessment of York's future transport needs.*
3. *Public consultation on strategy would help reduce the likelihood of errors arising from the hitherto fragmented nature of the consultations.*
4. *Valuable future options should not be closed off. It is therefore necessary to establish long-term objectives before later phases of the project are undertaken.*
5. *Demolition of Queen Street Bridge is most welcome, but the proposals fail to make best use of the space created.*
6. *So-called 'Legibility to the City Centre' misses the point. Pedestrianisation of the Portico and Tea Room Square are enough to solve the real problems in this area.*
7. *A disproportionate amount of space is pedestrianised, when there are other valuable uses for some of it.*
8. *Although the new wide pedestrian crossing to the Portico centre looks magnificent, there is no practical need for a crossing exactly here, and it divides the space up.*
9. *A new pedestrian/cycle route crossing the railway south of the train shed would be of major benefit.*
10. ***The Station Front proposals make insufficient provision for buses.***
11. *Covered walkways should be provided between the station and bus interchange.*
12. *Serious consideration needs to be given to a bus station in the space created by demolishing Queen Street Bridge.*
13. *Given the need for more bus provision, the proposed new location for the taxi rank and passenger drop off is questionable.*
14. *A separate drop off area allows the taxi rank and bus station to share space efficiently.*
15. *More use of Park & Ride facilities and less use of long-stay car parking near the station would help reduce city-centre traffic.*
16. *Near-station car parking should be divided into separate facilities, possibly one at Marygate, one on the Teardrop site, and one in its present location.*

These conclusions are based partly on ideas developed in enough detail to suggest they are practicable. These are presented in three proposals below. The first is essentially the original bus station proposal, updated in places to reflect the Station Front consultation's proposals. The second proposal is a new addition.

17. An outline proposal for a new bus station, intended to demonstrate its feasibility, is included in this response.

18. A supplementary outline proposal for a pedestrian/cycle interconnection between the Teardrop site, the station platforms, the bus interchange, and Queen Street environs is also included.

19. The map contained in the second proposal also shows how taxis might be fitted in.

Nomenclature

The 'Teardrop site' is widely referred to in official documents, press releases, etc., as 'York Central'. I have serious doubts about this moniker: if it sticks it will cause no end of confusion because the Teardrop site is anything but central. It isn't even inside the Bar Walls! We really could do with a better name, hopefully before this utterly inappropriate one becomes entrenched.

'Teardrop site' however, is a well-known name locally, and has clear geographical meaning. I propose therefore to stick to it, in the hope that something better emerges in time. 'Hudson Square' and 'Hudson Park' have been floated, and sound attractive, especially now that Hudson House is being demolished, and given the Teardrop site's proximity to the railway station. Perhaps there are other good ideas.

What 'York Central' ought really to be called has not gone into this list of recommendations on the flimsy grounds that this is the 'Station Front' consultation response, not the 'York Central' one.

This document is largely about a proposal for a bus station near where Queen Street Bridge is now. I suggest 'Queen Street Interchange' as the name for this, as it is geographically explicit.

Multiple Consultations

It is regrettable that redevelopment of areas round the Teardrop site and railway station is subject to a fragmented consultation process covering separately:-

- a) the new Scarborough Bridge pedestrian/Cycle crossing,
- b) the new access route into the Teardrop site,
- c) the Teardrop site itself,
- d) the Station Front, and
- e) the Station itself.

These developments are all closely interrelated. It is important not to create a 'multiple silo' situation in which strategic mistakes are made because each silo sees some important aspect as another silo's problem. While it is too late to reverse the multiplicity of consultations, it is not too late to coordinate analysis of the responses as if this were a single larger-scale consultation.

Once the major strategic decisions are made, fragmentation of the developments into multiple, separate projects is entirely sensible. But fragmentation of the consultations carries too much risk.

1. Responses from the various station-related consultations should be coordinated and treated as if this were a single larger-scale consultation.

Strategy

The Station Front proposals assume no change to:-

- a) the amount of long-stay car parking,
- b) the amount of short-stay car parking,
- c) whether these should continue to be provided in one place,
- d) the number of bus stops.

This betrays a disconcerting lack of any strategy underpinning the proposals. It is perverse to make changes to transport infrastructure without even attempting to assess what the strategic objectives are.

2. Plans for redevelopment around the railway station should be based on a strategic assessment of York's future transport needs.

Such a transport review should of course be subject to consultation. That would also provide an opportunity to make sure the various developments in and around the station work properly together, and to amend them if necessary.

3. Public consultation on strategy would help reduce the likelihood of errors arising from the hitherto fragmented nature of the consultations.

Delivery and Staging

There is nothing in the Station Front consultation proposals to suggest this is seen as the first step in a major transformation of the area, or that there is any long-term master plan containing long-term objectives.

Quite the opposite: the proposals have a very 'do the minimum, quickly' feel about them. Gone is any assessment of whether any of the Railway Institute buildings should be demolished. Instead we are given the questionable assertion that these unlisted buildings are an important part of railway heritage. Gone is any attempt to assess the amount of car parking needed. Instead, the proposals provide exactly the same number of places as we have now. Gone is any assessment of where the car parking should be. Instead, the long-stay car park remains where it is, and the short-stay one moved southwards *en bloc*. Gone is any attempt to assess how much bus provision will be needed: the proposals simply assume instead that the present provision is about right, and relocate it. This looks very much like rushed decision making.

Another circumstance suggesting the council is minded to 'do the minimum, quickly' is the apparent urgency attached to getting started on the job. Planning permission application is supposed to begin as early as September. The Council appears not to anticipate delays as a result of consultation responses.

Transformation of the station area does not have to be done in one single step. If there are good reasons to 'do the minimum, quickly' at this stage, that should be to limit the first phase of the project to demolishing the bridge, with a commitment to leaving things in a state that avoids closing off any valuable-looking future options. The apparently non-existent proper process of establishing long-term aims can operate in parallel with knocking down the bridge, which is necessarily one of the first steps in delivering the whole.

Bridge demolition without a clear idea of what is to happen next seems a messy way of doing things, but we are where we are, and the alternative of ploughing on and trying to ram through an inadequate scheme cooked up in a hurry is risky.

4. Valuable future options should not be closed off. It is therefore necessary to establish long-term objectives before later phases of the project are undertaken.

The proposals below appear to be valuable options for the future, not to be closed off without due consideration.

Queen Street Bridge

The Station Front proposals centre around demolition of Queen Street Bridge, and making use of the space this creates.

The bridge no longer serves a useful purpose, and its demolition would unquestionably free up space that can be put to better use. Unfortunately, however, the Station Front proposals amount to little more than demolishing the bridge, moving existing facilities about, and large-scale pedestrianisation.

This leaves the feeling that we ought to gain more from the disruption and expense involved in knocking the bridge down. Wide open pedestrianised space seems too little benefit for the cost involved. Vague though that impression might seem, the more detailed examination to follow shows this vague impression to be amply justified.

5. Demolition of Queen Street Bridge is most welcome, but the proposals fail to make best use of the space created.

'Legibility to the City Centre'

(Illustrative Masterplan section 3)

For pedestrians going between the station and Lendal, the real problem is not 'Legibility' (clear signage fixes that), but the congested arrangements in the Portico and Tea Room Square. At present a direct crossing from the Portico centre would usefully avoid this. But why 'solve' this problem with a new crossing when pedestrianising the Portico and Tea Room Square sweeps all those difficulties away?

The answer, I suspect, is because it looks nice on an architect's drawing, not because there is any real need for it, and so-called 'legibility to the city centre' is an excuse for a feature whose merit is little more than aesthetic.

6. So-called 'Legibility to the City Centre' misses the point. Pedestrianisation of the Portico and Tea Room Square are enough to solve the real problems in this area.

Disproportionate Pedestrian Provision

(Illustrative Masterplan section 8.2)

The brief seems to have been to develop a proposal based on demolishing Queen Street Bridge to create space, and simply replicating existing provision for car parking and bus stops, but in different locations. This has resulted in a disproportionate amount of pedestrianised space.

Better provision for pedestrians is much needed and most welcome. If there were no competing uses for the space freed up by bridge demolition, such a large expanse of open pedestrianised space would still be welcome.

Pedestrians have been prioritised over cyclists, and cyclists have been prioritised over buses to the extent that buses have been given too low a priority. Replicating the existing number of bus stops in the proposed new location is not enough (see conclusion 10). A larger bus interchange than the consultation proposes can be created without reducing pedestrian provision to unacceptably low levels.

7. A disproportionate amount of space is pedestrianised, when there are other valuable uses for some of it.

Location of New Pedestrian Crossing

(Illustrative Masterplan section 8.2)

At present, the lack of a pedestrian crossing from the middle of the Portico to the opposite side of the street is inconvenient. The plans solve that with a wide crossing, and most magnificent it looks, too. But the plans also remove the practical need for it!

Pedestrianising Tea Room Square and removing the taxi rank and drop-off from inside the Portico eliminate the constrictions pedestrians currently have to contend with. They now have the arches in the ends of the Portico all to themselves. Relocating the bus stops to the 'transport interchange' leaves just the old tram stop shelter, a bit of the Bar Wall ramparts, and a couple of trees directly opposite the Portico. Who needs direct access to these? Pedestrians who leave the station and use the proposed new crossing will be faced with having to turn left towards the Lendal Gyrratory, or right towards Queen Street.

The Tudor Arches in the Bar Walls (the ones the railway tracks into the original station passed under) are to be opened up for pedestrians and cycles. This is a very welcome aspect of the consultation proposals. For rail passengers heading in this direction, the proposed central crossing has no advantages over one near Parcel Square. For bus passengers using the relocated 'transport interchange' the proposed 'central' crossing provides a less direct route, and one at Parcel Square is clearly better.

Think about it: what exactly is 'central'? Taking the whole area into account, i.e. the station entrance, the taxi rank, the transport interchange, and the opened-up Tudor Arches, the most 'central' point in the whole station front development is not the centre of the Portico, but Parcel Square. So it could be argued that a 'central' crossing should be here instead.

As currently proposed, the new crossing divides the space outside the station. Under the present plans this is less of a problem because there is little but open space. But if alternative uses are found for this space it may be more practical to put crossings elsewhere.

Even if there are no immediate proposals for how the space outside the Portico might be used, the proposed central crossing risks closing off future options.

So there does seem to be a case for keeping the crossings roughly where they are now, outside the Station Hotel and near Parcel Square. That's not to say they should be kept exactly as they are. Enhancements would be entirely in order.

If the idea of this central crossing were abandoned, the main pedestrian entrances to the station would then be at the two ends of the Portico, not in the centre. This is how things are now, except passage would be completely de-constricted and de-conflicted by giving pedestrians this space to themselves. Instead of being confined to passing through only the small arches, they can use the large ones too.

8. Although the new wide pedestrian crossing to the Portico centre looks magnificent, there is no practical need for a crossing exactly here, and it divides the space up.

Cycling

(Illustrative Masterplan section 8.3)

Currently, the only way cyclists can cross between the Teardrop site and the city centre is via the Marble Arch. This limited provision is obviously far from ideal. In particular, there is no good route between the Teardrop site and areas accessed via Blossom Street, Nunnery Lane, and Lowther Terrace (and possibly the Crescent too, if that is opened up).

The Station Front proposals do not address this question. Nor, presumably, do the Teardrop site plans. This is an example of how dividing developments into separate silos can result in failure to see the big picture.

A bridge across the south end of the station could interconnect all of:-

- a) The teardrop site and station west entrance,
- b) Platforms 1, 3, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, and 11,
- c) The bus interchange, and
- d) Queen Street environs.

This is no mean achievement for just one lightweight bridge. It would even be possible to expand on it to create an elevated concourse across the south end of the station. More details of how that might be done are given in the second proposal attached.

9. A new pedestrian/cycle route crossing the railway south of the train shed would be of major benefit.

Inadequate Provision for Buses

(Illustrative Masterplan section 8.4)

Now we come to the central and most serious failing in the consultation proposals. Conclusion 10 is highlighted to emphasise this.

York is growing. Buses will necessarily form an increasingly important part of local transport as numbers of journeys increase, while road capacity remains stuck where it is. The proportion of journeys made by car can only go down, whether as a result of enlightened Council policy, or the gridlock resulting from failure to intervene.

The railway station area will be particularly affected. Section 2 of the *Illustrative Masterplan* projects a *three-fold* increase in the number of passengers using the York station due to:-

- a) Teardrop site development,
- b) HS2,
- c) Northern Powerhouse Rail, and
- d) general increase in passenger numbers, and other causes not mentioned.

How will so many extra passengers be dispersed from the station? Obviously, buses must play a major role.

Despite all this, the *Illustrative Masterplan* assumes there is no need to increase the number of bus stops! Admittedly, the separate Teardrop site consultation proposals include a 'bus hub' at the new west entrance to the station, but this is in reality just three stops, nowhere near enough to deal with the large increase in bus use that the plans should anticipate.

A significantly expanded bus infrastructure will be needed, especially at the railway station, and now is the time to build that realisation into plans for the future.

10. The Station Front proposals make insufficient provision for buses.

Covered Walkways

(*Illustrative Masterplan* section 8.4)

The proposals include a covered walkway between the taxi rank and the railway station, but no such provision for bus passengers.

Though congested, for northbound passengers the existing arrangements are far better in this respect. The bus stops directly outside the Portico are sheltered. Passengers using buses stopping at the island opposite only have a very short walk to the Portico. Southbound passengers are less fortunate, having to cross the road via a roundabout route. The new central crossing won't help at all because the bus stops will have moved further away.

The bus station proposal attached below completely avoids this problem by putting the bus station concourse inside the train shed.

11. Covered walkways should be provided between the station and bus interchange.

Need for a Bus Station

(*Illustrative Masterplan* section 8.4)

It is often remarked that York lacks a a bus station, and that something should be done about it. Outsiders often find it utterly puzzling that we don't have one. *I agree with this view.*

The issue of inadequate bus provision (core conclusion 10) is not quite the same as the question of whether York would benefit from a bus station, but the two are obviously very closely connected. If the Station Front consultation proposals were modified to increase the number of bus stops, the outcome would be by far the biggest of York's various bus hubs, and beginning to look remarkably like a bus station even if there were never an intention to create one.

The Teardrop site and Station Front developments are a golden opportunity to plan for a bus station, but judging by the proposals in the consultation documents, City of York Council is not minded to take this opportunity.

12. Serious consideration needs to be given to a bus station in the space created by demolishing Queen Street Bridge.

The first of the two attached proposals outlines how a bus station might be provided at very reasonable cost, without a visually intrusive new building in the open space created by knocking down Queen Street Bridge. It involves changes both inside and outside the train shed, making it another example of an idea that crosses consultation boundaries.

Taxi Rank

(Illustrative Masterplan section 8.5)

The consultation proposals move the taxi rank and drop off out of the Portico to improve air quality, de-constrict pedestrian access to the station, and decongest Tea Room Square. This is the right thing to do.

But the plans move the taxi rank and queue to alongside the train shed wall south of Parcel Square. Considered in isolation, this is practical, but because more space is needed for buses, and the proposed new location overlaps the bus interchange space envisaged in the alternative proposals below, so wisdom of putting taxis here is questionable.

The map in the second proposal (see map on page 21, text on page 25) shows an alternative way taxis might be accommodated.

13. Given the need for more bus provision, the proposed new location for the taxi rank and passenger drop off is questionable.

Drop Off

(Illustrative Masterplan section 8.5)

The consultation proposals assume the taxi rank and drop off are together and side-by-side, as they are now. There is no practical need for this. Having moved the buses and taxi rank away from the Portico area, there is more than enough space for drop-off here. Directly outside the Portico front would be an option, especially if the proposal for the grand but unnecessary crossing from the centre of the Portico is abandoned.

As the map for the second proposal shows, there is a way to fit the taxi rank and queue in with the bus station, which would not be possible if the drop off had to go in the same space.

14. A separate drop off area allows the taxi rank and bus station to share space efficiently.

Car Parking

(Illustrative Masterplan section 8.6)

The proposals simply assume that the existing amount of long-stay and short-stay parking provision should be retained. The short-stay parking is moved *en bloc* from inside the north train shed to a new location outside the south end.

Some more careful thought on this subject would not go amiss!

There has been no apparent examination of the possibility that car parking might be divided amongst multiple locations, even though doing so has clear benefits.

Park and Ride

Inner traffic congestion can be eased if rail passengers from more outlying areas use Park & Ride facilities instead of central car parks. Buses would need to run earlier in the morning and later in the evening because commuting rail passengers generally need a service at different times to city visitors. Whether the early morning and late evening routes and stopping patterns would be the same as daytime ones needn't be addressed here.

15. More use of Park & Ride facilities and less use of long-stay car parking near the station would help reduce city-centre traffic.

Marygate

The new Scarborough Bridge pedestrian/cycle route makes Marygate car park more accessible from the station, and access will no longer be blocked when the Ouse floods. Moving some of the long-stay parking to the Marygate car park would mean cars arriving via Bootham no longer need to cross the river or use the inner ring road. If this requires double-decking the car park (or part of it), so be it. If so, the new Scarborough Bridge link might most conveniently be accessed directly from the car park's upper deck.

Turning the Marygate car park into a multi-storey one would free up some land for other uses. Given the nature of the area and pressure to find space for residential developments, this is an obvious alternative possibility.

Teardrop Site

A similar ease-of-access argument applies to cars from the north and west. These could go via the new Millennium Green road into the Teardrop site, avoiding Holgate Road and the inner ring road. The Teardrop site consultation plans show quite a lot of public open space near the new west entrance to the station, so an underground car park below this is a realistic proposition. How about direct underground connections from this to the underpasses below the station? Land take would be very small, at the entrances and exits only, so a car park like this would hardly compete for space against other potential uses.

One of the Teardrop site proposals is to close the Marble Arch to ordinary traffic. For some users this would make the existing long-stay parking accessible only by a much more roundabout route, even if Marygate car park is used.

In some circles there seems to be a view that an aspiration for a largely car-free teardrop site means there should be no car park here. But closer analysis shows the opposite: if the Marble Arch is to be closed off, the case for long-stay parking for station users here is probably strengthened, not weakened.

Present Site

Some users would prefer to continue using the existing site because this is the easiest to reach. So we arrive at the possibility of not one long-stay car park, but three: the Marygate one, the Teardrop site one, and the existing one, reduced in size. Reducing its size fits in

well with a new bus station on a part of the space it currently occupies, and with the council's long-term aspiration to find alternative uses for other parts of this area.

Short-Stay Parking

Moving the short-stay parking out of the area inside the train shed near the Scarborough bay platforms makes a lot of sense. It might perhaps improve air quality inside the train shed (but let's not forget all those much larger diesel engines powering trains!). More importantly, it largely eliminates motor vehicle traffic through Tea Room Square and frees up space for cycle parking.

The Station Front proposals fail to consider whether the short-stay car parking should be broken up. It would be possible to attach some to each of the long-stay car parks near the station. Integrating the short-stay and long-stay parking simplifies access roads, thereby reducing land take.

Disabled Parking

Finally, disabled parking needs to be considered. But because the number of places is small, finding a convenient location should present no difficulties. As shown in the proposals below, the space outside the station Portico can be left largely open and unused, so something here ought to be possible.

15. Near-station car parking should be divided into separate facilities, possibly one at Marygate, one on the Teardrop site, and one in its present location.

Three Specific Proposals

Three specific proposals follow, one for a bus station, and one for a new pedestrian/cycle crossing south of the train shed, plus taxi rank.

These are in essence one person's vision of how a Queen Street Interchange might be laid out. The object of the exercise is to illustrate what could be achieved. Alternative proposals that meet the same objectives are of course welcome. But the Station Front consultation proposals look poor by comparison.

Queen Street Interchange Proposal

The bus station proposal is essentially the same as the one contained in my response to the 'York Central' Teardrop site consultation, with some modifications to take into account the Station Front consultation proposals, which weren't available when the bus station idea first emerged. 'Queen Street Interchange' is the suggested name.

Whereas the Station Front consultation regards the train shed wall as a boundary of the area under consideration, this proposal is for a bus station partly outside and partly inside the train shed. Being based on more holistic considerations of the entire station area, it crosses consultation boundaries. As the submission explains, this is key to its feasibility and affordability. A full-blown bus station entirely outside the train shed does not look like a viable proposition.

17. An outline proposal for a new bus station, intended to demonstrate its feasibility, is included in this response.

Pedestrian/Cycle Bridge Proposal

The second proposal is a longer-term aspiration for a pedestrian/cycle bridge across the south end of the station, interconnecting the Teardrop site, the railway platforms, the bus interchange, and Queen Street environs.

This too crosses consultation boundaries, as it affects the Teardrop site, the railway station itself, and the Station Front area. At its most grand, it could even be part of a visionary new 'Upper South Concourse' for the railway station.

It is conceived as an 'add-on' to the bus station. It is obviously not a cheap option, and if something like this were ever built, it would be at a later stage. The proposed bus station could be built and would be viable without it.

18. A supplementary outline proposal for a pedestrian/cycle interconnection between the Teardrop site, the station platforms, the bus interchange, and Queen Street environs is also included.

Taxi Rank Proposal

The second proposal map also shows how the taxi rank might be fitted in with the bus station (see map on page 21, text on page 25). These are essentially separate proposals, but since they share the same map, and the taxi rank proposal requires little detailed description, this part of the proposal has not been given a completely separate section of its own.

19. The map contained in the second proposal also shows how taxis might be fitted in.

Alan Robinson, 11 Jul 2018.

I am grateful to members of the York Bus Forum and others for their contributions towards and comments on this submission. The conclusions are however mine, and I make no claim that they represent the views of the Forum or anyone else.

The Author

I'm a semi-retired electronic engineer, with professional experience in public transport passenger information systems, mostly but not entirely for the railways, and a more general amateur interest in transport. I've been a York resident for the past 30 years.

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Proposal 1: A Bus Station for York?

This section is an edited version of essentially the same idea submitted in my response to the recent Teardrop site consultation. When that was drafted, the Station Front consultation proposals had not been published.

One of York's transport headaches has long been the lack of a bus station. The nearest we have is a string of stops, from the railway station at one end, down Station Road, and into Rougier Street, with other small 'hubs' dotted about town, for example at Exhibition Square and Merchantgate.

There is also a lack of layover bus parking in the city centre, making it more difficult to terminate services there.

Grasping the Nettle

The 'York Central', or 'Teardrop site' and Station Front developments offer a chance to do something about it.

The Station Front consultation has – most regrettably in my view – been separated from the Teardrop site consultation, even though the futures of the two sides of the station are necessarily interlinked. A more holistic approach would be better.

Teardrop Site Consultation

The idea of a bus station on the Teardrop site has cropped up quite often. The present development plans do include extra provision for buses, in the form of a 'bus hub' at the rear of the railway station. But this is little more than three bus stops, which in reality will add yet another mini-hub to the all-too-dispersed collection we already have.

That's not to say a few stops at the rear entrance are a bad idea. Buses going via Leeman Road or the new Millennium Green access road would do well to stop there. But please let's not kid ourselves this is anything like a solution to York's lack of a bus station.

The development plans are right not to put an entire bus station on the Teardrop site for two reasons. Firstly, it's on the wrong side of the railway station for city centre access. A better location would be on the east side, near the inner ring road.

Secondly, to get into town from the Teardrop site, buses must go under the Marble Arch, which is a low bridge with only 3.7m (12 ft) headroom. Unless the road bed is lowered – a horribly expensive and disruptive operation! – only single deckers can pass under it. Many coaches are also too high.

Station Front Consultation

The Station Front proposals are to demolish Queen Street Bridge and move the bus stops presently outside the station further south. The existing facilities around the station entrance are to be relocated, and the remainder of the space created by removing the bridge is pedestrianised. And that's about all.

The Station Front proposal *Illustrative Masterplan* claims York railway station will experience a *three-fold* increase in passenger numbers over the next 30 years, yet the

number of bus stops is assumed to remain the same. How are all these extra passengers going to be dispersed? The case for a step change in bus infrastructure provision is clearly very strong, and the existing proposals are inadequate.

While removal of the existing pedestrian bottlenecks near the station is a very welcome improvement, the extent to which pedestrians have been given priority over buses seems disproportionate, leaving an outcome in which pedestrians are given more than enough space, while buses are allocated too little.

Integrated Transport

A golden 'integrated transport' principle is that bus and railway stations should be together, forming a single hub for journeys by bus, train, or both. That leaves only one good place for a bus station: on what is now the long-stay car park at the south end of the railway station.

If the Teardrop site and Station Front developments find another use for this land, the opportunity to put a bus station here could be lost forever. This option should not be closed off unless sufficiently detailed study reveals sound reasons for its rejection.

The Obvious Place for a Bus Station

The most obvious place for a bus station is alongside Queen Street Bridge, which puts it as near as possible to the railway station. The idea isn't a new one: in 2012 the then Labour Council proposed using this area, but apart from the present proposal to knock Queen Street Bridge down, nothing has yet come of it. The Station Front consultation proposes a 'transport interchange' in this area, but in reality this is no more than the existing bus stops relocated.

How practical would something more ambitious be? I did a little research using Google Maps, assuming we'd need a layout making best use of limited space. The aim was to see what could be fitted into the land between Queen Street Bridge and the railway station.

Initially, four West Yorkshire bus stations were used as a guide: Leeds City, Bradford Interchange, Huddersfield, and Wakefield. These all have 25 bays, give or take one or two. Hull Paragon Interchange, which is also particularly relevant, has no less than 38. But it's hard to see how York could possibly need anything that big.

At all of these five stations the buses stop with their noses up against the station building wall at an angle of 60° or so. The angle is needed so the buses can be parked close together without one bus's front doors being blocked off by the bus alongside on the left. If the same sort of thing is done here, and assuming the same spacing between buses, 13 or perhaps 14 bays could be put along the currently exposed part of the train shed wall. If, as the Station Front consultation proposes, station outbuildings near Parcel Square are demolished, an additional four bays might be fitted in, if that's what the space is used for.

But there's a price to pay for packing so many buses into such a small area. They need room to turn into and reverse out of the bays. Taking the dimensions of those five bus stations as a guide, the tarmac would have to go most of the way out to Queen Street Bridge.

That creates another problem: too little space to include an adequately sized concourse between the train shed wall and the bays, especially at the north end near Parcel Square, where the flow of pedestrians would be greatest but where the space is most constricted.

Knocking Queen Street Bridge down and a slight eastwards realignment of the road might create a little extra space, but doesn't look like it would generate enough to provide a good 'pedestrian-friendly' solution.

Queen Street Bridge

Queen Street Bridge was built to take the road over the railway tracks into the 1841 station inside the Bar Walls. This early station soon proved inadequate, so the North Eastern Railway built the present one, opened in 1877. The old station is now the City of York Council's West Offices building.

The bridge isn't exactly the most pretty of sights, largely due to the overhanging concrete pavement structure. There's little prospect of removing just that part of it for aesthetic reasons: it was added later because the bridge as originally built was too narrow.

Although the original tracks under the bridge were used as sidings even up until the 1960s, the real justification for its existence vanished long ago. Knocking it down would cost money in the short term, but save on maintenance costs in the long term.

Although it would be quite possible to fit the buses and manoeuvring space into the area between the bridge and the station, the bus station's entrance and exit must also be considered. Demolishing the bridge would remove the needless grade separation between the road and ground level, so entrance and exit junctions can be laid out far more rationally.

The Station Front consultation does propose to demolish Queen Street Bridge, which fits in well with this bus station proposal.

Architecture

The area is dominated by the Bar Walls and railway station, which are both of huge historic importance. Between them, Queen Street Bridge begs for termination of its unsightly misery. The walls and station should remain the dominant features, with new additions being low-key affairs fitting in with both. A bold 'architectural statement' of a bus station building would not seem appropriate. Nor would something horribly utilitarian.

If you stand on Queen Street Bridge and look across the car park towards the station, you'll see a row of bricked-up arches in the train shed wall. Compared to the station's grand interior, it's a bit of a drab sight. Might it look better if those arches were opened up? Or some of them? There is a precedent for it. Quite a few arches elsewhere in the station are either open, or have doors or windows in them. That thought triggered an avalanche of ideas leading to this proposal.

The railway station is of course a listed building, and changes can't be made at will, but it's hard to see how putting doors or windows in these arches is a no-no, providing it is done sensitively. Some of the changes made in the past have been awful by comparison. The changes made to Hull Paragon station are far more drastic than this proposal for York.

Inside this wall there are a road, a few parking spaces, two disused platforms, and cycle stands. The space is poorly used. So how about using some of it as the concourse for the bus station instead? That puts the concourse inside the train shed, the buses outside it, and access to the buses is through the presently bricked-up arches.

With no concourse outside the train shed, there's enough space for buses to manoeuvre, and the bus and railway stations are about as integrated as possible. Bus station construction costs are obviously a lot lower if there's no new building to erect, and external visual impact is very low. Few other uses for this space would leave it so open.

The visual impact inside the train shed becomes what matters. Because it is rather tucked away in the southern corner of the station, under a separate arched roof from the main three, there shouldn't be any major difficulty there.

At present, where there is space for 13 or perhaps 14 buses, there are 18 arches. With the post-war extension buildings in Parcel Square removed, as proposed in the Station Front consultation, another six arches become exposed, giving space for another four buses. The existence of more arches than bus bays permits the use of one arch for each bay, leaving a few not needed for bus access. Perhaps those could be left as they are, to keep the bricked-up arch preservationists happy.

Of the five bus stations looked at, Hull Paragon Interchange is particularly interesting because it does a similar thing, albeit on a larger scale. Here, a glass front has been added to the north wall of the railway station. Buses stop outside it, and the concourse is inside. This isn't to suggest York station should be given identical architectural treatment, but the idea of putting the concourse inside the train shed is essentially the same.

There is one key difference in Hull. That train shed wall also had arches, but they are generally wider, and not on a completely regular pitch. This made it impossible to align the bays with the arches, so the lower part of the wall has been replaced by a horizontal steel beam supported by new pillars. Access to the buses is between these pillars.

But in York, there are more arches than there would be bays, and they are on a regular pitch too, so such drastic modification isn't needed. Opening up existing arches, leaving the pillars and buttresses between them intact, would do the trick and cost less.

I personally don't think York station needs anything like the glass front given to Hull Paragon. Glass inside the arches would be more appropriate, and again, less expensive. But that's only my view: let's leave that one to the architects, the Council, and the paymasters.

How Many Bays?

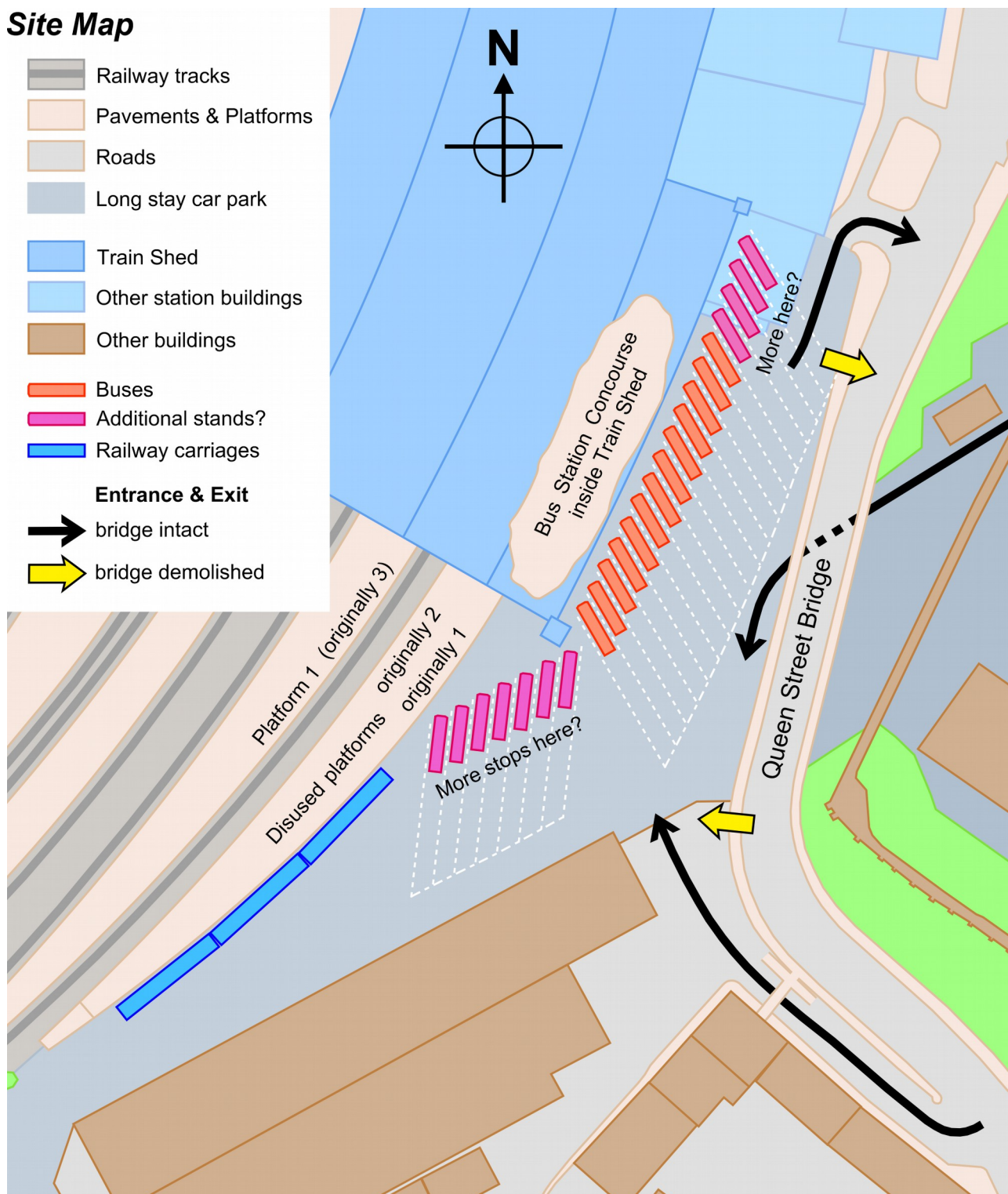
It's hard to see how York could need a bus station as big as any of those four West Yorkshire ones, let alone Hull's, with 38 bays. Would the 13 or 14 that the train shed wall can accommodate be enough? If not, the concourse can be extended beyond the end of the train shed, making space for a total of, say 20. If, as the Station Front consultation suggests, outbuildings near Parcel Square are demolished, another four might be fitted in at the north end. So it does seem there is enough room. The point here is not detailed design, but simply to show that this outline proposal is workable.

Additional layover bus parking would also be needed, especially for terminating services, but there's no shortage of space nearby in other parts of the long-stay car park.

Site Map

The simplified site map below shows the general idea. It isn't precisely to scale, but near enough to give a clear idea of what the possibilities are.

Site Map



Queen Street Bridge and existing buildings – which may or may not be demolished – are shown. Hopefully that will make it easier to see how the buses would fit in. It turns out that the amount of space needed is quite small compared to the entire long stay car park. Only a small proportion of its parking spaces would have to be displaced elsewhere. Thirteen buses are shown in red alongside the train shed wall, though a fourteenth might perhaps be fitted in. Removal of the post-war extension buildings, as the Station Front consultation proposes,

would expose six more arches and make space for another four at the Parcel Yard end, shown in magenta.

Seven more additional spaces are shown, also in magenta, beyond the end of the train shed, giving a total of 24 or perhaps 25, which seems far more than York will need. Their exact location and orientation would depend on whether or not the building(s) to the south are demolished.

The four extra spaces created by removing the extension buildings would conflict with the Station Front consultation proposal to put the taxi rank here. The map in the second proposal (see map on page 21, text on page 25) shows an alternative way taxis might be accommodated.

The dotted white lines indicate the minimum manoeuvring space the buses would need. The dimensions are based approximately on the four West Yorkshire bus stations, but things are complicated a little by the curvature of the train shed wall. At the north end, the buses approach the wall at an angle of about 50°, similar to Bradford Interchange, whereas at the south end of the wall the approach is more like 60°, similar to Leeds City and Huddersfield.

The angle at which buses must approach the train shed necessitates a northbound bus flow past the bays. Demolishing Queen Street Bridge permits access at any point along the road, as suggested by yellow arrows. A clockwise flow would then be easy enough to provide for.

Black arrows indicate access routes with the bridge intact. Northbound buses would enter via Queen Street, passing underneath the Railway Institute fire exit bridge, which would have to be modified to allow double-deck buses underneath, or removed entirely, with alternative fire exit arrangements for the RI building.

Southbound buses could not easily enter via this route because they would have to double back without causing traffic jams. Widening the road to create junction space by digging into the adjacent rampart, or demolishing some of the terraced housing would be needed. To avoid that, southbound buses might enter at the north end and turn round at the south end, or run along the road between the Council's West Offices and the nearby Bar Wall, passing under Queen Street Bridge. The road bed would have to be lowered because the bridge was designed to clear railway vehicles, which are not as high as double-deck buses.

While something along these lines does appear feasible with Queen Street Bridge still intact, it looks like a much more attractive proposition with the bridge demolished. Thankfully, the Station Front consultation proposals suggest the Council is minded to do just that.

Flow-Through Provision?

As described so far, this proposal is based on the assumption that space is limited, so there is a need to use it as efficiently as possible. That approach isn't penalty-free, though, because dwell times are increased, especially for passing-through southbound buses, which must double back on both entry and exit.

The proposal also assumes all buses have doors at the front only, or at least that these are the only ones used at this bus station. This might be acceptable in some cases where there are centre doors, but would be more awkward for bendy buses, which would be better served by the addition of a few flow-through stops. The map on page 21 does have one position at the south end where a bus with centre doors could be accommodated.

This leads to the question of whether the whole station might have a flow-through structure instead, more like the Station Front consultation proposals, but on a larger scale.

Flow-through arrangements, including the present Station Front consultation proposal, require bus users to cross the road. There are crossings at the main station entrance and on the corner of Queen Street, but none in between. The proposal here has all buses stop on the same side, eliminating this difficulty and minimising the distance passengers need to walk when changing between buses.

Whether or not limited space availability prohibits a flow-through design depends on an assessment of the number of stands needed. The Station Front consultation *Illustrative Masterplan* shows only seven bus shelters, on the assumption that the existing bus-stop provision is to remain unchanged. That assumption must be challenged. When there is an opportunity to make major improvements to York's public transport provision, the option of enhancing provision for buses must be looked at. The anticipated three-fold increase in railway passenger numbers only strengthens the case for such a review.

If a completely flow-through station is impractical due to space constraints, a hybrid with a limited amount of flow-through might be more appropriate. Difficulties begin to arise when more than one lane is required in each direction.

Disused Platforms

This proposal relies on the existence of two disused platforms. Given the three-fold increase in railway passenger numbers over the next 30 years anticipated in the Station Front *Illustrative Masterplan*, it would seem very unwise to close off the option of bringing unused platforms back into railway service. This scheme avoids that, with one caveat: the most easterly track (originally Platform 1) can no longer enter the train shed if that space is taken up by the concourse. Short trains could still be accommodated, however. To give an idea, a three-car train is shown in the site map, though up to four cars might be feasible without extending the platform.

The other disused platform (originally Platform 2) needn't be shortened at all.

The *Illustrative Masterplan*, however, appears to assume the original Platform 1 will never be brought back into railway use, despite that three-fold increase, and relocates the short-stay car park here. The implicit assumption that no extra platform space will be needed is highly questionable, to say the least!

Land Levels

The area outside the train shed wall, where the thirteen bays are, slopes slightly. At the north end, near the car park entrance, it is at platform level. At the south end, near the end of the train shed wall, it is at track bed level.

Inside the train shed, the best way to make good use of available space would be to put the bus station concourse at platform level. That way, the concourse is just another part of the single seamless platform space covering the whole east side of the station. That requires the land on the outside be at platform level too, or nearly so. It must be raised up.

After well over a century of being a nuisance, Queen Street Bridge may finally come in handy. Its last dying act would be to provide hard core for raising the land. Or to put it

another way, the rubble wouldn't have to be transported very far, and importing lorry-loads of material from elsewhere is avoided.

One more point: the proposal does not involve lowering land levels anywhere, so there is no risk of project delay for archaeological reasons.

Cycle Parking

This proposal is of course only a sketchy outline. More work needs to be done. In particular, how it would affect cycle parking needs to be considered. There do not appear to be any major problems.

The new bus station concourse would occupy some of the space currently taken up by cycle racks, which would need a new home. There do appear to be plenty of options. In any case, some of the cyclists who use the present arrangements can be expected to prefer cycle storage near the rear station entrance instead. If, as the Station Front consultation proposals suggest, the short-stay car parking is removed from its current location near the Scarborough bay platforms, space is freed up for more cycle parking here.

If there remain cycle stands on the disused platforms, raising the land up to platform level would not only improve access, but also remove the former Platform 1 edge, which constrains the space available for them. That gives options for expansion that presently do not exist, and potentially on quite a large scale.

Conclusions

The results of this little study are very encouraging:-

- ◆ a bus station at the railway station seems entirely practicable;
- ◆ *key to success and affordability is putting the concourse inside the train shed;*
- ◆ the outcome is near ideal from an integrated transport point of view;
- ◆ using the train shed avoids the cost of a new bus station building;
- ◆ the internal concourse location greatly eases external space constraints;
- ◆ this is one of the few possible uses for this area that leaves it an open space;
- ◆ land take is not excessive, and the space is efficiently used;
- ◆ nothing proposed appears unduly costly or technically challenging; and
- ◆ no major risks are immediately apparent.

This proposal is of course only one suggestion. Better alternatives are only to be welcomed. The important point is the existence of at least one workable and affordable-looking option for a York bus station.

I therefore believe the York Central Partnership and City of York Council should work up more detailed proposals for a bus station on the city-centre side of the railway station, with this outline proposal as a basis for at least some of the options.

Proposal 2: The Upper South Concourse

What follows is an additional but related proposal. This and the bus station proposal are independent in the sense that neither relies on the other. This proposal could be implemented in conjunction with the Station Front consultation proposals, otherwise unmodified, or the bus station could be implemented without this addition. The two proposals are however related in the sense that they are meant to work together.

Access between the Teardrop site and city-centre side of the railway are currently poor. Given the aspiration to keep car use to a minimum on the Teardrop site, the primary need is for pedestrian and cycle access. At present the only routes are the Marble Arch, plus the three crossings inside the railway station, one footbridge and two underpasses.

Extending the two underpasses westwards so they can be accessed via the new west entrance may well be a viable option, as it only involves burrowing under one railway track at platform 11, and works access would be easy. But these underpasses are narrow and have limited capacity. The footbridge in the middle of the train shed has more capacity, but is only accessed via steps.

None of these three routes inside the station is suitable for cyclists, so the Marble Arch is their only route from one side to the other. There seems little need to provide a cycle crossing inside the station, because the vast majority will want simply to cross the railway rather than access the station. Since the marble Arch already provides a crossing at the north end, the south end seems the place most in need of a new cycle crossing.

The south end is also where the bus interchange would be, so there is obvious merit in a new pedestrian/cycle crossing linking Queen Street, the bus interchange, and the Teardrop site. And since it would also cross the station platforms, it would be more useful still if these too could be accessed from it.

Construction of a bridge would be less disruptive than tunnelling. A bridge near here was mooted some years ago, the idea being a road bridge south of the train shed, linking Queen Street Bridge and the Teardrop site. That proposal assumed Queen Street Bridge would not be removed. This proposal is quite different: a bridge for pedestrians and cycles only, but integrated with the station and bus interchange. It might also be designed for emergency vehicle use too, though fire engines would require a heavier construction than police vehicles and ambulances, so might be excluded.

To reduce conflicts between users of this bridge and traffic along Station Road/Queen Street, it could be extended across the road towards the corner of the Bar Walls, giving access to the route through the Tudor Arches and to the city centre. For tourists, steps up to the path along the top would provide a most pleasant walking route.

Lifts and escalators and/or steps (but probably not ramps, which would be more visually intrusive) would be built down to all the platforms, so this 'bridge' begins to look more like an upper south concourse linking the platforms and bus station, with ready access to the Teardrop site and Queen Street environs. And why not add ticket machines, a waiting area, a coffee bar, and other paraphernalia to be expected in locations like this?

This map is based on the one above and in the Teardrop site consultation response, but updated to take account aspects of the Station Front proposals.



To distinguish them from other features, the proposed bridge, concourse, and approaches are given a general pink/violet/purple theme.

This scheme has high connectivity stemming from its large number of access points and travel directions served.

Arrows off to the right indicate access to platform level points inside the station. They are assumed not to be part of any though cycle route: the only cyclists using them would be those travelling taking their bikes on trains.

For such users and the disabled, lifts or ramps would be needed down to the platforms. Ramps would be long, so from a visual intrusion point of view lifts would be preferable. It would also make sense to provide steps and/or escalators.

Let's take the access points from the top of the map downwards, i.e. west to east.

Teardrop Site (cycles)

Cyclists need ramps rather than steps, and preferably not too steep. This makes the descent from the bridge down to the ground rather a long one. Suggested here is a spiral ramp, but if the truth be known its location was chosen to fit this drawing, not the layout of the Teardrop site. In practice the cycle ramp would be designed in whatever way best fits in with everything else.

This ramp might also be used by service trolleys, etc., travelling to or from the Platform 12 and west entrance level.

Platform 12 & West Entrance

Platform 12 does not currently exist. But given that projected *three-fold* increase in railway passenger numbers, it would be unwise not to at least make provision for it when building the new entrance. I've made the questionable assumption that wisdom will prevail.

Platforms 10 & 11

This is a straightforward connection to an island platform. No other station locations are accessed from here unless you want to take a deliberately roundabout route.

Platforms 7, (8), & 9

This is actually a connection to Platforms 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9, which are all interconnected on the level. But reaching Platform 6 and the southern half of Platform 5 requires a trip round the buffer stops at the ends of Platforms 6 and 7.

Platform 8 (the Harrogate bay platform) can be accessed from this point. Perhaps the signage should direct passengers walking from west to east towards Platform 8 at this point.

Platform 7 is inside the train shed, whereas Platform 9 is outside. However, it seems pointless to provide two separate access points, one for inside the wall and one outside. Though interconnection between the two platforms is blocked by the train shed wall, a few arches are open for through passage. Opening up more arches would improve access.

Beyond the south end of the train shed, Platforms 7 and 9 form a very wide island platform, which is at present open space. There may be further options here, perhaps for a spiral ramp accessing platforms 5 to 9, to be used by service trolleys, etc..

Platforms 5, 6, (& 8)

This is also a connection to the interconnected Platforms 5 to 9. But reaching Platform 7 and the southern half of Platform 9 requires a trip round the buffer stops at the ends of Platforms 6 and 7.

Platform 8 can also be accessed from this point. Perhaps the signage should direct passengers walking from east to west towards Platform 8 at this point.

Platforms 1 & 3

This is actually a connection to Platforms 1, 2, 3, and 4, plus the Bus Interchange and the disused former Platforms 1 and 2, if they are brought back into use. But accessing the Bus Interchange and former platforms 1 and 2 requires a detour round the buffer stops at the end of Platform 1 (former Platform 3).

Platforms 2 and 4 (at the north end of the station) can also be accessed via this point, and are reached by walking the length of the station. Perhaps the signage should direct passengers walking from west to east towards Platforms 2 and 4 here.

Bus Interchange & City Centre

This point also accesses Platforms 2 and 4 at the north end of the station. Perhaps the signage should direct passengers walking from east to west towards Platform 2 and 4 at this point.

This point can also be used to access the long-stay car park, and the short-stay one too, if it is part of the long-stay one.

If either of the disused bay platforms on this side (original platforms 1 and 2) are brought back into use, these would also be accessed via this point.

Lowther Terrace (cycles)

Without this, there is no easy access for cycles to the route via the current long-stay car park and Lowther Terrace to Holgate Road. Cyclists would have to descend into the bus station. With this ramp, there is no need for one down into the bus station and conflicts between cyclists and pedestrians inside the bus station concourse are avoided.

Although labelled Lowther Terrace on the map, it provides access to quite a number of other places, most notably the Lendal Gyratory. Since the Marble Arch provides an alternative and more direct route to there, how many would actually use it is open to question.

This ramp might also be used by service trolleys, etc..

East Side Pedestrian/Cycle Bridge

A pedestrian/cycle bridge connects the concourse to the Bar Wall ramparts across the street, below the top of the ramparts. From here, pedestrians and cycles can go in various directions.

Looking at it somewhat analytically, there are in principle four routes from the corner of the walls. The two principal directions are towards Micklegate Bar and towards Lendal. Tracks can in principle be either inside or outside the walls, but in the Lendal direction the Tudor

Arches unite the inside and outside, so there are actually just three routes. This scheme implements all three.

Because cyclists need ramps rather than steps, and preferably not too steep, a way is needed to incorporate them without being too visually intrusive. The solution is to take advantage of the rampart slopes, running the tracks obliquely across them.

Visual intrusion is mitigated by tucking the tracks away, out of sight from the station front area. A track across the walls immediately opposite the station is impractical in any case, because it would have to pass across the Tudor Arches, which might be practical from a horribly utilitarian point of view, but is out of the question on aesthetic grounds.

The track towards Nunnery Lane and Blossom Street is the only one visible from outside the walls, running obliquely down the Queen Street rampart. For access to Toft Green and the City Centre, tracks are routed across the inside ramparts, one going straight on towards Toft Green, and the other doubling back towards ground level at the nearest Tudor Arch. Visual intrusion is less of an issue here because this area is only visible from the top of the walls and the Network Rail offices just inside.

The New Arch

Access to these two routes is via a modestly sized and sensitively designed new arch in the walls. This provides an opportunity to put steps up the inside of the wall to the path along the top. It isn't difficult to imagine tourist guides recommending this route to visiting sightseers.

This aspect of the proposal may be controversial. In Victorian times the walls were widely seen as an old nuisance. There were plans to tear them down and 'modernise' the city. Fortunately that didn't happen. But to object to any modification, however small, seems a swing too far in the opposite direction.

The length of wall opposite the station had numerous new arches put through it in the nineteenth century, and four of them large, two for the tracks into the original railway station, and two for Lendal Gyratory roads. So this region of the Bar Walls is not pristine or unviolated.

Another point to note is that the proposed new pedestrian/cycle bridge would be at a level little higher than the top of Queen Street Bridge, and by the time the arch is reached, a degree of descent is also possible. This puts the arch below the top of the ramparts, so the approach would be via short cuttings on either side, which would largely obscure it. It would be barely noticeable except from nearby. Viewed from near Micklegate Bar, say, it could be designed to be quite invisible: only the path up the ramparts would show.

The Station Addition

So I suggest that the train shed be given an architecturally sympathetic southern extension to house such a concourse, plus a segregated roadway for cyclists. On its east side there would be a pedestrian and cycle bridge crossing the road towards the Bar Walls, and on its west side there would be access to Platforms 9 to 11 and the Teardrop site. Perhaps it might be designed so that, viewed end-on from Holgate Bridge, say, it would take a second look to even notice the change. The end walls of the existing roof could be removed and replaced

with transparent walls giving a clear view from this new upper concourse out over the interior of the original train shed.

All that said, this second proposal is a supplementary 'nice to have', and depends on the availability of significant funding for major station improvements. The proposal for the bus station is more important. There is no absolute need for simultaneous delivery either: should funding not be immediately available, the second could be added later. It would however be best to design everything else with suitable provision built in.

Taxi Rank

The earlier consultation response did not find a way to fit taxis into the overall scheme. This one does, as the map on page 21 shows.

The rank itself is located near Parcel Square, where Cycle Heaven now is, roughly where the Station Front consultation proposes, but nearer the Portico. The waiting taxi queue doesn't go alongside the train shed wall, as the Station Front consultation proposes, but on the opposite side of the bus lane along the backs of the bus manoeuvring area, separated from the main road by a not-too-wide pavement, a sort of paved 'central reservation', if you like. If needed – and assuming the RI buildings remain intact – a queue extension can be added, as shown.

Advantages and general comments:-

- a) there is room for a very long queue;
- b) the queue ends close to the rank;
- c) the rank is clearly visible from the head of the queue;
- d) the queue is clearly visible from the head of the queue extension (if needed).
- e) road space is efficiently used;
- f) junctions are simpler because buses and taxis share the same entrance and exit; and
- g) safety: cabbies can get out and chat to each other on the offside pavement.

Appendix A: Pictures

A1 and **A2** show the space for buses between the train shed and Queen Street Bridge, A1 looking northwards, and A2 looking southwards.

This space is large enough for buses to manoeuvre in and out, but not for a decent-sized concourse too.

Buses would park with their noses up to the train shed wall, and the bricked-up arches opened up to give access to the concourse behind the wall.

While there is space for 13 or 14 buses, there are 18 bricked-up arches, plus one at the north end with a door through.



A3 Queen Street Bridge is opposite the train shed wall, seen from within the long-stay car park, looking northwards.

Compared to its surroundings, this feature is hardly replete with aesthetic merit.

A4 looks northwards into the train shed area where the concourse would be.

The edge of the former Platform 1 can clearly be seen. Rubble from the demolished bridge would be used to raise the road surface up to platform level, both inside and outside.

The option of returning this end of the platform to railway use would be closed off.





A5 looks northwards along the disused former Platform 2, with the still-used Platform 1 on the left.

The train shed wall and arches can just be seen on the right through the pillars.

This disused platform's entire length could still be brought back into railway use.

A6 and **A7**, taken from inside the train shed, look towards the bus station space. **A7** is taken from the footbridge above Platform 5. The vantage point of **A6** is near the left of the lower picture.

The bus station concourse and railway platforms would be combined into one single, open, and level space.

In the bottom left corner of **A7** is a lift down to an underpass leading to platforms on the west side. There is already provision for disabled access from any of the platforms to the bus station.



A8, taken from Platform 1, is another view of the presently bricked-up arches through which the buses would be accessed.

At present the disused platforms are used for cycle parking, both inside and beyond the train shed.

All pictures © Alan Robinson 2018.

A9 Not all York's arches are bricked up. Here is an open one between Platforms 7 and 9, seen here from the inside.

On the bus station side, access to buses would be through a succession of arches like this, perhaps with glass doors and windows, if that helps in windy weather.



A10 shows the bus station concourse on the north side of Hull Paragon railway station, looking westwards. The concourse is inside the train shed and the buses outside, to the right (see also picture A4). The Hull development is on a grander scale than York would need, and in any case York has less space available.

On the right, the ticket office is behind two unmodified original arches. Beyond that, the old arch tops are supported by a horizontal steel beam on new pillars spaced at closer intervals, equal to the distance between the bus bays. Access to the buses is between the new pillars and through the glass frontage added on the outside.

A11 looks back eastwards. The old arches are comparatively few and far between. Access to the buses, (and being sure to board the correct one!), would be more difficult with the original brick walls still there.

In York, such serious structural surgery would be unnecessary because the existing arches are regularly and more closely spaced. All that is needed is to open enough up, leaving the pillars and buttresses intact.



Appendix B: Diversion during Bridge Demolition

This appendix is attached to address objections on the grounds that demolishing Queen Street Bridge would be far too disruptive, or that diversionary arrangements would be too expensive.

Knocking the bridge down would be no trivial task. Naturally enough, fears arise that doing so could cause horrendous disruption.

It would be idiotic to pretend disruption can be avoided, but the worst – closing this part of the ring road – should not be necessary.

With the steps and bridge up to the Railway Institute first floor fire exit removed, and a parking ban, Queen Street looks wide enough to take two-way traffic.

The entrance to the long-stay car park is more than wide enough to take two-way traffic, with the removal of station extensions due to be removed anyway, a bit of pavement and some railings.

So a diversionary road can be put through the car park approximately along the route shown here.

It would be cheap enough: for most of its length the diversionary route is over tarmac that already exists. All that's needed is to paint some white lines on it.

The most disruptive work is not bridge demolition – the diversion is routed clear of that – but removal of the approach ramps, especially the one at the south end, opposite the Queen Street terraced houses. Tricky parts of that operation might require night-time closures.

