

## Design & Conservation

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**Re:** York Station Frontage

**Ref:** 19/000535/FULM

**Date:** 13<sup>th</sup> June 2024      **File:** York station frontage 19-00535-fulm 13-06-24 EP

**To:** Brendan Murphy, Senior transport project manager

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Part of my role as Landscape architect is to provide advice on landscape matters relating to visual amenity, street scenes, trees, planting, landscape character, open spaces, and the public realm to name a few areas. All landscapes, such as play areas and the public realm should be inclusive.

In discussion of the merits between the use of stone in the approved scheme or the use of 'terracotta' coloured tarmac on the cycle way, I provide the following thoughts:

The scenarios are slightly different either side of the road.

On the station side (west side) of the road, the cycleway is separated from the pedestrian area by the line of HVM bollards. The bollards are large and closely spaced, and therefore provide some division of pedestrian and cycling activity, and hence protection for pedestrians. In turn, the cycleway is separated from the road with planting along some of its length. Therefore, I question whether it is necessary for the cycleway to be in a different colour right in front of the station.

The tactile crossings for pedestrians would be red in colour. Is it possible that a red cycleway, immediately adjacent to the red tactiles, could potentially cause some confusion? Is red a standard colour to demarcate cycle lanes for the visually impaired? Other colours such as green or blue would look even worse.

The proposed tarmac surfacing would cheapen the appearance of the scheme. The use of stone along the cycle lanes (as originally intended), aesthetically provides a better impression and quality of space in front of the station; and complements the setting of the station frontage – a

Grade II\* listed building, which along with The Minster, is a place and building of central importance to the city.

The use of tarmac along the cycle lanes would significantly reduce the aesthetic quality of the overall scheme. As a broad red line slicing across the space in front of the station and the city walls, this would be a visually dominant element of the overall station frontage improvements - as viewed from street level and from the city walls. The approved scheme seeks to provide a quiet, but high-quality, sympathetic surface for the station frontage, hotel, and city walls.

On the other side of the road (east side), adjacent to the city walls (a scheduled ancient monument), the cycleway passes through this hard open space, in so much as there are potentially pedestrians on either side of the cycle lane - within the space adjacent to the walls, and using the bus stops. The original design intention was for this to read as one urban space, as much as possible, which also increases the impression of the size and quality of the space.

Again, there are proposed bollards between the cycleway and the main pedestrian space. There is no requirement for HVM prevention measures on this side, so the bollards are spaced far apart. I suggest that these bollards are not necessary since they are so widely spaced as to not hinder vehicle movement between them, and are not so close to the highway as to prevent drivers mounting the kerb. Thus, either, i) remove the bollards completely, or ii) potentially increase the number of bollards slightly to reinforce the division between the pedestrian zone and the cycle lane.

I understand there are issues of people stepping into the cycle lane, or lingering in the cycle lane, on the south side of York Minster. The situation is slightly different by the city walls because it is generally more of a movement space than a milling space, and less of a tourist hot spot and attraction. Therefore, this potential conflict would be less relevant in this instance.

With a strongly differentiated and dedicated cycle lane, cyclists are likely to travel at faster speeds and claim the tarmac surface as exclusively theirs and therefore potentially put pedestrians at greater risk; i.e. the benefits of the cycleway being more visible could be outweighed by the increase in likelihood of an accident due to faster cyclists. Pedestrians are the top priority in pedestrian areas. On the carriageway, cyclists are a more important user than the vehicle. Coloured cycle lanes directly at the side of a road help to protect cyclists from vehicles. Applying a

coloured cycle lane to a pedestrian area, could give an impression that the cyclist is favoured over the pedestrian in an area in which pedestrians will be crossing the cyclist's direction of travel.

It may be more appropriate to use coloured tarmac away from the station frontage complex, where the cycle lane runs immediately adjacent to the carriageway.

We also discussed materials for the tactile paving at the crossing points. Red granite would be better aesthetically than red concrete. I hope the former would provide sufficient visual/tactile contrast. I understand that the contrast is sufficient to satisfy recognised national guidance.

Considered holistically within the above factors, the use of stone paving across the entire public realm surface, including the cycleway, would be preferable to applying tarmac to the cycleways in this prestigious location.

In summary, in consideration of the design and consultation process preceding this date, and making a professional judgement overall, I find that the proposed changes would result in a reduction in i) the aesthetic quality of the approved scheme, ii) the sense of space, and iii) the setting of York station and the city walls, in particular in this place of primary importance and arrival to the historic City of York. The detriment to the aesthetics of the scheme should be considered, along with a consideration as to whether the proposed changes would have a profound beneficial effect on the safety of pedestrians and cyclists.

I feel this proposed potential change is significantly different to the approved scheme, and to what has been presented to the public, by way of published plans and visuals, which show stone units as the surface material across the public realm including the cycle lanes. Therefore, I strongly advise that if this option is pursued, some visuals should be provided from both sides of the street, comparing the approved scheme that uses stone throughout, and the possible alternative that uses red tarmac instead of stone, and red concrete tactiles instead of red granite. These should then be used to re-consult the same audience as before.