

THE STUDY (written by Wanheng Su)

Title: “an appropriate plan for the redevelopment of the Waterdale Shopping Area can help to improve the town centre.”

For the last couple of years, because of competition from the other larger city centres and particularly from the shopping facilities at Meadowhall, the Doncaster’s CBD has been under threat.

Shopping has changed drastically for shoppers. Instead of shopping daily, they now shop less frequently, because of the introduction of storage systems and particularly because they now have less time for shopping.

When Meadowhall opened on the 4<sup>th</sup> of September 1990, it uses this to its advantage by having every major retailer including WH Smith and Marks & Spencer all under one roof. This is efficient as it saves time, and shoppers are keen for efficiency. Unlike Meadowhall, the Doncaster’s CBD doesn’t have this efficiency and shoppers are subject to nature’s nuisance like the while shopping. Thus shoppers now shop at Meadowhall, resulting in the Doughnut Effect.

The 12000 free parking spaces and the excellent transport systems available at Meadowhall further promotes this Doughnut Effect as shoppers at Doncaster’s CBD are not allowed or have to pay for parking. There are two new railway stations next to Meadowhall. 220 trains go past Meadowhall each day, providing an efficient and healthy transport system which shoppers are keen to take advantage of.

Furthermore, Meadowhall Shopping Area is big, clean and stylish; the centre has five shopping areas, each with its own theme and identity for different types of shopping, and is preferred by shoppers over the colourlessness and lifelessness of Doncaster’s CBD.

Decentralization occurs. The doncaster’s CBD becomes a “dead” area, and thus resulting in the Doughnut Effect.

As shoppers travel further to shop in the other larger city centres and Meadowhall, the Doncaster's CBD becomes a "dead" area, being abandoned because of the lack of activity. Shops were being closed down and deserted. The retailers now move out and settle in the periphery to ensure survival. Growth takes place in the periphery i.e. Meadowhall and the other larger city centres.

We are now searching for ways to improve the appearance and facilities in the Doncaster's CBD in hope that people will use it rather than going further to shop. It would no doubt attract shoppers to the Doncaster's CBD if the correct points were targeted the right ways.

Compared with three years ago, changes have taken place in the Doncaster Town Centre. Because of competition from other larger shopping centres and particularly the shopping centre at Meadowhall, the council has spent massive amounts of effort, time, and money in hope of improving the Town Centre.

Streets in the town centre were pedestrainised to ensure the safety and comfort of shoppers while shopping. The shoppers can now shop more freely due to less contact with traffic.

New street sculptures were introduced to town centre recently, which were done in hope of beautifying the environment in and around town centre. These were placed around the shopping areas where most people spent their time, either eating or just resting while shopping, to create a friendly environment.

These changes have been very successful in attracting shoppers to the town centre.

The Waterdale area, however, is quite different and in a state all by itself. Due to the lack of business, numerous stores have been closed in the Waterdale area. The owners were forced to bankrupt due to the lack of income coming in. While Meadowhall has all of its shops under one roof, which shoppers want, it is not so in the Waterdale area. Shoppers shopping at the waterdale area are subject to the rain as there is no roof over the shopping area. The variety of shops in the Waterdale area is embarrassing; only 17 different types of shop. The environment

is uninviting and seemed lacking of colour. There is also only about two seat in the whole of the shopping area, making it all that more difficult when shopping. The waterdale area also requires you to pay for parking, which is outrageous as Meadowhall allows free parking.

When a survey is carried out to determine the views of the shoppers shopping there about the waterdale area and what changes they want, it revealed that 80% of the shoppers have admitted to shopping in the waterdale area less frequently. This is declination and unless it is dealt with, it would destroy the shopping area. I found out that the shoppers mostly want a roof over their heads when shopping. More than half have revealed to want more variety in the types of shops available while most of them wanted more seating areas.

To create an appropriate plan for the redevelopment of the waterdale area, I have to take into account the shoppers' views.

The most important aspect to consider when a plan should be the comfort and safety of the shoppers. Secondly, there should be a sufficient line-up of stores, which would allow the shoppers to get all their shopping done in one shopping area since they now have less time.

To promote the comfort of shoppers while shopping, a roof should be constructed to prevent shoppers from suffering from nature's nuisance while shopping. This would prevent rain and other aspects of nature from bothering the shoppers while shopping.

Chairs should also be placed all around the shopping area to allow the shoppers to rest while shopping. This would promote the comfort of shoppers and also allow the shoppers to socialise with each other when shopping and help to build the reputation of the shopping area. To persuade more youngsters to shop in the shopping area, the shopping area should be built with more colours, which could emphasis the cleanliness of the shopping area and keeping up with the ever- evolving world.

Meadowhall have an amazing setup in which the shoppers are able to shop all their required goods in one place, thus saving time and resource. To be able to compete with

Meadowhall, Waterdale shopping area would also need to have all the major retailers under one roof. Instead of just 17 types of shop, there should be more variety to satisfy the needs of the shoppers. Major retailers like Marks & Spencer should be included in the selection of stores to be placed in the shopping area as they are well known throughout the country for their excellence in quality. The empty and deserted places would need to be filled for it to look more like a shopping area and appealing.

To make the shopping area more accessible to everyone including elders, there should be elevators built which would enable the elder persons to be able reach anywhere. Together with escalators, this would provide a place where everywhere is accessible, which is what is required by the shoppers.

There should also be sufficient lighting as nobody wants to shop in a dark place.

By doing all of those things to improve the waterdale centre, the whole town centre would also be improved.

Written by Wanheng Su, England.