

# PROPOSED CROYDON STATION EASY ACCESS UPGRADE



## VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT - ADDENDUM FOR REVISED PROJECT

Prepared by Envisage Consulting for Transport for NSW

**DATE:** 03 December 2015  
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**ENVISAGE DOCUMENT NO.:** E7515 VIA/ADD  
**STATUS:** FINAL REPORT, REVISION 01



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Report photomontages have been prepared by Cambium Group.

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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Purpose of this report

This report provides an addendum to the visual impact assessment (VIA) prepared previously for Transport for NSW's (TfNSW) proposed Croydon Station 'easy access upgrade' in Sydney (Envisage Consulting, 2015). It assesses a revised design, which is referred to in this report as 'the revised Project'.

The assessment follows the same assessment methodology presented in the previous VIA, and as such focusses on key viewpoints that surround the station from where the visual changes would be seen from, including the main shopping area, surrounding streets and the station itself.

## 1.2 Revised Project overview

In summary the changes that form the revised Project include:

- Reduced visual emphasis of the butterfly entrance awnings at both entries (roof pitch reduced to approximately half and reduced length)
- Replacement of the tiles on the upper lifts shafts with glazing and louvres confined to the eastern aspect (i.e. platform side), to simplify the structure when seen from the western side
- The overall height of the footbridge roof has been lowered by around 0.5m and the fall direction of the roof has been reversed so that instead of opening up towards the west (Meta Street) it opens up to the platforms, providing a visual break from the stair canopies and resulting in a smaller amount of the roof seen from the western side
- The façade of the footbridge has been modified so it is visually more lightweight and transparent, which has been achieved by relocating the louvres from the western side to the eastern side and increasing the glazing across the whole façade (and removing the aluminium panels)
- The stair canopies have been reduced in height and are now separated from the footbridge roof
- The platform canopies on Platforms 3/4 and 5 have been mostly removed to further reduce visual impact by providing a visual separation between the platform heritage buildings
- The new Station Operations Building at Paisley Road now has no large corner window to reduce potential views into this building
- Relocation of two advertising signs from Platform 5 to inside the northern side of the rail corridor, close to the intersection of College Street with Hennessy Street.

The materials and finishes schedule has not been modified and would be reviewed during the detailed design process.

The concept design drawings that illustrate the main changes are:

- TAP-C3897-CD-AR-3611(revision Fa)

- TAP-C3897-CD-AR-3614 (revision Fa)
- TAP-C3897-CD-AR-3617(revision Fa)
- TAP-C3897-CD-AR-3686 (revision C).

Two photomontages have also been produced that illustrate the changes as included in **Section 2.0** of this report.

## 2. Visual impact assessment

### 2.1 Effect on existing visual character

The dominant character of the surrounding area is urban and consists of a neighbourhood shopping centre that draws together the surrounding low density residential area. It is a low height environment of mostly 1-2 storeys with small retail shops framing the main street of The Strand, and creating a village-like, small grained character. The urban form is of a similar low scale across the northern side of the railway corridor. The northern end of The Strand, at the station site, has a strong visual character created by the combination of The Strand Café, heritage post office and existing station building, creating an attractive, pleasant and strong sense of place.

The revised Project would complement the existing character to a greater degree in terms of the following main changes:

- a more obvious visual separation between the heritage platform buildings and the new stair canopies/footbridge, thereby allowing for station viewers to appreciate these as stand-alone elements
- a reduction in the bulk and scale of the butterfly entrance awnings so they are more sympathetic to the Croydon village setting, while still helping to delineate the station entrances
- a more transparent, lightweight and less visually-cluttered footbridge structure due to the relocation of the louvres from the western side to the eastern side and increased glazing on the facade
- less of the footbridge being visible from the western side (due to a reversal of the roof fall which also reduced the height of the roof on this side by approximately 0.5m)
- increased transparency of the lifts due to the replacement of tiles in the upper lift shafts with glazing and the reduction of louvres to the eastern aspect (i.e. station side) only.

The previous report considered the height, scale, materials and overall visual compatibility with the surrounding main street of Croydon, concluding that 'the design has specifically focussed on retaining the key essence of the built character and the relationship of the station to the main street'. That conclusion is still supported in regard to the revised design, with the changes considered to have an increased compatibility and therefore a more positive effect on the existing visual character.

When seen from the western side (a key viewpoint), there would be a reduced visual impact to the existing visual character. This would be achieved by reducing the bulk and scale so the new structures sit more sympathetically within the existing streetscape (i.e. from the reduction in the prominence of the butterfly roof entry structures, the lower height of the footbridge roof and the relocation of the upper louvres to the eastern side with increased glazing for the upper lift shafts).

From the platform (eastern) side there would be a more distinct visual separation between the contemporary new stair canopies and the more streamlined footbridge structure, thus further minimising the effect on the existing visual and heritage character of the station. There would also be a visual break between the stair canopies and the footbridge to help reduce the visual dominance of the new structures.

## 2.2 Effect on key viewpoints

Of the public viewpoints previously assessed, the visual changes associated with the revised Project would be seen mostly from:

- Public viewpoint A: Corner of Meta Street and Presbyterian Ladies College (PLC)
- Public viewpoint B: Paisley Road (west)
- Public viewpoint C: The Strand (upper)
- Public viewpoint G – from station.

The re-assessed viewpoints and revised photomontage locations are identified in **Figure 2-1**.

### 2.2.1 Public viewpoint A: Corner of Meta Street and PLC

The photomontage of the Project (as publically exhibited as part of the Review of Environmental Factors (REF) display) from this viewpoint is illustrated as **Figure 2-2**, with a photomontage of the revised Project provided as **Figure 2-3**.

#### Visual sensitivity

This viewpoint is at the corner of Meta Street and Young Street, representing the view that would be possible from the existing retail and commercial area at this corner and the top of Hennessy Street. It incorporates views from PLC, those traversing from near the school to the railway station and travellers heading east along Young Street. Due to the high number of users the visual sensitivity of the viewpoint is high.

#### Magnitude of change

The previously assessed magnitude of visual change was moderate.

The revised Project would have a lower magnitude of visual change, yet would still be in the range of a moderate level. That is because it still represents a distinct change from the existing visual environment, however, the revised design further reduces the visual impact largely in terms of bulk, scale and the greater use of more lightweight materials. The reduction in bulk and scale would help the new station operations building and footbridge to sit more sympathetically within the Croydon village streetscape. The increase in glazing would also allow the new structures to appear more transparent and provide a visual separation between new and old fabric.

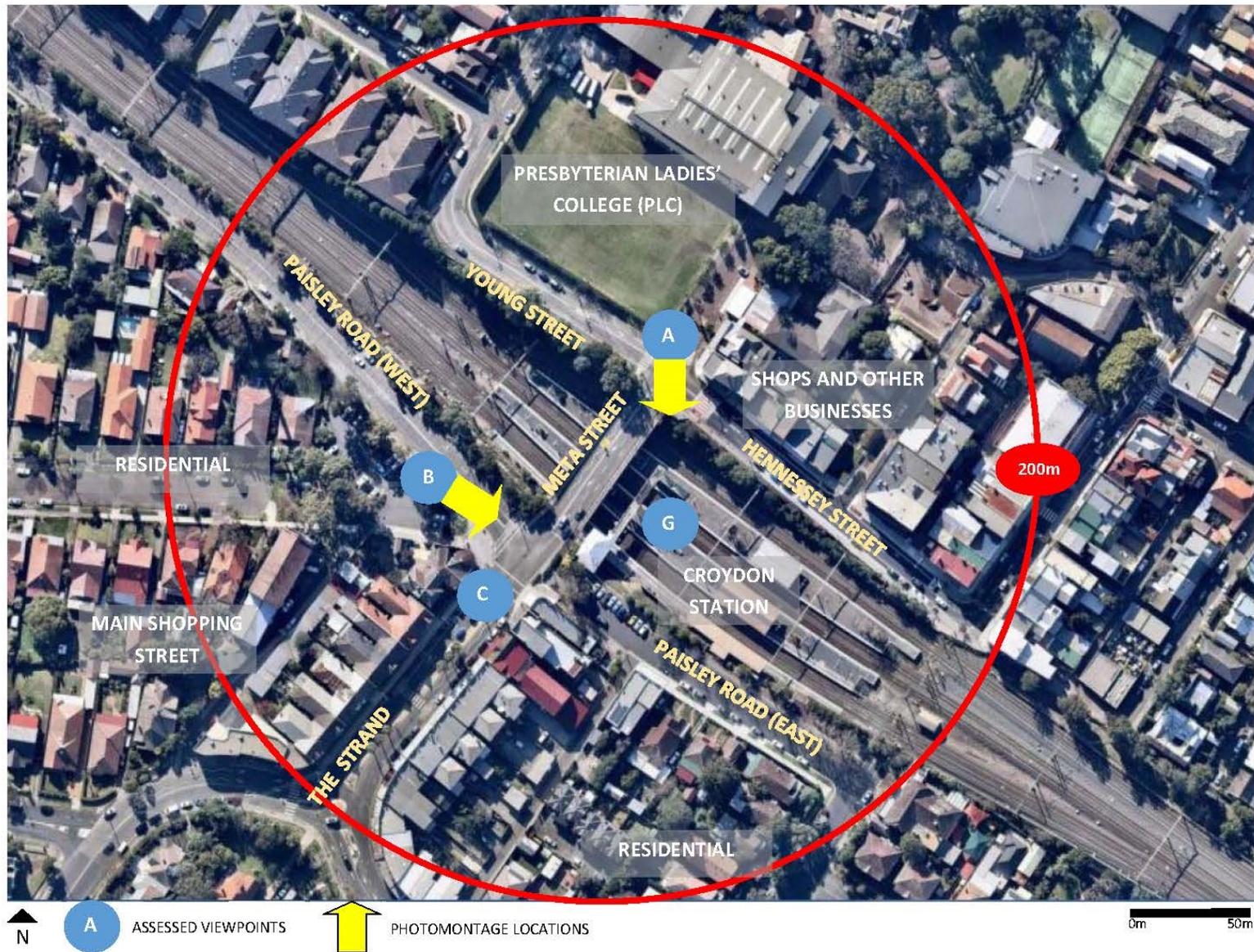


Figure 2-1: Key viewpoints re-assessed and photomontage locations



Figure 2-2: Photomontage of likely view from corner of Meta Street & PLC (publicly-exhibited Project)



Figure 2-3: Photomontage of likely view from corner of Meta Street & PLC (revised Project)

Positive changes to this viewpoint resulting from revised Project:

- the butterfly roof of the Hennessy Street station entrance would be less visually-dominant
- the footbridge would be more visually lightweight/transparent and situated at a slightly lower height (approximately 0.5m)
- in the distance the edge of the butterfly roof of the new station operations building would be less easily discerned due to it being shorter and having a less pronounced roof pitch
- the lift structures would be visually more lightweight, due to the replacement of tiles with glazing, and louvres placed only on side facing footbridge.

#### Overall visual impact level

The magnitude of visual change ranking, combined with the visual sensitivity ranking of high, leads to a lesser visual impact level to this viewpoint, yet one still in the range of moderate.

#### 2.2.2 Public viewpoint B: Paisley Road (west)

The photomontage of the Project (as publically exhibited as part of the REF display) from this viewpoint is illustrated as **Figure 2-4**, with a photomontage of the revised Project provided as **Figure 2-5**.

#### Visual sensitivity

This viewpoint is along the western part of Paisley Road where viewers look east toward the existing booking office. The road has a lower use than the busier Meta Street and The Strand, yet use is still relatively high, giving a visual sensitivity of moderate.

#### Magnitude of change

The previously assessed magnitude of visual change was moderate.

The revised Project would have a lower magnitude of visual change, yet would still be in the range of a moderate level due to the extent of change. However, from this viewpoint there would be a number of positive changes associated with the revised Project such as:

- the butterfly roof of the new station operations building would be less visually-dominant and would expose more of the hipped roof of the building
- the part of the footbridge visible from the location would appear more lightweight/transparent and situated at a slightly lower height, leading to less of the structure being visible
- the removal of the corner window of the station operations building with tile finish would also be visible from this location.



Figure 2-4: Photomontage of likely view from Paisley Road west (publicly-exhibited Project)



Figure 2-5: Photomontage of likely view from Paisley Road west (revised Project)

### Overall visual impact level

The magnitude of visual change ranking of moderate, combined with the visual sensitivity ranking of moderate, leads to a lesser visual impact level to this viewpoint, yet one still in the range of moderate.

### 2.2.3 Public viewpoint C: The Strand (upper)



Figure 2-6: Viewpoint C - existing view

**Figure 2-6** illustrates the existing view from this viewpoint located within the main shopping area.

### Visual sensitivity

This viewpoint is from the upper section of Croydon's main street, The Strand, where there are clear and close views toward the station. Currently the existing booking office is evident and an integral part of this view, marking the station entry and southern side of the railway corridor. The number of viewers of this viewpoint is high, due to its main street location and station entry role, leading to a visual sensitivity of high.

### Magnitude of change

The previously assessed magnitude of visual change was moderate.

The revised Project would have a lower magnitude of visual change, yet the change would still be in the range of a moderate level. That is because it still represents a distinct change from the existing visual environment, however, the revised design further reduces the visual impact to this viewpoint through more emphasis on reducing bulk and scale. The result is beneficial and would allow the new station operations building and footbridge to sit more harmoniously at the northern end of Croydon's main shopping street. Increased glazing would also allow the new structures to appear more transparent and provide a visual separation between the new and older components.

Positive changes resulting from revised Project:

- the butterfly roof of the new station operations building would be less visually-dominant but would still help to delineate the station entrance

- the part of the footbridge seen from this viewpoint would be more lightweight/transparent, with a narrow section of roof now seen and the structure situated at a slightly lower height, leading to it being less visible
- the lift structures would be visually more lightweight, due to the replacement of tiles with glazing, and louvres placed only on the side facing the footbridge.

#### Overall visual impact level

The magnitude of visual change ranking of moderate, combined with the visual sensitivity ranking of high, leads to a lesser visual impact level to this viewpoint, yet one still in the range of moderate.

#### 2.2.4 Public viewpoint G: from station

**Figure 2-7** illustrates the existing view of the upper station from the platforms, and **Figure 2-8** is an architectural visualisation of the likely view from the station platforms.



Figure 2-7: Viewpoint G - existing view from Platform 3 towards footbridge and booking office

#### Visual sensitivity

There is a high usage of Croydon Station, and therefore the visual sensitivity of viewpoints within the station are considered to be high.

#### Magnitude of change

The previously assessed magnitude of visual change was moderate.

The revised Project would have a lower magnitude of visual change, yet still be in the range of a moderate level due to the resulting noticeable change to the existing visual environment. The revised Project has made positive changes that would be seen from within the station, particularly the visual separation of the heritage platforms and creating a more visually lightweight footbridge and stair canopy structures.



Figure 2 8: Architect's visualisation of likely view from station platforms (by CCG)

Positive changes to views from the platforms, resulting from the revised Project, include:

- rail customers would be able to retain clear views of the heritage platform buildings on Platforms 3/4 and 5 (in addition to Platform 1/2), which under the Project (as publically exhibited as part of the REF display) were not available due to the platform canopies connecting to the platform heritage buildings
- views of a more streamlined and simpler new footbridge due to the roof not being visible and more glazing evident
- the continuous roof form of the footbridge and stair canopies has been changed by reversing the roof fall and separating the stair canopies, which have also been lowered to reduce the visual bulk.

#### Overall visual impact level

The magnitude of visual change ranking of moderate, combined with the visual sensitivity ranking of high, leads to a lesser visual impact level to this viewpoint, yet one still in the range of moderate for most parts of the Croydon Station. However, it is considered that due to the improvements associated with the revised Project, the level of impact to platform viewers would be reduced further to a low impact level (i.e. from the previously assessed level of moderate).

### 2.3 Summary of visual impact of revised Project

Overall, the revised Project is an improvement on the Project as publically exhibited during the REF display and would have a more positive effect on the visual character and changes to surrounding key viewpoints, by reducing the bulk and scale, and increasing the transparency so that the new structures sit more sympathetically within the Croydon village streetscape. This has been achieved through a number of design modifications to the footbridge roof and façade, lifts, butterfly awnings at the station entrances and canopies. Further opportunities to improve the visual amenity, such as tree planting at the station

entrance on Paisley Road and review of colours and finishes, would be undertaken during detailed design.

Other key improvements include a more defined visual separation between heritage elements (particularly the heritage platform buildings) through the reduction of platforms canopies on Platforms 3/4 and 5.

## 3. References

Envisage Consulting (2015) *Croydon Station Easy Access and Station Upgrade Visual Impact Assessment*