

PROPOSED PENRITH COMMUTER CAR PARK



VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

PREPARED BY ENVISAGE CONSULTING

ON BEHALF OF TRANSPORT FOR NSW



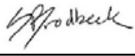
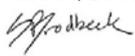
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DOCUMENT CONTROL - PROPOSED PENRITH COMMUTER CAR PARK VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT
REVISION 01

Revision number	Date of issue (year - mth - day)	Revision details	Approved by
00	16-04-20	Not applicable	S Brodbeck, Director 
01	16-05-27	Minor edits in response to TfNSW review	S Brodbeck, Director 

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Executive summary

This report provides a visual impact assessment of Transport for NSW's (TfNSW) proposed Penrith Commuter Car Park, referred to in this report as 'the Proposal'. The assessment forms part of the requirements for a Review of Environmental Factors under Part 5 of the *NSW Environmental Planning and Assessment Act, 1979*.

The assessment considers the effect to the existing landscape character and key viewpoints that surround the Proposal, including from Penrith Station, to the north of the station, from the surrounding area of North Penrith and from the Museum of Fire.

Proposal overview

The Proposal is for the construction of a new multi-storey car park composed of ground plus two floors of parking adjacent to the existing multi-storey car parking, with all floors to align with existing floor levels. The new car park design would match the existing in terms of design, height, materials and colours and would occupy the area between the existing car park structure and approximately 25 metres from the western boundary (i.e. Combewood Avenue).

The car park design focusses on achieving a contemporary structure that is aesthetically better than standard car park treatments and designed to have a level of detail and texture that responds to its location within the transforming new suburb of North Penrith.

A detailed description of proposed visual changes is provided in **Section 4.1**.

Visibility of Proposal

The Proposal has a relatively confined area of visibility due to the flat nature of the landform which allows for no real opportunities for any elevated views at ground level. The only potential elevated viewpoints are from built structures such as Penrith Station.

Potential viewpoints at ground level are confined to close locations, as those further away are blocked by existing structures, such as the existing multi-storey car park to the east, or would be soon blocked by planned mixed use development (six storey buildings) to the north. The railway corridor to the south, and the security palisade fencing alongside it, means that ground level views from Penrith city centre are heavily screened. Key viewpoints are those from the Museum of Fire, Penrith Station and the nearest parts of North Penrith.

The key potential viewpoints to the Proposal are identified and assessed in detail in **Section 5.2**.

Conclusion

The Proposal incorporates a number of key measures designed to mitigate potential landscape character and visual impacts:

- a contemporary car park design which matches the existing in terms of design, height, materials and colours
- allowance to either retain or reinstate trees and other landscaping surrounding the site.

The landscape character of the site and its immediate surrounds have a low sensitivity due to its highly urban nature and current use as a car park. The Proposal would replace the existing at-grade car park with a new multi-storey car park equivalent to the existing structure and would lead to an overall low impact on the landscape character.

Of the viewpoints assessed, all would have no more than a low impact as a result of the Proposal. This level reflects the planned future change for this part of North Penrith which will be transformed into a far more urban, dense and taller built environment, in which the new car park structure would be of comparable scale.

Nonetheless, to ensure the best possible visual outcome, a number of mitigation measures have been recommended, including increasing the extent of visual and landscape screening on the boundary of the car park. It should be noted that it is considered positive that the new car park is hidden by the Museum of Fire buildings when approaching along its main entry drive, thereby reducing the potential visual impact from this public viewpoint.

Overall, the height and design of the car park is comparable to the existing car park to the east that it will link with, is a continuation of use, and is consistent with future planned redevelopment of the surrounding area of North Penrith.

1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose of this report

This report provides a visual impact assessment of Transport for NSW's (TfNSW) proposed Penrith Commuter Car Park, referred to in this report as 'the Proposal'. The assessment forms part of the requirements for a Review of Environmental Factors under Part 5 of the NSW *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act, 1979*.

The assessment considers the effect to the existing landscape character and key viewpoints that surround the Proposal, including from Penrith Station, to the north of the station, from the surrounding area of North Penrith and from the Museum of Fire.

1.2 Proposal overview

The Proposal is for the construction of a new multi-storey car park composed of ground plus two floors of parking adjacent to the existing multi-storey car parking, with all floors to align with existing floor levels. The new car park design would match the existing in terms of design, height, materials and colours.

The key features of the Proposal include:

- extension of the existing multi-storey commuter car park to replace the existing at-grade car park to the west and provide approximately 350 additional car parking spaces
- provision of two sets of stairs, one on both the northern and southern sides of the extended car park
- provision of an additional lift adjacent to the existing lift in the south-eastern corner of the existing multi-storey car park
- ancillary works including utility adjustments, provision of lighting, CCTV, line marking, wayfinding signage, road works, footpath works and landscaping.

The new multi-storey car park would occupy the area between the existing multi-storey car park and approximately 25 metres from the western boundary (i.e. Combewood Avenue). A detailed description of the proposed visual changes is provided in **Section 4.1**.

1.3 Report format

The assessment methodology is broadly based on the NSW Road and Maritime Services' (RMS') *Environmental Impact Assessment Practice Note: Guidelines for Landscape Character and Visual Impact Assessment (EIA No. 4 Guidelines, March 2013)*.

The principal tasks of the assessment process are set-out in the report's format:

- Task 1: Define the methodology for the assessment (**Section 2.0**)

- Task 2: Establish baseline conditions and describe the context of the site, including the visual environment and site visibility **(Section 3.0)**
- Task 3: Describe the main visual changes associated with the Proposal **(Section 4.0)**
- Task 4: Assess the likely effects to landscape character and surrounding key viewpoints **(Section 5.0)**
- Task 5: Describe design and mitigation measures that have been, and could be, incorporated into the design to improve the visual outcome **(Section 6.0)**.
- Task 6: Conclusion **(Section 7.0)**.

2. Assessment methodology

2.1 General

The assessment methodology is based broadly on the NSW Road and Maritime Services' (RMS') *Environmental Impact Assessment Practice Note: Guidelines for Landscape Character and Visual Impact Assessment (EIA No. 4 Guidelines, March 2013)*.

Under the guideline, two main types of visual effects (or impacts) are assessed:

- effect on the landscape character
- effect on key viewpoints (visual impact).

The guidelines describe these impacts as follows: *"Landscape character and visual assessment are equally important. Landscape character assessment helps determine the overall impact of a project on an area's character and sense of place. Visual impact assessment helps define the day to day visual effects of a project on people's views."*

2.2 Detailed assessment methodology

The determination of the effect on landscape character and viewpoints are based on the combination of two criteria – the sensitivity and the magnitude of change, defined by Roads and Maritime (2013) as:

- *Sensitivity - The sensitivity of a landscape character zone or view and its capacity to absorb change. In the case of visual impact this also relates to the type of viewer and number of viewers.*
- *Magnitude - The measurement of the scale, form and character of a development proposal when compared to the existing condition. In the case of visual assessment this also relates to how far the proposal is from the viewer.*

The combination of sensitivity and magnitude provide the rating of the level of impact, as shown in **Table 2-1** (as adapted for this type of project from Roads and Maritime, 2013):

TABLE 2-1: IMPACT LEVELS (MATRIX OF SENSITIVITY & MAGNITUDE)

Matrix of relationship between sensitivity and magnitude					
	Magnitude				
		Very high	High	Moderate	Low (or negligible)
sensitivity	Very high	Very high	Very high	High	Low
	High	Very high	High	High-moderate	Low
	Moderate	High-moderate	High-moderate	Moderate	Low
	Low (or negligible)	Low	Low	Low	Low (or negligible)

For the purposes of this assessment the criteria listed in **Table 2-2** and **Table 2-3** have been specifically defined for sensitivity and magnitude of change for both the assessment of landscape character and the visual impact to viewpoints (note these are a general guide only for this project).

TABLE 2-2: SENSITIVITY RANKING CRITERIA

Sensitivity	Criteria
Very high	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Landscape or heritage of very high conservation value or ▪ Public views with a very high number of users in close proximity and/or the site has a very high visual prominence
High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Landscape or heritage of high conservation value or ▪ Public views with a high number of users in close proximity and/or the site has a high visual prominence
Moderate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Landscape or heritage of moderate conservation value or ▪ Public views with a moderate number of viewers in close or moderate proximity and the site is visually prominent or ▪ Private views in close proximity with mostly unimpeded views
Low (or negligible)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ None or little landscape or heritage conservation and/or visual value or ▪ Public views with a low number of users &/or not in close proximity &/or visually prominent.

TABLE 2-3: MAGNITUDE OF CHANGE RANKING CRITERIA

Sensitivity	Criteria
Very high	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The proposal forms a significant and immediately apparent part of the scene, and one that significantly contrasts in scale and character (either existing or planned) and is severely detrimental to the quality of the scene.
High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The proposal becomes the dominant feature of the scene to which other elements become subordinate, and one that significantly contrasts in scale and character (either existing or planned), possibly reducing the quality of the scene.
Moderate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The proposal forms a visible and recognisable new element within the overall scene, yet one that is relatively compatible with the surrounding character (either existing or planned).
Low (or negligible)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The proposal constitutes only a minor component of the wider view, which might be missed by the casual observer or receptor. Awareness of the proposal would not have a marked effect on the overall quality of the scene.

Indicative images (photomontages) have been prepared to illustrate the likely visual changes from key viewpoints and are included where relevant.

3. Context of existing visual environment

3.1 General context

The site of the new car park structure is west of the existing multi-storey car park on the northern side of Penrith Station, on Combewood Avenue, within North Penrith. If constructed, the new structure would amplify the existing multi-storey car park which is primarily for commuter car parking for Penrith Station. The visual context surrounding the site and nearby areas are described in more detail in **Section 3.5**.

When complete the surrounding area of North Penrith will provide approximately 1,000 dwellings, recreational open space and commercial areas. Closest to the station is a civic space or 'station plaza', with a local business centre linking with this plaza to the north, and a mixed use area (high density residential and commercial buildings) to the west. Further north is a linear public parkland alongside a canal with residential areas flanking each side.

Within this context Penrith Station acts as a focal point to the main commercial centre of Penrith. The pedestrian connection over the railway draws together the opposite sides of the railway corridor, with this role increasing with the ongoing establishment of North Penrith on the northern side.

The location and visual context of the Proposal is illustrated in **Figure 3-1**.

3.2 Ecological values

No naturally occurring vegetation would be affected by the Proposal. Some recently planted, immature trees around the boundary would require removal to allow for construction, but if so these would be reinstated and/or offset in accordance with TfNSW's *Vegetation Offset Guide* (TfNSW, 2013).

3.3 Heritage

The Museum of Fire, which is situated to the west of the proposal site was formally a power station and is listed on the *Penrith Local Environmental Plan* (LEP). It is not listed on the State or other heritage registers.

The following information is provided by the register on the Office of Environment and Heritage website (accessed April 2016):

- Statement of significance: Significant as a former power station and a fine example of post-war international style and post war expansion.
- Physical description: Comprising the former Penrith Power House, Administration Building, Water Reactivation Plant, Fuel Oil Storage Tanks and Water Storage Tank. Although lacking technological equipment, the present fabric of the building is intact and virtually as built.



FIGURE 3-1: SITE LOCATION AND VISUAL CONTEXT

Potential effects to any viewpoints from the museum site, and the overall setting, are described in **Section 5.0**.

3.4 Planning environment

The area of North Penrith that surrounds the Proposal site is covered by the *Penrith Development Control Plan (DCP), 2014*, with the concept plan and preferred land uses near the Proposal provided respectively as **Figure 3-2** as **Figure 3-3**.



FIGURE 3-2: NORTH PENRITH ILLUSTRATIVE CONCEPT PLAN (FROM DCP)

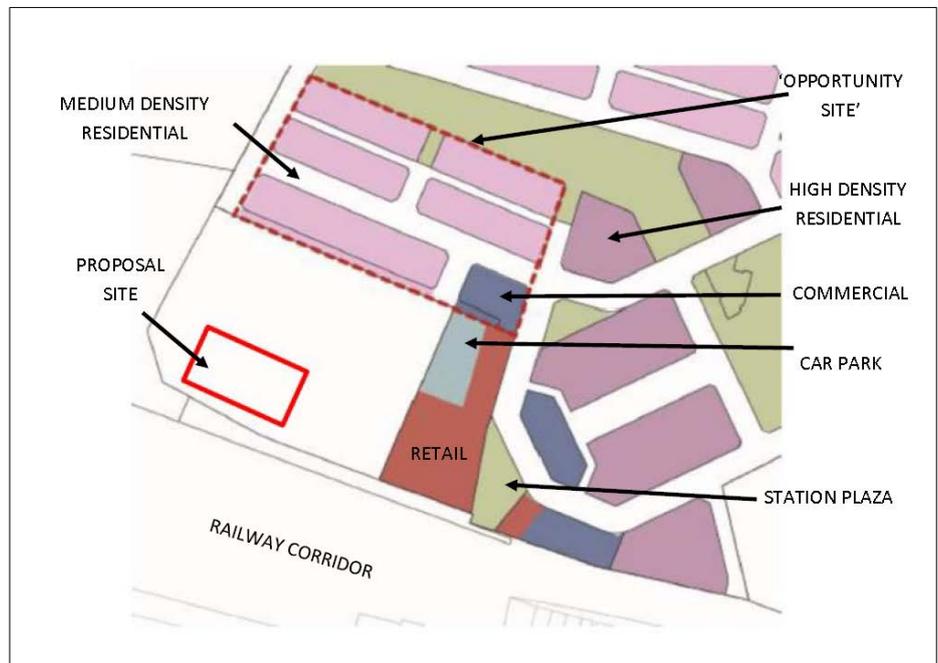


FIGURE 3-3: PREFERRED LAND USES FOR VILLAGE CENTRE (FROM DCP)

The site to the immediate north of the car park, that includes the Proposal, is identified in the DCP as an 'opportunity site'. The DCP states that this site 'may

accommodate a variety of land uses, in addition to residential, such as commercial office, institution, education uses or the like, adjacent to the Village Centre' with building heights of up to six storeys and 'a range of retail, business, and commercial premises should be provided at the ground level to activate the street frontages' (*Penrith Development Control Plan (DCP), 2014*, page E11-79).

Therefore, the future use of this site is likely to contain a six storey building with a residential component on the upper levels and commercial or retail at the lower levels.

3.5 Visual environment

3.5.1 Landscape character

The landscape character of the surrounding area of the site and Penrith is primarily urban, consisting of the central area of Penrith, which includes the newer area of North Penrith. To the south of the railway corridor is the Penrith city centre with its commercial buildings, car parks and public spaces, giving it a very built up, urban character. The closer area of North Penrith, that surrounds the Proposal site, is in a process of intense redevelopment as described in **Section 3.4**.

The landform is quite flat around Penrith Station and extending in all directions, including the Proposal site. Vegetation is fairly sparse, limited to established trees in the town centre's public spaces and streets on the southern side, and with mostly yet to mature trees along the streets and open spaces on the northern side. **Figure 3-4** illustrates the typical landscape character around the site.



FIGURE 3-4: EXISTING LANDSCAPE CHARACTER OF NORTH PENRITH

The immediate landscape character around the Proposal is dominated by the linear infrastructure corridor of the railway line, the existing car park structure to the east and the surrounding ground level car park. Adding to this infrastructure/commercial/urban feel is the industrial heritage marked by the large Museum of Fire complex to the west.

Overall, it is quite an eclectic mix of many different urban components, combining to produce an urban character that with the future redevelopment of the surrounding business zone will be dominated by a contemporary landscape of high density development, tall buildings, new street trees, an upgraded Penrith Station, and this new neighbourhood is situated alongside a railway corridor with industrial heritage buildings on the western edge. Over time the maturing of new trees along streets and within the linked open spaces in North Penrith will serve to soften the built-up look.

The likely effect of the Proposal on landscape character is described in **Section 5.1**.

3.5.2 General visibility

The Proposal has a relatively confined area of visibility due to the flat nature of the landform which allows for no real opportunities for any elevated views at ground level. The only potential elevated viewpoints are from built structures such as Penrith Station.

Potential viewpoints at ground level are also confined to close locations, as those further away are blocked by existing structures, such as the existing multi-storey car park structure to the east, or will soon be blocked by planned six storey buildings to the north. The railway corridor to the south, and the security palisade fencing alongside it, means that ground level views from Penrith city centre are heavily screened. Key viewpoints such as those from Penrith Station, the Museum of Fire and the closest viewpoints in North Penrith are assessed in **Section 5.2**.

4. Proposal description

This section describes the main components of the Proposal that have the potential for visual impact during establishment and operation. A more detailed Proposal description is provided in the Proposal's Review of Environmental Factors (REF).

4.1 The Proposal

The Proposal is for the construction of a new car park structure composed of ground plus two floors of parking adjacent to the existing car parking structure, with all floors to align with existing floor levels (refer **Figure 4-1** for an indicative image from the north-west corner). Indicative images are provided as **Figure 4-2**, **Figure 4-3** and **Figure 4-4**.



FIGURE 4-1: INDICATIVE IMAGE OF PROPOSAL LOOKING SOUTH-EAST

The car park design focusses on achieving a contemporary structure that is aesthetically better than standard car park treatments and designed to have a level of detail and texture that responds to its location within the transforming new suburb of North Penrith.

Key features relevant to this assessment:

- provision of approximately 350 additional car parking spaces
- existing vehicular exit and entrance to remain in current location, with an additional entry and exit to be provided at Combewood Avenue
- new expanded car park to utilise existing ramps
- provision of a new fully glazed lift and lift shaft adjacent to the existing lift (southern side), matched to existing materials and finishes
- removal of up stand and cladding along the western façade to allow for the expansion
- provision of stair access from new car parking structure to adjacent footpath at all stair locations.
- removal of landscaping vegetation

- ancillary works including stairs, a lift, power and lighting, CCTV camera surveillance, drainage, utilities, line-marking and signage, footpath and road works, urban design works and landscaping to be confirmed.

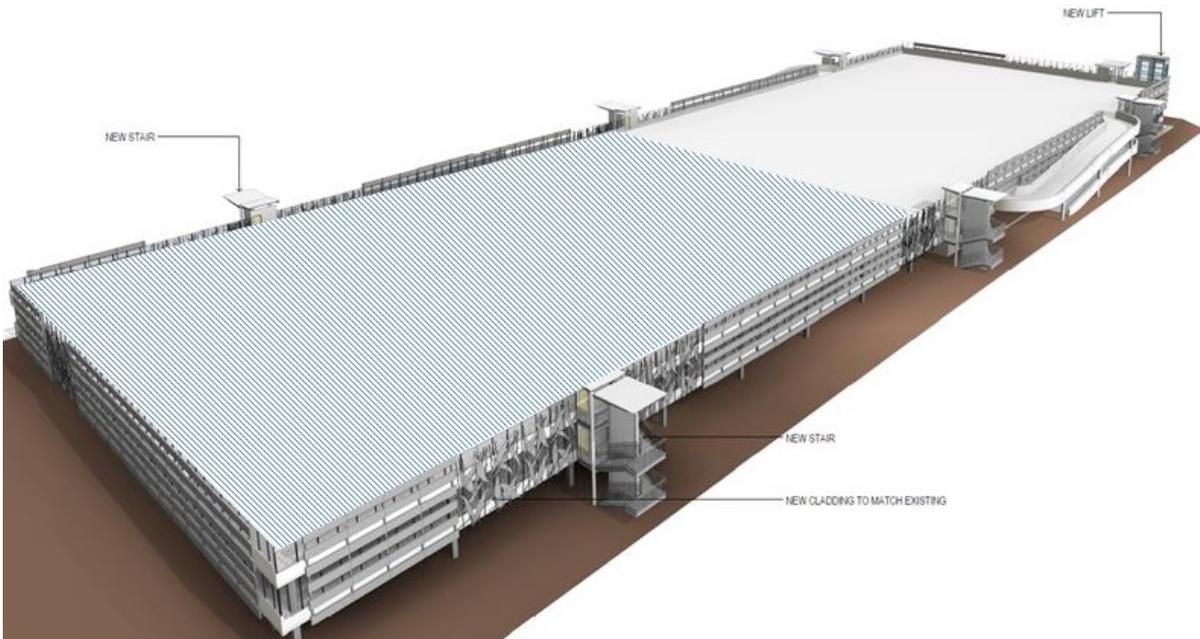


FIGURE 4-2: INDICATIVE LAYOUT OF PROPOSAL SITE WITH EXTENDED MULTI-STOREY CAR PARK ON LEFT (SUBJECT TO DETAILED DESIGN)



FIGURE 4-3: INDICATIVE VIEW OF THE PROPOSAL LOOKING NORTH-EAST (SUBJECT TO DETAILED DESIGN)



FIGURE 4-4: INDICATIVE VIEW OF THE PROPOSAL LOOKING WEST (SUBJECT TO DETAILED DESIGN)

Height and footprint of the car park structure

The majority of the car park structure would be approximately nine metres high, with the stair and lift structures reaching a height of approximately 9.5 metres, equivalent to the existing car park structure and a three storey building.

The ground floor component would consist of the area covered by the existing at-grade car park with the new multi-storey car park structure to occupy the area between the existing multi-storey car park and approximately 25 metres from the western boundary (i.e. Combewood Avenue).

Effect on existing vegetation

Existing semi-mature trees along the Combewood Avenue boundary would require removal to allow for construction. Vegetation removed would be reinstated and/or offset in accordance with TfNSW's *Vegetation Offset Guide* (TfNSW, 2013).

4.2 Temporary Construction works

There would be temporary works (as required) during construction, with it assumed that the site would be fenced off and all public access prevented during that time. Typical elements would include temporary fencing, stockpiling of materials and construction equipment.

4.3 Lighting

The Proposal would include the installation of lighting for operational, safety, security and maintenance purposes. It is assumed that night lighting would include building and pole mounted directional spot lighting and pole mounted pedestrian lighting similar to that currently existing. It is unlikely that any additional lighting would result in a direct line of sight from surrounding view locations. Light installations would be installed in accordance with the *AS 4282:1997 Controlling the Obtrusive Effects of Outdoor Lighting*, and avoid light spill to adjoining road corridors and residential areas.

5. Visual impact assessment

5.1 Effect on existing landscape character

Visual sensitivity

The landscape character has been previously described in **Section 3.4.1**. Due to the highly urban nature of the landscape character and its current use as a car park, the landscape character of the site and its immediate surrounds have a low sensitivity.

Magnitude of change

The Proposal would replace the existing at-grade car park with a new multi-storey car park with a maximum height of 9.5 metres, equivalent to the existing multi-storey car park that it would link with, and approximately to the height of a three storey building.

The Proposal would introduce a larger scale built element than the existing multi-storey car park, with its height and footprint meaning that current views over the at-grade car park from surrounding areas would be prevented. Up to 22 Eucalypt trees and 12 Lilly Pilly trees would require removal to facilitate the works. The final extent of vegetation trimming and removal would be determined during detailed design and construction planning stages and would be minimised as far as practicable. Any trees that are found to require removal would be subject to offsetting in accordance with TfNSW's *Vegetation Offset Guide* (TfNSW, 2013).

The overall effect would be that the existing landscape character would become more urban, with a more built-up look. This change in character is consistent with the planned future change for this part of North Penrith which has height limits of up to six storeys over the business zone to the north and east of the site. In general there would be a low magnitude of change to the landscape character associated with the Proposal.

Overall impact on landscape character

The sensitivity ranking (low), combined with the magnitude of change ranking (low), leads to an impact level on the landscape character of low.

5.2 Effect on key viewpoints

The assessed key viewpoints are identified in **Figure 5-1**.

The assessment describes the predicted changes in views that would occur during the life of the Proposal to particular viewpoints, based on the methodology described previously, that is:

- identification of the visual sensitivity of each viewpoint
- an assessment of the likely magnitude of visual change
- an overall assessment of the potential visual impact.



KEY:
 PROPOSAL SITE

FIGURE 5-1: PROPOSED PENRITH COMMUTER CAR PARK - KEY VIEWPOINTS

5.2.1 Viewpoint A: Northern side of Penrith Station

Visual sensitivity

Potential viewpoints on the northern side of Penrith Station are limited as most views are blocked by the existing multi-storey car park, such as views from the station plaza on the northern side where only the new lift shaft would be seen (refer **Figure 5-2**). The main views possible from Penrith Station would be when descending down the station stairs on the northern side as shown in **Figure 5-3**.

Due to the public nature of views from the northern side of the station, and moderate number of pedestrian users (which also takes into account future users), the visual sensitivity of viewpoints from the northern side of the station is moderate.



FIGURE 5-2: VIEW FROM NORTHERN STATION PLAZA, LOOKING WEST

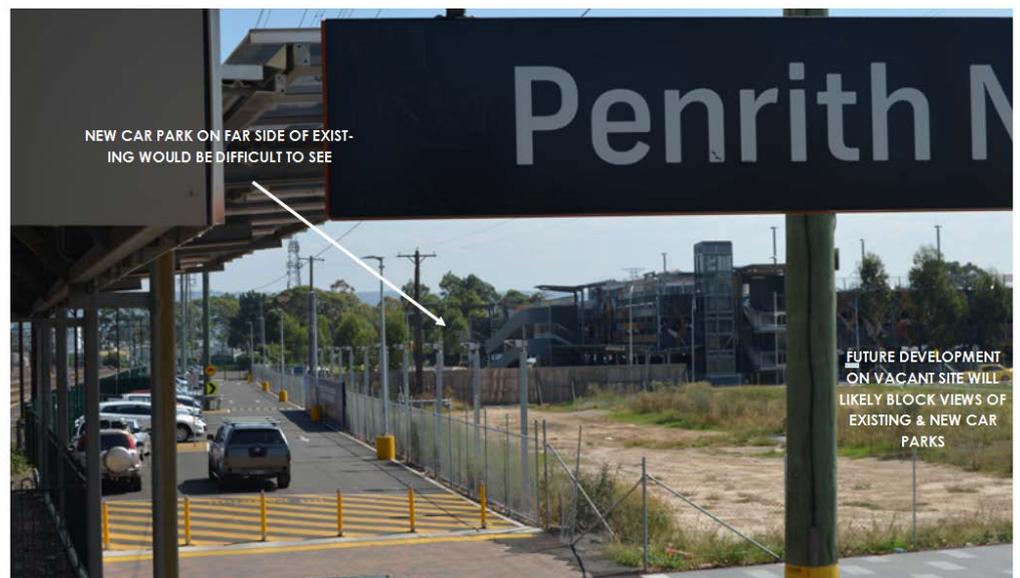


FIGURE 5-3: VIEW FROM TOP OF STAIRS NORTHERN SIDE OF STATION, LOOKING NORTH-WEST

Magnitude of change

From this viewpoint the existing multi-storey car park would continue to be in the foreground with the existing (or reinstated) semi-mature trees partially screening the nearest eastern side. Currently the ramps along the southern side can be seen with the existing lift at the nearest corner. The ramps would remain, and a second lift shaft would be constructed between the existing lift and the corner of the building. This new lift would double the overall width of the lift shaft and it would be of matching materials and the same height, thereby resulting in minimal visual change seen from this viewpoint.

The southern side of the proposed car park would be seen from this viewpoint, however, it would be separated by some 180 metres which would mean it would be a very small part of the overall view. There would also be a partial screen of trees along the southern side once either the existing, or re-instated, trees mature.

The magnitude of visual change would be low.

Overall visual impact level

The visual sensitivity (moderate), combined with the magnitude of visual change (low), leads to a visual impact level to this viewpoint of low.

5.2.2 Viewpoint B: Penrith Station

This viewpoint takes in views from the station in areas such as the station concourse and platforms. An existing view from the concourse is provided as **Figure 5-4** which shows the limited views that would be possible. Another viewpoint from the nearest, northern platform, and an indicative image of that same view showing the likely visual changes, are provided respectively as **Figure 5-5** and **Figure 5-6**.

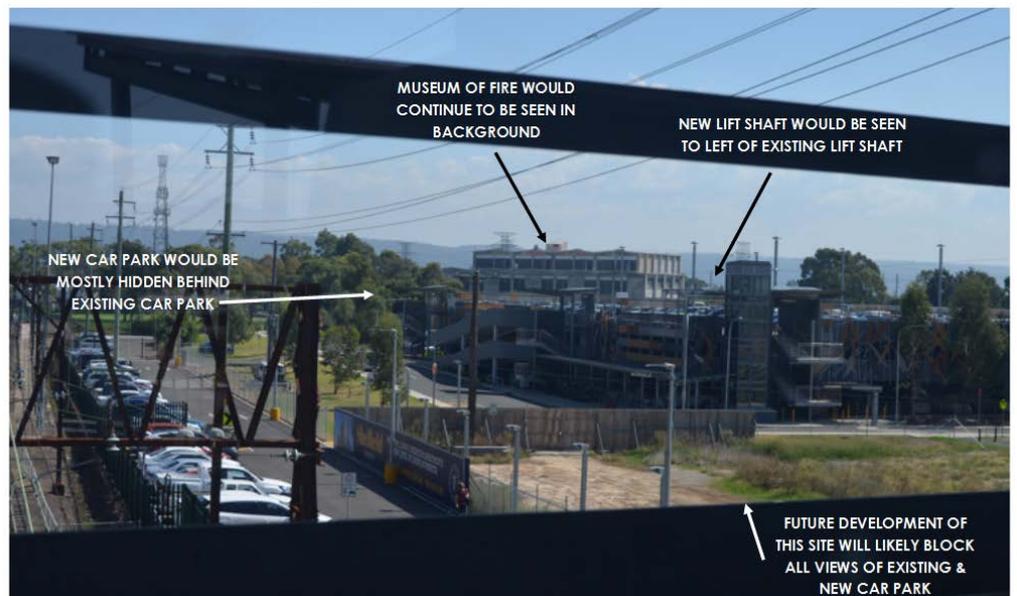


FIGURE 5-4: EXISTING VIEW FROM PENRITH STATION CONCOURSE, LOOKING NORTH-WEST



FIGURE 5-5: EXISTING VIEW FROM NORTHERN STATION PLATFORM

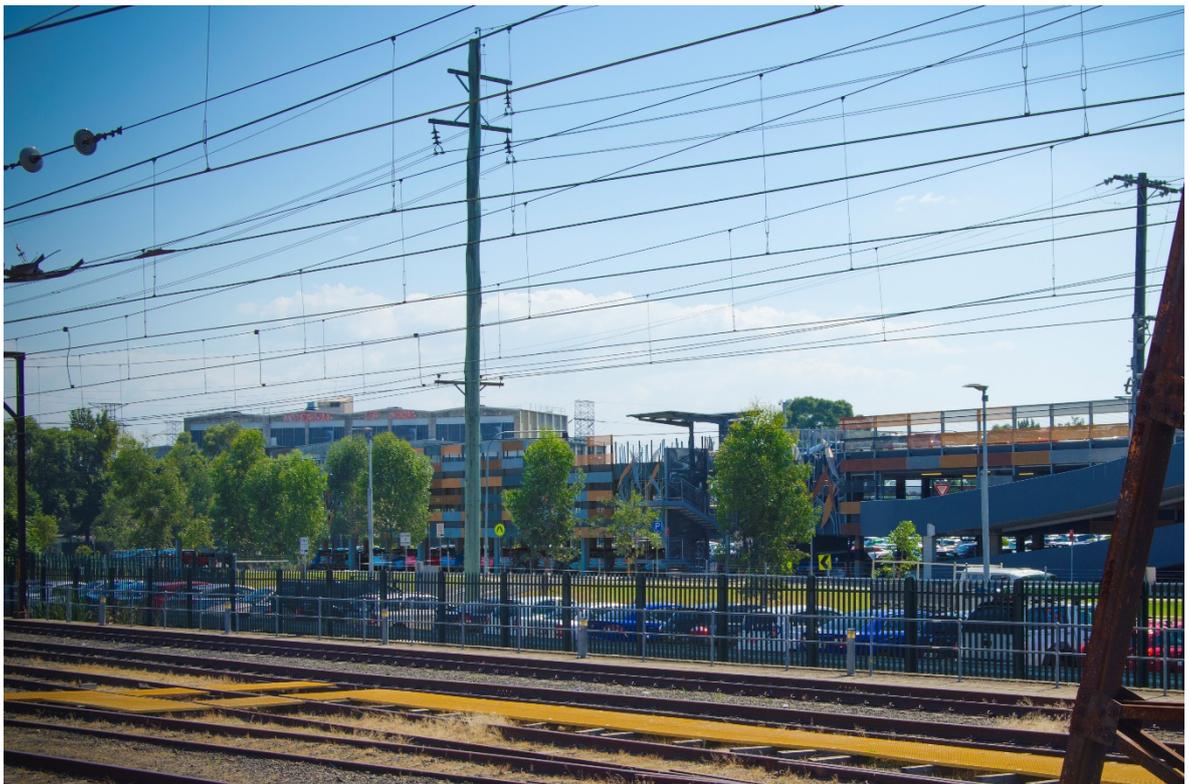


FIGURE 5-6: INDICATIVE IMAGE SHOWING NEW CAR PARK (ON LEFT) FROM NORTHERN STATION PLATFORM

Visual sensitivity

Due to the public nature of Penrith Station, and the moderate to high number of users, the visual sensitivity of any viewpoints is moderate.

Magnitude of change

From the station platform viewpoint the proposed car park structure would be seen beside the existing multi-storey car park, with it designed to seamlessly match the existing multi-storey car park in height and materials. The existing ramps along the southern side would continue to be seen, with the existing and proposed lift shaft at the south-eastern corner. There are a number of semi-mature trees between the street alongside the southern side of the car park sites (i.e. Combewood Avenue) and the railway corridor that partially screen the existing and proposed structures. These trees would continue to provide screening, with the extent of the canopies increasing over time as the trees mature.

The existing semi-mature trees immediately alongside the affected at-grade car park would likely be removed to allow for construction, however if so these trees would be re-instated with similar trees of advanced size. These trees would also provide partial screening to this viewpoint.

The magnitude of visual change would be low.

Overall visual impact level

The visual sensitivity (moderate), combined with the magnitude of visual change (low), leads to a visual impact level to this viewpoint of low.

5.2.3 Viewpoint C: Penrith city centre



FIGURE 5-7: EXISTING VERY LIMITED VIEWS FROM GROUND LEVEL IN CITY CENTRE DUE TO FENCING

There are no clear views within Penrith city centre from ground level due largely to the existing palisade fencing alongside this side of the railway corridor that mostly screen the available view (refer **Figure 5-7**).

The only possible viewpoints would be from higher locations within the commercial buildings along Jane Street and Belmore Street, although the closest locations along Jane Street are mostly occupied by the car parks of Westfield Penrith. The visual sensitivity of any views from these upper floors is low, as would the magnitude of change, giving an overall low or negligible visual impact level.

5.2.4 Viewpoint D: North Penrith mixed use area

Visual sensitivity

There would be views from some parts of the mixed use area and commercial zone of North Penrith which encircles the existing and new car park to the north and east (refer **Figure 3-3** in **Section 3-4** for future land use), with the existing vacant site immediately north shown in **Figure 5-8**. Due to the commercial use of the area and moderate number of potential viewers the visual sensitivity is low.



FIGURE 5-8: VACANT LAND ON NORTHERN SIDE OF PROPOSAL PLANNED FOR FUTURE MIXED USE

Magnitude of change

The vacant land to the north of the Proposal site, and east of the existing car park structure, are planned to have future buildings up to six storeys high of mixed use (which is likely to include both a commercial component at the lower levels and residential component on the higher levels). These future buildings will therefore be up to twice as high as the existing and new car park structures. The new buildings will eventually mean that the existing and new car park structures will be not be seen from surrounding open spaces and new residential areas further to the north and north-east.

There is a high likelihood of some residential development on the site to the north, which means that any future residents with views to the south would have foreground views towards the existing and new car park, which would block the current views that are available of the railway corridor with the Penrith city centre in the background. As these future residents would be aware of the car park use, and the current views are not of a high quality, it is not considered that this outcome is of concern. The contemporary design of the car park means that

it has been designed to a high standard in terms of a car parking building, and that in light of this and the future built environment of the business zone, the new car park would represent a low magnitude of visual change.

Overall visual impact level

Thus the visual sensitivity (low), combined with the magnitude of visual change (low), leads to a visual impact level to the nearby business zone of low.

5.2.5 Viewpoint E: Museum of Fire

The Museum of Fire is situated along Combewood Avenue just to the west of the Proposal. The museum is orientated so that the main vehicular entry is from Museum Drive, with views towards the Proposal site blocked by the museum buildings and trees from this location (refer **Figure 5-9**). On reaching the front of the building the entry drive passes along the side of the building (which is the south side) where the pedestrian entry is situated (refer **Figure 5-10**).



FIGURE 5-9: FRONT ENTRY TO MUSEUM OF FIRE (PROPOSAL HIDDEN)

Visual sensitivity

Due to the public nature of views from the museum, and its local heritage significance, the visual sensitivity of this viewpoint is moderate.

Magnitude of change

A large part of the potential views of the Proposal from near the front entry area are blocked by a large shed and some nearby trees (refer **Figure 5-10**), however when at the rear of the site the existing car park structure occupies a large part of the foreground view (refer **Figure 5-11**). The Proposal would visually replace the existing views over the at-grade car park and towards the existing multi-storey car park and occupy the foreground of the view, similar to the view shown in **Figure 4-1** (Section 4.1).



FIGURE 5-10: EXISTING VIEW FROM MUSEUM OF FIRE TOWARDS THE PROPOSAL SITE LOOKING EAST



FIGURE 5-11: VIEW OF EXISTING CAR PARK FROM REAR OF MUSEUM OF FIRE

From this rear viewpoint of the museum, the new structure would be comparable in visual scale, which is height and bulk, to the existing car park, although obviously substantially increasing its footprint. It would move a multi-storey car park closer to the Museum of Fire, with the building on the opposite side of Combewood Avenue to the rear boundary.

The change would introduce a contemporary building closer to the dominant former power station building of the museum, with it to a degree competing with the museum building in scale. Yet importantly, the museum would continue to be substantially larger in height and bulk, thereby retaining its visual dominance that is part of its character and presence. However, this visual dominance will likely be reduced in the future as the planned redevelopment of North Penrith

occurs, including the planned six storey buildings to the immediate north of the Proposal site.

Taking these changes into consideration, as well as the existing car park use, the context of the surrounding area and future planned change, the magnitude of visual change would be low.

Overall visual impact level

The visual sensitivity (moderate), combined with the magnitude of visual change (low), leads to a visual impact level to this viewpoint of low.

It is considered a positive outcome that the new car park is hidden by the museum buildings when approaching along its main entry drive, thereby reducing the potential visual impact to the museum.

5.3 Construction impacts

There would be temporary works (as required) during construction, with it assumed that the site would be fenced off and all public access prevented during that time. Typical elements would include temporary fencing, stockpiling of materials and construction equipment. These changes would be temporary and therefore not have a long term visual impact.

5.4 Lighting and shadowing impacts

It is assumed that lighting would be designed in accordance with relevant standards and be as minimal and unobtrusive as possible and directed away from any nearby receivers. The Proposal would slightly increase the overall lighting of the immediate area, however, such an outcome is consistent with the urban and future nature of this location.

There have been no overshadowing diagrams specifically prepared for the Proposal, however, considering its location and surrounding existing and future land use there have been no overshadowing issues identified.

Due to the Proposal's orientation, the majority of shadowing would fall over the section of Combewood Avenue on the southern side of the Proposal and towards the railway corridor further south. In the morning the shadowing would also extend towards Combewood Avenue on the western side, and in the afternoon to the section of Combewood Avenue on the eastern side. The length of the shadows would be greatest during the winter months, and be much shorter during summer. As no residences or recreational parkland is affected, any shadowing impact would be negligible.

6. Design outcome and further recommended measures

6.1 Positive visual attributes of Proposal

The Proposal incorporates a number of key measures designed to mitigate potential landscape character and visual impacts:

- a contemporary car park design which matches the existing multi-storey car park in terms of design, height, materials and colours.
- reinstating landscaping around the perimeter of the site.

6.2 Recommendations to further improve visual outcome

A number of further mitigation measures are recommended to ensure the best possible visual outcome can be achieved, as identified below.

6.2.1 Boundary fencing

The existing black palisade fencing along the southern side of the new car park would need to be removed to allow for construction. It is recommended that the remainder of this fencing be removed around the Combewood Avenue boundary to the west so as to reduce the extent of built elements, allow more open views of the boundary landscaping and improve safety.

6.2.2 Landscape and rehabilitation

An Urban Design Plan and Public Domain Plan would be prepared as part of the detailed design stage, and TfNSW would liaise with Council on offset planting as required by TfNSW's *Offset Planting Guideline* (TfNSW, 2103).

It is recommended that additional tree planting, with low shrubs or groundcovers (to allow for clear sightlines for safety) should be undertaken to increase the general visual amenity, provide shade and also increase screening to Combewood Avenue and the Museum of Fire. Many of the areas provided for landscape planting in the existing at-grade car park, along the Combewood Avenue boundary, are currently bare or only partially planted. It is recommended that the extent of trees and other landscaping be improved in these areas.

6.3 Construction phase

Mitigation measures during the construction period should include:

- installation of screen hoarding and/or shade cloth screens
- protection of existing trees to be retained
- consultation with a qualified Arborist to minimise impact on the long term health of any affected trees
- avoidance of temporary light spill beyond the construction site where temporary lighting is required
- rehabilitation of disturbed areas

- ongoing removal of graffiti in accordance with TfNSW standard requirements.

It is also recommended that any areas of weathering or other damage of the existing car parking structure be repaired so as to ensure the new and existing structures match as far as possible.

6.4 Operation phase

Mitigation measures during ongoing operations should include:

- ongoing maintenance, repair and replacement of any damaged built elements
- long-term maintenance of landscape planting and replacement of any failed plants
- any trees that are found to require removal would be subject to offsetting in accordance with TfNSW's *Vegetation Offset Guide* (TfNSW, 2013).

7. Conclusion

Impact to landscape character

The landscape character of the site and its immediate surrounds have a low sensitivity due to the highly urban nature of the landscape character and its current use as a car park. The Proposal would replace the existing at-grade car park with a new car park equivalent to the existing multi-storey structure to the approximate height of a three storey building.

The overall effect would be that the existing landscape character would become more urban, with a more built-up look. This change is consistent with the planned future change for this part of North Penrith which has height limits of up to six storeys over the surrounding mixed zone, and would lead to an overall low impact on the landscape character.

Impact to viewpoints

Table 7-1 summarises the likely visual impact level to surrounding viewpoints. Of the five viewpoints assessed, all would have a low or negligible impact level. This level reflects the planned future change for this part of North Penrith which will be transformed into a far more urban, dense and taller built environment, in which the new car park structure would be of comparable scale.

Nonetheless, to ensure the best possible visual outcome, a number of mitigation measures have been recommended, including increasing the extent of visual and landscape screening to the rear of the Museum of Fire. Yet it should be noted that it is considered a positive outcome that the new car park is hidden by the museum buildings when approaching along its main entry drive, thereby reducing the potential visual impact to the museum.

TABLE 7-1: SUMMARY OF VISUAL IMPACT TO KEY VIEWPOINTS

Viewpoints	Visual sensitivity	Magnitude of visual change	Impact level
A – Northern side of the station	moderate	low	low
B – Penrith Station	moderate	low	low
C – Penrith city centre	low	low	low or negligible
D – North Penrith mixed use area	low	low	low
E – Museum of Fire	moderate	low	low

Conclusion

Overall, the height and design of the new car park is comparable to the existing multi-storey car park that it will link with, is a continuation of use and consistent with future planned redevelopment of the surrounding area of North Penrith which will have many more tall buildings and significantly transform the existing character.

8. References

- Arup (2015). *TAP Commuter Car Parking Penrith Station Concept Design Report*.
- NSW Roads and Maritime Services (2013). *Environmental Impact Assessment Practice Note - Guideline for Landscape Character and Visual Impact Assessment*.
- Penrith City Council (2014). *Penrith Development Control Plan (DCP), 2014*,
- Transport for NSW (TfNSW) (2013). *Vegetation Offset Guide*.