



Oatley Railway Station Upgrade, Oatley - Sydney
Study Area Plan

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PRELIMINARY FOR DISCUSSION PURPOSES ONLY

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Figure 22 : Local Viewpoint Plan

7.0 Visual Impact Assessment

The availability of views is merely a prerequisite for visual impact. The severity of visual impact is determined by the relative importance of such views in the context of the view shed and the value placed on the landscape in and around the study site. As previously mentioned, the community engagement program for the project had not commenced at the time of preparing this report. Therefore a qualitative assessment of the visual impact was undertaken. The process aims to be objective and describe any changes factually. However, rating these changes requires subjective judgements to be made. The conclusions of this assessment therefore combine objective measurement and subjective professional interpretation.

To help quantify the potential visual impact of the study area, the following table of definitions is used. The table provides a landscape visual prominence rating based on the capacity of the landscape to absorb the degree of impact proposed by the development proposal.

Table 2 Assessment of Visual Prominence¹.

Visual Prominence	Definition
Large	A substantial / obvious change to the landscape due to total loss of, or change to, elements, features or characteristics of the landscape. Would cause a landscape to be permanently changed and its quality diminished. Change is likely to cause a direct adverse permanent or long term (more than 10 years) impact on the value of the receiver.
Moderate	Discernible changes in the landscape due to partial loss of, or change to the elements, features or characteristics of the landscape. May be partly mitigated. The change would be out of scale with the landscape, and at odds with the local pattern and landform and will leave an adverse impact on the landscape. Change is likely to impact adversely the integrity/value of the receiver but recovery is predicted in the medium term (5-10 years).
Small	Minor loss or alteration to one or more key landscape elements, features, or characteristics, or the introduction of elements that may be visible but may not be uncharacteristic within the existing landscape. Change is likely to adversely impact the integrity/value of the receiver but recovery is expected in the short term (0-4 years).
Negligible	Almost imperceptible or no change in the view as there is little or no loss of / or change to the elements, features or characteristics of the landscape. The existing landscape quality is maintained but may be slightly at odds to the scale, landform and pattern of the landscape. Water in background without prominence. Presence of polluted water or stagnant water.

Despite the word 'landscape' having its foundations in the idea of fixed views, in reality, we all experience landscapes by the way we move through them. Small scale landscapes or spaces such as the study site are generally experienced by pedestrians or at low speed from a vehicle. Our perspective as we move through the landscape in this way can be influenced by a number of elements. The following table provides a landscape visual exposure rating.

¹ Adapted from (Landscape Institute and Institute for Environmental Management and Assessment, 2002)

Table 3 Assessment of Visual Exposure².

Visual Exposure	Definition
High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Occupiers of residential properties with long viewing periods, within close proximity to the proposed development ▪ Communities that place value upon the landscape and enjoyment of views of their landscape setting
Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Outdoor workers who have a key focus on their work who may also have intermittent views of the project area ▪ Viewers at schools, or similar, when outdoor play and recreation areas are located within close proximity but viewing periods are limited ▪ Occupiers of residential properties with long viewing periods, at a distance from or screened from the project area
Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Road users in motor vehicles, trains or on transport routes that are passing through or adjacent to the study area and therefore have short term views ▪ Viewers indoor at their place of work, schools or similar
Negligible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Viewers from locations where there is screening by vegetation or structures where only occasional screened views are available and viewing times are short ▪ Road users in motor vehicles, trains or on transport routes that are passing through/adjacent to the study area and have partially screened views and short viewing times

Visual impact can also be influenced by the cultural landscape – i.e. the idea that places are made up of complementary interactions of setting and human activity. An important distinction should be noted here between space and place: - ‘space provides the context for places but derives its meaning from particular places’³. Space cannot be understood in isolation from experience and the subjective meanings created by human actions⁴. The meanings of a cultural landscape are manifested in the experiences and perceptions of the people acting within them. Therefore the value placed on a landscape by a community or individual is inherently subjective. This assessment has attempted to be objective, however it is recognised that visual assessment can be highly subjective and individuals are likely to associate different visual experiences to the study area.

For the purposes of this study the degree of visual impact is rated by importance (Table 4) as determined by the scale of impact on the landscape and the perceived sensitivity of the view shed.

²Adapted from (Landscape Institute and Institute for Environmental Management and Assessment, 2002)

³ Relph 1976

⁴ Tilley 1994

Table 4 Rating of Importance of Impact.

		Landscape Prominence			
		Large	Moderate	Small	Negligible
Visual Exposure	High	Major significance	High significance	Medium significance	Low significance
	Medium	High significance	Medium significance	Low significance	Insignificant
	Low	Medium significance	Low significance	Insignificant	Insignificant
	Negligible	Low significance	Insignificant	Insignificant	Insignificant

Field survey work enabled analysis of actual visibility of the subject site and probable impact of the proposed infrastructure for each of the viewpoint locations where the potential for visual impact has been identified. As noted previously, these available views were at the site scale.

The following table presents the results of the analysis;

Table 5 Viewpoint Analysis

Viewpoint	Figure Reference (see section 6.0 above)	Analysis	Impact Rating
1	17	Visual receivers in this location are likely to be pedestrians passing through the open space to the east of River Road, with the potential for intensive recreational use during weekend periods, both passive and active. However views to the site are restricted for much of the open space (Figure 23). Due to the size and frequency of vegetation in this area it is unlikely that the proposed development will impose any visual impact.	Insignificant
2	18	It is likely that visual receivers in this location will be vehicles travelling at low speeds, however viewing time is likely to be limited to a few seconds as the vehicle moves closer to the site and into the driver's frame of vision before passing beneath the underpass or turning away from the site into Mulga Road. It is likely that receivers will also be in the form of passengers choosing to 'park and ride'. For these receivers it is unlikely that the development will have a negative impact but rather improve legibility to the station. It is clear that the prominence of the proposed infrastructure will be high due to the scale of the structures required. However there will not be a total loss of the vegetation in this area and this will assist in absorbing and balancing the bulk of the structure.	Low
3	19	Visual receivers in this area will likely be pedestrians, recreational users, parishioners and residential property owners. This view is likely to have medium exposure due to the frequency and type off use and duration of viewing periods. Not unlike view sheds from points 2 and 4, the visual prominence of the proposal will be moderate. However due to the longer viewing periods it is likely that the impact will be greater. At present the extent of the view encompasses the historic underpass framed by vegetation and open space. The prominence of the proposed structure will impact on the quality of this view with the scale of the new structure likely to diminish the underpass as the focal point (Figure 24). The design of the structure has considered the form and materials of the proposed structure to ensure they compliment the underpass rather than detract from its	Low

Viewpoint	Figure Reference (see section 6.0 above)	Analysis	Impact Rating
		visual appeal.	
4	18	<p>It is likely that visual receivers in this location will be vehicles travelling at low speeds, however viewing time is likely to be limited to a few seconds as the vehicle moves closer to the site and into the driver's frame of vision before passing beneath the underpass or turning away from the site into River Road. It is likely that receivers will also be in the form of passengers choosing to 'park and ride'. For these receivers it is unlikely that the development will have a negative impact but rather improve legibility to the station.</p> <p>It is clear that the prominence of the proposed infrastructure will be high due to the scale of the structures required. However the remnant vegetation and vegetation lining the rail corridor will not be totally lost in this area and this will assist in absorbing and balancing the bulk of the structure. Due to the prominence of the proposal at this point and the moderately high exposure, the impact is considered to be medium.</p>	Medium
5	20	<p>Receivers in this location will be predominantly pedestrians moving towards the road crossing on Oatley Parade. Views of the site don't become available until moving closer to the park edge. At this point the site will have a medium level of exposure. However the visual prominence of the proposal is likely to be tempered by the existing vegetation of the adjacent Douglas Cross Gardens. The distance from the site and the existence of adjacent residential buildings in the composition of the view will mean that the proposal will be integrated into the sites character.</p>	Low
6	21	<p>Receivers in this location will be predominantly pedestrians moving towards the road crossing on River Road. At this point the site will have a high level of exposure due to the proximity of the viewer. This view also encompasses views from nearby residential occupiers. Vehicles are likely to have views for short durations only.</p> <p>However the visual prominence of the proposal is likely to be tempered by the existing vegetation of the adjacent Douglas Cross Gardens (Figure 25). Notwithstanding the visual impact on this view shed without mitigation, would be considered to be high. However it is important to note that design guidelines have been implemented to ensure the proposal can be integrated into the site with a lower level of impact.</p> <p>The proposal allows for as much existing vegetation as possible to remain allowing the new structures to be more easily absorbed into the landscape. The materials used also allow the structure to appear opaque and therefore reducing the bulk of its appearance. The form of the structure also reflects the nearby arches of the heritage underpass and so allows the new structure to be more easily integrated into the surrounding landscape. These design modifications result in a medium visual impact rating.</p>	Medium

Viewpoint	Figure Reference (see section 6.0 above)	Analysis	Impact Rating
7	22	<p>This view shed is the most visually prominent due to the proximity of visual receivers to the site, the scale of the proposal in relation to the human scale of the receivers and the duration of the periods of use in the Park. It is also given a high visual exposure rating because of the assumed value placed on the character of the park setting.</p> <p>The visual impact on this view shed without mitigation is considered to be high, however it is important to note that design guidelines have been implemented to ensure the proposal can be integrated into the site with a lower level of impact. The proposal allows for as much existing vegetation as possible to remain allowing the new structures to be more easily absorbed into the landscape. The materials used also allow the structure to appear opaque and therefore reduces the bulk of its appearance. The form of the structure also reflects the nearby arches of the heritage underpass and therefore allows the new structure to be more easily integrated into the surrounding landscape. These design modifications result in a medium visual impact rating.</p>	Medium
8	20	<p>Receivers in this location will be predominantly pedestrians moving towards the road crossing on Oatley Parade (Figure 27). It is likely that the duration of exposure will be for brief periods for the majority of users, however for those using the nearby bus stop exposure could be for extended periods. Exposure is therefore considered to be medium. The visual prominence of the proposal is also considered to be a moderate level due to scale of the proposal and the proximity of the receivers to the site.</p> <p>The impact is considered have medium modification with the urban design features of the proposal likely to be integrated into the nearby commercial character of the site at this point. It should also be noted that filtered views of the proposal will be available from various points throughout the park however, none are considered to have an importance rating higher than Medium.</p>	Medium
9	21	<p>Receivers in this location will be predominantly pedestrians moving towards the site and vehicles likely to have views for short durations only. The exposure of the site will be low to medium and visual impact is considered low due to the dominance of the commercial buildings in the foreground of the view shed. This will assist in screening the bulk of the structure however this may also contribute to a cumulative impact.</p>	Low



Figure 23 : Photomontage of the scale of the proposal from viewpoint 1



Figure 24 : Photomontage of the scale of the proposal from the vicinity of viewpoint 3



Figure 25 : Photomontage of the scale of the proposal from viewpoint 6



Figure 26 : Photomontage of the scale of the proposal from viewpoint 7



Figure 27 : Photomontage of the scale of the proposal from viewpoint 8

Potential visual impacts during construction include: perceptions of security and safety; temporary changes to access for all modes; changes to way-finding and orientation; potential pedestrian/vehicle conflicts; and potential pedestrian crowding points and queuing.

Under the current Reference Design, on the eastern (Oatley Parade) side of the station four (4) Cocos palms are to be removed due to construction of the overbridge, and up to five trees in connection with re-construction of the commuter car park.

On the west (Mulga Road) side of the station, approximately 14 trees, both exotic and native, would need to be removed as a direct result of the Proposal. These range in height from 6 to 21 metres and have spreads from 4 to 12 metres.

In relation to the above works, visual impacts would typically include:

- Vegetation removal
- Construction fencing
- Temporary site signage
- Cranes and other construction plant
- Construction compound and construction worker parking
- Temporary lighting
- Temporary pedestrian detours and associated signage
- Temporary relocation of taxi, bus and kiss and ride zones and associated signage.

These works would be temporary in nature and therefore visual impacts as a result of these items would be temporary. However given that the exposure of the construction phase is likely to be high, the overall visual impact of these works are considered to be high.

8.0 Conclusions and Recommendation

A key consideration in the assessment of the visual impact of the proposal will be the perception of local residents to elements that evoke a variety of responses.

Whilst the degree to which a development the scale of the proposed Oatley Station Upgrade is visible from certain vantage points can be quantified, the degree to which the viewers will be impacted is influenced by an individual's perceptions of what change will bring. The residents and users of the landscape surrounding the site will reflect a range of sensitivities. The degree to which the changes to the landscape are perceived negatively will in the end depend on the actual users / residents.

The project, as proposed, will change the landscape of the setting at the site level, however beyond this it will have little impact on the local area. As mentioned in the assessment process previously, the landscape character of the setting is generally suburban residential. Much of the open space and residential dwellings around the site provide a dense band of vegetation and built form. The effect of this, in a number of cases, has been to effectively contain the view shed to the immediate vicinity, blocking more distant views of the site.

A number of view sheds were identified as presenting views to the site. The degree of importance placed on these viewpoints varied according to a combination of considerations of visual prominence and visual exposure. It is concluded that views to the site from Oatley Parade from the north and closer to the site from Douglas Cross Gardens were the most significant. The report also proposes a number of guidelines to assist with maintaining the character of the area. The following recommendations are based on these guidelines and the results of the visual impact assessment;

8.1 Construction

- Avoid unnecessary loss or damage to vegetation adjacent to the rail corridor and Douglas Cross Gardens by protecting trees prior to construction and/or trimming vegetation to avoid total removal. This includes vegetation that makes a substantial and positive contribution to landscape character and/or provides screening to view sheds nominated as receiving potentially high visual impact.
- Minimise light spill from the rail corridor into adjacent visually sensitive properties by directing construction lighting into the construction areas and ensuring the site is not over-lit. This includes the sensitive placement and specification of lighting to minimise any potential increase in light pollution.
- Temporary hoardings, barriers, traffic management and signage would be removed when no longer required.
- Work/site compounds would be screened, with shade cloth (or similar material) (where necessary) to minimise visual impacts key viewing locations. The location of compounds and storage should not be on or in the vicinity of Douglas Cross Gardens.
- Measures such as the provision of visual screening/retention of existing vegetation would be considered for visually sensitive areas.

8.2 Operation

- Undertake rehabilitation planting as early as possible to replace vegetation that provided screening to adjacent residential properties and sensitive visual receivers.
- Use specifically designed lighting equipment that minimises the upward spread of light near to and above the horizontal. Care should be taken when selecting luminaries to ensure that appropriate units are chosen and that their location will reduce spill light and glare to a minimum.
- Disturbed embankments should be landscaped to complement the existing visual character of the study

area.

- Materials and colour palette should be consistent with the character of the site area and where possible dark shades of colours should be used.
- Consideration should be given to design solutions that minimise the bulk of the structure particularly when viewed from the north east of the site e.g. glass panelling to walkways and lift shafts and horizontal or slim line roofing profiles. Attention should be given to solutions that reduce the amount of shadowing to the gardens open grassed areas.
- The extent of vegetation on the southern edge of Douglas Cross Gardens should be retained and ongoing management plans established to ensure their long term protection.
- A landscape plan should be prepared for the western side of the rail corridor between the new structure and the underpass. The intent should be to provide some integration between the new structure and the underpass.
- Consideration should be given to design solutions for the new structure on the western side of the rail corridor that reflect the design language of the arched underpass and although a new part of the site character still reads as part of the urban form.

9.0 References

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Appendix I

Local Viewpoints



View A



View B



View C



View D



View E



View F



View G



View H



View I



View J



View K



View L



View M



View N



View O



View P



View Q



View R



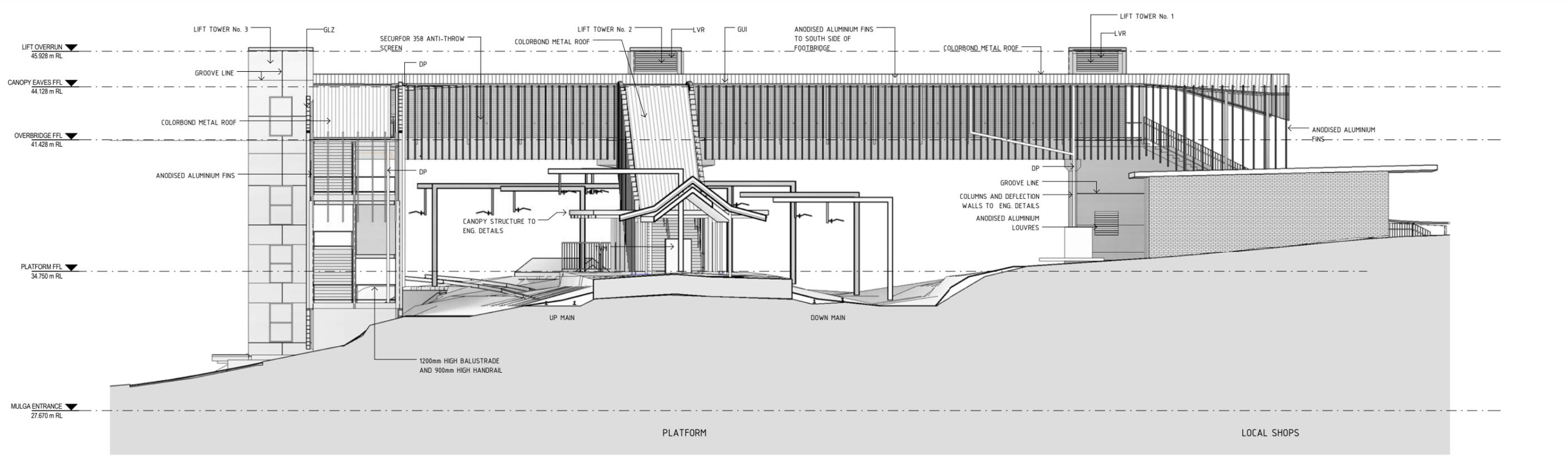
View S



View U

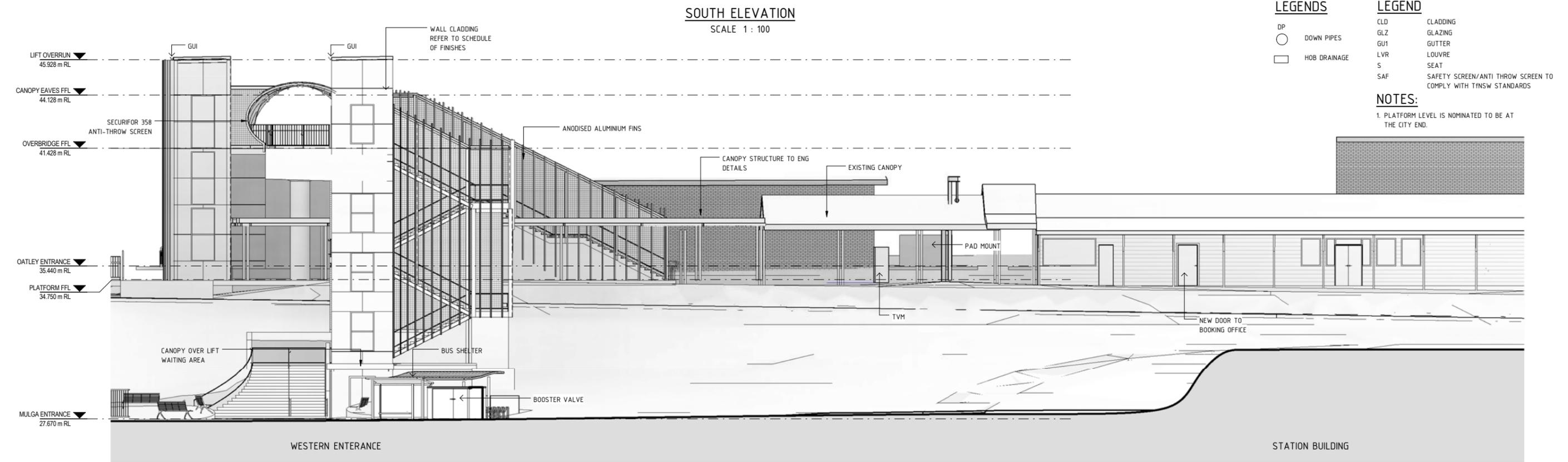
Appendix 2

Proposal Elevations



SOUTH ELEVATION
SCALE 1 : 100

- LEGENDS**
- DP DOWN PIPES
 - HOB DRAINAGE
- LEGEND**
- CLD CLADDING
 - GLZ GLAZING
 - GUI GUTTER
 - LVR LOUVRE
 - S SEAT
 - SAF SAFETY SCREEN/ANTI THROW SCREEN TO COMPLY WITH TNSW STANDARDS
- NOTES:**
1. PLATFORM LEVEL IS NOMINATED TO BE AT THE CITY END.



WEST ELEVATION
SCALE 1 : 100

No.	BY	DATE	DESCRIPTION	APPD.
B	AW	25.02.2014	FINAL CONCEPT DESIGN	EB
A	GAB	19.12.2013	PRELIMINARY CONCEPT DESIGN	EB

A1 Original Co-ordinate System: MGA Zone 56 Height Datum: A.H.D.

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OATLEY STATION PRECINCT
ILLAWARRA SOUTH LINE 18.282KM

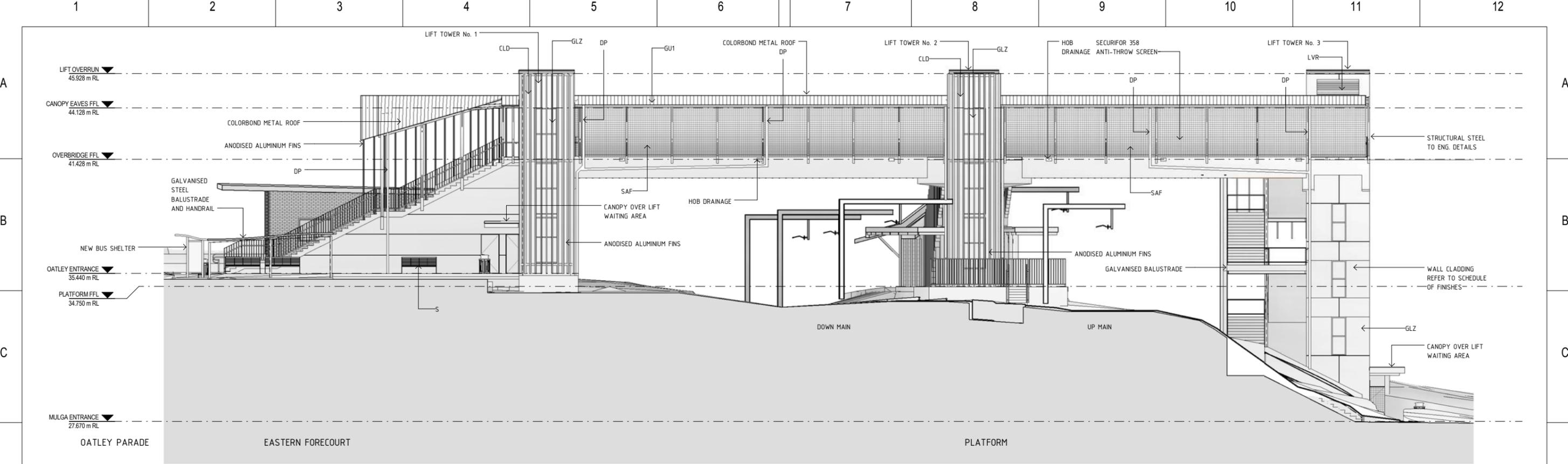
ARCHITECTURE
STATION OVERBRIDGE ELEVATIONS (SHEET 2 OF 2)

ELEVATIONS

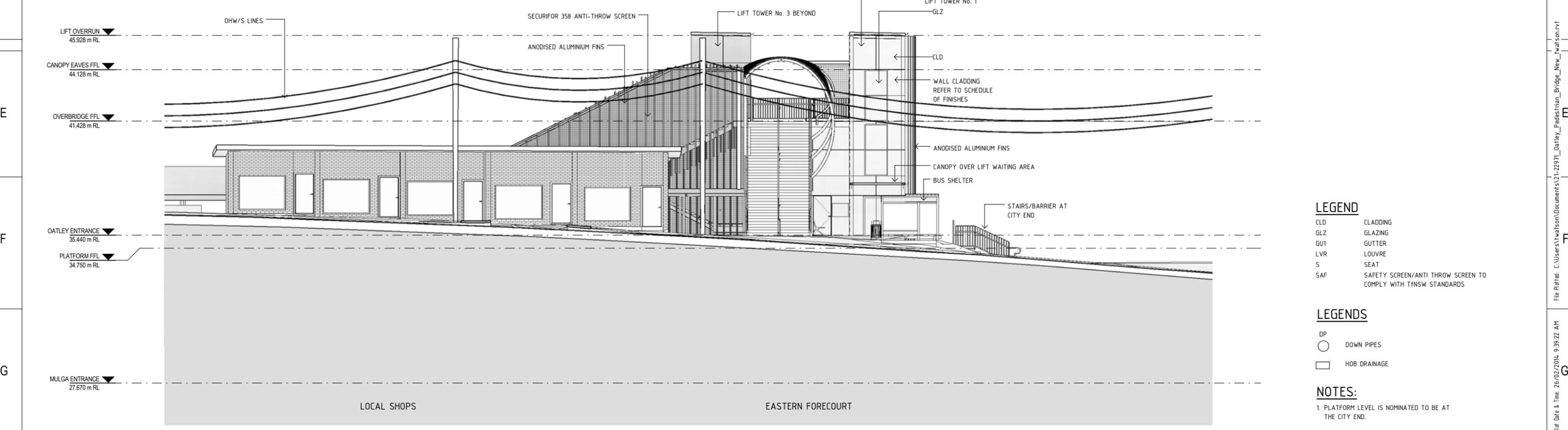
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STATUS FINAL CONCEPT DESIGN			
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NORTH ELEVATION
SCALE 1 : 100



EAST ELEVATION
SCALE 1 : 100

- LEGEND**
- CLD CLADDING
 - GLZ GLAZING
 - GU1 GUTTER
 - LVR LOUVRE
 - S SEAT
 - SAF SAFETY SCREEN/ANTI THROW SCREEN TO COMPLY WITH TNSW STANDARDS

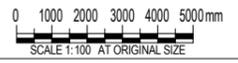
- LEGENDS**
- DP DOWN PIPES
 - HOB DRAINAGE

NOTES:

1. PLATFORM LEVEL IS NOMINATED TO BE AT THE CITY END.

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ARCHITECTURE
STATION OVERBRIDGE ELEVATIONS (SHEET 1 OF 2)

ELEVATIONS

FILE No. 21-22971	1 OF 2
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