

Bexley North Railway Station

Statement of Heritage Impact



Bexley North Railway Station

Statement of Heritage Impact

Client: Transport for NSW

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Table of Contents

Executive Summary		i
1.0	Introduction	3
1.1	Project Background	3
1.2	Site Location	3
1.3	Structure of this Report	4
2.0	Legislative Context	6
2.1	Introduction	6
2.2	Commonwealth Legislation	6
2.2.1	Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999	6
2.2.2	Disability Discrimination Act 1992	6
2.3	State Legislation	6
2.3.1	Infrastructure SEPP State Environmental Planning Policy (Infrastructure) 2007	6
2.3.2	Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979	7
2.3.3	The Heritage Act 1977	7
2.4	Local Government	8
2.4.1	City of Rockdale Local Environmental Plan 2011	8
3.0	Historical Context	9
3.1	Pre-European History	9
3.2	Early Settlement	9
3.3	Bexley North Railway Station	9
3.4	Later modifications to the Station	12
3.5	Historic Themes	15
4.0	Physical Description	16
4.1	General Location	16
4.2	Bexley North Railway Station	16
4.2.1	Island Platform	16
4.2.2	Platform building (1931,1948)	17
4.2.3	Bexley Road Overbridge (2009)	21
4.2.4	General	22
5.0	Significance Assessment	23
5.1	Introduction	23
5.2	Significance Assessment	24
5.3	Significance Grading	25
5.4	Implications for Detailed Design	26
6.0	Proposed Works and Anticipated Impacts	28
6.1	Introduction	28
6.2	Platform building Alterations	28
6.2.1	Potential Heritage Impacts	30
6.3	Access Upgrade Proposal	30
6.3.1	Potential Heritage Impacts	32
6.4	Summary of Impacts	32
7.0	Statement of Heritage Impact	34
7.1	Introduction	34
7.2	Heritage Impact Assessment	34
7.3	Statement of Heritage Impact	36
8.0	Conclusion	36
9.0	References	39
Appendix A		
	Historic Plans of the Original Bexley North Railway Station	
Appendix B		
	Plans for the 1947 Bexley North Railway Station Extension	
Appendix C		
	Plan of Proposal for Railway Station Upgrade and Station Car Park	

List of Tables

Table 1	Bexley North Railway Station historic themes	15
Table 2	Section 170 significance assessment	24
Table 3	Grading of significance criteria (from NSW Heritage Office, 2001:11)	25
Table 4	Bexley North Railway Station grading of fabric	26
Table 5	Recommended design principles	26
Table 6	Summary of the nature of the impacts	36

List of Figures

Figure 1: Study Area		5
Figure 2	Bexley North Railway platform building extension plan 1947	11
Figure 3	Bexley North Station Platform Building as of 1931. Modifications are shown in blue	12
Figure 4	Bexley North Station Platform Booking Office modifications, 1999, plan and elevation	14
Figure 5	Existing platform building layout with areas of proposed alterations highlighted	29
Figure 6	Proposed platform building layout (Note: North is south of the plan)	29
Figure 7	Proposed alterations to southern elevation	29
Figure 8	Proposed alterations to the Station access and Kingsgrove Avenue station carpark	31
Figure 9	Proposed detail elevation	31
Figure 10	Section showing proposed lift and stairs to platform	32

List of Plates

Plate 1	Bexley North Railway Station looking East (Rockdale City Council – Photo file) shows western elevation with screen wall to Male toilets now demolished	10
Plate 2	Bexley North Railway Station 1957 (Rockdale City Council – Photo file)	11
Plate 3	Original brick piers, 2015	12
Plate 4	Door in western elevation of platform building showing evidence of screen wall removal.	13
Plate 5	Door and window in southern elevation showing detailing of brickwork around openings	14
Plate 6	View showing Island Platform. Note weather shelters. View west.	16
Plate 7	View showing Island Platform. Note weather shelters. View east.	17
Plate 8	Western end of Railway platform building showing demolished screen walls to Male toilets.	18
Plate 9	Eastern end of Railway platform building showing modified eastern wall	18
Plate 10	View of southern façade of the Railway platform building with intact window above telephone box, boarded up window and AC unit to the right	19
Plate 11	Communications room showing coffered ceiling	20
Plate 12	Ceiling showing coffered feature and original air vent in women's toilets	20
Plate 13	Replacement floor and wall tiles, toilet bowl and cistern in men's toilet	20
Plate 14	Door to women's toilets showing original joinery	20
Plate 15	Overbridge from Station platform.	21
Plate 16	Overbridge pedestrian path.	21
Plate 17	General view of Bexley North Railway Station facing North showing plantings.	22

Executive Summary

AECOM Australia Pty Ltd (AECOM) has been commissioned by Transport for NSW to prepare a Statement of Heritage Impact (SOHI) regarding potential heritage impacts associated with a proposed accessibility upgrade for the Bexley North Railway Station. Contrary to the *National Disability Discrimination Act*, the Station currently cannot be used by people with a disability or prams, as the station can currently only be accessed via a set of stairs. The upgrades aim to provide:

- stations that is designed to ensure full accessibility to a wider range of customers including people with disability, limited mobility or parents/carers with prams,
- buildings and facilities that meet the needs of a growing population,
- encourage greater public transport use,
- integrate interchanges with the role and function of town centres, and
- provide interchanges that support an integrated network that allow seamless transfers between transport modes for all customers.

A search of the relevant heritage registers has identified the Bexley North Railway Station Group as being listed on Sydney Trains Section 170 Register (SHI No.4801898). It is identified as an item of local significance, holding historical, aesthetic, social, research and technical, some rarity and representative significance. The Statement of Significance associated with the Section 170 Register indicates the aesthetic and representative significance arises from the Station's ability to be an example as an austere 1930s railway building with simple Art Deco detailing and fine brick workmanship that is evocative of the effects of the Depression on building programs for NSW Railways. The research and technical significance is related to the ability of the fabric of the platform building to provide insights into experimental designs and modified construction techniques as a result of the economic conditions associated with the Great Depression. It is the conservation and legibility of these aspects that need to be considered and protected during the development of the upgrade.

In May 2015, AECOM undertook an options design and analysis process, during which three options were considered. AECOM also prepared a heritage assessment addressing the potential impacts associated with each option. While none of the options completely avoided heritage impacts, the assessment determined that Option A2 (*Concept Design*) was likely to have the least impact on the heritage significance of the Railway Station. Following the options analysis, it was determined that Option A2 was the preferred option. The *Concept Design* has since been refined to form the Concept Design Update, which was developed in response to the revised scope of works. The Concept Design Update results in a reduction in visual impacts. The design to which this document relates is the Concept Design Update.

The Concept Design Update includes the demolition of the current stairs from the Bexley Road Overbridge and construction of a lift and stairs. The Station carpark on Kingsgrove Avenue would be reconfigured to allow for an appropriately graded ramp and accessible parking spaces. Within the platform building the existing bathrooms are proposed for conversion into a Family Accessible Toilet (FAT) and an ambulant toilet. Internal works also include the provision of a two-hour fire-rated electrical cupboard within the Station Office. Associated with the installation of the electrical cupboard, it is proposed to brick in two original windows. Currently one window is boarded up and there is an air conditioning unit mounted on the wall adjacent to this window. This report provides a Statement of Heritage Impact relating to the potential heritage impacts associated with the Concept Design Update.

It has been determined that the proposed works would result in some impacts to significant fabric and views. It is concluded that the visual impacts, primarily from Kingsgrove Avenue and the Station carpark, have been minimised to the extent possible through design and materials selection. The widening of the door to the proposed FAT will only alter the internal skin of the brickwork and no change is expected to the external brickwork. Considering the brickwork surrounding the doorway has been previously modified the minor impact is considered negligible. The proposed impacts to significant fabric associated with the bricking in of two windows on the southern elevation can be mitigated by:

- investigating options to relocate the electrical cupboard elsewhere during detailed design,

- if the electrical cupboard is to remain the proposed location, the windows should be retained and supplied with frosted/fire rated glass or boarded with fire rated fibre cement sheeting from the inside so as to maintain the façade, and
- relocating the air conditioning unit.

Additional mitigation measures include:

- retention of the coffered ceilings and air vents in the Communications Room and the toilets,
- use of transparent screens on the ramp between the Station carpark and the Bexley Road Overbridge,
- in design of the lift shaft base, utilise materials that are complimentary to the existing materials palette, such as red brick in English stretcher bond to clad the lift shaft base,
- use of lightweight stairs supported on steel structure with concrete treads, and
- provision of a minimum two-metre gap between new platform canopies and the existing platform building roof.

Further opportunities to reduce the impacts to the heritage significance of the station should be investigated during detailed design including:

- review of the entrance canopy at the platform level to reference the existing roof form of the platform building,
- examining options to reduce the height of the lift shaft, if feasible, and
- articulation of the proposed brickwork to reference existing datum points of the platform building such as:
 - introducing string coursing in a band or moulded profile to match the existing platform building elevation. There are two areas of banding in the existing building; one at skirting level and the other at cornice level.
 - introducing a brick band or moulding to reference the existing openings.

Under Section 170A(1)(c) of the *Heritage Act 1977*, Transport for NSW must give the Heritage Council of NSW at least 14 days' notice if they intend to demolish an item entered on Sydney Trains Section 170 Heritage and Conservation Register. The Heritage Council of NSW would need to be notified in relation to the demolition of the stairway from the Overbridge.

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Project Background

AECOM Australia Pty Ltd (AECOM) has been commissioned by Transport for NSW (TfNSW) to prepare a Statement of Heritage Impact (SoHI) regarding potential heritage impacts associated with a proposed accessibility upgrade for the Bexley North Railway Station. Contrary to the *National Disability Discrimination Act*, the Station currently cannot be used by people with a disability or prams, as the station can currently only be accessed via a set of stairs. The upgrades will be delivered as part of the Transport Access Program (TAP), which aims to provide:

- stations that are designed to ensure full accessibility to a wider range of customers including people with disability, limited mobility or parents/carers with prams,
- buildings and facilities that meet the needs of a growing population,
- encourage greater public transport use,
- integrate interchanges with the role and function of town centres, and
- provide interchanges that support an integrated network that allow seamless transfers between transport modes for all customers.

A search of the relevant heritage registers has identified Bexley North Railway Station Group as being listed on Sydney Trains Section 170 Register (SHI No. 4801898). It is identified as an item of local significance, holding historical, aesthetic, social, research and technical, some rarity and representative significance. There is no listing on the *Rockdale Local Environmental Plan 1988* (LEP) or other heritage register. The Statement of Significance associated with the Section 170 Register indicates the aesthetic and representative significance arises from the Railway Station's ability to be an example as an austere 1930s railway building with simple Art Deco detailing and fine brick workmanship that is evocative of the effects of the Depression on building programs for NSW Railways. It is the conservation and legibility of these aspects that need to be considered and protected during the development of the upgrade.

In May 2015, AECOM undertook an options design and analysis process, during which three options were considered. AECOM also prepared a heritage assessment addressing the potential impacts associated with each option. While none of the options completely avoided heritage impacts, the assessment determined that Option A2 (*Concept Design*) was likely to have the least impact on the heritage significance of the Railway Station. Following the options analysis, it was determined that Option A2 was the preferred option. The *Concept Design* has since been refined to form the Concept Design Update.

This report provides a Statement of Heritage Impact relating to the potential heritage impacts associated with the Concept Design Update.

1.2 Site Location

Bexley North Railway Station is located on the T8 Airport line. The Station is accessed from Bexley Road, Bexley North, via stairs from the existing Overbridge. A station carpark is located on the northern side of the Station on Kingsgrove Avenue. Shaw Street, to the south of the Station, contains the Bexley North Branch of the Rockdale Library, Shaw Street Reserve and well as several shops. The Station context and the S170 listed curtilage is shown in Figure 1 Study area.

1.3 Structure of this Report

This report has been prepared to discuss the proposed insertion of a lift and ramps, together with upgrades of the toilet facilities and the associated station carpark. It is structured in the following manner:

Section 1 – Introduces the project, location and proposed works;

Section 2 – Outlines the historical context of Bexley North and the Railway Station in particular;

Section 3 – Provides a physical description of the Bexley North Railway Station;

Section 4 – Includes the assessed heritage significance of the Station;

Section 5 – Describes the proposed works;

Section 6 – Contains the Statement of Heritage Impact;

Section 7 – Provides recommendations and mitigation measures; and

Section 8 – Includes a list of references cited in the report.



Figure 1: Study Area

2.0 Legislative Context

2.1 Introduction

A number of planning and legislative documents govern how heritage is managed in New South Wales and Australia. The following section provides an overview of the requirements under each as they apply to the Project.

2.2 Commonwealth Legislation

2.2.1 Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999

The *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act) defines ‘environment’ as both natural and cultural environments and therefore includes Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal historic cultural heritage items. Under the Act protected heritage items are listed on the National Heritage List (items of significance to the nation) or the Commonwealth Heritage List (items belonging to the Commonwealth or its agencies). These two lists replaced the Register of the National Estate (RNE). The RNE has been suspended and is no longer a statutory list; however, it remains as an archive.

Under Part 9 of the EPBC Act, any action that is likely to have a significant impact on a matter of National Environmental Significance (known as a controlled action under the Act), may only progress with approval of the Commonwealth Minister for the Department of the Environment (DotE). An action is defined as a project, development, undertaking, activity (or series of activities), or alteration. An action will also require approval if:

- it is undertaken on Commonwealth land and will have or is likely to have a significant impact on the environment on Commonwealth land; and
- it is undertaken by the Commonwealth and will have or is likely to have a significant impact.

2.2.2 Disability Discrimination Act 1992

The *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (DDA) aims to reduce, to the level possible, discrimination against people with a disability. The DDA requires that people are given equal opportunity to access public transport and buildings, including those with heritage significance.

2.3 State Legislation

2.3.1 Infrastructure SEPP State Environmental Planning Policy (Infrastructure) 2007

SEPPs are environmental planning instruments which address planning issues within the State. SEPPs often make the Planning Minister the consent authority for the types of development they relate to. The *State Environmental Planning Policy (Infrastructure) 2007* (ISEPP 2007) is of relevance to this project. The ISEPP 2007 specifies in Part 2, Division 2, Section 14(2) that:

‘A public authority, or a person acting on behalf of a public authority, must not carry out development to which this clause applies unless the authority or the person has:

- a. had an assessment of the impact prepared, and
- b. given written notice of the intention to carry out the development, with a copy of the assessment, to the council for the area in which the heritage item or heritage conservation area (or the relevant part of such an area) is located, and
- c. taken into consideration any response to the notice that is received from the council within 21 days after the notice is given.’

Section 14 of ISEPP 2007 applies to infrastructure developments carried out by, or on behalf of, a public authority if the development is likely to impact a local heritage item or heritage conservation area (other than a heritage item that is also a State heritage item). Under ISEPP 2007, a public authority, or person/s acting on behalf of a public authority, must not carry out a development to which this clause applies, unless an assessment of the proposed impact has been prepared and forwarded

to the local government of the area for comment. Comments received within 21 days must be taken into consideration.

2.3.2 Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979

The *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (EP&A Act) allows for the preparation of planning instruments to direct development within NSW. This includes Local Environment Plans (LEP), which are administered by local government, and principally determine land use and the process for development applications. LEPs usually include clauses requiring that heritage be considered during development applications and a schedule of identified heritage items be provided. The City of Rockdale LEP 2011 applies to the Project and is discussed further in Section 2.4.1.

2.3.3 The Heritage Act 1977

The *Heritage Act 1977* (as amended) was enacted to conserve the environmental heritage of New South Wales. Under Section 32, places, buildings, works, relics, moveable objects or precincts of heritage significance are protected by means of either Interim Heritage Orders (IHO) or by listing on the NSW State Heritage Register (SHR). Items that are assessed as having State heritage significance can be listed on the SHR by the Minister on the recommendation of the NSW Heritage Council.

Archaeological relics (any relics that are buried) are protected by the provisions of Section 139. Under this section it is illegal to disturb or excavate any land knowing or suspecting that the disturbance or excavation will or is likely to result in a relic being discovered, exposed, moved, damaged or destroyed. In such cases an excavation permit under Section 140 is required. Note that no formal listing is required for archaeological relics; they are automatically protected if they are of local significance or higher.

Proposals to alter, damage, move or destroy places, buildings, works, relics, moveable objects or precincts protected by an IHO or listed on the SHR require an approval under Section 60. Demolition of whole buildings will not normally be approved except under certain conditions (Section 63). Some of the sites listed on the SHR or on LEPs may either be 'relics' or have relics associated with them. In such cases, a Section 60 approval is also required for any disturbance to relics *associated* with a listed item.

Under Section 170 of the *Heritage Act 1977*, NSW Government agencies are required to maintain a register of heritage assets. The Register places obligations on the agencies, but not on non-government proponents, beyond their responsibility to assess the impact on surrounding heritage items. Bexley North Railway Station is listed in Railcorp s170 register as Bexley North Railway Station Group (SHI #4801898).

2.4 Local Government

2.4.1 City of Rockdale Local Environmental Plan 2011

Bayside Council was formed from the merger of Rockdale and Botany Bay councils in 2016. The Rockdale LEP 2011 controls development in relation to heritage items within the suburb of Rockdale. Principally, heritage items cannot be demolished, damaged, subdivided, structurally altered or the land excavated for archaeological purposes without consent of the Council. A Statement of Heritage Impact may be required in order to consider an application.

The objectives of this clause are as follows:

- a. to conserve the environmental heritage of Rockdale,
- b. to conserve the heritage significance of heritage items and heritage conservation areas, including associated fabric, settings and views,
- c. to conserve archaeological sites,
- d. to conserve Aboriginal objects and Aboriginal places of heritage significance.

Development consent is required for any of the following:

- a. demolishing or moving any of the following or altering the exterior of any of the following (including, in the case of a building, making changes to its detail, fabric, finish or appearance):
 - i. a heritage item,
 - ii. an Aboriginal object,
 - iii. a building, work, relic or tree within a heritage conservation area,
- b. altering a heritage item that is a building by making structural changes to its interior or by making changes to anything inside the item that is specified in Schedule 5 in relation to the item,
- c. disturbing or excavating an archaeological site while knowing, or having reasonable cause to suspect, that the disturbance or excavation will or is likely to result in a relic being discovered, exposed, moved, damaged or destroyed,
- d. disturbing or excavating an Aboriginal place of heritage significance,
- e. erecting a building on land:
 - i. on which a heritage item is located or that is within a heritage conservation area, or
 - ii. on which an Aboriginal object is located or that is within an Aboriginal place of heritage significance,
- f. subdividing land:
 - i. on which a heritage item is located or that is within a heritage conservation area, or
 - ii. on which an Aboriginal object is located or that is within an Aboriginal place of heritage significance.

Schedule 5 of the LEP provides a list of identified heritage items, heritage conservation areas and archaeological sites. Bexley North Railway Station is not listed on this schedule. Wollie Creek Valley (I237) is the nearest heritage item in the vicinity of the Station (Figure 1 Study area).

3.0 Historical Context

3.1 Pre-European History

Available sources indicate that Bexley North falls within the traditional country of the Darug people, who spoke the Darug (also spelt Dhaŕ-rook, Dharrook, Dhaŕook, Dharruk and Dharug) language. Darug is believed to have been spoken from the Hawkesbury River in the north, to Appin in the south, and from the coast west across the Cumberland Plain into the Blue Mountains.

The post-contact history of the Darug-speaking peoples of the Sydney Region is primarily one of dispossession and loss, with traditional hunting and camping grounds rapidly claimed and settled by Europeans and populations decimated by introduced diseases such as tuberculosis and small pox (Attenbrow, 2010: 14-15, 21-22).

No Aboriginal heritage sites are recorded in the immediate vicinity of the Bexley North Railway Station Group.

3.2 Early Settlement

The site that the Station is built was part of the St George Parish of the Cumberland county. The land was initially granted to James Chandler as the Bexley Estate. Chandler was born in Kent, England and sailed on the *Surrey* to Port Jackson in 1820. A well-educated and wealthy man, he bought Sylvester's Farm that had previously been granted to Thomas Sylvester a decade earlier. In August 1822, he received a grant of 1,200 acres. His land then covered today's Bexley, most of Rockdale, and large areas of Bexley North and Kogarah. He named his holding after Bexley in his home county in Kent.

Chandler mortgaged his estate in 1832, paid it off the following year and divided the estate into 27 allotments. The allotments were not sold and he continued to mortgage the estate. Three years later he again tried to sell the estate and it was purchased for £991.15.0 by an ex-convict; Charles Tompson of Clydesdale. The land was later purchased by Charles Tindell of Camden by 1856 before being subdivided and subsequently becoming attractive to settlers.

3.3 Bexley North Railway Station

The main impetus for the construction of the East Hills line came from the real estate industry, which wanted to develop the area for residential purposes. The debate on the Bill to construct the line took only 15 minutes after it was introduced at 5:12am on 17 December 1924, and the Governors assent given on 23 December, but no funds were provided. The Public Works committee again recommended the railway from Tempe to East Hills in August 1927 with the expectation of a small operating profit and opening up of good building land. The Government's support for the project was evident with the then Premier, Jack Lang, performing the 'Turning of the First Sod' ceremony at Padstow on 3rd September 1927' (*The Sydney Morning Herald*, 1927:14). However, construction of the line was delayed in 1927 by the early stages of the Great Depression, before eventually becoming an unemployment relief project. The line was finally opened in 1931 (NSW Heritage Division, 2009).

The *National Advocate* newspaper published on 30 March 1933 a report that the Bexley North Railway Station safe had been blown open by burglars the night before. The thieves were only able to yield £10 for their night between the Bexley North and Bardwell Park Railway Stations (*National Advocate*, 1933:6f).

All platform buildings on the East Hills line were built to the same general design and plan, which was revised after initial planning to include a booking office, Railway Station Master's office and parcels office. In 1947-48 the platform building was extended at the eastern end to add another bay (Figure 2). This work necessitated demolition of the original parapet at the eastern end of the building, and extension of the awning, however the work was done in matching brickwork and included recreation of a new parapet to match the original. The work is sympathetic to the original 1931 building and is virtually indiscernible. This extension allowed for the addition of a combined booking/parcels office that was excluded from the original plans.

In the post war period of the 1940s and 1950s migrant hostels and housing commission estates were developed in suburbs along the line. The line was electrified from Kingsgrove in 1939, duplicated in

1948, and in 1987 the East Hills terminus was connected to the Main Southern Line at Glenfield Junction.

Although the original terminus building at East Hills Railway Station was demolished in 1987, the remainder of the East Hills Line from Turrella to Panania is the only line in Sydney with all platform buildings extant from its original construction phase (though some have been altered).

Recent alterations have included replacement of roof cladding to the Bexley North platform building (originally corrugated asbestos) with corrugated steel, widening of the Overbridge from two to four lanes with a concrete structure and concrete road deck (however retaining the original 1929 brick piers seen in Plate 3); and replacement of the platform entry stairs. In 1999 the interior fit out of the platform building was altered.



Plate 1 Bexley North Railway Station looking East (Rockdale City Council – Photo file) shows western elevation with screen wall to Male toilets now demolished



Plate 2 Bexley North Railway Station 1957 (Rockdale City Council – Photo file)

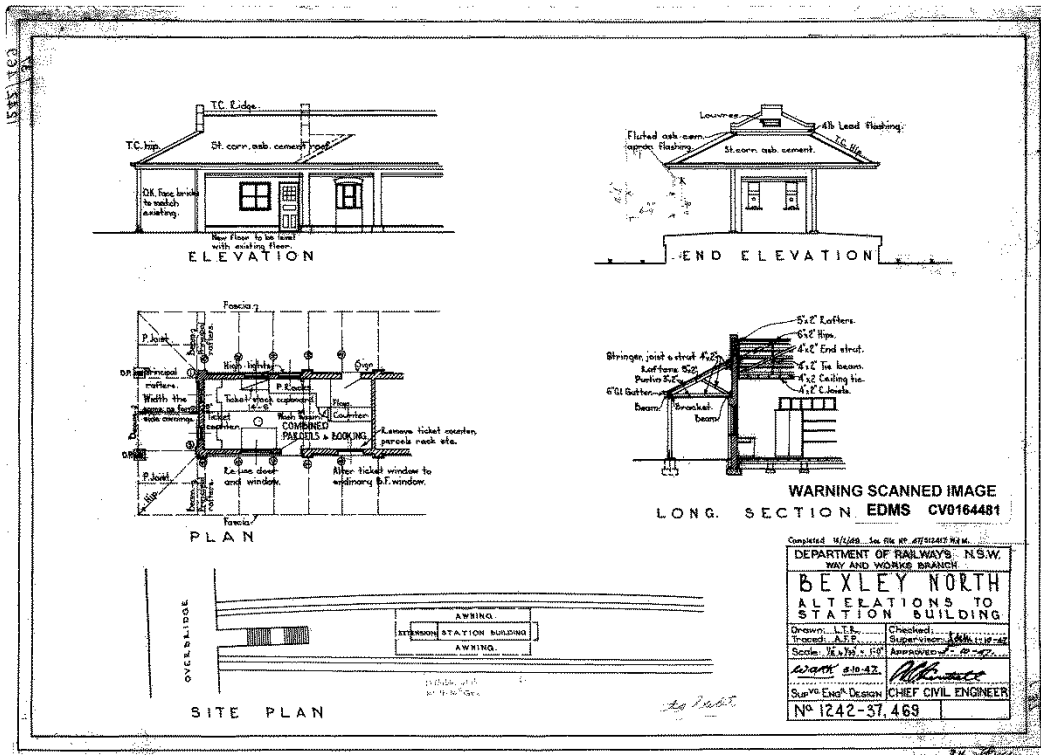


Figure 2 Bexley North Railway platform building extension plan 1947



Plate 3 Original brick piers, 2015

3.4 Later modifications to the Station

The plans for Bexley North are somewhat outdated and haphazard in their coverage. Figure 3 indicates the Platform Building at the time of its construction. In 1947, the eastern end (shown on the right of Figure 3) was knocked down and the booking office was extended, as shown in the partial plan reproduced in Figure 2. The screening walls around the male restroom have also been removed. This work was not remediated sympathetically and has left visible evidence of the works (Plate 4).

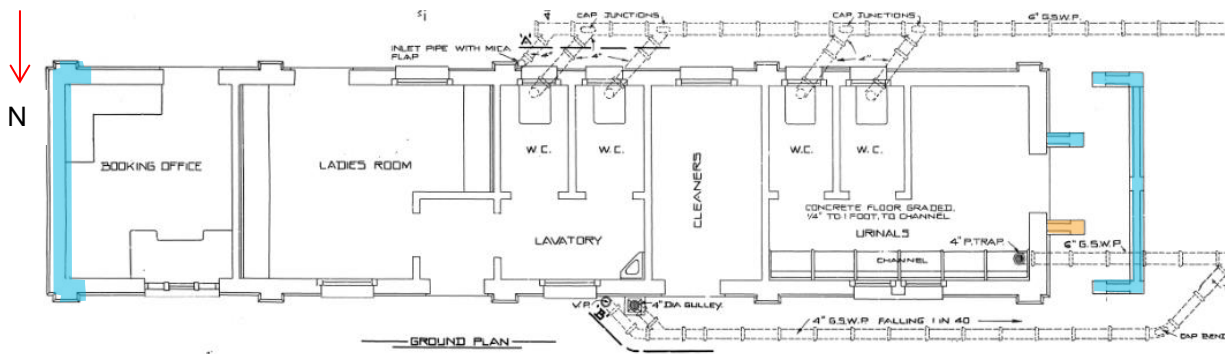


Figure 3 Bexley North Station Platform Building as of 1931. Modifications are shown in blue

In 1999, plans were prepared to modify the internal fit-out of the Booking Office, as shown in Figure 4. The majority of the works were internal, involving the removal and replacement of shelving, storage and desks. On the 1947 façade the original two ticket windows were bricked in and a new, wider window created. The men’s toilets, cleaner’s cupboards and the women’s toilets have remained

unchanged since their construction. The Ladies Waiting Room has been converted into a Communications Room, but the change does not seem to have resulted in any structural changes.



Plate 4 Door in western elevation of platform building showing evidence of screen wall removal.



Plate 5 Door and window in southern elevation showing detailing of brickwork around openings

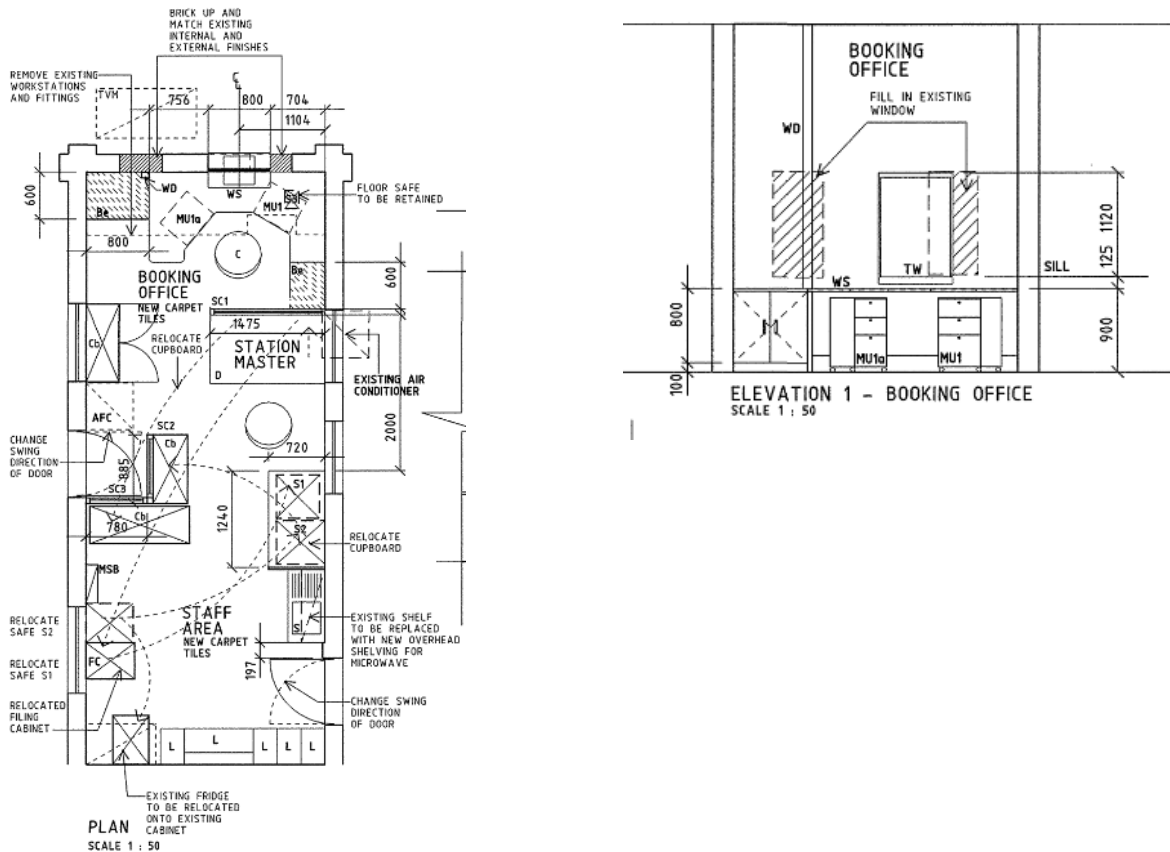


Figure 4 Bexley North Station Platform Booking Office modifications, 1999, plan and elevation

3.5 Historic Themes

Commonwealth (Australian Heritage Commission, 2001) and NSW heritage agencies (NSW Heritage Office, 2001b) use themes as a means of categorising how a place contributed to historical events at a national, state and local level. Historical themes are a means of relating site-specific developments to broader historical patterns. The themes which apply to the Railway Station are provided in Table 1, provided from the Sydney Trains Criteria for listing on the state heritage register.

Table 1 Bexley North Railway Station historic themes

National (Theme Group)	National Theme	State	Sydney Trains themes
3. Developing Local, Regional and National Economies	3.8.6 Building and maintaining railways	Transport activities associated with the moving of people and goods from one place to another and systems for the provision of such movements	3.8.1 Building the railway network
	3.14 Developing an Australian engineering and construction industry		
4. Settlement-Building settlements, towns and cities	4.2 supplying urban services (power, transport, fire prevention, roads, water, light and sewerage)	Towns, suburbs and villages- activities associated with creating, planning and managing urban functions, landscapes and lifestyles in towns, suburbs and villages	4.1.3 Impacts of railways on urban form

4.0 Physical Description

4.1 General Location

The Bexley North Railway Station is located approximately 13 km south west of Central Railway Station between Bardwell Park and Kingsgrove Railway Stations. The Railway Station is located on the East Hills line and services the Sydney Trains T8 Airport line, with four trains each way per hour in the off-peak. The Railway Station can be accessed from the Bexley Road Overbridge at the eastern end of the platform. Station car parking is provided off Kingsgrove Ave.

4.2 Bexley North Railway Station

Bexley North Railway Station services four tracks and consists of one island platform, a Railway Station Platform building, and stairs leading to the Overbridge. Detailed descriptions of each element are provided in the sections below.

4.2.1 Island Platform

The platform is concrete faced with concrete deck and finished with an asphalt surface. The platforms have been modified to include timber bench seating, lighting, signage and aluminium palisades. The platform is approximately 160 metres in length. A modern shallow pitched asymmetrical roofed weather shelter was erected on the Platform in c. 2010 to the east and west of the existing platform building (Plate 6 & Plate 7).

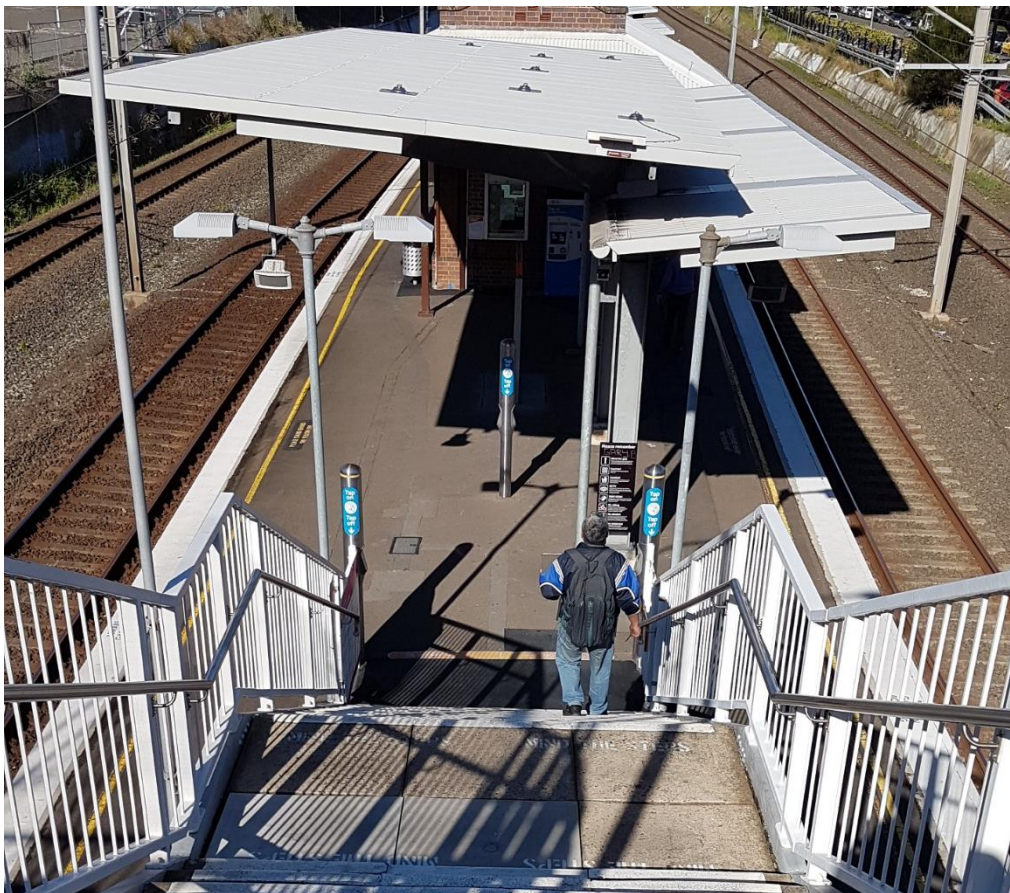


Plate 6 View showing Island Platform. Note weather shelters. View west.



Plate 7 View showing Island Platform. Note weather shelters. View east.

4.2.2 Platform building (1931,1948)

The platform building is located centrally along the platform. The building is a rectangular liver red face brick building of English bond¹ brickwork, divided into 5 bays, with bays defined by engaged piers. The building has a brick stepped parapet at both the east and west ends, The roof is gabled at east and west ends against the parapets, and is hipped over awnings to north, south and east elevations, which are an integral part of the roof form. Roof cladding is corrugated steel. The east awning wraps around the eastern stepped parapet. The stepped parapets each feature a projecting moulded brick capping course and three vertical lines of projecting decorative brickwork. There are pairs of timber louvered vents to each gabled parapet. There are modern fibre cement sheet ceilings to the awnings.

The fenestration has been altered to allow for modern ticketing office window, various other doors and areas of brickwork have been altered to allow for services and modern uses such as wider bathroom doorways and access to water tapes from outside the building. Some of the windows have been protected by security grills. Two highlight windows in the southern façade, at the eastern end are among those that remain relatively unaltered (Plate 10). Currently, one of the windows is boarded up and an air conditioning unit is installed on the wall to the right of this window.

The interior of the building consists of a series of discrete spaces arranged on a linear plan. These spaces comprise (from the west to the east): men's toilet, cleaners store, ladies' toilet, ladies' waiting room, combined booking/parcels office with ticket window. It should be noted that the building was planned without a booking or parcels office but was sympathetically extended in 1947-48 to include a combined booking/parcels office. Alterations to the interior fit out were undertaken in 1999, however some original interior fit out has survived, including interior joinery, ceiling and floor finishes

In 1947-48 the platform building was extended at the eastern end to add another bay. This work necessitated demolition of the original parapet at the eastern end of the building, and extension of the awning, however the work was done in matching brickwork and included the construction of a new parapet to match the original. The work is sympathetic to the original 1931 building and is virtually indiscernible.

¹ English bond features alternating rows of header and stretcher bricks.



Plate 8 Western end of Railway platform building showing demolished screen walls to Male toilets.



Plate 9 Eastern end of Railway platform building showing modified eastern wall

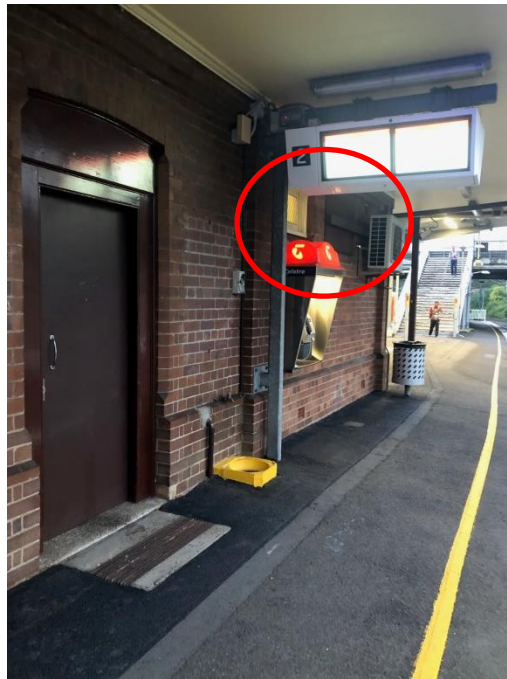


Plate 10 View of southern façade of the Railway platform building with intact window above telephone box, boarded up window and AC unit to the right

The interior of the building has been modified to varying degrees. The station office was refurbished in 1999 (refer Section 3.4) and retains no original features. The communications room has been relatively untouched and retains the original ceilings with timber battens used to create a coffered look (Plate 11) and air vent detailing, although the floor tiles are replacements. The ceiling and air vent details are also retained in the men's and ladies toilets (Plate 12). The toilets have been refurbished and, other than the ceilings and air vents, contain no original fabric. The wall and floor tiles, hand basins, cisterns, urinal and toilet bowls are all replacements (Plate 13). The internal divisions and the entrance doors have also been replaced. The original timber door frame is still present into the women's toilets (Plate 14), but as discussed, the door to the men's toilets has been previously altered and the door frame is gone.



Plate 11 Communications room showing coffered ceiling



Plate 12 Ceiling showing coffered feature and original air vent in women's toilets



Plate 13 Replacement floor and wall tiles, toilet bowl and cistern in men's toilet



Plate 14 Door to women's toilets showing original joinery

4.2.3 Bexley Road Overbridge (2009)

The Overbridge consists of Bexley Road motor vehicle road and pedestrian path. The stairs (Plate 15) from the Overbridge to the Railway Station platform end on the eastern end of the platform. The pedestrian path is the only access to the Station (Plate 16).

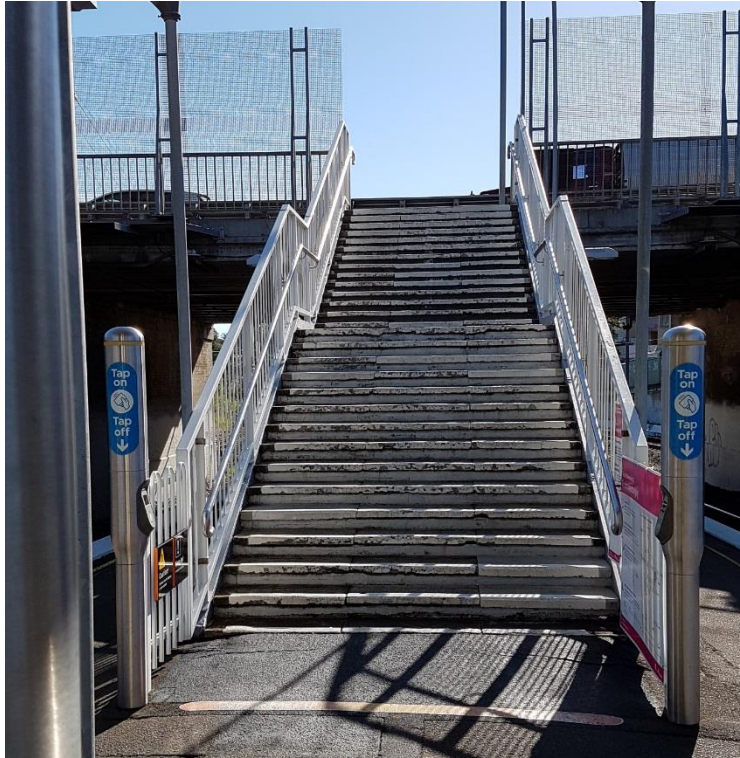


Plate 15 Overbridge from Station platform.



Plate 16 Overbridge pedestrian path.

4.2.4 General

No items of moveable heritage have been identified at the Station. The present buildings are the first known structures to have been constructed on the site. It is considered that the archaeological potential of the study area, within the rail corridor, is low.

While there are some plantings to the north of the Station, these are not of heritage significance and do not contribute to the heritage significance of the Railway Station (Plate 17).



Plate 17 General view of Bexley North Railway Station facing North showing plantings.

5.0 Significance Assessment

5.1 Introduction

In order to understand how a development will impact on a heritage item it is essential to understand why an item is significant. An assessment of significance is undertaken to explain why a particular item is important and to enable the appropriate site management and curtilage to be determined. Cultural significance is defined in *The Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance 2013* (the Australian ICOMOS Burra Charter, 2013) as meaning "aesthetic, historic, scientific, social or spiritual value for past, present or future generations" (Article 1.2). Cultural significance may be derived from a place's fabric, association with a person or event, or for its research potential. The significance of a place is not fixed for all time, and what is of significance to us now may change as similar items are located, more historical research is undertaken and community tastes change.

The process of linking this assessment with an item's historical context has been developed through the NSW Heritage Management System and is outlined in the guideline *Assessing Heritage Significance*, part of the NSW Heritage Manual (Heritage Branch, Department of Planning). The *Assessing Heritage Significance* guidelines establish seven evaluation criteria (which reflect four categories of significance and whether a place is rare or representative) under which a place can be evaluated in the context of State or local historical themes. Similarly, a heritage item can be significant at a local level (i.e. to the people living in the vicinity of the site), at a State level (i.e. to all people living within NSW) or be significant to the country as a whole and be of National or Commonwealth significance.

In accordance with in the guideline *Assessing Heritage Significance* (NSW Heritage Office, 2001a), an item will be considered to be of State significance if it meets two or more criteria at a State level or local heritage significance if it meets one or more of the following criteria:

Criterion (a) – *an item is important in the course, or pattern, of NSW's cultural or natural history (or the cultural or natural history of the local area).*

The site must show evidence of significant human activity or maintains or shows the continuity of historical process or activity. An item is excluded if it has been so altered that it can no longer provide evidence of association.

Criterion (b) – *an item has strong or special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in NSW's cultural or natural history (or the cultural or natural history of the local to area).*

The site must show evidence of significant human occupation. An item is excluded if it has been so altered that it can no longer provide evidence of association.

Criterion (c) – *an item is important in demonstrating aesthetic characteristics and/or a high degree of creative or technical achievement in NSW (or the local area).*

An item can be excluded on the grounds that it has lost its design or technical integrity or its landmark qualities have been more than temporarily degraded.

Criterion (d) – *an item has strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group in NSW (or the local area) for social, cultural or spiritual reasons.*

This criterion does not cover importance for reasons of amenity or retention in preference to proposed alternative.

Criterion (e) – *an item has potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of NSW's cultural or natural history (or the cultural or natural history of the local area). Significance under this criterion must have the potential to yield new or further substantial information.*

Under the guideline, an item can be excluded if the information would be irrelevant or only contains information available in other sources.

Criterion (f) – *an item possesses uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of NSW's cultural or natural history (or the cultural or natural history of the local area). The site must show evidence of the element/function etc proposed to be rare.*

Criterion (g) – *an item is important in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of NSW's (or local area's):*

- cultural or natural places; or
- cultural or natural environments.

An item is excluded under this criterion if it is a poor example or has lost the range of characteristics of a type.

The Heritage Council require the summation of the significance assessment into a succinct paragraph, known as a Statement of Significance. The Statement of Significance is the foundation for future management and impact assessment.

5.2 Significance Assessment

Railcorp S.170 contains a significance assessment using Heritage Division guidelines (NSW Heritage Office, 2001a). Table 2 provides the significance assessment, taken from the listing (NSW Heritage Division, 2014).

Table 2 Section 170 significance assessment

Significance Criteria	Application of Criteria
Historical significance SHR criteria (a)	Bexley North Railway Station is of historical significance as part of the East Hills line, a major Depression period public work undertaken under the controversial Premiership of Jack Lang and through its relationship to the development of the suburb of Bexley North and the broader East Hills region. The austere design of the platform building is reflective of the completion of the East Hills line as a Depression period unemployment relief works project.
Historical association significance SHR criteria (b)	No assessment provided.
Aesthetic significance SHR criteria (c)	Bexley North Railway Station is of aesthetic significance as an example of a small Inter-War period suburban railway building matching other East Hills line Railway Station buildings in design and style. The building is very austere in style, with Inter War Art Deco style touches (for example brick detailing to parapets) and is competently executed, exhibiting fine workmanship in its brickwork. The building is noted for its use of monochromatic brickwork, stepped parapets, irregular fenestration and engaged piers. Bexley North platform building is also of significance for its seamless 1947 addition in the same style as the original section of the building, involving recreation of a new parapet to match the original at the eastern end of the building.
Social significance SHR criteria (d)	The place has the potential to contribute to the local community's sense of place, and can provide a connection to the local community's past.
Technical/Research significance SHR criteria (e)	Bexley North Railway Station is of research significance for its ability to demonstrate design and construction techniques of the Inter-War period. The building provides insights into NSW Railways experimentation with styles of architecture and adaptation to depression period economic conditions.
Rarity SHR criteria (f)	The Bexley North Railway Station is not rare, as it is part of a cohesive group of 10 similar to identical Inter-War suburban Railway Stations completed in 1931 between Turrella and East Hills.
Representativeness SHR criteria (g)	Bexley North Railway Station is a good representative example of the cohesive collection of East Hills line Railway Stations built from Turrella to East Hills, with the platform and platform building generally intact (except for sympathetic extension to the platform building in 1948), and demonstrates the effects of the economic Depression of 1929-1930s on Railway Station construction.

Significance Criteria	Application of Criteria
Integrity/Intactness	Bexley North Railway Station has not had access lifts installed, as at some other Railway Stations on the East Hills line, and the Railway Station itself is therefore intact. The platform building has retained a high degree of integrity externally and a moderate degree of integrity internally.

Statement of Significance:

Bexley North Railway Station - including the 1931 platform and platform building - is of local heritage significance. Bexley North Railway Station is of historical significance as a major public work completed as an unemployment relief project during the Great Depression, and as a major transport hub for the suburb of Bexley North since 1931. Bexley North Railway Station platform building is of aesthetic/technical significance as an austere 1930s railway building with simple Art Deco detailing and fine brick workmanship that is evocative of the effects of the Depression on building programs for NSW Railways. Bexley North Railway Station is representative of the cohesive collection of 10 East Hills line Railway Stations from Turrella to East Hills.

5.3 Significance Grading

As different elements of an item can have a different contribution to its heritage significance, it is sometimes useful to define which elements are of significance and which may detract from its significance. The NSW Heritage Division (NSW Heritage Office, 2001:11) use the grading criteria provided in Table 3.

Table 3 Grading of significance criteria (from NSW Heritage Office, 2001:11)

Grading	Justification	Status
Exceptional	Rare or outstanding element directly contributing to an item's local and State significance.	Fulfils criteria for local or State listing.
High	High degree of original fabric. Demonstrates a key element of the item's significance. Alterations do not detract from significance.	Fulfils criteria for local or State listing.
Moderate	Altered or modified elements. Elements with little heritage value, but which contribute to the overall significance of the item.	Fulfils criteria for local or State listing.
Little	Alterations detract from significance. Difficult to interpret.	Does not fulfil criteria for local or State listing.
Intrusive	Damaging to the item's heritage significance	Does not fulfil criteria for local or State listing.

An examination of the fabric of the Bexley North Railway Station, in light of the significance assessment above, has graded the various elements of the Railway Station. The results are provided in Table 4. The grading has been used to inform the design parameters provided in Section 5.4.

Table 4 Bexley North Railway Station grading of fabric

Grading	Element meeting criteria
Exceptional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Form and character of the platform building
High	
Moderate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fabric of the stairs within rail corridor
Little	
Intrusive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Covered canopy of platform building Modern free-standing canopy on Platform

5.4 Implications for Detailed Design

The Bexley North Railway Station is listed on Sydney Trains Section 170 Register as an item of local significance, holding historical, aesthetic, social, research and technical, some rarity and representative significance.

The Statement of Significance associated with the Section 170 Register indicates the aesthetic and representative significance arises from the Railway Station's ability to be an example as an austere 1930s railway building with simple Art Deco detailing and fine brick workmanship that is evocative of the effects of the Depression on building programs for NSW Railways. It is the conservation and legibility of these aspects that need to be considered and protected during the development of the upgrade. It should be noted that the legibility and aesthetic significance of the platform building has been impacted by the construction of the free-standing platform canopy on the Platform. The canopy makes it difficult to appreciate the form and aesthetics of the platform building.

In 2015, design principles aimed at reducing or removing the impact on the identified elements that contribute to the Bexley North Railway Station's significance were proposed. These are replicated in Table 5, together with commentary regarding whether the recommendation is incorporated into the final design. The recommendations focused around complimenting the Art Deco detailing of the station platform building. Materials have instead been selected from Sydney Trains standard materials suite.

Table 5 Recommended design principles

Recommended design principles	Incorporated into concept design
Wherever possible, the existing original fabric of the platform building should be retained	Yes
The present Overbridge brick piers should be retained	Yes
The colour of the new materials should be chosen to blend with the aesthetic of the austere Art Deco detailing, for example use of red brick in English bond	Yes, but not on lift shaft
Design should consider Art Deco inspired detailing, echoing the form of the parapet on the platform building	No
The stair handrails would be a particularly visible and relevant item to use Art Deco inspired detailing	No
The lift façade, where not enclosed in brick, should be of matte stainless steel	No
Roofs should be with corrugated profiled cladding rather than longline	No – longline has been selected
Asphalt should be considered for the floor finish on the platforms, rather than saw cut concrete	Unclear
If stainless steel tactile studs are proposed, these should be in a matte finish	No – polished has been selected

Recommended design principles	Incorporated into concept design
The profiles of the downpipes and gutters should be cylindrical to be comparable to the Art Deco era	Yes
The soffit, if relevant, should be lined with a plain material	No – fibre cement sheeting has been selected
If possible, no new openings should be made into the Buildings and doors should only be widened if absolutely necessary	Yes
<p>Should the installation of new lighting, CCTV, help points, way-finding signage or other services be required:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They should be installed in areas where services have already been placed; • Should be installed with minimal impacts to significant fabric and the impacts should be reversible wherever possible; • Heritage signage and way-finding should be retained wherever possible and augmented wherever possible. 	No alterations currently indicated on plans

Source: AECOM 2015

6.0 Proposed Works and Anticipated Impacts

6.1 Introduction

This section outlines the works proposed to provide disabled and pram access to the Station platform and to upgrade the Station facilities.

6.2 Platform building Alterations

Modifications are proposed to the interior of the platform building to allow for the Family Accessible Toilet (FAT) and unisex ambulant toilet (Figure 5 and Figure 6). These include:

- removal of internal cubicle walls, cisterns and hand basins in existing male toilet to allow for FAT,
- widening of entrance to FAT and installation of a new door,
- removal of internal cubicle walls, cisterns and hand basins in existing female toilet to allow for unisex ambulant toilet,
- plumbing works to relocate a cistern in the FAT,
- plumbing to new locations for hand basins in unisex ambulant toilet and FAT,
- addition of new electrical cupboard (two hour fire-rated) to Station Office within the platform building,
- removal of existing air conditioning unit adjacent to the highlight windows of the southern wall to platform building,
- bricking in of two windows on the southern elevation, which would be obscured from the interior by the new electrical cupboard (Figure 7), and
- provision of air conditioning to Communications Room and Station Office within the platform building which would involve installing a condenser unit under stairs with a service conduit below platform level.

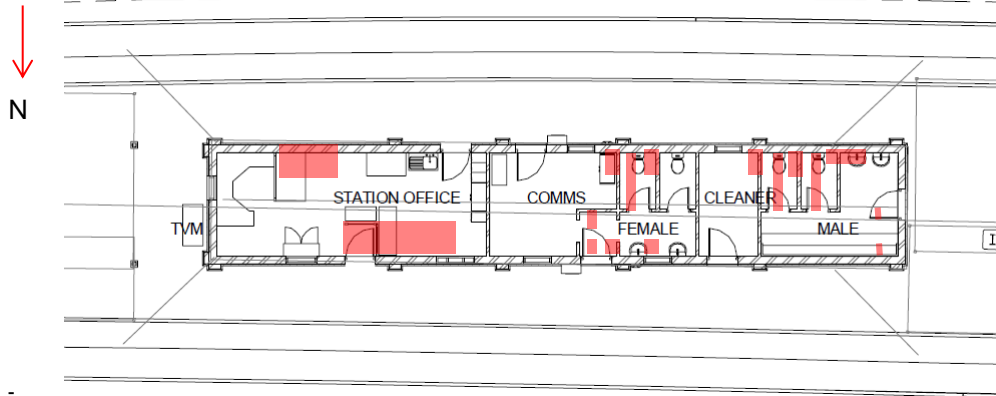


Figure 5 Existing platform building layout with areas of proposed alterations highlighted

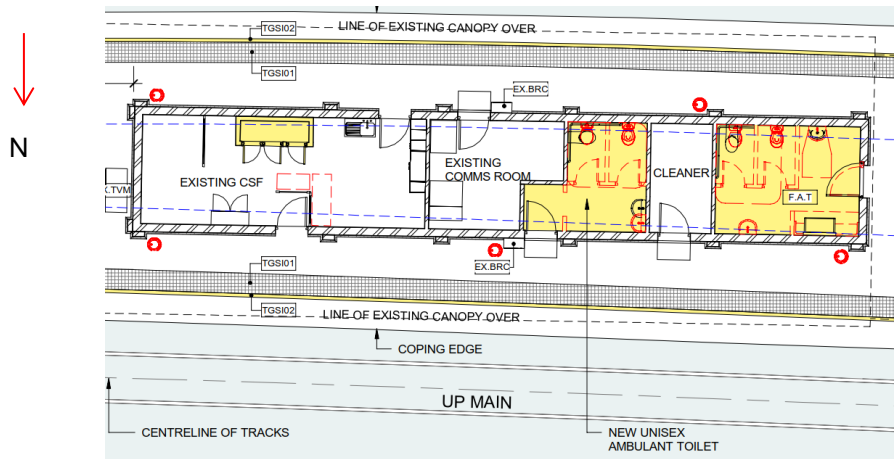


Figure 6 Proposed platform building layout (Note: North is south of the plan)

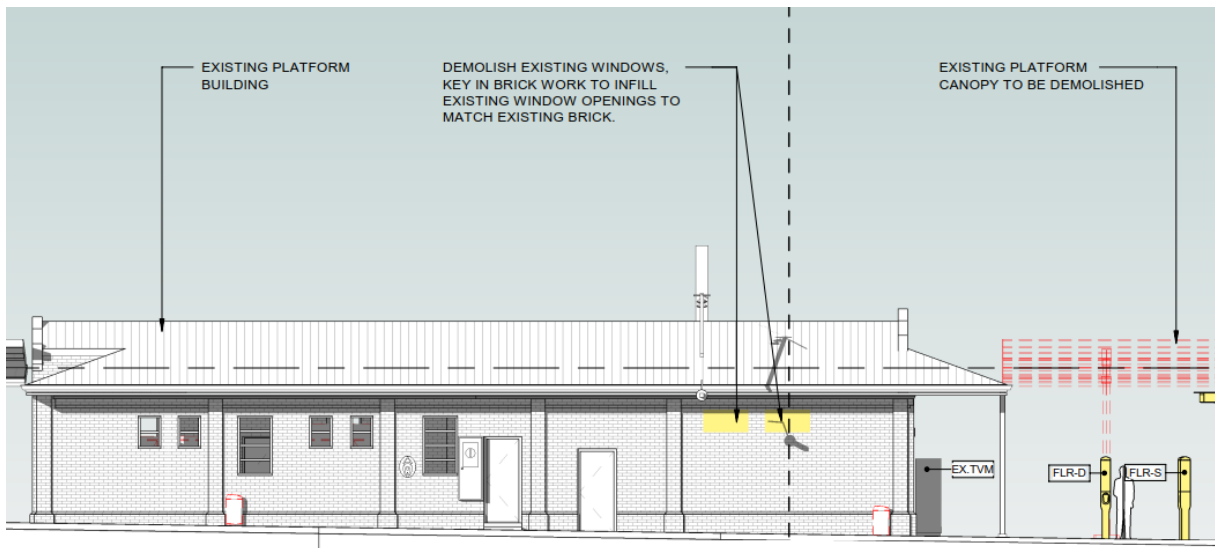


Figure 7 Proposed alterations to southern elevation

6.2.1 Potential Heritage Impacts

The alterations to the Station Office (historically known as a Booking Office) within the platform building would have minimal impact on fabric of heritage significance, being limited to the bricking in of two windows on the southern elevation associated with the proposed electrical cupboard. In order to mitigate the impact to significant fabric the following is recommended:

- investigate options to relocate the electrical cupboard elsewhere during detailed design,
- if the electrical cupboard is to remain in the proposed location, the windows be retained and supplied with frosted/fire rated glass or boarded with fire rated fibre cement sheeting from the inside so as to maintain the façade, and
- relocate the air conditioning condenser unit.

The interior of the Station Office was fitted out in 1999 (refer Section 3.4 and associated figures), effectively removing any earlier internal fabric. The works to insert the unisex ambulant toilet and FAT would remove partitions and internal walls that are not considered to be original, as it is understood the interior has been renovated.

The proposal also includes the widening of the doorway in the western elevation (to right of Figure 6). The brickwork of the building has been identified as contributing to the aesthetic significance of the station. It has been informed by TfNSW that the increased width required for the new doorway will only impact on the internal and not external skin of brickwork. It is also important to note, as identified in Section 3.4, it would appear that this elevation has undergone modification in the past as it appears to have lost the screen walls which have been unsympathetically patched, making the doorway an eyesore. Considering that the southern elevation has been previously modified and has been damaged, the works to widen the doorway has been assessed as minor impact to significant fabric and negligible.

6.3 Access Upgrade Proposal

Bexley North Upgrade concept design update works (Figure 8) include:

- Retention of existing overbridge and footpath,
- Accessible paths to Railway Station entrance lifts by regrading local footpath on Bexley Road,
- Provision of new lift and stair access (with new canopy) from the Bexley Road Overbridge to the platform,
- Provision of new accessible ramps to connect the existing Bexley Road footpath and the Station car park at Kingsgrove Avenue,

Proposed alterations to the interchange involve:

- Conversion of southern side of station car park to provide two accessible parking spaces, and
- Provision of a formalised station forecourt at Kingsgrove Avenue with seating and shelter.

The concept design plans are provided in Appendix C.

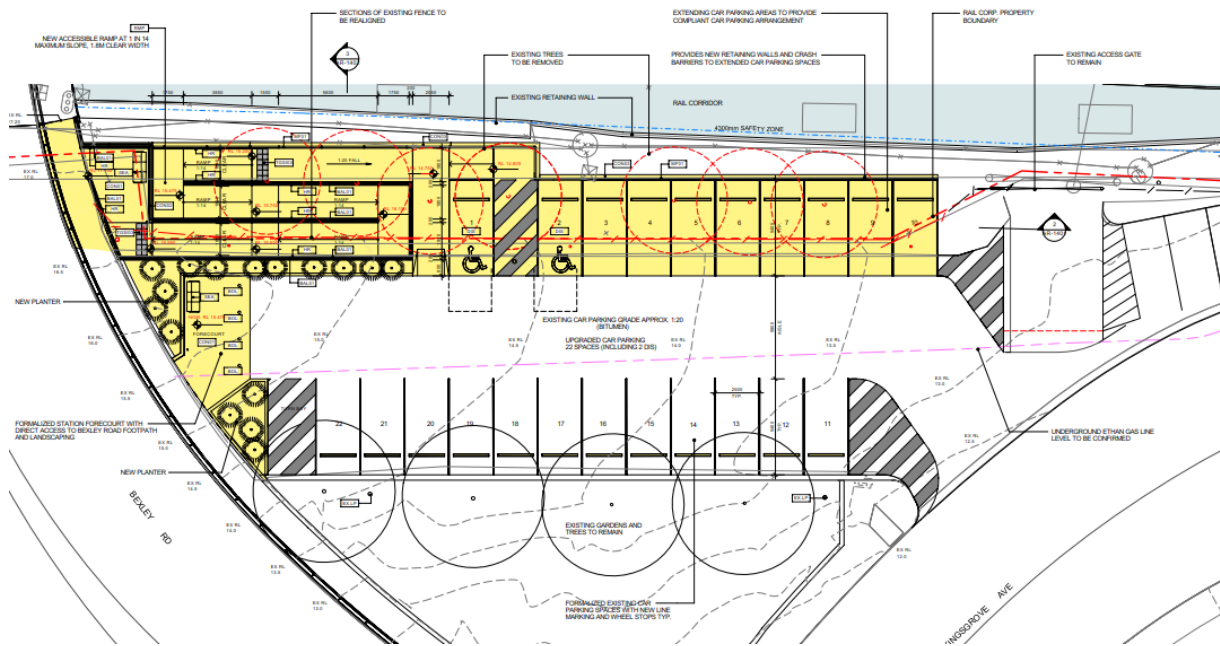


Figure 8 Proposed alterations to the Station access and Kingsgrove Avenue station carpark

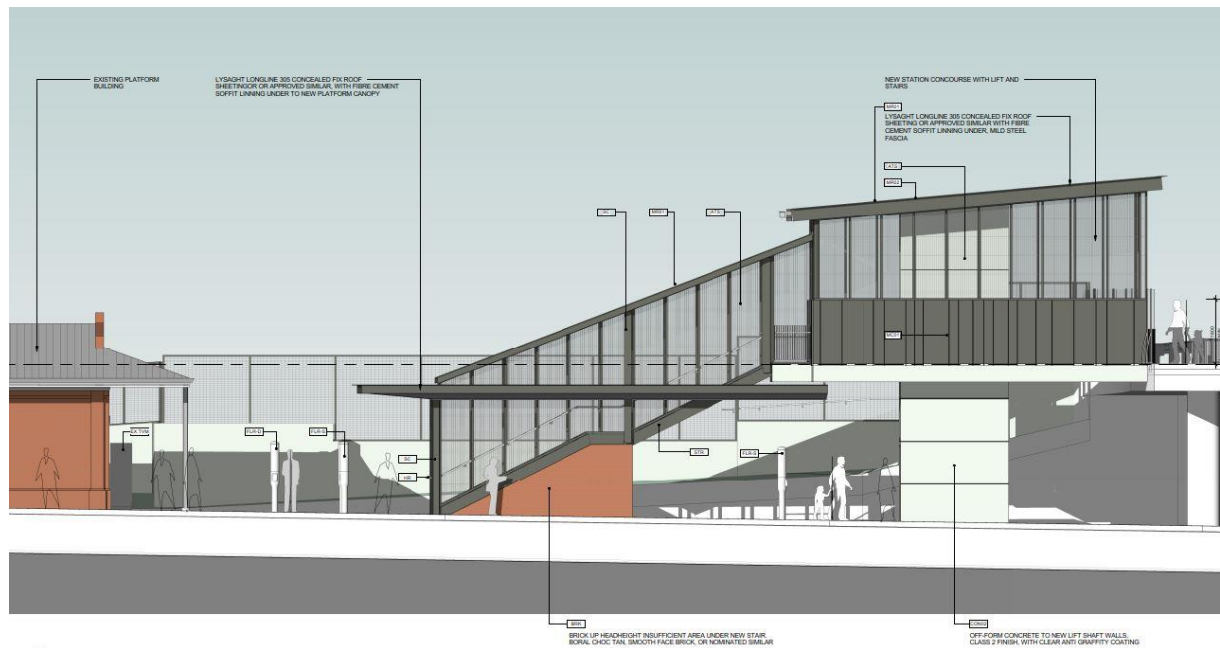


Figure 9 Proposed detail elevation

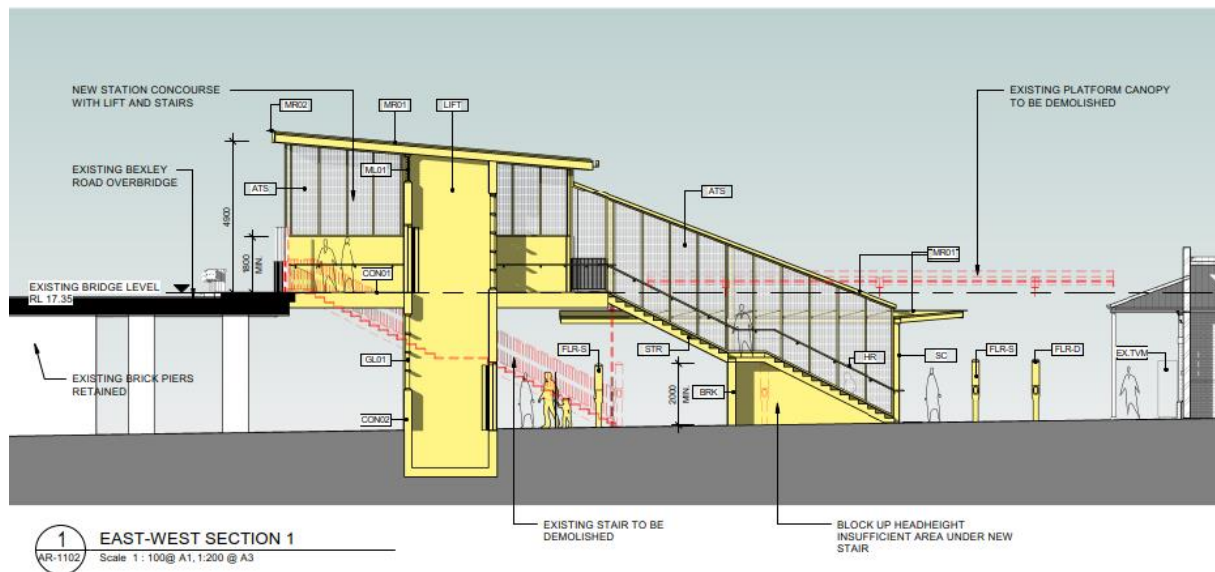


Figure 10 Section showing proposed lift and stairs to platform

6.3.1 Potential Heritage Impacts

The location of the lift shaft adjacent to the Overbridge locates the height of the shaft as far from the platform building as possible, thereby limiting the overshadow within the space available. However, the lift will still be significantly higher than the platform building, largely as a function of the necessity of moderating the change in level between the Overbridge and the platform. However, opportunities to reduce the lift height should be investigated during the detailed design stage. The demolition of the existing weather canopy is a positive heritage outcome. The replacement canopy associated with the lift and stairs would be withdrawn two metres from the platform building. This may have the effect of opening up views towards the platform building that would increase customers' ability to view and appreciate the aesthetic significance of the Building. However, the proposed roof form of the canopy does not relate to the existing architectural style of the station (hipped roof). It is recommended that a visual connection between the new and the existing structure be further investigated during detailed design such as incorporating references to the hipped roof form.

There are further opportunities to mitigate the impact of the proposed stair and lift at platform level by referencing the articulation of the existing platform building in the new brickwork such as:

- introducing string coursing in a band or moulded profile to match the existing platform building elevation. There are two areas of banding in the existing building; one at skirting level and the other at cornice level.
- introducing a band to reference the existing openings

The above item should be addressed in the detailed design stage.

When viewed from the station carpark and Kingsgrove Avenue, the ramp would partially obscure views of the platform building. The visual impact has been reduced through the selection of transparent screens, rather than steel, which would act as a visual barrier.

6.4 Summary of Impacts

The proposed works to the interior of the platform building, including the insertion of a unisex ambulant toilet, and FAT would have limited impact on the overall heritage significance of the Station. These works would remove internal partitions, toilet cisterns and hand basins that are not original fabric and non-significant. Widening of the doorway to the western elevation would have limited impact to significant fabric and is negated by the fact that this elevation has been previously modified by the removal of the screen walls. It is recommended that the ceiling and air vents in the current Communications Room and toilets are maintained within the upgrade as these are considered to be

original and significant features and fabric. The bricking in of two windows on the southern elevation, which would be obscured by the proposed electrical cupboard, would have an impact on the aesthetic significance of the station. It is recommended that the windows be left *in situ* on the exterior, with the window void being infilled on the interior only with a fire rated material.

Design and location of the proposed ramp and lifts has been minimised through location of the lift shaft near the Overbridge. The visual impact of the ramps on views from the station carpark and Kingsgrove Avenue have been minimised through the selection of transparent screens. There are further opportunities during the detailed design to reduce the impacts by:

- investigating options to relocate the electrical cupboard elsewhere
- redesign of the entrance canopy at the platform level to reference existing roof form of the platform building,
- selection of materials in line with the recommendations within this SoHI,
- examining options to reduce the height of the lift shaft, if feasible, and
- articulation of the proposed brickwork to reference existing datum points of the platform building such as:
 - introducing string coursing in a band or moulded profile to match the existing platform building elevation. There are two areas of banding in the existing building; one at skirting level and the other at cornice level.
 - introducing a band to reference the existing openings .

7.0 Statement of Heritage Impact

7.1 Introduction

The objective of a Statement of Heritage Impact (SOHI) is to evaluate and explain how the proposed development, rehabilitation or land use change will affect the heritage value of the site and/or place. A SOHI should also address how the heritage value of the site/place can be conserved or maintained, or preferably enhanced by the proposed works. This report has been prepared in accordance with the NSW Heritage Office & Department of Urban Affairs and Planning *NSW Heritage Manual* (1996) and NSW Heritage Office *Statements of Heritage Impact* (NSW Heritage Office, 2002). The guidelines pose a series of questions as prompts to aid in the consideration of impacts due to the Project. The questions in the guidelines do not adequately capture the potential impacts of the current proposal. In such an instance, the guidelines allow for the development of relevant questions. The following questions have been developed to address the potential impacts arising from the proposed upgrade works:

1. How is the impact of the proposed works on the heritage significance of the item to be minimised?
2. Would the new lift and ramp visually dominate the heritage item?
3. Are important features of the item affected by the proposal?
4. Is the proposal sympathetic to the heritage item? In what way?

7.2 Heritage Impact Assessment

1. How is the impact of the proposed works on the heritage significance of the item to be minimised?

The impacts to the aesthetic significance has been minimised through the following mechanisms:

- demolition of the existing weather canopy at the Bexley Road end. The new structure would maintain a minimum distance of two metres from the platform building. This may open views to the historic structure and improve customers appreciation of the Building. This may be a positive outcome.
- rectifying the brickwork detailing around the door in the western elevation, proposed for the entrance into the FAT,
- retention of the coffered ceilings and air vents in the Communications Room and the toilets,
- use of transparent screens on the ramp between the station carpark and the Overbridge,
- in design of the lift shaft base, utilising materials that are complimentary to the existing materials palette, such as red brick in English stretcher bond to clad the lift shaft base retaining the highlight windows to the southern elevation either by finding an alternative location for the electrical cupboard or installing a fire rated glass or fibre cement sheeting to the inside of the window.

2. Will the new lift and ramp visually dominate the heritage item?

When travelling on a train, the lift and ramps would not visually dominate the item on approach along the Up (City bound) or Down (outward bound) tracks. On the Down approach, the platform building is already screened from view by the Bexley Road Overbridge. Approach on the Up line, the lift and ramps would form a backdrop to the platform building, although, the platform building is significantly obscured by the existing unsympathetic weather canopy. It is considered that the proposed works would have minimal visual impacts when travelling on the train.

The proposal includes the demolition of the existing weather canopy at the Bexley Road end, with the new structure being withdrawn at least two metres from the platform building. For customers entering the platform area, this is likely to open views towards the platform building and result in an increased ability to read and appreciate the austere architectural aesthetic significance assessed in the listing.

The view from the Overbridge and Kingsgrove Avenue would be partially obscured. The platform building sits below the road level in a cutting and therefore cannot be seen on approach in either

direction and is therefore not a landmark on Bexley Road, including from the Overbridge. The visibility from the Overbridge is therefore mainly afforded to pedestrian traffic. The lift and new stairs would reduce views of the platform building around the lobby associated with the lift, but these will be re-established, in part, when descending the stairs. The canopy over the proposed stairs would not allow for a full view of the Building. The ramp from the Overbridge to the station carpark would extend halfway along the length of the platform building to allow for the necessary ramp grade, when viewed from Kingsgrove Avenue. A portion of the Building will be obscured by the safety barriers associated with the ramp. A transparent material has been selected for these safety barriers to reduce the visual impact.

The view of the platform building from the Shaw Street side is only afforded from the car park associated with the Library. Views from the adjacent playground are fleeting at best due to the mature vegetation surrounding the area. From the car park, the platform building will be in the foreground, with the angle largely obscuring the ramp between the station carpark and the Overbridge. The lift would be visible behind the platform building. With sympathetic detailing, it is anticipated that the visual impact can be minimised.

3. Are important features of the item affected by the proposal?

Beyond the visual impacts discussed above, the features identified as being of heritage significance are the ceiling and air vent in the current Communications Room and toilets, brickwork around the proposed door of the FAT and the concrete floor in the Communications Room and toilets. The works can be arranged so that the ceiling and air vent in the Communications Room and toilets can be retained and therefore will not be affected by the proposal.

The significance assessment identified that the platform building has research potential to yield information relating to design and construction techniques of the Inter-War period and also how NSW Railways experimentation with styles of architecture and adaptation to depression period economic conditions. The impacts associated with the proposal can be mitigated through an investigation into the fabric and associated building techniques and materials prior to and during construction.

With regard to the brickwork around the door in the western elevation, proposed for widening to allow access to the FAT, it would appear that this elevation has been previously modified. The removal of the screening walls has been unsympathetically patched. The wider opening would only alter the internal skin of the brickwork and leave the exterior wall intact. The proposal would therefore not affect important features and considering the area surrounding the doorway has been previously modified, the impact of the alteration is considered minor and negligible.

The bricking in of two windows on the southern elevation, which would be obscured by the proposed electrical cupboard, would have an impact on the aesthetic significance of the station. It is recommended that the windows be left *in situ* on the exterior, with either an alternative location for the electrical cupboard be sought during detailed design or the window void being infilled on the interior only with a fire rated glass or fibre cement sheeting to meet the required fire rating.

4. Is the proposal sympathetic to the heritage item? In what way?

The option selected was the preferred design in the heritage assessment as it sited the height of the lift as far from the platform building as possible. The other options included lifts in the station carpark or at the western end of the platform, these options would have boxed the platform building between the Overbridge and the lift and obscured views to a higher degree from the station carpark and Kingsgrove Avenue.

In addition, the demolition of the existing non-sympathetic weather canopy would increase the space between the platform building and the proposed lift and stairs. This would increase the views towards the platform building, as noted above.

7.3 Statement of Heritage Impact

The impacts identified above are summarised in Table 6.

Table 6 Summary of the nature of the impacts

Impact Type	Impact
Major negative impacts (substantially affects fabric or values of state significance)	None.
Moderate negative impacts (irreversible loss of fabric or values of local significance; minor impacts on State significance)	The bricking in of the windows on the southern elevation would constitute a moderate negative impact, being the irreversible loss of fabric of local significance.
Minor negative impacts (reversible loss of local significance fabric or where mitigation retrieves some value of significance; loss of fabric not of significance but which supports or buffers local significance values)	The impacts to the research significance of the platform building can be mitigated through investigation of the fabric prior to and during works. The visual impacts, which affect the Railway Station's aesthetic significance, can be minimised through design and materials.
Negligible or no impacts (does not affect heritage values either negatively or positively)	The widening of the door to the proposed FAT has minor and negligible impact to the interior skin of brickwork.
Minor positive impacts (enhances access to, understanding or conservation of fabric or values of local significance)	The lifts will enable the Railway Station to be used by people with a disability and those with prams, thereby increasing appreciation of the heritage aspects of the structure. Withdrawing the canopy at least two metres away from the platform building would increase views towards the structure and provide customers the opportunity to appreciate the austere architecture.
Major positive impacts (enhances access to, understanding or conservation of fabric or values of state significance)	None.

In summary, while there will be impacts to fabric of heritage significance, these impacts can be mitigated through the following measures:

- retention of the coffered ceilings and air vents in the Communications Room and the toilets,
- use of transparent screens on the ramp between the station carpark and the Overbridge;
- use of complimentary materials palate to clad the lift shaft base, and
- the bricking in of two windows on the southern elevation, which would be obscured by the proposed electrical cupboard, would have an impact on the aesthetic significance of the station. It is recommended that the windows be left *in situ* on the exterior, with either an alternative location for the electrical cupboard sought during detailed design or the window void being infilled on the interior by either a fire rated glass or FC sheeting to meet the required fire rating level.

8.0 Conclusion

AECOM Australia Pty Ltd (AECOM) was been commissioned by Transport for NSW to prepare a Statement of Heritage Impact regarding potential heritage impacts associated with a proposed accessibility upgrades for the Bexley North Railway Station to ensure the Railway Station meets the criteria of a Community Railway Station under the Railway Station Functional Classification. The Station can currently only be accessed via a set of stairs and consequently cannot be used by people

who are mobility impaired or are travelling with a pram. As a result, the Station does not meet legislative requirements under the Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act.

A search of the relevant heritage registers has identified the Bexley North Railway Station Group as being listed on Sydney Trains Section 170 Register (SHI No. 4801898). It is identified as an item of local significance, holding historical, aesthetic, social, research and technical, some rarity and representative significance. There is no listing on the *Rockdale Local Environmental Plan 1988* (LEP) or other heritage register. The Statement of Significance associated with the Section 170 Register indicates the aesthetic and representative significance arises from the Railway Station's ability to be an example of an austere 1930s railway building with simple Art Deco detailing and fine brick workmanship that is evocative of the effects of the Depression on building programs for NSW Railways. The research and technical significance is related to the ability of the fabric of the platform building to provide insights into experimental designs and modified construction techniques as a result of the economic conditions associated with the Great Depression. It is the conservation and legibility of these aspects that need to be considered and protected during the development of the upgrade.

In May 2015, AECOM undertook an options design and analysis process, during which three options were considered. AECOM also prepared an heritage assessment addressing the potential impacts associated with each option. While none of the options completely avoided heritage impacts, the assessment determined that *the Concept Design* was likely to have the least impact on the heritage significance of the Railway Station. The *Concept Design* has since been refined to form the Concept Design Update, which was developed in response to the revised scope of works.

The Concept Design Update includes the removal of the current stairs from the Bexley Road Overbridge and its replacement with a lift and stairs. The station carpark on Kingsgrove Avenue would be reconfigured to allow for an appropriately graded ramp and accessible parking spaces. Within the platform building, the existing restrooms are proposed for conversion into a Family Accessible Toilet (FAT) and an ambulant toilet for customers. The Office was refitted in 1999 and these works will not impact on significant fabric. This report provides a Statement of Heritage Impact relating to the potential heritage impacts associated with the Concept Design Update.

It has been determined that the proposed works will result in some impacts to significant fabric and views. The visual impacts, primarily from Kingsgrove Avenue and the station carpark, have been minimised through design and materials selection. The widening of the door to the proposed FAT has been assessed to have minor and negligible impact to significant fabric. The proposed impacts associated with the bricking in of two windows on the southern elevation can be mitigated by:

- investigate options to relocate the electrical cupboard elsewhere during detailed design,
- if the electrical cupboard is to remain the proposed location, the windows be retained and supplied with frosted/fire rated glass or boarded with fire rated fibre cement sheeting from the inside so as to maintain the façade, and
- relocate the air conditioning condenser unit.

Further mitigation measures proposed include:

- retention of the coffered ceilings and air vents in the Communications Room and the toilets,
- use of transparent screens on the ramp between the station carpark and the Overbridge, and
- use of complimentary materials palette to clad the lift shaft base with a lightweight stairs supported on steel structure with concrete treads.

Further opportunities to reduce the impacts to the heritage significance of the station should be investigated during detailed design including:

- Review of the entrance canopy at the platform level to reference the existing roof form of the platform building,
- Examining options to reduce the height of the lift shaft, if feasible, and
- Articulation of the proposed brickwork to reference existing datum points of the platform building such as:

- introducing string coursing in a band or moulded profile to match the existing platform building elevation. There are two areas of banding in the existing building; one at skirting level and the other at cornice level.
- introducing a brick band to reference the existing openings.

Under Section 170A(1)(c) of the *Heritage Act 1977*, Transport for NSW must give the Heritage Council of NSW at least 14 days' notice if they intend to demolish an item entered on Sydney Trains Section 170 Heritage and Conservation Register. The Heritage Council of NSW would need to be notified in relation to the demolition of the stairway from the Overbridge.

9.0 References

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Appendix A

Historic Plans of the
Original Bexley North
Railway Station

Appendix B

Plans for the 1947
Bexley North Railway
Station Extension

Appendix C

Plan of Proposal for
Railway Station Upgrade
and Station Car Park