

# Visual Impact Assessment

## Digital Advertising Signage Beecroft, Epping



Prepared for JCDecaux on behalf of Sydney Trains  
Submitted to the Department of Planning, Industry  
and Environment


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# 1 Introduction

This Visual Impact Assessment (VIA) has been prepared by *Keylan Consulting Pty Ltd* (Keylan) for JCDecaux on behalf of Sydney Trains (the Applicant) to accompany a Development Application (DA) for an advertising signage at Beecroft Road, Epping within the Parramatta Local Government Area.

The proposed development comprises:

- the erection of a 14.93m<sup>2</sup> one sided monopole digital advertising sign
- the display of illuminated advertisements
- a maximum luminance of 350 cd/m<sup>2</sup> during the night time period
- a minimum dwell time of 15 seconds

The VIA describes, analyses and assesses the potential visual impacts associated with the proposal. The relevant legislation and planning instruments are addressed in detail within the *Statement of Environmental Effects* (SEE) prepared to accompany the development application and have been informed by the findings of this VIA.

## 1.1 Report Structure

The VIA has been prepared in accordance with the following document structure:

Section	Overview
1 Introduction	Introduction to the VIA and the proposed development.
2 Site and Locality	A description of the site, the context and an assessment of the opportunities and constraints presented by the site.
3 The Proposal	A detailed description of the proposed development application
4 Methodology	A description of the methodology undertaken including any limitations encountered during the assessment.
5 Assessment	An in-depth visual impact assessment of the existing environment, proposal and potential impacts on the surrounding area.
6 Conclusion	A concluding statement taking into account the assessment of the proposal.

Table 1: Report Structure



## 2 The site and locality

### 2.1 Site description

The Site is located at a busy intersection. The surrounding locality is categorised by predominately commercial core type land uses surrounded by high rise residential with low density residential approximately 80 metres (m) towards the south.

Private open space and bowling greens are located at Forest Grove Epping 190 m southeast. The Site is not visible from these locations. The immediate locality involves other signs associated with transport, businesses identification and digital advertisements uses on the footpaths, airbridges and buildings. The locality allows for sufficient pedestrian access through walkways.

The Site fronts Beecroft Road, which is a classified road traveling in an eastbound direction onto Epping Road. The Site is located between both roads and sits on top of a transport corridor.

The Site in context to the surrounding area is shown in Figure 1.

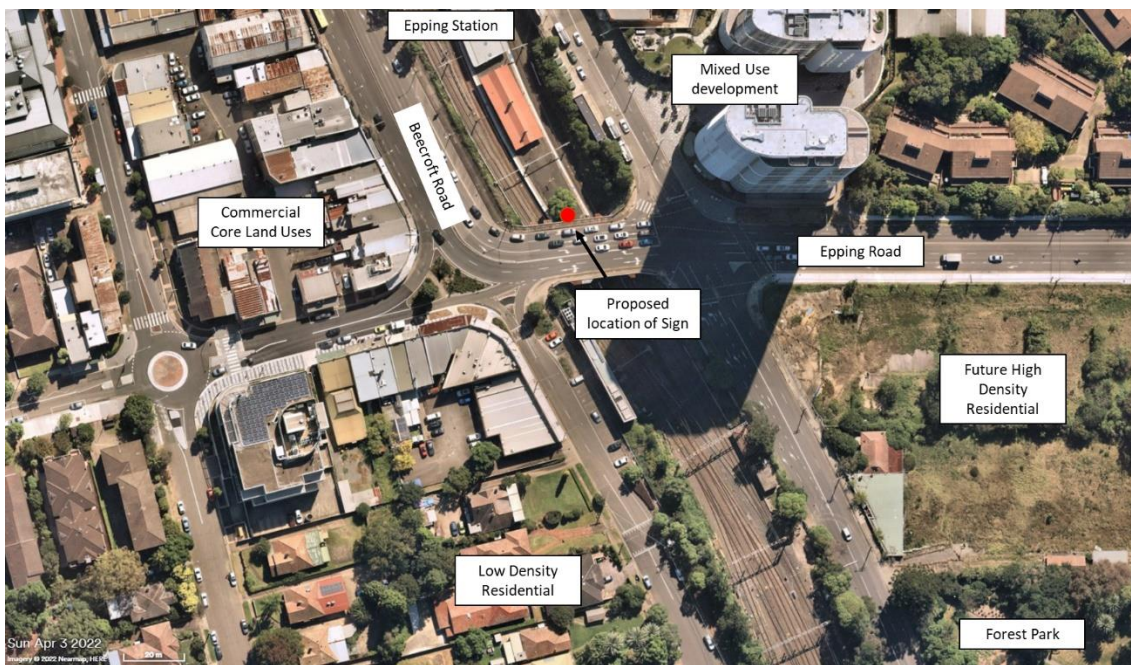


Figure 1: Site context (Base Source: Six Maps)

## 2.2 Surrounding locality

The advertising sign will be located within an established Sydney Trains corridor and visible from Beecroft Road and Epping Road which is an established TfNSW Road Corridor. The sign will be visible from Blaxland Road, Bridge Street, High Street and Langston Road. The development surrounding the Site includes:

- high rise residential located on Langston Road and Epping Road approx. 50 m to 60 m west from the Site
- commercial core type land uses scattered throughout the surrounding road network on High Street, Beecroft Road, Langston Road and Bridge Street
- low density residential is located on High Street south, southwest, from 80m to 150m away
- private open space and bowling greens is located southeast of the sign at Blaxland Road and Forest Grove Epping, noting the Site is not visible from this location
- the Epping Town Centre located east and west of the sign, which is undergoing a process of transition from low to high density

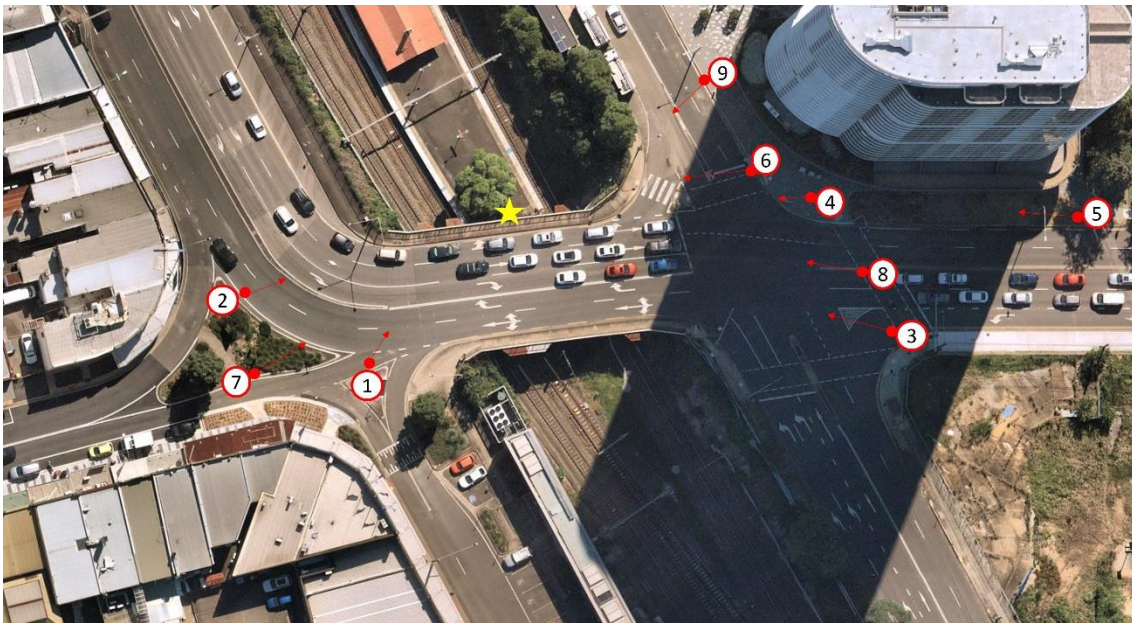


Figure 2: Summary of Photo location (Base Source: Six Maps)

Figure 3 to Figure 11 provides context into the visual catchment of the sign throughout the locality.





Figure 3: View from High Street looking northeast (Source: Keylan)



Figure 4: View looking east from corner of Bridge Street and Beecroft Road (Source: Keylan)





Figure 5: View looking north-west from Epping Road and Blaxland Road (Source: Keylan)



Figure 6: View looking west from Langston Place and Epping Road (Source: Keylan)



Figure 7: View looking west from Epping Road (Source: Keylan)



Figure 8: View looking west from Langston Place (Source: Keylan)



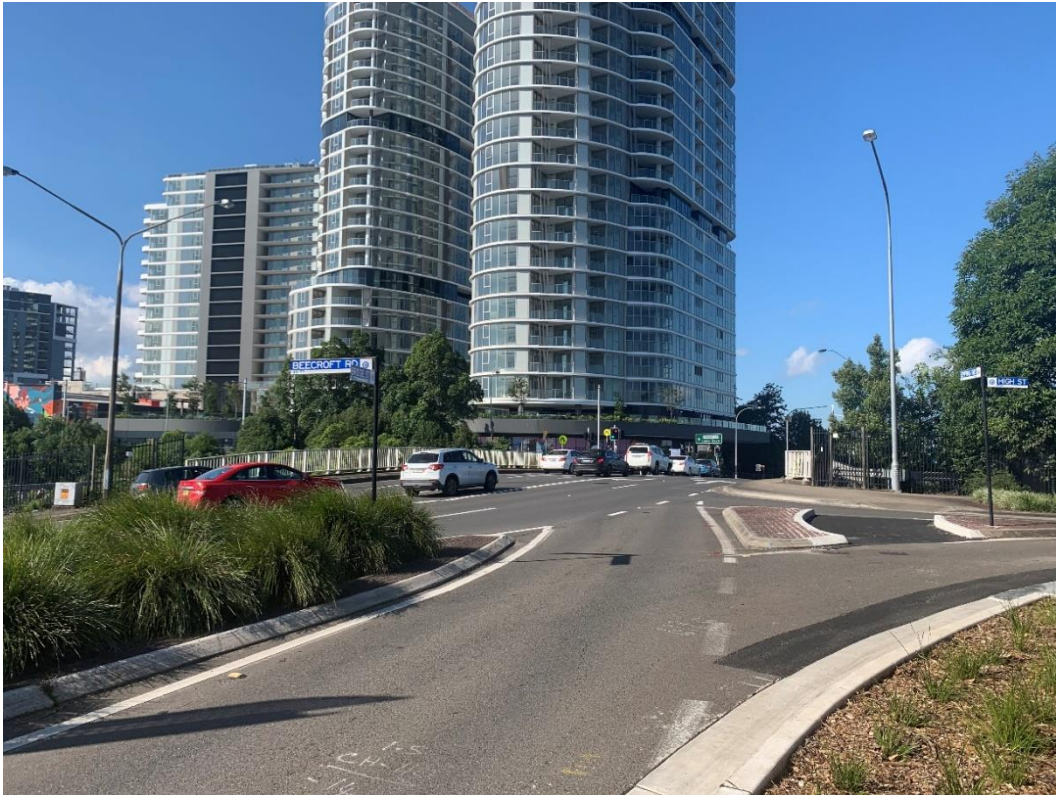


Figure 9: View looking east from High Street and Beecroft Road intersection (Source: Keylan)



Figure 10: View looking north east from Beecroft Road, Blaxland Road, Epping Road and Langton Place intersection (Source Keylan)





Figure 11: View looking southeast from Langston Place

### **2.3 Existing Signage Environment**

The surrounding locality comprises of signage in the following forms:

- transport and traffic related signage
- business identification signage
- advertising signage

The closest digital advertising signage is located 160m – 180 m north east of the sign and is attached to a pedestrian air bridge above Beecroft Road that provides access to Epping Railway Station.

The wider locality comprises of business advertising signage associated with ground floor retail and commercial premises. These commercial premises are located on Langston Place (east) and Beecroft Road and Bridge Street (west). Transport and traffic related signage are scattered throughout the road environment.

### 3 The Proposal

A new digital sign is proposed to be installed on the north side of the Beecroft Road overpass, located west of the intersection of Epping Road, Beecroft Road, Blaxland Road, and Langston Place in Epping.

The proposed digital sign will be installed on a column fixed on Platform 1-2 of Epping Railway Station with the digital display erected 3.39 m above the road on Beecroft Road Bridge. The digital sign will be positioned facing motorists on the Beecroft Road east approach.

The development is summarised in the below table.

Development Aspect	Description
Development summary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Installation of a new digital advertising of a monopole sign</li> </ul>
Signage location	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sign is proposed on the north side of the overpass (visible to east bound traffic traveling on Epping Road)</li> </ul>
Advertising display area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>14.93 m<sup>2</sup> (4.708 m x 3.172 m)</li> <li>Dimensions: 4.708 m x 3.172 m</li> <li>Advertising Area: 14.93m<sup>2</sup></li> </ul>
Visual screen size	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dimensions: 4.608 m x 3.072 m</li> <li>Area: 14.15 m<sup>2</sup></li> </ul>
Road clearance from ground level to the sign	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3.39 m above the road surface</li> <li><b>Note:</b> the sign does not cantilever over the road and will therefore not result in any road clearance issues</li> </ul>
Dwell time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>15 seconds</li> </ul>
Signage exposure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Visibility and readability is from a distance of 150 m</li> </ul>
Illumination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The digital signage is illuminated using LEDs installed within the front face</li> </ul>
Consent time period	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>15 years</li> </ul>
Existing signage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No existing signage</li> </ul>

Table 2: Development summary

The proposed signage will also be available for display of emergency messaging by Sydney Trains and other NSW Government agencies such as NSW Police, NSW Health and Transport for NSW.

Architectural drawings for the sign are provided within the Architectural package at Appendix 2.

Indicative images of the sign, as viewed from Beecroft Road, are provided at Figure 12 and Figure 13.



Figure 12: Photomontage of proposed sign (Source: JCDecaux)

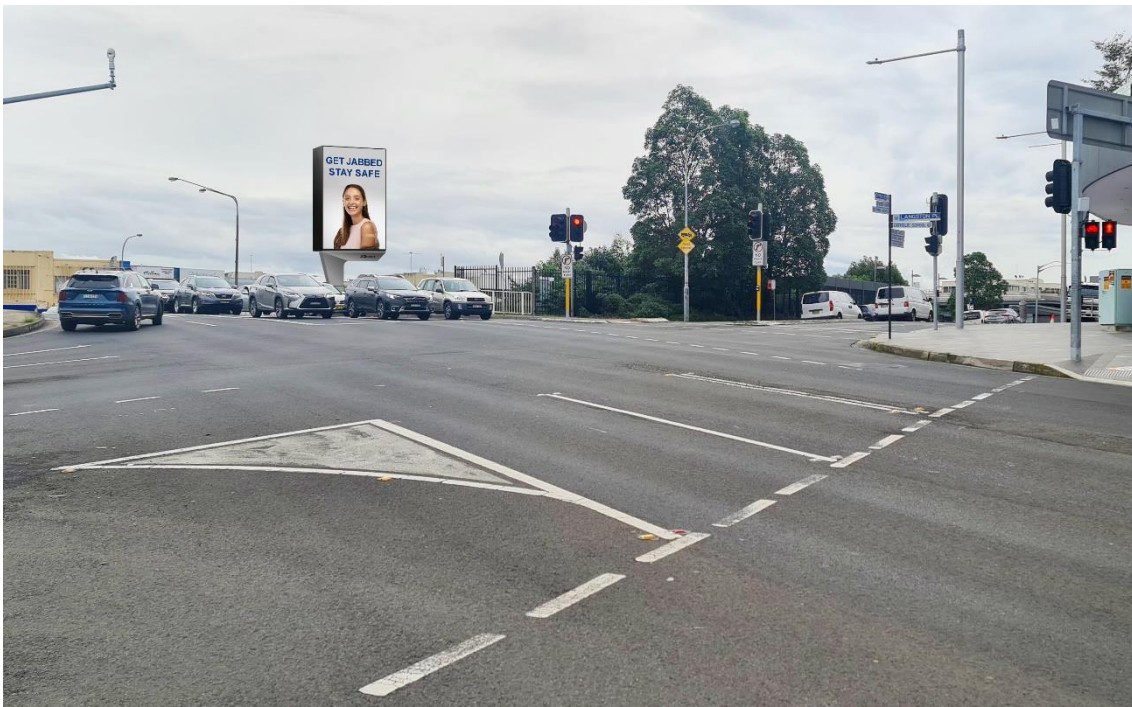


Figure 13: Photomontage of proposed sign (Source: JCDecaux)



## 4 Methodology

This VIA has been informed by a site visit undertaken on 5 of April 2022 and utilises photographs taken on this date. This VIA has been informed by the relevant *NSW Land & Environment Court* Planning Principles relating to visual impacts.

The VIA identifies the visual catchment of the proposed sign and identifies the existing, emerging, and desired future character of the area to understand any sensitive receivers and likely visual impacts.

Several viewpoints have been selected for detailed analysis based on their visibility to the proposal, the identification of key existing viewpoints and the sensitivity of each viewpoint. Each viewpoint has been assessed in accordance with the following points which are summarised in Section 5.4.

1. Existing visual character and likely extent of change to locality and surrounds.
2. Visual sensitivity, based on existing visual character, key views and other significant visual features.
3. Visual exposure of site under current situation and following development of the site.
4. Likely visibility of proposed development – including location, type and number of viewers and duration of any impact.
5. Level of any visual impact (low, moderate or high).

The following limitations have been encountered while preparing this VIA:

- the photographs taken cannot replicate the experience of viewing the proposal with the human eye
- photographs have only been able to be taken from public areas and therefore viewpoints cannot provide an exact analysis of impacts to private property

Additionally, as the DA is accompanied by a specialist *Lighting Impact Assessment*, visual impacts associated with the illumination of the proposed sign has not been considered as part of this VIA.

## 5 Assessment

The assessment within this Section has been undertaken in accordance with the methodology outlined at Section 4.

### 5.1 State Environmental Planning Policy (Industry and Employment) 2021

*Chapter 3 –State Environmental Planning Policy (Industry and Employment) 2021 (Industry and Employment SEPP)* aims to ensure that advertising and signage is well located, compatible with the desired amenity of an area and of high quality. Schedule 5 of Industry and Employment SEPP provides assessment criteria which guides the assessment of visual impacts arising from signage.

Schedule 5 of Industry and Employment SEPP is addressed in detail within the SEE. Key points from the Schedule 5 assessment relevant to the VIA include:

- the scale and visual compatibility of the sign is consistent with the surrounding road and locality
- the sign is directly adjacent of the Epping Town Centre pursuant to Section 4.1.5 of the Parramatta DCP 2011 and Section 4.6 of the Hornsby DCP 2013
- the proposal does not impede any views of vistas throughout the locality
- the proposal is near to the Epping/Eastwood heritage conservation area (Significance: Local) (PLEP 2011) and does not detract from the amenity or visual quality of the heritage area
- the proposal is adjacent the future Epping town centre and the visual impact of the proposed sign on future development within the town centre is low to minor
- the proposal is compatible with the existing and desired future character of the area as it provides a contemporary form of digital advertising signage, designed by Tzannes Architects, that is considered and creative ensuring a high quality design outcome
- the sign proposed on the Epping Road overpass does not detract or unreasonably impact the surrounding streetscape as the signs height is consistent with surrounding vegetation and its scale is compatible with the streetscape
- there is no advertising signage clutter on the existing overpass

### 5.2 Visual Catchment

The sign has a limited visual catchment and will be visible from certain streets, being:

- Epping Street, east of sign location
- Beecroft Road, west of sign location
- Langston Place, east of sign location
- High Street, southwest of sign location
- Blaxland Road, southeast of the sign location

The Site is located within a transport corridor and urbanised environment which is currently going through a densification process becoming a highly urbanised town centre. This is evident as the Site is adjacent the Epping Town Centre which will achieve maximum heights of 72 m and construction has started and finished on some buildings.

Surrounding the Site consists of visual receivers located in R2 Low Density Residential, B2 Local Centre and R4 High Density Residential zones. An area of low density residential development is located approximately 80 m south/southwest. The commercial core development is located approximately 40 m away east and west, with the Epping Town Centre being directly adjacent of the proposed sign.

A recently completed high rise mixed use residential development is located approximately 70 m to the east.

Epping Railway Station is located north of the site.



Figure 14: Surrounding visual receivers (Base Source: Six Maps)

The character of the visual catchment can be described as:

- mixed use town centre, with ground floor tenancies
- emerging high density residential development
- future high rise residential and commercial development fronting Epping and Beecroft Road
- transport and road corridor

The proposal is consistent with the visual character of the area as it is in a transport corridor surrounded by mixed-uses in a town centre. The surrounding locality is urbanised and is undergoing a process of densification evident by large scale mix use development being erected.



The proposal provides a compatible built form element that remains human in scale and below canopy trees ensuring consistency with the streetscape, whilst providing visual interest in the urban environment.

The immediate locality includes speed limit, parking and road safety signs associated with the road corridor.

The surrounding locality provides for business and advertising signage; however, no other digital advertising signage is within the immediate vicinity.

The viewpoints identified below in within the visual catchment have been identified to assess visual impacts (Figure 15).

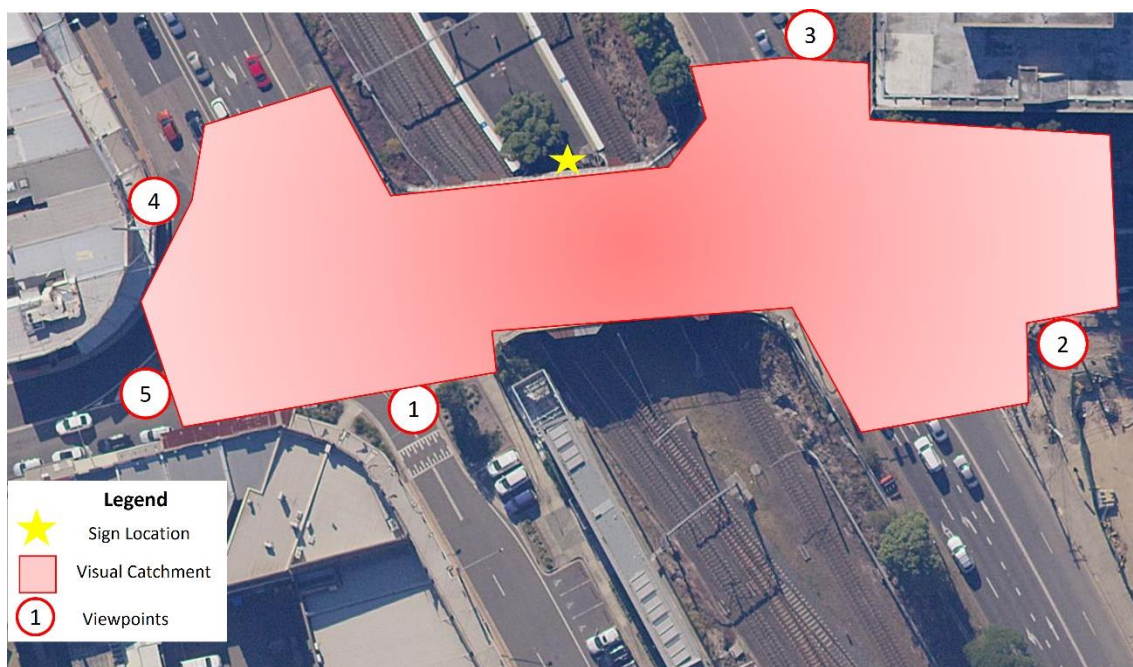


Figure 15: Visual catchment area and viewpoint locations (Base Source: Keylan)

### 5.3 Assessment of Viewpoints

#### *View 1: Standing at High Street Epping looking northeast*

View 1 was selected as this location is the start of an area of low-density residential development which coincides with the Epping/Eastwood heritage conservation area. The low density residential dwellings are located approximately 80 m southwest of the sign.

The visibility of the proposed sign is largely constrained to the road environment and surrounding built elements due to its location on the transport corridor being on the northern side of Epping Road. Pedestrians walking north along High Street will be exposed to the rear façade of the sign unable to see the advertising display area.

The constraints on visibility from the surround R2 zones are caused by the presence of dense mature vegetation which provides for appropriate screening when looking north from these dwellings. Further, a building located on the eastern side of High Street affords appropriate visual relief, blocking all view lines towards the low density receivers south as show in Figure 16.

In addition, the low density dwellings provide for appropriate front setbacks from High Street, which minimise opportunities for direct view lines towards the sign. Dwellings on High Street will not have sight lines to the sign.

The signs' location and orientation facing southeast will ensure there are minimal views to the sign from the southwest. The visual impacts of the sign on receivers from this viewpoint are considered **negligible to low**.



Figure 16: View diagram looking northeast on High Street (Source: Keylan)





Figure 17: Viewpoint 1 - existing view from High Street (Source: Keylan)



Figure 18: Viewpoint 1 - proposed view (Source: JCDecaux)



### ***View 2: View looking northwest from corner of Epping Road and Blaxland Road***

View 2 was selected as 70 m southeast of the sign is land zoned R4 High Density Residential at 2 Epping Road, Epping, proposed to be future high rise residential with a maximum height of 26.5 m.

Whilst the land is current undeveloped, future apartment/dwellings fronting Blaxland Road looking west have the potential to be visually impacted by the sign. The visibility of the sign from the future west R4 residential properties will be restricted due to future road widening proposed to occur along Epping Road. This road widening will increase future development setbacks from Epping Road providing visual relief through restriction of sightlines towards the sign (Figure 21).

The maximum height of the sign of 8.098 m above the overpass ensures that the sign is below surrounding tree canopy. This screening together with the separation distance of approximately 70 m between the sign and this site further ensures that there will be minimal visual impact to future development at 2 Epping Road, Epping.

Furthermore, any future development of this site will require a 10 m setback to both Blaxland Road and Epping Road, as per the Hornsby DCP (3.5.5 Setbacks). These setbacks will facilitate the provision of a perimeter landscaping and canopy trees that are to achieve a minimum height 10 m to 12 m planted along the road corridor (3.5.7 Landscaping) as part of the future redevelopment of the site, which will provide screening and minimise view impacts towards the site.

### ***DA/397/2020***

On the 18 February 2022 DA/397/2020 was approved by the *NSW Land and Environment Court* for the construction of 5 x 5-8 storey residential flat buildings comprising 321 apartments; construction of 2 x 2-3 level basement car parks comprising 266 car parking spaces at 2 Epping Road, Epping.

The approved plans shows that the north-western aspect of the site that interfaces with the sign will be setback from Blaxland Road with communal open space (Figure 19). In addition, the layout of the apartments show that internal living areas are orientated towards the north and bedrooms are orientated north and west, with landscaping and canopy tree planting along the northern and western boundaries, providing screening.

In addition, the development provides wintergarden that will reduce visual opportunity and further protect residential amenity (Figure 20).

The LIA (Appendix 4) confirms the lux levels of the sign is compliant with the relevant standards and therefore its illumination will have minimal impact on these residential receivers.

The impact the sign will have on these receivers is **low**.

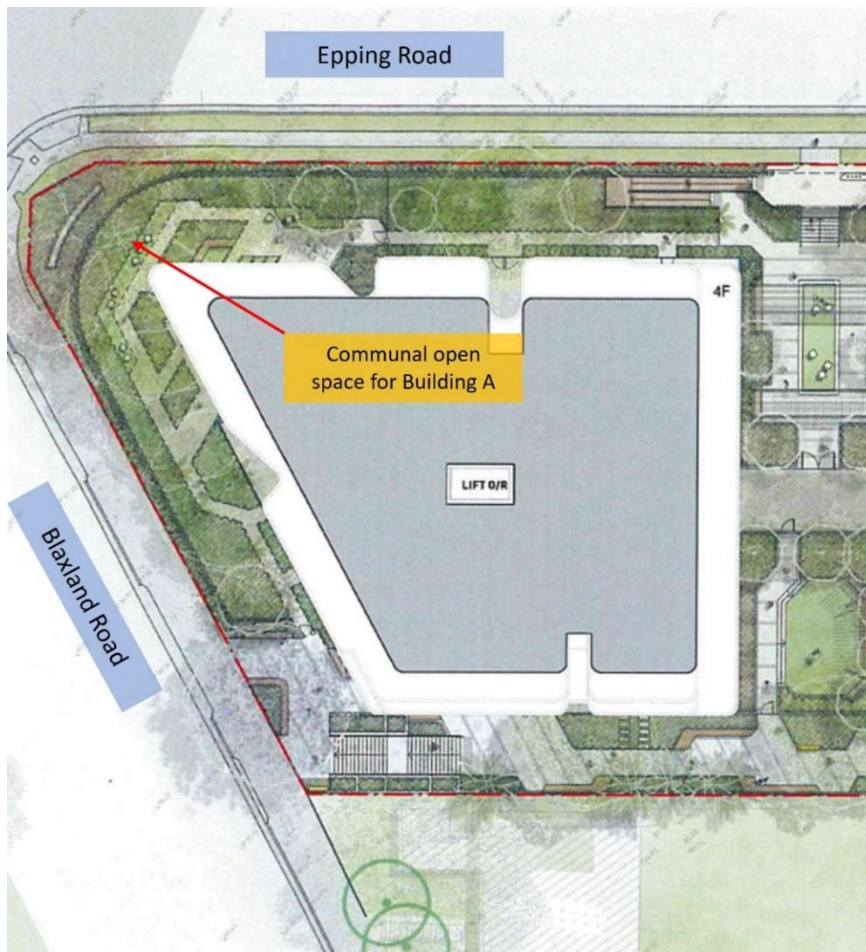


Figure 19: Site plan extract from stamped plans of DA/397/2020 (Source: PTW Architects)

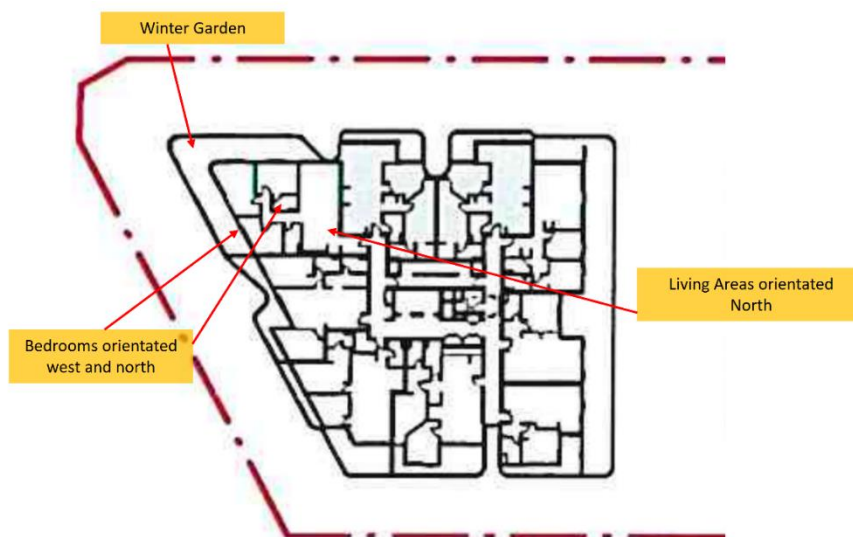


Figure 20: Apartment Layout extract from stamped plans of DA/397/2020 (Source: PTW Architects)

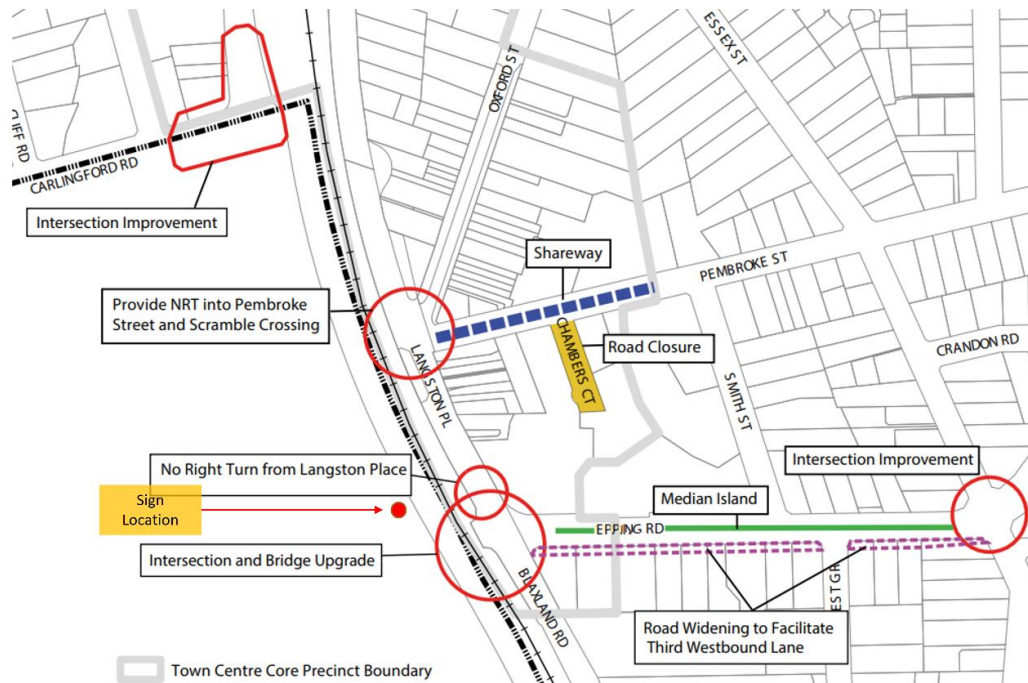


Figure 21: Figure 4.6 (g) of the HDCP 2013 Traffic Management Improvement Plan (Source: HDCP 2013)



Figure 22: Viewpoint 2 - existing view (Source: Keylan)





Figure 23: Viewpoint 2 -proposed view (Source: JCDecaux)

### ***View 3: View looking west from corner of Epping Road and Langston Place***

View 3 was selected as the sign will be visible from the mixed use development located 40 m east at 12-40 Langston Place Epping. Apartments facing the west and south-west are provided above podium level, with commercial frontages at ground level also orientated to the west and south-west.

### ***Residential***

Figure 27 indicates that the lowest level apartments facing west will have the greatest exposure to the sign. Impacts are minimised due to the fact apartments are elevated higher than the top of the sign, specifically above the podium level terrace which ensures minimal direct view lines.

The lower-level apartments facing west will receive greatest impact when viewed from their balcony. The apartment design and layout recesses living areas away from the road environment to protect the internal amenity of the occupants as shown in Figure 24.

Furthermore, the separation distance of the proposed sign together with the fact that the view lines will be angled rather than from eye level will minimise view lines.

These aspects together with the sign facing a south-easterly aspect with its orientation away from the west facing windows of the development ensures that visual impacts on the lower level apartments are minimised.

The visual impact is assessed as **low to moderate** for the lower levels of the development, with **low** impacts on the upper apartments

The LIA (Appendix 4) confirms the lux levels of the sign is compliant with the relevant standards and therefore its illumination will have minimal impact on these residential receivers.

### **Commercial**

The visual impact associated with the sign on the lower levels of commercial uses will have **low impact** given there will be minimal loss of amenity on the active frontages. The highly urbanised locality will remain unchanged.

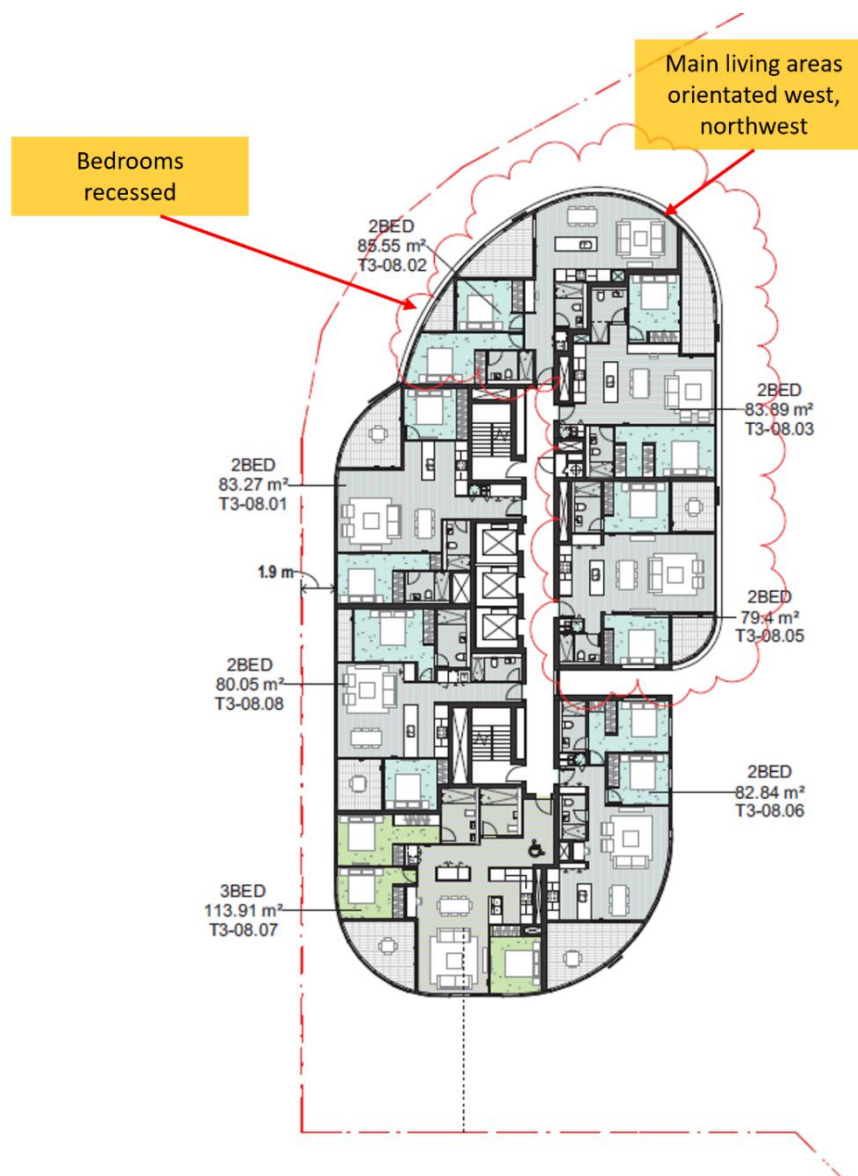


Figure 24: 12-40 Langston Place floor plan layout levels 4 to 8 (Source: DA/234/2016 Architectus)



Figure 25: Viewpoint 3 - existing view (Source: Keylan)



Figure 26: Viewpoint 3 - proposed view (Source: JCDecaux)





Figure 27: Visual Impact diagram of 12-40 Langston place Epping (Source: Keylan)

#### ***View 4: View looking east from Beecroft Road***

View 4 was selected as the frontage of Beecroft Road is expected to become a corridor of future high rise mixed use buildings, as part of the Epping Town Centre.

The Site is directly adjacent Epping Town centre. Epping Town Centre has a height control of 72 m fronting Beecroft Road, scaling down in height towards Victoria Street of 11 m further west of the site (Figure 30).

The sign has a maximum height above ground level of 8.098m. The visual impact on any future development will be negligible to low as the lower levels of the B2 development will have active frontages. Lower levels are anticipated to be used for commercial uses with higher levels being uses for residential.

The visual impact associated with the sign on the lower levels of commercial/retail uses will have **negligible to low** impact as only the back of the sign will be visible.

The visual impact associated with any future higher residential will be **negligible to low** as the elevational distance will alleviate visual impacts nor will the front of the sign be visible.



Figure 28: Viewpoint 4 - existing view (Source: Keylan)



Figure 29: Viewpoint 4 - proposed view (Source: JCDecaux)





Figure 30: Epping town centre master plan diagram (Source: Parramatta DCP 2011)

### ***View 5: View looking east from Bridge Street and High Street***

View 5 was selected as west of the sign location is the Epping town centre. The Epping Town Centre comprises of B2 Local Centre and R4 High Density Residential type development with building heights ranging from 11 m – 72 m. Bridge Street acts as an entrance to the future town centre, which the sign is visible from.

The sign is visible to drivers, pedestrians and future residents.

Notwithstanding, the visibility of the sign from the future residential property's west will be restricted due to the orientation of the sign, as only the rear of the sign will be visible.

Furthermore, the proposed sign will not impact any significant views or vistas from this location.

It is noted that the proposal is compatible with the existing and desired future character of the area as it provides a contemporary form of digital advertising signage, designed by Tzannes Architects, that is considered and creative ensuring a high quality design outcome that is reflective of the urban nature of the locality.

The visual impact associated with the sign on future development, existing pedestrians and drivers is **low** as only the rear of the sign be visible.





Figure 31: Viewpoint 5 - existing view (Source: Keylan)

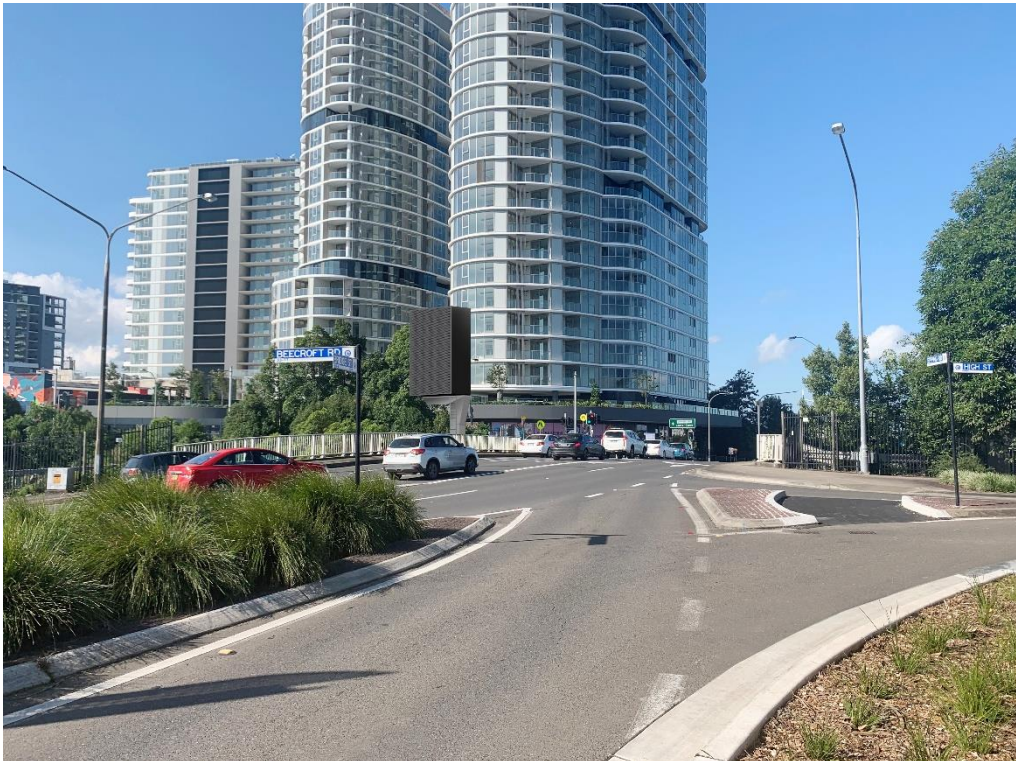


Figure 32: Viewpoint 5 - proposed view (Source: JCDecaux)

## 5.4 Assessment Matrix

A summary of the above view analysis is detailed in Table 3 below.

Viewpoint / Location	Distance of View	Visual Sensitivity	Level of Impact
1	80 m	High	Low
2	70 m	High	Low-medium
3	40 m	Medium to High	Low – medium
4	50 m	Medium to High	Low
5	50 m	Medium to High	Low

Table 3: Assessment Matrix

Rating	Visual Sensitivity	Level of Impact
Low	Not a sensitive receiver	Little change to existing views
Medium	Moderately sensitive receiver (eg. a park)	Somewhat impacted
High	Highly sensitive receivers (eg. residential uses, childcare, or heritage item)	Highly impacted

Table 4: Rating definitions

## 6 Conclusion

The proposed new digital advertising sign on the Beecroft Road Overpass will result in negligible to low visual impacts.

Following a detailed analysis of the proposal and the surrounding locality, the VIA concludes the following:

- the surrounding area has medium to high visual sensitivity due to the varying uses, large number of residential dwellings and nature of the visual catchment
- the sign is consistent with the character of the surrounding area which is highly urbanised in nature given its location in the Epping Town Centre
- the proposal is compatible with the existing and desired future character of the area as it provides a contemporary form of digital advertising signage, designed by Tzannes Architects, that is considered and creative ensuring a high quality design outcome
- the proposal does not result in any visual clutter as the proposed digital advertising sign will be a standalone sign along the Beecroft and Epping Road overpass
- the proposal has low to moderate visual impact on the nearest residential development at 12- 40 Langston Place Epping, notwithstanding this is considered acceptable given the orientation of the sign which faces south-east which mitigates direct view lines to the sign
- the proposal has low visual impacts on the potential future residential development to the south-east and west
- the proposal has low visual impacts on the existing Epping/Eastwood heritage conservation area or any surrounding heritage items
- the presence of mature trees and vegetation along the road corridor will restrict views of the sign from surrounding land uses
- the proposal is integrated within the visual envelope of the bridge and will not extend outside of the structural boundaries of the Beecroft Road and Epping Road overpass and will therefore not obstruct a view line or any significant views
- the installed digital advertising sign will enhance the visual interest of the Beecroft Road and Epping Road overpass through the presentation of high resolution digital advertisements
- the proposal is considered appropriate for its setting, as it is located within an established major road corridor
- the proposal will not unreasonably impact streetscape characteristics or detract from the road environment
- other surrounding residential receivers in the R2 zone will have negligible to low impacts
- residential receivers east and west in future R4 developments and the Epping town centre will have negligible to moderate visual impacts

Following consideration of the above, the proposal is considered to result in acceptable visual impacts on the surrounding area.