

Visual Impact Assessment

Digital Advertising Signage
Pacific Highway, Pymble



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

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1 Introduction

This Visual Impact Assessment (VIA) has been prepared by *Keylan Consulting Pty Ltd* (Keylan) on behalf of *JCDecaux* to accompany a development application (DA) for the installation of a digital advertising sign on the western side of Pacific Highway, Pymble.

The proposed development comprises:

- an advertising display area of 14.93m²
- a visual screen size of 14.16m²
- the continued display of illuminated advertisements (24-hour operation)
- a 10 second dwell time between message changes
- a maximum night-time luminance of 128 cd/m²

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 DA 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
Executive Summary	An overarching summary of the findings and conclusions of the assessment contained within this VIA.
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 legally identified as Lot 2073 DP1132828 and located on the western side of Pacific Highway, Pymble. The Pacific Highway is a Classified Road (Highway 10) and is frequented by drivers travelling northwest towards the Pacific Motorway and Hornsby and southeast towards Chatswood, North Sydney and the CBD.

The subject site is in the Ku-ring-gai Local Government Area and is approximately 23 Kilometres (km) northwest of the Sydney Central Business District (CBD). The Site is directly adjacent of the Pymble local centre pursuant to Section 14C of the Ku-ring-gai Development Control Plan (KDCP) 2022.

The Site in context to the surrounding area is shown in the below figure.



Figure 1: Site context (Source: Six Maps)

The Site is elevated and sits above surrounding roads such as Avon Road and Grandview Street due to the topography of the Site. The Site is located on a retaining wall structure above the T1 train line which occupies railway corridor land.

2.2 Surrounding locality

The advertising sign will be located within an established Sydney Trains corridor and will be visible from an established TfNSW road corridor to traffic travelling northwest. Development surrounding the site and in proximity to the road corridor includes:

- high density residential dwellings to the south
- nearest residential property is a residential flat building directly south of the subject site at 3 Pymble Avenue
- mix of retail, business and low-density residential uses to the north
- retail and business uses to the north east surrounding Pymble Station
- retail and business uses to the west

The surrounding locality is shown in the Figures below:



Figure 2: Looking north from Avon Road showing residential buildings within the vicinity of the site
(Source: Keylan)



Figure 3: Looking west showing the church and commercial uses along Pacific Highway (Source: Keylan)

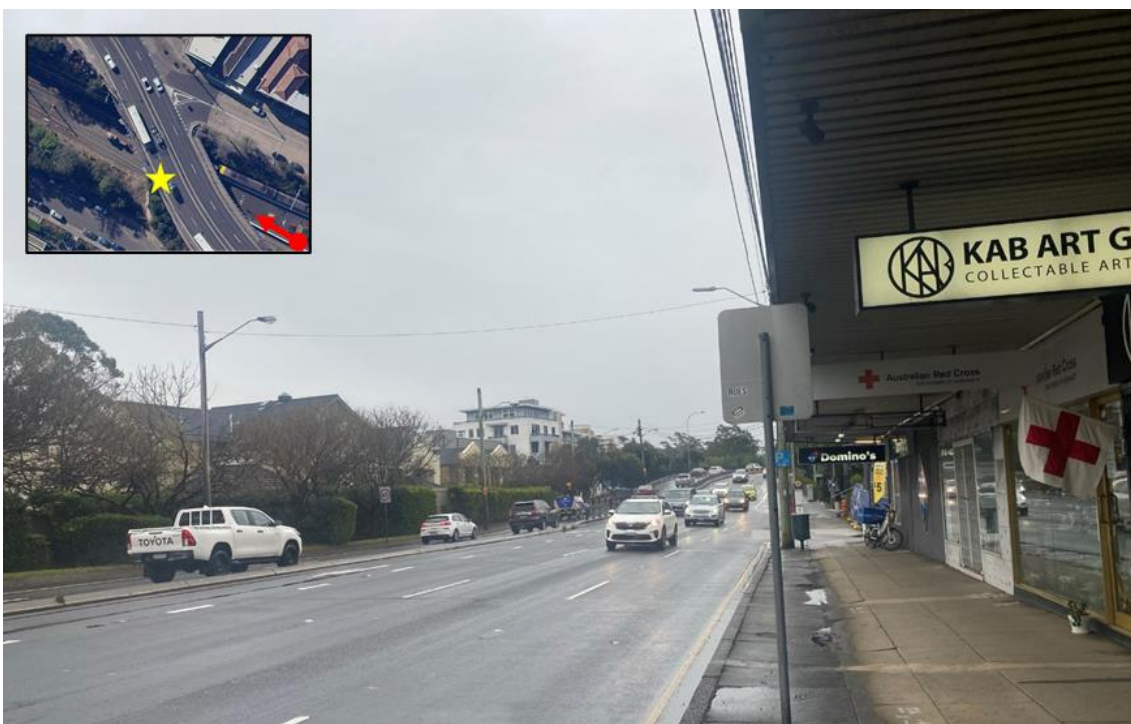


Figure 4: View showing commercial and residential uses on Pacific Highway (Source: Keylan)



Figure 5: Looking south towards residential and heritage item I69 on Pacific Highway (Source: Keylan)



Figure 6: Looking east from Pymble Railway Station (Source: Keylan)



Figure 7: Looking southwest from Grandview Street showing commercial uses (Source: Keylan)



Figure 8: Looking south from the intersection of Grandview Street and Pacific Highway (Source: Keylan)



Figure 9: Looking east along Pacific Highway nearby Pymble Hotel – heritage item 170 (Source: Keylan)



Figure 10: Looking north showing the retaining wall and existing vegetation (Source: Keylan)

2.3 Existing Signage Environment

There is no other advertising signage in the immediate vicinity. Notwithstanding, there is road safety signage to the north of the proposed sign on the opposing side of the Pacific Highway.

There is an existing business identification sign located approximately 35m north-west of the site. The sign is static and double sided facing towards the Pacific Highway and Pymble train station. Outside of this sign, the Site and immediate vicinity is not currently visually cluttered by signage.

3 The Proposal

The proposal includes the installation of a new single-sided LED monopole sign on the western side of the Pacific Highway. The sign is oriented to the south-east, facing traffic travelling northwest.

The sign will be located behind the existing metal fence, on a brick retaining wall which forms part of the Pacific Highway bridge overpass. The proposal will require a new concrete pier and support.

The development is summarised in the table below:

Development Aspect	Description
Development summary	installation of a new digital advertising monopole sign
Signage location	western side of the Pacific Highway orientated towards traffic travelling northwest
Advertising display area	14.93m ² (3.172m x 4.708m)
Visual Screen Size	14.16m ² (3.072m x 4.608m)
Distance between retaining wall to bottom of the sign	2.9m (measured from where monopole penetrates the ground to the bottom of the sign)
Dwell time	10 seconds
Signage exposure	visibility is from 220m and readability is from a distance of 150m
Illumination	the digital signage is illuminated using LEDs installed within the front face
Consent time period	15 years
Existing advertising signage	no existing signage
Vegetation Management	Minor pruning required to maintain views of the sign

Table 2: Development summary

Indicative images of the sign, as viewed from the Pacific Highway, Pymble Train Station and Grandview Street are provided below in the figures below.



Figure 11: Indicative photomontage from Pacific Highway facing west (Source: JCDecaux)



Figure 12: Indicative photomontage from Pymble Railway Station facing southwest (Source: JCDecaux)

4 Methodology

This VIA has been informed by a site visit undertaken on 1 July 2022 and utilises photographs taken on this date. This VIA has been informed by the relevant *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 then 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 impact.
5. Level of 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 and Heritage Impact Statement. Visual impacts associated with the illumination of the proposed sign have 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 Policy (Transport and Infrastructure) 2021

Chapter 3 – State Environmental Planning Policy (Industry and Employment) 2021 (SEPP Industry and Employment) 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 the Industry and Employment SEPP provides an assessment criteria which guides the assessment of visual impacts arising from signage.

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

- the proposal is compatible with the character of the area as it is located within a railway corridor and is orientated to present to oncoming vehicles travelling northwest along the Pacific Highway which is a highly frequented road corridor
- the proposal will not obscure or compromise any important views
- the proposal will not dominate the skyline as it is located in an urbanised environment where there is surrounding built form and mature vegetation and is in keeping with the scale of surrounding development
- the proposed sign will not adversely impact the heritage significance of the local heritage item on which it is located and local heritage items within the area
- the proposal will contribute to the visual interest of the Pacific Highway as the sign presents an innovative form of advertising
- the proposal is compatible with the scale, proportion and characteristics of the site

5.2 Visual Catchment

The proposed sign faces southeast on Pacific Highway and will be visible from Traffic and pedestrians travelling northwest along Pacific Highway and portions of Avon Road and Grandview Street. The proposed sign is anticipated to be visible from:

- two residential flat buildings to the south
- Pymble Railway Station to the east
- retail and business use to the northeast and east

The character of the visual catchment is identified in the below figure and can be described as:

- a transport corridor located on the western side of a classified road (No. 10) and above the T1 Railway Line
- high density residential for areas within the visual catchment to the south
- business and retail uses

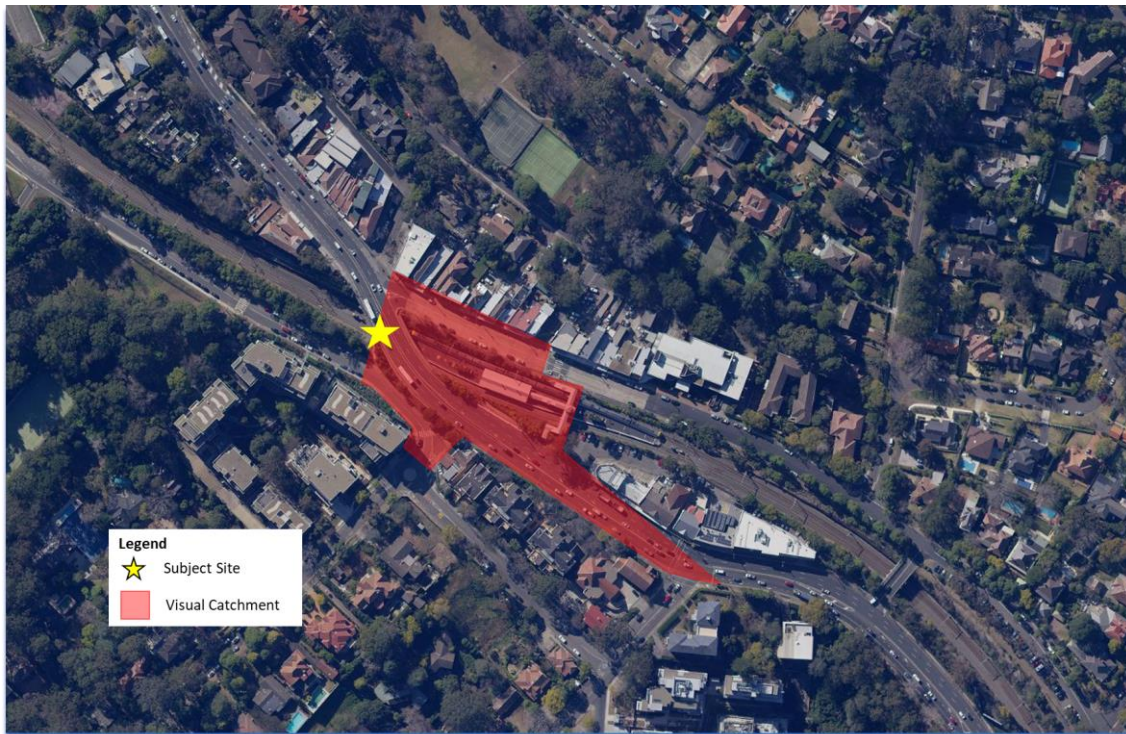


Figure 13: Visual Catchment (Base source: SixMaps)

The proposal is considered to be consistent with the visual character of the area, neighbouring the Pymble local centre which is urbanised area and within a transport corridor.

The proposed sign provides a compatible built element that remains human in scale ensuring consistency with the streetscape, whilst providing visual interest.

As addressed in Section 2.3 there is no advertising signage within the vicinity of the Site and limited business identification signs and road safety signs. These signs are suitably separated which ensures the proposal will not result in any visual clutter within the locality.

The viewpoints identified in the below figure have been used to assess visual impacts of the proposal.



Figure 14: Viewpoints (Base source: SixMaps)

5.3 Assessment of Viewpoints

View 1: Southern side of the Pacific Highway

View 1 was selected as it represents the view from the closest residential receivers located to the south of the proposed sign, and also identifies the viewpoint of road users from Avon Road within the visual catchment.

It is anticipated that there will be two sensitive receivers located at 2 Avon Road and 1116 Pacific Highway (Figure 15). An indicative photomontage has been provided at Figure 17 to compare the existing site context and impact of the proposed sign.

2 Avon Road

The proposed sign is orientated to face south-east, consistent with the road alignment. The units on the northern façade of 2 Avon Road are orientated to face north and will consequently have limited views towards the sign. Potential views will generally be limited to the side of the sign, rather than views of the advertising display area.

Vegetation located along the southern boundary of the railway corridor, including tree canopies and dense hedging will help to screen the sign. Further, individual apartments within 2 Avon Road are provided with vertical louvred screens which further restrict direct sight lines to the proposed sign (Figure 18).

1116 Pacific Highway

As identified, the proposed sign is orientated to face south-east, consistent with the road alignment. The residential units within 1116 Pacific Highway are oriented west with their primary private open space, in the form of balconies, are orientated south-west. Given the signs orientation, views from 1116 Pacific Highway towards the sign will be angled and therefore limited.

The proposed sign is located approximately 70m from this development. This separation distance together with the vegetation located along the southern boundary of the railway corridor, which includes tree canopies and dense hedging, will help to screen the sign.

Potential impacts to the above properties as a result of the illumination are limited as detailed within the Lighting Impact Assessment (Appendix 2).

On the basis of the above information, the potential visual impacts of the proposed sign on the residential dwellings at 2 Avon Road and 1116 Pacific Highway are considered to be low to medium.



Figure 15: View from Everton Street of two sensitive receivers (Source: Keylan)



Figure 16: Existing view from Everton Street facing the proposed sign (Source: Keylan)



Figure 17: Indicative view of proposed sign (Source: JCDecaux)



Figure 18: View of screening on 2 Avon Road (Source: Keylan)



Figure 19: Vegetation assisting to screen 2 Avon Street from proposed sign (Source: Keylan)

View 2: Eastern side of the Pacific Highway before Livingstone Avenue

View 2 was selected as it represents the view of the proposed sign from residential prosperities at the intersection of Pacific Highway and Livingstone Avenue (1076 Pacific Highway) (Figure 20). Residential apartments within this complex have balconies and windows orientated towards the sign.

However, these dwellings will have limited visibility of the sign due to the large church development directly adjacent, which obstructs views towards the sign. In addition, these dwellings are over 200m from the sign. This separation distance together with existing vegetation along Pacific Highway will further limit views towards the sign.

Indicative views of the sign at the intersection of Pacific Highway and Livingstone Avenue are provided below. As noted above, it is anticipated the church will shield residencies from the sign.

On the basis of the above, there are low potential visual impacts to these receivers as a result of the proposed sign.



Figure 20: Residential development at the intersection of Pacific Highway and Livingstone Avenue
(Source: Keylan)



Figure 21: View of Pacific Highway adjacent to residences at the intersection of Pacific Highway and Livingstone Avenue (Source: Keylan)



Figure 22: Indicative view of proposed sign at the intersection of Pacific Highway and Livingstone Avenue (Source: Keylan)

View 3: Residences along Pacific Highway

View 3 was selected as it represents the view from residential properties along Pacific Highway. The residential dwellings situated along the southern section of the road, between Avon Road and Livingstone Avenue, do not have direct sightlines towards the sign due to the fact that they all are orientated north with dense vegetation facing Pacific Highway (Figure 23). This will effectively screen view lines towards the sign from these properties.

Figure 24 provides an indicative view of the sign from Pacific Highway. As discussed above, there will be no impacts. On the basis of the above, there are low potential visual impacts to these receivers as a result of the proposed sign.



Figure 23: Residential properties facing south with no visibility of the sign (Keylan)



Figure 24: Indicative view of proposed sign (Source: JCDecaux)

View 4: Retail and business uses along Pacific Highway to the east

View 4 was selected as it represents the view from the retail and business uses along the eastern side of Pacific Highway. These properties are low-sensitive receivers given they generally contain commercial uses.

These properties will not have direct view lines of the sign as they are south facing and the proposed sign is south-east facing. The potential visual impact is therefore low.



Figure 25: Business and retail uses along Pacific Highway (Source: Keylan)



Figure 26: Indicative view of proposed sign (Source: JCDecaux)

View 5: Pymble train station

View 5 was selected as it represents the view from Pymble Train Station. The Station is included within the 'Pymble Railway Station Group' (ID 11110) heritage item. The item is listed by the *Transport Asset Holding Entity* (TAHE) as a State Agency Heritage Item under section 170 of the Heritage Act, however it is not listed on the State Heritage Register.

As detailed within the HIS (Appendix 2) the description on the on the State Heritage Inventory provides the following statement:

'The site has aesthetic significance in particular due to its well-known landmark qualities, particularly the elevated footbridge which forms an important visual element of the station precinct viewed both from the Pacific Highway and from Grandview Street. The footbridge was identified as an item of high heritage significance in the 2016 'Railway Footbridges Heritage Conservation Strategy'. It retains a high degree of integrity and is a good representative of an early twentieth century haunched beam footbridge with a trestle sub-structure'.

It is anticipated the proposed digital advertising sign will be visible from the entrances of the Station, the bridge connecting the entrances from Pacific Highway and Grandview Street and portions of the Station platform as illustrated in the below figures.



Figure 27: View of the entrance of Pymble Railway Station from Pacific Highway (Source: Keylan)



Figure 28: Indicative view of proposed signage from Pacific Highway Station entrance (Source: JCDecaux)



Figure 29: View from Pymble Station bridge connecting Pacific Highway and Grandview Street



Figure 30: Indicative view of proposed sign from Pymble Station bridge (Source: JCDecaux)

It is anticipated the views towards the sign on the platform will likely be blocked at some locations on the platforms due to rail buildings and the orientation of the sign.

Furthermore, the sign will be visible from some locations within the heritage item, however as discussed within the HIS, (Appendix 2) it will be located well away from the elements that primarily define the item's significance, i.e., the station building and footbridge, and will lie outside their immediate setting, which are separated by the Pymble Overbridge.

On this basis, the potential visual impacts of the proposed sign on the heritage item are considered to be low and acceptable.

View 6: Business and retail to the northeast – Grandview Street

View 6 was selected as it represents the view from business and retail uses within the Pymble Local Centre. These properties are low-sensitive receivers as they generally contain commercial uses.

The below figures demonstrate the view of these uses towards the proposed sign. The subject properties are orientated south, while the proposed sign is orientated south-east. Consequently, the view of the sign from these properties will be angled and limited.

Further, the view line towards the sign is screened by fencing infrastructure and vegetation which will mitigate any visual impacts on the business and retail uses. On this basis, view impacts at this location will be low.



Figure 31: View from Grandview Street facing the proposed sign (Source: Keylan)



Figure 32: Indicative view of proposed sign along Grandview Street (Source: JCDecaux)

View 7: Business and retail to the north – Grandview Street and Pacific Highway intersection

View 7 was selected as it represents the view from the Grandview Street and Pacific Highway intersection including business and retail uses at the western end of the Pymble Local Centre.

Due to the topography of the area, the sign is elevated at this point. Notwithstanding, its scale remains consistent with the height of the residential flat building to the south at 2 Avon Road and canopy trees within the rail corridor.

As the sign is orientated to the south-east, only the side and rear of the sign will be seen from this viewpoint. The sign therefore does not result in any unacceptable impacts at this location.

On this basis, view impacts at this location will be low.



Figure 33: View from Grandview Street and Pacific Highway intersection facing the proposed sign (Source: Keylan)



Figure 34: Indicative view of proposed sign at the Grandview Street and Pacific Highway intersection (JCDecaux)

5.4 Assessment Matrix

The below matrix provides an overall assessment of each viewpoint based on the number of viewers, duration of view, distance and visual sensitivity.

The high number of residential dwellings within the area indicate a higher visual sensitivity. However, the proposal seeks to minimise the proposed impacts of the sign and careful consideration has been given to the locality. Given the orientation and size of the proposed sign, visual impacts of the proposal are considered to be low to most viewpoints.

Viewpoint / Location	Distance of View	Visual Sensitivity	Level of Impact
1. Intersection of Avon Road and Everton Street (2 sensitive receivers)	45m and 75m	Residential – high sensitivity	Low to Medium
2. Intersection of Pacific Highway and Livingstone Avenue	245m	Residential – high sensitivity	Low
3. Pacific Highway after Livingstone Avenue	115m	Residential – high sensitivity	Low
4. Eastern side of the Pacific Highway before entrance to Pymble Railway Station	155m	Retail/business premises & road corridor – low sensitivity	Low
5. Pymble train station	35m to platform 115m to bridge	Heritage item – high sensitivity	Low
6. Grandview Street	85m	Retail/business premises – low sensitivity	Low
7. Intersection of Pacific Highway and Grandview Street	35m	Retail/business premises & road corridor – low sensitivity	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 (e.g. a park)	Somewhat impacted
High	Highly sensitive receivers (e.g. residential uses, childcare, or heritage item)	Highly impacted

Table 4: Rating definitions

6 Conclusion

The proposed advertising sign on the western side of the Pacific Highway will result in limited visual impacts to the surrounding locality and to sensitive receivers such as a heritage item and residential developments.

Following a detailed analysis of the proposal and the surrounding locality, this VIA has found the following:

- the surrounding area has a medium to high visual sensitivity due to a heritage item (Pymble Railway Station Group) and residential development located within the visual catchment
- views to the proposed sign from some sensitive receivers is often limited due to vegetation and distance between the receiver and the proposed sign
- the signage is consistent with the character of the surrounding area
- the sign will not produce visual clutter as there is no other advertising signage in the vicinity
- the proposed sign will be visible to a high number of pedestrians and motorists reflective of its location along a transport corridor
- the proposal does not impact upon any scenic views and will not protrude above the dominant skyline

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