

CAMDEN TOWN & HOLBORN STATION CAPACITY UPGRADES

by John Hawkins

TfL gave a presentation on 18 September 2013 to a Camden Council sub-committee about station upgrade plans in the borough. They pointed out that LU is currently exceeding records in passenger numbers, service levels and reliability, and in customer satisfaction. However, demand is forecast to continue to grow at the equivalent of a 'tube train full of people' every week as far as 2041 at least. A Greater London population of 9 million by 2031 was forecast in a 2011 projection, but this figure is now expected to be attained by 2021. Apart from line upgrades, attention is being given to station pinch-points.

CAMDEN TOWN

The Northern Line currently provides one of the lowest cross-London train frequencies, but will offer a 20% service enhancement by 2015 with the commissioning of a new signalling system. A diagram of overcrowding levels showed that all seats are taken within one station of each terminus, and that passenger demand is expected to soon outgrow the new upgraded service. A further upgrade is therefore being developed, perhaps with changed service patterns to ease the Camden Town junction operational challenges. There is talk of an enhanced upgrade or even full service separation. This second upgrade is being considered within a new approach to line upgrades to provide faster more frequent trains with greater capacity and reliability. However, completion of Northern Line upgrade 2 is expected by 2022, whilst the Piccadilly, Bakerloo and Waterloo & City upgrades were only shown for the 2020's.

Weekday passenger demand at Camden Town has grown 60% over the past ten years, with more than a quarter of those changing trains at the station. TfL have learnt from unsuccessfully promoting a major redevelopment of the station over ten years back, and they are now suggesting two alternative approaches to provide an additional ground floor station entrance with step-free access from Buck Street, which spans the north end of the current platforms.

The first option is dependent on Hawley Primary School's planned closure going ahead. It will use the ventilation shaft of the deep-level tube shelter to access low-level construction works whilst the station box is sunk. At the end of works its surface buildings will be removed and alternative access provided from the new station. This could allow a new public open space upon the site. In this option all fit-out works can take place within the construction box, reducing disruption to train services and shortening construction to four years. Three escalators will go directly to the northbound platform level with new connecting passages, and stairs down to the lower level and new passages to those platforms and the current concourse area.

The second option is to use the Buck Street Market site, location of the proposed interim ticket hall in the former scheme. Similar interchange passageways between platforms would be constructed at the north end of the platforms, and a connection made with the current lower concourse. This option would take an additional year, and supporters of the market site were vociferous in their opposition to the former scheme. The ventilation shaft of the deep-level tube shelter would remain unchanged.

The aim is to commence works on the new station entrance in 2019, with would leave completion later than the Upgrade 2 date quoted above. The current station will remain open during construction works and continue in use upon completion.

HOLBORN

Weekday passenger demand at this station has grown 30% over the past ten years, with more than 40% of passengers changing between lines. Demand is forecast to continue to grow despite Crossrail opening.

The plan here is to provide step-free access to all platforms and to provide a new low-level interchange between lines to relieve congestion in current passageways and around the Piccadilly Line escalators. This would not prevent future enlargement of the ticket hall or an over-station development.

A new lift shaft from the south-east corner of the ticket hall will link to the new interchange passage and also beneath that to the westbound Piccadilly Line platform. The new passage will be linked to the west end of both Central Line platforms by escalators and inclined lifts in parallel shafts and to the eastbound Piccadilly Line platform by escalators and also by a further lift. These will lead to the

current Aldwych platform tunnel which becomes an interchange concourse to be constructed from three shafts sunk from the Kingsway Tram Tunnel above. It is hoped to use the Aldwych branch for heavy plant delivery and for spoil removal, but it looks like this could mark the end of trains through to Aldwych. A construction work site is planned to the east of the current station building and also within that building. It is intended to seek necessary consents during 2015/16 and to commence in 2018 with the current station remaining open throughout the works.