

# New and improved Denmark Hill station delivers first “carbon positive” upgrade on rail network

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A new entrance, more comfortable waiting facilities, sheltered platforms, better lighting, a brand new 85-space cycle hub, and intriguing public art are just some of the benefits for passengers in the new £7.5m extension to Denmark Hill station – the first carbon positive upgrade of its kind at a station in Europe.

The entrance was officially opened today by Rail Minister Chris Heaton-Harris, who was joined by local resident, writer, broadcaster and campaigner Sandi Toksvig, representatives from Network Rail, GTR, the Camberwell Society, Kings College and Maudsley NHS hospitals and actress Danielle Arthur-Kennedy who read a poem called ‘The Test’ by local feminist activist, Una Marson, and many more, for the ribbon-cutting event.

The project was funded almost entirely by the Department of Transport and the improvements are designed to relieve station crowding which will allow for a more reliable train service to run.

The innovative design includes a new type of photovoltaic film fitted to the new roof which is able to

produce more energy than the new building needs and put energy back into the electricity grid.

Another major improvement is the addition of a second entrance on Windsor Walk adjacent to the two nearby major hospitals, Kings College and the Maudsley, cutting about 200m off the everyday journeys of up to 15,000 staff and patients, (once the walking route through the Maudsley hospital reopens in 2023 following their major construction work).

The listed wall on Windsor Walk has been rebuilt to its original design complete with heritage gates partly funded by The Railway Heritage Trust.

Rail Minister Chris Heaton Harris said: "This upgrade transforms a Victorian station into a modern experience for passengers – cutting crowding, improving access, and introducing new space for cyclists and artwork.

"Making this new extension to Denmark Hill the first 'carbon positive' upgrade by utilising innovative solar technology also demonstrates our ambition to ensure our rail network is greener for passengers and better for our environment."

The improvements to the station in Camberwell, South London, will also improve the look and feel of the station with Network Rail installing additional canopies along with new customer information screens and more seating. Together with upgraded PA systems these will encourage passengers to use the full length of the platforms and ease overcrowding.

Network Rail's Southern Region Managing Director, John Halsall, said: "The work we've done at Denmark Hill was ground-breaking in terms of upgrades to existing Victorian infrastructure in many ways, fusing the modern with the old, and above all making it accessible and user-friendly for passengers.

"The new upgrade is highly sustainable, using solar energy solutions that actually produce more power than the station upgrade needs to run, so we can put power back to the grid.

"We've managed to complete this project on time and on budget despite the impact of Covid, and that's testament to our relationship with GTR, the Camberwell Society, and the Salvation Army for lending us part of their site for the works."

A new cycle hub with secure storage for 85 bikes, funded by the two local hospitals and also by the Government's Cycle Rail Programme managed by Sustrans.

Lorcan Woods, Chief Financial Officer and sustainability lead at King's College Hospital NHS Foundation Trust, said, "We are delighted to have contributed towards the new cycle hub at Denmark Hill station. As part of our Active Travel Plan, we are committed to providing additional bike storage for staff who cycle to work and supporting local residents in our community to live an active lifestyle. Climate and health are fundamentally linked, and our new Strong Roots, Global Reach strategy seeks to address both."

David Bradley, Chief Executive of South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust, said: "The improved access to our campus will make a big difference to people who use our services, their carers and families,

and our staff who use Denmark Hill station to travel to work. The improvement work has supported our vision to improve services and our estate for local people.”

Sustainability was key to the project where an innovative new photovoltaic (solar) film has been installed on the new station roof, the rain cover over the accessible ramp and the new platform canopies, to make the upgraded parts of the station ‘carbon positive’, inputting energy into the Electricity Grid overall. It is the first time the film has been used at a Network Rail station in Europe and will be also used at other stations going forward.

The second entrance includes a range of new art and design elements which reflect Camberwell’s unique, vibrant identity. These include a new public artwork produced in collaboration with the Camberwell Society and Camberwell Arts, by the internationally celebrated British Ghanaian artist Godfried Donkor, using traditional adinkra symbolism of Ghana, a poem by Una Marson, the first black woman programme maker at the BBC and former Camberwell resident, and elements of the Camberwell visual identity including a wall tiled in the ‘Camberwell Brick’, in the palette of colours drawn from local greenery, architecture, water and the sky.

Nick Mair, Chair of the Camberwell Society, said: “We’re delighted with the collaborative experience of this project. Working with Network Rail, the project team and the Camberwell community we have created a unique welcome at Denmark Hill station reflecting Camberwell’s history and culture.”

Network Rail has worked closely in collaboration with train operating companies GTR and Great Northern to develop and design the scheme and has also worked with the Salvation Army which has provided space at its Champion Hill site for the project team, helping to minimise the impact of the works.

Tom Moran, Managing Director for Thameslink and Great Northern, said: “We are delighted to welcome this major investment in Denmark Hill.

“It doesn’t just ensure more comfort and convenience for many years to come, it also supports our commitment to make our stations more accessible, attractive and sustainable for the local communities we serve. It’s also a great showcase for what the rail industry can do in partnership with local employers and community groups to build back better and greener.

“The fabulous artwork helps to link this new north entrance to the south side of the station, where the Camberwell Society have installed a magical gallery of sculptures as part of our network-wide improvement programme.”

The new station upgrade is already receiving industry recognition and has been shortlisted for two 2021 National Rail Awards – ‘Infrastructure Project of the Year’ and ‘Sustainable Development of the Year’.

*Photo credit: Network Rail*