

## Surbiton station set for major £6.7m upgrade

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Work on building new staircases, a footbridge extension and ticket gates for platforms three and four at Surbiton station in Surrey has begun.

The Network Rail upgrades are designed to improve passenger safety and journey times as passenger levels grow post-Covid and should be completed by the end of May 2022. Work on the £6.7m DfT-funded project will see the number of ticket gates increase from eight to 16.

Surbiton is the eighth busiest station on Network Rail's Wessex route with nearly 9.5 million passengers passing through it during 2019-2020.

The work is designed to speed up exits from the station and stop passengers having to queue on a single set of stairs which can cause South Western Railway (SWR) trains towards Guildford, Hampton Court and Woking from leaving on time.

Preparatory works have started, with main work due to begin later in the month. Engineers will begin by removing part of the station building on platforms three and four along with the southern staircase to the public footbridge.

Members of the public will have full access across the footbridge throughout these improvements and lifts will be open as usual.

Between Wednesday 27 October and Sunday 14 November, and on the weekends of January 22/23 and 29/30, members of the public will be redirected via the passenger side of the footbridge.

Mark Killick, Network Rail's Wessex route director, said: "Surbiton station is one of the busiest on our route and its modernist façade is a famous local landmark, however it has just one staircase to the footbridge from platforms three and four. Currently passengers have to use very narrow parts of the platforms to exit which can lead to congestion on the platforms and prevent trains from being dispatched on time.

"The improvements will respect the station's rich heritage and will improve safety and keep trains running on time by making it easier to exit. I'd like to thank passengers for their patience while we carry out this essential work and we are working with colleagues at SWR to keep disruption to a minimum."

Alan Penlington, SWR's customer experience director, said: "The work Network Rail is carrying out will see a welcome reduction in congestion at Surbiton station during the evening peak which will help customers exit the station more easily and reduce delays. The addition of a new staircase will mean platforms can clear more quickly allowing our teams to safely dispatch trains and keep services running on time.

"There will be some disruption whilst the works take place as routes around the station and the car park change. I'd like to thank customers for their patience and understanding whilst these essential works are carried out."

The station building is a famous local landmark thanks to its art deco style, dating back to its rebuilding in 1937 using designs by the chief architect of the Southern Railway, James Robb Scott. In October 1983 it was made a Grade II listed structure by Historic England, marking it as an 'important building of special interest'.

Recognising the need to preserve the station's rich heritage, the enhancements have been developed by Network Rail architects in collaboration with The Royal Borough of Kingston Upon Thames, Historic England, The Railway Heritage Trust, The Design Council and The Twentieth Century Society.

*Photo credit: Network Rail*