

1 Bowman Court, West Wodonga

Application for planning permit
PA2503628



Officer Assessment Report
Development Assessment

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Executive Summary



Key information	Details	
Application No.:	PA2503628	
Received:	31 March 2025	
Statutory Days:	78	
Applicant:	Blueprint Planning Pty Ltd	
Planning Scheme:	Wodonga	
Land Address:	1 Bowman Court, West Wodonga	
Proposal:	New two-storey education building to be known as the "Middle Years Centre". The proposal also includes business identification signage and native vegetation removal	
Development value:	\$8.877 million	
Why is the Minister responsible?	In accordance with Clause 72.01 of the Planning Scheme, the Minister for Planning is the Responsible Authority for this application because the proposal is for a non-government school with an estimated cost of development of \$3 million or greater.	
Why is a permit required?	Clause	Trigger
Zone:	Clause 36.01-2 (Public Use Zone)	<i>Construct a building or construct or carry out works for any use in Section 2 of Clause 36.01-1</i>
Particular Provisions:	Clause 52.05-13 (Signs) Clause 52.17-1 (Native Vegetation)	<i>Display a business identification sign Remove vegetation</i>
Referral authorities	None	
Public Notice	Notice of the application under section 52 of the Act, other than under section 52(1)(b) was not required because the development is considered to not cause material detriment to any person.	
Delegates List	N/A	
Recommendation	The application is recommended for approval subject to conditions, as discussed in this report.	



1. The key milestones in the process of the application were as follows:

Milestone	Date
Pre-application meeting (DTP and applicant)	Yes – 3 December 2024
Application lodgement	31 March 2025
Further information requested	N/A
Further information received	N/A
Further plans submitted (formally under section 50 of the Act)	N/A
Further informally substituted sketch plans submitted (date)	N/A
Decision plans	Plans prepared by Hayball Architects, titled 'Catholic College Wodonga' and dated 14 March 2025.

2. The subject of this report is the decision plans (as described above).



3. The proposal is for a new two-storey education building to be known as the “Middle Years Centre”. Notably, there will be no increase in staff or student numbers as a result of the development.
4. Specific details of the application include:
 - Construction of a new building over an existing vacant passive open space area,
 - Two-storey building to be approximately 41m long, 28m wide, and 9m high
 - Building floor area of approximately 1,287m², containing school teaching and administration staff facilities and sickbay on the ground-floor and teaching classrooms on the first-floor
 - Pedestrian access via existing internal paved pathways,
 - External cladding materials and colours comprising red face brick masonry,
 - Colorbond “Manor Red” metal wall and roof sheeting and design panels/elements, with use of Colorbond “Manor Red” powder coat aluminium frame glazing, and
 - No change to existing lot boundary interface retaining wall/fencing treatments along Bowman Court or the public walkway (1.8m high black palisade fencing).
5. The applicant has provided the following concept image/s of the proposal:

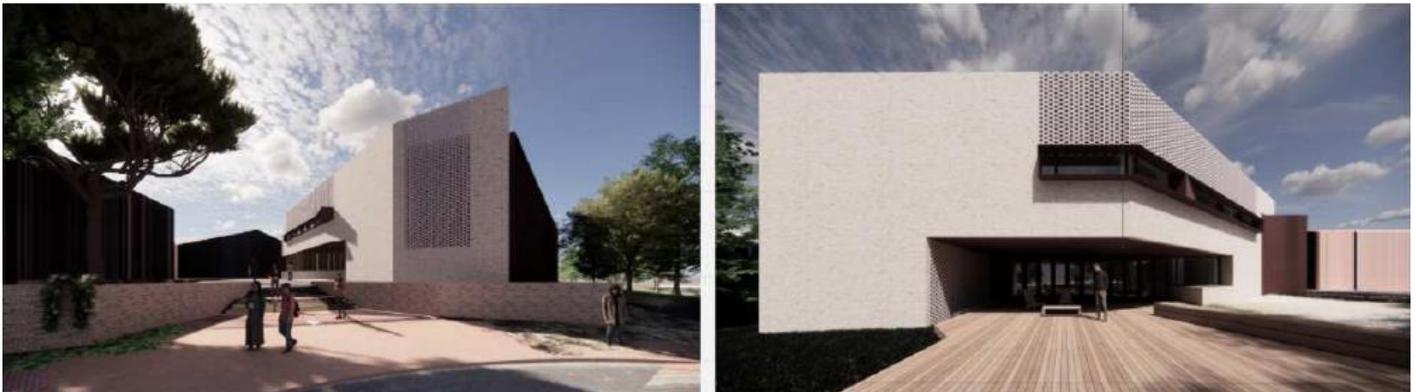


Figure 1: Concept image of proposal

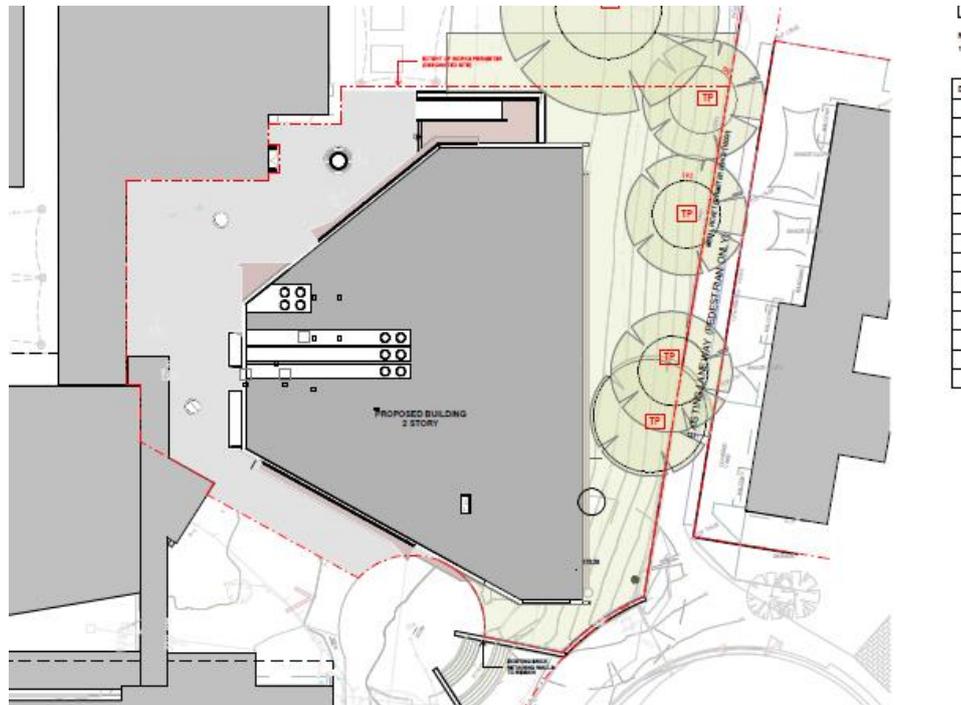


Figure 2: Proposed part site plan

Subject Site and Surrounds

Site Description

6. The site is located in a mixed although predominately residential area, with sports grounds, educational uses, and commercial areas interfacing with surrounding suburban residential development.
7. The existing site comprises the Catholic College Wodonga.
8. The site is 4.787 ha and has frontages to Bowman Court and Silva Drive.
9. The site is formally described as comprising Lot 1 on Plan of Subdivision 407358M
10. The site contains several infrastructure easements; however, these do not coincide with the proposed footprint of the subject development.
11. The physical context and surrounds of the site are shown in the image below:



Figure 3 – aerial image of the site showing location of development (source: applicant's planning report).



Municipal Planning Strategy

12. The following provisions of the Municipal Planning Strategy are relevant to the proposal:

Clause no.	Description
02.01	Context
02.02	Vision
02.03	Strategic Directions

13. The relevant provisions of the MPS have been taken into account as part of this assessment.

Planning Policy Framework

14. The following provisions of the Planning Policy Framework are relevant to the proposal:

Clause no.	Description
Clause 12.05	Significant Environments and Landscapes
Clause 13.05	Noise
15	Built Environmental and Heritage
Clause 15.01-2L	Environmentally sustainable development
Clause 15.01-5L	Preferred neighbourhood character
19	Infrastructure
19.02-2S	Education facilities

15. The Assessment section of this report provides consideration of the planning policies relevant to the proposal.

Statutory Planning Controls

Public Use Zone (PUZ2)

16. A planning permit is required to construct a building or construct or carry out works associated with a 'Section 2 use' under the zone. The purpose of the PUZ is:

To implement the Municipal Planning Strategy and the Planning Policy Framework.

To recognise public land use for public utility and community services and facilities.

To provide for associated uses that are consistent with the intent of the public land reservation or purpose.

17. The PUZ includes application requirements and decision guidelines. The following sections include discussion of how the proposal responds to these requirements.

Particular provisions

18. Clause 52.05 applies as a business identification sign is proposed.
19. Clause 52.17 applies as a remnant native tree being removed
20. Clause 53.18 applies to this application for buildings and works. The clause includes standards and objectives relating to stormwater.
21. Clause 53.19 applies to this application as it is a non-government school.



Referrals

22. The application was not required to be referred; however, the council were given notice of the application to which they responded, as outlined below.

Municipal Council comments

23. Wodonga City Council were referred the application and advised that it did not object. The council provided one drainage condition which is recommended to be included in the permit. The council also requested that a condition be placed on the permit requiring native vegetation offset, which DTP is agreeable to.

Notice

24. The application is not exempt from the notice requirements of section 52(1)(a), (b) and (d) of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*.
25. The application was not advertised other than to the municipal authority under section 52(1)(b) as it was considered not to cause material detriment to any person because:
- The proposed works are to an established school
 - The works are well setback from adjoining dwellings
 - The is mature vegetation which further act as an amenity buffer in addition to the substantial setback distances



What are the key considerations

26. The key considerations in assessing the acceptability of the proposal are as follows:
- Strategic direction and land use
 - Built form
 - Amenity (on-site and off-site)
 - Environmental considerations
27. These matters are addressed in turn below.

Strategic Direction and Land Use

28. The Planning Policy Framework's overall intent is to encourage appropriate land use and development which enhances the built environment, supports economic growth, meets the community expectations on retail and commercial provision, delivers diversity in housing supply to meet existing and future needs, and integrates transport and infrastructure planning. The proposal is generally consistent with the high-level strategic directions within the Wodonga Planning Scheme.
29. The proposal is also consistent with the purpose of the Public Use Zone, one of which is to support use of land for community facilities. It is noted that the proposal will contribute to the availability of secondary school educational facilities within the area.
30. Notably, the site currently operates as a secondary school. The proposal is consistent with the current use as an educational facility and is appropriate in relation to its residential context. The proposal would not create an unacceptable level of land use intensity on the site.
31. The relevant Municipal Planning Strategy and Planning Policy Framework provisions have been taken into account in assessing the application.

Built form

32. The proposed buildings and works are of an appropriate scale and form with respect to the context of the site, the institutional function of the buildings, and the applicable planning controls.
33. With regard to the purpose of the PUZ, the proposal represents an appropriate response to neighbourhood character and the built environment through a well-considered design which includes generous setbacks of building mass from site boundaries, with new works well integrated into the overall layout of the school site.
34. The proposal is furthermore consistent with the decision guidelines of the PUZ, with the development being compatible with surrounding land uses, while having appropriate heights, setbacks and appearance along with providing space for landscaping.

Height

35. The proposed secondary school building is two-storey with a maximum height of 9 metres to the top of the roof pitch.
36. These heights do not contravene any height limits specified in the planning scheme, and as discussed above are consistent with the provisions of the PUZ. The height is also appropriate in the context of single storey dwellings surrounding the site, with a transition between the proposed two-storey building and surrounding single storey dwellings is considered an acceptable built form relationship.

Setbacks

37. The proposed building is set back well from boundaries. The closest setback is 1.5 metres, however this to the head of Bowman Court where the carpark is located. The eastern boundary setbacks are generous, being between 4.3



metres and 10.5 metres. The northern boundary setbacks are over 40m, while to the west are the other school buildings on the site and therefore these boundary setbacks are not relevant. These setbacks provide adequate separation from adjoining properties and streets to ensure the proposed building does not appear excessively prominent when viewed from neighbouring properties and the public realm.

Design Detail

38. The overall design of the works is contemporary, with the form and treatment of the building providing visual interest and articulation, as depicted in Figure 5 below.
39. Cladding materials include red face brick masonry, Colorbond “Manor Red” metal wall and roof sheeting and design panels/elements, with use of Colorbond “Manor Red” powder coat aluminium frame glazing. The materials selected are robust and of an acceptable quality to ensure the appearance of the building can be readily maintained throughout the life of the building.
40. The design detail is considered an appropriate response to the site context and complements the style and colour palette of existing school buildings on the site.



Figure 4 – Render of proposed building (Source: Architectural Plans)

Signage

41. A business identification signage panel to the southern elevation is proposed measuring 3 metres wide by 4.5 metres high. The sign is front lit but not internally illuminated. The location of the sign has been provided; however, details of the design and appearance have not.
42. Despite this, given the sign’s location (highlighted in figure 5), the potential amenity impacts of the sign is considered exceptionally minor, as the sign faces southwest into the site, towards the existing D Block (Duffy Centre). The sign will therefore not appear prominent from the public realm, and nor does it raise any concerns with causing a nuisance to adjoining residential properties.
43. Given the minor nature and unobtrusive location of the sign, and the expectation that schools require signage for practical purposes, the sign raised no issues with respect the provisions of clause 52.05
44. It is recommended that that a permit condition require details of the signage to be provided prior to endorsement of plans. Permit conditions will also specify any lighting used on the sign not cause a nuisance to surrounding properties.



Figure 5 – location of proposed business identification sign

Amenity

On site

45. The proposal will provide a high level of internal amenity on the site. Adequate glazing to the new building will ensure good levels of daylight to learning spaces, while areas retained for landscaping will provide shade and soften the impact of new built form. For these reasons, DTP considers the level of internal amenity provided by the development to be supportable.

Off site

46. The proposal would not have an unreasonable impact on the amenity of the surrounding area given setbacks, height, and location of the works on the site. The shadow diagrams provided demonstrate that no adverse overshadowing of adjoining properties would occur due to the development, with almost the entirety of overshadowing at the spring equinox contained within the site or falling on the street or laneway adjacent the eastern boundary.
47. For the above reasons, DTP considers the likely external amenity impacts of the proposal to be within acceptable limits.

Environmental

Native vegetation removal

48. The application proposed removal of a remnant White Box (*E. Albens*) under clause 52.17. The tree is shown below in figure 6.
49. The tree is not understood to be in poor condition. The decision to remove the tree has come out of necessity given the engineering and design constraints on the site, and for safety given possibility of limbs being dropped. The applicant has also stated that the tree is not hollow bearing, and therefore unlikely to impact habitat of threatened fauna.
50. The council has advised that it is supportive of the tree removal, provided that a condition requiring offsets be included on the permit.
51. DTP's view is that the tree is a scattered remnant vegetation and the given only 1 tree is to be removed, the ecological impacts are limited. The requirements for an offset mean that the tree can be supported for removal without undue ecological or environmental impacts.



Figure 6: Tree to be removed

Environmentally Sustainable Design (ESD) and Stormwater Management

52. The application is supported by an ESD report to demonstrate the environmental credentials of the proposal. This is considered a positive given there is no requirement for a sustainable design assessment or Sustainability Management Plan within the Wodonga planning scheme. A condition will require the ESD report to be complied with to ensure the utility of the report is captured in the permit.
53. With respect to stormwater management, the applicant provided a stormwater management report which demonstrates a best practice approach to stormwater management. The report states that '*stormwater quality infrastructure has been included in the design to achieve the water quality objectives for Environmental Management Guidelines (Victorian Stormwater Committee, 1999)'s best practice, which means the removal of gross pollutants, suspended solids, nitrogen and phosphorus. The proposed treatment train was modelled using MUSIC modelling software*'. A condition will require that the stormwater report requirements are implemented and maintained as part of the development.
54. Subject to the above conditions, the proposal will result in appropriate environmental and stormwater outcomes.

Conclusion and Recommendation



Conclusion

55. The proposal is generally consistent with the relevant planning policies of the Wodonga Planning Scheme and will contribute to the provision of School facilities within the area.
56. The proposal is generally supported by the council.

Recommendation

57. **It is recommended that a Delegate of the Minister for Planning** issue Planning Permit No. PA2503628 for the construction of a secondary school building at 1 Bowman Court, West Wodonga, subject to conditions.
58. It is recommended that the applicant be notified of the above in writing.

Prepared by:

I have considered whether there is a conflict of interest in assessing this application and I have determined that I have:

- No Conflict**
- Conflict and have therefore undertaken the following actions:
- Completed the **Statutory Planning Services declaration of Conflict/Interest form**.
 - Attached the Statutory Planning Services declaration of Conflict/Interest form on to the hardcopy file.
 - Attached the Statutory Planning Services declaration of Conflict/Interest form into the relevant electronic workspace.

Name:

[Redacted Name]

Signed:

[Redacted Signature]

Title:

Phone:

Dated:

16 June 2025

Reviewed / Approved by:

I have considered whether there is a conflict of interest in assessing this application and I have determined that I have:

- No Conflict**
- Conflict and have therefore undertaken the following actions:
- Completed the **Statutory Planning Services declaration of Conflict/Interest form**.
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Name:

[Redacted Name]

Signed:

[Redacted Signature]

Title:

Phone:

Dated:

17 June 2025