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24/08/2026

Legacy Project Management
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Attention: Jack Spargo

Dear Jack,

165 Williamsons Road, South Morang

Urban Design Advice Memo – include revised landscape approach

The following memo provides a summary of our urban design review of the updated application plans submitted by Ewert Leaf Architects and Greenjoy Landscape Design for the development at 165 Williamsons Road, South Morang. The memo has been revised to include further consideration of landscape matters and interfaces as required by the letter regarding the Development Facilitation Program PPA-1184 dated 17.07.2026 from the Department of Transport and Planning.

This review is subsequent to our initial advice provided on December 12th, 2025 and the memo dated 19.12.2025. The new and amended information considered includes:

- The extent of, and recommended approach to conservation and regeneration, of the critically endangered Grassy Eucalypt Woodland of the Victoria Volcanic Plain (GEVVVP) – impacting on the previous planting recommendations.
- The expired permit for a residential development at 135 Williamsons Road with this land now in Council ownership and a tree reserve – changing the interface impacts.
- The approved plans for the 4-storey storage facility to the north which obscures views to the proposal from parts of the existing residential subdivision.

The proposed data centre has been assessed against relevant planning scheme documentation. This includes Development Plan Overlay Schedule 7 (DPO7 South Morang Employment Development Plan), Vegetation Protection Overlay Schedule 1 (VPO1 Significant Vegetation (River Redgum Grassy Woodland)) and local Council strategies. This advice memo takes into consideration the Urban Design Memorandum delivered by the Department of Transport and Planning (DTP) on July 10th, 2025.

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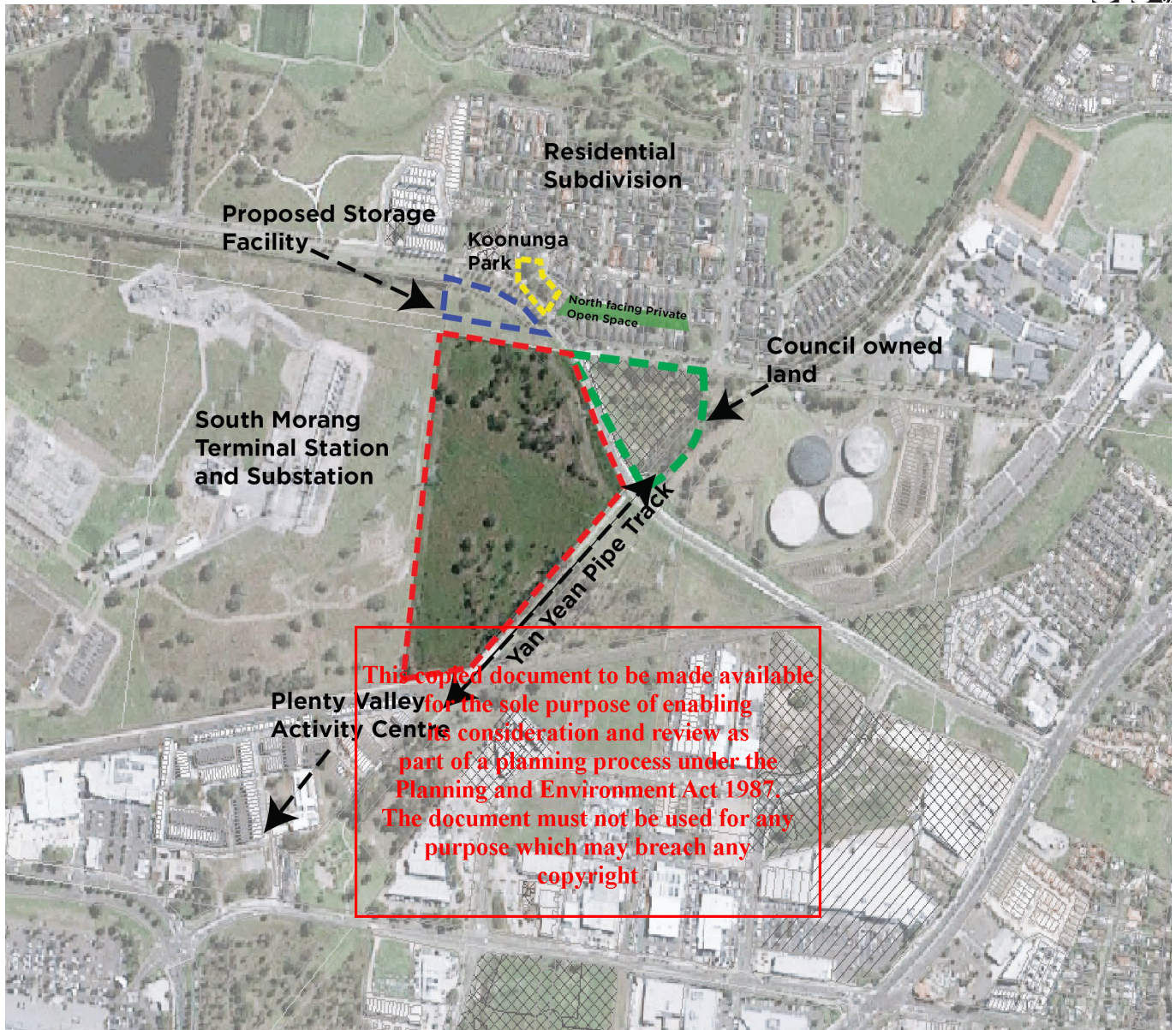


Figure 1: Aerial image of the site showing interfaces

Interfaces

As shown in Figure 1, 165 Williamsons Road interfaces with land uses of differing sensitivities and requirements.

- The planning zone map (Figure 2) identifies a Special Use Zone interface to the west, encompassing the South Morang Terminal Station and Substation (considered a low sensitivity interface).
- To the south, the site adjoins the Plenty Valley Town Centre (zoned ACZ2) and the Yan Yean Pipe Track (zoned PUZ1).
- Directly to the north, the site is separated from 130 Williamsons Road by the unmade road easement. 130 Williamsons Road is within the same C2Z zone as the subject site and will be the location of a 4 storey storage facility (currently under construction).
- Also to the north at the very tip of the north east corner, the site interfaces with residential land. The dwellings have their primary private open space (backyards) to the north of their block, meaning that the front entrances face south onto the subject land and Council .

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- To the north east is 135 Williamsons Road, the land is zoned GRZ1, however is owned by Council and has also been identified as containing GEWVVP landscape worthy of protection.

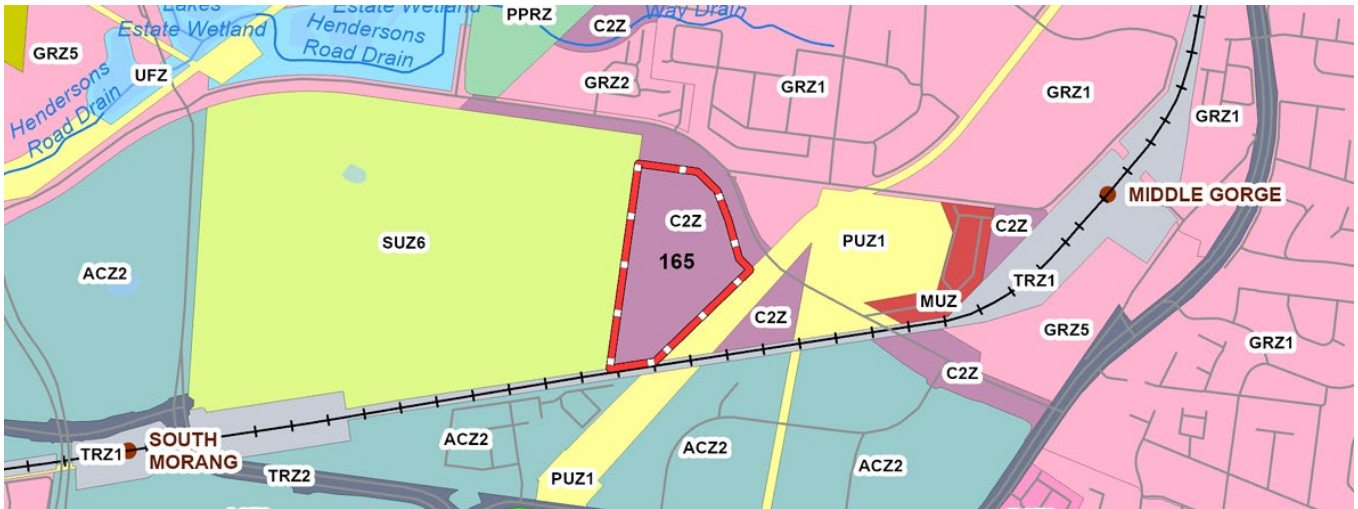


Figure 2: Planning zones across the site and its surrounding area

The dominant interface of the proposed built form experienced by the general public is to the north and north east, directly abutting land zoned ~~Commercial 2 Zone~~, and to a lesser extent the General Residential Zone. Figure 3 below shows the view from the corner of Findon Road and Williamsons Road looking south west.

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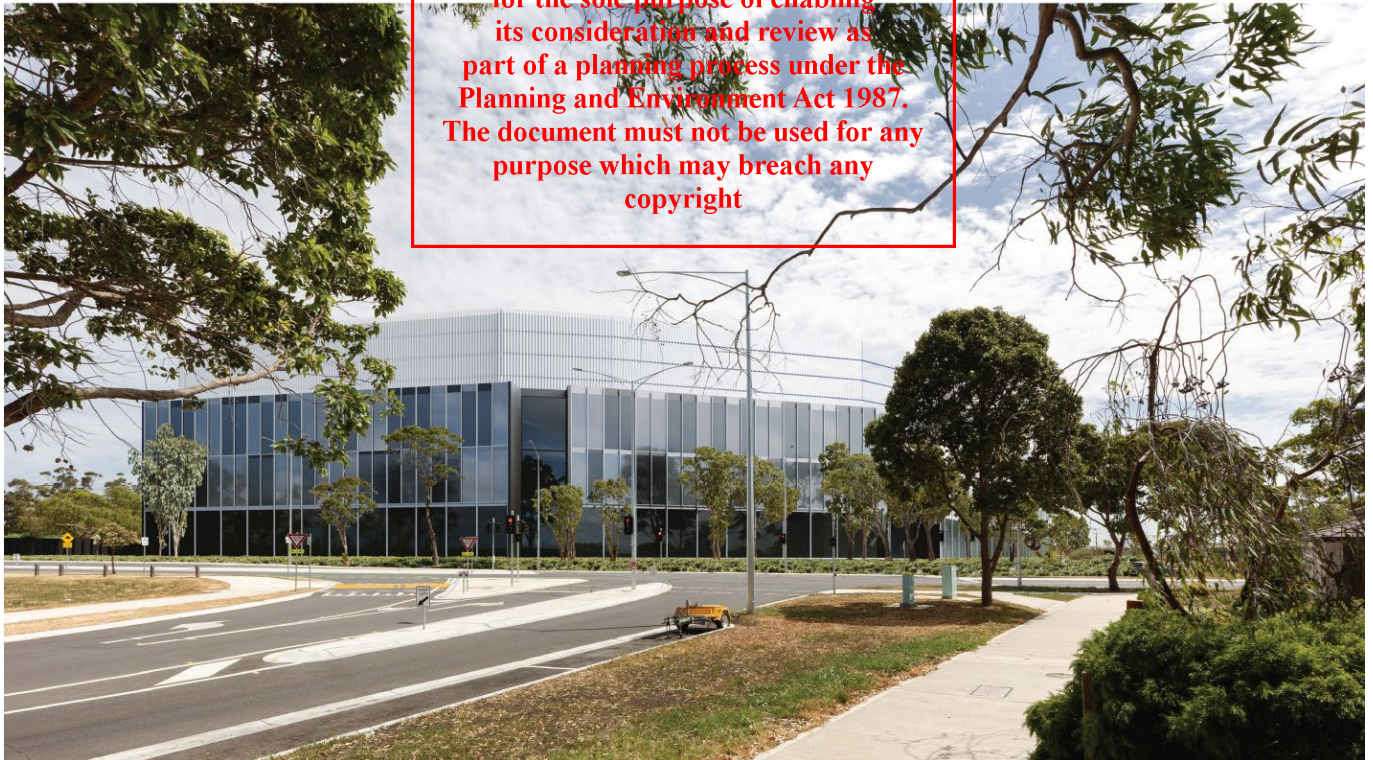


Figure 3: Render facing south west towards the building from Findon Road (Ewert Leaf TP DWGS 07.08.2026)

We consider this aspect to successfully 'disguise' the internal use of the data centre. The articulation of the façade is more akin to a large office building and not out of place in the surrounding context, particularly the close neighbours to the north (storage facility), the South Morang Terminal and Substation to the west and the big box land uses to the south.

The existing verge conditions along Findon Road comprise swales, trees, and other vegetation. The Landscape Plan includes recommendations for the Council verge such as canopy tree planting (Blackwoods) with additional screening on the fence (not shown in the render above). This condition will continue to improve as the landscape matures and we consider the relationship between Findon Road, the verge planting, screening planting on the fence and the massing and architecture of the data centre to be appropriate for the location.

We have reviewed the planning permit for 130 Williamsons Road, South Morang, located to the north of the site. The approved development comprises a four-storey building to be used as a storage facility. There is vehicle access within the western half of the site located in order to retain a protected tree. There is no car park access points from the proposed Williamsons Road extension that runs between the project site and 130 Williamsons Road.

Interface recommendations

We agree with the Department of Transport and Planning's recommendation to "ensure the implementation of ample landscape buffers and setbacks along primary road interfaces," and consider the Findon Road verges to present a prime opportunity to deliver these buffers. As outlined in the Department's recommendation, planting within these landscape buffers and setbacks should comprise deep soil zones and canopy tree planting where possible.

It should be noted however that the sensitivity of the landscape in and around the site (GEWVVP areas) will require specific maintenance regimes centred primarily around weed control. Any screening vegetation must be considered carefully with the health and survival of the GEWVVP areas as the primary concern. It is recommended that the Land Management Plan prepared by ABZECO should be considered as part of the planning permit.

There are also opportunities to enhance landscape buffers and setbacks between the 130 Williamsons Road site to the north and the subject site, across the proposed road extension. We recommend the provision of generous verges on either side of the road to support canopy tree planting where space allows noting that access to the site may be required and this should be considered in the spacing of verge canopy trees.. The approved plans for 130 Williamson Road shown in Figure 5 provide minimal opportunities for canopy planting.

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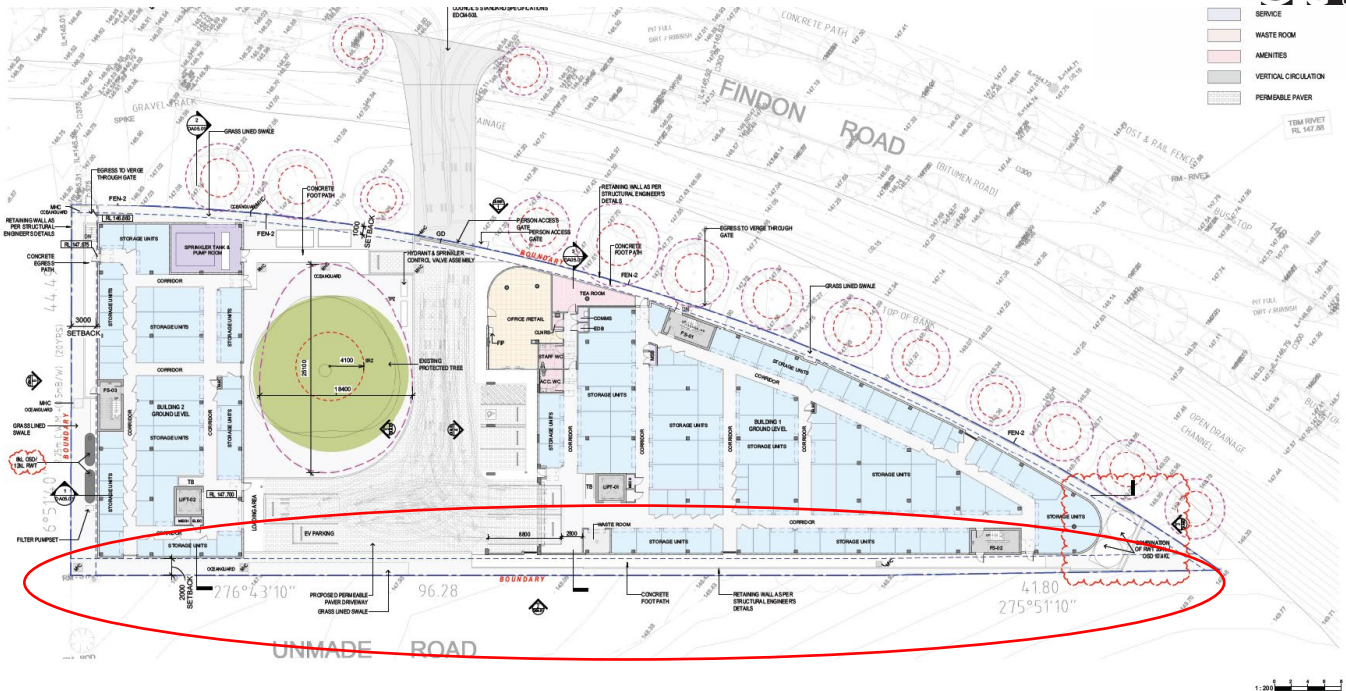


Figure 5: Approved plans 130 Williamsons Road, South Morang (Abacus 24.10.2025)

Landscape

The landscape plan prepared by Greenjoy Landscape Design demonstrates a strong emphasis on species prioritised by Council, including Matted Flax Lily and Grassy Eucalypt Woodland, as well as the protection of existing River Red Gums across the site, consistent with Clause 12.01-1L (Protection of Biodiversity). These species are supported by designated regeneration areas, where planting is constrained by overhead powerlines.

The identification of Grassy Eucalypt Woodland on the landscape plan represents a positive contribution to biodiversity outcomes, supporting Council revegetation priorities. The proposed diverse understorey will assist in supporting existing River Red Gum trees and enhance the health and longevity of new plantings.

Canopy tree planting in the form of Blackwoods has been proposed along the northern and eastern boundary outside of the powerline height restriction. This is supported when considered together with the Land management plan prepared by ABZECO.

The built form massing incorporates regular cut-outs that in two locations enables additional planting opportunities. There is screen planting proposed along the north/ north-east facing fence line.

Across the car park, landscape treatments are integrated within verges and supported by water sensitive urban design measures. Large canopy trees are prohibited due to the location under the power lines. Salvaged logs are proposed within the car park surrounds for habitat.

Landscape recommendations

Currently, only two of the five cut-outs along the façade are planted, as shown in the landscape plan below (Figure 7). All cut-outs should be planted to help break up the visual bulk of the development if possible. This approach aligns with the Department of Transport and Planning's principles for reducing building massing and

creating a visually recessive form, including “increased landscaping setbacks from key interfaces to conceal the development.” It also supports the DTP recommendation to “mitigate any potential visual impact resulting from the bulk of data centre structures/buildings.”

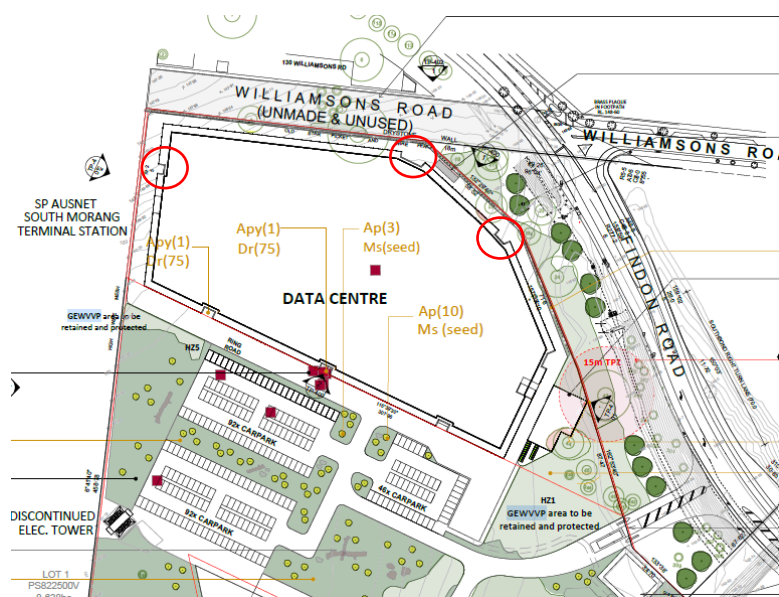


Figure 7: Landscape plan highlighting opportunity for planting within built form cutouts

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We agree with the Department of Transport and Planning’s recommendation that “consideration should be given to the potential for the site to offer a performative benefit to the broader area,” and note that this should be centred on the protection and enhancement of the GEWVVP areas. This may not align nor be compatible with ‘increased canopy coverage’ and as stated previously, any landscape proposed should adhere to Land management protocols set out by the appropriate experts.

Car Parking

The on-site car parking provision is extensive and occupies an area constrained by the powerline easement. The number of spaces exceeds the operational requirements of the data centre and its workforce. Where possible, reducing the number of parking spaces would help minimise urban heat island effects.

Car parking recommendations

As recommended by DTP, “the central car parking offers opportunity for increased planting on site.” To achieve greater greening across the car park, we recommend that the southern car park be recategorised as “overflow parking,” and that permeable surface treatments be considered (outlined below in red, Figure 8). These measures would support landscaping outcomes and contribute to the site’s Water Sensitive Urban Design. If the size of the car park was reduced at the western end it would enable the retention of the mapped Matted Flax Lily if appropriate.

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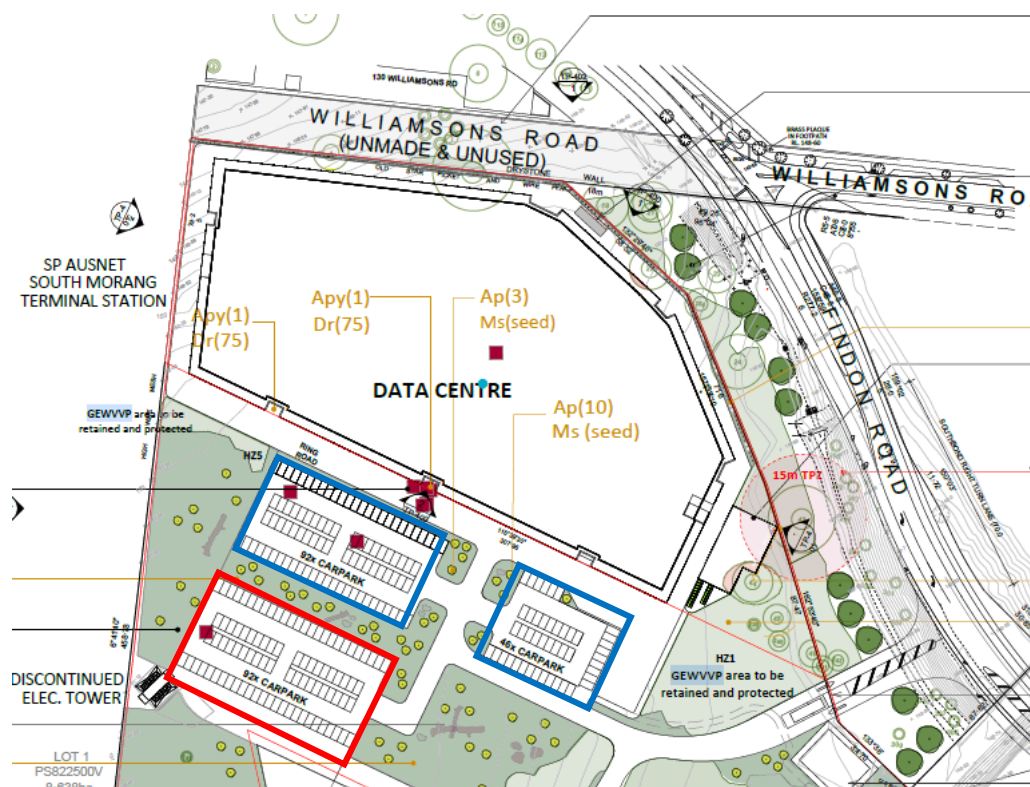


Figure 8: Landscape plan highlighting potential "overflow parking" area (in red)

Landscaping within and immediately surrounding the car park should include shrubs and ground covers to reduce urban heat and provide lower level shade. In the mid-sections of the northern car parks, wider planting areas should be incorporated to accommodate additional vegetation and passive Water Sensitive Urban Design treatments (shown in blue on the landscape plan above, Figure 8).

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Access

The site's proximity to the Yan Yean Pipe Track provides an opportunity to connect to the local active transport network and, ultimately, to the Plenty Valley Activity Centre. While the site interfaces with the Yan Yean Pipe Track along its south-eastern edge, it is not currently directly accessible in the proposed architecture and landscape design.

Access recommendations

For workers who choose to walk or cycle, we recommend the addition of a secure access gate along the interfacing fence line, connecting to the shared path. A landscaped path linking the access gate to the car park and building entry should be safe and provide clear sight lines. In line with this provision, the data centre should also provide end-of-trip facilities and bike parking adjacent to the building entry.

Materiality and façade

The cladding treatment of the built form is commercial in style, incorporating solid and glazed panels with permeable screening. The façade concept is illustrated below through precedent imagery (Figure 9) and a render (Figure 10).

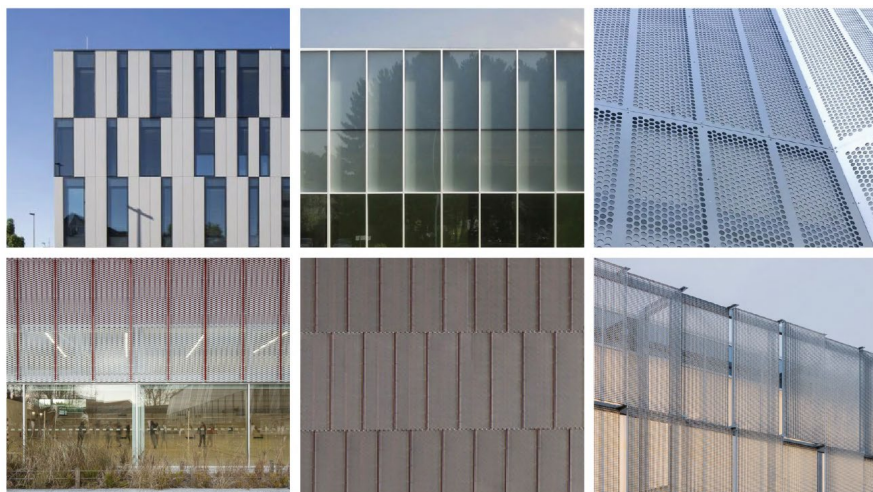


Figure 9: Façade concept precedent imagery



Figure 10: Render facing the southern façade of the built form, looking across the car park

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Materiality and façade recommendations

DTP's design principles and recommendations aim to refine the façade to better achieve the broader goals for the built form. For example, the façade can help make the building more visually recessive and break up its massing. We support the principle of refining the design to “create visual interest through a façade strategy.” We consider that the variety of materials and their arrangement achieves the design objectives, in particular the layered approach to the perforated screening which will change through light and shadow throughout the day. The materiality successfully balances the very specific performance requirements of a data centre with a purposeful and considered architectural approach.

We agree with the recommendation to explore greater integration of greenery to further reduce visual bulk noting that this can occur in and around the edges of the building ‘notches’.

Conclusion

In summary, the landscape and architectural proposal for 165 Williamsons Road, South Morang presents an acceptable outcome in this highly constrained site. The recommendations included in this report seek to strengthen the approach already adopted to ensure the survival of the GEWVVP areas is balanced with architectural and operational necessities.

Yours sincerely,

LatStudios Urban Design Team

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