

Planning Assessment Officer Report

DP2503745 – Addendum to Waterfront City Outline Development Plan &
PA2503685 - Planning Permit

331-381 Footscray Road, Docklands



Development Plan - Planning Assessment Officer Report
Development Assessment



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Executive Summary



Key Information	Details																											
Application No:	DP2503745 and PA2503685																											
Received:	2 May 2025																											
Applicant:	Sonic Healthcare Limited c/- Human Habitats																											
Planning Scheme:	Melbourne Planning Scheme																											
Land Address:	331-381 Footscray Road, Docklands																											
Proposal:	Addendum to the Waterfront City Outline Development Plan to facilitate the re-purpose and use of the Docklands Costco store for a consolidated research and development centre, incorporating laboratory spaces, offices, warehouse, staff amenity spaces, car parking and associated landscaping.																											
Development Value:	\$92M for building and works for re-purposing the building																											
Why is the Minister responsible?	<p>In accordance with the schedule to Clause 72.01 of the Melbourne Planning Scheme, the Minister for Planning is the responsible authority for matters under Divisions 1, 1A, 2, and 3 of Part 4 and Part 4AA of the Act and matters required by a permit or the scheme to be endorsed, approved or done to the satisfaction of the responsible authority in relation to development of land as part of a single project or multiple related projects, if it involves :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• construction of a new building or buildings containing a total gross floor area of more than 25,000 square metres;• construction or the carrying out of works (including extensions, alterations or additions to a building or buildings) which will directly create an additional floor area of more than 25,000 square metres of a building or buildings.• <i>Despite anything to the contrary in this schedule, the Minister for Planning is the responsible authority for the purposes of clause 43.04 (schedules 2 to 7) where the total gross floor area of the buildings in the development plan exceeds 25,000 square metres.</i>																											
Why is a permit required?	<table><tr><th>Clause</th><th>Control</th><th>Trigger</th></tr><tr><td>Zone:</td><td>Clause 37.05-4</td><td>Docklands Zone sch 6</td><td>Demolish a building Construct a building or construct or carry out works</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>Clause 43.02</td><td>Design and Development Overlay sch 54</td><td>Construct a building or construct or carry out works</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>Clause 43.04</td><td>Development Plan Overlay sch 7</td><td>Must be consistent with the DP</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>Clause 45.09</td><td>Parking Overlay (PA10)</td><td>A permit is required to provide car parking spaces in excess of 1 to each 150sqm GFA for 'industry'</td></tr><tr><td>Particular Provisions:</td><td>Clause 52.06</td><td>Car Parking</td><td>Car parking detail</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>Clause 53.22</td><td>Significant Economic Development</td><td>\$10M development value in Metro Melbourne</td></tr></table>	Clause	Control	Trigger	Zone:	Clause 37.05-4	Docklands Zone sch 6	Demolish a building Construct a building or construct or carry out works		Clause 43.02	Design and Development Overlay sch 54	Construct a building or construct or carry out works		Clause 43.04	Development Plan Overlay sch 7	Must be consistent with the DP		Clause 45.09	Parking Overlay (PA10)	A permit is required to provide car parking spaces in excess of 1 to each 150sqm GFA for 'industry'	Particular Provisions:	Clause 52.06	Car Parking	Car parking detail		Clause 53.22	Significant Economic Development	\$10M development value in Metro Melbourne
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Cultural Heritage:	Repurposing an existing building is not considered to be high impact activity and thus a CHMP is not required.																											
Total Site Area:	26,800sqm																											
Gross Floor Area:	37,810sqm																											



Height:	2	Storeys, excluding carparking and plant	
	11.385m	excluding plant	
	12.76m	Overall height	
Land uses:	Laboratory	10,330sqm	
	Office	4,710sqm	
	Amenity	1,095sqm	
	Retail (collection)	525sqm	
	Ancillary warehouse	2,920sqm	
	Plant	3,070sqm	
	Car parking	15,160sqm	
	Total	37,810sqm	
Parking:	Cars	Motorcycles	Bicycles
	448	0	106
Referral Authorities:	Melbourne City Council (Informal Notice) Development Victoria (s55 – Determining) Department of Transport (s55 – Determining)		
Advice sought:	Approval of Addendum to Waterfront City Outline Development Plan and; Approval of Planning Permit PA2503685		
Public Notice:	An application under any provision of this planning scheme is exempt from the notice requirements of section 52(1)(a), (b) and (d), the decision requirements of section 64(1), (2) and (3) and the review rights of section 82(1) of the Act if: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• If a development plan has been prepared to the satisfaction of the responsible authority.• Capital City Zone provisions• DDO provisions		
Delegates List:	Approval to determine under delegation received on 18 June 2025		



Application Process

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

Milestone	Date
Pre-application meeting (DFP, Council & applicant)	Unknown
Application lodged with DFP (PPA-813)	23 October 2024
Application lodged with DA (DTP)	2 May 2025
Further information requested	27 May 2025
Further information received	5 June 2025
Decision Plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Certificate of Title, dated 2 May 2025.• Town Planning Report prepared by Human Habitats, dated 31 March 2025.• Architectural Plans prepared by Nettleton Tribe, dated 3 September 2024.• Urban Context Report prepared by Nettleton Tribe, dated 25 March 2025.• Landscape Plan prepared by Aspect Studios, dated 29 August 2024.• Economic Impact Assessment prepared by Urbis, dated 21 August 2024.• Traffic Impact Assessment prepared by Onemilegrid, dated 28 March 2025.• Waste Management Plan prepared by Onemilegrid, dated 5 September 2024.• Sustainability Management Plan prepared by Waterman, dated 25 March 2025.• Preliminary Tree Assessment prepared by Homewood Consulting, 23 July 2024.

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

Proposal Summary

3. The proposal can be summarised as follows:

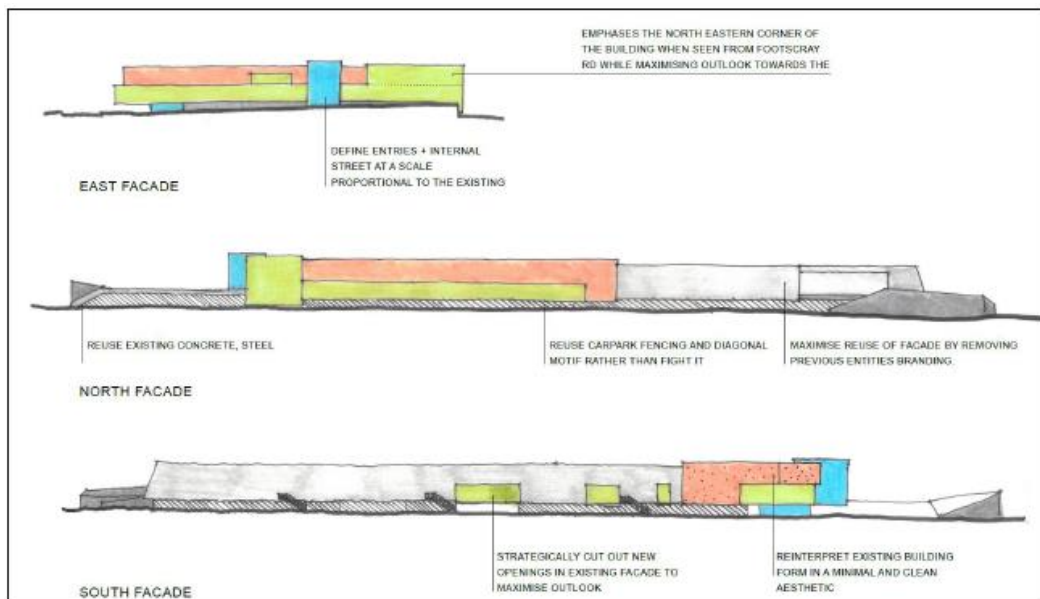
Key Information	Details
Proposal:	Addendum to the Waterfront City Outline Development Plan to facilitate the re-purpose and use of the Docklands Costco store for a consolidated research and development centre, incorporating laboratory spaces, offices, warehouse, staff amenity spaces, car parking and associated landscaping.
Total Site Area:	26,800 sqm
Gross Floor Area:	37,810sqm
Height:	12.76m
Setbacks:	Remains unchanged
Land Uses:	Research and Development Centre comprising of:



Laboratory	10,330sqm
Office	4,710sqm
Amenity	1,095sqm
Retail (collection)	525sqm
Ancillary warehouse	2,920sqm
Plant	3,070sqm
Car parking	15,160sqm
Total	37,810sqm
Car Parking:	448
Bicycle Parking:	106
Motorcycle Parking:	0
Loading and Waste arrangements:	Remain unchanged

4. Specific details of the application will :

- maintain a two-storey building height and include a new mezzanine to provide additional floor space.
- include internal reconfiguration to provide a reception area, staff lounge, laboratories, offices, warehouse, collection centre and end of trip facilities.
- reduce car parking from 550 to 448 spaces.
- Changes to the external façade to accommodate the proposed use.



5. The facility will be a state-of-the-art medical research and development hub, operating 365 days a year and employing more than 700 people when operating at full capacity. The laboratory is expected to process up to 15,000 tests per day.
6. The proposal is projected to generate a total of 600 jobs initially, including doctors, phlebotomists, medical scientists, administrators and logistics staff. This number will expand to approximately 720 in the future. The facility will operate 24 hours per day, 365 days per year with the peak staffing levels to occur between 2pm and 8pm daily with an anticipated 500 to 600 staff on site, reducing to approximately 60 staff during overnight shifts.
7. The applicant has provided the following concept images of the proposal:



VIEW OF FORECOURT FROM CORNER OF OBSERVATION DRIVE - WATERFRONT WAY



VIEW OF BUILDING ENTRY AND OUTDOOR STAFF AMENITY AREA



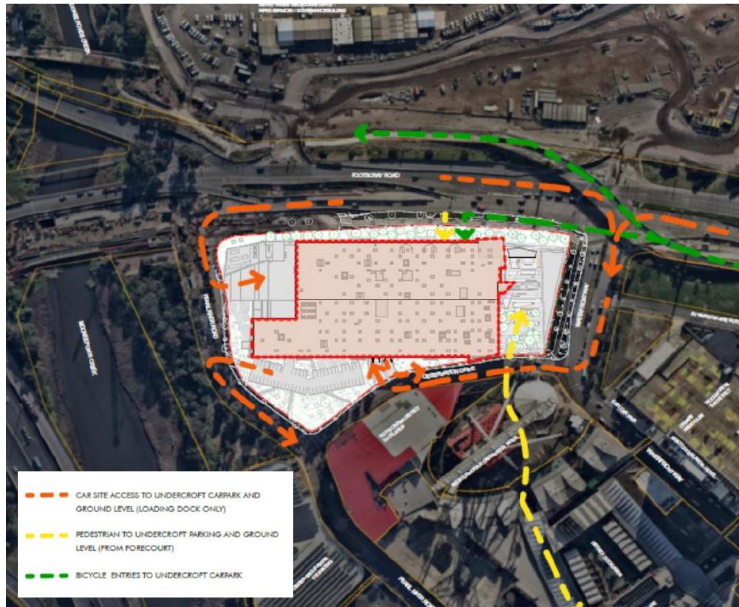
ELEVATED VIEW OF BUILDING ENTRY AND OUTDOOR STAFF AMENITY AREA



VIEW OF BUILDING ENTRY FROM ELEVATED FORECOURT

Changes required to the Development Plan to facilitate this use is as follows:

Page	Section	Addendum
4	Docklands Vision	Adds: 'Provide employment generating land uses that support the WFC precinct and create improved vibrancy'.
5	Commercial/hotel/serviced apartment diagram	Adds: the subject site to this diagram
10	1.6 – Staging and site presentation	Updates text : Stage 2 to 'Bulky Goods/ Homemaker / Retail & Research & Development Centre '
12	1.7 – Summary of Plan...	Adds: Research & Development Centre
12	Retail Diagram	Adds: ...& employment generating uses
18	Pedestrian Access map	Adds new map – <i>see below</i>
23	2.2- uses and use Pattern	Adds: Research & Development Centre
38-43	Schematic feasibility Plans	Deletes 'car park' from No. 15 and adds: Research & Development Centre to No. 21





Site Description

8. The subject site is located at 331-381 Footscray Road, Docklands, formally identified as Lot 1 on Plan of Subdivision 624997.
9. The subject site is located within Waterfront City, located approximately two kilometres west from the Melbourne CBD. Waterfront City is the western entrance to Docklands. It sits between Victoria Harbour, NewQuay, and the Bolte Bridge.
10. The subject site is an irregular shaped land parcel with a total site area of approximately 26,800 sqm. The site has a frontage of approximately 230m to Footscray Road to the north, a frontage to Pearl River Road to the west of 170m, a frontage to Observation Drive to the south of 160m, and a frontage to Waterfront Way of 90m.
11. The site is currently improved by a two-storey building that provides approximately 14,500 sqm of retail floor space, previously tenanted by Costco, now vacant. It also provides 550 car parking spaces.
12. Primary vehicle access is via Observation Drive to the south, with a secondary vehicle crossover and a separate loading ramp are provided on Pearl River Road.

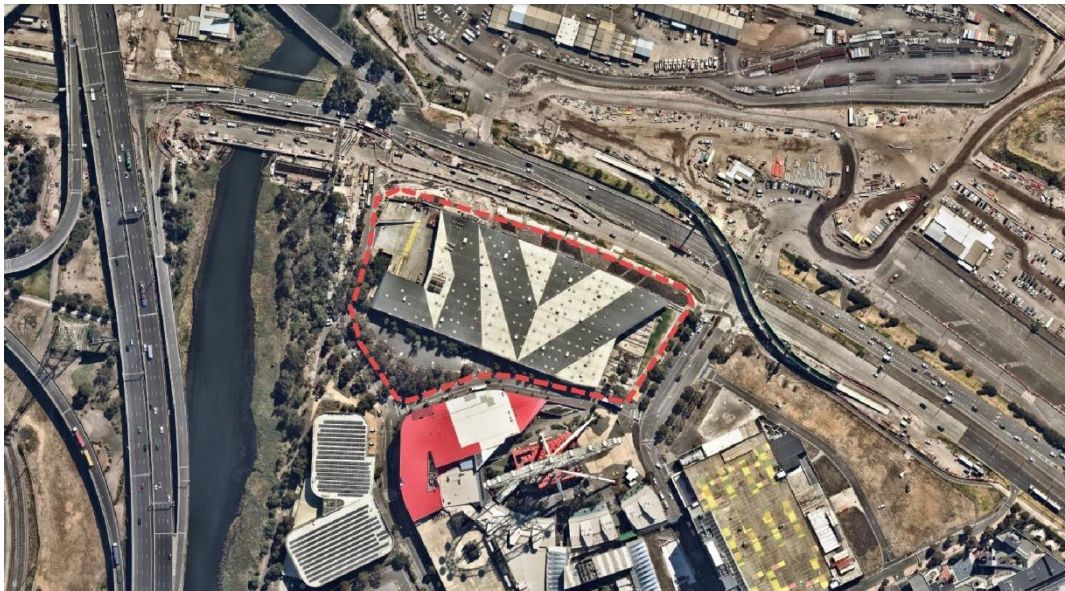


Figure 1: Subject site

13. Title details and encumbrances: the site is affected by a section 173 agreement that is created by Instrument AG098739R. This Agreement is between Victorian Urban and Costco, stopping the owner making any claims for site remediation.
14. The site is encumbered by two easements along the northern frontage, adjacent to Footscray Road. Easements 'E-2' and 'E-3' which run in an east/west orientation and are associated with 'transmission supply or distribution of electricity' and 'power supply'. The easements benefit CitiPower Ltd or any other electricity cooperation/distribution company.
15. Neither of the encumbrances discussed above will affect the consideration of this application in any way.

Site Surrounds

16. The surrounding development consists of a mix of land uses, including the Victoria Harbour shopping precinct, residential land uses, office and commercial uses and sporting facilities.

17. Development surrounding the site can be described as follows:

- To the **north** of the site, on the northern side of Footscray Road is the future E-Gate, currently containing the railway network, marshalling yard and associated buildings.
- To the **south** of the site is the Melbourne Observation Wheel, which is now permanently closed.
- To the **east** of the site is Market Lane, which includes a multi-level car parking building, retail spaces including a supermarket and a number of speciality shops.
- To the **west** of the site, on the western side of Pearl River Road, includes the Moonee Ponds Creek Trail and the Moonee Ponds Creek. Beyond this, land is generally used for industrial, transport and port uses.

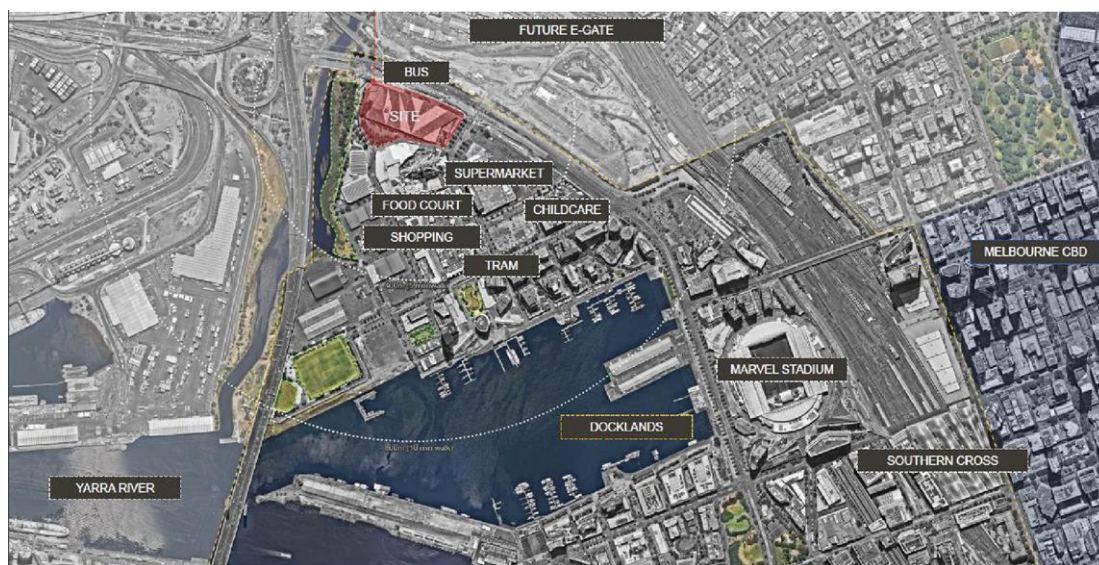


Figure 2: Development and uses surrounding the site

18. The site is well serviced by public transport. The site is located 400m from Tram Stop 11 on Docklands Drive, which is serviced by Tram 35, 70 and 86. Southern Cross Station is located within a 20min walking distance from the site.

19. A site inspection of the subject site and surrounds was undertaken on 5 June 2025. Images of the site and surrounds are reflected in figures below:



Figure 3: View of subject site from Footscray Road and Waterfront Way intersection



Figure 4: View of subject site from Footscray Road (looking northwest)

Figure 5: View of subject site from Waterfront Way (looking north)



Figure 6: View of subject site from Waterfront Way (looking southwest (car parking))



Figure 7: Subject site forecourt



Municipal Planning Strategy

20. The following objectives and strategies of the Municipal Strategic Statement of the scheme are relevant to the proposal:

Clause	Description
02.01	Context
02.02	Vision
02.03-1	Settlement – Docklands
02.03-3	Amenity, Safety, Noise
02.03-4	Built Environment
02.03-6	Economic Development

Planning Policy Framework

21. The following objectives and strategies of the Planning Policy Framework of the scheme are relevant to the proposal:

Clause 11	Settlement
11.01-1S	Settlement
11.01-1R	Settlement – Metropolitan Melbourne
11.02-1S	Supply of Urban Land
11.03-1S	Activity centres
11.03-6L-03	Docklands
Clause 13	Environmental Risks and Amenity
13.07S	Amenity, Human Health & Safety – Land Use Compatibility
Clause 15	Built Environment and Heritage
15.01-1L-04	Built Environment – Urban Design
15.01-2L-01	Energy and Resource Efficiency
Clause 17	Economic Development
17.01	Employment
17.01-1R	Diversified Economy – Metropolitan Melbourne
17.01-2S	Innovation and Research
17.02	Commercial – Business
Zone	
37.05s6	Docklands Zone Sch 6
Overlays	
43.02s12	Design and Development Overlay Sch 12 – Noise Attenuation Area
43.02s54	Design and Development Overlay Sch 54 – Business Park Precinct
43.04s7	Development Plan Overlay Sch 7 – Business Park Precinct
45.07	City Link Project Overlay (CLPO)
45.09s10	Parking Overlay Sch 10

Particular and General Provisions

52.06	Car parking
52.34	Bicycle facilities
53.22	Significant Economic Development
65	Decision Guidelines

Zoning and Overlays

Applicable Zone

Docklands Zone

22. Pursuant to clause 37.05-4 (Docklands Zone) – A permit is required to construct a building or construct or carry out works and to demolish or remove a buildings or works.

23. Land use – Research and Development Centre is a section 1 use within this zone (no permit required).

24. Clause 37.05-7 (Effect of approved development plans) provides:

In respect of any land that has been developed pursuant to a development plan approved by the responsible authority prior to 7 April 2008 under Clause 415 of the former Melbourne Docklands Area Planning Provisions (September 2006), the use and development of the land must comply with the approved development plan, including any conditions which apply to the plan, except with the further consent of the responsible authority.

25. The Waterfront City Outline Development Plan affects this site and was approved in 2003. This proposal seeks and addendum to the Waterfront City Outline Development Plan to facilitate the proposed use. This will be discussed in more detail in the latter part of this report.

26. The purpose of the Docklands Zone is:

- *To implement the Municipal Planning Strategy and the Planning Policy Framework.*
- *To ensure that use and development take account of the unique nature of the water environment.*
- *To encourage a variety of dwelling types within the Melbourne Docklands area to suit a diversity of needs.*
- *To ensure that development takes account of the relationship of the Melbourne Docklands area to the Central Activities District and the policies relating to the future development of the Central Activities District and other parts of the capital city.*
- *To encourage visual and physical linkages between the Melbourne Docklands and adjacent areas, in particular the Central Business District.*
- *To provide for the conservation and enhancement of buildings, areas and places of scientific, aesthetic, architectural or historical significance.*

27. The purpose of schedule 6 to Docklands Zone (Business Park Precinct) is:

- *To provide for a range of commercial, residential, recreational, educational, technology and business and leisure uses within a mixed use environment.*
- *To provide for a range of active and people orientated uses at the lower levels of buildings that are complementary of residential uses.*

- *To acknowledge the retention of port related activities west of Bolte Bridge.*

Applicable Overlays

28. A planning permit is required to construct a building or construct or carry out works pursuant to clause 43.02-2 for buildings and works.

29. The purpose clause 43.02 (Design and Development Overlay) is to:

- *To implement the Municipal Planning Strategy and the Planning Policy Framework.*
- *To identify areas which are affected by specific requirements relating to the design and built form of new development.*

30. Schedule 12 to DDO (Noise Attenuation Area)

- The clause sets out acoustic measures that must be met for any new or refurbished development, or any conversion of part or all of an existing building that will accommodate new residential or other noise-sensitive uses. Since the proposal is not for a noise-sensitive use, the overlay is not applicable.

31. Schedule 54 to DDO (Business Park Precinct)

- The site is identified within Area 1 of this Overlay. An application must be accompanied by a site analysis and urban context report which demonstrates how the proposed buildings and works achieves each of the Design Objectives of this schedule, and any local planning policy requirements.

Table 1 to Schedule 54	
Area	Maximum building height
DDO 54 Area 1	<p>45 metres except for:</p> <p>Buildings or structures forming part of a theme park which may extend to 60 metres.</p> <p>Buildings or structures located within the Waterfront City Precinct that are used for or associated with entertainment purposes that will be a significant attraction for visitors and/or tourists, where no height limit will apply.</p>

32. The site is affected by clause 45.07 (City Link Project Overlay (CLPO) , which has the purpose :

- *To implement the Municipal Planning Strategy and the Planning Policy Framework.*
- *To ensure the efficient construction, operation and maintenance of the Melbourne City Link Project, the Exhibition Street Extension Project and CityLink Tulla Widening Project.*
- *To ensure that the display of a Business identification sign on land no longer required for the Melbourne City Link Project or the Exhibition Street Extension Project is limited to a level that does not compete with the display of signs shown on the plan titled "Melbourne City Link Project - Advertising Sign Locations November 2003".*



33. The site is affected by clause 43.04 (Development Plan Overlay (DPO)), which has the purpose
- *To implement the Municipal Planning Strategy and the Planning Policy Framework.*
 - *To identify areas which require the form and conditions of future use and development to be shown on a development plan before a permit can be granted to use or develop the land.*
 - *To exempt an application from notice and review if a development plan has been prepared to the satisfaction of the responsible authority.*
34. Pursuant to clause 43.04-2, a permit must not be granted to use or subdivide land, construct a building or construct or carry out works until a development plan has been prepared to the satisfaction of the responsible authority unless a schedule to this overlay specifically states that a permit may be granted before a development plan has been prepared to the satisfaction of the responsible authority.
35. A permit granted must:
- *Be generally in accordance with the development plan.*
 - *Include any conditions or requirements specified in a schedule to this overlay.*
36. Pursuant to clause 43.04-4 (Preparation of the development plan), the development plan may consist of plans or other documents and may, with the agreement of the responsible authority, be prepared and implemented in stages. The development plan may be amended to the satisfaction of the responsible authority.
37. Schedule 7 to DDP (Business Park Precinct) required the preparation of the Waterfront City Outline Development Plan for the site. This plans identifies the subject site for 'Bulky goods, homemaker and entertainment retail'. An amendment to the Development Plan is required to insert the land use 'Research and Development Centre' (sought by this application) in the Development Plan.
38. Clause 45.09 Parking Overlay (PO10) has the purpose :
- *To implement the Municipal Planning Strategy and the Planning Policy Framework.*
 - *To facilitate an appropriate provision of car parking spaces in an area.*
 - *To identify areas and uses where local car parking rates apply.*
 - *To identify areas where financial contributions are to be made for the provision of shared car parking.*
39. A permit is required to provide car parking spaces in excess of the maximum number specified in the Table. A maximum of 1 to each 150sqm of gross floor area is required for an industry use (as Research and Development Centre is nested within the broader definition of Industry). A maximum of 195 car spaces are required for a GFA of 19,580sqm (industry use). 448 car spaces are proposed.

Particular and General Provisions

Provisions that Require, Enable or Exempt a Permit

40. Clause 52.06 sets out the requirements of car parking design.

General Requirements and Performance Standards

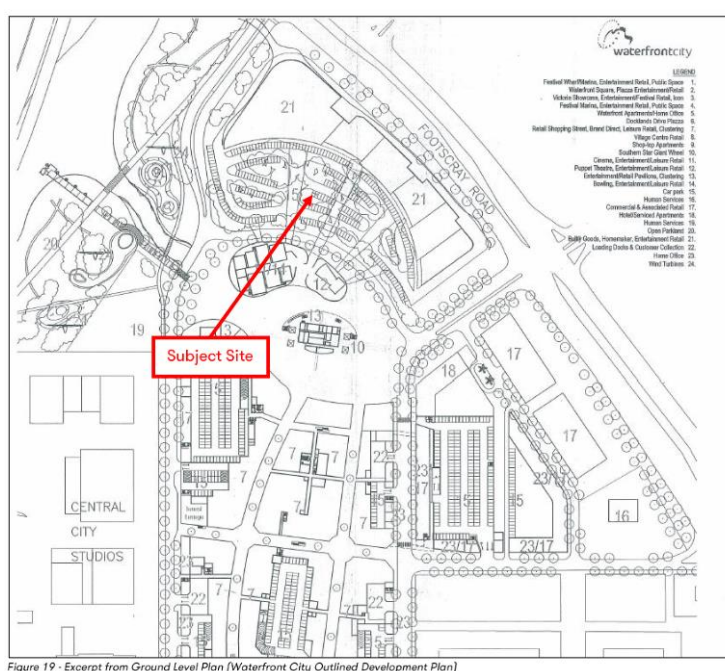
41. Clause 53.22 (Significant Economic Development) applies to application . This application is submitted under Category 1 of this provision as it is above the \$20M threshold, required for Metropolitan Melbourne.

Relevant Strategic Plan / Background Documents

Strategic Documents

Waterfront City Outline Development Plan (September 2003)

42. Waterfront City is a mixed-use precinct comprising retail, entertainment, residential, commercial, and leisure spaces. It provides an alternative to high-rise living in Docklands, featuring architecturally designed apartments and townhouses set within private garden environments.
43. DD07 identifies a number of Outline Development Plans approved for Docklands. Among these, the Waterfront City Outline Development Plan, approved on 28 November 2003, is the only relevant Development Plan for this site. It indicates the construction of a single-storey, large-format building at the subject location, fronting Footscray Road, with at-grade parking located at the rear to be used as 'bulky goods, homemaker, and entertainment retail and car park.



44. The latter part of this report includes discussions of how the proposal responds to the above requirements.



Referrals

45. The application was referred to the following groups:

Provision / Clause	Organisation	Response and date received
Section 55 Referral – Determining	TfV (Department of Transport and Planning	11/06/2025
Section 55 Referral – Determining	Development Victoria	3/06/2025
Informal Notice	City of Melbourne	18/06/2025
Internal	Urban Design	22/05/2025

Municipal Council Comments

46. The Melbourne City Council (**the council**) considered the application at their committee on 17 June 2025. The council determined:

- To support the addendum to Development Plan that affects the site, to include Research and Development Centre as a land use to facilitate the adaptive reuse of the existing Costco building, at 331-381 Footscray Road, Docklands.
- To support building and works of the existing Costco building, by making external upgrades including additional windows to the laboratory spaces and allied offices, internal fit out changes, additional landscaping and improvements to the building's thermal performance and its adaptive reuse (subject to conditions).
- The conditions required by the Council have been included as conditions on the permit.

Advice sought from other agencies

47. Development Victoria and Citylink (Department of Transport and Planning) provided no objections for the proposal.

48. Head of Transport for Victoria did not object to the proposal.

49. DTP's Urban Design team supported the proposal as it will deliver a series of benefits to the precinct, including:

- Upgrades to public realm and landscaping at Waterfront Way.
- Increased glazed elements to building interfaces, improving visual permeability between the building and adjacent streets.

Notice

50. The application is exempt from the notice requirements of section 52(1)(a), (b) and (d), the decision requirements of section 64(1), (2) and (3) and the review rights of section 82(1) of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* pursuant to the following provisions:

- Clause 37.05-6 (use and buildings & works) (Docklands Zone)
- Clause 43.04 (if a Development Plan has been prepared to the satisfaction of the responsible authority)
- Clause 43.02 (buildings & works)



Key Considerations


52. The following are deemed the key considerations in assessing the acceptability of the proposal:
- Whether there is policy support for an addendum of the Waterfront City Outline Development Plan to facilitate the adaptable reuse of the building.
 - Whether the addendum of the Waterfront City Outline Development Plan is satisfactory.
 - Whether there is policy support for change in land use and proposed buildings & works, as proposed.

Strategic Direction

53. The *Planning Policy Framework* encourages 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 proposed buildings and works and land use is consistent with the strategic direction of the following policies.
54. This proposal is for an adaptive reuse of an existing building within an existing Urban renewal area (clause 02.03-1 - Settlement). This intent is supported by clause 11.01-1R (Settlement- Metropolitan Melbourne) and it will help maintain a permanent urban growth boundary around Melbourne to create a more consolidated, sustainable city and protect the values of non-urban land, while ensuring a sufficient supply of land is available for residential, commercial, retail, industrial, recreational, institutional and other community uses (clause 11.02-1S - Supply of Urban Land) and will encourage the concentration of major retail, residential, commercial, administrative, entertainment and cultural developments into activity centres that are highly accessible to the community (clause 11.03-1S - Activity Centres). The proposal is supported by clause 11.03-6L-03 -Docklands, as it will provide a waterfront place of character and quality in which to live, work and visit.
55. The proposal is consistent with clause 13.07 (Amenity, Human Health & Safety - Land Use Compatibility) and (clause 02.03-3- Environmental Risk and Amenity) - as it will protect community amenity, human health and safety while facilitating appropriate commercial, industrial, infrastructure or other uses with potential adverse off-site impacts.
56. As the proposal is to retrofit an existing building, comprising only minor external buildings and works (with no significant change in height and setbacks) and improving the performance of the building, it is consistent with clause 15.01-1L-04 (Built Environment - Urban Design), clause 15.01-2L-01 (Energy and Resource Efficiency) and (clause 02.03-4 - Built Environment and Heritage).
57. The proposal is consistent with clause 17.01 (Employment) and Clause 02.03-6 (Economic Development) as it will strengthen and diversify the economy, clause 17.01-1R (Diversified Economy - Metropolitan Melbourne) in that it will support the Central City to become Australia's largest commercial and residential centre by 2050, by planning for office, retail, residential, education, health, entertainment and cultural activity spaces, clause 17.01-2S (Innovation and Research) in that it will create opportunities for innovation and the knowledge economy within existing and emerging industries, research and education and support development that meets the community's needs for retail, entertainment, office and other commercial services (clause 17.02 (Commercial - Business)).

Whether there is policy support for addendum of the Waterfront City Outline Development Plan to facilitate the adaptable reuse of the building.

58. Waterfront City is a mixed-use precinct comprising retail, entertainment, residential, commercial, and leisure spaces. It provides an alternative to high-rise living in Docklands, featuring architecturally designed apartments and townhouses set within private garden environments. The Waterfront City Outline Development Plan, approved on 28 November 2003, is the only relevant Development Plan for this site. It indicates the construction of a single-storey, large-format building at the subject location, fronting Footscray Road, with at-grade parking located at the rear to be used as 'bulky goods, homemaker, and entertainment retail and car park.

- 
59. The subject site is located in the Docklands Zone (Schedule 6) of the Melbourne Planning Scheme. Pursuant to clause 37.05, Research & Development Centre use is a section 1 use in the Docklands Zone. A permit is required for demolition and buildings and works only. The approval of this addendum to facilitate Research & Development Centre use does not contravene the purpose of the Docklands Zone schedule 6, which supports the provision of a range of commercial, residential, recreational, educational, technology and business and leisure uses within a mixed use environment.
60. Clause 37.05-7 (Effect of approved development plans) provides:
- In respect of any land that has been developed pursuant to a development plan approved by the responsible authority prior to 7 April 2008 under Clause 415 of the former Melbourne Docklands Area Planning Provisions (September 2006), the use and development of the land must comply with the approved development plan, including any conditions which apply to the plan, except with the further consent of the responsible authority.*
61. Addendum to the Waterfront City Outline Development Plan is therefore required to facilitate the re-purpose and use of the Docklands Costco store for a research and development centre.

Is the addendum of the Waterfront City Outline Development Plan justified and satisfactory.

62. As described in the proposal section of the report, the addendum will be as follows:
- Allows for Research & Development Centre use on the site (No. 21 and 15),
 - Deletes reference to car parking and adding this land use to 'Bulky Goods/ Homemaker / Retail.
 - Updates the Docklands Vision to include 'Provide employment generating land uses that support the WFC precinct and create improved vibrancy'.
63. This change to the Development Plan and its approval will now allow for and facilitate the use and development of the site for a Research & Development Centre, allowing the consideration of Planning Application PA2503685, which is currently before the Minister for Planning.
64. As noted earlier, pursuant to clause 37.05, Research & Development Centre use is a section 1 use in the Docklands Zone. A permit is required for demolition and buildings and works only. The approval of this addendum to facilitate Research & Development Centre use does not contravene the purpose of the Docklands Zone schedule 6, which supports the provision of a range of commercial, residential, recreational, educational, technology and business and leisure uses within a mixed use environment.
65. It is therefore recommended that the addendum to the Waterfront City Outline Development Plan be approved.

Whether there is policy support for change in land use and proposed buildings & works, as proposed.

Zone provisions

66. Docklands Zone schedule 6, supports the provision of a range of commercial, residential, recreational, educational, technology and business and leisure uses within a mixed use environment. Research & Development Centre use is a section 1 use within DZ6. With the amendment of the development plan to include the Research & Development Centre land use, clause 37.05-7 (Effect of approved development plans) allows for the consideration of this land use.
67. Under the Docklands Zone provisions, a planning permit required for demolition and buildings and works only. Buildings and works are being influenced by the Design and Development Overlay that affects the site. This is discussed in the next section of this report

Overlay provisions

68. Clause 43.02 (Design and Development Overlay Schedule 54) of the Melbourne Planning Scheme locates the site within Area 1 of this Overlay which has a height restriction of 45 metres. The proposal makes minimal changes to

the height of the building, retaining the bulk of the overall built form. The building will have an overall height of 12.76m.

69. Setbacks of the buildings remain unchanged.
70. Architectural elements will be added to the building which will positively contribute to its visual appearance and improve performance. The building will maximise reusing façade and reinterpret existing building form in a minimal and clean way. The break in façade will complement and align with internal functions of the building. New openings will be cut out in the existing façade to maximise outlook and maximise daylight access to the building. The entry of the building will be better defined through double scale frame, which will provide entries proportionate to the scale of the building.

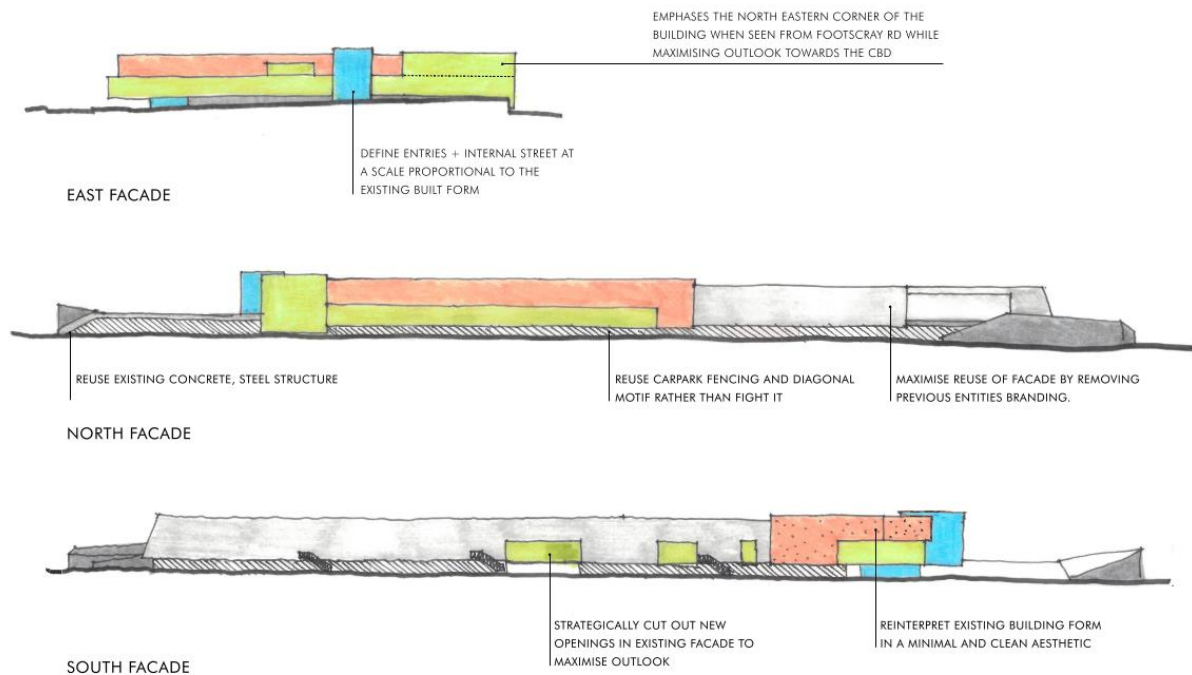


Figure 8: Proposed Facade Design

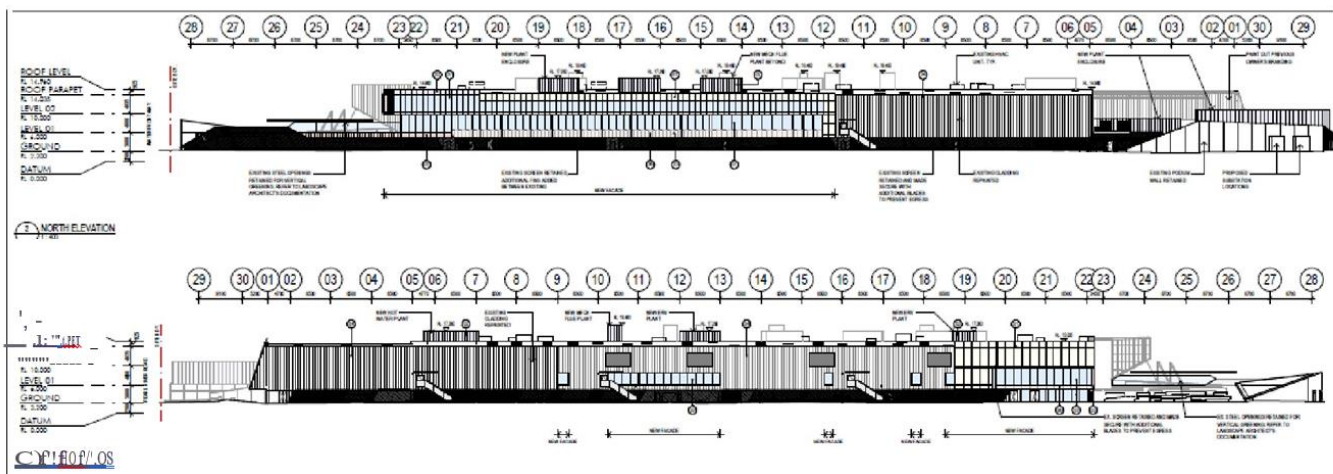


Figure 9: Proposed north and south elevations



Figure 10: Artists' impression of the proposal

71. The changes to the built form, due to its superficial or minor nature where heights and setback remain unaffected, will not increase the extent of overshadowing.
72. A Landscape Report prepared by Aspect Studios dated 29.08.2024 has been submitted with the application. Landscaping is proposed along all boundaries of the building, made up of both hardscape and softscape features. Existing landscaping works are to be retained and upgraded where possible, including the garden beds along the southern boundary and the rockworks along the northern boundary. The design will revitalise the arrival space, creating a welcoming environment for both visitors and staff. The significance of the main arrival and public interfaces will be celebrated, incorporating outdoor staff amenities and integrating repurposed elements within the forecourt extent.
73. Recreational open spaces will be developed that will be tailored to the needs of the staff, offering thoughtfully designed outdoor areas that promote comfort and wellness. These spaces will feature various seating typologies to accommodate diverse preferences and activities. Environmental improvements by mitigating urban heat island effects, boosting thermal performance, and expanding urban canopy cover.
74. A Preliminary Tree Assessment prepared by Homewood Consulting Pty Ltd dated 23 July 2024 has been submitted with the application that has assessed 34 trees on site, of which 24 are located within the Council road reserve. Tree species are as follows:

Botanical Name	Common Name	Number of Individuals
<i>Angophora costata</i>	Smooth-barked Apple Myrtle	13
<i>Agathis robusta</i>	Queensland Kauri	11
<i>Corymbia citriodora</i>	Lemon-scented Gum	6
<i>Eucalyptus leucoxylon</i>	Yellow Gum	3
<i>Corymbia ficifolia</i>	Flowering Gum	1
Total		34

75. The report assessed the majority of trees have fair or good health (85%) and fair structure (74%), and 25 of the 34 trees assessed have a ULE exceeding 20 years. Three *Agathis robusta* along Observation Drive are in poor health (Trees 6, 8 and 10) and two *Angophora costata* are in poor health (Trees 21 and 22). These trees have a Useful Life Expectancy (ULE) of less than 10 years and could be considered for long term replacement within the landscape. Tree 6 has poor health and poor structure and a ULE of less than 5 years, has damage at the base of the trunk from vehicle impacts and should be considered for removal in the short term.
76. This is satisfactory. Appropriate conditions to protect those trees that are recommended to be retained have been included in the permit.



77. Clause 43.02 (Design and Development Overlay Schedule 12) of the Melbourne Planning Scheme affects the site and requires any new or refurbished development or any conversion of part or all of an existing building that will accommodate new residential or other noise-sensitive uses to be noise attenuated. The land use, Research & Development Centre is not a sensitive land use and this is therefore not required. A permit is not required for buildings and works other than buildings and works associated with new, refurbished or converted developments for noise sensitive uses.
78. Clause 43.04 (Development Plan) – as noted earlier s development plans has been prepared for this site and need to be amended to facilitate the proposed use and development.
79. Clause 45.07 (City Link Project) abuts the site and has the purpose to ensure the efficient construction, operation and maintenance of the Melbourne City Link Project, the Exhibition Street Extension Project and CityLink Tulla Widening Project. The proposal was referred to City Link via Department of Transport and Planning (Roads)/TfV who offered no objections. There is no permit trigger under this overlay.
80. Clause 45.09s10 (Parking Overlay) - A permit is required to provide car parking spaces in excess of 1 to each 150sqm GFA for 'industry' (as Research and development use is nested within the broader definition of Industry). For GFA of 22,650sqm, 151 car spaces are required. This proposal will retain most of the car spaces on site (losing only 102). 448 car spaces will be provided. Given that this is an existing condition and has worked well with the former tenant, despite the greater demand for the use of the car park, this is satisfactory. This proposal seeks to reduce the intensity of car park use rather than increase it.

Particular provisions

Car and Bicycle Parking, Loading, and Other Services

Clause 52.06: Car Parking

81. As noted earlier, clause 45.09s10 (Parking Overlay) dictates car parking requirements on site. 1 car park to each 150sqm GFA for 'industry' (as Research and development use is nested within the broader definition of Industry) is needed. For the proposal, with a GFA of 22,650sqm, 151 car spaces are required. This proposal will lose 102), retaining 448 car spaces. The Council has required that one car share is provided. The proponent has provided this will not be practical to provide as the car park will be secure and not open to the public. In any case, there are cars paces available that can easy be converted to car share, should the demand arise. .

Design Standards for Car Parking

82. Generally speaking, the car parking and access design is proposed to remain largely as per existing conditions, with modifications proposed to reduce car parking improve pedestrian connectivity through the area. One Mole Grid state that the proposal has a high level of compliance with Clause 52.09-9, specifically Design Standard 1 and Design Standard 2 (Car Parking). All on-site car spaces will have a minimum width of 2.6 m, a length of 5.4 m, and aisles no less than 6.6 m wide. Spaces next to walls will meet the Planning Scheme's Design Standard 2. Accessible bays will be 5.4 m long and 2.6 m wide, with an adjacent shared area of the same size, exceeding the requirements of the Australian Standard for off-street parking for people with disabilities (AS 2890.6:2022). The Council has offered conditions which will be included in any approval.

Access, Traffic Movement and Circulation

83. Proposed modifications to the under-croft car park include adding new services and enhancing pedestrian connectivity, with two centrally located lifts and staircases. These changes will reduce on-site parking by 102 spaces, leaving a total of 448 spaces. Access will still be provided via the existing connection to Observation Drive, but the western entry lane will be modified to connect directly to the car park's western end for improved access. The emergency exit at the western end of the outdoor car park will remain open, providing an additional exit point with a left-out only onto Pearl River Road. Boom gates will be retained at all entry and exit lanes. A forecourt is proposed at the eastern end with a connection to Observation Drive.



84. The submitted One Mile Grid Traffic Impact Assessment expects the Melbourne Pathology to generate a peak of up to 491 vehicle movements during the PM peak hour. The former Costco use, with a floor area of 15,720sqm generated approximately 1,556 movements during the weekday PM peak hour, and 1,917 movements during the weekend PM peak hour. The proposed development will therefore improve traffic conditions and reduce congestion throughout the surrounding network.
85. The Council has required the provision of a double width crossover of at least 5.0m in width to Observation Drive from the proposed drop off area, to ensure incoming vehicles don't have to reverse onto the road when other vehicles are exiting, amongst other conditions which will be included in any approval.
86. The Council has also required a formal independent desktop Road Safety Audit (RSA) of the proposed development must be undertaken prior to construction at the developer's expense, to include vehicular/bicycle/pedestrian access arrangements, loading arrangements and internal circulation/layout. The findings of the RSA must be incorporated into the detailed design, at the developer's expense.
87. DTP will not include this condition on any approval. This condition appears to be onerous as, except for the new accessway from Observation Drive to the proposed drop off area, the site access, roads, loading dock are all existing conditions and the proposed use is far less intensive than the previous use as a Costco retail use.

Clause 52.34 : Bicycle Facilities

88. Clause 52.34-1 of the Scheme requires bicycle parking facilities at the rate of 1 per 1000sqm of GFA for an Industry use. For the proposal, with a GFA of 22,650sqm, 23 bicycle spaces are required. Three shower facilities are required. The proposal will provide a total of 106 bicycle spaces and eight shower facilities. This is satisfactory.

Loading / Unloading

89. The loading area is in the northwest corner with access via a wide crossover to Pearl River Road. The loading area will remain unchanged and can accommodate up to five 12.5 m heavy rigid vehicles (HRV). The hardstand area can accommodate a 20m semi-trailer for on-site turning. The Council has offered conditions which will be included in any approval.

Waste

90. A waste management plan has been prepared by One Mile Grid. The report states that bulk bins will be stored within a dedicated bin storage area, adjacent to the loading facility and collected by a private contractor. All clinical (incl. sharps), anatomical, and hazardous chemical waste will be managed in accordance with the Industry Code of Practice for the Management of Biohazardous Waste (including Clinical & Related wastes). Specialist waste removal contractors will be engaged to remove these streams from the facility. The Council has offered conditions which will be included in any approval.

Environmental Risks

Sustainability

91. The proposal will include a wide range of sustainability measures, integrated into the early design of the development to be able to achieve high levels of Environmentally Sustainable Design. The submitted SMP prepared by Waterman Group Pty Ltd v3 dated 25 March 2025 suggests that the proposal will reuse the entirety of the building's structural and facade system. The development of a proposed Green Star Pathway for the facility based on achieving equivalent outcomes to a 5 Star Green Star rated facility.
92. With regard to Energy, the buildings overall aim is to reduce energy consumption as far as reasonably practical with the aim to transition to Carbon Neutral in the future via the procurement of Large-Scale Generation Certificate and/or on-site generation.

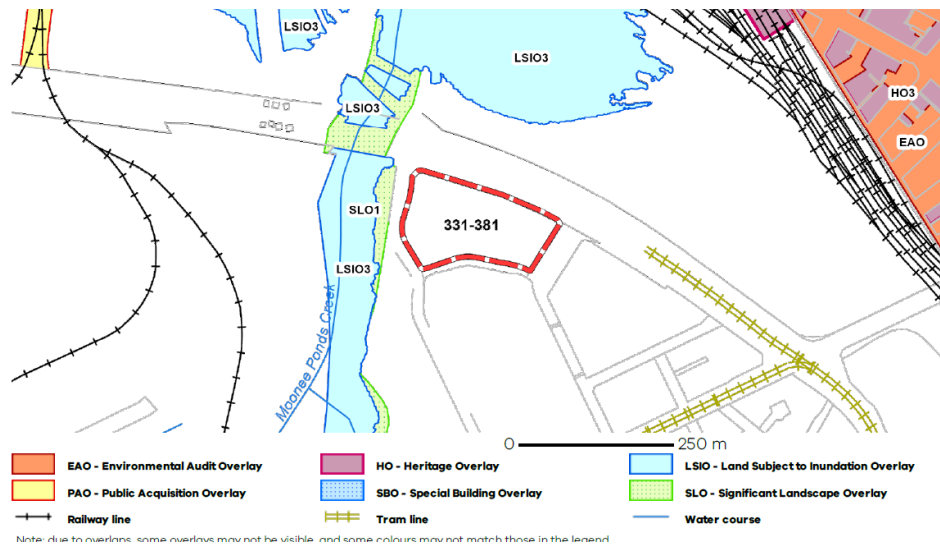
93. Water consumption will be minimised through the use of efficient fittings and fixtures, extensive reuse of rainwater harvested for flushing toilets and inclusion of future connection facilities to allow a non-potable water supply to be connected to future recycled water infrastructure provided by the local water authority (purple pipe system).
94. It will be required as a condition on any approval that the recommendations of this report are incorporated in the development.

Wind Conditions

95. As the building and works proposed are 'superficial', it does not change wind conditions on site, which is generally very comfortable for walking, standing and sitting.

Flood Mitigation

96. The subject site is not located with land that is prone to flooding. In any case the habitable parts of the building are located on the first floor of the building with the car park located at the ground level.



Other Matters

Cultural Heritage

97. Part of the site is located within an area of Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Sensitivity. A cultural heritage management plan (CHMP) is not required in this instance as the proposal refurbishes and existing building which is not considered to be a high impact activity.

Clause 53.22: Significant Economic Development

98. This application for a planning permit is lodged under clause 53.22 of the Melbourne Planning Scheme. A merits assessment under this provision is not required. The proposal is valued at \$92M, well over the \$10M development value in Metro Melbourne threshold to be eligible under this provision.



99. The proposal is generally consistent with the relevant planning policies of the Melbourne Planning Scheme and will bring workers/greater activity to the Docklands precinct. It will directly and indirectly contribute the economy of the Docklands area. The proposal is a good re-use of an existing building.
100. The proposal is generally supported by the various referral agencies, subject to inclusion of generic conditions.
101. It is **recommended** that the Addendum to the Waterfront City Outline Development Plan to facilitate the re-purpose and use of the Docklands Costco building for a Research and Development Centre be approved.
102. Once the DP is approved, it is **recommended** that Planning Permit No. PA2503685 issue for demolition, buildings and works and for an oversupply of car parking under Parking Overlay s10 for 331-381 Footscray Road, Docklands, subject to conditions.
103. It is **recommended** that the applicant, the council, Development Victoria and Department of Transport and Planning 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.



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:
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