

93–95 QUEEN STREET MELBOURNE



CLIENT

Whitehouse Institute — Daniel Clements

PROJECT NUMBER

26007

PROPOSED USE

Class 9b — Tertiary Education /
Class 4 option (Level 6)

EXISTING USE

Class 5 — Commercial Office

PREPARED BY

Plico Design Studio

STATUS

Advisory — Pre-Exchange — Rev 3

PLICO ADVISORY — ACQUISITION ASSESSMENT

ACQUIRABLE — MAKE A CONDITIONAL OFFER

93–95 Queen Street is a viable acquisition for a Class 9b tertiary education use, subject to resolution of a complete set of existing fire services and mechanical compliance items prior to exchange.

The building's height (7 storeys above ground plus basement) triggers a stairwell pressurisation requirement under NCC 2022 regardless of occupant load. However, the building surveyor has indicated that retrofit pressurisation can be retrofitted for a building of this type and configuration. At a revised occupant load of 150 persons, Performance Solution pathways are available for the majority of compliance items — materially reducing the cost exposure compared with a full Deemed-to-Satisfy upgrade programme.

The key item before exchange is resolution of the sprinkler flow test failure — this determines whether a Performance Solution for pressurisation is available or whether a full pressurisation system is required.

Plico's recommendation: make a conditional offer to purchase the property, with the offer subject to the vendor demonstrating that fire protection performance requirements can be met.

Indicative Compliance Investment

These figures are indicative only and are based on comparable Melbourne mid-rise change-of-use projects. They must be replaced by consultant quotes and contractor estimates before being relied upon for acquisition modelling. Compliance costs should be treated as a price adjustment lever in purchase negotiations.

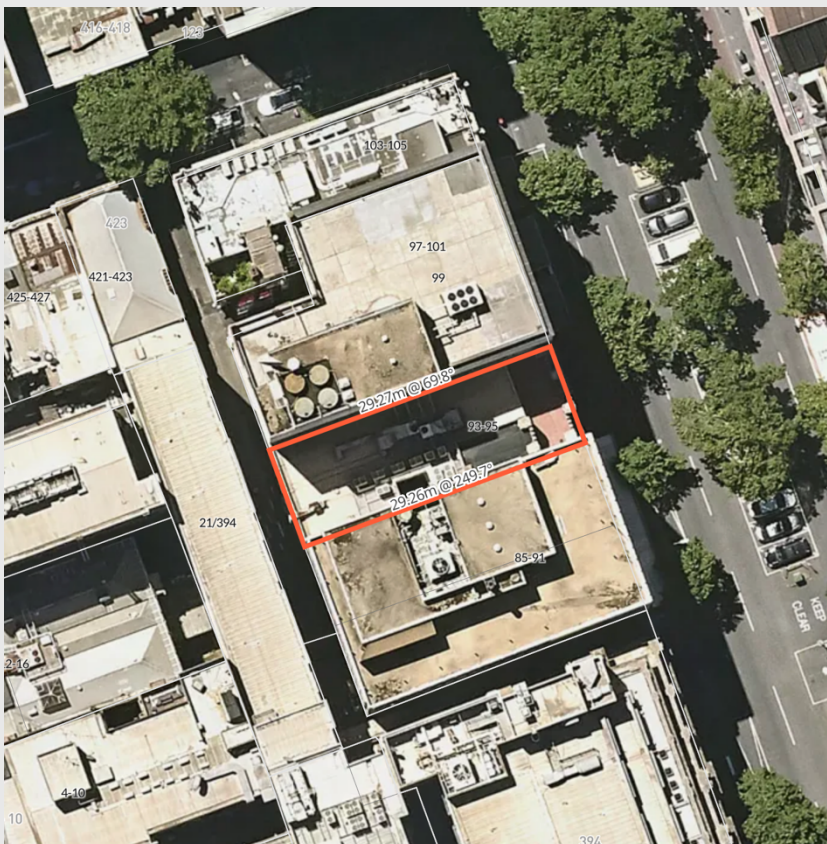
Category	Indicative Range (ex GST) and Notes
Fire services — sprinkler remediation	\$30,000 – \$150,000 Root cause of flow test FAIL determines scope; allow upper range until confirmed
Fire services — stairwell pressurisation	\$80,000 – \$200,000 Building surveyor confirms retrofit is straightforward; Performance Solution pathway may reduce to lower end; lobby pressurisation alternative available
Fire services — BOWS / detection / hydrant	\$60,000 – \$130,000 Primarily documentation gaps; physical upgrade scope to be confirmed by fire engineer
Mechanical — fresh air upgrade	\$60,000 – \$120,000 150-person load may allow existing system to be retained with minor upgrade; basement ventilation additional
Fire doors / exit hardware	\$30,000 – \$65,000 Likely documentation gap; AS 1851 survey will confirm; exit hardware replacement low cost and immediate
Access / DDA upgrade	\$40,000 – \$90,000 Lift compliance and accessible WC provision; access consultant to confirm scope
Emergency lighting / exit signs	\$15,000 – \$40,000 Re-layout as part of fitout; standard scope
Structural assessment (basement + L6 balcony)	\$15,000 – \$30,000 Consultant fees; physical upgrade cost unknown pending assessment
Base fitout (Class 9b — teaching, studios, amenities)	\$800,000 – \$1,400,000 Indicative only; dependent on brief and room mix; exclude FF&E

Total indicative compliance + fitout: \$1,130,000 – \$2,225,000 ex GST

Ex GST. Base fitout row already excludes FF&E. Total excludes consultant fees — allow an additional \$80,000–\$150,000 for fire engineer, building surveyor, mechanical, structural, access, and electrical consultant engagements. Allow 20–25% contingency on compliance items pending fire engineer root cause analysis of sprinkler FAIL and Performance Solution pathway confirmation.

Site Summary

Address	93–95 Queen Street, Melbourne VIC 3000 Lot 1 TP377815
Total NLA	1,756.5 m ² 8 levels — B, G, L1–L6 per Realserve 2017 lettable area plans
Zone	CCZ1 — Capital City Zone Schedule 1 — Melbourne
Council	City of Melbourne · 03 9658 9658
Building height	7 storeys + basement
Building surveyor	Not engaged — NCC 2022 Amendment 2 applies; engage pre-exchange
Permit history	6 permits in 10 years — all finalised. One pending (TP-2025-784). See §M.
Heritage	HO731 local only — confirmed NOT on Victorian Heritage Register (Heritage Victoria Certificate 79368361)



Aerial photo – Landchecker.com.au



Street photo – Plico Design Studio

Planning Overlays

- HO731 Heritage Overlay (local, Cl. 43.01)
- DDO1 Design & Development Overlay Sch 1
- DDO10 Design & Development Overlay Sch 10
- PO1 Parking Overlay Precinct 1

▲ **Pending permit TP-2025-784** — received November 2025, undetermined. Scope: external paint, canopy, signage, and basement bar door at 93–95 Queen Street. This overlaps with the proposed works and must be resolved or coordinated before exchange.

Heritage Victoria Certificate (79368361, issued 20 January 2026) confirms the building is not included in the Victorian Heritage Register, not in a World Heritage Environs Area, and has no current nominations, orders, or proceedings against it. The only heritage constraint is the local Heritage Overlay HO731 under the Melbourne Planning Scheme — this affects external and street-presentation works, not Heritage Victoria approval of internal building works.

Base Building Documents Reviewed

Document	Source / Folder
Contract & Section 32 — 95 Queen Street, Melbourne (Part 1)	Plans and Section 32
Floor Plans — 95 Queen Street, Melbourne	Plans and Section 32
Landchecker Property Report — Level 1, 95 Queen Street, Melbourne VIC 3000	Landchecker.com.au
Essential Safety Measures Report (R-107860, S185646)	Stokes Safety, via CBRE existing conditions package
Egress Inspection Report (R-107859, S185646)	Stokes Safety, via CBRE existing conditions package
Sprinkler Flow Test 2026 — 95 Queen Street, Melbourne	CBRE existing conditions package
Sprinkler System Annual Report (R-260795, Alexon-3120)	Alexon, via CBRE existing conditions package
Service Report (R-265307, Alexon-3120)	Alexon, via CBRE existing conditions package
Fire Certificate Information	CBRE existing conditions package
Certificate of Final Inspection	CBRE existing conditions package
NLA (Net Lettable Area) Plans — 95 Queen Street	CBRE existing conditions package
Electrical Services Drawings (2016)	CBRE existing conditions package
Mechanical Services Drawings (2016)	CBRE existing conditions package
Electrical Drawings	CBRE existing conditions package
Escom Electrical Services Drawings (As Built)	CBRE existing conditions package
JobCard 22641 (lift/elevator service)	CBRE existing conditions package
Service Quote SQ-7318	CBRE existing conditions package
TK Elevator service invoice (8067280465)	CBRE existing conditions package
Adero tax invoice (20260601)	CBRE existing conditions package
Stokes Safety invoice (INV-25187)	CBRE existing conditions package
ACHALL download (2606715)	CBRE existing conditions package
VFM Maintenance Docket (AU1192312)	CBRE existing conditions package
Maintenance record for 95 Queen Street — In Service (email correspondence)	Ex services reports correspondence
RE: Wheelchair platform lift bi-annual service invoice (email correspondence)	Ex services reports correspondence

Client Brief — Whitehouse Institute

Level	Brief description	Classification
Basement (237.3 m ²)	Strip out existing nightclub fitout — all fittings, fixtures and finishes. Refurbish as student and staff lounge with co-working style café/bar area. Incorporate light surfaces to brighten the space. New lighting throughout.	Class 9b
Ground (197.8 m ²)	Refurbish entry. Rear tenancy to become administration and reception with gallery and shopfront display area. Remove existing awning and replace with full-width awning to frontage. Improve bin storage and confirm dumb-waiter is functional. Ensure DDA access to lift lobby. Amenities may require upgrade. OLG Office lease (to March 2029) confirmed to be vacated for school use — written surrender not yet formalised.	Class 9b
Level 1 (224.7 m ²)	Current consulting tenancy to be handed back shortly. Remove some internal partitioning; retain front and rear glazed partitions for separate spaces. Amenities may require upgrade.	Class 9b
Level 2 (203.0 m ²)	Australasian Sonographers Association tenancy — lease in place to May 2028 with a 5-year option. Independent lift/stair access confirmed on lettable area plans. Retain as separate Class 5 tenancy for now.	Retain — Class 5
Level 3 (239.1 m ²)	Open tenancy. Minor adjustments to spatial distribution, finishes, lighting, and electrical only. Amenities may require upgrade.	Class 9b
Level 4 (238.4 m ²)	Open tenancy. Minor adjustments to spatial distribution, finishes, lighting, and electrical only. Amenities may require upgrade.	Class 9b
Level 5 (230.6 m ²)	Open tenancy. Minor adjustments to spatial distribution, finishes, lighting, and electrical only. Amenities may require upgrade.	Class 9b
Level 6 (185.6 m ² + 36.8 m ² balcony)	Strip out current internal fitout. Reconfigure to match Levels 3–5 (Class 9b) or convert to caretaker's flat (Class 4 option). Amenities upgrade likely. Balcony to be refurbished: new paving, waterproofing, flashing, activation. Balustrade openings to be reduced to meet compliance.	Class 9b / Class 4 option
Future	Consider extension upwards. Structural assessment to confirm feasibility of additional level(s).	—

Scope of Works — Per Level Assessment

The following table assesses the likely scope and relative cost intensity for each level. Cost intensity is assessed as Low / Medium / High relative to the scope described — absolute costs cannot be confirmed until schematic design is complete and a quantity surveyor is engaged. Whole-building fire services items are addressed separately in the "All" row and in the compliance section.

Level	Class	Scope of works	Cost intensity
B	Class 9b	Full strip-out of nightclub fitout; remediation and cleaning of all surfaces; new lightweight wall finishes; new lighting; café/bar joinery and servery fitout; co-working furniture zones; fire services review and upgrade; ventilation upgrade — status unknown since nightclub extract removed (BP-2016-892); structural floor loading confirmation	HIGH
G	Class 9b	Entry refurbishment; new full-width awning to frontage (HO731 trigger); reception, administration, and gallery fitout to rear; replace ground level main exit door hardware — non-compliant key-lockable panic bolts (Egress Report, Inspection 001); DDA path to lift lobby — confirm threshold treatment; OLG lease surrender to be formalised before vacant possession is assumed	HIGH
L1	Class 9b	Remove selected internal partitions; retain front and rear glazed partitions; make-good to floors, walls, ceilings; amenities upgrade subject to occupant load calc	MEDIUM
L2	Retain	No works proposed at this stage. Retain existing Australasian Sonographers Association fitout. Lease in place to May 2028 + 5-year option. Fire compartmentation review at interface slabs (above L1, below L3) — see §K	NIL
L3	Class 9b	Minor spatial redistribution; new finishes (floor, wall, ceiling); lighting and electrical upgrade; amenities upgrade subject to occupant load calc	LOW
L4	Class 9b	Minor spatial redistribution; new finishes (floor, wall, ceiling); lighting and electrical upgrade; amenities upgrade subject to occupant load calc	LOW
L5	Class 9b	Minor spatial redistribution; new finishes (floor, wall, ceiling); lighting and electrical upgrade; amenities upgrade subject to occupant load calc. Likely the most straightforward conversion level.	LOW
L6 Option A	Class 9b	Strip out current fitout; reconfigure to match Levels 3–5; new finishes, lighting, electrical; balcony: new paving, waterproofing, flashing — confirm structural capacity (4.0 kPa, NCC B1.2) — see §J; balustrade modification for compliance	MEDIUM
L6 Option B	Class 4	Convert to self-contained caretaker's flat; separate entry and services from Class 9b below; habitable room compliance (natural light, ventilation); balcony and balustrade works common to Option A; planning permit likely required for Class 4 use	MEDIUM-HIGH
All	—	Sprinkler system fire engineer assessment (flow test FAIL) — §A; hydrant pump set / hydrostatic test compliance — §B; stair pressurisation assessment and likely installation — §C; BOWS / occupant warning system review — §F; mechanical fresh-air upgrade — §G; fire/smoke door survey	CRITICAL

Level	Class	Scope of works	Cost intensity
		and likely replacement — §H; accessible WC and lift compliance — §I; NCC Section J energy assessment — §L	

Building Compliance Issues — Detailed Analysis

This section cross-references the ESMR (Stokes Safety, 29 May 2026), the Egress Inspection Report (Stokes Safety, 25 May 2026), the Sprinkler Flow Test (30 March 2026), and the City of Melbourne Building Permit History against the proposed Class 5 → Class 9b change of use. The ESMR was prepared for the vendor and reflects the building's current Class 5 use — every item below is additional to, not a substitute for, the Class 9b upgrade requirements. NCC clause references are indicative and must be confirmed with an engaged building surveyor.

CRITICAL — Sprinkler flow test FAIL. The 30 March 2026 flow test recorded a FAIL result against the building's sprinkler installation duty. Root cause is unconfirmed — fire engineer assessment required before exchange to determine remediation scope. See §A.

CRITICAL — Fire services excluded from 2017 scope. BP-2017-213 explicitly excluded fire services from internal alterations. No evidence fire services have been reviewed or upgraded since. See §M.

ACTION REQUIRED — Stairwell pressurisation not evidenced in existing documentation. A 7-storey Class 9b building with fire-isolated stairs requires pressurisation under NCC Spec E2.2b / AS 1668.1. The building surveyor has confirmed retrofitting pressurisation is achievable for a building of this type. Fire engineer to confirm pathway, scope, and cost. See §C.

HIGH — Essential safety measure service records missing across nearly every ESM category serviced by Alexon and Floyd Industries at time of inspection (May 2026). Does not necessarily mean non-compliance, but creates significant uncertainty about system condition. See §E, §F, §H.

HIGH — Ground floor main exit door non-compliant. Double glass swing door fitted with 2 x key-lockable panic bolts. Must be rectified — see §D.

HIGH — Ground floor OLG lease surrender not yet formalised. Do not design for vacant possession until a surrender deed is executed.

A. Fire services — sprinkler system CRITICAL HIGH COST

Current condition

The Sprinkler Flow Test (30/03/2026) recorded a FAIL result. The exported test data is partially corrupted/illegible, but the summary "Result" field explicitly records FAIL for the sprinkler system duty. Separately, the ESMR records the sprinkler system's routine maintenance as fully up to date and "Complies" — i.e. the system is being serviced on schedule, but a flow test conducted by others found it failed to perform.

NCC 2022 requirement

Spec E1.5 sets sprinkler coverage and design requirements that scale with building classification and occupant load. Class 9b buildings of this height require a sprinkler system that performs to AS 2118 design flow/pressure criteria for the building's hazard classification.

Gap identified

Required action

A failed flow test result with no fire engineer review on file. Unknown whether the fail is due to a localised fault (e.g. valve, pump, blockage) or a systemic capacity shortfall.

Obtain original sprinkler system design drawings and hydraulic calculations. Commission a fire engineer to peer-review the flow test result and determine root cause.

RESPONSIBILITY

Fire engineer + hydraulic services contractor

COST INDICATOR

High

RISK RATING

Critical

SOURCE

**Sprinkler Flow Test
30/03/2026; ESMR
29/05/2026**

B. Fire services — hydrant system HIGH

Current condition

ESMR records the fire hydrant system (incl. pump set and booster connection, maintained by Alexon) as "Does not comply." The 5-yearly hydrostatic pressure test was last completed 16/02/2021 and was due again in February 2026 — already overdue at the time of the May 2026 inspection.

NCC 2022 requirement

Hydrant systems must be tested and maintained to AS 1851; pump set capacity must be adequate for the building's hydrant demand under the applicable Class 9b occupant load and fire brigade response assumptions.

Gap identified

Overdue statutory test plus missing documentation means current hydrostatic performance is unverified. Pump set adequacy for a materially higher Class 9b occupant load has not been assessed.

Required action

Commission the overdue 5-yearly hydrostatic test immediately. Engage fire engineer to confirm pump set capacity is adequate for Class 9b occupant loads.

RESPONSIBILITY

Fire engineer + hydraulic services contractor

COST INDICATOR

Medium

RISK RATING

High

SOURCE

ESMR 29/05/2026

C. Stairwell pressurisation PRIORITY MANAGEABLE

Current condition

No stair pressurisation system is evidenced in any source document. The ESMR and Egress Report assess fire-isolated stairways, balustrades, and handrails as compliant for current Class 5 use, but neither document records a pressurisation system.

NCC 2022 requirement

Class 9b buildings over 4 storeys with fire-isolated stairways typically require stair pressurisation to NCC Spec E2.2b / AS 1668.1. This building is 7 storeys above ground (G + L1–L6) plus basement.

Gap identified

No evidence of an existing pressurisation system. BP-2017-213 explicitly excluded fire services from its scope of internal alterations.

Required action

Fire engineer to confirm pressurisation requirement for the specific Class 9b configuration and occupant load. A lobby pressurisation alternative should be assessed by the fire engineer as a potentially more cost-effective solution.

RESPONSIBILITY

Fire engineer + mechanical engineer + building surveyor

COST INDICATOR

\$80,000 – \$200,000

RISK RATING

Manageable

SOURCE

**Egress Report
25/05/2026; ESMR
29/05/2026; BP-2017-213**

D. Egress and exit hardware MEDIUM

Current condition Egress Inspection Report (Inspection 001) records the ground level main exit door as Fail: "Does not comply, door is fitted with 2 x key lockable panic bolts. Please remove and fit BCA compliant locking door hardware (including lockset)." All other inspected exit doors and paths of travel on Ground, L1–L6 passed.		NCC 2022 requirement NCC D2.21 requires exit doors to be readily openable without a key from the direction of egress travel. At 150 persons, DTS compliance on stair widths and travel distances is highly probable without physical upgrade — to be confirmed by a fire engineer once room layouts are known.	
Gap identified Ground floor exit door hardware is non-compliant for current use and would remain non-compliant for Class 9b. Stairway widths have not been assessed against Class 9b occupant loads.		Required action Replace ground floor exit door hardware with BCA-compliant locking hardware (low cost, but a legal obligation — do not defer). Building surveyor / fire engineer to calculate Class 9b occupant loads per level once room layouts are confirmed.	
RESPONSIBILITY	COST INDICATOR	RISK RATING	SOURCE
Architect (hardware) + fire engineer (occupant load/egress)	Low (hardware) / Unknown (egress upgrade)	High	Egress Report 25/05/2026

E. Emergency lighting and exit signs MEDIUM

Current condition ESMR records both Emergency Lighting and Exit Signs (maintained by Alexon) as "Does not comply" — annual service report could not be located onsite at time of inspection, despite maintenance dates being recorded (Oct 2025 / Feb 2025).		NCC 2022 requirement Emergency lighting duration and lux levels per AS 2293; exit sign placement against Class 9b occupant loads and travel distances, which will be materially higher than the current Class 5 configuration.	
Gap identified Missing service records create uncertainty about current system condition (not proof of non-compliance). Exit signage and emergency lighting layout will need re-design once Class 9b occupant loads and revised room layouts are confirmed.		Required action Obtain current service reports from Alexon or commission a fresh inspection. Budget for likely re-layout of emergency lighting and exit signage to suit the new Class 9b floor plan and occupant loads.	
RESPONSIBILITY	COST INDICATOR	RISK RATING	SOURCE
Electrical engineer / fire engineer	Medium	Medium	ESMR 29/05/2026

F. Building Occupant Warning System (BOWS) / evacuation system HIGH

Current condition ESMR records the BOWS (Alexon) as "Does not comply" — annual service report could not be located onsite, despite recorded monthly (Apr 2026), annual (Feb 2025) and five-yearly (Feb 2023) maintenance dates. Smoke and Heat Detection Systems carry the identical non-conformance.		NCC 2022 requirement NCC E4.9 requires an occupant warning system for buildings of this occupant load — Class 9b assembly/teaching occupant loads will likely place this building squarely within the threshold requiring a warning system.	
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Gap identified

This is a life-safety system, not a documentation-only issue — missing records combined with no fire services review since before 2017 (BP-2017-213) means the system's adequacy for a substantially higher and different-pattern occupant load is unverified.

Required action

Fire engineer to assess whether the existing BOWS and detection systems meet the Class 9b standard or require replacement. This item should be assessed and scoped as part of the pre-permit fire services programme.

RESPONSIBILITY

Fire engineer

COST INDICATOR

High

RISK RATING

Critical

SOURCE

ESMR 29/05/2026

G. Air conditioning / mechanical systems HIGH

Current condition

ESMR records Air Conditioning Systems (Floyd Industries) as "Does not comply" — both annual and quarterly service reports could not be located onsite, despite a quarterly maintenance visit recorded 9 September 2025.

NCC 2022 requirement

Class 9b education space fresh air requirements under NCC F4.5 and AS 1668.2 are materially higher per person than a Class 5 office (indicative minimum order of 10 L/s/person for education use).

Gap identified

The existing system is almost certainly sized for Class 5 office occupant density, not Class 9b teaching density. The basement is the highest-risk area: ventilation for the former nightclub use was removed under BP-2016-892 and no replacement scope is confirmed.

Required action

Obtain current service records from Floyd Industries. Mechanical engineer to assess existing system capacity against Class 9b fresh-air rates per room type, with particular focus on basement ventilation and coordination with any stair pressurisation works.

RESPONSIBILITY

Mechanical engineer

COST INDICATOR

High

RISK RATING

High

SOURCE

ESMR 29/05/2026; BP-2016-892

H. Fire doors and smoke doors MEDIUM

Current condition

ESMR records both Fire Doors and Smoke Doors (Alexon, six-monthly maintenance) as "Does not comply" — six-monthly service reports could not be located onsite.

NCC 2022 requirement

Fire and smoke doors are required at stair enclosures, lift shafts, and plant rooms, with self-closing/latching mechanisms in working order. Class 9b will likely add doors at the new Class 5/9b compartment interface (\$K).

Gap identified

Condition of existing fire/smoke doors is unknown given the missing service records and the building's age. These doors may not have been reviewed in close to a decade.

Required action

Commission a fire door/smoke door condition survey and AS 1851 service catch-up. Assume replacement is likely for non-compliant or end-of-life doors given the documentation gap and building age.

RESPONSIBILITY

Fire engineer + building surveyor

COST INDICATOR

Medium

RISK RATING

Medium

SOURCE

ESMR 29/05/2026; Realserve plans

I. Accessible access (DDA / AS 1428.1:2021) MEDIUM

Current condition Ground floor lettable area plan shows a "DIS." (disabled access) lift and amenities of 3.1 m ² at ground level. Each upper level shows a single set of male/female amenities — no ambulant or accessible WC is itemised separately on the plans reviewed.		NCC 2022 requirement Premises Standards 2010 and AS 1735.12 govern lift compliance; AS 1428.1:2021 and NCC F2.4 require ambulant and accessible WC provision scaled to Class 9b occupant loads per floor.	
Gap identified Given the building's age and 2017-era fitout, the existing lift and amenities are likely non-compliant with 2026-current accessibility standards. No accessible WC is confirmed on the plans reviewed for any level.		Required action Access consultant to audit lift compliance against Premises Standards 2010, confirm ground floor threshold treatment, and calculate required ambulant/accessible WC provision per level against Class 9b occupant loads once room layouts are known.	
RESPONSIBILITY	COST INDICATOR	RISK RATING	SOURCE
Access consultant + architect	Medium	Medium	Realserve plans 2017

J. Structural — floor loading MEDIUM

Current condition No structural assessment or loading documentation has been supplied for any level. The basement was formerly fitted out as a restaurant/bar (nightclub) prior to BP-2016-892 strip-out — its original design loading is unconfirmed. Level 6 has a 36.8 m ² balcony proposed for refurbishment.		NCC 2022 requirement Class 5 office: 3.0 kPa live load typical. Class 9b teaching/assembly areas: typically similar at 3.0 kPa for general teaching space, but student assembly areas can require up to 5.0 kPa. Balconies: 4.0 kPa (NCC B1.2).	
Gap identified No structural drawings or capacity confirmation sighted for basement, upper floors, or the Level 6 balcony.		Required action Structural engineer to confirm existing floor capacity for all levels — particularly the basement and Level 6 balcony — before schematic design proceeds on room layouts that assume any particular occupant density.	
RESPONSIBILITY	COST INDICATOR	RISK RATING	SOURCE
Structural engineer	Unknown	Medium	BP-2016-892; brief; Realserve plans

K. Level 2 Class 5 / Class 9b interface HIGH

Current condition Level 2 (Australasian Sonographers Association, lease to May 2028 + option) remains Class 5 while Levels 1 and 3 convert to Class 9b around it. No documentation of slab fire-resistance levels (FRL) above or below Level 2 has been sighted.		NCC 2022 requirement Fire compartmentation between different occupancy classes typically requires FRL of 90/90/90 at the separating slab soffit/topping (clause and exact FRL to be confirmed with building surveyor for this specific classification pairing).	
Gap identified		Required action	

No information confirms the existing slab FRL meets a mixed-occupancy separation standard. Services riser penetrations through the Level 1/2 and Level 2/3 slabs are likely present and their fire-stopping status is unconfirmed.

Building surveyor to confirm required FRL at the Level 2 interface slabs and assess existing construction against it. Structural engineer to advise on any topping or upgrade works. Audit and remediate service penetrations for fire-stopping compliance.

RESPONSIBILITY	COST INDICATOR	RISK RATING	SOURCE
Building surveyor + structural engineer	Medium	High	Realserve plans; brief

L. Energy — NCC Section J LOW-MEDIUM

Current condition

No glazing specification or building envelope performance data has been sighted. Building is pre-1994 era per ESMR header data — glazing is likely original or early-replacement single/early double glazing.

NCC 2022 requirement

HVAC upgrade and any envelope works will trigger a full NCC Section J assessment under the current NCC 2022 Amendment 2 provisions.

Gap identified

Envelope likely non-compliant with current Section J benchmarks. HO731 heritage constraints will limit the extent of facade modification available without a heritage permit, constraining the upgrade pathway.

Required action

Commission a Section J assessment at schematic design stage, once the HVAC upgrade scope (\$G) and any facade works are known. Coordinate with heritage advisor on what envelope changes are achievable under HO731.

RESPONSIBILITY	COST INDICATOR	RISK RATING	SOURCE
Sustainability/ESD consultant + heritage advisor	Medium	Low	ESMR header data; Planning Certificate

M. Building permit history — gaps and implications CRITICAL

Current condition

City of Melbourne property enquiry (issued 21 January 2026) confirms six building permits in the last ten years, all with Certificates of Final Inspection issued, and no outstanding Building Notices or Orders. Key permits: BP-2016-892 (basement strip-out); BP-2016-2124 (lift removal); BP-2017-213 (internal alterations excluding fire services); BP-2018-930, BP-2018-1155, BP-2018-725 (fitout works).

NCC 2022 requirement

BP-2017-213's explicit exclusion of fire services is the most significant finding: it means the building's fire services have very likely not been formally reviewed by a building surveyor since prior to 2017, predating current NCC provisions by multiple code cycles.

Gap identified

All permits carry final certificates, but a final certificate confirms the specific permitted scope was completed — it does not confirm the building's overall fire services are current or adequate.

Required action

Confirm with vendor/agent which lift was removed under BP-2016-2124. Treat the fire-services exclusion in BP-2017-213 as the basis for assuming no fire services upgrade has occurred since pre-2017.

RESPONSIBILITY	COST INDICATOR	RISK RATING	SOURCE
Building surveyor	Unknown	Critical	City of Melbourne Building Permit History, issued 21/01/2026

Performance Solution Pathways

What is a Performance Solution?

Under NCC 2022 Amendment 2, a Performance Solution is a documented alternative to the Deemed-to-Satisfy (DTS) provisions. Rather than complying with the prescriptive DTS clause, the design must demonstrate equivalent life-safety outcomes via the ABCB Protocol for Performance Solutions.

A Performance Solution requires a fire engineer (or other relevant specialist) acting as the Performance Solution practitioner, formal acceptance by the building surveyor, and — for Critical or High-risk items — typically an independent peer review. A Performance Solution does not waive compliance: it substitutes one compliance pathway for another and must be formally documented and approved before works commence.

The indicative occupant load of 150 persons materially improves the viability of Performance Solutions across multiple compliance items. A lower occupant load reduces the fire risk profile, simplifies evacuation modelling, and gives a fire engineer a stronger basis to demonstrate equivalence to DTS provisions without full physical upgrade.

C. Stairwell pressurisation

DTS requirement		Performance Solution available?	
NCC Spec E2.2b / AS/NZS 1668.1 — pressurised stairwells required where fire-isolated stairways serve a rise in storeys exceeding 4. This building (G + L1–L6 + basement = 8 levels) exceeds the trigger regardless of occupant load.		Conditional.	
Compensating measures		Conditions precedent	
— Lobby pressurisation in lieu of full stair shaft pressurisation, where stair lobby geometry permits (cheaper to retrofit, same functional outcome) — Enhanced sprinkler coverage to AS 2118.1 across all levels, providing early fire suppression that reduces smoke generation in stair approaches — Upgraded compartmentalisation — fire-rated construction at stair entries and between tenancies to limit smoke migration — Evacuation modelling demonstrating that 150-person occupant load can safely egress via existing stair widths within acceptable timeframes even without full pressurisation — Enhanced detection and BOWS response to trigger earlier evacuation		— Sprinkler flow test FAIL must be resolved and system certified before any Performance Solution relying on sprinklers can proceed — Fire doors at stair enclosures must be confirmed compliant and self-closing (Item H) — Building surveyor must accept the Performance Solution approach before design is committed — Fire engineer peer review will almost certainly be required by the building surveyor for a Critical item	
PRACTITIONER	PEER REVIEW REQUIRED	COST IMPACT	VIABILITY RATING
Fire engineer (Performance Solution practitioner)	Very likely required	Medium — saves \$100,000–\$200,000 vs full pressurisation if accepted	Moderate — improved by 150-person load; blocked until sprinkler system is remediated

A. Sprinkler system

DTS requirement

AS 2118.1 automatic fire sprinkler system compliant with current standard; pump set capacity adequate for Class 9b occupant load; flow test must pass. Current status: FAIL (flow test 30 March 2026).

Performance Solution available?

Unlikely for the flow test failure itself — this is a testable, binary result. However, if pump set capacity is the issue rather than head coverage, a hydraulic engineer may be able to demonstrate via calculation that existing capacity meets Class 9b demand without physical upgrade.

Compensating measures

- Hydraulic engineer flow and pressure analysis to determine whether the FAIL reflects a testing anomaly, pump set underperformance, or coverage gap
- If pump set is undersized: replace pump set (contained cost, \$30,000–\$60,000)
- If pipework coverage is insufficient: zone-by-zone upgrade may be possible rather than full system replacement

Conditions precedent

- Fire engineer must review the flow test results and identify root cause before any Performance Solution or remediation scope can be confirmed
- This item must be resolved before it can support any Performance Solution for Item C (pressurisation) or Item F (BOWS)

PRACTITIONER

Fire engineer + hydraulic services engineer

PEER REVIEW REQUIRED

Required if pump set replacement is proposed as a Performance Solution

COST IMPACT

Unknown until root cause confirmed — range \$30,000 (pump set only) to \$200,000+ (partial system replacement)

VIABILITY RATING

Unknown — root cause analysis is the immediate priority

B. Fire hydrant system

DTS requirement

AS 1851 — 5-yearly hydrostatic pressure test current (overdue since February 2026); pump set capacity adequate for Class 9b hydrant demand.

Performance Solution available?

Conditional — if the overdue test passes once commissioned, no Performance Solution is needed. If the pump set is confirmed undersized for Class 9b demand, a hydraulic engineer can prepare a Performance Solution.

Compensating measures

- Commission the overdue hydrostatic test immediately — if it passes, the item is resolved without a Performance Solution
- If pump set is undersized: hydraulic engineer to assess whether enhanced sprinkler system (Item A, once certified) reduces the effective hydrant demand to within existing pump capacity
- Fire brigade pre-consultation to confirm acceptable response assumptions for the building configuration

Conditions precedent

- Overdue hydrostatic test must be commissioned before any Performance Solution scope is known
- Sprinkler system (Item A) must be certified before it can be used as a compensating measure here

PRACTITIONER

Hydraulic services engineer + fire engineer

PEER REVIEW REQUIRED

Required if compensating measures are proposed

COST IMPACT

Low–medium — test cost minimal; pump set upgrade \$20,000–\$50,000 if required

VIABILITY RATING

Good — likely to resolve without a Performance Solution once test is commissioned

D. Egress and exit hardware

DTS requirement

NCC D2.21 — exit doors readily openable without a key from egress direction; stair widths adequate for Class 9b occupant loads per NCC D1.6; travel distances within NCC D1.4 limits.

Performance Solution available?

Exit door hardware: No — this is a direct life-safety requirement with no Performance Solution pathway. Replace hardware. Stair width adequacy: Conditional — at 150 persons, existing stair widths are almost certainly adequate under NCC D1.6 discharge calculations. Travel distance: Conditional — fire engineer to model travel distances against the proposed 150-person layout.

Compensating measures

- Replace ground floor exit door hardware — no alternative, low cost (\$2,000–\$5,000), do immediately
- Evacuation modelling at 150 persons to confirm stair width adequacy — likely to resolve without physical works
- If travel distance issues identified: enhanced detection providing earlier warning, or revised room layout to reduce travel distances

Conditions precedent

- Ground floor hardware must be replaced regardless
- this is not a Performance Solution candidate
- Room layouts must be confirmed before travel distance analysis can be completed

PRACTITIONER

Fire engineer
(egress/travel distance modelling)

PEER REVIEW REQUIRED

Not typically required for egress calculations at this scale

COST IMPACT

Low (hardware replacement) + fire engineer calculation fee (\$5,000–\$10,000)

VIABILITY RATING

Good — 150-person load makes DTS compliance on stair widths highly probable without physical upgrade

E. Emergency lighting and exit signs

DTS requirement

AS 2293 — emergency lighting duration and lux levels; exit sign placement adequate for Class 9b occupant loads and travel distances.

Performance Solution available?

Not typically applicable — these are binary compliance items. However, layout redesign to suit the new Class 9b floor plan is standard practice and does not require a Performance Solution — it is a design task.

Compensating measures

- Obtain current service records from Alexon — if records confirm the existing system is functioning, the gap is documentation only, not physical
- Commission fresh AS 2293 test to establish current baseline
- Re-layout emergency lighting and exit signage to suit new Class 9b floor plan as part of the fitout design

Conditions precedent

- Current system condition must be confirmed before re-layout scope is known
- Room layouts must be finalised

PRACTITIONER

Electrical engineer

PEER REVIEW REQUIRED

Not required

COST IMPACT

Low–medium — re-layout as part of fitout; allow \$15,000–\$40,000 depending on extent

VIABILITY RATING

High — straightforward design task once floor plan is confirmed

F. BOWS / evacuation system

DTS requirement

NCC E4.9 — occupant warning system required for buildings of this occupant load and classification; system must be adequate for Class 9b use pattern (assembly/teaching schedule, simultaneous evacuation).

Compensating measures

- Obtain service records from Alexon immediately — if the system is functioning, the cost exposure reduces significantly
- Fire engineer to assess whether existing system zones and speaker layout are adequate for Class 9b use pattern at 150 persons
- Zone reconfiguration to match new floor plan — likely required as part of fitout regardless of compliance status
- Enhanced detection sensitivity as a compensating measure if system output is borderline

Performance Solution available?

Conditional — if the existing BOWS is confirmed functional (missing records resolved), a fire engineer may be able to demonstrate that the existing system meets Class 9b requirements with minor modifications.

Conditions precedent

- Service records must be obtained and system functionality confirmed before Performance Solution scope is known
- Must be designed and tendered together with Item C (pressurisation controls) and Item A (sprinkler system) as an integrated fire services package

PRACTITIONER

Fire engineer + electrical/BMS engineer

PEER REVIEW REQUIRED

Required if existing system is proposed as compliant via Performance Solution

COST IMPACT

Medium — allow \$40,000–\$90,000 for reconfiguration; \$80,000–\$180,000 for full replacement

VIABILITY RATING

Moderate — depends on Alexon records and system condition

G. Air conditioning / mechanical

DTS requirement

NCC F4.5 / AS 1668.2 — minimum 10 L/s/person fresh air for Class 9b teaching spaces; existing system sized for Class 5 office density. Basement ventilation removed under BP-2016-892 with no confirmed replacement.

Compensating measures

- Mechanical engineer to calculate fresh air demand for 150 persons at Class 9b rates — existing system may be closer to adequate than a higher-occupancy assumption would suggest
- Demand-controlled ventilation (CO₂ sensors) to demonstrate that actual fresh air delivery meets AS 1668.2 at real occupant loads
- Basement ventilation must be addressed separately
- no Performance Solution available for a space with no confirmed ventilation; new system required
- Stair pressurisation interface must be coordinated with mechanical upgrade regardless of pathway chosen

Performance Solution available?

Conditional — if existing system capacity can be demonstrated via engineering calculation to meet Class 9b fresh air rates for 150 persons, a Performance Solution based on demand-controlled ventilation (DCV) or CO₂ monitoring may be acceptable.

Conditions precedent

- Obtain Floyd Industries service records to confirm existing system condition
- Mechanical engineer assessment of existing system capacity against 150-person Class 9b demand before Performance Solution scope is known

PRACTITIONER

Mechanical engineer

PEER REVIEW REQUIRED

Not typically required at this scale

COST IMPACT

Medium — allow \$60,000–\$120,000 for

VIABILITY RATING

Moderate–good — 150-person load significantly improves viability of

upgrade; basement ventilation is additional

existing system being adequate with minor upgrade

H. Fire doors and smoke doors

DTS requirement

AS 1905.1 — fire doors and smoke doors at stair enclosures, lift shafts, and compartment boundaries; self-closing and latching; condition confirmed via AS 1851 service records.

Performance Solution available?

No — fire door compliance is a binary, testable requirement. Doors either meet the standard or they do not. However, the compliance gap here is primarily a documentation gap (missing service records), not necessarily a physical non-compliance.

Compensating measures

- Commission AS 1851 service catch-up and condition survey immediately — if doors are found to be functional and compliant, the gap is resolved without a Performance Solution
- Replace any doors confirmed non-compliant or end-of-life — budget as a standard cost item
- Note: compliant fire doors at stair entries are a condition precedent for any pressurisation Performance Solution (Item C)

Conditions precedent

- AS 1851 service catch-up and condition survey before any scope is confirmed

PRACTITIONER

Fire engineer + building surveyor

PEER REVIEW REQUIRED

Not required

COST IMPACT

Low-medium — survey cost minimal; door replacement \$3,000–\$8,000 per door; allow \$30,000–\$60,000 total pending survey

VIABILITY RATING

High — likely a documentation gap rather than a physical compliance failure

Key Constraints & Navigation

Constraint	Rating	Explanation	Navigation strategy
Fire services condition & documentation	CRITICAL	Sprinkler flow test FAIL, overdue hydrant hydrostatic test, likely-required stair pressurisation with no evidence of an existing system, and fire services excluded from review since before 2017 combine into the single largest cost and life-safety unknown in the project. Must be quantified by a fire engineer and building surveyor before exchange.	Engage fire engineer and building surveyor before exchange — see compliance section.
Heritage Overlay HO731	LOW	Confirmed NOT on the Victorian Heritage Register (Heritage Victoria Certificate 79368361) — local HO731 only. Internal-only fitout may be exempt. External works require a heritage permit.	Engage Plico heritage team at pre-design stage.
NCC Class 5 → 9b Reclassification	HIGH	Egress, fire detection/suppression, stair pressurisation, accessibility, acoustic performance, HVAC fresh air, and sanitary facility provision all require review.	The detailed building compliance analysis sets out the full scope and risk profile.
CCZ1 Use Permissibility	MEDIUM	Tertiary education must be confirmed as Section 1, 2, or 3 under CCZ1 Schedule 1.	Lodge a pre-application enquiry with City of Melbourne Planning.
DDO1 / DDO10 Overlays	MEDIUM	Both DDOs apply. Internal fitout only is unlikely to trigger direct permit requirements. External works will be assessed against DDO objectives.	Note proposed Amendment C376melb (sustainability overlay) on exhibition — monitor but does not currently apply.
Ground floor lease (OLG)	MEDIUM	OLG lease runs to March 2029; vacation for school use confirmed verbally/in principle but written surrender deed not yet executed.	Do not design ground floor works assuming vacant possession until the surrender deed is executed.
Strata / Owners Corporation	MEDIUM	OC consent required for any works affecting common property (structure, facade, services risers — including any stair pressurisation plant).	Review OC rules, financial statements, special levies, and any existing disputes before exchange.
Parking Overlay PO1	LOW	CCZ1 education uses typically attract nil or very low parking requirements in the Melbourne CBD.	Confirm under Clause 45.09 and CCZ1 Schedule 1.
Special Condition 4 — AS IS purchase	HIGH	Property purchased AS IS. All NCC upgrade costs are the purchaser's responsibility; the vendor makes zero representations as to compliance.	This makes pre-exchange due diligence on fire services the most important investment the client can make before committing to purchase.

Risk Assessment

Risk category	Rating and explanation
Fire services compliance & cost	CRITICAL — Sprinkler flow test FAIL, overdue hydrant hydrostatic test, likely-required stair pressurisation with no evidence of an existing system, and fire services excluded from review since before 2017 combine into the single largest cost and life-safety unknown in the project.
Essential safety measure documentation gaps	HIGH — Service records missing across BOWS, emergency lighting, exit signs, fire doors, smoke doors, and air conditioning at time of ESMR inspection (May 2026). Does not prove non-compliance but creates material uncertainty.
NCC compliance / BCA upgrade cost (general)	HIGH — Beyond fire services, accessibility, structural loading, compartmentation, and Section J all carry unconfirmed compliance gaps. Building surveyor review required before exchange.
Ground floor lease surrender	MEDIUM — OLG lease to March 2029; vacation for school use confirmed verbally/in principle but written surrender deed not yet executed.
Heritage approval (HO731)	MEDIUM — Confirmed not on VHR — local overlay only. Internal fitout may not trigger the HO. External works will require a permit and HIS. Pending application TP-2025-784 is unresolved.
Planning approval — use permissibility	MEDIUM — CCZ1 likely permits education uses but confirmation via pre-application enquiry is required.
Strata / OC approval	MEDIUM — OC consent required for common property works — now including any stair pressurisation plant and risers.
AS IS purchase — Special Condition 4	HIGH — Vendor makes zero representations as to compliance; all NCC upgrade costs sit with the purchaser.
Construction cost / programme	MEDIUM — CBD heritage fitout carries premium rates. Stair pressurisation and fire services remediation could extend programme considerably beyond the 3–6 months typically allowed for heritage/BCA certification.
Finance / holding cost	MEDIUM — Typical CBD change-of-use projects take 12–18 months from purchase to occupation.
Market / end-use	LOW–MEDIUM — Melbourne's private and tertiary education sector is recovering post-COVID. Confirm a viable business plan before purchase.

Key Recommendations

01 Engage Plico immediately to prepare the return brief and lead schematic design

This is the foundation for every other recommendation in this report. Plico should facilitate a structured briefing workshop with the client to produce the return brief — capturing teaching space numbers, student and staff numbers, operational model, and specialist requirements — and then lead schematic design to translate that brief onto the existing floor plate. Owner: Plico (lead); Client (brief input). Timing: commence as soon as practicable, ideally in parallel with the fire engineer and building surveyor engagements below.

02 Engage a fire engineer pre-exchange to assess the compliance section findings

The sprinkler flow test FAIL, overdue hydrant test, likely stair pressurisation requirement, and missing ESM service records together represent the single largest unknown in this project. A fire engineer must peer-review the flow test result, assess the hydrant system, and provide a preliminary stair pressurisation scope before the client commits to purchase. Owner: Client (appoint); Plico (coordinate). Timing: before exchange.

03 Obtain sprinkler and fire services system design drawings from the vendor or local water authority

Hydraulic design drawings are necessary to interpret the flow test FAIL result and to confirm whether the basement's nightclub-era riser sizing is adequate. Request current Alexon and Floyd Industries service reports at the same time to close the ESMR documentation gaps. Owner: Client (via solicitor/agent). Timing: during due diligence, before exchange.

04 Engage a building surveyor for pre-permit advice

A building surveyor must review the full Class 5 → 9b reclassification — fire services exclusion since 2017, stair pressurisation, Level 2 compartmentation, and accessibility — and confirm the certification pathway before permit lodgement. Owner: Client (appoint); Plico (coordinate). Timing: during due diligence or immediately post-exchange.

05 Commission a structural assessment of the basement and Level 6 balcony

Confirm existing floor capacity against Class 9b assembly loading (basement) and the 4.0 kPa balcony requirement (Level 6) before committing to the brief's proposed uses for these areas. Owner: Client (appoint structural engineer). Timing: during due diligence, before schematic design.

06 Obtain a written surrender deed for the Ground Floor (OLG) lease before relying on vacant possession

The vendor/agent has indicated the tenancy will be vacated for school use, but no executed surrender has been sighted. Owner: Client (via solicitor). Timing: before exchange.

07 Investigate pending permit application TP-2025-784 in full and confirm which lift was removed under BP-2016-2124

Obtain the full permit file and current status for TP-2025-784 — its scope directly overlaps with the proposed works. At the same time, confirm with the vendor/agent which lift was removed under BP-2016-2124, as this affects accessible access planning. Owner: Client (via solicitor); Plico (heritage review).

Timing: during due diligence, before exchange.

08 Confirm CCZ1 use permissibility via pre-application enquiry with City of Melbourne

Lodge a formal pre-application enquiry to confirm whether tertiary education is a Section 1, 2, or 3 use under CCZ1 Schedule 1. Owner: Plico (prepare and lodge). Timing: post-exchange, informed by schematic design.

Recommended Next Steps

Step	Action	Responsibility	Timing
1	Engage fire engineer — brief on Class 9b configuration, 150-person load, and stairwell pressurisation pathway; commission sprinkler flow test root cause analysis	Plico (lead) + Client	Before exchange — condition precedent
2	Engage building surveyor — confirm certification pathway for Class 9b change of use and Performance Solution acceptance in principle	Plico (lead) + Client	Before exchange — concurrent with Step 1
3	Negotiate price adjustment — use compliance cost summary as a basis for purchase price negotiation with vendor; treat compliance programme as a deduction against asking price	Client + Solicitor	Before exchange
4	Conditional exchange — exchange contracts with fire engineer sign-off and sprinkler test resolution as conditions; allow 4–6 week due diligence period	Client + Solicitor	Exchange
5	Schematic design — Plico to prepare Class 9b floor plan options, room mix, and NLA schedule for Whitehouse brief; coordinate with fire engineer on Performance Solution documentation	Plico Design Studio	Post-exchange — weeks 1–6
6	Consultant coordination — appoint mechanical, structural, access, and electrical engineers; Plico to manage consultant briefs and coordinate against the compliance programme	Plico Design Studio	Post-exchange — weeks 2–8
7	Building permit application — prepare permit documentation for Class 9b change of use, fitout works, and compliance upgrades; liaise with building surveyor	Plico Design Studio	Post-exchange — weeks 8–20

Timing indications are indicative only and assume no material structural or sprinkler system issues are identified in Steps 1–2. Programme will be confirmed once fire engineer and building surveyor assessments are complete.

PLICO DESIGN STUDIO — PROJECT 26007

READY TO PROCEED

Plico Design Studio has prepared this feasibility report as part of our pre-purchase advisory service for Whitehouse Institute. We are ready to proceed to the next phase — fire engineer coordination, building surveyor engagement, and schematic design — immediately upon instruction.

We recommend engaging Plico on a fixed-fee basis for the compliance coordination and schematic design phases to provide Whitehouse with cost certainty through the critical pre-permit period.

Contact: Angus Wallace — Practice Director, Plico Design Studio · angus@plicodesignstudio.com

Disclaimer

This feasibility study incorporates the Essential Safety Measures Report (Stokes Safety Pty Ltd, 29 May 2026), Egress Inspection Report (Stokes Safety Pty Ltd, 25 May 2026), Sprinkler Flow Test (30 March 2026), City of Melbourne Building Permit History (issued 21 January 2026), Realserve lettable area plans (2017), Heritage Victoria Certificate (79368361, issued 20 January 2026), and Planning Certificate (reference 1215065, issued 17 January 2026), in addition to the Landchecker property report and the client brief prepared by Whitehouse Institute — Daniel Clements (Project 26007).

The Essential Safety Measures Report was prepared for the vendor (Tharos Sozi Pty Ltd) and reflects the building's current Class 5 use — every finding in it is additional to, not a substitute for, the Class 9b upgrade requirements assessed in this report. NCC clause references throughout this report are indicative and must be confirmed with an engaged building surveyor before being relied upon for design or cost decisions. All assumptions are flagged and require independent verification. The property is being purchased on an AS IS basis under Special Condition 4 — the vendor makes zero representations as to compliance and all NCC upgrade costs are the purchaser's responsibility. This report does not constitute formal planning, legal, fire engineering, structural, or building advice.

Prepared by Angus Wallace, Practice Director — Plico Design Studio

· angus@plicodesignstudio.com · +61 407 633 473 · ABN 64 479 965 721 · ARBV 17684