



Preliminary Landscape and Visual Technical Note and Green Belt Review

Land at Fen Ditton, Cambridgeshire

Vistry Strategic Land & Major Projects

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SLR Project No.: 402.065637.00001

Client Reference No: 030130

29 January 2026

Revision: 03

Basis of Report

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1.0 Introduction

SLR Consulting Ltd (SLR) was instructed by Vistry Strategic Land & Major Projects (the Client) to prepare a Landscape and Visual Technical Note and to provide an initial Green Belt Review for their site at Fen Ditton, Cambridgeshire (the site). The purpose of the Note is to inform a revised Vision Document being prepared by JTP Architects.

The terminology and approach used in this Note follows the guidance in the Landscape Institute and IEMA's "*Guidelines on Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment*" (GLVIA3, 2013). It does not purport to be a full landscape and visual appraisal or impact assessment (LVA). It seeks to identify the key issues which will be addressed in an LVA which will accompany a future submission. It also seeks to present a scope of works (including representative views) to be agreed later down the line with the Council.

It is important to note that all greenfield residential developments will result in at least localised landscape and visual harm: the key question to be answered by a future LVA is therefore whether the landscape of the site, and the surrounding area, can accommodate the degree of change that would occur as a result of a proposed housing development without causing an unacceptable degree of harm to a particularly sensitive landscape and whether it can be considered to be released from the Green Belt without affecting the function of the Green Belt across the plan area.

This Note is based upon a desk top assessment and a site visit carried out on 17th June 2025.

The initial Green Belt Review is based on the latest NPPF (December 2024) and subsequent guidance released in 2025.

The following Appendices are provided for reference:

- **Appendix A:** SLR Green Belt Appraisal Methodology
- **Appendix B:** Viewpoint Location Plan and Representative Views



2.0 Planning Context

2.1 Designations

The site is not subject to any landscape designations at a national or local scale. It is located within the countryside north-east of, and beyond, the Cambridge City Boundary which lies within 200m of the site's south-western boundary.

The site is wholly contained within the Cambridge Green Belt north of High Ditch Road which forms the Site's southern boundary. The A14 divides the Inner City Green Belt¹ and Wider Cambridge Green Belt and forms the site's northern boundary.

Fen Ditton Conservation Area is excluded from the Green Belt and abuts the site's boundary to the south-west. Horningsea Conservation Area lies within 1km to the north-west and the Riverside and Stourbridge Common Conservation Area extends east alongside the River Cam.

There are various Listed Buildings within the Fen Ditton and Horningsea Conservation Areas. The Riverside and Stourbridge Common Conservation Area is dominated by the three large open spaces along the River Cam: Midsummer Common with Butt Green, Stourbridge Common and Ditton Meadows. It forms part of a green wedge which penetrates the City east to west.

The Harcamlow Way is a National Trail which runs along the Fen Ditton Conservation Area boundary and the site's western boundary as public footpath 85/3. It runs through Horningsea and the wider countryside (within 3km) to the north and east of the site.

The Fen Rivers Way is a National Trail which runs along the River Cam and the western edge of Fen Ditton Conservation Area, within 250m of the site's western boundary (as footpath 162/1).

Field Lane is a public byway (130/3) which forms part of the site's north-western boundary. Low Fen Drove is a public byway (85/14) which runs within 1km of the site's north-eastern boundary where it crosses the dismantled railway.

A dismantled railway cuts through the south-eastern corner of the site and crosses the A14. It is designated as a County Wildlife Site to the north-east of the A14, outside of the site's boundary.

The River Cam is designated as a County Wildlife Site and runs between Fen Ditton and Horningsea. There are various public rights of way and public open meadows which offer recreational uses along the River corridor as it connects northern Cambridge to the City Centre.

Land to the south of the site is allocated as a major development site (known as Marleigh Park) which is currently under construction. There are various play spaces and parks located within the allocation.

The Cambridge Waste Water Treatment Plant Relocation was granted development consent by the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs in April 2025. The Ministry of Housing, Communities, and Local Government (MHCLG) has confirmed that funding will not be made available to support the delivery of Anglian Water's Waste Water Treatment Plant relocation from the current site on Cowley Road in north east Cambridge to its new proposed location north of the A14.

¹ Defined by 'Cambridge Inner City Green Belt Study' (LDA, 2015)



The Council are however hoping that another source of funding will come forwards for the WWTW, but it remains contingent on factors outside the Councils' direct control. If funding is found, this would change the character of the landscape of this area and block long distance views towards the site.

2.2 Adopted Planning Policy

The site is located within the South Cambridgeshire District Council administrative area. The adopted Local Plan is the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan (Adopted September 2018).

South Cambridgeshire District Council and Cambridge City Council are currently working together to prepare a new Local Plan for the combined area of Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire described as "Greater Cambridge".

The timetable for the Greater Cambridge Local Plan (as set out in the Local Development Scheme, dated January 2025) targets submission of a Local Plan under the current plan making system by December 2026.

Paragraph 2.31 of the adopted Local Plan reads as follows:

'A number of factors define the special character of Cambridge and it's setting, which include:

- *Key views of Cambridge from the surrounding countryside;*
- *A soft green edge to the city;*
- *A distinctive urban edge;*
- *Green corridors penetrating into the city;*
- *Designated sites and other features contributing positively to the character of the landscape setting;*
- *The distribution, physical separation, setting, scale and character of Green Belt villages; and*
- *A landscape that retains a strong rural character.'*

An LVA accompanying a future submission will need to demonstrate that the proposals have the ability to comply with the NPPF and with the adopted policies at that stage. It is worth noting that the Government has identified Cambridge as an area of growth² and any documents produced in relation to its expansion will be considered as part of a future LVA.

The key adopted Local Plan policies are listed below:

- **Policy NH/2: Protecting and Enhancing Landscape Character;** *'Development will only be permitted where it respects and retains, or enhances the local character and distinctiveness of the local landscape and of the individual National Character Area in which is it located'*. Reference is made to the District Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (SPD); the Landscape in New Developments SPD and the more detailed East of England Landscape Typology published by Landscape East.
- **Policy NH/6: Green Infrastructure** requires new development to reinforce, link, buffer and create new Green Infrastructure and to promote, manage, interpret and enhance the public enjoyment of it. Reference is made to the Cambridge Green Infrastructure Study.

² 'The Case for Cambridge', March 2024 (Online Guidance by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government and Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities).



- **Policy NH/8: Mitigating the Impact of Development In and Adjoining the Green Belt** seeks to control adverse effects of development in the Green Belt on its rural character and openness and sets requirements for suitable mitigation through high quality landscaping.
- **Policy NH/14: Heritage Assets** supports development proposals which sustain and enhance the special character and distinctiveness of the districts' historic environment and the significance of heritage assets and their settings.

2.3 Emerging Local Plan Evidence Base

The Draft Cambridge Local Plan is currently at the Regulation 18 Consultation stage.

The following documents have been reviewed in preparing this Note:

Draft Greater Cambridge Local Plan (Regulation 18) for consultation (2025) - Part 1 - Introduction and Development Strategy sets 7 strategic priorities at page 47. The two of most relevance to this note are:

'Biodiversity and green spaces: Increase and improve our network of habitats for wildlife, and green spaces for people, ensuring that development leaves the natural environment better than it was before.' and

'Great places: *Sustain the unique character and identities of Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire, and complement it with beautiful and distinctive development, creating a place where people want to live, work, visit and play.'*

The **Development Strategy** proposes, at page 56, expansion of the existing settlement 'a) within the Cambridge Urban Area; b) on the edge of Cambridge; c) at an expanded Cambourne; d) at other new settlements and e) in the rural southern cluster and wider rural area at Rural Centres and Minor Rural Centres.'

Figure 8 indicates the redevelopment of Cambridge City Airport (which lies to the south of the site, beyond Marleigh Park) and extending into the Green Belt along the northern edge of the City.

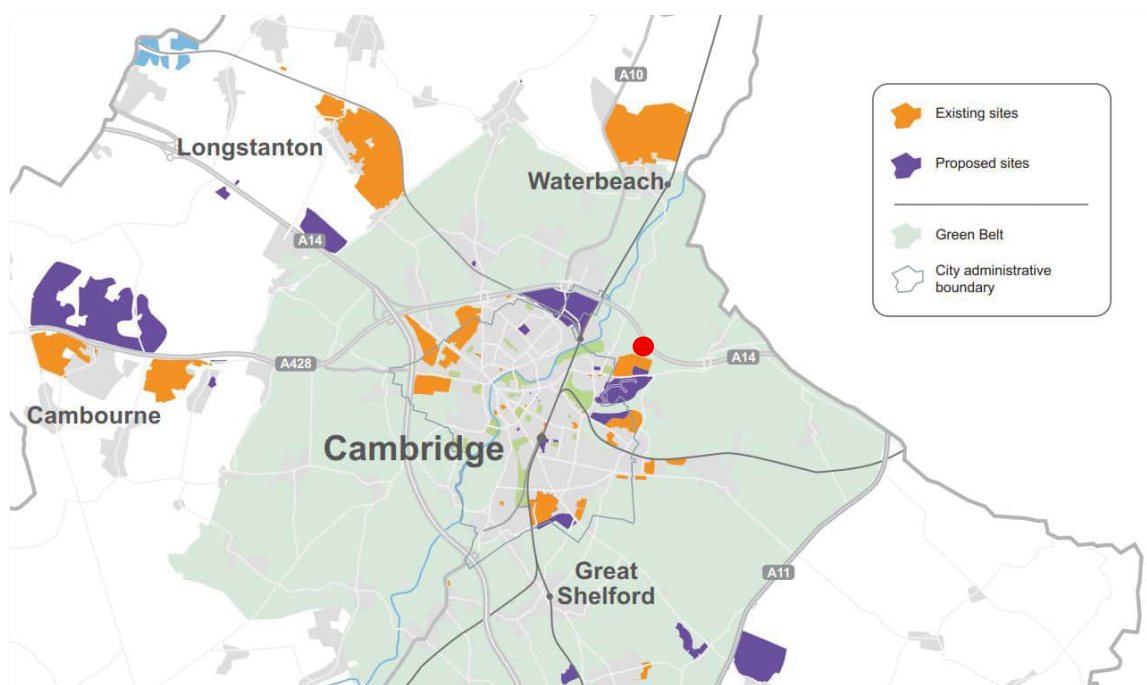


Plate 1: Extract of Figure 8 of the Draft Greater Cambridge Local Plan with the site's approximate location indicated as a red dot.



In considering landscape character, Page 91 states the following:

'A number of factors define the special character of Cambridge and its setting, which include:

- *Key views of Cambridge from the surrounding countryside;*
- *A soft green edge to the city;*
- *A distinctive urban edge;*
- *Green corridors penetrating into the city;*
- *Designated sites and other features contributing positively to the character of the landscape setting;*
- *The distribution, physical separation, setting, scale and character of Green Belt villages; and*
- *A landscape that retains a strong rural character.'*

Draft Policies of key relevance to this note are listed below:

Policy S/GB: The Cambridge Green Belt

The draft policy sets out the purposes of the Cambridge Green Belt namely to:

- Purpose 1. Preserve the unique character of Cambridge as a compact, dynamic city with a thriving historic centre.
- Purpose 2: Maintain and enhance the quality of its setting.
- Purpose 3: Prevent communities in the environs of Cambridge from merging into one another and with the city.

BG/GI: Green and Blue Infrastructure

The draft policy seeks to ensure that development leaves the natural environment better than it was before. The Draft Local Plan identifies 14 strategic green infrastructure initiatives to achieve biodiversity and green space goals. The policy follows Natural England's new Green Infrastructure Framework to develop standards ensuring places incorporate green spaces, trees, and features for people and wildlife. The 2018 CLP addressed GI primarily through Policy 8 (Setting of the city) and the broader natural environment strategy.

BG/TC: Improving Tree Canopy Cover and Tree Population

The draft policy aims at Improving tree canopy cover and the tree population. It supports the broader ambition of "Expanding Greater Cambridge's 'urban forest'" as a dispersed strategic green infrastructure initiative. While the 2018 CLP (Policy 71: Trees) focused extensively on protecting existing trees (resisting felling/damage) and requiring appropriate replacement planting, the emerging policy title suggests a more explicit and proactive strategic goal of increasing tree canopy cover and population across the area.

BG/PO: Protecting Open Spaces

The draft policy focuses on protecting open spaces. This aligns with the overall strategy to secure a larger network of nature and green spaces. This is consistent with the 2018 CLP (Policy 67: Protection of open space), which resisted the harm or loss of open space of environmental/recreational importance unless it could be satisfactorily replaced. The protection remains a core policy objective in the new plan. Whilst we do not have any accessible open space at our site we might need to consider this where open and contributes to views towards Fen Ditton and the church.

BG/EO: Providing and enhancing Open Spaces

This draft policy contributes to meeting development needs through delivering and enhancing multi-functional green spaces for people and wildlife. It builds directly on the provisions of the



2018 CLP (Policy 68: Open space and recreation provision through new development), which required residential development to contribute to on-site open space provision based on defined standards. The enhancement is linked to securing planning contributions to enhance the wider green infrastructure network.

WS/HD: Creating Healthy and New Developments

The goal of this draft policy is to create places that enable people to lead healthier lives, facilitating access to local services, active travel, and high-quality green spaces. This appears to be a new dedicated policy focus, formalising the integration of health outcomes into development design and placement within the strategic framework. While the 2018 CLP had a strategic objective to promote a safe and healthy environment (Objective 14), the new policy specifically targets the creation of healthy developments.

GP/QP: Enhancing High Quality landscape and Public Realm

The draft policy aims at ensuring new developments deliver high quality, well-designed spaces that sustain the unique character of Greater Cambridge. This maintains the commitment to design excellence outlined in the 2018 CLP Policy 59 (Designing landscape and the public realm). The shift in terminology from "Designing" to "Establishing/Enhancing" suggests a continued emphasis on delivery quality, ensuring the public realm is an integral component of high quality development under the 'Great Places' theme.

GP/LC: Protecting and Enhancing Landscape Character

The strategic priority is to safeguard unique, locally distinctive heritage and landscapes. This evolves the approach found in 2018 CLP Policy 8 (Setting of the city), which required development to conserve and enhance the setting and special character of the city based on the Landscape Character Assessment. The dedicated GP/LC policy under the 'Great Places' framework provides a focused mandate for maintaining and improving landscape character.

The Draft Greater Cambridge Local Plan (Regulation 18) for consultation (2025) Part 6 – Themes explores these policies in more detail.

Other evidence considered includes:

The Greater Cambridge HELAA Assessment (Dec 2025) considers the majority of the site (under ID 115182) for a proposed residential capacity of 1500 residential units. The 2025 landscape comment reads as follows: *'This is two large sites located to the north of the village of Fen Ditton outside and abutting the settlement framework. Wide, local and amenity views are high due to low lying nature of topography and lack of boundary vegetation. Development upon this site would have a significant adverse impact to the landscape character. It would be an encroachment into the landscape and an urbanisation of the rural landscape, which is an important backdrop to the village.'*

The Greater Cambridge Green Infrastructure Strategy (Chris Blandford Associates, December 2025) forms part of the evidence base for the emerging Greater Cambridge Local Plan. It provides a set of proposed Green Infrastructure standards, and emerging approaches to developing other potential Green Infrastructure standards through the Local Plan period. Strategic Green Infrastructure Initiatives are listed at page 21. The site sits within an area of greenfield which could provide offsite links to contribute to Strategic Initiatives 2: River Cam Corridor and 4. Enhancement of the Eastern Fens to the west and east respectively. The design of the Green Infrastructure on the site could also respond to Strategic Initiatives 9. Pollinator corridors and 10. Expand Greater Cambridge Urban Forest.

The Skyline and Tall Buildings Baseline, Strategy and Guidance (Chris Blandford Associates and Urban initiatives, November 2025). Figure 8 confirms that no strategic views towards the city are identified from within, or in the vicinity of the site. No landmarks are within close proximity of the site. Page 216 identifies road approach views when entering the site



from the east and a dynamic view (View L) is identified to the south of the site, looking across Ditton Meadows.

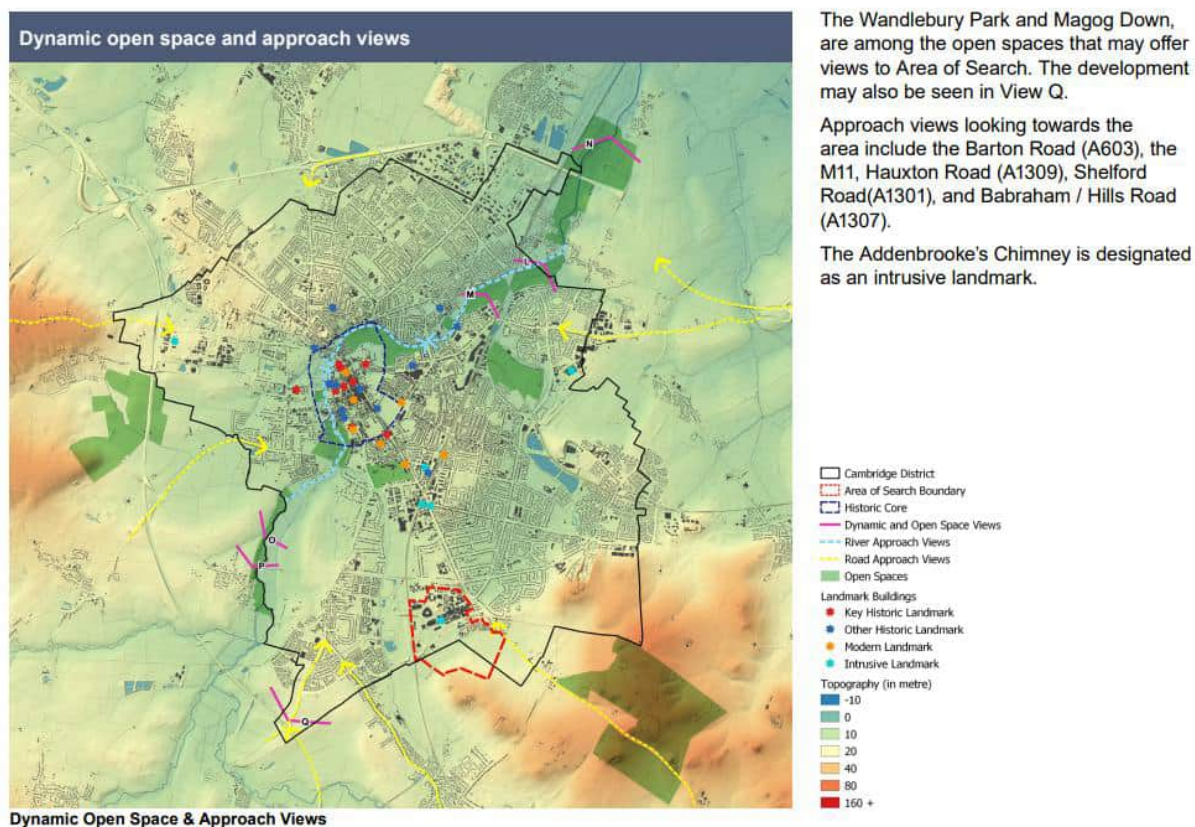


Plate 2: Extract of page 216 of the Skyline and Tall Buildings Baseline Strategy and Guidance

The Greater Cambridge Landscape Character Assessment (Chris Blandford Associates, Feb 2021) provides an up-to-date, and consistent, Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) of the whole Greater Cambridge area. It is considered at Section 3.1 below.

The Greater Cambridge Landscape Sensitivity Assessment (Chris Blandford Associates, Feb 2021) Part 1 assesses the sensitivity of the Cambridge landscape to residential, commercial and mixed-use development. It is considered at Section 3.1 below.



3.0 Landscape and Visual Considerations

3.1 Existing Character Assessments

The Greater Cambridge Landscape Character Assessment sets out the landscape context for the site.

At a **National** level, Natural England identifies the site as being located within **NCA 88: Bedfordshire & Cambridgeshire Clayland**. NCA 46:the Fens and NCA 87:East Anglian Chalk extend to the north and east respectively.

At a **Regional** level the East of England Landscape Character Typology identifies the site as being within the **Lowland Village Chalklands** landscape typology with Planned Peat Fen immediately to the west.

At a **County** level the Cambridgeshire Landscape Guidelines (1991) identify the site as being partly within the Western Claylands and the Fenlands.

Cambridgeshire County Council (2013) identify the site as being located in the Cambridgeshire Chalk Fen historic environment character area (LCA 18).

At a **Local** level the Greater Cambridge Landscape Character Assessment (CBA, Feb 2021) locates the site within **LCA 6A: Fen Ditton Fen Edge Chalklands**. The landscape is described as a settled landscape with small, linear villages and discordant influences introduced due to the proximity of the urban edge of Cambridge.

The key characteristics of LCA 6A, as listed below, are all relevant to, and displayed by, the site and its immediate setting:

- *‘Irregular pattern of large, rectilinear fields contrasts with small scale, more regular field patterns around settlement edges*
- *Well-trimmed hedges, boundary trees and shelterbelts provide a distinctive localised vegetation pattern near villages*
- *Settled rural landscape comprising small villages with historic linear cores and isolated farms*
- *Urban influences due to proximity to the urban edge of Cambridge including large scale transport infrastructure and hospitals.’*

Specific landscape sensitivities relevant to the site include the small-scale pastoral fields, shelter belts and associated vegetation at the village edges in the proximity of the River Cam.

Specific landscape guidelines listed below are all of relevance to the site:

- *‘Conserve and enhance the regular small-scale pastoral fields, shelter belts and hedges at village edges*
- *Manage drains and ditches to maintain historic features and enhance ecological value of the farmed landscape*
- *Ensure development is in keeping with the open, rural character.’*

The assessment considers the landscape condition and strength of character of the Greater Cambridge area and concludes that the Fen Edge Chalklands are of moderate landscape condition and moderate strength of character. The landscape management objective is to enhance and restore.

The Greater Cambridge Landscape Sensitivity Assessment - Part 1 (CBA, Feb 2021) considers the site within **Assessment Unit CEF03**. It concludes the following at page 56:



*'In summary, this is a commonplace, arable landscape. Open, expansive views and a sense of separation between Fen Ditton and Horningsea are more susceptible to the development scenario alongside several features which contribute to the defining and supporting character of Cambridge including a contribution to the rural context of Cambridge, natural value associated with vegetation on the dismantled railway line and small scale meadows in the north and recreational value. Features which are less susceptible include intrusive highway infrastructure, large scale arable fields with limited vegetation, and pylons which interrupt the skyline. On balance, this Assessment Unit is assessed as being of **medium** sensitivity to the development scenario.'*...

'In this context, there may be some opportunities for residential, commercial and mixed-use development with increased height/scale in parts of this Assessment Unit.'

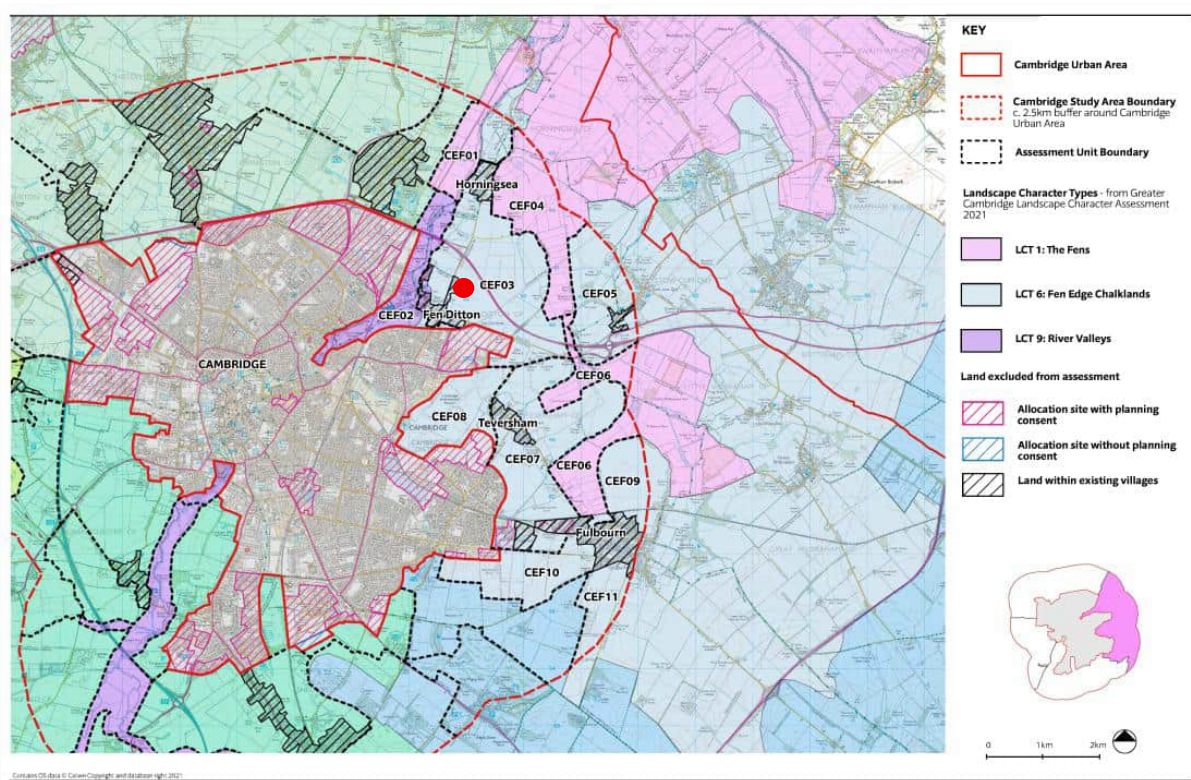


Plate 3: Figure 2.2 of Greater Cambridge Landscape Sensitivity Assessment with the centre of the site indicated as a red dot.



3.2 Overview of the Landscape Character and Value of the Site

For the purposes of this Note the site has been divided into three parcels as illustrated on the Viewpoint Location Plan at Figure FD-1.

Parcel A lies to the east of Horningsea Road and extends to the edge of the village of Fen Ditton. It is comprised of one medium sized arable field and one small area of pasture to the south adjacent to Musgrave Farm.

The parcel abuts the Fen Ditton Conservation Area boundary along its southern and south-western boundaries. PROWs (including Field Lane and a short section of the Harcamlow Way National Trail) run along its northern and western boundaries respectively. The Harcamlow Way is open to the site's western boundary as are the rear garden boundaries of properties at Wright's Close (outside of the Conservation Area). Field Lane is enclosed by hedgerow along the majority of its length.

Vegetation along the site boundaries is in moderate condition with regular gaps or large open stretches of the boundaries allowing for views into the parcel. This is mostly evident along Horningsea Road where there are direct views into the site along the majority of the parcel's eastern boundary. Horningsea Road is a busy route into Cambridge and the noise and movement is a detractor within the parcel. The urban influences reduce when moving west towards the edge of Fen Ditton.

Views of the St Mary's Church tower (at the centre of Fen Ditton) are a positive feature of the site but are mostly experienced from the north eastern extent of Field Lane and from the site's eastern boundary along Horningsea Road. There are views across the site from Horningsea Road towards Fen Ditton. In these views high level construction machinery is visible on the skyline at the northern edge of Cambridge. On the day of the site visit there were no views towards Cambridge City Centre – this may change in winter months.

Parcel B lies to the west of the dismantled railway and to the east of properties along Horningsea Road. It is comprised of one large irregular arable field which extends to the A14 along its northern boundary and one small field to the south-west which abuts the Fen Ditton Conservation Area boundary. The smaller field is contained by a managed hedgerow along its northern and eastern boundaries but there are regular gaps in the rear gardens of properties at Fen Ditton (within the Conservation Area) which overlook the parcel. The larger field is subdivided by linear ditches / margins which have little vegetation to distinguish them as a landscape feature. Vegetation to the northern boundary to the A14, along the dismantled railway line to the east, and to High Ditch Road to the south is well established and provides some sense of containment along these edges. The larger fields have an exposed open character which is influenced by the noise from traffic along the A14 corridor. There are occasional glimpses to the St Mary's Church Tower from the northern parts of the parcel. In wider panoramic views out from the site high level construction machinery is visible on the skyline at the northern edge of Cambridge. On the day of the site visit there were no views towards Cambridge City Centre – this may change in winter months.

Parcel C lies to the south-east of the dismantled railway line and to the west of Low Fen Drove which rises up over the A14 near the site's eastern corner. It is comprised of three medium sized arable fields and one small area of pasture adjacent to the dismantled railway line. The fields are divided by low managed hedgerows and / or ditches. The mature vegetation of the railway embankment, the A14 corridor and High Ditch Road provide some sense of enclosure. A small row of properties along High Ditch Road overlook the parcel's southern boundary. Mature vegetation along High Ditch Road limits any intervisibility between the site and the construction of new housing at Marleigh Park to the south. A new pedestrian / cycleway is in the process of being constructed to the south-east of the parcel, opposite Low Fen Drove – this is the only visual reference to the Marleigh Park housing site during summer months. On the day of the site visit there were no views towards Cambridge City Centre – this may change in winter months.



Plate 2 below provides an extract of the CPRE's Dark Skies Map and illustrates the effects of lighting associated with the edge of Cambridge and the A14 on the rural landscape east of the city. Each pixel shows the level of radiance (night lights) shining up into the night sky. These have been categorised into colour bands to distinguish between different light levels. The site is mostly contained within the brighter light level (2 – 4 Nanowatts / cm²/sr). Parcel A is located within light level 4 – 8 due to its proximity with the edge of Fen Ditton.

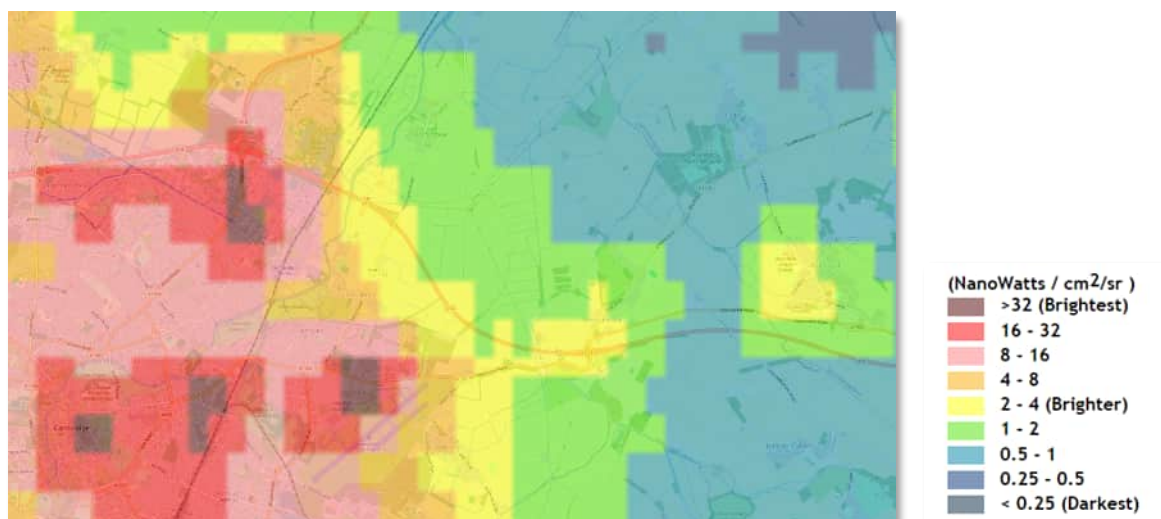


Plate 4: Extract from the CPRE's Dark Skies Map centred on the site

Overall, the site is typical of LCA 6A: Fen Ditton Fen Edge Chalklands. It presents as a settled intensively farmed landscape adjacent to the small, linear village of Fen Ditton as it extends along Horningsea Road and High Ditch Road. It is generally an open, flat uniform landscape.

It is most valued for its open countryside qualities and the part it plays in providing a visual setting to the Fen Ditton Conservation Area, especially in Parcel A where views to the St Mary's Church Tower are possible and the site is overlooked by the Harcamlow National Trail.

An initial review of the Factors listed at Table 1 of the Landscape Institute's Technical Guidance Note TGN02/21³ is provided below. This would be revisited as part of a future LVA once all constraints and surveys relevant to the site have been reviewed in detail.

At this stage, in the context of the above, it is considered that the site is mostly valued at a Community to Local Authority, with Parcel A displaying a range of factors which elevate its value to Local Authority. Parcel A may be considered to be a valued landscape in the context of Paragraph 187a) of the NPPF.

The LVA will acknowledge that any introduction of built form into a greenfield site will result in landscape and visual harm. In order to meet NPPF requirements it will be necessary to demonstrate that the most valued features of the site are protected and to identify any landscape enhancements which can be offered alongside the proposed built form to respond to local character management guidelines and Green Infrastructure Initiatives.

³ 'Assessing landscape value outside national designations.' (Landscape Institute's TGN 02/21)



Table 3.1: Evaluation Of The Value Of the Site And Its Immediate Context In Accordance With Table 1 Of 'Assessing Landscape Value – A Technical Guidance Note'

Factor	Assessment	Notes
Natural Heritage	Community	The UK Habitat Survey Summary Plan (HDA, June 2025) confirms that the majority of the site is currently in cereal crop with localised areas of modified grassland along the south eastern corner of Parcel A, the western edges of Parcel B and central to Parcel C. The dismantled railway line supports broadleaved woodland which extends beyond the site boundaries. To the north east it is designated as a County Wildlife site. Species rich native hedgerows are limited to the northern boundary of Parcel A. All other boundary hedgerows are native with trees along the A14 corridor and along High Ditch Road. Initial feedback from the ecologist (in preparing the revised Vision Document) is that site offers a suitably low baseline to ensure BNG can be enhanced as part of the proposals. The dismantled railway line is the most notable feature which holds natural heritage value within the site, and this is mostly beyond the site boundary within the County Wildlife site.
Cultural Heritage	Community (Parcel B & C) Local Authority (Parcel A)	Parcel A and the south western edges of Parcel B abut the Fen Ditton Conservation Area boundary. There are views from public rights of way within Parcel A towards features within the Conservation Area. This visibility would increase in winter months when trees are no longer in leaf. The Church tower is the most distinctive visual component of the Conservation Area and this is viewed from the eastern and northern boundaries of Parcel A. Glimpses are possible from within Parcel B, close to the A14, but not from any public right of way.
Landscape condition	Community	Overall, the site is in a good physical state both with regard to individual elements and overall landscape structure. Detracting / incongruous features are evident adjacent to the settlement edges and along the A14 and Horningsea Road.
Associations	Community	At the time of writing this Note the site is not known to be connected with notable people, events and the arts.
Distinctiveness	Community (Parcel B & C) Local Authority (Parcel A)	The Church tower is visible from the eastern and northern boundaries of Parcel A and presents as a landmark with the level rural landscape in the foreground. This confers a strong sense of place within Parcel A.
Recreational	Community (Parcel B & C) Local Authority (Parcel A)	Parcel A contains the Harcamlow National Trail (National Trail) and connects to Fields Lane. There are no public rights of way within Parcels B and C.
Perceptual (Scenic)	Community (Parcel B & C) Local Authority (Parcel A)	The Church Tower is a memorable/distinctive landmark on the horizon. It is visible from Parcel A. There are limited distinctive features, or distinctive combinations of features in Parcels B and C. There are no notable strong aesthetic qualities; visual diversity or contrasts.
Perceptual (Wilderness and tranquillity)	Low	There is no sense of remoteness, wildness or tranquillity, nor views to Dark Skies within the site.
Functional	Community	The site offers opportunities for connection to nearby Green Infrastructure assets, but it does not have strong physical or functional links with an adjacent national landscape designation, nor is it important to the appreciation of the designated landscape and its special qualities.



3.3 Potential Visibility of the Site, and Visual Receptors that have Potential to Obtain Views of Development

The site's open, level nature in the context of the edge of Cambridge and the A14 suggests that the extent to which any 2 to 3 storey development within the site will be visible will be fairly constrained but will likely extend across the A14 to the north-east. A computer generated ZTV (Zone of Theoretical Visibility) will be provided with a future LVA to illustrate the full extent to which the proposed built form will be visible.

The majority of views towards the proposed development will be from receptors overlooking the site and from adjacent public rights of way. The viewpoint location plan at Figure 1 and the representative views demonstrate that the visual receptors most sensitive to the proposed change include the following:

- Residents, motorists and pedestrians at Horningsea Road (View 1, 2, 6 and 8);
- Walkers at Field Lane (View 1);
- Walkers at Harmcamlow Way (View 3, 4 and 5);
- Residents at Wright's Close, Fen Ditton (View 4);
- Users of the Fen Ditton Recreation Ground & visitors to the Cemetery (View 5);
- Residents at Musgrave Farm (View 6);
- Visitors to Fen Ditton Community Primary School (Views 2 and 7);
- Residents and motorists at High Ditch Road (Views 9 and 11);
- Motorists at the A14 and Low Fen Drove Way (Views 10 and 12);

Views from further afield (Views 14, 15 and 16) demonstrate that the extent to which the site (and future development within it) may be visible in the flat landscape is likely to be limited. The site will be revisited in winter months to ensure that an LVA accompanying a future submission demonstrates the worst-case visibility of the site in near, middle, and long distance views.



4.0 Green Belt Review

4.1 Existing Green Belt Reviews

The Draft Local Plan refers to the Greater Cambridge Green Belt Study (LUC, 2021) as supporting evidence base.

Table 3.1, at page 44 of the Study shows the inter-relationship between the Cambridge Green Belt Purposes and the NPPF Purposes of the Green Belt.

Cambridge Purpose	NPPF Purpose	Comment
1. Preserve the unique character of Cambridge as a compact, dynamic city with a thriving historic centre.	1. To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas.	Cambridge Purpose 1 deals with the compact nature of the city and as such is directly related to the issue of urban sprawl, meaning that this purpose captures the essence of NPPF purpose 1.
2. Maintain and enhance the quality of its setting.	3. To assist in the safeguarding of the countryside from encroachment. 4. To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns.	Cambridge Purpose 2 is clearly related to NPPF Purpose 4, as noted above, but is also closely related to NPPF Purpose 3, owing to the strong rural character of Cambridge's setting. Whilst both NPPF Purpose 4 and 3 will be covered under Cambridge Purpose 2, NPPF Purpose 4 is given relatively more weight. This allows more meaningful variations in contribution and harm to be drawn out in the specific context of Cambridge.
3. Prevent communities in the environs of Cambridge from merging into one another and with the city.	2. To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another.	Cambridge Purpose 3 is closely related to NPPF Purpose 2. However, the focus here is not on gaps between 'towns' specifically, but on the gaps between Cambridge and the surrounding necklace of villages and on the gaps between individual villages themselves - both those within the inner necklace and those more distant.

The LUC Study divides the site into five parcels: FD3 and FD4 west of Horningsea Road; FD5 and FD 6 west of the dismantled railway and BW1 east of the dismantled railway.



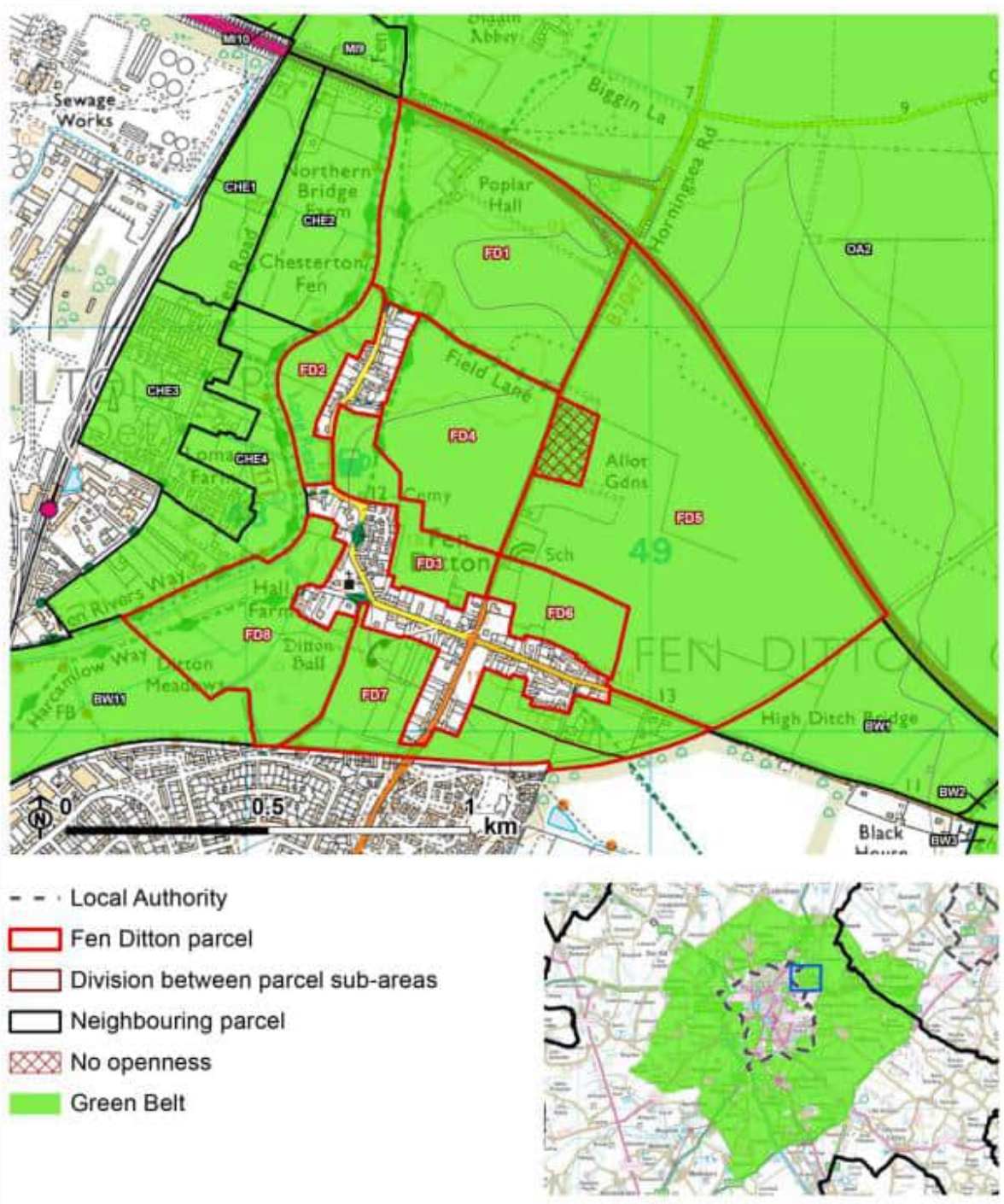


Plate 5: Extract of Green Belt Assessment FD-P1 showing parcel references and the site's location in the context of the wider Cambridge Green Belt.

The table below provides a summary of the LUC Study (on behalf of Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council) where relevant to the site.



Parcel ref	Contribution to Cambridge Green Belt Purposes			Impact on Contribution of Adjacent GB	Potential Harm to Cambridge GB
	Purpose 1	Purpose 2	Purpose 3		
FD3	Relatively Limited	Relatively Significant	Limited / No Contribution	Minor	Parcel FD3 makes a relatively significant contribution to maintaining and enhancing the quality of Cambridge's setting and a relatively limited contribution to preserving Cambridge's compact character. The additional impact on the adjacent Green Belt of the release of the parcel would be minor. Therefore, the harm resulting from its release, as an expansion of Fen Ditton, would be moderate high .
FD4	Relatively Significant	Relatively Significant	Limited / No Contribution	Moderate	Parcel FD4 makes a relatively significant contribution to preserving Cambridge's compact character and a relatively significant contribution to maintaining and enhancing the quality of Cambridge's setting. The additional impact on the adjacent Green Belt of the release of the parcel would be moderate. Therefore, the harm resulting from its release, as an expansion of Fen Ditton, would be very high .
FD5	Relatively Significant	Relatively Significant	Moderate	Minor- Moderate	Parcel FD5 makes a relatively significant contribution to preserving Cambridge's compact character, a relatively significant contribution to maintaining and enhancing the quality of Cambridge's setting, and a moderate contribution to preventing communities in the environs of Cambridge from merging with one another. The additional impact on the adjacent Green Belt of the release of the parcel would be minor-moderate. Therefore, the harm resulting from its release, as an expansion of Fen Ditton, would be very high .
FD6	Moderate	Relatively Significant	Limited / No Contribution	Minor- Moderate	Parcel FD6 makes a moderate contribution to preserving Cambridge's compact character and a relatively significant contribution to maintaining and enhancing the quality of Cambridge's setting. The additional impact on the adjacent Green Belt of the release of the parcel would be minor-moderate. Therefore, the harm resulting from its release, as an expansion of Fen Ditton, would be high .
BW1	Significant	Moderate	Significant	Minor	Parcel BW1 makes a significant contribution to preserving Cambridge's compact character and to preventing communities in the environs of Cambridge from merging with the city, and a moderate contribution to maintaining and enhancing the quality of Cambridge's setting. The additional impact on the adjacent Green Belt of the release of the parcel would be minor. Therefore, the harm resulting from its release, as an expansion of Cambridge, would be very high .



Development of the majority of the site is assessed (by LUC) as having the potential for 'Very High Harm' to the Cambridge Green Belt functionality, with only those parcels abutting the existing settlement edge (FD3 and FD6) having Moderate High to High harm rating respectively. The LUC assessment concludes that any development of the site would require a review of the Green Belt boundary in the vicinity of the site.

The Council's Green Belt Review is now out of date in the context of the latest NPPF and its guidance and will need to be reviewed.

The section which follows provides SLR's Initial Appraisal of the Green Belt on the basis of the latest NPPF and its guidance. It does not provide a review of the Cambridge Green Belt functionality but does consider its (and previous Green Belt Study's) findings where relevant in the context of the latest Government Guidance and objectives.

4.2 Methodology

This preliminary Green Belt appraisal assesses the functionality of the site for each of the five purposes of the Green Belt as set out in the 2025 NPPF from a landscape and visual perspective. It also assesses whether the site could be considered to be grey belt – although this matter is likely to be explored in more detail by Turley in their role as planning advisors.

The methodology used for this Green Belt and grey belt appraisal is set out at **Appendix A**. The methodology is based upon previous appeal decisions and High Court judgements, best practice in Green Belt appraisals, and has also been updated to include some of the definitions and criteria used in the Government's latest planning policy guidance on Green Belt and grey belt assessment (March 2025).

As Appendix A explains, the assessment determines, for purposes A (Unrestricted Sprawl), B (Coalescence of towns), C (Encroachment into the countryside) and D (preserving the setting and special character of historic towns) what contribution the site makes to each purpose. This purpose is described as being:

- **3 Strong**
- **2 Moderate**
- **1 Weak**
- **0 Makes no contribution**

4.3 Analysis of the Green Belt Functionality of the Site

4.3.1 Openness

The site is open and free from buildings. It abuts the settlement boundary of Fen Ditton to the west and south. The A14 road corridor forms the northern boundary and the eastern boundary (which is the narrowest) abuts the countryside which extends to the village of Stow-cum-Quay.

Views to the adjacent settlement edge are possible from Parcels A and B (west of the dismantled railway line). Parcel C has limited visual connections to the settlement edge but there may be views opened up towards the nearby Marleigh Park development in winter months. Noise and movement associated with traffic along Horningsea Road is evident across Parcels A and B. The A14 is generally well screened (in summer months) but higher vehicles are visible beyond the tree line and the noise of traffic is audible across the entire site. **Plate 2**, above, illustrates that the site is also influenced by existing light sources associated with the edge of the City and the A14 corridor.

In summary, the site is free from buildings and, whilst it does abut the existing settlement edge and is influenced by urbanising qualities of the built-up area and nearby roads, its open level arable characteristics present as a rural site. Any development would affect its openness.



4.3.2 Green Belt Purpose A - To Check the Unrestricted Sprawl of Large Built-up Areas

The site is located on the north-eastern edge of Cambridge and contained by the settlement edge of Fen Ditton along its southern and western boundaries and by the A18 corridor along the majority of its northern boundary.

The Cambridge Waste Water Treatment Plant Relocation was granted development consent by the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs in April 2025. Subject to funding, this would result in a form of development to the north of the site.

The site does not, therefore, function to protect against *unrestricted* sprawl, as there are clear boundaries or features beyond the site that would contain the spread of urban development.

The table below assesses the site against the illustrative features in the Government's planning policy guidance on grey belt to determine the level of contribution.

Table 4-1: Purpose A - To Check the Unrestricted Sprawl of Large Built-up Areas

Contribution	Illustrative Features	Assessment
Strong	<p>Assessment areas that contribute strongly are likely to be free of existing development, and lack physical feature(s) in reasonable proximity that could restrict and contain development. They are also likely to include all of the following features:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • be adjacent or near to a large built-up area • if developed, result in an incongruous pattern of development (such as an extended "finger" of development into the Green Belt) 	<p><i>Whilst the site is free of existing development, the existing settlement abuts it on two (of three) sides and there are physical features (including the A14 and future WWTW) which could restrict and contain development to the north and north-east.</i></p> <p><i>The site is adjacent to the village of Fen Ditton which presents as a small linear village beyond the large built-up area of Cambridge.</i></p> <p><i>If developed the site would be seen to be contained by the A14 which (as illustrated on Plate 1) presents a logical boundary for future expansion of Cambridge. If developed alongside other planned development in the area it would not result in an incongruous pattern of development.</i></p>
Moderate	<p>Assessment areas that contribute moderately are likely to be adjacent or near to a large built-up area, but include one or more features that weaken the land's contribution to this purpose a, such as (but not limited to):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • having physical feature(s) in reasonable proximity that could restrict and contain development • be partially enclosed by existing development, such that new development would not result in an incongruous pattern of development • contain existing development • being subject to other urbanising influences 	<p><i>The site is near to a large built-up area, but its contribution is weakened by the factors below:</i></p> <p><i>The A14 and future SWWT would restrict and contain development to the north. Existing settlement edges restrict and contain development to the south and west.</i></p> <p><i>The site is partially enclosed by existing development along its southern and western boundaries and where it abuts Horningsea Road. New development would not result in an incongruous pattern of development.</i></p> <p><i>The site is influenced by views of built form, traffic noise and lighting.</i></p>



Contribution	Illustrative Features	Assessment
Weak/None	Assessment areas that make only a weak or no contribution are likely to include those that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> are not adjacent to or near to a large built-up area are adjacent to or near to a large built-up area, but containing or being largely enclosed by significant existing development. 	<i>The site is adjacent to the village of Fen Ditton which presents as a small linear village beyond the large built-up area of Cambridge. It does also lie adjacent to (although separated by vegetation along High Ditch Road) the Marleigh Park development which could be seen to form part of the large built-up area of Cambridge.</i> <i>The site is adjacent to a large built up area and is largely enclosed by development.</i>
Conclusion	Moderate to weak contribution to this purpose	

In summary the site **makes a Moderate to Weak contribution to this function (score 1 to 2)**.

4.3.3 Coalescence

Whilst the site may be perceived locally as creating a sense of separation between the linear parts of Fen Ditton (along Horningsea Road and High Bridge Road) it is important to note that these residential areas all form part of the village of Fen Ditton which presents as one small linear settlement within the Green Belt.

The site could be seen to contribute to the gap between the villages of Fen Ditton and Stow-Cum-Quay (approximately 1.6km to the east, beyond the A14). Neither of these settlements are defined as Towns. Fen Ditton is described as a ‘Group Village’ within the adopted Local Plan, whilst Stow-Cum-Quay is described as an ‘Infill Village’. The latest PPG confirms that this purpose relates to the merging of towns, not villages.

The site does fall within the countryside to the north-east of Cambridge which extends across a range of smaller settlements. The Green Belt does not extend as far as Newmarket and therefore is not considered to play a part in maintaining separation between these two settlements. It is noted that the Cambridge Green Belt does have its own function of preventing communities in the wider area from merging with each other or with the City. This is a function unique to the Cambridge Green Belt and is not relevant under the latest government’s Green Belt Guidance.

A full assessment of the site’s contribution to this purpose, using the Government’s illustrative features, is set out in the table below:

Table 4-2: Purpose B - To Prevent Neighbouring Towns Merging into One Another

Contribution	Illustrative Features	Assessment
Strong	Assessment areas that contribute strongly are likely to be free of existing development and include all of the following features: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> forming a substantial part of a gap between towns the development of which would be likely to result in the loss of visual separation of towns. 	<i>The site is free of existing development but does not include either of the following features:</i> <i>It does not form part of the gap between two Towns.</i> <i>The site would not result in any loss of visual separation of towns.</i>



Contribution	Illustrative Features	Assessment
Moderate	<p>Assessment areas that contribute moderately are likely to be located in a gap between towns, but include one or more features that weaken their contribution to this purpose, such as (but not limited to):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> forming a small part of the gap between towns being able to be developed without the loss of visual separation between towns. This could be (but is not limited to) due to the presence or the close proximity of structures, natural landscape elements or topography that preserve visual separation. 	<p><i>It does not form part of the gap between two Towns.</i></p> <p><i>Its development would not result in the loss of any visual separation between two Towns.</i></p>
Weak/None	<p>Assessment areas that contribute weakly are likely to include those that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> do not form part of a gap between towns, or form part of a gap between towns, but only a very small part of this gap, without making a contribution to visual separation 	<p><i>The site does not form part of a gap between towns.</i></p>
Conclusion	No contribution to this purpose	

In summary the Site **makes no contribution to function B (score 0)**.

4.3.4 Encroachment

The site forms part of the open level settled farmland which forms the setting to Fen Ditton and the edge of Cambridge.

The site is adjacent to the settlement edge of Fen Ditton and near to the settlement edge formed by Marleigh Park. It does not contain any built form and is largely open. Views to the adjacent settlement edge (along two of its three of its sides) are possible from the site in its entirety and traffic noise from the A14 area is audible. **Plate 2**, above, illustrates that the site is also influenced by existing light sources. It has a largely rural character but is affected by the urban attributes of the adjacent settlement edges. Development of the site would have limited effect on the wider countryside setting which extends beyond the A14 to the north and north-east.

Development of any part of the site would present as an encroachment into the countryside to the north-east of Cambridge, however existing development already extends to the south and west of the site (and along Horningsea Road) and the A14 presents as a logical permanent boundary to the open level rural landscape to the north east. The site makes a **moderate contribution to this function (score 2)**.



4.3.5 Preserving the Setting of Historic Towns

The site contributes to the setting of Fen Ditton which is defined as a Group Village in the Adopted Local Plan. Fen Ditton is not an historic town. Cambridge is a historic city, not a town.

One of the key factors which define the setting of the City (as set out by the Adopted Local Plan) is ‘*The distribution, physical separation, setting, scale and character of Green Belt villages*’. In this context the site may be considered to contribute to the preserving the setting of Cambridge, even though there are no views to the City Centre from within it.

It is also worth noting that the Cambridge Inner City Green Belt Boundary Study (LDA, November 2015) assesses the site as Parcels 19.1 and 18.2 and at its Figure 25 (extracted below for ease) demonstrates the site’s distance from the Historic Core of Cambridge.

Its subsequent Assessment Summary on page 247 concluded that Parcels 19.1 and 18.2 make a ‘*Low Contribution to the Green Belt.*’

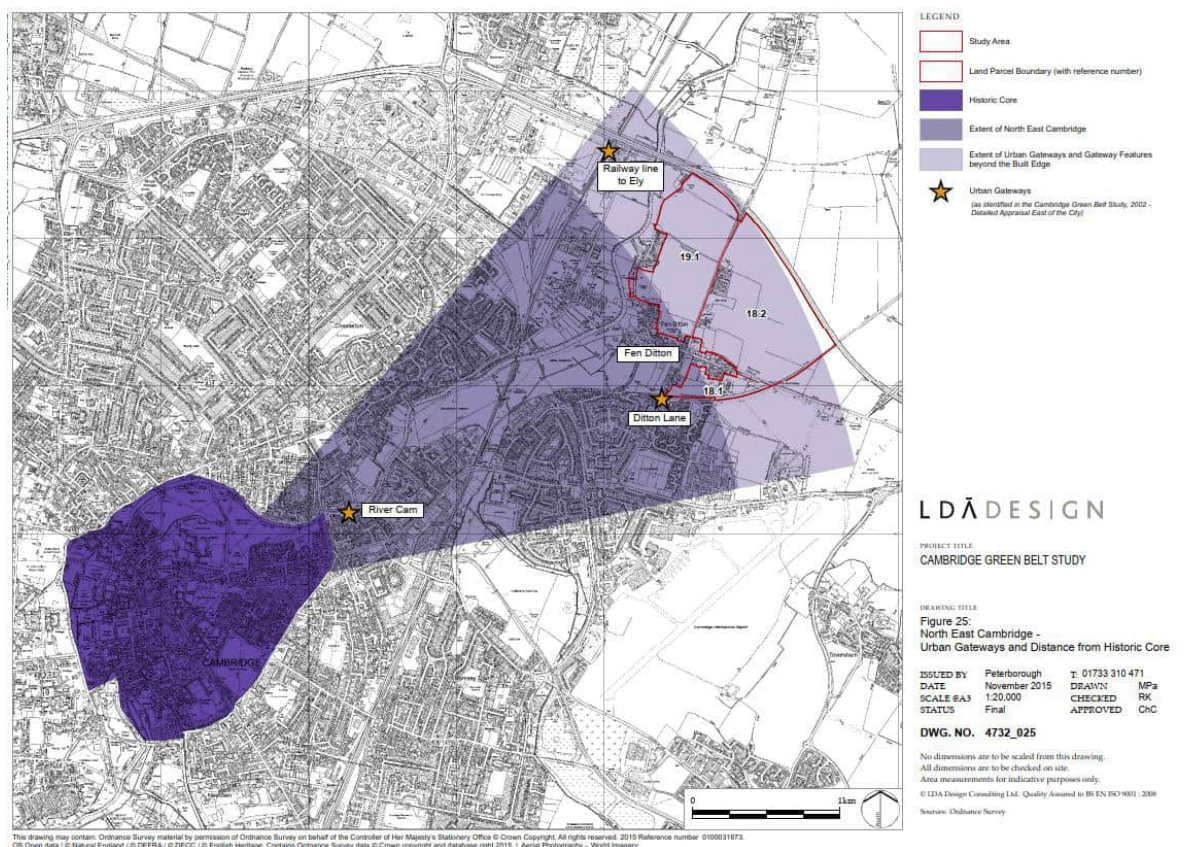


Plate 6: Extract of Figure 25 of Cambridge Inner City Green Belt Study Boundary (LCA, November 2015)

The table below provides an initial analysis of the site’s contribution to this purpose by applying the Government’s criteria.

Table 4-3: Purpose D - To Preserve the Setting and Special Character of Historic Towns

Contribution	Illustrative Features	Assessment
Strong	Assessment areas that contribute strongly are likely to be free of existing development and include all of the following features:	<i>The site is free of existing development.</i>



Contribution	Illustrative Features	Assessment
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> form part of the setting of a historic town Make a considerable contribution to the special character of a historic town. This could be (but is not limited to) as a result of being within, adjacent to, or of significant visual importance to the historic aspects of the town. 	<p><i>It does not abut the historic City Centre and there are no views (to be reviewed in winter) towards the City Centre or its features.</i></p> <p><i>It falls within the Cambridge Green Belt which has its own unique purpose of preserving the rural setting to Cambridge (Cambridge Green Belt Purpose 2) but the 2015 LDA Inner City Green Belt Review demonstrates that it is at some distance from the Historic Core of the City.</i></p>
Moderate	<p>Assessment areas that perform moderately are likely to form part of the setting and/or contribute to the special character of a historic town but include one or more features that weaken their contribution to this purpose, such as (but not limited to):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Being separated to some extent from historic aspects of the town by existing development or topography Containing existing development Not having an important visual, physical or experiential relationship to historic aspects of the town 	<p><i>The site falls within the Cambridge Green Belt which has its own unique purpose of preserving the rural setting to Cambridge (Cambridge Green Belt Purpose 2).</i></p> <p><i>It is separated from the historic aspects of the town centre. The 2015 LDA Inner City Green Belt Review demonstrates that it is at some distance from the Historic Core of the City.</i></p> <p><i>It does not contain existing development.</i></p> <p><i>It does not have an important visual, physical or experiential relationship to the historic aspects of the town.</i></p>
Weak/None	<p>Assessment areas that make no or only a weak contribution are likely to include those that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> do not form part of the setting of a historic town have no visual, physical or experiential connection to the historic aspects of the town 	<p><i>The site falls within the Cambridge Green Belt which has its own unique purpose of preserving the rural setting to Cambridge (Cambridge Green Belt Purpose 2).</i></p> <p><i>It is separated from the historic aspects of the town centre. The 2015 LDA Inner City Green Belt Review demonstrates that it is at some distance from the Historic Core of the City.</i></p> <p><i>It does not have an important visual, physical or experiential relationship to the historic aspects of the town.</i></p>
Conclusion	Moderate contribution to this purpose	

In summary the site **makes a moderate contribution to function D (score 2)**.



4.4 Assessment of Whether the Site Constitutes Grey Belt

The assessment above concludes that the site does not perform strongly against NPPF Purposes a), b) or d) and could potentially be classified (from a landscape and visual perspective) as grey belt.

Any consideration for its development would need to be considered in the context of the emerging local plan which shows (as per Plate 1) its location in the context of potential development areas. The A14 has previously been identified as the boundary to the Inner City Green Belt and presents a logical boundary to expansion of the settlement area. Development of the site would have the potential to reinforce this as a Green Infrastructure corridor and reinforce it as a permanent green edge to the extended settlement area.

Land to the north and north-east of the A14 would be retained as Green Belt and would continue to protect the most rural parts of the landscape.

It can therefore be concluded that **development of this site “would not fundamentally undermine the purposes (taken together) of the remaining Green Belt across the area of the plan.”**



5.0 Conclusion and Recommendations

The site is not subject to any landscape designations at a national or local scale. It is located within the countryside north-east of, and beyond, the Cambridge City Boundary. It is wholly contained within the Cambridge Green Belt and abuts the settlement edge of Fen Ditton - a linear 'Group Village' which is partially designated as a Conservation Area. There are various Listed Buildings within the Fen Ditton Conservation Area. The Riverside and Stourbridge Common Conservation Area extends to the west of Fen Ditton. It is dominated by the three large open spaces along the River Cam: Midsummer Common with Butt Green, Stourbridge Common and Ditton Meadows. It forms part of a green wedge which penetrates the City east to west..

The site is located within the South Cambridgeshire District Council administrative area. The adopted Local Plan is the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan (Adopted September 2018). Various documents have been prepared as the evidence base to the Regulation Draft Greater Cambridge Local Plan which is currently at the consultation stage. These include an updated Green Belt Review (LUC, 2021); a consolidated Landscape Character Assessment (CBA, 2021), Green Infrastructure Mapping (LUC, 2021) and a Landscape Sensitivity Study (CBA, 2021). These documents have been reviewed alongside adopted policy in considering the landscape and visual opportunities and constraints for the site. The council's own Sensitivity Study identifies the site as having a medium sensitivity to residential, commercial and mixed-use development.

An analysis of the site (and the three main parcels within it) concludes that, overall, the site is typical of LCA 6A: Fen Ditton Fen Edge Chalklands (the local landscape character area within which it is located). It presents as a settled intensively farmed landscape adjacent to the small, linear village of Fen Ditton as it extends along Horningsea Road and High Ditch Road. It is generally an open, flat uniform landscape.

It is most valued for its open countryside qualities (and its function as Cambridge Green Belt land) and the part it plays in providing a visual setting to the Fen Ditton Conservation Area, especially in Parcel A where views to the St Mary's Church Tower are possible and the site is overlooked by the Harcamlow National Trail. At this stage, in the context of the above, it is considered that the site is mostly valued at a Community to Local Authority, with Parcel A displaying a range of factors which elevate its value to Local Authority. Parcel A may be considered to be a valued landscape in the context of Paragraph 187a) of the NPPF.

The majority of views towards any development of the site will be from receptors overlooking it and from adjacent public rights of way. A range of representative views demonstrates the extent to which the site is visible in the landscape.

An initial Green Belt Appraisal has been carried out – this considers the Green Belt Reviews carried out to date and the latest Government objectives set by the 2025 NPPF and its Guidance. It concludes that any development within the site will affect its openness. This is the case for any greenfield site proposed for development. It makes a moderate to weak contribution Green Belt Purpose A (to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas; no contribution to Purpose B (to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another); a moderate contribution to Purpose C (to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment and a moderate contribution to Purpose D (to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns). It concludes that, as the site does not perform strongly against NPPF purposes a), b) or d) it could potentially be classified as grey belt.

Any consideration for its development would need to be considered in the context of the emerging local plan which shows (as per Plate 1) that the site presents a logical extension of the settlement area when viewed alongside potential development areas. Development of the site would have the potential to reinforce the A14 as Green Infrastructure corridor and a permanent green edge to the extended settlement area. Development of this site "would not



fundamentally undermine the purposes (taken together) of the remaining Green Belt across the area of the plan...”

Any proposals for the site should seek to respond to the following landscape and visual recommendations:

- Retain and enhance all boundary vegetation and where possible re-establish field boundaries which are no longer evident in the intensively farmed landscape;
- Allow for strategic planting and habitat creation along the northern boundary adjacent to the A14 so as to reinforce it as a permanent green edge to the extended settlement area;
- Consider a low density form of development which responds to the linear form of Fen Ditton and sensitively extends its settlement area in localised areas without affecting its overall character as a small, linear settlement;
- Any additional settlement areas beyond this should be distinctively separated from the village by green corridors and should be sensitively designed to consider direct views from High Ditch Road and to show a soft green edge to the settlement when approaching from the north and east;
- Allow for a hierarchy of green links offering wildlife and amenity movement corridors within and beyond the site;
- Allow for structural planting, wildlife habitats, drainage and/ or public open space within the green links so as to ensure they provide strategic breaks between any new areas of housing, thereby creating clusters of clearly defined communities in keeping with the character of the existing settlement form;
- Where possible celebrate views towards St Mary’s Church through green links and active frontages onto public open space;
- Introduce distinctive features (such as meadows, wetlands, play) into the public open space which references nearby heritage and wildlife assets both at the River Cam and within the eastern Fens so as to enhance the sense of identity both within the site as a whole and within each new community created.

End.





Appendix A Green Belt and Grey Belt Appraisal Methodology

A.1 Introduction

This Appendix provides an updated assessment methodology for assessing the contribution that parcels of land make to the functions of the Green Belt, as set out at paragraph 143 of the NPPF.

The methodology used is based upon best practice drawn from a large number of Green Belt assessments, as well as from the interpretation of Green Belt policies included within various appeal decisions. The assessment methodology for protecting against sprawl, coalescence and the setting and special character of historic towns has also been updated to accord with the definitions and criteria in the Government's recently issued guidance on the Green Belt, "**Advice on the Role of the Green Belt in the Planning System**" (27th February 2025).

This latest government guidance also included a methodology for determining whether parcels of land within the Green Belt should be considered as grey belt. For ease of reference this methodology is also set out in this Appendix.

A.2 Definitions

A.2.1 The Purposes of the Green Belt as set out in the NPPF (December 2024)

Paragraph 142 of the NPPF states that "*the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open*". Paragraph 143 sets out the five purposes of the Green Belt, which are as follows:

- a) to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;**
- b) to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;**
- c) to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;**
- d) to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and**
- e) to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.**

The following paragraphs provide further clarity on the definition of these terms, with the aid of various planning and legal precedents.

A.2.2 Openness

Traditionally openness has been defined as freedom from buildings. In *Timmins v. Gedling Borough Council* 2014 EWHC 654, it is stated that: "*[any] construction harms openness quite irrespective of its impact in terms of its obtrusiveness or its aesthetic attractions or qualities*".

But a number of helpful judgments relating to Jackdaw Crag Quarry in Tadcaster have made it clear that openness is not only a spatial term but that it also has a clear visual dimension. The High Court decision by Lord Justices Arden, Floyd and Sales (*Sales (Turner v Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government and another* [2016] EWCA Civ 466)) which states at paragraphs 14 and 15:

"The concept of "openness of the Green Belt" is not narrowly limited to the volumetric approach suggested by [counsel]. The word "openness" is open-textured and a number of factors are capable of being relevant when it comes to applying it to the particular facts of a specific case. Prominent among these will be factors relevant to how built up the Green Belt is now and how built up it would be if redevelopment occurs ... and factors relevant to the visual impact on the aspect of openness which the Green Belt presents.



The question of visual impact is implicitly part of the concept of “openness of the Green Belt” as a matter of the natural meaning of the language used in para. 89 of the NPPF. I consider that this interpretation is also reinforced by the general guidance in paras. 79-81 of the NPPF, which introduce section 9 on the protection of Green Belt Land. There is an important visual dimension to checking “the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas” and the merging of neighbouring towns, as indeed the name “Green Belt” itself implies. Greenness is a visual quality: part of the idea of the Green Belt is that the eye and the spirit should be relieved from the prospect of unrelenting urban sprawl. Openness of aspect is a characteristic quality of the countryside, and “safeguarding the countryside from encroachment” includes preservation of that quality of openness. The preservation of “the setting ... of historic towns” obviously refers in a material way to their visual setting, for instance when seen from a distance across open fields.”

The Government’s February 2025 guidance on the Green Belt also refers to the fact that “urbanising influences” might “weaken the land’s contribution to” protection against sprawl, whilst the sense of separation between towns is identified as being not purely due to physical distance, but also due to a sense of “visual separation”.

In conclusion, openness is not simply a matter of the absence of buildings from an area; it is also results from the degree of visibility of both built form - and urban activity - within an area.

A.2.3 Sprawl

The outward spread of the edge of a large built-up area into the open countryside in an unplanned or unregulated fashion. The Government’s February 2025 Green Belt guidance is clear that this should not include villages.

There is a clear spatial aspect for the potential for sprawl: if the area outside of the settlement edge is contained or largely enclosed by areas of existing development, then there is limited potential for sprawl. Similarly, if there are physical features in reasonable proximity to the parcel that could restrict and contain development, then the parcel would not strongly contribute to protection against sprawl. In addition to the spatial perspective, as the Government’s February 2025 guidance on the Green Belt states, it is possible that land outside of the existing settlement edge could be “subject to other urbanising influences”, such as visibility of built form, lighting, movement and noise, which would reduce the land’s contribution to protecting against sprawl.

A.2.4 Coalescence

Defined as the merging of two nearby towns. The Government’s February 2025 Green Belt guidance is clear that this should not include villages.

A strongly performing parcel of land would be free from development (or the influence of development) and would form a substantial part of the gap between towns. Additionally, a strongly performing parcel would maintain clear visual separation between towns.

A.2.5 Encroachment

Encroachment can be defined as the spread of urban development across open countryside. As with the definitions of openness and sprawl, there is both a spatial and visual element to encroachment. Spatially, a parcel of land will potentially protect against encroachment when it is entirely free from buildings and when it has an open, rural character. But as Lord Justices Arden, Floyd and Sales state, there is also a visual aspect to encroachment: if there is already a perception of strong urban influences upon a parcel of land, then it less effectively protects against encroachment.



A.2.6 Preserving the Setting of Historic Towns

Parcels which are free from development, and which are adjacent to a historic town and make a “considerable contribution” (Government Green Belt guidance, February 2025) to the special character of the town, should be assessed as making a strong contribution to the setting. The Government’s February 2025 Green Belt guidance states that this contribution could, for example, be “visual, physical or experiential”

A.2.7 To Assist in Urban Regeneration

All Green Belt land performs this function, in that by directing development towards the urban areas it prioritises urban regeneration.

A.2.8 Grey Belt

The glossary for the new NPPF issued in December 2024 defines grey belt as follows:

*“For the purposes of plan-making and decision-making, ‘grey belt’ is defined as land in the Green Belt **comprising previously developed land and/or any other land that, in either case, does not strongly contribute to any of purposes (a), (b), or (d) in paragraph 143.** ‘Grey belt’ excludes land where the application of the policies relating to the areas or assets in footnote 7 (other than Green Belt) would provide a strong reason for refusing or restricting development”.*

The methodology for determining which parts of the Green Belt should be considered to be grey belt is set out in the Government’s February 2025 Green Belt guidance, which is set out in **section A.5**, below.

A.3 Considerations for Assessing the Green Belt Functionality of the Appeal Site

Table A-1, below, sets out the considerations which are used for each of the Green Belt purposes, which have been updated to align with the Government’s 2025 Green Belt guidance.

Table A-2: Considerations for Assessing the Green Belt Functionality of Assessment Units

Green Belt Purposes	Criteria for Assessment
Purpose A: To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	<p>Is the parcel located on the edge of a large built-up area? (Does not include villages. Parcels away from the settlement edge do not perform this function).</p> <p>Is the parcel free from development, and/or free from urbanising influences such as visibility of built form, noise, movement and lighting?</p> <p>Is the site enclosed by development, such that development of the parcel would not result in an incongruous pattern of development (such as a “finger” of development extending into the Green Belt)?</p> <p>Are there physical features in reasonable proximity to the parcel that could restrict and contain development?</p>



Green Belt Purposes	Criteria for Assessment
Purpose B: To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another	Is the parcel between two towns? Does the parcel form a substantial part of the gap between the towns, but only a small proportion of that gap? Is the parcel free from development, and/or free from urban influences? Would development of the parcel be likely to result in the loss of visual separation between the towns?
Purpose C: To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	Is the parcel close to a town or large built-up area? Does the parcel contain a high proportion of built form or is it largely open? Is the parcel already subject to urbanising influences? Does the site have a largely rural character, urban fringe or does have both rural and urban attributes?
Purpose D: To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	Is the parcel on the edge of a historic town? Is the parcel free from development and/or free from urbanising influences? Does the parcel have an important visual, physical or experiential relationship to historic aspects of the town?
Purpose E: To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land	This criterion is not site specific and cannot, therefore, be used to identify the specific merits of individual parcels. Consequently, it has not been assessed in landscape terms.

In accordance with the levels of contribution set out in the Government’s February 2025 Green Belt guidance, there are four potential levels of contribution to each of the purposes:

- **3 = Makes a Strong Contribution to the Purpose**
- **2 = Makes a Moderate Contribution to the Purpose**
- **1 = Makes a Weak contribution to the purpose**
- **0 = Makes No contribution to the Purpose**

Assessing whether a Parcel is Grey Belt

The latest Government guidance on Green Belt assessment (February 2025) sets out the process for determining whether Green Belt land should be considered as grey belt. Figure 1, below, is reproduced from that guidance and summarises this process:



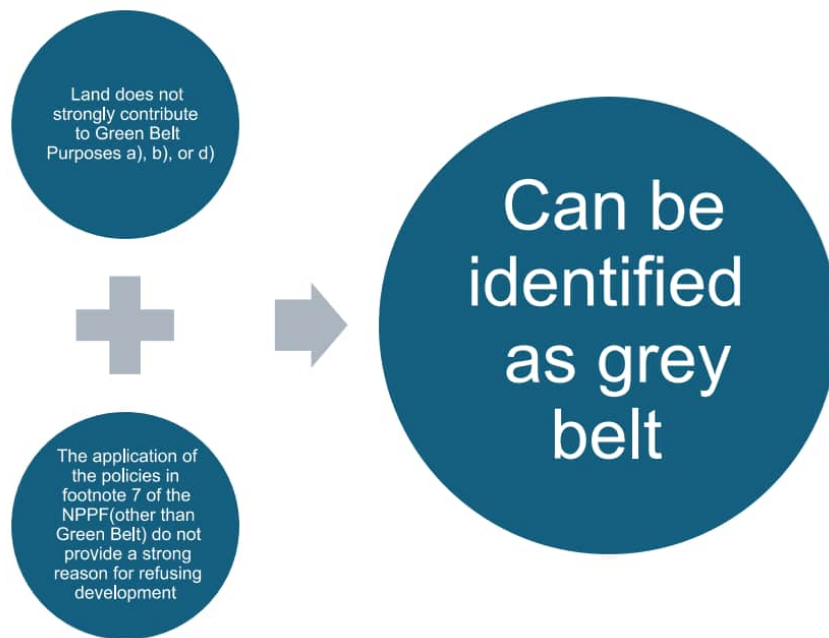


Figure 1 reproduced from the Government’s Green Belt/grey belt guidance (February 2025)

The Government’s February 2025 Green Belt guidance also states that a grey belt assessment should also consider “the extent to which release or development of Green Belt land (including but not limited to grey belt land) would **fundamentally undermine the purposes (taken together) of the remaining Green Belt across the plan area as a whole**”. The guidance clarifies this statement further by noting that in making this judgement it is necessary to consider “**whether, or the extent to which, the release or development of Green Belt land would affect the ability of all the remaining Green Belt across the area of the plan from serving all five of the Green Belt purposes in a meaningful way**”.

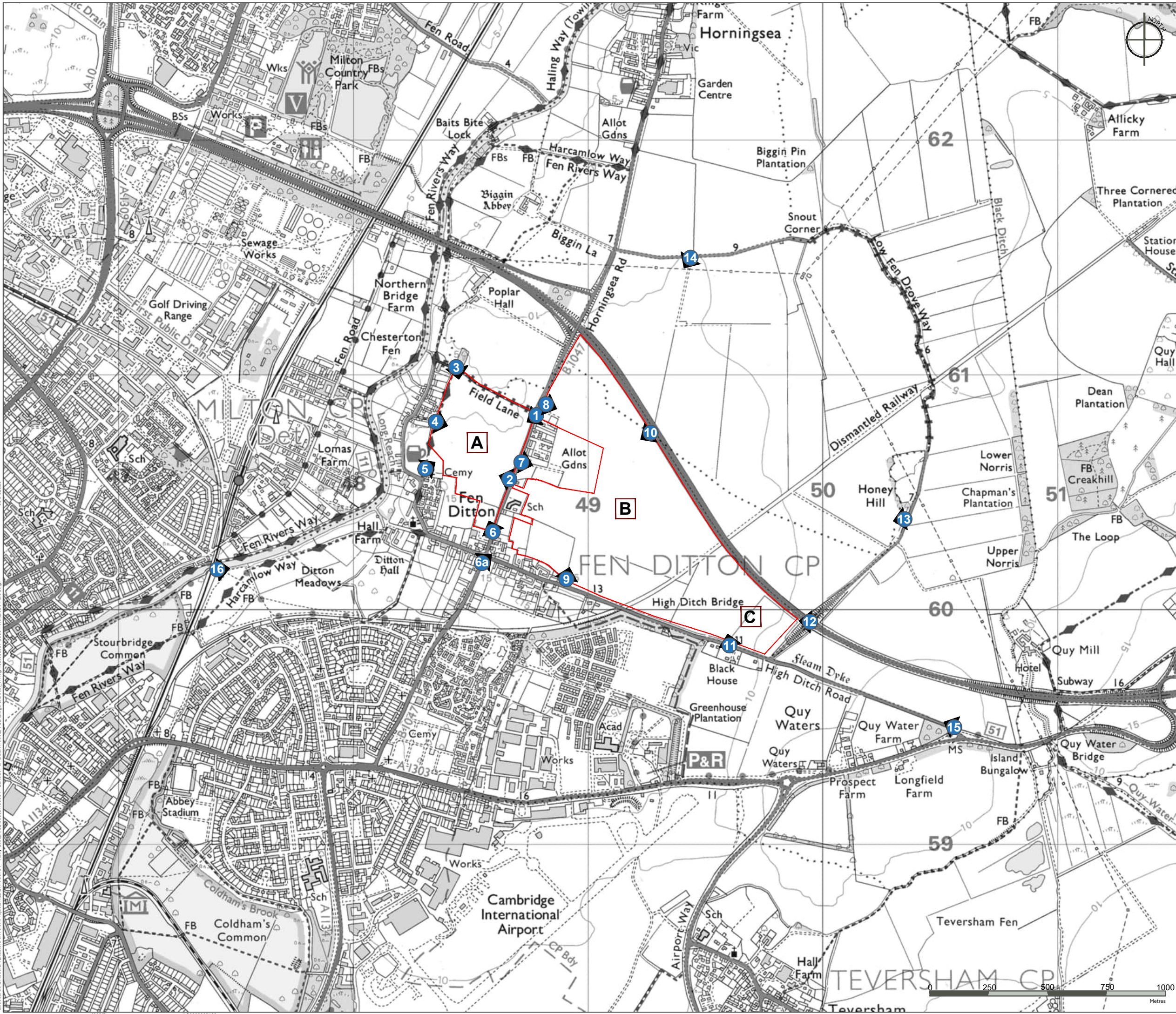




Appendix B Figures

Preliminary Landscape and Visual Technical Note and Green Belt Review

29 January 2026



Legend:

- Site Boundary
- Viewpoint Location
- Parcel References

1	Location of viewpoint cones adjusted	07/25	AC	CR	CR
Rev	Amendments	Date	By	Chk	Auth



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Drawing Status & Suitability Code
PLANNING

Client
Vistry Strategic Land & Major Projects

Project
Fen Ditton

Drawing Title
Viewpoint Location Plan

Scale 1:15,000	@ A3	SLR Project No. 402.065637.00001
Designed CR	Drawn AC	Checked CR
Date JUN 2025	Date JUN 2025	Date JUN 2025
Drawing Number FD-FIGURE 1	Rev. 1	

3/001/2026
I:\local\offices\uk\london\on\Avon\Projects\402\UK_VS3781 - Vistry Group\402_065637_00001 - Land at Fen Ditton\Tech\A3\0001 - Viewpoint Plan.dwg

BASELINE VIEW



VIEWPOINT:1 VIEW FROM HORNINGSEA ROAD HEAR JUNCTION WITH FIELD LANE, LOOKING SOUTH-WEST INTO THE SITE

• PROJECTION: CYLINDRICAL
 • ENLARGEMENT FACTOR: 96% AT A1 VIEW AT COMFORTABLE ARM'S LENGTH
 • TO BE PRINTED AT A1 FOR ASSESSMENT PURPOSES
 • VIEWING BOX INCORPORATES UP TO 90° HORIZONTAL FIELD OF VIEW

• DATE OF PHOTOGRAPHY: 17-06-2025
 • DIRECTION OF VIEW: SOUTH-WEST

TYPE 1 VISUALISATION LAND AT FEN DITTON, SUMMER PHOTOGRAPHY

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VIEWPOINT 1 **DRAWING NO: FD-PH-01**

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BASELINE VIEW



VIEWPOINT:2 VIEW FROM HORNINGSEA ROAD, LOOKING WEST INTO THE SITE

• PROJECTION: CYLINDRICAL
 • ENLARGEMENT FACTOR: 96% AT A1 VIEW AT COMFORTABLE ARM'S LENGTH
 • TO BE PRINTED AT A1 FOR ASSESSMENT PURPOSES
 • VIEWING BOX INCORPORATES UP TO 90° HORIZONTAL FIELD OF VIEW

• DATE OF PHOTOGRAPHY: 17-06-2025
 • DIRECTION OF VIEW: WEST

TYPE 1 VISUALISATION LAND AT FEN DITTON, SUMMER PHOTOGRAPHY

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BASELINE VIEW

MATURE HEDGEROW ALONG SITE BOUNDARY FILTERS / OBSTRUCTS VIEWS INTO SITE FROM MAJORITY OF FIELD LANE

PROPERTIES AT HORNINGSEA ROAD

THE SITE (PARCEL A)

MATURE VEGETATION ALONG SITE'S SOUTHERN BOUNDARY OBSTRUCTS / FILTERS (IN WINTER MONTHS) VIEWS TOWARDS ST MARY'S CHURCH AND FEN DITTON

HARCAMLLOW WAY (NATIONAL TRAIL)



VIEWPOINT:3 VIEW FROM HARCAMLLOW WAY AT ITS ENTRANCE INTO THE SITE FROM FIELD LANE

- PROJECTION: CYLINDRICAL
- ENLARGEMENT FACTOR: 96% AT A1 VIEW AT COMFORTABLE ARM'S LENGTH
- TO BE PRINTED AT A1 FOR ASSESSMENT PURPOSES
- VIEWING BOX INCORPORATES UP TO 90° HORIZONTAL FIELD OF VIEW

- DATE OF PHOTOGRAPHY: 17-06-2025
- DIRECTION OF VIEW: SOUTH-EAST

TYPE 1 VISUALISATION LAND AT FEN DITTON, SUMMER PHOTOGRAPHY

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VIEWPOINT 3 DRAWING NO: FD-PH-03

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BASELINE VIEW

PROPERTIES AT HORNINGSEA ROAD

THE SITE (PARCEL A)

MATURE VEGETATION ALONG SITE'S SOUTHERN BOUNDARY OBSTRUCTS / FILTERS (IN WINTER MONTHS) VIEWS TOWARDS ST MARY'S CHURCH AND FEN DITTON

HARCAMLLOW WAY (NATIONAL TRAIL)



VIEWPOINT:4 VIEW FROM HARCAMLLOW WAY NEAR ITS JUNCTION WITH FOOTPATH 85/4, LOOKING EAST

- PROJECTION: CYLINDRICAL
- ENLARGEMENT FACTOR: 96% AT A1 VIEW AT COMFORTABLE ARM'S LENGTH
- TO BE PRINTED AT A1 FOR ASSESSMENT PURPOSES
- VIEWING BOX INCORPORATES UP TO 90° HORIZONTAL FIELD OF VIEW

- DATE OF PHOTOGRAPHY: 17-06-2025
- DIRECTION OF VIEW: EAST

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BASELINE VIEW



VIEWPOINT:5 VIEW FROM HARMCAMLLOW WAY LOOKING NORTH ACROSS THE FEN DITTON RECREATION GROUNDS TOWARDS THE SITE

- PROJECTION: CYLINDRICAL
- ENLARGEMENT FACTOR: 96% AT A1 VIEW AT COMFORTABLE ARM'S LENGTH
- TO BE PRINTED AT A1 FOR ASSESSMENT PURPOSES
- VIEWING BOX INCORPORATES UP TO 90° HORIZONTAL FIELD OF VIEW

- DATE OF PHOTOGRAPHY: 17-06-2025
- DIRECTION OF VIEW: NORTH

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BASELINE VIEW



VIEWPOINT:6 VIEW FROM HORNINGSSEA ROAD, LOOKING NORTH-WEST INTO THE SITE

- PROJECTION: CYLINDRICAL
- ENLARGEMENT FACTOR: 96% AT A1 VIEW AT COMFORTABLE ARM'S LENGTH
- TO BE PRINTED AT A1 FOR ASSESSMENT PURPOSES
- VIEWING BOX INCORPORATES UP TO 90° HORIZONTAL FIELD OF VIEW

- DATE OF PHOTOGRAPHY: 17-06-2025
- DIRECTION OF VIEW: NORTH-WEST

TYPE 1 VISUALISATION LAND AT FEN DITTON, SUMMER PHOTOGRAPHY

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BASELINE VIEW

PROPERTIES ALONG HORNINGSEA ROAD
OBSTRUCT / FILTER VIEWS TOWARDS PARCELA

PROPERTIES AT HIGH DITCH ROAD
(INCLUDING LISTED BUILDINGS) WITH THEIR
REAR GARDENS BACKING ONTO PARCEL B



VIEWPOINT:6a VIEW FROM JUNCTION OF HIGH STREET/DITTON LANE/HORNINGSEA ROAD, LOOKING NORTH TOWARDS THE SITE

- PROJECTION: CYLINDRICAL
- ENLARGEMENT FACTOR: 96% AT A1 VIEW AT COMFORTABLE ARM'S LENGTH
- TO BE PRINTED AT A1 FOR ASSESSMENT PURPOSES
- VIEWING BOX INCORPORATES UP TO 90° HORIZONTAL FIELD OF VIEW

- DATE OF PHOTOGRAPHY: 17-06-2025
- DIRECTION OF VIEW: NORTH

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SUMMER PHOTOGRAPHY

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VIEWPOINT 6a DRAWING NO: FD-PH-07

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BASELINE VIEW

#42 HORNINGSEA ROAD

PARCEL B BEYOND ALLOTMENT SITE



VIEWPOINT:7 VIEW INTO SMALL FIELD ALONG HORNINGSEA ROAD (ALLOTMENT SITE) LOOKING TOWARDS THE SITE

- PROJECTION: CYLINDRICAL
- ENLARGEMENT FACTOR: 96% AT A1 VIEW AT COMFORTABLE ARM'S LENGTH
- TO BE PRINTED AT A1 FOR ASSESSMENT PURPOSES
- VIEWING BOX INCORPORATES UP TO 90° HORIZONTAL FIELD OF VIEW

- DATE OF PHOTOGRAPHY: 17-06-2025
- DIRECTION OF VIEW: EAST

TYPE 1 VISUALISATION LAND AT FEN DITTON,
SUMMER PHOTOGRAPHY

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BASELINE VIEW



VIEWPOINT:8 VIEW FROM HORNINGSEA ROAD, LOOKING EAST ACROSS THE SITE

- PROJECTION: CYLINDRICAL
- ENLARGEMENT FACTOR: 96% AT A1 VIEW AT COMFORTABLE ARM'S LENGTH
- TO BE PRINTED AT A1 FOR ASSESSMENT PURPOSES
- VIEWING BOX INCORPORATES UP TO 90° HORIZONTAL FIELD OF VIEW

- DATE OF PHOTOGRAPHY: 17-06-2025
- DIRECTION OF VIEW: EAST

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BASELINE VIEW



VIEWPOINT:9 VIEW FROM FIELD GATE ON HIGH DITCH ROAD, LOOKING NORTH-EAST INTO THE SITE

- PROJECTION: CYLINDRICAL
- ENLARGEMENT FACTOR: 96% AT A1 VIEW AT COMFORTABLE ARM'S LENGTH
- TO BE PRINTED AT A1 FOR ASSESSMENT PURPOSES
- VIEWING BOX INCORPORATES UP TO 90° HORIZONTAL FIELD OF VIEW

- DATE OF PHOTOGRAPHY: 17-06-2025
- DIRECTION OF VIEW: EAST

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BASELINE VIEW



VIEWPOINT:10 VIEW FROM A14, LOOKING SOUTH-WEST ACROSS THE SITE

- PROJECTION: CYLINDRICAL
- ENLARGEMENT FACTOR: 96% AT A1 VIEW AT COMFORTABLE ARM'S LENGTH
- TO BE PRINTED AT A1 FOR ASSESSMENT PURPOSES
- VIEWING BOX INCORPORATES UP TO 90° HORIZONTAL FIELD OF VIEW
- DATE OF PHOTOGRAPHY: 17-06-2025
- DIRECTION OF VIEW: SOUTH-WEST

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BASELINE VIEW



VIEWPOINT:11 VIEW FROM HIGH DITCH ROAD, LOOKING NORTH-WEST INTO THE SITE

- PROJECTION: CYLINDRICAL
- ENLARGEMENT FACTOR: 96% AT A1 VIEW AT COMFORTABLE ARM'S LENGTH
- TO BE PRINTED AT A1 FOR ASSESSMENT PURPOSES
- VIEWING BOX INCORPORATES UP TO 90° HORIZONTAL FIELD OF VIEW
- DATE OF PHOTOGRAPHY: 17-06-2025
- DIRECTION OF VIEW: SOUTH-WEST

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VIEWPOINT 11 DRAWING NO: FD-PH-12

BASELINE VIEW



VIEWPOINT:12 VIEW FROM LOW FEN DROVE WAY, BRIDGE ACROSS THE A14, LOOKING WEST TOWARDS THE SITE

- PROJECTION: CYLINDRICAL
- ENLARGEMENT FACTOR: 96% AT A1 VIEW AT COMFORTABLE ARM'S LENGTH
- TO BE PRINTED AT A1 FOR ASSESSMENT PURPOSES
- VIEWING BOX INCORPORATES UP TO 90° HORIZONTAL FIELD OF VIEW

- DATE OF PHOTOGRAPHY: 17-06-2025
- DIRECTION OF VIEW: NORTH-WEST

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BASELINE VIEW



VIEWPOINT:12 VIEW FROM LOW FEN DROVE WAY, BRIDGE ACROSS THE A14, LOOKING WEST TOWARDS THE SITE

- PROJECTION: CYLINDRICAL
- ENLARGEMENT FACTOR: 96% AT A1 VIEW AT COMFORTABLE ARM'S LENGTH
- TO BE PRINTED AT A1 FOR ASSESSMENT PURPOSES
- VIEWING BOX INCORPORATES UP TO 90° HORIZONTAL FIELD OF VIEW

- DATE OF PHOTOGRAPHY: 17-06-2025
- DIRECTION OF VIEW: WEST

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BASELINE VIEW

INTERVENING VEGETATION TO FIELD BOUNDARIES WITHIN THE FENS AND ALONG THE A14 FILTERS VIEWS TOWARDS THE SITE

LAND APPROVED FOR LOCATION OF WWTW

TRUCKS ON A14



VIEWPOINT:14 VIEW FROM LOW FEN DROVE WAY, LOOKING SOUTH-WEST TOWARDS THE SITE

- PROJECTION: CYLINDRICAL
- ENLARGEMENT FACTOR: 96% AT A1 VIEW AT COMFORTABLE ARM'S LENGTH
- TO BE PRINTED AT A1 FOR ASSESSMENT PURPOSES
- VIEWING BOX INCORPORATES UP TO 90° HORIZONTAL FIELD OF VIEW
- DATE OF PHOTOGRAPHY: 17-06-2025
- DIRECTION OF VIEW: NORTH-WEST

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BASELINE VIEW

HIGH DITCH ROAD

GLIMPSE OF PARCEL C



VIEWPOINT:15 VIEW FROM HIGH DITCH ROAD, LOOKING NORTH-WEST TOWARDS THE SITE

- PROJECTION: CYLINDRICAL
- ENLARGEMENT FACTOR: 96% AT A1 VIEW AT COMFORTABLE ARM'S LENGTH
- TO BE PRINTED AT A1 FOR ASSESSMENT PURPOSES
- VIEWING BOX INCORPORATES UP TO 90° HORIZONTAL FIELD OF VIEW
- DATE OF PHOTOGRAPHY: 17-06-2025
- DIRECTION OF VIEW: NORTH-WEST

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BASELINE VIEW

ABBAY CHESTERTON BRIDGE

FEN RIVERS WAY

RIVER CAM

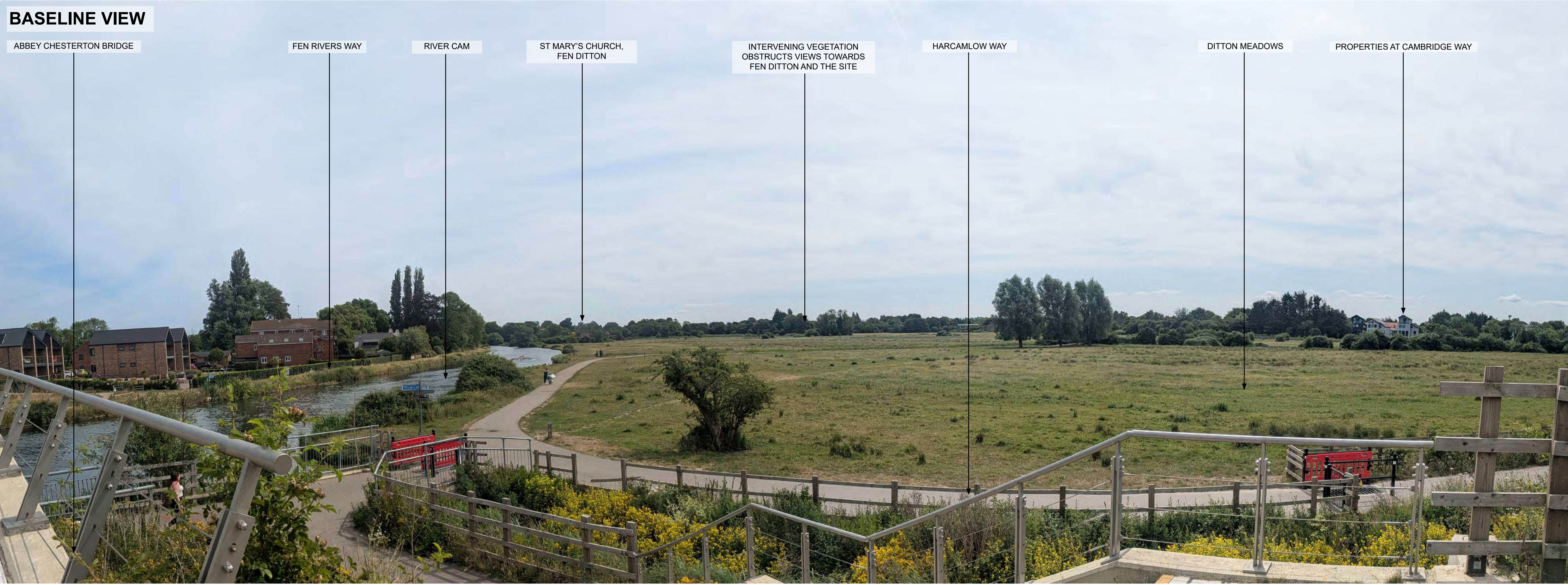
ST MARY'S CHURCH,
FEN DITTON

INTERVENING VEGETATION
OBSTRUCTS VIEWS TOWARDS
FEN DITTON AND THE SITE

HARCAMLLOW WAY

DITTON MEADOWS

PROPERTIES AT CAMBRIDGE WAY



VIEWPOINT:16 VIEW FROM ABBEY-CHESTERON BRIDGE, LOOKING EAST TOWARDS THE SITE

- PROJECTION: CYLINDRICAL
- ENLARGEMENT FACTOR: 96% AT A1 VIEW AT COMFORTABLE ARM'S LENGTH
- TO BE PRINTED AT A1 FOR ASSESSMENT PURPOSES
- VIEWING BOX INCORPORATES UP TO 90° HORIZONTAL FIELD OF VIEW

- DATE OF PHOTOGRAPHY: 17-06-2025
- DIRECTION OF VIEW: EAST

TYPE 1 VISUALISATION
SUMMER PHOTOGRAPHY

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