LAND AT FOWLMERE ROAD
FOXTON, CAMBRIDGESHIRE

ASTRA NO. 3 (FOX) LIMITED

Landscape & Visual Appraisal

January 2026 | ECE-2013-LVA-01

Quality Assurance

EC Environmental is a practice of Chartered Landscape Architects. This report has been prepared in accordance with the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment 3rd Edition, and the opinions expressed within it are those of qualified Landscape Architects, whose professional judgement is relied upon.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1. EC Environmental Ltd are appointed by Astra No.3 (FOX) Limited to provide a landscape and visual appraisal of Land at Fowlmere Road, Foxton, Cambridgeshire (the Site) for the promotion of the site for allocation for residential development in the emerging Greater Cambridge New Local Plan.

Purpose of the report

1.2. The approach within this report is derived from the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment 3rd Edition 2013 (GLVIA3 or "the Guidelines") and Technical Guidance Note LITGN-2024-01: Notes and Clarifications on Aspects of GLVIA3 (Landscape Institute, 2024) published by the Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment. The guidance states that Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) is:

"a tool used to identify and assess the significance of effects of change resulting from development on both the landscape as an environmental resource in its own right and on people's views and visual amenity".[1]

1.3. This definition of LVIA establishes the distinction between the two components of LVIA where landscape and visual effects are interrelated but should be dealt with separately. Landscape results from the interplay between the physical, natural and cultural components of the land, and visual amenity is the experience of people and their interaction (views) with the landscape.

1.4. The purpose of this report is to carry out a detailed appraisal of the site and study area, identify landscape and visual receptors likely to be affected, and determine the extent and significance of any potential landscape and visual effects against the baseline conditions. This LVA has been carried out by suitably qualified landscape professionals, providing impartial judgements that are based on training and experience, and through clear and transparent methods outlined in the methodology.

[1] Guidelines for Landscape & Visual Impact Assessment v3 paragraph 1.1

Scope & Extent of Study Area

1.5. The study area is considered to be 2km radius from the site boundary to account for the range of landscape and visual receptors likely to be affected.

2.0 METHODOLOGY

Approach

2.1. This assessment aims to identify and describe the nature and importance of the effects likely to arise as a result of the Proposed Development on the existing landscape and the visual amenity of people. This methodology has been developed in accordance with the principles of good practice set out in the following published guidance produced by the relevant professional organisations concerned with landscape and visual assessment:

- Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Third Edition (2013), (GLVIA3), published by the Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management & Assessment
- Technical Guidance Note LITGN-2024-01: Notes and Clarifications on Aspects of GLVIA3 (Landscape Institute, 2024)
- Natural England's 'An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment' (2014)
- An Approach to Landscape Sensitivity Assessment (Natural England, 2019)
- Landscape Institute (2019), Technical Guidance Note 06/19, Visual Representation of Development Proposals
- Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note 02/21: Assessing Landscape Value Outside National Designations (LI, 2021)

2.2. The GLVIA3 states that:

"Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) is a tool used to identify and assess the significance of and the effects of change resulting from development on both the landscape as an environmental resource in its own right and on people's views and visual amenity."

2.3. GLVIA3 Statement of Clarification 1/13 states that for an LVIA outside of the EIA process, it is not necessary to establish whether likely effects are significant, given that the term is enshrined in EIA Regulations. It goes on to note an approach that "is proportional to the scale of the project that is being assessed and the nature of its likely effects" also applies to LVIA being undertaken outside of the formal requirements of EIA. In this appraisal, judgements are made therefore about the level of effects, referred to by their importance rather than significance.

2.4. For the purposes of this Landscape and Visual Appraisal, the term *importance of effect* is used in place of *significance of effect*, in line with the guidance for LVIA undertaken outside the EIA Regulations. However, a familiar qualitative scale of *negligible, minor, moderate and major (beneficial or adverse)* is employed to express the relative importance of effects in a clear and transparent manner. This terminology is consistent with established LVIA practice and provides a robust framework for distinguishing between effects that are relevant to decision-making and those that are not.

2.5. Whilst linked, the assessment of landscape and visual effects are treated separately in LVA. The overall approach used to identify and assess potential landscape and visual effects is summarised as follows:

- Determine the scope of assessment.
- Collate baseline information through desk study research and field-based survey work, select appropriate landscape and visual receptors and establish their value.
- Review the proposal and determine susceptibility of landscape and visual receptors to the nature of development proposed.
- Combine value with susceptibility to determine the sensitivity of landscape and visual receptors to the nature of development proposed.
- Describe the nature and magnitude of change (impacts) likely to be experienced by landscape and visual receptors as a result of the Proposed Development.
- Describe any recommended measures to avoid or reduce the magnitude of any adverse change (mitigation).
- Assess the importance of effects for landscape and visual receptors in relation to the Proposed Development through a clear description of judgements on sensitivity and magnitude.
- Identify those effects that are considered relevant to decision making.

2.6. A detailed methodology is provided at **Appendix 2**.

3.0 BASELINE ASSESSMENT

3.1. It is important to understand the baseline conditions in relation to landscape character and visual amenity in order to assess the proposed development and its effects. Landscape and visual effects are interrelated, but it is necessary to deal with them as separate matters as required by the guidelines.

SITE DESCRIPTION

3.2. The Site is part of a large and regular shaped field arable field with mixed boundary features including intact and fragmented hedgerows, rear boundary fences to private dwellings. The Site lies opposite existing development on Fowlmere Road at the southern edge of the village of Foxton, Cambridgeshire. The boundary to Fowlmere Road is a managed hedgerow with several mature trees. A public right of way runs through the northern side of the Site. The Site is generally flat with a very gradual fall towards the east. Fowlmere Road sits at a very slightly higher level than the Site.

3.3. Next to the Site, to the north and west is the existing village settlement of Foxton. To the east and south are large arable fields with some tall hedgerows and vegetated brook corridors. To the west are large open arable fields and wooded hillocks. The village of Foxton occupies a slightly raised, well-drained position within a low, rolling landscape of clay plateau dissected by small shallow valleys and drainage lines.

3.4. Within the 2 km study area, the landscape is typical of the Lowland Chalklands with an open, large-scale agricultural pattern, gently rolling topography and long inter-visible views. The visual character is defined by extensive arable fields, sparse hedgerow structure, distant wooded skylines and small, dispersed settlements. The landscape promotes a strong sense of rural tranquillity, with the Morden to Duxford Lowland Chalklands (LCA 8B) providing the prevailing character context for both landscape and visual appraisal.

3.5. Historic villages such as Foxton, Fowlmere and other small settlements lie at the edges of the chalkland. Within the 2 km study area, settlement is limited to dispersed farmsteads, rural buildings and small village edges, with open countryside dominating between built features. The presence of transport corridors (e.g. the A10 and local roads) and the railway influence both movement patterns and occasional visual reference points in the landscape.

LANDSCAPE RECEPTORS

3.6. The baseline assessment of landscape character has been carried out through a desk-based study and fieldwork to identify and record the characteristic elements, features, and the aesthetic and perceptual factors which contribute to it (receptors). The starting point is the hierarchy of published assessments commencing with the National Character Area (NCA) profiles by Natural England, with County and/or District level assessments providing more detailed analysis identifying broadly homogenous zones that can be categorised in terms of quality and character.

National Character Areas

3.7. Natural England's National Character Area (NCA) profiles provide environmental evidence and information for England. These identify that the site lies near the centre of National Character Area (87) East Anglian Chalk. The assessment provides a broad overview of the character of this area, defined by a unique combination of landscape, biodiversity, geodiversity and cultural and economic activity. It is considered that the study provides a useful overview of the wider character, however, county or district level assessments provide a more detailed appraisal of the local character. Refer to Appendix 3 for more information.

Local Landscape Character

3.8. Landscape Character at the District Level within the Study Area is described in the Greater Cambridge Landscape Character Assessment (Chris Blandford Associates, 2021). This study has identified a number of landscape character areas and types in the local area along with a description of the key characteristics that make up the fabric of the landscape. This study identifies the Site as being within the 8B: Morden to Duxford Lowland Chalklands Landscape Character Area. The following table provides the key characteristics and distinctive features of the character area which contains the Site. Landscape character areas within the Study Area are shown on Figure 2.

Table 1: Key Characteristics and Distinctive Features

Key Characteristics
• Low hedges and few trees create a large-scale, open and simple landscape
• Occasional copses of trees on high ground are a distinctive feature
• Sparse settlement pattern with small villages elevated from the River Valleys on lower ground, interspersed with isolated farms and cottages
• Long distance views across arable fields towards the rising chalk hills to the northeast and south
• Historic linear features include roads, ancient trackways and earthworks

3.9. The Morden to Duxford Lowland Chalklands is characterised by a gently rolling landform of undulating upland chalk. Within the study area, this manifests as a subtle series of rises and shallow valleys, with ground levels generally rising southwards towards the rolling chalk ridges beyond Foxton and towards Rowley's Hill. The landform is not steep, but its gentle relief contributes to long, relatively open views across arable fields and towards wooded skylines.

3.10. Arable agriculture dominates the study area, with medium to large, geometric field parcels typical of chalkland landscapes. Field boundaries are often defined by low hedgerows rather than substantial tree cover, resulting in an open and expansive field pattern. Vegetation cover is generally sparse within fields, with hedgerows and occasional hedgerow trees forming the primary vegetative structure. Small blocks of woodland, shelterbelts and isolated trees may occur on higher ground or alongside watercourses, contributing visual interest and occasional glimpses of enclosure within the wider open landscape.

3.11. Within the wider study area there are two other landscape character areas, Rhee Tributaries Lowland Farmlands and Newton Chalk Hills. These two character areas have a very limited relationship to the Site and unlikely to be affected in terms of landscape character by any potential development and are excluded from further appraisal.

Village Landscape Character

3.12. Landscape character at the parish level is described in the *Landscape Character Assessment for Foxton Parish, South Cambridgeshire* (2017, Foxton Parish Council). This study places the Site within the Foxton Chalklands character area, a distinctive open rolling chalk landscape located to the south of Foxton, which makes a strong contribution to the village's rural setting.

3.13. The character area is underlain entirely by chalk geology, resulting in freely draining soils and high-quality agricultural land that supports extensive arable use within a large-scale and open field pattern. Landform slopes gently southwards and eastwards, creating physical and perceptual separation between Foxton and neighbouring villages including Fowlmere, Newton and Thriplow, which are only faintly perceptible in distant views, typically marked by church towers on the skyline.

3.14. The chalk ridge forms an important landscape feature, with the woodlands of Chalk Hill and West Hill providing wooded horizons that frame views to the south and east, and also back towards the village. From elevated ground, woodland edges and public footpaths, views are expansive and far-reaching, extending to the Royston to Heydon chalk ridge, where intermittent woodland caps the skyline. Despite its openness, the landscape retains a sense of structure through features such as the native tree belt along Hoffer Brook, intermittent roadside planting and scattered mature trees, which are remnants of former hedgerows and help to break up the scale of large arable fields.

3.15. Overall, the Foxton Chalklands are highly representative of the wider East Anglian Chalk landscape, valued for their openness, uninterrupted skylines, rural tranquillity and historic settlement pattern, and are considered sensitive to built development, particularly where it would extend the village southwards onto higher ground or introduce visually prominent structures that would be difficult to mitigate through screening.

VISUAL RECEPTORS

3.16. In order to analyse the visual baseline, fieldwork has been undertaken to identify the extent of visibility and thereby the people (receptors) that will be affected by the changes in views and visual amenity. The likely extent of views is initially informed by the ZTV model and desk study and then verified on site. Each viewpoint is then recorded by a number of panoramic photographs taken by qualified Landscape Architects, produced by the 'stitching' together of single-frame images into a 100° horizontal field of view to represent the landscape context. Visual receptors are identified from publicly accessible areas, and in most cases are representative of the experience by different types of visual receptor who may be affected. Sequential views along key routes or specific viewpoints are indicated where appropriate. The viewpoint locations are illustrated on the Viewpoint Location Plan (Figure 4).

3.17. Primary visual receptors within 2km are residents (village and dispersed farms), local road users, walkers using local footpaths and users of village amenities such as parks and greens. Views from private gardens are frequently experienced and are of moderate to high sensitivity because of their continuity and duration.

3.18. Viewpoint photography of the Site and its local context are contained within the photosheets shown on Figures 5.1 to 5.6. The location of these viewpoints alongside the Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) are shown on Figure 04).

3.19. The ZTV indicates that theoretical visibility of a potential development (assumed 10m height representing typical two-storey residential ridge height in the local context) is primarily concentrated within the open arable landscape surrounding Foxton, extending primarily across land to the south, east and south-west of the village, with more limited theoretical visibility to the north-east where landform and woodland blocks provide greater screening (refer to Figure 04 – ZTV). Visibility to the east and southeast is limited by intervening vegetation while settlement areas and woodland blocks restrict visibility to the west.

3.20. Areas of ZTV broadly correspond with the gently rolling chalk topography, with visibility tending to occur on slightly elevated ground, along open field slopes and within shallow valleys where intervening vegetation is sparse. The pattern of ZTV demonstrates that

visibility is not continuous, but fragmented, reflecting the influence of subtle changes in landform and the presence of hedgerows, tree belts, Foxton Wood, and vegetation associated with Hoffer Brook. Within the village itself, theoretical visibility is largely restricted to southern and south-western edges, where the settlement interfaces directly with open countryside.

3.21. The viewpoint photography confirms that the Site is experienced within a predominantly open, large-scale arable landscape characterised by long views, simple landcover and a strong sense of rural openness. Views from Fowlmere Road to the south (Viewpoints 1 to 5) show the Site lying within gently undulating farmland, where hedgerows and roadside vegetation intermittently filter views but do not create strong enclosure. From these locations, the Site is generally perceived as part of a broad agricultural panorama, with Foxton Wood, Rowley's Hill and distant settlement edges forming identifiable skyline features. Closer roadside viewpoints (such as Viewpoints 3 to 5) illustrate that existing hedgerows and trees provide partial screening at the Site boundary, resulting in glimpsed or filtered visibility rather than full, open views.

3.22. Public Rights of Way to the east and southwest (Viewpoints 6, 7 and 9) demonstrate a more open visual relationship with the Site, reflecting the limited boundary vegetation and expansive nature of the chalkland landscape. From these routes, users experience wide, open views across arable fields towards the Site and the southern edge of Foxton, with development visible primarily as low-level rooflines or settlement edges set against the open horizon. The viewpoint photography indicates that while the Site can form part of the middle ground in these views, it would not introduce prominent vertical elements into the skyline relative to the existing settlement that is present in the view.

3.23. More distant viewpoints along Cambridge Road (A10) and Shepreth Road (Viewpoints 10 and 11) lie within areas shown by the ZTV to have intermittent theoretical visibility (refer to Figure 04 - ZTV). The photography confirms that from these locations the Site is perceived at long distance within a wide agricultural panorama, where existing vegetation along Hoffer Brook, Foxton Wood and roadside tree belts reduces the prominence of the Site. At this distance, where visible the Site reads as a small component of a much larger rural scene, with visibility typically limited to fleeting or partial glimpses across open fields. The Site is

screened from view from Cambridge Road (B1368) to the southeast by a combination of field and roadside hedgerows and trees.

3.24. The combined ZTV and viewpoint evidence demonstrates that while theoretical visibility extends across parts of the surrounding chalkland farmland, actual visibility of the Site is frequently moderated by subtle landform variation, existing hedgerows, tree belts, woodland blocks and the built form of Foxton itself. As a result, views of the Site are often partial, filtered or intermittent rather than continuous. The Site is not widely apparent in distant panoramic views and, where it is visible, it is typically perceived as a component of a broad agricultural scene rather than as an isolated or visually prominent feature.

Representative Viewpoints

3.25. The viewpoints are representative of views obtained of the site and its visual context from principal visual receptors in order to inform judgements on the impact of the development on the visual amenity of these receptors. Descriptions of the nature, composition and characteristics of the existing views experienced at each viewpoint are provide in Table 2 below.

Table 2 – Summary of Visual Receptors

VIEWPOINT	CHARACTERISTICS OF VIEW	VISUAL RECEPTOR
1	**Orchard Farm, Fowlmere Road, Foxton (South)** View north along Fowlmere Road with hedged road corridor and arable fields; Foxton visible in distance.	Road Users
2	**Fowlmere Road, Foxton (South)** Open arable landscape with Foxton Wood and Rowley's Hill on horizon; village edge in distance.	Road Users
3	**Fowlmere Road, Foxton (South West)** A view looking south across open farmland toward the settlement edge, with St Mary's Church tower visible above the treeline.	Road Users
4	**Fowlmere Road, Foxton (West)** A south-facing view over the rising field toward The Street and the church tower, with hedgerows softening the existing settlement and trees punctuating the skyline.	Residential, Road Users
5	**Fowlmere Road, Foxton (South West)** A southward framed vista along a designed woodland break, centred on St Mary's Church tower on the horizon.	Road Users
6	**Public Footpath (Site)** A south-facing view across the Site from higher ground near the playing fields, with the village edge visible beyond the open field.	PRoW Users
7	**Public Footpath (East)** An eastward view from the ALLS looking across open grassland toward the Site's western boundary and adjacent dwellings to the east of the Site.	PRoW Users
8	**Public Footpath (Caxton Lane)** An east-facing panoramic view across broad open pasture toward the Site, with nearby hedgerows and scattered boundary trees lining the	Residents, PRoW Users

	western boundary.	
9	**Public Footpath (Chalk Hill)** A south facing view across open farmland toward the approximate Site location, where the Site and settlement at The Street is glimpsed.	PRoW Users
10	**Cambridge Road (A10)** A southeastern view filtered through woodland edges toward open fields, with no visibility of the Site due to intervening vegetation.	Road Users
11	**Shepreth Road, Foxton** A north-west view across extensive open farmland toward Walsham le Willows, where the Site lies beyond the visible settlement edge.	Road Users
12	**Cambridge Road (B1368)** View north-west across arable farmland towards Foxton Woods and Rowley's Hill.	Road Users

Landscape & Visual Sensitivity

3.26. The Site lies within a landscape that is consistently identified at both local and parish levels as being valued and sensitive to change. The Greater Cambridge Landscape Character Assessment describes the Morden to Duxford Lowland Chalklands as a large-scale, open arable chalkland with gently rolling landform, limited woodland cover and expansive views, while the Foxton Parish assessment identifies the Foxton Chalklands as making a strong contribution to the village's rural setting and separation from neighbouring settlements, and as being valued for its wide open vistas, tranquillity and uninterrupted skylines. These combined characteristics indicate a landscape with a high susceptibility to development, particularly where proposals would introduce built form into currently open farmland or extend the village into the chalkland setting.

3.27. In visual terms, the Site forms part of an open agricultural landscape experienced by residents, public rights of way users and road users, with predominantly open or semi-open views and intermittent longer-distance visibility across the chalkland. Although localised screening is provided by hedgerows, tree belts and subtle landform, the prevailing openness of the landscape increases the likelihood that change would be perceptible. Overall, the Site is therefore considered to have high landscape sensitivity and medium to high visual sensitivity, and any future development would need to be carefully sited, limited in scale and informed by a landscape-led approach to avoid significant adverse effects on the character and valued qualities of the Foxton Chalklands.

4.0 ASSESSMENT OF LANDSCAPE EFFECTS

Landscape Sensitivity

4.1. The Site lies within the Foxton Chalklands, a landscape that is consistently identified at both district and parish levels as having a strong and distinctive chalkland character, defined by open rolling arable farmland, gently undulating topography, long views and a high degree of rural tranquillity. The Greater Cambridge Landscape Character Assessment describes the Morden to Duxford Lowland Chalklands as a large-scale, predominantly arable landscape with limited woodland cover, simple landcover patterns and expansive skylines, while the Foxton Landscape Character Assessment highlights the particular importance of this area in providing the rural setting of the village and maintaining separation from neighbouring settlements. These characteristics contribute to a landscape that is inherently sensitive to built development, particularly where it would introduce new urban form into currently open countryside.

4.2. At the parish level, the Foxton Chalklands are valued for their wide-open vistas, uninterrupted skylines, historic relationship between landform and settlement, and their contribution to the perception of Foxton as a contained rural village. Local policy identifies sensitive urban edges and key views along the village margins, reinforcing the importance of retaining a clear distinction between settlement and countryside. Collectively, this evidence indicates a high landscape sensitivity, with a strong emphasis on protecting openness, rural character and the simple, uncluttered nature of the chalkland landscape.

4.3. Notwithstanding the high sensitivity of the Foxton Chalklands, the Site is located immediately adjacent to the existing southern edge of Foxton and is experienced in close association with existing residential development along Fowlmere Road. This relationship with the settlement edge, combined with existing boundary vegetation and the opportunity to create a strong, defensible edge through landscape-led design, indicates that there is limited but identifiable capacity for sensitively designed development. Any such capacity is conditional on development being contained, of modest scale, and integrated with a robust green infrastructure framework.

Likely Effects on Landscape Character

4.4. Development of the Site for residential housing of a similar scale and grain to existing village development would result in the direct loss of a small area of arable farmland, altering the existing land use from open agricultural to built form and associated private gardens, roads and public open space. This change would introduce a new element of village edge development into the Foxton Chalklands, with a consequent localised change in landscape character from open chalk farmland to a settled edge. The effect would be most apparent within the Site and its immediate surroundings, where the existing agricultural character would be replaced by a more domestic landscape.

4.5. The introduction of built form would also affect the perception of openness along this part of the village edge. Although development of a modest scale and grain could reflect existing settlement patterns, it would nonetheless extend the physical footprint of the village into an area currently experienced as countryside. This would result in a localised erosion of the open character that is a defining feature of the Foxton Chalklands, particularly in views from adjacent farmland and public rights of way.

4.6. Changes to landscape structure would arise from the establishment of new boundaries, internal roads and garden spaces. While new planting and green infrastructure could introduce additional vegetation, this would represent a shift from the predominantly simple and open chalkland field pattern towards a more structured and managed settlement-edge landscape. In the short term, prior to the establishment of planting, the contrast between built development and surrounding farmland would be more pronounced.

4.7. In the longer term, the introduction of hedgerows, trees and green corridors associated with development could provide some degree of visual integration and containment. However, this would not fully replicate the character of the existing open arable landscape and would instead create a transitional edge character. As such, the development would lead to a permanent but localised change in landscape character at the village margin.

4.8. The wider Foxton Chalklands landscape would remain largely intact, with the majority of the character area continuing to function as open agricultural land. The effects of development would therefore be geographically limited, and the fundamental characteristics of the wider

landscape character area would not be undermined.

Magnitude of Change

4.9. Overall, the magnitude of change to landscape character at the local scale would be medium, reflecting the introduction of built form and a change in land use from open arable farmland to a settled village edge. This judgement takes account of the Site's relatively small extent, its containment by existing settlement to the north and west, and the ability for development to be perceived as a logical extension of the village rather than a detached incursion into open countryside. At the scale of the wider Foxton Chalklands landscape character area, the magnitude of change would be low, given the localised nature of the proposals and the retention of the wider open chalkland landscape.

4.10. The magnitude of change would be influenced by the final design, layout and landscape mitigation. A landscape-led approach that limits development to the least sensitive parts of the Site, retains strong green buffers, and reinforces a clear and defensible settlement edge would help to reduce the perceived change and improve integration with the surrounding landscape.

Overall Importance of Landscape Effects

4.11. Taking into account the high landscape sensitivity and a medium local magnitude of change, the likely effect on landscape character at the Site and immediate surroundings would be moderate adverse. At the scale of the wider Foxton Chalklands landscape character area, the effect would be minor adverse, reflecting the limited extent and localised nature of change.

Summary (Landscape Effects)

4.12. In summary, development of the Site for residential housing of a scale and grain similar to existing development would result in an inevitable localised change from open chalk farmland to a settled village edge. While this would introduce some adverse effects on landscape character, these would be confined in extent and could be moderated through careful siting, sensitive design and robust landscape mitigation, ensuring that the wider Foxton Chalklands landscape and its valued characteristics are largely retained.

5.0 ASSESSMENT OF VISUAL EFFECTS

Visual Sensitivity

5.1. Visual receptors within the study area include residents at the southern edge of Foxton, users of public rights of way crossing the surrounding chalkland farmland, and road users along Fowlmere Road, Cambridge Road (A10), and other local routes. These receptors generally experience the Site within an open rural context characterised by arable fields, gently undulating landform and a limited degree of enclosure. Residents and PRoW users are considered to have high visual sensitivity due to their prolonged and often recreational engagement with views, while road users are considered to have medium visual sensitivity. Overall, the Site lies within a visually open landscape where change has the potential to be perceptible, but where subtle landform and existing vegetation provide some localised containment.

Likely Effects on Visual Amenity

5.2. From viewpoints along Fowlmere Road to the south and south-west (Viewpoints 1 to 5), the Site is currently experienced within the middle ground of open farmland, with views filtered in places by roadside hedgerows and trees. Development would introduce new built form into these views, replacing part of the agricultural foreground with a settlement-edge character. The resulting visual change would be noticeable, particularly in closer-range views, but would be moderated by intervening vegetation and by limiting building heights and massing to reflect adjacent development.

5.3. At Viewpoints 1 to 3, where views are aligned along the road corridor, built development would be partially glimpsed through existing hedgerows and proposed boundary planting. The perception would be of an extension of the village edge rather than a prominent or visually dominant feature. With appropriate landscape buffers and a restrained built form, the magnitude of visual change would be medium at these locations.

5.4. From public rights of way to the east and south-west (Viewpoints 6, 7 and 9), the Site is more openly visible, with wide views across arable fields towards the southern edge of Foxton. Development would introduce new elements into the near and middle ground of these views, altering their rural composition. However, the development would be read against the existing housing, village rooflines which establish a settled context against which

new development would be perceived and not as an isolated incursion into open countryside. Structural planting along the Site boundary would help to soften and filter views over time, reducing the prominence of built form.

5.5. Viewpoint 9 is from the public footpath south of Foxton Wood which has expansive views across the chalkland landscape. For these receptors, development would be perceptible but would occupy a relatively small proportion of the overall view and seen in the context of existing built form. The skyline would remain largely undeveloped, and long-distance views towards ridge-top woodlands would be retained. The magnitude of visual change at these viewpoints would therefore be low to medium.

5.6. From more distant routes such as Cambridge Road (A10) and the B1368 (Viewpoints 10–12), the Site is currently experienced at long distance within a broad agricultural panorama, often with intervening vegetation along Hoffer Brook and other hedgerows filtering views. Development would be barely discernible or perceived as a subtle change to the southern edge of Foxton, with built form appearing as a minor component at the edge of the settlement within a wider rural scene. The magnitude of change at these viewpoints would be low.

5.7. Across the study area, visual change would be most apparent in close-range and mid-range views from adjacent roads and footpaths, reducing with distance. Over time, proposed landscape mitigation and the maturation of planting would further soften the appearance of development and strengthen integration with the village edge.

Overall Importance of Visual Effects

5.8. In overall terms, the combination of high sensitivity receptors and generally low to medium magnitude of change indicates that visual effects would be moderate adverse in the closest views, and minor adverse or negligible in more distant views.

Summary (Visual Effects)

5.9. In summary, residential development of a scale and grain similar to existing housing would result in a perceptible localised change to views from the surrounding area. With careful design, limited building heights, and robust landscape mitigation, development could be assimilated into the southern edge of Foxton without giving rise to undue visual effects.

6.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

National Planning Policy Framework (2025)

6.1. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) – updated February 2025, sets out the Government's planning policies for England and provides a framework within which the appropriate local council can produce local and neighbourhood plans; the NPPF is a material consideration in making planning decisions.

6.2. The NPPF promotes a presumption in favour of sustainable development, defined as 'meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs', providing it is in accordance with the relevant up-to-date Local Plan and policies set out in the NPPF. High quality design and responding to local character are repeating themes through the core planning principles.

6.3. Chapter 12 on 'Achieving Well-Designed & Beautiful Places' in paragraph 135 states that planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments:

> "a) will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;
>
> b) are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;
>
> c) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change…."

6.4. Chapter 15 'Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment' in paragraph 187 states that planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

> "a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan);
>
> b) recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland."

6.5. In Chapter 16 Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment at paragraph 190, it states that:

"Plans should set out a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment, including heritage assets most at risk through neglect, decay or other threats. This strategy should take into account: amongst others:

a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets, and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;

b) the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits that conservation of the historic environment can bring;

c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness; and

d) opportunities to draw on the contribution made by the historic environment to the character of a place."

Local Planning Policy

Local Plan Policies (South Cambridgeshire Local Plan (2018)

6.6. **Policy HQ/1 – Design Principles:** this policy states that all development is to be of high-quality design and to make a positive contribution to its local and wider context. Proposals must preserve or enhance the character of the local urban and rural area, respond to the wider landscape, conserve important natural and historic assets and their settings, and be appropriate in scale, massing, form, siting, materials and appearance. The policy promotes a design-led approach and, for larger or complex sites, the use of masterplans and design codes.

6.7. **Policy NH/2 – Protecting and Enhancing Landscape Character:** states that development will only be permitted where it respects and retains, or enhances, the local character and distinctiveness of the local landscape and the relevant National Character Area. The policy reflects national guidance that seeks to protect and enhance valued landscapes and recognises that South Cambridgeshire is predominantly open, arable farmland with long views and distinctive character.

6.8. **NH/11 – Protected Village Amenity Areas (PVAA):** requires that land within or adjacent to a Protected Village Amenity Area is protected from development that would have an adverse

impact on its character, amenity, tranquillity or function. These areas often provide important open land within or around villages and contribute to their setting and rural character. It is noted that the Site does not have a strong relationship to a PVAA and unlikely to adversely affect these designated areas.

6.9. **Policy NH/13 – Important Countryside Frontage (ICF):** states that Important Countryside Frontages are areas of land with a strong countryside character that penetrate or sweep into a village or provide an important rural break between parts of the built-up area. Planning permission will be refused if development would compromise these purposes. The policy seeks to keep these frontages and the open countryside beyond them open and free from development to protect village setting and character. It is noted that the Site does not have a strong relationship to a ICF and unlikely to adversely affect these designated areas.

Neighbourhood Plan Policies (Foxton Neighbourhood Plan — Adopted Aug 2021)

6.10. The Foxton Neighbourhood plan contains several policies directly aimed at landscape and visual matters. The plan policies most relevant to Landscape and Visual Matters work are:

6.11. **Policy FOX/1 – Rural Character:** This policy requires new development to respect and retain the rural character of Foxton and its surroundings. Development should reflect and enhance the street scene through appropriate scale, height and massing; use materials and finishes that complement local character; maintain appropriate development patterns; avoid urbanising boundary treatments; and conserve or enhance mature vegetation.

6.12. **Policy FOX/3 – The Conservation Area & its Setting:** This policy requires development within the Conservation Area to respect and reinforce Foxton's distinctive vernacular as described in the Conservation Area Appraisal. Within the setting of the Conservation Area, new buildings must be positive contributors to the street scene, respecting surrounding height, scale, layout and materials.

6.13. **Policy FOX/4 – Heritage Assets & their Setting**: This policy seeks to protect listed buildings, Buildings of Merit, archaeological features and their settings. Development must conserve or enhance the significance of heritage assets and ensure that their setting and contribution to local character are not harmed.

6.14. **Policy FOX/5 – Protect and Enhance Foxton's Landscape Character:** This policy requires development to respect, retain and where possible enhance the landscape character of Foxton parish as identified in the Foxton Landscape Character Assessment. Proposals must demonstrate how they respond positively to landscape sensitivity, key characteristics and constraints.

6.15. **Policy FOX/6 – Maintain or Enhance Key Views and Village Gateways:** This policy seeks to protect identified key views, village gateways and sensitive settlement edges. Development should not obstruct or detract from these views and should reinforce the experience of entering and leaving the village.

6.16. **Policy FOX/7 – Protect or Enhance Green Spaces:** This policy seeks to protect designated Local Green Spaces and other valued green spaces from development that would harm their character, function or visual contribution. Development proposals must demonstrate that green spaces are retained, enhanced and integrated. It is noted that the Site does not have a strong relationship to a Local Green Space and unlikely to adversely affect these assets.

6.17. **Sensitive urban edge to be retained:** within the neighbourhood plan there is reference to *"Sensitive urban edge to be retained"*, and shown on Figure 14: Landscape Constraints, Sensitivities and Opportunities. These sensitive edges are typically locations where there are outward views from the settlement towards open chalkland farmland or ridge-top woodlands, and where the rural setting of Foxton is strongly experienced. The designation highlights that development in these locations could effect the village's contained form, erode the distinction between settlement and countryside, adversely affect key views and the wider landscape character identified in the Foxton Landscape Character Assessment.

6.18. Taken along with the policies listed above, this indicates that any development proposed within land identified as a sensitive urban edge would be subject to a cautious and landscape-led approach, with strong presumption against development that would unduly extend the village into open countryside or weaken the existing rural transition.

Conclusion

6.19. While the appraisal identifies localised moderate adverse landscape effects and minor to moderate adverse visual effects, national and local planning policy does not require the absence of harm, but seeks to ensure that development is appropriately located, well designed and responsive to its context. In this case, the Site's relationship to the existing settlement edge, together with the potential for a landscape-led masterplan, limited building heights, sensitive layout and robust green infrastructure, indicates that residential development could be delivered in a manner that respects local character and minimises harm. On this basis, the Site is considered capable of accommodating development that accords with the aims and objectives of national, local and neighbourhood planning policy.

7.0 MITIGATION RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1. Any development within the Site would need to be founded on a landscape-led and edge-of-settlement approach, informed by the Foxton Landscape Character Assessment, the Greater Cambridge Landscape Character Assessment and the Foxton Neighbourhood Plan policies relating to rural character, sensitive urban edges, key views and landscape protection.

7.2. The primary mitigation measure would be to confine built form to the least visually sensitive edges of the settlement, avoiding open skylines and areas that contribute most strongly to the open chalkland character and separation between settlements. Development should be arranged to reinforce a strong and defensible settlement edge, reflecting the existing village grain, and avoiding unduly expanding outward into open countryside. Building heights, massing and roof forms should remain consistent with surrounding development, with layouts designed to maintain outward views towards chalkland landscapes and ridge-top woodlands.

7.3. Landscape mitigation should focus on the creation of a robust green infrastructure framework that reflects local chalkland characteristics. This would include the strengthening and gapping-up of existing hedgerows using native species typical of the area (such as hawthorn, blackthorn, field maple and hazel), the introduction of new native hedgerows and tree belts along site boundaries. Strategic woodland planting should be avoided, instead favouring small copses and hedgerow trees that echo existing patterns.

7.4. The design of open space and landscape buffers should serve both visual and functional purposes, creating a gradual transition between built development and the surrounding farmland. Perimeter green corridors, informal open space and footpath links can be used to maintain visual openness, frame views, and provide recreational and ecological benefits. This is of particular importance as it pertains to the existing public right of way within the Site. Outward facing boundary treatments should avoid close-boarded fencing and instead use hedgerows, low timber fencing and native planting to achieve a soft rural edge.

7.5. Over time, this combination of careful siting, restrained built form and locally appropriate landscape mitigation could allow development to be visually assimilated within the Foxton Chalklands, while maintaining openness and rural character.

8.0 CONCLUSIONS

8.1. This Landscape and Visual Appraisal has considered the baseline landscape character, visual context, policy framework and the likely effects of residential development at Land at Fowlmere Road, Foxton. The Site lies within the Foxton Chalklands, part of the wider Morden to Duxford Lowland Chalklands, a landscape valued for its open arable character, gently rolling chalk topography, rural tranquillity and long views. Both strategic and parish-level landscape character assessments identify the area as sensitive to change, particularly at village edges where development could affect openness and rural setting.

8.2. Residential development of a scale and grain comparable to existing housing would result in a localised change from open farmland to a settled village edge. This would give rise to moderate adverse landscape effects at the local scale and minor adverse effects at the wider character area scale. In visual terms, effects would be most apparent in close and medium-range views from nearby roads and public rights of way, where they would range from minor to moderate adverse, reducing to minor adverse or negligible at greater distances.

8.3. Subject to a landscape-led masterplan, careful siting, modest building heights, retention and strengthening of boundary vegetation, and the delivery of a robust green infrastructure framework, residential development could be assimilated into the southern edge of Foxton without causing unacceptable harm to landscape character or visual amenity. Although some localised adverse effects would remain, these would be limited in extent and would not undermine the overall integrity or key characteristics of the Foxton Chalklands or the wider Morden to Duxford Lowland Chalklands. On this basis, the Site is considered capable of accommodating sensitively designed residential development in accordance with national, local and neighbourhood planning policy.

FIGURES

Notes.

Key

- Site boundary
- Distance from Site (1km, 2km)
- Listed buildings
- Key Views & Approaches (Neighbourhood Plan)
- Cambridge Green Belt
- Conservation Area
- Scheduled Monument
- Settlement Edges (Neighbourhood Plan)

SOURCES:
ORDNANCE SURVEY
DEFRA MAGIC MAP
SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE LOCAL PLAN (2018)
FOXTON NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN (2021)

N

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Landscape Design
Environmental Statements

Purpose of Issue:	Client:
Planning	ASTRA NO. 3 (FOX) LIMITED
project:	**Land at Fowlmere Road Foxton**
title:	Figure 01 - Site Location & Planning Policy
scale @ a3:	1:20,000
date:	24.01.2026
drawn: DL	check: EC
drwg no: ECE-2013-DR-001	rev: - -

Notes.

Key

- Site boundary
- Distance from Site (1km, 2km)

Greater Cambridge Landscape Character Assessment 2021

- 8B Morden to Duxford Lowland Chalklands
- 7D Newton Chalk Hills
- 3C Rhee Tributaries Lowland Farmlands
- 9C Rhee River Valley

1KM

2KM

N

SOURCES:
ORDNANCE SURVEY
GREATER CAMBRIDGE LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMEMT 2021

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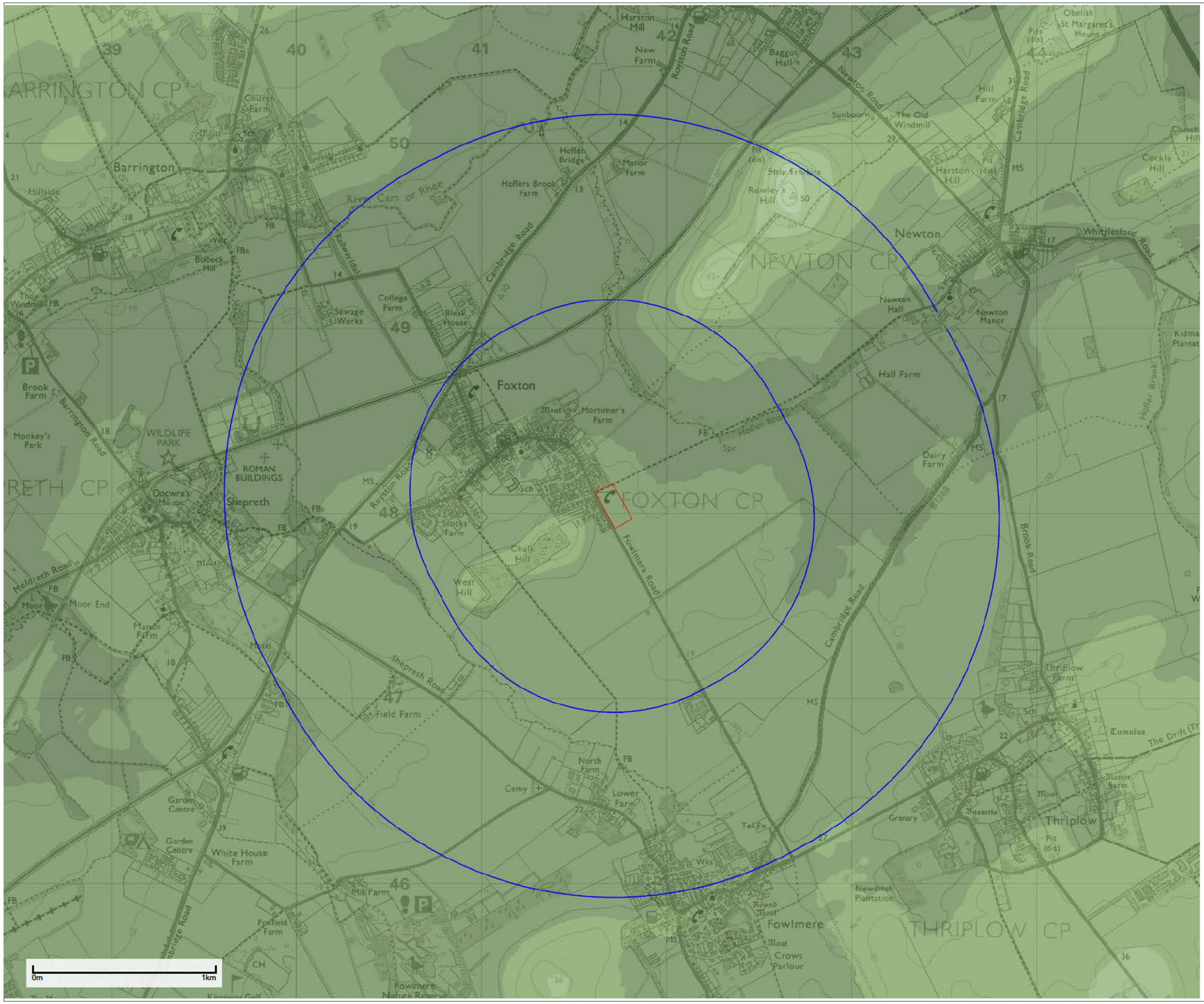
Purpose of Issue: Planning	Client: ASTRA NO. 3 (FOX) LIMITED
project:	**Land at Fowlmere Road Foxton**
title:	Figure 02 - Landscape Character
scale @ a3:	1:20,000
date:	24.01.2026
drawn: DL	check: EC
drwg no: ECE-2013-DR-002	rev: - -



Notes.

Key

- Site boundary
- Distance from Site (1km, 2km)
- 70m AOD
- 60m AOD
- 50m AOD
- 40m AOD
- 30m AOD
- 20m AOD
- 10m AOD
- 0m AOD

N

SOURCES:
ORDNANCE SURVEY
IDOX LIDAR DTM 1M

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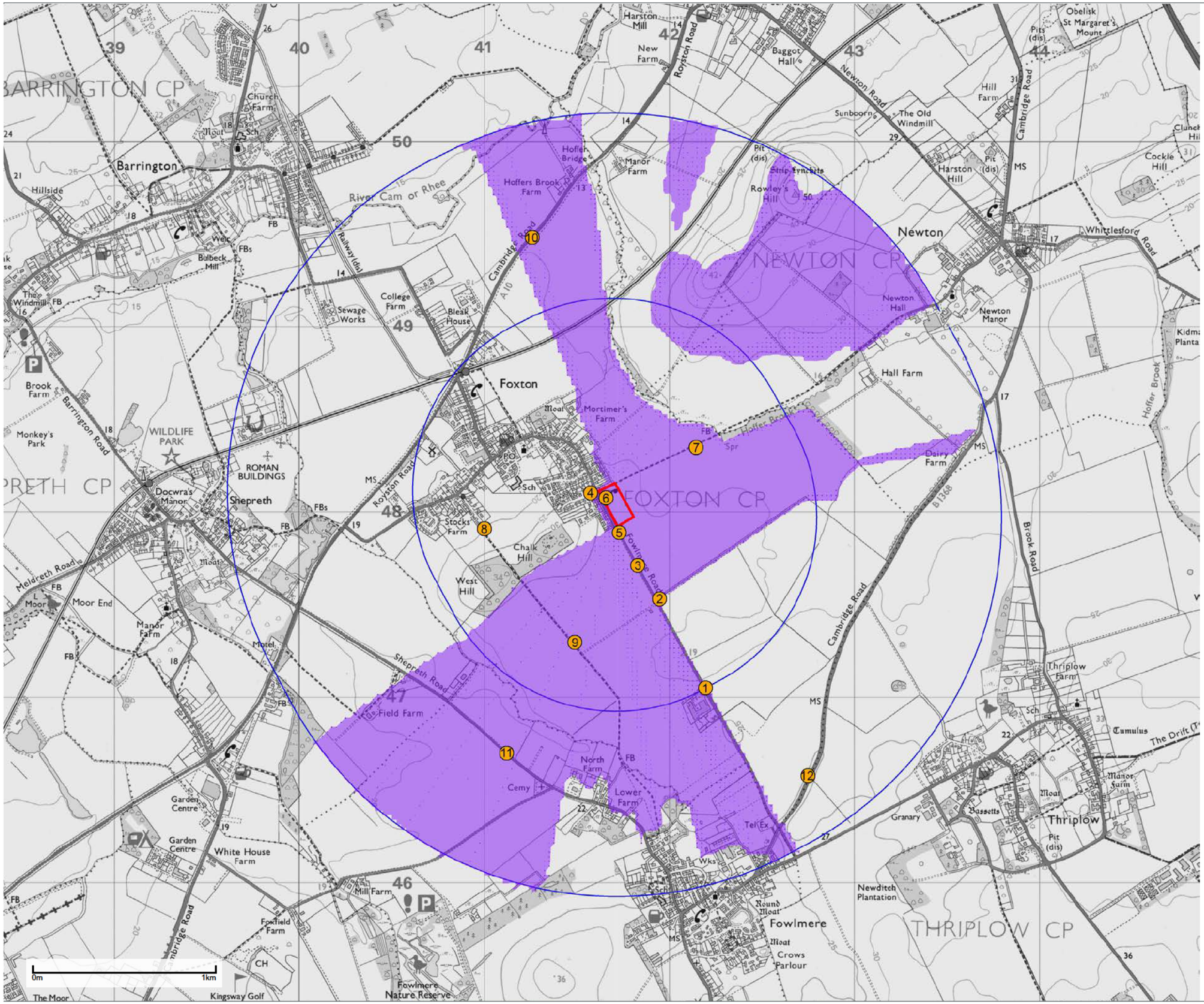
Purpose of Issue:	Client:
Planning	ASTRA NO. 3 (FOX) LIMITED
project:	**Land at Fowlmere Road Foxton**
title:	Figure 03 - Topography
scale @ a3:	1:20,000
date:	24.01.2026
drawn: DL	check: EC
drwg no: ECE-2013-DR-003	rev: - -



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Notes.

Key

- Site boundary
- Distance from Site (1km, 2km)
- Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) 10m development height
- 7 Viewpoint Location

N

SOURCES:
ORDNANCE SURVEY
IDOX LIDAR DTM 1M
IDOX LIDAR DSM 1M

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Purpose of Issue:	Client:
Planning	ASTRA NO. 3 (FOX) LIMITED
project:	**Land at Fowlmere Road Foxton**
title:	Figure 04 - Zone of Theoretical Visibility & Viewpoint Location
scale @ a3:	1:20,000
date:	24.01.2026
drawn: DL	check: EC
drwg no: ECE-2013-DR-004	rev: --

VIEWPOINT **1 - ORCHARD FARM, FOWLMERE ROAD, FOXTON (SOUTH)**

Direction of View:	North	AOD:	20m	Receptors Represented: Road Users
Distance from the site boundary:	1.0km	Date and Time:	22/01/2026, 13:50	

VIEWPOINT **2 - FOWLMERE ROAD, FOXTON (SOUTH)**

Direction of View:	North	AOD:	21m	Receptors Represented: Road Users
Distance from the site boundary:	550m	Date and Time:	22/01/2026, 13:23	

2013 Land at Fowlmere Road Foxton Astra No.3 (FOX) Limited

VIEWPOINT **1 & 2**

FIGURE **5.1**

EXISTING BASELINE VIEWS (EXTENDED PANORAMA)

FOR VIEWPOINT LOCATIONS REFER TO FIGURE 04

DATE: JAN' 26

DRAWN BY: DL

CHECKED: EC

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