



Land at Park Lane, Langham

Landscape and Visual Note
November 2025

a. Site Description and Designations

1. Icen Projects have been instructed by Mac Mic Strategic Land to consider the landscape and visual opportunities and constraints of the land at Park Lane, Langham (the 'Site'). Particular consideration has been given to the potential for direct and indirect effects on the Dedham Vale National Landscape, which is located approximately 0.55km to the east of the Site at its nearest point. It should be noted that this is a high-level appraisal which has been informed by winter site work and a Zone of Theoretical Visibility analysis. Any future applications would be supported by a full Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment ('LVIA').
2. The Site comprises two large-scale arable fields, a linear field to the east of the Site and part of a smaller arable field located north of Park Lane and south of School Road between Langham Wick and Langham Moor. The Site has been identified as a draft allocation (Policy PP37) in the Colchester City Council Preferred Option Local Plan Regulation 18 Consultation.
3. The fields of the Site are bound by managed hedgerows which are gappy in places. The hedgerow along the south of the Site also contains a variety of scattered hedgerow trees of varying condition, including oak, lime, ash and poplar. The Site is well connected by an existing network of Public Rights of Way ('PRoW') that cross north-south and east-west through the Site, including Langham 31, 33, 35, 46, 55 and 56.
4. To the east and west of the Site, narrow linear fields, mostly used as paddocks or for grazing, separate the Site from the rear gardens of properties along Wick Road and Moor Road. Views into the Site above existing intervening hedgerows are available from first floor windows at the rear of these properties. To the north, the proposed Site access adjoins School Road just east of Langham Recreation Ground. The northern boundary also adjoins newly built out development at Discovery Way, School Farm, and a small block of woodland to the south of Holly House. Scattered residential development exists along Park Lane to the south of the Site, beyond which is the former RAF Boxted Airfield, the geometry of which is still present on the landscape today and partly extends into the south-west corner of the Site.
5. The Site does not contain any landscape, heritage or ecological designations. However, a number of Grade II listed buildings can be found in proximity to the Site, including Mantons (inset from the south-east corner of the Site), Langham Oak Cottage (located south of the Site, opposite PRoW Langham 55), Park Lane Farmhouse (located south of the Site near PRoW Langham 46), Floral Dene (located near to the south-west corner of the Site), Munsons Cottage and Moor Cottages

(located to the south-west of the Site off Moor Road), Tudor Cottage and Bakers (located along School Road to the west of Langham Community Centre), Little Oaks Barn (located along School Road to the north of Langham Community Centre), and School Farmhouse (located at School Farm). The RAF Boxted Memorial is locally listed.

6. An area of public open space, play and sports provision exists to the immediate north of the Site at Langham Recreation Ground. This includes an equipped play area, grass football pitch, two tennis courts and some outdoor gym equipment.

b. Relevant Policy and Baseline Studies

Levelling Up and Regeneration Act (2023)

7. Under the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act, all public bodies have a duty to 'seek to further' the statutory purposes of protected landscapes, including National Landscapes. In the case of the Dedham Vale National Landscape, its statutory purpose is '*conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the area of outstanding natural beauty*'.
8. This duty also applies when considering changes to the setting of a protected landscape. In decision-making terms, this means that decision-makers must actively demonstrate how proposed developments will conserve the natural beauty, special qualities, and key characteristics of the protected landscape, and clearly explain how any harm identified will be effectively reduced and compensated.

National Planning Policy Framework (2024)

9. The Site is located near to the Dedham Vale National Landscape (approximately 0.55km at its nearest point), which is considered to comprise a 'valued landscape' in the context of paragraph 187(a). Despite it not falling within the National Landscape, any development of the Site will need to have due consideration for paragraph 189 which notes that '*development within their setting should be sensitively located and designed to avoid or minimise adverse impacts on the designated areas.*'

Colchester City Local Plan 2013 - 2033

10. **Policy ENV3: Green Infrastructure** notes the importance of protecting, enhancing and creating a comprehensive green infrastructure network.
11. **Policy ENV4: Dedham Vale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (National Landscape)** reinforces the importance of preserving the Dedham Vale's perceptual qualities, including dark skies, when developing both within and within the setting of the National Landscape. The policy states:

"Development will only be supported in or on land within the setting of the Dedham Vale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) that:

- (i) *Makes a positive contribution to the natural beauty and special qualities of the AONB, including tranquillity and the AONB's good quality night/dark skies;*
- (ii) *Does not adversely affect the character, quality views, into and out of the AONB and distinctiveness of the AONB or threaten public enjoyment of these areas, including by increased motorised vehicle movement;*
- (iii) *That there are no adverse impacts on the setting of the AONB which cannot reasonably be mitigated against; and*
- (iv) *Supports the wider environmental, social and economic objectives as set out in the Dedham Vale AONB and Stour Valley Management Plan.*

Applications for major development within or in close proximity to the boundary of the Dedham Vale AONB will be refused unless in exceptional circumstances it can be demonstrated that the development is in the public interest, and this outweighs other material considerations."

12. **Policy DM4: Sports Provision** highlights how new residential development will be required to contribute to the provision or enhancement of sport or leisure facilities where a need has been identified.

13. **Policy DM15: Design and Amenity** provides a series of design principles that should be applied to new development to achieve high standards of design and amenity.

14. **Policy DM18: Provision of Open Space** notes that all new residential development will be expected to provide new public open space. The policy states:

"Precise levels of provision will depend on the location of the proposal and the nature of open space needs in the area but as a guideline, at least 10% of the gross site area should be provided as useable open space. The Local Planning Authority will expect large sites of 5 hectares or more to provide at least one strategic area of open space within the site."

Colchester City Council Preferred Options Local Plan Regulation 18 Consultation (2025)

15. **Policy PP37: Land north of Park Lane, Langham** identifies the Site as a draft allocation with the potential to deliver 900 homes. It notes that development on the land would be supported, providing it meets a series of design principles. Pertinent points relevant to landscape include:

- *Onsite BNG measures should include enhancement of existing hedgerows. Soil conditions may favour the creation of higher distinctiveness grasslands, including some of a calcareous character;*

- *Support will be given to delivering grassland habitat to support the delivery of the strategic creation opportunities in the Essex LNRS;*
- *Screening comprising locally appropriate tree belts, hedgerows and/or woodland will be required along the site boundaries to ensure that development is sensitively integrated into the landscape to reflect and reinforce rural character;*
- *'Enhanced Open Space' as shown on the Policies Map substantively in excess of 10% of the allocation area must be provided as open space. This should include at least one area of strategic open space and multiple areas of less formal and more incidental open space.*
- *Deliver a strategic open space centrally within the site to provide a naturally landscaped community space that is well connected to new and existing development;*
- *Development must conserve, and where appropriate, enhance the significance of heritage assets (including any contribution made by their settings). Designated heritage assets close to the allocated site includes twenty-two Grade II Listed Buildings as informed by the stage 1 HIA.*

16. **Policy GN1: Open Space and Green Network and Waterways Principles** notes that:

“Major residential development proposals must demonstrate, in a Green Network and Waterways Plan, that new multifunctional open space(s) of a minimum size of 10% of the gross site area is included in the proposals and must meet any relevant criteria in site allocations policies, be informed by an appraisal of local context.”

17. The policy then provides a list of design principles for open space in new development to follow. It also goes on to note:

“Where residential allocations are identified to provide for 'Enhanced Open Space' as indicated in the Place Policies (and shown on the Policies Map), substantively in excess of 10% of the allocation area must be provided as open space. This should include at least one area of strategic open space and multiple areas of less formal and more incidental open space.”

18. The land north of Park Lane draft allocation is identified as an 'enhanced open space' allocation and therefore would be expected to provide 'substantively' in excess of 10% as open space.

19. **Policy LC1: Landscape** highlights the importance of development proposals being sympathetic to their surrounding landscape character and qualities of the locality. Development must comply with the following criteria:

“a) Development must safeguard or strengthen tranquillity, features and patterns that contribute to the landscape character and local distinctiveness of the area, protect rural openness and sense of

place and protect natural landscape features where they make a contribution to the historic environment.

b) The scale, design, materials and landscaping measures are appropriate and would lead to an enhancement of the character of the landscape.

c) Proposals must consider ecological and geological features, identifying areas suitable for habitat creation, and incorporate measures in the landscape plan with details of management and maintenance.”

20. It goes on to note that *“development must have regard to the Colchester Landscape Character Assessment 2024 to identify the character areas and features of the affected landscape. Development must take into account the general guidelines and landscape character area specific guidelines.”*

21. It also notes that *“the Council considers that landscape character areas with ‘high’ inherent value and sensitivity as per Appendix A of the Colchester Landscape Character Assessment 2024, are valued landscapes.”* The Site falls within LCA B7: Langham Farmland Plateau, which is considered to be of ‘medium’ value and therefore is not considered to be a valued landscape in the context of Paragraph 187 of the NPPF.

22. **Policy LC2: Dedham Vale National Landscape** highlights the importance of preserving the special qualities of the National Landscape for development occurring within its setting. This includes its dark skies and development should take account of The Dedham Vale National Landscape Lighting Design Guide 2023.

Colchester Landscape Character Assessment (2024)

23. The Council published its updated Landscape Character Assessment in November 2024. The Site and its immediate surroundings are located within LCA B7: Langham Farmland Plateau which is described as *“a predominantly arable landscape, featuring a mixed pattern of small to medium sized fields in the north and larger scale fields to the south interspersed by occasional woodland blocks.”*

24. Landscape management guidelines specific to LCA B7 and relevant to the Site include:

- *“Ensure that relevant special characteristics and qualities of the Dedham Vale National Landscape are conserved and enhanced, having regard for the aims set out in the current Management Plan.*
- *Seek to prevent further loss or decline in the quality of remaining boundary hedgerows and encourage their restoration/reinstatement using species appropriate to the local character and climatic conditions.*

- *Conserve and enhance the existing traditional orchards and seek to reintroduce them more widely within the landscape.*
- *Protect and manage listed buildings and the undesignated remnant parkland at Lamb Corner to preserve the sense of time-depth and historic character.”*

25. Development management guidelines specific to LCA B7 include:

- *“Avoid visually intrusive and incongruous development within the area, particularly in the north within and adjacent to the Dedham Vale National Landscape.*
- *Any large scale or visually intrusive development would be detrimental to the open rural character of the landscape; consider opportunities for the undergrounding of any proposed power lines to avoid need for pylons, with landscape features reinstated following construction.*
- *Conserve the local distinctiveness of historic buildings and their rural setting.*
- *Ensure that new development responds to historic settlement pattern and uses materials which are appropriate to local landscape character including the local vernacular of weatherboarding and brick (refer to the Essex Design Guide (2018) for further information).*
- *Maintain and enhance the character of the local straight roads. Resist unsympathetic highway improvement that would threaten their rural character.*
- *Encourage the integration of development into the landscape through the use of locally appropriate tree belts, hedgerows and woodlands to reflect and reinforce rural character.*
- *Seek to reduce lighting impacts and avoid any further reduction in tranquillity, particularly to the south; for areas to the north-east refer to the Lighting Design Guide for the Dedham Vale National Landscape (July 2023).”*

26. The above management guidelines should be considered in any designs to ensure compliance with draft Policy LC1: Landscape.

27. The Assessment considers LCA B7 to be of medium value, noting that it has some sensitive attributes and values, including part which is located within the Dedham Vale National Landscape.

Dedham Vale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan 2021-2026

28. The National Landscape’s Management Plan sets out a series of policies with the aim of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the project area. One of these policies, Policy CS2, is *‘resist proposals that significantly negatively impact the AONB’s natural beauty and special qualities, including those in its setting’.*

29. The Management Plan also sets out the special qualities of the National Landscape, which are:

- *'Iconic lowland river valley associated with the artist John Constable RA, the views he painted are still recognisable today;*
- *Historic villages with timber framed housing and prominent churches;*
- *Valley bottom grazing marshes with associated drainage ditches and wildlife;*
- *Naturally functioning River Stour with associated tributaries, meres and historic river management features;*
- *Semi natural ancient woodlands on valley sides and associated wildlife;*
- *Traditional field boundaries intact and well managed;*
- *Apparent and buried archaeology indicating millennia of human occupation;*
- *A sense of relative tranquillity; and*
- *Surprisingly long distance views from higher ground along the valley in an area associated with large skies.'*

Colchester Preferred Options Local Plan Sustainability Appraisal (2025)

30. The sustainability appraisal notes that the reason for the Site's allocation is that *'development is large scale and there are no biodiversity or landscape constraints. Development would deliver improved community infrastructure, including substantial open space. Development would contribute towards improvements to wastewater infrastructure and connect separate parts of Langham.'*

Colchester Green Network and Waterways Guiding Principles

31. The Green Network and Waterways Guiding Principles have been developed to provide locally-specific principles for the conservation and enhancement of green and blue infrastructure across the area. They have taken account of Natural England's Green Infrastructure Framework, as well as the Essex Green Infrastructure Standards. A summary of the guiding principles for green and blue infrastructure are:

- Multifunctionality;
- Addressing gaps in provision, particularly those highlights within the Essex Local Nature Recovery Strategy ('LNRS');
- Making strategic and local connections;
- Variety of provision and 'building blocks';

- High quality spaces that allow for connections with nature;
- Accessible for all;
- Respond to character;
- Partnership working; and
- Managed, valued and monitored.

Essex Local Nature Recovery Strategy (2025)

32. The Essex LNRS was published in July 2025, with the primary purpose of identifying locations for habitat creation which would provide the greatest benefit to nature and the wider environment. Parts of the Site have been identified as 'strategic' opportunity areas for the creation of scrub and grassland, with some small parcels of woodland opportunity.

c. Landscape and Visual Context

Landscape Character

33. The Site and the wider landscape to the south is open in character with few landscape features. The Site is currently comprised of large-scale arable fields bound by poor to medium quality hedgerows and dissected by a grid of PRow. This provides a sparse landscape framework to anchor development, meaning careful siting of new structural vegetation is needed. This open character is reflected in the former Boxted Airfield to the south. The Site is contained by existing development within Langham to the north, east and west, beyond which the landscape is characterised by a smaller scale of arable and pastoral fields bound by woodland and established hedgerows. The Site and its immediate surroundings are considered to be of medium value, as noted within the published evidence.
34. The village of Langham is currently made up of two linear settlement areas, Langham Wick which is focussed along Wick Road, and Langham Moor which is focussed along Moor Road. The two settlement areas are joined by School Road which has scattered development and community uses along it, including Langham Primary School and Langham Community Centre. Langham functions as a single village and has perceptually merged along School Road in the north. However, along Park Lane, scattered development means the two settlement areas remain physically and perceptually separate. Careful consideration will be needed as to how the new development knits into the existing form of Langham.

Visibility

35. Two Zones of Theoretical Visibility ('ZTV') have been produced to demonstrate the anticipated visibility of the proposed development. These are shown in **Appendix A1** and include a bare earth version which demonstrates the screening effects of topography alone, as well as a version which includes some broad assumptions on the screening effects of buildings and woodland. The ZTV

Study Area was set at a distance of 5km from the Site boundary, as is common practice with proposals of this nature and scale.

36. Due to the relatively flat topography of the Site and the surrounding area, the bare earth ZTV indicates the potential for wide ranging theoretical visibility of the proposed development, particularly to the east and west, including parts of the Dedham Vale National Landscape. However, once the screening effect of surrounding buildings and woodland blocks is factored in, the theoretical visibility of the proposed development reduces significantly, with theoretical visibility mostly contained to the Site and its immediate surroundings, as well as around Boxted Airfield to the south. Winter fieldwork confirmed that there are some filtered views towards the Site from PRow which cross the former airfield, however, from here it is seen within the context of existing development within Langham which contains the Site to the north, east and west.



View across the former airfield towards the Site from PRow Langham 44

37. The ZTV indicates an area of low potential visibility to the east of the Site, including a very small part of the Dedham Vale National Landscape. However, it was confirmed through winter fieldwork that existing buildings and vegetation along the eastern edge of Langham screen the Site from view from these locations. As shown on the ZTV with screens, there would be no views of the proposed development from the National Landscape to the north
38. There are a number of Grade II listed buildings in proximity to the Site, some of which have partially open or filtered views into the Site, including Mantons, Langham Oak Cottage, Park Lane Farmhouse, Floral Dene and Tudor Cottage. There are close views into the Site from surrounding properties, particularly those along Wick Road and Moor Road. Existing hedgerows and intervening strips of land between the Site and adjoining back gardens means views are largely limited to rear-facing first floor windows. For properties along Moor Road, views from ground floor windows are less heavily filtered due to the newly establishing hedgerow along the western Site boundary.



View towards Langham Oak Cottage from PRow Langham 55



View towards properties along Wick Road from PRow Langham 55



View towards Mantons from PRow Langham 55



View towards properties along Moor Road from PRow Langham 46

Dedham Vale National Landscape

39. The Site is in proximity to the Dedham Vale National Landscape, which is located approximately 0.55km east of the Site at its nearest point where Birchwood Road meets the A12. As discussed above, it has been confirmed through analysis of the ZTV and winter fieldwork that the proposed development would not be visible from the Dedham Vale National Landscape due to the relatively flat local topography and intervening vegetation and built form.
40. When considering impacts on the setting to the National Landscape, the potential for the proposed development to impact on the special qualities of the protected landscape needs to be understood. The special qualities of the Dedham Vale are set out in paragraph 29 and it is considered that the proposed development would have no impact on these.
41. Although there is no predicted intervisibility between the Site and the National Landscape, the potential for indirect impacts on the perceptual qualities of the Dedham Vale, particularly in relation to light pollution and dark skies, will need to be considered. At present, the village of Langham is unlit and has no streetlights, however, light sources from Colchester and the A12 brighten the night sky locally. As such, the eastern half of the village and the Site is considered to have moderately bright skies, whereas the western half of the village and Site is considered to have relatively darker skies, according to CPRE's Light Pollution and Dark Skies mapping. It is likely that the introduction of the proposed development would brighten the night skies locally, extending the area of moderately brighter skies across the whole village of Langham and its immediate surroundings. Any application, even at outline, would seek to reduce lighting impacts through the integration of lighting principles that align with the Dedham Vale National Landscape Lighting Design Guide 2023 within any design guidance or design coding. With these principles in place, brightening of the night sky would be localised and would not impact on the large swathes of darker night skies across the National Landscape to the north of Langham.
42. Other potential impacts on the perceptual qualities of the National Landscape include an increase in traffic as a result of the proposed development. The current A12 junctions have capacity to support

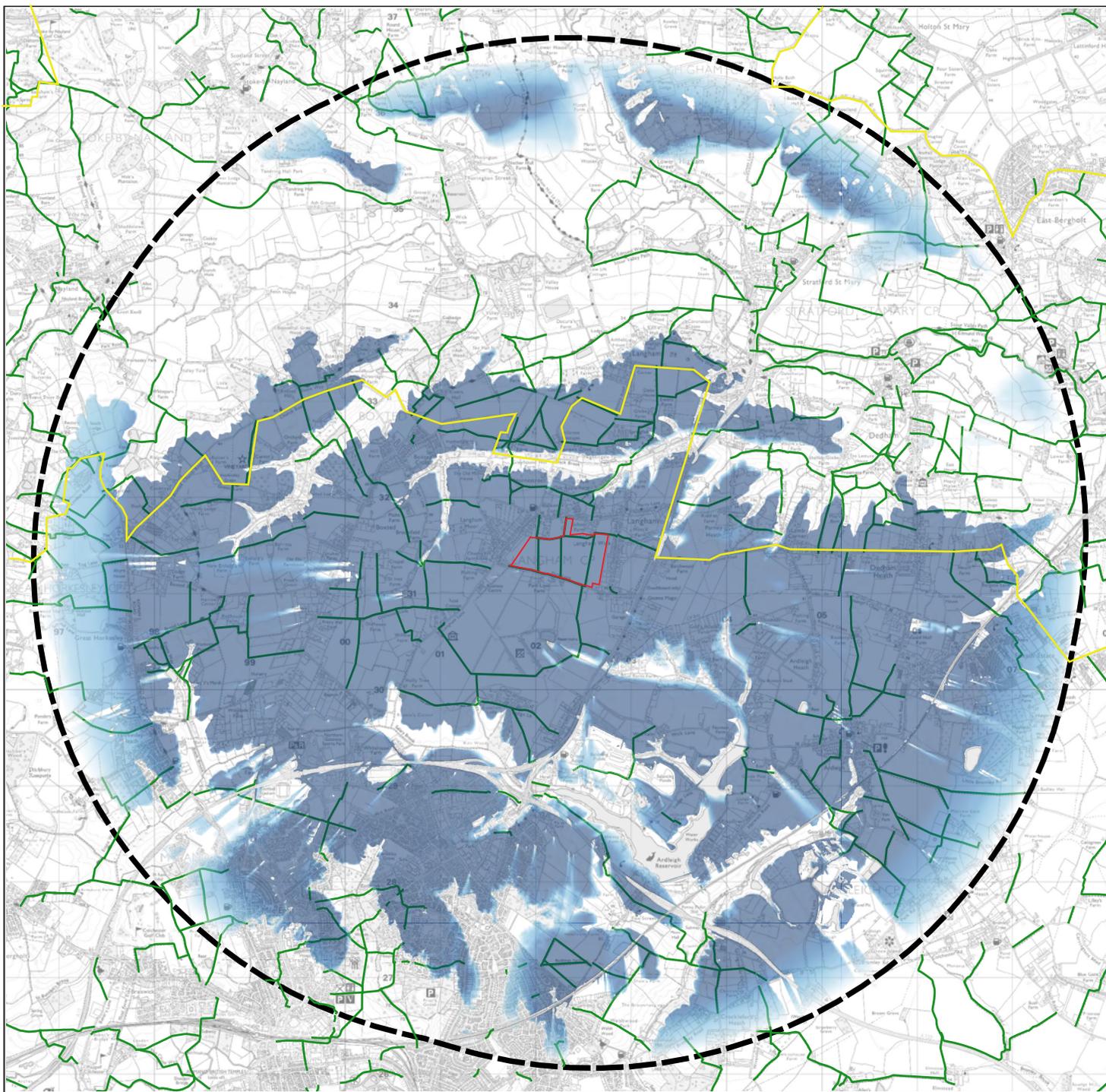
the development, and it is not anticipated that any upgrades would be required. However, the potential for increased usage of lanes which extend north from Langham into the Black Brook valley and the National Landscape beyond should be considered. This includes Grove Hill, which extends from Wick Road on the eastern side of the village. Grove Hill extends into Nightingale Road and Rectory Road, which is where it enters the National Landscape approximately 0.9km north of Langham. Greyhound Hill extends north from Moor Road in the west of the village where it enters the National Landscape approximately 0.5km north of the village. Both roads are narrow and bound by hedgerows or woodland, giving them a rural character.

43. Icen's Landscape team will work with the project's transport consultants to understand potential increased usage of these roads and how this could be mitigated in landscape and visual terms. Where possible, the introduction of signage or highways infrastructure will be avoided or minimised.

d. Conclusion

44. The Site is enclosed to the north, east and west by existing buildings and vegetation. As such, it is well contained from the wider landscape, as shown on the ZTV with screens in **Appendix A1**. Winter fieldwork confirmed that there are some filtered views towards the Site from PRow which cross the former Boxted Airfield to the south, however, from here it is seen within the context of existing development within Langham which contains the Site to the north, east and west.
45. As confirmed through an interrogation of the ZTV and winter fieldwork, there would be no views of the proposed development from the Dedham Vale National Landscape. Despite this, careful consideration will be needed as to how sensitive lighting principles are embedded within the design of the scheme. This would result in some local brightening of the night sky, which is already moderately bright due to the proximity of Colchester and the A12. However, the large swathes of dark night skies found across the Dedham Vale to the north of Langham would remain unchanged. Careful consideration will be needed as to how the potential for additional traffic along lanes which lead from Langham into the National Landscape will be managed, and how this could impact on the perceptual qualities of the Dedham Vale.
46. Overall, due to the containment of the Site by existing built form and vegetation, it is considered very unlikely that the proposed development would result in significantly negative effects on the National Landscape's natural beauty and special qualities, and would therefore comply with Policy CS2 of the Dedham Vale Management Plan.
47. As the scheme progresses, it is recommended that Icen's Landscape team engage with the Dedham Vale National Landscape Partnership to discuss how sensitive design principles, such as lighting principles, can be integrated into the scheme. We would also recommend engaging with the Partnership and Colchester City Council to agree representative viewpoints and locations for Type 3 visualisations to support the LVIA.

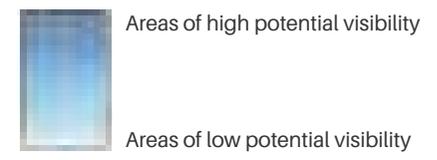
APPENDIX A1 – ZONE OF THEOERTICAL VISIBILITY



KEY

- Site boundary
- 5km distance from the Site
- Public Rights of Way
- Dedham Vale National Landscape

Zone of Theoretical Visibility



NOTES

The Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) has been generated using EA 2m Digital Terrain Model. The ZTV has been generated based upon an observer eye level of 1.60m. It is based on 12m high points spaced out on the perimeter of the Proposed Development Areas. All heights mentioned are above ground level (AGL).



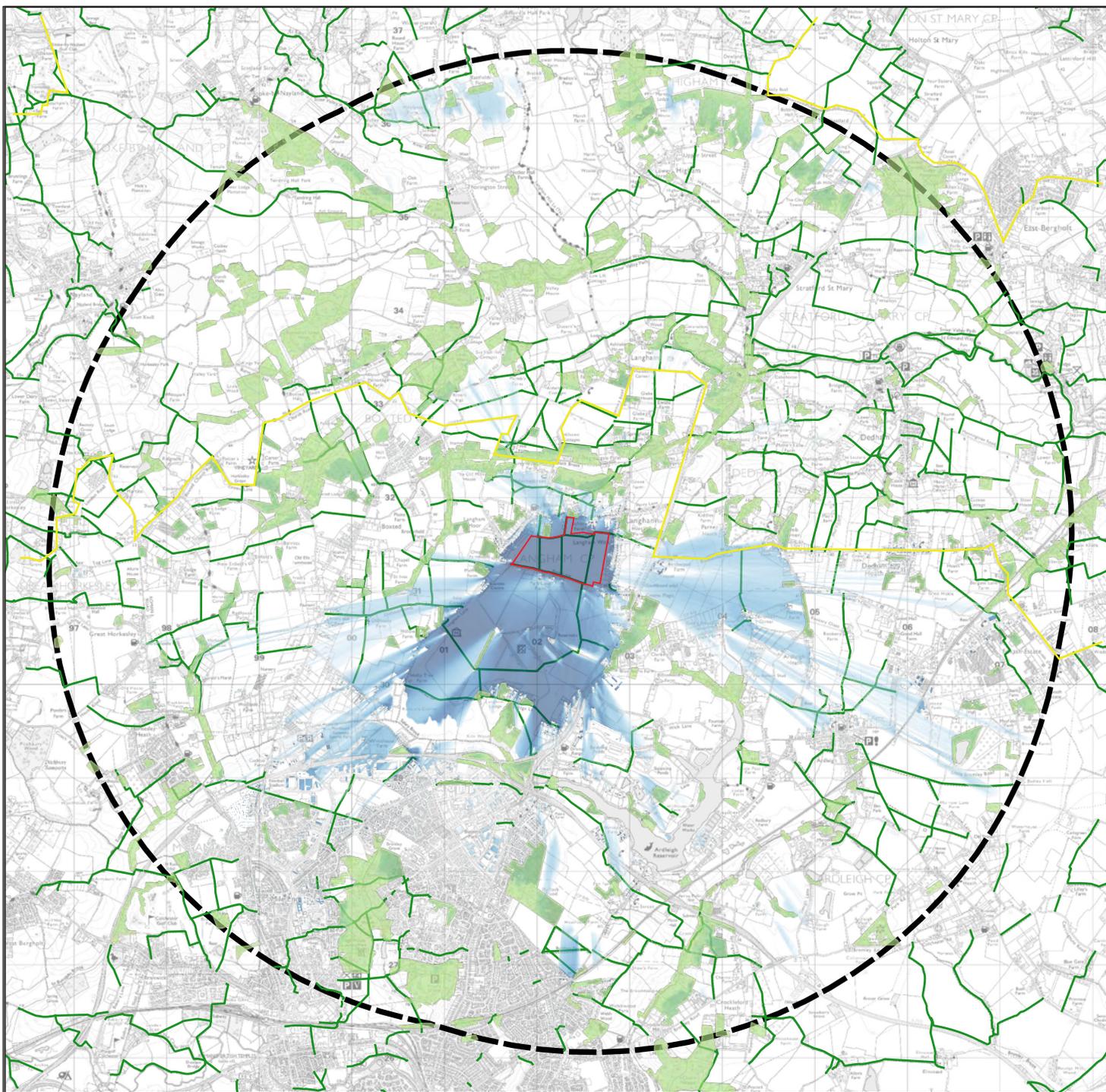
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PROJECT **Land at Park Lane, Langham**
 DRAWING **Zone of Theoretical Visibility - Bare Earth**
 CLIENT **Mac Mic Strategic Land**

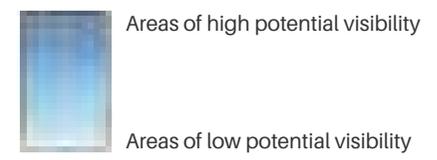
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CHECKED BY	RH	DATE	November 2025
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KEY

- Site boundary
- 5km distance from the Site
- Public Rights of Way
- Existing Woodland
- Dedham Vale National Landscape

Zone of Theoretical Visibility



NOTES

The Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) has been generated using EA 2m Digital Terrain Model. The viewshed output includes screening by existing buildings at 9m height and woodland at 12m height.

The ZTV has been generated based upon an observer eye level of 1.60m. It is based on 12m high points spaced out on the perimeter of the Proposed Development Areas. All heights mentioned are above ground level (AGL).



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PROJECT	Land at Park Lane, Langham
DRAWING	Zone of Theoretical Visibility - With Screens
CLIENT	Mac Mic Strategic Land

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