Appendix H Assessment of Landscape Effects

Fast Track Approvals Act Application

Foxton Solar Farm

Genesis Energy Limited

SLR Project No.: 810.V14848.00001

13 February 2026

SLR

Assessment of Landscape Effects

FOXTON SOLAR FARM

Wall Road & Motuiti Road

FAST TRACK APPROVALS ACT APPLICATION

December 2025

Information and Quality Control

Prepared for	Genesis Energy Limited (Genesis)
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Contents

ASSESSMENT

GRAPHIC SUPPLEMENT (appended as separate document)

STATEMENT

As an expert witness I have read, and am familiar with, the Code of Conduct for expert witnesses contained in the Environment Court Practice Note 2023. This report has been prepared in compliance with that Code. In particular, unless I state otherwise, this response is within my area of expertise and I have not omitted to consider material facts known to me that might alter or detract from the opinions I express.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Scope

The SLR Consulting Limited (SLR) landscape architecture team has been engaged by Genesis Energy Limited (Genesis) to provide an Assessment of Landscape Effects (ALE) for a proposed solar farm at two large farm holdings at 304-508 Wall Road and 447 Motuiti Road, Foxton, Horowhenua District. A Graphic Supplement (GS) is provided as an appendix to this ALE, with the plans and photographs it contains referenced through this report.

Our work has been prepared to inform the Assessment of Environmental Effects (AEE) for this project's (fast track application to the Ministry for the Environment). The full AEE has been prepared by Nicky Sedgley, Technical Director - Planning (SLR Auckland).

The 488 ha rural application site is located approximately 4 km northeast of Foxton and 23 km southwest of Palmerston North. As part of the assessment process, visits to the application site and surrounds were carried out on:

- The 8th of April 2024 (appraisal of the site and confirmation of the study area for landscape effects and visual catchment).
- The 18th and 19th of November 2024 (second walk over of the site; capturing surrounding viewpoint photography and photomontage locations).

Visual simulation viewpoint photographs were captured on 19th November 2024 by 'Virtual View Ltd', in accordance with "Te Tangi a te Manu' (Tuia Pito Ora/NZILA Landscape Assessment Guidelines, 2022), and of viewpoints as instructed by the assessment author. Virtual View has subsequently provided photomontages (visual simulations) for five representative viewpoint locations surrounding the application site.

The photomontages are based on technical information provided by the client, detailing and setting out the application. Photomontages are provided to support the assessment process, but do not 'replicate' real life.

1.2 Assessment Methodology

This ALE follows the concepts and principles outlined in 'Te Tangi a te Manu' (Tuia Pito Ora/ NZILA Landscape Assessment Guidelines, 2022) and Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, 3rd edition (IEMA & the Landscape Institute, 2013).

The proposed development has been based on a site value and design constraints approach, having regard to physically and technically practicable ourcomes, as well as environmental, social and cultural considerations. The landscape values were considered and the project was designed to minimise effects where practicable.

This assessment of landscape effects relates to the potential landscape and visual amenity effects (both positive and adverse) of the proposed 180 MWac solar facility and does not constitute a planning assessment. The ALE involves the following:-

- Appraisal of the existing local environment including the application site, considering existing landscape character and values. This is with a focus on determining the landscape's ability to absorb and integrate the development proposed within the surrounding environment.
- Analysis of the application site's viewing audience, visual catchment and the nature of available views.
- Description of the application's landscape relevant key features, along with design mitigation and enhancement measures put forward. Design mitigation advice has been provided via the initial opportunities and constraints phase and subsequent project development.
- Assessment of the application against relevant landscape related planning provisions.
- Overall findings as to the level of anticipated landscape effects.

> '*While landscape assessment methods vary, they are all based on landscape character and values. Character is an expression of the landscape's collective attributes. Values are the reasons a landscape is valued. Values, though, are embodied in attributes. Effects are consequences for a landscape's values resulting from changes to attributes. The landscape's values are manged through managing such attributes.*' (Te tangi a te Manu, 2022)

Please note measurements, areas and percentages given are approximate only and based on available data at the time of writing this report.

This assessment has been written by Kiran Stephenson, Senior Landscape Architect and Nigel Parker (SLR), Technical Director – Landscape Architecture (NZILA Registered Landscape Architect) and reviewed by Melissa Davis (SLR), Technical Discipline Manager – Landscape Architecture (NZILA Registered Landscape Architect).

2.0 EXISTING LANDSCAPE

2.1 Broader Landscape Setting

The Manawatu-Wanganui Region is located between Wellington to the south and Waitomo to the north. It is framed to the west by the Tasman Sea and to the east by the rugged Ruahine and Tararua Ranges.

The region contains 7 districts including Horowhenua. Horowhenua is one of the southernmost districts of the Manawatu-Wanganui region (the other being the Tararua District). The Horowhenua landscape has a strong sense of place which draws on its unique landscape, natural features and their interconnectedness. The district is 'contained' by the coastal edge to the west, and framed by the Tararua Ranges to the east, with a patchwork of distinct landscapes in-between. There are a number of beaches, rivers, estuaries and lakes evident in the landscape with the coastal and inland dune fields contributing to the district's identity.

The 'Landscape Assessment of the Rural Environment of the Horowhenua District' (Horowhenua District Council, October 2008) categorised the district into different landscape domains. The application site sits within the 'Foxton Dunefields Domain' with 'Coastal Environment Domain' to the west (a portion of which is an Outstanding Natural Landscape (ONL)) and 'Moutoa Opiki Plains Domain', 'Tararua Terraces Domain' and 'Hill Country Domain' (majority of which is an ONL), referenced as located from west to east respectively (**see Figure 02**).

Relevant findings from the 2008 study of the 'Foxton Dunefields Domain' include the following:

- The linear advancement of the dunes inland is a particular characteristic of this domain, and has influenced the location and direction of roads, siting of houses and provided view shafts through to both the Tasman Sea and the Tararua Ranges.
- The existing parcels also reflect the road and dune patterning; they tend to be large, with frontages on the roads and boundaries across the dune ridges indeterminately defined by shelterbelts and/or forestry plantations.
- ... the drainage of the wetlands and conversion to pasture has removed the changeable, delicate textures provided by reed species and grasses. However, the usually lush bright green of the pasture grasses contributes strongly to the perceptions of rural character, providing a sense of openness and expanse.
- Dairy and sheep farming are now the dominant productive activities in the rural area, along with market gardening and poultry farming.
- Now the dominant cover is pastoral in nature, with forestry plantations on many of the dunes. The inter-dunal swamp areas and peaty backswamps would have originally contained swamp forest and wetland species – where these landforms remain intact, the wetland shrub and reed species have persisted.
- Aesthetic Values: While the forestry emphasises the difference in elevation between the dunes and the inter-dunal depressions, it also has an homogenizing effect in terms of texture, light and density of the dunes themselves. The height and dense nature of the vegetation also blocks views within and through the dunes...'
- Natural Science Factors: The dune field system in this

FIGURE 01: Tararua Ranges (Source - www.aa.co.nz (insert copyright sybol) Philip Capper Creative Commons)

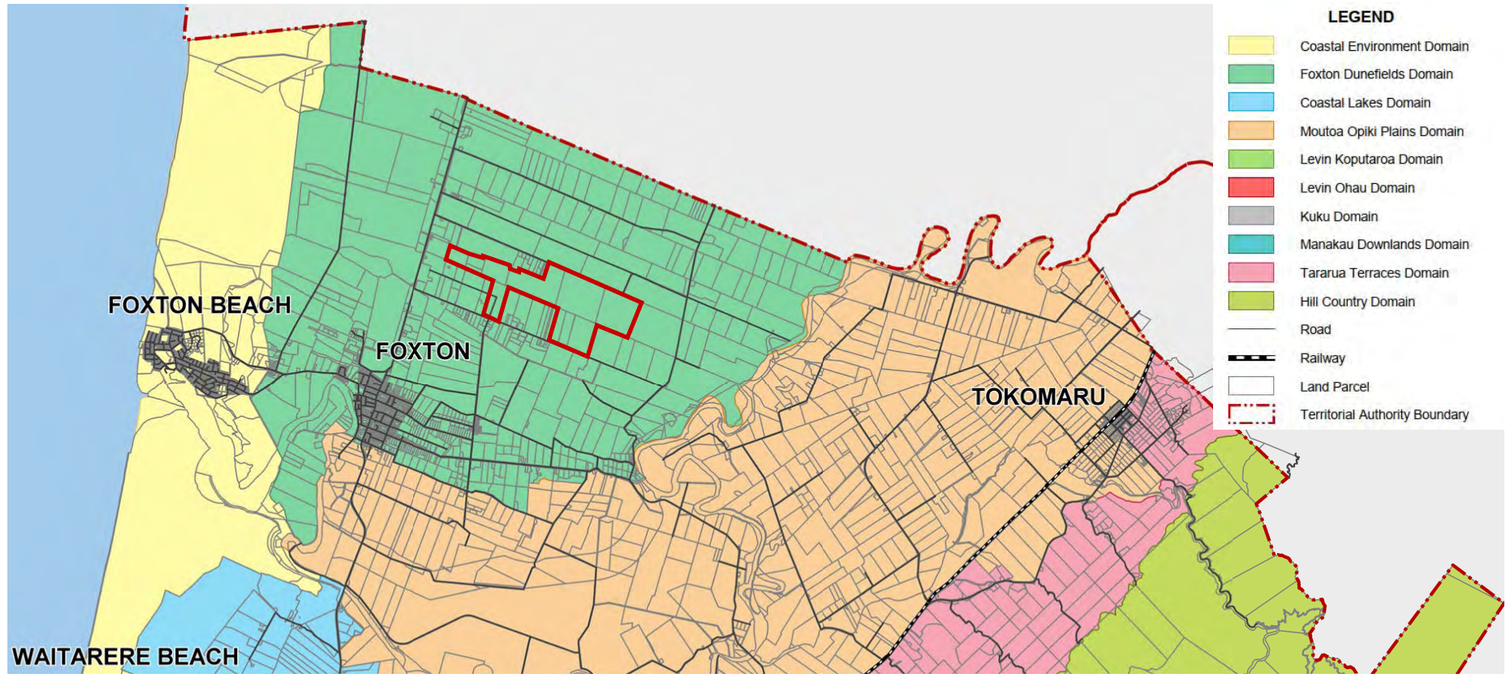


FIGURE 02: Landscape Domains of the Horowhenua District (Source - Horowhenua District Plan)

area is unique to the country…the dunes in this area are of the oldest occurring along the Kapiti and Horowhenua districts and as such have a high level of value in their rarity and distinctiveness.

The full landscape character description of the 'Foxton Dunefields Domain' can be found in '**Part 4: Appendices and Maps, section 4.1.2**' of the Operative Horowhenua District Plan.

An August 2011 'Outstanding Natural Landscape & Features Review' (ONFL) was undertaken by Boffa Miskell for Horowhenua District Council. The review evaluated the 8 proposed ONFLs in relation to Section 6(b) of the RMA and determined whether they reached the threshold of 'outstanding'. The Foxton Dunefields did not reach the 'outstanding' threshold.

> '*It is not considered that the landscape values of the proposed Foxton Dune area as a whole, meet the threshold to consider the entire area as an ONL…the area as a whole is not exceptional in the district that warrants the entire dunefields, much of which are substantially modified, being classified as an ONL*'.

The review goes on to say, '*Notwithstanding this, the dune landforms are an important characterising element of the Horowhenua landscape*.'

The key findings from both the 2008 and 2011 studies have informed the 'Operative Horowhenua District Plan, 2015 National Planning Standards Version' (OHDP).

Specific Foxton Dunefields policies can be found in '**Part 3: Area Specific Matters, RURZ - Rural Zones, Section Rural Precinct Policies - Foxton Dunefields Precinct Policies**' (OHDP) and in section ***4.0 Relevant Statutory Matters*** of this report.

2.2 Local Landscape

LANDSCAPE SETTING

As illustrated by **plan LA02** in the GS, at a local level, the application site is located approximately 4 km north of the township of Foxton, and 6.4 km northeast of Foxton Beach settlement.

The landcover is largely exotic with improved grasses appearing lush and green due to irrigation. Forestry blocks at different stages of growth also punctuate the landscape. A few pockets of indigenous vegetation remain with the largest being Himatangi Scientific Reserve and Round Bush Reserve (Omarupapako) 1.7 km north and 1.4 km southwest respectively from the application site. The dominance of vegetation over built form is notable.

Land use in the area is rural with agricultural activities (such as dairy and sheep farming, market gardening and poultry farming) and forestry blocks. Silage heaps and hay bales scattered through the pastoral landscape are evident of the working rural environment and provisions made for stock. Soils range from LUC Class 3 – 7 and are broadly sandy, free draining with pockets of peaty depressions and exposed to wind erosion by the westerly and northwesterly coastal winds.

Whilst the landscape and land use read coherently at a wider scale, the individual lot sizes range from smaller rural residential to longer, thinner lifestyle plots through to large lots, some over 100 ha or more. Areas of lifestyle blocks include those located along Motuiti Road to the south of the application site. In proximity to the site, structures and dwellings are generally grouped and set back from the road and occur as ribbon development along the western part of Motuiti Road. Most of the rural dwellings are single storey houses located on the flats with a couple of 2-storey properties also evident along Motuiti Road. Sometimes these properties are nestled adjacent or amongst the duneland. Shelterbelts and boundary vegetation associated with dwellings are also evident particularly along Motuiti Road where the vegetation frames the smaller properties. In general the built form associated with rural activities tends to be sparsely located, low in height and secondary to the vegetation dominated landscape.

There are two Marae within the vicinity of the site, both located off SH1. Paranui Pā is located 2.3 km northwest of the site. Motuiti Pā is located 0.6 km southwest of the site. The location of both Marae within the vicinity of the site highlights the cultural landscape values within this area. Iwi engagement was undertaken directly by the client.

Beyond the town and settlements, the circulation and roading pattern is quite simple. SH1 (100 kph) has a more north-south alignment parallel to the coast (6.7 km west of SH1) as does Himatangi Block Road. Secondary roads tend to run perpendicular to SH1, following the general alignment of the parabolic dunefields and emphasising their length as well as forming view shafts to the Tararua Ranges.

Infrastructure such as powerlines supplying homes and farms tends to run as a single line on one side of the road verge, with the larger national grid transmission lines running through the

FIGURE 03: Dairy farming and central pivot irrigators.

FIGURE 04: Forestry blocks truncating views.

FIGURE 05: Shelterbelts associated with lifestyle properties.

fields in a northeast-southwest direction. Distant wind turbines located on the Tararua Ranges to the east of Palmerston North are visible in long distance views.

The largely flat to undulating topography, long straight roads, limited enclosure through shelterbelts and pockets of forestry contribute to the expansive open views and big sky perceptual qualities.

The existing dune landforms (whether pristine or modified) are a rare and distinctive feature through the local landscape providing a repititive and cohesive pattern and characteristic.

The low level of built development, viewshafts through to the Tararua Ranges, unkempt transitional coastal to plain landscape with the sand dunes, provides a degree of expansiveness and memorability with a strong sense of place.

VALUED LANDSCAPE ATTRIBUTES

> '*A Landscape assessor's role in a statutory planning context is, ultimately, to assist decision - makers to manage landscape values: for instance, by identifying a landscape's value (and the attributes on which those values depend), assessing effects on such values, and designing measures to maintain and improve the values*' (Te Tangi a te Manu: Aoteraoa New Zealand Landscape Assessment Guidelines', 2022).

From the desktop research and the two site visits the key existing landscape values (numbered) and the attributes on which those values depend are detailed below.

1. Expansive open views and big skies (particularly off Wall Road).
2. The distinctive local character and characteristics forming a sense of place - the remnant and modified dune landforms, viewshafts to the Tararu Ranges and the degree of expansiveness and memorability.
3. The working rural environment and the dominance of vegetation.

The flat to gently undulating topography, low level of built form of the rural setting and lesser vegetation enclosure to road boundaries (particularly Wall Road) contributes to the perception of a low horizon line and big sky experiential qualities.

Large areas of pasture, forestry blocks, poultry sheds, silage heaps and other farm equipment contribute to the working rural environment. Local landscape detractors include uninhabited or unmaintained properties, weedy roadside verges and transmission lines.

The long straight sections of road (off SH1) provide open axial viewshafts ahead towards the Tararua Ranges, with dunefields forming the foreground landscape features.

In the vicinity of the site, a higher level of dune country (whether pristine or modified) at the eastern end of Wall Road provides a cohesive localised pattern with perceptual qualities attached to these.

Motuiti Road expresses a more lifestyle block scale land use with olive groves and orchards on smaller land parcels with shelterbelts containing these land uses.

The application site sits within a landscape with a cohesive overall character, but one in which nuances also play a big part. Through some areas, the landscape unfolds as you move through it. Overall, the simple topography, open expansive views and dune formations have undergone change over time due to factors including lack of statutory designation, rural productive land use, roading patterns, and at a finer grain, areas of lifestyle development.

As a matter of practice, landscape sensitivity is considered specifically with regards to the nature Collectively the various attributes contribute to the value attached to the local landscape character being considered as moderate/medium, with an overall sensitivity to change being considered moderate/medium.

FIGURE 06: Big sky and low horizon line.

FIGURE 07: Viewshafts towards Tararua Ranges

FIGURE 08: Dune country (whether pristine or modified)

2.3 The Application Site

The site is currently used as a dairy and beef farm and comprises a combined title area of approximately 488 ha. Some land will be retained by the owners (52 ha), as illustrated by **plan LA03**.

There are three vehicle access points to the site and an unused track as illustrated by **plan LA03** in the Graphic Supplement (GS):

- 350 Wall Road.
- Between 191 and 233 Motuitu road.
- 447 Motuiti Road.

Approximately 40% (2,150m) of the site's northern boundary fronts Wall Road, while the remainder is positioned behind rural properties at 60–286 and 522 Wall Road. The eastern and western boundaries are fully enclosed by adjoining rural properties, placing the site entirely mid-block in these directions. To the south, the boundary projects toward and abuts Motuiti Road in two sections, collectively accounting for 18% of the southern frontage.

The site has previously been extensively graded and prepared, providing a level surface suitable for dairy farming operations and centre pivot irrigation (from around 2010-2015). What appears to be smaller remnant dune features on the southwestern corner, parts of the southern boundaries and the eastern boundary of the site remain.

National Grid transmission lines cross the site on a northeast-southwest alignment, towards the east of the site, with pylons located on elevated domed features (as the ground around them has been flattened for irrigators). Smaller powerlines also cross land parcel 191 Motuiti Road and Part Himatangi 4C5 Block (part of the application site).

There is an easement/right of access in the site's southwestern most field (191 Motuiti Road) which dissects the usable land area. A poplar tree avenue lines the eastern edge (on site and perpendicular to Motuiti Road) and western edge (offsite) of this land parcel.

Existing tree cover is limited with the bulk of the landcover comprising exotic pasture grass species irrigated for dairy grazing. There is a length of 470 lineal metres of mature exotic trees (Radiata Pine and Macrocarpa) on the western boundary of Lot 1 DP 31997.

The ecological value of the existing site has been described and assessed in the ecology report which is appended in the AEE.

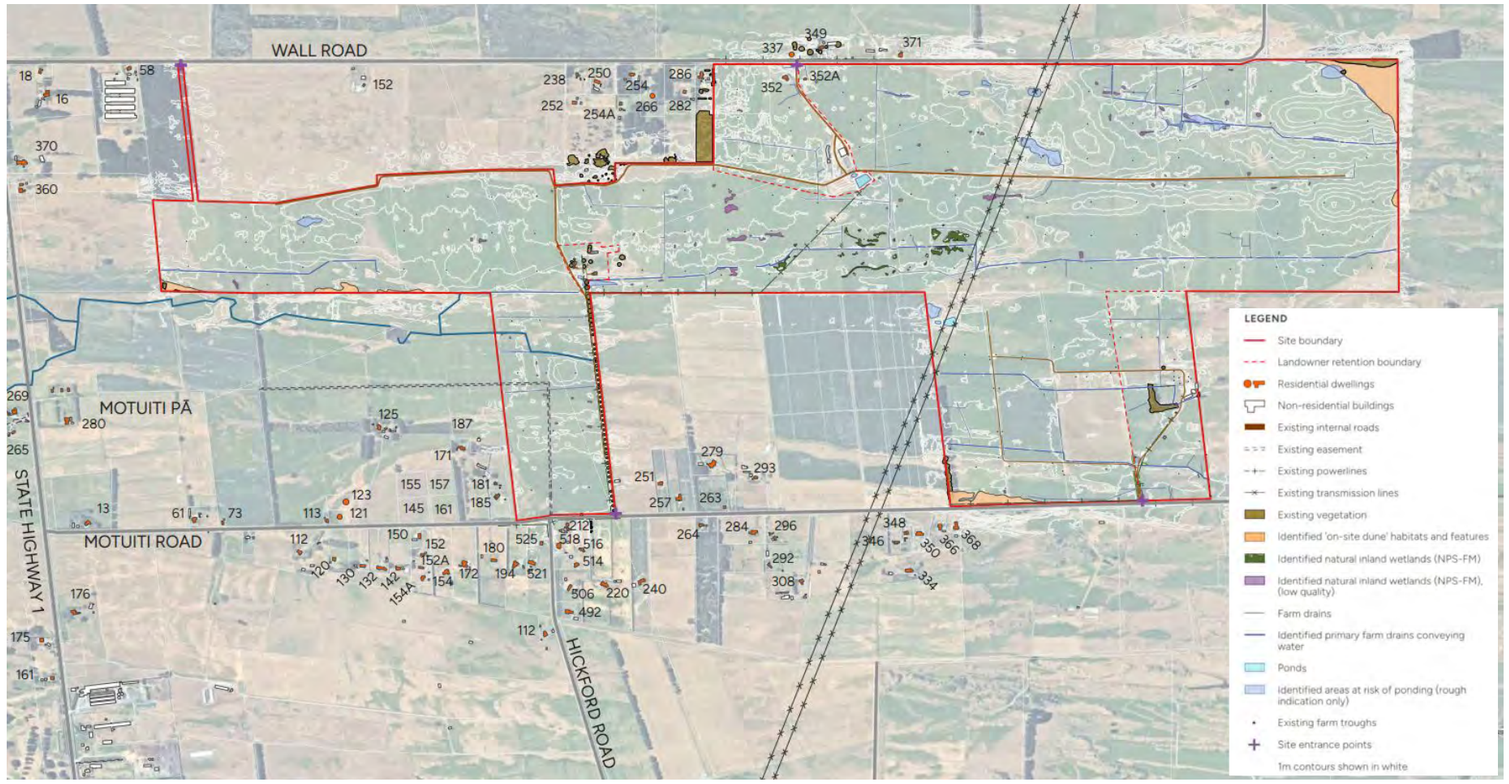


FIGURE 09: Inset from plan LA03 - Site Context Plan.

FIGURE 10: Site Appraisal Panorama A

2.4 Site Appraisal

A series of Site Appraisal Viewpoint Panoramas A-C, E were taken from within the application site and D was taken from outside of the application site. These illustrate the site's existing landscape character. These photographs, set out on the following pages, illustrate both typical and distinctive features through the application site (with photograph locations and view directions on **plan LA23** of the GS).

Site Appraisal Panorama A illustrates a view looking northeast into the lower lying area of the site from an elevated position on an existing remnant dune, this slight rise also extending across the right-hand side (RHS) foreground of this view. The existing pine plantation in the left midground of the image is located beyond the application site, delineating part of the northern boundary. Within the site, the land in front of the pines is relatively flat with a drain cutting across at an east – west alignment. South from this viewpoint (behind the viewer), neighbouring land is lower lying with the existing remnant dune forming a higher ridge blocking intervening views into the site. SH1 and Motuiti Marae are located over 500m west and southwest from this location respectively.

FIGURE 11: Site Appraisal Panorama B

Site Appraisal Panoramas B illustrates a southeast view looking into the site from the existing farm track. The gently undulating, pasture foreground is divided into paddocks by a timber post and wire stock fence. To the right of the panorama, large centre pivot irrigators approximately 6m high can be seen. The mature, exotic treeline on the boundary of area Lot 1 DP 31997 can be seen to the centre left with the farm worker cottages located centrally in the panorama. The single poplar avenue to the centre right of the workers cottages forms part of the application site. The Taraua Ranges form a slightly faded backdrop with the high voltage transmission lines (difficult to discern in the panorama) running through the application site in the distance.

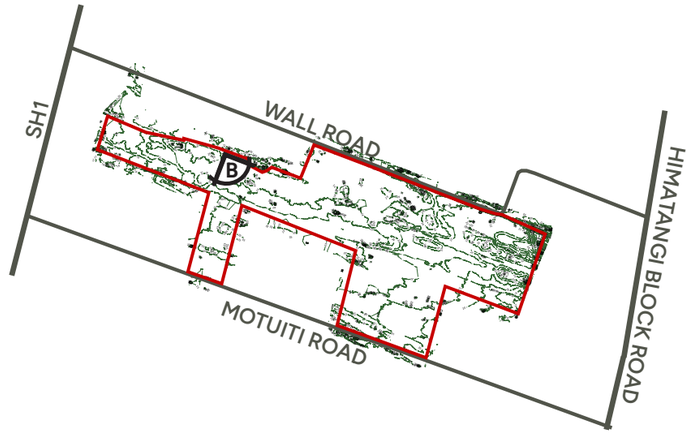


FIGURE 12: Site Appraisal Panorama C

Site Appraisal Panorama C illustrates a view looking southwest into the application site from a elevated position in the northeast corner. The predominant feature of this view is the smoothly undulating pastoral landform extending and levelling off away from the viewer with centre pivot irrigation and grazing cattle in the midground. The faintly discernible low timber post and wire fence marking the eastern edge of the application site can be seen to the left of the panorama from which the foreground topography rises up before sloping back down (approximately 8m) into the application site. External dune landforms and vegetation form mid-background views with the existing farm structures of 447 Motuiti Road (application site) in the centre of the panorama. At a distance, the tall open lattice structures of existing high voltage transmission line pylons can be seen across the application site to the right of the panorama, with the milking shed barely visible in the view.

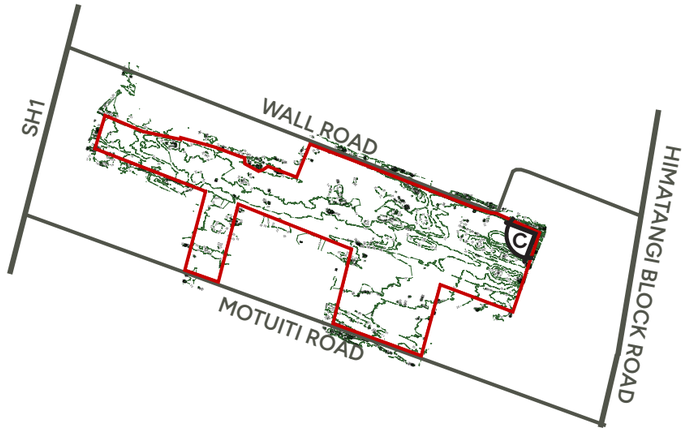


FIGURE 13: Site Appraisal Panorama D

Site Appraisal Panorama D illustrates the view northwest into the application site from a corner of the site boundary adjacent Motuiti Road. The key aspect of this outlook is the extensive pasture areas of the site. The view is framed by the road reserve to the left and native boundary vegetation perpendicular to this, to the right. The highly modified landscape includes hummocks and lesser intact remnant dunes bound the road and are visible in pasture cover to the left hand side of the fore and midground.

Irrigators and cattle can be seen in the midground with the gently undulating pasture dissected into paddocks by low timber post and wire fences. The single line of mature, exotic trees on the boundary of area Lot 1 DP 31997 in the midground and left in the panorama are on the boundary of the application site.

On-site, high voltage transmission lines and visible lattice pylon structures extend across near the full breadth of the view in the background, with the existing milking shed also visible in the distance. Smaller powerlines (11kv) run within the application site and parallel to Motuiti Road.

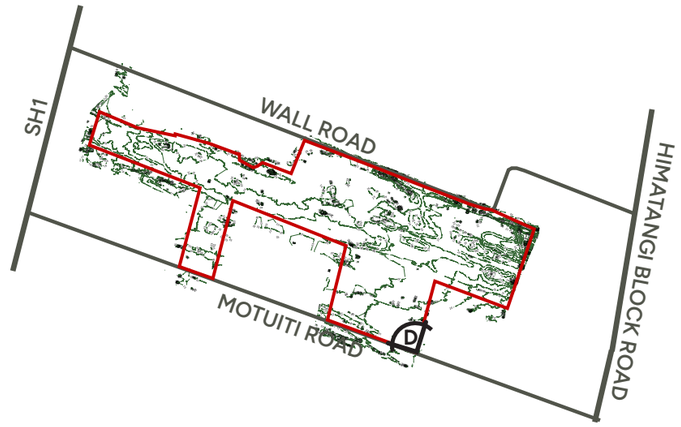


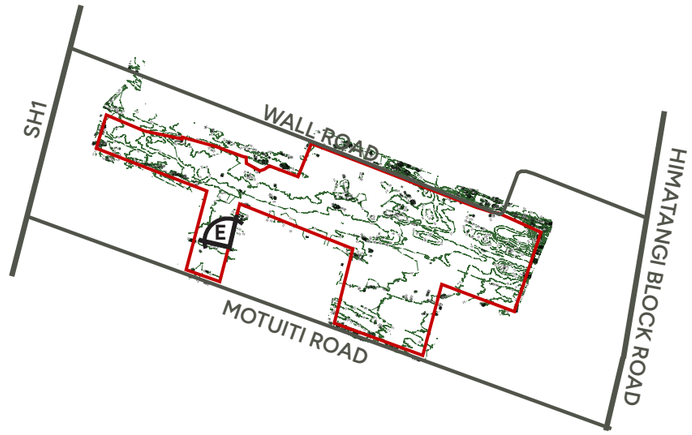
FIGURE 14: Site Appraisal Panorama E

Site Appraisal Panorama E illustrates a view looking northwest into pasture areas of the site from an internal farm track. The topography is similar to other areas, being generally flat to gently undulating. Centre pivot irrigation extends at angle across the view from the near to midground, extending away from the viewer. The lineal pattern of 11 kV powerlines extends from the left of the view, into the more distant central area of the site. Behind the powerlines, the treed nature of neighbouring properties is echoed for distant aspects beyond the site's central area, evident in distant mid views. From this perspective, these horizontal layered bands of evergreen vegetation beyond the site contrasts the open pasture within it and illustrates a low horizon line in this direction.

2.5 Site summary

The panoramas illustrate that the application site is typically level to undulating, modified for centre pivot irrigation and dairy grazing. In pastoral land use, the site area is compartmentalised into paddocks demarcated by low and visually recessive timber post and wire fences.

Field drains, and to a lesser extent wetland areas, are not easily distinguishable from the surrounding exotic grassland vegetation. High voltage transmission lines and smaller powerlines are aligned going across and along the peripheries of the site in some locations. Little of the dune system remains onsite with remnant areas of dunes found on the southwestern corner, parts of the southern boundaries and the eastern boundary of the site. Vegetation cover dominates over built structures.



3.0 PROPOSAL DESCRIPTION & MITIGATION MEASURES

3.1 The Proposal (refer to sheets LA04 – LA07 in GS)

The AEE describes the application in full at 'Section 3.0, Proposal'. A summary of landscape relevant components of the proposal include:

- An overall development area of 335 hectares out of a 488 hectare application site area.
- Solar panels constructed as arrays laid out as shown on **plan LA04**.
- Approximately 300,000 tracking solar panels, in proposed rows running north to south. Each row of panels is typically separated by around 2 - 4m when the panels are horizontal.
- The final height of solar panels at maximum tilt of 60° will be upto 3.5m above ground level depending on the details of final design. As per the client supplied drawings a height of 3.01m with the lower edge of solar panels sitting 500mm above ground level are shown on plan **LA07 of GS** and Figure 16 opposite.
- Inverters and transformer stations.
- Underground cabling.
- Perimeter security fencing at a maximum height of 2.35m.

Ancillary Infrastructure:

- Internal access roads and parking, loading and manouvering areas.
- An operations and maintenance building and storage facilities 200m from the Wall Road fronatage of the site. Appearance of these buildings is to be similar to a standard metal farm shed and a maximum height of 7m.
- Provision for a 100 MW / 200 MWh Battery Energy Storage System (BESS), located on 1.75 hecates gravel hardstand area.
- A new substation containing a 220 / 33 kVA Transformer and a new connection to the Transpower operated National Grid. The substation dimensions would be approximately 85m x 135m and would be elevated upto 600mm above ground level.

Earthworks as required for:

- Construction of a new access point into the site from Wall Road.
- Foundations and hard stand areas for the power station, substation, BESS amd ancillary buildings.
- Transformer.
- Construction or upgrading of access tracks.
- Trenching for cables.

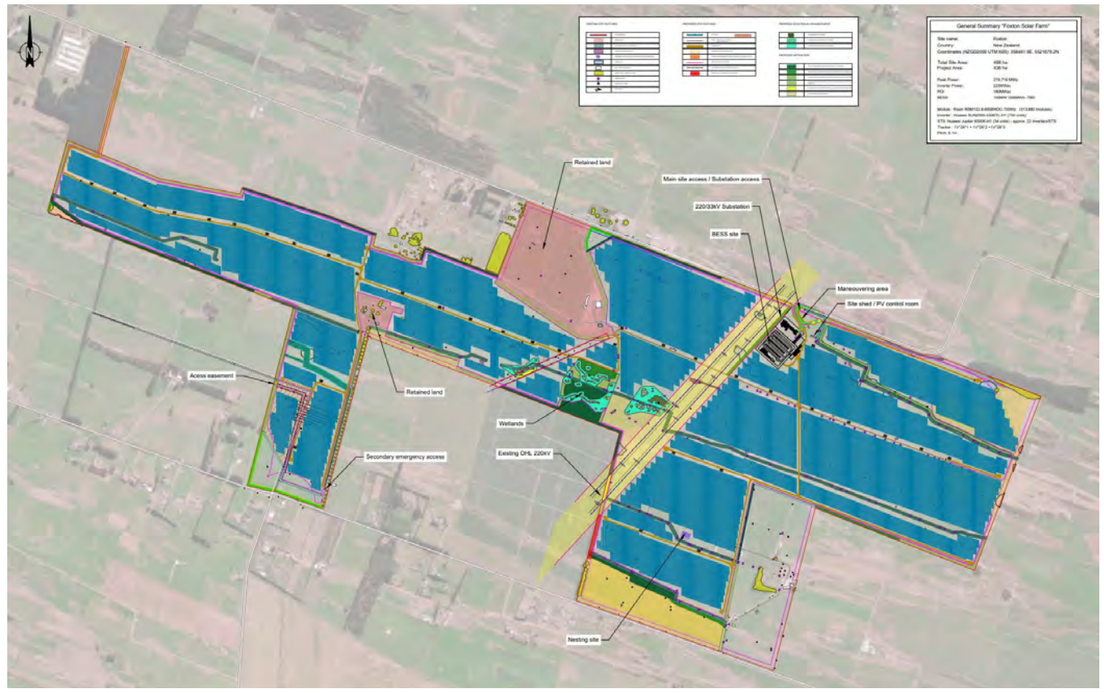


FIGURE 15: Inset of plan LA04 of GS - Proposed General Layout

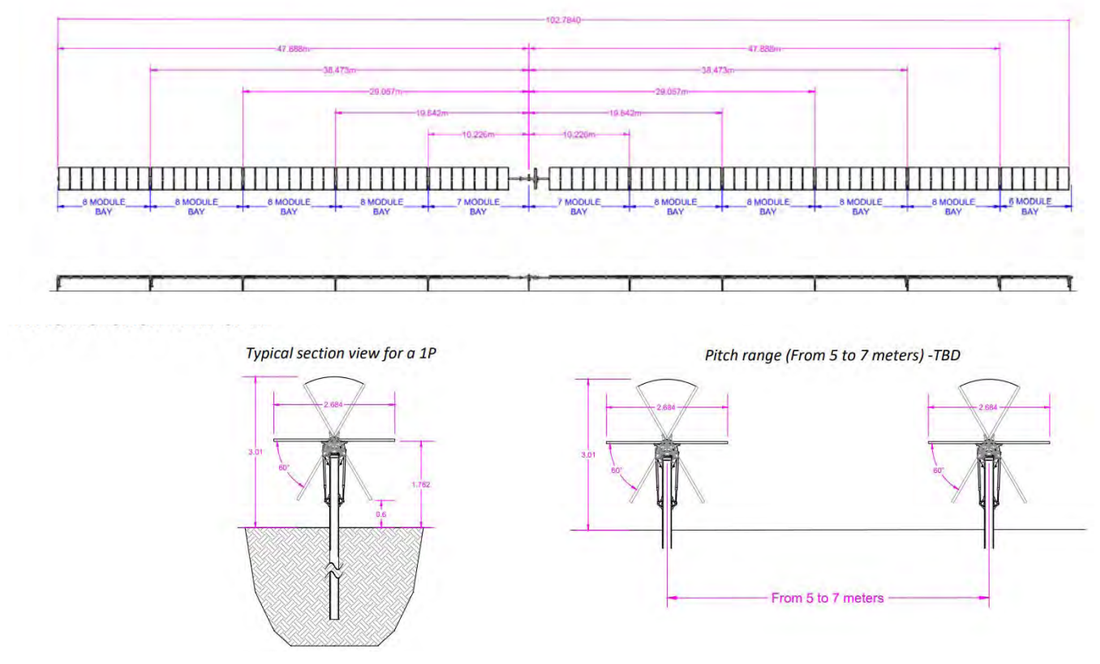


FIGURE 16: Inset of plan LA07 of GS - Solar Array Details

3.2 Primary Design-Led Measures

The site sits within a landscape with a cohesive working rural character with distinctive landform patterns, expansive views and a dominance of vegetation. Several of the initial design measures identified in the early site analysis phases have been adopted and implemented into the final design to reduce landscape and visual amenity effects from the outset. These include:

- 100m development area setbacks from neighbouring residential dwellings (with the exception of 337 & 371 Wall Road which have shorter setbacks) and 20m development area setbacks from roads.
- Single (1P) solar panels (lower solar panel design height)
- Security fencing will typically be set back inside the property boundary and positioned inside of any proposed boundary mitigation planting.
- Providing non-developed areas within the development area to break up the extent and scale of the proposed solar farm (as outlined in section *6.1 Landscape Effects*).
- Retaining and planting one (1) hectare of wetland areas
- Retaining undevelopable areas in the vicinity of lifestyle properties on Motuiti Road to retain the open character.

3.3 Secondary Mitigation Measures, Restoration and Enhancement

Secondary measures are designed to support the outcomes of the key primary measures. For this application, they include boundary mitigation planting and planting along the main drain in the northeast corner of the site (refer to **plans LA10 to LA16** in the GS).

Boundary mitigation planting will comprise native revegetation and/or hedgerow or shelterbelt species. Planting along the northern, eastern, and western boundaries is proposed to be maintained at an approximate height of 6m, which is anticipated to provide effective visual screening and break up views into the site while remaining below the threshold that could cause shading of the solar arrays. In addition, taller clusters of specimen trees are indicatively proposed within the boundary planting where their placement can be accommodated without compromising solar array performance.

Boundary mitigation planting along Wall Road is proposed in proximity to higher sensitivity receptors (residential dwellings) or where the solar arrays are in proximity to the Wall Road frontage.

Intermittent planting is proposed along lengths of the boundary which are setback from Wall Road and where there is the potential of oblique views from the nearest private resident.

Sections of the northern boundary which are set back from the road and form middle block parcels are left unplanted due to distance from the majority of the potential viewing audience.

A length of 620m along the north eastern boundary of Wall Road will be planted with lower growing plant species to retain longer views of surrounding dune features and the Tararua Ranges (refer to representative VP 5, page 22 for further discussion).

Southern boundaries will include plant mixes left to mature to provide a range of heights and visual interest.

There is a 15m wide strip of proposed planting along the northern edge of the main drain (Drain 1) in the northeast corner approximately 850m in length. The 5m closest to the drain will be riparian planting with the remaining 10m width to be taller species and groups of specimen trees located to avoid shading solar arrays. This planting strip will provide a backdrop for the solar developable area closest to Wall Road. It will aid in filtering views towards the larger proposed solar developable area on higher ground, thereby reducing the apparent overall mass of the solar array areas. The southern edge of the field drain will have a 5m proposed riparian planting width.

Enhanced wetland areas will provide landscape mitigation with taller mitigation planting around the wetlands. Concentrating the wetland planting and infilling them with taller vegetation in this location will also aid in breaking up some longer views across the site area.

Ecological enhancement measures also facilitate improving the landscape and/or visual amenity of the proposed development site and its wider setting over its existing condition.

Despite these comprehensive mitigation measures carrying substantive positive benefits, on balance they do not fully remedy the expansive built form scale. Constraints such as construction and operation feasibility inherent to the sucess of the Solar Farm limit further landscape mitigation opportunities.

Overall, the integrated mitigation and enhancement measures will provide an acceptable response to the local landscape values (embodied in the key landscape attributes). This approach allows for some positive landscape outcomes which are balanced against the adverse aspects of establishing the development in this location.

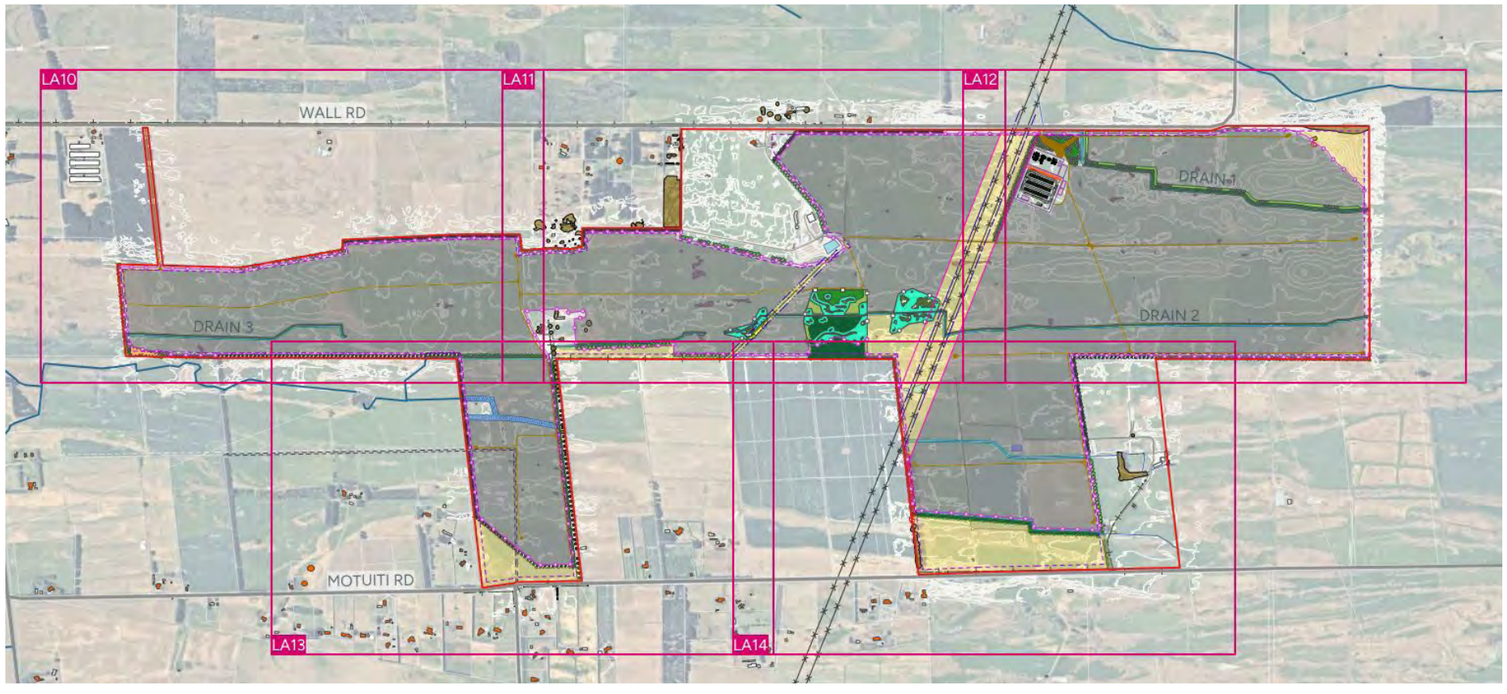


FIGURE 17: Inset of LA08 Mitigation and Enhancment Plan

4.0 RELEVANT STATUTORY MATTERS

This report provides an assessment of landscape effects for inclusion with an application to establish a solar farm at the site, under the Fast Track Act 2024

Landscape relevant planning provisions referenced have been provided by the project planner and are summarised below. A full planning assessment is provided by the application AEE.

4.1 Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA)

The application site is not within an area subject to Outstanding Natural Landscape (ONL) or Outstanding Natural Feature (ONF) classification. However, of relevance to the proposal, the RMA also requires regional and local councils to have regard to Section 7 matters. Of relevance to landscape matters of the application, this includes:

7(c), the maintenance and enhancement of amenity values

7(f), the maintenance and enhancement of the quality of the environment

4.2 Horizons One Plan

The Manawatū - Whanganui (Horizons) Regional Council has prepared a Horizons One Plan as a 'one stop shop' to replace the Regional Policy Statement, Regional Plan and Coastal Plan. The one plan defines how the natural and physical resources of the Region, including fresh water, air, productive land and natural ecosystems are cared for and managed.

HORIZONS ONE PLAN
RPS (REGIONAL POLICY STATEMENT) - SRMR (SIGNIFICANT RESOURCE MANAGEMENT ISSUES FOR THE REGION
SRMR-14: THREATENED INDIGENOUS BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY
Due to more than a century of landscape modification, the Region has lost much of its indigenous habitat. Habitat remnants continue to be threatened by *land** development and by pest plants and pest animals. The Manawatū Plains were once covered by a mosaic of *wetland** habitats. Large-scale drainage has reduced this *wetland** habitat to about 3% of its former area and, although drainage has mostly stopped, the few remaining *wetland** habitats are still vulnerable.

4.2 Operative Horowhenua District Plan 2015 (National Planning Standards Version)

The Operative Horowhenua District Plan, 2015 (OHDP) provides the policy framework within which this landscape assessment has been prepared.

Under the HDOP, the application, within the General Rural Zone, and within the Foxton Dunefields Precinct/Domain) has 'Discretionary' activity status. Landscape related HDOP objectives and policies relevant to the application are set out as follows (emphasis added).

OPERATIVE HOROWHENUA DISTRICT PLAN 2015 (NATIONAL PLANNING STANDARDS VERSION)
PART 3: AREA SPECIFIC MATTERS
RURZ - RURAL ZONES
OBJECTIVE RURZ-GRZ-O3 LAND USE ACTIVITIES - NATURE, CHARACTER, AMENITY VALUES AND SERVICING
To enable primary production activities and other rural based land uses to function efficiently and effectively in the Rural Zone, while **avoiding, remedying or mitigating the adverse effects of activities, including reverse sensitivity effects caused by new activities on existing activities, in a way that maintains and enhances the character and amenity values of the rural environment.**
POLICY RURZ-GRZ-P1
Identify the following landscape precincts within the Horowhenua Rural Environment in recognistion of the specific landscape character, visual quality, primary productive values and sensitivity of different areas: Coastal Environment **Foxton Dunefields...**
POLICY RURZ-GRZ-P2
Manage subdivision and land development based on the landscape precincts through subdivision controls that reflect the different characteristics and qualities of the landscape precincts.
POLICY RURZ-GRZ-P5
Retention of an open and spacious character to the rural areas of the District, with a dominance of open space and plantings over buildings, and within which the potential for conflict between rural and residential acitivites is minimised.
POLICY RURZ-GRZ-P6
Minimise obtrusive built elements in the rural environment by integrating building location and design with the surrounding landform and landscape qualities and recognise that farm building location is influenced by their function.

POLICY RURZ-GRZ-P10
Having regard to the (sic) **in respect of the elements of rural character ensure that new activities locating in the rural area are of a nature, scale, intensity and location consistent with maintaining the character of the rural area and to be undertaken in a manner which avoids, remedies or mitigates adverse effects on rural character, including rural productive values.**
POLICY RURZ-GRZ-P11
Ensure that new activities locating in the rural area are of a nature, scale, intensity and location consistent with maintaining the character of the rural area and to be undertaken in a manner which avoids, remedies or mitigates adverse effects on rural character, including rural productive values and potential reverse sensitivity effects.
POLICY RURZ-GRZ-P30
Avoid, remedy or mitigate the impact of buildings on the rural landscape and maintain overall low building density and building height throughout the rural environment.
RURAL PRECINCT POLICIES - FOXTON DUNEFIELDS PRECINCT POLICIES
POLICY RURZ-GRZ-PREC2-P52
Manage the scale, intensity, size and design of subdivision and land development to ensure that it reflects and retains the distinctive dune landform pattern, natural habitats and landscape character and qualities of the Foxton Dunefields Precinct.
POLICY RURZ-GRZ-PREC2-P53
Maintain soil stability, the parabolic dunefield landscape character and amenity values of the dune country of the Foxton Dunefields Precinct through subdivision design that minimises earthworks and vegetation clearance.
POLICY RURZ-GRZ-PREC2-P55
Ensure that existing vegetation that contributes to soil stability and the landscape character of the site is retained and incorporated into the subdivision design to reduce the visual and landscape effects of the subdivision.
POLICY RURZ-GRZ-PREC2-P56
Minimise obtrusive built elements in the dune country landscape by integrating building location and design with the surrounding landform and landscape qualities, including by avoiding buildings on dune ridgelines and elevated sites.
POLICY RURZ-GRZ-PREC2-P57
Ensure that the natural habitats of the parabolic dunefields and inter-dunal areas, particularly remnant indigenous forest areas and wetland areas, are identified and protected from inappropriate subdivision and development.

RURZ-GRZ-PR4 NATURE, CHARACTER, AMENITY VALUES AND SERVICING
ANTICIPATED ENVIRONMENTAL RESULTS (AER) POLICY RURZ-GRZ-AER3
Diversity of acitivities within the Rural Zone that are compatible with the rural environment in nature, scale, amenity and character.
ANTICIPATED ENVIRONMENTAL RESULTS (AER) POLICY RURZ-GRZ-AER6
Maintenance of rural character and rural amenity values throughout the District's rural areas in accordance with the particular character and qualities of the individual landscape precincts.

5.0 VISUAL CATCHMENT & VISUAL AUDIENCE

The visual catchment for the application site is the area of surrounding land from which all or part of the site may be visible. The extent of the visual catchment is largely determined by landform or topography that may block or curtail views towards the application site. In addition, land cover plays a role in determining the visibility of the site, as buildings or vegetation may also block or filter views. The visual catchment for the application site is within 500-600m of the site's boundary.

Long distance views of the application site from the Tararua Ranges may be available, at a distance of over ten kilometres. However, where visible, the application site will be seen as a very small proportion of the overall view, and in context with the surrounding rural working environment and nearby development of Foxton.

5.1 Visual Audience

The identified visual receptors are:

- Rural residential and farm-based neighbours.
- Workers on neighbouring land parcels.
- Road reserve users, typically both local and visiting vehicle occupants.

5.2 Viewpoint Photographs/Panoramas

Unless stated otherwise photographs were taken using a canon DSLR with an AF lens manually set to 35mm, the equivalent of a 50mm lens on a fixed frame camera.

External representative viewpoint panoramas taken are recorded on the Viewpoint Location Plan (**plan LA23** in GS) and discussed in this report in order, in a clockwise direction around the site. These panoramas are taken from public viewpoints (with the exception of VP 9) to represent surrounding outlooks towards the site. The representative photographic viewpoints were selected on the basis of visibility analysis carried out during visits to the site and surrounds.

Views afforded towards the site from the surrounds have been considered as follows:

- **Open views** indicate a clear view or unobstructed view to a notable part of the site.
- **Partial views** involve a view to part of the site due to some intervening elements.
- **Glimpse views** involve a small or minimal level of visibility due to intervening elements; and
- **Truncated views** to the site are those blocked by intervening features.

As part of the consultation process Genesis Energy Limited (Genesis) organised a letter drop to adjoining landowners and community with a description of the proposal and a FAQ document. Ongoing consultation with a landowner identified through this process has resulted in a landscape response being requisite. The land owner in question (who has an existing dwelling at 125 Motuiti Road PROP26) is proposing a new house site at 187 Motuiti Road (PROP39). As such a 'specific' viewpoint (VP 9) from the proposed building platform at 187 Motuiti Road has been assessed and included.

Single frame full page viewpoint photographs and visual simulations (photomontages) are provided at A3 size in the graphic supplement.

Supporting panoramic views, depicting the wider aspect visible, as would be perceived in place are on the following pages.

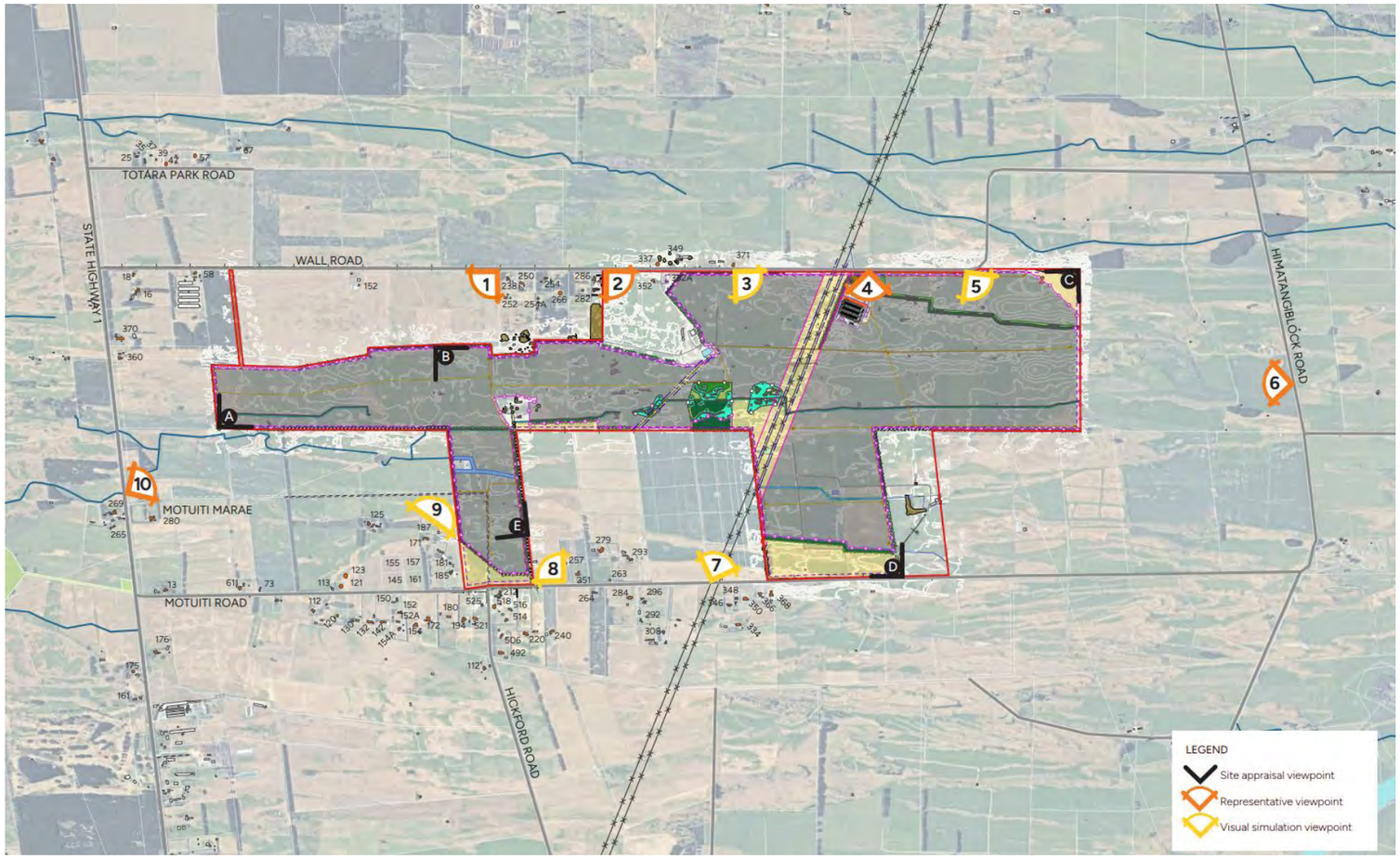
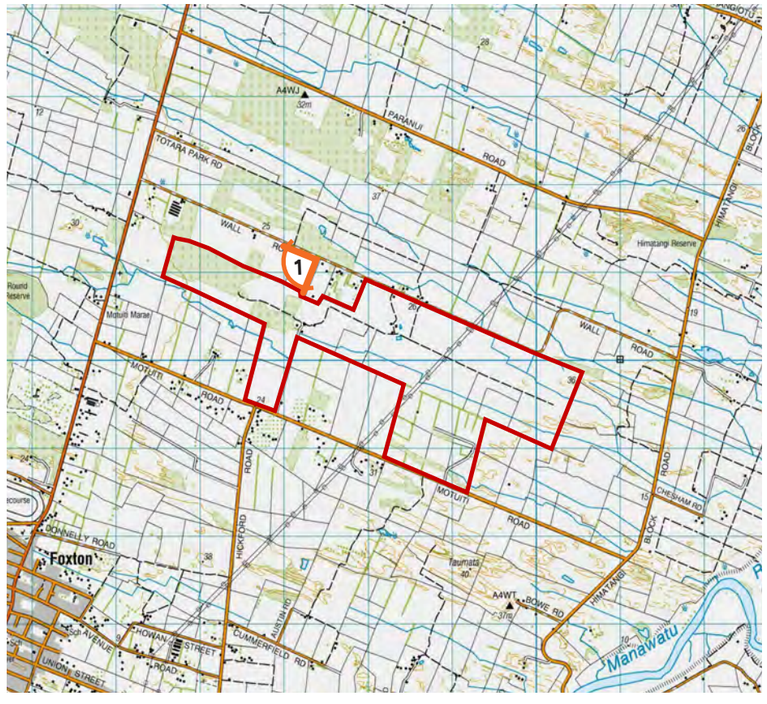


FIGURE 18: Inset from LA23 Viewpoint Location Plan

FIGURE 19: REPRESENTATIVE VIEWPOINT 1



WALL ROAD - On secondary road near property No. 252 Wall Road (PROP01).

VIEWPOINT ONE

Distance to Application Site: 430m

Representative viewpoint for: residents of 238-286 Wall Road (PROP01 - PROP04).

EXISTING VIEW

This open view in southwest direction captured in proximity to the cluster of dwellings on Wall Road, illustrates the long open view of the application site which is setback 430 m from Wall Road. The foreground paddock neighbouring the application site contains patches of remnant dunefield landforms adjacent to the site boundary. Central pivot irrigators (approximately 6m high) on the application site, behind the dunefield landforms can be seen.

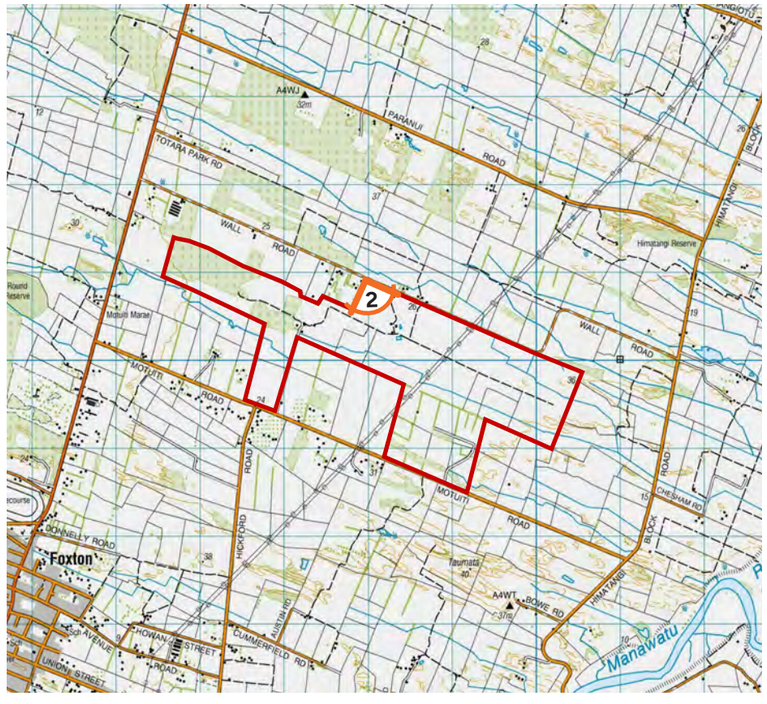
ANTICIPATED CHANGE TO VIEW

- The landscape change comprises the introduction of a low-lying development band across the breadth of the view, with the solar arrays visible in the mid-distance in this viewpoint. Impressions of the big sky and foreground open pasture will remain.
- The introduction of an infrastructural landscape and enclosure pattern from mitigation planting effects the values of the open and expansive rural character from Wall Road.
- The existing dunefield landforms, which lie outside the site, will remain and provide an additional layer of visual screening. These landforms will help soften views of the proposed solar arrays, particularly in the short term while on-site mitigation planting is establishing
- The 420m furthest extents of the boundary right hand side (RHS) in this viewpoint will remain unplanted.
- A further 335m between unplanted and fully planted lengths will be intermittently planted to filter, soften and allow glimpse views of the development.
- As mitigation planting matures, the extent of visible solar array will reduce.
- Existing vegetation forming the low background horizon would still remain legible in the short term.
- The proposed mitigation planting once established will be maintained at a height of 6m along the northern boundary and will be in alternating stretches of exotic shelterbelt/ hedgerow or native plant mix. Similar to the height of the existing central pivot irrigators. This is likely to provide a more layered vegetative change, in keeping with a working rural environment.

Rating (short-term): **Low-Moderate** (adverse)

Rating (long-term): **Low** (adverse)

FIGURE 20: REPRESENTATIVE VIEWPOINT 2



WALL ROAD - On secondary road near property No. 286 Wall Road (PROP04).

VIEWPOINT TWO

Distance to Application Site: 400m south and 390m east.

Representative viewpoint for: residents of 286 - 238 Wall Road (PROP04 - PROP01).

EXISTING VIEW

This open view from the corner of 286 Wall Road (PROP04) illustrates the open view of the application site. The proposed solar arrays will be set back 400m south and 470m east from this viewpoint location.

The foreground paddock is part of the application site but will be retained by the landowner. The existing farmhouse building and milking shed (centre left and midground of this panorama) are within the boundaries of this landowner retained and managed land. The existing transmission lines can be seen in the distance crossing the application site left to right with the Tararua Ranges forming the background.

Existing vegetation in the centre right midground foreshortens views to the paddock beyond. The central pivot irrigators on the RHS are on the application site.

ANTICIPATED CHANGE TO VIEW

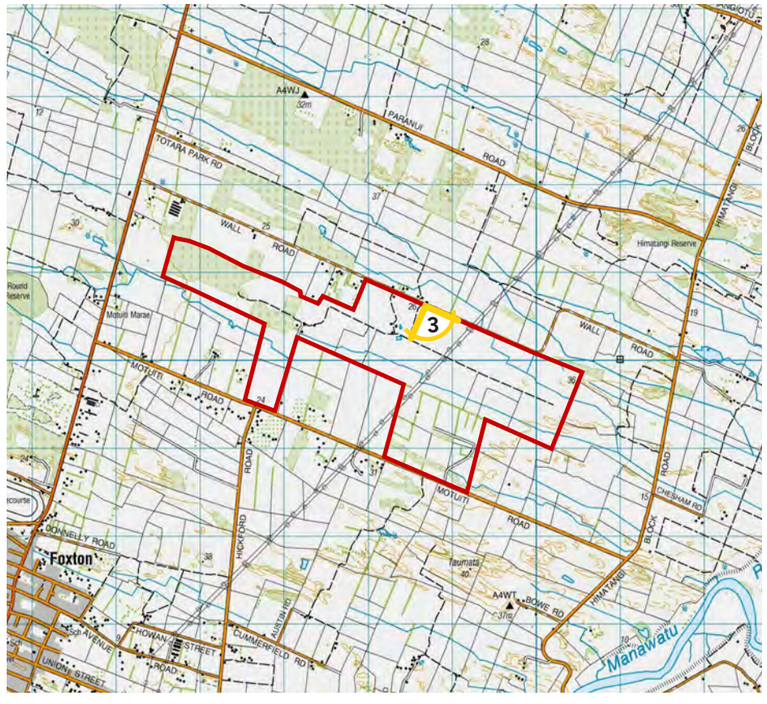
From this representative viewpoint the change in the view to the residents of 286-238 would include: -

- Solar arrays would be visible in the mid-distance in this viewpoint. 435m from the milking shed in to the RHS will remain unplanted. The remaining RHS boundary in this viewpoint will be intermittently planted affording glimpse views into the site.
- The introduction of an infrastructural landscape and enclosure pattern from mitigation planting effects the values of the open and expansive rural character from Wall Road.
- Impressions of the big sky and existing foreground paddock and farm buildings remain.
- As mitigation planting matures the extent of visible solar array will reduce.
- The proposed mitigation planting once established will be maintained at a height of 6m similar to the height of the existing central pivot irrigators with taller groups of specimen trees indicatively proposed where their location can be accomodated to avoid shading solar arrays. This is likely to provide a more layered vegetative framework change but one still in keeping with a working rural environment and reflective of the existing front boundary vegetation on adjacent lifestyle blocks.

Magnitude rating (short-term): **Low – Moderate** (adverse)

Magnitude rating (long-term): **Low** (adverse)

FIGURE 21: REPRESENTATIVE VIEWPOINT 3



WALL ROAD - On secondary road near property No. 371 Wall Road (PROP08).

VIEWPOINT THREE

Distance to Application Site: 10m

Representative viewpoint for: residents of 337 - 371 Wall Road (PROP08).

EXISTING VIEW

This outlook in a southeast direction illustrates the open view of the application site. The site boundary (indicated here by the low post and wire fence) illustrates the proximity of the application site.

Lattice pylon towers and transmission lines to the left of the viewpoint can be seen traversing the application site and diminishing in stature, at greater distances into the midground of the panorama. The towers are typically positioned on localised high points within the application site. This is a reminder of the remnant dunefield characteristics and the more recent flattening that has occurred to install the central pivot irrigators. Beyond the irrigators, dunefields external to the application site can be seen in the mid-distance with the Tararua Ranges forming the layered distant background to this panorama.

At the time of the second site visit (18th -19th November 2024), the dwelling and property of 371 Wall Road appeared unoccupied and unkept.

ANTICIPATED CHANGE TO VIEW

Solar arrays will be setback 20m from the site boundary and 50m from the closest point of property 371 Wall Road. From this representative viewpoint the change in the view would be noticeable and would adversely affect, particularly in the short term, the landscape value of vegetative predominance.

The proposed 6m high hedgerow mitigation planting will grow faster than a native planting mix and will effectively screen views of the solar farm as it reaches the height of the 3.5m panels. This will change the currently open, expansive, pastoral views available to an enclosed outlook in the long term. Whilst the visual amenity derived from the pastoral aspect of the outlook would be diminished, hedgerows of this type are evident within the locale and are a readily identifiable characteristic of the wider rural environment.

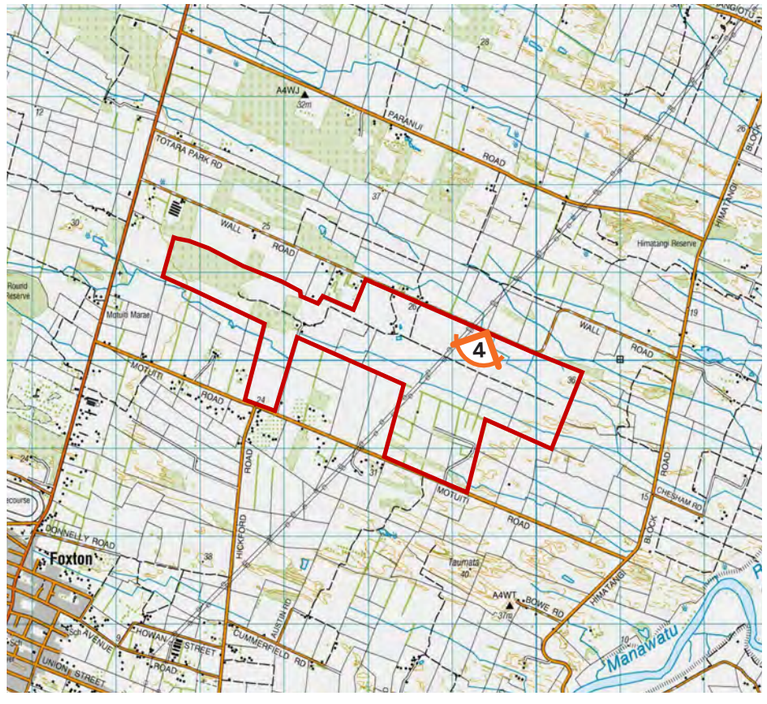
Hedgerow screening will re-establish the perception of vegetative dominance in this view. However, the resultant enclosure will affect the ability to experience the open and expansive valued landscape attribute. It is considered preferrable for this higher sensitivity visual receptor to loose this attribute. For this reason, mitigation planting is only partially successful.

In the left hand side (LHS) of this view taller towers and the gantry associated with the BESS and substation may be visible although proposed mitigation planting would screen the bulk of this essential associated infrastructure.

Rating (short-term): **High** (adverse)

Rating (long-term): **Moderate** (adverse)

FIGURE 22: REPRESENTATIVE VIEWPOINT 4



WALL ROAD - On secondary road near transmission lines

VIEWPOINT FOUR

Distance to Application Site: 15m

Representative viewpoint for: users of Wall Road.

EXISTING VIEW

This south facing viewpoint from near the transmission lines illustrates the open view of the application site. The site boundary is indicated here by the low post and wire fence in the foreground, with rank grass to the road berm.

This view illustrates the undulating nature of pasture areas within the site. A foreshortened view of pylons and transmission lines to the right of the image diminishes in stature away from the viewer, and slightly into the midground of the panorama. The right most pylon can be seen located on localised high points.

These localised highpoints foreshorten views of the application site beyond and to the right of the panorama. Central pivot irrigators stretch expansively across the view on paddocks adjacent Wall Road. Offsite dune features and vegetation are seen in the mid-distance and foreshorten views of paddocks beyond the site. The Tararua Ranges form a backdrop to the left of the panorama.

ANTICIPATED CHANGE TO VIEW

From this illustrative viewpoint, the proposed change would occupy the portion of the view currently dominated by pastoral land, thereby altering the visual composition and reducing the prominence of vegetative dominance as a defining attribute The main entranceway into the Solar Farm off Wall Road would be within the foreground of this viewpoint. The taller towers and gantry of the substation (refer to **plan LA05** in GS) would be visible above perimeter planting albeit it in context with the existing transmission line infrastructure.

Mitigation planting is expected to achieve effective screening of the solar arrays as it matures to around 6m in height, resulting in a more enclosed view. Although this approach aligns with exsiting rural shelterbelt practices, it represents a notable change from the current open character, diminishing the perception of expansive openness that contributes to the area's landscape value.

Rating (short-term): **Moderate – High** (adverse)

Rating (long-term): **Moderate** (adverse)

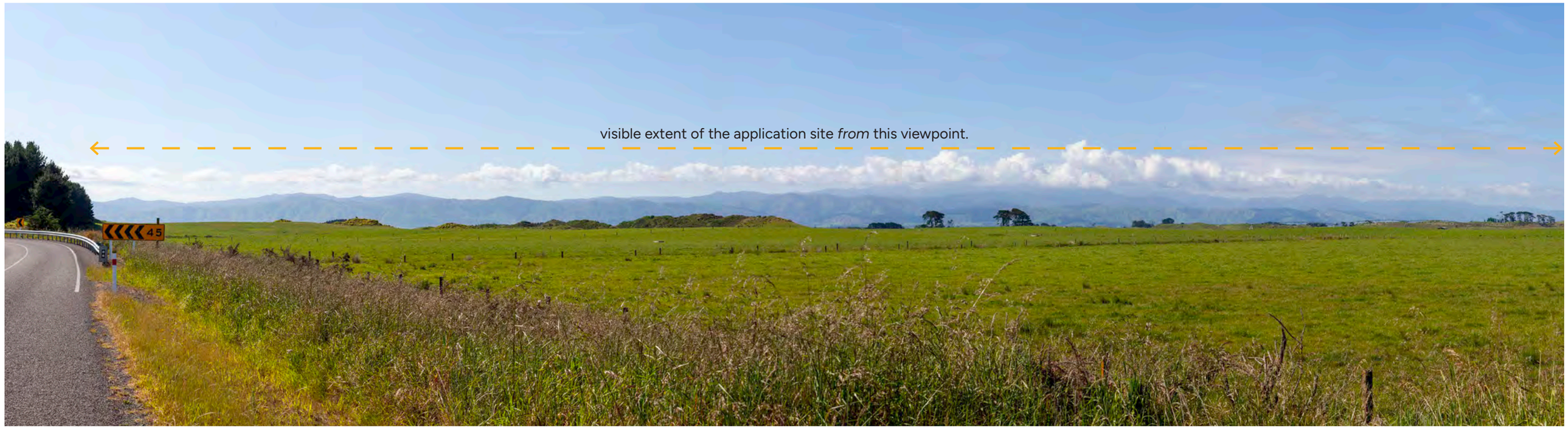
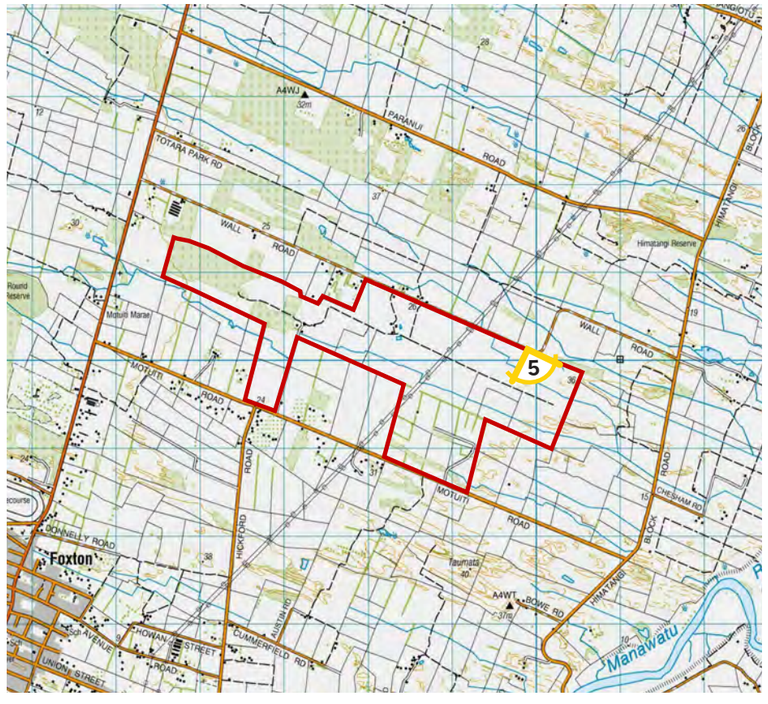


FIGURE 23: REPRESENTATIVE VIEWPOINT 5



WALL ROAD - Close to the bend on Wall Road

VIEWPOINT FIVE

Distance to Application Site: 7m

Representative viewpoint for: users of Wall Road.

EXISTING VIEW

This southeast orientated viewpoint near the 90 degree bend of Wall Road adjacent to the site boundary, illustrates an open view of the application site and the landscape beyond. The roadside site boundary is indicated here by the low post and wire fence to the left of the view. The lower lying paddock of the application site, extends to the right across the foreground in most of this outlook.

To the left of the viewpoint the existing forestry block on neighbouring land provides a bookend to the application site. Visible mounds of an external dune landscape in the midground (beyond the site) illustrate the layered landscape features with the Tararua Ranges forming the extensive and distant backdrop to this view. Also refer to *Valued Landscape Attributes section 2.2* for a fuller discussion of the valued landscape attributes.

ANTICIPATED CHANGE TO VIEW

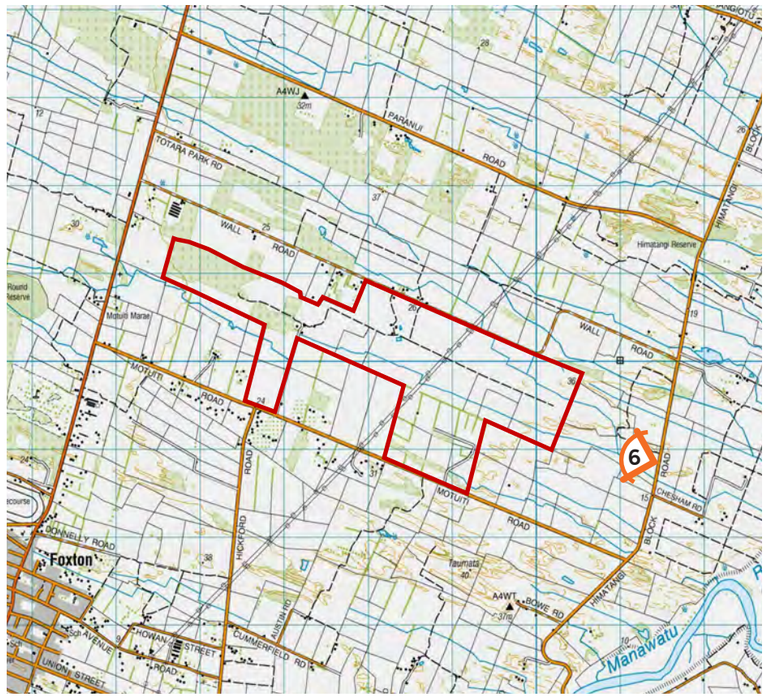
From this viewpoint the change afforded by the proposal will involve the introduction of built form across the broad visible extent of application site paddock areas. The introduction of solar panels would be an expansive built element affecting the attribute of vegetative dominance, visible in the short term. In the long term the intervening field drain planting will help soften and break up views of the breadth of the solar panel arrays from this viewpoint as illustrated by the visual simulations on pages **LA37 - LA44 in the GS**.

To retain the longer views of the layered landscape and open and expansive valued attributes, the proposal will not involve tall mitigation planting along this frontage of Wall Road. It is considered the value of retaining the broader landscape outlook outweighs road users' loss in visual amenity where afforded near partial views of the solar farm.

Rating (short-term): **Moderate - High** (adverse)

Rating (long-term): **Moderate - High** (adverse)

FIGURE 24: REPRESENTATIVE VIEWPOINT 6



HIMATANGI BLOCK ROAD - On secondary road by 384 Himatangi Block Road (PROP61)

VIEWPOINT SIX

Distance to Application Site: 1.2 km

Representative viewpoint for: users of Himatangi Block Road and persons on adjacent and surrounding properties.

EXISTING VIEW

This long-distance glimpse view in a westerly direction illustrates the part of the site beyond the existing dunefield features in the mid distance. Himatangi Block Road is a 80 kmph rural road and is well-used, connecting Foxton to Palmerston North.

ANTICIPATED CHANGE TO VIEW

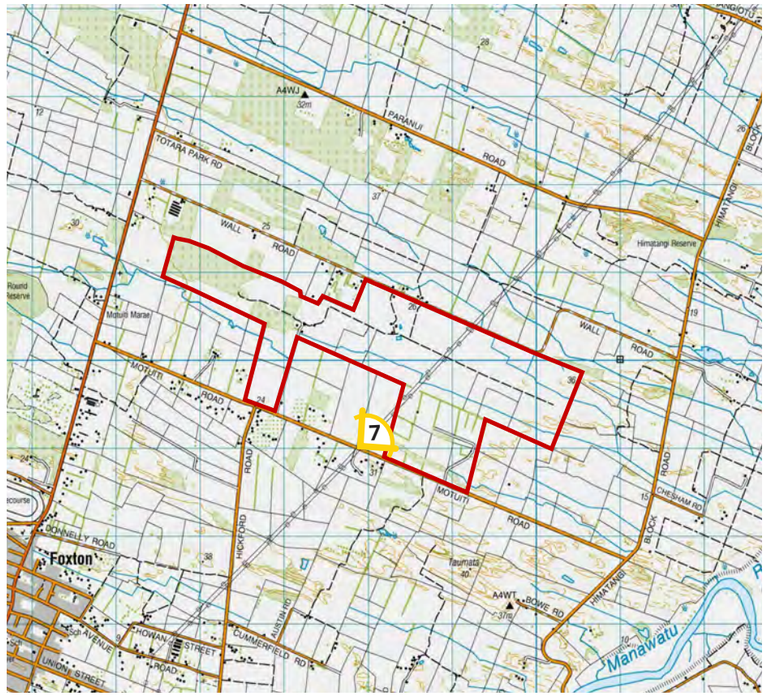
From this representative viewpoint the small change in the view is unlikely to affect the visual amenity of workers in the area and vehicular users of Himatangi Block Road because: -

- The proposed solar farm forms a small proportion of the overall view.
- The viewing distance is 1.2 km from the application site forming a long-distance view.
- The speed of travel by vehicles, with less surrounding detail observed by occupants.
- Existing dunefield landforms truncating 80% of the application site extent.

Rating (short-term): **Very Low** (benign)

Rating (long-term): **Very Low** (benign)

FIGURE 25: REPRESENTATIVE VIEWPOINT 7 PANORAMA



MOTUITI ROAD - On secondary road, under transmission lines by Lot 2 DP 479352 & 346 Motuiti Road

VIEWPOINT SEVEN

Distance to Application Site: 600m (from boundary in mid-distance), closest boundary 300m (to the east).

Representative viewpoint for: residents of 346 - 368 Motuiti Road.

EXISTING VIEW

This viewpoint in a northerly direction illustrates the foreground dominated by undulating topography with a patchy grass and tree lupin groundcover of a neighbouring land parcel. The tall lattice pylons and transmission lines dominate the immediate foreground forming a viewshaft into the application site beyond. Centre pivot irrigators on the application site can be seen in the mid-distance and to the left of the viewpoint. To the right of the viewpoint the existing, tall, exotic, treeline of land parcel Lot 1 DP 31997 filters views into the application site beyond.

ANTICIPATED CHANGE TO VIEW

From this representative viewpoint the more noticeable change would occur to the centre right with the removal of the existing Lot 1 DP 31997 treeline opening up views, possibly of the Tararua Ranges.

In the short-term areas of solar arrays would be visible in the mid-distance extending into the RHS foreground with the tallest towers of the substation visible in the distance and to the right of the transmission lines.

In the long-term as mitigation planting matures the visible extent of the solar farm will be reduced.

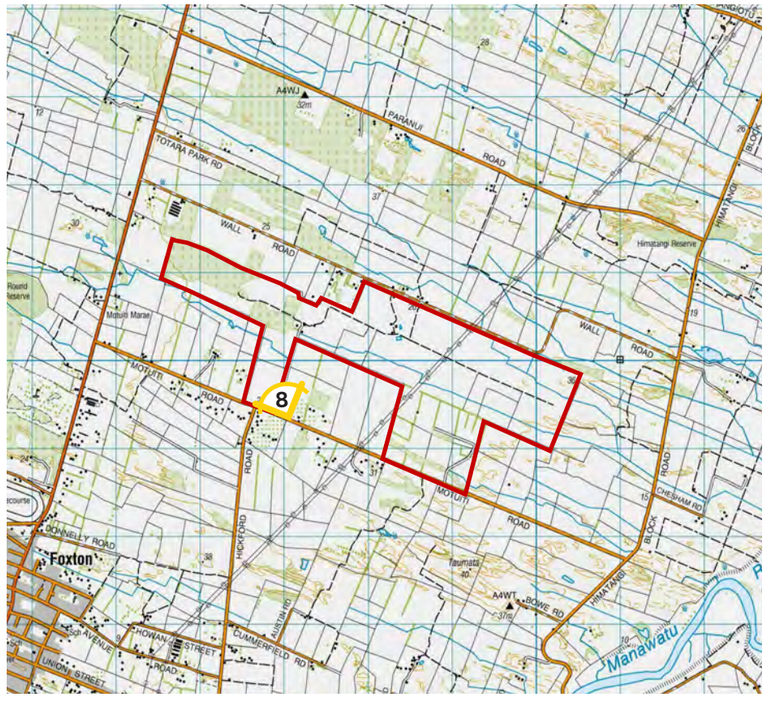
Glimpsed mid-distance views of the solar arrays will be afforded in the LHS of this viewpoint, where boundary mitigation isn't proposed.

Rating (short-term): **Low** (adverse)

Rating (long-term): **Very Low - Low** (adverse)

Also refer to visual simulations on pages LA47 - LA54 in GS.

FIGURE 26: REPRESENTATIVE VIEWPOINT 8



MOTUITI ROAD - On secondary road, by 251 Motuiti Road

VIEWPOINT EIGHT

Distance to Application Site: 176m.

Representative viewpoint for: residents of 251 - 293, 240 - 296 Motuiti Road.

EXISTING VIEW

This open view in a northwest direction illustrates the narrower land parcel 191/229 Motuiti Road, which extends from the central midblock aspects of the application site (to the right of the viewpoint) down to Motuiti Road in the foreground, extending out to the left of the view. The spaced line of poplar trees extending across the view are within the application site boundary as are the smaller powerlines running up the application site behind them. Beyond these, the line of smaller poplar trees (in the mid distance) are on neighbouring property marking the western edge of the land parcel. Centre pivot irrigators can be seen with the naked eye in the application site central in the viewpoint and in the mid distance.

ANTICIPATED CHANGE TO VIEW

This representative viewpoint illustrates that solar panel arrays would be partially visible in the short-term while 6m mitigation planting matures, obscuring panels once reaching 3-4m in height. Due to the north - south orientation of the arrays it is likely that the first row of solar arrays will block views to arrays behind them. The solar development area is set back a minimum of 100m from neighbouring existing dwellings and 75m from Motuiti Road.

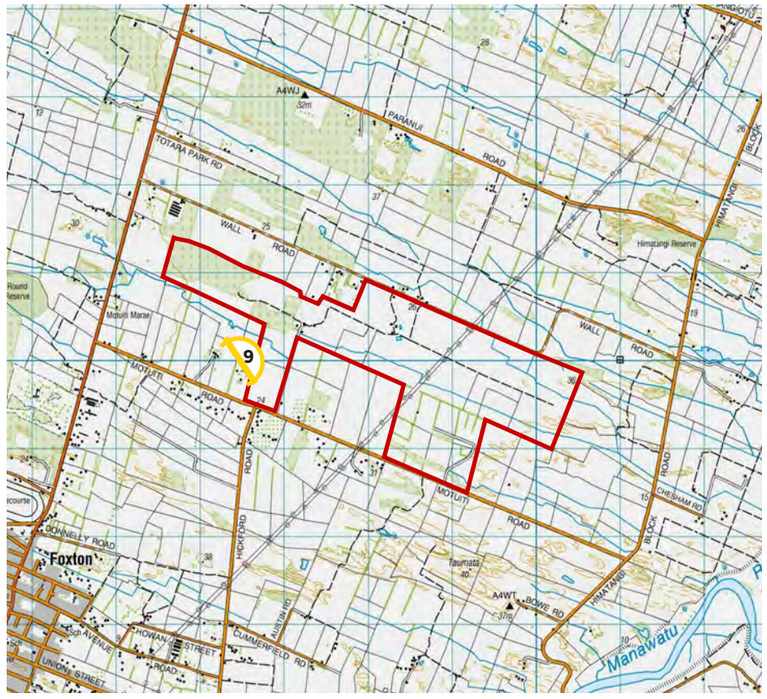
Rating (short-term): **Low – Moderate** (adverse)

Rating (long-term): **Low** (benign)

Also refer to visual simulations on pages LA55 - LA62 in GS.

FIGURE 27: SPECIFIC VIEWPOINT 9 - NORTHERN VIEW

FIGURE 27a: SPECIFIC VIEWPOINT 9 - EASTERN VIEW



Private property: localised elevated position on 187 Motuiti Road (PROP39)

VIEWPOINT NINE

Distance to Application Site: 510m to the north, 170m to the east.

Specific viewpoint for: new house site on land parcel 187 Motuiti Road (PROP39).

EXISTING VIEW

This open full view is from a localised elevated position (approximately 3 - 4m higher than surrounding ground level, based on information at the time of writing the report) on the private land of 187 Motuiti Road (PROP39). It illustrates the application site in the mid-distance (over 510m) in the northern viewpoint and just beyond the foreground (over 170m) in the eastern viewpoint.

ANTICIPATED CHANGE TO VIEW

Northern view: the full height proposed mitigation planting on the southern boundary of the application site, will screen the majority of the solar arrays in the long term. Some filtered views of solar arrays may be visible through gaps in the planting.

Eastern view: like the top view, proposed mitigation planting will screen much of the solar arrays in the long term. Some filtered views of the solar arrays may be afforded in areas of land parcel 191/229 Motuiti Road through gaps in the proposed planting.

In both views the foreground still provides an immediate rural landscape outlook. In the eastern view the existing increasing enclosure of views is evident by the avenue of poplar trees although it is acknowledged that proposed mitigation planting would provide a more solid planting block such as the existing shelterbelts on lifestyle properties off Motuiti Road.

The adverse effects on visual amenity are related to: -

- The introduction of a substantial infrastructural element into an otherwise well vegetated view effecting the existing cohesive landscape character.
- The increase in enclosure by the proposed mitigation planting framework to an open view in the mid-distance.
- The small proportion of the solar farm arrays visible at a distance in the long term.
- The physical change and scale of landuse in the mid-distance from an established rural landuse to one of increased built form.

Magnitude rating (short-term): **Moderate - Moderate High** (adverse)

Magnitude rating (long-term): **Low** (adverse)

To reiterate there is currently no dwelling on this location.

Also refer to visual simulations on pages LA63 - LA78 in GS.

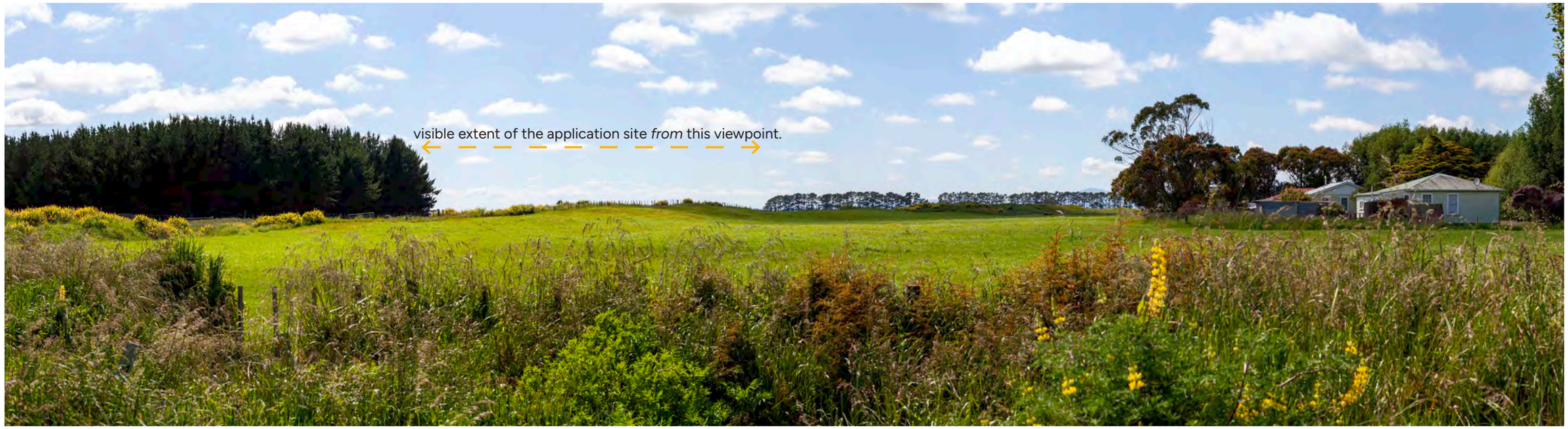
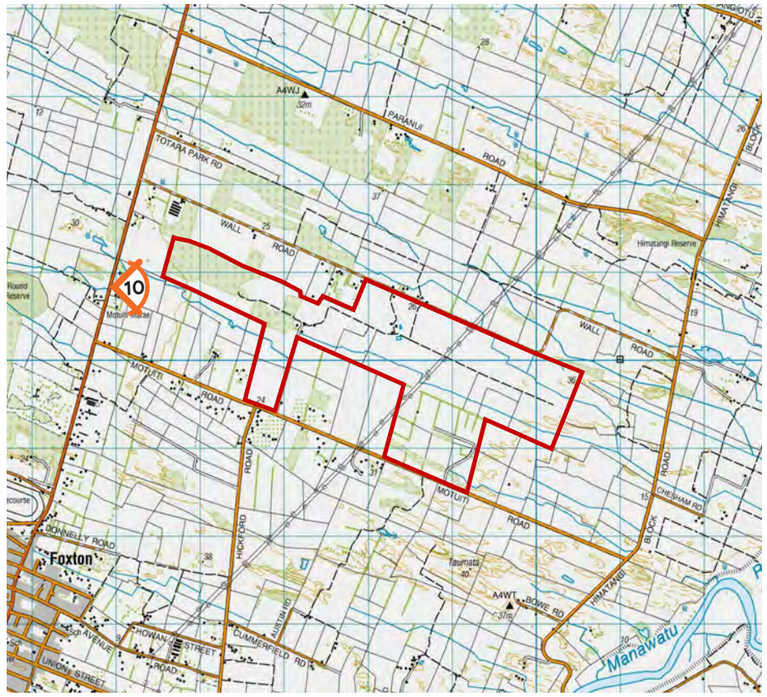


FIGURE 28: REPRESENTATIVE VIEWPOINT 10



VIEWPOINT TEN

Distance to Application Site: 650m.

Representative viewpoint for: Motuiti Pā and residents of 274-282 SH1.

EXISTING VIEW

This glimpse view on the shoulder of SH1 (100 kmph) in a northeast direction looks towards the westernmost corner of the application site. The existing vegetation and the dune landforms on neighbouring land parcels closer to the foreground interrupt views of the application site.

ANTICIPATED CHANGE TO VIEW

At a distance of 650m there will be little to no change in this representative view because:-

- Of the truncating of views by existing vegetation and dune landform.
- Proposed mitigation planting will effectively screen any potential views of the solar arrays.

Rating (short-term): **Very Low** (adverse)

Rating (long-term): **Very Low** (benign)

6.0 ASSESSMENT OF EFFECTS

'*Effects on landscape character, its qualities and values, results from physical change to the landscape. However, change in itself does not denote an adverse effect as landscape effects relate to the outcomes for landscape values. Landscape effects are assessed against the landscape values of the existing environment (as embodied in landscape attributes) and relevant identified landscape values from planning provisions*' ('Te Tangi a te Manu', 2022).

'*As a subset of landscape effects, visual amenity effects result from changes to views, i.e. the effects on landscape values as experienced in views*' (Te Tangi a te Manu, 2022).

The level of potential (adverse) visual effects involves assessment of the nature and extent of change to an outlook in consideration of the sensitivity of the viewing audience. The effects of the application are considered on a 7-point scale as illustrated below in **Figure 27**.

FIGURE 27: NZILA 7-point scale in comparison to RMA effects ranking (Source: Te Tangi a te Manu, 2022)

6.1 Landscape Effects

'*Landscape effects are consequences of changes to the physical environment, being outcomes of landscape values derived from physical, associative, and perceptual dimensions.* ***Effects on landscape values are assessed against the existing environment and the relevant statutory provisions***' (Te Tangi a te Manu, 2022) *with emphasis added.*

'*Character is an expression of the landscape's collective attributes. Values are the reasons a landscape is valued. Values, though, are embodied in attributes.* ***Effects are consequences for a landscape's values resulting from changes to attributes. The landscape's values are managed through managing such attributes.***' (Te Tangi a te Manu, 2022 with emphasis added).

The key values are:

- Expansive open views and big skies (particularly off Wall Road).
- The distinctive local character informing the sense of place.
- The working rural environment and the dominance of vegetation.

The bulk of the application site sits away from road frontages situating the proposed solar farm into middle block paddocks. The overall height of the solar panels upto 3.5m high will sit low in the flat to undulating landscape generally retaining the low horizon line and big sky perception.

As the application site has been levelled and modified, very little of the parabolic dunefield remains intact. Retained, remnant dune landforms on the perimeters of the site (as identified on **plan LA03** in Graphic Supplement) appear diminished and disjointed.

The concentration of dune landforms bounding the application site (whether pristine or modified) is most legible to the east and southeast where they form a foreground setting to the Tararua Ranges.

The proposed development area will near entirely retain both the existing landform and landcover, with provision for underlying pasture managed by sheep grazing (dependent on feasibility). Existing poor-quality wetlands on-site will be primarily spanned by development.

There is currently a low level of built development in the working rural environment with a dominance of vegetation as land cover. The physical landscape change (or 'shift' in characteristics) of the proposal will include approximately 335 hectares of development area within the project area of 436 hectares. The introduction of a built infrastructural landscape at the scale of the proposal is acknowledged. It is at a sufficiently extensive scale to tip the balance from a predominantly vegetated local landscape (a key valued landscape attribute), into a local landscape dominated by infrastructural built form.

This change in land use also effects the working rural environment attribute. Whilst the addition of planting through mitigation measures such as hedgerows and native planting introduces some vegetation these have a consequence on the valued open and expansive landscape attributes.

The relevant landscape issue is therefore the combined effect of the number of structures in this rural setting, albeit low in height and subservient in views to the dunefields and Tararua Ranges and managing mitigation planting to retain where possible the open and expansive landscape attribute.

To this end, the extent of the project is broken up by: -

- Land under owners' retention being undeveloped for the solar farm.
- Retaining 14 hectares across Lots 1 & 2 DP 31997 and Part Himatangi 5A4B Block, closest to Motuiti Road as undeveloped land (refer to **plan LA14**).
- Setbacks incorporated to Motuiti Road of 75m to 293m in the vicinity of neighbouring lifestyle properties.
- Providing a central feature of 12 hectares as undeveloped pasture, wetland restoration and ecological enhancements.
- Planting with riparian species to the northern margins of main drains.
- Using the 50m offset either side of transmission lines in conjunction with the ecological enhancement and pastureland to provide a significant break, both horizontally and vertically across the site.
- Offsetting 20m from all site boundaries.
- Offsetting 50-100m from residential properties.
- Planting along entranceway and around the BESS and substation by Wall Road and partially along the perimeter of the transmission lines.

The short-term landscape effects of the proposal are rated as moderate - high and adverse in nature. With the measures bullet pointed above to break up the extent of the solar farm and with mitigation planting established enabling the acceptable integration of the development into its working rural environment the long term effect of the proposal is rated as **moderate** and **adverse** in nature.

6.2 Visual Effects

There can be more than one visual receptor at any given viewpoint. Effects from each viewpoint are only assessed on the highest sensitivity visual receptor. The Level of visual and amenity effects relative to each representative or specific viewpoint are summarized in the following table.

VIEWPOINT NO.	VISUAL RECEPTORS IDENTIFIED	LEVEL OF VISUAL AND AMENITY EFFECTS
One (p.18)	Residents of 238-286 Wall Road (PROP01 - PROP04).	Short-term: Low - Moderate (adverse) Long-term: Low (adverse)
Two (p.19)	Residents of 286 - 238 Wall Road (PROP04 - PROP01).	Short-term: Low - Moderate (adverse) Long-term: Low (adverse)
Three (p.20)	Residents of 337- 371 Wall Road (PROP08).	Short-term: High (adverse) Long-term: Moderate (adverse)
Four (p.21)	Users of Wall Road.	Short-term: Moderate - High (adverse) Long-term: Moderate (adverse)
Five (p.22)	Users of Wall Road.	Short-term: Moderate - High (adverse) Long-term: Moderate - High (adverse)
Six (p.23)	Users of Himatangi Block Road and persons on adjacent and surrounding properties.	Short-term: Very Low (benign) Long-term: Very Low (benign)
Seven (p.24)	Residents of 346 - 368 Motuiti Road.	Short-term: Low (adverse) Long-term: Very low - Low (adverse)
Eight (p.25)	Residents of 251 - 293, 240 - 296 Motuiti Road.	Short Term: Low - Moderate (adverse) Long Term: Low (benign)
Nine (p.27)	New house site on 187 Motuiti Road (PROP39).	Short Term: Moderate - Moderate High (adverse) Long Term: Low (adverse)
Ten (p.28)	Motuiti Marae and residents of 274-282 SH1.	Short Term: Very Low (adverse) Long Term: Very Low (benign)

Views are primarily limited to those of more immediate neighbours and road users. It is considered acceptable that the solar development will not be fully screened, and glimpse partial views will remain for road users from some locations.

The application site and proposed development areas within will not be visible in entirety from any one viewpoint in the surrounding location (barring long distant, elevated outlooks).

Although mitigation planting will reduce the prominence of infrastructure in views from higher-sensitivity receptors, this measure introduces a consequential effect on landscape character. The shift from open to enclosed outlooks erodes the perception of openness - a valued attribute that cannot be reinstated, particularly along Wall Road.

Overall, the adverse visual effects of the application are considered to be 'moderate - moderate high' in the short term. This is considered to reduce to '**low - moderate to moderate**' in the long term as mitigation planting is established.

6.3 Assessment against Planning Provisions

This section sets out consideration of what objectives and policies say in relation to landscape values and what they anticipate in terms of the scale and nature of development or landscape change. This discussion does not provide an exhaustive assessment of the planning framework relevant for the proposal, as this is covered by a separate specialist planning assessment.

The relevant matter of the Regional Policy Statement (RPS) is the loss of indigenous habitat by land development and pest plants.

The application site currently contains little to no indigenous habitat. As part of the development's enhancement and mitigation measures, approximately nine hectares will be set aside for wetland, riparian, and dune scrubland restoration. Additional native planting will be reintroduced through approximately 6,000 lineal metres of boundary planting and around eight hectares of on-site native revegetation.

The application has discretionary activity status under the Operative Horowhenua District Plan, 2015 (OHDP). It is consistent with a number of district planning matters including front and side yard-built form setbacks and height limits. The application is compliant with relevant district plan metric provisions for buildings regarding maximum height (15m), road boundary setback (10m), other site boundary setbacks (10m). A gantry structure within the substation does infringe on the height of utility masts and structures (20m) by 2.3m.

Related policies address matters including rural character and amenity, provision of non-farming activities, privacy and minimising 'obtrusive built elements in the rural environment'.

The proposed development location on a heavily modified site, is considered an acceptable clustering of electricity related land use and infrastructure with regards to landscape outcomes. Changing the farming practice from dairy cattle to a lower intensity sheep grazing land management practice (feasibility dependent), would also retain rural productive values.

Built elements are integrated with the surrounding landform through siting solar arrays away from site boundaries and any remaining dune landforms onsite.

The predominantly midblock land parcels of the site (where set back), broadly retain the existing rural outlook from adjacent road and residential dwellings. Where effect is derived through enclosure this is considered preferable to the visibility of extensive infrastructural elements. Shelterbelt/hedgerows are a generic characteristic of the dynamic working rural environment. However, it is acknowledged that their planting affects the specific open and expansive valued landscape attribute in this locale.

The solar panels will introduce an extensive scale of built form onto the existing pastoral landscape. However, the boundary setbacks, low height of the panel arrays, land under owners' retention, 25 hecates of planting and the minimum 2 - 4m spacing between solar arrays will aid to integrate the development into the landscape setting.

It is considered that the application including landscape mitigation is of a nature, scale and intensity acceptable for the character of the rural area. It retains the distinctive landform pattern and working rural landscape character of the Foxton Dunefields Precinct.

7.0 CONCLUSION

This application approach has been based on a site value and design constraints approach, balancing the landscape values with technically practicable outcomes. The landscape values were considered and the project was designed to minimise effects where practicable. Both landscape and ecological expertise have informed the development layout, mitigation and enhancement strategy. Whilst the mitigation measures proposed reduce the level of adverse effect on the landscape, the introduction of infrastructure at this scale cannnot be fully mitigated.

Landscape relevant objectives and policies address both rural landscape character and associated visual amenity.

Integrating the project into the landscape setting has involved consideration of the following landscape valued attributes, identified in both the physical and policy context. As stated earlier in section 2.2 page 06 these are:

1. Expansive open views and big skies (particularly from Wall Road).
2. The distinctive local character and characteristics forming a sense of place - the dunes, viewshafts to the Tararua Ranges and the degree of wildness and memorability
3. The working rural environment and the dominance of vegetation.

Collectively the various attributes contribute to the value attached to the local landscape character being considered as **moderate/medium,** with an overall sensitivity to change being considered **moderate/medium**.

The physical landscape change (or 'shift' in characteristics) of the proposal will include approximately 335 hectares of development area within the project area of 436 hectares. The introduction of a built infrastructural landscape at the scale of the proposal is acknowledged. It is at a sufficiently extensive scale to tip the balance from a predominantly vegetated local landscape (a key valued landscape attribute), into a local landscape dominated by infrastructural built form. This change in land use also effects the working rural environment attribute. Whilst the addition of planting through mitigation measures such as hedgerows and native planting introduces some vegetation these have a consequence on the valued open and expansive landscape attributes.

Place responsive enhancement and mitigation solutions will afford a degree of landscape integration and the enhancement of ecological values. Landscape containment will be afforded by the site's midblock location, pattern of existing landform neighbouring the site and will be reinforced by proposed mitigation planting. Proposed native planting through the site will improve the ecological and landscape value. The use of the application site as a solar farm will supersede dairy farming onsite and the site may be available for grazing sheep, with areas of restoration planting fenced off from stock access. The proposed solar arrays will sit low in an open expansive landscape generally retaining the big sky perceptual qualities of the landscape setting.

With the proposed mitigation and enhancement design approach in place, it is considered that the project will be of a 'nature, scale, intensity and location' that is acceptable within the receiving environment. There are limited comparative activities of this scale in the local area, however the development will be perceived in association with relevant electricity related infrastructure and in a region where renewable energy projects are seen in the broader landscape.

Views are primarily limited to those of more immediate neighbours and road users and the proposed development areas will not be visible in entirety from any one viewpoint in the surrounding location (barring long distant, elevated outlooks).

The introduction of planting mitigation measures has been focussed around higher sensitivity receptors. Whilst this reduces adverse visual effects for the particular receptors, the consequence of the introduction adversely affects the open and expansive valued landscape attribute.

Whilst mitigation measures for higher sensitivity receptors introduces vegetation to reduce the amount of infrastructural built form seen in views, the introduction of this type of vegetation has a consequence for landscape effects, which cannot be remedied (particularly in the vicinity of Wall Road).

Overall, the adverse visual effects of the application are considered to be **'moderate - moderate high'** in the short term. This is considered to reduce to 'low - moderate to moderate' in the long term as mitigation planting is established.

Some positive landscape outcomes will be derived from the place responsive development approach alongside the retirement of areas of the site from cattle grazing activity to achieve appropriate planting outcomes and ecological enhancement.

On balance the application is considered acceptable in the receiving landscape setting, with an overall effects rating of **'moderate to moderate-high'** (more than minor in RMA terms) adverse landscape effects in the short-term, reducing to a **'moderate'** (more than minor in RMA terms) level of adverse effects in the long term.