dpa
Design and Planning
Associates Limited

# DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

## Full Planning Application to Wrexham Borough County Council for the Change of Use of Agricultural Field to Agricultural Equestrian Use and the formation of a 60m x 20m All-Weather Menage (Riding Arena) for private use at Dukes View, The Pant Farm, Lane from A 539 Via Pigeon House & Dukes View To C 158, Hanmer, Whitchurch, Wrexham, SY13 3DS



November 2024

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## 1. Instruction:

We have been instructed by our client, Ms J Davies and Mr Stuart Samuel, to prepare and submit a full planning application to Wrexham Borough County Council for the proposals noted within this design and access statement.

## 2. Location/Description:

The site lies in Wrexham Borough, Wales

The site holds a postcode of SY13 3DS

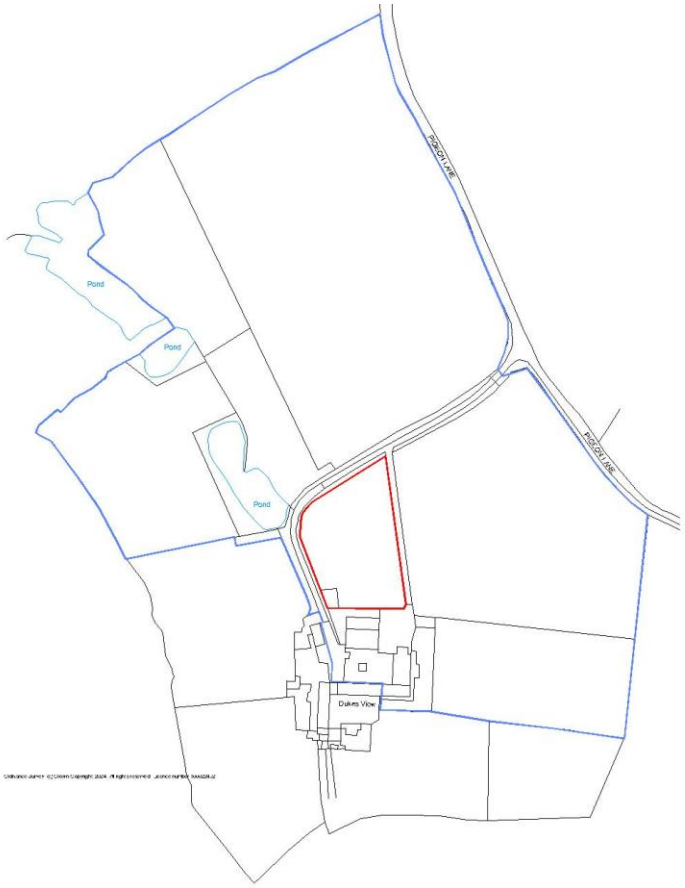
The site has direct vehicular access off a public highway of tarmacadam namely Pigeon Lane

Coordinates: Latitude: 52.95641, Longitude: -2.84539

What3Words: ///mavericks.incline.headstone

The extent of the property in which the planning application relates is defined with a red line on the site location plan below.

The red line area measures to approx. 3336 sqm.




Location plan – not to scale

## 3. Site Description

The site lies within an agricultural field of approximately 0.82 acres in size bordered with post and rail fencing. The field is used as a paddock for horses. The field is predominately level as outlined in the photos below.





The site is situated within the 'open countryside' for planning purposes. There are two neighbouring properties and the property itself consists of a dwelling, agricultural barn and grazing land.

The area is rural, with scattered residential and farming properties predominating. There is also a very high level of equestrian activity in the locality, with appropriate horse facilities existing in and around the area, including several exercise areas of the type proposed.

The proposed ménage would be situated on an existing agricultural field, currently used for grazing horses and is enclosed by post and rail fencing. The proposal is considered to benefit from this setting being set well back from Pigeon Lane with further screening provided by the surrounding mature field boundaries.

The proposal does not impact any trees or hedges. It will not have any adverse effects on neighbouring properties or public views. Additionally, there will be no noise or odours generated by the development.

## 4. The Applicants

Upon completing the property purchase, Ms. Davies will permanently reside at the property providing a focal point for family horse activity for herself and her wider family.

The family keeps horses for recreational and sporting purposes, actively participating in equitation and dressage.

## 5. Explanation of Need

Horse riding and horse care are without question dangerous activities.

Over the past decades, horses have increasingly been bred for sporting and athletic performance, making them more sensitive and high-strung than their ancestors. As a result, these horses require consistent exercise to maintain their mental and physical health. Without sufficient work, a horse may become bored, potentially leading to behavioural issues and a decreased willingness to safely respond to commands from its rider or handler.

Historically, horse exercise was conducted on grass, but using pastureland for this purpose in unsuitable conditions can be harmful to the land, leading to significant damage and poaching. This practice not only detracts from the landscape aesthetically, but it can also result in various health issues for the horse, including poor footing, injury risk, and inadequate exercise conditions that affect the animal's overall well-being.

In poor or wet weather conditions, grassland becomes too wet, muddy, and slippery for safe use. Exercising horses in these conditions quickly damages the ground, creating uneven surfaces. This increases the risk of trips, slips, and strains, potentially leading to muscle and tendon injuries, as well as serious falls.

In "good" or dry conditions, such as those increasingly experienced in many areas due to changing weather patterns, the ground can become too hard. This can lead to injuries from impact or percussion, putting stress on the horse's joints, hooves, and muscles, and increasing the risk of strain or fractures.

In frosty conditions, exercising horses without suitable frost-tolerant surfaces becomes impossible, as the ground becomes too hard and slippery, posing a significant risk of injury to both the horse and rider.

In snow, frost, and foggy conditions, riding on public highways or designated off-road routes becomes impossible due to hazardous conditions. While some bridleways exist, there are few formally permitted off-road routes in the area, and those that do exist are short, disjointed, and often require riders to use public highways. Additionally, off-road routes typically have uneven surfaces and suffer from the same weather-related issues—damage and wear—like those found on grassland, making them unsafe for use in adverse conditions.

Hard-surfaced routes, such as public roads and lanes, offer limited opportunities for safe exercise, as they are only suitable for walking and trotting, and only in a straight line along the route. Additionally, many horses, especially those that are young, inexperienced, or not accustomed to traffic, can be frightened by vehicles encountered on these routes. For these horses, roadwork can be unsafe or even impossible, particularly during early stages of training.

In an open field or on off-road, non-vehicular routes, there are numerous uncontrollable and unpredictable distractions for the horse, such as livestock, working farm machinery, loose dogs, off-road cyclists, and more. These distractions make carefully controlled training difficult, significantly increasing the risk to both the horse and rider. With such hazards, it becomes challenging to ensure a safe and focused training environment.

In addition to concerns about the safety of working animals on unsuitable surfaces, there is a growing awareness among horse owners of the importance of using purpose-built exercise areas. These areas help ensure that horses are well-schooled meaning they are educated to understand and respond reliably to their handlers. A well-schooled horse is mentally and physically healthier, behaves more predictably and obediently, and is overall safer to ride and handle.

The provision of a private horse exercise facility offers a significant public benefit. By reducing the need for horses to use public routes, it indirectly helps the wider community and environment. The reduction in horse traffic on public roads and paths lessens wear and tear on these routes and minimises the potential for conflict with other legitimate users, such as pedestrians, cyclists, and drivers.

When the horse and rider venture out into the public domain, the training they receive in a dedicated exercise area, like the one proposed, ensures they are "well-schooled." This is akin to an experienced car driver versus a learner driver—trained horses and riders are more predictable, obedient, and capable of responding appropriately to their environment. As a result, they pose less risk to other users of public routes, such as pedestrians, cyclists, and motorists.

6. **Social Context:**

The proposed location of the menage has been carefully chosen as it will not be visible from Pant Farm and Stable House, the only properties in proximity of the site.

7. **Economic Context:**

The proposed ménage would be dedicated to the schooling of horses, thus allowing the more effective and efficient use of the land. This would also reduce the damage to wider grazing land on the property.

The facility is intended solely for the private use of the occupants of Dukes View, to support their enjoyment of the dwelling, land, and existing buildings. No commercial use is planned, meaning there will be no impact on public route access or any increase in traffic.

Access to the facility in use will be wholly internal to the property, significantly reducing the family's own residential traffic movements as they will not need to travel their horses out of the property to undertake exercise and schooling activities. Thus, both horse and vehicular traffic in the public domain is minimised by the proposal.

**8. Design Principle**

As outlined, the purpose of the proposal is to create a private horse exercise and schooling facility that supports the welfare of the horses housed on the property. This will allow the applicants to fully enjoy their sport and recreational activities in the safest possible manner throughout the year, reducing the need to exercise on public highways, designated horse routes, or open fields.

**9. Location:**

The position and layout of the proposed facility have been carefully selected as the most suitable, considering the best use of the available land, practical functionality. The land is already used for grazing horses, so there would be no significant change in that respect.

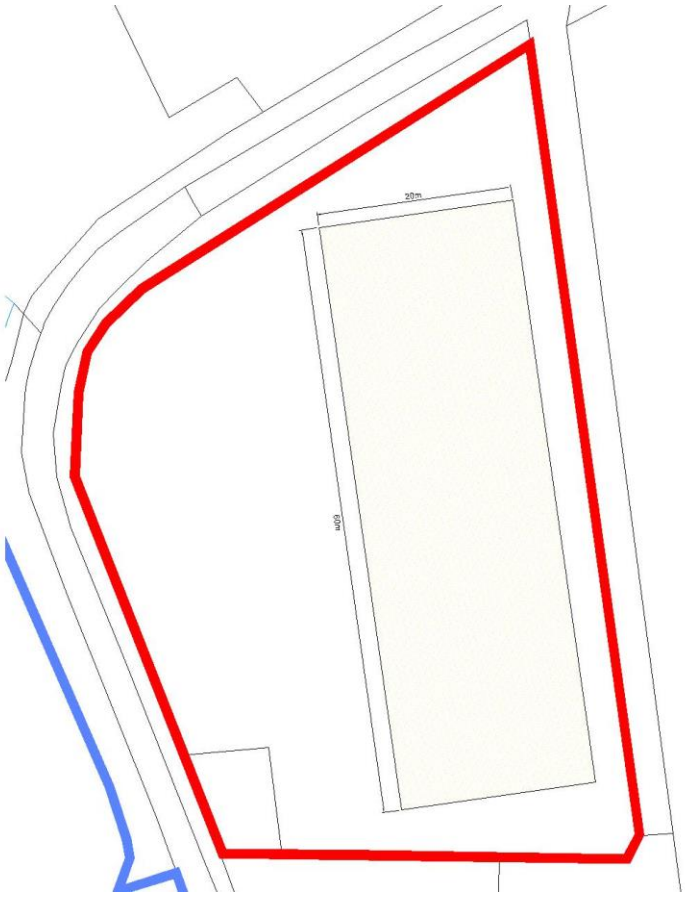
The location is convenient for access from the dwelling and agricultural barn providing a sheltered location in which the horses can work, shielded by established trees and hedges at the wider site boundaries.

**10. Use:**

The horse exercise facility is intended solely for the private use of the household.

**11. Size:**

Layout:
The layout of the facility consists of a rectangular riding area edged with retaining boards, without a surrounding fence, and featuring a Silica Sand surface. This design is considered entirely typical for the nature of the development and its location.

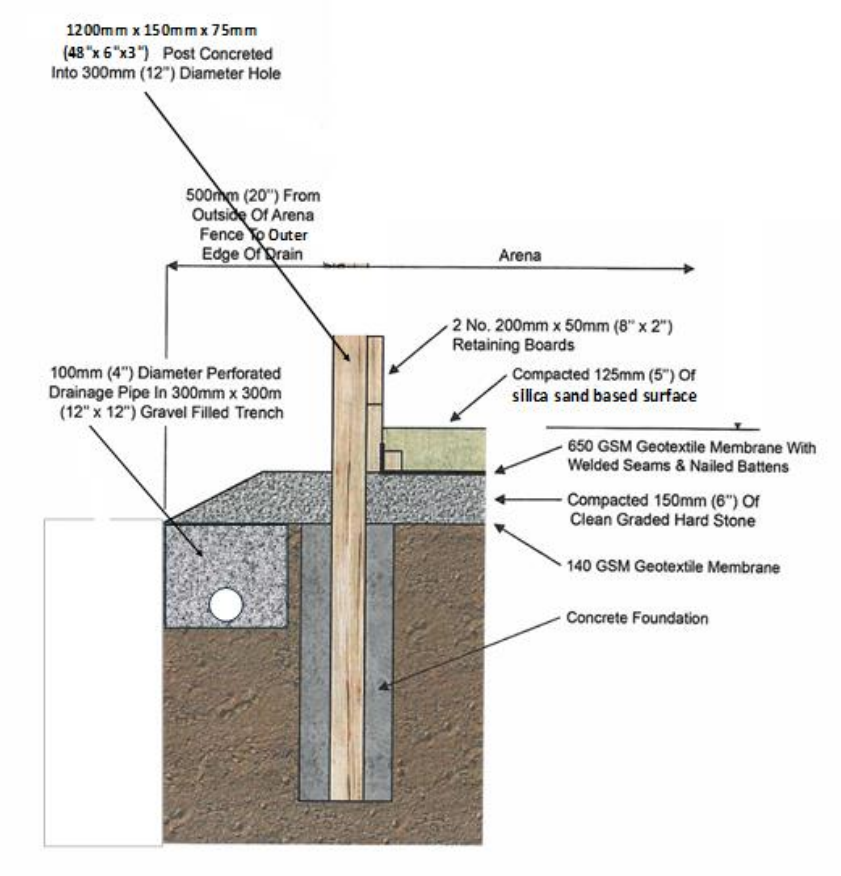



Scale:

The proposed ménage measures 60m x 20m, which is a standard and commonly adopted size for a riding arena used for the safe schooling of competition dressage horses. The photo below shows an example of a typical all-weather arena



Due to the site topography, the visual impact of the arena to the surrounding countryside is negligible.




Arena cross section

**12. <u>Historic Environment:</u>**

The site lies within 'open countryside' setting and would not affect any listed building, conservation area or archaeological interests in the area. Therefore, there would be no impact upon 'heritage assets' in this regard.

**13. <u>Access:</u>**

The ménage would be accessed directly from our client's property, with vehicle access provided from the client's yard area to ensure regular maintenance, including harrowing and levelling of the surface. The two neighbouring properties would not be affected by any increase in traffic.

**14. <u>Design Solution:</u>**

The proposed structure will provide a safe, well-drained riding surface, enabling year-round exercise and training for both horse and rider in most weather conditions. It will be built on a free-draining base of clean, local stone, allowing surface water to naturally filter through the structure and into the ground, as it does in the existing environment. This design ensures that there is no concentrated flow of water created.

The proposed location for the facility is close to the existing buildings on the property, at the edge of an adjoining field, ensuring easy access. The surface material will consist of a specialist equestrian sand, chosen for its performance

qualities. This material provides a stress-absorbent, slip-resistant, and horse-supportive surface, while also being weather-tolerant, making it suitable for year-round use.

*Note:* There will be no accumulation of dung in the proposed horse exercise area. Any droppings that occur during exercise will be promptly lifted to maintain the optimal condition and performance of the riding surface materials. These droppings will be managed as part of the property's regular field management routines.

**15. Climate Change Considerations:**

In accordance with DCLG 'Guidance on information Requirements and Validation" (March 2010), the proposal has been considered against the guidance set in NPPF in terms of climate change considerations. However, the planning application is for an equestrian ménage and therefore the advice is largely irrelevant.

**16. Conclusions:**

The land proposed for the facility has historically been used for grazing horses. The proposal seeks to provide an all-weather facility in a discrete location that meets the needs of the client and their family, allowing for the safe and effective schooling of their horses. The scheme is considered to comply with relevant policy, striking an appropriate balance between the client's requirements and minimising impact on the surrounding landscape.