

## **DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT**

### **Change of Use of field from Agricultural to private Equestrian; Including New Ménage**

**Rectory Farm  
Thrandeston**

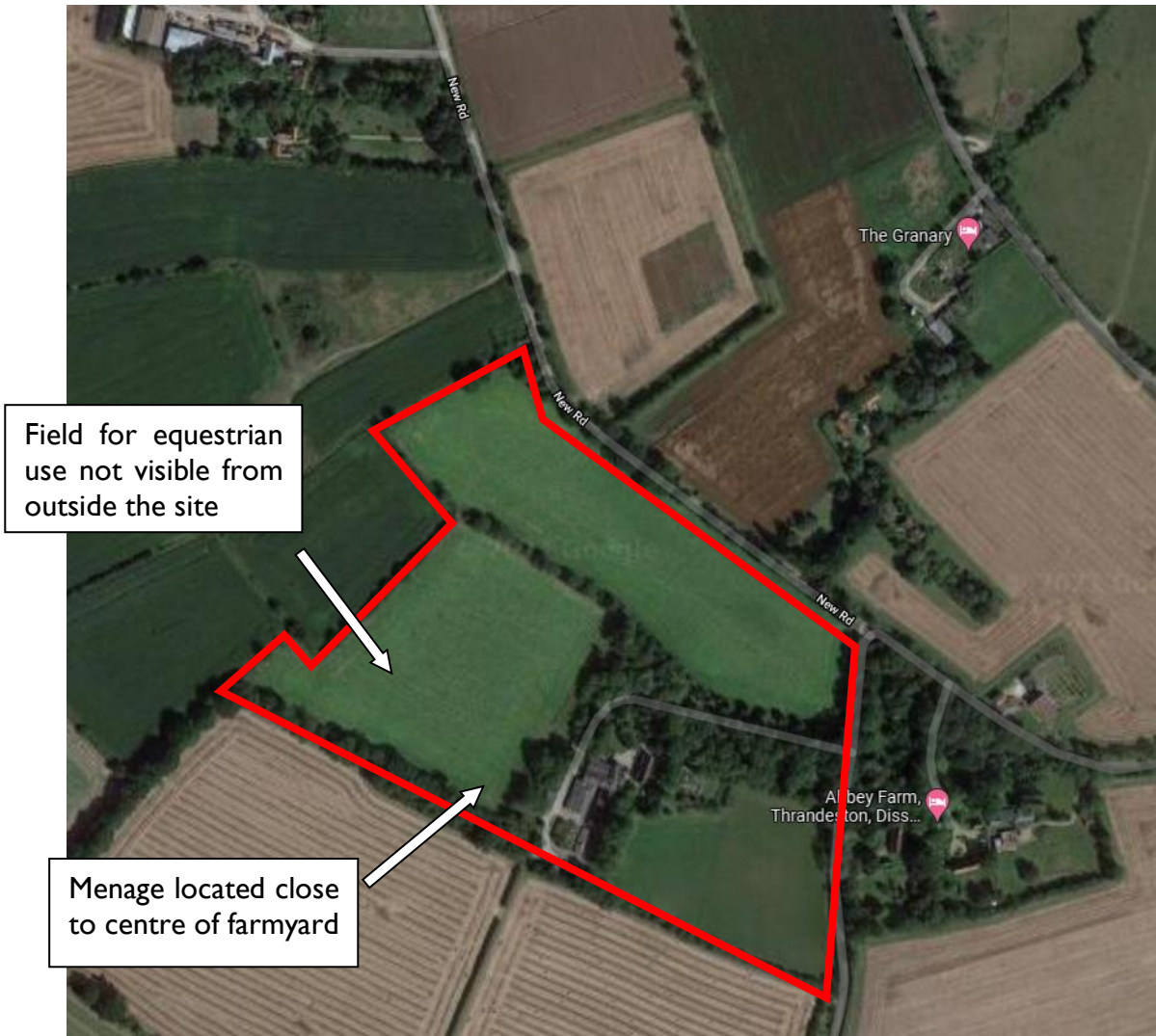
**October 2021**

**Agent:**  
Roberts Molloy Architects  
3 Church Lane  
Bressingham  
Diss Norfolk  
IP22 2AE

01379 687705

## I. Introduction

The property is a small 'farm', including approximately 8.3Ha of agricultural fields surrounding a farmyard with multiple modern buildings and a historic farmhouse, all located away from the road and screened by mature planting and trees. The amount of arable agricultural field area is insufficient to provide a livelihood. Permitted Development under Class Q has been established for conversion of one of the farm buildings to residential. It is likely therefore, that the property may be split into two residential curtilages, but that is not currently applied for.



**AERIAL VIEW**

## 2. Amount of development

The current proposal is for erection of a new private leisure menage and change of use of land for grazing for horses within one of the fields.

The result will be retention of approximately 5.5Ha of agricultural arable land and 2.75Ha of grazing with menage. The property is entirely surrounded by productive agricultural land owned and operated by bigger farms. The field for use for grazing is of an irregular shape and therefore less economical to work with large modern machinery. The use for grazing will effectively help to retain the smaller field pattern within the landscape as there will be no pressure to combine the 2.75 Ha with neighbouring larger fields.

Joint Local Plan Policy LP21 points out the need to avoid negative impact on the environment, landscape character, setting of the locality. Suitably managed horse grazing should not have a negative impact on the ecology of the area. We attach the British Horse Association guidance on Pasture Management as a guide to what standard procedures and practices will be followed by the applicants. There is also a reference to the positive approaches to manage land for agriculture, conservation and recreational purposes. As the

filed will be managed for livestock grazing, its return to agricultural use in the future would be easily achieved.

### **3. Constraints – Policy PL21**

**Ia.** Location, size and scale – the applicant owns 9 horses for private recreational purposes. The grazing field at 2.75Ha will not provide year-round grazing for the 9 horses, but is roughly the correct scale at 1 horse / 0.75acres.

**Ib.** Siting – the new menage fencing will not be seen from anywhere outside the property. There is significant tree screening all around the field and along the field boundary to the south to screen the menage from the wider countryside

**Ic.** No lighting proposed for the menage. Fence as detailed on accompanying plans to be post and rail, which will not adversely affect the local environment in which the menage will sit.

**Id.** Lighting to be applied for separately at a later date if required, does not form part of this submission. There will be no impact on any other amenity through noise disturbance.

**Ie.** N/A

**If&g.** The menage will be constructed without any changes to existing landscape features, trees or hedges. Landscape Maintenance will be through standard countryside management such as hedge cutting and replanting as necessary, grazing of fields by wildlife (the horses) and maintenance of fences.

**Ih.** Biodiversity can be enhanced through livestock grazing if properly managed (see attached BHA Pasture Management leaflet).

**Ii.** The field is currently part of a very small property which is not self-sustaining as a working farm. Conversion of 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of the land to grazing with the retention of the remaining fields in agricultural use will not impact on the sustainability of the property as a farm but does offer added value to the property of such small proportions, whilst retaining the field in a natural, productive use. Horse grazing can be important in taking over small remnant pieces of once large or self-sufficient agricultural holdings, which would otherwise lose their small-field edges and hedges in the landscape as they are absorbed in other ways.

## APPENDIX A

# Ecological Benefits of Horses

July 23, 2014, by ELCR

by Danielle Bolte

We are all familiar with the benefits we derive from horse ownership, including the sometimes large contribution these gentle giants make to our physical and mental wellbeing, yet benefits accrue to the community as well from having horses in the neighborhood, ranging from socioeconomic to environmental. As horse ownership increases throughout the developed world, these benefits need to be better recognized and incorporated into land use planning efforts.

The first step in making this a reality is an understanding of what types of benefits can be gained from encouraging horses in the landscape; only by realizing the types of benefits that can be provided by horse farms can their place in land use planning and the achievement of community goals be appreciated. Among these benefits are important contributions to the ecological health of the landscape, some of which are enumerated below.

1. **Provision of Wildlife Habitat.** Most horse farms include large open areas that are left more or less natural and used as pastures, trails, or other minimally invasive uses. This practice leaves large areas of semi-natural vegetation, including meadow type spaces and remnant woodlands, which are perfectly suited to species such as deer, turkey, squirrels, rabbits, and other forms of wildlife, especially those that do well in edge habitats.
2. **Watershed and Stream Protection.** Compared to other livestock operations, horse farms are more likely to utilize water troughs rather than relying on natural water bodies, primarily to prevent the horses contracting diseases from natural waterways. In many cases, this protection can extend to fencing off these natural water bodies, protecting their banks from erosion and minimizing sediment loads in the streams. This practice also provides a natural buffer between the livestock operation and the waterway, providing the opportunity for nutrients to be filtered out of runoff before it reaches surface waters. This protection can be ensured by requiring minimum buffer zones between manure piles, small paddocks, and other sources of highly concentrated animal waste and surface water bodies.
3. **Groundwater Recharge.** In addition to protecting surface waters, horse farms can help recharge underground aquifers. Especially in the case of lower intensity farms, the large areas of pasture land and relatively low percentage of impervious surfaces allow ample opportunity for rainwater to infiltrate into the groundwater rather than running off into sewer systems or swelling surface waters. The benefits of locating horse farms over groundwater recharge areas result from their generally low intensity use and few chemical residues, meaning the water percolating through the soil will be cleaner and the groundwater will require less purification, saving money and time.
4. **Soil Conservation.** A properly managed pasture retains at least 70 percent groundcover year round, as compared to traditional cropland which lies fallow part of the time with no stabilizing crop roots to hold valuable topsoil in place. Pasture land with year round grass cover helps prevent soil erosion, reducing sediment loads in surrounding streams and preserving the productivity of the soil and the nutrients in it.
5. **Maintenance of Biodiversity.** Properly managed grazing can help maintain range and pasture land in good condition by providing the necessary level of disturbance to encourage growth and reproduction of the desired grasses, helping to maintain habitat for desirable wildlife species.