

# PLANNING, DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

## ERECTION OF EQUESTRIAN BUILDING & NEW ACCESS

LAND TO THE WEST OF THE A689, HOWDEN-LE-WEAR

FOR: **J. Metcalfe**



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# 1. INTRODUCTION





# 1. INTRODUCTION

## Purpose

This Planning, Design and Access Statement has been prepared to support the accompanying application, on behalf of our client J. Metcalfe, seeking planning permission to create a new equestrian building with new access on land to the west of the A689, Howden-le-Wear. This Statement establishes the principle of development for the subject proposals with commentary on the design.

This supporting Statement will provide an overview of the following aspects of the application:

- The existing character of the area;
- The planning policy context;
- Evaluation of the subject site;
- Planning considerations;
- The proposed design; and
- Conclusions.

This section of the statement provides an introduction to the development proposals.

## Planning Application

The planning application is submitted in full with all matters considered. A pre-application submission was undertaken (Ref: PRE28/22/00753) which has assisted in the formulation and design of the subject scheme.

The application submission is supported by the following technical reports:

- Planning & Design Statement prepared by AMS Planning and Architecture Ltd;
- A suite of drawings produced by AMS Planning and Architecture Ltd;
- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal prepared by Natural Wild; and
- Phase 1 Environmental Assessment Report prepared by EnviroSolution Ltd.



Site Location Plan



# 1. INTRODUCTION

## Site Location and Surroundings

The subject site extends to approximately 0.25 hectares which forms part of a wider agricultural field situated to the west of Valley Terrace, Howden-le-Wear, within the administrative boundary of Durham County Council. The site is located to the east of the A689 Valley Terrace.

Whilst adjacent to the existing residential development along Valley Terrace to the east, the locality of the site is semi-rural in nature, bound by fields to the north, south and west, typical of the edge-of-settlement location. More specifically, land to the north of the site, beyond the band of mature trees and vegetation, comprises an equestrian centre and grazing land. Further equestrian facilities are situated to the west of the site, as shown on the aerial plan opposite. The proposed stable building will therefore be in keeping with surrounding land uses and comprises a form of development appropriate to the setting.

The site is located within an Area of Higher Landscape Value (AHLV) as defined on the County Durham Policy Maps. There are no listed buildings contained in or adjacent to the site boundary and the site is located entirely within Flood Zone 1 and is therefore at a low risk of flooding.

## Planning History

The planning history of the subject site is as follows:

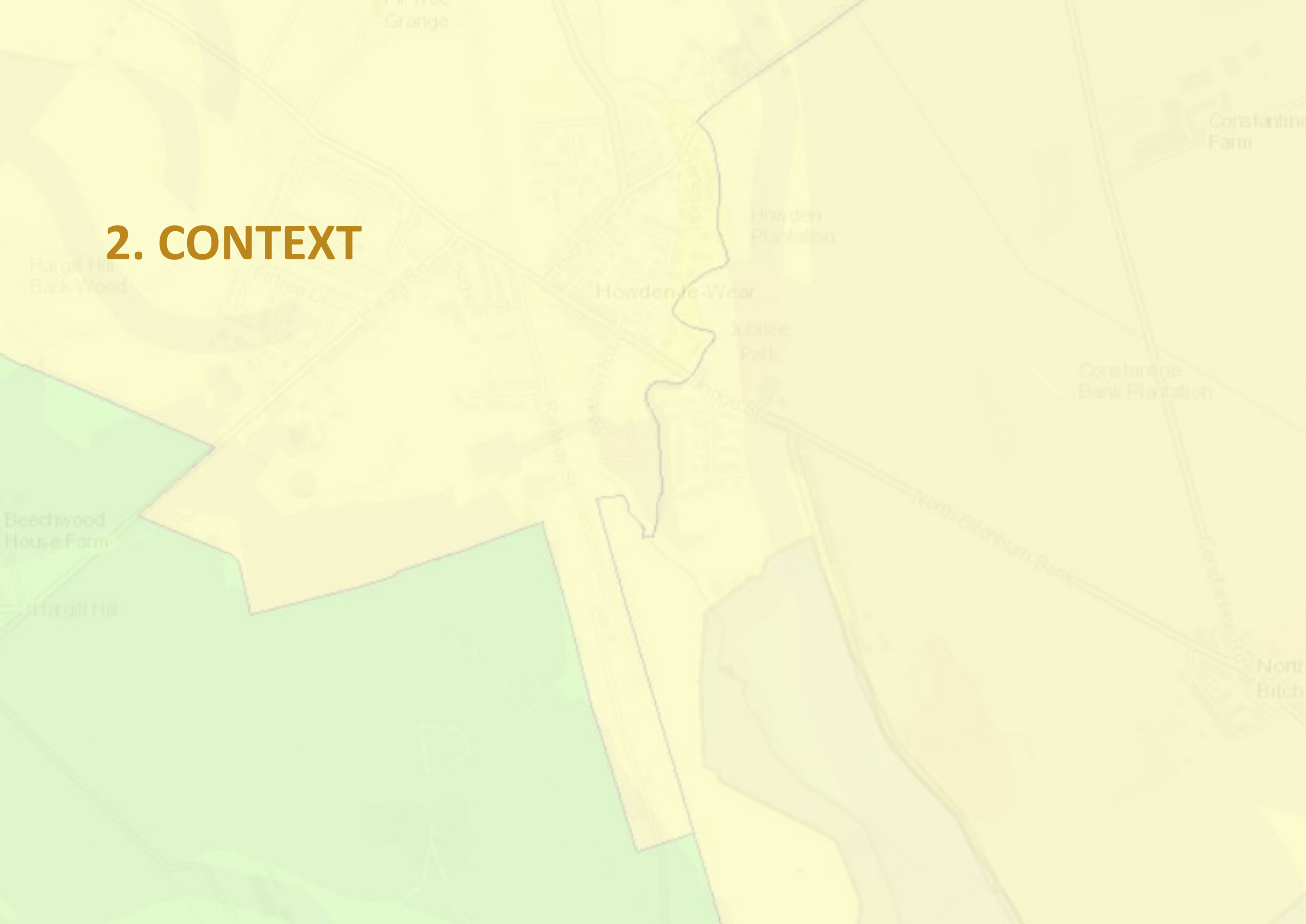
- **8/CMA/3/20** – Construction of a hardcore access track at existing CSO site. Approved 06 January 2006.
- **3/2005/1070**—Construction of hardcore access track. Approved 08 December 2005.
- **DM/22/02059/FPA**—Erection of a stable block comprising five stables, tack room, hay storage, wagon store and area for lambing. Withdrawn October 2022.

Pre-application advice was sought in relation to the proposed stable building. A summary of the response is provided overleaf.



*Aerial view of the subject site and immediate surroundings. Existing residential development to the north and east is indicated by the yellow shading, with the remainder of the surroundings being agricultural and equestrian*

## 2. CONTEXT





## 2. CONTEXT

### Planning Policy Context

#### National Planning Policy

Whilst the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) does not specifically address proposals for a domestic-scale outbuilding, whether for the stabling of horses or other use, where it is not proposed in a location with a specific landscape or heritage designation, there are equally no national policies which would preclude such a development.

Indeed, the presumption in favour of sustainable development is at the heart of the NPPF (paragraph 11) and is the golden thread which runs through all national planning policy. The Framework advises, in paragraph 126, the creation of high quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Further, paragraph 130 outlines that planning decisions should create development with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users. Given that there are no designations in this instance, or other planning reasons which could preclude development, the proposed equestrian building's status as sustainable development is established. As such, the subject proposal is supported by national planning policy.

#### Local Planning Policy

The County Durham Local Plan was adopted on the 21st October 2020, and provides the policy framework for the county up to 2035. The following policies are considered relevant to the subject proposals:

- Policy 10—Development in the Countryside;
- Policy 13—Equestrian Development;
- Policy 21—Delivering Sustainable Transport;
- Policy 29—Sustainable Development;
- Policy 31—Amenity and Pollution;
- Policy 32—Despoiled, Degraded, Derelict, Contaminated and Unstable Land;
- Policy 39—Landscape;
- Policy 40—Trees, Woodlands and Hedges;
- Policy 41—Biodiversity and Geodiversity; and
- Policy 43—Protected Species and Nationally and Locally Protected Sites.

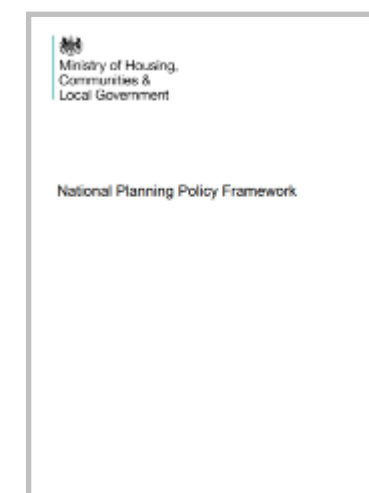
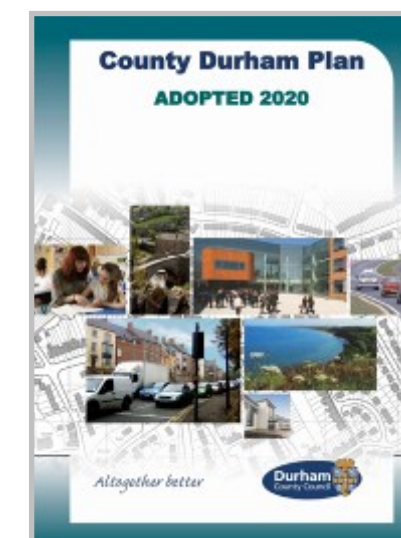
#### Policy 13—Equestrian Development

Equestrian development will be considered an appropriate countryside use and will be permitted where the following criteria are met:

- Stables are of an appropriate size, design and construction for their intended use and the number of stables reflect the amount of grazing land available;
- The proposal involves the appropriate conversion of

existing buildings or, where proposals involve new permanent buildings, these are located as part of, or close to, an existing farmstead or other building grouping;

- The proposal would not, by virtue of their siting, design, scale, materials or layout, lighting or through the inappropriate intensification of existing bridleways, routes and land, unacceptably affect the character, heritage or nature conservation value or the locality, either individually or cumulatively with other development;
- The proposals provide appropriate measures for screening buildings, hard standings, arenas and storage areas with trees or hedges;
- The proposal is supported by details of appropriate waste storage, management, end disposal and surface and ground water drainage; and
- The proposal would not adversely impact on the general amenity of neighbouring properties and the wider area; and g. safe and suitable access can be achieved, and in the case of commercial establishments are located close to existing bridleways or other routes suitable for trekking or hacking out where this forms part of the business.





## 2. CONTEXT





## 2. CONTEXT

### Viewpoint 1

Photograph taken from the existing communal car park in the foreground with mature tree belt to the rear. Views of the subject site are glimpsed beyond the parked cars at this location.

### Viewpoint 2

Photograph taken from the eastern most part of the subject site looking east towards the A689 with valley terrace, with the existing utility access road along the northern edge of the site to the left of the picture.

### Viewpoint 3

Photograph of the existing water utility within the site to which the access road connects.

### Viewpoint 4

Photograph taken looking west of the surfaced access track as it exits the communal car park. The mature tree belt to the north of the site is on the right of the picture, with the subject site to the left at the end of the existing access track.



Viewpoint 1



Viewpoint 2



Viewpoint 3



Viewpoint 4



## 2. CONTEXT

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### Viewpoint 5

Photograph taken from the most south westerly point of the proposed grazing land. The A689 and Valley Terrace can be seen on the horizon.



Viewpoint 5

### Viewpoint 6

Photograph taken the bus stop on the A689, roughly midway down the eastern boundary of the site. Due to the mature hedgerow views of the site are not achievable.



Viewpoint 6

### Viewpoint 7

Photograph taken from the most southernly footpath point on the A689 Valley Terrace. Views of the subject site are not achievable.



Viewpoint 7

### Viewpoint 8

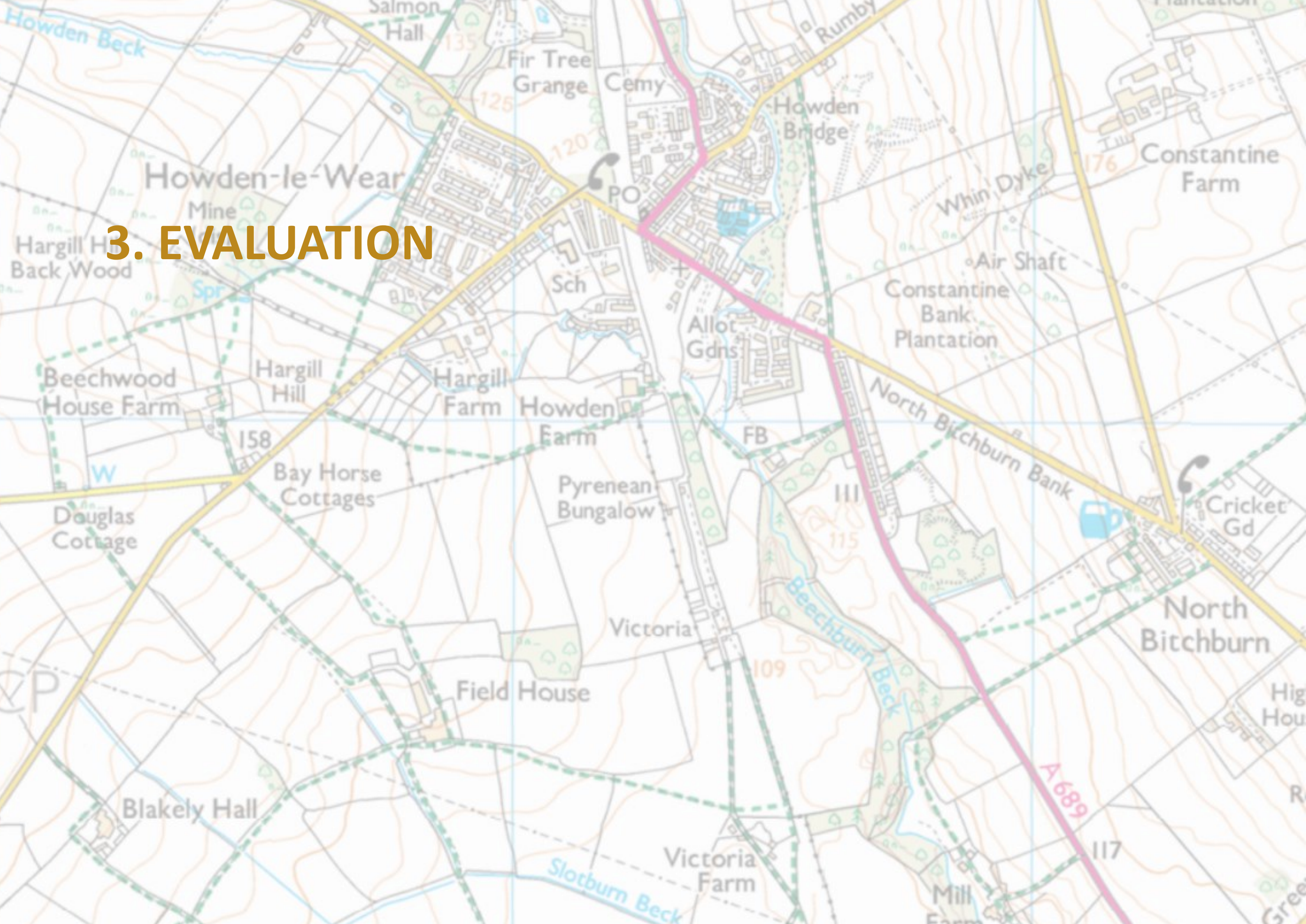
Photograph taken from the closest public footpath, located circa 100 metres to the north eastern corner of the existing residents car park. The existing mature tree belt and dense undergrowth obscure views of the subject site from this location. The public footpath wanders westwards, past two existing equestrian buildings and associated paddocks and outdoor menage.



Viewpoint 8



### 3. EVALUATION





### 3. EVALUATION

#### Opportunities and Constraints

##### Client's Brief

The client's objective is to secure planning permission for a stable building that:

- Primarily provides domestic stabling for horses;
- Additionally provides essential storage in the form of a tack room and hay storage;
- Achieves a safe, secure and accessible environment;
- Respects neighbouring amenity; and
- Enables the applicant and friends to adequately house and care for their horses within proximity to their homes.

##### Development Opportunities

- Views of the development site are limited due to the adjacent woodland to the north and thick hedgerow which bounds the A689 to the east;
- Creation of a new safe access from the A689 highway making access easier for the utilities company that requires access to utilities within the subject land; and
- The Flood Map for Planning, provided opposite, identifies that the subject site lies entirely within Flood Zone 1 and is therefore at a low risk of flooding.

##### Constraints

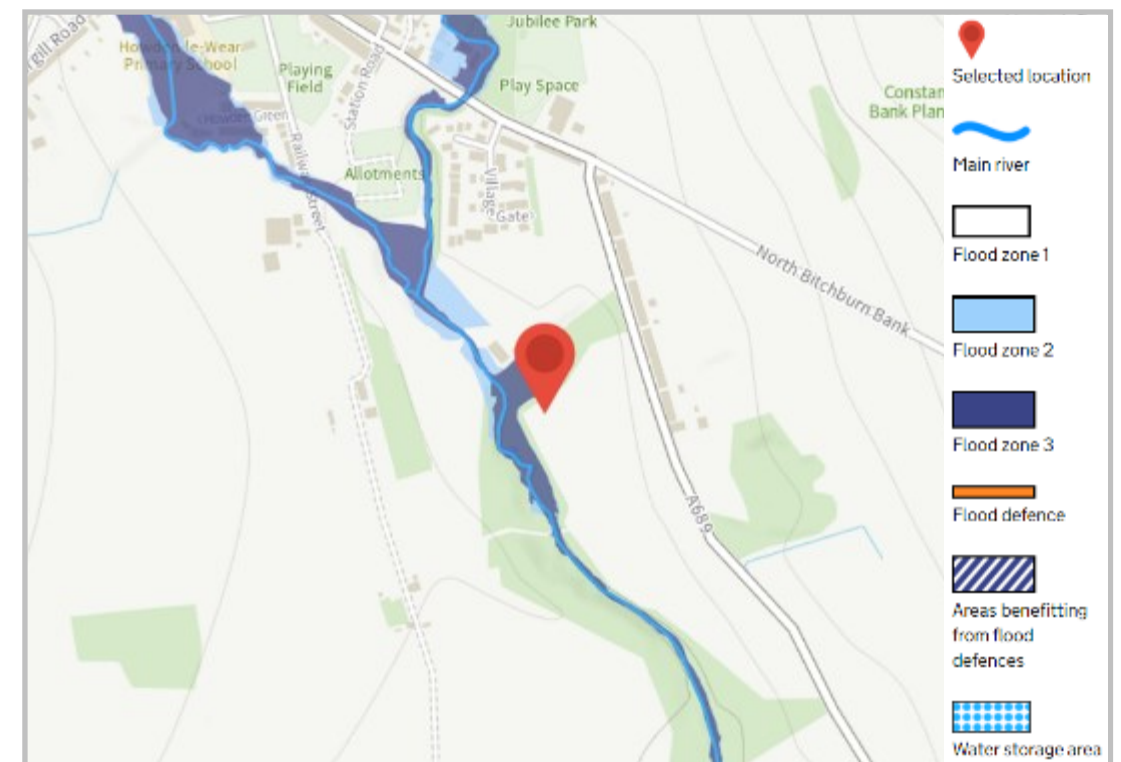
- The proposed development must be sensitive to neighbouring residential uses; and
- The proposed building must be well located within the site to avoid being seen as isolated.

##### Important Features

- The subject proposal will allow a social and recreational requirement to be fulfilled on a domestic scale in a suitable location; and
- The dense band of woodland to the north screens views of the subject site from the adjacent public right of way.



Existing utility facility within the site



Flood Map for Planning



## 4. PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS





## 4. PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

### Principle of Development

The application site is located to the south of Howden-le-Wear. The County Durham Plan defines the 'built up area' as land contained within the main body of the existing built development of a settlement or within a settlement boundary defined in a Neighbourhood Plan. All other areas falling outside of this definition are considered as countryside in policy terms, as is the case with the subject site.

Policy 13 (Equestrian Development) as outlined within the Planning Policy Context page in Section 2 of this report is the key policy for determining the subject proposals, as they relate to small scale non-commercial development. The Policy states that new equestrian development will be considered an appropriate countryside use and will be permitted where certain key criteria are met.

The proposed equestrian building will allow the applicants to stable their horses at one location local to their primary residences, rather than split between two separate sites at Westerton and Tudhoe as is currently the case. The applicants who are the intended final owners and operators of the site all currently reside within, or adjacent to the village of Howden-le-Wear, with journeys required to be made by car to existing stables, rather than on foot as the proposals would allow.

The proposed building has been designed to provide the required equestrian stable space as per the requirement of the applicants to house their existing horses. The grazing space required per horse means that the building operation could not expand beyond what is required by the applicants and therefore could not operate as a commercial activity.

Since the receipt of the pre-application response from the Council, the size of the proposed stable building has been reduced in size to provide exactly the required stable space to match the applicants current horse ownership. The size of the land associated with the proposed stable has also roughly doubled in size with the purchase of the second half of the



*View of the proposed development area*

adjoining field. The stable building is therefore of an appropriate size, design and construction for their intended use and the number of stables reflect the amount of grazing land available. Horse muck will be removed incrementally via trailer by a local farmer. Surface water intended to be drained into the adjacent water course.

The stable building is located towards the rear corner of the grazing field, adjacent to an existing water utility which already has an existing surfaced access which is required to be maintained by the applicants. The subject application will see the upgrade of this access, as required within the title deed, and utilisation by the proposed stables.

The stable is to be of a standard construction, mirroring the materials of the existing equestrian buildings located just to the north across the tree belt and west across the tree belt. With no listed buildings, conservation area of any other landscape designations and a strong existing tree belt to the north and west of the site, with significant existing mature hedgerow to the east, the subject site is a suitable location for such a use and building.

The proposed hardstanding areas wrap around the building, with the primary area of hardstanding to be located to the north of the building, next to the mature tree belt which will provide significant screening. As demonstrated by the below photo, the only views of the building achievable from the public highway would be glimpsed views seen in context with the existing car park on the site.

Overall, the proposed creation of the subject equestrian building meets all the relevant criteria in Policy 13 and is therefore considered acceptable.



*View looking east from the subject site, with extent of public view points into the site indicated in black*



## 4. PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

### Other Considerations (continued)

#### Impact on Residential Amenity

Policy 13 (Equestrian Development) outlines that proposals should not adversely impact on the general amenity of neighbouring properties and the wider area. Policy 29 (Sustainable Design) also highlights amenity as an important consideration, requiring all development to provide high standards of amenity and privacy and minimize the impact of development upon existing adjacent and nearby properties.

More specifically, Policy 31 (Amenity and Pollution) outlines:

*“Development which has the potential to lead to, or be affected by, unacceptable levels of air quality, inappropriate odours, noise and vibration or other sources of pollution, either individually or cumulatively, will not be permitted including where any identified mitigation cannot reduce the impact on the environment, amenity of people or human health to an acceptable level. Development which does not minimise light pollution and demonstrate that the lighting proposed is the minimum necessary for functional or security purposes will not be permitted.”*

The impact of an equestrian building on residential amenity at the proposed location was assessed in the pre-application response, with comments provided by Environmental Health (Nuisance Action Team), which concluded:

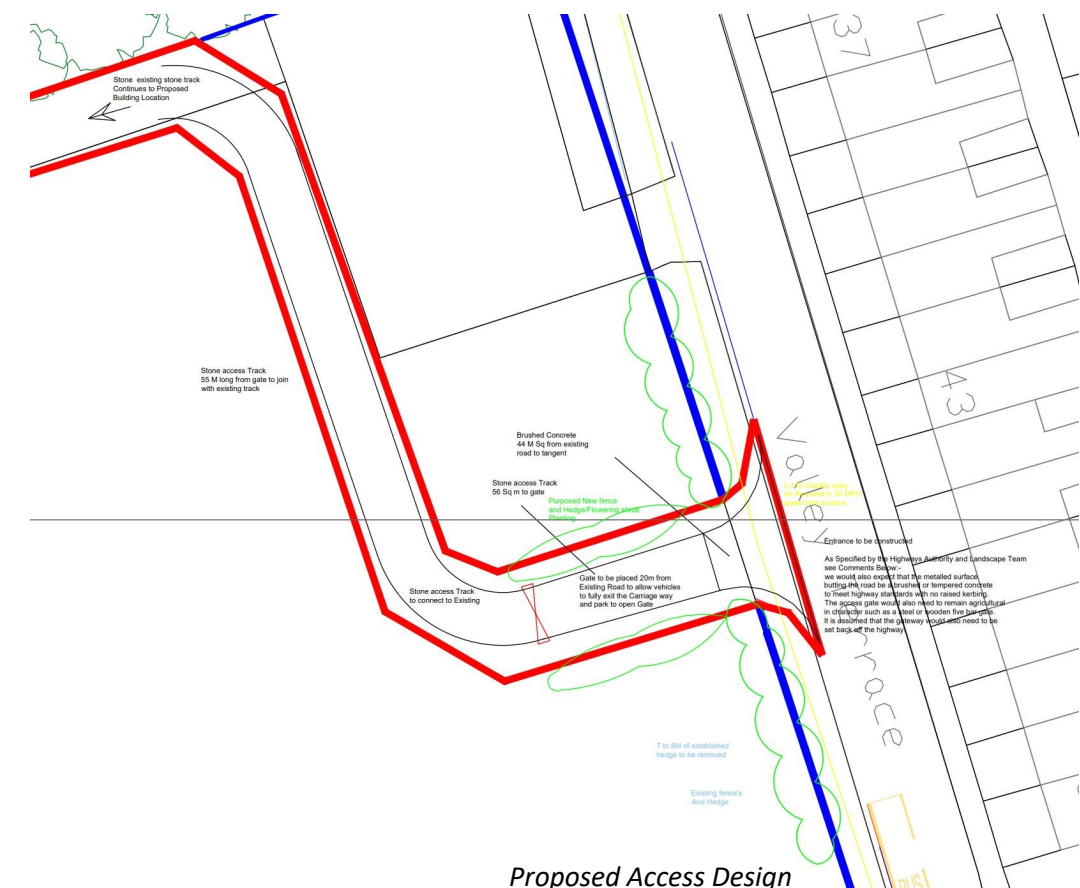
*“The proposal is not sensitive, however the site area is somewhat sensitive with residential properties approximately 130m away. The site area could be described as semi-rural and semi-residential. We are not aware of any matters concerning the site and believe the proposed new agricultural building is within reasonable parameters, providing relevant good practice guidance is complied with, concerning livestock and manure management. This would indicate that the development would not lead to an adverse impact.”*

As per the above, and through the design discussion contained within this Statement, it is considered that the proposed development would not have an adverse impact on the residents of Valley Terrace given the separation distance, proposed design and surrounding existing land use.

#### Access and Highway Safety

The subject land was sold to the current owners without an access, which was previously assumed to be achieved via the adjacent car park but after a review of title deeds this was actually not lawful and reserved solely for the water board. A new access is therefore required to allow the land to be managed and tidied as a minimum. A new access has been designed by a qualified consultant and has been screen by DCC Highways team in advance of submission. Right to use the access will also be given to the water board, with an existing surfaced track running westward towards a water utility within the site constructed in 2006.

The access track is the responsibility of the owner (applicant) to keep maintained. The previous owner of the land has not undertaken regular maintenance of the track and as a result it has become overgrown with weeds along the edges and is no longer well defined. The applicant intends to undertake some repairs to the track, weeding along the edges to once again define the edges of the existing surface. A new surface of road plainings will be laid, using the existing track as the hardcore. This will therefore be constructed as a ‘no dig’ project and will not impact any surrounding trees.





## 4. PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

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### Other Considerations (continued)

#### *Ground Conditions*

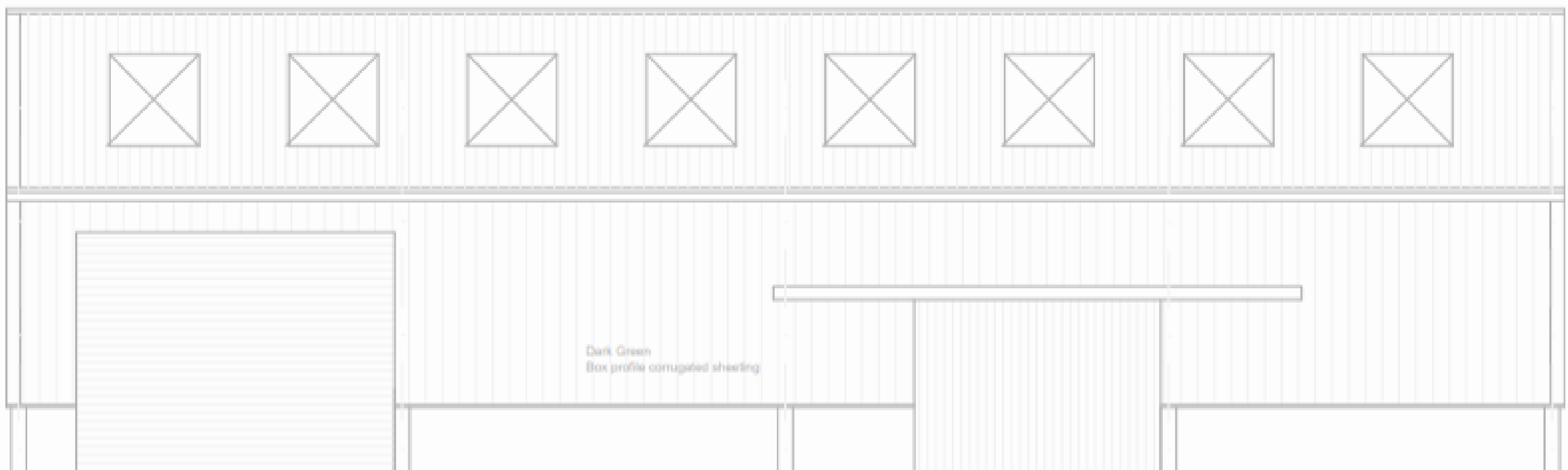
As requested, a Phase 1 Environmental Assessment Report, prepared by EnviroSolution Ltd, has been prepared to support this application. The Report identified that, similar to the majority of open land in County Durham, it has historical mining links, with the potential for made ground within shallow soils. It is recommended a Phase 2 intrusive ground investigation is undertaken prior to site redevelopment to obtain additional information on the ground conditions and the contamination status. The scope of works for the investigation will need to be submitted and approved by the local authority prior to the commencement of the Phase 2 intrusive works.

As the site intersects a Development High Risk Area for coal mining. It is therefore recommended that a detailed Coal Mining Risk Assessment is completed.

#### *Ecology*

A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, prepared by Naturally Wild Ecologists, found that the site was of low ecological value, with some habitat for nesting birds within the existing grassland. A series of ecological mitigation and enhancement measures to be incorporated into the works have been outlined. These include carrying out the proposed works outside of bird nesting season, and a sensitive lighting scheme. A scheme for the implementation of bird boxes, as per the comments received by the Council's ecologist, would be acceptable to achieve bio-diversity net gain considering the small loss of habitats of low distinctiveness.







## 5. THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

### General Design Principles

The full application submission includes a suite of drawings produced by AMS Planning, Architecture and Development Consultants.

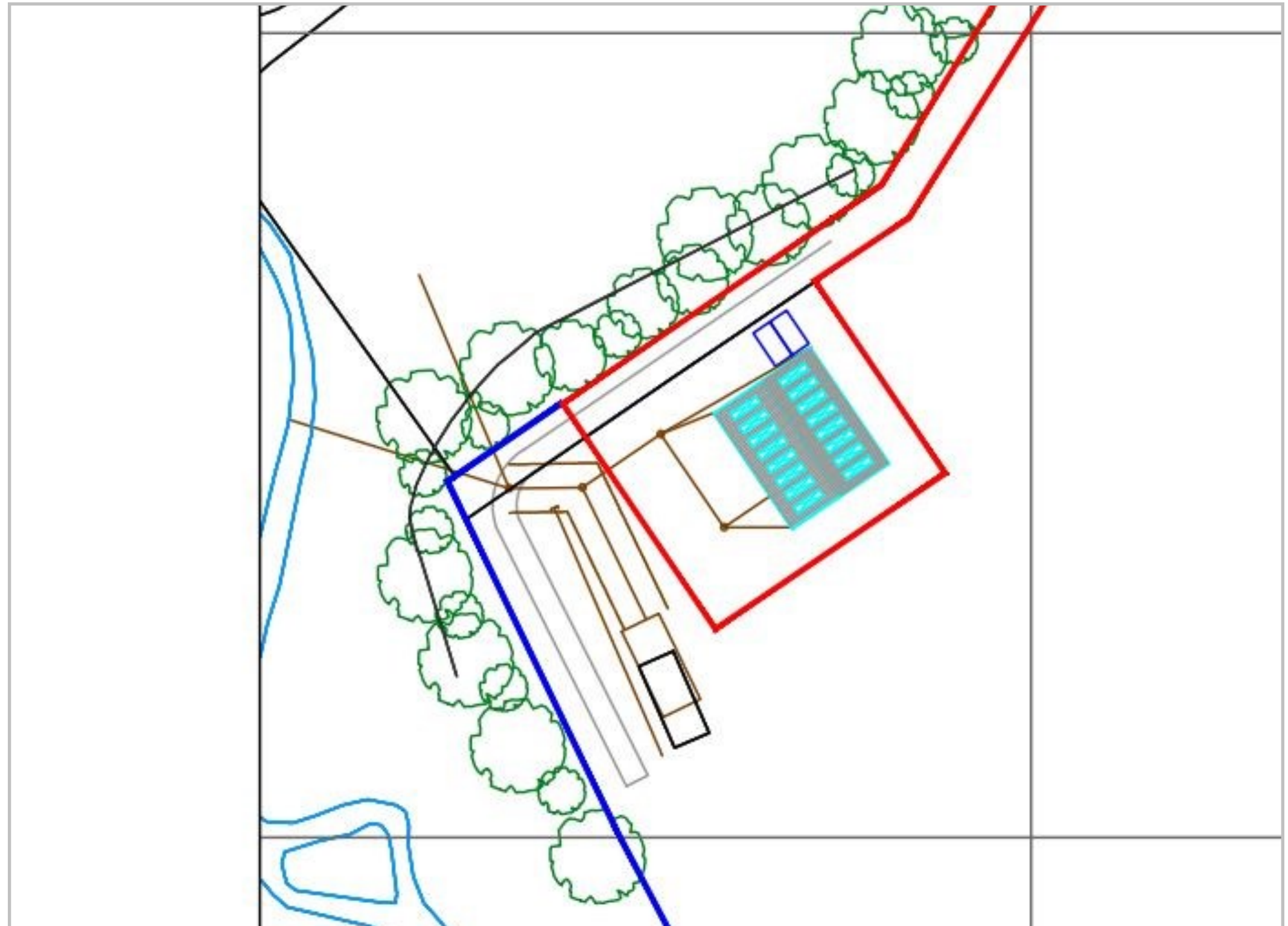
The siting of the equestrian building towards the north west of the wider site, as shown opposite on the Proposed Site Layout, provides adequate spacing from adjacent dwellings at Valley Terrace, as to not negatively impact on amenity. This area is also well screened by the thick band of dense vegetation to the north and west of the site, screening the proposed development from view in these directions.

By utilising and undertaking some basic maintenance of the existing access track, currently servicing the Northumbrian Water Facility, less hardstanding is required to realise the proposed development.

The proposed building will create a functional space suitable for the proposed use, consummate in size for the applicants requirements. The position of the stable block leaves the remainder of the site as paddock land, providing suitable and safe space for the applicant's horses to graze.

The proposed stable block has been designed to ensure that it is in keeping with the immediate locality, is not overbearing to neighbouring properties, and provides a high quality, functional building.

The subject proposals will utilise the existing safe and suitable vehicular access from the A689 to the east of the site.



Extract from Proposed Site Layout Plan

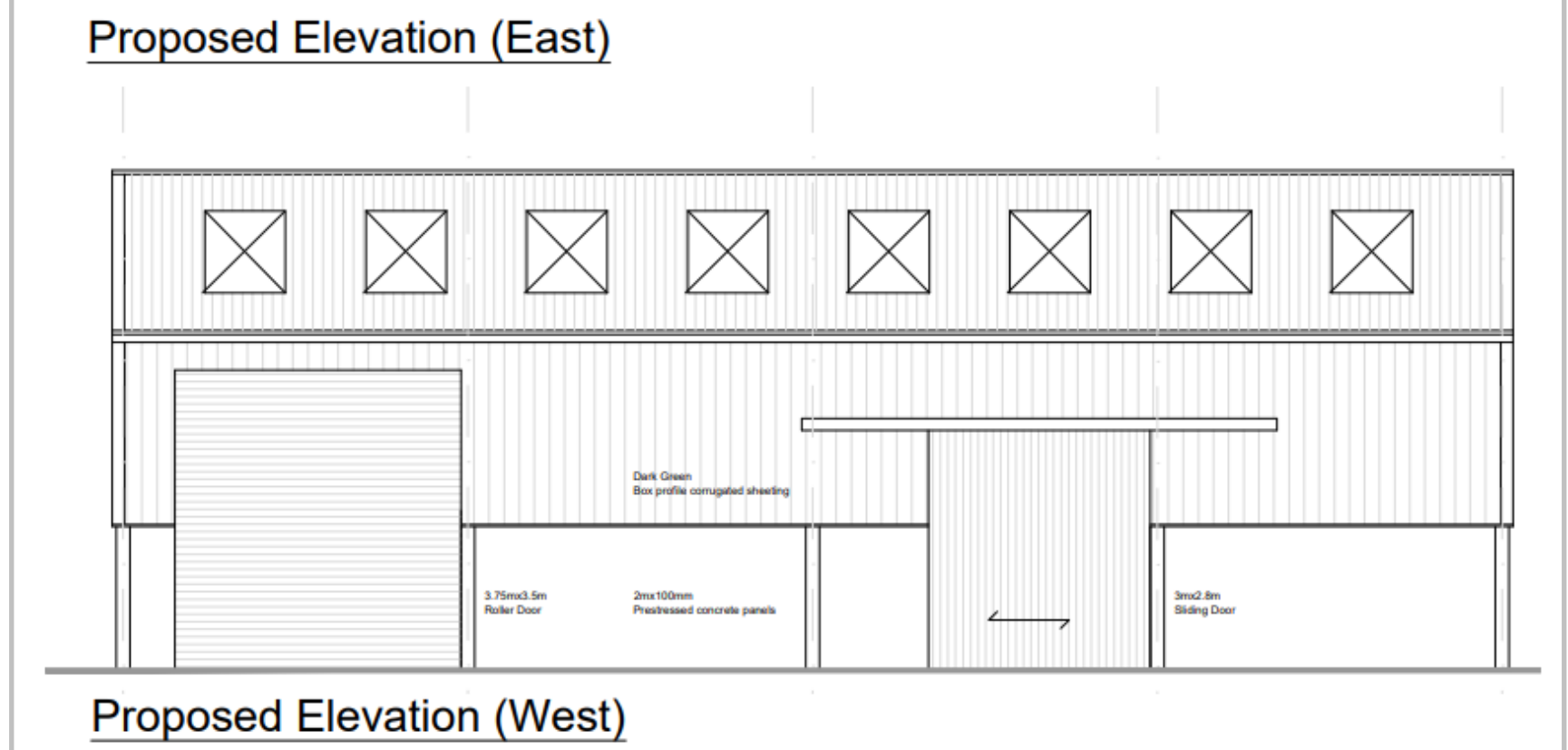
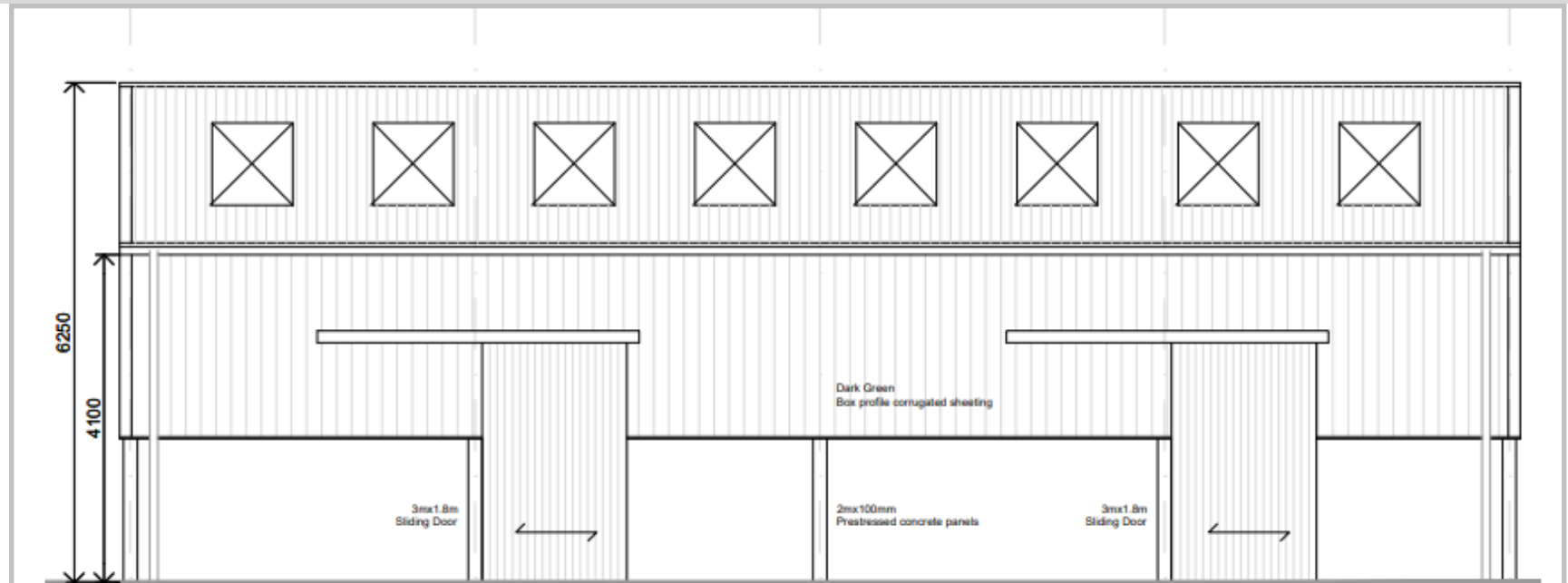
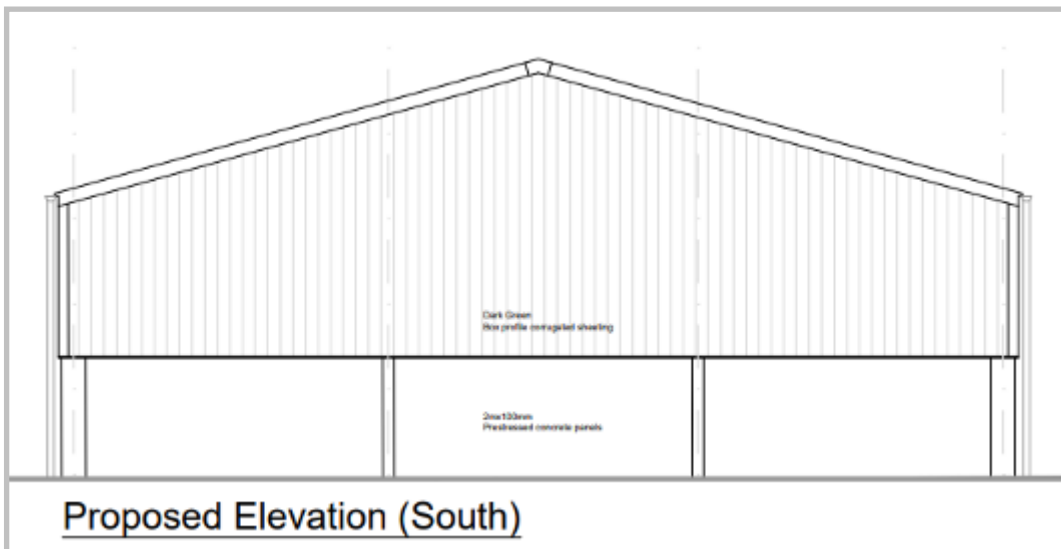
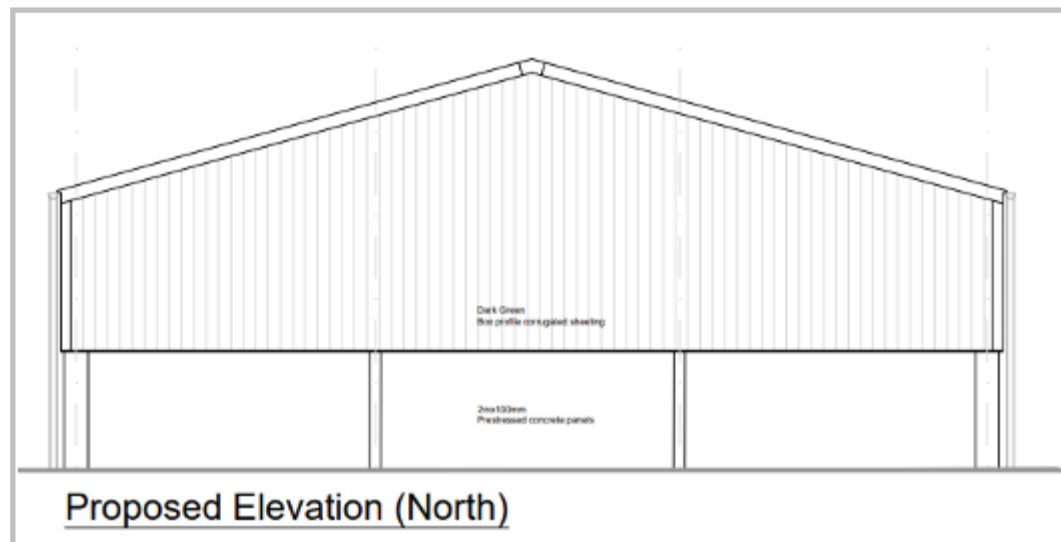


## 5. THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

### Proposed Elevations

The elevations opposite and below demonstrate that the proposed stable building will be simple and agricultural in appearance, appropriate to the semi-rural location, and similar to other stable buildings around the outskirts of Howden-le-Wear.

The design utilises a neutral colour palette, with dark brown corrugated sheeting above concrete panels to provide an appropriate building that will sit in harmony with the surroundings.





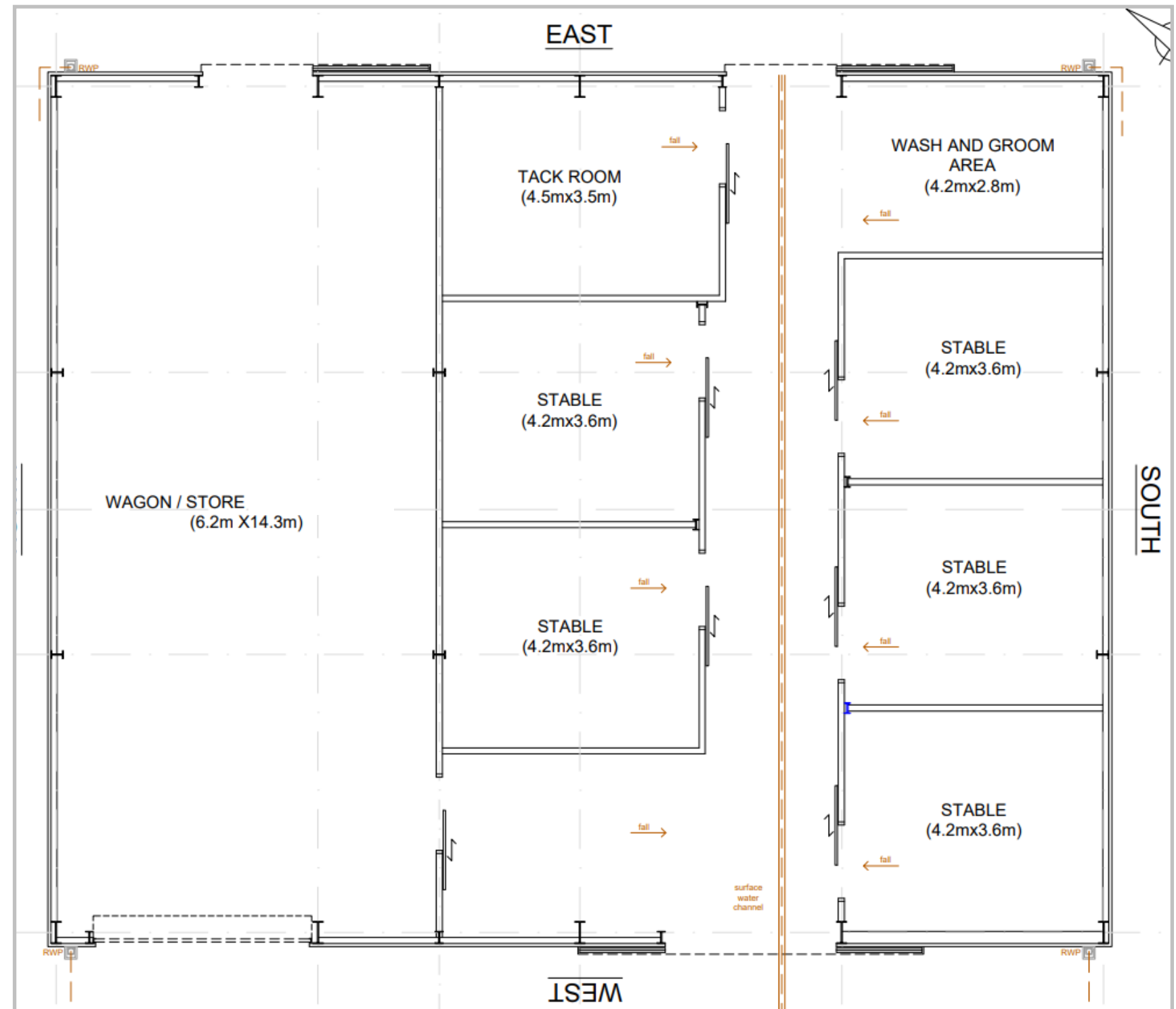
## 5. THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

### Proposed Floor Plan

As shown on the adjacent Floor Plan, the proposed building will comprise a simple, functional and suitable internal layout to provide the following facilities:

- Five stables to adequately and safely house the applicants' horses—this number now reflects the amount of grazing land available, as the remainder of the wider field has been secured by the applicants and will be utilised for grazing and paddocks, should the application be approved;
- An ancillary tack room to store all necessary equipment associated with the keeping of horses;
- A wash and groom area to provide the facilities necessary for the proper care of horses; and
- Multi-purpose area comprising wagon storage facilities.

The proposed design provides all the necessary facilities required for the intended purpose of keeping horses on a hobby basis.



Extract from Proposed Floor Plans



## 6. CONCLUSION





## 6. CONCLUSION

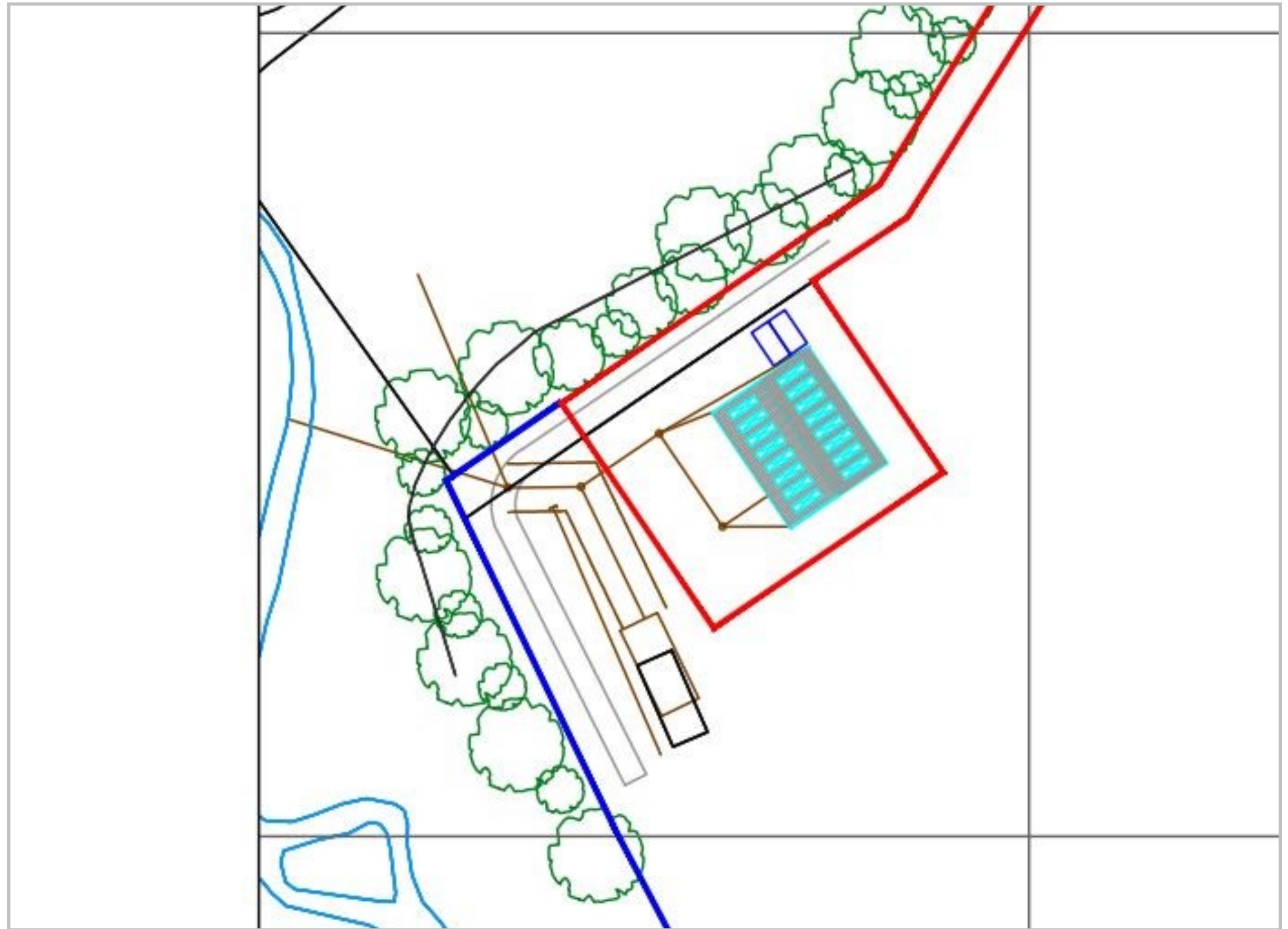
This Planning, Design and Access Statement has been prepared to support the accompanying planning application seeking permission for the erection of a new equestrian building and access with tack room, hay storage on land to the west of the A689, Howden-le-Wear.

This Statement has demonstrated the efforts which have been made to create a suitable, functional equestrian building to provide the applicant and her family and friends with the adequate facilities to house and graze their horses.

There are no planning reasons why permission should not be granted. The subject scheme represents a sustainable proposal for a suitable recreational/functional use outside the development boundary, in compliance with local policy. The principle of development is therefore established.

The subject site is well located, benefitting from extensive existing screening from public viewpoints, sitting to the rear of the site and utilising an existing access track required to be maintained at all times to serve a nearby drainage chamber.

For the reasons presented in this report it is considered that planning permission should be granted.



Extract from Proposed Site Layout Plan