DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

PROJECT

Mr & Mrs J D Thompson
Proposed menage (riding arena)
Thorn Tree Farm
Leek Old Road
Longsdon
ST9 9QJ

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 This Design & Access Statement is submitted in support of the Full Planning Application for the provision of a menage for private use situated on land within the curtilage of Thorn Tree Farm.

2. CONTEXT

2.1 The site is situated within the 'open countryside' for planning purposes. The property consists of house, out buildings, storage, stabling and pasture land.

2.2 The proposed menage would be located on the North of the property adjacent to the A53 Leek-Stoke road. The menage would not be visible from the A53 as this section of the road is elevated and bounded by a 1.3m stone wall. The menage would be visible from the public footpath which runs through the property. The menage would be well-screened from Leek Old Road as it would be at its furthest distant point from the road and the roadside hedgerow has a substantial row of established trees.

2.3 There will be no public access to the menage and it is solely for private use on private land. The land is currently used for grazing horses and sheep. Flowering species present include thistle, nettle and buttercup. The total grazing available is approximately five acres. Whilst there is only one horse presently, we expect to return to having two and the reduction of the available grazing will not be detrimental to the British Horse Society guidelines of one acre grazing per horse.

2.4 It is well-recognised by the British Horse Society (+100,000 members with active campaigns across welfare, access and safety) that menage based exercise is a safer and more secure environment, compared to an open field, for schooling horses by riding or lunging. The proposed facility will also reduce the need to hack on the local roads to exercise horses, which has significant risk with the need to cross the A53 trunk road to access quieter roads.

2.5 The menage proposed is 40mx20m which would allow for both dressage and jumping to be practised. Susan Thompson has a lifetime of successful, competitive riding experience at both local and county-level events. Training for this has been achieved by travelling horses to commercial arenas for hire and the proposed on-site facility will negate that.

3. DESIGN

3.1 The proposal would seek to create a menage which would be a fenced area of 800m2.

3.2 With the exception of top soil and grass, no vegetation or planting will be affected by the construction of the menage. The topsoil removed will be used to grade in the surrounding areas of the menage to provide a link between menage edge and grazing land, or used in other areas of our land and reseeded with meadow-mix grass seed. No soil will be removed from the site.

3.3 A herringbone drainage system is proposed below the clean stone layer on top of an initial geotextile membrane. The stone and drains will be covered with a second membrane layer e.g. Mypex, with a silica sand layer underneath the finished surface area of shredded rubber. The edging of the arena would be formed by wooden post and rail fencing, which is an open and light structure (illustrated on the cross-section plan). Locally sourced stone, timber from sustainable forests and recycled materials will be used as widely as possible.

3.4 The herringbone drainage system will complement existing land drains.

3.5 No floodlighting is proposed, the menage is for use during daylight hours.

3.6 The location is proposed (a) to not interfere with existing established trees/roots, (b) to work with the natural drainage flow and (c) to not harm the visual amenity of our neighbours.

4. ACCESS

4.1 The menage will be accessed through the open field area.

4.2 As a facility for private use this will not generate any significant increase in vehicular traffic on Leek Old Road. The proposal is likely to reduce vehicle movements as the requirement to exercise and train horses off site will be infrequent.

5. CONCLUSION

5.1 The proposal is an appropriate form of development in the open countryside and local policy is supportive of facilities for outdoor sport and recreation, with several examples of menage/riding arenas being approved by Staffordshire Moorlands in recent years.

5.2 The proposal would provide an all-weather facility in a discrete location for safe and effective schooling of our horses.

5.3 The proposal has been made within the constraints of the site to meet the demands of economical construction, good engineering design practice and practical use.

S M THOMPSON

11th August, 2023

REF. THORN TREE MENAGE 001