

**Proposed
Equestrian
Facilities
Land West of Hill
Farm Road
Taplow**

**Design & Access
Statement**

on behalf of

Mr S. Hussain

May 2014



Land at Hill Farm Road

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1. Introduction

1.1 The following Design & Access Statement has been prepared to support an application by Mr S.Hussain for a proposed equestrian facility on Land West of Hill Farm Road, Taplow.

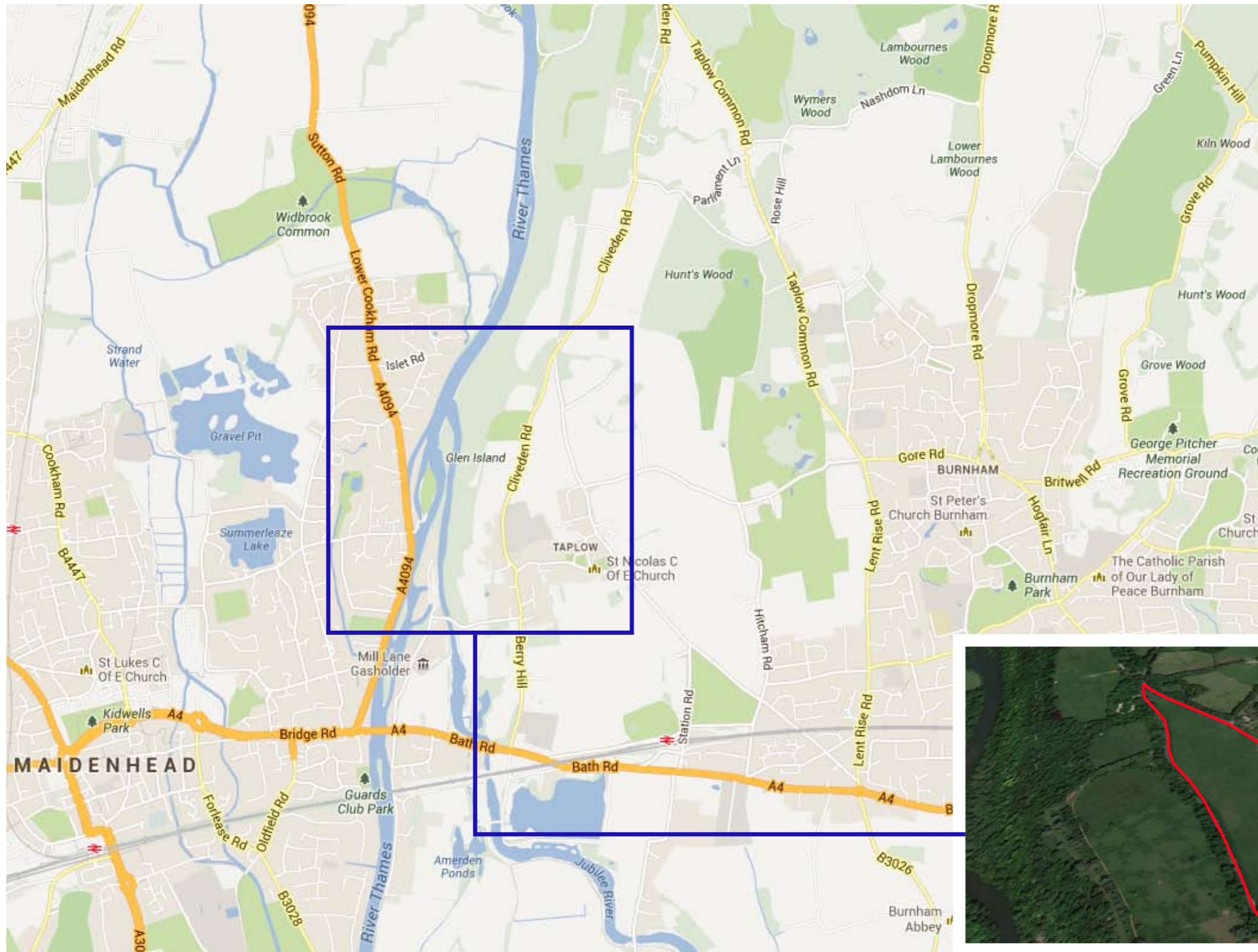
1.2 This Statement accompanies a covering letter and architectural drawings prepared by Design 4u Ltd. The format of this Statement has been developed in accordance with DCLG Circular 01/2006 and the updated guidance on information requirements and validation (April 2010). This Statement has also been prepared with regard to the guidance provided by CABE 'Design and Access Statements : How to write, read and use them' (2006).



1.3 The proposed development has given particular consideration to National Planning Policy Framework and the 'Development Plan' which comprises of the South Bucks Core Strategy (February 2011), saved policies from the South Bucks District Local Plan (adopted in 1999; policies saved in 2007 and consolidated February 2011) and associated Supplementary Planning Guidance.

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2. Site Context and Surroundings



2.1 The application site comprises a large triangular area of circa 11.5 ha of grazing land to the north of the village of Taplow. The site is bounded by Hill Farm Road to the east and Cliveden Road to the west, with both roads converging at the northern extents of the site.

2.2 Within the site itself, the land is currently laid to grass with fencing delineating individual grazing parcels. The boundaries to the site are well established, with existing mature trees and vegetation providing a good sense of containment.

2.3 The application site falls just outside of the defined village boundary for Taplow and abuts residential development along its southern edge. The gardens of the existing properties at the northern extents of the Buffins development overlook the southern part of the site.

2.4 Adjoining these properties is the wider residential curtilage of Wickenden, a large Lutyens style detached property which overlooks Taplow Cricket Club. The property



Land at Hill Farm Road

2. Site Context and Surroundings



is set within a substantial plot which included a small vineyard up until the late 1990's.

2.5 A small area of allotments abuts the south eastern site boundary. These are accessed directly from Hill Farm Road and are enclosed by a screen of mature trees.

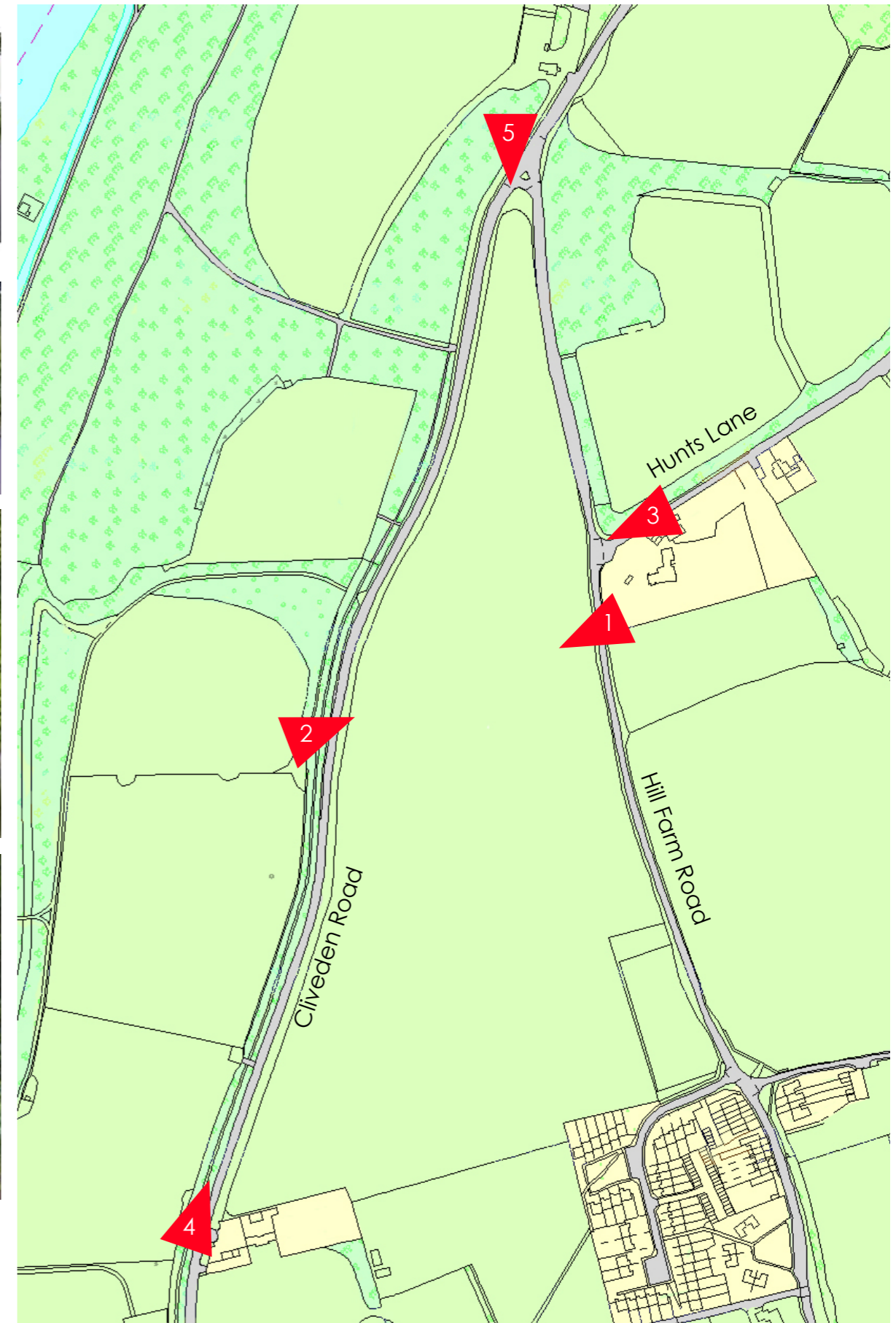
2.6 To the east of Hill Farm Road is further agricultural and grazing land bound by mature trees interspersed with large trees. The western site boundary is formed by Cliveden Road which extends northwards from the centre of Taplow village up to the extents of the Cliveden Estate.

2.7 The western side of Cliveden Road is heavily treed, screening longer distance views to the west towards the River Thames and the Historic Park and Gardens associated with Taplow Court further south.

2.8 The site benefits from an existing entrance providing direct vehicular access onto Hill Farm Road. This principal access point has existing agricultural width gates with good levels of forward visibility towards Taplow (south) and the junction with Hunts Lane to the north.

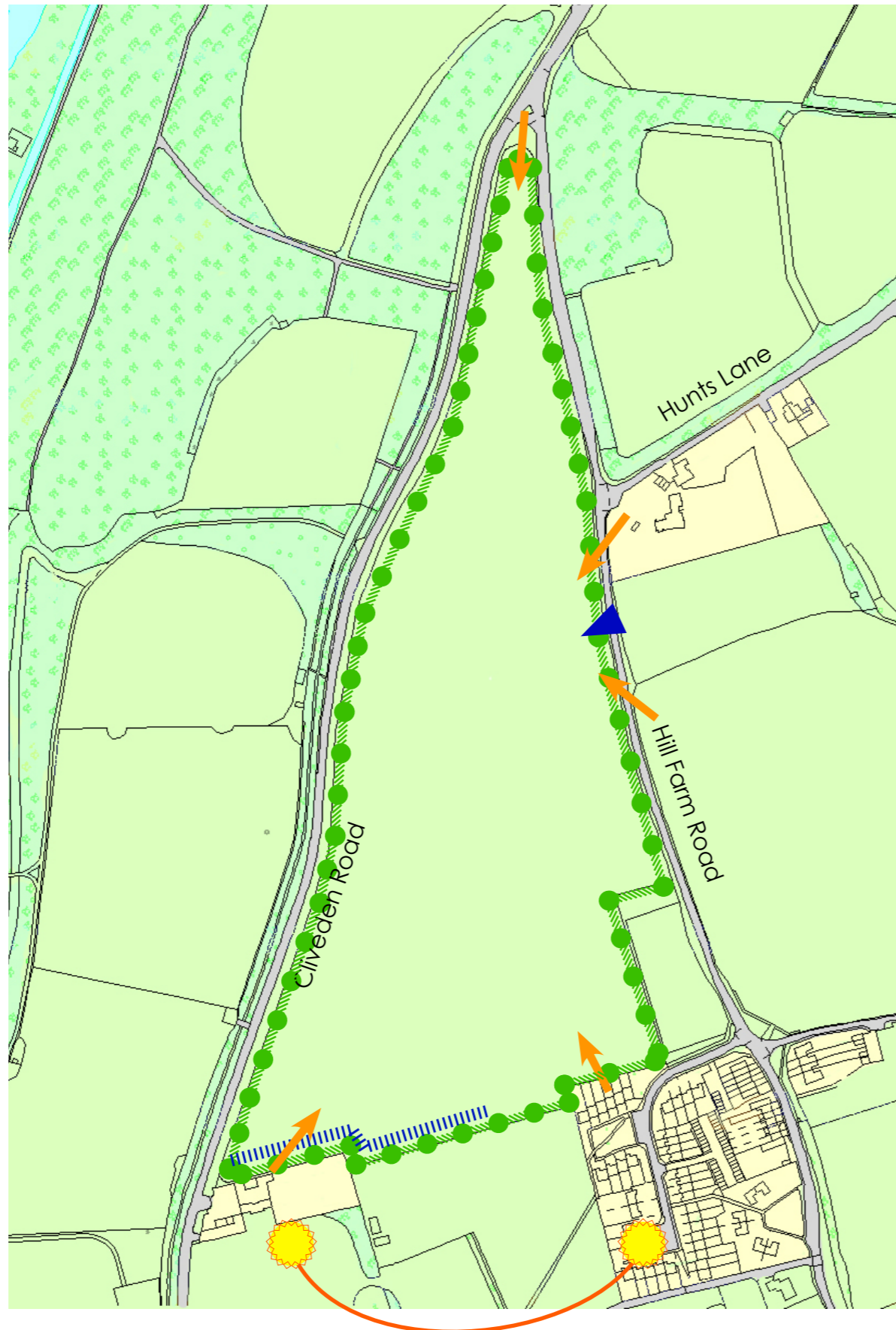
Land at Hill Farm Road

2. Site Context and Surroundings (ctd)



Land at Hill Farm Road

2.Site Constraint



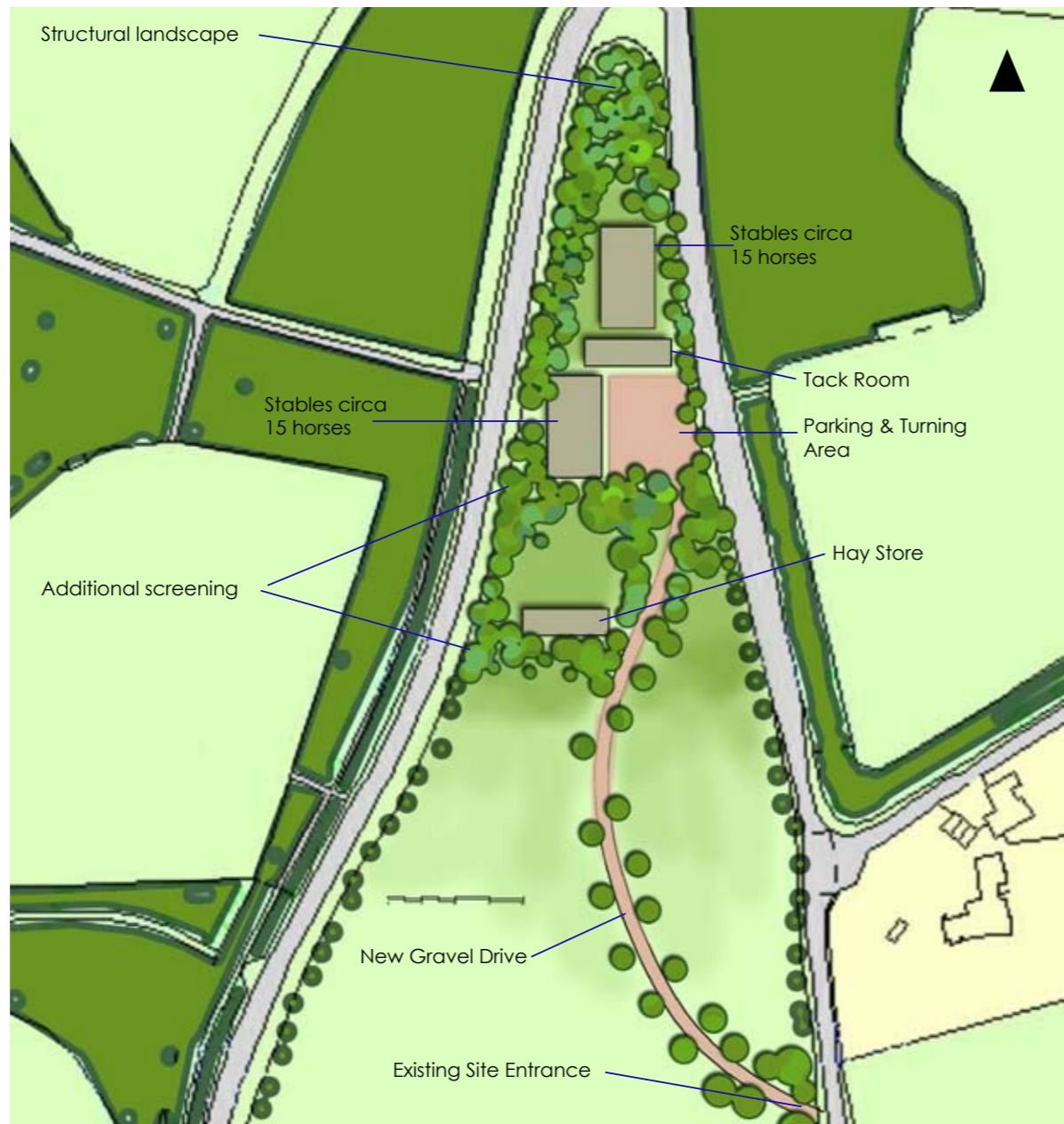
- Site Access
- Important Views into Site
- Sun Path
- Existing Boundary Vegetation
- Sensitive Edge
- Boundary

Land at Hill Farm Road

3.1 The planning history for the site is extremely limited with no relevant planning applications to the current proposal.

3.2 The application site had previously formed part of the Cliveden Stud until its sale in 2006. The history for the Stud includes a number of more recent applications including proposals for a Polo pitch, all weather exercise track, irrigation pond and hardstanding (LPA Ref: 06/01838/FUL).

3.3 The most recent planning history at the Cliveden Stud relates to an application submitted by Toss Trading Inc to remove agricultural occupancy restrictions on 7 dwellings within the estate (12/00952/FUL). We understand that this application was refused as the Council were not convinced that there was no longer a need for these dwellings for the foreseeable future.



Extract from Pre-Application Submission

3. Planning History & Pre-Application Advice

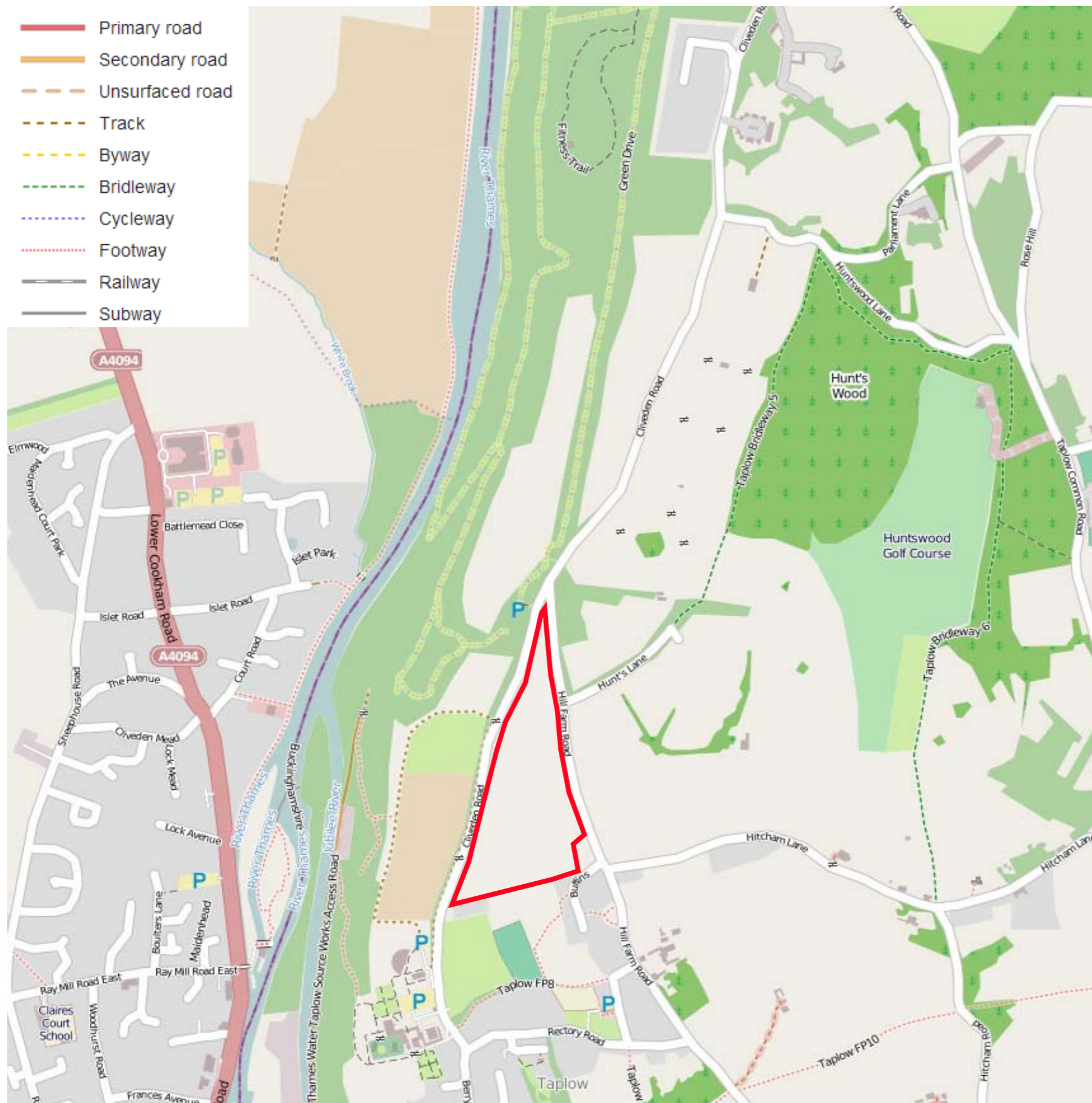
Pre-Application Advice

3.4 In advance of the current planning application submission, our client made a formal request for pre-application advice in December 2013.

3.5 A formal written response was subsequently received from Richard Regan (Senior Planning Officer) on 21st January 2014 which highlighted the following:-

- the proposed location of the stables/buildings is inappropriate, and needs to be reconsidered;
 - the use of the existing access point was noted and visibility and highways safety would need to be considered carefully as part of the application;
 - an access drive of this length is unnecessary and inappropriate to serve the needs of the use, as well as being inappropriate in the Green Belt;
 - the proposed use and development would be acceptable in principle;
 - the proposed buildings should be of a size and scale necessary to provide adequate room and facilities for the number of horses kept on the site;
 - relocating the stables closer to the existing access point could potentially overcome these concerns.
- 3.6** The applicant has reviewed these comments with his professional advisors and revised the proposal to overcome the concerns raised by officers.
- the stables should be no larger than the size recommended by the British Horse Society;
 - the design and appearance of the new buildings should be traditional;
 - the proposed type of stable building within this submission would appear to be of an appropriate and suitable form, scale and appearance;
 - the application proposals should provide sufficient grazing land available to support the number of horses being kept on site;
 - the proposed number of horses to be kept on the site (30 horses) appeared excessive for a site of this size;

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4. Planning Policy Context

4.1 The planning policy context for the site is provided by the National Planning Policy Framework (March 2012), the South Bucks Core Strategy (February 2011) and the saved policies from the South Bucks District Local Plan (adopted in 1999; policies saved in 2007 and consolidated February 2011).

National Planning Policy Framework

4.2 The NPPF introduces a presumption in favour of sustainable development (Para 14) and encourages Local Planning Authorities to 'approach decision-taking in a positive way to foster the delivery of sustainable development' (Para 186).

4.3 It states that Local Planning Authorities should 'look for solutions rather than problems, and decision-takers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible' (Para 187).

4.4 The NPPF confirms that local planning policies should 'support economic growth in rural areas in order to create jobs and prosperity by taking a positive approach to sustainable new development' (Para 28).

4.5 Para 81 notes that once Green Belts have been defined, local planning authorities 'should plan positively to enhance the beneficial use of the Green Belt, such as looking for opportunities to provide ... opportunities for outdoor sport and recreation'.

South Bucks Core Strategy & Local Plan

4.6 The site is currently designated as Green Belt on the Council's Proposal Map as open countryside which falls outside of a defined settlement boundary. Accordingly, it is noted that there is a general presumption against 'inappropriate development' with only very limited development normally permitted.

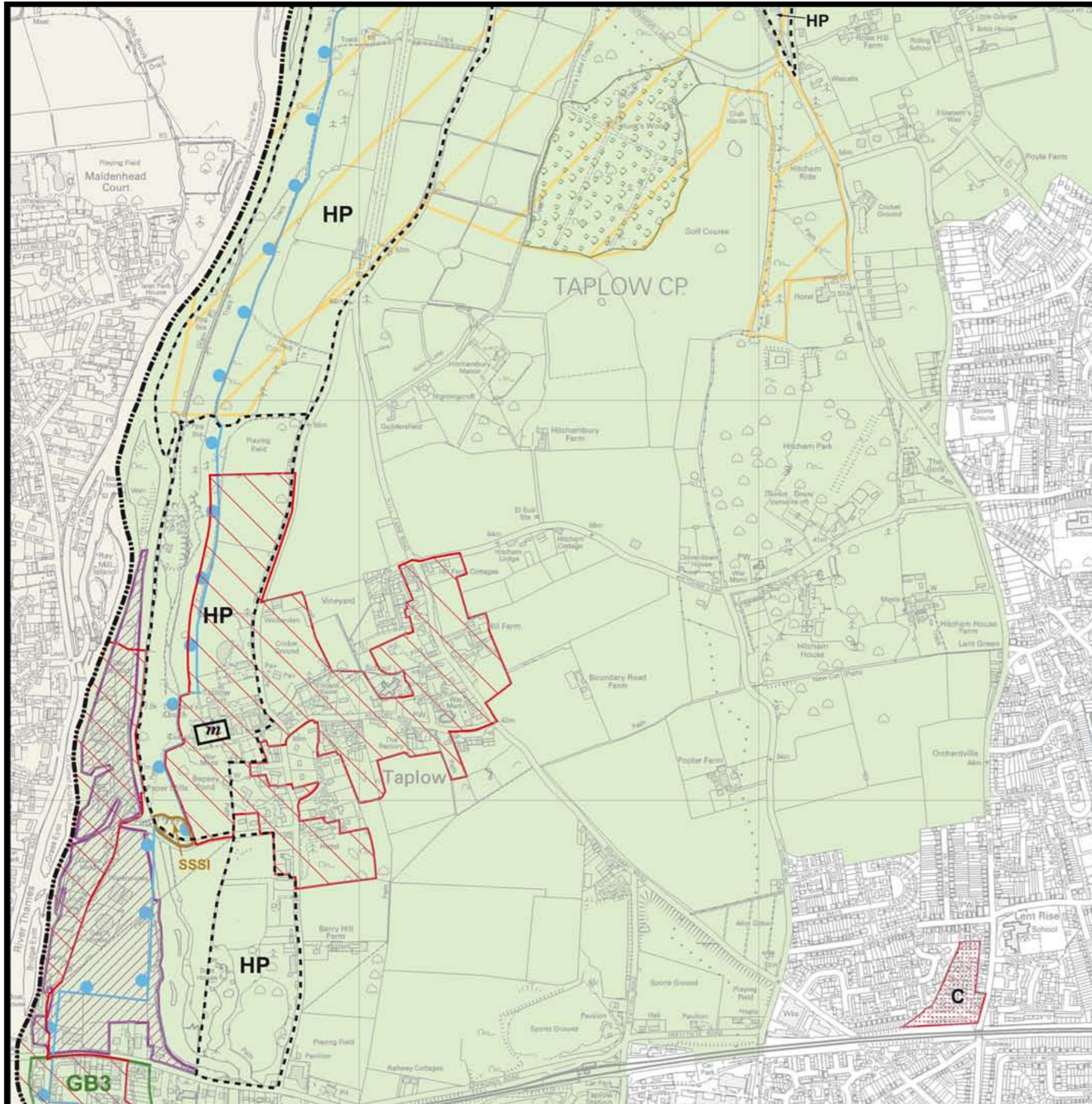
4.7 The South Bucks Core Strategy was adopted in 2011 and provides the overall planning framework for new development within the District for the period up to 2031. It is noted that the 'Spatial Strategy' confirms that the Council will continue to protect and manage the Green Belt with the majority of development generally focused within existing settlements.

4.8 The Council's Local Plan also includes several policies that relate to development within the Green Belt. Saved Local Plan Policy GB1 reaffirms the Council's commitment to protect the Green Belt and outlines the limited circumstances where new development will be considered acceptable.

4.9 This includes '(b) Essential facilities for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation or outdoor leisure' which can be interpreted to include equestrian uses.

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4. Planning Policy Context (ctd)



4.10 It is noted that new development within the 'essential facilities' category should not adversely affect the character or amenities of the Green Belt, nearby properties or the locality in general. Furthermore, the scale, height, layout, siting, form, design and materials of any new building should also respect local character and the Green Belt.

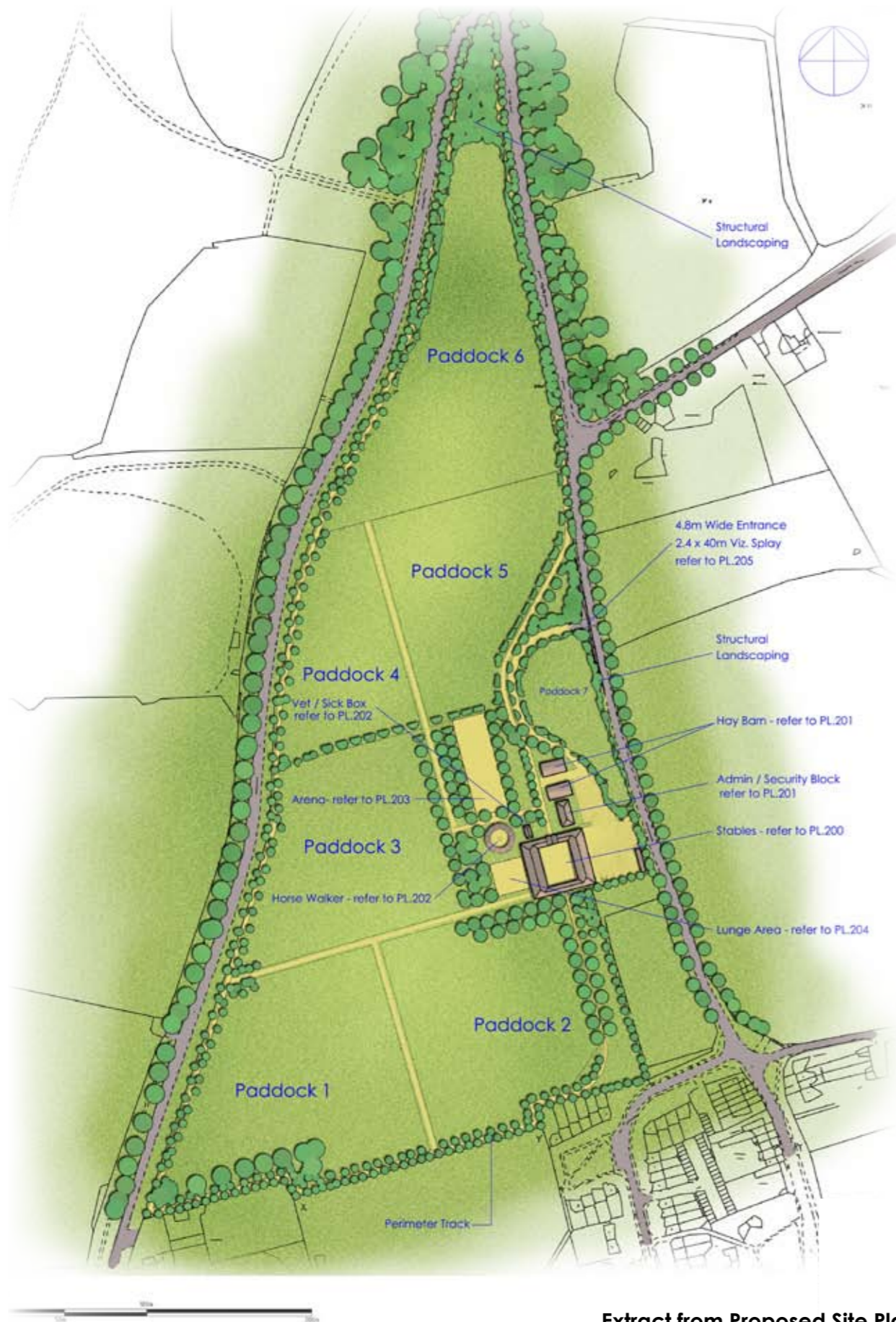
4.11 In addition, Local Plan Policy R5 – Horse Related Facilities is also of relevance to this application submission. This policy confirms that proposals for new equestrian facilities (including riding schools, stud farms, livery stables and other private facilities) will only be permitted where:-

- the proposal would not lead to a concentration of such uses in the locality, to the detriment of the landscape, character or amenities of the surrounding area or neighbouring uses;
- adequate ancillary grazing land is and will remain available;
- adequate arrangements are made for the collection, storage and disposal of waste from the site; and
- close access to bridleways and open land for riding is available.
- buildings or other structures would provide facilities which are strictly ancillary and essential to an outdoor equestrian use;
- the floorspace, bulk and design of buildings and other structures would be appropriate to the character of the area;
- buildings associated with the equestrian use would be sited within an existing group or complex of buildings or in a readily screened, unexposed location;
- the proposal would not adversely affect the character or amenities of the nearby properties or the locality in general;

Extract from Local Plan Proposals Map

Land at Hill Farm Road

5. Application Proposals - Use



Extract from Proposed Site Plan

5.1 The current application proposes the erection of a new equestrian facility on Land West of Hill Farm Road, Taplow. The proposals include accommodation for up to 20 horses with associated ancillary facilities and grazing land.

Use

5.2 The application site comprises circa 11.5ha and is understood to have originally formed part of Cliveden Stud up until its sale in 2006. Accordingly, the existing lawful use of the land is considered to be as equestrian grazing land.

5.3 The applicant intends to retain this primary use and proposes new ancillary equestrian accommodation on the south eastern part of the site. The existing access would be retained with an access road linking to a small courtyard area formed by single storey stables, tack rooms and stores.

5.4 The NPPF confirms that provision of appropriate facilities for outdoor sport and outdoor recreation are appropriate uses within the Green Belt provided that they preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it.

5.5 We also note that Local Plan Policy R5 confirms that the general principle of providing new equestrian facilities within the Green Belt is considered acceptable subject to satisfying a series of criteria. This principle has been confirmed as acceptable through our recent pre-application discussions with officers.

5.6 The wider surrounding area includes several examples of established equestrian businesses which include Cliveden Stud and Snowball Farm Livery.

5.7 As such, this area of South Bucks is acknowledged as a suitable location for this form of equestrian use within the Green Belt. It is not considered that this proposal would lead to an unacceptable concentration of uses in this location. Furthermore, the site has good access to the local bridleway network and wider riding routes.

5.8 The proposal includes a range of facilities which are considered essential to the equestrian facility.

5.9 The proposed level of stable accommodation has been reduced from our pre-application scheme to ensure that the amount of associated grazing land meets current BHS recommendations. As such, the scheme complies with the objectives of Local Plan Policy R5 which confirms that proposals should demonstrate 'adequate ancillary grazing land is and will remain available'.

5.10 The proposed menage area is also of a size normally expected to allow for the training of horses and for teaching riding to pupils. Uncertainty regarding the weather and inconsistent ground conditions can make schooling in a field very difficult and can cause injuries such as tendon strains.

5.11 A well drained arena space can allow exercise even if inclement weather would preclude it. The proposed menage area (20m x 60m) is accepted as a minimum size to allow

sufficient space to accommodate jumps and concurrent training sessions.

5.12 The proposed horse walker is an important element of high quality equestrian facilities and is the standard size needed to exercise the horses within the yard.

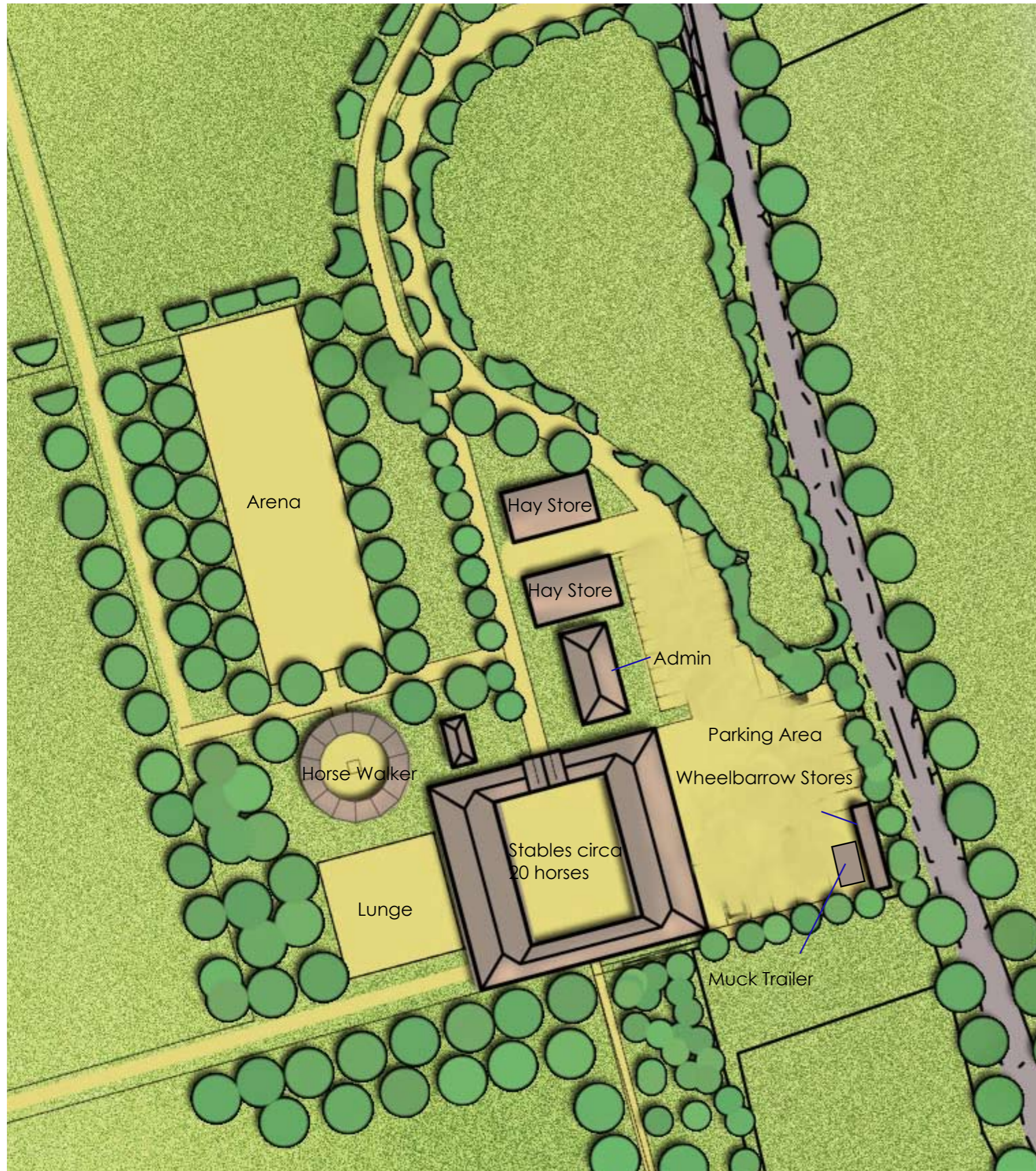
5.13 The walker is good for warming up horses prior to work, cooling down after work and keeping them moving if turnout is problematic. This can also introduce gentle work after injury or rest period – building up muscle strength without the restriction and weight of the rider. It is also safer than exercising out in a field or road.

5.14 The provision of a rubber floor offers a level and consistent surface with sufficient 'give' which still allows the horses foot to move naturally as it hits the ground. It is also easier to clean to keep working environment healthy.

5.15 The provision of an admin / security block is also considered to be essential to the operation of the equestrian facility. The applicant will make a significant financial investment in the site and will be responsible for the security and welfare of the horses within his care. This block will provide an administrative focus for the facility, with relevant ancillary accommodation to allow a permanent security presence on site.

5.16 The proposals also include other associated ancillary buildings which include two hay barns. These structures are typical agricultural buildings and are entirely appropriate to this semi rural setting.

5. Application Proposals - Layout



Layout

5.17 As part of our formal pre-application discussions, officers highlighted that our suggested location for the new equestrian buildings at the northern end of the site was unlikely to be acceptable. This was due to the lack of natural screening and comparatively exposed nature of this location.

5.18 Following extensive discussions with our client, we have reconsidered this position and sought to provide a more compact proposal with the new equestrian facility focused towards the south eastern extents of the site.

5.19 As such, new development will be positioned in a less sensitive location, closer to the village settlement boundary and benefiting from a degree of existing boundary screening. Furthermore, the position and orientation of the new built form would ensure there is no direct impact on the adjoining dwellings along the southern boundary.

5.20 A further benefit of relocating the built form closer to the existing access point is that the length and prominence of the access road will be significantly reduced.

5.21 The application proposals will retain the existing access point with an enhanced entrance accessing directly onto Hill Farm Road.

5.22 The new access road curves southwards towards a new gravel car park with sufficient parking for both staff and owners/visitors. The car park has been designed to ensure that

a horse box and refuse vehicle can safely turn and exit the site in a forward gear.

5.23 The proposed administration and security block overlooks the northern end of the car park, providing a degree of passive natural surveillance and sense of security for visitors and staff.

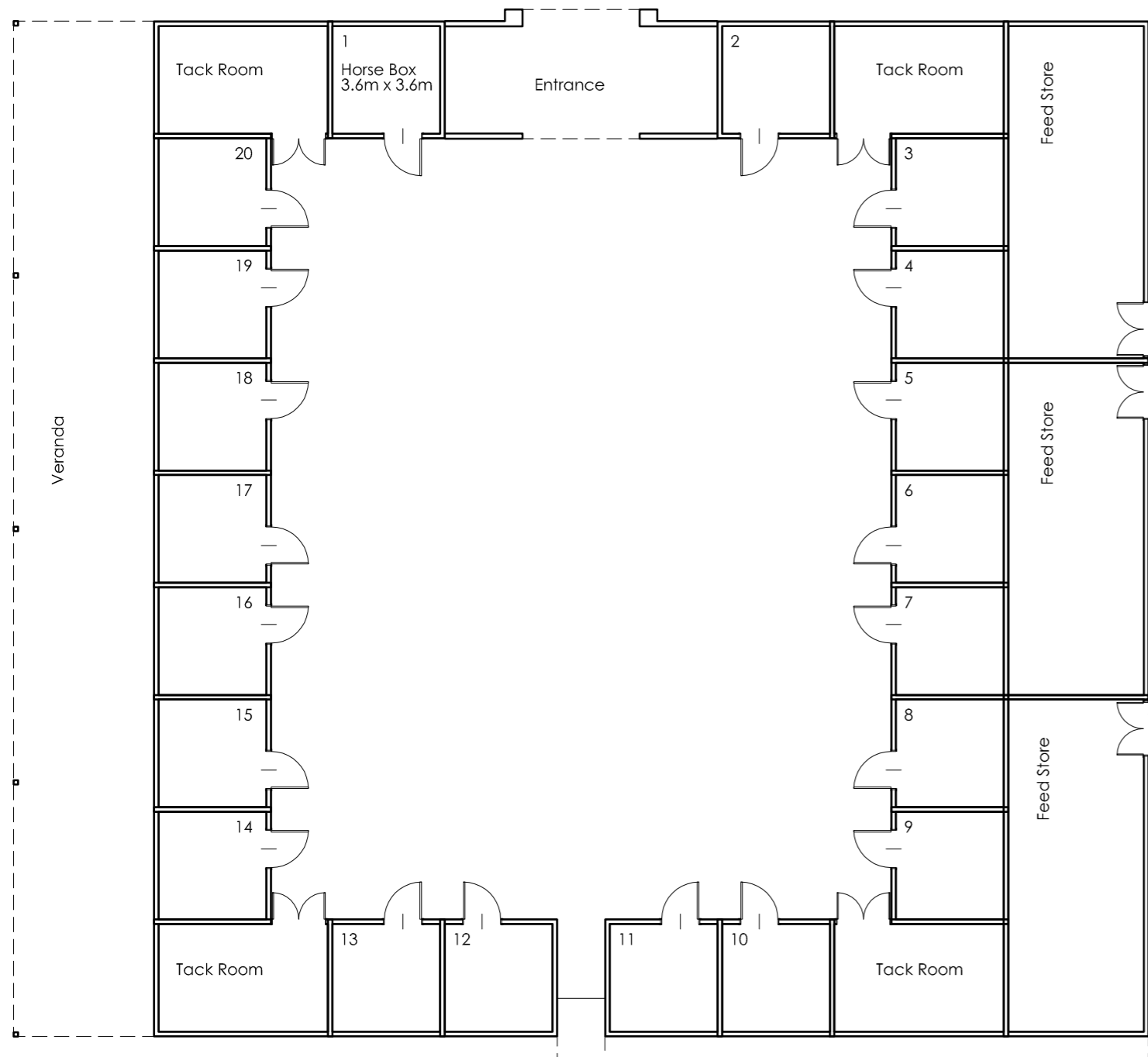
5.24 The proposed stable block is located to the south of the admin block, providing accommodation for up to 20 horses set around a central shared courtyard.

5.25 Each of the stables have been designed to meet current British Horse Society standards (3.6m x 3.6m) with tack rooms located in each corner to provide easy access to for riders and grooms. The proposed feed store is consolidated within the eastern elevation, maintaining easy access through to the adjoining car park where delivery vehicles have ample room to pull up alongside the stables.

5.26 The layout of the stables incorporates a principal north facing entrance archway with access through to the adjoining lunge area, horse walker and all weather arena. A smaller narrow south facing pedestrian access provides a quick link through to car park and the nearby wheelbarrow store.

5.27 These pathways connect through to the proposed hay barns (to the north of the admin block) and the proposed perimeter exercise track which passes along the site boundary.

Land at Hill Farm Road



Extract from Proposed Stables Plan

5. Application Proposals - Amount & Scale

Amount & Scale

5.28 The application proposals have been designed to take into consideration The British Horse Society's current Guidelines for the Keeping of Horses. This confirms that average pasture will maintain approximately two horses per hectare provided that good pasture management is employed (equivalent to 1-1.5 acres per individual horse).

5.29 Whilst this is typically regarded as a minimum requirement, the acreage per horse will largely depend upon other factors including the management of the animal, the quality of grazing land and pasture management.

5.30 The BHS guidelines confirm that stock densities may increase with a larger acreage provided that the acreage is subdivided and effective management and animal husbandry is employed. Furthermore, there is also a distinct difference between acreage requirements for horses where (i) grassland provides the total grazing keep and (ii) the grassland is only to provide supplementary grazing or turnout exercise.

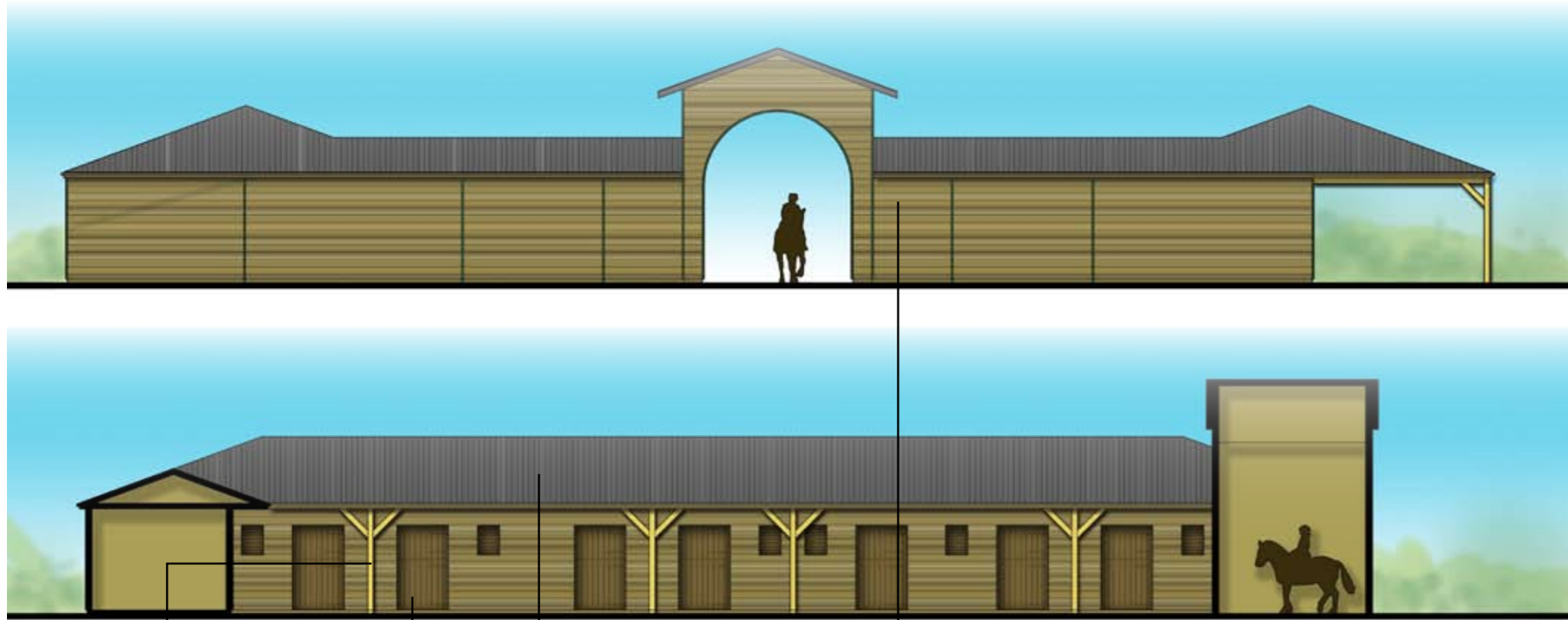
5.31 Indeed, where a combined system of management is proposed and the horse is stabled for part of the time (as with the current scheme), provision of 1 acre per horse may be more than adequate. Moreover, the BHS advises that even where adequate pasture is available, stabling the horse helps reduce the effects of long term grazing, giving the grass and ground a chance to recover.

5.32 The proposed equestrian facility will accommodate stabling and associated recreation facilities for up to 20 horses on site. The scheme will provide circa 20 acres of grazing land, a ratio which meets the current BHS recommended acreage requirement.

5.33 Furthermore, the applicant will implement a proactive management programme, with the fields sub divided into smaller paddocks and levels of grazing carefully monitored.

5.34 The scale of associated accommodation is commensurate to the number of horse kept on site, incorporating appropriate ancillary structures. This includes (i) an integrated feed store, (ii) an isolation/vets block, (iii) an admin/security block, (iii) associated areas of storage (including two hay barns) and (iv) exercise and rehabilitation facilities (including a horse walker, lunge area and arena).

5.35 The scale of new built form on site has also been reduced to ensure it reflects its sensitive Green Belt setting. Virtually all of the new buildings are single storey, incorporating shallow pitched roofs with a low ridge height. The exception to this are the two new hay barns which extend up to 7m in height. Whilst these are taller structures, they are agricultural buildings which one would readily expect to see within a countryside setting.



Proposed Stable Block Elevations



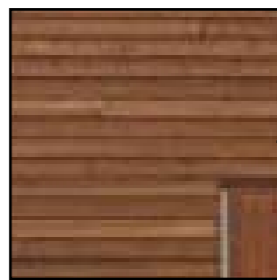
Timber Post



Profile sheet Roof



Horse Box Doors



Timber Cladding

Appearance

5.36 The applicant intends to create a high quality equestrian facility comprised of well designed and attractive buildings which will maintain an agricultural appearance.

5.37 The new equestrian buildings are traditional in character, utilizing a rural vernacular which respects this sensitive Green Belt location.

5.38 The design of the new stable block has been kept intentionally low key with stained timber boarding enclosing this single storey structure.

5.39 The new roof will be formed from slate grey coloured profile sheet roofing, with a shallow pitch helping to reduce the prominence of the building.

5.40 The proposed administration building retains a similar appearance with stained timber windows punctuating the cladding and the profiled roof projecting over the entrance to provide some shelter.

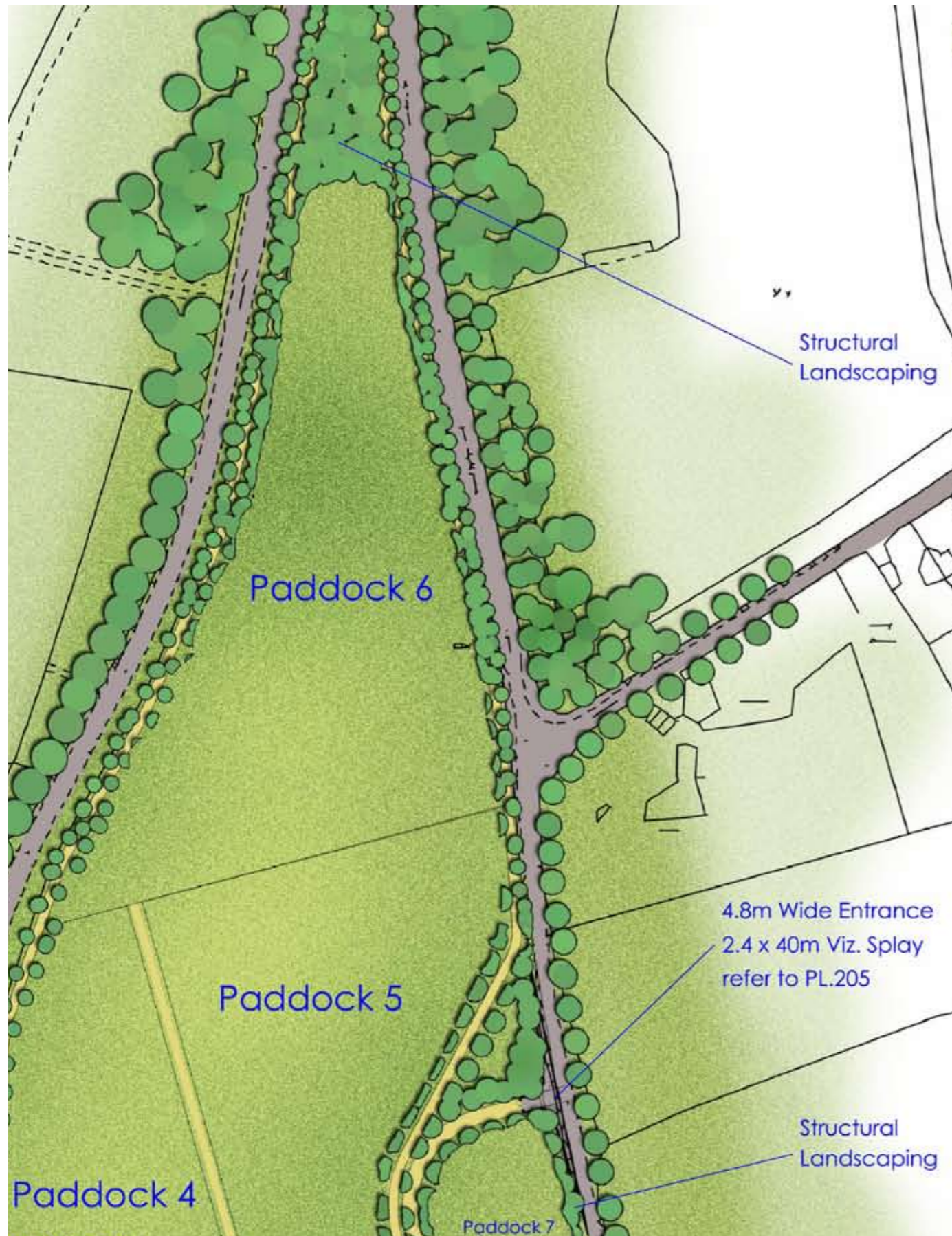
5.41 This architectural approach is also reflected through the design of the vets / isolation block which will maintain a similar low key appearance.

5.42 The new hay barns also maintain a traditional appearance with a predominantly open structure (timber clad on one side) capped by a curved profile roof. These represent typical agricultural buildings which are entirely appropriate to this countryside setting.

5.43 The access drive, car park and pathways will be finished with gravel, providing a soft transition into the central courtyard area. Permeable surfaces will also be included to facilitate access to the new stable blocks.

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5. Application Proposals - Landscaping



Example of Structural Planting Belt



Example of a Paddock



Stables within landscape setting

Landscaping

5.44 The application site benefits from a reasonable level of self containment with a combination of mature trees and dense traditional native hedging helping to limit views in and out of the site.

5.45 The applicant acknowledges that further structural landscaping will be required to help enhance this level of containment, particularly along the northern extents of the site and along parts of the southern boundary.

5.46 No existing landscaping will be adversely affected by the proposed development with the buildings and physical works kept a sufficient distance away from the hedgerows.

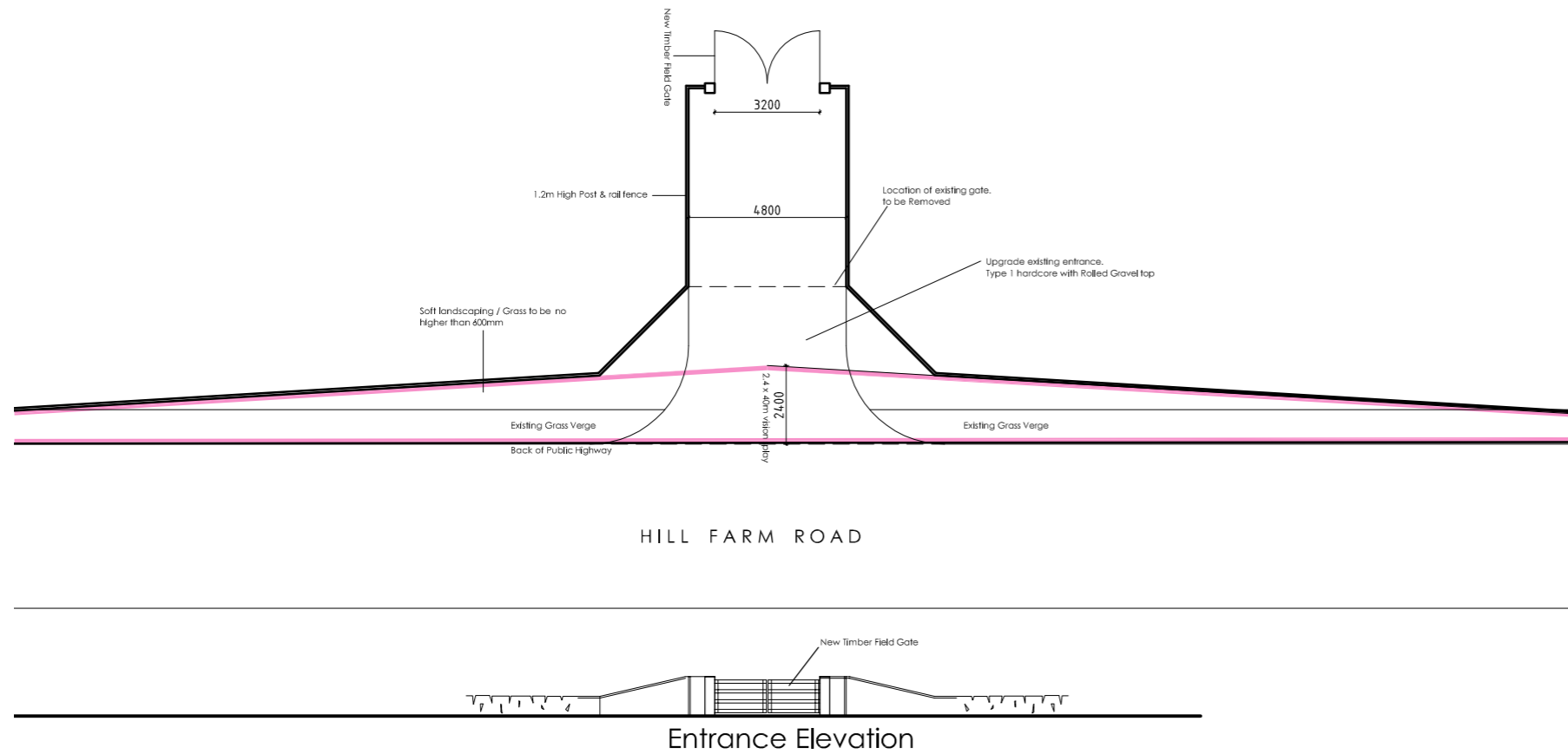
5.47 The Site Plan illustrates that additional tree planting is proposed as part of the development. This will help enhance the attractive landscape setting of the site and result in a significant biodiversity gain.

5.48 The proposed site management regime will also seek to reinforce and maintain the existing hedgerows and trees within them whilst introducing further planting where appropriate.

5.49 The applicant is confident that the proposed landscaping on site could be controlled through a suitably worded pre-commencement condition.

Land at Hill Farm Road

6. Access



Extract from Proposed Access Plan

Access

6.1 The application site is located immediately to the north of Taplow village and benefits from an existing 4.8m wide agricultural access.

6.2 This existing entrance provides a direct vehicular access onto Hill Farm Road which in turn connects to Cliveden Road to the north, Hunts Lane and Hitcham Lane to the east, Rectory Road and High Street to the west and Boundary Lane (and ultimately the A4) to the south.

6.3 The proposed equestrian facility will retain this established access point in its existing position, providing an enhanced entrance with significantly improved sight lines. The position of this access will also provide easy access onto Hunts Lane and the wider Taplow Bridleway Network.

6.4 The existing metal entrance gates will be removed and replaced by 3.2m timber gates flanked by 1.2m post and rail fencing. The new entrance will be set back from the road, providing sufficient space to allow a horsebox to pull in safely off the road.

6.5 The new access road arcs southwards to serve a new car park which is positioned discreetly at south eastern corner of the site. The access and car park will be constructed from gravel and will provide parking for approximately 25 vehicles. The dimensions of the car park are sufficient to allow a refuse vehicle and horse boxes to turn within the site and exit the site in a forward gear.

6.6 The proposed visibility splays take into account the position of the access onto the outside of a shallow bend and the comparatively good levels of visibility from the access position. The existing frontage hedgerow will be trimmed back with any new planting maintained at a maximum height of 600mm. These visibility splays can be achieved on land within the applicants control or on highway land.

6.7 The proposed levels traffic generation are considered to be extremely modest with comparatively limited impact on nearby junction and the surrounding highways network.