DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

Equestrian Centre, Lowlands, Shrewley

RDA
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Contents

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1.0 Introduction

Above; Aerial view of Site

This Design & Access Statement has been prepared on behalf of the applicant, Riding for the Disabled Association (RDA) in support of the application for the development of a National Training Centre and ancillary offices on the site of an existing equestrian centre, at Lowlands Equestrian Centre near Shrewley, Warwickshire.

The proposal is made up of two parts:

- To demolish two existing buildings and construct a new building which will contain the training facilities and office for RDA at Lowlands.
- To demolish an existing 'lean to' extension to the indoor manège and create a new covered training and spectator seating area for 150 people.

The statement has been prepared in accordance with Section 62 of the Town & Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).

2.0 Site Analysis

2.1 Site Location

The proposed site is located on the outskirts of Shrewley, a small village in Warwickshire which lies approximately 5 miles north west of Warwick and 8.4 miles south west of Kenilworth.

The site is accessed directly off the B4439 Old Warwick Road which is a main road running north west from Warwick to Hockley Heath and Solihull

The village of Shrewley is small rural village which largely consists of private residential dwellings of a variety of sizes, styles and ages. The village contains a small shop and a public house.

2.2 The Existing Site

Lowlands Equestrian Centre, located on the outskirts of Shrewley, Warwickshire has been in operation since 1985 and consists of a mixture of buildings in a variety of styles and ages.

The site is accessed by vehicles on its eastern boundary from the B4439 just north of the road junction between Five Ways Road and Shrewley Common. The site has a fairly discrete yet generous vehicle access from the main road. This consists of an existing bell mouth with a timber gate set well back from the road. The access has good visibility and is appropriate for the variety of vehicles which visit the site.

The site is well screened from the B4439 by a fairly large mature hedgerow and a number of existing trees. Even during the winter months when this hedgerow is relatively 'bare' views into the site from the road are limited. Passers by may be aware of horses within the adjacent paddock but are often completely un-aware of the buildings which make up the existing equestrian centre.

From all other boundaries the site is also very well screened with the main group of buildings being largely hidden from view from all aspects. In particular when looking towards the site from the village which lies to the south the site is screened by trees which are located both on the boundary and within the site and almost all of which will be retained.

2.3 The Existing Buildings

- **The Existing Dwelling:**

  The existing dwelling on the site is believed to have been constructed in the 18th century and is traditional in its appearance. It is constructed with orange facing brickwork typical of the area and has a pitched roof finished with plain clay tiles. The building has dark painted timber framed windows and black metal rainwater goods.

- **The Existing Buildings to be Demolished:**

  There are two existing buildings which are proposed to be demolished to make way for the new training facility. One of these buildings is a brick single storey pole barn with steep pitched roof finished with plain clay tiles. It is considered that this building does not have any particular architectural merit and is devoid of any defining features. Both eaves and verge detailing are simple and there are no other significant architectural details. The building has also been modified over time with white plastic ventilation grilles having been fairly recently inserted into the eastern facing elevation.

  The second building to be demolished is a relatively modern purpose built stable building. This building has been constructed within the last 20 years and is a steel portal frame building with exposed concrete blockwork at low level and corrugated metal and timber cladding at high level. The building has shallow pitched roof and is approximately one and a half storeys tall. It is typical of a modern agricultural building but has no architectural merit.

- **The Stable Yard:**

  The stable yard lies at the heart of the group of existing buildings at Lowlands. The yard consists of a central courtyard of concrete hardstanding surrounded on 3 sides by single storey timber stable buildings. All of these buildings are intended to remain and the stable yard will continue to be the centre of activity on a day to day basis .

- **The Indoor Manège Building:**

  The indoor manège building is another large modern agricultural building assumed to be constructed in the 1980s. The building is a large steel portal framed building with shallow pitched roof. The external walls have precast concrete panels at low level with the upper half of the building being finished in timber cladding laid vertically. The roof is finished with a profiled corrugated roofing sheet. Along the southern side of the indoor manège is a 'lean to' extension which is assumed to be a more recent addition yet is very similar in appearance to the main building. This 'lean to' element contains a raised timber platform which is used as a viewing gallery when events demonstrations are taking place. This part of the building is in a relatively poor state of repair and is no longer fit for purpose and nor does in provide the level or amount of accommodation which RDA require.

  It is for this reason that the prosed scheme seeks to demolish this element of the building and replace it with a new purpose built viewing gallery for visitors.

- **Other Buildings:**

  There are a number of other buildings dotted around the site at Lowlands most of which are domestic scale timber clad buildings and a re used for storage or equestrian related activities.

2.4 The Mass and Form of the Existing Buildings

Apart from the existing dwelling almost all of the existing buildings on the site are relatively modern in age and typical of agricultural barns and storage buildings which are found within the local area. Most have shallow pitched roofs finished with profiled sheeting, metal or roofing felt. Most are also clad with relatively inexpensive facing materials such as profiled metal sheeting or timber cladding laid either vertically or horizontally. The buildings are a range of sizes and height which is determined by their use but most are between one and two and a half storeys in height.

View of existing driveway

View of existing stable block from driveway.

View of existing dwelling to be retained.

View of existing stable block to be demolished.

View of existing stable block to be demolished.

Site Photographs

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View of driveway access from Old Warwick Road

View down existing driveway towards the equestrian centre

View of existing dwelling to be retained from driveway

View across existing paddock towards Old Warwick Road

View across existing paddock towards Old Warwick Road

View towards the southern boundary

Site Photographs

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View of pond

Typical timber accommodation building

View of Charleys' House (to be relocated)

View of indoor manège

Main entrance to indoor manège

View inside indoor manège

Site Photographs

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View of stableyard

View across stable yard with existing stable building to be demolished beyond

View through to stable yard from entrance to indoor manège

View of existing stable block facing indoor manège

Site Photographs

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3.0 Riding for the Disabled

3.0 About RDA

Riding for the Disabled Association (RDA), brings the therapy, achievement and fun of horses to children and adults all over the UK. Formed in 1969, the charity today supports around 25,000 riders and carriage drivers with all kinds of disabilities, and there are almost 500 RDA groups around the UK.

Horsepower

At RDA they say 'it's what you *can* do that counts' and their activities are good for children and adults with all kinds of disabilities. Firstly, there's the sheer joy of being around horses and ponies and getting involved in a fun activity. Disabled people of all ages can feel isolated or lacking in confidence. RDA groups are a welcoming and positive place to come and join in, to make friends and to enjoy learning about horses.

It isn't always easy for parents to find activities for their kids where they feel completely included and where their disability takes a back seat. The children who come to RDA find a friendly, family atmosphere where they are no different to anyone else and where everyone is supported to achieve their goals.

Then there are the physical benefits. The movement of the horse is perfect as a gentle activity to help relax and strengthen core muscles. This is great for people who can't walk or have problems with balance and coordination. Children and adults with learning disabilities also benefit. Many children who never talk at home or at school will say their first words at RDA – usually to say 'thank you' to their pony.

Helping Hooves and Hands

The thousands of horses and ponies that work for RDA provide life-changing therapy and offer opportunities for riders and carriage drivers to achieve amazing things. While society often views disability in terms of barriers and limitations, horses unlock potential and reveal what individuals *can* do. Achievement takes many forms at RDA: from sitting up for the first time unaided, all the way to standing on a podium taking gold at the Paralympics.

RDA couldn't achieve what it does without the volunteers who give their time to help out. There are around 19,000 men and women all over the UK who volunteer at their local RDA group. Come rain or shine they are there for their riders with a welcoming smile, a listening ear and the ability to make coming to RDA the best part of someone's week.

A Parent's View

Amy was born prematurely and eventually diagnosed with Global Developmental Delay, Sensory Processing Disorder as well as serious core muscle weakness. Amy started riding with RDA last year.

"Amy LOVES riding – being on a horse is her happiest time. She has always found it hard to do the things that other kids find easy but she clearly knows that she can do this. Seeing Amy riding gives me huge amounts of pride in her as a parent – that she is happy and able to do something so well, and something that is doing her so much good.

Although at first it took her months to smile, Amy has since been a happy and confident girl, something we have clung to throughout all of the difficulties and disappointments and worry for her future.

The opportunity for Amy to ride with RDA has helped transform our lives from one of daily worry to hope for the future and excitement about what she will be able to do."

Sarah Pendleton, Amy's Mum

RDA is a charity registered in England and Wales (No: 244108) and Scotland (No: SC039473).

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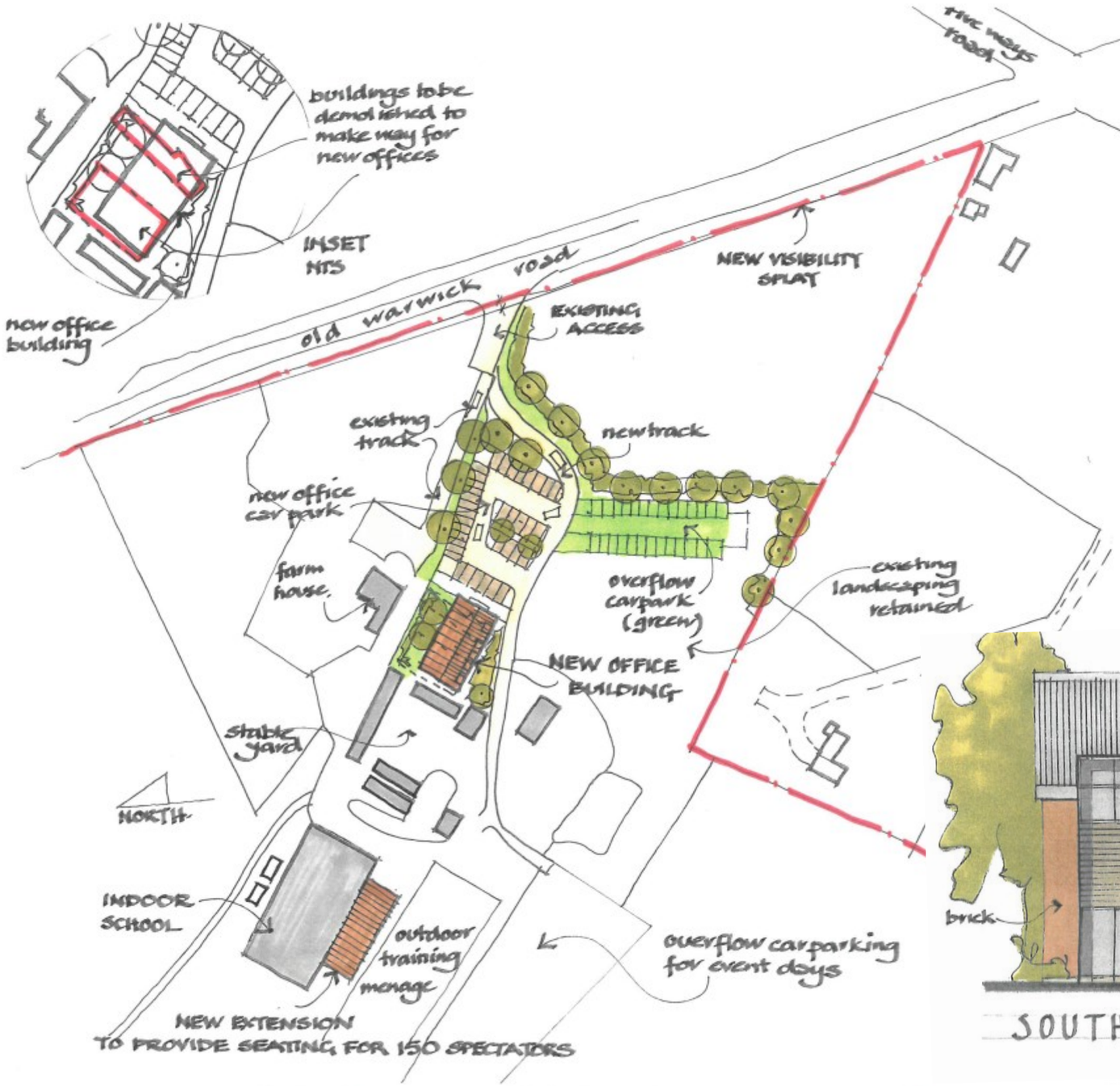
4.0 Initial Proposals

Image which formed part of the pre-application submission to WDC in July 2016. Image shows new training facility with existing dwelling beyond.

4.1 Initial Proposals

In response to the RDA brief initial proposals were drafted for the training centre and ancillary offices to demonstrate how a building of this type would sit on the site. The initial design took its inspiration from some of the other buildings on the site and was based upon a 'barn' type form with simple rectangular footprint and pitched roof. The scheme presented large gable to the main driveway which would have been a fairly prominent feature as visitors entered the site from the Old Warwick Road—as shown on the image above.



4.2 Pre-Application Submission to WDC

Once initial proposals had been prepared, Robothams submitted an application for pre-application advice to Warwick District Council planning department.

Samples of some of the drawings which were submitted as part of this application are shown on this page. As can be seen from the drawings the content of the pre-application submission was deliberately detailed to ensure that an equally detailed response could be provided by council officers.

Drawings submitted to the planning department as part of the pre-application submission on 13.07.16. The submission consisted of:

Proposed site plan, proposed floor plans, proposed elevations for the training centre and administration building, proposed 3D images and a brief description of the proposal.

FRONT / EAST ELEVATION.

4.3 Pre-application Feedback

Following the initial pre-application submission a site visit was arranged for WDC to visit site and understand the proposals. Gary Fisher and Patrick Flanagan of WDC Planning Department were in attendance at this meeting along with representatives from RDA and Robothams Architects.

Initial feedback from WDC was positive although concerns were raised by the planning officers about the size, scale and orientation of the building which had been proposed. In response to this Robothams Architects re-designed the scheme to address the issued raised. The adjacent images show the amended design which were forwarded to Gary Fisher of WDC on 19th August 2016.

The amended scheme incorporated the following key changes:

- The building form was spun through 90 degrees to sit broadly on the same footprint as the existing stable buildings to be demolished.
- The revised building form had more in common with the form of the stable buildings to be demolished and a more comfortable relationship with the existing dwelling.
- The amendment to the footprint in turn meant that the mass of the building was less 'bulky' than the original proposals and the ridge line significantly reduced.

4.4 Pre-application Feedback

Following the submission of amended proposals a further meeting was arranged with WDC to discuss the design changes and the content of a full planning submission. This meeting took place on 27th September 2017 at WDC's offices on Milverton Hill, Leamington Spa. The meeting was attended by Gary Fisher of WDC and representatives of RDA and Robothams Architects.

The new proposals were well received, verbal feedback from Gary Fisher regarding the design was positive and he confirmed that the mass form and appearance of the building seemed to be more appropriate than the original proposals.

At this meeting WDC noted that they appreciated the good work that RDA do and that this scheme was an application which they would wish to support. It was also noted that RDA would need to prepare a strong case for the development and that the application should seek to focus on the following issues:

- The application should outline the reasons as to why the scheme is considered to be appropriate development within the green belt and make reference to National and Local Policy.
- The application should identify the need for RDA's operations to be combined on one site and outline the benefits that this would bring to RDA. I t was acknowledged that it would not be practical for the equestrian operations to move to an urban setting (Warwick) and therefore it was reasonable to suggest that the administration and training facilities should move to Lowlands where there was already an established presence.
- The application should fully explain the existing operations at the head office in Warwick and also the existing operations at Lowlands.
- The application should provide evidence of existing vehicle trips to and from Lowlands and proposed vehicle trips following the re-development. Details of any annual events which are already held at Lowlands along with details as to how these are currently managed.
- The application should outline how the design for the scheme has evolved, and how it will be sympathetic to its setting and the wide context.
- Information should be provided for comparison purposes on the size of the footprint, floor area and volume of the new buildings compared to the existing to be demolished. It was noted that RDA should ensure that the level of new floor area provided is kept to a 'realistic minimum'
- It was acknowledged that the site was well screened from all boundaries and that a visual impact assessment would not be required. However, the proposed landscaping is an important part of the scheme and the application should consider the impact of the scheme on existing landscaping features and detail how these are to be mitigated.

4.5 Consultation with WCC Highways

Pre application advice on the proposals was sought from WCC Highways prior to the detailed design being progressed and a meeting was held on site to discuss the proposals with Dave Pilcher of WCC Highways and representatives from Robothams Architects. The feedback provided by Mr Pilcher on site was positive and he noted that the existing access from the B4439 Old Warwick Road was suitable for the proposed use. This was confirmed in an e-mail from Mr Pilcher to Nick James of Robothams Architects on 8th December 2017.

Mr Pilcher wrote:

Dear Nick.

I refer to our meeting on site relating to the above and apologise for the delay in replying.

As we discussed, the visibility from the access onto the B4439 is more than adequate for the proposed use.

The location of the proposed new car-park access adjacent to the existing gates is also a suitable distance from the B4439, therefore there will be no vehicle conflicts arising from this that are likely to cause safety concerns on the highway.

I trust that the above is sufficient, however, should you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Kind Regards

Dave Pilcher

4.6 Consultation with Shrewley and Rowington Parish Councils

RDA have a long established presence at Lowlands and are proud to be a part of the village communities within Shrewley and Rowington. Before any detailed proposals for Lowlands were prepared RDA considered it necessary to consult with the local parish councils of Shrewley and Rowington to give the local community opportunity to comment and influence the proposals.

The first consultation meetings with both of the parish councils were held during the summer of 2016. At these meetings the initial proposals were discussed and it was established that both parish councils were supportive of the plans. Communication with the councils has been ongoing and a further consultation meeting is planned in March to update them on progress and present the final scheme. Local ward councillor Josie Compton has also been consulted and was in attendance the meeting with both the parish councils.

5.0 The New Training Centre

5.1 The Layout

The site is accessed by vehicles from the Old Warwick Road via and existing bell mouth access. This existing access is fairly generous in terms of its width and offers good visibility in both directions when exiting the site. The access is currently used by a variety of vehicle types which include cars, commercial vehicles and agricultural vehicles which visit the site on a regular basis. As is described in the previous section of this document pre-application advice from Warwickshire County Council Highways confirmed that the existing access was suitable for the proposed development and therefore no alterations or amendments to this access are proposed as part of this submission.

Upon entering the site the existing timber gate across the driveway is to be removed and relocated to create free movement for vehicles to and from the new development. A new opening is to be formed within the existing hedgerow within the site and at this point the new driveway will lead visitors around to the new car parking area which will serve the new training and administration centre. The new car park has been sensitively designed and will be screened from the driveway by new hedgerow and tree planting. Within the car parking area a variety of surface materials will be used to ensure the car park has a soft, domestic feel.

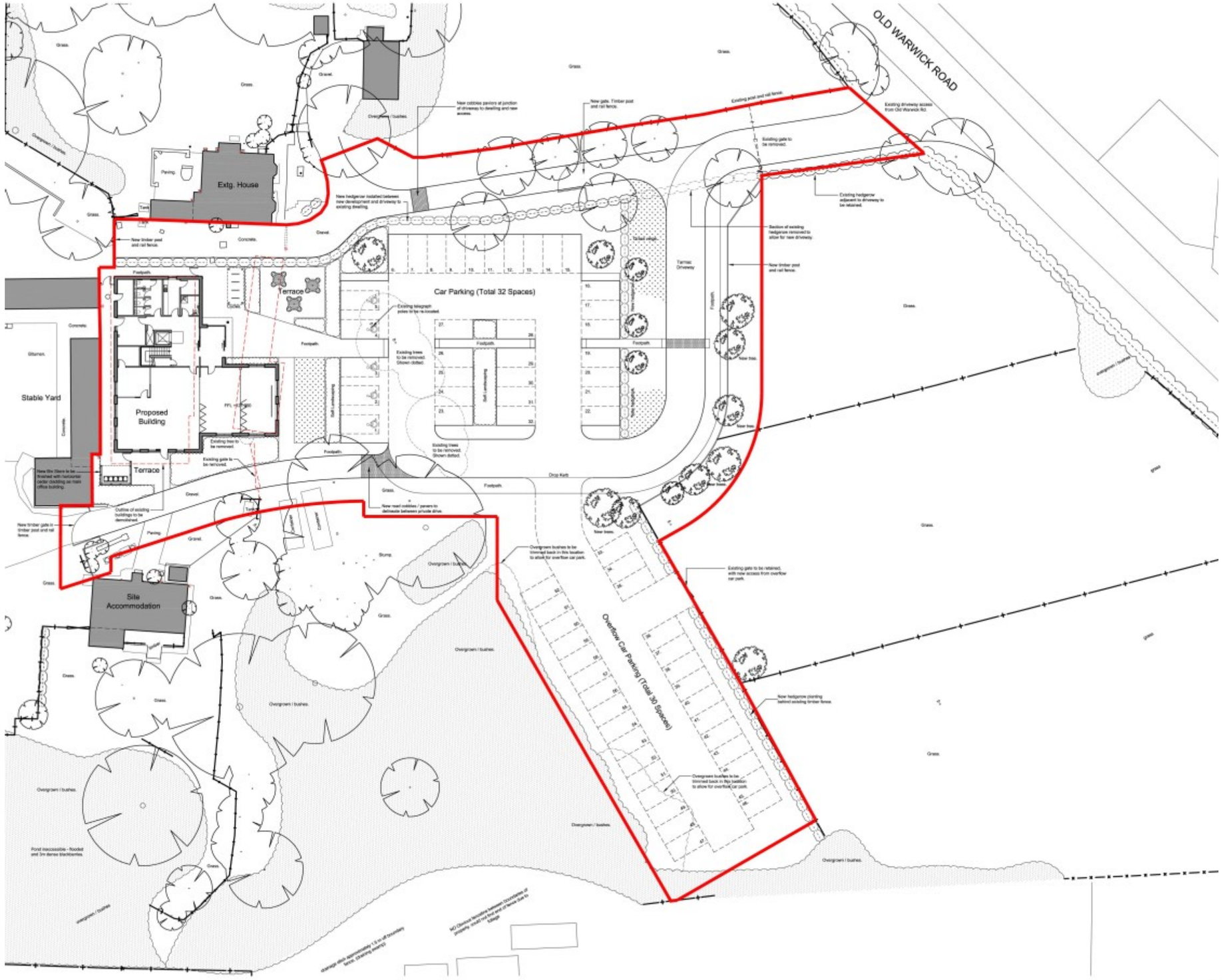
Access to the dwelling will be via the existing driveway which will share the same vehicle access from the Old Warwick Road. A new timber fence and gate will be installed across the end of this driveway to give the dwelling a greater level of privacy and security. A new hedgerow is to be installed on the southern boundary between the dwelling and the new development again to give a greater level of privacy to the dwelling and clearly define the new boundary between the two buildings.

The entrance to the new training and administration area will be clearly defined from the car park by a new footpath which will lead directly to the main entrance. The building has been designed to be highly accessible and drop kerbs and level access will be provided from the car park as well as discrete low level lighting. 32 no. formal parking spaces are provided within the main parking area and five of these will be designated disabled parking bays immediately adjacent to the main entrance. Covered cycle storage for 8 no. cycles will also be provided adjacent to the main entrance.

In the south eastern corner of the site the existing gravel driveway which is used to access the stable yard continues around past the gable end of the building to a new timber gate and fence which secures the perimeter of the stable courtyard.

A covered bin store is also provided adjacent to the south facing gable of the new building. This building has been designed to be similar in appearance to the adjacent training facility and will be faced in the same facing materials. Currently there is no central bin storage facility at Lowlands and the provision of this store will improve the management of refuse and recycling on site. Currently bins are collected by the local authority on a fortnightly basis from the end of the main driveway adjacent to Old Warwick Road and it is intended that this arrangement will continue once the new buildings are occupied.

Additional car parking for 30 no. cars is provided in the overflow parking area as shown on the site layout drawing. This are is to be used on an occasional basis to accommodate visitors who come to attend larger events. Currently when such events are held parking is often spread across the site, however the overflow parking area will allow RDA to have closer control over this and improved control over access to the site generally. This parking area will be a grassed area which will be reinforced with a plastic cellular matting system to allow for occasional vehicle parking. The area will be screened by a new hedgerow and tree screening which is to be installed inside the existing fence line.



Site Layout Showing new Training Centre

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5.2 The Amount

As has been described in previous sections of this document the new training centre has been designed to respond to its setting. Consideration has been given by RDA to ensure that the development provides the 'realistic minimum' amount of area which RDA need to carry out their operations effectively. With this in mind Robothams Architects have designed the footprint to relate as closely as possible to that of the existing stable buildings which it replaces yet also provides RDA with the required floor area. The adjacent diagram and figures show how this has been achieved .

Consideration has also been given to the form of the new footprint and this too is designed to respond to the setting and the wider context. As can be seen form the adjacent image the new foot print has been designed to sit broadly on the footprint of the existing buildings to be demolished. However, it is also important to note that the front projecting gable of the new building has been deliberately positioned on the southern side of the building away from the boundary with the existing dwellings. This layout means that the building is not unduly dominant from the driveway as you enter the site and ensures that that the new development is sub servient to the existing dwelling.

The building seeks to provide 651m^2 of Gross Internal Area spread across two floors. The total footprint of the building is 367m^2 Gross External Area.

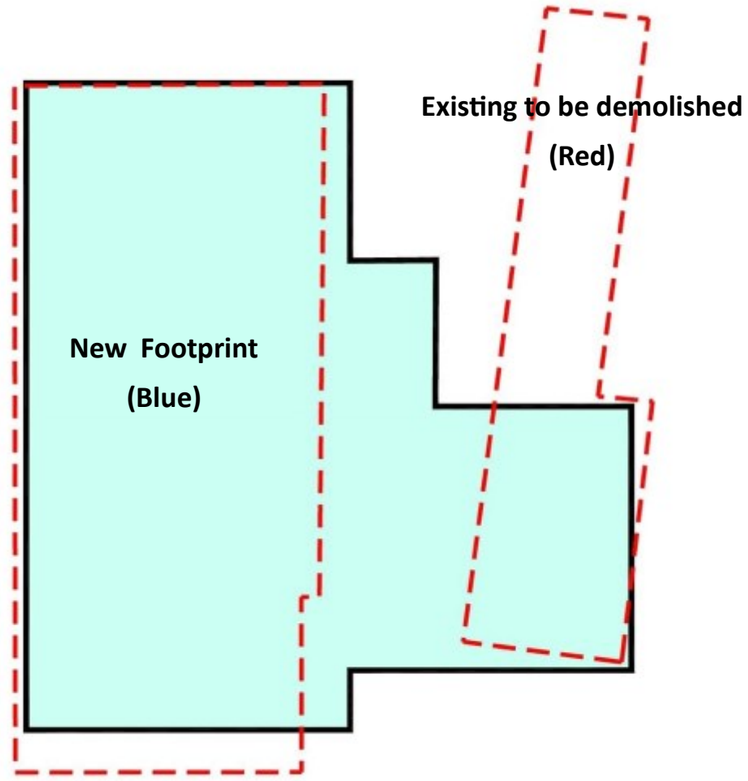
The existing buildings to be demolished provide a total volume of 1463m^3. The proposed training facility will generate a volume of 2439m^3. The nett increase in volume is 976m^3. It is clear that consideration has been given to the increase in volume which the new building will generate and the form of the building has been specifically designed to keep the nett increase in volume to an absolute minimum. This is described in more detail in section 6.4.

New Training and Administration Centre

Ground Floor: 333.7m^2 GIA	First Floor: 317.3m^2 GIA
Open Plan Offices with Reception	Open Plan Offices with Break Out Spaces
Meeting Rooms	Duty Managers Office
Kitchen with Store	Finance Office
Unisex Toilets	Staff Room with Kitchenette
Disabled W.C. and Shower	Meeting Room
Plant Room	Disabled W.C.
Boot Room	Unisex Toilets
Store Rooms	Cleaner Store
	Post Room
	Comms Room / Store Room

Total new floor area (GIA): 651.0 m^2

5.3 Diagram Showing Comparison of Footprints



Existing footprint to be demolished:	**356 m^2**
Proposed footprint of training facility:	**367 m^2**
Total nett increase:	**11 m^2**

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Elevation A - View towards Main Entrance (from Car Park)

5.4 The Mass and Scale

The scale and mass of the building has been specifically designed to respect the rural setting. The building is 1.5 to 2 storey in scale in order to provide the required level of accommodation but great care has been taken to ensure that it s form is appropriate and it does not unduly dominate the adjacent existing dwelling. This is achieved by providing a shallow pitched roof to the building which has a lowered eaves level and means the overall height is kept to a minimum. The eaves are set to be as low as is practically possible whilst still providing usable internal space and the main ridge level is positioned to sit just below the level of the ridge of the adjacent dwelling. The form of the building which is subsequently generated is not unlike many of the other buildings which can be found across the site or in similar rural locations across the county.

5.5 The Design and Appearance

The building has been designed to sit comfortably within a rural setting yet also to have a contemporary edge which reflects the progressive nature of the RDA's operations. The agricultural form is finished with sympathetic facing materials which are also typical of the area. Details of each of the facing materials is provided later in this document, however the combination of materials can be seen more clearly in the elevation of the main entrance provided above.

5.6 The Materials

The building has been designed to sit comfortably within its setting. As can be seen from the elevation drawings the mass and proportion of each of the elevations has been carefully considered to give the building a rural feel which is sympathetic to the buildings which surround it.

The palette of facing materials is also intended to be sympathetic to its context and incorporates the use of traditional materials which are typical of those used on rural buildings and often found within similar settings. In adopting this approach the design seeks to present itself as a modern development but one which seeks to enhance its setting and blend in to the local context.

The proposed palette of materials consists of:

- **Red multi type facing brickwork:**

  Typical of the area and similar is colour and texture to the existing dwelling.

- **Western Red Cedar horizontal cladding:**

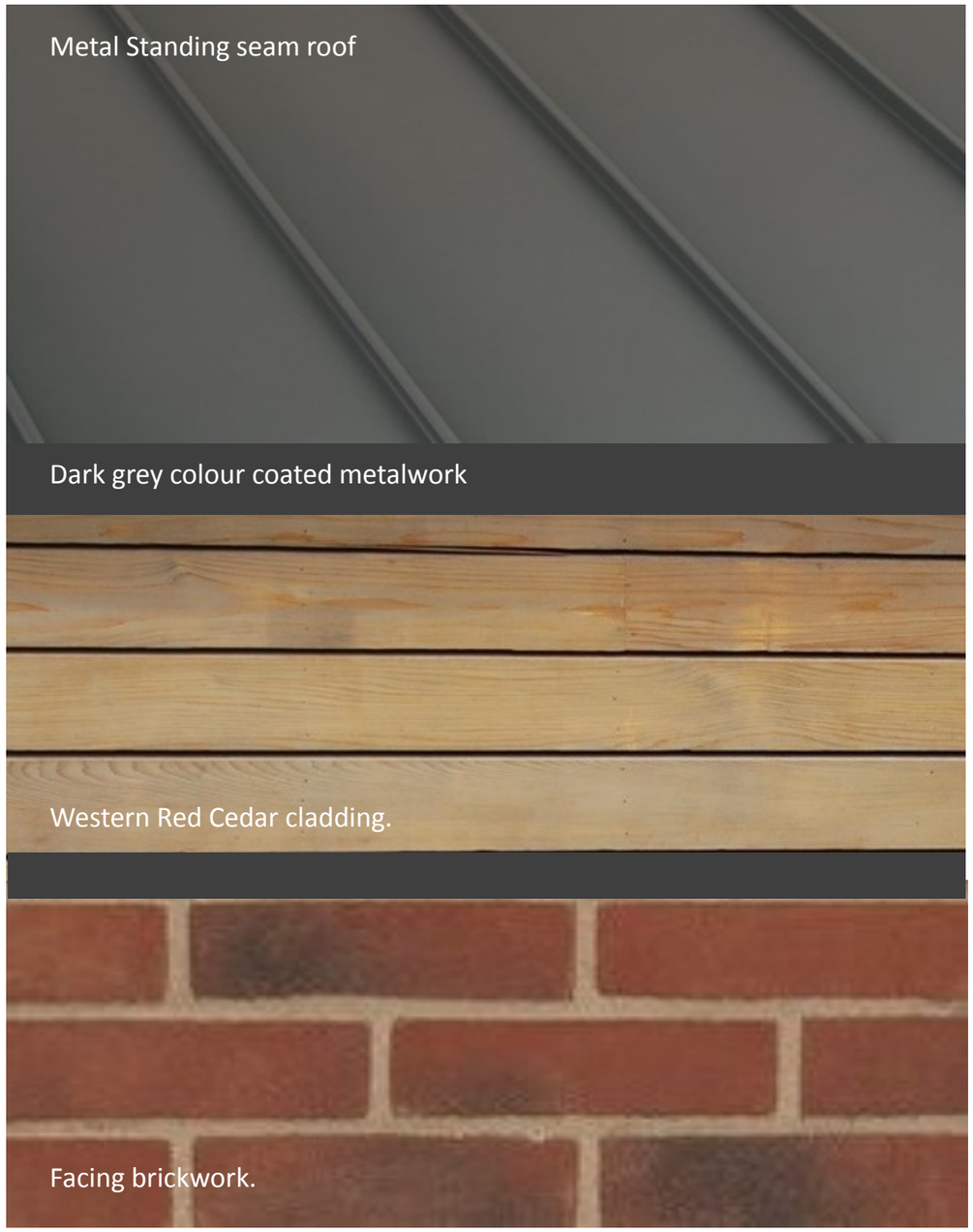
  Western red cedar is a natural material which is often used to clad similar buildings of agricultural appearance. The boarding is to be laid horizontally which again is a detail typical of a building of this type and similar to that used on other existing buildings within the site. Over time the cedar will 'grey' and 'weather-in' helping the building to blend into its setting.

- **Dark grey metal standing seam roof:**

  The use of a standing seam roof rather than a tiled or slate roof is more in keeping with the other ancillary agricultural buildings which exist on the site and within the surrounding area. Using a different material to that which is found on the existing adjacent dwelling also helps to define the different buildings emphasise their different uses whilst being sympathetic to its context.

- **Grey colour coated metalwork, windows and doors.**

Dark grey metalwork and windows will add definition and interest to the elevations whilst complementing the other facing materials and helping to give the building a slightly contemporary feel.



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View of training centre from car park

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6.0 The Training & Spectator Seating Area

6.1 The Layout

The training and spectator seating area is a proposed extension to the indoor manège building which is located western side of the equestrian centre at Lowlands and seeks to provide a covered seating area for training and demonstration purposes. In order for the new extension to be constructed an existing lean-to extension to the indoor manège building is to be demolished and the new building will sit in the 'gap' which is created between the indoor manège and the outdoor manège .

The entrance is located at the eastern end of the building and is clearly defined by the hard landscaping and a canopy which sits over the top at high level. In front of the main entrance is a terrace area which will act as a meeting point when training events are being held. This area is also slightly raised and provides space for approximately 10 no. wheelchair users which will enable them to have a safe and clear view over the fence and into the outdoor manège when training and demonstrations are taking place. This external terrace in turn leads to a raised viewing platform which also looks out over the outdoor manège. This platform can be accessed via the internal or external steps. Alternatively wheelchair users can access the viewing area via the internal platform lift.

The creation of a new concrete footpath between the stable yard and the spectator seating area as shown on drawing 3351-12 links the new seating area to the wider development. This footpath provides a clearly defined pedestrian route between the seating area and the new training centre at the eastern side of the site and ensures all visitors to the site including wheelchair users have complete access to the facilities which are provided on site.

New Spectator Seating Area.

Ground Floor

Seating Area (for approximately 150 people)

Break out space

Meeting Room

Viewing Platform

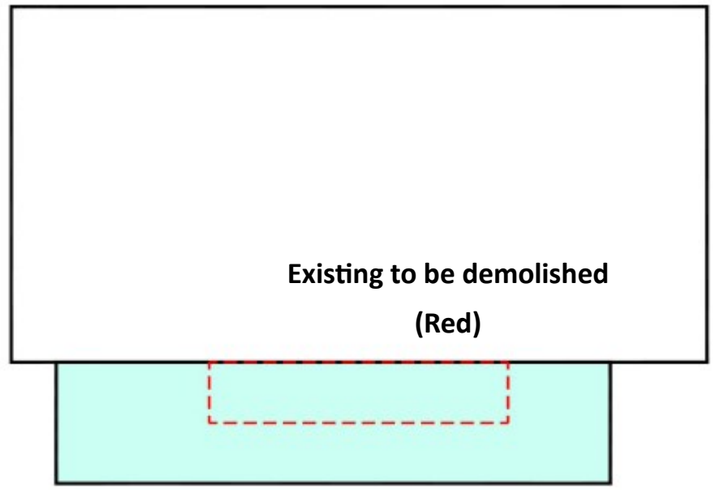
Tea Room with Kitchenette

Unisex Toilets

Disabled W.C.

Total new floor area (GIA): 223.0m^2

6.2 Diagram Showing Comparison of Footprints



Existing footprint to be demolished: 983m^2

Proposed footprint of training facility: 1164m^2

Total nett increase: 181m^2

6.3 Volume

The volume of the existing indoor manège building is 5808m^3. The propose volume of the indoor manège once the new extension has been constructed is 6594m^3. The nett increase in volume is 786m^3.

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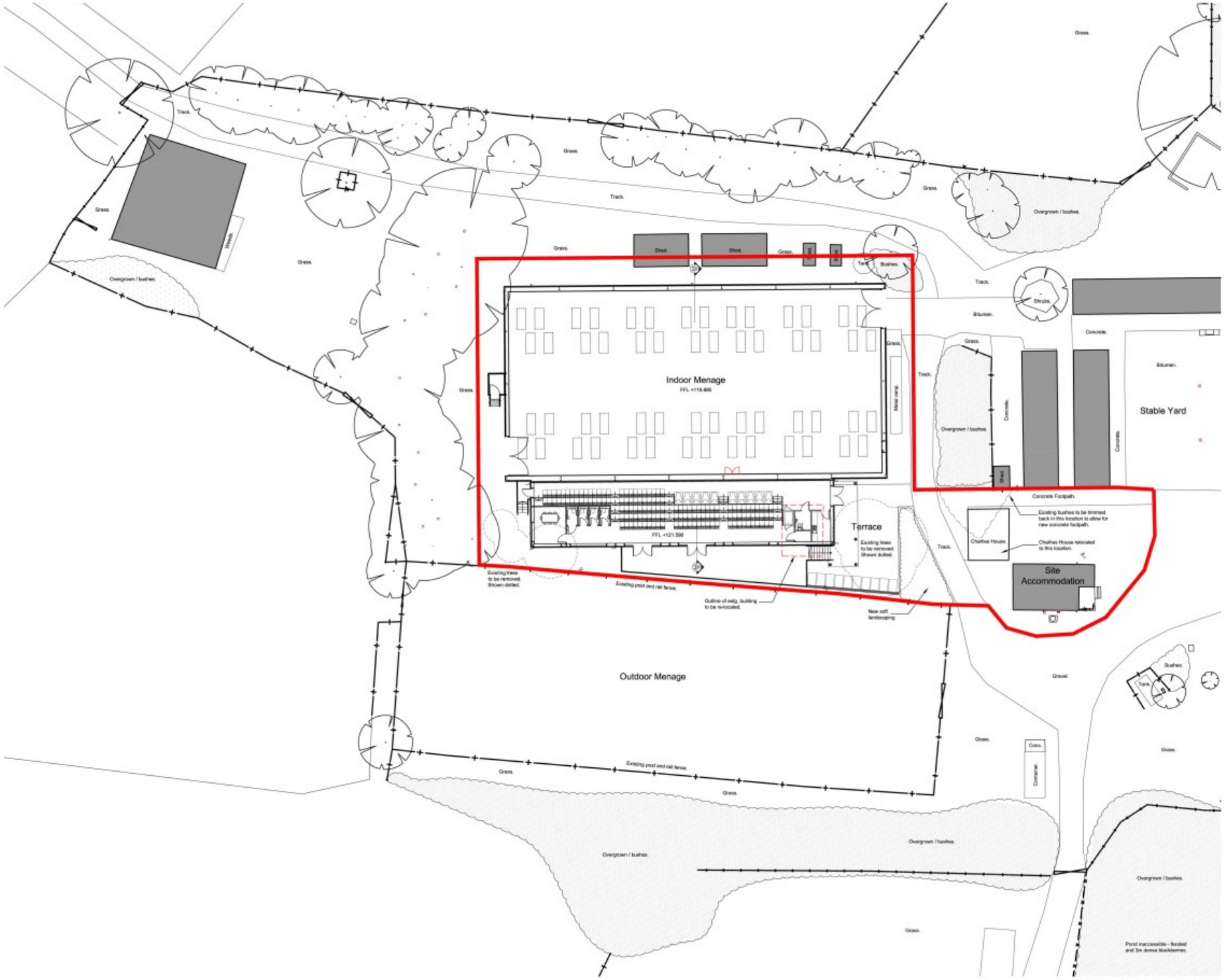

Site Layout Showing New Training and Spectator Seating Area

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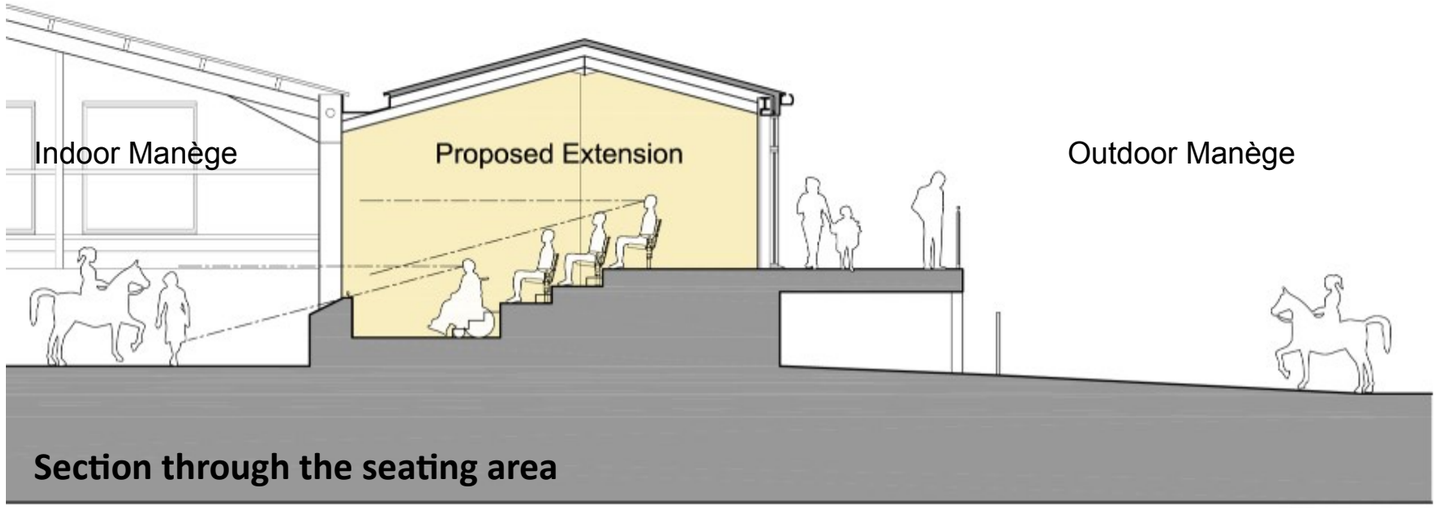
6.4 The Mass and Form of the Building

The new training and spectator seating area is designed to be sympathetic to the existing building to which it is attached. The building has a long thin footprint which is generated by the internal accommodation and the long rows of seats which are provided in tiered rows. The height of the building is generated by the level of the top tier of seating and overall the building is approximately 4.7m from ground floor to eaves. The building sits under a shallow pitched roof similar to the indoor manège and the other buildings which exist on the site.

6.5 The Appearance

The spectator seating area has been designed to have a similar appearance to the new training facility at the front of the site and will be finished with the same facing materials of red brickwork, western red cedar horizontal cladding and grey metal roof. This elevational treatment is not only in keeping with the exiting building to which is attached but also links the two new developments and helps to generate a strong identity for the development as a whole.

The adjacent section shows how the new seating area relates to both the indoor and outdoor manège. Currently when training and demonstrations are taking place within the indoor manège, RDA will 'rope-off' a part of the space and lay out rows of loose seating for spectators to use. The new tiered seating area as proposed will be much more accessible for disabled users and give spectators a much clearer view both internally and externally. This will make training sessions and demonstrations much safer and easier for RDA in the future.



Section through the seating area

Lowlands Equestrian Centre

View of new training and seating area

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Aerial view of new training and seating area

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7.0 Hard and Soft Landscaping

7.1 Hard Landscaping

A neutral and natural palette of hard landscaping materials is proposed to enhance the scheme. Examples of the type of materials proposed are shown on the adjacent images and a brief description provided below.

- **Concrete sett paving:**

  Concrete sett paving will be used at the interface between areas of tarmac and gravel driveways. It will also be used to enhance larger areas of flag paving at the entrances to both the new training centre and the spectator seating area. Concrete setts will also be used within the parking bays of the new car parking area at the front of the training facility.

- **Gravel:**

  Many of the existing tracks around the site have a gravel finish. Gravel is also used for the driveway of the existing dwelling. The other materials shown have been carefully selected to compliment this material.

- **Black tarmac:**

  Currently used on the existing driveway. This will be extended through to the new car parking area at the front of the training facility. Black tarmac will be used to the driveway elements only with the concrete setts used within parking bays.

- **Concrete flag paving:**

  Concrete flag paving is to be used for larger areas of hard landscaping around the perimeter of the new buildings. It is intended that the paving will be laid in a 'half lap stretcher bond' which will give these areas an additional level of character and traditional appearance.

- **Plastic grass reinforcement system:**

  A plastic grass reinforcement system is proposed to the new area of overflow parking adjacent to the new training facility. These systems are often used at National Trust properties and other heritage sites to create greener parking areas.

7.2 Soft Landscaping

The design and specification of the soft landscaping is an important feature of the scheme and proposals have been prepared by Encon Associates and form part of the planning submission. Careful consideration has been given to the location, extent and specification of the soft landscaping to ensure that it is appropriate for this rural setting. In particular, new tree screening and hedgerow planting around the new car parking areas have been carefully considered to ensure that they minimise the visual impact of the new development.

Grass reinforcement system to overflow parking area.

Concrete setts

Gravel

Tarmac

Concrete flag paving

RDA

Lowlands Equestrian Centre

robothams

8.0 Accessibility

8.1 Access Statement—Parking

The proposal seeks to provide new training facilities at Lowlands where RDA have been operating for a number of years. The site is and will continue to be accessed by a variety of users most but mainly by users with disabilities.

The scheme will provide a total of 32 no. formal car parking spaces adjacent to the training centre of which 5 no. will be designated as wheelchair disabled spaces. It should be noted that RDA have given consideration to the number of wheelchair disabled spaces which are required to ensure that the amount provided is sufficient for their operational needs and they have confirmed that the 5 no. shown on the drawings are sufficient. The reasoning for this is due to the fact that whilst many of RDA's users do have a disability the proportion of the users who specifically require the use of a wheelchair disabled parking bay is relatively low.

8.2 Access Statement—Cycle Storage

4 no. Sheffield style cycle hoops will be provided in a sheltered illuminated are for use by staff and visitors. This will provide cycle store for 8 no. cycles. The shelter is to be located immediately adjacent to the main entrance of the training facility.

8.3 Access Statement - DDA & Part M Compliance

The site is accessed by vehicles from the Old Warwick Road and vehicle parking is provided adjacent to the new training centre. Within the site, where possible car parking and footpaths will be flat and level, there will be no ramping in excess of a 1:20 gradient to the car park or roadways and all access doorways including the main entrance will have level thresholds.

The main entrance is located centrally to the building and will be highly visible from the car park with emphasis provided by the canopy which sits above. The entrance will be clearly defined through the careful use of hard landscaping materials and will be well lit to ensure it is easy to read by all building users.

Internally within the training facility the main entrance leads to a central core area which contains a passenger lift which gives access to the first floor. The layout of both ground and first floors have been specifically designed to ensure they can be easily accessed and navigated by able bodied and disabled users. Accessible W.C. facilities and shower facilities are also provided.

The new training and spectator seating area is designed to be equally accessible. Connectivity between the new building and the rest of the facilities is achieved by the installation of a new concrete footpath which links this building to the rest of the site. Internally accessible W.C. facilities area also provided along with a platform lift which enables wheelchair disabled users to access the upper level viewing platform. Specially designed designated viewing areas to both the indoor and outdoor manège areas area also provided.