

The Erection of Stables & Keeping of Horses

DEVELOPMENT
SERVICES
DEPARTMENT

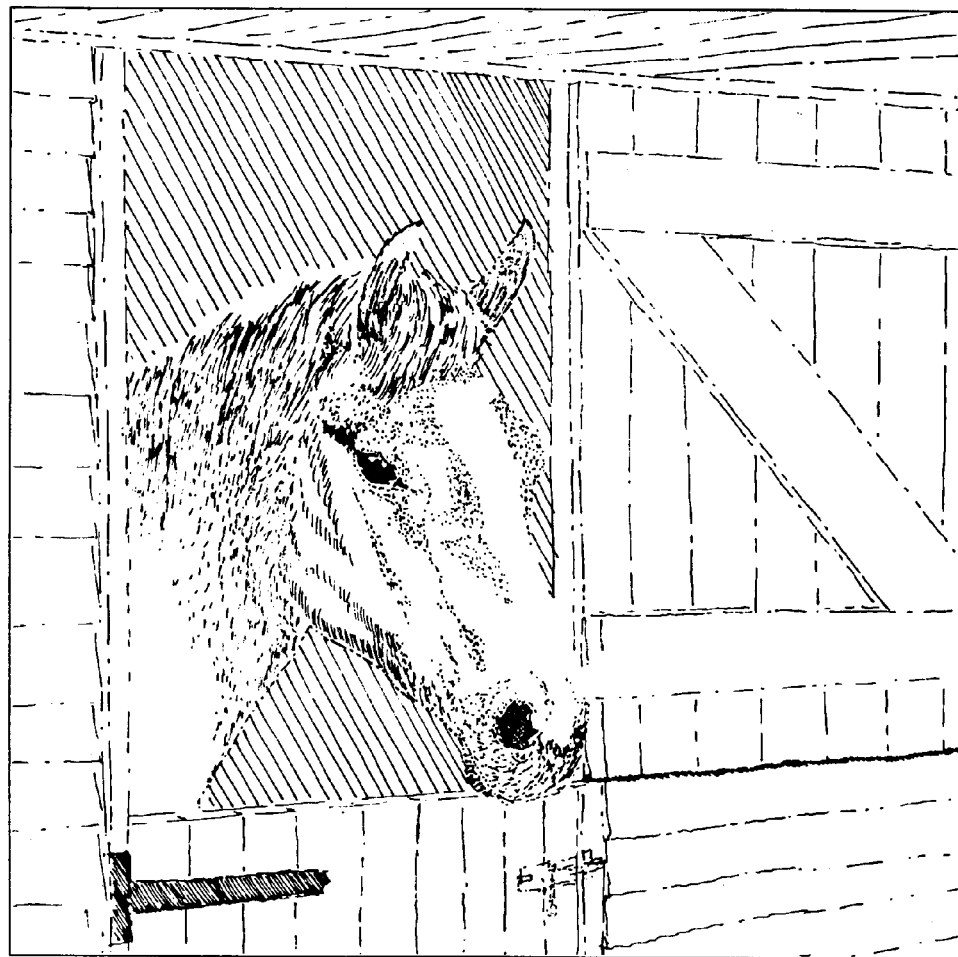
Swale
BOROUGH COUNCIL
NORTH KENT COAST

PLANNING AND
DEVELOPMENT
GUIDELINES No.7

Introduction

This guide sets out the Council's requirements in respect of the standard of buildings connected with the keeping of horses and other related matters. The term "horse" for the purposes of this guidance refers to both horses and ponies.

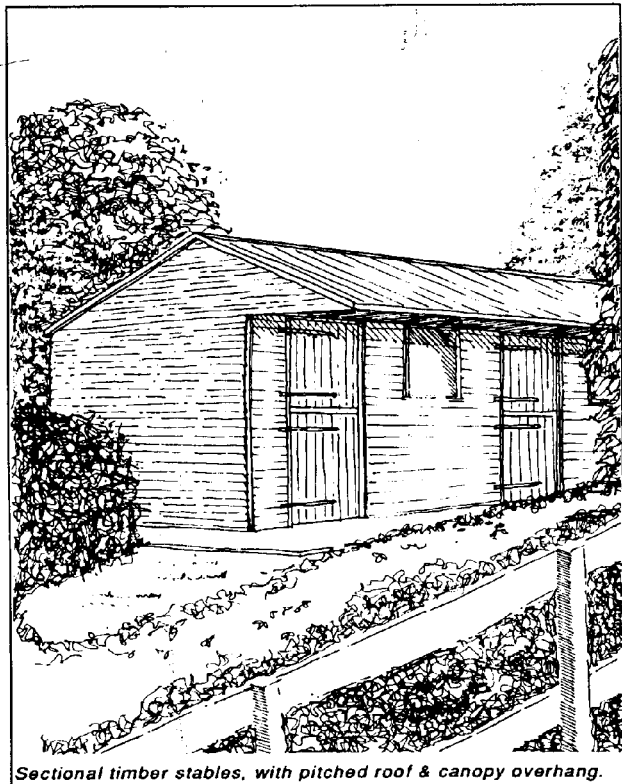
"Horseculture" is a somewhat derogatory term, which brings to mind tumbledown buildings in overgrazed weed strewn fields. The reality need not be like this and properly designed and constructed buildings within well managed pasture, sensitively sited, should not detract from the countryside.



The Need for Planning Permission

1.0 Unless the horses in question are truly working farm horses, planning permission is required in most circumstances, for the erection of stables and associated buildings. Field shelters, hay barns, the construction of all weather riding surfaces, tack rooms, feed stores and the like also normally require planning permission.

1.1 If the development is to take place in the garden of a domestic dwelling however, it falls within the same category as a garden shed or a swimming pool and, provided certain conditions are met, may not need planning permission. These conditions are rather complex and a summary of the relevant points of the permitted development rights is set out opposite.



Sectional timber stables, with pitched roof & canopy overhang.

Do I Need Planning Permission for a Stable in my Garden?

(i) *No part of the building or enclosure can be nearer to a highway than the original dwelling house unless it is 20 metres or more from that highway;*

(ii) *If the building is more than 10 cubic metres and is within 5 metres of the dwelling it will be considered as an extension to the dwelling and the criteria for extending a dwelling under "permitted development" apply;*

(iii) *No part of the building or enclosure should exceed 4 metres in height if it has a pitched roof, or 3 metres in any other case;*

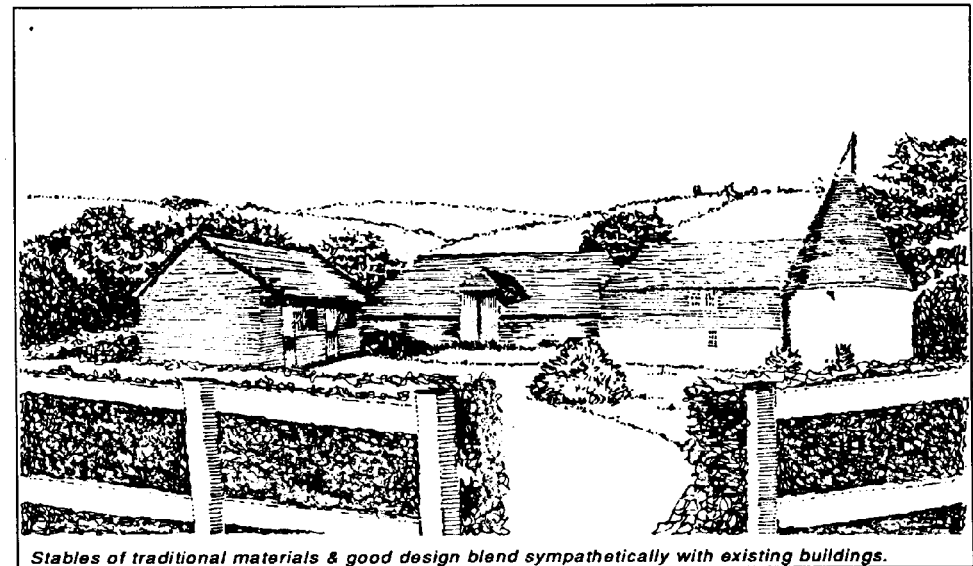
(iv) *The total area of the ground covered by buildings should not exceed 50% of the total garden area; and*

(v) *In the case of Conservation Areas, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty or within the curtilage of a listed building, no building greater than 10 cubic metres can be erected without the benefit of planning permission - regardless of its height and position in the garden.*

1.2 Stables which are built within the gardens of residential properties as "permitted development" not requiring the submission of a planning application must be purely for the private use of the occupants of the dwelling house involved. Stables for any other use definitely require the submission of a planning application. Please contact the Council if you are in any doubt as to whether or not planning permission is necessary. Building Regulations Approval is not, however, normally required for stables but there are some exceptions and further advice is available from the Council's Building Surveyors.

Buildings

2.0 Planning permission for stables will only be granted if the buildings are of an attractive design and appropriate materials. This will almost always mean that a pitched roof is required. The design of the popular sectional timber stables which have a pitched roof with an overhang at the front is usually acceptable. A higher standard of design and materials is required if the buildings fall within a Conservation Area, an Area of Outstanding Beauty, a Special Landscape Area or adjoin a Listed Building. These are areas where the visual effect of any new development is of particular concern and therefore extra care in design and siting is required.



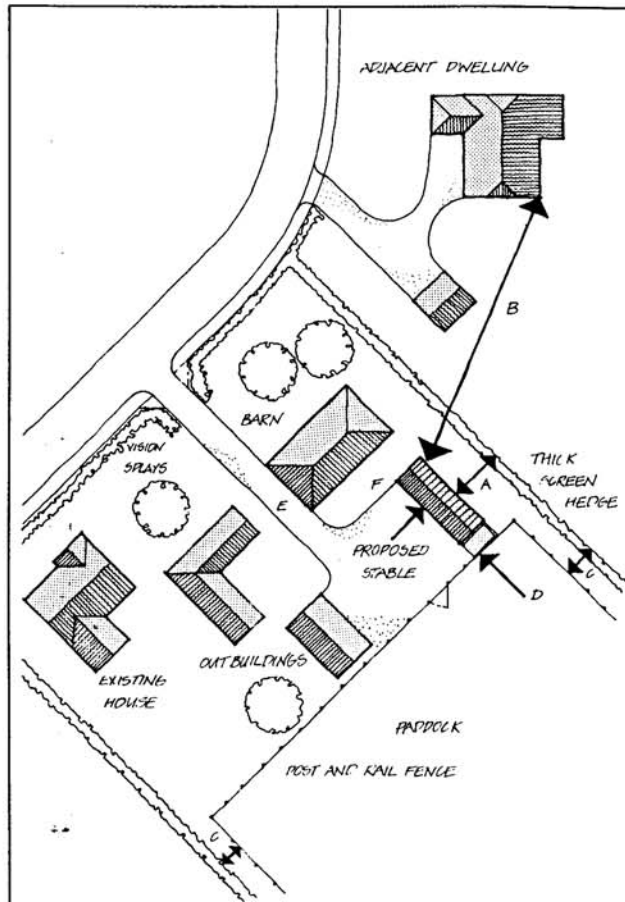
Stables of traditional materials & good design blend sympathetically with existing buildings.

2.1 Whereas a light colour may be acceptable in a domestic setting, stables in a rural setting are usually less obtrusive if the timber is stained a dark colour, and roofing material is either dark grey or dark green. If brickwork and tiles are to be used these should reflect the character of traditional local buildings and not be bright or garish. **A harsh urban appearance is to be avoided in the countryside at all costs.**

Siting

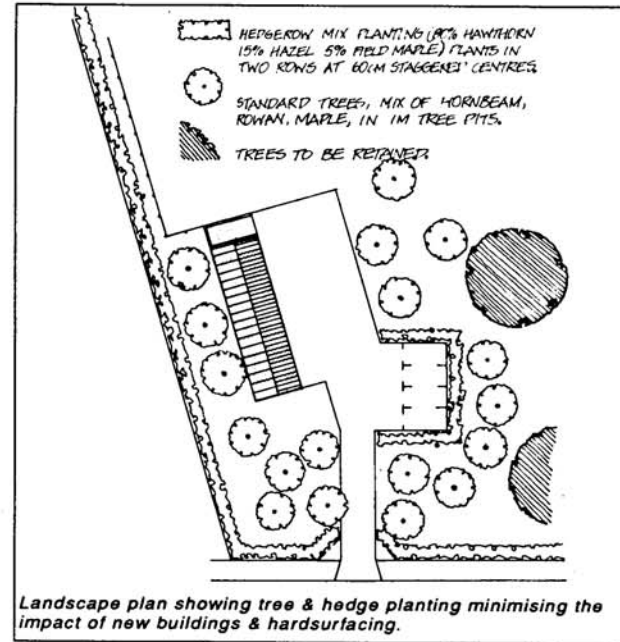
3.0 Buildings which are additional to existing barns or stables should be grouped with those existing buildings as closely as possible. This helps to keep the area of development from sprawling over undeveloped countryside and to minimise the impact of the new buildings. Siting close to existing buildings should also reduce the area of hardsurfacing required in connection with the buildings and required to give access to them. Siting the buildings close to the access point onto a road minimises the length of road or track to the building but must be balanced against the prominence of the buildings in such a position. A well established thick hedgerow is very useful in providing an effective screen.

3.1 The siting of new buildings on an undeveloped site has to be carefully thought out to avoid causing harm to a previously unspoilt area of countryside. Prominent siting for example on a hill top, in the middle of a field or in open marshland are best avoided because of the visual impact of buildings occupying such positions. Stables adjoining residential properties



- A STABLE MINIMUM 6 METRES FROM BOUNDARY
- B STABLE MINIMUM 30 METRES FROM ADJACENT DWELLING
- C PADDOCK POST AND RAIL FENCE MINIMUM 3 METRES FROM BOUNDARY
- D ENCLOSED MANURE STEAD
- E LENGTH OF ACCESS MINIMISED
- F STABLE LOCATED WITHIN EXISTING BUILDING COMPLEX

Plan showing required distances between "horse uses" & the neighbouring property.



Landscape plan showing tree & hedge planting minimising the impact of new buildings & hardsurfacing.

should be at least 6 metres from the boundary of any residential property which is not part of the application site, and 30 metres from any dwelling, which is not connected with the proposed stables. If external electric lighting is to be provided, this can make a site very prominent in a rural landscape. A planning condition is likely to be attached to any permission granted for the erection of stables in the open countryside requiring details of lighting to be submitted to and approved by the Council before it is installed.

Landscaping

4.0 Planning permission granted for stables or associated development is likely to be subject to a landscaping condition. Trees and hedges can be used to soften the impact of new development upon the landscape. Native trees of the type to be found in the existing hedgerows are required for this purpose. It is not acceptable to plant a row of conifers such as would be found in a domestic garden. The aim of the landscaping is to help the new development to blend into a rural landscape and to avoid introducing a sub-urban appearance upon a hitherto rural area. When drawing up a landscaping scheme it is important to avoid any trees and shrubs which are poisonous to horses. All new planting must be fenced off to protect them from the horses. For further advice on landscaping please refer to the Council's Guidance entitled "Planting on New Developments - A Guide for Developers".

Access

5.0 Horses require frequent inspection and attention, particularly if stabled. Quantities of bedding material, hay and other feed have to be brought to the site and numerous vehicle movements are likely. A good access with adequate visibility in both directions is, therefore, essential and something which will be critically examined during the course of determining a planning application.

5.1 One or two stables used entirely for keeping horses within one ownership will obviously generate less vehicle movements than a commercial livery stable or riding school, and the requirements for the access will be dependant partly upon the degree of use to be expected and partly upon the type of road onto which the site will be accessed. When commercial stables are the subject of a planning application, the suitability of the local road network for horse box movements to and from the site are also a consideration.

Riding

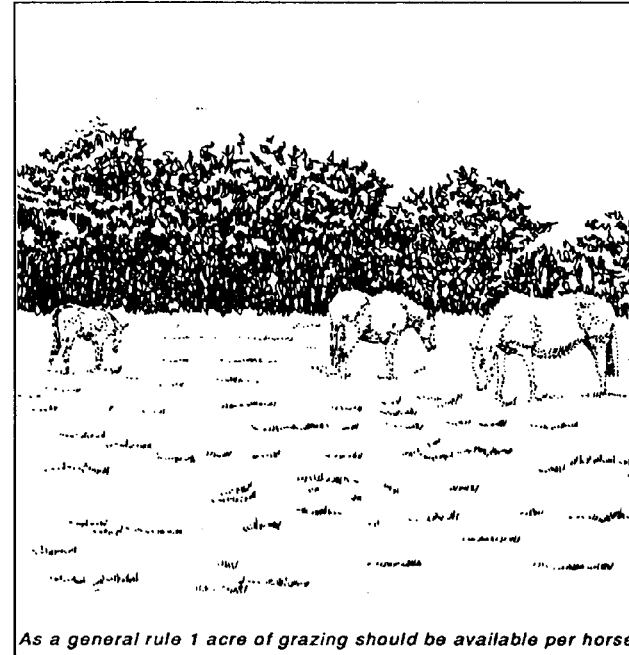
6.0 An application for stables should be supported by a statement explaining where it is anticipated that riding will take place. Public bridleways are few and far between and horses and traffic do not mix well together. If riding is to take place on the land where the stables are situated it may be necessary to provide an "all weather" riding surface in order to limit damage to grazing land. This will depend upon the amount of land available and the number of horses kept. A small acreage will not tolerate regular use for both riding and grazing, as it is likely to become a sea of mud in the winter and a bare dust bowl in the summer.

6.1 Provision of an all weather riding surface is an expensive but effective solution, but may not be acceptable in visual terms. It increases the area of development in what may be a sensitive rural area. If an all weather riding surface is seen as the solution to the problem of where to ride, such development must be kept close to existing buildings and screened by extensive hedge and tree planting, if these do not already exist. The provision of an all weather riding arena requires planning permission.



Grazing

7.0 The keeping of horses for recreation purposes on land is an activity which falls within the control of the planning authority. If the use of land is clearly a mixed one involving grazing and recreation uses, it is likely that the Council will require a planning application to be submitted. If permission is granted, it is possible for the Council to limit the number of horses kept on a given area of land. It is in any case desirable to restrict the number of horses kept to a number that the amount of land available is likely to be able to sustain. As a general rule the Council will expect grazing to be available on the basis of 1 acre per horse. Over stocking results



in overgrazing and is recognisable by pasture which has been grazed almost bare except for certain weeds which are unpalatable to horses and therefore continue to flourish.

7.1 In order to keep horse pasture in good condition it must be rested from time to time to prevent over grazing. Grazing by other animals such as sheep or cattle or "topping" long growth helps to keep the pasture in good condition. Droppings should either be removed or spread. In small paddocks, it is essential to remove the droppings. Poisonous weeds such as

ragwort must be removed and burned, as they are more poisonous when wilting than when they are alive and also more likely to be eaten. Poorly managed pasture has an unattractive appearance, which can be very damaging in an otherwise attractive landscape, and demonstrates a lack of concern for the welfare of the horses.

7.2 The presence of jumps, bollards, oil drums etc., are a definite indication that land is not being used solely for grazing purposes, and can contribute to the poor image that horses sometimes have in the countryside. Such equipment should be stored out of sight when not in use and not allowed to disfigure the landscape for indefinite periods. Applicants for planning permission may be required to accept a condition which requires them to undertake to remove jumps and other equipment when not in frequent use.

Fencing & Shelter

8.0 Fences and gates which adjoin a highway normally require planning permission. Post and rail fencing is attractive and probably the best alternative to natural hedges. Other forms of enclosure such as wooden stakes and wire, are frequently used for enclosing fields grazed by horses. Barbed wire should only be used as a top strand and must be kept very taut. It should not be dangerous to passers by on public footpaths. Thick hedges form good barriers and also provide shelter from wind. If a field shelter is to be provided, its orientation relative to prevailing winds is an important consideration. However, planning permission will only be granted if the shelter is unobtrusively sited and of appropriate design and construction. A lorry body is not considered suitable.

8.1 Stables which are not erected in an area which is completely enclosed should be provided with a fence around them, so that if doors are accidentally left open, the horses are confined and do not have access onto a road. Such an enclosed area also enables horses to be let out of the stables rapidly in the event of a fire.

Drainage

9.0 Provision of a drainage system connected to a wastewater sewer or drainage tank is essential in some sensitive water gathering areas, particularly if commercial stables are involved. If three or more stables are to be erected, a drainage system is advisable in any case. Although the urine produced by the horses is absorbed by straw, shavings, or other absorbent bedding, the emptying of water buckets, scrubbing feed bins and process of keeping this number of stables clean is likely to produce enough liquid waste to warrant a drainage system in any area. The muck heap area may also need to be connected to a waste water system to avoid pollution of the water table in water sensitive areas. The National Rivers Authority is consulted on any planning application submitted for commercial stables and for development within the most sensitive water gathering areas. Drainage to a soakaway may be acceptable in areas which are not of special importance for water gathering. Advice from Southern Water Services or the Mid-Kent Water Company and National Rivers Authority should be sought in the first instance, when considering drainage requirements.

Disposal of Manure

10.0 The greatest source of complaint connected with stables concerns the disposal of manure. A statement accompanying an application for stables should contain an explanation of how this will be disposed of. In most situations it

will be necessary to show a hard surfaced area, enclosed on three sides for the storage of manure. Stabled horses generate a quantity of manure. Even the one horse owner soon becomes the owner of a sizeable manure heap, and commercial stables generate an even greater quantity. When planning the siting and construction of the area for containment of the manure heap, it may be advisable to allow space for a mechanical shovel to be operated.

10.1 Burning manure creates foul smoke and is not a suitable method of disposal. Manure heaps do smell and also attract flies and vermin. If sited near residential properties they give rise to justifiable complaints. Storage of vast, untidy heaps of manure also detract from the appearance of the countryside and large accumulations must be avoided by arranging for regular disposal.

Stables in Gardens

11.0 It is rarely appropriate to keep horses in a garden unless that area is very large. Stables, paddocks and manure heaps should be kept as far away as possible from adjoining residential properties to avoid causing distress to occupants who do not share an enthusiasm for horses. Stables should be sited at least 30 metres from the nearest adjoining dwelling and there should be a minimum area of $\frac{1}{2}$ an acre where horses can be safely turned for exercise without reaching into the neighbour's garden. It is not normally appropriate to keep more than two horses in a garden area unless that area is very large.

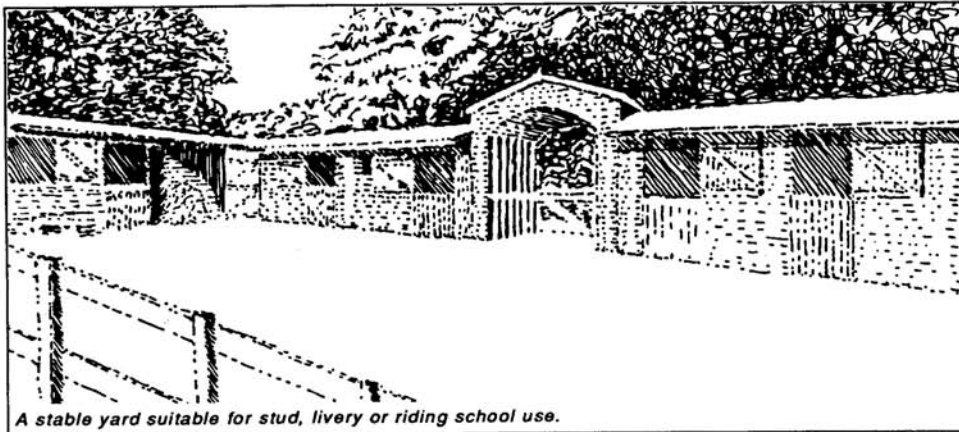
11.1 A small paddock in a garden is useful to allow the horse freedom from the boredom of stabling and has some grazing value but such a small area of grass would not form a significant proportion of the horse's diet. The enclosure should be 3 metres from any boundary with an adjoining dwelling to avoid damage to boundary fences, which are unlikely to be horse proof, and to safeguard plants and trees in the adjoining gardens. Appropriate storage buildings for forage and bedding are likely to be needed in addition to the stables themselves and due consideration should be given to this requirement at an early stage in planning for the stables.

Other Planning Considerations

12.0 Unless a planning application is submitted for commercial stables, such as a riding school or livery yard, a condition restricting the use of stables to private use is likely to be attached to the planning permission. This is because commercial stables are likely to give rise to fresh issues which need to be considered carefully before planning permission is granted.

12.1 Whereas an application for a small number of stables for private use may receive planning permission subject to the requirements set out in these guidance notes, obtaining planning permission for larger stable yards in rural areas is more difficult. Such applications are likely to be resisted by the Council because of the pressure for residential accommodation, which is likely to follow, as well as the increased demands upon rural road networks and their greater visual impact upon the countryside.

12.2 Security is a problem which should be addressed in the early stages of planning and ideally any stables should be within sight and sound of persons occupying a dwelling and able to take responsibility for overseeing the stables. The existence of stables needing supervision cannot be used to justify the erection of a dwelling in an area where this would not normally be permitted.



A stable yard suitable for stud, livery or riding school use.

12.3 If a public right of way runs through the land in question, care must be taken not to obstruct paths with buildings or fences. Planning permission for stables does not include permission to park a horse box or other lorry on the land. If this is your intention, you should make this clear by showing the area where the lorry is to be parked on your plans.

Horses & Nature Conservation

12.4 The nature conservation of many areas such as traditional grazing marsh and kentish woodlands, rely on traditional management. On the North Kent Marshes, in particular, grazing by cattle and sheep is required. Grazing by horses has a markedly different effect on grassland to that by sheep and cattle. Horses graze and dung in separate parts of each field that they use. This may leave some areas very closely grazed, whilst other soil-enriched areas will be invaded by coarse weed, harming rare plant communities and species. Fencing often prevents

grazing of the ditch margins and future maintenance. Similarly, grazing beneath canopies of trees prevents natural regeneration. The advice of English Nature (see contacts) should be sought. There will however normally be a presumption against the erection of stables and a change of use from agriculture to horse paddocks within *Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Sites of Nature Conservation Interest and ancient woodland.*

Riding Schools

13.0 The use of private stables for livery or riding school purposes requires planning permission for a change of use. Before riding lessons can be offered in exchange for money, a licence is required from the Council's Environmental Services Department. This licence is not the same as planning permission and the issue of a licence does not indicate that planning permission will be granted.

Conclusion

14.0 Planning permission is usually required for the keeping of horses and the erection of associated buildings and the Borough Council will seek to safeguard the appearance of the countryside and, where applicable, to safeguard the amenities of adjoining residential occupants. Provided that careful thought, time and effort are given to the provision of facilities for horses and managing them properly afterwards, horses can be an attractive feature in the countryside.

Contacts

see contacts below

For further planning advice please contact:

Planning Services, Swale house, East Street, Sittingbourne, Kent, ME10 3HT; (advice is also available on the planning pages of website at www.swale.gov.uk)

Email us on planning@swale.gov.uk or Fax us on 01795 417417

The Duty officer is: available:

8.45 to 5.00pm Monday to Thursday and 8.45 am to 4.30 pm on Friday.

Contactable either in person at Swale House or by telephoning **01795 417442** and can

- Give advice on procedures and processes
- Answer general questions and Comment on development potential
- Give general advice on who to contact and how best to seek pre-application advice.

Swale's Conservation Officer - telephone 01795 417375

For Building Regulation advice please contact:

South Thames Gateway Building Control Partnership,
Compass Centre, Chatham Maritime, Chatham, Kent, ME4 4YH

Telephone 01634 331133

Fax 01634 331299

Email building@stqbc.org.uk

If you would like further information, more copies or alternative versions (i.e large print, audio, different language) we will do our best to accommodate your request please contact:

Customer Services

Phone: **01795 417850**

Email: csc@swale.gov.uk

Contacts (continued)

British Horse Society

British Equestrian Centre,
Stoneleigh,
Kenilworth,
Warwickshire.
CV8 2LR ☎ 0203 696697

County Chairman
Mrs M.P. McDonald
Pear Tree Farm,
Bilsington,
Ashford,
Kent.
TN25 7LA ☎ 0233 720382

Secretary
Mrs P. Withers
Ragged House Farm,
Egerton,
Ashford,
Kent.
TN27 9ER ☎ 0233 76313

Bridleways
Mrs E German
Paddocks View
Staple Street
Faversham
Kent.
ME13 9TY. ☎ 0227 750585.

Road Safety
Miss. P: French
99 Surrenden Road,
Folkestone,
Kent.
CT19 4AG ☎ 0303 275603.

Welfare
Miss. J. Claxton
High Tree Lodge,
Buck Street,
Challock,
Ashford,
Kent.
TN25 4AT ☎ 0233 74451.

District Representative

Swale:
Mrs. M. Ingleton
"Prospect Villa",
418 Minster Road,
Isle of Sheppey.
☎ 0795 873709.

Association of British Riding Schools

Mrs. J. Packer
Old Brewery Yard,
Penzance,
Cornwall.
TR18 2SL ☎ 0736 69440.

National Pony Society

Willingdon House
102 High Street.
Alton
GU34 1EN.

Other Contacts:

English Nature

Countryside Management Centre,
Coldharbour Farm,
Wye.
Ashford.
Kent.
TN25 5DB. ☎ 0233 812520.

This booklet is one of a number of planning and development guidelines published by the Development Services Department of Swale Borough Council. Others include:

1. ● *The Conversion of Buildings Into Flats and Houses in Multiple Occupation.*
2. ● *Listed Buildings - A Guide for Owners and Occupiers.*
3. ● *The Conservation of Traditional Farm Buildings.*
4. ● *The Design of Shopfronts, Signs and Advertisements.*
5. ● *Designing an Extension - A Guide for Householders.*
6. ● *Planting on New Developments - A Guide for Developers.*
7. ● *The Erection of Stables and Keeping of Horses.*
8. ● *Conservation Areas.*

Others may be published from time to time. Should you wish to obtain any of the above then please contact:

Swale Borough Council. Development Services Department
Swale House, East Street, Sittingbourne
Kent. ME10 3HT. ☎ (0795) 417344