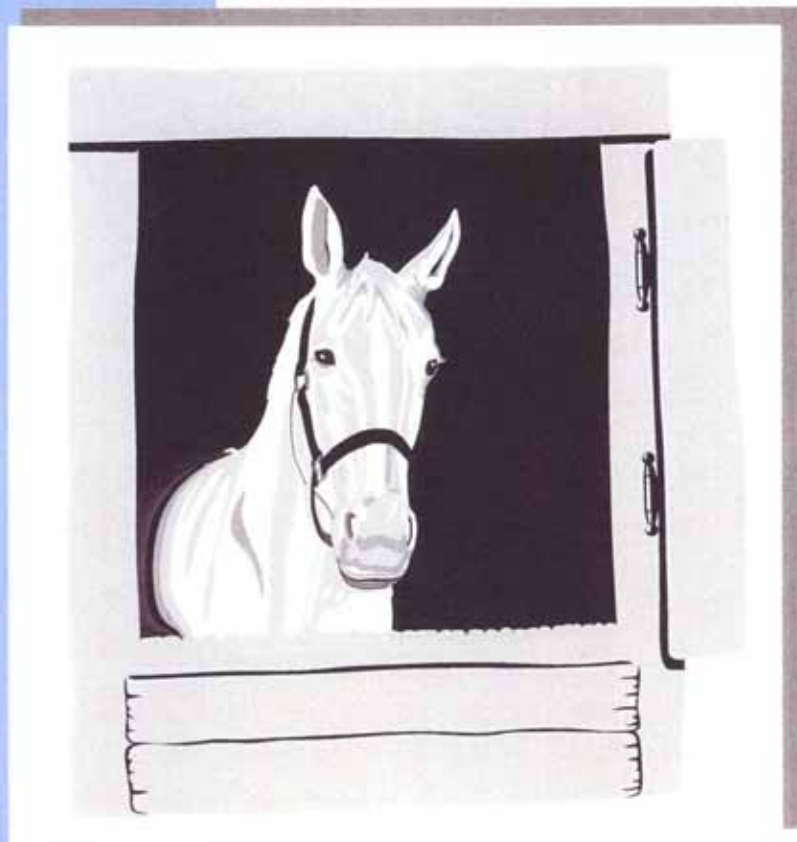


# EQUESTRIAN DEVELOPMENT



## SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE



Winchester  
City Council

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## **1 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 Horse riding is a very popular countryside activity, enjoyed by an estimated 3.3 million people nationally. The number of horse owners, riding establishments, pony and riding clubs show a continued increase. There are also increasing numbers of riders taking part in competitive events such as show jumping and horse trials. This is happening at a time when there are not enough facilities to match the growth. The increase in popularity, particularly in countryside locations, has resulted in increased pressure on the countryside for more equestrian facilities, at a time when changes in agricultural practices has led to farmers seeking to diversify. Farmers are having to look for additional ways of supplementing their business and many are interested in providing for the growing demand for horse related development. In addition to the countryside, the urban fringe area is also a suitable location, often within site and hearing distance of properties and helping to reduce the need to travel.
- 1.2 As for any other development in the countryside, development involving horses should take particular care to minimise the effect proposals will have on the appearance of the countryside. Buildings should be sited and designed in such a way as to blend with their surroundings. High standards of design, construction and maintenance of buildings and care of land are essential to ensure that equestrian activities do not have an adverse impact on the countryside and that horses are well housed and cared for.
- 1.3 The City Council has an important role to play in ensuring that the character of the countryside is not destroyed through inappropriate action, neglect or ignorance. Through the exercise of its development control and enforcement powers, the City Council can seek to restrict development which would cause demonstrable harm to important areas of countryside. This guidance will assist the local planning authority in determining planning applications relating to equestrian development and whether or not it is expedient to take enforcement action.

## **Purpose of the Guidance**

- 1.4 This planning guidance has been prepared with a view to achieving two main purposes:
- i) to provide detailed information and interpretation of the proposals of the Winchester District Local Plan as they relate to development involving horses;
  - ii) to provide more detailed guidance for developers, landowners and others concerned with horses, including such matters as design guidance, provision of facilities and management of the land.
- 1.5 This supplementary planning guidance should be used for reference purposes and for guidance not simply as a check-list for developers and landowners. It would be advisable for anybody interested in providing for equines to contact the local planning authority to check whether planning permission is required, and to discuss their proposals before submitting a planning application, as any unauthorised work may result in enforcement action being taken.
- 1.6 This guidance was prepared using information supplied by the British Horse Society, Countryside Commission and Farming and Rural Conservation Agency.

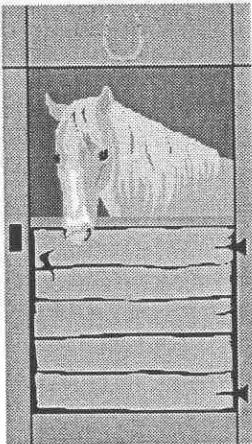
## **Status of the Guidance**

- 1.7 This Brief was published in draft form in July 1999 to enable the public to comment on the information contained in it. The comments have been taken into account and a number of revisions are now incorporated into the Brief. The Brief has been adopted by the City Council as non-statutory supplementary planning guidance for equestrian related developments.



## 2. POLICY BACKGROUND

2.1 The production of this supplementary planning guidance is prompted by proposals contained in the Winchester District Local Plan and the need to amplify these and provide additional guidance. The City Council recognises that many areas of countryside



proposed for development involving horses are environmentally sensitive, requiring detailed and careful consideration. The main proposals of the Local Plan affecting horse related development in the countryside are:

- i) countryside policies aimed at retaining the attractive and dynamic nature of the District as a place to be enjoyed and in which to live and work (Proposals C.1-C.2, C.7-C9, C.12-C.20);
- ii) heritage policies relating to the reuse of agricultural buildings of historic or architectural interest (Proposals HG.1-HG.4, HG.6, HG.18-H.G.20, HG.23, HG24);
- iii) environmental policies aimed at protecting the character of settlements, the landscape and preserving wildlife habitats (Proposals EN.4-EN.8, EN.10, EN.14-EN16);
- iv) housing policies aimed at controlling the location of residential development (Proposals H.3, H.8);
- v) facilities and service policies to ensure adequate infrastructure is available to serve developments (Proposals FS.2, FS.3);
- vi) recreation policies set out general proposals for providing appropriate amounts of recreational space (Proposals RT.4, RT.8);

- vii) transport policies relating to coping with the substantial increase in demand for travel (Proposals T.7-T.12).

2.2 The overall theme of the Winchester District Local Plan is one of conservation and enhancement of the built and natural environment. Although there are several policies which relate to equestrian development, the main policies are contained in the Countryside, Environment and Recreation Chapters.

2.3 The main countryside policies of the Local Plan encourage the reuse of existing non-residential buildings wherever it is possible, provided the building is a permanent structure and not unsightly. However, whilst the reuse of existing buildings is to be preferred to the development of additional buildings, existing rural buildings will not always be suitable for conversion or reuse. The presumption against development in the countryside is particularly pertinent to new residential dwellings, which are not normally permitted for equestrian developments. Where a dwelling is exceptionally to be permitted in association with equestrian activities, there would be a requirement for a Section 106 agreement to tie it to such use. Policies in the Environment Chapter of the Plan aim to integrate any development into its surroundings. The aim is to maintain and protect the character of settlements and the wider landscape, whilst preserving wildlife habitats. Development is permitted for equestrian activities in countryside locations provided that it complies with the requirements in Proposal RT.8 of the Winchester District Local Plan, which relates specifically to equestrian developments. (Proposal RT.8 and accompanying explanatory text are reproduced in Appendix 1).

2.4 In addition to the Countryside policies in the Winchester District Local Plan, there is a Landscape Assessment for the whole of the District. This supplements a more specific landscape assessment of the East Hampshire Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) produced by the Countryside Commission in 1991. Both of these documents identify the various landscape characteristics and evaluate the necessary

protection measures needed to ensure the character types identified are protected. These measures have been incorporated into the Countryside policies in the Winchester District Local Plan, although the Landscape Assessments provide additional, more detailed background information, which should be taken into account.

2.5 Policies in the Winchester District Local Plan interpret policies set out at strategic level in the Hampshire County Structure Plan Review. The Countryside Policies in the County Structure Plan aim to achieve a balance between the three themes of conservation of the natural heritage, protection of the best agricultural land (Grades 1, 2 and 3a) and the health of the rural economy. Social and economic pressures which generate demands for new development and change in the countryside must be weighed against local constraints and the principal aim of conserving the countryside as a whole. Development which is permitted must be carefully integrated into its surroundings to minimise its impact. Countryside recreation is encouraged in locations where it will assist the local economy, meet local needs, or where existing buildings can be reused (provided these are unobtrusive and suitable for reuse), and provided it fulfils the transport requirements.

2.6 Guidance has been provided at national level by the Government in Planning Policy Guidance note (PPG) 1 (General Policy and Principles) and PPG 7 (Countryside - Environmental Quality and Economic and Social Development).

2.7 Planning Policy Guidance 7 was revised in February 1997 and offers guidance in the following areas relating to development involving horses:

- sustainable development
- protecting the character of the countryside
- protecting the best agricultural land (see also Annex B)
- rural businesses
- reuse of existing buildings (see also Annex G)

- protecting Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty
- development involving horses (Annex F)

2.8 A key theme which runs through the guidance is one of sustainable development. This entails accommodating the necessary change in rural areas while maintaining and, where possible, enhancing the quality of the environment for local people and visitors. The guiding principle in the countryside is that development should benefit economic activity and maintain or enhance the environment. Sensitive, small-scale new development can be accommodated in and around many settlements. Rural areas can accommodate many forms of development without detriment if the location and design of development is handled with sensitivity. New building in rural areas should contribute to a sense of local identity and regional diversity and be of an appropriate design, materials and scale for its location. The reuse and adaptation of existing rural buildings has an important role in meeting the needs of rural areas for commercial and recreational activities. It can reduce the need for new development in the countryside and avoid leaving an existing building vacant and prone to vandalism and dereliction.

2.9 Within the principles of sustainable development the best and most versatile agricultural land should be protected as a national resource for future generations. As a result, irreversible development on land of grades 1, 2 or 3a should be avoided wherever possible.

2.10 Planning Policy Guidance note 1 (revised in February 1997) offers general advice on sustainable development, design (see also Annex A), development in rural areas and access.

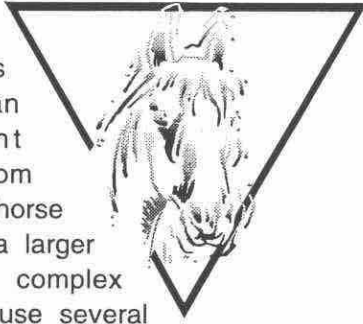
2.11 The guidance contained in PPG 1 is similar to that contained in PPG 7, emphasising the need for sustainable development and good design. New development should be of an appropriate scale, mass, height, landscape siting and have suitable access in relation to any neighbouring buildings and the local area more generally. A design or layout appropriate to a specific location is not

necessarily appropriate elsewhere. Each individual development should take account of the defining characteristics of the local area, for example, local or regional building traditions and building materials.

- 2.12 In attempting to achieve sustainable development and help reduce the environmental impacts of transport, development should try to reduce reliance upon the private car. Development in the urban fringe areas in particular should be accessible by alternative means of transport, such as walking, cycling or public transport, in accordance with the aims of Planning Policy Guidance note 13: Transport.

### 3. PLANNING CONTROLS

3.1 There are many different types of equestrian development ranging from keeping one horse in a field to a larger commercial complex which can house several horses. The type of development will determine whether or not planning permission is required. Commercial developments for several horses will require planning permission, but things are a little more ambiguous where horses are kept at field. It is advisable to check with the local planning authority whether planning permission is required, as any unauthorised work may result in enforcement action being taken.



3.2 Planning permission is not required for the use of land for the purposes of agriculture, where agriculture is "the breeding and keeping of livestock and the use of land as grazing or meadow land" (Section 336 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990). "Livestock" relates only to livestock bred or kept for agricultural purposes. The land can be considered to be used for "grazing" if horses are turned onto it with a view to feeding them from it. The use of land for grazing horses is an agricultural use. Buildings used for housing horses used in farming qualify as agricultural permitted development, and so benefit from the permitted development rights in Part 6 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995. However, buildings for horses that are simply grazing the land, rather than used in agriculture, do require planning permission.

3.3 If horses are kept on the land for some other use, such as exercise or recreation, grazing becomes incidental or inevitable; therefore, keeping horses as opposed to grazing them is not an agricultural use of land. When agricultural land is subdivided into paddocks, when shelters are provided, or when farm buildings are converted to livery use, there

may be a material change in the use of agricultural land. Therefore, keeping a recreational horse on agricultural land may mean the land has changed to a recreational use, thus requiring planning permission.

3.4 Stables or loose boxes erected within the curtilage of a dwelling house for horses kept as "pet animals...for domestic needs or personal enjoyment of the dwelling house" enjoy permitted development rights under Part 1 of the General Permitted Development Order 1995.

3.5 As there are many different types of equestrian development with different requirements, Chapter 4 deals with the needs of recreational equestrian development, whilst Chapter 5 considers commercial development.

## 4. RECREATIONAL EQUESTRIAN DEVELOPMENT

- 4.1 Development for equestrian uses will vary according to the scale of activity intended. This Chapter focuses on development for horses kept in private ownership for the enjoyment of the owner. The majority of such horses are kept in a field on their own rather than in a large complex with lots of others.
- 4.2 The general requirements of privately owned horses will vary according to how and where they are kept and the type of animal it is. For example, a stallion will have different requirements to a mare or gelding, simply due to its stronger instincts and strength. This guidance is pertinent to providing for the basic needs of horses in general, such as land requirements and provision of adequate shelter, and will need to be adapted according to the needs of the individual animal(s). It is advisable to discuss proposals for development with the local planning authority and check whether planning permission is required, as any unauthorised work may result in enforcement action being taken.
- 4.3 The rest of this Chapter deals with each of the different requirements of horses and is based upon information provided by the British Horse Society (BHS) and the Countryside Commission. Additional reference material is listed in Appendix 2.

### Providing and managing land for horses

- 4.4 The requirements of land for horses will vary according to the size of the animal and where it is kept. A horse which is kept at grass will require more land than one kept in a stable. Where horses are kept at grass and the pasture is expected to provide for all the horse's grazing needs, the BHS recommends provision of between 0.6-0.8 hectares. Less than 0.4 hectares of land will not provide adequate grazing for horses unless they are stabled for some of the time and fed supplementary feed. All horses will

require supplementary feed (hay) during the winter months, whether stabled or not.

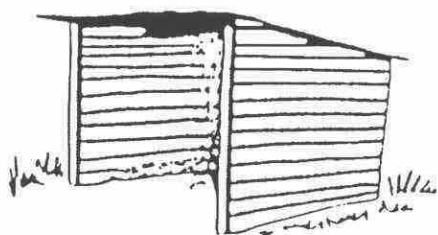
- 4.5 Where grazing land is only to provide supplementary grazing for turnout (exercise) when a horse is stabled for some of the time, a larger number of horses can be kept on a similar amount of land, or one horse may be kept on a small parcel of land.
- 4.6 The pasture needs to be relatively flat and well drained. These factors will help to provide healthy pasture which in turn produces economical food for horses. Grass grows best on well drained land, which allows good aeration and does not hold puddles after rain. To achieve better quality pasture which will also be easier to keep relatively weed free (some of which, such as ragwort, are poisonous to horses), it is advisable to keep the sward about 5cm in length and no less than 2-5cm at the end of the grazing period. Sharing the land with other animals such as cattle or sheep may also help avoid the build up of weeds and assist in the control of parasitic worms. It is a legal requirement to remove noxious weeds from the land. The daily removal of dung (where possible, or a minimum of twice a week) from the pasture will help achieve even grazing, avoid the build up of weeds and help control the build up of parasitic worms.
- 4.7 ADAS have produced an information leaflet 'Ragwort, advice to farmers', available direct from ADAS at the address in Appendix 3. More details on how to maintain pasture can be found in the Countryside Commission booklet 'Horses in the Countryside' and from a jointly published leaflet from English Nature and the BHS entitled 'Horses, grasslands and nature conservation'. The BHS also have other advisory leaflets. A list of useful reference material is included in Appendix 2.
- 4.8 Horses can be kept without any pasture at all if they are stabled at all times and dry fed. Where such a situation arises, there will need to be access to suitable land for the purpose of exercise, whether on pasture or a bridleway. In the interests of safety riding horses on roads should be minimised and Proposal RT.8 of the Winchester District



Local Plan requires equestrian sites to have good access to the bridleway network.

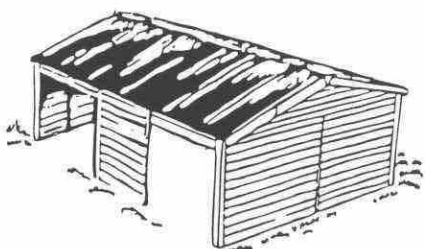
## Providing suitable shelter / accommodation for horses

- 4.9 A horse kept at grass all year round will require a shelter to protect it from the extremes of the weather. Although trees and hedgerow plants may appear to offer some protection, horses need a shelter where they can escape the sun and midges in the summer months and somewhere which will offer some degree of warmth and protection from the rain at other times.
- 4.10 There are many different sorts of shelter which can be provided, ranging from a simple screen which the animal can stand behind to get protection from the prevailing wind, to a stable box with doors. If no stable is provided, the next best alternative is a shelter with three sides and a roof (see Figure 1).



**Figure 1**  
*Shelter with three sides and a roof*

This basic design can easily be varied according to the number of horses to be protected. However, larger shelters designed for several horses must have more than one doorway if there is a partial screen across the 'open' side (see Figure 2).



**Figure 2**  
*Shelter with more than one doorway for several horses*

This feature is designed to prevent a dominant horse from excluding any other horses by blocking the only entrance. In

such cases where there are two entrances, they should be a minimum of 3m wide. The opening should be high and wide in order to encourage the horses in and allow room for manoeuvre where more than one horse are using it.

## Stables

- 4.11 A field shelter is important for the horse kept at grass, but some horses need to be kept stabled for some or all of the time. The minimum dimensions of a stable must enable a horse to lie down, stand up and turn around without difficulty. The British Horse Society recommends a floor area of 3m x 3.7m for a pony and 3.7m x 3.7m for a horse, with a height of between 2.7m - 3.4m according to the height of the horse. (There should be a minimum 0.9m clearance in the roof.)
- 4.12 The stable doors should be a minimum of 1.2m wide and 2.3m high, with the bottom door being 1.2m high. It is essential that the doors open outwards and are securely bolted. They should be placed to one side to avoid draughts and where two stables adjoin, the doors should not be placed next to each other.
- 4.13 Each stable should have:-
- provision for water
  - rings for tying up
  - hard wearing, waterproof, non-slip floor
  - a 'kicking board'
  - good ventilation
- 4.14 The stable floor should be made of a hard wearing, waterproof and nonslip material. Suitable surfaces include roughened concrete or finished granolithic material. It should slope slightly to the back of the stable, draining into a gully and soakaway. Only clean uncontaminated surface water from roofs and paved areas should be discharged to soakways. Foul water from stables should be stored and disposed of in accordance with the 'Code of Good Agricultural Practice for the Protection of Water'. It is important that the Environment Agency is contacted regarding the appropriate foul water disposal routes for stables (For more information on storage

and disposal of manure refer to paragraph 4.19). A 'kicking board' of at least 1.2m should be provided around the base of the walls. The walls should present a reasonably smooth uninterrupted surface free from edges or projections on which an animal could injure itself. Although a hard-standing area outside the stable is not essential, it is extremely useful.

- 4.15 It is important that there is good ventilation in the stable, but without draughts. This can be achieved with high level windows, whenever possible on opposite walls to ensure cross ventilation. Windows should open inwards with air flow upwards and not down across the horse's back and they should be barred.
- 4.16 Any electric lighting and power points should be protected from the horse, with switches located outside of the box. The use of intrusive external lighting will be resisted. Wiring should be rodent proof and secured. It is advisable to have fire-fighting equipment on site.

### **Additional storage areas / accommodation**

- 4.17 A feed store and hay/straw stores for bulk supplies must be provided separate from the other areas. Where it is necessary to provide a tack room it should be integrated with the stabling.
- 4.18 It is recommended that a more integrated approach be taken to equestrian development. Consideration should be given to all aspects of equestrian accommodation and storage needs at the outset to avoid piecemeal development, a particular problem on smaller sites which can become 'overcrowded' and obtrusive in appearance. All buildings should be integrated as much as possible to minimise visual intrusion on the landscape setting, and the siting of caravans will not be permitted. If provision of a washroom and rest area are required, they should be integrated into the main stable building. It would be advisable to discuss development proposals with the local planning authority and check whether planning permission is required before undertaking any development.

- 4.19 Consideration must be given to how horse manure is to be disposed of in a legal and environmentally sound manner (this does not include burning). The drainage from manure heaps is classified as 'slurry' and should be stored, collected and disposed of in accordance with the 'Code of Good Agricultural Practice' and 'the Control of Pollution (silage, slurry and agricultural fuel oil) Regulations' 1991 as amended 1997. Foul water from manure heaps and stables is polluting and the pollution of controlled waters is an offence under the Water Resources Act 1991, punishable by a fine not exceeding £20,000 or imprisonment for a term not exceeding three months or both. (The 'Code of Good Agricultural Practice for the Protection of Water' is available direct from MAFF at the address in Appendix 3).

- 4.20 The storage of manure should be in open bunkers, constructed of non-absorbent blocks with a concrete floor. It should be a four-sided construction with an opening left in one side to allow for the removal by trailer if necessary. Drainage of the bunker should be achieved by sloping the floor of the bunker towards the rear into a gully outside. The size of the bunker will depend upon the length of time the manure is stored. A useful guide is 5 cubic metres per horse for one week.

### **The choice of materials**

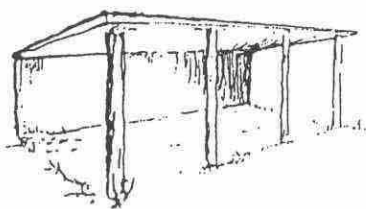
- 4.21 Development in an area with existing buildings should attempt to blend in with them. Where possible locally occurring materials or reclaimed materials should be used to remain in keeping with the surroundings. Similarly, the scale and design of buildings should be consistent with its use and surrounding buildings.
- 4.22 The choice of materials for construction will vary according to the type of shelter/stable constructed and its location. Materials should be chosen where possible to harmonise with existing local buildings and the landscape.
- 4.23 It is important that the materials chosen will offer the horse sufficient insulation against extremes in the weather. The use of corrugated metal should be avoided as this is too hot in summer and cold in winter.

4.24 The choice of colour can play a large part in determining the degree to which a building will stand out from its surroundings. In relatively flat, open landscapes constructing a building with a darker roof can make it less obtrusive, as will a shallow pitch roof. The colour should be compatible with the rural setting. As a result the most suitable colour will vary according to each individual situation. The choice of colours for farm buildings in general should be guided by the browns, grey-browns, ambers and ochres found in the natural landscape. Green has an ambiguous relationship with the greens of nature and can 'kill' the colour of surrounding vegetation. Black and often dark blues are effective in rendering a building less conspicuous in most situations, while white and strong hues should preferably not be used.

4.25 More information on stable design can be obtained from the British Horse Society and ADAS. (The addresses are provided in Appendix 3). For more information on the colour and siting of shelters refer to 'Farm Buildings: A Design Guide for Hampshire'.

### The siting of a shelter / stable

4.26 The majority of equestrian development occurs in a countryside location or within the urban fringe, both of which can be particularly sensitive to new development.

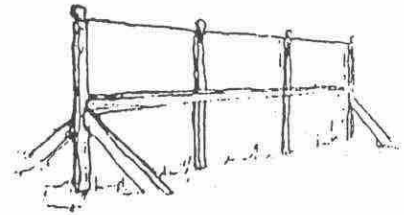


**Open-ended covered shelter**

As a result equestrian activities should attempt to reuse or convert appropriate existing buildings wherever possible to avoid the need for further development in the countryside. Where new development is necessary, attempts should be made to make it as inconspicuous as possible.

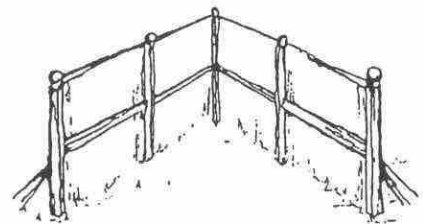
4.27 Before constructing new shelters, it is advisable to identify critical viewpoints in the surrounding landscape before deciding upon

the location, in order that attempts can be



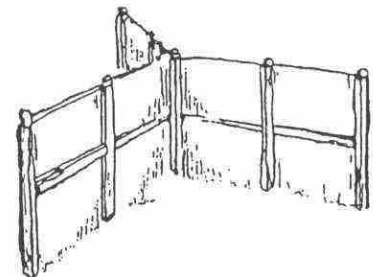
**Straight screen**

made to minimise the likely impact of any new development in a countryside location. New buildings should be linked in with any existing buildings on site to appear less obtrusive. The situation of a shelter should make the most of natural folds in the landscape or surrounding tree belts to render



**Two angled screens**

them as inconspicuous as possible. At the very least, buildings should avoid an elevated situation on an open skyline. The planting of appropriate native trees and shrubs may offer some screening,



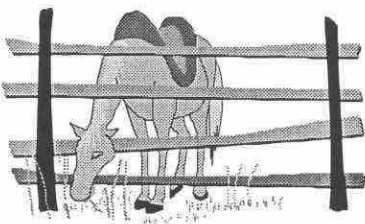
**Multiple angled screens**

particularly in exposed areas, but such planting should be of locally indigenous species and managed in a manner sensitive to the locality, for example, hedge laying or coppicing. (N.B. All new planting in the early stages of growth should be protected from being eaten or trampled by livestock.) There is a need to retain the historic field patterns with associated hedging or traditional fencing. The Landscape Assessments provide useful information on the characteristics of the main landscape types within the District which should be retained and enhanced.

4.28 The main purpose of the shelter is to offer some protection to horses from the extremes of weather. When locating three-sided shelters particular attention needs to be paid to the direction of the prevailing wind. In order to maximise the degree of protection offered to the horses, it is better to orientate the shelter with the opening away from the direction of the strongest winds. Where there is no prevailing wind, the entrance should face south or west. The shelter should also be sited away from the lowest part of the field in order to keep the inside as dry as possible.

## Fencing / hedges

4.29 The boundary of the site should be well-defined and of adequate



construction to keep the horse(s) contained. The Animals Act 1971 makes any person in possession of livestock which strays liable for any resulting damage, so it is in the owners' best interest to provide secure fencing. The choice of barrier, whether fencing, hedges or walls should vary with location, in order to remain in keeping with the local characteristics wherever possible. (Refer to the Landscape Assessments for information on the local characteristics.)

4.30 The best barriers are good, solid, pressure-treated post-and-rail fences, well-laid hedges or well-maintained walls. Post-and-rail fencing is preferable in association with hedge planting, and where it is used posts must be erected at 1.5m - 3m intervals with three rails. Uprights must be sturdy and set sufficiently deep to prevent them from leaning over. Although post-and-rail fencing is preferable in practical terms, it may not best reflect local boundary types.

4.31 A suitable alternative to post-and-rail fencing is wire fencing provided the wires are kept tightly strained between posts and have an adjustable strainer. The wire must be checked regularly for loosening and retightened as necessary. Where wire

fencing is used, it should preferably have a top rail to present a visible barrier to the horse and prevent the wire sagging should the horse lean over it. The use of white tape on the top rail to present a visible barrier is unsightly and should be avoided. Barbed wire, close boarded timber and corrugated metal fences should be avoided. Electric fences which are properly constructed and maintained may be used to divide the pasture into separate areas for grazing and exercise, although unnecessary field division/fencing should be avoided.

4.32 The height of the fence will vary according to the size of the animal. Horses can stretch up to 2m over a fence, so the top rail will need to be approximately 1.25m in height to protect adjacent shrubs from nibbling. However, a stallion will generally require a higher fence of 1.25m - 2m, particularly in the vicinity of other stallions or in-season mares. The lowest rail should be 0.5m, high enough to allow grazing below, preventing the build up of unsightly weeds around the boundary. Where existing hedges are utilised instead of man-made fencing, care should be taken that there are no plants such as yew, laburnum, laurel and ivy which are poisonous to equines. Hedges are usually the most attractive and typical local boundary type and should be retained and reinforced as necessary wherever possible.

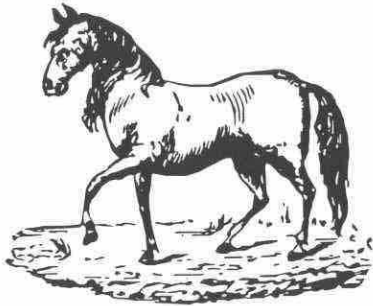
4.33 Gates should be able to swing freely and to be fastened in the open position. The catch should be such that it can not be 'fiddled' open by the horse. Additional measures can be made to make the site more secure from thieves or vandals, by the use of a stout padlock, 'peg hinges' or reversal of the top hinge to prevent the gate being easily opened or lifted off.

## Access to land for exercise

4.34 It is preferable to provide enough space to keep and exercise horses on the same site to avoid conflict with other road users. It is advisable not to ride horses on the land used for grazing as it can damage the sward, thus reducing its nutritional content. If this occurs, horses will require additional dry feed to supplement their diet. Similarly if any jumps are used they should be removed



immediately after use so that the grass is not marked and to reduce the unsightly aspect of the site. The



l o c a l

planning authority may apply planning conditions to achieve the removal of jumps. Jumps that are permanently fixed to the ground require planning permission. Horses need regular exercise and unless there is sufficient land provided on site, access to alternatives, such as bridleways, is essential.

- 4.35 There are 32,000 accidents each year involving horses on the country's roads, so riding along these should be avoided where possible. Horses can be ridden on bridleways, byways, roads used as public paths (RUPPs) and unclassified roads. Horses may not be ridden along public footpaths unless the owner has given permission. It may be possible to ride on 'permissive' or 'licensed' routes in country parks or land owned by bodies such as the Forestry Commission or the National Trust. Some farmers will also permit riding on their land by prior agreement or under licence. The choice of location for keeping horses should reflect access to such routes if there is limited pasture available to graze and exercise the animal. Appropriate sites may be limited as there are a lack of suitable well kept bridleways in the District, particularly with the rise in use by other users of the countryside. Where equestrian development requires planning permission, the local planning authority will take into account the availability of suitable bridleways and other rights of way.

### **Access to the site**

- 4.36 Although exercising horses on the public highways should be avoided, there is still a need for easy access to the pasture/stable from the highway. The owner of the horse should ideally check on the animal at least once a day and provide fresh water. This requires easy access from the highway, particularly in case of emergencies. Provision should be made on site for enough

space to park with a horse box or lorry. Horse boxes/lorries should not remain parked on site for long periods as they are often unsightly in a countryside location. In some rural locations there can be a problem with unwelcome traffic generation along narrow country lanes, particularly where horse boxes/trailers are used regularly.

- 4.37 Locations within sight and hearing distance of a property, even if it is not the owner's, are preferable. Access to the site would also be possible by unmotorised means such as walking or cycling, which is in the interests of sustainable development. These factors often mean that urban fringe sites are suitable. Motorised means may cause problems on narrow country lanes, particularly where a horse box or trailer is used regularly.

## 5. COMMERCIAL EQUESTRIAN DEVELOPMENT

5.1 Many of the considerations for providing for recreational equestrian development are still relevant to commercial developments. As a result, Chapter 4 of this guidance offers useful information pertinent to commercial activities and should be read in conjunction with this Chapter.

5.2 The scale of development for commercial equestrian activities will vary according to the type of facility being provided. Some of the various types of facilities commercial operators provide are as follows:-

- Riding School
- Training Centre
- Facility Centre
- Livery Yard
- Trekking Centre
- Stud

More details on the types of service/facility they provide is contained in Appendix 4.

5.3 One factor in determining the type of equestrian facility to be provided will be the nature of the location and its suitability for development. An urban fringe location would probably be limited to smaller scale developments, in order that it did not disturb or detract from the adjoining settlement. Any commercial equestrian development will be required to comply with the policies in the development plan, particularly Proposal RT.8 in the Winchester District Local Plan. (Proposal RT.8 is reproduced in Appendix 1).

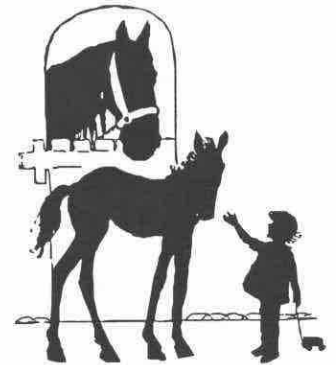
5.4 A particular concern with commercial equestrian activities is traffic generation. Often, due to the rural location of such development, the roads are unsuited to much additional traffic generation, particularly where horse-boxes are used regularly. There will also need to be sufficient parking provided at commercial sites to accommodate visitors. Insufficient parking facilities could lead to parking along country roads, causing an obstruction and

damage to the grass verges. Any new development will need to comply with the Transport Policies in the Winchester District Local Plan, in particular policies T.8 and T.9.

5.5 In addition to the problems associated with traffic generation are those resulting from the visual impact of commercial enterprises. This often results from the types of building used as these are usually of a larger scale and require additional facilities that are often out of keeping with their surroundings. For example, manèges are particularly problematic because of their shape, materials, earth shaping and the use of flood lighting, all of which are often incongruous to the landscape setting (for additional information on manèges see Appendix 4).

### On-site Accommodation

5.6 On a small site where there is no on-site keeper, the development should, if possible, be within sight and hearing distance of an existing property for the safety and well-



being of the animal(s). It is preferable if the owner lives close by in case of emergencies and for daily checks and providing fresh water and feed for the horse(s). This should also help to reduce the number of vehicle movements. However, the keeping of horses does not justify the granting of planning permission for new houses in the countryside.

5.7 New commercial developments where there is a need for somebody to be close-by to look after the well-being of horses should be established in a location close to existing residential properties. Proposals RT.8 and C.18 of the Winchester District Local Plan do not allow residential development in the countryside, except in exceptional circumstances.

5.8 Where exceptional circumstances have been demonstrated the provision of a temporary structure such as a caravan will be permitted

on a temporary basis where an essential need exists. Any accommodation provided must be integrated with the equestrian development to minimise the impact of additional development in the countryside. Any on-site accommodation will have to be tied to the equestrian development by a planning condition or Section 106 agreement as residential development in the countryside is not normally permitted. The Section 106 agreement will limit the occupancy of a residential property to person(s) employed in the equestrian enterprise or in agriculture or forestry.

## APPENDIX 1

Proposal RT.8 and explanatory text from the Winchester District Local Plan.

### Equestrian Development

9.37 Horse riding is a very popular leisure pursuit generally requiring a countryside location, and often demanding built facilities such as stables, schools or studs. The Plan, therefore, allows for such development but seeks to minimise its impact by encouraging the reuse of existing buildings wherever possible. Where new buildings are essential, they should be carefully designed and located to fit in with the landscape and/or adjoining buildings. In the case of equestrian enterprises, the Local Planning Authority will need to be satisfied that adequate arrangements will be made for manure disposal, generally by frequent removal, so as to avoid disturbance to adjoining properties.

9.38 Equestrian development does not fall within the planning definition of agriculture. Therefore, whilst such leisure or business-orientated uses will be allowed within the countryside, they are not considered to be so vital to its economy or well-being as the primary industries of farming and forestry.

9.39 The presumption against residential development in the countryside applies to proposals related to equestrian uses (see Proposal C.18). The effect of the proposed development on neighbouring property and land uses will be taken into account, as well as the pressures that will be placed on existing footpaths, bridleways and roads.

#### Proposal RT.8

**The development of stables, horse riding schools and/or riding centres or studs in the countryside will be permitted, provided they:**

- (i) where possible, make use of existing buildings which do not constitute eyesores, and do not involve the erection of new buildings which may harm the landscape appearance of the area;

- (ii) do not harm the appearance or function of a Strategic or Local Gap;
- (iii) are well related to existing or proposed bridleways and are not likely to cause or exacerbate conflicts between equestrians, vehicles or pedestrians;
- (iv) do not have a detrimental affect on nearby properties or land uses (for example, because of inadequate manure disposal arrangements), and accord with Proposals C.2, C.24 and other relevant proposals of this Plan.

The development of dwellings in connection with equestrian development will be considered only where an essential need can be demonstrated, using the criteria for agricultural workers' dwellings as set out in Proposal C.15 (see Proposal C.18). Therefore, in considering applications for such development, the Local Planning Authority will have regard to the need for on-site accommodation and the adequacy of existing residential development.



## APPENDIX 2

### Useful Documents for Reference

#### **Winchester City Council**

Winchester District Local Plan  
Winchester District Local Plan Topic Study  
No. 4: Recreation and Tourism  
Winchester District Local Plan Topic Study  
No. 5: Countryside  
Winchester District Landscape Assessment

#### **Hampshire County Council**

Hampshire County Structure Plan Review

#### **Hampshire County Council and District Councils of Hampshire**

Farm Buildings: A Design Guide for Hampshire

#### **Government Advice**

PPG 1: General Policy and Principles  
PPG 7: Countryside-Environmental Quality  
and Economic and Social Development  
PPG 17: Sport and Recreation

#### **ADAS**

Ragwort, advice to farmers

#### **British Horse Society**

Various leaflets

#### **Countryside Commission**

Horses in the Countryside  
The East Hampshire Landscape: An  
Assessment of the Area of Outstanding  
Natural Beauty

#### **MAFF**

Code of Good Agricultural Practice for the  
Protection of Water

## APPENDIX 3

### Useful Addresses

The British Horse Society (BHS)  
Stoneleigh Deer Park  
Kenilworth  
Warwickshire  
CV8 2XZ  
Tel: 01926 707700  
Fax: 01926 707800  
Web site: [www.bhs.org.uk](http://www.bhs.org.uk)

ADAS Equine Consultancy  
Oxford Spires Business Park  
The Boulevard  
Kidlington  
Oxon  
OX5 1NZ  
Tel: 01865 845137

The Environment Agency  
Culverdene Court  
Wessex Business Park  
Wessex Way  
Colden Common  
Nr Winchester  
Hampshire  
SO21 1WP

Association of British Riding Schools  
Queen's Chambers  
38 - 40 Queen Street  
Penzance  
Cornwall  
TR18 4BH  
Tel: 01736 69440

Countryside Agency  
John Dower House  
Crescent Place  
Cheltenham  
Gloucestershire  
GL50 3RA  
Tel: 01242 521381  
Fax: 01242 584270  
(Formerly Countryside Commission)

Farming and Rural Conservation Agency  
Coley Park  
Reading  
Berkshire  
RG1 6DE  
Tel: 0118 9392203  
Fax: 0118 9392216  
(An executive agency of MAFF)

## APPENDIX 4

### Types of commercial activity

- 1. Riding School**  
A place that offers instruction in riding and horsemanship using horses that are the property of the establishment. It may also offer tuition to individuals on their own horses, hire out their training and schooling facilities, or offer various livery services.
- 2. Training Centre**  
An establishment with qualified teaching staff but without horses of its own for hire, but is fully equipped and capable of giving specialist instruction and training in equitation or horsemanship to individuals on their own horses.
- 3. Facility Centre**  
An establishment which offers hire of suitable facilities to use for instruction and training in equitation. No resident staff or horses for hire but may offer some livery service.
- 4. Livery Yard**  
An establishment which offers adequate facilities for the accommodation and care of horses on a full, part, grass or 'do-it-yourself' basis. No instruction or hire of horses.
- 5. Trekking Centre**  
An establishment which offers for hire riding horses for conducted tours. Often situated in AONBs.
- 6. Stud**  
An establishment specialising in the breeding of horses and training of students in this branch of animal husbandry.

### A Guide to Riding Centre Requirements

Minimum of 1 hectare of land (proportional to the number of horses)  
A Manège (minimum of 40m x 20m) - ideally all weather surface  
Jumping area with all weather facilities  
Stabling  
Store for jumps, equipment, forage, tractor, etc.

Tack room  
Feed room  
Offices and other associated buildings

A more complete centre with indoor school and cross-country training area would require an area of 3.5 hectares.

### Manège

Particular care will need to be taken over the design of manèges so that they do not detract from the landscape setting. Manèges are a particularly problematic part of commercial equestrian developments in that their rectangular shape is often incongruous in a countryside setting. The choice of surfacing material and the occasional need to embank land to provide a level site may again be out of keeping with the surrounding landscape. There is often a desire for floodlighting causing problems with light pollution in the countryside. These are some of the particular issues that will need to be addressed satisfactorily before planning permission will be granted.



**Winchester**  
City Council

November 1999  
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