

Equestrian Developments

Planning a new yard, keeping your pony at home or keeping your horse in a pasture paddock all create a number of issues which must be considered:-

- Location
 - Access to Bridleways and other access land
 - Soil Type
 - Topography and Exposure
- Planning
 - Is Planning required?
- Rating
- Design
- Waste (manure)

LOCATION

If you have not yet bought a property or land, then you should consider how suitable the site is to keep horses. Access for a horsebox is important as well as how you are going to get to the bridleway network, or area that you can purchase a riding permit such as Toll Rides and woodlands (off road).

Heavy or wet fields can be a problem for winter grazing and cause hoof problems and mud fever so are best avoided.

If you wish to build stables the prevailing wind is a major factor. Ventilation must be good but not drafty. Visual impact will be important both for planning and possibly security.



PLANNING PERMISSION

Is Planning Required for Equestrian Uses?

Planning queries should be answered before you invest in a site otherwise you could face enforcement action. The landmark legal case which balanced the equine and agricultural use is *Sykes V SoS for the Environment*. This case decided there were six types of horse, only three of which are classed as an agricultural use;



- The working horse
- The racehorse
- The recreational horse
- The grazing horse
- The residentially incidental horse
- Horsemeat

“The Working Horse” (if employed in agriculture) and those horses raised for meat are classed as agriculture. If you are intending to keep your horse at home, then, provided the stable is within the curtilage of your dwelling (and that is up for debate too) your horse counts as a “Residentially Incidental Horse” and this can be carried out without planning permission.

The complication is “The Grazing Horse” which is agriculture provided all horses in a field are grazing. When you start to give additional feed or do further activity in the field than just grazing, the use stops being ‘grazing’ and falls into the category of ‘keeping’, which is not agriculture. For instance, if a mobile field shelter is placed in a field or jumps are left in a field for more than 28 days, this is classified as ‘keeping’ horses and requires planning permission. If planning



permission is required it does not mean that obtaining it for stables and change of use will be impossible, just that you have to take consideration of the local and national planning policies and apply to the Local Planning Authority (LPA) for planning permission.

However, in the green belt, life can get a lot more complicated due to the need to show your development is appropriate. The conversion of existing buildings is much easier than building new ones.

DESIGN

Once you have found your land, decided on your type of equestrian use and checked the planning situation in the area you can start thinking about the design of the yard. There are a lot of choices and the style will depend upon whether you are building from new or converting existing buildings. You need to consider; number of places, loose box or stalls (appropriate size), American barn, traditional courtyard or rows of stables, type of construction, drainage, manure storage, access, landscaping, grazing, feed, fodder and tack storage, security, undercover or open manège and so the choices go on.

RATING

If your equestrian use is for a commercial purpose, including livery stables, then your development will be subject to business rates.

WASTE

You must also consider what you are going to do with your waste. Consider carefully what sort of bedding you are going to use as shavings preclude the sale of the manure for compost.

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