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Equestrian Developments

Whether you are hoping to put a few horses on to some land, convert some farm buildings to stables or proposing a new yard it is likely that you will need planning permission.

Most Local Planning Authorities will accept small scale developments for stabling (i.e. private use), but if it's a matter of a new complex for a commercial business (i.e. livery yard) there can be resistance. This will be the case in the Green Belt where new buildings for a commercial use are seen to be inappropriate development. The conversion of existing buildings (i.e. agricultural buildings) will usually be a better option than new buildings for a commercial equestrian enterprise.

Given the above it is important to understand the planning issues of a site before acquiring a site, or certainly developing proposals and submitting a planning application.

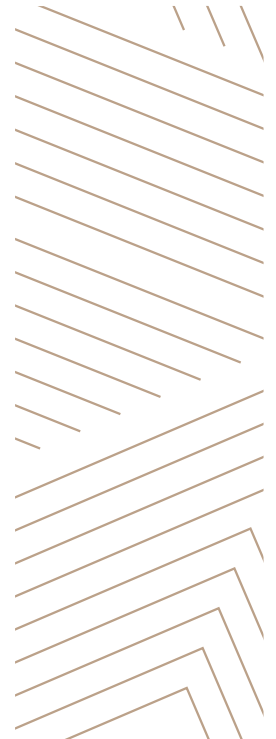
PLANNING PERMISSION

Is Planning required for an Equestrian Use of the land?

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

If you are intending to keep your horse at home, then, provided the stable is within the curtilage of your dwelling (and that can be up for debate too) your horse counts as a "Residentially Incidental Horse" and this can be carried out without planning permission.



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“The Working Horse” (if employed in agriculture) and those horses raised for meat are classed as agriculture.

The complication is “The Grazing Horse” which is an agricultural use of the land 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.

If an equestrian proposal includes the provision of a manège this will need planning permission, this is an application for the change of use of the land (usually from agriculture).

LOCATION

If you have not yet bought a property or land, then you should consider how suitable the site is to keep horses. Access is important for the movement of horseboxes etc, and also possibly in relation to the proximity to bridleways in order to ride-out and exercise the horses. Heavy or wet fields can be a problem for winter grazing and cause hoof problems and mud fever, so are best avoided.

Where new stabling is required the visual impact will be a consideration from a planning perspective and so any existing natural screening will be beneficial.

DESIGN

In respect of new stabling facilities, there are various choices regarding design and materials, e.g. timber stables, an American barn, or a bespoke courtyard. Local authorities are sometimes keen to dictate the design and style of any stable development. Other facilities to consider as part of any equestrian scheme will be the storage for feed, bedding and tack, and the storage and disposal of the manure.

Good design will consider the welfare of the horse, the safety of those looking after the horses, the appearance and siting of the buildings, access, landscaping and site security.

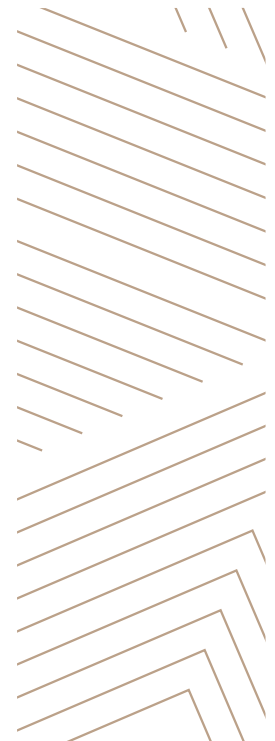
RATING

If the equestrian use is for a commercial purpose, including livery stables, then the development once up and running will potentially be subject to business rates.

For more advice [contact](#) your local Acorus office.



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