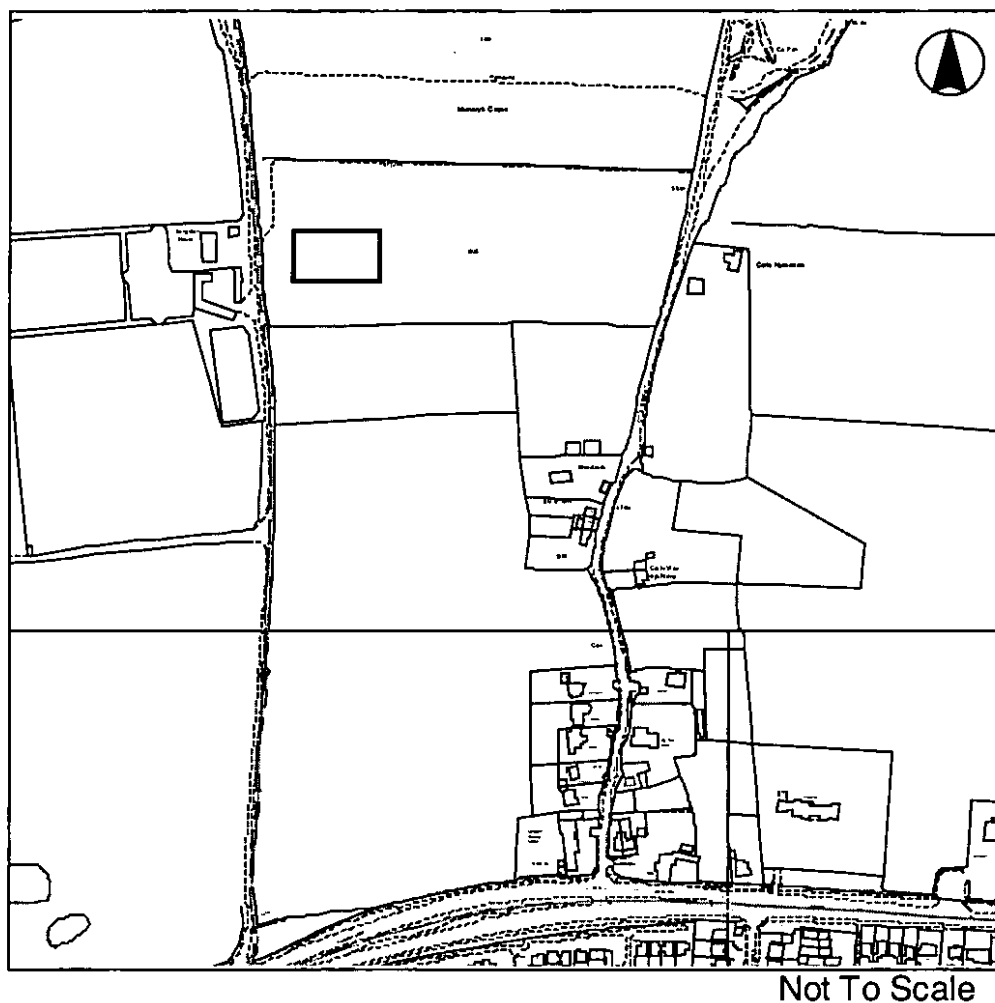


Location: Land East Of Longdean House West Of Cote Street

Proposal: Erection of building for covered riding area including stables and general storage for use in connection with existing stud farm

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## 1. THE PROPOSAL AND THE SITE

The application seeks planning permission for the erection of a large building east of Longdean House. The building would provide a covered riding area, including stables and general storage for use in connection with the existing stud farm. The site is situated to the north-west of Cote Street with vehicular

access to the Arundel Road (A27). The site is within the Sussex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

The existing access track to Longdean House forms the boundary between Arun District and Worthing Borough. Longdean House is within Arun District but the proposed building would be on the eastern side of the access track, opposite the house and within Worthing Borough.

The proposed building would be approximately 33 metres by 60 metres with a ridge height of 7 metres and an eaves height of 4 metres. The roof would be of fibre cement with the gable ends clad in stained timber. The sides of the building would be rendered block work, broken up by windows with two open-fronted bays. The north side of the building would be sunk into the ground by up to 2 metres.

The building would provide a central riding and training arena of 20 metres by 60 metres and would also create lean-to structures along the sides to accommodate 10 stables, a tack room and rest room, as well as feed storage.

#### SUPPORTING STATEMENT FROM APPLICANT

**"1. Background:**

- 1.1 *The Castle Goring Estate came into the Somerset family in about 1820, and has been passed down through the family since then. It has been added to, reduced, and altered in many ways since then, but has still fundamentally remained a family run farming business. Past generations have put all their efforts into maintaining the Estate and improving it, in order to pass on a viable asset to their children. Currently, two generations of Somersets are involved in running the Farm and Estate, with a third generation waiting in the wings. It is hoped that the Estate will remain within the family for the foreseeable future.*
- 1.2 *The Estate runs to some 1800 acres, of which approximately 500 are woodlands, mostly over stood hazel coppice, which is gradually being restored with the help of forestry grants. A further 800 acres are let to three tenant farmers and the remaining 500 acres are farmed in hand. The farm grows about 250 acres of cereals and has about 250 acres of grassland supporting 600 breeding sheep, a few suckler cows and 25 horses of varying ages. About 150 acres of grassland is entered into the South Downs Environmentally Sensitive Area Scheme (ESA) in an attempt to restore downland pasture to the area by control of stocking densities and fertiliser and chemical use. (see farm map)*
- 1.3 *Clem and Sara Somerset started Longdean Stud in 1989. The Stud is run as a part of the Castle Goring Farm, and was seen as a means of diversification from mainstream farming. When the stud was started, Clem & Sara were living at Potlands Farm, which was lost to the A27*

*Patching Junction improvement scheme. The brood mares were run on pastures in Clapham Woods, and foals were sold at weaning.*

- 1.4 *After Longdean House & Stud was built in 1994, as a direct replacement for Potlands Farm, the mares were moved to the Stud pastures, and with the recession that followed the collapse of the housing market around that time, it became impossible to sell the foals for realistic money. Youngsters were therefore reared on so that they could be sold when they were ready to ride. This, however, requires much more room in terms of stables and training facilities for the horses in order to prepare them for sale and to present them to best advantage.*

## **2. Stud Objectives:**

- 2.1 *The aim of the Stud is to breed and sell top class competition horses, mainly for the Dressage market. By using German Hanoverian mares and stallions, our motto is 'The Best from over There, Bred over Here!' Our sights are set very high, with our ultimate target being to breed a horse that will go to the Olympic games. Our oldest 'babies' are 12 now, and of that crop of foals, one is in New Zealand, competing very well at dressage, being last years Advanced Medium National Champion, and on their National squad, one is in Germany, one is in France leaving one in England, who is also doing well. We have since sold horses to Ireland and to Germany, so we can already claim to be of International interest. International and Olympic British riders, like Carl Hester, Peter Storr and Suzanne Davies show considerable and frequent interest in our young horses with a view to buying.*

## **3. Current Stud Policy:**

- 3.1 *Currently, the stud has 8 active brood mares, and we try to rear a foal from them every other year, so we end up with 4 foals a year. This keeps a wide range of bloodlines open to us on the mare's side. We send the empty mares over to Germany each spring for covering by the best available bloodlines in the Hanoverian studbook. Foals are available for sale, but if they do not sell, then they have to be kept until they are at least four, and produced under saddle to be sold. The market for foals has remained very flat, mainly because clients increasingly do not have the room to rear them properly, so we are finding that we have to keep more and more babies until they are ready to ride at four years old.*
- 3.2 *We employ one professional groom/rider who looks after the stables and does the breaking and training of the young horses, and produces them for sale. The only facilities that he has are a treatment room and a very windswept outdoor riding area. This was fine when there were only a couple to do, or in the Summer, but with more youngsters coming through, it has become impossible to prepare and present them properly under present conditions, especially in winters like last year,*

when he was wet through almost every day from October through to the end of March!

#### **4. The need for Expansion:**

4.1 It became evident during the last year that we could not continue as we are. We have about 25 horses and 12 stables. In the terrible wet of last winter, we tried to house some of the mares in Bolt Farm yard (the main steading of our farming holding), but found it impossible to keep them safe with no person permanently on site. We had so much trouble from vandals who would rush round the farmyard throwing things at them, and doing their best to scare them rigid that I had to move them back outside onto the waterlogged fields. With no-one living on site, I could not properly secure the premises. (see farm map)

4.2 The Stud has now taken off, with international interest in our horses, and we need to have more stables and better training facilities to maximise our market. We need to take foals from our mares more often so that they are more productive, and we need to be able to keep our youngsters for longer so that we can be more flexible in their marketing.

4.3 Our best form of advertising is through our own horses at competition. Stud policy is to retain a female line from all the brood mares so we can maintain the continuity of the bloodlines through different generations. We therefore have some of our own youngsters available for competition, as they have to prove themselves before becoming brood mares. These we train and compete ourselves, and are our flagpole in the big wide world. The better these mares do, the better and more widespread our marketplace is.

#### **5. The Proposed building:**

5.1 The proposed building is a barn measuring approximately 33m x 60m. This will give us a clear span central riding and training arena of 20m x 60m, which is the internationally recognised size of a dressage arena, and the size to which all training is set. It will also give us a lean to building down the length of each side, which will allow for 10 stables, tack room and rest room as well as feed storage area down one side, and the other side left available for further expansion of stabling in the future. (see attached scale down drawings)

5.2 The roof pitch is set as low as possible, at 10%, in order to minimise impact, and the roof material, although fibre cement, will be coloured to blend in with the surrounding area. The gable ends will be clad in wood, which will be suitably stained, and the sides will be rendered block work, broken up by windows and two open fronted bays. The building is just 7m high to the ridge, and 4m high to the eaves. The North side of the building is sunk into the ground by up to 2m, so the building is set into the slope as much as possible. The whole building is designed to

be set as low as possible into the ground and is sighted to be as invisible to the outside world as possible.

**6. Location:**

- 6.1 *The location of Longdean House & Stud was agreed after lengthy discussion with Arun District Council as a replacement house & stables for Potlands Farm, which was lost to the Patching junction road scheme. The location was selected because the land in the immediate vicinity is best suited to rearing and grazing livestock and horses, and because the topography of the land provided a natural hiding place for the house and stables. It is very free draining soil, which is able to stand grazing all year round. There is nowhere else on the farm where the land can carry horses all year round, even through the wettest extremes of last winter. However, I do not believe that members of Arun council planning committee would have cause to regret their decision to allow Longdean House and Stud in its present location. It has mellowed and blended in very well indeed.*
- 6.2 *It is with similar care that we have selected the proposed site for this building. The site we have chosen is within an area of coppiced hazel woodland, protected to the south and east side by a large thick thorn hedge, at least 3 metres wide, and sheltered to the north and west by rising ground and woodland. It will be difficult to catch more than glimpses of the building from any public highway or footpath, or from any private dwelling. Even from Highdown Hill, which is over a mile away, it will be difficult to see much of the building, and the rising ground and dense woodland behind it to the north will ensure that no part of the building is on a skyline and that what is visible will be well buffered by the woodland. Yet, vitally, the building will be within 50 metres of Longdean House & Stables, and will therefore be ideally located for integration and management. (see attached site plan)*
- 6.3 *My Grandfather planted the site with hazel stools for coppicing in the farming depression of the thirties. It was a field before then, so there are no mature trees to be cleared and there is no historic flora to be damaged. Although there are attempts to re-vitalise the hazel-coppice industry in Sussex, we have some 500 acres of over stood coppice, which is far more than we have finance and resources to deal with, so the Estate will not notice the loss of this small area of modern woodland. Most of the rest of the woodland is much older than this and is of much more importance in terms of flora and fauna.*
- 6.4 *We have considered and rejected other possible locations. Our main selection criterion is that the building must be close to the house, so that supervision is available 24 hours a day. This is of paramount importance given the value of the animals involved, and the general welfare standards by which I expect all my animals to be kept. There will be a video link from the stables to the house for added security.*

6.5 Any other site would have to be in open fields around the house, and would be very difficult to hide. Any new building for horses in Holt Farm yard would not be possible because of the inability to secure the premises. Horses are animals of natural flight from danger, and they cannot cope with being frightened whilst in a confined space like a stable. The fields around the farm buildings also lie very much wetter than at Longdean, and are not suitable for grazing horses of this kind. Similarly, there is no land South of the A27 that would be suitable because the soil there is heavy clay. This argument was sustained when permission was granted to build Longdean House & Stables at its present location.

## 7. The economics:

7.1 The costs involved in breeding and rearing top competition horses are considerable. We estimate that to get a live foal on the ground costs at least £3,000 each, allowing for depreciation of the mare's value over the two-year cycle currently used. This would reduce to about £2,500 per foal if the mares foaled every year because the depreciation on the mare would be less.

7.2 It costs a further £2,000 each to rear them to the autumn of their 4th year (i.e. three and a half years old) when they are ready to start work and prepare for sale, so there is a total cost to date of £5,000 per head for an unbroken 3 year old horse. Unfortunately, an unbroken three year old has to be extremely good looking and moving to sell for that sort of money, but a winter's work between three and four years old can raise the value from £4,000 to about £10,000 for the average horse of the type that we are breeding. Further training and light competing of the best horses will raise their value from £10,000 to £20,000 or even £30,000 over the next two years. Our current facilities allow us to sell our average horses for about £6,000 at four years old, because we have to move them on, and they have had to struggle to learn outside through the winter, with all the distractions of wind and rain, and their friends in the fields alongside.

7.3 The extra stabling and indoor arena will allow us to keep the horses for longer, train them better and more quickly, and thus give us the flexibility to sell them at the top of their potential price, rather than having to sell them because of pressure of space and time.

7.4 Vitally, the extra stabling will allow us to take in other people's mares and young stock at livery. We have been approached by one top Hanoverian breeder to take their breeding stock of approx 25 horses, which includes 7 brood mares, and their yearling and two year old offspring. These would be charged at about £25/head/week, resulting in increased income of £32,500 per year. This would be a terrific boost for the stud, and give guaranteed income without having to rely on selling. By using our dry ground for grazing, and the extra stabling, this could easily be accommodated, and by using our training facilities, these

horses could be kept here until they are ready for sale, further increasing our revenue at no risk to ourselves.

- 7.5 *These same people would also stand their stallions with us, collecting semen and sending it out to other breeders via artificial insemination. One of these stallions is a former World Champion and is very well used, covering about 100 mares each year at £1,000 per mare! The stud would get a percentage of this money in return for the work, as well as the kudos from having such a horse on the premises. This horse is being trained for the Athens Olympics 2004. That would be a great boost for Worthing if it got there! There is tremendous potential to use our free draining ground in this way, but we need the resources of the building and stables to back it up.*

## **8. Employment:**

- 8.1 *Recent cutbacks in the farming profitability have led to major cutbacks in farm employment. Currently, three people are employed full time on the farm. These are split into one person working in the woods, one person on the farm and one person on the horses. As recently as 1998, we had 7 people employed on the farm. Expansion of the horse enterprise will create at least another two and a half jobs, plus possible training places for students.*

## **9. The Future:**

- 9.1 *The intention is that the Stud will be divided into two sections. The brood mares and young horses will be kept in the existing stables, using the fields round the house for grazing, but the riding horses and those ready to start training will be moved into the new stables alongside the covered arena, and worked in the adjacent area. This will help concentrate the minds of the young horses as they will no longer be able to see their friends in the fields from their stables they should therefore adapt more easily to stabled life, and settle to work more quickly. This will enable us to enlarge our brood mare and young horse section.*
- 9.2 *As mentioned above under 'economics' we have been in discussion with other breeders who would like us to keep their brood mares and young horses for them at livery. This will be a real boost to the stud's income because the money will be a guaranteed weekly payment, and will not rely on the sale of horses.*
- 9.3 *Our daughter, Georgina, who is 15, is currently dressage training very hard on two pony stallions, with the aim of being selected to represent Great Britain at the pony European Dressage Championships over the next two summers. Her ponies will be available at stud, and we intend to use the new facilities to collect and process semen to send out to mare owners. It is also likely that we would stand a horse stallion here as well, and send semen from him out to mare owners. Our current*

facilities would not allow us to do this. With the right stallions, the market for this is potentially very good. A Hanoverian stallion that we know of has sent semen to over 100 mares for the last 2 years at £1,000 at time so it is a necessary market to follow. With the modern use of artificial insemination, it is no longer necessary to have visiting mares for natural covering, so this would not create any further problems.

- 9.4 As our reputation for rearing young horses spreads, two international riders have asked us if we would rear their young horses for them. In order to do this, we have grassed down one of the arable fields near Longdean House, with a view to splitting it into large paddocks for these young horses. (see site plan) It will therefore be necessary to have more stables for them available in the winter. We do not, however, intend to run a typical 'livery yard'. Any horses that we rear that are owned by other people will belong to professional horse people who will use us as additional space for their own business, and will therefore not be visiting more than three or four times a year. Horses like this have to be reared at very low density with plenty of space. Each young growing horse will require at least one acre to himself, and they will run in small herds of three or four, split by sex and age. The quality of the grazing will therefore have to be maintained by sheep and cattle.

## 10. Planning Policy Guidance:

- 10.1 This application fits well with current planning policy guidance (PPG). Worthing Local Plan policy 'Countryside' allows for this building to be erected under Policy C6, 'Proposals for Farm Diversification', with certain provisos, all of which can be met by this building. Policy C2, which covers the AONB, generally refuses development within the AONB unless 'it is essential to meet local social and/or economic needs,' and provided that the adverse effects on the AONB are kept to a minimum. This building is essential to the future of the Stud and the farm through diversification, and any adverse effects have been minimised through careful site selection, making use of a very low profile roof, and using existing mature screening of the site.

- 10.2 The recent Inspector's report on the local plan inquiry recommends that:

3.12 d) 'Development will not normally be permitted outside the built up area boundary as defined on the proposals map unless:

- (i) it is specifically identified elsewhere in the plan; or
- (ii) a countryside location for the proposed development is justified.



*Any development permitted should respect the form, scale and character of the landscape and not cause an unacceptable level of pollution by way of noise or sources of artificial light that would be out of keeping with its countryside location.*

*This development is justified economically, and is indeed essential for the survival of the stud as a farm diversification enterprise. Its situation and screening ensures that there will be no unacceptable pollution by any source*

10.2 *Government planning policies also allow for "this kind of development. In DEFRA's White Paper, 'Our Countryside; The Future,' Chapter 8; 'A New Future for Farming', the Government launches its £1.6bn Rural Development Plan, which includes grants for agricultural diversification projects such as this. Sections 8.4.3 to 8.4.6 deal specifically with the planning environment. This section refers to PPG7 and notes that there was 'a need to ensure that this guidance was implemented more consistently at local level'. It also noted that 'most farmers were unfamiliar with the planning system, resulting in many poor quality applications'. I have full empathy with this note!*

10.3 *PPG7 deals specifically with farm diversification in planning terms. The Government DTLR paper 'The Implementation of National Planning Policy Guidance (PPG7) In Relation to the Diversification of Farm Business' states that:*

*2.18... stress is placed on the importance of LPAs supporting 'Farm diversification schemes for business purposes that are consistent in their scale with their rural location " It then refers to specific revisions to paragraphs 2.8 & 3.4 of PPG7 (1997) as reported in News Release 155,21 March 2001. Minister Nick Rainsford states that 'guidance is now 4 years old and needs to be clarified in respect of the Government's policy on farm diversification. The text of paragraph 2.8 is amended as follows:*

*"... encourage rural enterprise, including the diversification off arm business".*

*Paragraph 3.4 is deleted and replaced by:*

*3.4 A, having introduced the context for farm diversification provided by the ERDP & the Government's Action Plan for Farming, advises that*

*"... ..Farming continues to make a significant contribution to the economy of rural areas, but increasingly, diversification into non agricultural activities is vital to the continuing viability of many farm businesses. LPAs should set out in their development plans the criteria to be applied to planning applications for farm diversification projects. Local planning authorities should be*

**supportive of well conceived farm diversification schemes for business purposes that are consistent in their scale with their rural location. "**

3.4 B "... ..it is usually preferable for farm diversification schemes to re-use good quality existing buildings and put them to a new business use, rather than build new buildings in the countryside. **New buildings, either to replace existing buildings or to accommodate expansion of enterprises, may also be acceptable provided that they satisfy sustainable development objectives and are of a design and scale appropriate to their rural surroundings "**

10.4 The DTLR paper concludes by saying:

2.33 "in conclusion, there is now very strong national policy support for farm diversification, underpinned by funding streams and advice for farmers, combined with a supportive planning policy framework. Much of this support is new and yet to be felt and so, to date, farm diversification activity has been relatively limited "

10.5 DETR News Release 155, 21 March 2001 announces 'greater flexibility in new planning guidance'. Commenting on the changes to PPG7 outlined above, Minister Nick Rainsford said '... .The relevant text of PPG7 is therefore being updated to reflect the new context, and to make clearer to LP As the positive approach they should take towards farm diversification proposals. This fulfils one of the commitments of the Rural White paper "Our Countryside, The Future " (Paragraph 8.4. 6 of Chapter 8)

10.6 The DETR guidance 'The Countryside, -Environmental Quality and Economic & Social Development (PPG7) has attached Annex F: Development Involving Horses.

10.7 This requires specifically:

F1. 'High Standards of design, construction & maintenance of buildings and care of the land are necessary to ensure that equestrian activities do not have an adverse effect on the countryside and that the horses are well housed and cared for'.

The plans for the new building are sound, and the stabling area goes above and beyond basic requirements. A visit to the farm and stud will indicate the degree of land management that goes with rearing horses. This is a vital aspect of a successful horse rearing enterprise.

10.8 F2 '.... Buildings should be sited to blend in with their surroundings'.. Particular care has been taken with this, in design and material use as well as the chosen site.

10.9 F5 *'Within the framework set out in PPG7, the Government wishes to see a positive approach towards planning applications for horse based development, which respect the rural environment'.*

10.10 *Our proposed farm diversification scheme is therefore clearly in keeping with the Governments planning guidelines, despite being within the AONB. It also fits comfortably with the new Local Plan and, therefore, should be supported under these government guidelines.*

## **11 Summary:**

11.1 *In conclusion, we are asking the Planning Committee to approve an extension to an existing business. The site has been carefully selected. the materials sympathetically chosen, and the alternatives discounted. This is an extension of a genuine agricultural diversification, and is run under the umbrella of the Castle Goring Farm. All planning proposals can be fully justified under PPG7 and Worthing's Local Plan. The farm and its history in the area are long established. The building is not for our leisure purposes. It is required for sound economic reasons to ensure that our stud farm enterprise can flourish. It will not be used as a riding school, or as a livery yard, and the paddocks will not be tatty 'string and tape' affairs! A view of the existing paddocks at the stud will satisfy you of our standard of grassland management (see map 1).*

11.2 *It will restore farm employment back to the levels of the mid 1990's, and will ensure the survival of a top quality competition and breeding stud within the Worthing area. Without this expansion, the stud's future must be very doubtful unless it moves to ready built premises elsewhere (if available). This would mean closing down a long established family farming business.*

11.3 *We see this as the best way to combine the breeding and training of our horses in the future, and also as a final stage in our expansion. This will not be a stepping-stone to further expansion in the future."*

## **2. CONSULTATIONS**

The Parks Manager comments as follows:-

*"Normally there would be an objection to the loss of any amount of a site of nature conservation importance but the supporting statement from the applicant appears to contradict the reasons for designation. The Clapham Wood complex was designated because of its ancient woodland status but the applicant states that this particular coppice was planted in the 1930s and it may not, therefore, be as valuable, although the presence of an Oak tree within it may indicate that it retains some ecological value and in this regard, it is strongly advised that the views of the County Ecologist are sought.*

*It appears that the existing damaged Oak tree to be removed is not protected by a Tree Preservation Order but an amenity assessment should be undertaken because it is possibly a very old tree. The new building could be pushed further northwards to avoid this tree.*

*In terms of the wider landscape, the proposal would be well screened by the remaining coppice and could, consequently, be said to have only a minimal impact”.*

The Head of Technical Services raises no objection.

The Building Control Manager comments that Fire Brigade access to 15% of the perimeter of the building could be achieved and a turning circle should be created within the site.

The County Council as Highway Authority notes that there is no deceleration lane and restricted visibility at the junction of the access and A27 and therefore if the use of the building cannot be restricted and the proposal results in a more intensive use of the access then highway improvements would be required principally in relation to visibility.

The Countryside Agency comments that it has no formal comments but suggests that the Sussex Downs Board is consulted. The Agency also comments that in order to foster high quality development, the design of new development should reflect local design characteristics and wherever possible using local materials.

The Head of Environmental Services, the Environment Agency and Southern Water all raise no objection to the proposal.

The Highways Agency comments that it does not wish to restrict the grant of planning permission.

The Sussex Downs Board comments that,

*“Being for equestrian use, the proposed building does not enjoy the same general presumption in favour normally accorded to agricultural buildings. However, the applicant has put together a very good application, with an informative and persuasive supporting statement, which makes the case very well for the principle of such a building.*

*The proposed building is of significant size and, in many locations, would be unduly prominent. However, in the location proposed, it would have the benefit of the existing mature and relatively dense hedges to the south and west and the mature woodland of Munery’s Copse to the east and north. Accordingly, it would be relatively well-screened, particularly as views from the A27 are also partially obscured by an existing tree belt along the roadside.*

*In my view, the acceptability of this proposal in terms of landscape impact depends upon the maintenance of this hedgerow and woodland. I am a little concerned about the area left blank immediately to the north of the proposed building on the survey and layout plan, and would prefer to see this area retain its hazel coppice or be replanted. However, I accept that the building would still be well-screened and have a woodland backdrop when seen from the south without this.*

*Therefore, provided that the site has no particular ecological interest and the existing hedges and woodland, at least that around the site, are retained and managed and replaced if necessary, I have no objection to this application.*

*I would, ideally, like to see the preparation and implementation of a management plan for Munery's Copse (if one does not already exist or the woodland is not already actively managed) and a restriction on external lighting the subject of conditions or legal agreement attached to the permission, if granted, but my lack of objection is not conditional upon these measurements."*

The Society of Sussex Downsmen comments that,

*"The Society notes that the Stud farm was relocated on this site following road improvements to the A27. It is satisfied that the Stud forms an acceptable part of farm diversification on this large and long established farm. The land around the farm is well drained for winter grazing by horses and there is good access to the bridleway network without crossing roads. It is recognised that a covered menage of international dimensions is required for dressage training. The proposed site is reasonably well screened by existing trees from the A27 and by hazel coppice from Cote Street. Relocation of the building closer to the northern boundary to take advantage of the proposed construction works with "cut and fill" would however help to reduce the impact of the building. Some additional planting with fast growing indigenous trees, such as poplar would be also beneficial.*

*The Society is concerned that horses living on site should only use the building. Competitive events would introduce unacceptable additional traffic and the parking of large horseboxes would be very intrusive in the landscape. The Society therefore suggests that the development should be defined as a training centre for resident horses only.*

*Subject to conditions limiting the use to horses resident at the stud and to additional tree planting and landscape works, the Society does not wish to object to this application."*

The comments of the County Planning Officer and Arun District Council are awaited.

### 3. REPRESENTATIONS

No letters of representation have been received, although all residents of Cote Street have been notified.

### 4. PLANNING ASSESSMENT

The application site is located within the Sussex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty where Policy EN2 of the adopted Worthing Local Plan states that only in compelling circumstances will development be permitted which would damage the special landscape character and appearance of the Sussex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Policy C2 of the Deposit Draft Local Plan states that development which would be harmful to the nationally important visual quality and locally distinctive characteristics of the Sussex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty will not be permitted unless the development is essential to meet local, social and/or economic needs or for commercial development where it can be demonstrated that the development is in the national interest and there is no alternative site available elsewhere. In these cases, the policy requires the adverse affects on the AONB to be kept to a minimum and there to be no unacceptable harm to the natural beauty of the landscape. It states that major developments are likely to be inconsistent with the national designation of the AONB and such applications will be rigorously tested against the written criteria and accompanied by environmental assessments.

The main considerations in determining this proposal are, therefore, the principle and impact of development in the AONB, the effect upon the site of nature conservation, loss of trees, access and impact on residential amenity. The proposal should be considered against Policies EN1, EN2, EN5, EN8, EN9 and EN27 of the adopted Worthing Local Plan and Policies RES5, C1, C2, C6, C7, BE1, BE2, BE3, TR15 and H22 of the Revised Deposit Draft of the Worthing Local Plan Review 2000.

The applicant's supporting statement seeks to justify the development on economic grounds and as a form of agricultural diversification. Policy C2 of the Deposit Draft Local Plan states that development harmful to the AONB will not be permitted unless it is essential to meet economic needs. There is no clear evidence that the stud business would not survive without the proposed building, however, it would clearly improve the efficiency and profitability of the business and may result in some additional employment. The applicant has indicated that without this building the Stud's future may be doubtful unless it moves to 'ready built' premises elsewhere and it is clearly an important farm diversification for the Estate. It could be argued therefore that the proposal is essential to the business expansion of this enterprise. On this basis the development could be justified so long as the building would have only a minimum impact on the landscape quality of the South Downs.

The proposed building is very large and there is concern about the scale of this development in the AONB. However, as set out in the consultation response from the Sussex Downs Board the building will be set into the ground and the existence of mature planting and rising ground to the north will significantly reduce any impact this building will have on the wider landscape. The existing hazel coppice to the north of the building can be retained and supplemented by additional planting. As the applicant owns adjoining land existing landscape features can be retained and it is understood that there is already a Management Plan for Munery's Copse to the east of the site. In view of the existing screening around the proposed building there would be limited views from public vantage points with the nearest public footpaths being to the east along Cote Street and to the west leading through Clapham Wood. In relation to the Oak Tree referred by the Parks Manager the applicant has been requested to provide further information on the health of this tree and the possibility of relocating the riding arena if the tree is worthy of retention.

It will be important to give careful consideration to the proposed materials and the colour of any roofing material and this can be adequately covered by condition. In this respect, it would be preferable to have timber cladding to the walls of the building rather than to have rendered concrete blocks.

The site is, however, within the Clapham Wood site of Nature Conservation Importance and the views of the County Ecologist are awaited to establish whether the proposal would cause harm to the nature conservation qualities of this site. The fact that the proposed site is within an area of Hazel coppice planted in the 1930s may limit the ecological damage, however the comments of the County Ecologist are clearly important in assessing the acceptability of this proposal.

The applicant suggests that only one vehicular movement per day would be generated by the new development. The County Council as Highway Authority is concerned at the lack of deceleration lane and poor visibility at the junction of the access with the A27 and suggests that unless the use of the building is restricted then a more intensive use of the access would require highway improvements. To control the use of the building it will be important to restrict its use to purposes ancillary to the Stud Farm, in particular, to prevent its use as an indoor riding school or D.I.Y. livery stable. These matters can be adequately controlled by condition.

Although, this is a large scale proposal within a sensitive rural location it is considered that the expansion of this commercial enterprise can be justified providing further diversification for the Castle Goring Estate. The development is therefore recommended for approval subject to satisfactory comments from the County Ecologist.

5. RECOMMENDATION

**Planning permission** be granted subject to:-

1. C1A Standard full condition.
2. C8A Agree/provide landscaping scheme.
3. C9A Agree materials before construction.
4. C10A Use limited to that approved (purposes ancillary to the Stud Farm and for no other use including as a riding school or livery yard).
5. Prior to the commencement of the development precise details of the finished floor levels of the proposed building in relation to a nearby datum point together with details of existing and proposed ground levels shall be submitted to and approved in writing with the Local Planning Authority.

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Trees and Forestry : DoE Circular 36/78  
Trees in Relation to Construction : British Standards Institution BS5837 (1991)  
The Countryside and the Rural Economy - PPG 7 : January 1992  
Letter of Support from the Applicant or Applicant's Agent  
Observations of Southern Water Services  
Observations of the Environment Agency  
Observations of the Head of Environmental Services  
Observations of the Head of Technical Services  
Observations of the Parks Manager  
Observations of the Highway Authority.

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