

DEPOSITED 1/3/02  
TP REF. No.  
WB 102/0012.7 July



*Longdean House & Stables*

**Planning application no.                      for 60m x 33m (approx) building to include training arena and stables at Longdean House, Clapham, Worthing.**

**Supporting Evidence**

This statement is in support of a full planning application for building of approx: 60m x 33m to include a training arena and stabling.

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This statement explains the nature of the proposal, and the need for the building and seeks to take account of Planning Policies and other considerations. Before setting out the nature of the proposals, it is important to understand the background.

This statement is prepared by the myself, Clement Somerset, of Longdean House, Clapham, Worthing. I have a Higher National Diploma in Agriculture, and have been running the Castle Goring Farm since 1980. My wife, Sara, is responsible for the Stud.

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## **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 fertilizer 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,



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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 be 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

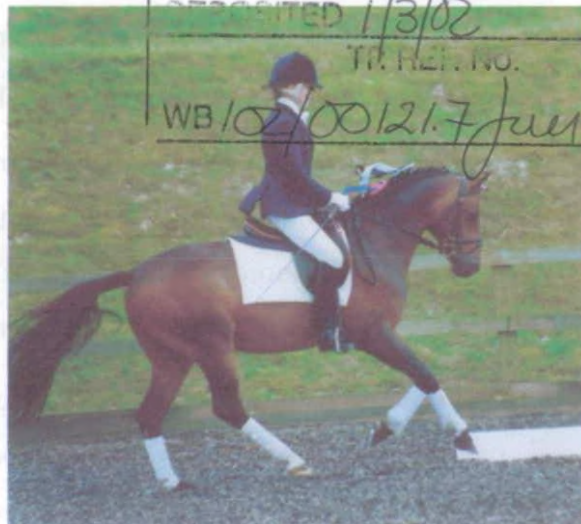
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'Longdean Rioja' with her mother- Champion foal 1999



Georgina Somerset winning the Regional Dressage Finals with her pony stallion, 'Welcome Sharan',

### 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 Holt 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 broodmares 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 broodmares. 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 too 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 suitable 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.

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**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 it's 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 meters wide, and sheltered to the north and



*View from site Southwards*

*View from site towards Highdown Hill*

*These pictures were taken from the centre of the proposed building.*

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 meters of Longdean House & Stables, and will therefore be ideally located for integration and management. (see attached site plan)

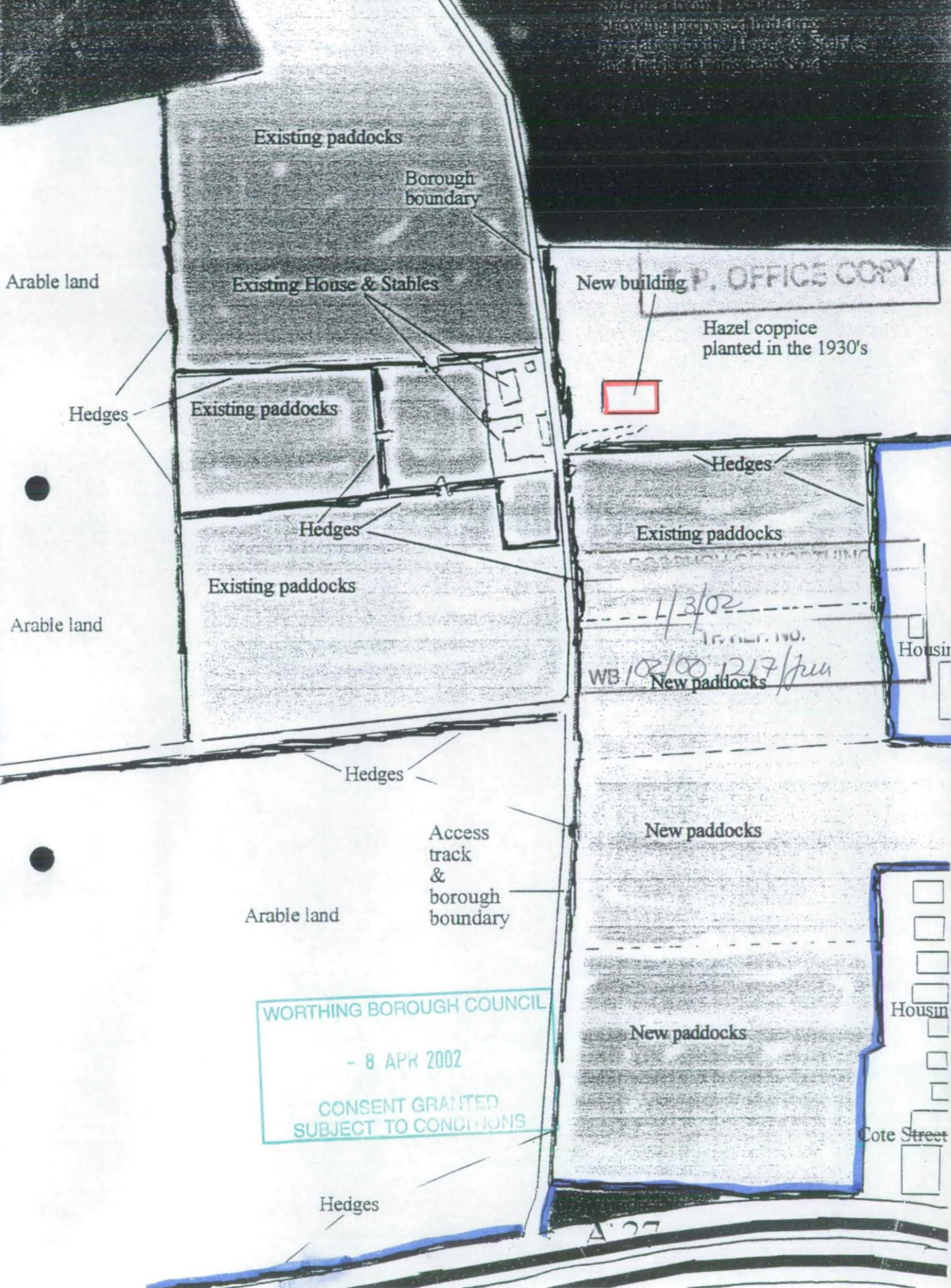
- 6.3 My Grandfather planted the site with hazel stools for coppicing in the farming depression of the thirties. It was a field before then, so there are no mature trees to be cleared and there is no historic flora to be damaged. Although there are attempts to re-vitalise the hazel coppice industry in 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 very 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 4<sup>th</sup> 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



Showing proposed building  
provision for the House & Stables  
and the new paddocks



P. OFFICE COPY

Existing paddocks

Borough boundary

Existing House & Stables

New building

Hazel coppice planted in the 1930's

Arable land

Hedges

Existing paddocks

Hedges

Existing paddocks

Hedges

Existing paddocks

Arable land

1/3/02

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New paddocks

Housing

Hedges

New paddocks

Arable land

Access track & borough boundary

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New paddocks

Housing

Cote Street

Hedges

A:27



Woods

Site plan from 1:2500 map  
Showing proposed building  
in relation to the House & Stables  
and fields at Longdean Stud

TOP OFFICE COPY

Not to scale

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Hazel coppice  
planted in the 1930's

Arable land

Existing paddocks

Borough boundary

Existing House & Stables

New building

Hedges

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Cote Street

Hedges

Wood

A 27



