

RECOMMENDATION FOR APPROVAL

07/0029

11.01.07

Mrs P Dodds

Oakwood Stables, Durham
Road, Lanchester

Erection of indoor training
and exercise arena

Lanchester Ward

The Application

1. Planning permission is sought for the erection of an indoor training and exercise arena at Oakwood stables, Lanchester which has developed primarily into a riding school. On site there is an existing stable block, mobile home to the north and floodlit outdoor riding area to the south. The site is accessed off Durham Road onto a tarmac road which also leads down to the sewerage works and Tribridge Diaries. There are fields located to the east and west of the site which are not presently used for agriculture, with agriculture land to the north of Durham Road.
2. The building would be situated to the far south of the site, adjacent the existing outdoor riding area, to the west of the existing access road and above the Lanchester Valley Walk. To the south of this there is an existing sewage works. It would be located approximately 256m to the west of the residential properties at Oakwood. There are eight properties located on Oakwood with their rear gardens facing onto the application site.
3. The land slopes down from north to south and the proposed siting of the building would sit in the lowest part of the site with mature trees to the south above the Lanchester Walk and a mature hedgerow to the eastern side adjacent the access road and the bridge that crosses the walk.
4. The building would be of standard agricultural design constructed of steel with a grey roof and green walls. It would be 30m in length, 18m in width, 5.5 m in height at ridge and 3.6m in height at eaves with a pitched roof. A new pathway down to the building is proposed adjacent the hedge constructed of informal materials suitable for wheelchairs.
5. The applicant's agent has submitted information in support of the application and outlines the need for an indoor facility. Reasons for the application stated by the applicant include:

- It is difficult for pupils of the riding school to concentrate in adverse weather conditions.
- Handicapped and disabled users find it difficult to function in adverse weather.
- The site is exposed to winds and thus lessons disrupted by ponies turning themselves against this.
- All weather surfaces degrade and pool through constant use in rain and snow
- The stables provides for a range of people with emotional and physical special needs and assists in social inclusion. This statement is backed up by a letter in support of the proposal by the head teacher of the Villa Real school in Consett.

History

6. In 2000 Planning Permission was granted for a stable block comprising of 10 stables and an exercise area at Oakwood Stables (reference 1/2000/0434/DMFP).

In 2002 Planning Permission was granted for a variation of condition 5 of the Planning Permission granted in 2000 to allow the use of the stables as a riding school (reference 1/2002/0216/DMVP).

In 2003 Planning Permission was granted for the erection of floodlighting to the outdoor ménage (reference 1/2003/0957/DMFP).

In 2004 planning permission was refused for an extension to the existing stable block and siting of a residential mobile home at Oakwood stables on the grounds that there was felt to be no functional need on animal welfare grounds or for the proper functioning of the business to have permanent residential occupancy on-site (reference 1/2004/0439/DMFP).

However in December 2004 planning permission was granted by the planning committee for the re -submission of planning application 1/2004/0439/DM for extension to stable block and siting of a residential mobile home (reference 1/2004/1020/DM).

In October 2005 permission was granted to vary condition 6 of planning permission 1/2003/0957/DMFP to extend the time of floodlighting from 1900 hours to 2000 hours (reference 1/2005/0847/DM).

Policy

7. The following policies of the adopted Local Plan are relevant in determining this application

General Development Principles (GDP1)

Protecting the Countryside (EN1)
Development within Areas of High Landscape Value (EN6)
Recreational Facilities within the Countryside (RE3)

The Lanchester Village Design Statement

Consultations

8. County Highways Development Control Officer- No highway objection raised.
9. Environment Agency- No comments.
10. Lanchester Parish Council-Members strongly opposed the development for the following reasons:

Originally starting life as a stable block for the personal use of the applicant, additional development was approved in 2000, with conditions precluding its use for any trade or business. However an application was approved for a variation of that condition to permit its use as a riding school despite strong local opposition. Whilst other developments to date could be said to relate to an acceptable recreational use with minimum support buildings, thus making good use of former agricultural land, unfortunately the present proposal to incorporate a very large building to provide indoor activity is considered quite inappropriate in its present open countryside location and too near the village of Lanchester, currently protected by its existing and very attractive landscape. The proposed building is considered to be an unacceptable development in the countryside and would seriously intrude upon immediate rural surroundings.

Concern was also expressed at a likely increase of vehicular activity in the area, particularly during the hours of darkness resulting from the proposed extended use of the area. Also the lack of adequate screening from Oakwood housing area and Durham Road the proposed development is outside the previously agreed development limit.

11. Councillor Ingham objects to the proposal on behalf of local residents in the vicinity on the grounds that the building proposed will be visually intrusive in an area of high landscape value.
12. Lanchester Partnership- The riding establishment has become established notwithstanding the wishes of the community at Lanchester. Originally starting life as a stable block for the stabling of a few horses, stated by the applicant to be for the personal use of the owner. The stable block and exercise arena were approved in August 2000 subject to conditions precluding use for any trade or business (Condition No 5). However, an application (reference 1/2002/0216/DM) was approved on 20th May 2002 for the variation of that condition to permit use as a Riding School against the expressed wishes of the Parish Council, local residents and the Lanchester Partnership.

The community was opposed to the increase in vehicular traffic accessing the site from A691 and to the creation of a business venture in the countryside. The site lay outside the well defined limits of the settlement in the attractive open countryside, part of an area of High Landscape Value, surrounding the southern half of Lanchester and providing the setting and outlook from the village and on the main approach to it. The Derwentside District Local Plan Policy EN6 seeks to protect the area for its landscape quality and acknowledges that the area could easily be damaged by inappropriate development.

It seems to us that so far development at the site could be said to relate to an open air recreational use with minimal building in support of that use, the horses being kept out in the open for much of the time and the horse riding taking place in the open either on site or in the surrounding open countryside. It makes effective use of former agricultural land, which might otherwise have lain unused. However, the present proposal would result in the erection of a very large building to provide for an indoor activity and as such is quite inappropriate in this open countryside location. It may be, as the applicant's agents claim that the site is near to Lanchester but it is by no means an 'Urban Fringe' location as suggested by them. It is an essential part of the attractive landscape surroundings to a pleasant rural village protected by formal landscape designation. The proposed building would seriously intrude upon the rural surroundings to the village be seen prominently from parts of the village and particularly from the main road on the approach to the village. For these reasons it is thought to be entirely inappropriate in this location.

We are therefore strongly opposed to the proposal and would ask the Council to reject it. In the event that you were to recommend approval of the application we would ask for the opportunity to address the committee before a decision is reached. Without wishing in any way to detract from these views we consider that, should the Council be minded to approve the proposal, further consideration should be given to the siting, design, materials of construction and the landscaping of the site.

Development in this location needs to be carefully controlled so that its impact on the visual amenity of this important open rural area, near the entrance to the village, should be minimized. Consideration should be given to the use of traditional materials to create a building of traditional "agricultural" appearance more typical of the locality. Such was the case with additional buildings at Lizards Farm, north of the village, approved a few years ago. The site is low lying and will be seen principally against the landscape as opposed to the sky, the choice of materials should therefore be dark not light. The proposed use of different colours for the walls and roof and contrasting colour for the "barges" and other edges features, as proposed, would draw attention to the building and increase its apparent size and obtrusiveness and are quite inappropriate. Moreover, although screened by trees from the railway there is no screening of

the building in views from the main road. The design of the building and lack of landscaping make the proposal quite inappropriate.

13. Neighbours have been consulted and a site notice posted. Nine letters of objection have been received, seven from residents of Oakwood. These are summarised as follows:

- Expansion on this scale has always been planned, as was previously private stabling. Will thus be further development applications.
- Continuation of process to develop a significant commercial enterprise outside village boundary
- Overall plan must be appraised in its entirety
- Become a nuisance and causing damage
- Land previously in continual agricultural use. Only become unstable because of stables.
- Large, unattractive and obtrusive. Visible and prominent from main road in a conspicuous position
- Detrimental impact of character of landscape in area of high landscape value
- Sporadic development in open countryside detracting from character and visual amenity
- Materials not traditional
- Colour should be changed
- Should be located on field the far side of the access road which is screened from housing
- Extends village beyond the development limit and into greenbelt
- No need for lights to outside arena if this were to be built
- Light pollution through the rooflights-intrusive, detrimental to wildlife environment and quality of life
- Extra traffic will produce further accidents on already dangerous entrance. Lack of parking
- Nearby house elevated and gardens not screened
- Horse riding an outdoor sport and winters are shorter/less harsh and valley gives some protection.
- Visible from Lanchester walk
- The sewerage works and pylons is not a reason to add further flaws to the landscape

14. Ten Letters of support have been submitted, from users of the stables and riding school. These are summarised as follows:

- Local initiatives, rural enterprises and diversification should be encouraged and supported
- The environment and expertise provide valuable opportunities and personal development for those that are disadvantaged, elderly and disabled as well
- Positive social and educational benefits and lifestyle

- Employment benefits
- Provides much needed recreational facilities
- Necessity for all weather activities
- A more sheltered environment will be beneficial to those with complex health issues
- A thriving business has been established and developed given the depression in the rural economy
- Provide income for the rural economy
- In keeping with the surrounding area and sympathetic in colour and well orientated
- Given landscape features will not be highly visible with minimal intrusion given position at lowest end of site. However agricultural buildings are a feature of the area
- Opportunity for roosting of birds and bats

Officer Assessment

15. Oakwood Stables was initially granted Planning Permission in 2000 and since that time the enterprise has developed into a livery and also as a riding school. There are fourteen stables, a mobile home sited at the stable yard for a temporary three year period to provide 24 hour supervision of the equestrian enterprise and an outdoor ménage with floodlighting. This application now seeks permission for the erection of an indoor training and exercise arena to the south of the site for the riding school.
16. PPS7, Sustainable Development in Rural Areas, states in relation to Equine uses:-
- “Horse riding and other equestrian activities are popular forms of recreation in the countryside that can fit in well with farming activities and help to diversify rural economies. In some parts of the country, horse training and breeding businesses play an important economic role. Local planning authorities should set out in LDDs their policies for supporting equine enterprises that maintain environmental quality and countryside character. These policies should provide for a range of suitably located recreational and leisure facilities and, where appropriate, for the needs of training and breeding businesses. They should also facilitate the re-use of farm buildings for small-scale horse enterprises¹ that provide a useful form of farm diversification”.*
17. It is necessary to balance and integrate the requirement to protect the countryside with the need to sustain and encourage the vitality and viability of the rural economy. Any new development within the countryside should be of the benefit to the rural economy whilst not harming the character and appearance of the surrounding landscape area.
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18. In determining this proposal consideration should be given to the likely impacts of upon the high landscape qualities of the local area, designated an Area of High Landscape Value within the Adopted Local Plan. Policy EN6 expects that within areas of High Landscape Value development will be permitted provided that it pays particular attention to the landscape qualities of the area in the siting and design of buildings considered to be appropriate. Development within these areas should be compatible with its predominantly rural nature.
19. It is considered that the location of the proposed building just outside Lanchester is an acceptable location for this countryside enterprise, easily accessible for people to use sustainably, without being within the built up area whereby amenities may well be affected. Areas of open land between existing towns and villages do provide good locations for valuable leisure and recreational opportunities for all.
20. The positioning of the indoor arena in this location is in close proximity to the sewerage works and is also seen against the existing stable block and as such is considered to be an appropriate location for the building. It would be well sited, away from the main road, being at the lowest end of the site to the south east corner, as the land falls away significantly from Durham Road down towards the sewage works. The site is also well screened on three side by trees, hedges and bushes which run along the edge of Durham Road to the north, the fields to the east and the Lanchester Walk to the south, to give an enclosed appearance.
21. The building itself is of standard agricultural design, constructed of steel with a grey roof to blend in with the skyline with green walls and barges. The building would appear no worse in the countryside landscape than most agricultural buildings and is unlikely to have any significant impact upon the visual amenity of the wider locality in accordance with design guideline 4P and 4Q of the Lanchester Village Design statement. The proposed siting of the building would not adversely affect the character or landscape qualities of the Browney and Smallhope Burn Valleys Area of High Landscape Value. The development would not result in the loss of existing features or trees and it is considered that there would be no significant harm to wildlife habitats.
22. Given its positioning to the lowest point of the site within the south east corner and located approximately 256m from the rear of properties on Oakwood it would not in be overly dominating or prominent when viewed from the rear of these properties. There is no doubt the building would be seen, however, visually and in terms of potential additional, noise, smell or light pollution the building and its use would not be excessive nor so detrimental to these properties whereby refusal of the proposal would be justifiable, given this mitigating distance. There is also a residential property at Tribridge Dairies which is approximately 60 metres away but does not directly look onto the site.

23. It has been suggested by objectors that the building be located on the eastern side of the access road and hedge, and although it is the proposal before members which must be determined, officers feel that the proposed building should be grouped together with the existing, rather than extend into the next field further away from the built up area, where it would be more exposed.
24. Concerns regarding increased traffic and car parking due to the expansion of the premises are noted. However there have been no objections from the County Council Highway Engineer on road safety grounds.
25. Oakwood stables is an existing equestrian facility and the proposed use, siting, size and design of the indoor arena would be appropriate to the area and in accordance with Local Plan policies. Therefore members are recommended to approve the application.
26. Recommendation

Conditional Permission

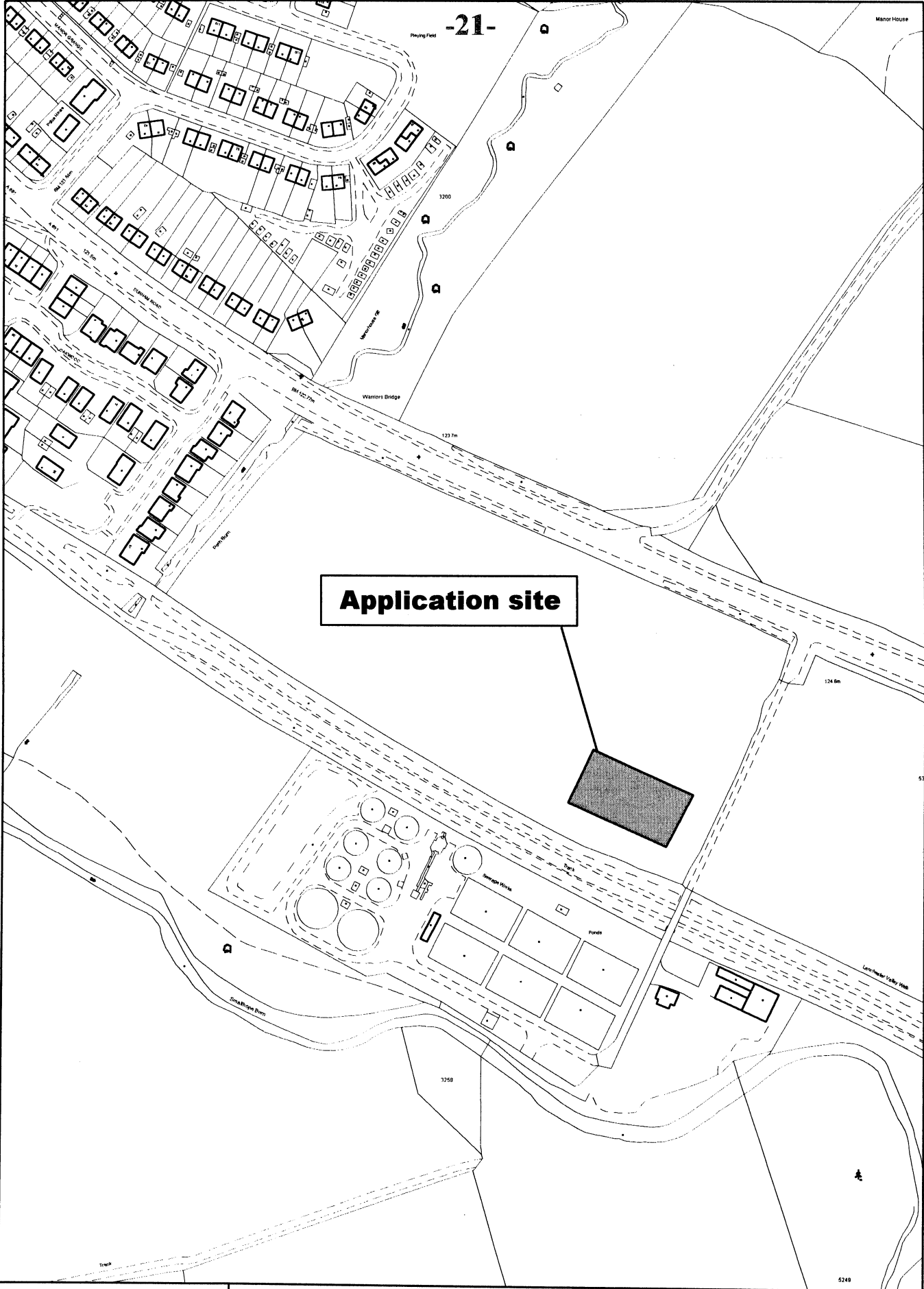
- Time Limit. (ST)
- Approved Plans (ST)
- Material (AO4)
- Surface Water Drainage (DO4)
- No further Caravans, Portable Buildings or other Moveable Structures shall be brought onto the site without the further written permission of the Local Planning Authority.
- Reason: In the interests of the appearance of the area in accordance with Policy EN6 of the Local Plan.
- No development shall commence until detailed plans showing the layout, construction, and surfacing materials for any hard standing areas or paths have been submitted to, and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The agreed details shall be undertaken as approved prior the commencement of the approved development.
- Reason: In the interests of the character and appearance of the area in accordance with Policy EN6 of the Local Plan.
- No development shall commence until details of any ground raising, cutting or other excavation works along with the finished floor slab level and associated land re-shaping works for the approved indoor arena in relation to a fixed datum point have been submitted to, and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The agreed details shall be undertaken as approved.
- Reason: In the interests of the character and appearance of the area from any raising or lowering of ground levels in accordance with Policy GDP1 and EN6 of the Local Plan.

Reason for Approval

27. The decision to grant planning permission has been taken having regard to policies GDP1, EN1, EN2, EN6, RE3 of the Derwentside District Plan and relevant material considerations, as detailed in the report to the Development Control Committee. In the view of the Local Planning Authority no other material considerations outweigh the decision to grant permission.

Report Prepared by, Ann Rawlinson, Senior Area Planning Officer

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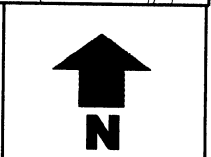


Application site

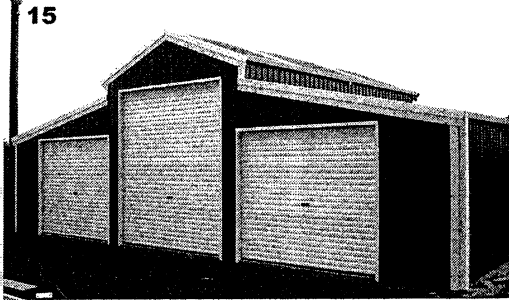
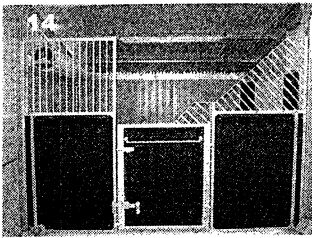
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Erection of indoor training and exercise arena
 Oakwood Stables
 Durham Road
 Lanchester

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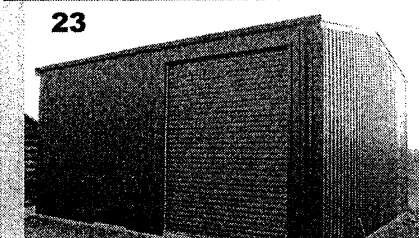
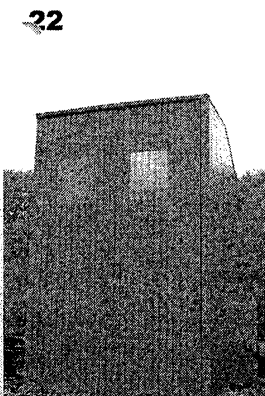
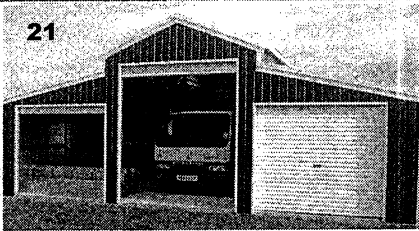
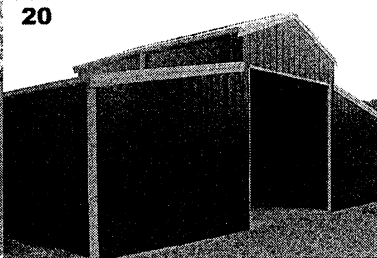
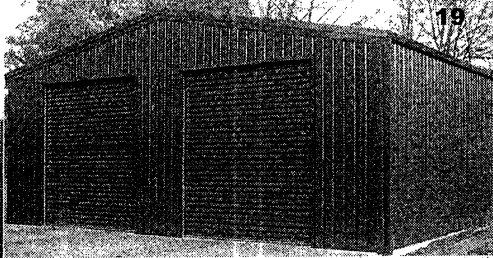
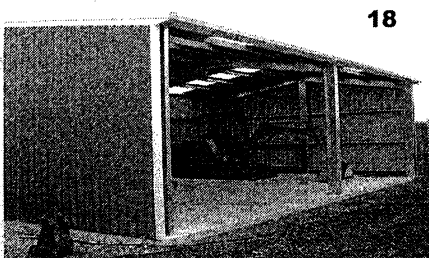
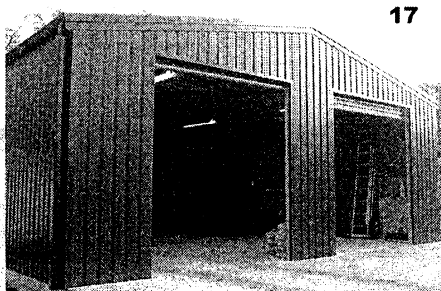


Rural & Industrial



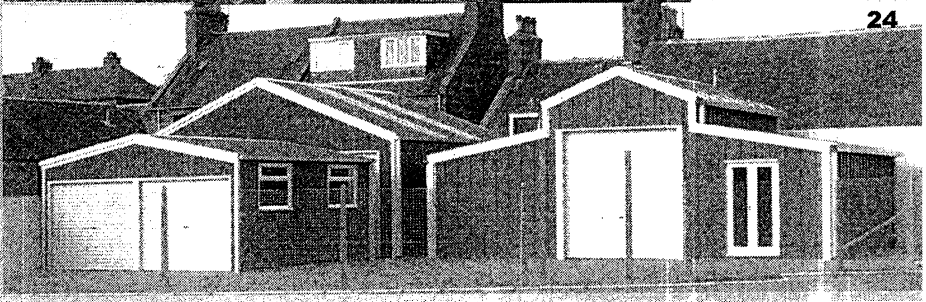
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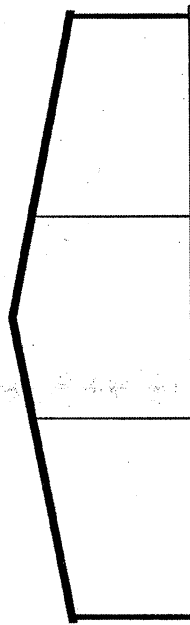
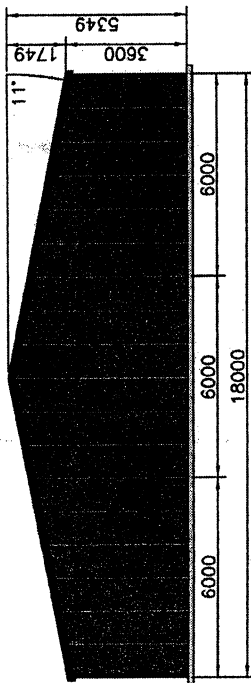
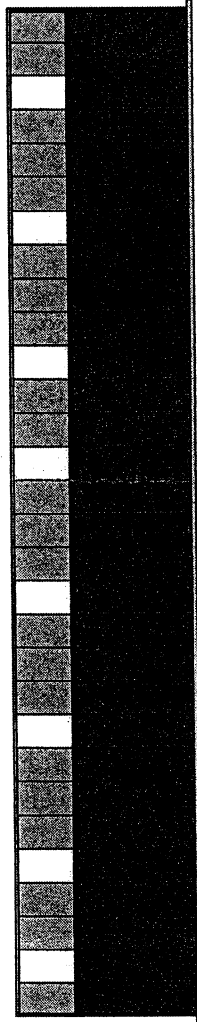
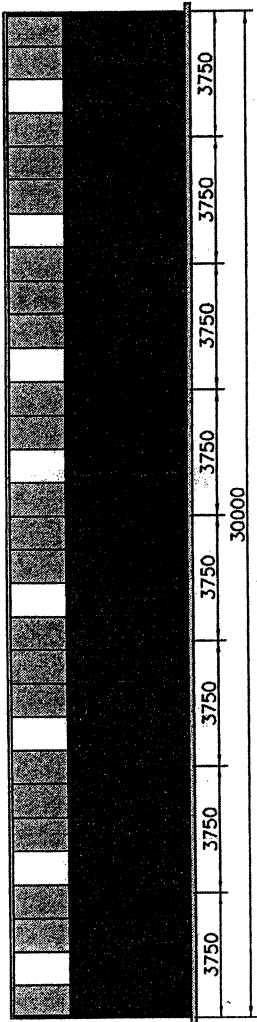


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- Roller doors
- Sliding doors
- Windows
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- Hardie Plank siding on walls and extended eaves detail
- Lean to's



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