

CASE STUDY: LARGE SUITE ACCOMMODATION



Organisation: Canine Country Club
 Location: UK, Cornwall/Devon
 Kennels Type: Semi-outdoor
 Kennels: 15 boarding
 Kennel Sleep Size: 2.4m x 2.4m (8ft x 8ft) and
 2.4m x 3.3m (8ft x 11ft)
 Kennel Run Size: 2.4/3.3m x 4.2m (8/11ft x 14ft)
 Year Built: 2007

www.caninecountryclub.co.uk

A NEW, RURAL BOARDING KENNELS WITH
 LARGE SUITES UP TO 22FT/6.7M.
 THEY ENJOY THE SUCCESS OF BEING A
 HIGH QUALITY BUSINESS WITH A HOME-LIKE
 FEEL, WITH LOTS OF SPACE FOR BOTH
 QUIET REST AND FUN PLAYTIMES

CANINE COUNTRY CLUB

CHANGING THE IMAGE OF KENNELS

Jackie and Tim Ferrier are pioneers in the world of boarding kennels, being the first to build such large rooms (8ft x 8ft/11ft sleeping areas with 14ft runs) to such a high standard of building. Wanting only the best, the building is traditionally constructed to 'human' standards with insulated cavity blockwork (good insulation keeps buildings warm in winter, cool in summer), trussed rafters with a slate roof to give it high class aesthetic qualities, and low maintenance and running costs.

Like many aspiring boarding kennel owners, Jackie and Tim's thoughts about the possibility of owning such a business started a number of years before the actual reality of becoming kennel owners.

Having always had dogs of their own, with parents living nearby who could look after them – the thoughts of finding a suitable boarding establishment had never been an issue.

However, in 2000 Jackie, the family and her parents went on a cruise – this meant that suitable accommodation had to be found for the dogs. Jackie had her first experience of viewing boarding kennels:

“Wow, what a shock – what a disappointment. How could much-loved dogs that live along side us both day and night be expected to live in tiny, dark, smelly, noisy, damp, cold spaces with little or no exercise, while we have a wonderful luxurious holiday?”

In the end Jackie settled for a pet sitter, believing this to be the better option after her experience of viewing local kennels. This option proved to have its own problems and the reality of having the dogs in their own home created additional issues with neighbours complaining about the pet sitter, and her dogs being left for lengthy periods of time.

On returning, they vowed never to leave their dogs again.

I CAN DO BETTER

This story is so familiar, and one we hear over and over again – *“I can do better”*. It is typical of the caring people we work alongside, people who have been involved with animals – in Jackie's case it was racehorses.

Like many of the clients we deal with, Jackie's story is based on a desire to provide a facility for owners who have to leave their dogs, but want to go away and enjoy their holiday, knowing that their dogs are being looked after on a more personal level, with quality time and interaction on a one-to-one basis in a spacious, home-like environment.

Jackie first approached Kennel & Cattery Design in September 2005 having found our website. From the outset it was very obvious that she was going to be a unique client, determined to construct kennels to an extremely high standard.

Given her experiences when viewing established boarding kennels, she soon realised that it would be impossible to purchase an existing business that had the standard and design of kennels that they wanted to build.

Jackie and Tim lived in Hampshire and after visiting several estate agents with a list of their requirements for a suitable property

where they could construct kennels and that 'ticked all the boxes'. They quickly realised that the cost of such a property in Hampshire far exceeded their budget. The search radius was broadened to the South-West of England.

The property had to fit a list of requirements, such as a minimum of 5 acres of land, no neighbours, situated close to a main road and to be a visually appealing location from a customer's point of view.

Eventually a suitable property was located in Cornwall. They made an offer – it was accepted – it was really happening.

“When you get clients driving 15 hours just to come and look at the kennels before booking their dog in, it speaks volumes!”



IN A LEAGUE OF THEIR OWN

THE DESIGN BRIEF

During the intervening period Jackie was in regular contact with us to discuss design options, practical issues such as services, drainage, etc. The design finally chosen was an 'L' shape. The reasoning behind this was to minimise the stress and noise, and to create a building that was functional, while at the same time providing a facility that was simply in a league of its own. This fitted with Jackie's design brief and her commitment to provide a kennel facility that offered so much more than anything she had seen elsewhere.

Finally, they moved into their new property in January 2006 and applied for planning permission 2 weeks later. At the parish council meeting Jackie explained why they wanted to construct such a facility; fortunately, all of the council members supported it wholeheartedly.

Unfortunately, the property straddles two county council borders; this meant that Cornwall Council had to liaise with Devon Council. The consultation process ended up taking six months; eventually a 'yes' decision was given. The only objection the council received was from a neighbouring kennel owner! Fortunately the council ignored this.

PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Neither Jackie nor Tim had ever undertaken such a large project. Initially they obtained quotations from local building contractors. The aim was to use the main contractor as the project co-ordinator. Based on finance, they decided to undertake the project management themselves, employing the various trades as and when they were required.

During the regular telephone calls made to us during the construction stage, it soon became obvious that this option was not as advantageous as they had first imagined. It is not until you undertake such a project that you realise exactly what is involved in project-managing a build. Without a formal contract, with no overall plan with timescales, and the issues with sourcing suitable materials in the correct time period, it proved to be a project with many ups and downs.

As Jackie commented on several occasions 'dealing with contractors was an entirely new language and took a period to adjust to'. Being gentle people, they also found it very hard dealing with contractors not pulling their weight. After eight months with many ups and downs, the project was completed.

EXCEEDING EXPECTATIONS:

Jackie and Tim are delighted with their end result and say that the building has exceeded all their original expectations. The building has 15 suites with double-glazed UPVC doors, underfloor heating with warm, vinyl floor coverings. The large size of the rooms and the design of the building make it an extremely calm, quiet and relaxing atmosphere to live and work in. This combined with the low number of dogs allows for lots of individual attention – is a winning combination which their customers delight in. There were also 'hidden' rewards for building such high standard dog-friendly accommodation, including things like how much easier the cleaning routine is, not only because of the vinyl finish, but also that there is little 'mess' to clear up. The dogs are very relaxed in their own private and quiet spaces, have comfortable, warm sleeping areas and get taken out several times a day. They behave as if they were at home, waiting for their late night or early morning visit outside.

The high quality of the kennels attracts a definite 'type' of customer who has rarely taken a holiday since having dogs, or who have rescue dogs who they feel have been through enough in kennels already. Their customers tell Jackie they are lucky to have found somewhere so special for their dogs, where the low numbers mean there is time to develop relationships with them – but most of all, time to care for them. Customers immediately understand that the love and dedication behind creating such a special and unique business is applied to everything, from the care of the dogs to their website diaries.

When we asked Jackie and Tim how they felt after operating for six months, their reply was simply: *"We love the fact that we are appealing to people just like us who have never left their dogs before. It is a lovely feeling to know that all of these people are happy to leave their precious dogs with us, and it makes the journey to get where we are now all the sweeter. Our passion for dogs started this project and to us nothing can be better than getting up each morning, in the most stunning location and entertaining and loving dogs all day – does it get any better than this? We don't think so!"*

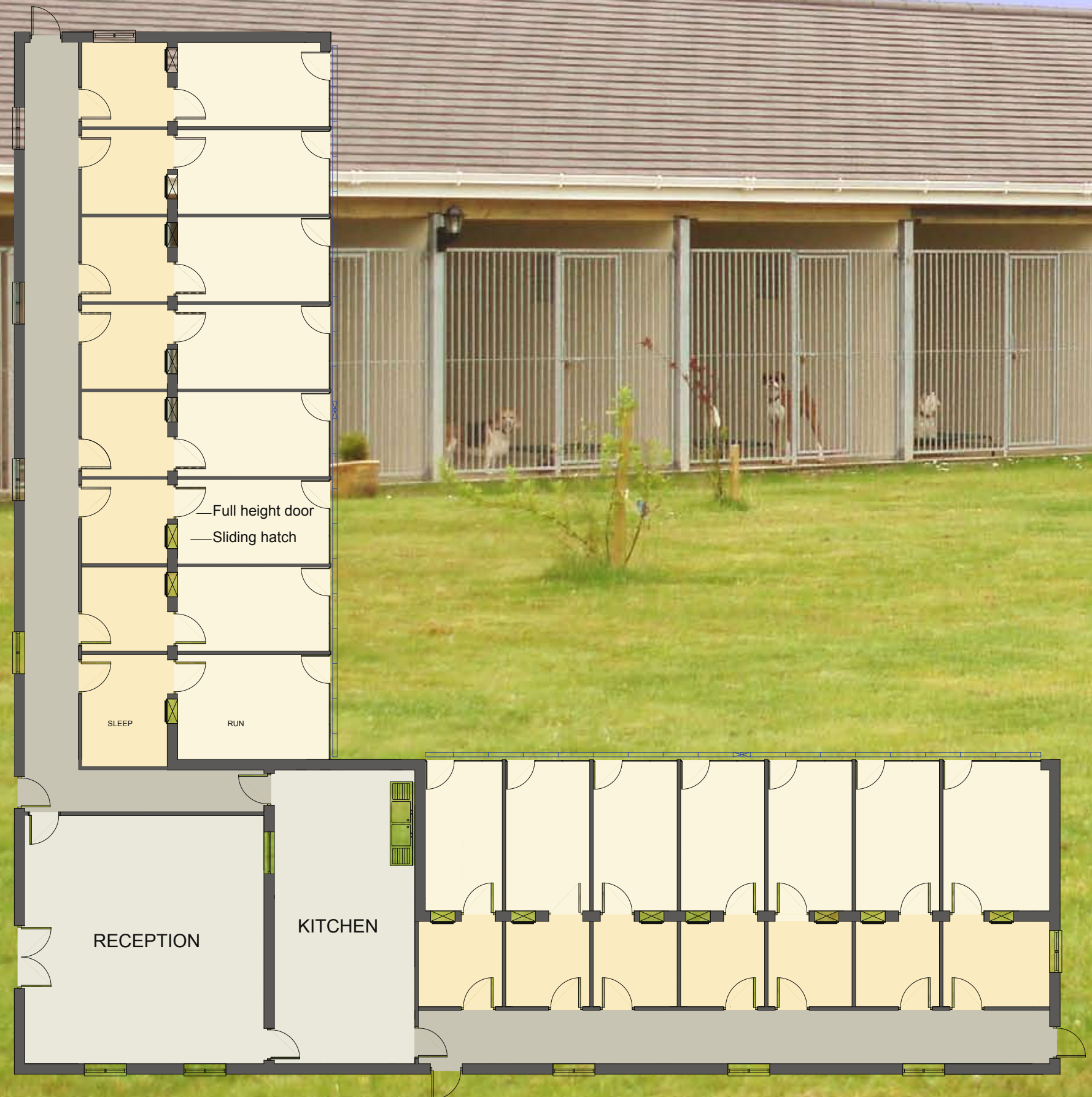
Having visited the site on several occasions it is clear what they have achieved is a credit to them both; the quality they aimed for has been achieved, their initial vision and sheer determination has given them a kennel facility that sets them apart and has been so welcomed by their clients.

BUILDING A CORRIDOR - FROM START TO FINISH



CANINE COUNTRY CLUB





CANINE COUNTRY CLUB