

£54,000 on designer kennels for a handful of Alsatian guard dogs.

Jeremy Hanley, the Forces' Minister, has admitted the money was spent on five kennels at the Britannia Royal Naval college in Dartmouth, Devon — but refuses to confirm that it was for five dogs.

Security

In a letter to David Jamieson, Labour MP for Plymouth/Devonport, Mr Hanley said he could not confirm the number of dogs involved for "security reasons".

But kennels are not the only expensive buildings erected at Dartmouth.

A double garage has been built for the captain of the college at a cost of £25,000.

The garage houses the captain's two family cars, despite the fact that he already has a garage at



his home adjacent to the college. The kennels could have been built by the MoD — which has sent out redundancy notices to 7,000 servicemen to save money — for a seventh of the cost if it had put them next to the main buildings.

Instead, it was decided to site the timber and concrete structure a few hundred yards away on hilly ground.

A Royal Navy spokesman said: "It seems rather expensive — £54,000 is a lot of money for a five-dog kennel.

"But it includes accommodation, an exercise area and drainage. The

levelling of the site pushed up the cost."

Levelling also increased the cost of the captain's garage. A security audit stated that it should be erected 75ft away from the captain's house because of the risk of bombs being placed under the cars, even though house and garages are within the security fence.

Angry

The Ministry expenditure could have bought a large house or paid for renovations to existing housing, according to an angry Mr Jamieson.

"In my constituency, I have naval families living in shocking conditions in RN housing, with damp running down the walls and carpets rotting underfoot," he fumed.

Anthony Steen, Conservative MP for the South Hams, said: "The whole thing is an embarrassment and shouldn't have happened."