

MME PLANNING SERVICES

Retention of children's play equipment and zipwire
platform.

at

Rowan, Two Mile Ash, Horsham, West Sussex,
RH13 0LA

Planning Statement

Ref: P-045a

November 2025

Version 1



Figure 1: Site Location / Red Line Area

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 MME Planning Services is instructed to submit this application for the retention of children's play equipment and zipwire platform at Rowan, Two Mile Ash, Horsham, West Sussex, RH13 0LA.
- 1.2 This statement sets out the proposed scheme in detail with regards to the following aspects: the planning history of the site, the development proposals, the relevant planning policy, the planning merits of the scheme and how the proposals would now comply with the Council's policies.
- 1.3 It is noted that the development as set out above is subject to a planning compliance case under reference EN/25/0192.

2. Site, Surroundings and Background

- 2.1 The application site relates to a residential property located on the south-eastern side of Two Mile Ash. The site is therefore located within a countryside setting in policy terms. The site forms part of a relatively small cluster of dwellings located in close proximity to Christ's Hospital.
- 2.2 The site consists of a large, detached dwelling set within a spacious plot. An existing swimming pool outbuilding is located close to the north-eastern boundary of the site and is accessed via an existing track. Adjacent to the swimming pool building and driveway is an existing hardstanding area and detached garage / storage building.
- 2.3 The site benefits from an existing access track which provides a connection from the public highway to the large open area to the rear of the site and runs parallel to the north-eastern boundary of the site. The access is a relatively straight pathway that has been accessed by cars, vans and tractors, as well as UK Power Networks with a cherry picker to maintain the site and boundaries.
- 2.4 Contrary to previous applications and statements, the application has confirmed via the previous owner of the site that the large open area to the rear of the main dwelling was always used as part of their residential garden, and that fencing previously in situ was only erected by the previous owners to provide some containment for their dogs.

3. Planning History

- Two storey extension to form indoor swimming pool associated changing rooms & en-suite bedroom Site: Rowan Two Mile Ash Horsham

Ref. No: SQ/100/90 | Status: Application Withdrawn, November 1990

- 2-storey ext to form indoor swimming pool assoc changing rooms & res rooms on grd & basement floors & en-suite master bedroom on 1st floor Site: Rowan Two Mile Ash Southwater

Ref. No: SQ/121/90 | Status: Application Permitted, April 1991

- 2 storey extension including swimming pool, changing rooms, service rooms & master bedroom above Site: Rowan Two Mile Ash Horsham

Ref. No: SQ/71/91 | Status: Application Refused, September 1991

- Overhead line & pole mounted sub-station Site: Two Mile Ash Southwater

Ref. No: SQ/89/91 | Status: Application Permitted, December 1991

- Erection of a single storey rear extension (Certificate of Lawful Development - proposed)

Ref. No: DC/16/0525 | Status: Application Permitted, April 2016

- Installation of 22no ground mounted solar panels.

Ref. No: DC/22/2316 | Status: Application Permitted, February 2023

- Reduction of existing roof overhang to the front elevation at ground floor. Installation of a flat roof canopy to main entrance and window alteration.

Ref. No: DC/23/1295 | Status: Application Permitted, August 2023

- Change of use of swimming pool to include commercial use

Ref. No: DC/24/0757 | Status: Application Refused, August 2024

- Change of use of existing swimming pool to allow mixed private and commercial use.

Ref. No: DC/25/0606 | Status: Pending Decision

- Erection of a ground floor infill extension. Change of roof tiles and changes to material finish on all elevations.

Ref. No: DC/25/0812 | Status: Application Permitted, July 2025

4. Proposals

- 4.1 As detailed above, planning permission is sought for the retention of children's play equipment and zip wire and platform within the rear garden area of the main dwelling on site. As set out within the application form, the proposed works were carried out and completed in spring / summer 2025. The application is therefore fully retrospective.
- 4.2 The development consists of timber framed play equipment consisting of swings, a slide, steps and bridges and is of a typical form for such children's play equipment. The zip line platform consists of a timber construction with the zip line running from east to west. The platform is located at the western end and is attached to an existing tree, with steps up to the angled platform which has a height of approximately 2m. At the eastern end, the zip line is attached to 3no timber poles attached to the ground.

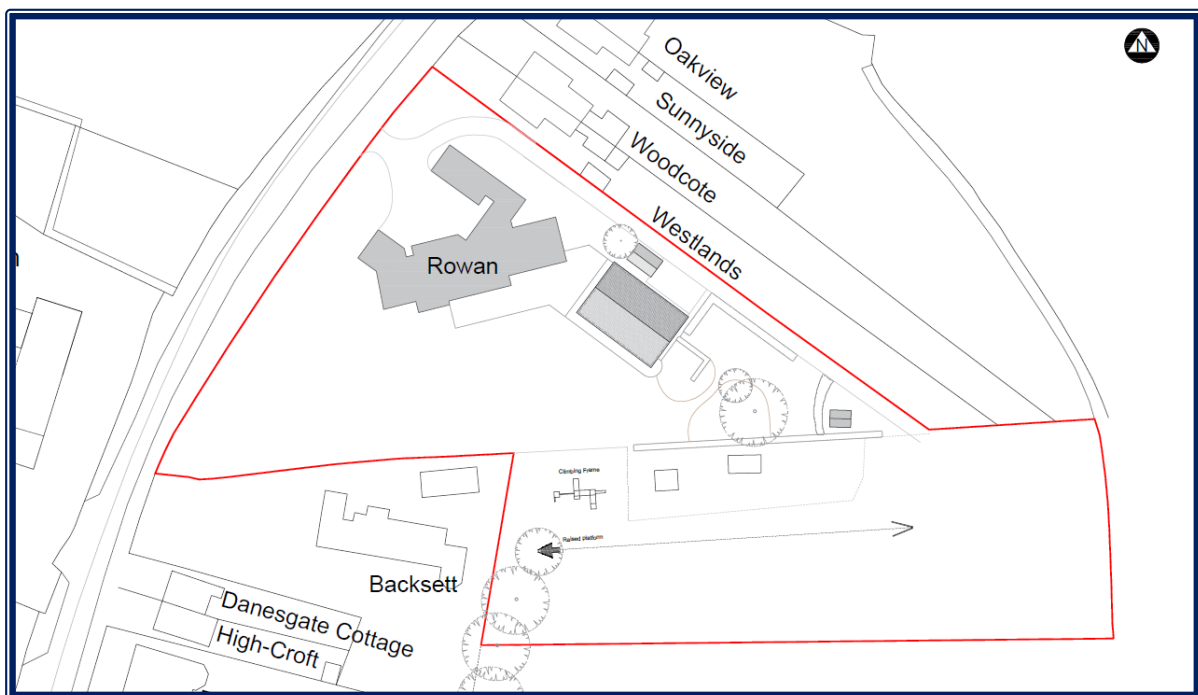


Figure 2: Proposed Site Plan

- 4.3 As set out under section 2 of this statement, the area where the play equipment and zip wire are located were always previously used as part of the garden in association with the dwelling on site. The completed equipment and zip wire are located in close proximity to an existing permitted solar panel array, as well as a shed and greenhouse.
- 4.4 Given the nature of the development, and positioning, there would be minimal impact on the countryside setting, with the equipment and zip wire used by the applicant's children and young family members for informal recreational purposes. Taking this into account, it is viewed that there would not be any detrimental impact on neighbouring amenity.

5. Planning Policy

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2024) and National Guidance

- 5.1 The NPPF sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied. It provides a framework for the preparation of local plans for housing and other development. The NPPF should be read as a whole.
- 5.2 Running throughout the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Sustainable development is achieved through three main objectives which are – economic, social and environmental.
- 5.3 Paragraph 11 of the NPPF states that for decision-taking, this means approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay. Where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out of date, planning permission should be granted unless the policies of the Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provide a clear reason for refusing the development proposed, or, any adverse impact of doing so would 'significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits' when assessed against the policies of the NPPF when taken as a whole (NPPF paragraph 11 (d)).

Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF) (2015)

- 5.4 Paragraph 34 of the NPPF requires that all development plans complete their reviews no later than 5 years from their adoption. Horsham District Council has submitted its new local plan for examination, however at this stage, the emerging policies carry little to no weight in decision making.

5.5 A Local Development Scheme (LDS) was published in February 2025 by the Council. The LDS sets out the production timetable for the New Local Plan anticipated to be adopted in April 2026. Notwithstanding the above, as the HDPF is now over 5 years old, the most important policies for determining this application are now considered to be 'out-of-date'. This position is further highlighted given that the Horsham District Local Plan examination hearing meetings scheduled for January 2025 were cancelled by the appointed Inspector, and in April 2025 advised that the Plan is withdrawn due to concerns about its legal compliance.

5.6 While considered to be out of date, the main HDPF policies relevant to this application are as follows:

- Policy 25 - Strategic Policy: The Natural Environment and Landscape Character
- Policy 26 - Strategic Policy: Countryside Protection
- Policy 31 - Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity
- Policy 32 - Strategic Policy: The Quality of New Development
- Policy 33 - Development Principles

Southwater Neighbourhood Plan (SWN) (2021)

5.7 Neighbourhood Plan policies relevant to this application are as follows:

- SNP16- Design

6. Planning Considerations

Principle of Development

6.1 Policy 26 states that – “Outside built-up area boundaries, the rural character and undeveloped nature of the countryside will be protected against inappropriate development. Any proposal must be essential to its countryside location, and in addition meet one of the following criteria: support the needs of agriculture or forestry; enable the extraction of minerals or the disposal of waste; provide for quiet informal recreational use; or enable the sustainable development of rural areas. In addition, proposals must be of a scale appropriate to its countryside character and location.

- 6.2 Development will be considered acceptable where it does not lead, either individually or cumulatively, to a significant increase in the level of overall activity in the countryside, and protects, and/or conserves, and /or enhances the key features and characteristics of the landscape character area in which it is located”.
- 6.3 As is evident from the nature of the proposals, the development is considered to be very modest in this context, providing private play equipment and a zip line for the applicants’ children and young members of the family.
- 6.4 The play equipment and zip wire gives their children a way to have fun and exercise. This is supported by various government initiatives to get children more active and to enjoy the outdoors, including the recently launched Let’s Move campaign which encourages parents to find simple, fun ways to get their children moving for at least 10 minutes a day. As such, the impact of the play equipment and zip wire and platform are considered to be minimal.
- 6.5 The site is a rural location given its location and context, however this should not be considered a hindrance to the applicant’s children enjoying the outdoor space which they have the benefit of. Given this setting, the development is therefore considered to be essential to its countryside location and would provide for quiet informal recreational use as required by Policy 26 of the HDPF.
- 6.6 It is also highlighted again that the site has historically always been used as part of the garden which has been confirmed by the previous owners of the site. The large open area to the rear of the site has never been used for formal agricultural purposes or as a paddock and is therefore considered to be more closely associated with the main residential use of the site.
- 6.7 Given the nature of the development, private informal recreational use and the wider overall use of the site, there would not be a marked increase in activity as a result of the works which is considered to result in harm to the countryside setting, in accordance with Policy 26 of the HDPF.

Design, Appearance, and Impact on the Setting

- 6.8 Policy 25 of the HDPF seeks to protect the natural environment and landscape character of the District, including the landform, development pattern, together with protected landscapes and habitats. Development will be required to protect, conserve, and enhance landscape and townscape character, taking account of areas or features identified as being of landscape importance, individual settlement characteristics and settlement separation. In addition, development will be supported where it maintains and enhances the Green Infrastructure Network.
- 6.9 Policies 32 and 33 of the HDPF require development to be of a high standard of design and layout. Development proposals must be locally distinctive in character and respect the character of their surroundings. Where relevant, the scale, massing and appearance of development will be required to relate sympathetically with its built-surroundings, landscape, open spaces and to consider any impact on the skyline and important views.
- 6.10 Given the nature and scale of the completed development, these are not considered to be harmful in this setting. The materials, consisting mainly of timber are considered to be appropriate in this rural location and furthermore, it must be noted that the development has a low degree of permanence, and could be removed very easily, with the land returned to its former condition. This is considered to be a significant material consideration. The development is not considered to have detracted from the informal character of the landscape, with the underdeveloped nature of the rear of the site retained.
- 6.11 Overall, the completed works represent appropriate development within this countryside setting and would be in accordance with Policies 25, 32 and 33 of the HDPF.

Neighbouring Amenity

- 6.12 Policy 33 of the HDPF states that permission will be granted for development that does not cause unacceptable harm to the amenity of the occupiers/users of nearby properties and land.

- 6.13 The completed development is located approximately 12m away from the closest neighbouring property to the west of the site. Given the nature of development and the users, being for the applicant's children, as well as existing boundary treatments, it is viewed that the development does not have a detrimental impact on neighbouring amenity to an extent or degree which would warrant refusal of this application.
- 6.14 The development does not create any additional activity or noise which would disturb neighbours beyond what could ordinarily take place on site without planning permission and therefore, no concerns are raised in this regard.
- 6.15 Taking the above into account, the development would be in accordance with Policy 33 of the HDPF and would be acceptable in this regard.

7. Summary and Conclusion

- 7.1 Overall, the completed development represents an appropriate form of development within the countryside setting, which has created an informal recreational use which would not be detrimental to neighbouring amenity.
- 7.2 Overall, works would be in accordance with Policies 25, 26, 32 and 33 of the HDPF and therefore, the Local Planning Authority is respectfully asked to grant planning permission accordingly.