

MME PLANNING SERVICES

Installation of children's play equipment positioned in the
location of pre-existing play equipment.

at

Colgate Memorial Hall, Forest Road, Colgate, West
Sussex, RH12 4SY

Planning Statement

Ref: P-059

August 2026

Version 1

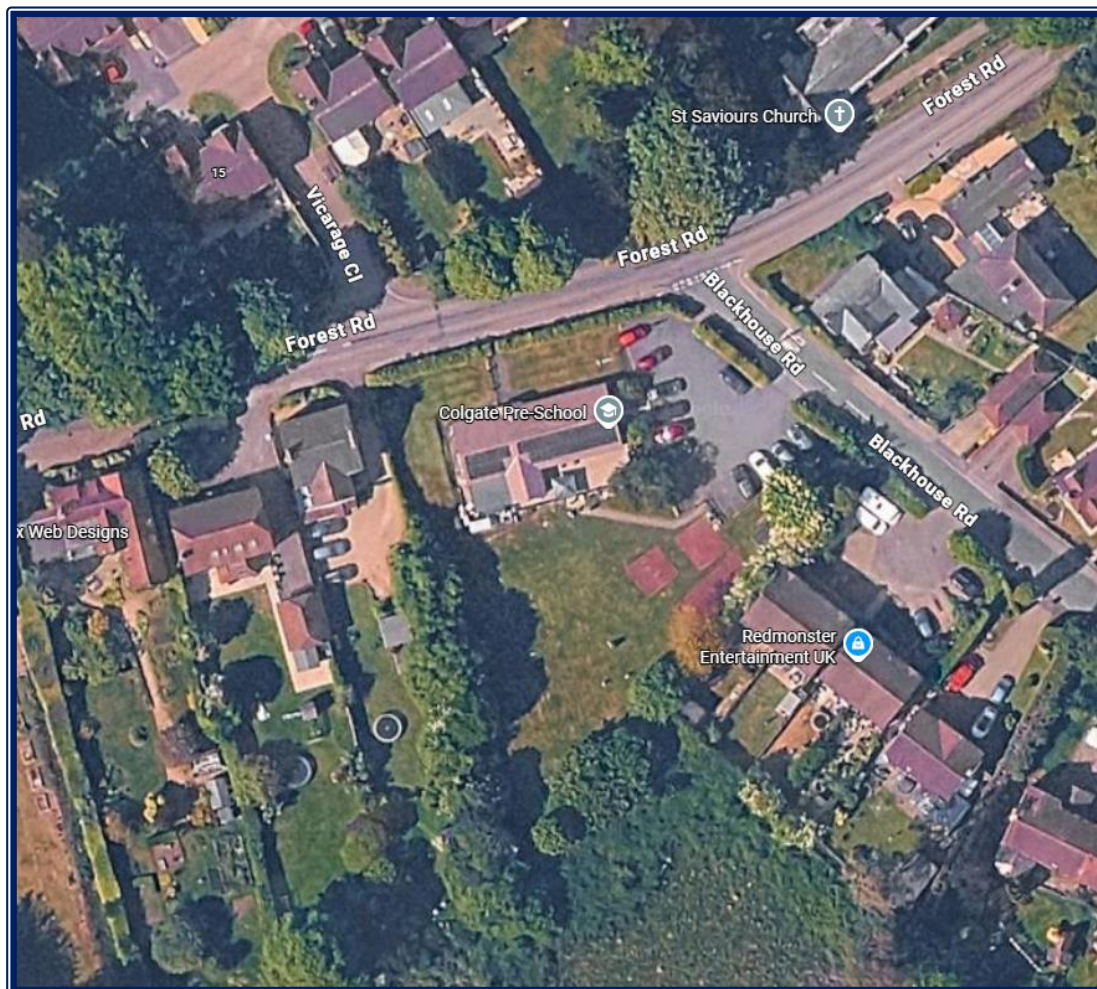


Figure 1: Site Location

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 MME Planning Services has been instructed to submit this application for the installation of children's play equipment to be positioned in the location of the pre-existing play equipment at Colgate Memorial Hall, Forest Road, Colgate, West Sussex, RH12 4SY.
- 1.2 This statement sets out the proposed scheme in detail with regard 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.

2. Site, Surroundings and Background

- 2.1 The application site relates to the existing Colgate Memorial Hall site, located at the junction between Forest Road and Blackhouse Road, Colgate. The site is located outside of any defined built-up area boundary and is therefore considered to be located in the countryside in policy terms. The site is also located within the High Weald National Landscape (formerly Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)), but is not covered by any other formal designations.
- 2.2 The site consists of the main memorial hall building, which is primarily used as a community facility and pre-school, a parking area and grassed areas providing outdoor space for site users.
- 2.3 The site also previously benefitted from pre-existing children's play equipment comprising a slide and swings. These have been removed due to safety concerns given the age of the equipment, which had been in place for a number of years. The playground safety surfacing serving the previous equipment is still in place.

3. Planning History

- [Removal of cedar shingles roof material and replacement with lightweight imitation slate.](#)

Ref. No: DC/21/2603 | Status: Application Permitted, February 2022

4. Proposals

- 4.1 As detailed above, planning permission is sought for the installation of children's play equipment. The proposed equipment comprises a swing set, a tower with slide, a double see saw and 2no small springers. The proposal also incorporates the provision of new playground safety surfacing.
- 4.2 The proposed play equipment would effectively replace previous play equipment which has been removed from the site. The previous equipment was removed due to age and safety concerns. The proposed play equipment would be positioned in the same location as the previous equipment with a slight increase in the area occupied by the playground safety surfacing, as detailed within the submitted plans. The area to be occupied by the proposed play equipment is considered to be modest in size and the equipment would not appear prominently from public vantage points.
- 4.3 The proposed play equipment consists predominantly of a timber construction to each element which would be appropriate in this location. The tower with slide and swing set would have overall heights of approximately 3.5m and 2.6m, respectively.

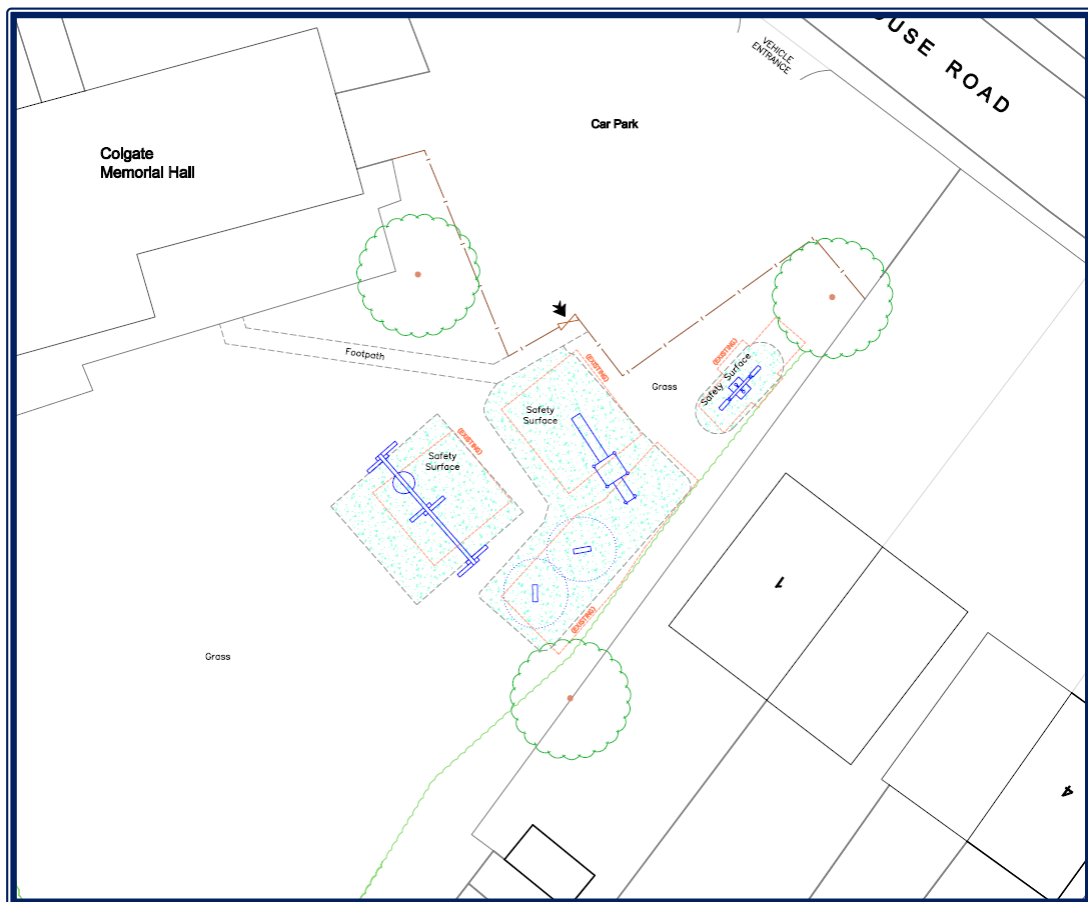


Figure 2: Proposed Site Plan

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: 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. Proceedings for the new Local Plan have re-opened, however the new local plan carries limited weight in decision-making at this stage.

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 30 - Protected Landscapes
- Policy 31 - Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity
- Policy 32 - Strategic Policy: The Quality of New Development
- Policy 33 - Development Principles

Planning Advice Note(s) (PAN)

5.7 Relevant PANs to this application are as follows:

- Shaping Development in Horsham District
- Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure

6. Planning Considerations

Principle of Development

6.1 Paragraph 96(c) of the NPPF states that: “Planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places which: enable and support healthy lives, through both promoting good health and preventing ill-health, especially where this would address identified local health and well-being needs and reduce health inequalities between the most and least deprived communities – for example through the provision of safe and accessible green infrastructure, sports facilities, local shops, access to healthier food, allotments and layouts that encourage walking and cycling”.

6.2 Paragraph 98 of the NPPF states that: “To provide the social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs, planning policies and decisions should:

a) plan positively for the provision and use of shared spaces, community facilities (such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship) and other local services to enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments;

b) take into account and support the delivery of local strategies to improve health, social and cultural well-being for all sections of the community;

c) guard against the unnecessary loss of valued facilities and services, particularly where this would reduce the community's ability to meet its day-to-day needs".

- 6.3 Paragraph 103 of the NPPF states that: "Access to a network of high-quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity is important for the health and well-being of communities and can deliver wider benefits for nature and support efforts to address climate change. Planning policies should be based on robust and up-to-date assessments of the need for open space, sport and recreation facilities (including quantitative or qualitative deficits or surpluses) and opportunities for new provision. Information gained from the assessments should be used to determine what open space, sport and recreational provision is needed, which plans should then seek to accommodate".
- 6.4 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.
- 6.5 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".
- 6.6 In addition to the above, Policy 43 of the HDPF relates to Community Facilities, Leisure and Recreation and states that: "The provision of new or improved community facilities or services will be supported, particularly where they meet the identified needs of local communities as indicated in the current Sport, Open Space and Recreation Study and other relevant studies, or contribute to the provision of Green Infrastructure. In addition to supporting facilities or services located in accordance with the Development Hierarchy and Strategic Development locations, sites located outside built-up areas will be supported where this is the only practicable option and where a suitable site well-related to an existing settlement exists".

- 6.7 As is evident from the nature of the proposals, the development is considered to be very modest in this context, providing new and improved play facilities in the location where previous play equipment was located, for use by local residents and children attending Colgate Pre-school.
- 6.8 Given this setting and the existing use of the wider site, the development is therefore considered to be essential to its countryside location and would provide for quiet informal recreational use. The proposal would result in the enhancement and regeneration of an existing community facility within the village of Colgate.
- 6.9 In addition to the above, it is highlighted that the previous play equipment which has been removed from the site was considered to be of 'Low' quality within Horsham District Council's Open Space, Sport and Recreation Review (June 2021), and that this equipment had a 'High' value. This review was carried out before the previous equipment was removed. Given the above ratings, this highlights the importance of the provision of the proposed new equipment to the Memorial Hall and the village of Colgate.
- 6.10 Taking into account all of the above, the principle of the development is considered to be acceptable and would therefore be in accordance with Policies 26 and 43 of the HDPF, and Paragraphs 96, 98, and 103 of the NPPF.

Design, Appearance, and Impact on the Setting

- 6.11 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.
- 6.12 Policy 30 of the HDPF states that the natural beauty and public enjoyment of the High Weald AONB and the adjoining South Downs National Park will be conserved and enhanced and opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of their special qualities will be promoted. Development proposals will be supported in or close to protected landscapes where it can be demonstrated that there will be no adverse impacts to the natural beauty and public enjoyment of these landscapes as well as any relevant cross boundary linkages.

- 6.13 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.
- 6.14 Given the nature and scale of the proposed development, the use of the site and the fact that the proposals would replace previous play equipment in the same location, the proposed development is not considered to be harmful in this setting. The materials, consisting mainly of timber are considered to be appropriate in this 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. The development would not detract from the character of the site or its surroundings and would be appropriate given the community use of the site and the nature of the surrounding area
- 6.15 All boundary treatments to the site would remain and would not be disturbed, and the proposals would not appear prominently or out of keeping when viewed from limited public vantage points. The proposed development would constitute a high-quality development and would appropriately reflect the character and visual amenities of the site, the countryside location and the High Weald National Landscape.
- 6.16 Overall, the works represent appropriate development within this countryside setting and would be in accordance with Policies 30, 32 and 33 of the HDPF.

Neighbouring Amenity

- 6.17 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.
- 6.18 Given the nature of the development, the proposed users (young children), the community use of the site and the previous equipment that was in place in the same location, it is considered that the development would not have a detrimental impact on neighbouring amenity to an extent or degree which would warrant refusal of this application.

- 6.19 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.
- 6.20 Taking the above into account, the development would be in accordance with Policy 33 of the HDPF and would be acceptable in this regard.

Ecological and Biodiversity Considerations / Enhancements

- 6.21 Policy 31 of the HDPF states that:

“Development will be supported where it can demonstrate that it maintains or enhances the existing network of green infrastructure. Development proposals will be required to contribute to the enhancement of existing biodiversity and should create and manage new habitats where appropriate. The Council will support new development which retains and/or enhances significant features of nature conservation on development sites. The Council will also support development which makes a positive contribution to biodiversity through the creation of green spaces, and linkages between habitats to create local and regional ecological networks”.

- 6.22 The application is supported by a detailed Preliminary Ecological Assessment (PEA). The submitted ecological information outlines that the proposals would not have a detrimental impact on protected habitats or species, with mitigation and enhancement measures proposed.
- 6.23 As such, the submitted details indicate that there would be no detrimental impact on habitats or protected species, in accordance with Policy 31 of the HDPF.

7. Summary and Conclusion

- 7.1 Overall, the proposed development represents an appropriate form of development within this setting. Given the existing use of the site and the previous play equipment, the proposals would result in an enhancement to an existing community facility. The proposed development would be acceptable from a visual standpoint and would not have a detrimental impact on neighbouring amenity.
- 7.2 Overall, the proposed works would be in accordance with Policies 25, 26, 30, 32, 33 and 43 of the HDPF and therefore, the Local Planning Authority is respectfully asked to grant planning permission accordingly.