

Planning Statement – Rose Cottage

1. Introduction

This Planning Statement is submitted in support of a householder planning application at **Rose Cottage, High Street, Cuckfield, West Sussex**. The proposal seeks retrospective permission for the installation of **new timber vehicular gates** and a **close-board timber boundary fence** along the London Lane frontage, set back 2.4 metres from the kerb. The works are required to improve security, reinstate a long-established boundary treatment, and ensure safe vehicular access to and from the property.

The applicant is the owner-occupier of Rose Cottage.

2. Site and Surroundings Analysis

Rose Cottage occupies a prominent corner plot at the junction of the High Street and London Lane, on the northern edge of Cuckfield. The property is residential in use and is bordered by mature hedgerow, trees, and established garden planting. The topography is generally level, with the London Lane boundary forming the primary vehicular access point.

The site previously contained an oil tank, which has now been removed, eliminating a visually intrusive and environmentally undesirable feature. The removal has enabled the widening of the driveway and turning area, improving visibility and manoeuvrability at a constrained access point on a busy through-route.

The London Lane boundary historically comprised a **close-board timber fence**, which provided privacy and enclosure. This boundary treatment is clearly visible in:

- **1953 Ordnance Survey mapping**, showing a solid boundary line consistent with fencing rather than hedging or open treatment.
- **Historic aerial photography (1960s–1990s)**, which shows a continuous linear boundary feature along London Lane.
- **Google Street View imagery (2009–2024)**, which confirms the presence of a close-board fence until its deterioration and partial collapse prior to the recent works.

This evidence demonstrates that a **solid timber boundary fence has been a consistent and characteristic feature of the site for over 70 years**.

3. Description of the Proposal

The application seeks permission for:

a) New Timber Vehicular Gates

- Positioned **set back from London Lane** to allow vehicles to wait off the carriageway while opening/closing the gates. Permission had previously been granted for gates to be placed close to the road.
- Constructed in **traditional timber**, sympathetic to the character of Rose Cottage and the surrounding residential area.
- Designed to improve security following a burglary in July 2025 (crime reference: 604 – 26/07/2025).

b) Close-Board Timber Fence

- Installed along the London Lane boundary, **2.4 metres behind the kerb line**.
- Constructed of **unstained timber**, allowing natural weathering and integration with existing vegetation.
- Setback allows for **native species planting**, extending the hedgerow and softening visual impact.
- Reinstates the **historic boundary treatment** that existed from at least 1953.

The works incorporate **security-by-design principles**, reducing opportunities for crime while avoiding visually intrusive security measures.

4. Planning Policy Context

The proposal has been assessed against relevant national and local planning policies, including:

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

- **Section 12 – Achieving Well-Designed Places:** supports development that is visually attractive, sympathetic to local character, and maintains a strong sense of place.
- **Section 8 – Promoting Healthy and Safe Communities:** encourages design that reduces crime and the fear of crime.
- **Section 9 – Promoting Sustainable Transport:** supports safe and suitable access for all users.

Mid Sussex District Plan (2014–2031)

- **DP26 – Character and Design:** requires development to respect local character and reinforce sense of place.
- **DP21 – Transport:** requires safe access and adequate visibility.
- **DP29 – Noise, Air and Light Pollution:** supports measures that protect residential amenity.
- **DP37 – Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows:** encourages retention and enhancement of green boundaries.

Cuckfield Neighbourhood Plan

- **Policy CNP10 – Design:** supports development that reflects local vernacular and boundary treatments.
- **Policy CNP12 – Rural Character:** encourages planting and natural screening.

5. Planning Assessment & Justification

a) Design and Character

The proposed gates and fence are constructed in traditional timber, consistent with the rural and residential character of London Lane. The reinstatement of a historic close-board fence maintains the established appearance of the boundary and avoids introducing any new or alien materials.

b) Security and Crime Prevention

The property was burgled in July 2025, with access gained via the open driveway. The previous boundary treatment, a low gate and chain-link fence, offered no meaningful security and allowed unrestricted views into private areas. The proposed works directly address this vulnerability and align with NPPF guidance on designing out crime.

c) Highway Safety

Setting the gates back from the road allows vehicles to wait off the carriageway, preventing obstruction of London Lane. The widened driveway and turning area improve visibility and manoeuvrability, in accordance with DP21.

d) Landscape and Visual Impact

The fence is positioned 2.4 metres behind the kerb, allowing for planting of native species to soften the boundary and enhance biodiversity. The use of unstained timber ensures the fence will weather naturally and blend with the existing hedgerow.

e) Reinforcement of Historic Boundary Treatment

Evidence from mapping, aerial photography, and Street View confirms that a **close-board fence has been present on this boundary for over seven decades**. The proposal therefore **restores**, rather than introduces, a long-established feature.

6. Planning History

Historic mapping and imagery confirm the presence of a close-board fence on the London Lane boundary from 1953. Recent works to repair the property followed significant deterioration caused by previous inappropriate materials and lack of maintenance. No previous applications relating to boundary treatments are recorded as having altered the long-established fencing arrangement.

7. Conclusion

The proposed gates and close-board fence represent a **proportionate, historically consistent, and policy-compliant** enhancement to Rose Cottage. They:

- Improve security following a documented burglary
- Enhance highway safety by providing off-road waiting space.
- Allow for native planting to soften visual impact and support biodiversity.
- Use materials and design appropriate to the character of the area.
- Accord with the NPPF, the Mid Sussex District Plan, and the Cuckfield Neighbourhood Plan.
- Reinstate a boundary treatment present since at least 1953.

24/04/2026