

Planting Proposal and Landscape Statement Retrospective Planning Application – Close-Board Fencing and Gate

Property: Rose Cottage, High Street, Cuckfield, RH17 5EN

Planning Application: DM/26/1035 and DM/26/1036

This statement accompanies the retrospective application relating to the close-board fencing and gate at the property, which lies outside the conservation area.

As part of the boundary works already undertaken, native hedgerow planting has been implemented along the full length of the boundary as an integral part of the overall treatment, ensuring that the fencing sits appropriately within its rural and historic setting.

Drawings submitted as part of this application include the condition of the boundary shortly after purchase in November 2024. At that time, the boundary contained an existing native hedgerow, principally **hawthorn** (*Crataegus monogyna*) and **blackthorn** (*Prunus spinosa*), although it had not been actively maintained and included a number of non-native trees together with extensive English ivy (*Hedera helix*), dogwood (*Cornus sanguinea*) and Virginia creeper growth. The Virginia creeper was competing with and suppressing the native hedge species, limiting healthy growth and density.

Since taking ownership of the property, active management has been undertaken to restore and strengthen the native hedge. The removal of extensive non-native growth has allowed the hawthorn and blackthorn to recover and establish more successfully. As a result, the existing hedge is now thriving and screens approximately half of the fencing from view during the growing season, significantly reducing visibility from surrounding viewpoints and nearby public areas. The hedge also provides valuable habitat and nesting opportunities for local wildlife, including hedge sparrows and blue tits.

Along the remaining section of boundary, where there was a greater concentration of non-native planting, unhealthy small trees and less effective screening; new native hedgerow planting has been undertaken in front of the fence to create continuity across the full boundary. The new planting has been undertaken to replicate the appearance, character and ecological value of the restored mature hedge and comprises native **blackthorn** whips (*Prunus spinosa*) staggered with more mature **hawthorn** planting (*Crataegus monogyna*) of approximately 4 feet in height, together with intermittent **dog rose** whips (*Rosa canina*) throughout the hedge line.

The use of native species reflects the traditional hedgerow boundaries characteristic of the Mid Sussex landscape and provides a more natural and appropriate boundary treatment within the rural setting. The hedgerow will be planted and maintained as a double row with five plants per linear metre as a minimum. As the newer planting matures, the boundary treatment will develop into a continuous native hedgerow, further softening and screening the fencing and gate so that the boundary presents primarily as planted native hedging rather than a visually prominent built form.

The planting approach has been chosen to:

- reinforce the rural and historic character of the setting;
- soften and minimise the visual impact of the fence and gate;
- support biodiversity and wildlife habitat creation; and
- retain and enhance the appearance of a traditional native hedgerow associated with the local landscape character.

Overall, the implemented planting strategy has transformed the boundary from a previously unmanaged condition into one more consistent with the rural setting and historic character of the listed property and surrounding landscape. The hedgerow will continue to be traditionally maintained to support long-term establishment and integration into the landscape over time.