



Planning Statement

Ref: DA26002 - Birch Hotel

Site address: Manchester Rd, Heywood OL10 2QD

Date: 27th January 2026

Proposal: Proposed Security Fencing and Access Control

1. Introduction

This Planning Statement has been prepared in support of a full planning application for the erection of security fencing and associated access control measures at Birch Hotel, Manchester Road, Rochdale.

The proposal relates solely to perimeter boundary treatment and security infrastructure. It does not propose any extensions to the building, any increase in operational activity, or any alteration or regularisation of the lawful planning use of the site. The application is confined strictly to security improvements required in response to documented safety concerns.

For clarity, the submission is focused entirely on physical boundary measures and should not be interpreted as seeking to redefine or formalise the planning status of the building.

2. The Site and Context

The application site comprises the former Birch Hotel building together with its associated curtilage. The site occupies a prominent position on Manchester Road (A6045) and directly adjoins the M62 motorway corridor to the south. It is a substantial developed plot containing a large built structure, hardstanding and landscaped areas.

The site context can be summarised as follows:

- A prominent roadside frontage to Manchester Road.
- A rear boundary directly abutting the motorway embankment.
- Residential development to the east.
- Mature trees and landscaping providing partial screening.
- A clearly defined landholding extending to the motorway boundary.

This is not an undeveloped or open countryside site in character. It is an established developed parcel defined by a significant building and associated curtilage. The proposed fencing follows existing boundary lines and does not extend development into new areas.

3. Occupation and Security Context

The building is currently occupied, including overnight accommodation. As such, the safeguarding and security of occupants is a primary operational consideration.

In recent months the site has experienced security breaches, including burglary incidents and unauthorised access. These incidents exposed vulnerabilities in the existing perimeter arrangements and highlighted the absence of adequate access control.



Rochdale Borough Council's Community Safety Officer undertook a site visit and subsequently issued formal recommendations aimed at minimising risk. These included:

- Strengthening perimeter security.
- Introducing controlled vehicle access.
- Improving gating arrangements.
- Restricting informal or vulnerable access points.

The Council officer explicitly encouraged the implementation of enhanced fencing and access control measures in order to reduce safeguarding risks. The proposed development is therefore a direct, proportionate and professionally supported response to documented safety concerns rather than an aesthetic or discretionary enhancement.

4. The Proposed Development

The application seeks permission for the installation of enhanced perimeter fencing and controlled access points within the existing site boundary. The proposal includes:

- 3.0m high green powder-coated 358 security mesh fencing to principal boundaries.
- 2.0m high mesh fencing to restrict access around the sewage area.
- Timber fencing to selected locations.
- An automated cantilever sliding entrance gate.
- A 4m wide double-leaf access gate.
- A 1.2m controlled pedestrian gate with maglock and hydraulic closer.

The chosen 358 mesh specification provides anti-climb performance while remaining visually permeable. The green powder-coated finish has been selected to reduce visual prominence and allow the fencing to recede into the landscaped backdrop. The design avoids solid walling or visually oppressive structures.

All works are contained entirely within the applicant's ownership boundary and do not alter the built envelope of the site.

5. Planning Assessment

5.1 Principle of Development

The proposal represents boundary treatment within an established developed site. It does not introduce additional built mass, new floorspace or expanded operational activity. There is no intensification proposed as part of this application.

National planning policy supports development that promotes safe and secure environments. Enhancing perimeter security in response to documented crime incidents is consistent with these objectives and represents responsible site management.

5.2 Visual Impact, Openness and Green Belt Considerations

In visual terms, the proposal introduces fencing along established boundary lines without increasing the overall built form of the site. The substantial existing building already defines the character of the plot and remains the dominant feature.



Importantly, along the side boundary the proposed fencing is set in approximately one metre from the legal boundary line. The existing hedgerows and mature trees along this boundary are to remain fully in situ. The fencing will therefore sit behind established vegetation rather than replacing it.

This approach delivers clear visual and environmental benefits:

- Existing hedgerows and trees are retained in full.
- The established green edge to the site is preserved.
- The fencing will be largely screened by vegetation.
- The perception of openness from adjoining land is maintained.
- The boundary treatment reads as recessive rather than dominant.

The fencing does not introduce new building mass or volumetric development. Spatial openness is preserved because:

- No new structures extend beyond existing boundaries.
- The mesh design is visually permeable rather than solid.
- The green powder-coated finish reduces visual prominence.
- Existing landscaping remains the primary boundary feature.

In Green Belt terms (if applicable), the proposal does not reduce openness in physical or visual terms. It does not extend development further into open land, nor does it alter the established built envelope. The siting of the fence inside the vegetated boundary reinforces this position.

With regard to trees and root protection, the installation of security fencing of this nature is a routine and widely implemented form of development adjacent to existing vegetation. The fencing will be installed using standard methods that avoid significant excavation or root disturbance. There is no requirement for removal of trees or hedgerows, and no loss of landscaping is proposed.

In any event, the security context gives rise to compelling justification. The presence of documented burglary incidents, formal Council safety recommendations and the inherent risk arising from motorway adjacency together establish a clear need for enhanced security. The fencing is proportionate to the site's risk profile and cannot reasonably be characterised as excessive in context.

5.3 Residential Amenity

The proposed development will not give rise to adverse amenity impacts. The fencing does not generate noise, overlooking, overshadowing or operational disturbance.

On the contrary, improved perimeter security is likely to reduce the risk of anti-social behaviour and unauthorised access, thereby benefiting neighbouring occupiers and contributing positively to the wider area.

5.4 Public Safety and Crime Prevention

Paragraph 92 of the National Planning Policy Framework supports development that creates safe and secure environments and seeks to reduce crime and the fear of crime.

The proposal directly addresses:



- Identified perimeter vulnerabilities.
- Council safeguarding advice.
- Risks associated with unauthorised access.
- The site's adjacency to a motorway embankment.

The development therefore delivers clear, tangible and policy-supported public safety benefits.

6. Clarification on Planning Use

This application does not seek to determine, alter or regularise the lawful planning use of the site. The proposed boundary treatment is justified by the factual occupation characteristics of the building and the documented security concerns, irrespective of any specific use class designation.

Nothing within this submission should be interpreted as an admission of change of use or as prejudicing any fallback or lawful use position. The application is confined strictly to perimeter security infrastructure and should be assessed on that basis.

7. Planning Balance

When considered in the round, the proposal:

- Introduces no additional built mass.
- Preserves openness and visual permeability.
- Does not intensify activity.
- Is supported by professional safety advice.
- Delivers significant safeguarding and crime prevention benefits.

Any limited visual change arising from the fencing is clearly outweighed by the demonstrable need to protect occupants and prevent further security incidents.

8. Conclusion

The proposed security fencing and access control measures are necessary, proportionate and policy compliant. They respond directly to documented crime incidents and formal Council recommendations and will materially enhance safeguarding and public safety.

The development does not harm openness, visual amenity or neighbouring amenity and does not alter the planning use of the site.

Planning permission should therefore be granted.