

Objection to Reserved Matters Application 253071: Impact on 22 Canberra Lake Way

I'm writing to submit an objection to the Reserved Matters application (Ref: 253071). I'm a concerned family member who visits 22 Canberra Lake Way several times a week to spend time with my family and help with the kids. As I'm there regularly, I experience the day-to-day infrastructure of this quiet cul-de-sac first-hand.

Every time I visit, I rely on the visitor bays to park my car safely. To get to these bays, I drive past the narrow, council-adopted entrance of the close. This section of the road is already a bottleneck, drivers have to stop, wait, and give way to oncoming cars just to turn safely in or out of the main entrance of Canberra Lake Way.

More importantly, the children in my family treat this entire cul-de-sac as a safe haven. They use the central green as a loop for cycling and play safely on the open grass whenever the weather allows. I regularly see children from other houses meeting up and playing in the street due to the security it offers. As a frequent visitor, the benefits of this remaining a private cul-de-sac are obvious. Canberra Lake Way is kept in pristine condition, honestly, in a much better state than the public spaces maintained by Wokingham Borough Council ('WBC').

Families here pay private maintenance fees on top of their Council Tax since this is a predominantly unadopted road. They do not get a single penny of public funding or Council help for wear, tear, or cleaning. It feels incredibly unfair for the Council to treat this road as a public shortcut for pedestrians, while leaving the financial burden of looking after it with the residents. The current Bellway layout seems to treat this peaceful close as a convenient overflow zone, completely failing to protect the existing neighbours.

I urge WBC to direct Bellway to change this layout, or refuse the application altogether, based on the following planning grounds:

The Loss of the Promised Landscape Buffer

This layout directly violates the Charvil Neighbourhood Plan (CNP), specifically Policies CH1 (Local Character) and CH10 (Green Infrastructure). I've read the planning report submitted by Lee Searles (Andrea Pellegram Ltd) on 23rd January 2026, and I know the site's history from when my family first bought this home. A deep landscaping buffer was promised by Hicks Developments to guarantee that the privacy of the existing homes would be protected when the adjacent land was eventually built on, and it is actually still advertised on the Hicks website today.

This buffer lost its enforceability due to a simple administrative mistake. However, the physical need to protect the privacy and living conditions of number 22 has not changed. Bellway's current layout ignores this history entirely, squeezing dense housing against Canberra Lake Way. Bellway's Planning Manager, Alex Hales, has already confirmed to my family, in writing, that they have the design autonomy to alter this layout if guided by the Council. Therefore, WBC must step in and enforce Policy CH1 to protect the established neighbourhood layout.

Layout Defects, Overcrowding, and Privacy Infringement

The proposed design crams houses far too close to the property line of 22 Canberra Lake Way, conflicting with CNP Policy CH2 (Design), WBC Core Strategy Policy CP3, and Tree Strategy Policy NE4. My family, at number 22, previously paid to privately extend their rear garden just to create a liveable outdoor space. Bellway is now taking unfair advantage of this extended boundary line, using it to cram two entire houses against the full width of number 22's fence.

This crowding completely destroys any sense of privacy, especially since the existing Canberra Lake Way gardens are already quite shallow. All of the primary living spaces for number 22 are at the back of the house, including all the main living areas and the three main bedrooms. The proposed Bellway Plots 25 and 26 have been given excessively deep rear gardens (12–14m+), the developer has put private lawns exactly where a protective boundary buffer belongs, anyone sitting on the garden patio, relaxing in the living room, or using the bedrooms will be directly overlooked by the upper floors of these two crammed properties.

To try and fill this narrow boundary gap, Bellway suggests relying on trees, though their landscaping plan is incredibly vague and the gap provided will be too narrow to plant trees in without infringing upon no. 22's private property. I have to highlight that there is first-hand proof on Canberra Lake Way that the specific trees they want to use will fail: every single Silver Birch planted by Hicks Developments in the gardens of CLW houses 23 to 26 have died. Picking a tree species that does not survive in local soil conditions makes no sense.

A Fully Viable Alternative (Sonning Golf Course Boundary)

A quick look at the site proves that a fair layout is achievable. This alternative actively aligns with CNP Policy CH10 regarding Green Infrastructure. The developer's own plan shows that the boundary running along Sonning Golf Course is free of any statutory Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) or Root Protection Areas (RPAs).

Squeezing the internal road and dense housing tightly against the Canberra Lake Way boundary is unnecessary. Shifting the internal road loop and housing rows (Bellway Plots 27–44) into that completely empty zone allows the required landscaping footprint to be placed along no. 22 Canberra Lake Way boundary instead.

(Please see the attached Annotated Bellway Plan demonstrating where a land swap from the Sonning Golf Course blue triangle to the Canberra Lake Way orange triangle is entirely feasible, which has been provided by my family).

I fully support their request to have the layout amended. It's a minor adjustment that would have long term benefits for no. 22 Canberra Lake Way and no long term impact on Bellway's development.

Footpath Link

The proposed layout includes a pedestrian footpath link that empties straight into the narrowest point of the private cul-de-sac. This directly breaches NPPF Paragraphs 114, 115, and 116 regarding Highway Safety, as well as WBC Core Strategy Policies CP3 and CP6. The new estate relies heavily on tight, tandem (in-line) parking and only provides 12 visitor spaces for the entire development.

This path will act as a catalyst for cars spilling over. When new residents and their visitors find the new estate roads full, they will choose to park in Canberra Lake Way. If outside vehicles park along the already narrow street, it will make turning and driving incredibly difficult. I fully expect that emergency services and refuse trucks will struggle to get past, causing a highway safety hazard.

Crucially, this increased parking will severely block clear lines of visibility for residents and visitors trying to manoeuvre. It will become difficult and dangerous for cars to reverse safely out of their driveways or the visitors bays and when their view of the road is blinded by overspill parking. This lack of visibility poses serious risk to the children playing and pedestrians walking in Canberra Lake Way.

Furthermore, introducing an unmonitored public path introduces a severe threat to the safe environment the children currently enjoy. On my regular walks nearby, I frequently see dog mess left completely unmanaged on the council-adopted sections of The Hawthorns and Park Lane. If this footpath is built, it will channel anti-social behaviour and dog mess onto the road. Large sections of Canberra Lake Way are private, meaning the Council has no legal power to enforce parking fines or provide street cleaning. The planned layout dumps an unmanaged public route into a private close, leaving the residents to physically and financially clear up the mess.

The Absolute Absurdity of the Watering Plans

Beyond the terrible layout, the application says absolutely nothing about how this green buffer will actually be maintained and kept alive, which conflicts with NPPF Section 12 (Achieving Well-Designed Places). I want to point out how completely ridiculous the watering logistics are here. How does a management company honestly expect to water a narrow strip of land that is locked away behind private garden fences?

Unless workers plan to drag hoses straight through the back doors and private gardens of the new houses from May to September, this plan is completely broken. If the council leaves this unaddressed, the plants will dehydrate and die within the first summer—exactly like the dead Silver Birch trees that already sit on Canberra Lake Way from the previous development. Canberra Lake Way needs a clear, binding commitment on how this land will be looked after, before anything is approved.

Conclusion: Explicit Action Required by Wokingham Borough Council

This current layout, the footpath, and the landscape design create an unsafe and intrusive environment for the families living here. As someone who drives into this cul-de-sac multiple times a week to see my family and help with the kids, I am terrified of what will happen if these plans go ahead.

I am formally asking the Council to step in and force the developer to make the following critical changes:

1. Completely Remove the Footpath Link: This pedestrian link must be taken out of the plans entirely.

