

Planning Application 253071

Submitted by: **Fernanda Rossatto**

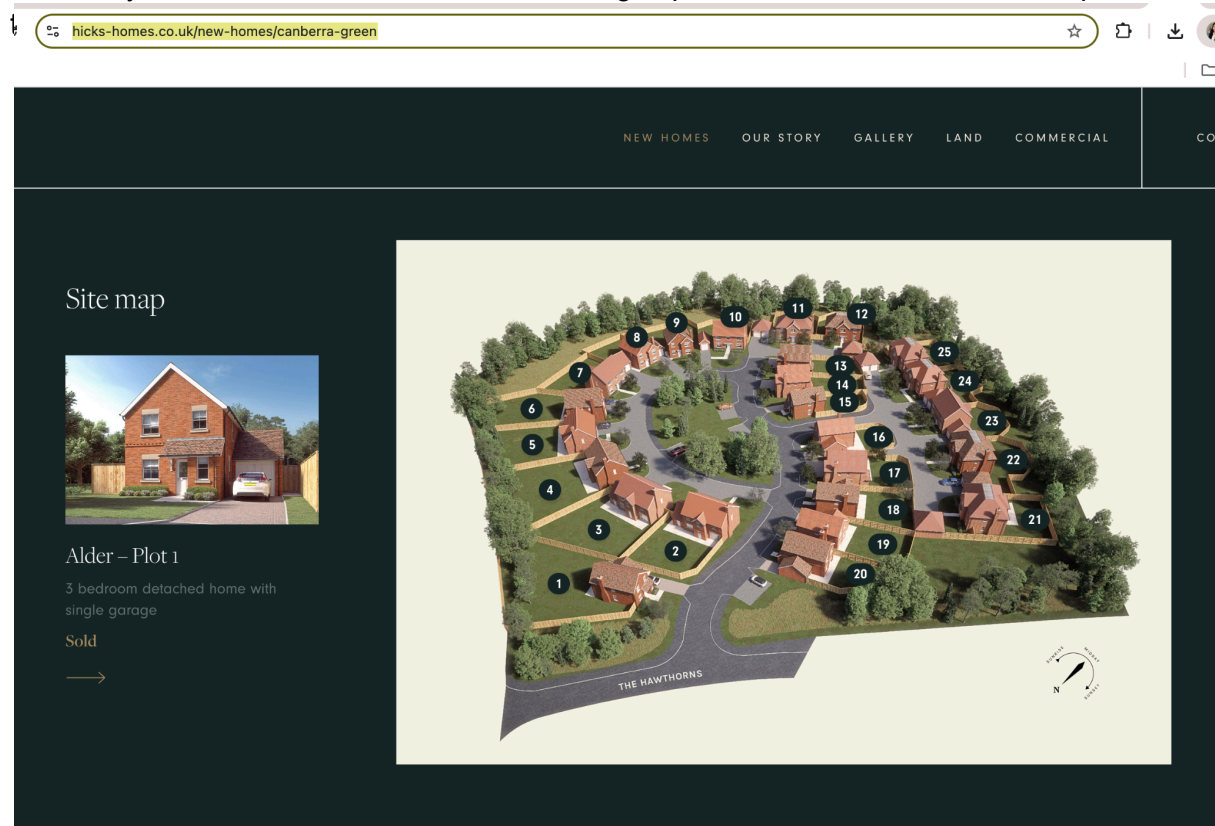
Address: 23 Canberra Lake Way, Charvil, RG10 9DH

I object to the reserved matters application in its current form. While I have several concerns, my principal objections relate to the inadequate landscape buffer between the proposed development and Canberra Lake Way, the ecological effectiveness and long term management of that buffer, and the lack of meaningful facilities for older children and teenagers.

1. Inadequate landscape buffer

My primary concern is the token buffer proposed between the new development and the existing Canberra Lake Way development.

The published plans and marketing material for Canberra Green consistently showed a significant belt of trees behind the properties on Canberra Lake Way. This remains visible on the [Hicks Homes website](https://hicks-homes.co.uk/new-homes/canberra-green). Until Bellway submitted its detailed proposals, residents therefore had every reason to understand that a meaningful planted buffer of trees would separate the



I appreciate that marketing material is not, by itself, determinative of a planning application. However, it is relevant evidence of the intended relationship between Canberra Green and the adjoining land. It is extremely disappointing that a landscape feature represented so consistently now appears to have no effective protection or enforcement.

The currently proposed separation does not amount to a continuous, robust and effective landscape buffer. In particular, a strip of approximately three metres beyond the existing property boundaries is unlikely to provide sufficient space for substantial trees and understorey planting to establish and thrive. It also leaves little resilience if individual trees fail.

This raises concerns under Policies CHARVIL 7 and CHARVIL 9 of the adopted Charvil Neighbourhood Plan, concerning green infrastructure and sustainable layouts. It also sits uncomfortably with Policy CP3 and the Borough Design Guide.

The Charvil Neighbourhood Plan was formally adopted following extensive community involvement and now forms part of the statutory development plan. Approving a detailed layout that does not properly reflect its green infrastructure requirements would undermine the purpose of having an adopted Neighbourhood Plan.

2. Privacy and residential amenity

Private rear gardens within the proposed development appear to extend directly towards the Canberra Lake Way boundary. This is notably different from the treatment of The Hawthorns, where a landscape strip has at least been provided, although I also consider the screening there insufficient.

Given the overall size of the application site, there is no obvious reason why the new development could not be moved slightly towards the Sonning Golf Course boundary to provide a more generous and neighbourly separation from existing homes. This would also better reflect the green infrastructure principles of the Charvil Neighbourhood Plan. Planning Voice report has shown this is feasible.

The proposal appears to rely on minimum separation distances where a significantly better layout could reasonably be achieved.

The landscape buffer should not be treated merely as a narrow visual screen. It should be wide enough to function as genuine green infrastructure, supporting biodiversity.

3. Planting details, timing and maintenance

The submitted scheme should provide clear and enforceable answers to the following:

1. What tree, hedge and shrub species will be planted along the Canberra Lake Way boundary?
2. What sizes and maturity levels will those trees have when planted?
3. What will their expected height and canopy spread be after five, ten and twenty years?
4. Is the proposed three metre strip sufficient to accommodate their mature roots and canopies without conflict with fences, gardens, drainage infrastructure or future residents?
5. When will the boundary planting be undertaken?
6. Who will own and manage the buffer?

7. What arrangements will be made for watering, inspection, pruning and general maintenance?
8. For how long will failed, diseased or dying planting have to be replaced?

Planting should take place at the earliest appropriate planting season and before construction or occupation of the homes closest to the boundary, so that it has time to establish before residents experience the full effects of the development. If planting fails, it must be identified and replaced promptly.

A detailed landscape and ecological management plan should be secured by condition. This should include a long term maintenance programme, responsibility for management, watering arrangements and replacement planting. A five year replacement obligation would be inadequate for a boundary intended to provide permanent screening and ecological value.

4. Ecological impact

The ecological impact of the boundary treatment does not appear to have been adequately addressed. A narrow strip containing isolated trees should not be presented as an effective ecological corridor or substantial biodiversity enhancement.

There should be evidence that the proposed buffer has sufficient width, soil volume, species diversity and long term management to function successfully. The development should deliver a genuine and measurable biodiversity benefit rather than planting that may struggle to survive or provide meaningful habitat.

5. Facilities for older children and teenagers - Pump Track

The development will significantly increase Charvil's population, yet there remains inadequate provision for older children and teenagers.

Charvil already has playgrounds aimed primarily at younger children. What is notably missing is an accessible outdoor facility for older children, such as a pump track. Twyford's skatepark demonstrates the value of providing a safe, local space where young people can exercise, socialise and spend time outdoors.

A pump track would provide a meaningful recreational and sporting facility for a broad age range, contributing to young people's physical health, wellbeing and quality of life.

The development proposes a substantial number of new homes. To justify this additional pressure on the village, it must respond meaningfully to Charvil's identified needs rather than simply provide a token play area. The development should include an appropriate facility for older children and teenagers. If a pump track cannot reasonably be accommodated within the application site, the developer should make a suitable financial contribution towards providing one elsewhere in Charvil through the appropriate planning obligation or infrastructure mechanism.

Conclusion

I ask the Council not to approve the reserved matters application in its current form. At a minimum, the layout should be amended to provide:

1. A substantially wider, continuous and ecologically functional landscape buffer along the Canberra Lake Way boundary.
2. A detailed planting schedule specifying species, planting sizes and anticipated maturity.
3. Early implementation of the boundary planting.
4. An enforceable long term landscape and ecological management plan.
5. **Meaningful recreational provision for older children and teenagers, ideally through a pump track or a contribution towards one elsewhere in Charvil.**

Without these changes, the proposal would provide inadequate green infrastructure and fail to respond properly to the needs of the wider Charvil community.