

PLANNING REF : 253071
PROPERTY ADDRESS : 26 Canberra Lake Way
: Reading, Berkshire
: RG10 9DH
SUBMITTED BY : Mrs Amanda Brand
DATE SUBMITTED : 09/06/2026

COMMENTS:

The Planning Case Officer
Planning Department, Wokingham Borough Council
planning.enquiries@wokingham.gov.uk

Planning Application: 253071 (Reserved Matters) - Land West of
Park Lane, Charvil, RG10 9TS
Objector: Owner and Occupier, 26 Canberra Lake Way, Charvil

Note: This objection is submitted alongside, and in support of, professional planning representations prepared by Planning Voice (on behalf of 22 and 23 Canberra Lake Way) and by Lee Searles MRTPI, Andrea Pellegram Ltd (on behalf of residents of 8, 11, 12, and 22-26 Canberra Lake Way). The policy analysis in those reports is adopted and relied upon herein.

Dear Sir or Madam,

1. The Property, the Site Geometry, and Why This Matters
Stand at the rear of 26 Canberra Lake Way and look toward the location site. Every habitable window in the principal living areas of this house - the main bedroom, the kitchen, the living room - faces that boundary. The bi-fold doors opening onto the garden face that boundary. There is no other aspect. There is no sheltered side. When construction begins, and throughout the years it continues, this property will be directly and continuously exposed to whatever the site generates: dust, noise, vehicle movements, and the overlooking gaze of new homes built on ground that rises above the level of my own.
That last detail - the topography - is the single most important physical fact in this objection, and it is entirely absent from the submitted plans. The land slopes upward from the rear boundary of 26 Canberra Lake Way toward the application site. Any dwelling built near that boundary will sit at a materially higher elevation than my home. Its windows will look down into my garden and into my principal rooms from the moment it is occupied, regardless of what planting is placed between us. No landscape masterplan shaded in green resolves a gradient. Only a revised layout can.
I do not object to the principle of development on this land. Seventy-five dwellings have outline consent, and that consent is not contested. What I object to - and what this letter sets out with specific reference to adopted policy - is a layout that has concentrated its highest density, its most intensive use, and its most inadequate boundary treatment at the one edge of the site where the established community is closest, most exposed, and most vulnerable. That is not an accident of geometry. It is a design choice. And it is one the Council has both the power and the duty to require the applicant to reverse.

2. The Landscape Buffer: Why It Cannot Work as Drawn

The topography makes the buffer structurally inadequate at 26 Canberra Lake Way

The application site rises above the level of my rear garden. This is a fact of ground level, not interpretation. It means that any new dwelling positioned near the shared boundary will occupy elevated ground relative to my property - and that planting positioned within a narrow buffer strip will, for many years after establishment, provide no meaningful screening of the upper storeys of those new homes.

The submitted Landscape Masterplan (Drawing 2299.1001 Rev B) does not contain a single cross-section. There is no drawing that shows finished ground levels across this boundary, no profile demonstrating the relationship between new windows and existing habitable rooms, and no planting specification showing at what point - if ever - the proposed vegetation would achieve effective screening given the gradient. Without these drawings, the submitted landscape proposals cannot be properly assessed by the Council or its consultees. They should not be approved on the basis of masterplan shading alone. I ask the Council to require, before determination, scaled cross-sections drawn through the boundary at its narrowest point - the pinch point directly behind 26 Canberra Lake Way - showing finished ground levels, the proposed planting profile at establishment and at ten and twenty years of maturity, and the relationship of that profile to the habitable windows on both sides of the boundary. If those cross-sections show what the topography suggests they will show, the Council will have conclusive evidence that the buffer as currently drawn cannot protect the privacy of this property, and that a revised layout is required.

The pinch point is unquantified and unscaled

No scaled plan has been submitted showing the precise depth of the buffer at its narrowest point behind 26 Canberra Lake Way. This is the most sensitive location on the boundary interface, and it is the one location for which the submitted plans provide least information. The Council cannot assess whether the buffer is adequate without knowing its dimensions. The applicant must be required to provide this before any decision is made.

The landscape submission does not satisfy Condition 31

Condition 31 of the outline permission (232704) is explicit: the Reserved Matters application for landscaping must include a plan specifying the positions, design, materials and type of all boundary treatments, planting species, sizes, densities, and an implementation timetable. The Landscape Masterplan submitted with this application satisfies none of these requirements. It is a schematic. It shows areas shaded green. It does not constitute a landscape plan within the meaning of Condition 31, and it cannot form the basis for an enforceable landscaping condition.

This matters acutely on this site. The planning history of the adjacent Canberra Lake Way development (appeal permission 143292) documents in precise detail what happens when landscape conditions are imprecise. The detailed planting plans submitted to and relied upon by the Planning Inspector at that appeal were never formally scheduled in the conditions. The consented boundary planting was consequently never legally enforceable, and it was never implemented. The Landscape Officer's response to the current outline application explicitly

noted this failure and stated that the new permission must remedy it. The residents of Canberra Lake Way have already lived with the consequences of a landscape condition that failed because of

imprecise drafting. The Council must not approve this application on the basis of a conditional placeholder for landscape details.

Full, detailed

plans must be submitted, assessed, and approved before any decision is issued - not reserved to a pre-commencement condition that risks creating the same ambiguity again.

Mature planting is required from the date of first occupation

Given the topography and the proximity of new habitable windows to the boundary, standard whip or feathered planting stock will provide no meaningful privacy protection at the point the new homes are first occupied. The applicant must specify minimum planting sizes sufficient to deliver genuine screening from day one of occupation, not at some indeterminate point years after establishment. Any maintenance

obligation must be legally binding and enforceable, with a replacement requirement in the event of failure, and a clearly identified responsible party for the long term.

3. Density, Massing, and the Outline's Broken Commitment

The Site Analysis Plan submitted with the outline application (DWG.102) made an explicit commitment: the privacy of existing dwellings on Canberra Lake Way would be safeguarded through landscape buffers and mid-density development at the boundary interface. The current Reserved Matters layout is the direct opposite of that commitment. The highest density cluster in the entire proposed scheme is positioned at the boundary with the existing community - precisely where the outline said density would be lowest.

The existing Canberra Lake Way community is twenty-five detached dwellings in a character area averaging 16.9 dwellings per hectare, as recorded in the Charvil Neighbourhood Plan. The outline permission was granted for 75 dwellings on 6.97 hectares - approximately 10.8 dwellings per hectare across the whole site. At that overall density, there is no design justification for concentrating the scheme's most intensive development at its most sensitive edge. The applicant has offered none.

Policy CHARVIL 4 of the Neighbourhood Plan - now part of the statutory development plan - requires proposals to have regard to the density of existing development and to respect existing character. Policy

CHARVIL 3 requires proposals to maintain a sympathetic relationship to existing development in terms of scale, building orientation, building line, and setback, in accordance with Design Code MS02. A layout that places its highest density housing directly against a low-density established community, with angled building corners presented toward existing rear gardens, is not a sympathetic response to either policy.

The professional report submitted on behalf of residents of 22-26 Canberra Lake Way documents that the flank walls of Plots 25 and 26 - approximately 10 metres wide and over 9 metres high, sited between 10 and 12 metres from affected properties - generate an angle of view from ground floor windows of approximately 33 degrees. This exceeds the 25-degree threshold applied under the Council's assessment

framework to identify unacceptable overshadowing. The orientation is south-west. The affected properties will lose afternoon sunlight to primary living spaces and gardens. This is contrary to Policy CP3(a) of the Core Strategy and to Requirement R15 of the Borough

Design Guide SPD.

Planning Voice's professional report demonstrates - with a worked alternative layout - that a continuous landscape buffer exceeding 10 metres can be established along the entire Canberra Lake Way boundary, with no reduction in the approved 75-unit density, by modestly reducing the over-deep rear gardens of Plots 25, 26, and 41-43 toward the adopted 11-metre minimum. The space to fix this problem exists within the applicant's own red-line boundary. The Council must direct the applicant to use it.

4. Construction Air Quality: A Specific Harm to a Specific Child
My daughter is nine weeks old. If this application is approved and construction begins later this year and continues into 2027, she will be between six and eighteen months old during the most intensive phases of the build - a window that published medical research identifies as the most critical period of human lung development, and the period during which particulate matter exposure causes the most durable, irreversible harm.

I want to be precise about the physical circumstances, because they are not typical. The entire rear elevation of 26 Canberra Lake Way faces the site boundary directly. Every principal window - main bedroom, kitchen, living room - faces that boundary. The bi-fold doors to the garden face that boundary. There is no sheltered elevation, no internal room that does not face the site, no aspect of this home from which she can be separated from whatever the construction generates. On any day that a window or door is open, construction pollutants will enter her environment without obstruction. This is not a concern about construction noise or disruption in the abstract. It is a concern about the direct, unmediated, sustained exposure of a child who cannot be moved and cannot advocate for herself.

The medical basis for this concern is established and specific. Infants are born with only 30 to 50 per cent of the alveoli they will develop as adults; lung growth is fastest in the first two years of life. The GINIplus and LISA birth cohort studies (Environmental Research, 2020) and Imperial College London birth cohort research tracking children from birth through adolescence (2017-2020) demonstrate that particulate matter exposure during the first year of life is associated with measurably reduced lung function at ages six, ten, and fifteen. The damage accumulates silently during exposure and emerges years later. Young children's airways are smaller and more permeable than adults', producing disproportionately higher dose absorption relative to body size. Construction dust - PM2.5 and PM10 from earth-moving, concrete batching, vehicle movements, and plant machinery - is a primary source of the fine particulate matter to which this research applies. The more dwellings constructed, the longer the period of intensive exposure. The current proposal places the largest cluster of new dwellings directly behind my property. That is not a coincidence of layout. It is the design choice that creates this specific harm. I ask the Council to impose the following conditions on any permission granted. Each is standard practice on sensitive urban construction sites; each is non-negotiable given the receptor:

A Construction Management Plan (CMP), approved in writing by the LPA before any works commence, specifying dust suppression measures calibrated to the proximity and vulnerability of adjacent receptors. Continuous real-time PM10 air quality monitoring at the site boundary nearest to 26 Canberra Lake Way throughout the construction period, with data reported to the LPA and made available to neighbouring residents on request.

Enforceable working hour restrictions: no noisy or dusty operations before 08:00 or after 18:00 Monday to Friday; before 08:00 or after 13:00 on Saturdays; no working on Sundays or bank holidays.

Wheel-washing facilities at the site exit and hard-surfaced haul routes to prevent dust and spoil tracking onto the public highway and into the residential environment.

A named site manager responsible for dust and noise compliance, with a publicly displayed complaints contact number at the site entrance from the first day of works to the last.

5. Tenure Mix: The Letter of the Neighbourhood Plan, Not Its Spirit
The Charvil Neighbourhood Plan requires a genuine range of open market housing types and sizes, including options for those wishing to

downsize and remain in Charvil. Every open market dwelling in the current proposed mix is four or five bedrooms. Nothing smaller is available at open market rates. This is not compliance with the Neighbourhood Plan's housing mix requirement. It is compliance with the part of it that commands the highest sale values, while the rest is quietly set aside.

The tenure-blind objective is similarly nominal. When two and -bedroom properties are exclusively affordable and four and five-bedroom properties are exclusively open market, any observer driving along the road can immediately identify the tenure of any dwelling by its size. A scheme in which tenure is immediately legible from the street is not tenure-blind in any meaningful sense. The

Council should require the applicant to demonstrate - specifically and substantively - how this scheme delivers the tenure-blind design objective in practice, not merely in name.

It has been stated during the consultation process that the location of affordable dwellings at the site entrance reflects the phasing of construction, with those units brought forward to access grant funding at an early stage of the build. The planning system is not a mechanism for managing a developer's funding timeline. Plot locations must be determined by design quality and policy compliance. The Council should satisfy itself that the concentration of affordable housing at the most sensitive boundary of the site is the product of considered design, not financial sequencing.

6. The Proposed Pedestrian Link: Three Unresolved Concerns

The proposed footpath connecting the new development to Canberra Lake Way has not been assessed against its foreseeable impacts on the existing community. Three specific concerns require resolution before any approval is given.

Parking displacement. The parking provision within the new development - including tandem spaces for affordable dwellings nearest the footpath - is not adequate for the car ownership levels associated with homes of this type and location. A direct pedestrian connection creates an obvious incentive to park in Canberra Lake Way and walk through. The roads and parking areas within Canberra Lake Way are

privately owned and maintained by a management company funded by existing residents. Those residents have no mechanism to manage overflow parking from an adjacent development and no obligation to absorb its costs. If the footpath proceeds, the Council must first be satisfied that parking within the new development is genuinely self-sufficient, and any maintenance cost implications for Canberra Lake Way residents must be addressed through a planning obligation. Security. Thames Valley Police, in their representations on the outline application (12 November 2024), identified the creation of a leaky cul-de-sac from Canberra Lake Way as a security vulnerability, noting that open-sided and open-reared properties create clear exposure to burglary, which is predominantly carried out from the rear. The Landscape Officer's comments on application 232704 independently concluded that open space running to the rear of dwellings without active frontages would create an unsafe environment prone to anti-social behaviour. These are not speculative concerns raised by anxious residents. They are conclusions reached by professional statutory consultees. The Council must address them on the record before approving any pedestrian connection. Child safety. Canberra Lake Way is a small, self-contained residential street where children play on the communal green and in the roads as a matter of daily life. That character depends on the street being known - its traffic predictable and its users familiar. A public through-route introduces unknown pedestrian flows into an environment where that expectation does not exist. This is not a request to exclude strangers from a public space. It is a request that the Council assess the specific safety implications of creating a through-route into a community built around children playing in shared spaces, before it approves one.

7. What This Application Requires Before It Can Proceed

None of the objections in this letter requires the Council to refuse the principle of development. Every one of them is capable of resolution without reducing the approved 75-dwelling density. Planning Voice's professional report demonstrates this with a worked alternative layout. The space to fix this application exists within the applicant's own red-line boundary. What has been missing, across multiple iterations of this scheme, is the will to use it. The Council must require the following before granting permission: An amended layout that redistributes built form away from the Canberra Lake Way boundary interface, establishes a continuous landscape buffer of sufficient depth to be effective given the prevailing topography, and reorients the dwellings on Plots 25 and 26 to eliminate the overbearing impact and 25-degree overshadowing documented in the professional reports.

Scaled topographical cross-sections drawn through the boundary at the pinch point behind 26 Canberra Lake Way, showing finished ground levels and the relationship of proposed planting profiles to habitable windows on both sides, before any landscape plan is assessed.

Full detailed landscape plans satisfying Condition 31 of permission 232704 in full - specifying species, planting sizes and densities, establishment programme, long-term maintenance obligations, and boundary treatment - submitted, assessed and approved before

determination. Not reserved. Not conditioned. Approved. The residents of this community have already paid the price of imprecise landscape conditions on this site once. The Council must not allow that to happen again.

Neighbourhood Plan housing mix compliance demonstrated specifically: how the proposed tenure mix delivers the range of open market housing types required by the Plan, and how the scheme achieves meaningful tenure-blind design in practice.

Resolution of the footpath concerns - parking self-sufficiency demonstrated, Thames Valley Police security concerns addressed on the record, and child safety implications assessed - before any pedestrian link is approved.

The five construction management conditions set out in Section 4: CMP with dust suppression, real-time PM10 monitoring, working hour restrictions, wheel-washing, and a named compliance contact.

Determination by the Planning Committee in open session, not under delegated authority - given the volume and professional standing of representations received and the formal Call-In request made by Councillor Leon Cook.

A planning officer determining this application will need to be able to demonstrate that the layout protects the amenity of the existing community, that the landscape conditions are enforceable and specific, and that the design reflects the character and density of Charvil as the Neighbourhood Plan requires. The current submission cannot support those conclusions. An amended scheme can. The Council should require one.