

Application Reference: 253071

Site Address: Land West of Park Lane, Charvil (Bellway Homes Development)

Nature of Submission: Request for Robust Planning Conditions and Layout Amendments

Dear Case Officer,

I am writing as a neighbouring homeowner directly affected by the proposed development to submit my formal comments regarding application **253071**. While I acknowledge that the developer has amended the layout to introduce a 4-to-5-metre (estimated as no measurements are included in the plans) wide boundary buffer strip, in places, adjacent to our homes, I must object to the application in its current form. The current proposal lacks critical detail regarding the implementation, planting, and long-term maintenance of this strip. Furthermore, the proposed width is insufficient to address the substantial acoustic and visual impacts of the new layout.

If the Council is minded to approve this application, I strongly request that the layout is amended to widen this zone, and that strict, legally binding pre-commencement conditions are attached to any decision notice. We have experienced the failure in the past when conditions were not applied correctly to the creation of the buffer during Canberra Lake Way development, let's not repeat those mistakes here. This is our one opportunity to get this right.

1. Failure to Meet Wokingham Borough Core Strategy Policy CP3

Under **Policy CP3 of the Wokingham Borough Core Strategy** and **Section R15 of the Wokingham Borough Design Guide SPD**, new developments must maintain a high standard of amenity for existing users and protect neighbouring properties from unreasonable overlooking, inter-visibility, and loss of privacy.

The proposed 2-storey homes positioned directly along our boundary line will create elevated lines of sight into our established private rear gardens and habitable rooms. A 4-to-5-metre wide strip of unplanted land is entirely insufficient to mitigate this visual dominance. To satisfy Policy CP3 and ensure an acceptable standard of privacy, this buffer must feature a dense, mature, and strategically designed landscape screening barrier. The current lack of a detailed planting schedule represents a severe omission.

2. The Material Case for an Extended 10-Metre Buffer Zone

To properly safeguard residential amenity, we strongly urge the Council to require Bellway to increase the depth of this landscape buffer to a **minimum of 10 metres**. A 4-to-5-metre strip provides basic spatial separation but fails to address acoustic privacy.

The proximity of new residential gardens and habitable rooms directly against our boundary will result in significant noise transmission, including everyday garden-based conversations, footsteps, and domestic activity. Increasing the buffer to 10 metres would create an effective acoustic baffle. When combined with dense structural planting, a 10-metre zone provides the necessary physical distance to disperse and absorb sound travel. This extension is vital to ensure that existing residents

can continue to enjoy their private outdoor spaces without an unacceptable increase in ambient noise or a complete loss of conversational privacy.

3. Formally Requested Planning Conditions

Should the development proceed, we request that the following conditions are secured before any construction commences to ensure the boundary strip serves its intended planning purpose:

- **Condition A: Comprehensive Landscape and Planting Scheme**

The developer must submit, and have approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, a comprehensive landscaping scheme for the buffer zone. This schedule must strictly specify **mature, native, evergreen species** (such as *Ilex aquifolium* (Holly), *Taxus baccata* (Yew), or heavy-standard *Carpinus betulus* (Hornbeam)) to ensure substantial, immediate, and crucial year-round visual screening and sound attenuation. Low-cost deciduous twigs or basic turfing must be explicitly rejected, as they lose their screening utility during winter months.

- **Condition B: Minimum 5-to-10-Year Landscape Management Plan (LMP)**

A legally binding maintenance framework must be established. The LMP must clarify that a professional management company (and *not* the future individual residents of the new homes) holds legal responsibility for the buffer strip. This must include a **"failure clause"** stipulating that any trees or hedging that die, become diseased, or are removed within 5 years of completion must be replaced in the next planting season with specimens of the same size and species.

- **Condition C: Removal of Permitted Development (PD) Rights**

To prevent the long-term degradation of this essential screening, the Council must remove Permitted Development rights across the entire buffer zone. This legal restriction must strictly prohibit future residents from erecting garden sheds, outbuildings, or fencing within the strip, and prevent the clearing of the protective tree barrier.

Conclusion

A boundary buffer is only effective if it offers genuine acoustic and visual protection. A 10-metre wide, professionally planted, and legally protected buffer is the minimum standard required to prevent this development from causing an unmitigated, adverse impact on our homes, directly violating Wokingham's design and amenity policies. I urge the planning committee and officers to hold Bellway to these standards before granting approval.

Yours sincerely,

Lee Cripps