

--Email From External Account--

Dear Canterbury City Council,

I am writing to express my strong objection to the proposed development on the farmland and orchards in Wincheap, referred to as Merton Park.

This green space is an invaluable part of our local community and one of the few remaining rural, non-prescribed outdoor areas close to the city. My family and I walk our dog there regularly, as do many others in the area. It acts as a vital informal social hub — a place where residents meet, connect, and enjoy open, natural surroundings. The freedom and safety this space provides for dogs to run, play, and socialise simply cannot be replicated in smaller, prescribed parks or fenced recreation areas.

This land was also a key factor in our decision to purchase a home in Wincheap. The character of the orchards and farmland contributes to the charm, wellbeing, and identity of the area — qualities that would be lost forever if it were developed.

Beyond its social and recreational importance, the area clearly serves as a habitat for a wide range of wildlife, including several species of endangered birds. The hedgerows, long grasses, and varied plant life offer shelter and food for rabbits, insects, and other small animals. Such an ecosystem cannot simply be replaced elsewhere; once it is gone, it is gone for good.

There are also serious environmental concerns. Air quality in Wincheap is already poorer than in other parts of Canterbury. Replacing this natural carbon sink with housing and increased traffic would inevitably worsen the problem, impacting both human and ecological health.

It is also concerning that areas such as Wincheap, traditionally less affluent, appear to be targeted for development while wealthier areas like Blean have successfully resisted similar proposals. The city's growth should be equitable and environmentally responsible, not at the expense of communities with fewer resources to object.

Instead of building on precious farmland and orchards, I urge the Council to focus on redeveloping existing urban sites such as the Wincheap Industrial Estate and other brownfield areas. If the true issue is a shortage of homes, consider higher-density options such as well-designed apartments — housing that meets needs without consuming large areas of green space.

Finally, I strongly recommend that the Council undertake a thorough, transparent study into the potential traffic, environmental, and social impacts of any new development before progressing further - there could be irreversible damage to wildlife and the ecosystem and well and adding additional traffic to an already congested area, air quality is important to our health and the health of the communities children.

Thank you for taking the time to consider this objection. I hope you will recognise the irreplaceable value this land brings to Wincheap and the wider Canterbury community.

Yours sincerely,

James Cook

Wincheap Resident