

From: Mary.E Mackle [REDACTED]
Sent: 18 May 2026 13:13
To: Consultations
Subject: Wincheap Orchards

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Dear Madam/Sir,

I am writing to express my concerns regarding the proposed Merton Park development on the existing Wincheap orchards and surrounding fields. As a resident of [REDACTED] who recently relocated from London, I feel I may offer a perspective that has perhaps not yet been fully considered.

I understand the pressure facing the council and the wider city to provide additional housing. However, I believe there must be careful consideration of what could be lost in the process. Canterbury's identity and character are what make it so exceptional, and once those qualities are damaged, they cannot easily be restored.

I am originally from Dublin, while my husband is from America. Between us, we have lived across several countries and continents, and we had many options for where to settle permanently. Eight years ago, during a visit from London, we discovered Canterbury and immediately fell in love with it. What makes the city truly special is not only its remarkable history and heritage, but also the way nature exists alongside it so harmoniously. Having expansive green spaces and wildlife so close to the city centre is incredibly rare and was one of the main reasons we chose to make our home in Wincheap.

The orchards and surrounding walks have brought enormous benefits to our mental wellbeing and helped us through difficult periods in our lives. While I appreciate that personal attachment alone may not be enough to prevent development, there are several wider concerns that I believe deserve serious attention before any decision is made.

One of the most troubling aspects is the impact this development would have on views surrounding Canterbury's UNESCO World Heritage setting. The idea that one of the country's oldest and most significant Christian landmarks could become overshadowed by dense modern housing feels deeply inappropriate. Cities and nations around the world protect the integrity and setting of their historic and sacred sites. It is difficult to understand why Canterbury should be treated differently.

There is also the issue of water supply. Kent has already faced significant concerns regarding water shortages, and reports have warned that further large-scale housing developments could place unsustainable pressure on existing resources. This raises

important questions about whether the necessary infrastructure is truly in place to support expansion on this scale.

Flooding is another concern. The proposed site sits at a higher elevation, and replacing green fields with extensive hard surfaces will inevitably affect drainage and water runoff. Homersham Road already experiences flooding problems, and many residents are understandably worried that further development could make the situation considerably worse.

Beyond this, Canterbury already struggles with infrastructure demands. Concerns about disruption to local schools are valid, but more broadly, it is difficult to see how a significant population increase can be responsibly managed in a city that already lacks sufficient services such as A&E provision, school capacity, and transport infrastructure.

Finally, there is the environmental impact. The Wincheap orchards are an important natural habitat and support a wide range of wildlife, including species listed on both the Red and Amber conservation lists. Orchards themselves are becoming increasingly rare, and it seems contradictory to support environmental initiatives while simultaneously destroying one of the very landscapes the council claims to value. Brownfield development would surely represent a more responsible and sustainable alternative.

When I imagine Canterbury after the completion of Merton Park, I struggle to recognise the city that so many people cherish. It would represent a profound and irreversible change to the character of the area. I sincerely hope the council carefully reconsiders the long-term consequences of this proposal before proceeding further.

Kind regards,
Mary Sutter

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