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Development Management
Eastleigh Borough Council
Eastleigh House, Upper Market Street
Eastleigh, Hampshire, SO50 9YN

For the attention of the Case Officer

Planning application reference: H/26/101905

Site: 150 Park Road, Chandler's Ford, Eastleigh

Proposal: Retrospective application for the retention of a boundary fence

Subject: Applicant's response to the objection received

Dear Sir or Madam,

I am the applicant for the above application and write in response to the objection published on the planning portal. I have read the objection carefully. I respect the objector's right to comment and I recognise that the fence going up without permission having first been sought was a genuine concern to a neighbour. I should say at the outset that I accept we did not follow the correct procedure. We should have applied before the work was done, and this retrospective application is our attempt to put that right properly and openly. That said, the objection contains a number of points that I believe are inaccurate or incomplete, and I would like, respectfully, to set out the position as I understand it. This letter is confined to that objection. The planning case for the fence is set out in the application itself and in my earlier submissions and I do not repeat it here. My purpose is to show, in the order the objector raises them, that each of the points made is either factually incorrect, unsupported by evidence, or not a material planning consideration.

In summary, the objection rests on three claims: that the previous boundary was an attractive native hedge which the fence has inappropriately replaced; that the fence has caused a loss of vegetation; and that the fence is poorly built from poor materials. I address each below.

1. The previous boundary was not the native hedge described

The objection characterises the former boundary as attractive native species hedging that blended well with the local area and offered privacy to the property. I do not believe that description reflects what was actually there, and I would like to explain why.

First, the hedge was not made up of native species in its entirety, as the objection implies. A substantial element of it was bamboo. Bamboo is not a native British plant, and the running varieties are among the most invasive plants a domestic garden can contain. The bamboo on this boundary had spread well beyond the hedge line. It was emerging across the front of the property and its rhizomes were tracking towards, and potentially beneath, the house itself.

Running bamboo is recognised by the RHS, by chartered surveyors and increasingly by mortgage lenders and conveyancers as a plant capable of damaging hard surfaces, drainage and foundations, and it is now routinely treated with the same seriousness as Japanese knotweed. It also spreads under fences and walls into neighbouring gardens and under adjacent hard surfaces. On this corner its effect on the public pavement and the road edge is already visible, with the surface having lifted and moved where the rhizomes have run beneath it. Its removal therefore protects not only our own property but the immediately adjoining neighbours and the public highway.

Managing and removing that bamboo was therefore not an aesthetic choice. It was a necessary and responsible step. Whatever native material was present in the hedge was intertwined with, and being steadily overtaken by, an invasive non native species that could not be left in place. I would simply ask that the Council does not proceed on the understanding that a valued, wholly native hedge was removed to make way for a fence, because that is not what happened. What was removed was a boundary we had come to see as a problem, and we removed it for the reasons a careful householder would.

Second, the objection states that the hedge was sufficiently high to offer privacy to the property. I understand why it might have looked that way from the pavement, and I say this with no criticism of the objector, who could only judge from outside. From inside the house the position was quite different. My daughter's bedroom faces the road and the corner directly, and she would, I think it fair to say, wholeheartedly disagree that the hedge gave her any real privacy. The gaps in it, the seasonal thinning, and the fact that bamboo grows tall but sparse meant that the room was overlooked from the pavement for much of the year.

The particular circumstances of this corner make that more than a theoretical concern, and I set them out in the application itself. The junction of Park Road and Pine Road is a well known meeting point in Chandler's Ford. It is the corner of two busy roads and it is used as a gathering and rendezvous point by, among others, Hiltingbury Running Club and Chandler's Ford Running Club before and after group runs, and by large numbers of school children and young adults through the day and into the evening. The running clubs in particular use the corner as a regrouping point mid run, where the faster runners stop and wait for the slower runners to catch up, which can mean a group of ten or twenty people standing on the pavement outside the house several evenings a week. People stand and wait on that corner, immediately outside my daughter's window, often in groups and often for some time. That is where the looking in came from. On more than one occasion individuals actually approached the bedroom window itself. As explained in the application, this is what led us to install cameras and other security measures, and it is why a solid boundary, rather than a porous hedge, was needed. A hedge that offers some visual screening from a passing pedestrian does not offer privacy from a group standing still on the pavement a few feet from a bedroom.

Privacy and security for a bedroom facing a road junction of this kind is a legitimate concern for any family, and it was one of the principal reasons for replacing the hedge. The fence provides the privacy the hedge only appeared to.

2. Vegetation has not been lost; a planting scheme is part of the proposal

The objection states that the fence has resulted in a loss of vegetation. The submitted drawing shows a planting strip behind the fence, and it has always been my intention to plant that strip as soon as permission is confirmed. The net effect of the proposal is therefore not a loss of vegetation but the replacement of a hedge heavily infiltrated by an invasive non native species with a managed scheme of native trees and shrubs. To be clear, the intention is not to plant another hedge. The fence is the boundary. The planting is a strip of individual native trees and shrubs set behind it, chosen to soften the fence, add seasonal interest and support wildlife, and spaced so that each plant can be kept to size and maintained without the problems of an overgrown hedge line.

This is not an afterthought prompted by the objection. In early 2026, in preparation for these works, I planted a hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*) on the boundary, to the right of the former hedge line as viewed from the house. The intention from the outset was a fence with native planting in front of it, with the hornbeam as the first element of that scheme. The remaining works took longer than planned for reasons of cost, but the hornbeam has been in the ground throughout. It has taken well to the position and the soil, has come through the dry summer without difficulty, and is flourishing. The Case Officer will be able to see it on a site visit. It is direct evidence that the planting scheme was planned, and started, well before the fence went up, and its vigour is the best possible indication that the native species proposed below will establish and thrive on this boundary.

I have taken advice on species that are native, that support biodiversity, and that will cope with the drier summers and wetter winters that the objector rightly notes are becoming more common. The proposed scheme is a mix of individually planted native trees and shrubs drawn from the following:

- Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*): as a single standard tree, exceptionally drought tolerant once established, with blossom for pollinators and berries for birds
- Field maple (*Acer campestre*): a native tree that copes well with dry conditions and gives strong autumn colour
- Hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*): already planted on the boundary in early 2026 and flourishing; tolerant of both drought and heavy soils, and holds its leaves through winter for year round screening
- Holly (*Ilex aquifolium*): evergreen, native, and a valuable winter food source and nesting cover for birds
- Hazel (*Corylus avellana*): fast establishing, resilient, and a key species for native invertebrates
- Guelder rose (*Viburnum opulus*) and dog rose (*Rosa canina*): flowering natives that add seasonal interest and support pollinators

All of these species appear on the Woodland Trust and RHS lists of recommended native trees and shrubs for gardens and are appropriate to the character of Chandler's Ford, where native specimen planting along boundaries is common. Unlike bamboo, none of them spreads by underground rhizome and all can be kept comfortably within the boundary as individual plants. The result will be a more attractive, more biodiverse and more climate resilient boundary than existed before, and one that will soften the appearance of the fence from the street within two

to three growing seasons. With the hornbeam already established, that softening has in fact already begun.

I would be content for the Council to secure this planting of trees and shrubs by condition, with a requirement that it is carried out in the first planting season following the grant of permission and that any plants which fail within five years are replaced. That is a standard landscaping condition and I offer it willingly.

3. The fence was built by a vetted, highly rated professional contractor

The objection asserts that the design and materials do not appear to be particularly robust and raises concerns about the quality of the building work and the timber used. I note that the objector offers no evidence for this, no technical qualification, and no specific defect. The concern rests on having watched the work from a neighbouring property. I do not doubt that the concern is sincerely held, but it is an impression rather than an assessment, and I hope the Council will find the following independent evidence about the contractor reassuring.

The fence was designed and built by RB Landscaping & Groundworks Ltd of Eastleigh, a local professional landscaping and groundworks contractor. I did not select this contractor casually. I chose an established, vetted, Checkatrade approved business precisely so that the work would be done properly.

Company standing. RB Landscaping & Groundworks Ltd, company number 13701486, is an active private limited company incorporated on 25 October 2021 and registered in Eastleigh, trading under SIC code 81300, landscape service activities. It is VAT registered (402978291). Its accounts and confirmation statements are filed and up to date at Companies House. Its sole director, Mr Ryan Birnie, has no other company appointments and no dissolved companies against his name. This is a clean, transparent, locally based business with a public filing record.

Checkatrade approved contractor since August 2021. Checkatrade is the largest independent vetting and review platform for trades in the United Kingdom. Membership is not simply a listing; it is conditional on passing a rigorous set of checks, and continued membership is conditional on maintaining customer feedback. RB Landscaping & Groundworks Ltd has held continuous membership for over five years.

To become and remain a Checkatrade approved trade, a business must pass up to twelve separate vetting checks. The Checkatrade profile confirms that this company has passed them:

- Identification check on the individual
- Proof of address
- Financial check on the individual
- Verification of qualifications and accreditations
- County court judgement search against the individual
- Open source media check
- Customer review verification
- Company trading history
- Company duplication check

- County court judgement search against the business
- Enhanced business check
- Director checks

These are the checks that a prudent homeowner relies on when appointing a contractor. They are also, in substance, the checks that a local authority would apply to a contractor on its own approved list. A business that has passed them and held its place on the platform for five years is, by definition, a business with an established trading record, no adverse judgements, verified qualifications and verified customer satisfaction.

Independent customer rating: 9.8 out of 10. The company holds a score of 9.8 out of 10 from 25 independent, published customer reviews. Over the last twelve months it scores 9.8 for quality of work, 9.8 for reliability and 9.8 for communication. Checkatrade reviews are submitted by customers directly to the platform and verified against a genuine job, so they cannot be curated by the trade. The reviews are consistent in their themes: honesty, tidiness, professionalism, and care over the finished result. Customers describe raised beds, decking, drainage, greenhouse bases, fence posts and gates built to a high standard, with attention to levels and finish. One reviewer specifically praises the time taken to make sure decking was perfectly level; another describes new drainage, a re sited fence post and an oak raised bed completed by a professional and proficient team. The most recent review, from June 2026 and from the Chandler's Ford postcode area, describes the work as first rate with communication on point throughout.

Qualifications and guarantee. The company is City & Guilds Level 2 qualified. It undertakes domestic, commercial and insurance work, the latter being significant because insurers require contractors to meet defined standards of workmanship. Work is covered by the Checkatrade guarantee.

I would gently invite the Council to set the objector's impression alongside this record: a Companies House filing history, a five year vetted membership of the national trade platform, twelve passed checks, a verified public rating of 9.8 out of 10 and a formal qualification. We chose this contractor because we wanted the work done well, and I believe the evidence shows that it was.

4. Materials

The objector raises concern about the timber used but identifies no defect in it. The company's published policy on materials is clear. RB Landscaping & Groundworks Ltd states that it works only with industry leading suppliers who provide top quality products and materials, and that it complies with strict guidelines and safety regulations on all of its work. That policy is consistent with the standard of the reviews above and with the standard of the work I observed on my own property.

For the Council's assistance, timber fencing supplied through reputable trade merchants in the United Kingdom is manufactured and treated to recognised standards. Fence posts intended for ground contact are pressure treated to Use Class 4 under BS EN 335 in accordance with BS 8417, and above ground components to Use Class 3, giving a design service life of fifteen years or more against decay and insect attack. Fence panels and closeboard components are

manufactured to BS 1722, and timber from the major merchants is sourced from certified sustainable forestry under the FSC or PEFC schemes. A professional contractor buying from industry leading suppliers is buying to those standards. That is what was used here.

Local sourcing. All of the materials for the boundary works were sourced locally. The stone, aggregate and hard landscaping materials for the associated groundworks were supplied by Miles Stone of Woodside Avenue, Boyatt Wood Industrial Estate, Eastleigh (SO50 9ES). Miles Stone is a third generation family business that has traded since 1970, specialising in natural stone and porcelain for gardens, landscapes and architectural projects, and exhibited at the RHS Chelsea Flower Show in 2025. It curates a limited range of materials tested for durability and performance rather than an open catalogue, and supplies both the trade and private customers from its Eastleigh yard less than two miles from the application site. Sourcing from an established Eastleigh merchant means the materials are of a known trade quality, appropriate to local conditions, and consistent with those used on countless other properties across the Borough. It also means minimal transport distance and a direct contribution to the local economy, both of which sit comfortably with the Council's sustainability objectives.

The objector suggests that the fence will deteriorate. Every timber fence in Chandler's Ford, including those on the objector's own street, is subject to the same weathering. What determines longevity is the quality of the timber treatment, the depth and setting of the posts, and the use of gravel boards and capping to keep the boards clear of the ground and the end grain protected. Those are exactly the matters that a vetted professional contractor attends to, and they are not easily judged from outside the boundary.

I would add that a properly built timber fence is, if anything, more resilient to hot dry summers than a hedge, which the objector's own comments about this summer's conditions illustrate. Timber does not need watering. That is one of the reasons a fence with specimen planting behind it was chosen over a replacement hedge.

If the Council has any residual concern about the construction or materials, I would welcome a site visit by the Case Officer, who will be able to inspect the fence at first hand. I would much rather the Council satisfied itself directly than took either my word or the objector's for it.

5. Conclusion

The objection is founded on a description of the previous boundary that does not match the facts, on a claim about privacy that the family living in the house does not recognise, on a concern about vegetation loss that the submitted planting scheme answers and that the hornbeam planted in early 2026 already contradicts, and on an opinion about workmanship that is unsupported by any evidence and contradicted by the contractor's verifiable record.

I do not write this to dismiss the objector, who is a neighbour and whose concern I take seriously. I write it because I think the Council should have the full picture before it weighs the objection. We acted to remove an invasive plant, to protect our daughter's privacy and security on a busy corner, and to do so using a properly vetted local contractor and locally sourced materials. We should have sought permission first, and I regret that we did not. I hope that, with the facts set out, the Council will feel able to give the objection the weight it fairly merits and no

more. I remain happy to discuss any aspect of this with the Case Officer or to facilitate a site visit.

Yours faithfully,

Gareth Quartley
Applicant