Dear Sirs,

Regulation 22 notice re Planning Application ref 14/12118/OUT

I refer to the notice recently affixed to a post in Rowden Lane on 13th August. Please accept this letter although it is later than the reply deadline due to the late notification. It will be appreciated if future notices are posted in good time in a prominent location in the Lane. All of the Rowden Manor area residents would like to see better notification in future.

I understand that this notice refers to the revised Environmental Statement provided by the developer. This ES contains considerable detail and it has not been possible to speak with a council representative to discuss the main items that have changed or been added in the latest statement. I hope that my comments and objections are within the context of the revised document.

The local residents’ overall objection to the revised ES is that it does not adequately preserve or enhance the setting of the Rowden Manor conservation area and buildings. The current development proposals raise several concerns for us with the lack of specific detail within the ES: views to and from the heritage assets; proximity of urbanising cycle and foot paths; light pollution; broad statements of intent for additional planting without meaningful proposals; increased (from last report) traffic at specific locations that will affect Rowden Lane residents. The ES seems more of a scoping document of intent without the more definitive proposals that should have been submitted by this time for proper evaluation.

1. Views to and from the heritage assets: The density and scale of the proposed development within the existing topography will be difficult to mitigate with tree screening alone. After leaf fall the visibility will increase and be accentuated by vehicle headlights, estate road lighting and views to and from the bulk of the housing outlines. Your own conservation officers and English Heritage have written with their concerns that the development does not comply with the current NPPF Planning Act and suggesting that layouts and densities are
reviewed. I cannot see that there has been much change in the impact of the proposals in the latest ES and would appreciate if you would advise of where specific mitigation has been provided.

2. Proximity of urbanising foot and cycle paths: There seems to be a discrepancy between the current public right of way and the proposed cycle/footpath that passes by the Rowden Manor buildings. The proposed route seems to come closer to the buildings and would have a negative impact on the setting of the conservation area. Also this would be visibly worsened by providing an urban surfacing whereas the current pathway is an informal grass route through open fields. Our greatest concern however is that the developer may propose to light this route. Any lighting is wholly inappropriate for this area that is currently unlit with a wonderfully dark sky at night. The potential effect on wildlife is a further concern. A final and not unimportant point of concern that should be considered is the existing rights of way across the proposed development. These must not be allowed to be supplanted or extinguished by the proposals for the Country Park - which by inference may suggest that it is a public place, whereas it will still be a privately owned area of land and therefore should retain the historic rights of way for all times.

3. Light pollution: we are concerned with many aspects of the potentially pollutive lighting schemes that do not appear to have been fully addressed by design or elimination – not just the proposed lighting of some footpaths. It would be good to understand where these lit locations will be as well as giving some indication of when specific lighting details will be available for comment. There is some information provided in the ES for roadway lighting and mention of 6m high light columns. Considering the topography of the area we believe that this is too high and will produce light spill of an unacceptable nature that will spoil the unlit conservation area. The addition of new planting screens will not hide reflections off cloudy skies and in Winter after leaf fall the screens will not provide much of a barrier – particularly to vehicle headlights. The ES noting of wildlife/bat corridors also suggests that the overall lighting designs will be intrusive for most areas and inappropriate to the rural setting of the area immediately beyond the new housing. There is no mention of lighting adjacent the proposed ‘informal’ playing fields and it is hoped that there will be none in this extremely sensitive location.

4. Broad statements of intent for new planting: there is insufficient detail in the ES for proper consideration of the effects of any mitigation by screening of views in and out of the development. Species, densities and undergrowth formation has not yet been detailed and further information will be needed to understand the design intent. The graphic images shown do not convey particularly robust screening that should be of appropriate type and necessary to complement the conservation area.
5. Increased traffic generated by the development: The revised ES seems to indicate significantly increased traffic levels at the area L1 for PM traffic. Any increase in traffic around the Rowden Lane/Coppice Close exit near the A4 will exacerbate the access for Rowden Lane residents, especially as there is a new TRO order about to be enforced on Rowden Lane adjacent its junction with the A4. The Coppice Close access will be considerably compromised by this TRO. It is a concern that the ES does not accurately portray the housing development that Redcliffe Homes are currently completing in Rowden Lane and Coppice Close.

Please accept this letter as an objection to the ES document in its current form and advise on when further information on the above matters – details and specifications – will be available for full consideration of the impact of this large-scale development.

The ES makes reference to works commencing on site in 2016 and therefore the residents of Rowden Manor conservation area would also like to be informed of the developer’s timetable for further formal and informal submissions on all other related proposals for the Rowden Park development.

Yours faithfully,

Maurice Evans