Dear Mrs Burkey

ROWDEN PARK, PATTERDOWN ROAD, CHIPPENHAM, WILTSHIRE
Application No 14/12118/OUT

We have received amended proposals for the above scheme and wish to offer the following comments.

Historic England Advice
Previous advice has been provided by Historic England regarding the proposed mixed urban extension proposed for Rowden Park in Chippenham and our engagement with regards to the review of Chippenham’s housing allocation policy.

As the new Inspector of Historic Buildings and Areas for Wiltshire I am not familiar with the site in detail, I have reviewed the information submitted to date along with our previous advice. The submission of amended information in the form of the ‘Design Note: Conservation Area Edge’ does not appear to alleviate the concerns regarding the impact of the proposals on the character of the Chippenham Conservation Area. This document provides further justification for the form of the scheme being proposed but does not make any physical changes to the proposed layout that would counter the comments made by my predecessor Caroline Power in her advice on 9 March 2016. This advice therefore continue to be outstanding:

‘… we believe that the area of rural open fields that is a significant characteristic of the southern aspect of the Conservation Area also extends around the south western and part of the western side of the Conservation Area’s boundary. This rural quality is an important and positive element of the conservation area’s character and contributes towards the way it is experienced in this location. Furthermore, the report recognises that the construction of housing along the western and south-western margin of the Conservation Area will have a “significant indirect affect” on it. However, we disagree with the concluding remark that the development along the western margin will result in a “neutral significance of effect.” In our view the proposal will have a marked impact
on this aspect of the Conservation Area’s character and immediate setting and the application should therefore be judged against Paragraph 134 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

It is also disappointing that the applicants do not consider it necessary to revisit their original Masterplan despite the point raised in paragraph 2.6.5. of the report that the construction of residential housing “would change the existing predominantly rural character”. As already stated as we consider this to be a fundamental component of the Conservation Area’s context, we would have expected more consideration of the mitigation measures and landscaping to be reviewed. The tranquillity and sense of spatial distance from development that is currently experienced within the Conservation Area will, in our view, be harmed by the presence of this development in close proximity to its boundary. As a result we suggest that the layouts, densities and landscaping are reviewed in order to reduce the impact of this development on the Conservation Area and its immediate environment.’ (Caroline Power, Historic England, March 2016).

Given the advice detailed above, our concerns regarding the scheme continue to be outstanding and the recommendations outlined upheld.

**Recommendation**

We would urge you to address the above issues, and recommend that the application should be determined in accordance with national and local policy guidance, and on the basis of your specialist conservation advice.

Yours sincerely

Jacqueline Martinez
Inspector of Historic Buildings & Areas
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cc Caroline Ridgewell - Conservation Officer, Wiltshire Council.