

RIDSDALE & CO. LTD.

Ridsdale-Dietert and Disa Foundry Sand Testing & Control Equipment 'Analoid' Compressed Chemical Reagents

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OUR REF:

YOUR REF: **24th November 2020**

DATE:

For the attention of the Independent Examiner

As members of the Neighbourhood Forum, we were invited to comment on the documents produced by the Council, following their recent public consultation on the proposed modification of the Marton West Neighbourhood Plan. Our company owns Newham Hall and we would wish to draw your attention to our actions to conserve the historic significance of the Hall and parkland, which are set out below:

Newham Hall was built in 1880 by John Mills, an Ironmaster, who was seeking a house in the countryside, which was both convenient for his business, in the centre of Middlesbrough, close to the River Tees, and yet which gave him the opportunity to develop his interest in agriculture. He bought an estate of 400 acres, at the heart of which was a 17th century house which had, for at least 50 years, been let for rent. John Mills demolished the Hall, and the adjacent farm, before moving the farm roughly 100m to the north.

After he died in 1919 the house was inherited by successive generations of the family, but it was unoccupied from 1929, until it was purchased in 1952 by Ridsdale & Co Ltd and Bureau of Analysed Samples Ltd.

The joint owners have taken great care to maintain the Hall in as original a condition as possible, bearing in mind the commercial requirements of the organisations. All the principal rooms would still be recognised by the original occupants and many of the other rooms, such as the bedrooms, are also unchanged. The stables, coach house and stud farm buildings are also readily recognisable.

Middlesbrough, of course, owes its very existence to the iron works on the banks of the Tees and several of the Ironmasters who ran the companies built themselves luxurious mansions in extensive parkland. Despite the proliferation of bigger and better properties such as Marton Hall, only Newham Hall remains. The house and its surrounding parkland, therefore, is of particular interest as the only surviving example of an Ironmasters house in more or less its original condition and more or less its original setting.

Since purchasing the Hall, Ridsdale & Co and Bureau of Analysed Samples (and latterly Newham Hall Holdings, which was formed in 2013 from the two companies) have been assiduously ensuring that the house remained in a pristine condition and that the historic parkland, which with its drive and Lodge House, is an essential part of the whole, was also protected.

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A threat to the wellbeing of the Hall, with attendant Lodge and stone entrance (all Grade II listed) arose, in July 1995 when an attempt by Middlesbrough Council to allow the building of 38 houses in the Parkland, was challenged by our agents, Ward Hadaway, who made an application to refer the proposed development to the Secretary of State for "*decision under the provisions of Section 77 of the Town and Country Planning Act*". The subsequent Public enquiry resulted in the Council being refused planning permission.

Following this there was no further threat to the Parkland until the "Middlesbrough Local Development Framework Core Strategy and Regeneration DPD Preferred Options" was published in January 2013. This included very radical proposals to surround Newham Hall with housing to the north of the drive and to the east of the hall (between the hall and the golf course), and to convert the parkland to the south of Newham Hall into an extension to the golf course, linked to the current course by a dog leg around De Brus Park.

At this point, as owners of Newham Hall and its historical grounds, we turned once more to Ward Hadaway and we then commissioned the Southern Green report "*Landscape and Heritage Proposals Newham Hall Newby*" dated June 2013. This report consisted of three sections: A Heritage Assessment by Archaeological Services, Durham University; an Appraisal of Designed Landscape by Fiona Green and a Landscape and Visual Appraisal of Housing Proposals for Land Adjacent to Newham Hall by Southern Green.

This was submitted to the Council, on our behalf by Ward Hadaway, and they represented us at the public examination of the plan between the 24th and the 26th of June 2014 by an independent Inspector.

We had been able to get the housing removed at a fairly early stage but the golf course proposal remained until the inspector instructed the Council to remove it.

The Inspector also pointed out that the NPPF required authorities to have up to date evidence about the historic environment in their area, which eventually resulted in the Council commissioning the Land Use Consultants (LUC), who produced the documents *Landscape and Heritage Assessment* and *Land south of Newham Hall (final report)* at the end of 2016..

It was also required that both the Council and we agreed the boundaries beyond which the development of Coulby Newham should not proceed, in order to protect the visual setting of the Hall. Both the Southern Green report and the Inspector's report are available electronically. This became the plan which was adopted by the Council in 2014.

We continued to retain Ward Hadaway and in January 2017 they responded on our behalf to the "*Middlesbrough Local Plan Review Issues Paper*" of November 2016 again reiterating the need to protect the Parkland around Newham Hall. An electronic copy is available.

This fed in to the "*Preferred Options Middlesbrough Local Plan*" of May 2018 in which an additional 10 houses were proposed to be built on the parkland, in the same area as that which was contested in the 1996 public enquiry. Again, Ward Hadaway reminded the Council of the historic nature of the parkland and the need to preserve it without further degradation. An electronic copy of this submission is also available. This attempt to revise the plan was subsequently dropped by the Council.

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We were also instrumental in requesting that Historic England assess the park and garden for inclusion on the register of Listed Parks and Gardens, which was unsuccessful.

We are concerned that Middlesbrough Council now consider the parkland not to be worthy of protection, whereas every independent report that has been commissioned, both by ourselves and by the Council, show that it is of considerable local/regional interest and should be preserved.

We very much welcome and support the approach taken by the Neighbourhood Forum to designate the parkland as Local Green Space to protect it so that future generations may have the opportunity to discover for themselves how the early visionaries of Middlesbrough lived.

for RIDSDALE & CO LTD.
R P Meeres,
Managing Director