

Date of Meeting	23 February 2017
Application Number	16/10220/FUL
Site Address	Old Wardour Castle Nightingale Lane Wardour Tisbury Wiltshire SP3 6RR
Proposal	Installation of new parking meter
Applicant	English Heritage Trust
Town/Parish Council	DONHEAD ST ANDREW
Electoral Division	TISBURY – Cllr Tony Deane
Grid Ref	393804 126296
Type of application	Full Planning
Case Officer	Warren Simmonds

Reason for the application being considered by Committee

The application has been called to SAC by Cllr Deane due to concerns in respect of Highway safety and car parking.

1. Purpose of Report

The purpose of the report is to assess the merits of the proposal against the policies of the development plan and other material considerations and to consider the recommendation that the application be approved subject to the Conditions listed at the conclusion of the report.

2. Report Summary

1. Principle of the proposed development
2. Impact on the character and setting of the listed building and listed park
3. Impact on the surrounding landscape
4. Impact on the amenity of neighbours
5. Highways considerations

Tisbury parish council object to the proposal on grounds that the proposal would result in parking problems along the access road and the proposed parking machine would have a detrimental visual impact.

Donhead St Andrew parish council object on the grounds that charging for car parking would deter visitors to the area.

Six representations were received from third parties; each was in objection to the proposed development. Grounds for objection included visual impact of the parking machine, cars likely to park along the access road to avoid parking charges, and the potential attraction of crime and vandalism.

3. Site Description

The application site is a consolidated surfaced car park located to the North West of Old Wardour Castle. The site is well screened within the wider landscape by extensive mature woodland to the immediate North and West, and by mature tree screening to the South and East.



4. Planning History

S/2008/1194	Enlargement of visitor kiosk	Approved subject to Conditions
S/1999/2160	Temporary replacement visitor hut	Approved (18/84 procedure)

5. The Proposal

The application proposed the installation of a single freestanding, solar powered parking meter within the existing car park. The proposed parking meter has approximate dimensions 1.82m tall, 40cm wide and 30cm deep and can be coloured black or green.



6. Planning Policy

Wiltshire Core Strategy Core Policies CP39, CP48, CP51, CP57, CP58 & CP62

NPPF & NPPG

7. Summary of consultation responses

Tisbury parish council object to the proposal on grounds that the proposal would result in parking problems along the access road and the proposed parking machine would have a detrimental visual impact.

Donhead St Andrew parish council object on the grounds that charging for car parking would deter visitors to the area.

WC Highways – No highway comments

Rights of Way officer – No objections

Conservation officer – No objection, with comments

AONB Partnership – Wide ranging comments in respect of need, visual impact, impact on the listed park and building & parking.

8. Publicity

The application was publicised by press notice and site notice.

Six representations were received from third parties; each was in objection to the proposed development. Grounds for objection included visual impact of the parking machine, cars likely to park along the access road to avoid parking charges, and the potential attraction of crime and vandalism.

9. Planning Considerations

Principle of the proposed development

Officers would seek to clarify that the imposition of parking charges at the existing car park does not constitute 'development' as set out within Section 55 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and as such the landowner may introduce car parking charges (perhaps with the use of a car park warden or volunteer collecting fees) without the need for planning consent and without further reference to Wiltshire Council. The requirement for planning consent is only derived where there is 'operational development' or the change of use of the land. In this case, the application proposes operational development by the installation of a parking meter, thereby requiring planning consent.

As the principle of charging for parking is not material to the planning decision, the considerations which remain relevant consist of the scale, design and impact of the proposed parking meter on the immediate surrounding environment, the character and setting of the listed park and adjacent listed building, the impact on the wider landscape and impact on amenity of nearby residents.

In answer to questions raised in respect of the rationale for installing the parking meter, the applicant has provided the following additional information:

"Our primary purposes for installing this machine is to give priority to our visitors, who can often find the car park is full, as well as to provide a small amount of income to the castle and English Heritage. We often have occasions where the car park is found to be full, but many of the cars are not our visitors, which means that English Heritage members or paying visitors are not able to visit, due to people parking in the car park for free. This can occur throughout the year; on peak summer days as well as in the winter months - when the grass overflow area is too wet to drive on.

We will only be charging for car parking during the opening hours of the site, which means that the car park will be available free of charge for anyone who wishes to use it before 10am and after 6pm, or on weekdays throughout the winter months when the site is closed. We are proposing a flat fee of £2 per car for all day parking, which we feel is a reasonable fee. We will also refund the parking cost to anyone who is visiting the castle.

As you are probably aware, English Heritage became an independent charity Trust in April 2016. This departure from being a non-departmental public body means that we have to be self-reliant from government support. We currently generate 66% of our income internally, and have a gradually reducing grant in aid from until 2022/23 when we must be 100%

financially sustainable. We therefore, have to explore all options for reducing our expenditure liabilities and increasing income from our properties. Although there will only be a small amount of income generated from this scheme, it will go some way to offsetting the conservation and maintenance costs we have for the castle as well as our maintenance liability for the access road itself, which EH are also responsible for.

We believe that the installation of a car parking machine will help us to reduce the capacity issues that we experience, as well as providing a small amount of income to support the work that English Heritage does in preserving the historic environment. The installation of a parking machine is something that can easily be reversed in future years, and will not have any impact to the preservation of the monument. We have carefully assessed the impact to the site and its setting, and have spoken to our Properties Curator as well as the Ancient Monuments Inspector from Historic England. They have both agreed that the impact on the setting will be low.

Some of the objections to the planning are on the grounds of safety, suggesting that people will try to avoid paying the parking fees (by parking along the narrow access road to the site). The access road is a single track road with only a few passing places, although drivers could choose to park in one or two of the few passing places, it is unlikely that this would occur. It would take a very irresponsible driver to park in a narrow passing place on a single track road, as much as it would be irresponsible to park in a single track road and block it. As we will be refunding visitors to the castle, then we would not anticipate any of our visitors would try to avoid to parking charge and park on the access road. Further to this, we are charging for use of the car park only during our published opening times. Which means that there will be plenty of opportunities for residents to still enjoy use of our car park, and walks around the castle, without paying the parking fee.

The standard machines will be black in colour. I have been told that the supplier could provide a green meter - if this was a stipulation of the planning. However the standard choice of a black machine is not a highly visible or bright colour. The meter we have chosen will be solar powered, so there will be no need for cabling to be run to the installation point.”

The proposed development, required in connection with the ongoing management of an established tourist attraction, is considered acceptable in principle.

Impact on the character and setting of the listed building and listed park

The proposed parking meter is of relatively small scale and would be located in an existing car park that is well screened in wider views within the surrounding landscape. The conservation officer has assessed the proposal and considers the proposal would not have an adverse impact on the setting of the castle and raises no objection.

It is considered, by reason of the small scale and discrete location of the proposed parking meter, the proposal would not adversely affect the existing character or setting of the adjacent listed building or wider surrounding listed park.

Impact on the surrounding landscape

The proposed parking meter is of relatively small scale and would be located in an existing car park that is well screened in wider views within the surrounding landscape.

It is considered, by reason of the small scale and discrete location of the proposed parking meter close to dense mature woodland, the proposal would not adversely affect the existing character or setting of the adjacent listed building or wider surrounding listed park.

Impact on the amenity of neighbours

By reason of the limited scale of the proposed parking meter, the distance and general relationship between its proposed location and the closest neighbouring dwellings to the South and West, it is considered the proposed development would not result in undue impacts on the amenity of neighbouring residents or visitors to the area.

Highways considerations

The Highways officer has assessed the proposal and provides the following comments:

“I note that the single track vehicular access road (with passing places) which leads to the site does not form part of the public highway and is not included within the application site edged red. The nearest publicly maintained road is some 600 metres from the site. It is considered that the development proposed will not detrimentally affect public highway safety and therefore I have no highway comments to make on this application.”

Whilst concerns have been expressed in consultation responses and in third party representations that the proposed development might lead to problematic and inappropriate parking in passing places and along the single track approach road to the site, it is considered that, by reason of the limited times when parking charges would apply (detailed above), the low cost of parking charges proposed (£2 per day) and the fact that visitors to the Castle would be reimbursed the cost of parking on entry, such issues are unlikely to manifest.

Officers would advise that the determination of the application should not be based on perceived secondary impacts of the introduction of parking charges (as the introduction of parking charges does not constitute development and does not require planning consent), but should be limited to the material considerations detailed above.

10. Conclusion

The proposed development is considered accordant with the Development Plan and national and local guidance.

RECOMMENDATION

APPROVE, subject to the following Conditions:

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

REASON: To comply with the provisions of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans:

Drawing number B538/03 (undated) as deposited with the local planning authority on 7th November 2016, and

Drawing number P538/04 (undated) as deposited with the local planning authority on 7th November 2016.

REASON: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.