

Date of Meeting	09 th April 2015
Application Number	14/12106/FUL
Site Address	Stonehenge Visitor Centre, Amesbury, Wiltshire, SP4 7DE
Proposal	Change of use from agricultural land and creation (temporary consent 2 years) of a 26 space coach park and associated ancillary works
Applicant	English Heritage
Town/Parish Council	Winterbourne Stoke
Ward	Till and Wylve Valley
Grid Ref	409985 142854
Type of application	Full Planning
Case Officer	Louise Porter

Reason for the application being considered by Committee

Cllr West has requested the consideration of this planning application at a Planning Committee due to there being considerable local public interest in this application regarding highway issues, use of more agricultural land and over development within the World Heritage Site. Cllr West has indicated the key issues that justify the call in: scale of development, visual impact on the surrounding area, design, environmental/highway impact and car parking (use).

1. Purpose of Report

To consider the above application and the recommendation of the Area Development Manager that planning permission be **Granted** with conditions for the reasons detailed below

2. Report Summary

The main issues in the considerations of this application are as follows:

- Principle of Development
- Landscape and Visual Impact
- Highway Impact
- Heritage Impact
- Ecological Impact

3. Site Description

The application relates to the Stonehenge Visitor Centre (SHVC) coach park which is positioned approximately 2km from the Stonehenge monument, adjacent to the junction between the A360 and B3086. The SHVC and associated coach and car parks are relatively recent additions to the landscape following the decommissioning of the old

visitor centre and car/coach park which was approximately 0.12km from the Stonehenge monument. The existing coach park has 30 coach bays and operates on a one-way system with coaches entering the SHVC site via the main car entrance to the south of the coach park, and leaving the coach park via a separate exit to the north of the coach park.

4. Relevant Planning History

S/2009/1527	Decommissioning of existing visitor facilities and a section of the A344; the erection of a new visitors centre, car park, coach park and ancillary services building; and related highways and landscaping works	Approved with conditions
14/12107/FUL	Resurfacing of an area of overflow car park	Refused

5. The Proposal

It is proposed to expand the existing coach park by a further 26 spaces. These parking spaces will be separate from the existing coach park, positioned approximately 60m to the east, but will share the same access and exit routes from the existing coach park. The layout of the existing coach park will be altered to include a pedestrian route along the western edge of the site. The new parking spaces will have a pedestrian walkway which will join up with the existing pedestrian walkway to the visitor centre.

The application originally included 50 staff car parking spaces, but this aspect of the proposal was removed from the application part way through the application process.

6. Planning Policy

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

- **Paragraph 137:** “Local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas and World Heritage Sites and within the setting of heritage assets to enhance or better reveal their significance. Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to or better reveal the significance of the asset should be treated favourably”.

Wiltshire Core Strategy (WCS)

- Core Policy 6: Stonehenge
- Core Policy 51: Landscape
- Core Policy 57: Ensuring high quality design and place shaping
- Core Policy 58: Ensuring the conservation of the historic environment
- Core Policy 59: The Stonehenge World, Avebury and Associated Sites World Heritage Site and its setting

- Core Policy 69: Protection of the River Avon SAC Protection of the River Avon SAC

7. Summary of consultation responses

Winterbourne Stoke Parish Council

Object. Whilst more visitors to the WGHS is to be encouraged, it can only be so if travel to, from and within the WHS is managed in an environmentally sound manner. English Heritage failed to accurately predict visitor numbers. The major concerns with the application is that an increase in the number of coach and car parking spaces will result in a pro rata increase in the number of visitors to the Visitor Centre with more vehicles using unsuitable local roads and more vehicle movements within the WHS. English Heritage should be encouraged to adopt more realistic traffic management plans that suit the existing vehicle capacity, and adopt measures to increase the overall number and proportion of visitors arriving in the WHS in a sustainable fashion (ie on foot, by cycle, on horseback etc.) in line with the aspirations of the WHS Management Plan.

Chitterne Parish Council

Object. Unsustainable and inappropriate. No meaningful numerical data supplied to justify increase in parking capacity. The pre-booking system should be better managed. The proposal should be considered against the context of the traffic implications of other larger-scale developments nearby. Suggest imposition of restriction of local access routes for coaches.

Highways Agency

No objections. The proposal will not have a detrimental effect on the Strategic Road Network

English Heritage

On balance, we accept the conclusions of the Heritage Impact Assessment that this application for a temporary extension to the visitor centre coach park will not result in a major adverse impact upon the Outstanding Universal Value of the Stonehenge component of the Stonehenge, Avebury and Associated Sites World Heritage Site. Similarly the reversible and temporary nature of the application means that we accept there will be no permanent impacts upon the setting of individual Scheduled Monuments that lie in proximity to the application site. This planning advice is predicated upon this application being for *temporary* works, valid for a period of two years. We look forward to discussing a sustainable permanent solution to coach parking at the visitor centre in due course, should this temporary application be permitted.

Environment Agency

Holding objection - due to insufficient information on the facilities proposed to accommodate the increasing number of visitors in relation to the sewage treatment and water supply provisions at the site. There are ongoing permit compliance issues with the treatment plant. Also there are permitted limits on volumes of water abstracted. Should an increase in visitor numbers cause a potential to exceed permit limits then the applicant would be required to apply for a variation to the permit and/or licence.

Wiltshire Archaeology

Support subject to conditions. Two archaeological evaluations and a geophysical survey have taken place on the site, the latest in January of this year. No significant archaeological features have been present in the trenched evaluations in this area, although some Neolithic and Bronze Age flint has been found in the ploughsoil. Remains of this date are particularly relevant to the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the WHS. The evaluations indicate that there is unlikely to be a large number of significant heritage assets with an archaeological interest present on the site. However, given the archaeological sensitivity of the site, and the likely significance of even small or isolated features which may have been missed by the evaluation, I do consider it reasonable to ask for some mitigation on the proposed works. It is therefore recommended that a programme of archaeological works, likely to be in the form of a watching brief, is carried out as part of any development.

Wiltshire World Heritage Site Coordinator

I note that the application is temporary and that English Heritage is looking at longer term solutions to the current operational issues. I would very much welcome the opportunity to work with English Heritage at the Stonehenge Visitor Centre along with other partners such as Wiltshire Council, Visit Wiltshire, Go South Coast and Amesbury Town Council in taking forward the aspirations of the Stonehenge and Avebury WHS Management Plan 2015 to improve sustainable transport in and around the Stonehenge WHS. In particular in addressing Policy 6c, Action 146 "Develop a Sustainable Transport Strategy for the WHS to reduce parking pressure and deliver environmental benefits". The developments in the WHS and its vicinity including the proposed the Stonehenge Visitor Centre, Solstice Park, Royal Artillery Museum and increase in residents of Larkhill as part of the Army Rebasing 2020 project provide an opportunity for all relevant partners to take an holistic approach to sustainable travel in the area. I look forward to working with English Heritage on this project.

Wiltshire Ecology

Possible that the site may be used by ground nesting birds and therefore recommend a condition to protect breeding birds during construction.

Wiltshire Highways

Initial response (26/01/15):

- No evidence to support increase in staff car parking.
- Access to temporary contractors construction compound unacceptable
- Question whether the loss of 2m aisle width in existing coach park allows sufficient manoeuvring space for coaches.
- Require justification for the access to the coach park expansion being to the north and therefore requiring a turning circle, rather than accessing from the south and following a one-way system.
- Question why a 10m wide pedestrian route is required
- Question the need for a raised table crossing point for guides, drivers and staff
- The proposed surface is impermeable and no information has been provided regarding the discharge for rainwater runoff.
- The surface treatment for the turning circle is not considered robust enough to last the 2 years of use.
- Anticipate seeking a requirement for coach movements to travel via the A360 to and from the A303, avoiding use of The Packway, and for this to be enforced.

Second response (05/03/15):

- Initial issues resolved following receipt of amended/additional information except for the following elements:
- Require tracking for the proposed new area of coach parking
- Concern raised over tightness of turning circle
- Still concerned over suitability of surface material
- Concern raised over priorities at junction between existing coach park and proposed coach park
- Require tracking evidence for the Marshall interlocking blocks at the north-east corner
- Proposed signage is not a permitted variant to official road signs and could be confusing, however these are to be positioned on private land rather than highway land.
- Variation required to timber edge boarding and associated pegs.

Wiltshire Landscape - No objections

Natural England

Refer to the standing advice on protected species.

8. Publicity

The application was advertised by Site Notice and published on Wiltshire Council's website.

6 letters supporting the application were received, covering the following points:

- The proposal will be able to accommodate the larger foreign coaches, however the whole visitor centre development should have waited until the A303 has been widened and re-routed.
- Visit Wiltshire – *“Improving the quality of our visitor experience has been identified as a priority in Wiltshire’s Destination Management & Development Plan, published January 2015. The current coach parking facilities and walkways are inadequate for such an important visitor attraction. The provision of additional coach parking and improved walkways around the coach park will greatly assist the domestic and international travel trade, including tour operators and group travel organisers. The proposals will improve the overall visitor experience and would improve the quality of welcome received by visitors arriving in Wiltshire”*
- Royal Artillery Museum – *“The proposed improvements to parking at Stonehenge will improve the quality of experience offered to visitors, whatever the weather or time of year. This in turn will help maximise the benefits to local businesses, other visitor attractions and the wider economy from the continued public interest in the nation’s most famous ancient monument”*
- CIE Tours International – *“Since the new visitor centre opened we have been very concerned about the coach parking area, especially about the lack of space and the lack of walkways, which we feel puts our customers at great risk (having to walk behind and in front of moving vehicles). We feel it is an accident waiting to happen, and fully support Stonehenge’s application to have the area extended and proper walkways for pedestrians provided”*.
- Driver Guides Association – Dedicated staff parking will free up more space in the main car park. There should be a dedicated area for parking of taxi’s and private hire vehicles. Improvement to the visitor experience.
- Guild of Registered Tourist Guides – Addresses safety in the coach parking area, however sufficient staff training, signage and moveable barriers need to also be implemented.

29 letters objecting to the application were received, covering the following points:

- Traffic congestion
- Increase in visitors and traffic
- A303 and surrounding road system needs to be addressed
- Coaches are too large for village roads
- Impact to archaeology
- Pedestrian and cyclist safety issues along village roads
- Proposal is contrary to the aims of the WHS Management Plan
- Questions raised over what happens following the 2 year temporary period
- Pre-booking facility should be improved to better manage visitor numbers
- Requires better management of the site
- Questions the method adopted for assessing heritage impact within the submitted heritage statement.

- “blot on the landscape”
- Air pollution
- Noise pollution
- Loss of agricultural land
- Visual impact
- Due to unexpected visitor numbers, original “low environmental impact” land trains are being supplemented by diesel buses.
- Need to consider proposal in relation to other application sites e.g. Army rebasing, Wiltshire Grain Store, Royal Artillery Museum, Waste Disposal site at Chitterne and Solstice Park.
- Need to have a traffic management plan
- Visitor rubbish
- If approved, a condition should be imposed to restrict coach travel from using the B390 between Shrewton and the A36 at Knook Camp.
- Stonehenge Traffic Action Group – *“Dangerous situation thought out badly”*. *“Extra coach parking will result in more rat running through villages to avoid the hold ups on the A303 while the project to fix this road is put in place”*.
- Campaign to Protect Rural England (South Wiltshire) – *“Efforts should be made by English Heritage to not cater for such a large number of visitors. Instead, measures should be put in place within the present development footprint to improve safety and restrict the number of coaches and cars via pre-booking and strict control of entry to the facility. Coach parties should be turned away if there is no parking space”*.
- Campaign to Protect Rural England (Wiltshire) – Visual and archaeological harm. Longer term parking plans? *“Measures should be put in place within the present development footprint to improve safety and restrict the number of coaches and cars via pre-booking and strict control of entry to the facility”*.
- Cycling Opportunities Group for Salisbury – *“...planning permission should be refused until EH has a strategy and time-bound plan to reduce car-borne trips to the Centre and increase trips by public transport, cycling and walking in accordance with the Travel Plan for the site”*. Insufficient weight given to sustainable transport initiatives. Insufficient information with the parking assessment regarding staff access to the site.
- Stonehenge Alliance – Pre-booked access only. Sustainable/public transport options need to be considered. Impact on archaeology. Visual impact.

9. Planning Considerations

Principle of development

Paragraph 137 of the NPPF states *“Local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas and World Heritage Sites and within the setting of heritage assets to enhance or better reveal their significance. Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to or better reveal the significance of the asset should be treated favourably”*.

Core Policies 6 and 59 relate specifically to development within World Heritage Sites:

Core Policy 6

Stonehenge

The World Heritage Site and its setting will be protected so as to sustain its Outstanding Universal Value in accordance with Core Policy 59.

New visitor facilities will be supported where they:

- i. Return Stonehenge to a more respectful setting befitting its World Heritage Site status*
- ii. Include measures to mitigate the negative impacts of the roads*
- iii. Introduce a greatly enhanced visitor experience in a high quality visitor centre*
- iv. Implement an environmentally sensitive method of managing visitors to and from Stonehenge*
- v. Include a tourist information element, which highlights other attractions and facilities on offer in the surrounding area and raises the profile of Wiltshire.*

Core Policy 59

The Stonehenge, Avebury and associated sites World Heritage Site

The Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the World Heritage Site will be sustained by:

- i. Giving precedence to the protection of the World Heritage Site and its setting*
- ii. Development not adversely affecting the World Heritage Site and its attributes of OUV. This includes the physical fabric, character, appearance, setting or views into or out of the World Heritage Site*
- iii. Seeking opportunities to support and maintain the positive management of the World Heritage Site through development that delivers improved conservation, presentation and interpretation and reduces the negative impacts of roads, traffic and visitor pressure*
- iv. Requiring developments to demonstrate that full account has been taken of their impact upon the World Heritage Site and its setting. Proposals will need to demonstrate that the development will have no individual, cumulative or consequential adverse effect upon the Site and its OUV. Consideration of opportunities for enhancing the World Heritage Site and sustaining its OUV should also be demonstrated. This will include proposals for climate change mitigation and renewable energy schemes.*

Therefore the principle of development within the Stonehenge World Heritage Site is acceptable subject to it meeting all the criteria of Core Policies 6 and 59.

Landscape and Visual Impact

Regard has to be taken to the recent refusal of the resurfacing of the existing overflow car park at Stonehenge which is approximately 300m to the south of the proposed coach park expansion (14/12107/FUL). The resurfacing works were refused for the following reasons:

The surfacing of the overflow car park by reason of its appearance and lack of landscaping would be a prominent and intrusive addition to the World Heritage Site detracting from its open and undeveloped character, contrary to Core Policies 6 and 59 of adopted Wiltshire Core Strategy.

Clearly the applications are similar in that both involve the tarmacking of an existing grassed/agricultural area. The car park application was already used by cars as an overflow car park, so the presence of cars in that location was already a regular occurrence. Wiltshire Councillors therefore refused the application based on the impact of the change from grass to tarmac. The current application differs in that the area is not currently used for any parking, therefore not only is the ground surface altering to tarmac, but there will also be the added presence of up to 30 coaches in the area. Other differences between the proposals include the presence of existing screening vegetation and the undulating landscape. The overflow car park is located on a hillside at a higher level than the main area of car parking with no landscaping. The proposed coach park expansion is to be located on a slightly flatter piece of land which is seen in the context of three sections of tall trees and the ancillary building. Whilst the proposed coach park will be visible from several locations, given the backdrop that it is in the proposal is not considered to have a significantly detrimental impact on the landscape. In addition, consent is only requested for a period of two years, after which the proposed works will be fully reversible and the land will be returned to its existing state. This can be controlled via a timed condition.

The Wiltshire Landscape Officer was consulted on the proposal and raised no objections.

Highway Impact

Neither the Highways Agency nor Wiltshire Highways have raised objections to the proposal based on impact to the strategic or local road networks. Given that these are professional opinions on the situation, it is considered inappropriate to recommend the refusal of the application based on highway safety grounds or congestion impacts despite the large number of objections that have been raised on this issue. Whilst some objectors have stated that traffic surveys taken over a long period of time have proved that traffic going through local villages has increased since the opening of the new SHVC, no evidence has been submitted to back up these claims.

English Heritage have stated that the aim of the additional coach parking spaces is not to encourage additional visitors to come to Stonehenge, rather it is to better manage the current numbers of coaches that are coming to Stonehenge. It has been stated that coaches are finding there are no spaces left to park in the coach park, and therefore passengers are disembarking at Stonehenge and the coach will then leave the site and park elsewhere, then returning to collect the passengers, thus doubling the number of journeys taken on the local road network. With a sufficient number of spaces to accommodate all coaches at peak times, this doubling of coach journeys would not be occurring. It is possible therefore that if the expansion of the coach park did result in

more coaches visiting Stonehenge, the removal of the double journeys at peak times would counter balance the increase in coach journeys. No indication has been given to the number of coaches currently not being able to find parking spaces within the coach park, nor is it known whether more coaches would come to Stonehenge as a result of a larger coach park. Therefore it is unknown to what extent this counter balance of coach movements would occur in reality.

The suggestion that coaches should be required to travel to Stonehenge via the A360 and A303 rather than The Packway is not something that the Local Planning Authority could enforce, and therefore this is not a possible planning condition.

Two letters of representation stated that the proposal needs to be considered in relation to other nearby application sites e.g. Army rebasing, Wiltshire Grain Store, Royal Artillery Museum, Waste Disposal site at Chittern and Solstice Park. The Highways Agency and Wiltshire Highways both have no objections to the principle of the expansion of the coach park, considering the proposal to not have a detrimental impact on either the local road network or the strategic road network.

The initial consultation response from Wiltshire Highways highlighted the lack of evidence submitted to support the need for 50 staff car parking spaces. The additional information submitted stated that English Heritage planned to do a survey of staff travel patterns and visitor traffic over the coming months, and as a result of the prematurity of requesting the staff car parking, this aspect has now been removed from the proposal. The area of land that was to be used for staff car parking will be grassed and have gentle mounding to ensure that the area is not perceived as a potential parking area for the duration of the temporary use.

Wiltshire Highways also raised a number of resolvable issues. These issues and English Heritage's responses are set out below:

- Access to temporary contractors construction compound unacceptable on highway safety grounds – The temporary access has been removed. The existing exit from coach park will be widened to allow temporary two-way traffic during the construction phase.
- Question whether the loss of 2m aisle width in existing coach park allows sufficient manoeuvring space for coaches – A vehicle swept path analysis has been undertaken to demonstrate that 12m coaches can park in the modified existing coach parking area with the aisle width reduced by 2m. In addition, it is confirmed that the proposed new coach parking area for 15m coaches is to be completed before the existing area is to be modified.
- Require justification for the access to the new coach park being to the north and therefore requiring a turning circle, rather than accessing from the south and following a one-way system – Justification has been provided in the following statement: *“The layout was developed specifically to (a) provide a common*

access route for all coaches to parking areas which can be simply signed, managed by EH staff and passes the existing drop off point for tour guides at the west end of the Ancillary Building; (b) move the drop off point for all able-bodied visitors from the existing layby along the north side of the Ancillary Building (which is often highly congested) to the coach parking areas; and (c) enhance visitor safety by providing as far as possible safe walking routes which are segregated from vehicle access roads and manoeuvring areas. The proposed layout achieves all these objectives, and in particular objective (c), by avoiding coaches crossing the walking routes for visitors from the new coach parking area and the west side of the existing coach parking area where visitors will alight, along the proposed footpath/visitor assembly area on the north side of the existing access road and to the Visitor Centre Building and Visitor Transit System. The proposed alternative "direct access to the area from the south" would compromise all 3 objectives."

- Question why a 10m wide pedestrian route is required – This 10m wide stretch is to be a visitor assembly area for tour guides to assemble groups and hand out tickets, audio guides etc. This width of pavement is required in order to allow groups to pass each other safely.
- Question the need for a raised table crossing point for guides, drivers and staff – This is to be used as a safety measure to keep coach speeds to a minimum and enhance pedestrian safety.
- The proposed surface is impermeable and no information has been provided regarding the discharge for rainwater runoff – Drainage issues are discussed in the ecology section of this report.
- The surface treatment for the turning circle is not considered robust enough – With regular maintenance English Heritage believe the surface treatment will be adequate for 2 years.
- Tracking required for the new area of coach parking including turning circle and access road – Additional plans were received on 25/03/15 showing sufficient manoeuvring space. At the time of writing this report, Wiltshire Highways had not commented on these additional plans. Any comments received will be added to late correspondence at Southern Area Committee.
- Proposed signage is not a permitted variant to official road signs and could be confusing, however these are to be positioned on private land rather than highway land. English Heritage have also stated that during peak times parking marshals will be present to help direct coaches to the appropriate parking area.
- Variation required to timber edge boarding and associated pegs – English Heritage have confirmed this was a mistake on the plan and will submit an amended plan in due course.

Some objectors have stated that English Heritage need to better manage visitors through the pre-booking system and by having a Traffic Management Plan. There is an existing Traffic Management Plan agreed under planning permission S/2009/1527, however if this is not complied with, this is a matter for Enforcement to look into, rather than being resolved by this current application. Regarding the pre-booking system, English Heritage have stated that any coaches that have not pre-booked are turned away, however the problems occur when coaches have missed their pre-booked slot and therefore coaches often arrive in bulk rather than each at their own allotted arrival time.

Some letters of representation have stated that no permission should be granted until the A303 has been upgraded and the Long Barrow roundabout being redesigned/replaced. The expansion of the coach park is not considered to have a direct impact on these areas (as confirmed by Wiltshire Highways and the Highways Agency) and therefore it would not be reasonable to request any works are done to these areas prior to the permission being granted.

Further comments were received regarding air pollution and noise pollution – presumably this is in reference to additional coach movements. As stated above, there are not expected to be substantially different visitor numbers as a result of the proposal.

Other letters of representation that have stated that the proposal would result in an increase in litter. The control of litter on the site is largely a management issue for English Heritage but it is not anticipated that there would be such a significant increase in litter as to warrant refusal of the application.

Heritage Impact

Two archaeological evaluations and a geophysical survey have taken place on the site, the latest in January of this year. No significant archaeological features have been present in the trenched evaluations in this area, although some Neolithic and Bronze Age flint has been found in the ploughsoil. Remains of this date are particularly relevant to the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the WHS.

The NPPF says: *141. Local planning authorities should make information about the significance of the historic environment gathered as part of plan-making or development management publicly accessible. They should also require developers to record and advance understanding of the significance of any heritage assets to be lost (wholly or in part) in a manner proportionate to their importance and the impact, and to make this evidence (and any archive generated) publicly accessible. However, the ability to record evidence of our past should not be a factor in deciding whether such loss should be permitted.*

The evaluations indicate that there is unlikely to be a large number of significant heritage assets with an archaeological interest present on the site. However, given the archaeological sensitivity of the site, and the likely significance of even small or isolated

features which may have been missed by the evaluation, it is considered reasonable to ask for some mitigation on the proposed works. It is therefore recommended that a programme of archaeological works, likely to be in the form of a watching brief, is carried out as part of any development.

English Heritage confirmed they accept the conclusions of the Heritage Impact Assessment that the proposal would not result in a major adverse impact upon the Outstanding Universal Value of the Stonehenge component of the Stonehenge, Avebury and Associated Sites World Heritage Site. Similarly the reversible and temporary nature of the application means that English Heritage also accept there will be no permanent impacts upon the setting of individual Scheduled Monuments that lie in proximity to the application site. This planning advice is predicated upon this application being for *temporary* works, valid for a period of two years. The Wiltshire World Heritage Site Coordinator builds on this, stating that as this is a temporary proposal, they look forward to discussing and negotiating a long term sustainable solution to the problem.

Ecological Impact

The Environment Agency have raised a holding objection on the proposal due to insufficient information on the facilities proposed to accommodate the increased number of visitors as a result of the increased number of coach spaces. The Environment Agency have reiterated that they do not object to the principle of the expansion of the coach park, but the concern is based on the impact of the potential increase in tourist numbers on the existing sewage treatment and water supply provisions on the site. As a result the Environment Agency have requested further information and assurances that the existing facilities are suitable for an increase in usage. The Environment Agency also highlight that there are ongoing permit compliant issues with the treatment plant, which is permitted for a maximum discharge volume of 25m³ a day, and also with the licence for the volume of water abstracted for water supply. Should an increase in visitor numbers cause a potential to exceed permit limits then the applicant would be required to apply for a variation to the permit and/or licence.

Wiltshire Highways highlighted in their initial consultation response that insufficient information had been submitted regarding the drainage of the expanded coach park. Subsequently, a drainage strategy was submitted as additional information. The existing soakaway structure and petrol interceptor were sized only to accommodate flows from the existing coach park and therefore a separate petrol interceptor and soakaway is proposed to the south-east of the expanded coach park. The Environment Agency has provided no objections to this form of surface water management, and given this follows the same method used within the existing coach park, the surface water drainage methods as proposed are considered to be appropriate.

No ecological information has been provided to support the application. The application site covers 2.51 ha, approximately 1.5ha of which comprises development on land which is currently managed as arable. The remainder is already developed as part of

the Stonehenge visitor facilities. The development lies 1.5km from the Salisbury Plain SAC / SPA. Given the relative scale of the development, the Wiltshire Ecologist does not consider it is likely to have a significant effect on stone curlew which are a feature of the SPA. In addition, the development does not sterilise a significant proportion of the extensive landscape beyond the SPA boundary that contributes to supporting the SPA features. Natural England does not raise any concerns in relation to the SPA.

Stone curlews are also listed on annex 1 of the EU Birds Directive and Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and are thus protected from disturbance while they are breeding. The nearest that stone curlews have been recorded nesting is approximately 1.6 km away. At this distance, these nest sites are unlikely to be affected by the development proposals if they are used in the future.

It is possible, even likely, that the site may be used by ground nesting birds such as skylark or possibly even stone curlew. Therefore the Wiltshire Ecologist recommends that a condition is used to ensure that these birds are not harmed during construction.

Misc

An Environmental Impact Assessment Screening Request was submitted for the proposal prior to submitting the planning application. It was concluded that whilst the proposed development was categorised as Schedule 2 Development, the proposal was not likely to have significant environment impacts and as such an Environmental Impact Assessment was not required.

10. Conclusion

It is estimated that English Heritage will provide the Environment Agency with sufficient information prior to the Southern Area Committee in order to remove the holding objection. For these reasons, this application is recommended for approval, subject to a resolution that the existing sewage treatment and water supply provisions can cope with any potential increase in visitor numbers. The proposed expansion of the existing coach park by a further 30 spaces is considered to be acceptable as a result of its temporary and fully reversible nature, together with its limited impact on highways, heritage, ecology, and landscape and visual amenity. As such the proposal is considered to be in accordance with paragraph 137 of the National Planning Policy Framework and Core Policies 6, 51, 57, 58, 59 and 69 of the adopted Wiltshire Core Strategy.

11. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended the application be APPROVED, subject to the following Conditions:

(1) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans:

Updated Planning Statement dated February 2015 received 19/02/15

Parking Strategy Statement dated 19/02/15 received 19/02/15
Drainage Strategy dated 18/02/15 received 19/02/15
Response to Wiltshire Highways comments dated 19/02/15 received 19/02/15
Response to Environment Agency comments dated 24/03/15 received 24/03/15
Heritage Impact Assessment dated December 2014 received 23/12/14
Heritage Impact Assessment Addendum dated February 2015 received 19/02/15
61034252-DR-C-502 Rev T02 dated 18/02/15 received 19/02/15
61034252-DR-C-503 Rev T02 dated 18/02/15 received 19/02/15
61034252-DR-C-504 Rev P02 dated 05/01/15 received 05/01/15
61034252-DR-C-506 Rev T02 dated 18/02/15 received 19/02/15
61034252-SK-C-500 Rev P01 dated 18/02/15 received 19/02/15
61034252-DR-C-000 Rev T01 dated 11/02/15 received 19/02/15
61034252-DR-C-001 Rev T02 dated 18/02/15 received 19/02/15
61034252-DR-C-100 Rev T02 dated 18/02/15 received 19/02/15
61034252-DR-C-501 Rev T02 dated 17/02/15 received 19/02/15
61034252-SK-C-501 Rev P01 dated 16/03/15 received 25/03/15
61034252-SK-C-502 Rev P01 dated 16/03/15 received 25/03/15
8982-1-TM1 Rev 0 dated 06/01/15 received 19/02/15
8982-2-TM2 Rev 2 dated 10/02/15 received 19/02/15
8982-3-VS2 Rev 1 dated 04/02/15 received 19/02/15
8982-4-TM1 Rev 2 dated 10/02/15 received 19/02/15
8982-6-VS1 Rev 0 dated 08/01/15 received 19/02/15
8982-7-TM1 Rev 0 dated 13/02/15 received 19/02/15

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

(2) No development shall commence within the area indicated (proposed development site) until:

- A written programme of archaeological investigation, which should include on-site work and off-site work such as the analysis, publishing and archiving of the results, has been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority; and
- The approved programme of archaeological work has been carried out in accordance with the approved details.

REASON: To enable the recording of any matters of archaeological interest.

Further Recommendations: The work should be conducted by a professionally recognised archaeological contractor in accordance with a written scheme of investigation approved by this office and there will be a financial implication for the applicant.

(3) Before construction works commence, a method statement prepared by a professional ecologist will be submitted for planning authority approval demonstrating the measures that will be put in place to ensure that breeding birds are not disturbed or harmed during the construction period. The works will be undertaken in accordance with the recommendations of the approved method statement.

REASON: To avoid harm to ground nesting birds during the breeding season

(4) Prior to the commencement of the development details for temporary parking of coaches displaced from the development area during the course of the works shall be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be undertaken in accordance with the approved details.

REASON: To ensure an adequate supply of coach parking at the Stonehenge Visitor Centre site during the works.

(5) The coach park expansion hereby permitted shall be removed in its entirety and the land restored to its former condition on or before 09/04/2017 in accordance with a scheme of work submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

REASON: In order for a permanent and sustainable solution to be found to coach parking for the Stonehenge Visitor Centre.