



**National
Trust**

Planning and Heritage Statement

Background

The National Trust owns and operates car park payment machines across their visitor locations in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. The income generated is crucial to delivering our conservation work. The National Trust is undertaking a project to replace the machines and deliver a reliable and industry-standard set of solutions at car parks across their visitor locations. The old equipment is now obsolete and inefficient, and its poor performance causes dissatisfaction for supporters and impacts on the income which can be generated.

The new, modern industry-standard equipment being installed is more accessible and will provide a more seamless experience for visitors. It is smaller in size, so less intrusive in its surroundings. It will also be paperless, with tickets no longer required to be displayed in vehicles, which has the added benefit of improving visitor movement within car parks.

The systems can be updated remotely, reducing the need for on-site servicing and the associated travel emissions. Recyclable or biodegradable materials are used in the construction of the new equipment, supporting circular economy goals.

Proposal

The National Trust is applying for planning permission and advertisement consent for the erection of 3 new pay machines in the Hither Road car park and the erection of 3 new signs providing information on the parking requirements and payment.

Within the existing car park (including the overflow), there are 5 pay machines. As part of the proposals, these will all be removed and replaced with 3 machines, none of which are to be sited in the overflow parking area. The solar powered terminals are cash free and offer visitors the option to pay via a Parking App or via a card if not a National Trust member.

The 3 advertisements will be 600mm x 860mm in size, non-illuminated and made of Tricoya (durable, modified MDF) and attached to wooden posts with a height of 1.6M from ground level. 2 would be sited adjacent to the proposed 2 new terminals at main pedestrian entrance and exit to the car park. The third would be placed on an existing wooden 1.67m post adjacent to the replacement terminal in the center of the car park.

Heritage Impact Assessment

The application site lies outside the Lacock Conservation Area and the Grade II Registered Park and Garden. However, any proposals within it are considered to affect the setting of these designated assets. It is a main entrance point for the large proportion of visitors to the village and therefore people's appreciation and experience of this significant historical asset start in the car park area.

Lacock is of great significance for its high concentration of historic buildings, which have high historic, evidential, aesthetic, and cultural heritage value. Lacock Abbey represents one of the most complete survivals of a medieval monastic house in the UK. Like many other monastic buildings, it was converted into a country house post Dissolution but retains the remarkably complete Cloister, Chapter House, Warming House, medieval wall paintings / graffiti, tiles and important surviving medieval roof structures of dormitory and refectory.

The garden and park of Lacock Abbey comprise a multi-period designed landscape with important archaeological evidence of earlier gardens, that is of national historic, aesthetic, cultural and evidential significance. Evidence from the late 17th century shows a variety of formal gardens laid out on the south side of the abbey, adjacent to the former Bath-London Road. The 18th century garden was the most extensive, with contributions from notable 18th century garden designers including Stephen Switzer (1682-1745), Capability Brown (1716-1783) and William Emes (1729-1803). Until the late 19th century, the gardens covered approximately 19 acres (7.7 hectares) but were reduced to 11 acres (4.45 ha) when the area of the former water garden was enclosed as a field. Since 2019 the water garden area has been taken out of agricultural tenancy use and reverted to parkland.

Hither Way was constructed in the 1970s and serves as the alternative route to Lacock High Street for traffic heading in the direction of Bowden Hill following the introduction of restrictions outside of the Abbey. The access/egress to the main National Trust car park is situated along this length of road - a pedestrian crossing was installed in 2016 – 2017. This is predominately a tourism area with no residential housing in the immediate vicinity.

Within the Conservation Area there are varied and attractive views, including:

- Carefully composed and framed vistas within the Abbey's Garden and park
- Views from and to the village, in which prominent buildings – notably the Church, are landmarks.
- Views within the village, some enclosed/ contained and others more open and out into the wider landscape.

The Lacock Conservation Management Plan (2012) places the car park in Character Area 5. The document states; *'The character area comprises the National Trust car park with a block of woodland to the north, through which a gravel path takes visitors along the roadside to the Abbey and village entrance. A dense line of mature trees forms the eastern and northern boundaries, screening the car park from the Abbey.'* The Plan determined that the car park is of neutral significance.

Given the existing infrastructure within the car park, the proposed reduction in payment terminals and the siting and visual appearance of the payment terminals and advertisements, our proposals are considered to be sympathetic to the setting of these heritage assets and not cause harm to the special interests of the Conservation Area and the Registered Park and Garden.

Visual Impact

The proposals are for an existing and well-established car park on the edge of the historic village. There are existing pay machines and advertisements spread across the car park. As part of a National Car Parking Project, the proposals seek to rationalize car park infrastructure and also improve the facilities for visitors.

The reduction in 2 parking machines is considered to be of benefit to the character and visual amenities of the car park and wider area. The 3 new machines which are solar powered will be sited at the entrance and in the center of the car park. They have a slimmer profile than the existing ones.

2 new advertisements will be placed close to the 2 new machines near the entrance/exit of the car park. They will be sited to the side, adjacent to the existing main sign which provides information on the village and Abbey. Photos of the proposed location can be viewed in the Appendix. Given their position to the side, they do not disrupt the flow of pedestrians or appear visually intrusive when you leave the car park on foot to head towards the village center and Abbey.

There is a mature oak tree behind the existing Lacock sign. The 2 new advertisements would be sited on the grassed area under the canopy of this tree, with the new pay machines on the existing hardstanding slightly to the south-west of the tree. Whilst this tree is not protected by virtue of a Tree Preservation Order or a Conservation Area designation, it does hold amenity value within this locality. Given the nature of the proposals, their lack of foundations and small-scale nature of the machines and adverts, it is not considered the proposed development would have an adverse impact on this tree or surrounding vegetation.

The 3rd advertisement will be erected on an existing wooden post next to the new pay machines. This is an area with existing hard surfacing, posts and gates. The advert will be read in conjunction with the replacement pay machine and is not considered to harm the visual amenities of the parking area or wider locality.

Ecology and Biodiversity Net Gain

It is considered that the proposal for the 3 pay machines is exempt from Biodiversity Net Gain. Paragraph 17 of Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and the Biodiversity Gain Requirements 2024 set out the specific exemptions from BNG. The footprint of the 3 machines does not impact more than 25sqm of onsite habitat and is not classed as Priority Habitat. The machines will be placed on a concrete base on existing hard surfacing and where existing terminals are already sited.

Conclusion

It is concluded that the proposed pay machines and advertisements will not have an adverse impact on the visual amenities of the locality or harm the setting of the Conservation Area and Registered Park and Garden. The proposals are sited within an established car park and will be viewed in conjunction with the existing use and appearance of this space.

APPENDIX A



2 new pay machines will replace this existing one in the same location.

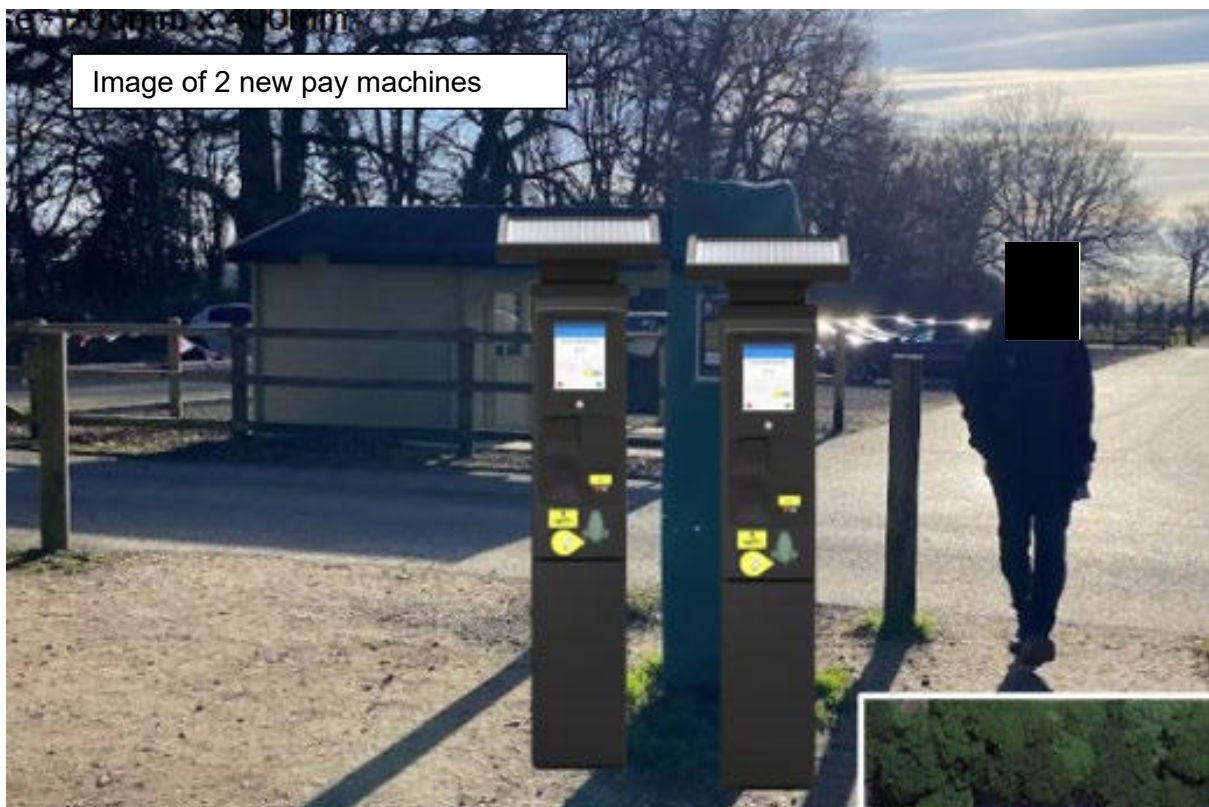


Image of 2 new pay machines



Area for new signage – adjacent to bench



Existing machine to be removed and replaced with new terminal. New signage to be placed on existing wooden pole adjacent to the terminal.



Image of new parking machine

Payment terminal
Solar powered
4G data connection
Contactless only payment
Existing terminal to be removed
and new terminal to be installed
using conversion plate

This location is replacing an existing
terminal to avoid queues at the
pedestrian exit terminal location

Existing post for new
advertisement

