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■ Our ref: 2536/R001
Your ref:

Planning Department
Wiltshire Council
Monkton Park Offices
Monkton Hill
Chippenham
SN15 1ER

27 May 2026

Dear Sirs

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990

PLANNING APPLICATION FOR THE PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION AND OPERATION OF A GROUND MOUNTED SOLAR PV ARRAY TOGETHER WITH ALL ASSOCIATED WORKS, ANCILLARY INFRASTRUCTURE AND EQUIPMENT, LANDSCAPING, BIODIVERSITY IMPROVEMENTS AND ACCESS – LAND AT STOURHEAD, NEAR MERE, WILTSHIRE, BA12 6QD

Aardvark EM Limited is instructed by National Trust for Places of Historic Interest ('the Applicant') to submit a planning application for the following Proposed Development on Land at Stourhead, Near Mere, Wiltshire, BA12 6QD ('the Site'):

'Proposed Construction and operation of a ground mounted solar PV array together with all associated works, ancillary infrastructure and equipment, landscaping, biodiversity improvements and access.'

The Proposed Development will generate renewable electricity for a temporary period of 40 years, to directly supply the National Trust's buildings, visitor facilities and estate operations at Stourhead, significantly reducing reliance on fossil fuels and supporting the Trust's net zero ambitions by 2030. By replacing imported grid electricity with clean, locally generated power, the scheme will deliver measurable carbon savings, improve long-term energy security, and enhance the resilience of the estate's operations. Any surplus electricity produced will be exported to the National Grid, contributing to the wider decarbonisation of the national energy supply.

From the detailed impact assessments undertaken to accompany the Application, it is clear that the Proposed Development is sustainable. It would have no significant adverse effects on landscape designations or the historic environment. Other designated assets within the environs of the proposed scheme are suitably screened and distant from the Site to avoid significant adverse impacts.

Biodiversity would be significantly improved with a 63.92% habitat biodiversity net gain and 37.49% hedgerow biodiversity net gain. Safe road access has been designed, and residential amenity is protected from noise and glint and glare impacts.

While the temporary development proposed is in use it is anticipated that the Moderate Modified Grassland proposed will be maintained by regular sheep grazing consequently there would be no permanent loss of agricultural land.

The submitted design for the proposed development is the result of an iterative design process informed by environmental assessments and consultations with the local residents and representatives to improve the scheme and make it acceptable in planning terms.

Pre-application advice was provided by Wiltshire Council (reference ENQ/2025/01883) on the 13 January 2026. A public consultation event was held between Monday 12th January and Friday 16th January 2026 inclusive at Stourhead National Trust site, where a Concept Design of the Proposed development was presented to the visitors to the site, local residents and relevant consultants for their review and feedback. A full and detailed account of the pre-application consultation process is provided in the Design and Access Statement to accompany the planning application.

The benefits of the Proposed Development considerably outweigh the negligible impacts identified, and planning conditions can be applied to ensure the full mitigation and enhancements are delivered in practice. This conclusion is reached based on a full and robust assessment of the likely environmental impacts of the Proposed Development, as presented within the accompanying supporting assessments and reports.

Overall, there is an urgent need for the Proposed Development; it is suitable to the Site and its surroundings; it accords with national and local planning policy and all relevant material planning considerations; and will deliver significant biodiversity benefits.

In summary, based on the Proposed Development and assessments undertaken, the Site is deemed suitable for a development of this nature in terms of planning policy and guidance, and planning permission should be granted. It is considered that in line with paragraphs 11 and 48 of the NPPF (December 2024) and Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, when undertaking the planning balance, the Proposed Development would accord with the local development plan and there are no material considerations which indicate otherwise.

The planning application has been prepared and submitted in line with the Local Planning Authority validation checklist and is supported by the documentation set out below:

Document	Author	Reference
Covering letter	Aardvark EM Ltd	2536-R001
Design and Access Statement	Aardvark EM Ltd	2536-R002
Planning Statement	Aardvark EM Ltd	2536-R003
Submission Pack	Aardvark EM Ltd	2536-R004
EIA Screening Opinion	Wiltshire Council	PL/2025/09055
Pre-Application Response	Wiltshire Council	ENQ/2025/01883
Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment	Swan Paul	SPP/3417/doc.1
Agricultural Land Classification	Reading Agricultural Consultants	10868
Construction Traffic Management Plan	AWP	2032
Ecological Impact Assessment	Tyler Grange	18103_R02a_JS
Biodiversity Net Gain Statement	Tyler Grange	18103_R03a_JS
Flood Risk Assessment and Preliminary Drainage Strategy	RMA Associates	RMA-C2899
Glint & Glare Assessment	Neo Environmental	Glint & Glare Assessment
Noise Impact Assessment	Inacoustic	25-302
Heritage Impact Assessment	Headland Archaeology	P25-274

The application also includes the following plans and drawings.

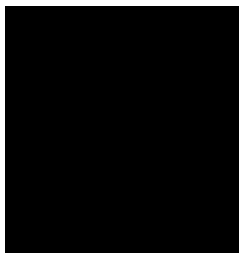
Drawing title	Drawing Number/Reference
Location Plan	SP01 – Revision 06
Proposed Site Layout Plan	PL01 – Revision 06
Existing Site Layout Plan	PL00 – Revision 06
Distribution Board	SD01 – Revision 02
String Inverter	SD02 – Revision 02
PV Detail	SD03 – Revision 02
CCTV Camera	SD04 – Revision 02
Perimeter Fenceline	SD05 – Revision 02
Access Track	SD06 – Revision 02

The above documents should be read as a whole to gain a complete understanding to fully understand the Proposed Development, its potential effects and planning merits.

The planning application documentation has been submitted to the Council via the Planning Portal and the application fee paid directly to the Council by the Applicant.

We trust the submitted documentation is sufficient for the Council to validate and register the application without delay. However if you do require any further information, please contact me on 01984 624989.

Yours faithfully



Zac Hemborough BSc Hons MSc MRTPI

Senior Planning Consultant
For Aardvark EM Limited