



Kate Clements
Wiltshire Council

24-06-2026

Dear Kate Clements

**T&CP (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 & Planning
(Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Regulations 1990**

**STOURHEAD, STOURTON, WARMINSTER, BA12 6QD, ENGLAND
Application No. PL/2026/03394**

Thank you for your letter of 2026-06-11 regarding the above application for planning permission. On the basis of the information available to date, we offer the following advice.

Summary

The proposed solar PV array is located outside of Stourhead registered park and garden (RPG) and would not be visible from its boundary, or designed viewpoints and circulation routes within it. This is due to the nature of the topography, existing mature planting and intervening fields. It would be partially visible from the adjacent public footpath linking Bonham Cottage and House to Stourton village.

Historic England does not object to the proposed solar PV array, as it will not adversely impact the setting, thus significance of Stourhead RPG and Stourhead House. Nor would it impact the significance of Bonham Cottage and House.

Historic England Advice

Historic England was consulted by the applicant, the National Trust, during the early stages of the project and visited the proposed site on 1st October 2025. Written pre-app advice was not provided as the scheme was not sufficiently developed at that time.

Significance of heritage assets

Stourhead is an internationally acclaimed 18th century English landscape garden. The classically inspired design was begun by financier and owner Henry Hoare in the 1740s.



It incorporates ever-changing vistas around a central lake, replete with exceptional garden buildings, including The Pantheon, Temple of Apollo, Grotto, Temple of Flora, and Gothic Cottage, which are grade I listed. It also incorporates Stourton village, notably the Church of St Peter (grade I) which stands prominently to the south-east of the lake.

Hoare commissioned pioneering architect Colen Campbell to design the Palladian style country house, Stourhead House (grade I), located on the eastern edge of the gardens. Leading aristocratic architect Henry Flitcroft and sculptor William Privett were commissioned to design the garden buildings and statues. These together with other garden features depict the historical and political iconography and symbolism reflecting the Hoare family's place and role in 18th century society.

The planting structure initiated by Hoare was carefully arranged and managed around the lake and designed walks to create drama, revealing and framing views. It was subsequently enhanced by his grandson Richard Colt Hoare. The gardens became very influential during the English Landscape Movement and, as tourism rose in popularity during the mid to late-18th century, well documented by writers and commentators of the period. Their exceptional historic interest is reflected in their Grade I registered park and garden (RPG) status.

Bonham Cottage and House (grade II*), a 14th century manor and former chapel, is located approximately 500m to the south-west of the application site. A public right of way runs adjacent to the site, linking the manor with the Church of St Peter at Stourton village.

Impact on heritage assets

The proposed ground-mounted solar PV array would supply the main visitor facilities at Stourhead. It would be located in agricultural land approximately 150m south of the RPG, and south-east of the visitor car park. It would comprise 5 rows of panels, 2.85m high and 4.78m wide, covering an area of 1.47ha. It would be enclosed with a 2.4m timber post and wire deer fence, with 4m high, pole-mounted CCTV cameras located in each corner.

Due to the relatively flat topography and the intervening fields and hedgerows, the site would not be visible from the RPG boundary or existing visitor car park and arrival area. The southern edge of the RPG comprises mature woodland, principally Bonham Hanging plantation, and descends steeply northwards to the central lake and Stourton village. Therefore, the site is not visible from any designed viewpoints or circulation



routes within the RPG.

The proposed hedge along the northern boundary of the site would help screen the solar PV panels from the adjacent public footpath. The extent to which it will be screened would be dependent on what height the hedge is managed at maturity.

The proposed pole-mounted CCTV cameras are likely to be more visible than the panels given their height. Therefore, we query the requirement for four, given the modest size of the array and rural setting. We note in the Design & Access Statement includes an alternative, less visually intrusive option for consideration, comprising ground-based sensors. This would be preferable to the cameras as it would lessen the visual impact.

The existing woodland planting to the west and south of the site is relatively new but will provide a dense screen once it has become established. Similarly, the existing hedge and orchard planting will provide screening to the east. Therefore, in the long term the site will be largely visually contained.

Historic England's position

Historic England does not object to the proposed solar PV array. We concur with the assessment and conclusion of the application's Heritage Statement that the proposal would not adversely impact the setting, thus significance of Stourhead RPG and Stourhead House.

There would be some visual impact on the public footpath north of the site that links Bonham Cottage and House to Stourton village, but this would reduce over time when surrounding planting has become established. The setting and significance of the heritage asset would not be adversely affected.

Regarding security proposals for the site, the proposed CCTV camera option would be more visually conspicuous than a ground-based sensor option. Therefore, our preference would be the latter option to lessen the visual impact of the scheme.

Recommendation

Historic England recommends that your Council may approve this application, which would not harm the significance of Stourhead House and RPG (grade I), and Bonham Cottage and House (grade II*) unless it finds that other considerations indicate refusal.

If there are any material changes to the proposals beyond those we have suggested,



please contact us. If you propose to determine the application in its current form, please inform us of the date of the committee and send us a copy of your report at the earliest opportunity. Please also advise us of the decision in due course.

Yours sincerely

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CC. Joanne Fisher, Inspector of Historic Buildings and Places, Historic England