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Heritage Statement

Alton Towers Resort: Splash Landings Hotel
Proposed new CHP container and associated items to rear of splash landings hotel

PP-04486247

Introduction

This heritage statement has been produced by Smytheman Architectural on behalf of Merlin attractions operations. It should be read in conjunction with planning application ref. PP-04486247.

Site and Surroundings

Alton Towers Resort is situated in the Churnet Valley, 17 miles east of the city of Stoke on Trent. The main site is located on a plateau from which overlooks the surrounding valleys. There are extensive areas of woodland, particularly on the steep downward slopes of the southern and eastern boundaries. The woodland serves to screen the main parts of the parks development from the surrounding area.

The site is located within the Alton and Farley conservation area and contains a number of listed buildings. The woodland to the south are registered sites of biological importance.

Significance of the Historic Fabric and Area

The gardens at Alton Towers were recognised as having particular historical significance in The Conservation Plan for Alton Towers (2010) as follows:

'The collection of garden buildings at Alton is quite extraordinary. There is a very large number of them concentrated into a small space. Such juxtapositions provoked adverse criticism in the 19th century from garden architects such as J.C. Loudon (1783-1843) and Nesfield. More recently, Pevsner said "far too many buildings, in far too many styles, far too close together". Loudon and Nesfield were two outstanding garden professionals of their time and it is reasonable to include that the criticisms were well founded. An alternative view set out by Michael Hussey in Country Life (1960) and supported by Michael Fisher, is that Loudon did not see the gardens in their mature state and failed to appreciate the earl's intention to create views of the house from the garden rather than the other way around. However, even in 1840, Loudon noted that some trees were growing out of control suggesting that the landscape was, in part at least, well developed.'

'Notwithstanding this 19th Century criticism, the inclusion of the gardens and the park on the English heritage register with a grade I listing (one of only three in Staffordshire) is indicative of their importance today as an example of a unique piece of landscape design in England at the beginning of the 19th Century. While the gardens may not have contributed significantly to mainstream landscape design, they are an extraordinary example of what could happen when great wealth was combined with extravagant and eccentric eclecticism. Moreover, much of the original intentions of the patrons and designers remains evident and the detailed archival material provides much by way of guidance for conservation and restoration.'

The Towers area are included as part of the grade I listed gardens. They are of particular historic significance too, built between 1820-1840, the towers were designed by a number of Architects including James Wyatt and A.W.N Pugin. The Towers were built in a castellated Gothic style with an asymmetrical plan.

At the core of the 19th century mansion are significant portions of the house which originally stood on the site, Alveton Lodge, dating from the 18th century and possibly incorporating much earlier work. The 19th century house draws together the three main phases of the gothic revival (Picturesque, romantic, and the ideological Gothic of A.W.N. Pugin). Indeed, the growth and development of the house appear to have been haphazard.

Features of particular interest include The Talbot gallery, the banqueting hall, the interior of the chapel and the grand entrance from the barbican gateway. The long vista of some 480 feet through the southern gallery range is also of particular significance.

Proposed Development

The proposed development includes the erection of combined heat and power (CHP) container to the rear of Splash Landings Hotel at Alton Towers resort. Shown in drawing 2954-02 and 2954-03. The principle objective of the CHP unit is to add additional services to Splash Landings Hotel helping the resort maintain a high level of customer service.

Currently a refuse area, the site works will include the removal of temporary refuse skip and associated platform. The proposed development shall include minor amendments to the existing hard standing to provide a level surface for the CHP container.

Impact of the Proposed Development

It is the opinion of Smytheman Architectural Services that the impact of the new container in at this location of the resort will be minimal. The new container and associated items will be placed in an unobtrusive location hidden from public view by the hotel to the north of the container and dense woodland to the immediate south of the site.