Alton Towers Resort Operations Ltd
Alton
Staffordshire
ST10 4DB

16th February 2017

Re: Proposed Woodland Path in relation to SW8

I have been asked to comment on the effect that the above path will have on the existing trees.

I have reviewed the drawings sent to me by Nichols Brown Webber (373/95-5) and Smytheman Architectural (2967-59) and also walked along the proposed route with Neil Walker(ATR) and Nathan Stubbs (SA).

I have also discussed this briefly with Steve Massey, Trees and Woodlands Officer at SMDC as he has also visited the site to look at some tree removals along the Deer Park Wall and look briefly at the proposal.

In general terms the path is designed to bring the public around the edge of the SW8 site. It follows the lines of the existing pathways for most of its route although it will be widened where necessary to accommodate the volume of use.

The first section passes through the Root Protection Areas of Trees T20-T23 in our trees schedule. There is already an existing block pathway here that is still in reasonable condition. It would appear that this could be carefully lifted and re-laid without damage to the trees.

The second section of the path then passes under T33 (Category B Ash and T34 Category B Lime) but this area was originally the site of the railway and is predominately a hardstanding made up of crushed limestone. The path will be built along the existing route and on top of the existing levels so there should be no impact on these trees.

The pathway then joins the original track that has been used to service the Log Flume and the Skyride. This track was built many years ago and has been constantly used by heavy vehicles, including mobile cranes, to access the rides. The new path will be built on top of the existing hard core and should therefore have no negative impact on any of the trees along this section.

The path does appear to cross through part of the RPA of T55, which is a Category A Scots Pine, before it crosses the line of the Deer Park Wall. If at all possible it will be routed around the RPA but if this is not possible it will be built above the existing soil levels using cell web to protect the tree roots.

Once the path is over the Deer Park Wall it runs along the line of the DPW and due to the presence of the wall and the associated ditch it is unlikely that any tree roots from retained trees within the woodland will be affected. Many of the trees along or very close to the DPW have already been removed as part of the ongoing work to maintain the DPW in good condition. The tree removal has already been approved by Steve Massey and has now been completed and so there are no trees along this section that will be affected.

Conclusions

It would appear from the information provided and my subsequent site visit that the path can be achieved without any loss of trees.

It can also be achieved with minimum disturbance to the trees provided that the usual care is taken when working within the RPAs.

It would be prudent to have a further site meeting between the contractors and the Arboriculturalist before the work commences to makes sure that any slight issues can be resolved.

H. E. Williams

15th February 2017