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ARCHITECTURAL

Design and Access Statement

Alton Towers Resort: Ingestre Court Restaurant
Proposed new restaurant and servery, conservation works to existing building fabric and
internal alterations to existing kitchens, stores and bar

Revision A; additional info re concept, form and materiality added.
Revision B; Document amended in line with new scheme 07-07-2017

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Introduction

This design and access statement has been produced by Smytheman Architectural on behalf of Alton Towers.

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 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 woodlands 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 application seeks listed building consent for alterations to the existing food court and internal bar area to create an improved food offering with a new servery located to the rear of what is the existing courtyard tavern adjacent the existing kitchen. In this area it is proposed to reinstate an existing bricked up opening to create a new dual access with remedial repairs to the building fabric. A number of existing modern doors to this area are to be removed and reinstated with new vertically boarded close panel doors. The existing unauthorised servery to the courtyard is to be removed together with other themed features in the courtyard. The existing canopy structure to the courtyard is to be recovered to match existing with new glazed frameless handrails to the perimeter.

Impact of the Proposed Development

The removal of the existing unauthorised servery will open up the courtyard whilst improving the historic character and appearance of the existing building, refurbishing the existing canopy structure will encourage more users to visit the area

Site Analysis

The building comprises a series of 4 no linked wings which are adjoined to form an internal courtyard area. Access is via 3 no archways. The front façade has 2 no turrets and a central access offering views across mutiny bay from the turrets. The other adjoining buildings are brick built 2 storey buildings with tiled pitched roofs which have previously been updated/ altered in the past with many features not in keeping with the existing. As previously mentioned there is a timber built servery/ outlet and timber canopy area with a number of themed elements which are to be removed as part of the proposed scheme.

Design Concept and Principles

The application is for the refurbishment of the existing courtyard tavern area to form a new servery and restaurant area therefore encouraging a higher footfall through the courtyard area. In removing the existing redundant unauthorised servery and surrounding timber structures the courtyard is opened up even further therefore encouraging people to engage more with the surrounding area. In order to increase views across the courtyard we have utilised glazed handrails with a frameless feature, therefore giving a sense of enclosure within the canopy area whilst leaving it open to the rest of the courtyard.

Functional Need

The proposal is intended to provide a different type of dining experience to the current offering across Alton Towers, giving an opportunity to develop and bring into use one of the parks greatest historical assets.

Community Involvement

There will be no community involvement with the development

Access

Access to the park resort will be unaffected as will access around the development site.