

Moneystone Park (Appeal) Highway Proof of Evidence (Executive Summary)

APP/B3438/W/16/3144848
Laver Leisure (Oakamoor) Limited

October 2017

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Issue and Revision Record

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A	April 2016	Andrew Watkin	Caroline Ella	Kevin Riley	First draft for QC comment
B	July 2016	Andrew Watkin	Caroline Ella	Kevin Riley	Second draft for QC comment
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Executive summary

A.1 Site Context and History

- A.1.1 The site is a former quarry, with active quarrying ceasing in September 2011. As noted in 1.2.1 of Royal Haskoning's revised (2016) Transport Assessment (**C.D.98**), the active quarry used to generate 130 heavy goods vehicle (HGV) movements per day and 170 car movements, giving a total of 300 daily two-way vehicle movements, or 469 daily two-way passenger car units (PCU's).
- A.1.2 When functioning as an active quarry, Moneystone also employed over 70 people locally as well as some 20 employees on long-term contracts. Over half of the workforce lived within 6 miles of the site, with 86% of the employees living within 9 miles. The site also employed a number of contractors in transport roles bringing the total employment on site to around 150.
- A.1.3 The proposed development is intending to generate similar numbers of weekday trips in the peak summer season (370 daily two-way trips in vehicles) which is numerically comparable to the levels of traffic generated by the quarry site when it was fully active, albeit that weekend movements will be higher and there will be a substantial reduction in the number of HGV movements. **Appendix MM11** provides a short note on why I believe the trip generation figures for the proposed development applied in this assessment are robust.

A.2 Accessibility

- A.2.1 The appeal site covers approximately 52 hectares and is located within 1 mile of the villages of Whiston to the north west and Oakamoor to the south east. To the south of the site, the Crewe to Derby Railway provides direct connectivity to both Stoke-on-Trent and Derby with the closest stations on the line being Blythe Bridge and Uttoxeter.
- A.2.2 Routing to the site is principally via an established route (Eaves Lane) that was previously used by all quarry vehicles, with the road operating satisfactorily for many years and accommodating vehicles of a greater size than will use the proposed site when operational.
- A.2.3 The area is well suited to walking and cycling and has a number of core routes and connections. This will be of benefit to visitors staying in the lodges, and both daily visitors and employees at the site.

A.3 Local Economy and Tourism

- A.3.1 The proposed development is looking to provide a different offer to tourists in the area to the existing hotels and B&Bs (and is therefore not in direct competition), it is well placed to support sustainable trips by walking, cycling or shuttle service to Alton Towers, meaning visitors from the site will have a low impact upon the local road network in comparison to visitors from other accommodation sites.
- A.3.2 The Moneystone Park development will very much help to strengthen the sense of local community both in terms of providing employment and communal/leisure facilities to local residents, delivering economic and social benefits to the area. By reducing the distance that local residents must travel to access employment and leisure opportunities, the development will also bring notable transport and sustainability benefits to the area.

A.4 Development Proposals and Mitigation

- A.4.1 The site will provide 418 parking spaces across the site, with 67 of these for staff, as well as one space per lodge, although vehicles would only be able to park here to unload/load with vehicles being moved to a secure car park within the 418 allowance.
- A.4.2 The Royal Haskoning Transport Assessment (June 2016) goes into great detail about the development impact of the site and concludes that following the impact assessment, there will be no link or junction capacity concerns on the local highway network. This was also confirmed by Staffordshire County Council (SCC) as local highway authority in their response to the consultation for both the original and revised scheme. This is also confirmed in our Statement of Common Ground.
- A.4.3 **Appendix MM7** highlights that the proposed site already benefits from a number of PRowS) and intends to provide a significant upgrade to the footpath and bridleway offer in the area, with a number of new connections through the site and onto the public highway for pedestrians and cyclists.
- A.4.4 To reduce the reliance upon private vehicles for visitors and residents at the site, a minibus will also be available to visitors and staff for access to and from Alton Towers, to collect guests from Blythe Bridge Station and a number of other uses including for providing shuttle services for staff who lives further afield.
- A.4.5 A Travel Plan Framework (June 2016) was produced by Royal Haskoning and outlined a range of sustainable measures which would be undertaken to support the sustainability of the site and reduce reliance upon private vehicles. In addition to the measures noted above including the shuttle bus, a number of soft measures are proposed to support sustainable travel at the site including electric pool bikes to hire, maps of local walking and cycling routes and discounted public transport tickets.

A.5 Policy Context

- A.5.1 My client has shown that the appeal site is in line with all relevant local and national policy. I believe and demonstrate throughout this Proof of Evidence that the appeal site can be sustainable in relation to transport and that the site can provide benefit not just to residents, but others in and using the local area.
- A.5.2 With regard to the Churnet Valley Masterplan, the proposed development site is identified within the Masterplan and generally adheres to the policy. In addition, the Churnet Valley Transport Study (produced by Atkins for SCC, July 2013) also supports the proposed development by demonstrating that the local highway network could accommodate a higher level of development than that which is proposed.

A.6 Traffic Generation and Access

- A.6.1 The Transport Assessment (TA) prepared by Royal Haskoning and submitted by my client for the re-submission as part of the Environmental Statement in June 2016 highlighted that traffic flow volumes related to the development can be readily accommodated on the existing highway network. I concur with this, having thoroughly reviewed that documentation. This was also agreed by SCC in their consultation response for both the original and revised application.
- A.6.2 In **Appendix MM11**, I demonstrate the robustness of the trip generation and previous traffic assessments undertaken.

A.6.3 Since the previous submission, my client has assessed the width of Carr Bank and Eaves Lane between Whiston and Oakamoor through a professional topographical survey to remove general detritus/mud from the carriageway to assess the actual rather than perceived widths of these routes. The results of these are contained in **Appendix MM12** and show that with the carriageway properly cleared (something clearly not done for some time and therefore a maintenance issue by SCC) many of the perceived inadequate widths are indeed only the real lack of maintenance, rather than a lack of road width.

A.6.4 The revised application proposes an improvement to the site access junction with Eaves Lane, to prevent right turn movements out of the site into Oakamoor, in respect of concerns raised from local residents about vehicles using Carr Bank to reach the village and onwards for example to Alton Towers. Guests would be made aware of the requirements to turn left, and provided with alternative routes to local attractions.

A.7 Signage and Routes

A.7.1 It is my opinion that guests at the lodges, particularly the owner-occupied lodges would not be undertaking multiple daily trips to Alton Towers during their stay at the proposed site. Alton Towers is an attraction which can be visited in a day or perhaps two but is not somewhere it is anticipated guests would make daily trips to over the course of their stay.

A.7.2 Signage would be provided from the Moneystone Site to direct guests from the site to Alton Towers using the official route (i.e. not via Carr Bank) as well as promotional and marketing information being provided on the website and within the lodges to guests advising them of the correct and preferred route.

A.7.3 Whilst the issue noted at the top of this chapter specifically references traffic associated with travel to and from Alton Towers, construction traffic routes have also been considered as part of the proposed development to ensure these movements also do not make use of unsuitable rural routes.

A.8 Black Plantation Connectivity

A.8.1 In response to this concerns about access to the Black Plantation area, the resubmitted (and subsequently approved) June 2016 application removed all lodges from the Black Plantation area, with the area remaining within the site boundary as landscaping.

A.8.2 In addition to this, contrary to the concern noted above, a new pedestrian and cycle route was proposed within the original 2014 submission, to be provided between the Black Plantation area and Eaves Lane to ensure guests at this location were not reliant upon car access.

A.9 Sustainable Travel Modes

A.9.1 The Travel Plan Framework provided with the application sets out a wide range of measures aimed at managing and reducing private car use for both visitors and staff. The plan would be implemented and monitored and precedents set at other comparable developments (such as Woburn Center Parcs) provides an indication of the expected success of some of the proposed measures such as shuttle services, and walking and cycling initiatives. More information on these examples is provided in section 8.4.

A.9.2 It is my belief that those who choose to visit the park, due to its nature, will not being doing so just to use it as a base from which to take private car day trips to other destinations, but more as a destination itself to support participation in outdoor activities such as walking, cycling and water sports.

