

DELEGATED DECISION REPORT

SMD/2024/0114
Valid 11/03/2024

ALTON TOWERS FARLEY
LANE
FARLEY

Removal of the existing 2 no. static and 1 no. portacabins and the decluttering of the site in general to provide a storage and opportunity for visitor attraction (Multi-use) building that consists of 6 no. containers (3 per side lengthways) and tensile domed roof between.

(FULL - MINOR)

MAIN ISSUES

- Heritage
- Design and visual impact
- Neighbouring amenity
- Trees
- Highways

DESCRIPTION OF SITE

The site comprises of a restricted site for members of the public for residual storage within Alton Towers Resort. It is located between the existing toilet block and The Curse of Alton Manor building and the Sky Ride Monorail Train sidings and maintenance building. The ground level gradually slopes upwards towards a large concrete base and then steeply downwards towards the southern part of the site next to the monorail. There are two static cabins to the north and one to the south west of the site.

The site currently offers no access for members of the public and is used for residual storage.

It lies within the Alton and Farley Conservation Area.

PROPOSAL

The proposal is to create one large unit made up of 6 portacabins within the centre of the site. The unit consists of a set of 'domed steel' frames on which a tensile sheet will be draped tight and fixed between 2 sets of 3 portacabins laid end to end.

It measures 36m in length x 13m in width with a building height of 5.4m. The footprint will be 472m².

The use of the unit will be mainly used for storage with the intention to use as a visitor attraction during seasonal events. During these events, items stored in the building

will be placed around the theme park and the storage space will become an attraction site.

RELEVANT LOCAL AND NATIONAL PLANNING POLICIES

Local Development Plan Document (Adopted 2020)

E 4 Tourism and Cultural Development

DC1 Design Considerations

DC2 The Historic Environment

T1 Development and Sustainable Transport

National Planning Policy Framework

National Planning Policy Guidance

RELEVANT PREVIOUS APPLICATIONS

None

CONSULTATIONS

Publicity

Site Notice expiry date: 18/04/24

Neighbour consultation period ends: 16/04/24

Press Advert: N/A

Public Comments

No representatives

Alton Parish Council

No objection

Farley Parish Council

No objection

Environmental Health

No objection subject to conditions on neighbouring amenity

Historic England

No objection

OFFICER COMMENTS

Principle of Development

Policy E 4 supports the sensitive expansion of existing tourist attractions and facilities in the Churnet Valley Area in the Local Plan. It sets out a Development Strategy for the site which recognises the need for the resort to refresh existing themed areas. It also requires all development to consider the impact on views, transport, trees and heritage assets.

It is situated within the established built area of the Alton Towers theme park and therefore, the general principle of development is considered to be acceptable subject to other materials considerations including heritage assets, design and impact on residential amenity.

Design & Impact on Heritage Assets

The application is situated within the Alton and Farley Conservation Area and the Alton Towers registered park and gardens. Policies DC1 and DC2 seek to ensure good quality design in all development and for development proposals to protect and where possible enhance heritage assets.

The proposed building is a large steel shed in dark green. While the building could not be described as good quality design by its unitarian design, dark colour and lack of any fenestration, the functional style building reflects the use as a large multi-purpose storage unit, not prominently sited in the park (screened by fencing to be restricted by the public) and is relatively proportionate to the site. The overall height of approx. 5.4m is notably higher than the existing buildings which is exacerbated being located on higher ground. However, it is in keeping with other structures in this part of the park that it would not appear obtrusive beyond the site. The proposal will also protect the Conservation Area as it will be a temporary structure and will involve the clearance of existing open storage from the area and securing some enhancement.

The proposed building poses no issue in terms of heritage impact given that the nearest listed structure is located 30m west of the site and there is no intervisibility with any Listed buildings/structures or the Registered gardens. As such, it not anticipated to lead to any harmful long term cumulative effects on the significance or setting of heritage assets. It is recognised that while the building will be more noticeable by its sheer size, height and position on the mound of the site, the building would be comparable to existing large steel buildings of similar scale that are of little heritage value. Therefore on balance, the scheme would not cause adverse harm to the setting of nearby heritage assets.

The Conservation Officer has been consulted and wishes to make no comments on the scheme.

Therefore for these reasons, no objection is raised and relevant parts of Policies DC1 and DC2 are satisfied.

Amenity

Paragraph 127(f) of the NPPF (2019) and policy DC1 seeks to secure development that protects amenity, including residential amenity, in terms of satisfactory daylight, sunlight, outlook, privacy and soft landscaping.

The building will be operated during the opening hours of the themed park which comes with its own footfall and associated noise.

The building is intended to be used as residual storage and a seasonal visitor attraction. The storage element of the building is considered low key and does not give rise to any neighbour amenity issues.

Referring to the visitor attraction, much of the potential impact and disturbance will arise from the amplified music and visitors. Environmental Health were consulted and raised no objection as the disturbance of noise would largely be mitigated by it being an indoors attraction. The consultee however, has asked for a number of conditions such as construction hours, lighting, unexpected contamination but notably, requested the level of noise is controlled to levels that is inaudible at the site boundary to protect residents beyond the theme park are protected from noise disturbance. It is also worth noting that the attraction is relatively small scale, located within the middle of the theme park that I am of the opinion that it would have limited impact to nearby residents. As such, this application is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy DC1 of the Local plan.

Trees

There are a number of trees within the site that would be affected by the proposal. An arboricultural report was provided as part of the scheme and identified a number of trees that would need to be removed to provide easy access to the site. At the time of visit, the trees outlined in the report were removed. The Tree officer has been consulted and raised concerns that works already completed will have been carried out without reference to or compliance with any conditions which may have been/may yet be considered necessary – for instance the photos show no evidence of temporary tree protection barriers in place. This said, the tree officer raised no objection and has not requested any conditions as any would be deemed redundant.

Impact to Highways

Section 12 of the NPPF states that planning should always seek a high standard of amenity for existing and future users of developments. Policy T1 states that permission will only be granted for development where satisfactory accommodated traffic generated by the development or can be improved as part of the development.

The operation of the development would generate an increase of footfall during the period that it is used as an attraction site however, the scheme is minor scale that it is not expected to impact on the existing traffic generated by the theme park as a whole. This application is therefore considered to be in accordance with Section 9 of the NPPF and Policy T1 of the Local Plan.

CONCLUSION / PLANNING BALANCE

For the reasons discussed above the proposal is considered to comply overall with policies in the Development plan and a recommendation of conditional approval is made.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION : Approve

Case Officer: Lisa Li

Recommendation Date: 13/05/24

X *B.S. Haywood*

Signed by: Ben Haywood

On behalf of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council