

## Conservation Team Advice

**Date:** 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2025  
**Application Ref:** SMD/2024/0579  
**Site Address:** Alton Towers, Farley Lane, Farley  
**Proposal:** The proposal is for the removal of an existing attraction and to replace it with a new attraction and ancillary buildings (station and maintenance buildings) within the CBeebies Land area of Alton Towers.

| Heritage assets affected:                |                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Designated Heritage Asset(s):</b>     | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Alton Towers and attached garden walls and gatehouse – Grade II* (listing ref: 1374685)</li> <li>Alton Towers – Grade I Registered Park &amp; Garden (listing ref: 1000191)</li> <li>Alton &amp; Farley Conservation Area</li> </ul> |
| <b>Non-Designated Heritage Asset(s):</b> | <input type="checkbox"/>            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |

## Conservation Advice

### Summary of Significance

The proposal would be situated in Alton & Farley Conservation, the immediate setting of the Grade I Registered Park & Garden and the wider setting of Alton Towers (Grade II\*).

Alton Towers (Grade II\*) is a former country house dating c.1810-40, built for the fifteenth and sixteenth Earls of Shrewsbury. The building is constructed in ashlar stone and slate roofs, designed in an asymmetrical plan form and castellated Gothic style. The estate for the hall was sold in the early-20<sup>th</sup> century and the site was used as a major attraction and amusement park from the 20<sup>th</sup> century onwards. The significance of the building derives from its historic association as an early- to mid-19<sup>th</sup> century country house, connection with the Talbot family, designs by various notable architects including Wyatt and Pugin, dramatic Gothic design and retention of historic fabric, internal décor and plan form.

The former country house is situated in a Grade I Registered Park & Garden, which comprises an outer deer park, woodland, lake, gardens and pleasure grounds. The immediate setting of the parkland has been somewhat diminished by the development

of the amusement park and car parking, nevertheless, it still retains its grandeur which accentuates the designed importance of the principal Listed Building.

Alton & Farley Conservation Area covers the hamlet of Farley to the north and the village of Alton south, along with Alton Towers parkland in the middle. The significance of the Conservation Area relates to the medieval origins of both settlements, historic association with the Talbot family, retention of 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century buildings, predominant construction of buildings in stone, large areas of wooded slopes and the dramatic views of Alton Castle along the skyline.

### **Assessment and Impact**

The proposal would involve the removal and replacement of an attraction in CBeebies land. This area sits just outside the Registered Park & Garden, but it still has the potential to impact views and appreciation of the designated parkland and the wider setting of the principal listed country house.

Limited technical details have been provided on the new attraction, but the indicative information provided outlines that the principal building would be no larger than 9m (H) x 11m (W) x 50m (L) and would be mono-pitched. Other ancillary structures are indicated on dwg no. ATPS-SA-CBL-XX-DR-A-0402 Rev P1.0, again with limited technical details.

A group of trees would be removed to the north of the site to accommodate a larger building on the plot. There is some concern from a heritage perspective that this could reduce the amount of soft landscaping which minimises the visual harm to the setting of the surrounding designated heritage assets.

Sectional drawings have been provided which illustrate the overall massing and height would be no greater than the Tower Street buildings behind the site nor some of the indicative trees shown on the sections. However, it would be useful to have either some sectional drawings or illustrative information on what the visual impact would be when looking north towards the site (i.e. from the events stage or lake) to fully assess the level of impact on the setting of the designated heritage asset, particularly as these are higher grade assets.

Subject to further clarification on the visual impact from the loss of trees, the proposed development would likely have a minimal impact on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, setting of the Registered Park & Garden and principal Listed Building as this area has already been significantly built up for the amusement park and the replacement building would unlikely alter this existing level of heritage harm.

## Legislation and Policy

### Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

The local planning authority should have a desirability of preserving the setting of the Listed Building (s.66) and preserving or enhancing the character and appearance of the Conservation Area (s.72).

### National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2024

In determining applications, local authorities should take account of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation, the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality, the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness (par.210).

Any harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within the setting), should require clear and convincing justification (par.213).

### Local Development Framework

Consideration should also be given to the following documents and local development framework policies:

- Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan (Adopted 2020) – DC2 The Historic Environment
- Alton & Farley Conservation Area Appraisal (2008)

## Conclusions and Recommendations

Overall, the proposal has the potential to have a negligible impact on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and setting of the Registered Park & Garden and Listed Buildings. This would comply with s.72 and s66 of the Act, Section 16 of the NPPF and policy DC2 of the local development framework. However, as mentioned above, we would require some clarification on the visual impact from outside the site to ensure that the setting and significance of the designated heritage assets is conserved.

Notwithstanding the above, we would recommend the following conditions for any approval:

- Specific details of the design and appearance of the new building(s)
- Details of all external facing materials, including any graphics
- Specific details of new or replacement fencing
- Details of any external lighting or plant equipment

**Conservation Officer:** Megan Atkinson