Alton Towers Resort

Proposed Lodge Development
Proposed Spa Extension
& Proposed Relocated Car Parking

Transport Assessment

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Document history

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Table of contents

Tables

Figures

1. Introduction

1.1. This Transport Assessment has been prepared on behalf of the Merlin Entertainment Group in support of the following planning applications for new accommodation in a lodge/tree house development, Spa extension and relocation of car parking within the Alton Towers Resort in Staffordshire.

The Proposed Development

1.2. The proposals comprise 3 elements:

New lodge development - it is proposed to construct 122 lodges and 10 tree houses to the east of the existing hotel complex. The tree houses will be located to the south of the site and will be raised on stilts and will accommodate up to 8 persons, whilst the lodges will be constructed on concrete plinths at ground level with accommodation for up to 5 persons. In addition 3 service huts, a restaurant / store and sub station is proposed to support the development. Landscape bunds will separate the lodges visually from the tree houses. Parking within the lodge development itself will be limited to disabled parking (9 spaces) and a drop off area to allow guests to go to the main restaurant building to check in and to 14 spaces to the east of the tree houses. Permanent parking for the lodge development will be to the north of the site through the use of the existing tarmac area (120 spaces). The previous application proposing a lodge development to the north of Alton Towers for which a Transport Assessment has been submitted was withdrawn (ref. 12/00998/FUL).

Spa extension - it is proposed to extend the existing spa to create a new spa garden to the east of the existing spa.

Relocated car parking for the hotel extension - As part of the hotel extension an area of parking (76 spaces, plus 5 disabled) was approved to the north of the hotel. The new parking area included some existing parking spaces and therefore resulted in a net increase of 67 spaces plus 5 disabled spaces. It is proposed to relocate this area of parking to the land between the spa garden and the lodges (see parking shaded in brown on drawing: 67 spaces, plus 5 disabled: a like for like relocation with no net increase). This like for like relocation is to be addressed by a minor material amendment application to the hotel extension planning permission (ref. 11/00402/REM10J)

1.3. The accommodation will be managed as part of the existing hotel complex and guests will be able to deliver baggage to the lodges using golf carts. Only disabled guests, service vehicles and emergency vehicles will be allowed on the site.

1.4. The development will be accessed using the existing Resort access road from the Farley Lane entrance. The location of the development and layout are shown in Figures 1.1 and 1.2.

Figure 1-1 Development Location

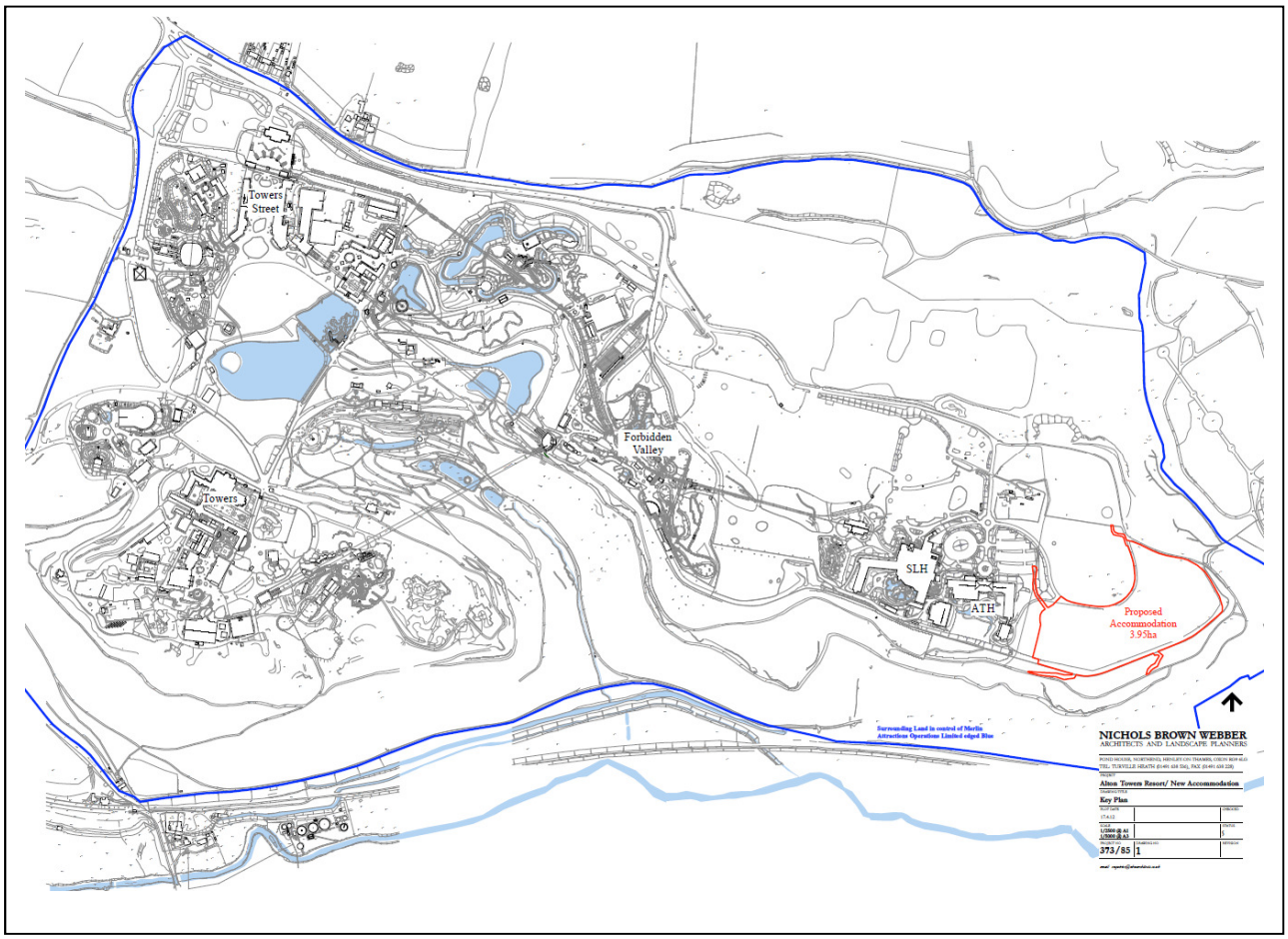
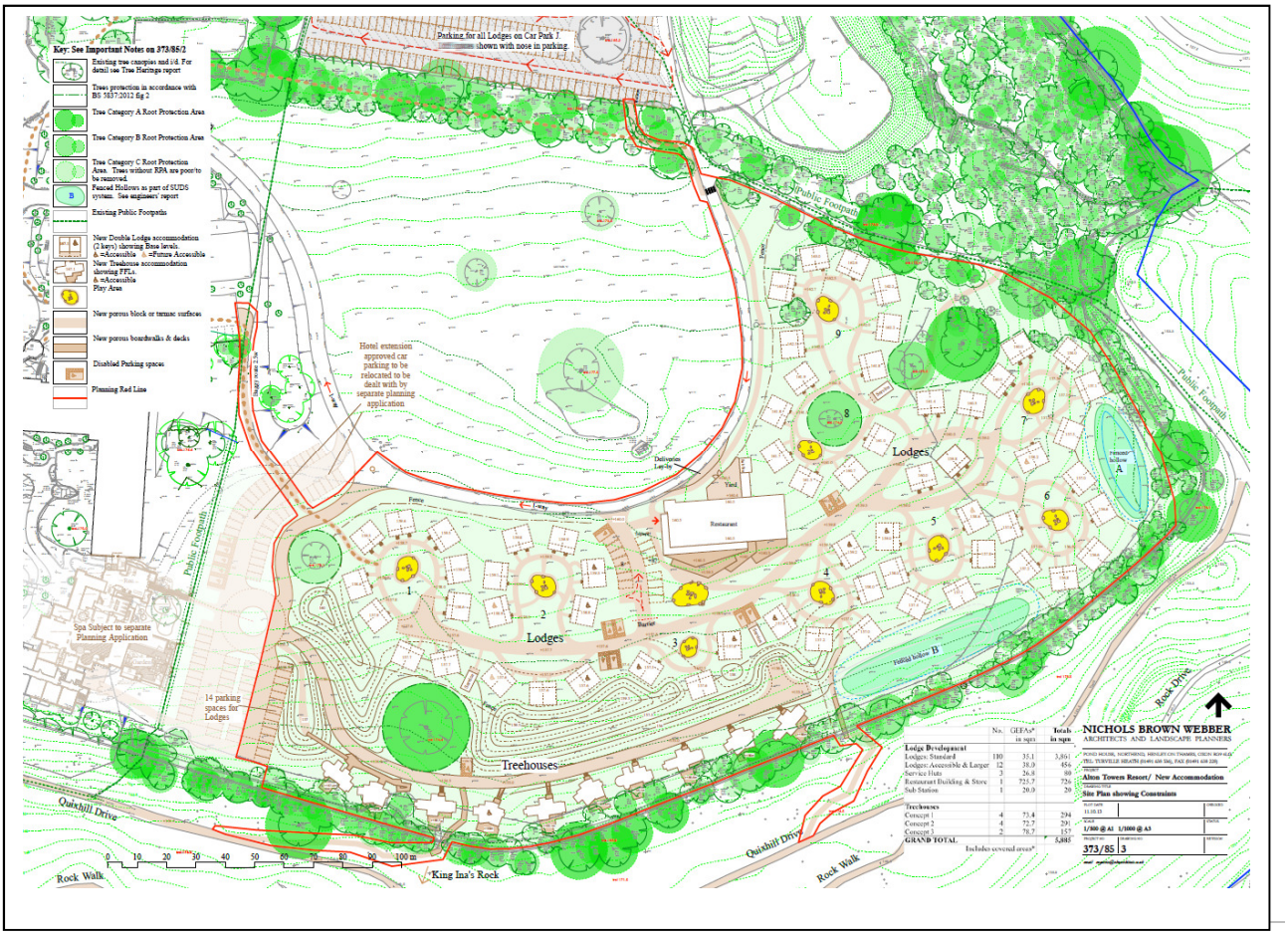


Figure 1-2 Development Layout



Contents of the Document

1.5. The Alton Towers Resort is a major tourist destination in Staffordshire and attracts visitors to the theme park and hotel complex. The transport assessment needs to examine both these attractions (spa and lodge/tree house development) as they are closely linked and many hotel guests are also theme park visitors.

1.6. Section 2 describes the Resort location and Section 3 provides the available visitor and traffic data based on surveys in 2010, 2011 and 2012 which supports the assessment of potential key transport parameters that enable an assessment of traffic generation and impact in Section 4. The conclusion is provided in Section 5 with a brief summary below.

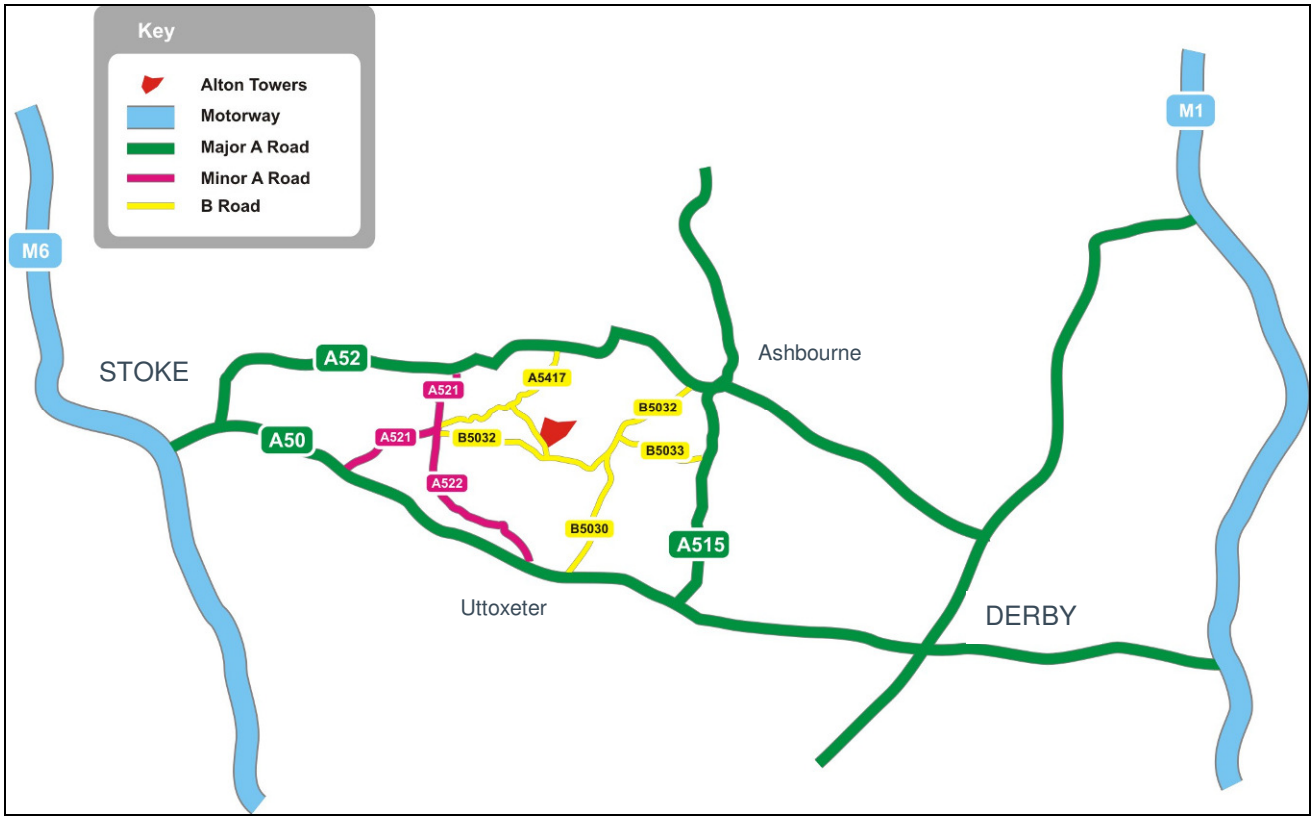
Summary of Conclusions

1.7. In summary, the main users of the lodges/tree houses will be resort guests who's arrival and departure will be spread across the day therefore having little or no conflict with day visitors to the theme park. Indeed the additional accommodation, in line with the statements provided for the Long Term Plan, will potentially reduce the number of vehicles to and from Alton Towers Resort during existing peak hours of the site. The proposed spa extension will merely complement the existing spa facilities to improve customer satisfaction. It will not materially result in additional visitors or additional traffic movements. The car park relocation has no impact on this transport assessment.

2. The Resort Location

2.1. Alton Towers Resort is located in the County of Staffordshire in the Staffordshire Moorlands District. The location of the site in its wider geographical context is illustrated below.

Figure 2-1 Location of the Alton Towers Resort



Existing Local Highway Network

2.2. Vehicular access to Alton Towers Resort is by Farley Lane and the B5032 in the south and Wootton Lane and the B5417 in the north. The B5417 connects to the A52 in the north to the west of Ashbourne, and the B5032 connects to the A50 at Uttoxeter via the B5030 in the south. The A52 and A50 are primary routes and link to the motorway and trunk road network.

Farley Lane

2.3. Farley Lane is the main southern access road to Alton Towers Resort and the development site. It is a rural road with a width of approximately six metres. Through the village of Alton the road is undulating with tight corners and has a speed limit restriction of 30 mph. At the southern end of Farley Lane is the B5032, which links the site to the B5030 at Denstone and the A50 Trunk Road in the south.

Wootton Lane

2.4. Wootton Lane is also a rural road of approximately six metres width with limited pedestrian facilities and numerous farm entrances. At the northern end of

Wootton Lane is the B5417, which in turns connects to the A52 and provides access to the north of Derby and Stoke.

B5417

2.5. The B5417 connects Wootton Lane to the A52 to the north of Alton Towers. It has a width of around six metres and has a speed limit of 40 mph.

B5032

2.6. The B5032 connects with Farley Lane in the south, the carriageway is approximately six metres in width and has an average travel speed of 35 to 40 mph.

B5030

2.7. The B5030 connects the B5032 to the A50 at Uttoxeter in the south. The carriageway is approximately nine metres wide and is relatively flat with few curves that result in an average speed of 55 to 60 mph.

Existing Public Transport

2.8. The use of public transport for visitors to the Resort is limited as trips tend to be long distance, for family parties and at off peak periods when services are limited. However Alton Towers Resort does encourage public transport and provides information on available services on its website.

Train

2.9. There are several train stations within reasonable proximity to Alton Towers, shown below, some of which are linked to Alton Towers via public or dedicated bus.

Table 2-1 Railway Stations serving Alton Towers Resort

Station	Distance
Uttoxeter	6.44 miles
Blythe Bridge	7.49 miles
Longton	10.42 miles
Barlaston	12.02 miles
Wedgwood	12.04 miles
Tutbury & Hatton	12.11 miles
Stoke-on-Trent	12.26 miles

2.10. As Stoke-on-Trent is a main-line station, in many cases it is cheaper and faster to reach than Uttoxeter. A series of buses connect these two stations with the resort as demonstrated below. These shorter multi-modal journeys that combine bus and rail, from destinations which are within say a 20 mile radius, are a realistic travel option.

Buses

2.11. The Alton Towers website provides a list of bus services and their corresponding fares. There are five bus services running to and from Alton Towers Resort from conurbations in the area (as shown in Table 2.2). These services do have a limited frequency. Alton Towers also operates a fleet of buses for employees.

Table 2-2 Bus Services to Alton Towers Resort

Service Number Operator	**Route**	**Frequency**	**First and Last Service** Outward Journey	**First and Last Service** Return Journey
10/10A Alton Towers	Leek – Cheddleton - Kingsley - Cheadle – Alton Towers	7 – 9 Journeys per day	06.00am and 18.30pm	05.30am and 00.15am
32A FIRST	Uttoxeter Railway Station – Rocester – Denstone – Alton – Alton Towers	7 Journeys per day – every 2 hours	09.00am and 19.45pm	08.00am and 19.15pm

2.12. First PMT (Potteries Motor Traction) operates the X39 bus service from Stoke on Trent to the coach park at Alton Towers Resort. The First PMT service is operational throughout the period Alton Towers Resort is open to visitors and would also serve customers to the new hotel development.

Employee Travel Plan

2.13. The Alton Towers Resort site currently operates an Employee Travel Plan for both the Resort and existing hotels. The plan encourages all team members and to some extent visitors to reduce their dependence on the private vehicle by promoting the following policies:

- Car sharing
- Utilising public transport
- Cycling
- Varying travel times to the site

2.14. The existing Travel Plan is currently being updated to include the addition of this new development and integrate the new accommodation with the existing hotels and theme park.

3. Available Data

3.1. This section provides a summary of relevant data on visitors and traffic to both the hotels and resort over recent years.

Resort Visitor Data

3.2. The Alton Towers Resort is open during February half term and then from mid-March to early November. Daily visitor numbers to the Resort vary considerably affected as they are by a number of influences including the economic climate, the increase in 'staycation' holidays, day of the week, school holidays, weather, other sporting events and the influence of new attractions.

3.3. Generally the peak periods, approximately 30 days per annum, immediately precede or are during school holidays, when up to 20,000 visitors are attracted to the Theme Park. There are occasions when special events (eg, concerts, Scarefest, Fireworks) are held when this number is exceeded and up to 25,000 attend. However special traffic measures are implemented at these times to reduce the traffic impact on the road network. On other days the volume is considerably less and the majority of days average at less than 15,000 visitors. The proposed lodge development will have limited impact on the number of theme park visitors and provides an additional facility for longer stays by visitors with long journeys.

3.4. Theme Park visitors purchase entry in a number of ways including at the ticket booths, group bookings, as special advance online purchase offers, through promotional vouchers or annual Merlin or Resort passes.

Hotel Guests

3.5. Data is available from the existing Alton Towers Resort hotels on the hotel guest volumes. The hotels provide accommodation for Park visitors, conference guests and tourists requiring a local base for the regional attractions. The existing hotels have a total of 391 rooms, all of which can be used for double or family occupancy. The average number of sleepers per room during 2011 was 2.97. Occupancy of 90% is experienced during the peak Park opening period.

3.6. Hotel guests are permitted to purchase 2 day tickets for the Theme Park alongside their hotel booking and approximately 52% of hotel guests purchased Theme Park tickets.

3.7. In addition there are hotel guests that have annual Merlin passes or tickets purchased in other ways that are not recorded but it is estimated that approximately 80 - 90% of hotel guests visit the Theme Park during the open season and this indicates up to 1,000 daily Theme Park visitors (230,000 annually – 8.5% of all Theme Park visitors).

3.8. Hotel visitors can check in from 3.00pm and check out before 11.00am but are permitted to leave their cars in the hotel car park before or after their stay. They are permitted to enter the Theme Park at 9.00am in advance of other visitors who are not staying at the site. Generally one night hotel guests will arrive during

the afternoon and use the water park and hotel facilities. This assists in reducing the number of vehicle trips arriving at the Resort in the peak hours.

Summary of Key Transport Parameters

3.9. The availability of visitor and transport data enables a number of key parameters to be identified. Clearly these parameters will vary based on time of the year, day of the week, weather and events but they enable estimates to be made of the expected impact of the proposed development.

3.10. There are a number of key parameters that determine the volume of vehicles generated by the Alton Towers Resort. These include:

- Annual Volume of Guests
- Seasonal Variation – identification of volume of guests per day
- Modal Split
- Vehicle Occupancy
- Arrival / Departure Profile
- Trip Distribution
- Hotel Stays

3.11. This section sets out the values of each of these parameters that are used in this assessment.

Volume of Resort Visitors

3.12. As described in Section 3 the annual number of visitors to the Resort is dependent on a number of influences including the economic climate, the increase in 'staycation' holidays, the weather and the influence of new attractions.

3.13. Generally, peak days attract approximately 20,000 visitors to the resort. However, on occasions when special events (eg, concerts, Scarefest, Fireworks) are held this number can exceed this and up to 25,000 attend.

Seasonal Variation

3.14. The Peak and Peak+ days at the Resort are when the traffic generation has some effect on the highway network. This was approximately 22 days during 2011 and 34 days during 2010. It is the Resort strategy to encourage guests to use the Resort during the quieter days and not significantly increase the number of Peak days.

Modal Split

3.15. Surveys during 2012 identified the modal split at the Resort as being:

Private car	88.1%
Private hire coach or bus	8.4%
Train and bus	2.1%
Train and taxi	0.7%
Other	0.7%
	100%

3.16. For this analysis these figures are being used to estimate the number of vehicles to be generated by the proposed lodge development.

Vehicle Occupancy

3.17. 2008 surveys estimated the vehicle occupancy to be 3.6 persons per car and 40 persons per coach.

Arrival / Departure Profile

3.18. The surveys undertaken in recent years provide accurate figures on the arrival and departure of vehicles at the Resort. Based on those surveys the peak movements occur in the morning and when the Resort closes in the evening. On Peak days the Resort can implement later evening opening to reduce the peaks.

3.19. For this analysis the following proportions are to be applied:

9.00 – 10.00 am - 25% arrivals
6.00 – 7.00 pm - 28% departures

Trip Distribution

3.20. The traffic data collection in 2010 indicates that 54% of trips to the Resort arrive from the south (through Alton) and 46% for the north (through Farley)

3.21. These parameters have been applied in the identification of the traffic impact in Section 4.

Hotel Guests

3.22. The hotels at the Resort are unique and the travel characteristics are quite different than normal business or holiday hotels. Generally guests are visitors to the Park and follow the transport characteristics of seasonal variation, modal split, vehicle occupancy and trip distribution. The main difference is the arrival / departure profile.

3.23. Guests generally arrive during the afternoon or evening on the day before their visit to the Park. This period is the opposite of the Park visitor peaks and in fact reduces the peak traffic movements on the local highway network. A similar pattern of travel is expected for the proposed lodge development.

4. Traffic Generation and Impact

Existing Resort Traffic Generation

4.1. The number of vehicles generated by the Alton Towers Resort is dependent on the key parameters defined in this report and is affected by a number of factors including the economic climate, the increase in 'staycation' holidays, school holidays, weather, other sporting events and the influence of new attractions

4.2. Based on the key parameters determined above the vehicles generated on a Peak+ day can be estimated as follows:

Number of Resort visitors on Peak+ days = 25,000

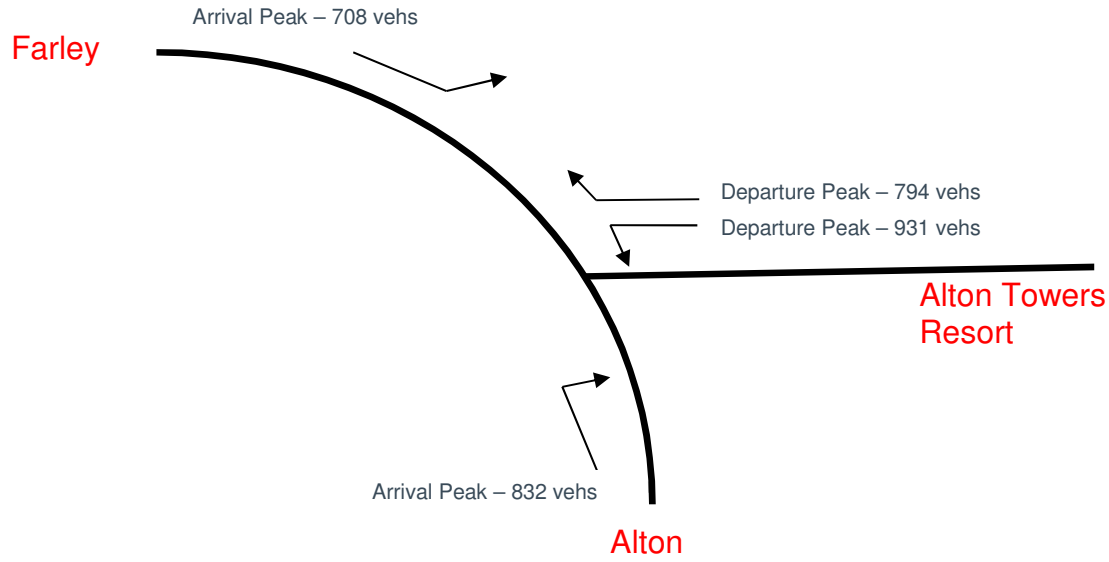
Vehicles generated
25,000 x 88% by car / 3.6 per car = 6,111 cars
25,000 x 8% by bus/coach / 40 = 50 buses / coaches
TOTAL = 6,161 vehicles per Peak+ day

Vehicles per peak hour
6,161 x 25% = 1,540 arrival peak hour
6,161 x 28% = 1,725 departure peak hour

Arrivals (9.00 - 10.00am)
832(54%) vehicles per hour from the south
708(46%) vehicles per hour from the north

Departures (6.00 – 7.00pm)
931(54%) vehicles per hour to the south
794(46%) vehicles per hour to the north

Figure 4-1 Resort Generated Traffic Movements



Lodge Development Traffic Generation

4.3. The TRICS database that is normally used to estimate traffic generated by hotel developments is not appropriate for this proposal. The development is tourist accommodation and generated trips are considerably different to a normal tourist resort or business hotel. The availability of hotel or lodge accommodation has a direct impact on the Resort traffic movements. An estimate has been made below of the estimated generation of traffic movements for the lodges based on the parameters establish above and the proportion that is additional to existing movements.

Visitors

Total number of lodge units = 132. Increase from existing 391 hotel rooms (34% increase)
Estimated occupancy on Resort Peak days = 90%
Estimate of maximum number of guests = 122 x 5 and 10 x 8 = 690
Based on occupancy number of guests = 690 x 90% = 621
Estimated number of guests that visit the theme park = 85% = 528

Vehicles generated

Estimated 1car per occupied lodge unit and 2 cars per tree house unit
144 x 90% occupancy = 130 vehicles per day

Peak Arrivals – 3.00pm to 6.00pm = 25% per hour = 33 vph

Peak Departures – 4.00pm to 5.00pm = 30% per hour = 39 vph

Number of vehicles that are already Resort visitors = 85% = 110 vehs per day

Number of vehicles that are additional = 20 vehs per day

Reduction in Resort peak hour traffic movements (ie arriving the night before)
1,540 peak hour arrivals – 33 new accommodation = 2.1% reduction

Additional Resort Trips

4.4. The estimated number of additional trips related to the Lodge development is only 20 per day. The Spa extension and relocation of car parking will not generate any additional trips. Due to the nature of the proposed development these will be predominately outside the existing Resort peak period.

Proposal Impact

4.5. The highway network adjacent to the Resort currently carries approximately 800 vehicles in the peak hour on a peak day at the Resort.

4.6. This forecast volume of additional traffic is a very small percentage of the current volume of traffic on the network and less than that experienced in 2010 when no significant congestion was experienced. In 2011 only 22 Peak and Peak+ days were recorded. On the remaining days during the Resorts season the volume of traffic generated will be significantly lower.

4.7. This additional volume of traffic can be accommodated on the peak days and is within the capacity of the highway network.

Parking

4.8. The propose parking for the lodge development will be at the northern end of the existing hotel parking area. A small area of drop off parking and disabled parking spaces will be located to the west of the restaurant building and 14 spaces are proposed to the west of the proposed Tree Houses. It is proposed that bays will be allocated for use by lodge/tree house guests. The analysis above estimates that the proposed development will only generate an additional 18 vehicles at the Resort as the majority are existing visitors. Clearly, predominantly using the existing tarmac car park provides the flexibility to use the available parking for varying levels of lodge occupation without impacting on the total theme park and hotel parking required for the resort.

5. Conclusion

5.1. This Transportation Assessment has been carried out in relation to the proposed 132 lodge/tree house development on the Alton Towers Resort site in Staffordshire. The proposed lodges will be accessible via the existing Alton Towers access. The proposed Spa extension and relocation of car park will not create any additional trips.

5.2. The main users of the lodges/tree houses during peak periods will be visitors to the Resort who arrive during the day or in the evening when day visitors are leaving after spending a day at the Resort. The additional accommodation could potentially reduce the numbers of vehicles to Alton Towers Resort during the existing peak hours of the site.

5.3. The existing Staff Travel Plan for the Resort will be extended to include the proposed development and any new staff will be encouraged to use alternative forms for transport to the private car, therefore minimising the number of employee vehicle trips to the site.

5.4. There are therefore no valid reasons for refusing the proposed development at this site, on highway or transportation grounds.