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ARCHITECTURAL



**3198: Design & Access Statement**  
**TP24-SA-XX-XX-RP-A-0001**

**Project Exodus**

Thorpe Park Resort, Staines Road, Chertsey, Surrey, KT16 8PN

Rev

Description

Date

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## 1.0 Project Team

The following 'Project Team' has been assembled to prepare the information within the planning submission.

Acoustic Consultant:	Cahill Design Consultants
Applicant:	Thorpe Park Resort
Arboriculture:	Keen Consultants
Architecture:	Smytheman Architectural
Ecologists:	Baker Consultants
Flood Risk Consultant:	Atkins
Health & Safety:	PCA Safety
Landscape Design:	Nichols Brown Webber
Mechanical & Electrical:	MSE Ltd
Planning Consultants:	Lichfields
Structural Design & Drainage:	HBL Engineers
Transport Consultants:	Transport Planning Associates

## 2.0 Introduction

This statement has been prepared by Smytheman Architectural to support a Full Planning application submitted to Runnymede Borough Council. This is commissioned on behalf of the applicant Thorpe Park Resort (a company forming part of Merlin Attractions Operations Limited).

Thorpe Park Resort is one of the UK's most thrilling theme parks. Located between the towns of Chertsey and Staines-Upon-Thames in Surrey, the park is operated and owned by Merlin Entertainments and is home to over 30 exhilarating rides including Stealth – the UK's fastest rollercoaster, as well as unmissable live events and quirky, on-site themed accommodation the Thorpe Shark Cabins.

After the Thorpe Park Estate was demolished in the 1930s, the site became a gravel pit. Thorpe Park Resort was then built in the 1970s on the gravel pit which was partially flooded, creating a unique water-based theme for the park which would later lead to the marketing strapline "An Island Like No Other". It was officially opened to the public by Lord Louis Mountbatten in 1979. In the years since the park has continually expanded to become one of the UK's most beloved theme parks.

Major attractions currently found at Thorpe Park include Tidal Wave, a super-soaking 85ft plunge water ride which was the tallest in Europe when it opened in 2000, the UK's first VR dark ride Derren Brown's Ghost Train: Rise of the Demon which blends virtual reality with thrilling physical effects and intense action and a relentless rollercoaster escape for survival on The Walking Dead: The Ride.

The park is also home to some of Europe's most thrilling rollercoasters including the UK's only winged roller coaster The Swarm where guests race at speeds on up to 60mph through terrifying near-miss theming elements; SAW – The Ride which plunges guests through a 100ft beyond vertical drop on a roller coaster themed to the cult horror movie classic and the intense inverted roller coaster Nemesis Inferno which twists guests through forces of up to 4Gs. Thorpe Park Resort is also home to exciting family attractions such as young thrill seeker favourite Angry Birds 4D Experience, the iconic Flying Fish junior coaster and the gravity-defying spintastic fun of Zodiac and magic carpet ride Quantum.

This document intends to describe the application site and demonstrate how its surrounding context has been considered during the design process of the proposals, this is related back to the suggested Design and Access sections in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Development/Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 (as amended) and National Planning Practise Guidance.

The National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) confirms that Design and Access Statements should be proportionate to the complexity of the application, as this application site is a small zone of the existing theme park the statement will be kept concise, in-keeping with national policy. The wider effects of the proposals on the community have also been considered following public consultation.

The design rationale is to rejuvenate the Old Town area by providing a world class experience for the parks target audience, young adults. This is vital to the parks success in a competitive industry.



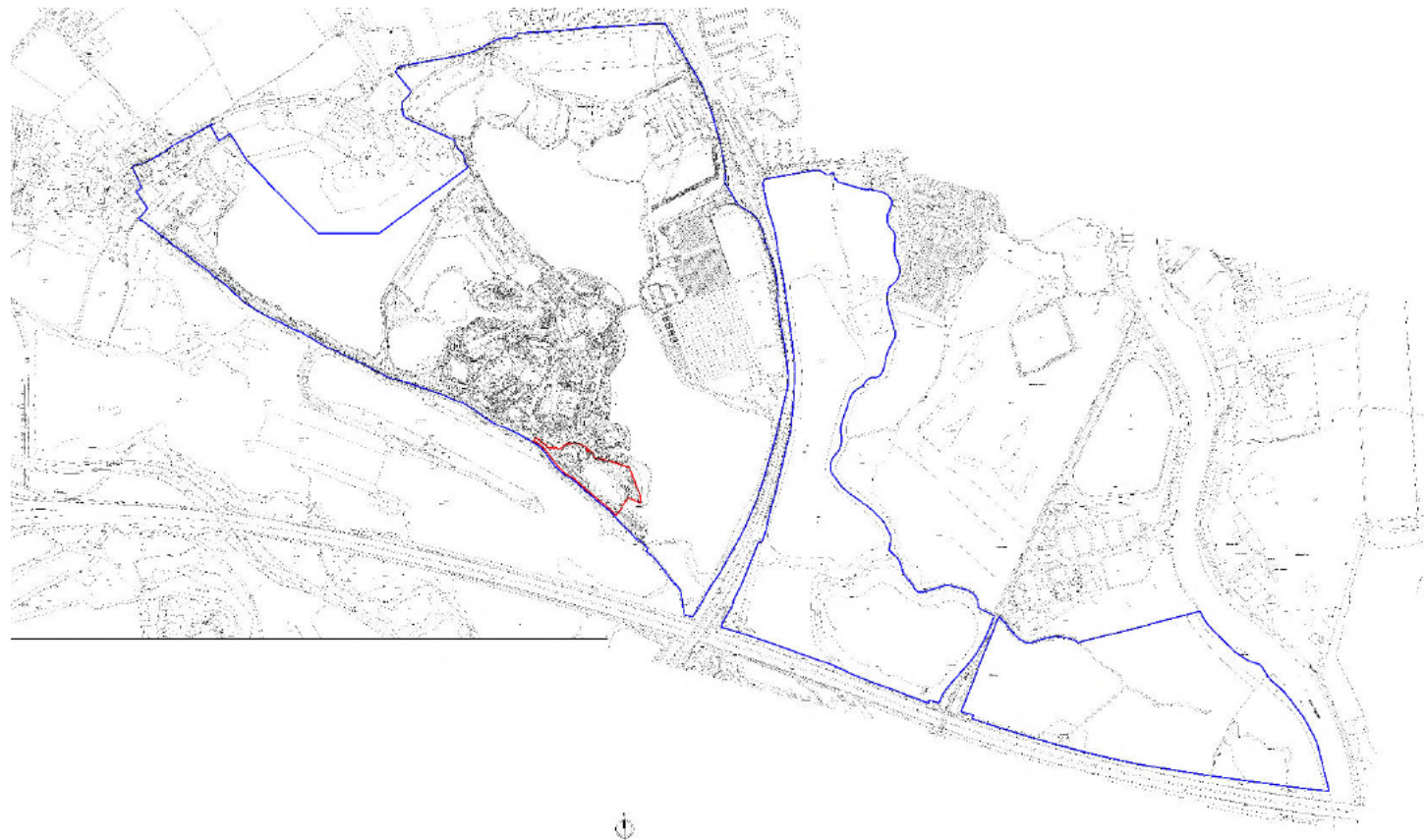
### 3.0 Location & Site

Easting: 51.4019889831543  
Northing: -0.51341915130615

Thorpe Park is located approximately 8 km to the south of Heathrow Airport, within the Borough of Runnymede. It occupies a total area of 109ha, approximately 20 miles West of Central London.

Merlin Entertainments Group is the long-term leaseholder of the land at the Resort and the land to the southeast in the Blue edged boundary line on Figure 1. This equates to 1,677,510m<sup>2</sup> / 414.52 Acres.

The application site (edged Red) equates to 18607m<sup>2</sup> / 1.8ha.



This site was selected over the other options (refer to TP24-SA-XX-XX-DR-A-0109 - Alternative Location Considerations) because of the following points:

- Site has necessary existing services and infrastructure
- Site was tired with unused rides
- Enhancement of guest experience at this end of the park was desirable
- Reuse of this area disperses guests more evenly among the existing footprint of the park

Figure 1: Extract from Land Registry / Ordnance Survey with all land owned by the applicant edged Blue and the application site edged Red. Prepared by Smytheman Architectural.

TPR has excellent public transport links and benefits from a regular bus service. The 950 Bus travels from Staines Bus & Train station to the park regularly, there are also good bus links from nearby Woking and Chertsey. By rail, the regular Southwestern Railway service from Waterloo station to Staines runs around 5 times per hour with a journey time of between 30-50 mins. Trains also run direct to Staines from Windsor & Eton Riverside, Reading and Weybridge. TPR is approximately 7 miles from Heathrow Airport by road. Finally, by road TPR is well connected. The Site is easily accessible by road from junctions 11 and 13 of the M25, and then the A320 (Staines Road). The resort is well sign-posted and 'paid-for' parking can be booked in advance online for a discounted rate. There is also Dedicated Disabled parking within proximity to the park entrance.



Figure 2: Aerial view from Google Maps following the standards prescribed by Google. [Permissions – Google](#)



The application site is outlined in Red on figure 3. Monks Walk borders the Southern and Western edge of the site. The North the site is bordered by the Saw and Colossus rides beyond which lies the wider core of the resort. To the East, the site is bordered by Abbey Lake.

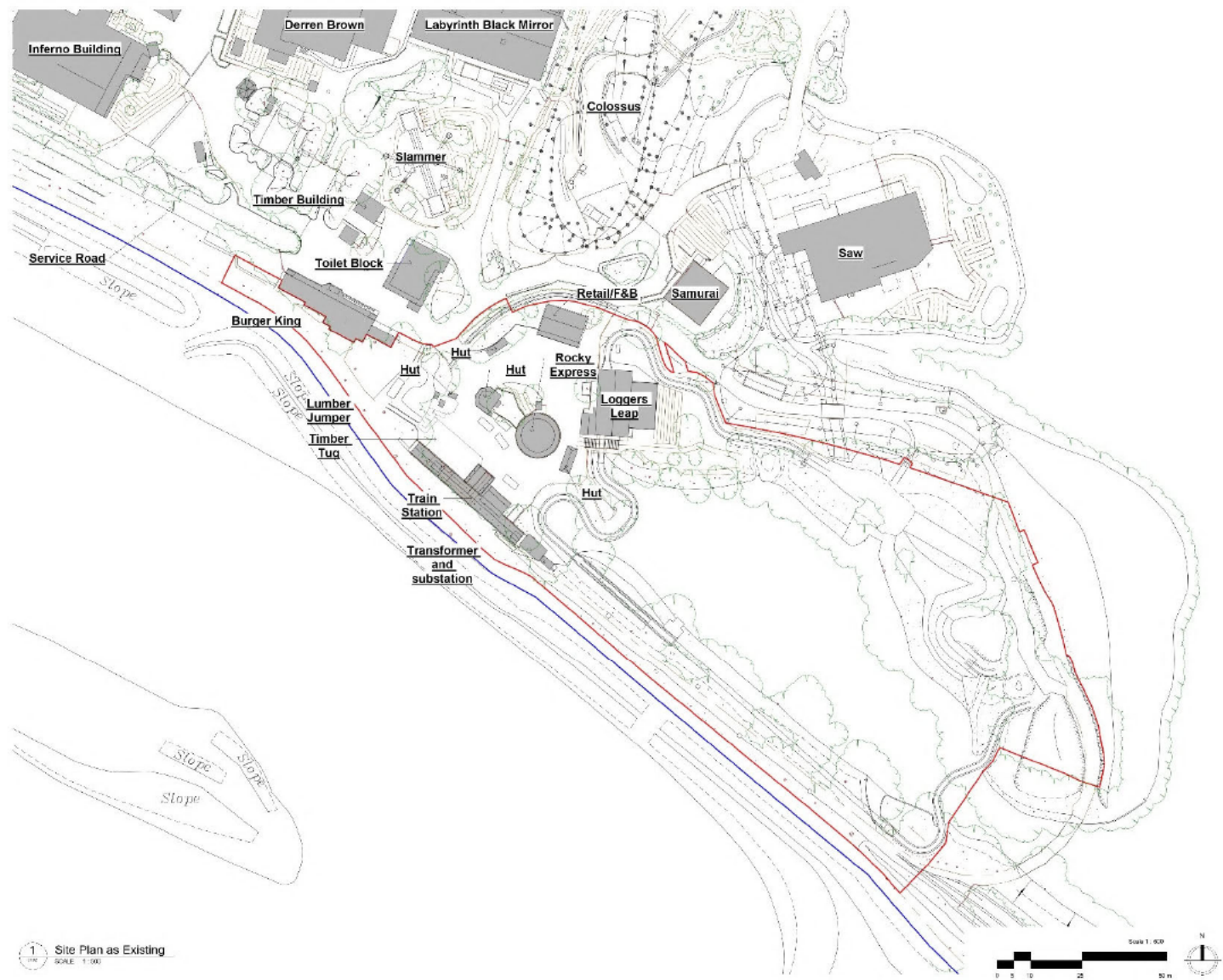
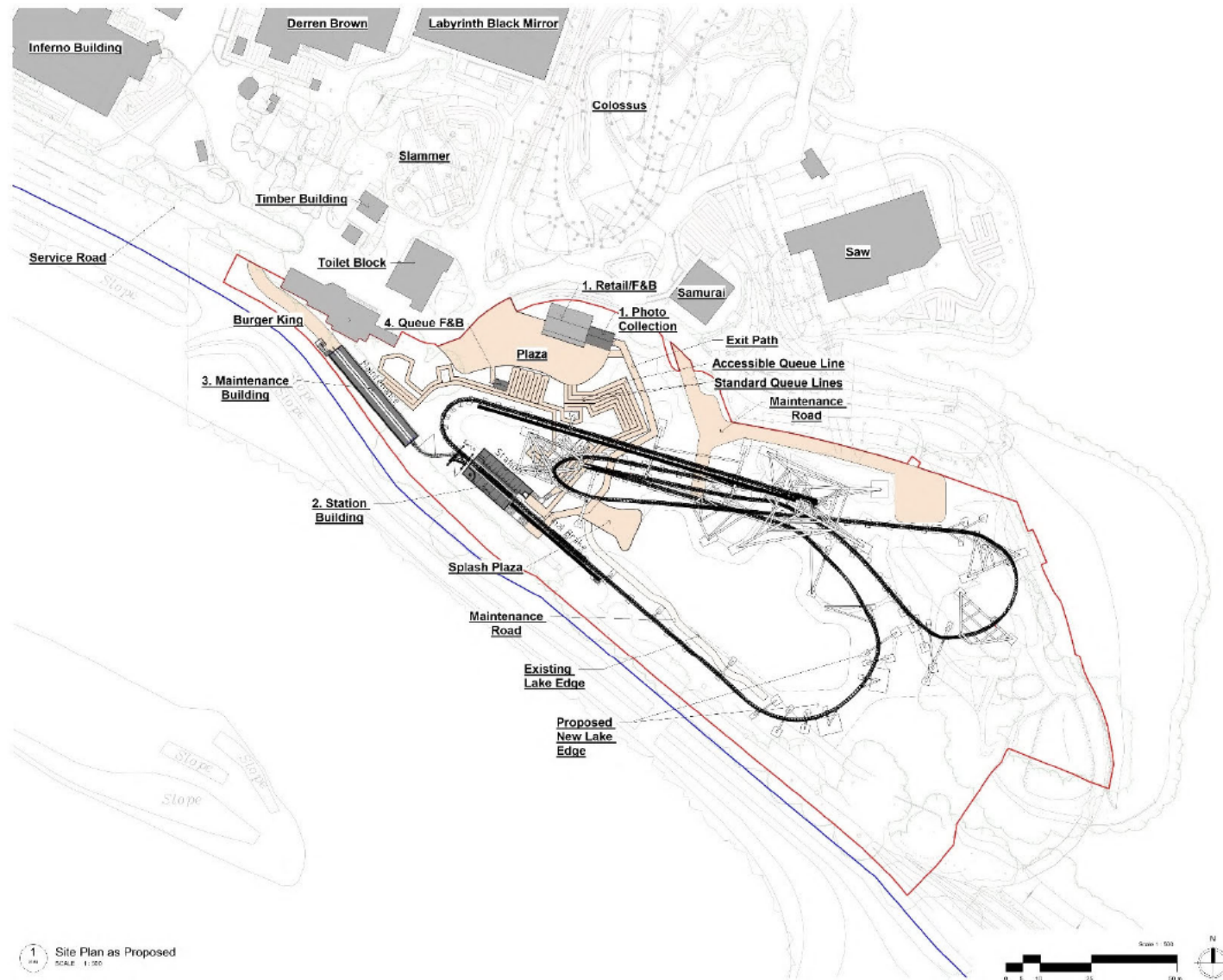


Figure 3: Existing Site Plan.



**Figure 2: Proposed Site Plan adjacent for comparison.**

As shown over the following pages the site is currently built up of block paved areas with a range of single storey timber buildings built in a wild western style, including the Canada Creek Railway Station, Loggers Leap Station and a range of Food and Beverage outlets built in timber frame with rustic horizontally laid timber cladding. There are also several canopies designed to look like wild western shacks and carts.



## 4.0 Site Analysis

There are several opportunities and constraints, that the proposals must respond to:

- As an established part of the resort all required infrastructure exists including retail, toilets, Food & Beverage offerings, substation, and pedestrian access.
- The Proposal is an in-fill development that will use existing links from the surrounding areas.
- The site benefits from a mature natural buffer of planting providing visual benefits and acoustic reduction.
- The proposal will use the existing landscape with enhancements to create an exciting new setting, including the incorporation and enhancement of the lake.
- The Proposal must consider flood risk concerns.
- Boundary Security enhancements would help tidy up the current setting though levels mean that any new fencing should not obstruct flood water flow.



Figure 3: Aerial view of the site as existing.



## 5.0 Site Photos



4. site entrance from NW Burger King



7. Looking North from site entrance to Slammer



8. Looking NE from site entrance toward Colossus

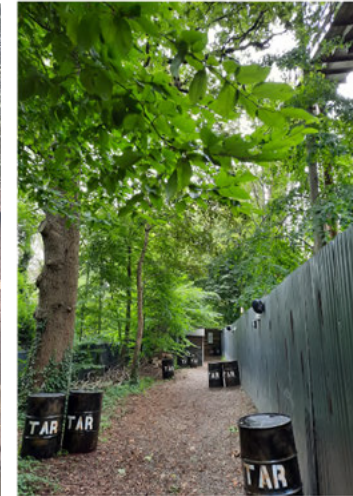
The application site is an existing developed site with several disused ride structures, and some smaller family rides.



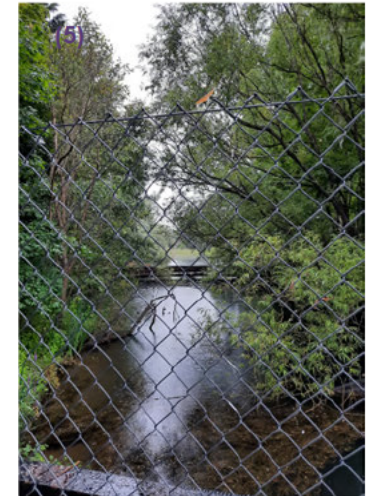
9. Rocky Express F&B Outlet



10 Rocky Express ride



11 Looking NW along existing pathway adj. Monks walk



12 Looking NW from Bridge over Abbey Lake to SE of site.





13. Showing the Rocky Express ride booth and Food and Beverage Hut



14 showing the Canada Creek Train Station and a carriage type Canopy



15 showing Retail unit to be retained and extended.

The main existing elements to be removed are the Loggers Leap Station building, and the Canada Creek Station building shown in the images above. The remaining theme items and surfacing are to be removed and new surfacing and landscaping to be installed in its place. The existing large retail unit to the North of the site will be retained and extended.



## 6.0 Planning History & Public Consultation

Thorpe Park Resort's recent planning history is extensive, relevant historical applications are summarised in the planning statement.

A Public Consultation was carried out from **Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> December 2021 – Friday 7<sup>th</sup> January 2022**. Consultation events were carried out at Thorpe Park on 9th December 2021. Two presentations were given at 3pm and 7pm at the park's events marquee. Online presentations were also held on 13<sup>th</sup> December at 1pm and 7.30pm.

At the end of the presentation's attendees were invited to provide a written response to a questionnaire provided by Thorpe Park. Responses were provided via the online questionnaire and email. An analysis of the feedback received is provided in the Statement of Community involvement.



Figure 16: Extract from the TPR Consultation website prepared by Lichfields showing the timeline of the application process.

### Consultation Outcomes

The principle of a new rollercoaster in this location was strongly supported. During the consultation queries were raised regarding impact of the ride on the Heathrow flight path. Whilst the structure is not expected to pose a significant obstacle to passing aircraft, the design and health and safety team continue to liaise with the CAA to ensure any potential risk is appropriately mitigated. Other design related matters arising from the consultation included requests for further detail regarding height and potential visual impact, any proposals impacting Monk's Walk and the ride colour and theming.

## 7.0 Design

### 7.1 Concept



Figure 17: Initial Proposals

The Development of this land was intended to bring footfall to this currently underused section of the Resort to spread the guests over a wider area and enhance the guest experience. The proposed development will comprise of the rollercoaster itself with a new plaza area and queue lines, ride station building, maintenance/plant building, and two retail buildings (Photo Collection point and F&B unit).

Several different schemes have been developed through the early concept design process. The plan adjacent shows initial considerations for a different layout in Purple however through development of the design and after environmental considerations were discussed it was agreed that the Canyon area to the East should be retained as an ecological buffer to reduce sound and visual impact from outside the park by maintaining the tree belt edge. In addition to this it was agreed that the ride should be condensed to retain the current Food & Beverage Building and its surroundings to reduce waste.



## 7.1 Concept (continued)

- In the next version of the design the following revisions were made:

- Ride Condensed into area available around Loggers Leap and Canada Creek Stations

- Plaza area and pathways reduced to minimum to retain as much existing trees/landscaping and allow space for new planting

- Existing Maintenance track behind Burger King retained to maintain food and beverage offering capacity for guest satisfaction

- Existing entrance into site from North closed off and West entrance widened to enhance views of landmark structure from within the Resort for all those entering the main plaza area

- Station Building moved further north to provide Monks Walk buffer area.

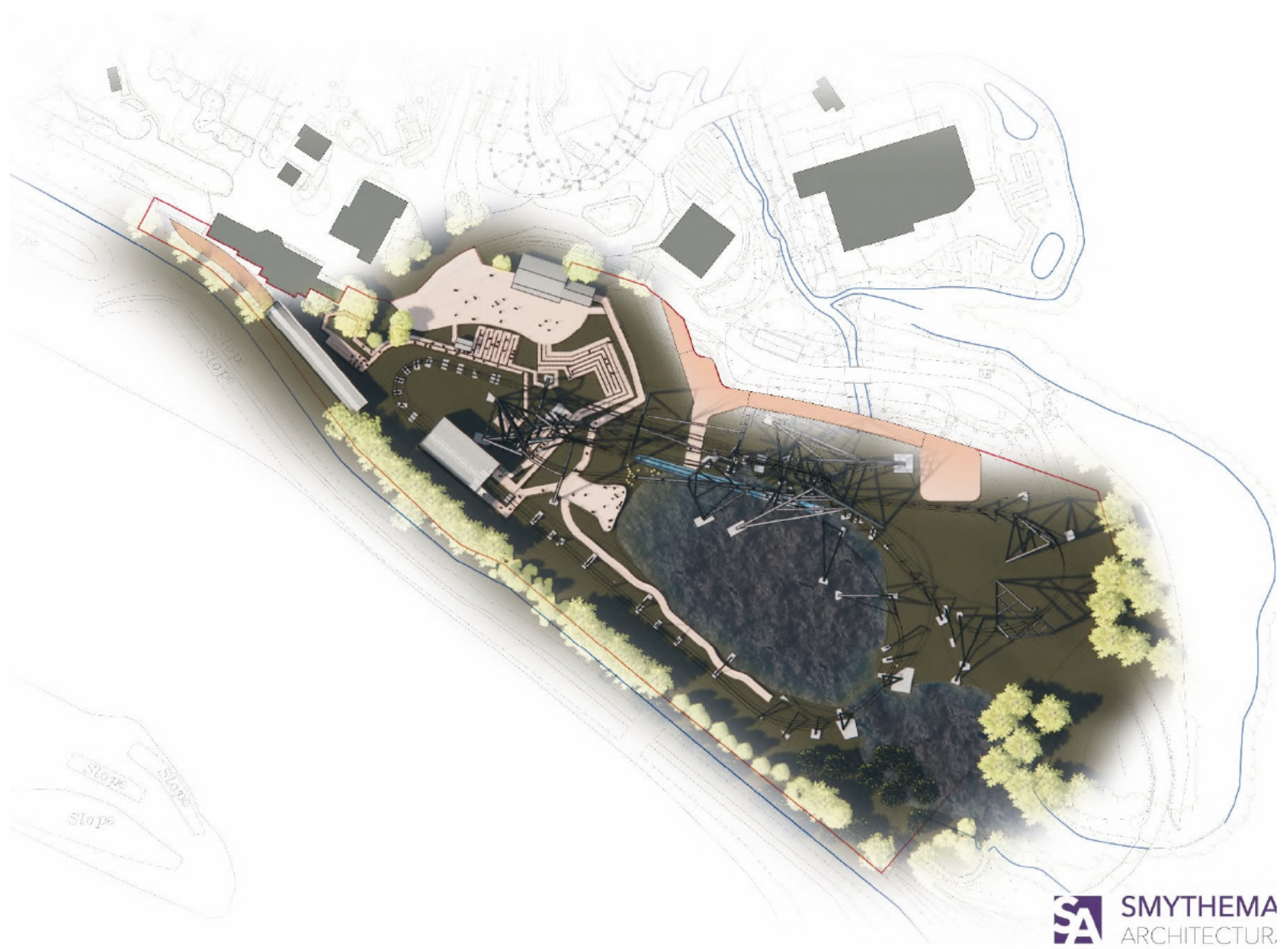


Figure 18: Final proposal

## 7.2 Use & Amount

The proposals significantly enhance Thorpe Park's offering to the public by creating a 'UK Best' experience with unique selling points. The proposals utilise the existing infrastructure (paths) and encourage a new high footfall area to draw guests from other areas of the park allowing for a revitalised guest experience.

In terms of developed land GIA and GEA of the proposed structures can be found below and on Drawing TP24-SA-XX-XX-DR-A-0106 – GIA and GEA will capture these too.

### Development GIA:

• Building 1 - Photo Collection	34.1m <sup>2</sup>
• Building 2 – Ride Station	180.3m <sup>2</sup>
• Building 3 – Maintenance	254.3m <sup>2</sup>
• Building 4 - F&B Unit	7.6m <sup>2</sup>

Total GIA **476.3m<sup>2</sup>**

### Development GEA:

• Building 1 - Photo Collection	39.2m <sup>2</sup>
• Building 2 – Ride Station	195.8m <sup>2</sup>
• Building 3 – Maintenance	285.1m <sup>2</sup>
• Building 4 - F&B Unit	10m <sup>2</sup>

Total Development GEA **530.1m<sup>2</sup>**

Room Schedule as Proposed			
Room	Area	Volume	Notes
1	Photo Collection	34.1m <sup>2</sup>	
2	Proposed Ride/F&B	85.9m <sup>2</sup>	
3	Core of Ride	19.2m <sup>2</sup>	
4	Operator Plaza	7.6m <sup>2</sup>	
5	Platform	15.2m <sup>2</sup>	
6	Maintenance Room	154.3m <sup>2</sup>	
7	F&B Unit	7.6m <sup>2</sup>	

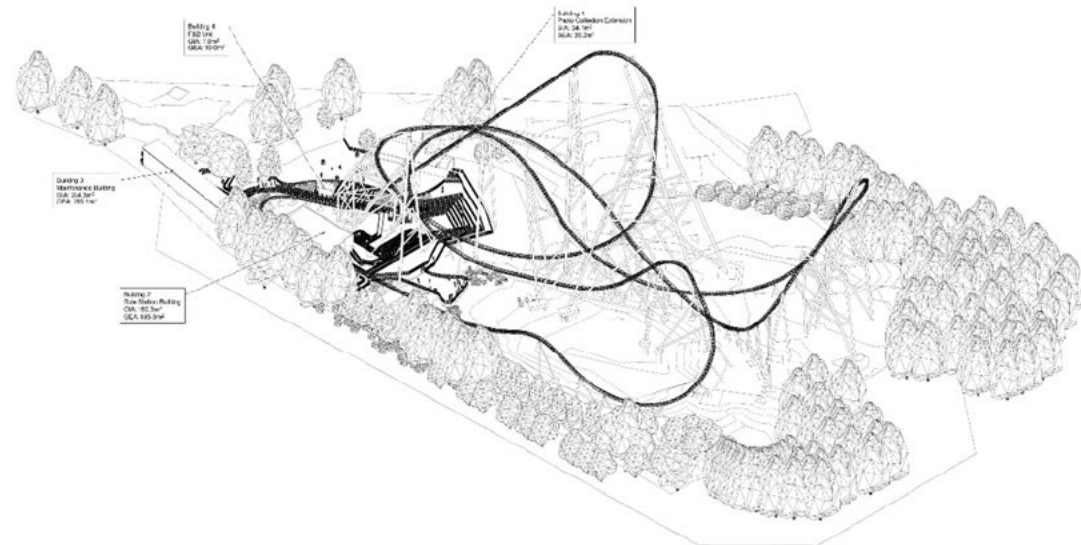


Figure 19: View of land area



### 7.3 Layout & Scale

The following drawing shows the few sections of track which will be more than 25m from ground level highlighted in Orange. In general, these are the sections that could potentially be seen from the surrounding areas depending on current screening from the existing tree belt. The Levels at each peak are also shown. The majority of the track is situated below the existing natural buffer, and this should shield views from outside the site. Where track sections breach this 25m area the track will be painted in a sympathetic and mitigating colour which, as demonstrated on the Viewpoints from NBW in the following pages provides additional space suitable to plant trees and vegetation subject to a management plan.

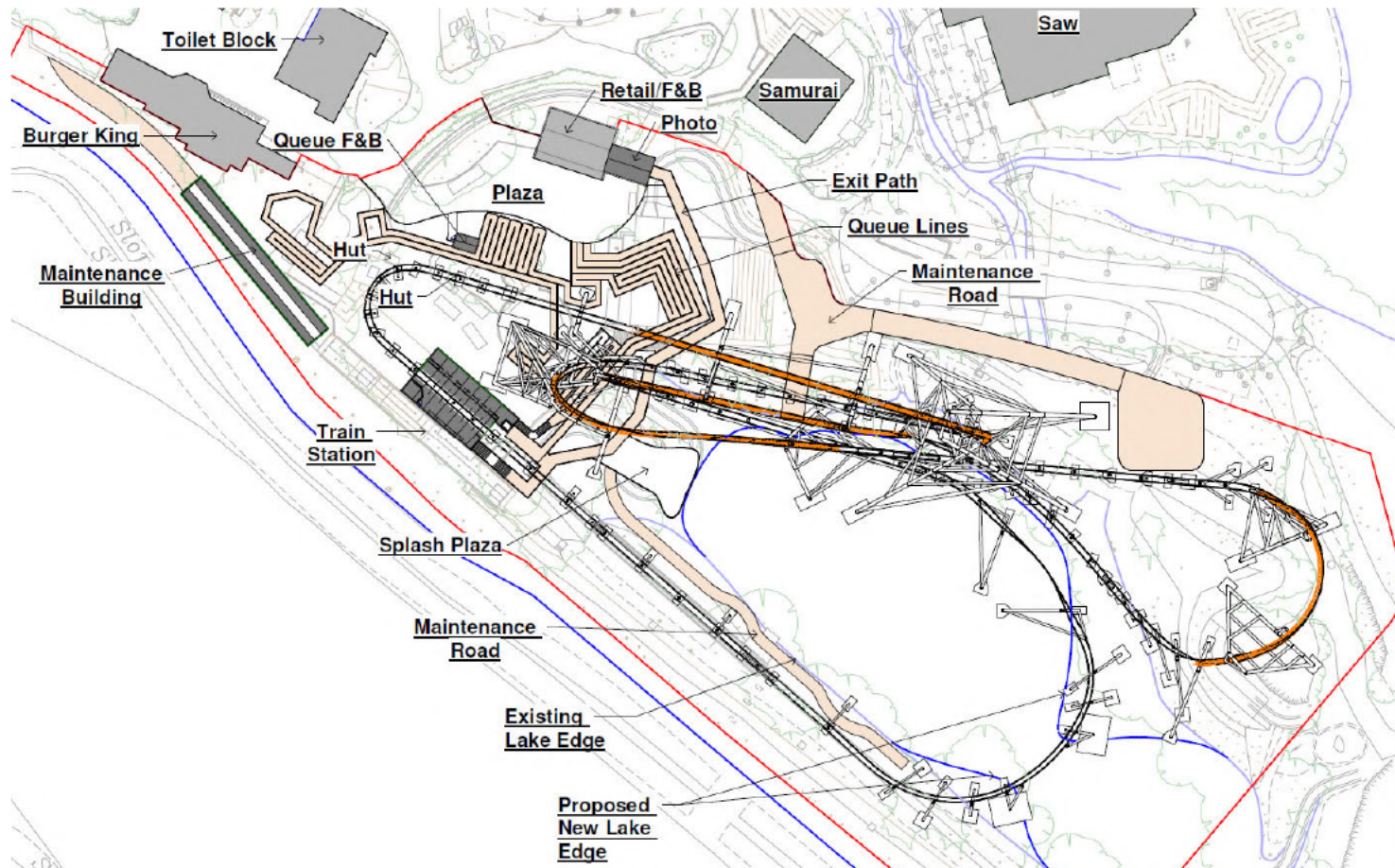


Figure 20: Site Plan with Orange Highlights where track exceeds 25m from GL

An appraisal of the landscape and visual impacts of the scheme has been undertaken and accompanies the application in the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment which also establishes the baseline conditions. Appendix 4 of the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment considers each viewpoint with existing photos from each point were supplemented with an indicative proposal image showing a light grey track.

Please see Landscape and visual impact assessment document for viewpoint refence plan and visuals depicting scale and massing.

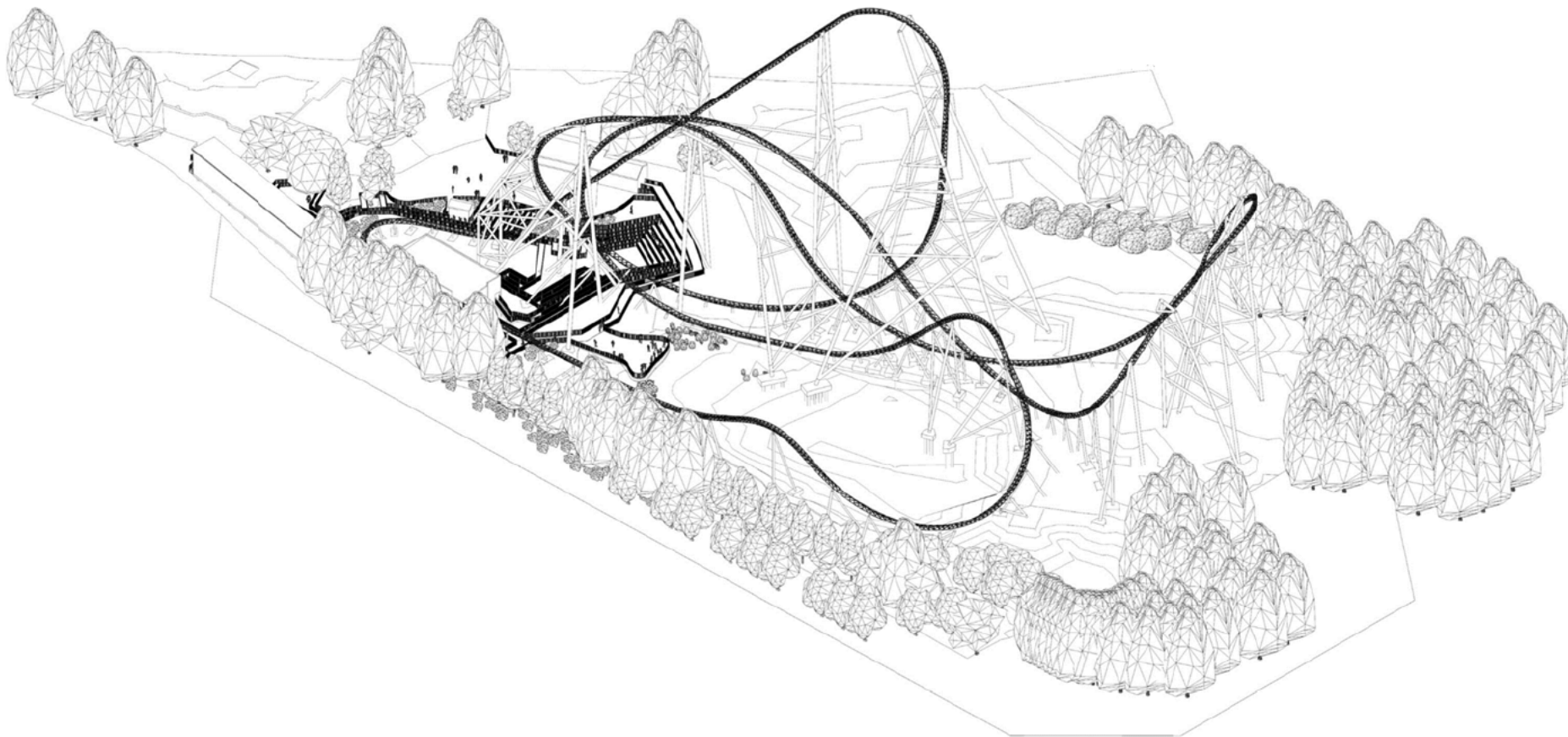


Figure 21: Land Overview by Smytheman Architectural demonstrates how the development will sit within the tree-lined site



## 7.4 Trees & Woodland

The Ride Layout has been carefully designed to retain the significant trees along Monks Walk and other high-quality trees on site. Where trees are required to be removed the design seeks to limit this to the internal areas within the site and includes trees of low quality that were largely planted when the Resort was created in the 1970s.

To inform the layout of development a tree survey was undertaken in accordance with *BS5837:2012: Trees in relation to design, demolition, and construction – Recommendation*. The constraints and opportunities presented by trees were identified during that process and fed into the design concept.

Where better quality trees were identified their retention was sought. To accommodate the layout the areas of lesser quality trees were identified, and consideration given to their use for development subject to suitable compensation.

An arboricultural impact assessment and tree protection plan were prepared to discuss and inform the impact on trees and to show the protective measures needed during the works.

The outcome of this process is a scheme that retains significant trees, and other tree cover, as well as extensive new tree planting and new habitat creation.

## 7.5 Ecology and Biodiversity Gains

The proposed development will take place on the edge of the existing resort, in an area that holds a disused ride attraction. The habitats present at the site include broadleaved woodland, conifer plantation and a small gravel pit bay. Surveys at the site have been undertaken to record bird and bat activity. To the south, and outside of the proposed development is a Site of Special Scientific Interest, which makes up part of the Southwest London Waterbodies Special Protection Area. These designated sites are listed due to their wintering bird interest.

The site itself is not of high conservation value, and the tree planting and other habitat works to be undertaken as part of the development will ensure a 10% Biodiversity Net Gain. Trees with bat roosting potential will not be affected by the proposed works, and it is considered that impacts on the wintering birds will be negligible as the ride will not operate during the core winter period when the birds are present.

## 7.6 Landscaping

Where possible the existing landscape features are retained and improved. The existing pathways are retained. A detailed landscape plan is submitted by NBW, an extract of this can be found on the following page.

The existing site consists of a developed area in the west with mainly non-indigenous plants and a small lake surrounded by mainly indigenous wet woodland and mixed woodland.

To the east is there is a mound and a flatter area covered by conifer planting.

Trees will be removed to accommodate the ride, but new indigenous woodland and scrub will be planted in and about the ride area with the areas of new planting exceeding the areas removed by some 45%.

The overall areas of woodland cover will increase by 29% over time producing a Biodiversity net Gain of 10%. The new trees will include native trees that do well on the site including oak, alder, goat willow, grey willow, white willow, hazel, field maple, holly, hawthorn, and blackthorn. In the herb layer, wildflower seed mixes will be sown to help provide a species rich habitat.





Figure 22: Landscape Design by NBW.



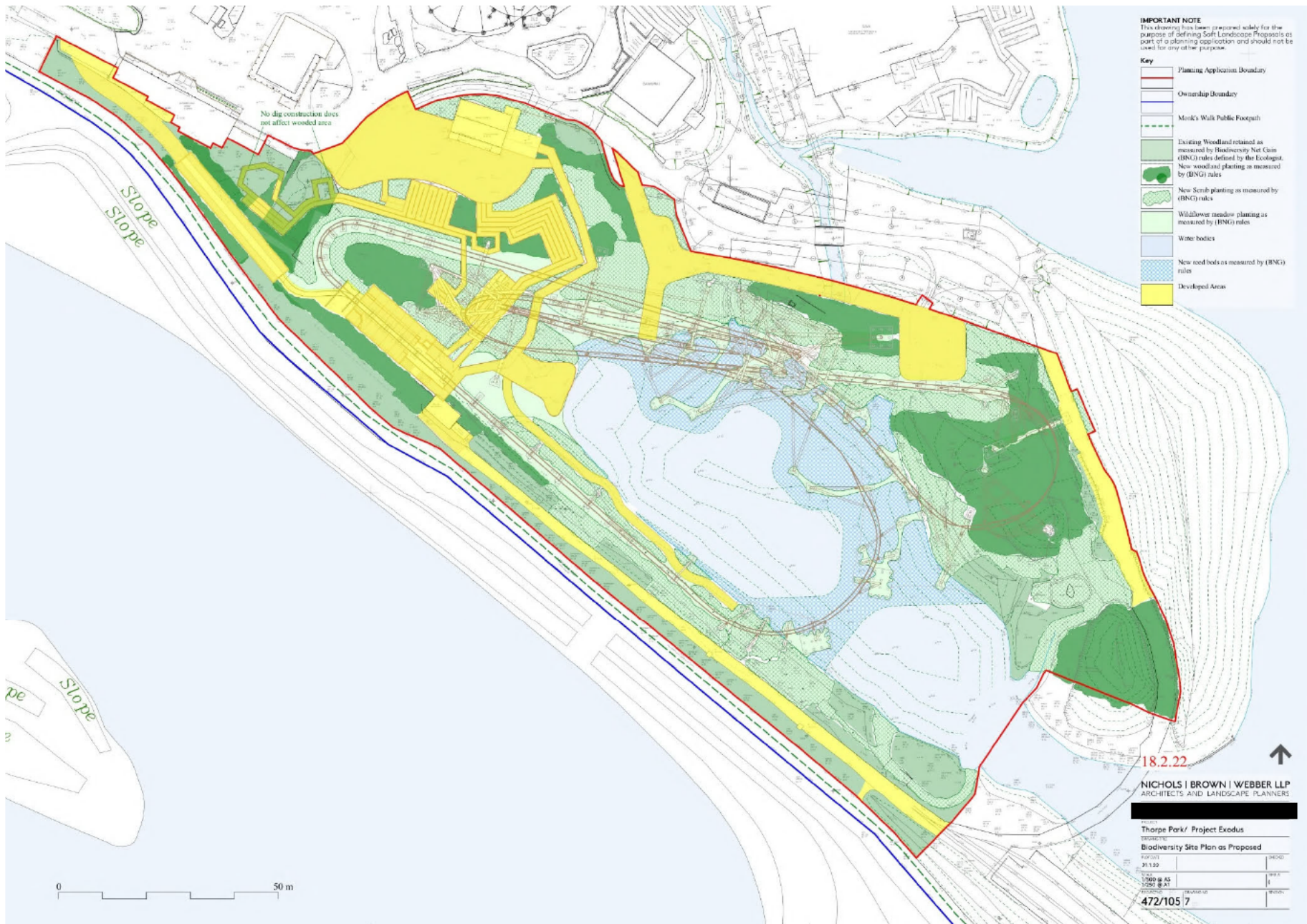


Figure 23: Biodiversity Site Plan by NBW.



## 7.5 Appearance

The following images give an indication on what the proposals will feel like. Theming and creative content will progress as part of the detailed design stage following approval of planning permission.

The theming images from the public consultation show that the ride itself and its positioning over the lake will be the main theming feature, with a backdrop of dense mature vegetation.



Figure 24: Rendering of Ride from the queue line area adj. the Maintenance Building



Figure 25: Rendering of Ride from the Plaza area near the retail building



Figure 26: Rendering of Ride from the top of the station exit stair



## 8.0 Access

### 8.1 Inclusive Access

Merlin Entertainments and Thorpe Park aspire to fully comply with the aims of the Equality Act 2010. At TPR the 'Accessibility Day Planner' provides clear guidance on the accessibility of every attraction the park offers, as well as offering the assistance of the guest experience team where required. The proposed rollercoaster will be assessed and added to the information offered in this support network.

In preparing the proposed designs, consideration has been given to the principles of inclusive design for staff and visitors alike. Inclusive access has been viewed in its broadest form and the design approach aspires to provide full access for all. Disabled guests can use the plaza and all rides, the following page details some of the accessibility measures put in place.

### 8.2 External Site Accessibility

All public areas will receive level access from the footpaths at a gradient shallower than 1:20, a gradient gentle enough for all types of users without assistance. Most of the proposed new surfacing will be level and set around 13.6m AOD to match the existing surfacing, reducing the need for extensive ground works.

Additionally dedicated Disabled Queue Lines have been created. The access threshold from outside into buildings will always be level on the main public approach. This has been the reason behind the level design of certain buildings such as the F&B unit and the Photo collection extension, acknowledging the increased flood risk.

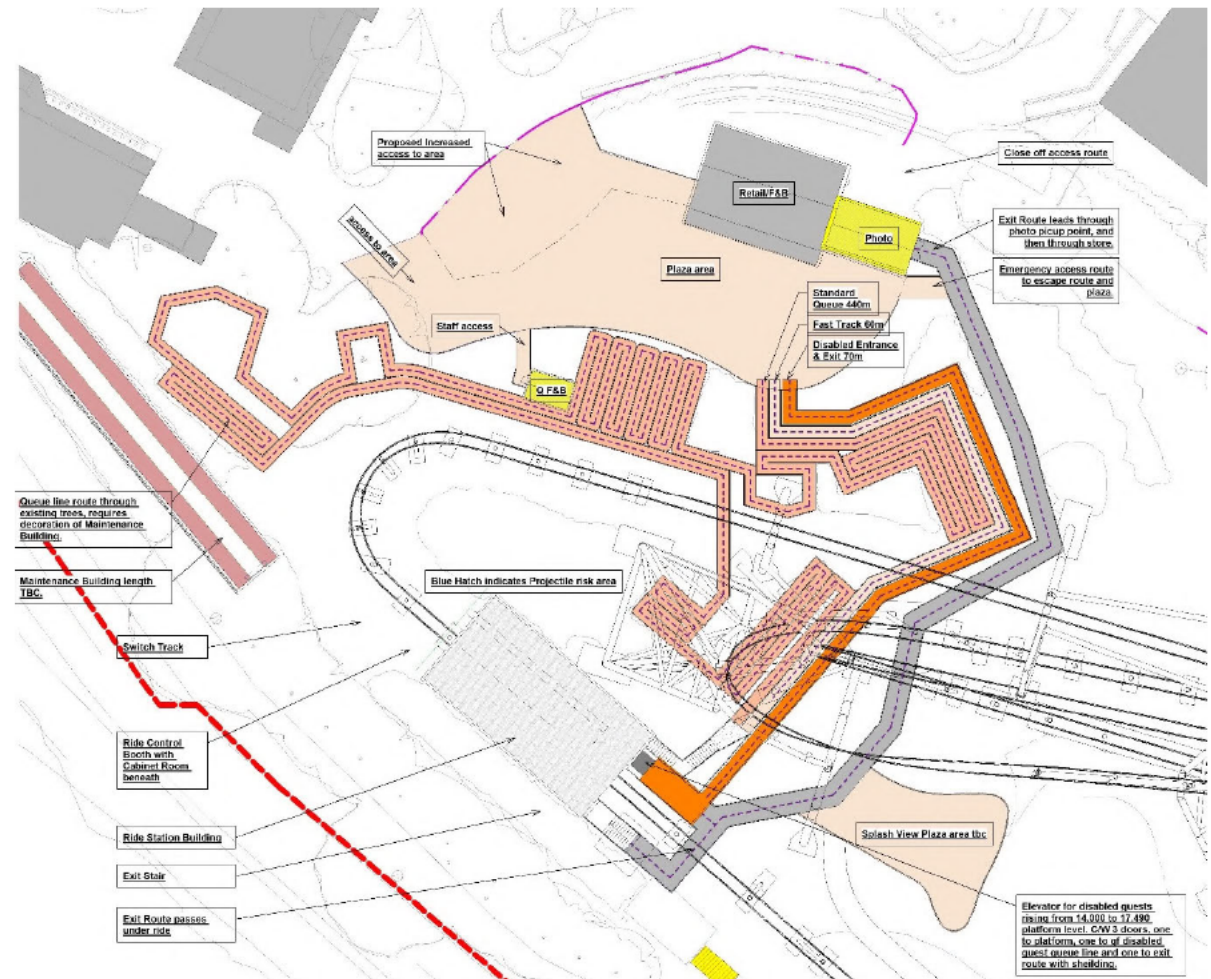


Figure 27: Queue-lines for all ride offering, whilst the disabled route (highlighted in Orange) is shorter all routes are level, and all routes enter in similar positions to ensure that no route feels less distinguished.

### **8.3 Building Accessibility**

Buildings will meet Approved Document M of the Building Regulations, with inclusion of best practice measures where practical to do so. The detailed construction design of the buildings will be completed in close collaboration with Thorpe Park to ensure buildings achieve the needs of its visitors and staff. As shown on the Figure 27 there is a platform lift to allow disabled guest to reach the raised platform, this will be protected in the event of a flood event with localised flood barriers.

### **8.4 Traffic Generation & Parking**

The resort has parking spaces dedicated for disabled use with level access to the main entrance. Use of manual wheelchairs and hire of electric scooters is available to all visitors. These systems are well established.



## 9.0 Conclusion

In conclusion the proposals reflect the aims of both national and local policy and guidance. The ride will help Thorpe Park promote and generate renewed interest in the park and in particular this corner of the park without developing new lands, and regain previously seen visitor numbers without reducing the guest experience quality. In turn, this provides noteworthy economic benefits in the form of tourism and employment.

The proposals have inclusivity and access for all at the heart of the design. Merlin Entertainments Group and Thorpe Park is committed to this in every development going forward. This accords with the Equality Act 2010 and allows all types of guests to enjoy a day out at Thorpe Park. This is another noteworthy communal benefit.

Finally through careful design and development of the site plan new features have been located such that their impact on the landscape and views outside the park is minimised.

For the reasons above it is considered that the planning application should be **approved**.