

Briefing Note

Our ref 04858/45/NT/HW

Date 15 September 2022

To [REDACTED]

From Lichfields

Subject Thorpe Park Resort – Proposed Rollercoaster application

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 This briefing note addresses the matters recently discussed between Runnymede BC (RBC) and Lichfields in relation to the EA objections (31.08.22) related to planning application ref. RU.22/0374. This note focuses on Thorpe Park Resort in respect of flooding and the long and well-established approach to development involving flood compensation and operation/ evacuation plans. The note explains the unique nature of the site in flooding terms - from the town planning perspective - and why, despite the EA's in principle objection, the proposed new rollercoaster should be granted planning permission.
- 1.2 By way of background this proposed new rollercoaster will be the first at the site for 10 years. As we explained in the application documents and summarised below, the investment is essential for the park in terms of recovering from the pandemic as well as ensuring a thriving business over the coming years. The application has been subject to extensive consultation and the submitted documents clearly set out the very special circumstances to justify development within the green belt. The scheme includes 10% biodiversity net gain and has demonstrated there will not be any significant adverse impacts. With the exception of the Environment Agency objection, which we address below, there are no objections from statutory consultees and 5 letters of support have been received from third parties. The lack of any third party objections indicates that the consultation and explanation of the development has reassured everyone about the careful site selection, the benefits and that there will be no adverse effects.
- 1.3 The Environment Agency has raised some technical matters ("objection 2") to the application which Atkins responded to on 9 and 15 September 2022. We consider all of these queries have now been addressed and Atkins awaits a response from the EA to objection 2. There is also an in-principle objection ("objection 1") from the Environment Agency because part of the site is located within the functional floodplain. However, that of course applies to many parts of the park, which means the operator is well aware of these issues and designs and manages the park with the issues and risks addressed.

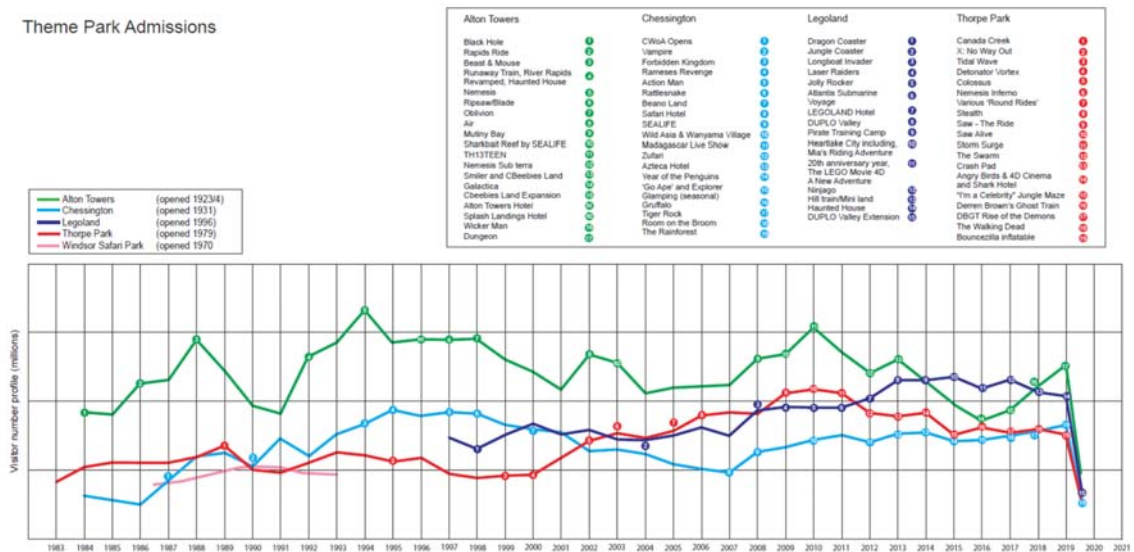
2.0 Background and Need for Investment

- 2.1 Thorpe Park Resort is a major UK theme park located within Runnymede Borough Council, on land formerly excavated for gravel. It includes three lakes Manor Lake, Fleet Lake and Abbey Lake, which surround the core of the park and its rides and attractions. A fourth

lake, St Ann's Lake, to the south, is outside of the Thorpe Park Resort ownership and operates as Thorpe Lakes a water sports company. Thorpe Park Resort is the only theme park in Surrey and has continually maintained its position as a high-profile tourist attraction within Runnymede and the wider south east region. The operation of Thorpe Park Resort as a major theme park therefore brings many economic benefits to the local area, a summary of some of these benefits is provided in appendix 1.

2.2 Thorpe Park is located within the green belt and includes areas within flood zone 2 and 3. Following changes to the Use Class Order the use of the theme park is Sui Generis. Theme parks are not specifically referred to in the NPPF categorisation of vulnerability/acceptability in the flood zones. The nearest that can be identified is "Assembly and Leisure" but that covers numerous forms of development (often indoors/inside buildings) and not exclusively or mainly theme parks. This isn't surprising given how few theme parks exist and the very broad brush nature of the categories referred to in the table. The guidance and categorisations in essence focus on seeking to avoid causing risk to people from flooding. It is important to reflect on this when assessing the development at such an unusual site.

2.3 The site has an extensive planning history and over the years a number of Medium Term Development Plans have been secured for new development at the site (MTDP 2004-2010 ref. RU.03/0965 and MTDP 2010-2016, ref. RU.10/0579 and). This new development has allowed Thorpe Park to continue to maintain visitor numbers and invest in its infrastructure. Past experience has shown that a lack of investment in new rides and attractions means that visitor numbers decline. Declining visitors results in less overall investment and a cycle of decline. Continued investment at the site is therefore critical to maintain visitors and the wider economic and social benefits that the theme park brings to the area. The graph below demonstrates the importance of investment in new rides and attractions in order to maintain visitor numbers.

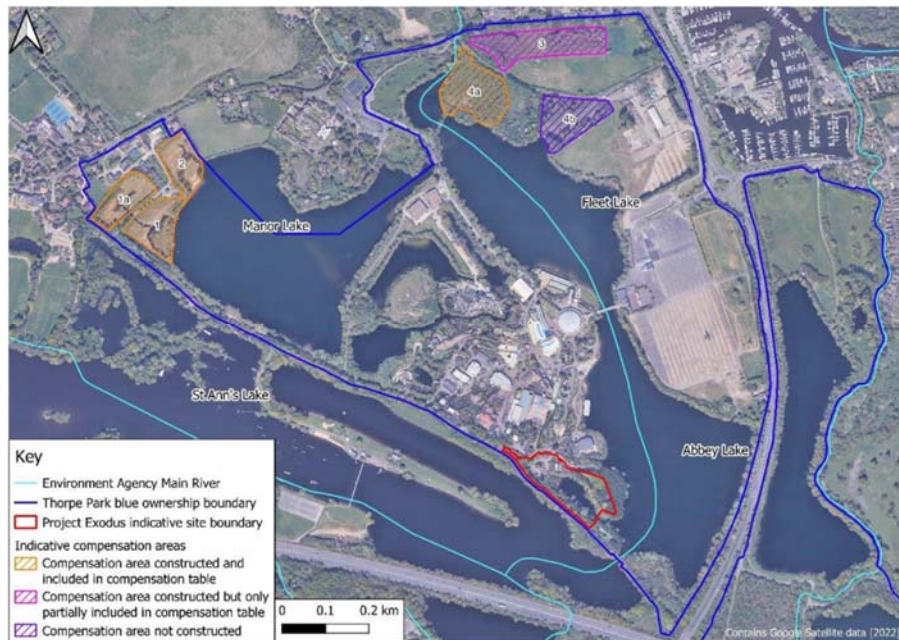


- 2.4 The proposed rollercoaster application is critical to the recovery of Thorpe Park post covid and it is important that the determination of the application is not delayed further as Merlin needs to commit to construction contracts to ensure that the ride can open for 2024.

3.0 Thorpe Park's Floodplain Compensation Scheme

- 3.1 Given the site's location in an area at risk of flooding a comprehensive floodplain compensation scheme has been agreed as part of the Medium Term Development Plan – agreed in November 2004 for compensation areas 1, 2, 3, 4a and 4b (ref. RU.03/0965 – permission at appendix 2) and a separate application was approved in 2010 for area compensation area 1a (ref. RU.09/1050– permission at appendix 3). This allows surplus floodplain storage to be provided on site, by lowering ground levels. The floodplain storage space created is then used to offset against new development at the site. The compensation scheme means that development proposals do not increase the risk of flooding at the site or in the surrounding area.

- 3.2 A plan showing the compensation areas is provided below:



Source: Atkins

- 3.3 Floodplain compensation areas 1, 2, 3, 4a were implemented during 2008/09. Area 4b was not constructed and has not been included in the floodplain compensation table.
- 3.4 Compensation area 1a was constructed at a later date and was subject to approval of additional details by the Council to address conditions 1 & 3 of the compensation area 1a planning permission which required details of channel dimensions and an updated floodplain compensation table. These approvals are appended to this note – see letters dated July 2010 & May 2011 at appendix 3, alongside a copy of the approved plan ref. 472/9 4/o which shows the approved compensation area 1a alongside the other approved areas).

- 3.5 As part of discussions on the creation of area 1a it was agreed that compensation from area 3 would be gifted for community benefit and not used by Thorpe Park.
- 3.6 Images taken from Google Pro and contained at appendix 4 confirm the physical changes on site as a result of the implementation of the floodplain compensation areas. The photos are several years old and the vegetation will have matured significantly in the interim. Please let us know if additional up to date pictures will be helpful.
- 3.7 The floodplain compensation table linking new development and offsetting the flood storage has been regularly updated over the last 18 years, and agreed through planning conditions and planning permissions that reference the relevant updated floodplain compensation table. The status of the floodplain compensation scheme is also reflected in Runnymede Local Plan Policy EE13 'Managing Flood Risk' which references that *"any loss of the approved compensation scheme at Thorpe Park"* by the River Thames Scheme would be re-provided in agreement with the Council.
- 3.8 As well as providing floodplain storage, the floodplain compensation scheme provides ecology enhancements at the site. Below are images of the site when the compensation areas were under construction (1) and the significant new landscaping and ecological areas that were provided as part of the compensation areas (2), alongside the new landscaped buffer areas which provide further ecological enhancements and substantial screening of rides and attractions within the core of the park.

Images showing the construction of the compensation area, the completed compensation area and the landscaped buffer areas.



4.0 Operation of Thorpe Park

- 4.1 Thorpe Park has an established Flood Evacuation Management Plan that has been agreed with the Council in consultation with the Environment Agency. This ensures there are clear procedures in place that are intended to ensure there is not an emergency in the first place. The primary approach is that Thorpe Park regularly monitors lake levels at the site using monitoring stations located within its lakes. The measures and procedures that are in place mean that the theme park would either be closed to visitors in advance of an anticipated flood event or evacuated well in advance of a flood event. However as explained by Atkins the nature of the water bodies at Thorpe, mean that the levels rise relatively gradually and this enables advanced planning by the senior management team at the theme park and an advanced decision made to not admit visitors to the park. In the last 20 years it has not been necessary to close the Park due to flooding. Should there be an expected event the evacuation plan is put into operation. Any damage to the site and its buildings/infrastructure as a result of flooding is a matter for Thorpe Park and its insurance company. Thorpe Park is therefore a very different site compared to other types of development where monitoring does not take place, where evacuation plans may not exist, occupiers may be less willing/able to evacuate, and/or where there are no measures in place to monitor and respond to any flood event.
- 4.2 The proposed new rollercoaster is located within the core of the theme park or the pink zone which is defined in the MTDP as the area where new development and associated activities will be concentrated. The application site comprises the Old Town part of the Resort which includes several rides, a food and beverage unit and the structures/buildings of now closed rides, including Loggers Leap. The site is therefore not an undeveloped piece of land and the proposed use of the site will reflect that of the previous use for which the principle has been established. Indeed, Thorpe Park could refurbish the buildings and rides without the need for planning permission and they could be used by the general public without the need for any flood mitigation/ floodplain compensation. This is a clear fall back in planning terms. The extent of the existing buildings and structures within the application boundary is shown in the extracted demolition plan below (see red hatched areas). Overall the proposed development will result in a net reduction of building footprint on the site. Those older/existing buildings on site were not designed to be resilient to the flow of flood water either so as well as providing less footprint the proposed new buildings also have better flood resilience should the buildings become inundated?]. There will be an increase in ride track and columns however this is part and parcel of any new attraction but is clearly raised above any design flood level in terms of the track, water compatible in terms of the columns, and outdoor in nature.

Plan extract showing demolition of buildings rides and structures



- 4.3 The “Assembly and Leisure” use class that is referenced in flooding guidance encompasses a wide range of uses that occur far more frequently across the country compared to theme parks– this includes bingo halls, film studios, casino, exhibition and leisure centres. Following the changes to the use class order Theme Parks are sui generis. Theme parks are not a typical “assembly and leisure” use and a considered and nuanced approach is valid in these circumstances rather than trying to shoe horn the development into one category or another. On this basis we consider it is more appropriate to consider the unique circumstance and the nature of theme park uses as they are largely outdoor based recreation – classed as sui generis in the new use class order. The proposed ride needs to be provided within the core of the park. It cannot be provided elsewhere in areas of lower flood risk due to the space constraints and operational requirements meaning the ride needs to be located within this existing developed core location within the park.
- 4.4 The proposed rollercoaster merely updates and replaces existing infrastructure within the core of the park to create a new theme park ride. The visitor numbers generated from the development will contribute to the recovery of visitor numbers at the Resort, but visitor numbers will remain below the peak that occurred in 2010 and well below those assessed for the Medium Term Development Plan. The proposed development will not create a new use and all new floorspace is compensated for within the updated floodplain compensation table. There is no additional flood risk at the site or in the surrounding area as a result of the proposed development, given the proposed floodplain compensation and drainage strategy. The proposed development does not therefore conflict with the NPPF which identifies that when determining any planning applications, local planning authorities

should ensure that flood risk is not increased elsewhere. The submitted flood-risk assessment demonstrates:

- A) that there will be no increase in flood risk.
- B) the development is located within an existing developed part of the site and replaces existing rides and buildings, whilst the site includes areas at risk of flooding (zones 2 and 3) this is unavoidable given the sites flood risk classification and the location of the core of the park which is surrounded by lakes.
- C) The sequential and exception tests are passed.
- D) The development is appropriately flood resilient such that, in the event of a flood, it could be quickly brought back into use without significant refurbishment. The finished floor levels for the control room, maintenance building and rollercoaster boarding platform are all above the 1% + 35%CC level, but due to access requirements the F&B unit and Photo booth finished floor levels have not been raised above flood levels due to the need to provide level access and a desire to reduce additional loss of floodplain storage. Thorpe Park has however accepted that any damage to these facilities will need to be paid for by the theme park at no expense to the public.
- E) The proposals are accompanied by a comprehensive drainage scheme including source control SuDS techniques.
- F) Any residual risk will be safely managed by the lake level monitoring and flood evacuation procedures which includes agreed evacuation routes.

- 4.5 Thorpe Park is a unique site and given the measures in place it is considered that the proposed development should be approved. The technical objection due to the presence of some of the development being within the functional floodplain is acknowledged. However the need for rides and infrastructure to be replaced at the theme park mean is critical to the success of the site and the proposed development merely replaces existing rides and infrastructure within the core of the site. It has been demonstrated that the proposed development will not increase flood risk at the site or elsewhere and that the sequential and exception tests have been passed.
- 4.6 Thorpe Park and Merlin has taken a responsible and forward thinking approach towards the flood risk via the provision of its compensation scheme and has also been providing biodiversity benefits before such requirements were required or imposed. This proactive and responsible approach has therefore kept the flood areas in balance and the park operating safely for many years.
- 4.7 Given the above it is considered that the guidance in the NPPF (para 167 has been met) and that the proposals do not conflict with Policy EE13 of the Runnymede Local Plan.
- 4.8 The wider benefits and acceptability of the proposed development are set out within the submitted Planning Statement and the conclusions from the Planning Statement are included at appendix 5 of this note.

Appendix 1

The Economic Footprint of Thorpe Park

01 EMPLOYMENT EFFECTS

185 Jobs

Permanent Employment
[185 people are employed permanently by Thorpe Park]



Construction Employment
[temporary construction jobs supported by capital investment in 2021]



10 Jobs

853 Jobs

Seasonal Employment



265 Jobs

Visitor Related Employment
[annual jobs (FTE) supported by visitor spending in shops, hotels, restaurants and other service facilities]

02 OPERATIONAL EXPENDITURE

£13.7m
Annual Wage Bill

£20.9m
Supplier Expenditure
[per annum]

£2.1m
Capital Expenditure
[per annum]

£1.0m
Annual Business Rates

£17.5m
Indirect & Induced Expenditure
[operational expenditure recycled each year within the region to produce other forms of income]

03 VISITOR EXPENDITURE

£51.1m
Annual Visitor Spending in Thorpe Park
[accounts for a significant proportion of annual tourism expenditure in Runnymede]

£13.6m
Off-site Expenditure by Overnight Visitors
[25% of visitors stay overnight and spend money in hotels, shops and services each year]

£3.4m
Off-site Expenditure by Day Visitors
[spending prior to arriving at the park on goods and services each year by day visitors]

04 TOURISM AND COMMUNITY IMPACTS



Flagship Attraction Raising Profile of Runnymede



Introduces Visitors to Other Local Attractions



Visitor Expenditure in Local Shops and Services



Community Focus with Education and Charitable Projects

Design and analysis by Lichfields (Copyright 2022)

Thorpe Park is one of the largest and most popular themed attractions in the UK delivering substantial economic benefits locally, regionally and nationally.



RUNNYMEDE BOROUGH COUNCIL

TECHNICAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT

CIVIC OFFICES
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KT15 2AH

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DX 46350 ADDLESTONE
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TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (GENERAL DEVELOPMENT PROCEDURE) ORDER 1995

DECISION NOTICE: GRANT PERMISSION (subject to conditions)

Nathaniel Lichfield & Partners
14 Regent's Wharf
All Saints Street
London N1 9RL

Application Number: RU.03/0965

Proposal: Outline planning application for installation of rides (not to exceed 65m) and buildings (floorspace up to 8000sqm) in period 2004-2010, partial infilling of lakes and creation of compensation areas, landscaping infrastructure improvements, relocation of part of overflow car park and works to main access from A320

Location: Thorpe Park
Staines Road
Chertsey
Surrey
KT16 0PN

Runnymede Borough Council in pursuance of their powers under the above mentioned Act and Order **GRANT** permission for the above development in accordance with the details given on the application form and approved plans. Permission is given subject to the following **CONDITIONS**:

1. Approval of the details of the siting, design and external appearance of the building(s), the means of access thereto and the landscaping of the site (hereinafter called "the reserved matters") shall be obtained from the Planning Authority in writing before any development is commenced, and shall be carried out as approved.

Reason: To comply with Article 3 of the Town and Country Planning (General Development Procedure) Order 1995.

Continued/.....

(RU.03/0965)

2. (a) Application for approval of the reserved matters shall be made to the Planning Authority before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.
- (b) The development hereby permitted shall be begun either before the expiration of five years from the date of this permission, or before the expiration of two years from the date of approval of the reserved matters to be approved, whichever is the later.

Reason: To comply with section 92(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

3. Before each part of the development hereby permitted is commenced, details and/or samples of the external materials, including colour treatment in respect of that part of the development shall be submitted to and approved by the Planning Authority and no variations in such materials when approved shall be made without the prior approval, in writing, of the Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure that the development harmonises with the surrounding in the interest of visual amenity and to comply with Policy GB10 of the RBLP 2001.

4. The highest part of new buildings shall not exceed the prevailing height of 10 metres and new or replacement rides or structures shall not exceed 30 metres in height with the exception of the 'icon' coaster ride that shall not exceed 65 metres in height unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Planning Authority.

Reason: In order to obtain a satisfactory form and scale of development in the interests of the Green Belt land designation and visual and residential amenities to comply with Policy GB10 of the Runnymede Borough Local Plan April 2001.

5. The 'icon' coaster shall be of an open structure design with the majority of the structural support for the ride not exceeding 30 metres in height and the upper section of the ride above 30 metres having no more than two vertical drops or one loop unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Planning Authority.

Reason: In order to obtain a satisfactory form and scale of development in the interests of the Green Belt land designation and visual and residential amenities to comply with Policy GB10 of the Runnymede Borough Local Plan April 2001.

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6. The use of the rides and attractions, hereby permitted, by the general public shall be limited to the following hours:
- i) during school holidays : 09.00 to 23.00 Monday to Saturday, and 09.00 to 22.00 hours on Sundays;
 - ii) 09.00 to 22.00 hours on all other days.
- Reason:** In order to maintain the amenities of the area and in particular the amenities enjoyed by the residential properties in the vicinity.
7. Notwithstanding the requirements of condition (6) of this permission, the rides and attractions hereby permitted may be used by the general public for not more than ten days of each calendar year from 09.00 until midnight, subject to the use allowed by this condition not being in breach of any condition or any other planning permission.
- Reason:** In order to maintain the amenities of the area and in particular the amenities enjoyed by residential properties in the area.
8. No advertisements, display boards or illumination shall be placed or provided on the proposed rides or attractions hereby permitted or within the area occupied by or adjacent to these without the prior permission of the Planning Authority.
- Reason:** To maintain planning control in the interests of the visual amenities of the area.
9. A revised and updated Ecological and (Landscape) Management Plan shall be submitted including long-term design objectives, management responsibilities and maintenance schedules of all landscape and habitat creation areas shall be submitted and approved by the Planning Authority before the development commences.
- Reason:** To conserve and enhance the natural features and ecology of the area in accordance with Policy NE18 of the Runnymede Borough Local Plan April 2001.
10. Detailed schemes of the landscaping and ecological improvement works hereby permitted shall be submitted for the approval of the Planning Authority (including a planting scheme for the newly created shallow lake margins and creation of new wetland areas), such details to include a programme for the implementation of the works, and when approved such scheme or schemes shall be carried out as approved and thereafter maintained for a period of 5 years, such maintenance to include the replacement of any trees and shrubs that die, are removed or become damaged or diseased with others of similar size and species, unless the Planning Authority gives written consent to any variation.
- Reason:** In the interests of the visual appearance of the area, to protect, restore or replace the natural features of importance within or adjoining lakes and the general ecology of the area in accordance with Policies NE15 and NE20 of the Runnymede Borough Local Plan April 2001.

Continued/.....

(RU.03/0965)

11. An updated floodplain compensation table, showing storage volumes down to a level of 12.7m above Ordnance Datum (Newlyn) shall be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority within 3 months of the approval hereby given. The floodplain compensation scheme shall be carried out as approved.

Reason: To ensure that the appropriate level of floodplain compensation is provided in order to alleviate the increased risk of flooding that would otherwise be caused by a reduction in flood storage capacity and to comply with Policy SV2 of the Runnymede Borough Local Plan April 2001.

12. No development approved by this permission shall be commenced until a detailed method statement for the flood compensation and infilling has been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority. The scheme shall include amongst other things details on the phasing and duration of works, volumes of materials to be imported, types of materials to be used, construction measures, storage of plant, materials and vehicles and ensure that any contamination (eg by soil, silt, oil, rubble or any other debris or pollutants) of the adjacent waterbodies or drains is prevented. The scheme shall be implemented as approved.

Reason: To protect and conserve the water quality of the lakes in accordance with Policy SV2A of the Runnymede Borough Local Plan April 2001.

13. No development works for each of the major rides and attractions shall commence until a noise assessment has been submitted and approved for each in accordance with advice contained in Planning Policy Guidance Note 24: Planning and Noise, September 1994.

Reason: In order to protect residential amenities in the area and its semi-rural character.

14. No development works for the 'Big Lake Laser Show' shall commence until a light pollution technical assessment has been submitted and approved by the Planning Authority.

Reason: In order to protect residential amenities in the area and its semi-rural character.

15. No sound reproduction equipment for the Big Lake Laser Show which conveys messages, music or other sound by voice or otherwise which is audible outside the premises shall be installed on the site without the prior written consent of the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In order to protect residential amenities in the area and its semi-rural character.

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16. Prior to the commencement of the development hereby approved, details of the cleaning facilities to prevent the deposition of extraneous matter of the public highway shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: In order that the development should not prejudice highway safety, the free flow of traffic nor cause inconvenience to other highway users and to comply with Policy MV2 of the Surrey Structure Plan 1994, Policy DN2 of the Surrey Structure Plan Deposit Draft December 2002 and Policy MV4 of the Runnymede Borough Local Plan Second Alteration 2001

17. The new visitor attractions shall not be made available for public use until the proposed vehicular/pedestrian/cycle modified access to Thorpe Park has been designed/constructed in accordance with a scheme to be submitted and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, all to be permanently maintained to a specification to be agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority and the visibility zones shall be kept permanently clear of any obstruction above 600mm in height.

Reason: In order that the development should not prejudice highway safety, the free flow of traffic nor cause inconvenience to other highway users and to comply with Policies MT2 and MV4 of the Surrey Structure Plan 1994, DN2 of the Surrey Structure Plan Deposit Draft December 2002 and MV2 and MV4 of the Runnymede Borough Local Plan Second Alteration 2001.

18. A management scheme for the use of the designated car parking areas during peak operating days shall be submitted for the approval of the Planning Authority; such scheme to include, among other measures, a hierarchy for priority of use (e.g. disable, parents and toddlers, visitors, high occupancy vehicles) the management scheme shall be implemented, as approved, prior to any of the rides and/or attractions, hereby permitted, being open to the public.

Reason: Condition 18 is required in order that the development should not prejudice highway safety, the free flow of traffic nor cause inconvenience to other highway users and to comply with Surrey Structure Plan Policy MT2 and Deposit Draft January 2001 Policy DN2 and Runnymede Local Plan Policy MV4.

19. The number of lorry movement accessing the A320 Staines Road shall not exceed 75 movements per day.

Reason: To ensure that the development should not prejudice highway safety, nor cause inconvenience to other highway users and to comply with Surrey Structure Plan Policy MT2 and Deposit Draft January 2001 Policy DN2 and Runnymede Local Plan Policy MV4.

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20. Prior to the commencement of any development hereby permitted, detailed drawings of any steps and ramps shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Any steps or ramps must have an open construction. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details and therefore after retained.
- Reason:** To prevent the increased risk of flooding due to impedance of flood flows and reduction of floodwater storage capacity and to comply with Policy EN3 of the Surrey Structure Plan 1994, Policy SE3 of the Surrey Structure Plan Deposit Draft December 2002 and Policy SV2 of the Runnymede Borough Local Plan Second Alteration 2001
21. Prior to the commencement of any development hereby permitted detailed drawings of any walls, fences or other means of enclosure within or around the site shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The design of any wall, fence or other means of enclosure must be permeable to flood water. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details and thereafter retained.
- Reason:** To prevent obstruction to the flow and storage of floodwater with a consequent increased risk of flooding and to comply with Policy EN3 of the Surrey Structure Plan 1994, Policy SE3 of the Surrey Structure Plan Deposit Draft December 2002 and Policy SV2 of the Runnymede Borough Local Plan Second Alteration 2001
22. There shall be no raising of existing ground levels on the site within the area liable to flood, other than in accordance with the approved details.
- Reason:** To prevent the increased risk of flooding due to impedance of flood flows and reduction in flood storage capacity and to comply with Policy EN3 of the Surrey Structure Plan 1994, Policy SE3 of the Surrey Structure Plan Deposit Draft December 2002 and Policy SV2 of the Runnymede Borough Local Plan Second Alteration 2001
23. All spoil and building materials stored on site before and during construction shall be removed from the area of land liable to flood upon completion.
- Reason:** To prevent the increased risk of flooding due to impedance of flood flows and reduction of flood storage capacity and to comply with Policy EN3 of the Surrey Structure Plan 1994, Policy SE3 of the Surrey Structure Plan Deposit Draft December 2002 and Policy SV2 of the Runnymede Borough Local Plan Second Alteration 2001

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Informatives

1. The applicant is advised that this permission is subject to a Section 106 Agreement.
2. The development hereby granted consent has been assessed against the following Development Plan policies - Policies PE1, PE2, PE8, MT2 and DP22 of the Surrey Structure Plan 1994, Policies LO4, LO5, SE1, SE3, SE4, SE7, SE8, SE10, DN2, DN14 and DN15 of the Surrey Structure Plan Deposit Draft 2002 (Proposed Modifications June 2004) and Policies GB1, GB10, LE1, MV4, MV5, MV9, NE15, NE16, NE17, NE18, NE20, R1, SV2, SV2A of the Runnymede Borough Local Plan Second Alteration April 2001 and other material planning considerations including third party representations. It has been concluded that the development would not result in any harm that would justify refusal in the public interest. The Planning Officer's report giving a more detailed assessment of this application is available for inspection at the Technical Services Department and copies can be obtained subject to a photocopying charge.
3. Under the terms of the Water Resources Act 1991, the prior consent of the Environment Agency is currently required for any discharge of sewage or trade effluent onto or into ground and for surface run off into ground water. Such consent may be withheld. If there is existing discharge consent, the applicant should ensure that any increase in volume is permitted under present conditions. Contact the EA Authorisations Officer on 01276 454333 for further details.
4. Details of the highway requirements necessary for inclusion in any application seeking approval of reserved matters may be obtained from the Transportation Development Control Division of Surrey County Council.
5. The applicant is advised that this decision relates to the following drawing numbers received on the dates shown:-

Drawing Number:

Date Received:

CL/4858/44 Rev A	25/5/04
472/109b, 110a	24/10/03
CL/4858/045 Rev A, 046 Rev A	9/2/04
CL/4858, 42	14/8/03
472/108, 111a, 112, 113	14/8/03
Example of launch coaster (Appendix 4: Knotts Hydraulic Coaster)	14/8/03
Environmental Statement	14/8/03
Traffic Impact Assessment	14/8/03
Travel Plan	14/8/03

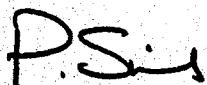
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Any permission hereby granted shall not be construed as authority to carry out works on the highway. The applicant is advised that a licence must be obtained from the Highway Authority before any works are carried out on the footway, footpath, carriageway, verge or other land forming part of the highway.

Your attention is drawn to the **NOTES** overleaf.

Date of Registration: 14 August 2003

Date of Decision: 18 November 2004



Director of Technical Services

Nathaniel Lichfield & Partners
14 Regent's Wharf
All Saints Street
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N1 9RL

DCNOTICE



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Fax: 01932 838384
DX 46350 ADDLESTONE

www.runnymede.gov.uk

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990

**TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING
(GENERAL DEVELOPMENT PROCEDURE) ORDER 1995**

DECISION NOTICE: GRANT PERMISSION (subject to conditions)

Application Number: RU.09/1050

Proposal: Creation of flood compensation area 1A on land south of Thorpe Farm and bridge link between existing compensation areas 1 and 1A

Location: Thorpe Park
Staines Road
Chertsey
Surrey
KT16 0PN

Runnymede Borough Council in pursuance of their powers under the above mentioned Act and Order **GRANT** permission for the above development in accordance with the details given on the application form and approved plans. Permission is given subject to the following **CONDITIONS**:

- 1 The development for which permission is hereby granted must be commenced not later than the expiration of three years beginning with the date of this permission.

Reason: To accord with the provisions of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act (as amended).

- 2 Prior to the commencement of any cut operations, details of the channel dimensions linking Cut Area 1A to the adjacent lake and compensation Cut Area 1 shall be submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved channel shall be implemented on site and remain in perpetuity for the lifetime of the development.

Reason: To ensure the proposed compensation cut area is in hydrologic continuity with the surrounding floodplain and lake system. To ensure the proposal serves its purpose in mitigating flood risk for future development upon Thorpe Park in accordance with Planning Policy Statement 25.

/continued ...

3 Within 3 months of the completion of the proposed development an updated compensation table shall be submitted to and approved in writing to the Local Planning Authority. No compensation created by Cut Area 1A shall be used for future development proposals in the wider Thorpe Park Development until:

1. The Local Planning Authority has confirmed it is satisfied the development has been completed in accordance with the approved plans.
2. The bridge link and channel have been completed and are operational in accordance with the approved plans.

Reason: To ensure the implementation of this proposal occurs in accordance with the approved plans and to ensure there is no temporary increase in flood risk in accordance with Planning Policy Statement 25.

4 If, during development, contamination not previously identified is found to be present at the site then no further development (unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority) shall be carried out until the developer has submitted, and obtained written approval from the Local Planning Authority for, an amendment to the remediation strategy detailing how this unsuspected contamination shall be dealt with.

Reason: To ensure any residual risk of contamination does not pose a risk to controlled waters in accordance with Planning Policy Statement 23.

5 Prior to the commencement of any landscaping operations a landscape management plan, including long- term design objectives, management responsibilities and maintenance schedules for all landscaped areas shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The landscape management plan shall be carried out as approved and any subsequent variations shall be agreed in writing by the local planning authority.

The scheme shall include the following elements:

- detail extent and type of new planting (NB planting to be of native species)
- details of maintenance regimes
- details of any new habitat created on site
- details of treatment of site boundaries and/or buffers around water bodies

Reason: To ensure the final landscaping of this compensation cut area adequately reflects the local surroundings and respects the nature and integrity of the adjacent Natura 2000 site and enhances biodiversity in the long term in accordance with Planning Policy Statement 9.

6 No development shall take place until the applicant, or their agents or successors in title, has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted by the applicant and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To allow the site to be investigated for archaeological purposes before development commences on the site and to comply with saved Policy BE15 of the Runnymede Borough Local Plan Second Alteration 2001.

Informatives

1 All planting schemes for the proposal should contain species of local provenance and certainly species which are native to the United Kingdom.

/continued ...

- 2 Pollution Prevention Guidelines will be particularly relevant for this scheme. These can be found at www.netregs.gov.uk.
- 3 A Waste Management Licence (Now an Environmental Permit) is in operation for this site. The particulars of that Waste Management Licence/Environmental Permit may need to be amended to take account of the above approved scheme. The relevant Environment Agency permitting officer should be contacted in respect of this. Alternatively, the Environment Agency national customer contact centre can be telephoned on 08708 506 506.
- 4 The applicant is advised to seek ecological advice and liaise with Surrey Wildlife Trust to determine the best time to schedule the construction works in order to minimise the disturbance to birds using the main field, the adjacent areas 1 and 2 and Manor Lake.
- 5 The development hereby granted consent has been assessed against the following Development Plan policies - Policies SP5, NRM2, NRM4, NRM5 and TSR4 of the Adopted South East Plan (May 2009) and saved Policies GB1, GB10, LE1, R11, MV4, MV9, NE16, NE20, SV1, SV2, SV2A, BE5, BE10 and BE15 of the Runnymede Borough Local Plan Second Alteration April 2001 and other material planning considerations including third party representations. It has been concluded that the development would not result in any harm that would justify refusal in the public interest. The Planning Officer's report giving a more detailed assessment of this application is available for inspection at the Technical Services Department and copies can be obtained subject to a photocopying charge.
- 6 The applicant is advised that this decision relates to the following drawing numbers received on the dates shown:-

<u>Drawing Number</u>	<u>Date Received</u>
472/9 4/0, 4/1, 4/2, 6/1A, 27L, 29A	2/12/09
Design and Access Statement	2/12/09
Contamination and Water Quality Report (Nov 2009)	2/12/09
Flood Risk Assessment (Nov 2009)	2/12/09
Ecology Statement (Nov 2009)	2/12/09
Environmental Statement (18th March 2010)	19/3/10

Any permission hereby granted shall not be construed as authority to carry out works on the highway. The applicant is advised that a licence must be obtained from the Highway Authority before any works are carried out on the footway, footpath, carriageway, verge or other land forming part of the highway.

Your attention is drawn to the NOTES overleaf.

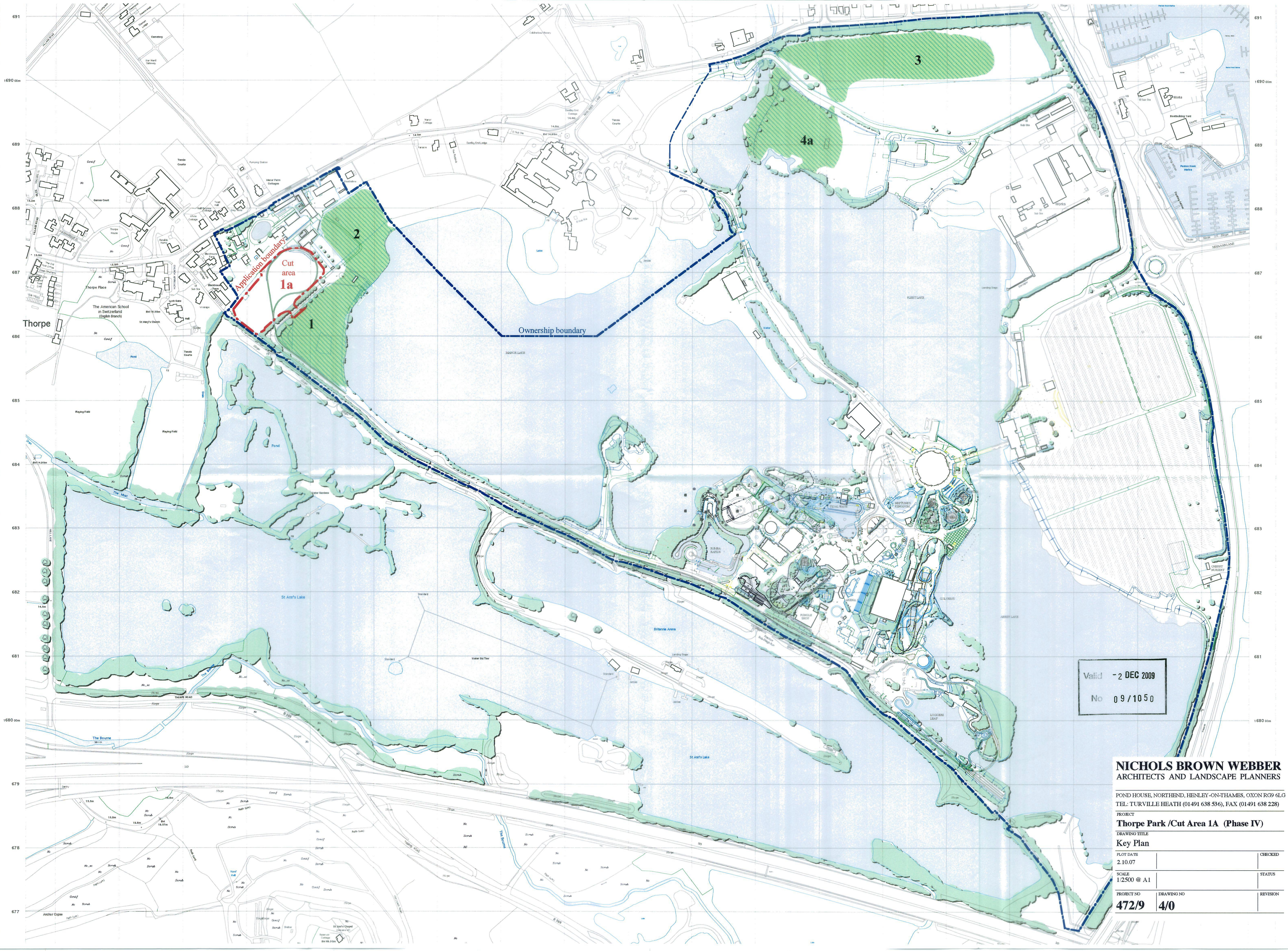
Date of Registration: 07 December 2009
Date of Decision: 11 May 2010

P.S.

Director of Technical Services

Our primary aim: to enhance the quality of life for Runnymede residents

(RU.09/1050)



Valid -2 DEC 2009
No 09/1050

NICHOLS BROWN WEBBER
ARCHITECTS AND LANDSCAPE PLANNERS

POND HOUSE, NORTHEND, HENLEY-ON-THAMES, OXON RG9 6LG
TEL: TURVILLE HEATH (01491 638 536), FAX (01491 638 228)

PROJECT

Thorpe Park /Cut Area 1A (Phase IV)

DRAWING TITLE

Key Plan

PLOT DATE _____

2.10.07

SCALE
1/2500 @ A1

PROJECT NO
472/9

DRAWING NO
4/0

CHECKED

STATUS

REVISION

Runnymede Civic Centre, Station Road
Addlestone, Surrey KT15 2AH

Tel: 01932 838383
Fax: 01932 838384
DX 46350 ADDLESTONE
www.runnymede.gov.uk

[REDACTED]
Nathaniel Lichfield & Partners
14 Regents Wharf
All Saints Street
London
N1 9RL

GRANTING/DISCHARGING OF CONDITIONS

Application No: RU.10/0531

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Date 01 July 2010

Dear Miss Whitney,

DETAILS PURSUANT TO CONDITIONS 2 (LINK DETAILS) AND 6 (ARCHAEOLOGY) OF PLANNING APPROVAL
RU.09/1050 FOR CREATION OF FLOOD COMPENSATION AREA 1A

AT THORPE PARK, STAINES ROAD, CHERTSEY
Your ref: 04858/16/105/NT/HW/MM/1099596v1

I refer to the letter from the Environment Agency dated 2nd June 2010 and the letter from the County
Archaeologist dated 7th June 2010.

I therefore write to confirm that the details submitted in compliance with the conditions listed below
are considered satisfactory to comply with planning permission RU.09/1050:

<u>Condition</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Drawing/Document</u>
2	Bridge Link Details	472-9 29A
6	Archaeology	Written Scheme of Investigation (Archaeological Solutions Ltd. 21st May 2010)

This approval is only in respect of the details submitted and if any of the details are amended the Local
Planning Authority should be consulted immediately to ensure no further submissions are required.

Yours sincerely,



PETER SIMS
Director of Technical Services



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All Saints Street
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N1 9RL

3rd May 2011

GRANTING/DISCHARGING OF CONDITIONS

Application no: RU.11/0223



Dear Miss Whitney,

THORPE PARK, STAINES ROAD, CHERTSEY

DETAILS PURSUANT TO CONDITIONS 3 (UPDATED FLOOD COMPENSATION TABLE) AND 5 (LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT PLAN) OF PERMISSION RU.09/1050 FOR CREATION OF FLOOD COMPENSATION AREA 1A ON LAND SOUTH OF THORPE PARK AND BRIDGE LINK BETWEEN EXISTING AREA 1 AND 1A

On the basis of the Environment Agency's letter dated 21st April 2011 I write to confirm that the details submitted in compliance with the conditions listed below are considered satisfactory to comply with planning permission RU.09/1050:

<u>Condition</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Drawing/Document</u>
3	Updated flood compensation table	Technical Note/Memo (Atkins 6/4/2011) Compensation Table 472-9-270 (& updates)
5	Landscape maintenance plan	472-9 4/2 Revision B

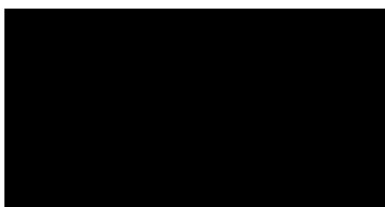
Regarding Condition 5 Surrey Wildlife Trust recommends that the use of blackthorn and Scots pine is limited as these species are very invasive and will present an ongoing control issue. The Trust recommends hawthorn as an alternative to blackthorn; alder instead of black cherry; and, holly can provide all year round greenery and berries if male and female plants are used.

Natural England reiterates its guidance under the 2010-2016 MTDP that tree/shrub planting alongside aquatic vegetation and wetlands could deter wildfowl and so planting should be kept to a minimum and restricted to low shrub species, with taller species e.g. Scots Pine and black polar only planted sporadically.

/continued ...

This approval is only in respect of the details submitted and if any of the details are amended the Local Planning Authority should be consulted immediately to ensure no further submissions are required.

Yours sincerely,



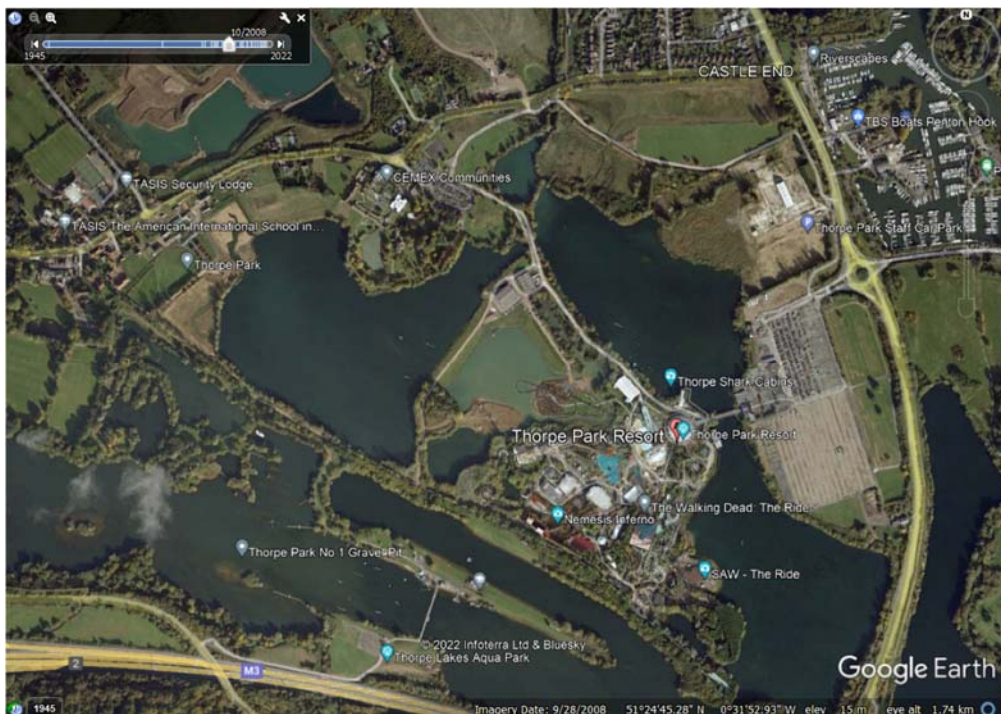
email: jonathan.partington@runnymede.gov.uk
Tel: 01932 425242

Appendix 4: Google Earth Pro extracted images of Thorpe Park

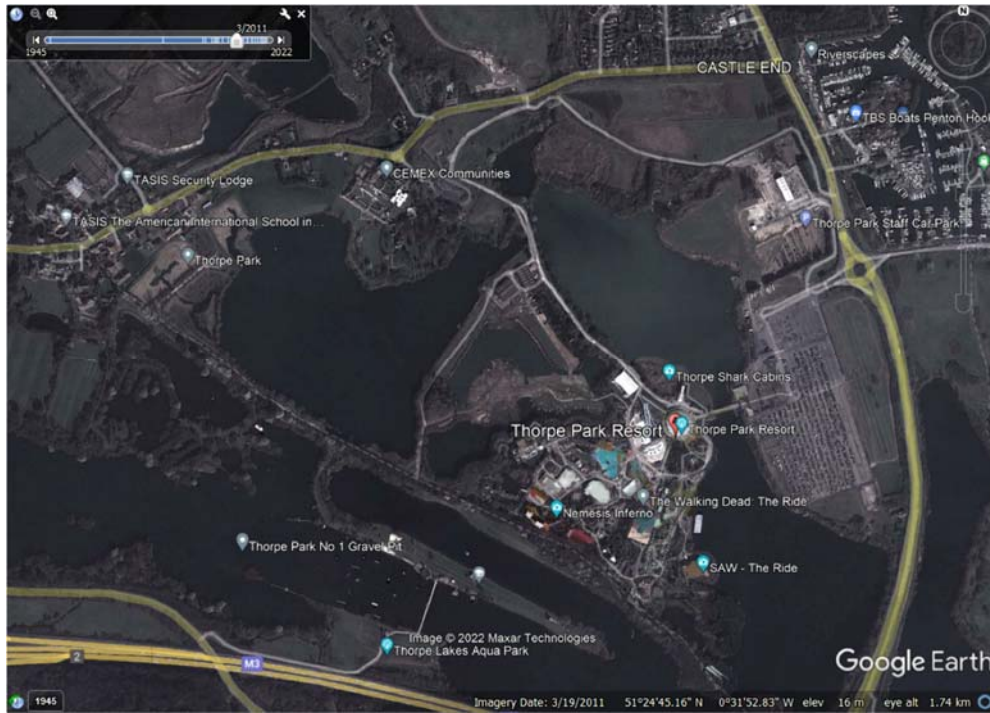
March 2005 – initial works at compensation area 4a are visible. ©Google



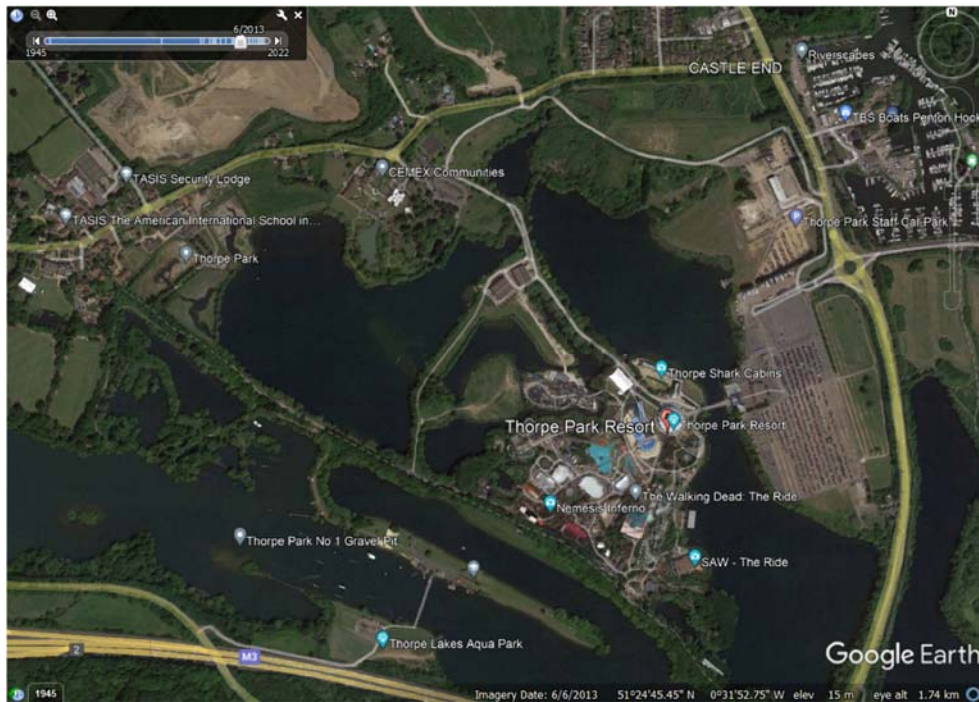
Sept 2008 – Compensation areas 1 and 2 are clearly shown and area 3 and 4a are also shown. ©Google



March 2011: Compensation 1a has been completed. ©Google



June 2013: all compensation areas are complete and shown on the aerial image. ©Google



Appendix 5: Planning Statement Conclusions

The application presents sustainable development and both the NPPF and Runnymede Local Plan recognise the importance of the continued success of the leisure industry in supporting the local economy. Thorpe Park Resort is recognised as a high profile local tourist attraction and the proposed development will enable the theme park to continue its recovery trajectory from the pandemic and make a substantial and valuable contribution to the prosperity of the Borough. Overall, the proposed development is considered acceptable for the following reasons:

- 1 The principle of continued investment and enhancement of Thorpe Park Resort is strongly supported by national and local policy and due to the nature of development being intrinsically linked to the theme park, the sequential test is complied with.
- 2 The development is considered to be an exception to inappropriate development in the Green Belt as the redevelopment of previously developed land that does not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt in line with NPPF paragraph 149. Should the Council consider otherwise, a substantial very special circumstances case exists, whereby any harm identified to the Green Belt or other harm is demonstrably outweighed by the economic and environmental public benefits arising from the development. Regardless of the approach followed, the proposed development can be found acceptable in Green Belt terms.
- 3 The proposal will revitalise an underused part of the Resort to deliver a high quality scheme that will contribute to the local character and context. The layout is well integrated within the site and allows the retention of significant existing trees. A bespoke theme will be delivered with the colour scheme reflecting a lighter colour for the taller sections of track to blend into the sky.
- 4 The proposals will ensure that the economic benefits of Thorpe Park Resort are retained and increased including: A total addition of 31 jobs from the proposed development itself. In turn, the Resort supports 185 permanent jobs and 853 seasonal jobs along with 265 jobs created indirectly by visitor spending in shops, hotels and restaurants in the local area. A further 89 jobs will be created during the construction stage of the development. Moreover, it will lead to an additional £17.5m indirect and induced operational expenditure annually and draw a further £13.6m visitor expenditure per year in local shops, hotels, restaurants etc. from overnight visitors to the Resort.
- 5 A comprehensive landscaping scheme will contribute to the overall greening of the site with substantial new planting that will lead to an increase in tree coverage of 45% across the site, more than compensating for the low quality trees removed as a result of the development.
- 6 With respect to visual impact, Thorpe Park Resort sits discretely within its landscape setting. The careful and considerate positioning and theming of the ride will ensure that views of the new ride are reduced by utilising and adding to the existing tree belt screening around the edge of the site. Where the proposed rollercoaster will be visible, the structure will be seen within the context of existing rides in the main developed core of the Resort, meaning the character of views will remain unchanged.
- 7 The setting and significance of Thorpe, Laleham and Chertsey Conservation Areas will be preserved, along with the associated heritage assets within these including the listed buildings at Thorpe Park Resort. Similarly the setting of nearby listed buildings including the Grade II* Cemex House to the north of the site will also be preserved.

- 8 The proposed development will be acceptable in flood risk terms with sufficient capacity in the flood compensation bank at Thorpe Park Resort to accommodate the development. Appropriate design mitigation has been incorporated into the scheme including a sustainable drainage scheme which will attenuate surface water from the development in line with policy requirements.
- 9 The scheme will be compatible with the emerging River Thames Flood Relief Scheme to be delivered by the Environment Agency in line with Policy LP Policy EE13.
- 10 A Biodiversity Net Gain of 10% will be achieved on site through new woodland planting and habitat creation. In addition, appropriate mitigation measures have been recommended to ensure that the development will not have an adverse impact on the nearby designated sites or priority species. The development is therefore acceptable in ecology terms.

In addition, the proposed development will be acceptable with respect to noise impact, highways impact, sustainability, and contamination.

Accordingly, the proposed development accords with the statutory development plan and should therefore be granted planning permission.