

Planning Committee  
Thanet District Council  
Cecil Square  
Margate  
Kent  
CT9 1XZ

17 October 2011

Dear Members

**PLANNING APPLICATION REFERENCE NUMBER F/TH/10/1061 (ARLINGTON HOUSE & 1-50 ARLINGTON SQUARE, MARGATE CT9 1XP)**

Since writing to you last week, we have now seen the comments of the Council's Conservation Section and would like to comment on it.

This comment states that the decision to upgrade the Scenic Railway, from Grade 11 to Grade 11\*, was "primarily made because of an increased recognition of the structure's rarity value and unusual design". However, the English Heritage Advice Report of 29 June 2011 (attached) clearly states that the Scenic was upgraded for those reasons and its historic value and group value.

For clarity, the four reasons given for the designation decision are:

- Rarity: it is the oldest surviving roller coaster in Britain and is of international significance as the second oldest in Europe and amongst the five oldest in the world of this prominent C20 entertainment structure;
- Design: scenic railways are amongst the earlier types of roller coaster design and it is an internationally important surviving example of this first generation of moving amusement technology;
- Historic interest: as an important and evocative aspect of the seaside heritage of Margate, one of the earliest and foremost English seaside resorts, and Dreamland, its principal amusement park;
- Group value: it groups with Dreamland's other listed buildings the Grade II\* cinema and Grade II menagerie."

The Conservation Section's comment goes on to say that rarity value and unusual design are factors that are "not affected by the proposals". On balance, we would agree with that view. However, the two other reasons given by English Heritage for its upgrading would most certainly be affected by the proposals.

Concerning the historic interest point, we would ask if the Scenic will still be "evocative" with a large shed wall behind? The EH document clearly made reference

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to "Dreamland", not just the ride itself, and the character of Dreamland will change significantly with this development.

From a rider's perspective, the aspect to the west will alter drastically, changing from a view down across the Arlington car park, which gives the rider an enhanced feeling of height, to a feeling of being over-shadowed (both metaphorically and, depending on the time and season, even physically) by a building.

The Discussion section in the listing upgrade says additionally: "Its location in a particularly important town in the development of the seaside gives it added interest; as does its location in Dreamland amusement park..."

The designation document then goes onto the name group value as a reason for upgrading, while the Discussion part of the document says that it "groups strongly". By definition, group value is about relationships, and the relationship between the structures is definitely negatively impacted upon by the proposals.

In summary, we believe that TDC's Conservation section's statement should be challenged on two counts:

1. It fails to mention two of the four reasons for the upgrade;
2. And it therefore fails to consider the considerable impact of the development on those points omitted.

Yours faithfully

Nick Laister  
Chairman  
For and on behalf of The Dreamland Trust

Cc Alan Byrne, Historic Buildings and Planning Advisor, English Heritage  
Tom Foxall, Historic Buildings Inspector, English Heritage  
Cherry Aplin, Assistant Planning Manager, TDC

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