

HERITAGE STATEMENT
GO-KART TRACK, PROMENADE, WALMER CT14 7DN

This heritage statement is submitted in support of a planning application for the installation of a go-kart track for electrically operated vehicles, within the curtilage of the Roman Landings Adventure Golf Course, situated at the site of the former putting green, adjacent to The Promenade, on Walmer seafront.

In the absence of specific policies relating to conservation areas within the local plan (the Core Strategy adopted in 2010) reference should be made to National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) paragraphs 184 and 192, which confirm that enhancement of the historic environment represents one of the many facets of sustainable development; that heritage assets should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance; and that in determining applications, account should be taken of the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets, with new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness. In addition, paragraph 193 emphasises that when considering the impact of development upon heritage significance, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation.

The site, the subject of this statement, lies between The Strand and The Promenade, and presently comprises part of an adventure golf course, for which planning permission has previously been granted, which is bounded on three sides by a perimeter wall and hedge. It is adjoined to the north by Walmer Paddling Pool, from which it is separated by a 1.73 metre high chain link fence, also consented. To the south, it is adjoined by a shelter and an extensive area of seafront open space.

On the opposite side of the Promenade there are a number of beach huts, the Walmer Sea Scouts premises, and a timber kiosk used as a refreshment and cycle hire facility, the first and latter of which benefit from planning consents previously granted.

As part of the adventure golf course leisure offer, a hard surface has been laid, and which is used as a go-kart track for electrically operated karts. As can be seen from the images below, the go-kart track has been formed simply by the marking out of a track on the surfacing with white paint, whilst the perimeter and central section are formed by the siting of portable barriers, used tyres and drums, and small, almost silent, electrically operated karts, none of which exceed 1 m in height, and all of which are wholly portable such that they do not constitute operational development requiring planning permission.



None of the features associated with the go-kart track are visible within the wider street scene, since they are screened to the north, south and west by the boundary walls and hedge planting. From The Promenade, the track is partially visible through the entrance to the adventure golf course and partly visible across the boundary wall to the paddling pool. However, the track and associated equipment are entirely appropriate to the lawful use of the site; they do not exceed the height of the surrounding boundary hedge and walls; such that cumulatively any impact upon the wider context of the conservation area is negligible. It is therefore considered that the development produces a neutral impact on the conservation area.

However, if the impact is considered to be harmful, it certainly represents less than substantial harm, and which must then be weighed against the public benefits.

In this instance, the benefits include the economic contribution made by this track to the offer now available through the introduction of the adventure golf course, and the associated bringing back into beneficial use of the paddling pool and associated kiosk, with an attractively designed and themed attraction for both district residents and visitors. Furthermore, it supplements the economic benefits of three, full time jobs, and an additional attraction to visitors who also enjoy the ability to visit other local attractions and make use of the local shops and facilities.

In fact, the local plan, at paragraph 3.25, recognises that there is considerable opportunity to improve tourism in the district, and the creation of additional attractions such as this electrically operated go-kart facility will contribute positively to this aim.

It is therefore concluded that this development fully accords with all of the above principles, and which has resulted in the creation of an additional, attractive and appropriately themed facility, which will reinforce the leisure and tourism related character of the conservation area, in accordance with NPPF principles in respect of the historic environment.