

Universal UK Could Feature Europe's Tallest Rides

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Universal Destinations & Experiences has announced that its planned theme park in Bedford could include the tallest rides in Europe, with proposed structures reaching heights of up to 377 feet (115 metres).

In planning documents submitted to the government, the company confirmed it is seeking approval through a special development order,

which would allow the project to bypass the standard local planning process. This fast-tracks approach would enable the UK government to approve the development directly, accelerating the construction of what could become a major new entertainment destination.

The company explained that the proposed height allowance is intended to make the resort competitive with other top attractions in Europe.

“Although the Universal Orlando Resort does not currently have attractions up to this height, taller attractions are more common in Europe, where rides need to be taller to create the experience, as space is more constrained,” the planning statement read. It also emphasised that building upward rather than outward helps make more efficient use of the available land.

If built, the park would surpass the UK’s current tallest ride, Hyperia at Thorpe Park, which stands at 236 feet (72 metres). It could also overtake Europe’s tallest rollercoaster, Red Force, located at PortAventura World in Spain, which measures 367 feet (112 metres).

While the majority of the park’s structures are expected to range between 20 and 30 metres, several taller features are planned to shape a dynamic and visually engaging skyline. Universal highlighted Bedford’s central location and strong transport links as key reasons for choosing the site. A submitted map showed its proximity to major cities such as Birmingham, Oxford, Cambridge, and London.

The park is expected to attract up to 8.5 million visitors annually, with 55,000 people attending on peak days. Guests will arrive via a tree-lined boulevard by car or through a dedicated public transport hub. A main entry plaza, open to both ticketed and non-ticketed visitors, will host

restaurants, shops, and entertainment venues. Paying guests will then enter the main park through a large, iconic archway.

Inside, the resort promises high-speed coasters, immersive storytelling, and themed attractions. Visitors are expected to encounter “incredible creatures, heroes, and villains,” while enjoying interactive environments and live shows designed to deliver a world-class theme park experience.