

Trentham leisure estate counts the benefits of Vista Number Plate Recognition



Spectacular gardens, unusual shops and close encounters with monkeys are among the many attractions of Trentham, a 750-acre parkland estate in the Midlands. Trentham attracts ever-larger numbers of visitors and so security plays a vital role in ensuring that everything runs smoothly.

Vista Number Plate Recognition (VNPR) is a key element in the strategy. Cam-Tec Ltd has installed a VNPR system as a high-profile, preventative security measure. Alerts are triggered whenever particular vehicles enter the site, enabling security staff to take action if necessary.

Although security was the prime driver for the VNPR solution, further benefits continue to arise through use of the visitor statistics that it produces. “We hadn’t realised what a useful trade tool it would be. This has been a real bonus,” says Trentham Operations Manager Simon Johnson.

“Applications are only limited by your imagination,” adds Cam-Tec Ltd Director Paul Pugh. “Anyone with a car park can make good use of it.”

Trentham revived

People across the Midlands have fond memories of happy days at Trentham. In times gone by, its ballroom, lakeside lido and popularity for concerts made it a key part of people’s social lives. It is now recapturing its place in local hearts thanks to a major regeneration programme. The £100 million project will restore the gardens and estate while greatly expanding the choice of things to see and do.



Prevention is better than cure

Providing high security for businesses and visitors was seen as essential in developing the new attractions. "Everyone wants to be assured that their property is safe whilst they're away from it. This system can give them peace of mind," says Simon Johnson.



It was essential to put in place measures to forestall any potential problems with the expansion of Trentham. Number plate recognition kept being raised in discussions, recalls Simon Johnson, and having been persuaded that it would provide an excellent management tool, he started to research suitable suppliers. He chose Cam-Tec Ltd based on their excellent proposal and recommendations from other local companies. "They've been fantastic," states Simon Johnson. He praises the personal touch that has been provided throughout, as well as the resulting system.

Specialised system



The core of the system is a Vista VNPR Lite two lane number plate recognition system with built-in infrared illuminators, supplied by Norbain and installed by Cam-Tec Ltd. These special cameras work with software from CitySync to identify and record the number plates of all vehicles coming through either lane of the site's main entrance.

The system springs into action whenever a number plate passes into its predetermined field of view. The image is recorded onto a digital video recorder while the software logs all the numbers onto a dedicated PC and maintains a record.

Precision technology ensures that accuracy is 95% or better, even in conditions that cause high reflections. "What it does is fantastic" enthuses Paul Pugh.

Simple installation

Paul Pugh emphasises how simple the VNPR system is to install and he always finds Norbain's sales engineers provide helpful guidance where necessary. "A lot of people think that number plate recognition is really complicated – but that certainly isn't the case."

There is a choice of cameras in the range. "You just have to select the right camera for the right application," says Paul Pugh. In this case, the model used is aimed at a range of 35m. "The VNPR system is simplicity itself to set up," Cameras just need to be positioned correctly and, with a little guidance from Norbain's technical advisers, excellent results were soon achieved.

Multiple benefits

Analysis of the number of cars coming onto the site provides useful information for marketing purposes. "That was a bonus we didn't even know we were going to get," says Trentham Event and Marketing Manager Steve Hamilton. New uses of the data continue to emerge. For instance, the number plate recognition enables analysis of vehicle ages and this has shown that a high percentage of new cars come to the site. "We are being visited by a lot more ABCs than we had realised," he adds.

Close co-operation

Dialogue and co-operation with the police has been a key feature of the system's success and further applications continue to be discussed, says Simon Johnson. He feels that it is important to achieve a "happy medium" to ensure that law-abiding users do not feel that their privacy is being compromised. "But we all want to do the right thing and help ensure the safety of the public" he concludes.