

DERWENT VALLEY MILLS WORLD HERITAGE SITE

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Liz Prior
Amber Valley Borough Council
Town Hall
Ripley
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25th May 2018

Dear Liz

AVA/2018/0286: Single-storey side extension with basement/undercroft level connected to existing via new glazed link stairwell at The Old Court House, 3 Chesterfield Road, Belper.

Please find below my response to the consultation concerning the above application. These comments will be taken to the World Heritage Site Conservation and Planning Panel for verification in July.

The site lies within the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site (DVMWHS). The Derwent Valley Mills were inscribed on the World Heritage List by UNESCO in 2001. The Derwent Valley Mills Partnership, on behalf of HM Government, is pledged to conserve the unique and important cultural landscape of the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site; to protect its outstanding universal value (OUV), to interpret and promote its assets; and to enhance its character, appearance and economic well-being in a sustainable manner.

The retrospective Statement of Outstanding Universal Value (SOUV) for the Derwent Valley Mills was adopted by the World Heritage Committee in 2010. The SOUV refers to the following UNESCO criteria, which the World Heritage Committee agreed were met at the time of inscription. They are:

- C(ii) That the site exhibits “an important interchange of human values, over a span of time or within a cultural area of the world, on developments in architecture or technology, monumental arts, town planning or landscape design”;
- C(iv) That the site is “an outstanding example of a type of building or architectural or technological ensemble or landscape, which illustrates a significant stage in human history”.

The SOUV records that these criteria were met for the following reasons:

- C(ii) The Derwent Valley saw the birth of the factory system, when new types of building were erected to house the new technology for spinning cotton developed by Richard Arkwright in the late 18th century.

C(iv) In the Derwent Valley for the first time there was large-scale industrial production in a hitherto rural landscape. The need to provide housing and other facilities for workers and managers resulted in the creation of the first modern industrial settlements.

A Management Plan for the World Heritage Site was created in 2002, and updated in 2014. It has as the first of its nine aims to: “protect, conserve and enhance the Outstanding Universal Value of the DVMWHS.” In accordance with this aim, and with reference to Section 12.1 of the Management Plan, I have consulted with Derbyshire County Council’s Conservation, Heritage and Design Service (which advises the World Heritage Site Partnership in planning matters), and have received the following advice:

The building served as courthouse during the active period of the textile manufacturing industry, in Belper. It is listed in grade II, located within the Belper and Milford Conservation Area, and was the lodge to the former Field Head House, dating from the first half of the C19th century. The special interest of the building, known as The Old Court House, derives from its former use and communal associations, together with its design and construction as a representative of its time. The character of lodges is typically a building of small scale, conceived as a finite entity in a recognisable architectural style. As a first impression to a larger estate, with a principal building of high status, the lodge typically sets the scene as part of a controlled sequence of visual experiences and sense of arrival. As a lodge, the building has an optimum size, relative to its character, with a finite amount of additional accommodation before that character is compromised. This character should be preserved, whether its relationship with the site and larger context is lost, particularly if it is a designated heritage asset, as is the case with the Old Court House.

The proposed extension would be a stepped arrangement, in section, becoming two-storey to the private side to incorporate a roof terrace. In conjunction with the previous extension, there is no doubt that the cumulative impact would be very significant and harmful to the significance of the building as described above. The proposals would be harmful to the special architectural or historic interest of this designated heritage asset, and an 'attribute' of the World Heritage Site, as a result of the excessive additional accommodation, as experienced in the round, which would be overly dominant to the building and involve further loss of its intended architectural composition.

Consequently, the loss of significance to the Court House, resulting from the impact of proposed extensions and alterations, would be harmful to the OUV of the World Heritage Site.

I hope these comments can be considered when a decision is made concerning this development.

Yours sincerely



Adrian Farmer

Heritage Co-ordinator,
Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site. cc Sarah Johnson, AVBC