DERWENT VALLEY MILLS WORLD HERITAGE SITE

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Laura Anthony
Amber Valley Borough Council
Town Hall
Ripley
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10th July 2018

Dear Laura

AVA/2018/0552: New decking and parking area at 25 Prospect Drive, 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 later this month.

The site lies within the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site (DVMWHS) Buffer Zone. 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 site immediately abuts the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site and the Belper and Milford Conservation Area.

This is a retrospective application for parking and decking to the sloping front garden of a post-war semi-detached dwelling. The visual amenity of the immediate locality is considered to be harmed by the heavily engineered structures and use of artificial materials, with it being regrettable that bare concrete blockwork and concrete copings, of minimal scale, have dominance for the viewer. Although relatively fresh, it is difficult to see how the materials would weather and soften with age, as would natural materials or measures to incorporate the beneficial effects of planting. However, Prospect Drive does not appear to be generally visible from the public domain, where it would cause harm to the Outstanding Universal Value of the World Heritage Site. In this instance however, it is considered that there would be no harm to the World Heritage Site's significance.

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