

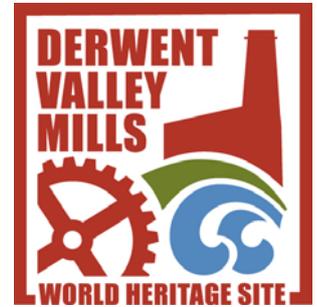
DERWENT VALLEY MILLS WORLD HERITAGE SITE

Room 169, North Block, County Hall, Matlock, Derbyshire, DE4 3AG

T: +44(0) 1629 536831

E: info@derwentvalleymills.org

www.derwentvalleymills.org



Clare Thornton
Amber Valley Borough Council
Town Hall
Ripley
Derbyshire DE5 3BT

26th November 2014

Dear Clare

AVA/2014/0470: Amended information relating to an outline planning application for demolition of existing buildings and construction of residential development (approximately 107 dwellings), on land Off Derwent Street, Belper.

Please find below my response to the consultation concerning the above application, in light of the amended information. These comments will be taken to next week's meeting of the World Heritage Site Conservation and Planning Panel for verification.

The site is within the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site (DVMWHS) and the Belper and Milford Conservation Area. 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 Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the Site was defined by the following criteria, agreed by UNESCO when the mills were inscribed. 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 UNESCO World Heritage Committee recorded 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 early 19th 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 towns.

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 and Design Section (which advises the World Heritage Site Partnership in planning matters) over this application, and have received the following advice.

Previously provided comments on the potential effect on the Outstanding Universal Value of the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site for both the original and revised proposals are still valid and current. In particular, the requirement for an overall masterplan for the redevelopment area and the provision for a mix of uses to continue the traditional variety and vibrancy of the place remain outstanding. However, with regard to the amended information the World Heritage Site Partnership would make the following observations:

Indicative Site Layout

The layout that is included with this Design Statement still promotes an east-west orientation with no mitigating attention to the adverse effect the arrangement would have on views into the development from the Meadows. While the statement includes a paragraph on the importance of the design of the western edge of the development, the eventual developers of the site may put more weight on the illustrative content than the text.

Design Statement

The reference to high quality materials is welcomed, but should emphasise that in applying the locally distinctive vernacular materials, ‘high quality’ equates to ‘natural’, preferably from local sources. However, this would not preclude interpretation of the character and spirit of the place with complimentary materials were it to be justified. Reinforcing the critical importance of the western edge to the success of the development, mentioned above, the Statement should go further to include the desirability of a lively western frontage through a creative combination of mixed use, an appropriately creative and contextual building aesthetic and a robust landscaping scheme. The indicative layout currently offers nothing over and above what would be provided anywhere in the country, which increases concerns about its inclusion.

Accommodation mix

This could and should go so much further and incorporate a mix of uses that are complimentary and compatible with residential use to produce a more sustainable development.

Connectivity

Again, this should be applied in a creative and meaningful way to the Meadows as well as Bridge Street, both functionally and aesthetically. Further townscape design studies should be undertaken to inform the eventual layout.

Sustainability and Building for Life

Inclusion of these aims and objectives are a worthwhile baseline to include in this, and any current development, and together with the considerations above, should be at the forefront of the design process, in pursuit of an exemplary scheme at the heart of the World Heritage Site.

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

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Adrian Farmer". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Adrian Farmer

Heritage Co-ordinator
Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site.

Cc Rachael Coates AVBC.