

DERWENT VALLEY MILLS WORLD HERITAGE SITE

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Mr Gareth Griffiths
Derbyshire Dales District Council
Town Hall
Matlock
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19th December 2017

Dear Gareth

17/01164/FUL: Addition of verandas to front, new paving to entrance and seating area, alterations to steps, pathway and wall and alterations to window at 124 - 126 North Parade, Matlock Bath.

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 February.

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 received the following advice:

This handsome former dwelling, listed in grade II and within the Matlock Bath Conservation Area, has fine 18th century detailing, and makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area, and therefore, to that of the Buffer Zone. It survives to represent a phase in the village’s layout prior to the more commercial, Victorian development of Matlock Bath, as a spa town attraction. It would be regrettable to conceal the designed architectural arrangement of the frontage and to dilute its townscape contribution of punctuating the street scene by virtue of being set-back behind the later frontages of contrasting scale, form, style and materials.

Within the World Heritage Site itself, authenticity and integrity are important material considerations in the assessment of change. Were the addition of a such a structure to the front of a designated heritage asset to be acceptable, in principle, the ‘false heritage’ detailing, of the type proposed for the glazed structure, is likely to be inappropriate, compared to a more contemporary and honest response.

The impact of this proposal on the Outstanding Universal Value of the World Heritage Site would be low, it should be said, restricted to the visual quality of an area designated to protect the setting of the adjacent industrial developments. However, in consideration of impacts on the other designated heritage assets, the harm to these would reflect adversely on the experience around the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site, where its immediate setting is protected by the Buffer Zone.

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

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Adrian Farmer', written in a cursive style.

Adrian Farmer

Heritage Co-ordinator, Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site.

cc Dr Mark Askey, DDDC