

DERWENT VALLEY MILLS WORLD HERITAGE SITE

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Mark Penford
Amber Valley Borough Council
Town Hall
Ripley
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2nd February 2018

Dear Mark

AVA/2018/0056: Restoration of 2 existing Cottages, replacement of former social club building with a new detached dwelling, construction of a terrace of 3 dwellings and conversion and extension of an existing barn to form a dwelling at Matlock Road, Ambergate.

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:

While none of the buildings within the former farmstead are listed, the historic farm buildings, probably of early-to-mid 19th century, are clearly of some historic significance. In later years, probably during the 1960s, the former ‘Chase Farm’ site was developed to feature a modern social/sports club with associated car parking. However, the site remains clearly discernible as a former historic farmstead despite these alterations.

Over the last century the settlement of Ambergate has expanded along the A6 and beyond the farmstead on both sides of the former turnpike road. The industrial site has also expanded further towards Ambergate in roughly the same period. As the site may be considered to be in an established residential area it is understandable that further residential related development is being considered as a sustainable use.

The proposed development features the demolition of the modern social/sports club – this is of no historic significance to the WHS. The replacement dwelling occupies a similar footprint to this and it is of a suitable scale as a single storey development. Provided that the replacement dwelling is of a suitably high design quality the World Heritage Site Partnership has no objection to the proposed development in principle, however, elevations will be required to comment on this more comprehensively.

The proposals also include the renovation of the former farmhouse and the renovation and extension of the former cart shed. There are no objections to this as any external alterations to the existing fabric are limited and sympathetic in alignment with their agricultural character. The proposed extension to the cart-shed is subservient to this and of a suitably high design quality.

An additional three new houses, as part of a terrace type development, are proposed closer to the boundary nearest the A6. Their orientation, at a right angle to the road, should help preserve the view into the former farmstead and towards the historic farm buildings. It also is considered that these are of a suitably high design quality. However, whilst the Partnership does not object to these in principle there are concerns that greater consideration should be given towards their height. These are essentially 3 storeys and aside from the Hurt Arms there is no other precedent for this scale of residential development. There are concerns that the new terrace will look out of context when seen against the existing agricultural buildings on the site.

As the proposed development will retain and preserve the existing farm buildings, and other important remnant farmstead features, it is considered that this will help minimise any adverse impacts on the OUV of the DVMWHS. The new housing development will result in some harm to the OUV of the WHS but it is considered that this can be mitigated to a degree through its high-quality design in compliance with the DVMWHS Management Plan. Therefore it is hoped that the recommendations in this consultation response are considered in order to reduce the potential impact of the proposed development as much as possible.

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'. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Adrian Farmer

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