

DERWENT VALLEY MILLS WORLD HERITAGE SITE

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Helen Frith
Development Management
Derbyshire Dales District Council
Town Hall
Matlock DE4 3NN

19th March 2018

Dear Gareth

18/00135/FUL: Use of sports area as an activity park for children for school holidays, Bank Holidays and weekends in 2018 and 2019 at the Tennis Courts, Derwent Gardens, South 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 next 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 received the following advice:

The site is located within the Derwent Gardens, which is on the Register of Historic Parks and Gardens, being a public park that originated as commercial pleasure grounds in the late 19th century, listed grade II.

While the established recreational use is not inappropriate within this leisure and tourist context, ideally the site would transform to a use that required less man-made structures with a view to enhancing the more natural elements of the pleasure grounds. Historically, the adjacent bowling green presumably set a precedent for this type of recreational use.

The significance of the World Heritage Site relates to the factory system as it relates to the textile industry, its contribution to the Industrial Revolution and its arrested presence within a rural landscape. Given that the pleasure grounds were created after the initial phases of industrial development, both the existing and proposed use of this site would not impact on this significance. While it would be desirable to enhance the condition and presentation of the World Heritage Site and its setting, it is not considered that the Outstanding Universal Value of the proposed uses, which are stated to be for a limited period, would be harmed. Consequently, there is no objection to the proposals contained in this application.

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 Dr Mark Askey, DDDC