

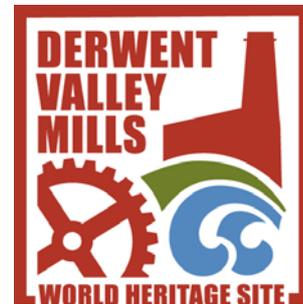
DERWENT VALLEY MILLS WORLD HERITAGE SITE

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Alan Redmond
Amber Valley Borough Council
Town Hall
Ripley
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16th April 2018

Dear Alan

AVA/2018/0176: Outline planning application for the reinstatement of Holly House Farm at Holly House Farm, Longwalls Lane, Blackbrook.

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 supporting documents of this application provide plausible evidence for its connection with a significant personality within the cotton spinning and textile narrative, which is the focus of its world significance.

However, one of UNESCO’s primary tenets of inscription on the World Heritage List is the current and future ‘authenticity and integrity’. Holly House Farm is in an advanced state of ruination. Despite the surviving historic fabric, mostly below ground level, and historic documents and photographs, any reconstruction would be largely conjectural and, therefore, by definition, devoid of the required authenticity required in presenting it as a component of the World Heritage Site.

Derwent Valley Mills was inscribed on to the World Heritage List despite the absence of some major monuments of its past significance. At Belper these include West Mill, the Round Mill and both houses of the Strutt family; at Milford the majority of the mill site is absent; at Cromford, the upper floors of the first mill were lost in a fire.

The connection with America, in the style of Holly House, is most interesting, however. Correctly acknowledged in the Planning Statement as a ‘non-designated heritage asset’, it would have been preferable for this property to have been presented in its original state, rather than recently having damaging extensions. It could be argued that the ruinous condition of the farmstead and its neglect in favour of the establishment of a house of higher status, in a foreign style, expressing the creation of wealth founded on the intellectual property of its original location, is the contribution to significance by Holly House Farm and Holly House, rather than any reinstatement.

This is mentioned in the context of the justification, put forward in the application, that the heritage would be better revealed by the reconstruction of Holly House Farm (Planning Statement paras 5.13 to 5.20 and D&AS page 20).

Were any building to be acceptable on this site, conservation principles would be better observed if the remains were to be sensitively conserved and incorporated into an honest, contemporary building of similar form, scale and massing as the former farmstead, which would be read as a product of its time. This, however, would be better undertaken within the context of an interpretation centre or modern working farmstead rather than a private house, which would have no public access or benefit.

Given that the proposed reconstruction would not restore any integrity to the World Heritage Site's significance in any authentic manner, it is considered that there would be no exceptional circumstances, in terms of the World Heritage Site, for development that was promoted as revealing heritage significance.

As the application is in outline, with reserved matters, it is only possible to state that any development outside a built framework, within the Buffer Zone, has the potential for reducing the rural landscape setting of the World Heritage Site and could, therefore, be potentially harmful.

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