

DERWENT VALLEY MILLS WORLD HERITAGE SITE

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Liz Prior
Amber Valley Borough Council
Town Hall
Ripley
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11th May 2018

Dear Liz

AVA/2018/0327: Demolition of existing kitchen extensions and outbuildings and construction of new rear extensions at 13 The Butts, Belper.

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 July.

The site lies within the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site (DVMWHS). 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:

Both properties are thought to have been constructed in 1829 by John Williams Melbourne, nail manufacturer, and reflect the growth in worker-housing to accommodate an expanding population in Belper. Although they were not built by the Strutt family they clearly appear to emulate the style of some of the earlier Strutt worker housing which set a precedent for other industrialists in the town. Therefore the houses are considered to be attributes of the WHS for their contribution towards the social-infrastructure related value as defined in the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site Management Plan (2014-19).

The proposed development will require the demolition of the existing single storey rear extensions which are to be replaced by two single-storey extensions which are of a modern design. Although the existing extensions are probably later additions they are of a suitable scale and character in relation to the houses. The new extensions project further into the garden than the existing single-storey extensions and occupy the full width of the rear garden area. In doing so they will cover the entire width of the rear elevation at ground floor level and the ability to interpret the rear courtyard garden will be eroded. Whilst they of a satisfactory design quality, clearly discernible from the historic building, and it is unlikely they will be visible from the public realm, they will have a negative impact on the authenticity of the houses which are attributes of the DVMWHS. There is also a concern that they will set a dangerous precedent for other similar extensions to neighbouring properties.

Whilst there is no objection to a rear extension to the properties in principle, in their current form they are not appropriate and will harm the OUV of the WHS. In NPPF terms this will amount to less than substantial harm albeit at the lower end of the scale. The local planning authority will need to satisfy themselves that the benefit of the proposed extensions meet the criteria stipulated in paragraph 134 before arriving at a decision.

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

Yours sincerely



Adrian Farmer

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