

DERWENT VALLEY MILLS WORLD HERITAGE SITE

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Mark Penford
Amber Valley Borough Council
Town Hall
Ripley
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25th May 2018

Dear Mark

AVA/2017/0721: Outline application for 8 two-storey dwellings on the former old lead works off Lea Road, Lea Bridge.

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:

The site lies to the north of the historic and highly significant John Smedley Mill complex. It would appear that there is currently very little or no inter-visibility between the site and the mill complex as it is situated behind an existing row of houses and surrounded by established woodland.

The site has historic significance as a former lead works site although it is believed that no significant buildings or structures have survived following its closure in 1936 and the site has since ‘greened over’. Given the site’s previous industrial land use it is considered not to form part of the intact arrested rural landscape setting of the WHS. Similarly, as the site is now vacant, it is not considered to be an attribute of the ‘relict’ industrial landscape and so has a limited contribution to the value associated with ‘the development and dissemination of new technology of mass production’. Notwithstanding this it is likely that there is some surviving archaeological evidence which could help contribute towards a better understanding of this value.

The proposed development is for eight two-storey dwellings running parallel to Lea Road. The layout plan indicates that these will be set back from the road, a similar distance to the existing row of semis on the opposite side of the road. The visual implies that they appear to be of a simple form and similar massing to the adjacent row of stone-built houses.

Although the site may be considered to be a brownfield site it is within a very sensitive part of the DVMWHS. This is because it is on the approach to the John Smedley textile mill and because it is surrounded by its arrested rural landscape setting. From the Derbyshire Historic Environment Record it is apparent that the proposed development will also potentially result in the loss of significant archaeological remains as it was ‘once the largest lead smelting site in Derbyshire’ with ‘origins as far back as the 1630s’.

Therefore it is felt that the development would amount to less than substantial harm and this will need to be carefully considered in accordance with paragraph 134 of the NPPF. However, it is considered that this harm could be mitigated through a high quality design of the best possible standard of detailing, in accordance with the requirements of paragraph 16.4, Aim 1, P 2.5, of the DVMWHS Management Plan. The scheme should also result in a minimal amount of trees to help reduce its visual impact. It is also essential that any housing development should be preceded by a thorough archaeological investigation and carried out with a suitable watching brief in place to

facilitate a better understanding and interpretation of the historic significance of the site in relation to the DVMWHS and its contribution to its OUV.

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