

DERWENT VALLEY MILLS WORLD HERITAGE SITE

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Dr Mark Askey
Development Management
Derbyshire Dales District Council
Town Hall
Matlock DE4 3NN

21st June 2018

Dear Mark

18/00395/FUL: Formation of car parking area and erection of railings and gates at Brookside Cottages, 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 received the following advice:

The proposed development site is within the DVMWHS and forms part of the Smedley’s (formerly Nightingale’s) Mill site at Lea Bridge. The site was first developed in 1783 as a cotton mill and later converted for wool spinning when taken over by the Smedley family in 1818. The development site is immediately adjacent to a row of cottages built in 1783 as part of Peter Nightingale’s cotton mill development. Therefore the Smedley’s mill complex is considered to be an attribute of the WHS for its contribution towards both its physical, technological and social-infrastructure related values as defined in the WHS Management Plan (2014-19). It is a key site and carries with it great significance to the World Heritage Site narrative and contributes to its Outstanding Universal Value.

The development will require the demolition of a mid-20th century ‘security hut’ to create eight parking spaces; six of which are to be used in conjunction with the cottages and the remaining two will be used by visitors. It is also understood that a length of low-level estate-style metal fencing will be installed to the west boundary of the car park.

It is regrettable that the security hut has to be removed although its contribution to the narrative of the development of the historic mill site is limited (of relatively low significance) given its age. The comments provided by the council’s development control archaeologist are very much supported as excavations may reveal early features relating to industrial processes at the site that should be appropriately monitored recorded. The new car parking spaces will help support the ongoing use, or sustainability, of this historic industrial site and so contribute towards and securing its optimal viable use under paragraph 134 of the NPPF.

Therefore while there will be a small amount of harm on the OUV of the DVMWHS this should be mitigated and offset by the benefits brought through the development and through the appropriate archaeological recording of the site which may help towards a better future understanding and interpretation.

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', written in a cursive style.

Adrian Farmer

Heritage Co-ordinator, Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site.
cc Dr Mark Askey, DDDC