

DERWENT VALLEY MILLS WORLD HERITAGE SITE

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Paul Wilson
Amber Valley Borough Council
Town Hall
Ripley
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29th June 2018

Dear Paul

AVA/2018/0542: Conversion and rebuilding of barns to create four dwellings at Lawn Farm, Whitewells Lane, 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) 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 farmstead is located in a well preserved rural area of the DVMWHS Buffer Zone and while not a listed building the remnant, probably late 18th century, vernacular farmstead is clearly of some historic merit. It is also thought that the farm may have been bought by the Strutt estate in around 1801 and consequently used as part of their campaign to provide a reliable and reasonable supply of food for their workforce. If this is true then this heightens the significance of the farmstead, as a World Heritage Site Attribute, and its contribution to the OUV of the WHS. Though numerous modern farm sheds have been constructed which subsume a large proportion of the early farm buildings, it is likely that many original features, and potentially those added by the Strutts, exist.

The proposed development comprises the conversion of the early farm buildings to dwellings and the construction of a new residential wing to form a ‘U’ shaped residential development plus two detached garage blocks to the east of the development to complete an inner courtyard. The modern agricultural sheds, probably built in the latter half of the 20th century, are to be demolished in order to facilitate the development.

The change of use of the existing farm buildings to residential will result in the loss of an authentic use of the property but this should be outweighed by the improved understanding and interpretation of the farmstead through the removal of the modern agricultural buildings.

There are no objections to the construction of the new wing and garages as they are of a suitable form and are subservient to the principal farm buildings, although it is considered that they could be more distinct in their design to avoid any blurring of the history of the site. However, this distinction can be improved through consultation with the local planning authority’s conservation officer and/or by approaching an independent design review panel such as OPUN.

The WHS Partnership does not object to the proposed development as it should, on balance, serve to enhance the immediate setting of the DVMWHS and so, overall, have a positive impact on its OUV. However, in view of the potential connection with the Strutt estate this should be investigated further in order to improve our understanding of the agricultural dimension of the site. We would also advise that Derbyshire County Council’s development control archaeologist is consulted to ensure that any Strutt-related alterations are suitably recorded.

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

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Adrian Farmer". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'A' and a long, sweeping tail.

Adrian Farmer

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