

DERWENT VALLEY MILLS WORLD HERITAGE SITE

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Paul Wilson
Amber Valley Borough Council
Town Hall
Ripley
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2nd July 2018

Dear Paul

AVA/2018/0339: New detached dwelling with attached garage and annexe and workshop on land adjacent to Woodside, Midland Terrace, Ambergate.

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 application site is within the curtilage of an existing semi-detached property labelled as ‘Station House’ on the current OS map. The area within which the proposed dwelling is to be built appears to be overgrown with no specific designated land use. The north side, addressing Midland Terrace, is bound by a simple historic stone wall. A simple map regression to the first edition OS (1843-1893) suggests that the existing property has been on the site since at least this period.

Previous advice from the Partnership considered that a new dwelling could be acceptable in principle on this piece of land provided:

- it did not involve the demolition of the existing dwelling;
- it could be demonstrated that the new dwelling would not have a significant impact on the immediate setting of the WHS - a basic visual impact assessment should be submitted to better understand the visibility of the proposed dwelling with views from within and around the WHS considered;
- a Heritage Statement is to be provided in order to better understand the historic significance of the site and its relationship to the WHS which should be used to help improve the design quality and help mitigate any potential adverse impacts on the setting of the WHS, and,
- the new dwelling is to be of a suitably high design quality in order to comply with the DVMWHS Management Plan as the current design proposal fell short of this – a clear modern design would be preferable to architectural pastiche.

I am not aware of any Heritage Statement or visual impact assessment having been undertaken to inform the proposed development or demonstrate that the development of this site would not have a significant impact on the immediate setting of the World Heritage Site. The proposed design can only be judged as it is presented, therefore.

The proposal comprises a large dwelling, an attached annex to the front, an integral garage and workshop to the rear. Although the massing includes a lower, one and a half storey element, to relate more in scale to the row of dwellings on Midland Terrace, located on their building line, the 3-storey dwelling would rise high above the scale of the adjacent cottages. The roof ridge is orientated at right angles to the cottages and the former semi-detached dwellings of Woodside and Station House.

The proposal is considered to be a missed opportunity in design terms, for a site which holds such potential. While there appears to have been an attempt to resolve the different scale and levels of the row of cottages and Woodside, the architectural style and expression does not relate to its immediate context. There are a number of anomalies in the elevational drawings, there are concerns in respect of:

- the wide, dominant gables are incongruous in their current form;
- the gable to the recessed balcony on the south elevation is an unresolved element (not shown in side view);
- the overall fenestration pattern is unsatisfactory;
- a traditional dormer(s) is not characteristic feature in this context (unclear whether one or two are proposed);
- the diminutive chimney stack misses an opportunity to contribute to the overall composition;
- the balconies are an unresolved element, particularly to the front;
- the entrance has no expression or contribution to the design;
- the rooflights are too large and numerous;
- the materials for the workshop are unlikely to be of an appropriate quality;
- flush eaves and verges present a mean expression compared with the exposed rafter ends of the adjacent cottages, for example);

The site is also close to a number of listed buildings, namely, 6, 7, 8 and 9 Midland Terrace, the Goods Shed at Ambergate Station and the North and South Portals of Toadmoor Tunnel. The transport links of road, canal, rail and tramways are significant components of the textile narrative of the World Heritage Site, identified as 'attributes' that contribute to the Outstanding Universal Value of the World Heritage Site.

Development within a place of the highest heritage value demands an appropriate design quality as a response to prominent sites that impact on the World Heritage Site or its setting.

The DVMWHS Partnership is not satisfied that this proposal meets this standard, in its current form. However, within the general scale and massing, with a careful re-working of its external expression, a satisfactory solution is possible that could be assimilated into this sensitive and special place.

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 Sarah Johnson, AVBC