

DERWENT VALLEY MILLS WORLD HERITAGE SITE

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Sarah Pearce
Amber Valley Borough Council
Town Hall
Ripley
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6th July 2018

Dear Sarah

AVA/2018/0511: Change of use of existing workshop to form 2 dwellings with associated vehicular parking and formation of 10 new dwellings with associated vehicular parking on land to the rear of Northfield, Matlock Road, 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 later this month.

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 application site, in its two parts on opposite sides of the railway line, is located within the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site. It is also within the Belper and Milford Conservation Area and within the setting of a number of listed buildings, including the footbridge over the railway, Northfield, the Old Police Station, East Mill, the walls to the railway cutting, and potentially, the millworkers housing in Long Row. The outbuildings are likely to be curtilage listed buildings, to Northfield, which was listed in 1979. Nevertheless, a sensitive conversion of the workshops to residential use would give the buildings a viable use and future life.

The site for the proposed ten dwellings, appears to be a parcel of enclosed land, associated with Northfield, used as pasture in conjunction with its cowshed and yard, described in the NMR Act Book of Reference, referred to in the supporting Heritage Statement. Subsequently, the land has been locked-in by the introduction of the railway and later development to the north and east. While it currently provides an open green space, visually connected with the grounds of the former Quarry Bank, later St Elizabeth’s Primary School, the undeveloped portions of enclosed land to the north of Pingle Lane and the recreation ground, which define the northern edge of the town of Belper.

The comments of the Borough Council’s Development Control Archaeologist are noted and supported, in respect of the production of a desk-based assessment, in order to ascertain whether the site holds any non-designated heritage assets or other significance that would contribute to the Outstanding Universal Value of the World Heritage Site.

The proposed development would retain a degree of openness given the proposed density of development. However, there would be an impact in a number of views that form the current setting of the designated heritage assets identified above. For that reason, the production of a separate setting assessment report, as requested by the DC Archaeologist is considered reasonable, to allow better consideration of its impact on the setting of the surrounding attributes of the World Heritage Site’s Outstanding Universal Value. The view from the road bridge over the railway cutting at Long Row could be particularly impacted on.

The traditional design of the dwellings, to the front, is similar to the development on the Fire Station site, nearby. However, the inclusion of more elements, such as the corner quoins and full window surrounds, is considered to be overly-fussy and moves the design more towards the pastiche, contrary to the desired ‘authenticity’ within the world heritage site. The rear elevations are more contemporary with balconies, glass balustrading and larger glazed

opening to the private, south facing gardens. The coped parapets between each pair of dwellings and the end gables are not generally locally distinctive features, although it is acknowledged they do feature on the higher status three storey dwellings at 12-16 Matlock Road.

The scale of development of this open space could have an adverse impact on the Outstanding Universal Value of the World Heritage Site, depending on the results of the desk-based and setting assessments. The Partnership should also be re-consulted on the application when these documents have been produced. In the interim it maintains a holding objection on the grounds of insufficient information on the heritage impact of this scheme located in close proximity to a number of key attributes of the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site.

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 with a large initial 'A'.

Adrian Farmer

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