

DERWENT VALLEY MILLS WORLD HERITAGE SITE

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Paul Wilson
Amber Valley Borough Council
Town Hall
Ripley
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11th September 2018

Dear Paul

AVA/2018/0852: Small masonry faced, concrete infilled buttress to reinforce a section of retaining wall on bridge over River Derwent, Holly Lane, 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 tomorrow.

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 section of the structure proposed to receive the buttress is attached to a listed structure and is listed by virtue of that attachment. As the application states, consent has already been granted for all works identified on application LB6/0516/15, however it is not possible to carry out the originally proposed rebuilding to the retaining wall between spans 7 and 8 due to the location of six 33KV electrical cables. This application is therefore to build a small masonry faced, concrete infilled buttress to reinforce this section of retaining wall, detailed on drawing C35021/1/01.

The World Heritage Site Partnership has previously advised that a blue brick facing to the proposed buttress would be preferable to stone. This is based on best conservation principles and practice, particularly as expounded by SPAB. That new work should be clearly readable as not forming part of the original structure in order to avoid any confusion of misinterpretation of its inherent significance.

Concern has been expressed by the applicant that the tying-in of the brickwork to the random rubble of the existing wall would not be easy to achieve or aesthetically pleasing. Furthermore it is claimed that this could lead to separation of the buttress which would defeat the object of installing it. The Partnership does not consider that the coping detail to the buttress would prove any more difficult to make work with a random wall than brickwork.

While it is accepted there would be no other blue brick construction in the immediate locality, the principle to use brickwork is sound in respect of this heritage asset. The stone samples provided are from a dismantled building with no association to the area. It is difficult to see how the stone blocks could be re-used, economically or visually, as a facing to a flat concrete backing, without extensive re-dressing and exhaustive selection. Historically, brick is commonly used as a buttressing material even where it is not the main material for the structure it is constructed to support. While it is unfortunate that the buttress is required, the considerable cost and disruption of a more conservative repair is adequate justification for the solution to buttress the unstable section of the structure.

The Outstanding Universal Value of this attribute will not be unduly harmed as a result of the works, but we maintain the position that a non-structural brick ‘facing’, appropriately designed and detailed, would be a preferable material to imported random stonework.

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 on the 'r'.

Adrian Farmer

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