

DERWENT VALLEY MILLS WORLD HERITAGE SITE

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Alan Redmond
Amber Valley Borough Council
Town Hall
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5th December 2018

Dear Alan

AVA/2018/0977: Outline planning application for the erection of a dwelling and an annex at Holly House Farm, Longwalls Lane, Blackbrook.

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 January.

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 Partnership previously commented that were any building to be acceptable on this site, conservation principles would be better observed if the remains were to be sensitively conserved and incorporated into an honest, contemporary building of similar form, scale and massing as the former farmstead, which would be read as a product of its time. However, it went on to say that this would be better undertaken within the context of an interpretation centre or modern working farmstead rather than a private house, which would have no public access or benefit and, given that the proposed reconstruction would not restore any integrity to the World Heritage Site’s significance in any authentic manner, it was considered that there would be no exceptional circumstances, in terms of the World Heritage Site, for development that was promoted as ‘revealing heritage significance’.

This subsequent outline application includes details of the proposed dwelling and its relationship with the surviving and documentary evidence of the site’s past. The proposal aims to follow the footprint of the previous buildings on the site, with its form and scale interpreted in an unambiguous modern style, using a design concept that is more appropriate for its rural context than a conventional house design.

It is still considered that the reinstatement of a dwelling on this site would not contribute to the integrity of the World Heritage Site, and therefore offers no weight to a case for justifying exceptional planning consideration. However, on its own merit, in terms of its impact on the Outstanding Universal Value, it is considered that the development would not harm its significance, particularly given that a contemporary, non-pastiche concept has been adopted. It is expected that a high quality development will be pursued through the application process, befitting the global significance of this site’s context, including the appropriate preservation of the surviving fabric to retain any significance that may be contained.

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

Yours sincerely



Adrian Farmer

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