

DERWENT VALLEY MILLS WORLD HERITAGE SITE

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Sarah Pearce
Amber Valley Borough Council
Town Hall
Ripley
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22nd January 2019

Dear Sarah

AVA/2018/1093: Redevelopment of petrol station site for commercial purposes including secure store and workshop at Fountain Garage, Derby Road, Whatstandwell.

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 site sits within a thin strip of cleared woodland, formed historically between the linear natural and transport threads of the River Derwent, the turnpike road and the railway. The site was probably not cleared of trees very much earlier than the mid-twentieth century. It is located over the culverted watersmeet of Mere Brook and Merebrook Sough, which are tributaries of the River Derwent.

The most recent use of the site, as a filling station with related garage workshop, has a low impact, situated, as it is, in this area of cleared woodland. This is by virtue of its open forecourt, occupied only by a small rustic canopy to the petrol pumps, and the small single storey, workshop building, set back at the rear of the site, with its ridge parallel to the road, clad in a non-permanent material in a recessive colour.

The proposed workshop building would be located at right angles to Derby Road, along the extreme western boundary, on land that is not currently occupied by built form. Extending towards the front boundary of the site, leaving room for a fence and hedge planting, the approximately 7.5 metre high building (to the ridge) would have a significant impact on this natural, rural context, presenting a more urban character. As proposed, the open character of the site would become more enclosed with weldmesh, a heavy duty gate and hedge planting along the majority of the front boundary.

While it is recognised that the scheme incorporates a number of mitigation elements, including natural timber cladding to the workshop building and Quickthorn hedge planting to the front boundary, the intensification of the use of this site would still represent a change to the sparsely developed character of the locality, within a distinctly rural landscape context.

This change to the relict 18th century landscape, within which the influential textile industry was, for a time, imposed, would harm the significance of the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site, as expressed in its Outstanding Universal Value.

The harm would be ‘less than substantial’ in terms of the NPPF, though it is considered to be unjustified harm to heritage asset of great international significance.

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 'F'.

Adrian Farmer

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