

DERWENT VALLEY MILLS WORLD HERITAGE SITE

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Sarah Pearce
Amber Valley Borough Council
Town Hall
Ripley
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31st January 2019

Dear Sarah

AVA/2018/0511: Change of use of existing workshop to form two dwellings with vehicular parking and formation of 10 dwellings with 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 in March.

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 Partnership’s comments on this proposal, on 6 July 2018, supported the comments of the Borough Council’s Development Control Archaeologist 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.

Regrettably, the subsequent Heritage and Design Statement and Setting Assessment has not demonstrated the impact of the development on the significance of the designated heritage assets which are within close proximity to the proposed development in any meaningful way using the specific design proposals for the site. For that reason, specific comments on the revised elevations for the new build components of the site would be premature. However, given the proximity of the site to numerous attributes of the World Heritage Site, concerns remain for the impact of the increased scale of development and the associated quality of design, the amendments of which are considered to minimal.

Should the requested information fail to demonstrate the impact of the proposed development, it must be concluded that the loss of the relationship between the mills and its immediate millworkers’ housing would represent harm to the Outstanding Universal Value of the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site. This harm would likely be assessed as ‘less than substantial’, although the heritage value of principal monuments of the World Heritage Site would be assessed as being very high in any assessment of public benefit to balance that significant harm.

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 Brooks, AVBC