

DERWENT VALLEY MILLS WORLD HERITAGE SITE

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Helen Frith
Amber Valley Borough Council
Town Hall
Ripley
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21st March 2019

Dear Helen

AVA/2019/0167: Construction of four timber huts, timber fence and gazebo to rear external area at Railway Hotel Public House, 25 King Street, 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:

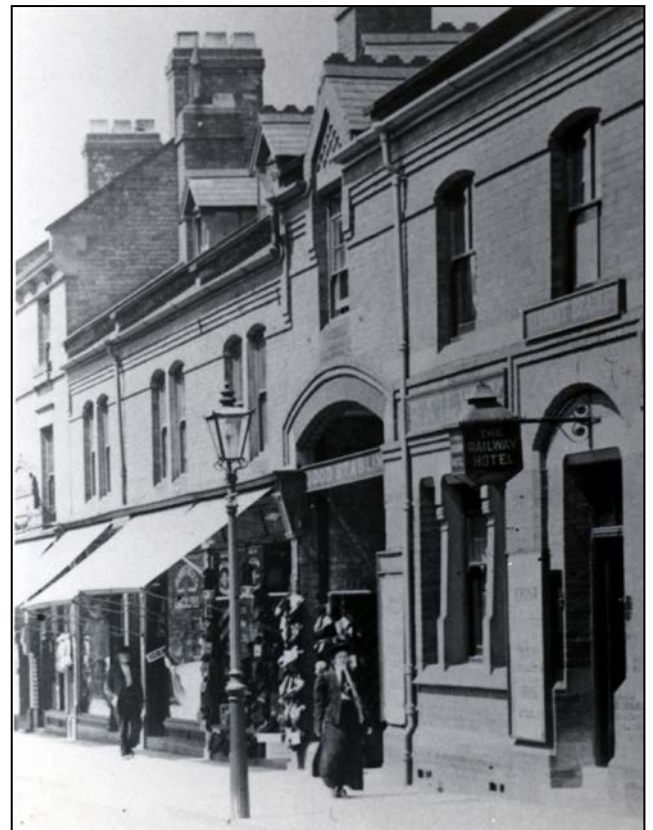
- C(ii) The Derwent Valley saw the birth of the factory system, when new types of building were erected to house the new technology for spinning cotton developed by Richard Arkwright in the late 18th century.

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 Railway Hotel is located within the commercial core of the town. As a building (then called the Tiger Inn) originally erected to serve the turnpike road, and after 1838, under its current name, serve the railway through the town, the building can be considered to be an ‘attribute’ of the world heritage site. The present public house is also within the Belper and Milford Conservation Area. The proposed investment in the business is welcomed, potentially contributing to the vitality of the town and the facilities for visitors to the World Heritage Site.

The building has been significantly degraded over time, particularly the losses to its original design of the King Street frontage, which was constructed from facing brick, with brick and stone detailing (see image, right). A large archway opening, which lead to the stabling to the rear of the property, has been all but lost and squared-off. Almost all of the surface detail has been lost to the openings at ground and first floor, but most notably its ashlar door entrance surround and distinctive stone mullions to its large, triple ground floor windows. The removal of the windows surrounds has probably prompted the render covering to the brickwork, which is how the building is perceived today.



While ‘authenticity and integrity’ are important qualities of the world heritage site, the technically-possible reinstatement of the hotel’s original design would probably be an unrealistic aspiration. The existing uPVC frames within their simple openings, set with no celebratory detail within the rendered wall, present windows that are significantly degraded. The proposed replacement of the frames, for painted timber, would represent a slight enhancement, although the paired ‘mock-sashes’, would, as their names suggests, further a false situation.

A tripartite subdivision would be more satisfactory for the large openings, or even a well-designed and honest modern solution could be more satisfactory, though the proposed solution would be difficult to resist as an

improvement on the existing frames. A finished colour for the frames, other than brilliant white, would contribute to any enhancement.

The package of proposals to the rear of the property, in the former stabling courtyard, are considered not to affect the significance of the World Heritage Site and hence its Outstanding Universal Value. The finished colour of the timber huts, which would be visible through the coach entrance, should be of a suitable quality, rather than a natural timber finish.

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 Brooks, AVBC