

DERWENT VALLEY MILLS WORLD HERITAGE SITE

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Laura Anthony
Amber Valley Borough Council
Town Hall
Ripley
Derbyshire **DE5 3BT**

25th July 2019

Dear Laura

AVA/2019/0547 & AVA/2019/0548: Two storey side extension (with listed building consent) at The Old Court House, 3 Chesterfield 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 September.

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:

This grade II listed building is located within the Belper and Milford Conservation Area. The building served as court house during the active period of the textile manufacturing industry, in Belper. The lodge to the former Field Head House, it dates from the first half of the 19th century. The Old Court House, so called, as a listed building, is recognised for its importance at a national level. In addition to its former use and communal associations, its special interest is derived from its design and construction as a representative of its time. The character of lodges is typically a building of small scale, conceived as a finite entity in a recognisable architectural style. As a first impression to a larger estate, with a principal building of high status, the lodge typically sets the scene in a controlled sense of arrival and sequence of visual experiences. As a lodge, the building has an optimum size, relative to its character, there being a finite amount of additional accommodation before that character is compromised. This character should be preserved, whether its relationship with the site and larger context is lost, particularly if it is a designated heritage asset, as is the case with the Old Court House.

The proposed intervention would transform the modest lodge into a significantly large 4-bedroom dwelling – the additional two bedrooms having generous en-suite facilities - with substantial reception rooms, between the original lodge and the previous extension. The proposed extension would be excessive in relation to the lodge and its intrinsic, small scale character and would impact adversely on the special architectural or historic interest of the building, as experienced in the round. Consequently, the loss of significance to the Court House, as an attribute of the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site, resulting from the proposed extensions and alterations, would be harmful to its Outstanding Universal Value.

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