

DERWENT VALLEY MILLS WORLD HERITAGE SITE

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Heather Wynne
Amber Valley Borough Council
Town Hall
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25th July 2019

Dear Heather

AVA/2019/0432: Rebuild boundary wall, replace front wall with small gate for pedestrian access and large wooden gate for vehicular access (with listed building consent) at 4 Chevin View, 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 listed building is located within the Belper and Milford Conservation Area. The application site forms part of the millworkers’ houses, Nos. 1-10 (consecutive) Chevin View, Bridge Street, the list description for which is: “An early example of Strutt back-to-back housing. Houses were being built here in 1790. Originally 29 back-to-back houses known as Berkin's Court. Apart from the intact back-to-back plan of Nos 9 and 10 they have been converted to single dwellings. Three storey coursed sandstone terrace. Nos 1 to 3 with steeper pitch, later C19, blue tiled roof; original slate roof to rest. Brick chimney stacks on ridge. Narrow windows, the majority with late C19 sashes, 2-light casements to top floor; deeply tooled ashlar lintels. The west elevation retains a few original small paned sashes. On this front, lean-to sculleries have been added, probably in the mid C19, to the ground floor. Plain doorways with slightly cambered stone voussoir arches. Stone rubble east front garden walls are ramped up by the doorways”.

Map evidence on the early OS Plans suggests that there have been changes to the provision of ancillary accommodation and outbuildings, affecting the size of the gardens, the location of the boundaries and, consequently, the age of the boundary features. However, the existing walls contribute to the special interest of the buildings, the significance, character and appearance of both the World Heritage Site and the Conservation Area. They are also mentioned in the list description of the row of houses, above.

As surviving structures of some age, typical of the construction of traditional domestic boundary walls, there must be a presumption in favour of their retention, as their removal would be harmful to a number of designated heritage assets. The absence of a consistency of treatment along this boundary, highlighted by the applicant, does not necessarily justify further loss or changes of elements of historic fabric that have inherent value of their own, as is the case here. Additionally, the presence of these domestic gardens, just off the busy thoroughfare of the former turnpike road, contributes to the domestic character, established in close proximity to the mills complex. In addition to the loss of appropriate boundary treatment, replaced with elements of less permanent qualities, an area of domestic garden would be lost to vehicle standing under this proposal.

In detailed terms, the style and finish of the proposed new and replacement gates, is not correct or appropriate, even were the principle of their intervention acceptable. Traditional gates in the area, for this age of property, are generally plain and simple, painted timber boarded items, braced or ledged and braced with a simple capping to protect the end grain. Some gates were reinstated with public funding in the Clusters area, to an authentic pattern

(see William Street). The style of gate, produced for applications across the whole country, would lack the local distinctiveness necessary in a sensitive location of international significance. This application could have reduced the impact were the vehicular and pedestrian gates to have been combined to maintain as much stonework as possible. Nevertheless, the harm to the value of the various designated heritage assets, which would result from the proposed works, could not be outweighed by any public benefit, as required in the revised NPPF (July 2018), even in the unlikely event of all vehicles being removed from this area.

In summary, it is considered that the proposed works would cause, in planning terms, 'less than substantial harm' to the Outstanding Universal Value of the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site, a designated heritage asset of the highest heritage 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'. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Adrian Farmer

Heritage Co-ordinator, Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site.

cc Sarah Brooks, AVBC