

# DERWENT VALLEY MILLS WORLD HERITAGE SITE

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Mark Penford  
Amber Valley Borough Council  
Town Hall  
Ripley  
Derbyshire DE5 3BT

30th August 2019

Dear Mark

**AVA/2019/0591: Demolition of existing dwelling and construction of replacement dwelling at High Croft, Top Lane, 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 in September.

The site lies within the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site (DVMWHS) Buffer Zone. 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 18<sup>th</sup> 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 site is within the Whatstandwell Conservation Area. There is no character appraisal for the conservation area, although the site also sits within a Special Landscape Area, which could be a material consideration for the relict, 18th century, rural landscape setting of the World Heritage Site, itself an attribute that contributes to its significance as defined in its Outstanding Universal Value (OUV).

The setting of the World Heritage Site, in this locality, includes the valley slopes up to the skyline to the east of the River Derwent. Within this rural hillside, the dispersed historic settlement of Whatstandwell is comprised of Derbyshire vernacular dwellings, farmsteads and the occasional community building, established in direct contact with the lanes that serve them. Less characteristic or sensitive residential development has infiltrated this traditional context, in terms of the settlement’s pattern of development (grain), scale, form, materials and detailing. Included within this phase of less respectful development is Hill Croft, set down from Top Lane with a suburban, winding vehicle access drive; with its full width dormers containing several windows to both roof slopes, to the east and west; with its brick construction and artificial roof covering and modern roof details to its eaves and verges, introducing prominent painted timber elements, in near and distant views. The opportunity exists for a degree of enhancement were a replacement or remodelled dwelling to more-appropriately respond to this context.

In consideration of the proposals to enhance the character or appearance of the conservation area and the rural setting of the World Heritage Site, any replacement dwelling should have a high quality of design which respects the local distinctiveness of this place that contributes to a heritage asset of world significance.

In principle, the replacement of the existing modern dwelling is acceptable. Equally, subject to complying with other Development Plan policies, a degree of increase in size could be acceptable were it not to adversely impact on the conservation area and the setting of the World Heritage Site.

However, the proposals do not convincingly demonstrate that the replacement dwelling, of increased volume and height, would preserve or enhance the OUV of the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site, through the preservation of its setting or the character and appearance of the Whatstandwell Conservation Area and its contribution to the significance of the Site. Further consideration needs to be given to the choice of materials, the

quality of its design expression through consistency of a clear design concept and its associated detailing, as described in the observations included above.

I hope these comments can be considered when a decision is made concerning this development.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "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