

DERWENT VALLEY MILLS WORLD HERITAGE SITE

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Paul Wilson
Amber Valley Borough Council
Town Hall
Ripley
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6th September 2019

Dear Paul

AVA/2019/0578: Detached dormer bungalow and detached dwelling at The Haining, 1 Ashbourne 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 later this month.

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 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:

Although located within the Buffer Zone of the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site (DVMWHS), the development site is so close that the access from Plot 1B would be from the World Heritage Site, on the Ashbourne Road. The access would potentially impact on the Site through loss of soft landscaping and an increase in urban character. In terms of assessing the impact of the proposed development, the Buffer Zone should be considered as part of the World Heritage Site, since the Site’s setting forms an integral part of its significance. The application has failed to fully indicate the impact of the dwellings on their context, either from the World Heritage Site, the buffer Zone or, in design terms, the built context within which the site sits.

While there is no objection, in principle, to development on this land, the quality of design for an area recognised as being of world significance, is not considered to meet the required standard set out in the current DVMWHS Management Plan. Equally, the next iteration of the DVMWHS Management Plan will set out a ‘design rationale’ for the Site and its Buffer Zone. Even in the absence of supporting information, the dwelling can be described as being of a suburban type that makes no reference to their context.

In conclusion, it is considered that the proposed development would be harmful to the significance of the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site, by failing to preserve its character and appearance. The harm to the Site’s Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) would be ‘less than substantial’, as defined in the NPPF. However, the harm to a heritage asset of world significance is unlikely to be outweighed by any public benefit that would result from the proposed development.

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