

DERWENT VALLEY MILLS WORLD HERITAGE SITE

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Sarah Pearce
Amber Valley Borough Council
Town Hall
Ripley
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6th September 2019

Dear Sarah

AVA/2019/0678: Demolition of the existing cottage and rebuild and enlargement at White Cottage, Duffield Bank, Duffield.

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 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 application site is located immediately outside the World Heritage Site itself. It is also immediately adjacent to the grade II listed Duffield Bank Cottage, on Makeney Road, and in close proximity to Duffield Bank House, which is itself within the World Heritage Site.

White Cottage forms part of a small group of dwellings, ranged on the valley slopes of the River Derwent, which are visible from the flood plain of the World Heritage Site and form part of its sparsely developed, relict late 18th century landscape, which is itself an inherent part of the significance of the World Heritage Site. While the site is not located within the Duffield Conservation Area, the boundary is less than 300 metres to the south; the Belper and Milford Conservation Area is a slightly greater distance to the north.

The properties along this stretch have no buildings opposite them, which permits inter-visibility between the river, and the settlement of Duffield, to these valley slopes and the sparse development that occupies it. White Cottage is visible from Eyes Meadow, on the edge of Duffield, and the Derwent Valley Heritage Way, which runs directly in front of this house, along Duffield Bank, which are two important receptors for public amenity. This hillside forms a prominent backdrop to Duffield, contributing to the character and appearance of the World Heritage Site.

The proposed development would be imposed, on steeply sloping ground, within the middle of a group of historic buildings defining a settlement pattern that survives from the pre-enclosure awards of 1787, revealed through recent research. This documentary evidence shows the earlier part of the building on the map, together with many of the buildings that form this group.

White Cottage itself has probably been constructed in two main phases. The original part of White Cottage is at least a late-18th/early 19th century dwelling of a similar age to the grade II listed Duffield Bank Cottage. The northern part appears on the 1st edition OS and almost certainly the 1787 pre-enclosure plan. White Cottage occupies a prominent location on the eastern bank of the Makeney Road, on the rising slopes of the river valley, visible as a break between the high hedge-above-stone-wall garden boundaries of Knoll House and Duffield Bank Cottage.

The researched documentary evidence demonstrates an element of connection with the textile production narrative within the Derwent Valley. This is through ownership of these buildings by the Lombe family that, crucially, initiated textile manufacture within purpose-built factories, through the development of silk production, in Derby following fact-finding missions to Italy. The potential for this connection to further inform the knowledge of the World Heritage Site is currently unknown.

The authenticity of a group of buildings that was contemporary with, if not earlier than, the introduction and development of the textile industry in the Derwent Valley, contributes to the relict 18th century cultural landscape setting, which is an intrinsic part of the significance of the World Heritage Site.

The scale, proximity and design of the proposed development would seriously impact on the character and appearance of the locality, which contributes to the sparsely developed, relict 18th century cultural landscape setting, which is an intrinsic part of the significance of the World Heritage Site.

Despite the description of the works on the application, the demolition of the entire dwelling appears not to be proposed. The earliest part of the dwelling would be retained, albeit with new window openings, alteration to existing openings and removal of the gable chimney stack (which has been omitted from the existing drawings). Comprehensive alterations would occur beyond/behind the single front cell (living room and bedroom above). The later part of the building, with its ridge parallel to Makeney Road is not without interest with respect to its contribution to the visual appeal of the group; evidence of stone window surrounds and a brick chimney stack to match that of the older part of the dwelling. Despite nominal retention of the dwelling, it is considered that there would be a loss to the authenticity of the rural setting of the World Heritage Site, a group that has been in existence for at least two and a half centuries.

Furthermore, the scale and form of the access, parking and garaging proposals, incorporating distinctly engineered features in order to achieve them, are entirely inappropriate to this traditional vernacular group where building responds with sympathy and respect for its context.

The proposed residential accommodation and its contrived and engineered external amenity spaces are similarly inappropriate for this historic group, which contributes to the wider cultural landscape significance of the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site.

The Outstanding Universal Value of the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site would be harmed through a loss of authenticity to the relict 18th century cultural landscape setting, which is an intrinsic part of its significance, through the loss the coherence of a group that contributes to the textile production narrative.

It is considered that the harm would be 'less than substantial' given that no direct works to the building itself are involved. However, the great weight that should be given to the conservation of designated heritage assets deems it unlikely that any perceived public benefits would outweigh that significant harm.

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 style with a large initial 'A' and 'F'.

Adrian Farmer

Heritage Co-ordinator, Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site.
cc Sarah Brooks, AVBC