

DERWENT VALLEY MILLS WORLD HERITAGE SITE

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

10th September 2019

Dear Laura

AVA/2019/0645: Proposed Side extension at Fernbank Cottage, Ashbourne Road, Blackbrook.

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:

Apologies for not responding within your required time limits and it is understood that this application will now have been approved.

The application’s description of the proposed works is misleading and understated. Fern Bank Cottage represents a typical Derbyshire vernacular cottage, in its scale form, massing and materials. Set against a backdrop of mature trees, on a small hillock, it also contributes to the local landscape character. It is regrettable that the cottage, visible in medium distance views from Ashbourne Road, will be subsumed by the proposed extensions. The approved extension will add a significant volume of accommodation to the dwelling, with the two-storey extension impacting on the traditional scale of the cottage and hence its character. Despite seeming to be a modest, single storey extension, the character of the cottage will be further altered by it cloaking the prominent north facing gable with its traditional ridge stack and its visible connection with the ground, from which it currently emerges. It is hoped that Condition 2 of the consent will be robustly enforced to ensure that at least the materials are sufficiently appropriate to preserve more of the cottage’s contribution to the character and appearance of the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site.

It is appreciated that comments need to be provided promptly to allow the planning authority to make a holistic judgement. It is accepted that the Partnership was unable to respond quickly enough to influence this development. These comments are merely given to illustrate the potential impact on significance, as defined in the Site’s Outstanding Universal Value, even within its Buffer Zone, in developments that would otherwise be acceptable and routine in the planning process.

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