

DERWENT VALLEY MILLS WORLD HERITAGE SITE

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Laura Anthony
Amber Valley Borough Council
Town Hall
Ripley
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20th November 2019

Dear Laura

AVA/2019/0960: Rear, front & side extensions along with associated internal and external alterations at 6 Hollyhouse Lane, Blackbrook.

Please find below my response to the consultation concerning the above application. These comments will be passed 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:

The site is located within the small rural settlement of Blackbrook, and the Buffer Zone of the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site, inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List to protect the setting of the Site itself.

The building, known today as Ingleton Farm, appears on the 1st Edition OS Plan as a small, isolated structure within an open landscape of historic enclosed fields. It appears to have been a very small scale farm operation, if indeed that is what it was. The building is stone built, with two south facing gables facing the open fields that slope down to the Ashbourne Road. One of these gables was the end wall of the original L-shaped building, while the second gable appears to be part of a more complex, relatively modern extension.

In the early part of the 20th century, the two pairs of semi-detached houses and a detached dwelling were constructed, off Longwalls Lane, as a simple row of buildings from the farmstead to the lane. These brick buildings have their roof ridges parallel with the access road, now known as Hollyhouse Lane, on a similar line to the former farmstead.

The application site contains a detached brick dwelling dating from the later part of the 20th century, inserted between Ingleton Farm and the subsequent workers’ houses. While this modern house is set-back from the building line of the earlier development, it also sits discernibly higher than the other buildings, increasing its prominence. Although the ridge line of this house again follows the established orientation of the brick dwellings, its style is distinctly different; the construction of the dwelling bears the ubiquitous, non-contextual details of the time, with white painted timber box eaves and verges and an inappropriate colour of facing brick; window openings have a landscape orientation as opposed to the more visually pleasing tall vertical openings of the sliding sash windows. Although representative of its time, its lack of any inherent reference to its context leads logically to the conclusion that the dwelling has a negative contribution to this small historic group of buildings. Its front elevation, however, has a simple, symmetrical composition.

The proposed alterations and extensions to No 6 Hollyhouse Lane are significant and would change the appearance of the house substantially. A front extension would be in the form of a timber-clad, two-storey, offset gable, with the remainder of the existing brick dwelling being rendered. There is no precedent for either of these materials within this small group of predominantly historic buildings. A lean-to porch in the internal corner formed by the

gable extension would add further complexity to the existing simplicity of form and massing of the front elevation. The proposed works also include extensions to the rear and a partially-detached range for an office, dog room and store. Externally to the front the house, its relationship with the ground would be transformed to sit on a substantial plinth comprising a projecting patio, planters, retaining structures expressive steps and iron balustrading, raised along two-thirds of the frontage. The resulting complexity and increased prominence of the proposed extensions and alterations would exacerbate the negative contribution the dwelling makes to the group and hence the locality.

For the reasons described above, it is considered that the changes to the dwelling, both in scale and detail, would impact negatively on the appearance of this small group of buildings with the rural setting of the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site. The harm would be 'less than substantial' as defined in the NPPF, although the conservation of designated heritage assets of the highest value would carry great weight against any public benefit of the proposal. With particular reference to this issue, the next iteration of the DVMWHS Management Plan, which will be adopted by the Partnership from early 2020, will set out a 'design rationale' for the Site and its Buffer Zone.

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 with some loops and flourishes.

Adrian Farmer

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