WORCESTER LLOYD

ARCHITECTS & ENGINEERS



31 Field Lane, Belper, DE56 1DD

Heritage Impact Assessment

for the proposed construction of a single storey side extension

19th May 2026

RIBA

Chartered Practice

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INTRODUCTION

This Heritage Impact Assessment has been prepared in support of a planning application for proposed development works at 31 Field Lane, Belper. The property lies within the Belper Conservation Area and also forms part of the wider Derwent Valley Mills UNESCO World Heritage Site.

The application seeks consent for:

- A modest single storey side extension;
- Creation of a secure entrance lobby;
- Formation of a ground floor shower room/WC and utility room;
- Replacement of existing non-traditional uPVC windows and doors with heritage-style flush casement aluminium units.
- Installation of recessed solar photovoltaic panels within the roof slope.
- Installation of Air source Heat pump.

The purpose of this report is to assess the significance of the heritage assets affected and evaluate the extent to which the proposals preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the World Heritage Site.

The assessment has been informed by a review of the submitted drawings including existing and proposed plans and elevations.

SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

31 Field Lane comprises a semi-detached dwelling of early to mid-20th century origin situated within a predominantly residential streetscape in Belper. The dwelling exhibits characteristic architectural features common to the area, including:

- Brick construction;
- Pitched tiled roof;
- Traditional vertically proportioned openings;
- Decorative detailing reflective of local domestic vernacular forms.

The surrounding area is typified by varied historic residential development which collectively contributes positively to the character of the Belper Conservation Area. The site occupies a visually established residential plot at the end of a privately accessed road with off-street parking and mature domestic boundaries.

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The property is not statutorily listed; however, its location within both the Conservation Area and the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site means that the site contributes to the wider historic townscape significance and setting of designated heritage assets.

HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

The Belper Conservation Area derives significance from:

- Its cohesive historic urban grain.
- Surviving traditional building forms and materials.
- The relationship between residential growth and the industrial development of Belper.
- The quality and consistency of domestic architecture.
- Historic roofscapes and traditional fenestration patterns.

The Conservation Area includes a broad mix of architectural periods, although there remains a strong emphasis on traditional materials such as brick, stone, slate, and timber joinery.

The site contributes to the Conservation Area primarily through:

- Its established residential form.
- Its visual continuity within the street scene.
- Its scale and massing.
- Its contribution to the rhythm of semi-detached dwellings along Field Lane.

DERWENT VALLEY MILLS WORLD HERITAGE SITE

The Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site is designated for its Outstanding Universal Value associated with the birth of the factory system and industrial settlement planning.

The site's significance is largely experienced through:

- Historic settlement patterns.
- Relationships between industrial buildings and housing.
- Historic landscape setting.
- Surviving built fabric illustrating industrial-era expansion.

The application property forms a small component of the wider residential environment associated with Belper's historic development. While the property itself is not individually significant in heritage terms, it contributes modestly to the wider townscape context of the World Heritage Site.

This statement is intended to support early discussion on how these policies should be applied to the proposal.

DESCRITPION OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

The proposed scheme includes a modest single storey side extension designed to integrate sympathetically with the host dwelling through the use of complementary materials and architectural detailing.

The extension accommodates:

- A new secure entrance;
- Utility room;
- Ground floor shower room/WC.

The proposed plans demonstrate a carefully considered arrangement that maintains the existing scale and hierarchy of the original dwelling.

Additional external works include:

- Replacement of outdated uPVC windows and doors with heritage-style flush casement aluminium units;

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- Installation of recessed solar photovoltaic panels integrated within the roof slope;
- Retention and reinterpretation of traditional architectural detailing including arched openings and vertically proportioned fenestration.
- Installation of air source Heat pump.

The proposed elevations illustrate the use of complementary brickwork, traditional proportions, and a subservient roof form that visually relates appropriately to the host dwelling.

PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

National Planning Policy Framework

The proposals have been assessed against Sections 16 and 14 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), particularly:

- Paragraph 205 — great weight should be given to the conservation of heritage assets;
- Paragraph 208 — where development leads to less than substantial harm, this harm should be weighed against public benefits;
- Paragraph 214 — local planning authorities should look for opportunities to enhance or better reveal significance;
- Support for renewable and low-carbon energy technologies.

The NPPF also encourages sustainable development and upgrading of existing buildings to improve environmental performance where sensitively designed.

Local Planning Policy

The proposals are consistent with local conservation and design policies which generally seek to:

- Preserve or enhance the character and appearance of conservation areas;
- Ensure high quality contextual design;
- Encourage sustainable construction and energy efficiency improvements;
- Promote use of sympathetic materials and detailing.

HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Impact of the Side Extension:

The proposed extension is modest in scale and clearly subordinate to the principal dwelling.

Key heritage considerations include:

Scale and Massing:

The extension remains single storey in form and does not dominate the host property or adjoining streetscape. Its reduced ridge height and secondary positioning ensure that the original dwelling remains visually prominent.

Design Integration:

The proposal adopts complementary materials and detailing reflective of the existing dwelling, including:

- Matching brick tones;
- Sympathetic roof pitch;
- Traditional opening proportions;
- Arched detailing reflecting existing architectural character.
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The extension therefore reads as a coherent and respectful addition rather than an incongruous intervention.

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Visibility:

The extension is primarily experienced within the side and rear domestic setting. Wider public views are limited and the proposal does not interrupt important views, vistas, or spatial characteristics associated with the Conservation Area or World Heritage Site.

Townscape Character:

The proposal preserves the established residential rhythm and grain of development along Field Lane. The modest footprint ensures that the openness between dwellings is not excessively eroded.

Overall, the extension results in a neutral to minor positive heritage impact.

Replacement Windows and Doors:

The existing uPVC windows and doors are unsympathetic to the character of the dwelling and detract from the architectural quality of the property.

The proposed heritage-style flush casement aluminium windows represent a significant visual improvement through:

- Slimmer frame profiles;
- Improved proportions;
- Traditional appearance;
- Enhanced consistency with historic detailing.

Importantly, the replacement fenestration reinstates a more heritage-appropriate appearance while also improving security and energy performance.

This aspect of the proposal is considered to positively enhance the character and appearance of both the Conservation Area and the wider World Heritage Site setting.

Recessed Solar Panels:

The proposed recessed solar panels have been carefully integrated within the roof slope to minimise visual impact.

The panels are:

- Flush fitting rather than surface mounted;
- Positioned sensitively within the roof plane;
- Visually recessive in appearance.

Given the increasing importance of sustainable retrofitting within historic environments, the discreet incorporation of renewable technologies is supported by national policy where heritage impacts are minimised.

The proposal demonstrates an appropriate balance between conservation objectives and environmental sustainability.

The visual impact upon the Conservation Area and World Heritage Site is considered negligible.

Assessment of Harm:

The proposed development would result in no harm to the significance of designated heritage assets.
The works:

- Preserve the character and appearance of the Belper Conservation Area;
- Preserve the setting and significance of the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site;
- Introduce enhancements through removal of unsympathetic modern alterations;
- Improve the architectural coherence of the dwelling;
- Deliver sustainability and accessibility benefits.

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Where change occurs, it is carefully considered, proportionate, and sympathetic to the historic context.

Public Benefits

The scheme delivers several identifiable public and environmental benefits including:

- Enhancement of local visual amenity;
- Replacement of inappropriate modern materials.
- Improved sustainability and reduced energy consumption.
- Introduction of renewable energy technology.
- Improved residential accessibility and functionality.
- Long-term viable use and maintenance of the property.

The proposals therefore align with the wider objectives of sustainable heritage-led development.

Conclusion

This Heritage Impact Assessment concludes that the proposed development at 31 Field Lane, Belper constitutes a sensitive and well-considered scheme appropriate to its heritage context.

The proposals:

- Respect the architectural character of the host dwelling;
- Preserve the character and appearance of the Belper Conservation Area;
- Preserve the Outstanding Universal Value of the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site;
- Introduce high quality contextual design;
- Enhance the property through removal of unsympathetic uPVC elements;
- Integrate sustainable technologies in a discreet and heritage-sensitive manner.

The scheme represents an appropriate balance between conservation, sustainability, and modern residential requirements and is fully compliant with national and local heritage planning policy.
Accordingly, it is considered that planning permission should be supported.

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