2 Becksitch Lane

Belper

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YARN Architecture

Heritage Impact Assessment for Buffer Zone

Introduction & Context

This Heritage Impact Assessment has been prepared by YARN Architecture to set out the assessment and support for the remodelling and extension of the existing dilapidated property at 2 Becksitch Lane, Belper in relation to the sites position within the DVMWHS Buffer Zone.

This Assessment should be read in accordance with the Design and Heritage Statement and drawings which further details the design rationale and the context of the site.

The design strategy employs a dual architectural response :

1. **Front Elevation:** A traditional vernacular cottage frontage directly responding to and reinforcing the street scene of Becksitch Lane of the surrounding area.
2. **Rear Elevation:** A modern extension featuring a subservient rear box dormer, delivering high-quality modern living space transitioning with the levels of the site without significant upward extension or an additional floor.

The application site lies within the Buffer Zone of the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site (DVMWHS). This assessment explicitly addresses the potential impact on designated DVMWHS and the OUV monitoring views. It demonstrates that while the contemporary rear elevation and box dormer fall within the theoretical field of vision of a key monitoring view, they are entirely imperceptible to a normal bystander at ground level and can only be discerned under extreme magnification (zoom lens approximately 0.83 mile away).



Image 1

Front view of 2 Becksitch Lane
from driveway entrance



Image 2

Rear view of 2 Becksitch Lane
from 'lower ground / garden' level

The existing building is nothing of significant heritage or architectural value and currently is visually harmful to the existing streetscape.

Consequently, the proposal preserves the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the DVMWHS, complies with national and local planning policies, and is a significant enhancement over the existing dilapidated building.

The Proposed Development : Design Strategy & Development

The architecture is defined by a duality in design that respects the public realm while embracing modern living at the private rear.

- Front & Side Elevations (Traditional)
  The front of the property is designed to read as a traditional cottage, integrating seamlessly with the established local vernacular and the immediate street scene. The use of off-white render, traditional dormer windows, and a feature oak-framed storm porch provides a welcoming, high-quality aesthetic that elevates the character of the street and enhances the appearance of the existing property.

- Rear Elevation (Contemporary)
  As the property cascades down the sloping site, the architecture transitions into a contemporary, split-level home. The rear elevation features high-quality dark grey zinc standing-seam cladding, which marries with the dark grey tones of the roofing tiles. Sets of large glazed apertures are designed to maximise natural daylight, solar gains and capture the panoramic views over the Derwent Valley.

Materials

The proposed material palette of render, timber, zinc cladding and slate roof can be found within the existing street scene and properties visible within the local area (Appendix B) and Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site.

Scale & Massing

Given the property's prominent location at the junction of 'Three Gates' and 'Becksitch Lane', a primary design objective was to keep the visible scale and massing low.

Rather than imposing a dominant upward extension, or, second storey, the additional floor space is achieved through a sympathetic hip-to gable conversion and dormer accommodation in the roof space and a lower-ground level extension which is attained using the existing levels around the property.

This strategy ensures that the established rooflines are respected, and the vital outlook and open feel from the road junction are preserved, safeguarding the visual amenity of neighbouring properties, nearby heritage assets and the wider public realm.

Sustainability Considerations

Sustainability is at the core of this proposal. Rather than demolition and rebuild, the design advocates the adaptive re-use of the existing structure.

The renovation will incorporate thermal performance upgrades, bringing a poorly insulated 1960s building up to—and exceeding—modern Building Regulation standards through the use of external insulated render and an internal insulated lining system.

The introduction of natural light via rooflights and large aperture glazing on key elevations will drastically reduce energy demands.

The renovation will also make use of the governments energy grant by installing an air source heat pump with the new thermal envelope, so the property is more effectively heated and less reliant on natural gas.

By virtue of its position and design, the proposals avoid any overshadowing / loss of light and privacy corners to neighbouring properties, which are elevated.



Image 3

Front impression of 2 Becksitch Lane



Image 4

Rear perspective impression of 2 Becksitch Lane

Planning Policy

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Chapter 16: Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment:

- Paragraph 203: Requires local planning authorities to take account of the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation.
- Paragraph 205–207: Requires a balanced judgment proportional to the significance of the asset. Great weight is given to the asset's conservation.
- Paragraph 211–214: Distinguishes between "substantial harm" and "less than substantial harm." Where a proposal causes no perceptible harm to an asset's OUV or setting, it aligns fully with the presumption in favour of sustainable development.

Local Planning Framework & World Heritage Site Guidance

- Amber Valley Borough Council Local Plan:
    - Heritage & Design Policies (EN5 / EN28 / EN29): Development within or affecting the setting of the DVMWHS Buffer Zone must conserve and enhance the site's Outstanding Universal Value.
- Belper Neighbourhood Plan:
    - Policy Environment & Heritage: Requires developments within the parish to respect established character, preserve non-designated assets, and safeguard key views toward and within the DVMWHS corridor.
- Derwent Valley Mills WHS Management Plan & Monitoring Framework:
    - Establishes fixed monitoring viewpoints across the valley to identify landscape and built-environment changes. It mandates that developments within key view cones should not break ridgelines, or, introduce visually jarring elements into the wider industrial landscape setting.

Heritage Context & Site Assessment

Site & Character of Becksitch Lane

Becksitch Lane occupies an elevated, sloped position above the Derwent valley floor. The streetscape is eclectic, featuring 19th-century gritstone cottages alongside mid-to-late 20th-century residential infill.

The existing bungalow is a mid-20th-century, non-designated property in an advanced state of structural and visual dilapidation. It makes a negative contribution to the character of Becksitch Lane and detracts from the visual amenity of the DVMWHS Buffer Zone.

Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the DVMWHS

Inscribed by UNESCO in 2001 under criteria (ii) and (iv), the DVMWHS represents the birthplace of the modern factory system. Its significance derives from the pioneering 18th and 19th-century cotton mills (such as Strutt's Belper Mills), associated waterpower engineering, planned industrial workers' housing, and the dramatic valley landscape setting that encloses them.

Assessment of Impact on Heritage Assets & OUV Monitoring Views

Traditional Frontage & Streetscape Contribution

The street-facing elevation is traditional, designed to integrate into Becksitch Lane:

- **Scale and Massing:** Maintained at a single-storey height, preserving the existing roof horizon and low-profile footprint, so the Derwent Valley is still connected the street scene.
- **Materials:** Light render and natural dark slate, matching the local vernacular. The two dormer windows are appropriately proportioned and match similar in the area.
- **Impact:** By renovating the dilapidated bungalow which is an eyesore with a more traditional elevation, the proposal delivers a positive enhancement to the public realm and street scene.



Image 5

Becksitch Lane street level (image taken on Chevin Mews to see roofline against horizon)

Proposed rear dormer would not impair views outside of the buffer zone and would remain screened by the exiting roof ridge and given the hip-to-gable conversion and inset sides of the dormers.

It should be noted that an additional storey for bedroom accommodation would affect this view out from where the roads converge

Detailed Analysis of OUV Monitoring View Impact

(using a "Zoom" Assessment)

A key consideration for development within the DVMWHS Buffer Zone is its potential visibility from key monitoring views, public viewpoints, and the main mill corridors (e.g., North Mill and East Mill).

The application site is situated in an enclosed residential context where intervening land and residential development obscure views of the rear roof slope from public vantage points.

A walk-around was conducted to see the impact of the site / proposal from key areas within the A6 corridor (DVMWHS) and nearby primary heritage assets.

Owing to the properties set back against the hillside and the low-scale of the existing roofline the site is not visible from Derby Road, the Babington Hospital Site or Chapel Street island (outside Morrisons), which considered key areas within local proximity. Therefore, the contemporary rear elevation will have no visual impact on the interpretation of the World Heritage Site in this area

Therefore, a study was undertaken along the opposite side of the Valley on Chevin Road toward Farnah Green Triangle to see if, or , where the site could be seen. This can be found in Appendix A of this Assessment.

A crucial consideration for this application is the site's relation to designated DVMWHS Monitoring Views (2022) across the valley corridor which is located along Chevin Road as part of this study. In particular, Monitoring View 36 (Belper and the Derwent Valley from the north end of Chevin Road) which is a panoramic view across the town of Belper from one side of the valley to the other.



Image 6

Extract of Monitoring View 36 (DVMWHS Report 2022) taken toward the South East.

Note: this only includes the relevant 1/3rd of the panoramic image

Image 7

Photo taken from Monitoring point 36 toward site area using 70mm camera lens zoom, which equates to 1.45 x human eye (approximately 180ft zoom). The site is not discernable.

It should be noted that this view is not visible as part of the monitoring view, but has been captured as part of this assessment





Image 8

Photo taken from Monitoring point 36 toward site area using 300mm zoom camera lens zoom (high magnification) which equates to 1000ft zoom (the site is 1340ft from the monitoring point).

The site is slightly distinguishable (centred)

It is noted there are other box dormers and contemporary elevations within this hillside location / buffer zone

The assessment of has been weighted against these views:

A. Human Eye Perception (Unassisted View)

- Visual Distance: At a distance of 1.34 km (0.83 mile) from the monitoring point to the application site, the human eye cannot resolve fine architectural details, window frames, or, subtle rear roof extensions against the dense backdrop of Belper's hillside development.
- Topographical & Urban Grain Integration: The rear elevation and box dormer are set against an existing hillside roofscape. To a normal bystander viewing the valley landscape from public paths or valley floor vantage points, the proposed redevelopment appears as part of the established residential fabric. The box dormer does not break the sky ridgeline and there are precedent examples.

B. Telephoto / Telescopic Visibility

- Technical: Under extreme magnification (e.g., high-powered telephoto camera lens), the rear elevation, contemporary zinc architectural detailing, and box dormer are technically visible.
- Material Mitigation & Low Reflectivity: To ensure this 'technical' visibility does not translate into visual harm:
  - Dormer Cladding: Clad in dark matte zinc / dark slate-grey material to match the surrounding roof slates, preventing glint, reflection, or stark contrast.
  - Subservient Profile**:** The box dormer is set well below the main ridge line, set back from the eaves, and inset from the gables. The dormer scale would classify as permitted development.
  - Glazing: Non-reflective glass specifications minimise glare across the valley

Assessment of Visibility looking into buffer zone of application site:

Visual Impact (Monitoring View 36 from site)		
Observer Type	**Visibility**	**Heritage Impact Evaluation**
Person/bystander (unassisted eye)	Imperceivable	Neutral (no visual impact)
Telescopic / Telephoto View (High Zoom; 8x optical, 300mm camera lens)	Discernible under high zoom only. Site visually integrates into existing hillside and dormer is designed to blend in with roof.	Negligible, no harm to OUV or monitoring view panorama

Heritage Harm & Policy Balance (NPPF Compliance)

In accordance with NPPF Chapter 16 principles, visual presence of new development does not automatically equate to heritage harm. For harm to occur, a development must negatively affect the ability to understand, appreciate, or experience the Outstanding Universal Value of the World Heritage Site.

Evaluation	Technical Finding	Heritage Assessment
Streetscape Impact	Replaces dilapidated structure with habitable structure and traditional frontage.	Significant Benefit
Core WHS Mills & Corridor	No direct visual intervisibility from DVMWHS corridor.	No Harm
OUV Monitoring View (Human Eye)	Imperceptible at distance across valley.	Neutral / No Harm
OUV Monitoring View (High magnification Zoom)	Visible under high magnification, but fully recedes via dark cladding & subservient massing.	Neutral / Preservation of OUV

Key Arguments Supporting Approval:

1. Duality of Design: Retains traditional context to public highway / street scene (Becksitch Lane), restricting modern architecture to the private, elevated rear.
2. Minimal Visual Impact: Theoretical visibility through a telephoto lens from nearly 1 mile away does not constitute "less than substantial harm" to the setting of the WHS buffer zone, as the overarching landscape character remains unaltered to human experience.
3. Regeneration: Returns a dilapidated site to a habitable, high-quality family home.
4. Precedent : Properties nearby sharing same materials and features (Appendix B).
5. Sustainability: Para 214 NPPF states if no perceptible harm to an asset's OUV or setting, it aligns fully with the presumption in favour of sustainable development.

Conclusion

The proposed extending and remodelling of the bungalow with traditional frontage on Becksitch Lane, transitioning to a contemporary form at the rear represents a quality and sympathetic design response within the DVMWHS Buffer Zone.

Whilst the rear box dormer and contemporary aesthetic fall within the broad angle of an OUV monitoring view from nearly 1mile away, the design is completely imperceptible to the unassisted human eye and recedes into the established built backdrop even under telephoto magnification. There are also other properties with precedent features, contemporary styling and materials in the local vernacular.

The proposal causes no harm to the Outstanding Universal Value, key views, or setting of the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site, while delivering a substantial visual enhancement to Becksitch Lane. The scheme fully satisfies Chapter 16 of the NPPF, Policies EN28/EN29 of the Amber Valley Local Plan, and the Belper Neighbourhood Plan.

Appendix A

Route map of assessment and locations of views



Application site denoted by blue circle

Images

Note: all images shown in this section are zoomed to magnification of 70-120mm for clarity and exaggerate what can be seen with the human eye without assistance



Image 1 – taken on Chevin road, just past row of cottages looking toward Becksitch Lane

Image 2 – taken outside Chevin House Farm looking toward Becksitch Lane





Image 3 – taken from layby on Chevin Road.

Properties on Becksitch Lane are not discernable until zoomed – application site is not visible due to low scale



Image 4 – taken on footpath located off Chevin road, near collection of houses. The application site is just visible (centre)

Image 5 – taken from Monitoring View 36 DVMWHS assessment looking to South East of viewpoint



Appendix B

Dormer Windows within local context



Image 1 – Adult Education Centre, approx 125m from application site. Box and shed dormers.



Image 2 – Wide photo, application site centered (screened by dense vegetation).

Note pitched dormers to neighbouring property (blue), row of Box dormers with varying material cladding (red) and flush (front facing dormers) on Becksitch Lane streetscene



Image 3 – Pitched dormers front facing on Becksitch lane, approx 70 m from application site



Image 4 – Rendered pitched dormers front facing on Becksitch lane, approx 85 m from application site

Zinc Cladding & Contemporary Styling



Image 5 – Contemporary bungalow located above Becksitch Lane, visible from application site featuring stone facing, timber cladding and zinc cladding and roofing



Image 6 – Zinc standing seam roof of the above contemporary property visible from application site



Image 7 – New building (under consrcution) featuring zinc cladding and standing seam roof, at nearby to Becksitch Lane and visible in Buffer Zone



Image 8 – Contemporary dwelling, situated approx 65m from application site (visible on Becksitch Lane)