DERWENT VALLEY MILLS WORLD HERITAGE SITE

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Rebecca Godson
Amber Valley Borough Council
Town Hall
Ripley
Derbyshire
DE5 3BT

29th October 2026

Dear Rebecca,

AVA/2026/0562: Conversion of church to single dwelling-Holy Trinity Church Derby Road Milford Belper Derbyshire DE56 0RA

Please find below a Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site Partnership response to the consultation concerning the above application. These comments will be taken to the next meeting of the World Heritage Site Conservation and Planning Group in December for verification.

The site lies within the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site (DVMWHS). 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 maintain the Outstanding Universal Value of the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site by protecting, conserving, presenting, enhancing and transmitting its culture, economy, unique heritage and landscape 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 2026. It has as the first of its five aims to: "protect and conserve the Outstanding Universal Value of the DVMWHS to ensure its transmission to future generations." In accordance with this aim, and with reference to the operational guidance in Section 18 of the Management Plan, I give the following advice:

The application site is located within the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site (DVMWHS), which is of the highest significance. The Church of the Holy Trinity is listed Grade II and is of national significance. Designed by architect William Bonython Moffat and built in 1848, it is located on a highly prominent site in Milford that was given by the Strutt family. The land was specifically gifted for use by the community. Consequently, the church was a key community building within the settlement and is an important feature of the WHS. It is therefore an element of Value 2 as defined in the current DVMWHS Management Plan (2026-2031) which contributes to the OUV of the DVMWHS. The church also lies within the boundary of the Belper and Milford Conservation Area and makes a positive contribution to its character and appearance.

The application is for change of use to a four-bedroom dwelling. The proposed change to residential use would prevent public access and result in loss of a community asset. The proposed physical works to accommodate the conversion would irreversibly alter the internal spatial quality and character of the listed church and garden use of the churchyard would inevitably alter the character of its setting. The large size of the building and its limited curtilage does not lend itself to residential conversion. There is no scope for on- site parking. Consequently, the proposal does not represent an appropriate use for the building.

No marketing or other information has been provided to establish whether more suitable uses which provide a level of public access have been explored. More suitable uses could include community use, office use or holiday rental for example.

In the Partnership's view, the proposed conversion to residential use would have an adverse impact on the OUV of the DVMWHS through loss of a community asset which contributes to an element of Value 2 of the WHS. In our view, other options should be explored that are more compatible with the listed building and enable a level of public access.

Yours sincerely,



Rose Thompson

Heritage Co-ordinator, Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site.
CC- Mel Morris- Heritage Consultant

CONTROLLED