
DERWENT VALLEY MILLS

United Kingdom (1030)

In accordance with Decision **45 COM 7B.61** of the World Heritage Committee, the United Kingdom State Party has produced a State of Conservation Report for the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site (WHS).

As requested, this report is structured according to the format set out in Annex 13 of the *Operational Guidelines (2023)*. The specific points raised in the World Heritage Committee's Decision are reproduced in text boxes.

1. Executive Summary

Following the UNESCO World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS/ICCROM Advisory Mission from 31 January to 2 February 2024, the State Party submits this State of Conservation Report responding to the issues raised in the World Heritage Committee's Decision, as well as a number of issues that were discussed during the Mission. These update the information included in the previous State of Conservation Reports submitted on 16 December 2021 and 1 March 2023, and provide a cross reference to the additional information submitted under paragraphs 172 and 174 of the *Operational Guidelines*.

Where there have been changes in the status of developments (either consented or at application stage) within the buffer zone and setting of the property, such as in Belper and Derby, these are reported on, as is relevant information relating to the progression of development plans within the property's boundary. The latest progress of each local planning authority currently undertaking a review of its Local Plan is also outlined as is continued provision of training and delivery of enhanced conservation advice.

The report includes information on recent support provided to key sites such as Cromford Mills and delivery of major projects which support the objectives under the WHS Management Plan. Following recent flooding episodes affecting the property, an update on Derby City's flood alleviation project is also included.

The Advisory Mission presented an ideal opportunity to explore in detail the concerns raised by the World Heritage Committee concerning the management system and development pressures at the property. The State Party was particularly keen for the Mission to see how the UK planning system can deliver sustainable outcomes which safeguard OUV through a process of advice and refinement of schemes with active engagement from heritage consultees.

The State Party looks forward to receiving the Mission's advice and recommendations contained in the forthcoming Mission Report. It hopes this will provide the basis for ongoing detailed discussion with parties involved in the management of the property regarding the concerns set out in the World Heritage Committee's Decision.

2. Response from the State Party to the World Heritage Committee's Decision, paragraph by paragraph.

1. Having examined Document WHC/23/45.COM/7B

2. Notes that development proposals in the buffer zone and the setting of the property have been approved against ICOMOS' advice that these projects would have a negative impact on the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property, and that development areas have been identified within the property boundaries in the Belper 2021 Neighbourhood Plan, which may have a similar impact on its OUV, and requests the State Party to:

- a) Reconsider the approval of the Landmark project in Derby and not approve the implementation of the Amber Rock Resort, Bradshaw Way and Eagle Quarter proposals in their current form to avoid the negative impact they will have on the OUV of the property,*
- b) Halt the further execution of already approved projects that may have a negative impact of the OUV of the property but whose implementation has not yet commenced in the property, its buffer zone and setting and submit details of these projects to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies;*

Development Proposals within the Buffer Zone and Setting of the Property

The State Party welcomed the opportunity for the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies to visit the property as part of the recent Advisory Mission and review planned and ongoing projects within its boundary, buffer zone and wider setting.

Belper 2021 Neighbourhood Plan

Three sites have been identified within the property boundary for development under the Neighbourhood Plan. A [former care home](#) of no architectural merit ([AVA/2020/0089](#)), the site of a [former hospital](#) listed at Grade II, and the [former library](#) originally built as a residential dwelling by the Strutts. The [new library](#) is well designed in context and frees up the old site for sustainable reuse. The recent Advisory Mission visited these sites and discussed why they have been identified and where there is opportunity to improve the environs of the WHS.

Landmark Project (Application Reference 05/18/00771 as varied by 22/01967/VAR)

The State Party acknowledged and discussed the request from the World Heritage Committee in relation to the approval of the Landmark project in Derby during the recent Advisory Mission.

The State Party reported that Derby City Council, the local planning authority for this scheme, had accepted an application ([23/01132/CLE](#)) for formal confirmation that a material operation has been undertaken within the prescribed time limit sufficient to implement the consent granted. This means the development has technically commenced.

However, as discussed during the Advisory Mission and notwithstanding the above, Derby City Council remains keen to explore any potential opportunities for amendments to the consented scheme or broader spatial planning solutions with the developer and other parties to address previous concerns raised by the council's conservation officer, the World Heritage Committee and Historic England.

Amber Rock Resort, Crich Quarry (Application Reference: CM6/0122/28)

Derbyshire County Council, the local planning authority for this case, has recently received the further information from the applicant it was awaiting as reported in the 2023 State of Conservation Report. Historic England has been reconsulted by Derbyshire County Council on this additional information and is in the process of formulating further advice. The State Party will ensure that the World Heritage Centre is updated on the progress of this application in due course following the recent Advisory Mission.

Bradshaw Way and Eagle Quarter, Derby

The Advisory Mission provided an opportunity for detailed discussion regarding these two proposals within the City of Derby.

The State Party can confirm that both schemes have been referred to the Secretary of State for the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities and that he is currently considering whether to call in these decisions. Historic England has formally requested that the Secretary of State does indeed call in these applications for his own determination. As yet the Secretary of State has not yet made his decision.

Recent Appeal Decisions

The State Party is able to report on two recent decisions where the Planning Inspectorate has dismissed appeals against decisions by the local planning authority (Amber Valley Borough Council) to refuse permission for applications due, in part, to their impact on the OUV of the WHS.

[APP/M1005/W/22/3306736](#) - St Elizabeth House, Matlock Road, Belper

In this case the Inspector concluded that the proposed alterations and extensions including a two-storey conference centre, to a house built by mill owners for one of the company directors “*would not protect and conserve the DVMWHS’s OUV, or promote sustainable development for the reasons set out above. Any benefits arising from public awareness, enhanced social wellbeing and a cohesive and coherent understanding of the DVMWHS would not outweigh the harm identified to DVMWHS and other designated heritage assets.*”

[APP/M1005/D/23/3326075](#) - 1 George Street, Belper

Here, as seen in the recent Advisory Mission, in relation to the replacement of traditional roof materials (Welsh slate replaced with Spanish slate) and rainwater goods (cast-iron replaced with plastic) on an end-terrace millworkers cottage, the Inspector assessed that in his opinion “*...the external materials used on the buildings in this location are...extremely important and they make a significant contribution to the character and appearance of the area.*”

3. Notes with concern the poor state of conservation of the large Belper Mills complex, one of the key attributes of the property, and that current proposals for the adaptive reuse of the complex would lead to an erosion of the OUV of the property and urges the State Party to define a rescue plan for the way forward with appropriate uses that support the property's OUV and to submit details of such a proposal to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies before any approvals are given that may be difficult to reverse;

The State Party can confirm that the live planning and listed building consent applications for the site on which it has previously reported (State of Conservation Report 2023) still await determination. However as discussed during the recent Advisory Mission, Amber Valley Borough Council remains in negotiation with the site owner regarding any potential opportunities for amendments to the proposed scheme in order to address previous concerns raised in ICOMOS' Technical Review.

The Advisory Mission has provided a timely opportunity to visit and review the site and the planned project at Belper Mills as well as the steps various partners are seeking to take to create a deliverable, sustainable and appropriate long-term future for the Belper Mills. These include alternative options to the current plan that have been commissioned by the DVMWHS Partnership with public consultation.

4. Also notes that the various local and regional authorities tasked with the management of the property are currently developing new local plans, but that these do not seem to be coordinated nor their potential impact on the OUV of the property assessed cumulatively, and also requests the State Party to ensure that, prior to their adoption, all new local plans and policies that affect the property, its buffer zone and its setting are assessed through integrated Heritage Impact Assessments (HIAs) in conformity with the Guidance for Impact Assessment in a World Heritage Context, that analyse their cumulative impacts on the OUV of the property, and that these HIAs are submitted to the World Heritage Centre in line with Paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines for review by the Advisory Bodies;

The following Local Plans remain under review at the current time:

Derbyshire County Council together with **Derby City Council** are currently preparing a new [Minerals Plan](#) to cover the period to 2038. The draft plan was published in the Spring of 2023 prior to submission to the Planning Inspectorate. A new [Waste Plan](#) is also being jointly prepared by the two councils which will guide development until 2035. This is at an early stage where background information is being compiled.

Derby City Council is also reviewing and updating its Local Plan's DVMWHS policy (AC9) and the Darley Abbey Mills policy (AC10), as well as the general heritage policy (CP20), in early 2024, working towards submitting the new Plan in June 2025.

In addition to the Local Plan review, Historic England and the WHS Partnership are in early discussions with Derby City Council and their consultants around a **Design Guide** for development within the City, including regarding how such a document might address tall buildings. This will

draw on the work previously undertaken on tall buildings and other studies. The State Party will provide more information as these discussions proceed.

A timetable for the development of the Amber Valley Local Plan has been agreed by Full Council on 13 December 2023. One of the policy documents under review, EN5, relates to the Derwent Valley Mills WHS, on which both the WHS coordination team and Historic England will be commenting.

[Erewash Borough Council](#) is also currently working on a new local plan. Review of its Core Strategy (as reported in the 2021 State of Conservation Report) has progressed and is part way through its Examination in Public by an Inspector from the Planning Inspectorate.

The State Party reported on review of the **Derbyshire Dales District Council** Local Plan in the 2021 State of Conservation Report. This review continued during 2022.

During the recent Advisory Mission, the State Party presented information regarding the status of current local plans and baseline information feeding into these review processes, with regard to the protection of the property's OUV, which involves the active engagement of heritage consultees. The discussion also explained how the requirement for Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) is met.

5. Welcomes the updating of the Management Plan for the property but further notes with great concern that the management system for the property is fragmented, that negative impacts can be accommodated within the national policy system leading to a cumulative erosion of the property's OUV, that the Management Plan does not have any legal jurisdiction and that consequently the requirements for HIAs for development proposals as outlined in the Operational Guidelines are not met;

6. Further requests the State Party to initiate a review of the management system of the property, with the aim of establishing a fully functioning management system that:

- a) Guarantees the safeguarding and transmission of the OUV of the property,*
- b) Provides a management authority with the legal jurisdiction and agency to ensure the OUV of the property is safeguarded, also in coordinating the spatial and other plans of the various authorities with spatial mandates over the various sections of the property and its buffer zone and setting,*
- c) Provides legal status to the Management Plan of the property,*
- d) Provides a legal mandate for the execution of HIAs as prescribed by the Operational Guidelines in conformity with the Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessments in a World Heritage Context, developed in collaboration between the Advisory Bodies and the World Heritage Centre;*

7. Expresses concern that development pressures on the property, coupled with the inability of the management system to safeguard its OUV, are reaching such proportions that, if not addressed as a matter of urgency, ascertained or potential threat, as defined in paragraphs 179 and 180 of the Operational Guidelines, could be confirmed and strongly recommends to the State Party to invite a joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS/ICCROM Advisory mission to the property to provide guidance on revising and strengthening the management system;

The State Party is pleased that the recent Advisory Mission provided the basis for ongoing detailed discussion regarding all the concerns set out in the World Heritage Committee's Decision above. It looks forward to receiving the advice and recommendations contained in the forthcoming Mission Report regarding the management system and development pressures concerning the property. Alongside and integrated with these discussions Historic England will continue to explore with all the local planning authorities across the property how UNESCO's Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessments in a World Heritage Context can be utilised in a consistent and proportionate manner.

8. Finally requests the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by 1 February 2024, a report on the state of conservation of the property and on the steps taken to implement the recommendations mentioned above, for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 46th session, considering that the urgent conservation needs of this property require a broad and urgent mobilization to preserve its Outstanding Universal Value.

The recent Advisory Mission presented an opportunity for the issues raised to be discussed alongside the steps taken by the State Party, the WHS Partnership and other parties such as Historic England to safeguard the property's OUV. The Mission enabled the State Party to present those positive steps which are in hand across, for example, training, funding, policy development and site-specific solutions across the Derwent Valley.

3. Other current conservation issues identified by the State Party which may have an impact on the property's Outstanding Universal Value

Belper

Residential development / redevelopment works have been taking place on both the Derwent Street (North) and former Fuchs sites on Derby Road in Belper, and are both near to completion. These schemes are illustrative of the positive impact of expert advice from Historic England and Derbyshire County Council specialists in support of Amber Valley Borough Council in the exercise of its planning functions. Both developments of new build and re-use respectively have come to positive final schemes and consequently the State Party did not feel it was necessary to notify the World Heritage Centre on these occasions.

The [former Fuchs](#) (a motorcycle lubricant manufacturer) site comprises a [Grade II listed former hosiery warehouse](#) dating to the early 19th Century which had been derelict for many years. The redevelopment will create 16 apartments within the building ([AVA/2022/0864](#) (Listed Building Consent) and [AVA/2022/0863](#) (Planning)).

The [Derwent Street \(North\)](#) ([AVA/2021/0106](#)) development comprises 114 new build affordable homes constructed on behalf of Nottingham Community Housing Association (NCHA).

The recent Advisory Mission also viewed a cleared site to the south of the [new library in the former hosiery factory](#) ([Land Off Derwent Street](#)) ([AVA/2022/0586](#)). This application has been submitted in outline form by Derbyshire County Council for determination by Amber Valley Borough Council and proposes 60 new dwellings for members of the community over the age of 55 including some providing supported living accommodation. Historic England expressed concerns regarding the submission of an outline application in such a sensitive location within the World Heritage Site. Further information and details of the proposed redevelopment is currently awaited. The State Party will ensure that the World Heritage Centre is updated on the progress of the application following the Mission.

Discussion continues in respect of other sites with the aim of achieving outcomes in which redundant historic structures are set to new sympathetic uses which sustain their significance and contribution to OUV and where new structures are well designed in context.

Cromford Mills

Historic England grant aid and National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) investment at the [Grade I listed Cromford Mills](#) across buildings 1 (now used as a temporary school room) and 18 (the first building of Arkwright's mill complex) has been supporting the Arkwright Society which own the site and open it to the public.

A major programme of repair and conversion at Building 17 (constructed in 1785 for spinning and later used for warehousing and as a dye works), funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund (previous name of the NLHF) and European Regional Development Fund, was completed in 2017. The current grants for urgent repairs are helping to address the fact that Building 18 is still at risk and Building 1 has recently suffered render failure.

An NLHF grant is also underpinning a project to review governance, revise master planning and achieve project development across the Cromford Mills site.

The recent Advisory Mission included a visit to Cromford Mills to see the results of partnership working at the site. The discussion highlighted the challenges faced by the Arkwright Society as the owner of the site in achieving financial resilience and sustainability. The visit demonstrated the important contribution made by grant funding to the protection of its historic buildings.

Hydropower Schemes in the WHS

The Arkwright Society are in addition delivering hydropower and water source heating schemes which both underpin their sustainable future operation and better reveal OUV, bringing the water power origins of the DVMWHS into conversation with present day UK Government and UN climate change priorities.

The [hydro power project at Cromford](#) has involved partnership with [Derwent Hydro](#) who have now also taken on and re-opened the [Grade II* listed Masson Mills](#) in Matlock Bath, as seen during the recent Advisory Mission. Derwent Hydro also operates the historic turbine installation at Belper Mills, likewise visited during the Mission.

Conservation Advice and Training

Amber Valley Borough Council now has enhanced Conservation advice capacity through funding from Historic England (as was reported had been secured in the 2023 State of Conservation Report) in anticipation of their successful submission, examination and adoption of the new [Local Plan](#).

If any of the planning authorities require a second or calibrating opinion, then the WHS coordination team provides this through Derbyshire County Council's Conservation, Heritage and Design Service (see sections 20 to 22 of the DVMWHS Management Plan 2020-25).

In respect of training to support robust decision making (as previously reported on in the 2021 State of Conservation Report), during January 2024 the WHS Partnership undertook a second round of training available to all planning committee members and officers in the local planning authorities across the WHS. Participants in these training events highlighted their value to the recent Advisory Mission.

Darley Abbey Bridge

Derby City Council acted rapidly to address the urgent condition of the failed 20th century concrete bridge deck between Darley Abbey and Darley Abbey Mills (as previously reported to the World

Heritage Centre under paragraph 172 of the *Operational Guidelines* on 24 February 2023). The temporary bridge structure is now in place and operational which sustains the businesses, in turn sustaining this key part of the property.

The Council is continuing to work on a scheme and delivery partnership for a permanent replacement, and Historic England remains closely engaged. The State Party will share details of the potential options identified for a permanent solution with the World Heritage Centre, following the recent Advisory Mission's visit to the site and discussion about the bridge.

Derwent, Our City Our River – Flood Management for the City of Derby

The [WHS Management Plan](#) (Section 9) recognises the River Derwent's liability to flood, and the likelihood of increasing threat to sites on or close to the river banks as a result of climate change.

The City of Derby's flood alleviation project, [Our City Our River](#) (OCOR) (highlighted in the 2021 State of Conservation Report and during the recent Advisory Mission) is led by Derby City Council in partnership with the Environment Agency. The [OCOR Masterplan](#) includes plans for flood defences which would provide a level of protection up to a 1 in 100 year chance of occurrence. Delivery of the Masterplan is underway, split into three packages. Whilst OCOR remains a work in progress, the packages of flood protection implemented to date have been reported to be performing well.

Package I of the Derwent Our City our River flood management scheme, originally granted conditional consent in [2015](#), is installed and successfully performing. The [Non-Technical Summary](#) from the planning application provides an overview of the scheme and its delivery. Further property-based protection is in hand in Darley Abbey where recent floods did extend. The [Scheduled](#) and [Grade II* listed](#) Abbey Public House (former monastic building) is currently drying out and appears undamaged.

[Package II](#) flood protection and associated redevelopment extending on the left bank of the Derwent into Derby is currently going through the planning process ([23/00320/FUL](#)) and offers the opportunity to enhance the character of the city, better reveal OUV in the setting of the [Silk Mill \(Grade II listed\)](#), and reduce the river level around the Museum during a flood event. The Silk Mill suffered flood damage in October 2023 affecting the recently installed Museum of Making and details were provided to the World Heritage Centre under paragraph 174 of the *Operational Guidelines* on 21 December 2023. The Silk Mill reopened to the public in January 2024, in time for the recent Advisory Mission to visit.

Derbyshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS)

The preparation and creation of [Local Nature Recovery Strategies](#) (LNRS) is now a statutory requirement under [The Environment Act 2021](#). These strategies will join together across the country to create a national nature recovery network. Derbyshire County Council has been identified as the [responsible authority](#) to prepare and deliver the Derbyshire LNRS. This document will provide a framework for nature recovery and set out how the natural environment should be stewarded to improve biodiversity. Specific policies will be included in that document to ensure the appropriate promotion and stewardship of the DVMWHS rural relict setting. In combination with this Derbyshire County Council has also commissioned a natural capital strategy that will feed into the LNRS, identifying where nature recovery can also deliver ecosystem services, such as controlling water run off and reducing flooding events.

4. **In conformity with Paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines, describe any potential major restorations, alterations and/or new construction(s) intended within the property, the buffer zone(s) and/or corridors or other areas, where such developments may affect the Outstanding Universal Value of the property, including authenticity and integrity.**

The State Party would draw the World Heritage Centre's attention to the information provided in the paragraph 172 notification submitted alongside this report regarding proposed development at Full Street, Derby.

5. **Public access to the state of conservation report**

The State Party is content for the full State of Conservation Report to be uploaded to the World Heritage Centre's State of Conservation Information System.

6. **Signature of the Authority**

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