

1 **Multi-hazard susceptibility assessment using Analytic Hierarchy Process: the Derwent**
2 **Valley Mills UNESCO World Heritage Site case study (United Kingdom)**

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12 Abstract: Many of the UNESCO World Heritage Sites face geological threats which could have negative
13 effects on the value, integrity and accessibility of their heritage assets. A relevant example is the Derwent
14 Valley Mills UNESCO World Heritage site, one of the key sites of Britain's industrial revolution of the
15 18th century and located along the Derwent River Valley. Individual susceptibility scenarios of natural
16 hazards in the area like collapsible deposits, compressible ground, debris flow, landslide, running sands,
17 shrink-swell, soluble rock and flooding (both riverine and groundwater) are available, but a comprehensive
18 product able to support disaster mitigation measurement and land planning still does not exist. On this basis,
19 a multi-hazard susceptibility analysis was completed with the added benefit of reducing the complexity and
20 providing a methodological framework for multi-hazard estimation. The analysis was completed in a GIS
21 environment through an Analytical Hierarchy Process (AHP) multicriteria decision-making process. Since
22 the AHP method is affected by a user selection bias, a quantitative Relative significance index was derived
23 to rank the AHP factors during the susceptibility estimation. This index suggests that flooding is the
24 principal natural hazard for the Derwent Valley Mills UNESCO World Heritage site. The multi-hazard
25 susceptibility map also indicates that most of the areas where the mills are located are subject to significant
26 susceptibility to natural hazards.

27

28 **Keywords:** cultural heritage; Derwent Valley Mills; multi-hazard; susceptibility; England.

29

30 1. Introduction

31 The UNESCO's List of World Heritage Sites (WHS) in Danger encompasses several cultural and
32 natural heritage sites that are threatened by wars, natural hazards, pollution, uncontrolled urbanization and
33 unchecked tourist development [1-2] (<https://whc.unesco.org/en/conventiontext/#Article11.4>). Over the
34 long-term, these conditions can potentially induce irremediable damage for the conservation and
35 preservatios of the asset.

36 Compared to other threats, natural hazards are difficult to predict and usually underestimated [e.g. 3].
37 As of 2021, UNESCO considers only 3 of the 435 World Heritage Sites in the European continent in danger
38 despite a recent analysis has associated 16% of them with high seismic hazard, 12% with very high landslide
39 susceptibility, and 7% with high volcanic hazard [4]. As a result, there is a lack of understanding in Great
40 Britain of the impact of natural hazards on the World Heritage List properties [5]. Multi-hazard
41 susceptibility assessment analyses the spatial relationship between different hazards and is a key tool for
42 WHS managers [6].

43 In recent decades, attention to cultural heritage protection from natural hazards has received growing
44 interest and new methods supporting susceptibility, hazard and risk calculations have been progressively
45 developed [7-16]. The challenge is now represented by the assessment of multi-hazards [17-19] and their
46 potential impact [20-22].

47 The evaluation of multi-hazard susceptibility requires the knowledge of the interaction of multiple
48 potentially active processes (triggering, increased-probability and catalysis/impedance) that cannot be
49 captured by summing up a single hazard, usually evaluated independently within an area [21-23]. According
50 to the type of hazard and available data, stochastic, empirical and mechanistic methods have been developed
51 for multi-hazard susceptibility assessment [24]. Due to the lack of sufficient or reliable data [25], many
52 authors adopt susceptibility-based approaches, where a comprehensive susceptibility scenario to multiple
53 natural hazards is generated from the susceptibility of individual hazards [8]. That's why, in this work, we
54 will use the terms 'hazard' and 'susceptibility' interchangeably.

55 On this basis, this paper analyses the British Geological Survey (BGS)'s geological and single-hazard
56 datasets to advance the understanding of the main hazards affecting the UNESCO Derwent Valley Mills
57 World Heritage Site (DVMWHS) (Fig. 1) in the UK through a multi-hazard susceptibility analysis. This
58 work builds upon the geohazard assessment BGS has carried out for the UK World Heritage List sites as
59 part of the PROtection of European cultural HEritage from GeO-hazards (PROTHEGO) project [26].



60

61 Figure 1 – a) Map showing position of the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site, associated Core
 62 Area and Buffer Zone and large historic infrastructure (blue symbols). Examples of Mills and pump
 63 facility along the Derwent Valley: b) Cromford Mill, c) Leawood pump house, d) Belper East Mill.
 64 Coordinate system: British National Grid.

65

66 **2. Research aim**

67 This paper aims at providing a multi-hazard susceptibility scenario based on the Analytical Hierarchy
 68 Process for the mills located along the DVMWHS considering relevant natural hazards acting in the area
 69 such as: flooding, groundwater flooding, compressible ground, landslides, and running sands. A flowchart
 70 of the analysis we conducted is provided as Supplementary Materials (S1).

71

72 **3. The Derwent Valley Mills UNESCO World Heritage site**

73 The DVMWHS (Fig. 1) is an example of one of the key sites of Britain’s industrial revolution (18th
 74 century) included in the UNESCO World Heritage List in 2001 due to its international role in the birth of

75 the modern factory system, the development of new technology for spinning cotton and the first modern
76 industrial settlements (<http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/>). The DVMWHS comprises historic cotton and silk
77 mill complexes (e.g., Belper Mills, Cromford Mills and Darley Abbey Mills), the watercourses that powered
78 them, railways and the housing settlements erected for the mill-worker communities during the 18th and
79 19th centuries [27].

80 The Valley encompasses an approximately 24 km-long stretch of the lower course of the Derwent River
81 valley, from Derby in the south to Matlock Bath in the north, where it almost abuts the southern boundary
82 of the Peak District National Park. UNESCO has divided the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site
83 into a Core Area (CA) and the Buffer Zone (BZ). The Core Area is a single entity (12.3 km²), encompassing
84 historic buildings, features and landscapes that contribute to the universal value of the site. The Buffer Zone
85 (43.6 km²) represents a zone that in itself is not of outstanding universal value but that may influence the
86 World Heritage site. The United Kingdom government, Derwent Valley Mills Partnership [28] and local
87 councils are accountable to UNESCO for the conservation and preservation of the heritage assets within
88 the Derwent Valley. Money have been already invested to develop plans for sustainable flood risk
89 management over the next 50 to 100 years through the complex network of embankments of the River
90 Derwent [29].

91 Geologically, the site is characterised by the presence of Quaternary alluvium, slope deposits and
92 glacially-derived till deposits especially in the CA overlying a bedrock mostly consisting of thick
93 interbedded mudstone, siltstone and sandstone of the Carboniferous Millstone Grit Group and Bowland
94 High and Craven Groups (Mississippian). Due to the typical alternation of permeable and impermeable
95 layers, such rocks are particularly prone to landslides [26].

96 The Derwent Valley Mills has been one of the demonstration sites of the PROTHEGO project
97 (<http://www.prothego.eu/>) that analysed single hazards threatening the historic asset along the valley.

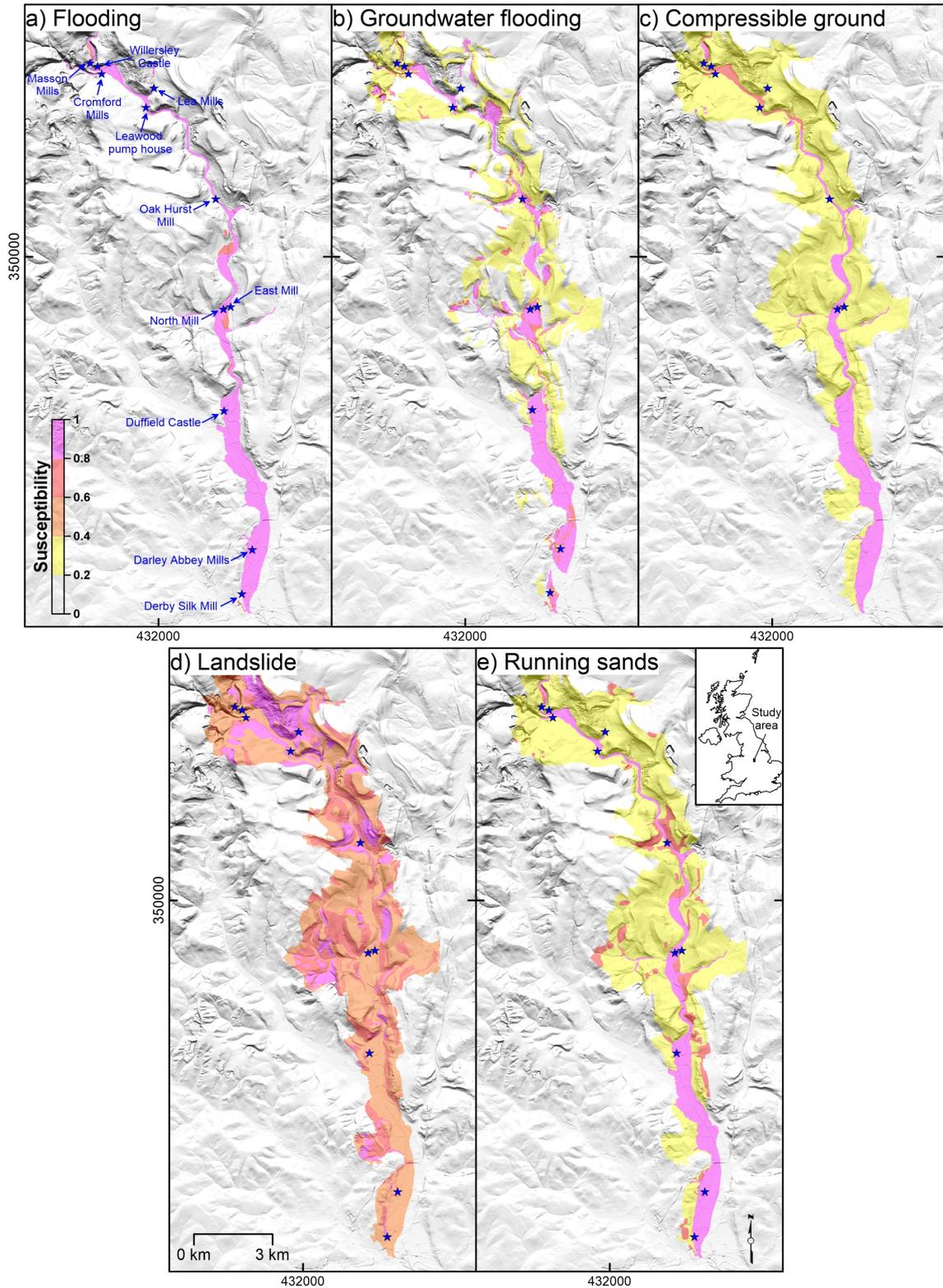
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99 **4. Materials and methods**

100 *4.1 Materials*

101 The multi-hazard susceptibility analysis of the DVMWHS included the following natural hazards:
102 collapsible deposits, compressible ground, debris flow, landslide, running sands, shrink-swell, soluble rock
103 and flooding (both riverine and groundwater; Fig. 2). Data about these hazards were derived by the BGS
104 Geosure dataset (<https://www.bgs.ac.uk/datasets/geosure/>) and the BGS flooding datasets
105 (<https://www.bgs.ac.uk/datasets/groundwater-flooding/>). These datasets provide a score of natural hazards
106 susceptibilities at 1:50,000 scale within the CA and the BZ using a qualitative scheme: from A (low) to E
107 classes (high) [30]. For the purpose of our analysis, i) only natural hazards with susceptibility levels higher

108 than B were considered thus, leaving only flooding, groundwater flooding, compressible ground, landslides
109 and running sands, ii) susceptibility classes A to E were converted into equally-spaced numerical values
110 ranging from 0 to 1 (i.e. susceptibility score, H_i) and iii) raster maps were derived by the available
111 susceptibility datasets. Converted susceptibility scores (H_i) form a numerical basis for multi-hazard
112 susceptibility estimation (see below for method).



113

114 Figure 2 – Susceptibility maps of single natural hazards in the DVMWHS. The largest historic
 115 infrastructure is depicted by blue symbols. Coordinate system: British National Grid.

116 *4.2 Multi-hazard susceptibility assessment*

117 The multi-hazard was assessed using the Analytical Hierarchy Process (AHP) [31-32]. AHP is a semi-
118 quantitative method where each factor (which refers to a single hazards in our case) is weighted through a
119 pairwise relative comparison against all the other factors [33]. AHP is an expert-based methodology
120 characterised by: i) integration of all types of information; ii) expert's knowledge and experiences are
121 fundamental for discussion rules; iii) reached consensus, weights for each relevant factor are obtained
122 automatically by eigenvector calculation of the comparison matrix and iv) inconsistencies can be detected
123 using consistency index values developed in [33-34] and, eventually corrected if needed. The principal
124 drawback of AHP is related to the subjectivity of choices, so that factors ranking may differ from one user
125 to another. To mitigate this effect, a Relative Significance index (RSi) was firstly derived to guide the
126 scores of the AHP factors needed for the susceptibility estimation. Since the estimation of multi-hazard
127 susceptibility is related to the presence of historic infrastructure, the RSi index for each natural hazard
128 (e.g. flooding, groundwater flooding etc...) is given by the sum of the susceptibility scores to a single
129 natural hazard for each infrastructure (See Table 1 for details). For instance, RSi for flooding is the sum
130 of susceptibility-to-flooding scores estimate at all of the considered Mills. Each hazard was then ranked
131 according to this index and these ranks, in turn, have been used in the AHP pairwise matrices.

132 The multi-hazard susceptibility was estimated using a weighted sum model:

133
$$MH = \sum_{i=1}^n H_i W_i \quad (1)$$

134 Where n is the number of considered natural hazards, H_i represents the susceptibility score to a selected
135 individual natural hazard (from 0 to 1) and W_i is a weight representing the relative importance of that hazard
136 (i , from 0 to 1) that modulates the contribution of each considered single-hazard susceptibility score (e.g.
137 to flooding) to the multi-hazard susceptibility score. Weight estimation, through the AHP, was completed
138 developing two pairwise comparison matrices. The first matrix reports the significance scores (Ss) assigned
139 to each factor (i.e. natural hazard) on the basis of the following levels of importance defined in the literature
140 [32]: 1 = equal, 3 = moderately, 5 = strongly, 7 = very strongly, 9 = extremely and 2, 4, 6, 8 = intermediate
141 values. Level of importance are assigned on the basis of the relative importance between factors on the row
142 and corresponding factors on the column (See Table 2 for matrix structure and supplementary materials
143 S2). Matrix construction is completed considering major diagonal elements with an equal level of
144 importance (i.e. Ss =1). The second matrix uses normalized scores to derive the average weight for each
145 natural hazard. Especially, Ss are first normalized by the total along the column and subsequently averaged
146 along the row for AHP weights estimation (See the combined matrix of Table 2 for calculation details and
147 supplementary materials S2). The consistency of the AHP's weights was examined using the Consistency
148 Ratio (CR):

149
$$CR = CI/RI \quad (2)$$

150 where RI is the Random Index and CI is the Consistency Index (CI) [35] equals to:

151
$$CI = \lambda_{\max} - n/n-1 \quad (3)$$

152 where λ_{\max} is the largest eigenvalue of the second matrix of order n , where n is the number of the considered
153 natural hazards. The RI represents the consistency index of a randomly generated pairwise comparison
154 matrix and its value depends on the number of elements being compared (i.e the size of the matrix) [35].
155 CR is used to check and, therefore, avoid possible inconsistencies in the pairwise matrix. When CR is $>$
156 0.1, the comparison matrix is inconsistent and should be revised [35], conversely, if CR is ≤ 0.1 the
157 weighting coefficients are suitable. After checking the consistency of the matrix, the weighted sum model
158 was applied to the susceptibility of each hazard into a Geographical Information System (GIS) environment
159 to derive a multi-hazard susceptibility map of the DVMWHS at 10m resolution.

160

161 **5. Results and discussion**

162 Table 1 reports the results from the RSi analysis for the single hazard susceptibility scores over the
163 largest historic infrastructure located in the study area (Fig. 1). Being all the mills within Quaternary fluvial
164 deposits, i) they are located in a very high susceptibility zone to flooding and the RSi of this natural hazard
165 is the highest in the comparison (Rank: I), ii) six mills are located either in a high susceptibility zone to
166 groundwater flooding or compressible ground (Rank: II and III, respectively), iii) one mill is located in a
167 very high susceptibility zone for landslide (Rank: IV) and, iv) two mills are located in a very high
168 susceptibility zone for running sands but the overall susceptibility score for this hazard is slightly lower
169 than that of the landslide susceptibility (Rank: V).

170 Based on natural hazard ranking of Table 1, a joint AHP pairwise comparison matrix, containing both
171 Ss and normalized Ss (see numbers in parentheses), was developed assigning a comparative score to each
172 considered natural hazard and single hazard AHP weights were estimated (Table 2). The importance of this
173 process along the analysed reach of the Derwent Valley has been already suggested in [36] who underlined
174 the potential need for mitigation measurements to protect mills against riverine flooding in the light of the
175 changing climate. The relative relevance of riverine flooding is considered strong in comparison with that
176 of groundwater flooding and compressible ground hazards and extreme in comparison with landslides and
177 running sands. The result is compatible with the high probability of flooding in the Environment Agency
178 maps (<https://flood-map-for-planning.service.gov.uk/>).

179 Although landslides are widespread in the area with 44 events reported up to 2014
 180 (<https://www.bgs.ac.uk/geology-projects/landslides/national-landslide-database/>), these events are located
 181 at the outer slopes of the valley so do not directly impact the key infrastructure, and are mainly represented
 182 by shallow phenomena in the Quaternary deposits or falls/topple in the bedrock especially in the northern
 183 part of the study area [26]. Finally, compressible ground (Fig. 2c) and running sands (Fig. 2e) hazard are
 184 moderate and follow the Quaternary deposits of the CA. The relative relevance of compressible ground
 185 hazard in comparison to landslides and running sands was considered equal and moderate. Landslides and
 186 running sands were considered of equal importance. Differently from previous works [37] which only
 187 provide a review of existing hazards individually, the holistic approach we have considered here allows the
 188 extraction of a ranking for prioritizing hazards and determine their magnitude compared to each other.

189 Table 1 – Results from RSianalysis for natural hazard ranking in each of the areas where the historic
 190 infrastructure is located. The relative significance index is the sum of all the scores for each column
 191 (hazard).

id	Historic infrastructure	Flooding	Groundwater flooding	Compressible ground	Landslide	Running sands
1	Masson Mills	1	0.6	0.6	0.4	0.6
2	Willersley Castle	0	0.2	0.2	0.4	0.2
3	Cromford Mills	1	0.6	0.6	0.4	0.6
4	Lea Mills	0	0	0.2	1	0.2
5	Leawood pump house	1	1	0.2	0.8	0.2
6	Oak Hurst Mills	1	1	1	0.6	0.6
7	North Mill	1	1	1	0.4	0.8
8	East Mill	1	1	1	0.4	0.6
9	Duffield Castle	1	1	1	0.4	1
10	Darley Abbey Mills	1	0.8	1	0.6	1
11	Derby Silk Mill	1	1	1	1	0.4
Relative Significance index (RSi)		9	8.2	7.8	6.4	6.2
Ranking		I	II	III	IV	V

192

193 Table 2 – Pairwise comparison matrix and AHP weights. Significance scores normalized by the total along
 194 the coloumn are reported in pharenteses (bold text). AHP weights for each natural hazard are astimated as
 195 the average of normalized scores along the row.

	Flooding	Groundwater flooding	Compressible ground	Landslide	Running sands	AHP weights
Flooding	1 (0.616)	5 (0.652)	5 (0.625)	9 (0.562)	9 (0.562)	0.604

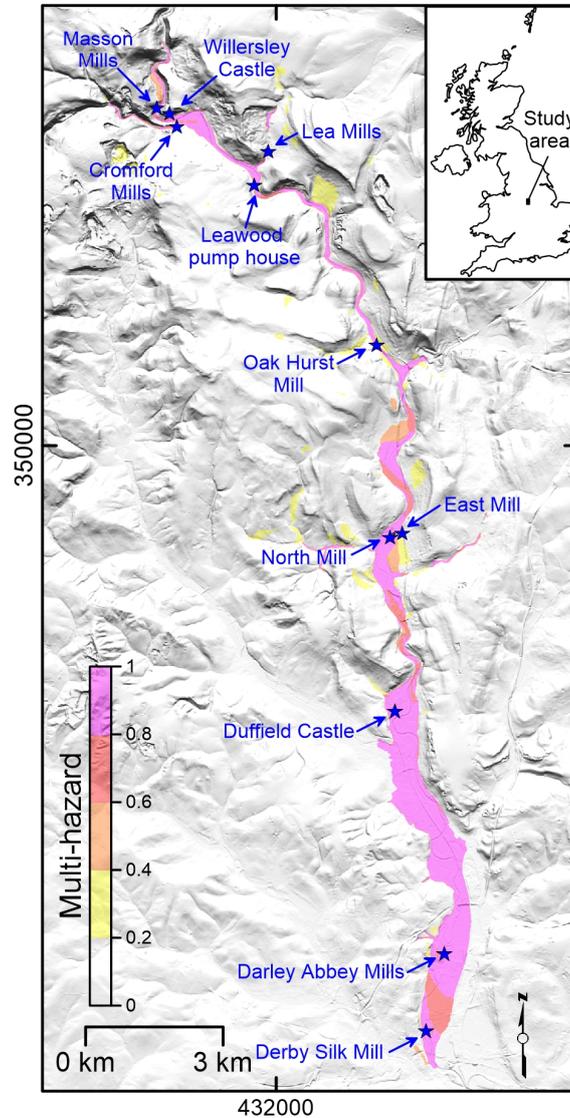
Groundwater flooding	0.200 (0.123)	1 (0.130)	1 (0.125)	3 (0.187)	3 (0.187)	0.151
Compressible ground	0.200 (0.123)	1 (0.130)	1 (0.125)	2 (0.125)	2 (0.125)	0.126
Landslide	0.111 (0.068)	0.333 (0.043)	0.500 (0.063)	1 (0.063)	1 (0.063)	0.060
Running sands	0.111 (0.068)	0.333 (0.043)	0.500 (0.063)	1 (0.063)	1 (0.063)	0.060
Total	1.6222	7.6667	8.0000	16	16	

196 The matrix of Table 1 was used as a basis for deriving the AHP weights of the multi-hazard
197 susceptibility assessment as average along the row of normalized significance scores. Estimated weights
198 ranged between 0.604 of flooding hazard to 0.06 of landslide and running sands hazards. Reliability of
199 these evaluations was suggested by a Consistency Ratio of 0.095 obtained considering a Consistency Index
200 of 0.106 and a random index of 1.12. The multi-hazard susceptibility map for the DVMWHS is shown in
201 Figure 4. Considering the scores assigned to individual hazards, the area with the highest susceptibility (i.e.
202 between 0.8 and 1) is the central sector of Derwent river valley and its alluvial deposits. This susceptibility
203 zone is much developed in comparison with zones of lower susceptibility; this is related to the weight of
204 flooding and groundwater flooding susceptibilities, which represent the most significant hazards of the area
205 [26]. Indeed, the area with the highest susceptibility substantially corresponds to the zone highly susceptible
206 to these two natural hazards as well as compressible ground and running sands hazards. Considering their
207 weights and spatial distribution, landslide hazard seems to have only a limited significance in the process.
208 The produced map allows to include susceptibility to more than one natural hazard for the DVMWHS. The
209 susceptibility levels are: i) Masson Mills, 0.75; ii) Willersley Castle, 0.09; iii) Cromford Mills, 0.77; iv)
210 Lea Mills, 0.08; v) Leawood pump house, 0.82; vi) Oak Hurst Mill, 0.92; vii) East Mill, 0.91; viii) North
211 Mill, 0.91; ix) Duffield Castle, 0.91; x) Darley Abbey Mills, 0.91; xi) Derby Silk Mill, 0.86.

212 Limits of these estimations are related to the limits of the method used for the analysis. A first caveat
213 is the subjectivity in the choice of the comparative scores for individual hazards which is inevitably biased
214 by the experience of the operator [32]. This issue was partially overcome through the introduction of the
215 RSi to guide the ranking of the hazards. A second limit is related to the consistency of the judgment matrix
216 that, being related to the acceptability of the results, is affected by the number of factors considered for the
217 analysis [38]. In presence of a significant number of factors, acceptable results might be very difficult to
218 obtain and, alternatively, multicriteria decision-making methods or machine learning methods should be
219 considered [39-41]. Another limitation is that the AHP analysis is able to provide information about the
220 susceptibility of an area to natural hazards, but does not consider the relationships among these hazards
221 (e.g., flooding increasing landslides hazard or viceversa).

222 Despite the above-mentioned method drawbacks, AHP has many advantages that have made it one of
223 the most widely exploited procedures in the scientific literature. The different advantages are: i) AHP
224 provides simple and very flexible modelling; ii) it is a simple and straightforward decision-making method;

225 iii) any level of detail on the main focus can be listed, in this way, the overview of the main problem can
226 be represented very easily; iv) AHP has already a very wide range of application like in planning and benefit
227 and risk analysis and v) current computer software helps decision-makers to use AHP quickly.



228
229 Figure 3 – Multi-hazard susceptibility map derived through the AHP method for the DVMWHS. The
230 largest historic infrastructure is depicted by blue symbols. Coordinate system: British National Grid.
231
232

233 6. Conclusions

234 The analysis of multi-hazard susceptibility of the Derwent Valley Mills UNESCO World Heritage Site
235 indicates that the main natural hazards for the area are, in the order: flooding, groundwater flooding,
236 compressible ground, landslide and running sands are. Multi-hazard susceptibility mapping through a

237 weighted sum model, parameterized using the AHP multicriteria decision-making method, suggest that the
238 most susceptible sector of the study area is the axial sector of the valley where alluvial deposits cover the
239 mudstone, siltstone and sandstone of the bedrock leading to favourable conditions for groundwater flooding
240 and ground deformation phenomena like ground compression and liquefaction. The susceptibility level for
241 the mills ranges between 0.08 of the Lea Mills and 0.92 of the Oak Hurst Mill. The resulting multi-hazard
242 susceptibility map provides a basis for subsequent estimation of multi-hazard risk of the Derwent Valley
243 Mills UNESCO World Heritage Site. Knowing the multi-hazard susceptibility is critical for policymakers
244 and site managers to strengthen disaster preparedness for heritage properties in the future by building
245 resilience and reducing general vulnerability. These types of analyses can raise awareness for local
246 stakeholders on the urgent need for adaptation as a large number of WHS are already at risk from natural
247 hazards under current conditions and these risks will exacerbate in this century [28] posing a serial threat
248 to the conservation of WHSs but also can provide evidences on potentially redefining Core Areas and the
249 Buffer Zones within UNESCO sites.

250

251

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258

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