

Conservation Team Advice

Date: 7th May 2026
Application Ref: SMD/2026/0124
Site Address: Visitor Centre, Rudyard Lake, Lake Road, Rudyard
Proposal: Formation of play area

Heritage assets affected:		
Designated Heritage Asset(s):	☒	Rudyard Conservation Area
Non-Designated Heritage Asset(s):	☐	

Conservation Advice

Summary of Significance

The proposal would be situated in Rudyard Conservation Area, which was designated for its origins as a reservoir constructed c.1797-1801 to supply the Caldon Canal. The area became popular for tourism from the mid-19th century through to the early-20th century after the development of Staffordshire Railway. The area's significance derives from its picturesque beauty with the lake as the focal point, large areas of vegetation and landscaping, historic associations with the development of the canal, popularity as a tourist destination in the Victorian and Edwardian period and collection of 19th century villas. Buildings are predominantly constructed in dark pink gritstone which adds to the quaint charm of the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. As identified in the Conservation Area Appraisal (2016), the development site would be surrounded by some positive unlisted buildings.

Assessment and Impact

The proposal would involve construction of a play area to the dam head of Rudyard Lake, near to the visitor centre. It would be situated on a steep slope which is currently densely populated with trees.

The proposed development would involve removal of 3 trees, engineering works to flatten the topography and creation of retaining walls to the slope. The play area would be surfaced with rubber and mulch and the retaining walls would be steel posts with timber sleepers laid horizontally. As indicated in the proposed drawings, the play equipment would be timber construction.

Whilst the proposed works would involve the removal of 3 trees, it would not result in total loss of mature trees and vegetation on the site which would help somewhat screen or minimise views of the proposed play area from the dam head. The proposed

new equipment, surfacing and boundary treatments would respond to the naturalistic qualities of this part of the Conservation Area. The proposed siting is not in a key view of the lake or other prominent heritage assets. Overall, the proposed works are unlikely to harm the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

Legislation and Policy

Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

The local planning authority should have a desirability of preserving or enhancing the character and appearance of the Conservation Area (s.72).

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2024

In determining applications, local authorities should take account of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation, the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality, the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness (par.210).

Local Development Framework

Consideration should also be given to the following documents and local development framework policies:

- Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan (Adopted 2020) – DC2 The Historic Environment
- Rudyard Conservation Area Appraisal (2016)

Conclusions and Recommendations

In summary, the proposed development would unlikely harm the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. This would satisfy the provisions of s.72 of the Act, Section 16 of the NPPF and policy DC2 of the local development framework. There are no objections to the proposal from a conservation perspective.

Conservation Officer: Megan Atkinson