

Case information

Reference/Case ID		201506816	
Scheduled Monument	Caledonian Canal, Dochgarroch Lock - Muirtown Locks		
Index no	M6499	Grid Ref	NH619404 261900.0000 840400.0000
Date of Application	28 January 2016	Application Received	29 January 2016
Summary of proposed works	The infill of a hollow against the canal embankment near to the Tomnahurich swing bridge, and the alteration of the footpath layout.		

1. Summary recommendation

This report recommends approval for the infill of a hollow against the canal embankment near to the Tomnahurich swing bridge, and the alteration of the footpath layout.

2. Background

The Caledonian Canal which was designed by Thomas Telford and built between 1803 and 1822. It was then and remains today the single largest construction work in the Highlands.

The proposals are part of the Inverness West Link Road (IWLR) which are related to the previous SMC (Our Case ID: 201306147). Although this is a revision to the existing SMC, the proposals could be considered to be a material alteration to that consent. In light of this, we advised the applicant that a new SMC would be required.

3. Proposals

The works are a revision to the existing SMC for the Inverness West Link Road. They comprise the infilling of a hollow against the canal embankment with imported material in two locations (as shown on the attached drawing) in order to build up the road approach to the canal. The hollow appears to be an incidental result of the creation of the canal and not a designed feature. It therefore makes little contribution to the monument's cultural significance. The infill will comprise surplus top soil from elsewhere on the site and aims to reduce the incline, ease future maintenance and reduce the risk of falls. The proposals also include a small alteration to the footpath layout.

4. Representations received

No representations were received.

5. Report

a) Policy considerations

The application should be viewed with the following legislative and policy considerations in mind:

3.16. Works on scheduled monuments should therefore normally be the minimum level of intervention that is consistent with conserving what is culturally significant in a monument.

3.19. Extensive intervention will only be allowed where it is clearly necessary to secure the longer-term preservation of the monument, or where it will clearly generate public benefits of national importance which outweigh the impact on the national cultural significance of the monument. Such public benefits could come from, for example, interventions which make public access to scheduled monuments easier, or assist public understanding, or will produce economic benefits once the works are completed.

3.20. Where change is proposed, it should be carefully considered, based on good authority, sensitively designed, properly planned and executed, and where appropriate in the context of an individual monument, reversible.

b) Assessment

The monument is a working, industrial canal and the potential impact was previously considered as part of the existing SMC. As part of that assessment, it was recognised that there will be occasions where modern infrastructure will require new crossings of the canal – the IWLR is one example.

The project is also seen as being vital for the growth of Inverness and the Highlands and is referred to in NPF 2. Although the works overall will be a significant intervention to the monument, the public benefits are of sufficient scale to outweigh the impact on its cultural significance.

It is recognised that a complex project such as this evolves over time. The proposed change to the embankment addresses some minor health and safety concerns highlighted by Highland Council about the design and the users of the canal. The proposed works which involve the infilling of a hollow with imported material in two locations against the canal embankment and the change to the footpath layout address this concern by reducing the incline, easing future maintenance and reducing the risk of falls. This change to the hollow at the embankment will have a minor impact on the canal's cultural significance.

In summary, although the proposed works cannot be considered to be a material change to the existing consent, they are part of the wider IWLR scheme and will not have a significant impact on the cultural significance of the monument.

c) Other material considerations, including impact of the works on Protected Species and Places

There will not be an impact on Protected Species and Places.

The proposed works are to address any potential health and safety issues of the previous design. Once completed, they will also have added on wider public benefits because of the anticipated economic benefits IWLRL.

d) Conclusion

The proposed works are compliant with Section 3.16 of the SHEP in that they are the minimum level of intervention that is consistent with conserving what is culturally significant in the monument. The works will have added on public benefits and have been carefully considered in order to mitigate any impacts. The works are therefore equally compliant with 3.19 and 3.20 of SHEP.

6. Recommended decision

The works proposed are considered acceptable in meeting the terms of national policy for scheduled monuments, and also accounting for other material considerations.

I therefore recommend consent is **granted, without conditions**.

7. Conditions

None - the existing SMC includes sufficient conditions.

8. Approval

Officer	Nicola Hall	Date	14/03/2016
Approved by	John Raven	Date	21/03/2016

Annex A – list of supporting documents

Landscape Design and Mitigation Sheet 1 (HRS7126 PL08)
Landscape and Mitigation Sections (HRS7126 PL 15)
Landscape and Mitigation Sections (HRS7126 PL 15 Rev 1)
Amendment to earthworks in vicinity of Caledonian Canal (CS059146/H/100/SK064 P1)