

Case information

Reference/Case ID	201504359		
Scheduled Monument	Forth and Clyde Canal: Auchinstarry Farm – Castlecary Forth and Clyde Canal: Castlecary – M9 Motorway		
Index no	M6766, M6768	Grid Ref	NS719769 271800.0000 676700.0000
Date of Application	13 October 2015	Application Received	13 October 2015
Summary of proposed works	Upgrade of Forth & Clyde Canal towpath by change of specification from soft to hard surface.		

1. Summary recommendation

This report recommends that consent be granted.

2. Background

The application is for works within two scheduled monuments that comprise those parts of the Forth and Clyde Canal lying in Cumbernauld and Falkirk parishes. The canal is of national importance as a superlative example of Georgian civil engineering, part of the first of Scotland's great inland waterways to be constructed (between 1768 and 1790). This application for consent relates to a length of towpath about 1.5km long between NGR NS 77619 78791 and NS 78929 78663.

The towpath is an important element of the canal infrastructure. However, the upper deposits of the towpath surface are likely to be of modern origin and not a major component of the monuments' cultural significance. Canal towpath upgrades similar to this proposal have been conducted many times in the last 11 years, and similar proposals for works on the Forth & Clyde Canal have received scheduled monument consent.

3. Proposals

Consented Works:

Alteration of towpath surface from type 1 compacted stone to hard surface of Dense Bitumen MacAdam (DBM) top-dressed with grey whin stone chips.

Description of works:

Works would include:

- Scarifying towpath to a depth not exceeding 100mm
- Removal of vegetation encroachment
- Regulating scarified towpath to introduce 1:40 cross fall
- Applying two layers of bitumen, upper layer containing whin stone chips to give grey stone surface
- Placing soil along towpath edges and seeding grass.

4. Representations received

No representations have been received.

5. Report

a) Policy considerations

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

AMAAA 1979, Part 1 Section 2:
control of works affecting an ancient monument.

The Scottish Historic Environment Policy (2011):

3.4. Scheduled monument consent is required for any works that would demolish, destroy, damage, remove, repair, alter or add to the monument or to carry out any flooding or tipping on the monument. It is a criminal offence to carry out any of these works without consent.

3.14. Scottish Ministers include a monument in the Schedule to secure the long-term legal protection of the monument in the national interest, in situ and as far as possible in the state it has come down to us. Scheduled monuments have an intrinsic value as monuments, not related to any concept of active use. It is the value of the monument to the nation's heritage, in terms set out in the section on Scheduling in Chapter 2 of SHEP, that is the primary consideration in determining applications for scheduled monument consent.

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.

3.18. Scheduled monument consent applications must be considered in terms of the cultural significance of the monument and the impact that the proposals would have upon this cultural significance. The more important particular features of the monument are to its cultural significance, the greater will be the case against interventions which modify these features.

b) Assessment

The proposals would involve scarifying and regrading the topmost 100mm of the existing towpath surface and the introduction of layers of bitumen above, the upper layer being dressed with whin stone chips to give a grey finish. Because the works would be restricted to the upper surface of the towpath, it is likely that they would only impact on recent layers; it is very unlikely that there would be any impact on deposits or structures associated with the original canal or with 19th or early 20th century path surfaces.

The proposals envisage retaining a grey finish to the towpath. However, it is likely that there would be a cosmetic change to the appearance of the path, its surface becoming harder and smoother. Although noticeable, this would be unlikely to have an appreciable impact on the cultural significance of the monument. The proposals appear to have been carefully considered, sensitively designed and properly planned, and use a methodology that has been successfully applied to other parts of the canal network.

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

Scottish Canals have indicated there would be no impact on Protected Species or Places.

d) Conclusion

The proposals would involve very shallow disturbance to the existing footpath and the addition of a new hard surface finished with grey chips. There will be a small visual change, but negligible impact on the cultural significance of the monuments. This accords with SHEP para 3.18. The work would make the towpath fit for purpose reflecting current demands on it and can be regarded as the minimum level of intervention that is consistent with conserving what is culturally significant in the monuments (SHEP 3.16). The proposal appears to be carefully considered and reversible, according with SHEP 3.22a.

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.

7. Conditions

Granted without conditions.

8. Approval

Officer	Richard Heawood	Date	12/11/2015
Approved by	John Raven	Date	12/11/2015

Annex A – list of supporting documents

Location plan, scale 1:5000

Towpath methodology: 'Lowland Canals: Towpath Upgrade: Method'