

Case information

Reference/Case ID	201504730		
Scheduled Monument	Crinan Canal, Cairnbaan - Ardrishaig		
Index no	M6501	Grid Ref	NR823909 182300.0000 690900.0000
Date of Application	27 October 2015	Application Received	27 October 2015
Summary of proposed works	Towpath upgrade works from soft to hard specification		

1. Summary recommendation

This report recommends that consent be granted.

2. Background

The monument is part of the Crinan Canal. It is of national importance as a significant feat of Georgian civil engineering, by the eminent Scots engineer, John Rennie. This application for consent relates to a length of towpath about 4km long between NGR NR 83902 90797 and NR 85645 87959.

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 monument's cultural significance. Canal towpath upgrades similar to this proposal have been conducted many times in the last 11 years, and similar proposals have received scheduled monument consent.

3. Proposals

Consented works

Alteration of towpath from soft surface to hard dense bitumen macadam overlaid with bitumen emulsion top-dressed with 6mm stone chip to match existing towpath in colour and appearance.

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 bitumen, upper layer containing stone chip to match existing towpath colour range
- 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 stone chip to match existing towpath colour range. 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 matching the existing colour range of 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 stone chips. There will be a small visual change, but negligible impact on the cultural significance of the monument. 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 monument (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 1:10,000

Crinan Canal: Towpath Upgrade: Method