

Case information

Reference/Case ID	201505388		
Scheduled Monument	Caledonian Canal, Corpach to Banavie		
Index no	M6491	Grid Ref	NN099765 209900.0000 776500.0000
Date of Application	20 November 2015	Application Received	20 November 2015
Summary of proposed works	The installation of an inspection platform/pontoon in order to carry out works to the B-listed swing bridge.		

1. Summary recommendation

This report recommends approval for the installation of an inspection platform/pontoon in order to carry out works to the B-listed swing bridge.

2. Background

The monument comprises a section of the Caledonian Canal. Designed by Thomas Telford and built between 1803 and 1822, it was then, and remains, the single largest construction work in the Highlands.

Pre-application discussions were conducted with the applicant. As the legal scheduling document excludes the swing bridge, Scheduled Monument Consent (SMC) is not required for works to the swing bridge itself. Although the proposed compound areas are located within the scheduled area of the monument, they do not require SMC and these do not form part of the application.

HES are currently being consulted by the local authority on the LBC for the proposed works to the B-listed swing bridge.

3. Proposals

The proposals comprise the installation of a platform/pontoon to the immediate south of the bridge to allow for full inspection access. Currently, such inspections are restricted to a narrow walkway which only allows for inspection of the bridge's core, rather than the entire bridge span, and do not allow for inspecting the underside of the structure.

The application includes a method statement which explains that the modular units of the pontoon/platform will be constructed on the bank side, before being moved into place in the canal and locked together. The proposal is envisaged to be permanent, although it can be removed if it becomes redundant in the future.

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 swing bridge is operationally required to ensure that services on the Mallaig line run. There will be a minimal impact on the monument and the applicant considers that the inspection platform/pontoon is necessary in order to assist in the maintenance of the swing bridge. The works are considered by the applicant to be the optimum and most cost effective method of achieving permanent access – the alternative is to necessitate bespoke access each time maintenance is required. Higher levels of staff safety are also envisaged once the works have been completed.

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

There will be no impact on Protected Species and Places.

The proposal should ensure higher levels of safety for staff maintaining the bridge.

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.

As there are no proposals to notify HES when the works are to be carried out or record or monitor any resulting impacts, related conditions have therefore been recommended.

6. Recommended decision

Subject to compliance with the schedule of conditions, 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, subject to the conditions detailed below.**

7. Conditions

1. At least two weeks before any works begin on site, the applicant shall inform Historic Environment Scotland and the local authority archaeologist in writing of the likely timetable of works. Any changes to that timetable shall also be notified to both bodies.

Reason: to enable a representative of Historic Environment Scotland to have the opportunity to inspect the work for which consent is granted, and to inform the local authority archaeological service of the proposed works.

2. Two weeks after completion of the works, the applicant will provide photographs of the completed works to Historic Environment Scotland.

Reason: To ensure that an accurate record of works to the monument is maintained.

8. Approval

Officer	Nicola Hall	Date	14/12/2015
Approved by	John Raven	Date	14/12/2015

Annex A – list of supporting documents

- Existing general arrangement bridge closed Sheet 1 of 2 (DR-CB-001)
- Substructure condition survey
- Existing general arrangement bridge open sheet 2 of 2
- Topographical study
- Pontoon platform