

Case information

Reference/Case ID	201504955		
Scheduled Monument	Forth and Clyde Canal: Glasgow Branch		
Index no	M6771	Grid Ref	NS571689 257100.0000 668900.0000
Date of Application	02 November 2015	Application Received	06 November 2015
Summary of proposed works	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formation of door opening in existing brick wall to the Rodney Street development. • Creation of steps and linking path to the canal towpath. • Removal and relocations of the 'trim-trail' fitness equipment 		

1. Summary recommendation

This report recommends approval with conditions for partial grant of the works. One element of the application has been included contrary to pre-application advice received from HES, and it is recommended that consent is refused for that element.

2. Background

This part of the monument is on the Glasgow Branch that connects the main canal to Glasgow City Centre. At the development location, the embanked section of the canal runs from Applecross Street towards the city through Speirs Wharf. The towpath runs on the southern side of the canal as it passes the newly-consented Rodney Street residential care home which is presently under construction. The works are intended to provide a stairway leading from the care home car park upwards to the canal.

Glasgow City Council have granted planning permission for the development, and Historic Scotland made no objection to the proposed access to the canal (201402961), but advised pre-application discussion on an SMC application, which took place in summer 2015. The applicant's initial preferred location for access to the canal was through the remaining façade of a lock-keeper's cottage, which we considered was an important element in the cultural significance of the canal. It was

also envisaged that part of the ground between the towpath and the opening would be excavated to a depth of 1.5m, and a staircase would lead from the opening up onto the towpath. In response, we recommended that the opening was made in an adjacent modern engineering-brick wall, and that the sill level of the opening was made at the same height as the towpath datum. These counter-proposals were made in order to minimise impacts on the fabric and appearance of the canal. The application reflects the first recommended change, but not the second.

The applicant has been invited to submit a revised detail drawing, but this offer has not been taken up.

3. Proposals

- Formation of door opening in existing brick wall to the Rodney Street development.
- Creation of steps and linking path to the canal towpath.
- Removal and relocations of the 'trim-trail' fitness equipment.

This involves creating a staircase up the embankment (which is outwith the scheduled area), and creating an opening through an engineering-brick wall which would grant access onto the towpath.

The applicant then proposes to excavate canal fabric between the opening and the towpath and form two concrete steps to grant access up to the level of the canal towpath. The two steps would be immediately outwith the opening, and would be linked to the tarmac towpath by a 2m long and 1.5m wide tarmac path.

It is also proposed to relocate elements of the consented 'trim-trail' fitness equipment that is located immediately adjacent to the brick wall.

4. Representations received

Representations received from Scottish Canals' manager of third party works on the canal network on 16/12/15 has revealed that they were in discussion with the applicant at the start of December regarding changes to the proposal, and had requested a revised detail that incorporated our recommendations. These changes are summed up below. Scottish Canals have also indicated to HES that they sent a list of suggested revisions to the applicant in early December which accepted the opening through the wall while rejecting the idea of excavating to provide a link between the opening and the canal.

5. Report

a) Policy considerations

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

The Scottish Historic Environment Policy (SHEP)

The assessment below relies on the following paragraphs of SHEP:

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.

3.20. 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

Most of the access works will take place outside the scheduled area, will have no impact on the monument, and are not part of this consent. The back face (ie, the side facing away from the canal) of the engineering-brick wall marks the outer boundary of the scheduled area.

1. Formation of door opening in existing brick wall to the Rodney Street development.

The physical impact on the engineering-brick wall would be substantial, as it would involve the loss of fabric and the insertion of a concrete sill. However, this brick wall is likely to date to the late 20th century (a precise date cannot be established, but it is at least post-1960 judging from the brick fabric), and makes a very small contribution to the nationally-important cultural significance of the monument. The creation of the opening would be plainly of a non-historic nature and would not lead to confusion in the future about whether this was an historic or modern intervention. This element of the proposal would therefore have a very slight adverse impact on the monument.

2. Creation of steps and linking path to the canal towpath.

The impact of excavating to provide a link to the towpath

The excavation of the area in front of the wall would allow the level of the stairs inside the opening to be minimised – essentially, the 1m height difference between the stairs and the towpath would be made up by excavating part of the ground between the wall and the towpath, rather than increasing the height of the stairs outwith the scheduled area.

This excavation and the creation of the two concrete steps up to the towpath would also create confusion as to whether the access was an original feature of the canal, or if it is a modern creation. It would not represent the minimum necessary (as per SHEP 3.16) as the impact could be minimised by heightening the stairs before it meets the inner face of the engineering-brick wall. The impact would therefore be of a significant nature.

The impact of creating a tarmac path linking the opening with the towpath

A tarmac path of 2m length and 1.5m wide would link the proposed steps to the existing tarmac towpath, based on a 100mm deep foundation. The upper surfaces of

this part of the scheduled monument are not archaeologically sensitive in this area, as previous excavation for the 'trim-trail' equipment revealed no cobbled surfaces or other features. Therefore, the excavation of the path would be likely to have no more than a slight adverse impact, as it would slightly affect the ability to see how the towpath relates to the line of the canal. However, as the finalised detail of how the opening would be joined to the towpath has not been provided to HES or the landowner, the overall length of this path may be subject to change.

3. Removal and relocations of the 'trim-trail' fitness equipment.

The 'trim-trail' fitness equipment comprises coir matting and six concrete founds (up to 225mm depth) for three hurdles. This work was granted SMC (201400376) in 2014 and the works were completed that year. The hurdles will require relocation outwith the location of the works, but the removal work would be carried out by Scottish Canals rather than the applicant. The precise methodology for the removal has not been agreed between the applicant and Scottish Canals. However, the location selected for the equipment was part of a greatly-altered section of the canal and was not considered to be archaeologically sensitive. The impact of removal of the hurdle foundations from the scheduled area would not be significant, and can be considered to be of a slight adverse nature.

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

No natural environmental issues have been identified by the applicant. There are no records of EPS on this section of the canal.

d) Conclusion

(1) *The opening-up works through the engineering-brick wall.* On the basis of the above, the opening-up works would not have a significant impact on the cultural significance of the canal, and are not inconsistent with SHEP 3.16 as cited above.

(2) *Access between the wall and the towpath.* The path linking the opening to the towpath would have a similarly slight level of impact and is also consistent with SHEP 3.16. However, its final form would respond to the finalised detail of the stair and the overall access. The proposed excavation between the sill of the opening and the two proposed concrete steps would have a significant adverse impact on the scheduled monument. It is also opposed by the landowner on health and safety grounds. As presently constituted, this element of the works is not consistent with 3.16 or 3.20 of SHEP as cited above.

(3) *The removal of the 'trim-trail' equipment.* As the precise detail of the methodology for removal of the fitness equipment has not been provided, it would be necessary to incorporate a condition to control this. A draft condition has been proposed below.

On that basis, it is proposed to refuse consent for the creation of the steps and path until that detail has been discussed and agreed between HES and the applicant, while bearing in mind that any detail should also be subject to input from the

landowner. This should result in a new application for that element of the works proposed.

As no timetable for the works has been indicated in pre-application discussion or in the application, it is necessary to seek this through a condition, which has been proposed below.

6. Recommended decision

I recommend that consent is **partially granted, subject to the conditions detailed below.**

Subject to compliance with the schedule of conditions, the opening-up of the engineering-brick wall and the removal of the 'trim-trail' fitness equipment are considered acceptable in meeting the terms of national policy for scheduled monuments, and also accounting for other material considerations.

The detail of the proposed steps between the boundary wall and the towpath are not considered acceptable in meeting the terms of national policy for scheduled monuments, and also accounting for other material considerations.

The excavation of the canal between the brick wall and the towpath, the concrete steps and the linking tarmac path would have an impact on the fabric of the monument that does not meet the criteria for Scheduled Monument Consent that is laid out in Scottish Historic Environment Policy. It has not been possible to address mitigation for these impacts within the timescale of this application. As the detail drawing provided with the application clearly shows the excavation and step works, it is not possible to address this element of the works through conditions.

Therefore, we propose to part-grant the works. Consent should be granted for the opening up works through the brick wall, as 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

1. Prior to any works associated with this consent commencing on site, a works timetable including an intended completion date should be submitted to Historic Environment Scotland. Any alterations to the timetabled commencement or completion dates should also be notified to Historic Environment Scotland.

Reason: to ensure that Historic Environment Scotland have the opportunity to inspect the works for which consent is granted.

2. The removal and relocation of the fitness equipment beside the towpath shall not commence on site until a methodology for this has been agreed in writing by Historic Environment Scotland. This methodology should include the restoration of the ground profile where this would not be affected by the path works.

Reason: to ensure that the removal of the equipment is carried out in a manner which preserves the cultural significance of the monument.

8. Approval

Officer	John Malcolm	Date	22/12/2015
Approved by	Barbara Cummins	Date	29/12/2015

Annex A – list of supporting documents

- Site Plan AL(00)02B
- Details 8904-02B