

Case information

Reference/Case ID	201506485		
Scheduled Monument	Union Canal, Fountainbridge to River Almond		
Index no	M11097	Grid Ref	NT205702 320500.0000 670200.0000
Date of Application	14 January 2016	Application Received	14 January 2016
Summary of proposed works	Landscaping and improvement works from Viewforth Bridge to Gibson Terrace, Union Canal Edinburgh		

1. Summary recommendation

This report recommends that this consent be granted with conditions.

2. Background

The proposed works include resurfacing of the tarmac towpath using granite setts, the removal of several 20th century features (including a barrier gate, speed humps and water abstraction chamber), and the insertion of utility ducting, mooring rings and LED lighting.

The proposed location of the works lies between Viewforth Bridge and Gibson Terrace, c. 400m east of the eastern terminus of the Union Canal. The towpath at this location represents the line and property boundary that appears on the 1st edition of the OS 6-inch mapping. Other historic mapping indicates that the line of the towpath has not changed since that point. The tarmac resurfacing represents work carried out for the Millennium Project.

Pre-application discussions took place with East Team on 15.12.15 regarding the specific requirements of this application. No requirement for a heritage impact assessment was stipulated at this point.

There have been a considerable number of previous consents and planning applications affecting this location since the introduction of our Casework Management System in 2009. However, none specifically relate to this particular section of the canal or its towpath.

3. Proposals

There are eight elements to this work:

1. Upgrade current towpath with granite setts, in keeping with newly laid setts within the Boroughmuir School grounds.
2. Removal of barrier gates and speed humps from the towpath.
3. Reduce side walls of redundant canal abstraction point under towpath to reach formation level for new towpath granite setts.
4. Excavate and install in advance of towpath upgrade two 100mm ducts to future proof for the provision of later services.
5. Installation of 10 mooring rings.
6. Installation of LED lights along the length of the newly upgraded towpath.
7. Installation of two towpath recessed uplighters to illuminate crests either side of Viewforth bridge.
8. Removal of graffiti from Viewforth Bridge.

The assessment at section 5 (b) below will consider the potential impact of these elements in turn.

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:

AMAA 1979

Part 1 Section 2 applies in this case, specifically section 2 (3), section 2 (3a) and section 2 (4).

SHEP

The assessment below considers the application in terms of the policy at paragraphs 3.16 to 3.21. Paragraph 3.16 represents the main test for works on scheduled monuments – ‘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’.

b) Assessment

1. Upgrade current towpath with granite setts, in keeping with newly laid setts within the Boroughmuir School grounds.

The towpath surface is of tarmac on a 150mm-200mm thick sub-base of Type 1 material. The line of the towpath closely resembles that of the original line, and this represents an important element in the cultural significance of the monument. It is proposed to remove the towpath and sub-base material, and re-lay new Type 1 material to a 200mm thick depth as a firm base for 150x300x100mm granite setts. The existing copes are concealed in places by vegetation, which would be cleaned back to expose them again. Kerbstones would be used to delineate the inner edge of the towpath from the property boundary. As no historic fabric exists at the depth proposed and the path would not be widened, the impact of this element on the cultural significance of the monument would be negligible.

2. Removal of barrier gates and speed humps from the towpath.

These are modern features intended to separate pedestrian from cycle traffic at a junction between the towpath and a path to Gibson Terrace. The realignment of routes leading to the canal as a result of redevelopment of the school site makes these redundant. All features are bonded into the modern towpath surface and would be mechanically removed during the resurfacing work. They are not significant elements in the cultural significance of the monument, and their removal would enhance appreciation of the setting of the canal (and particularly views along the channel).

3. Reduce side walls of redundant canal abstraction point under towpath to reach formation level for new towpath granite setts.

Canal abstraction points were ordinarily used to supply adjacent industrial features such as factories or distilleries. They are ordinarily marked on OS town mapping at 6-inches to 1 mile sheets, although that is not the case here. This one would have been used to supply water to the adjacent 19th century Viewforth Works (rather than the 20th century Scottish & Newcastle Brewery that later occupied the site). It is a concrete chamber that cuts the 18th century copestones and is faced with a steel grille. A hose would have been inserted into a manhole (now covered by vegetation) in order to draw water into the works site. The concrete construction and use by the factory indicates that it is a 20th century feature, and therefore probably dates between c.1910 and c.1950. This is not a primary feature of the canal, and only makes a slight contribution to its cultural significance. The void would be infilled and the lateral walls of the chamber would be ground down to provide an even surface for the new path surfacing. However, the grilled front would continue to face the canal, so the feature could still be read as an abstraction point. The impact of this work on the cultural significance of the canal could therefore be slight in nature.

4. Excavate and install in advance of towpath upgrade two 100mm ducts to future proof for the provision of later services.

There is an existing service duct for electricity supply and comms fibre under Viewforth Bridge, as well as another duct outwith the scheduled area at Gibson

Place. In order to prevent the need for re-excavation to facilitate a connection between these two points at some future stage, it is proposed to do this work now. The ducting would be laid in a trench 450mm deep by 350mm wide between these two points. This would be entirely excavated to a depth that would be less than the proposed sub-base and granite setts, so would not impact on historic fabric. The impact on the cultural significance of the monument would therefore be negligible.

5. Installation of 10 mooring rings

These would be set at even spaces in the existing soft canalside verge between Gibson Terrace and Viewforth Bridge, so approximately one every 21 metres. These features are entirely in keeping with similar rings that would have lain along this section of the canal well into the 20th century. The physical impact on historic fabric would be negligible. The impact on the cultural significance of the monument would therefore be slightly positive.

6. Installation of LED lights along the length of the newly upgraded towpath

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7. Installation of two towpath recessed uplighters to illuminate crests either side of Viewforth bridge.

These two elements are considered together here. One solar-powered LED light would be emplaced within the fabric of the new granite setts at 7m intervals, each in a 150mm deep and 540mm wide void. In the 20m section closest to the bridge, four identical LEDs would be placed at 5m intervals. Two uplighters would be placed under the bridge to illuminate the crests that are visible on the abutments, each set in the new towpath to a depth of 150mm. Therefore, there would be a negligible impact on historic fabric. The illumination of the bridge at night would have a slightly positive impact on the setting of the monument. The impact on the cultural significance of the monument would therefore be slightly positive.

8. Removal of graffiti from Viewforth Bridge

A trial area of graffiti would be cleaned using a solvent-based cleaner (which has previously been used on other areas of the canal network and was developed with advice from Technical Conservation, Historic Scotland). If this is successful and does not affect the patina of the stone, a wider area would be treated prior to full removal. The application proposes to consult HES after the completion of the trial area. If the trial is successful, the graffiti removal would positively impact on the setting of the monument and have no impact on the physical remains.

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

None predicted. The site is highly urbanised, and no Protected Species or Places have been identified in other applications for works at this site.

d) Conclusion

The proposed graffiti removal works would be notified to Historic Environment Scotland, according to drawing 1504.L.G(92)004. No notification is proposed for other works. As the other works would represent a change to the baseline setting of the canal, it is proposed to insert a notification condition to inform a post-completion site visit to quantify the change.

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 recommend consent is **granted, subject to the condition detailed below.**

7. Conditions

1. Not less than two weeks before the works associated with this consent are commenced on site, a works timetable including a proposed completion date shall be submitted to Historic Environment Scotland. Any alterations to the works timetable shall also be submitted to Historic Environment Scotland.

Reason: to allow Historic Environment Scotland to inspect the works for which this consent is granted.

8. Approval

Officer	John Malcolm	Date	08/03/2016
Approved by	John Raven	Date	08/03/2016

Annex A – list of supporting documents

1. Covering Letter Works Description for Proposed Landscaping Work. Gibson Terrace to Viewforth Bridge
2. Overall Landscape Layout Plan. Dwrng: 1504.L.G.(92) 001
3. Down Takings Location Plan Dwrng: 1504.L.G.(92) 000
4. Detailed Layout Plan Dwrng: 1504.L.D.(94) 001)
5. Lighting Layout Plan Dwrng: 1504.L.G.(92) 003
6. Details Dwrng 1505.L.D(94) 002
7. Extent of Graffiti Removal Dwrng: 1504.L.G.(92) 004
8. Edging Layout Plan Dwrng: 1504.L.G.(92) 002