

Case information

Reference/Case ID	201507066		
Scheduled Monument	Forth and Clyde Canal: Auchinstarry Farm - Castlecary		
Index no	M6766	Grid Ref	NS719769 271800.0000 676700.0000
Date of Application	09 February 2016	Application Received	09 February 2016
Summary of proposed works	Change of towpath surface specification from soft to hard surface		

1. Summary recommendation

This report recommends approval without conditions.

2. Background

The monument comprises a length of inland waterway forming part of the Forth and Clyde Canal. The length of the monument is approximately 14.5km and runs from Red Burn Aqueduct on the west to the M9 on the east. The monument includes the banks and towpath.

The monument is of national importance because it is an integral part of the Forth and Clyde Canal, which is an excellent example of Georgian civil engineering. It was the first of Scotland's great inland waterways to be constructed (between 1768 and 1790).

3. Proposals

It is proposed to change the current soft surface (type 1 compacted stone) of a section of the towpath (from Cumbernauld Road to just past Lock 18. Dense Bitumen Macadam (BDM) would be introduced with top dressing of stone chips.

The existing towpath make-up would be scarified to a depth not exceeding 100mm. Vegetation encroachment would be removed to achieve the correct towpath width (2.2m or 3.5m where it is used by agricultural plant). The scarified towpath would be

altered to introduce a cross-fall toward the canal. Where this cannot be achieved a gravel drain would be provided on the back edge of the towpath with cross drains to the canal (depth to suit underlying ground conditions).

Where not used by agricultural plant the towpath would be overlaid with 50mm of DBM, evenly distributed across the required width. Where agricultural plant use the towpath the specification would involve 50mm of Type 1 sub-base and 100mm of DBM. The transition from one to the other would be over a distance of approximately 10m and would be achieved by a gentle rise to the level of the higher agricultural specification.

Layers of bitumen emulsion with stone chips would be added to the agreed towpath widths. Topsoil would be imported along the towpath edges to a maximum depth of 50mm and maximum width of 400mm and seeded with grass. All access and compound areas would be reinstated.

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:

Ancient Monuments & Archaeological Areas Act 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.

3.17. As each monument will require treatment specific to its individual nature, characteristics, significance and needs, any proposed change to it must be fully and explicitly justified.

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.

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 proposals would involve works to upgrade an existing, soft towpath surface. The existing surface appears to be subject to erosion and the formation of puddles. The works have been designed to raise the existing level of the towpath and ensure it drains effectively. With the exception of scarification of the existing surface and possible excavations for gravel drains where necessary, the works should not involve ground disturbance. Scarification and the limited excavations required for gravel drains would not be likely to have an impact on sensitive archaeological remains at this location.

The works would result in a harder and better drained surface that is less prone to erosion and the formation of puddles. The bitumen surface would be slightly different in appearance to the existing surface, but would not be out of keeping with the towpath surface along other parts of the canal. Nor is the existing type 1 surface likely to be an area of original, historic surfacing.

Therefore, the works would not be likely to affect any archaeologically significant remains and would not have an adverse effect on the appearance of the monument. It is concluded that the proposal would have a negligible effect on the monument's cultural significance. The works may improve public access along the monument and reduce the risk of erosion.

The proposed works appear to have been carefully considered and properly planned.

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

The application site does not lie in a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Special Area of Conservation (SAC) or Special Protection Area. National Biodiversity Network GIS data sets indicate no evidence for Protected Species in the relevant 100m grid squares.

d) Conclusion

The proposals concern works in part of the Forth and Clyde Canal scheduled monument. There should be negligible impact on the cultural significance of the monument. The proposals therefore accord with SHEP 3.16 and 3.18.

The proposal appears to be carefully considered and planned, according with SHEP 3.20. The proposal should improve public access along the monument and reduce erosion, and hence may be regarded as justified (SHEP 3.17).

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.

- I recommend consent is **granted with no conditions**.

7. Approval

Officer	Simon Stronach	Date	18/02/2016
Approved by	John Raven	Date	18/02/2016

Annex A – list of supporting documents

Forth & Clyde Canal: Castlecary, Towpath Upgrade Drawing

Lowland Canals: Towpath Upgrade – Method (including sketch).