



Case information

Reference/Case ID	201600033		
Scheduled Monument	Caledonian Canal, Loch Oich to Cullochy Lock Bridge of Oich, suspension bridge and embankment		
Index no	M6495 M90343	Grid Ref	NH336031 233600.0000 803100.0000
Date of Application	07 April 2016	Application Received	11 April 2016
Summary of proposed works	Drilling of underground 33kV cable below the above scheduled monuments (approach to Bridge of Oich and the Caledonian Canal).		

1. Summary recommendation

This report recommends that consent be granted without conditions.

2. Background

The scheduled monuments affected by these proposal are a stretch of the Caledonian Canal running from Loch Oich north-eastward to Cullochy Lock and a suspension bridge crossing the River Oich, together with a causeway or embankment leading south to the site of another bridge which crossed the Caledonian Canal.

The bridge dates to around 1850, and the engineer was probably James Dredge. The scheduled area include the suspension bridge and the causeway. The scheduled area around the canal includes the canal itself and ground extending either side and containing the towpaths and embankments and any associated capstans, bollards, mooring hooks, mile posts, weirs and overflows.

The affected monuments are of national importance because they are excellent examples of 19th-Century engineering. The bridge is the only unaltered, Scottish example built to the principles of James Dredge. The Caledonian Canal was designed by the famous Scottish civil engineer Thomas Telford. At the opening ceremony it was described as 'one of the most stupendous undertakings of that nature which Europe had seen'.

HES replied to an EIA consultation regarding overhead line aspects of these connection works (Case 201505015). There have also been some discussions and clarifications during the application process (it should be noted that a previous application, Case 201506452, was withdrawn but the current application is the same and some clarifications made at that time remain valid).

3. Proposals

The modifications of overhead lines are outside the scheduled area. They would require the movement of tracked machinery along the towpath and across ground to the overhead line. This part of the work does not require Scheduled Monument Consent as it should not alter the monument in any way. However, it has been confirmed during the application process (email from SSE of 23 May 2016) that contractors/site staff would be made aware of the presence and extent of the monuments and of the need to avoid disturbance/damage to them.

Two sections of underground 33kV cable would be drilled below the two scheduled monuments: at the approach to the Bridge of Oich and below the canal. The two sections cross at approximate right angles to the affected monuments and each drill would consist of 1 number 160mm diameter pipe. The entry and exit points for the cable would be outside the scheduled areas and the depth of the cable would be around 5m below the canal bed (emails from SSE 8 February 2016 and 23 May 2016).

It has been confirmed that the extent of the scheduled areas would be shown on a 'Bore Plan' (the site survey), included within the Work Pack and available on site. It has also been confirmed that the compound would be located outside the scheduled areas (email of 23 May 2016).

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.

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 the drilling of relatively thin bores below the approach to the suspension bridge over the River Oich (M90343) and below the Caledonian Canal (M6495). In both cases the entry/exit points would be outside the scheduled areas.

Because the proposed works run at a considerable depth (approximately 5m) below the scheduled monuments they would not affect the canal or embankment, the towpath or any associated structures. The proposed works are therefore very unlikely to cause any damage to the fabric of the monument or related sub-surface remains. For similar reasons the proposed works would not visually alter the appearance of the scheduled monuments.

It is concluded that the proposed works are unlikely to have an appreciable impact on the cultural significance of the monuments. The proposals appear to have been carefully considered and designed to avoid damage to the monuments.

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

The application sites do not lie close to any SSSI, SPA or SAC designations. There has been recorded evidence for Protected Species (otters) in the vicinity (100m grid square). SSE have confirmed that a protected species survey would be undertaken prior to any works in order to assess any impacts on Protected Species (email of 23 May 2016).

d) Conclusion

The proposals would involve drilling beneath the scheduled monuments, which is not likely to have an adverse impact on any elements of the scheduled monuments (including sub-surface remains) that contribute to their significance.

There would be no visual changes to the monuments once works have been completed.

Therefore, the proposed works should cause negligible impact on the cultural significance of the monuments, which accords with SHEP para 3.18. The proposals appear to be carefully considered, based on good authority, sensitively designed and properly planned and should accord with SHEP para 3.20. The proposed works would conserve the cultural significance of the monuments so there is no conflict with SHEP 3.14 or policy at SHEP para 3.16.

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

None.

8. Approval

Officer	Simon Stronach	Date	23/05/2016
Approved by	John Raven	Date	25/05/2016

Annex A – list of supporting documents

Drilling – Site Specific Method Statement Loch Oich (SSE)
Supplementary Emails from SSE to HES (8 February and 23 May 2016)
Drawings – Environmental Issues in Plot Area (SSE)