



Case Information

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| Reference/Case ID | 300018483 | | |
| Scheduled Monument | Caledonian Canal, Fort Augustus to Loch Ness | | |
| Index no | SM3614 | Grid ref | NH 37500 9100 |
| Date valid application received | 19 September 2016 | | |
| Summary of proposed works | Installation of six tubular steel piles for 24m floating pontoon to attach to and sediment management for pontoon to float | | |

1. Summary recommendation

It is recommended that consent be granted without conditions.

2. Background

This stretch of the Caledonian Canal is comprised of a series of five Locks by Banavie a swing bridge and the harbour, lighthouse and landing stage where the canal joins Loch Ness.

The monument is of national importance as it is part of the much larger Caledonian Canal, which runs from Corpach, by Fort William, to Clachnaharry, Inverness. It links the east and west coasts of the Highlands using both natural lochs and purpose-built stretches of canal. It was designed by famous Scots engineer Thomas Telford and built between 1803 and 1822. It remains the largest single construction in the Highlands.

The fabric of the canal and its associated features such as embankments, coping stones, locks, bollards, and weirs are integral to its significance. However, the physical fabric of the embankment makes varying contributions to its cultural significance, depending on its age and condition. In terms of setting, views along the canal (both from the towpath and from the water) are important as they give an appreciation of its function, character, and scale. Views which clearly link the canal to associated structures such as locks, bridges, or lock-keepers' cottages are also significant as they aid in understanding and appreciating the function of the canal and its wider context.



Pre-application discussions took place in August and September 2016.

3. Proposals

It is proposed to replace an existing pontoon on the southern bank of the canal just east of the Banavie swing bridge with a smaller pontoon which lies closer to the canal than the current pontoon. This will allow for the berthing of larger vessels on the pontoon without impeding other traffic along the canal. The proposal is supported by Scottish Canals who own and manage Scotland's canals.

- Removal of current 2m-wide pontoon (which rests on floats)
- The driving of six hollow steel piles, 150mm in diameter, into the embankment along the interface of the bank and the water by machine. Appropriate ground protection will be used to prevent damage to the towpath during the works
- The installation of a 1.5m floating pontoon and associated access gantry.

4. Representations received

No representations were received.

5. Report

a) Policy considerations

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

Historic Environment Scotland Policy Statement June 2016

3.14. A monument is included 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 this policy statement that is the primary consideration in determining applications for scheduled monument consent.

Scheduled Monument Consent: Report on Handling



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ALBA

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.

Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979

Part 1 Section 2 - Control of works affecting an ancient monument.

b) Assessment

The proposal will have a minimal impact on the historic fabric of the canal. Although the proposal will necessitate the removal of an existing pontoon, this is of recent construction. The OS 1st Ed Map (1876) suggests that the canal bank was a simple earthen embankment with no walls or canal side furniture in the 19th century. The surface of the canal below the waterline is likely to be comprised of shifting silts which are frequently disturbed by passing vessels and natural processes. The work is therefore unlikely to disturb any historic fabric.

The proposed pontoon is replacing a structure that was there previously. As it is smaller than the current structure it will obscure less of the canal embankment and be less obtrusive to views up and down the canal and so it will have a lesser impact. The low profile of the structure, its narrow width, and its position, hugging the embankment near other canal furniture, mean that it should have little potential to negatively affect views along the canal out toward Loch Ness or in toward the swing bridge and locks at Banavie. The proposed works should therefore not impact on the setting of the monument.

The Caledonian Canal is an industrial, working monument. It is subject to change and its continued use is of one of the best way of helping to safeguard it.



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

An environmental impact assessment carried out by Scottish Canals suggested that the proposed works should have no impact on protected species or places.

d) Conclusion

The proposed works will have little potential to impact the historic fabric of the monument or its setting. The works do not therefore conflict with paragraph 3.16 of the Policy Statement.

6. Recommended decision

The proposed works will have little potential to impact the historic fabric of the monument or its setting.

I recommend consent is **granted without conditions**.

7. Conditions

No conditions have been attached to this decision.

8. Approval

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| Case officer | Kevin Grant | Date | 26 September 2016 |
| Approved by | John Raven | Date | 30 September 2016 |

Annex A – list of supporting documents

- Map showing location of proposed works
- Image of current pontoon
- Design drawings of proposed pontoon
- Assessment by Scottish Canals incl. Heritage and Environmental Assessment.