



Case Information

Reference/Case ID	300018691		
Scheduled Monument	Loch Thom-Overton, water cut		
Index no	SM3244	Grid ref	NS 24600 72000
Date application validated	22 November 2016		
Summary of proposed works	Repairs to collapsed wall and improvement of footpath		

1. Summary recommendation

This report recommends that approval for 'Loch Thom-Overton, water cut - repairs to collapsed wall and improvement of footpath' be **granted**.

2. Background

The monument is part of a large water system built to provide water for the Greenock area. It is comprised of an aqueduct, reservoir, sluice houses, and workman's bothies. It was built in 1825-7.

The scheduled area includes remains of the water system, the aqueduct itself, the embankment on which it sits, and an area extending 5m upslope from the canal channel. Modern laid path and road surfaces are specifically excluded from the scheduling.

The monument is of national importance because it has an inherent potential to make a significant addition to our understanding of the past, in particular to the study of hydraulic engineering and development of water provision for drinking and industry in 19th-century Greenock. The monument demonstrates the significant impact that technology had on the Scottish landscape during this period and the particular contribution of Robert Thom to hydraulic innovation. The well-preserved aqueduct, sluices and associated structures are an important survival of a defining period in industrial and civic history, not only in Inverclyde but across Scotland and further afield. The loss of the monument would impede our understanding of industrial development at a regional, national and international scale.

The application is for footpath improvement works and repairs to a collapsed wall. As the existing surface of the path is excluded from the scheduling this application relates



only to the rebuilt of the wall and any potential setting impacts. It has been submitted by Inverclyde Council. It is part of a wider programme of maintenance which includes similar works in recent years.

HES Heritage Management Directorate has undertaken pre-application discussions with the applicant regarding the scope and timing of works, and this application accords with the outcome of those discussions.

3. Proposals

- Path repair works to 900m of towpath
- Repair of a short section of retaining wall around 15m in length.

Consented works – The existing path will be upgraded by placing and compacting type one stone over the existing surface to a thickness of 75mm. This will then be topped with a covering of buff-coloured whin dust 20mm thick in order to match the appearance of the existing footpath.

A section of dry-stone retaining wall which forms part of the aquaduct and retains the path will be rebuilt using traditional dry stone dyking methods. The existing stone will be used with no imported material being permitted.

Aims - The path is being repaired and upgraded in order to improve its condition and improve amenity for leisure users like walkers and cyclists. The repair of the wall is required to maintain the structure of the monument and prevent further collapse.

Timetable - The works will be undertaken in February 2017.

4. Representations received

No third party representations were received.

5. Report

a) Policy considerations

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

Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979

Part 1 Section 2: Control of works affecting scheduled monuments.



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.

3.15. Monuments are subject to decay and the threat of destruction, from natural and human causes. Conservation work is normally needed to prolong the life of a monument, but there is a risk that this can be so invasive that it irreversibly modifies the monument's character and affects the special interest or features that made the monument important in the first place.

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.

b) Assessment

The physical impact of the proposed works would be minimal in the case of the wall improvement works. The walling to be replaced has collapsed and so the original construction of the dry stone has already been lost. The original fabric will be carefully restored in a manner which matches the surviving walling nearby without damaging or altering the remaining revetting wall or embankment.

The path improvement works will have no impact on the fabric of the monument as the path surface is specifically excluded from the scheduling.

Both the path improvement works and the rebuild of the collapsed wall should result in little or no visual alteration to the monument as both are intended to visually match the existing fabric. They should therefore have no potential to negatively impact upon the setting of the monument.

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

An otter survey was undertaken in advance of the work and it suggested that there should be no impact on Protected Species and Places considered likely. The works will be undertaken in a manner which ensures there will be no impact.



d) Conclusion

The works should have little potential to impact the physical fabric of the monument and should have no impact on the monuments setting. The proposed works are necessary to conserve the monument, and will improve the amenity of the monument, encouraging public access and enjoyment of it. They are therefore compliant with paragraphs 3.14 and 3.16 of the policy statement.

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 without conditions**.

7. Conditions

No conditions have been attached to this decision.

8. Approval

Case officer	Kevin Grant	Date	13 January 2017
Approved by	John Raven	Date	16 January 2017

Annex A – list of supporting documents

- General plan of works.
- Location Plan.
- Photographs of wall collapse.