

Scheduled Monument Consent: Report on Handling



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Case Information

Reference/Case ID	300018720		
Scheduled Monument	Caledonian Canal, Fort Augustus to Loch Ness; Caledonian Canal, Laggan Locks		
Index no	SM3614; SM5295	Grid ref	NH 37500 9100; NN 28500 96100
Date application validated	23 January 2017		
Summary of proposed works	Extension of Lock emergency access ladders		

1. Summary recommendation

This report recommends that approval for Caledonian Canal, Fort Augustus & Laggan Locks: Extension of Lock emergency access ladders be granted.

2. Background

Two scheduled monuments will be affected by this proposal. These are;

SM5295 Caledonian Canal, Laggan Locks: The monument consists of a pair of standard Caledonian Canal masonry lock chambers with associated working areas, including protective jetties projecting into Loch Lochy.

SM3614 Caledonian Canal: Fort Augustus to Loch Ness. The monument comprises of a stretch of the Caledonian Canal, running from the top (west) lock at Fort Augustus eastward to Loch Ness.

The scheduled areas include the canal 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 major components of the Caledonian Canal, built between 1803 and 1822. The 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'.

It is the proposed works relating to the extension of current emergency access ladders at the Fort Augustus bottom lock and the Laggan locks which this application



relates to. The works are proposed so the ladders can be used at low-water level during an emergency. The application is accompanied by a location plan of the proposed works and an image of an existing ladder at Fort Augustus.

3. Proposals

The Proposed Works Include:

- Temporary removal of lock ladders from the ladder recess.
- Extension of cored recess within which ladder is located.
- Extension to ladders to be welded at the bottom and reinserted to recess.

Description of Works:

Consented works – removal, extension and replacement of emergency access ladders.

The ladders at the bottom lock at Fort Augustus and at Laggan will first be removed from their recesses for extension. The ladder recess within which they are located will then be extended with ground mounted core equipment, which will extend the cored recess by 1m and below the lowest water level.

Any masonry faces which are exposed during the coring work will be repointed to establish a waterproof facing. An extended section would then be welded onto the bottom of the ladder which in turn would be returned to the ladder recess.

The works will provide access to emergency ladders when the water lies at its lowest point. The work will be undertaken by Scottish Canals as soon as possible, as the current condition of the ladders will present a health and safety risk.

4. Representations received

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:

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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.

3.16. 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.

3.19. Extensive intervention will only be allowed where it is clearly necessary to secure the longer-term preservation of the monument, or where it will clearly generate public benefits of national importance which outweigh the impact on the national cultural significance of the monument. Such public benefits could come from, for example, interventions which make public access to scheduled monuments easier, or assist public understanding, or will produce economic benefits once the works are completed.

b) Assessment

The proposed works involve the temporary removal of the emergency access ladders and the extension of the ladder recess. The physical impact of the proposed works would relate to the removal of the ladders, the extension of the recess below the water level, repointing masonry, extending and reinstalling the ladder. The work would involve undertaking remedial and conservation works to mitigate health and safety risks to the public and would maintain the structural integrity of the masonry below the waterline.

It is anticipated that the ladders will be removed from their current fixings. The proposed coring would reach a depth of approximately 1m below the low waterline.

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This would result in a loss of historic masonry. However, the works proposed would affect a relatively small proportion of the scheduled monument and only represent an extension of an existing feature. Once the coring is complete any exposed masonry below the water mark will be repointed and waterproofed by a diving team, thereby restoring any structural integrity. On completion the extended emergency access ladders would be returned to their original locations. As the development would lie below the waterline at its lowest point it would not be visible from the surface and there will be minimal impact on the character of the monument. Overall, the works would not therefore result in a significant impact on the cultural significance of the monument.

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

No impact on Protected Species and Places considered likely as it does not lie close to any SSSI, SPA or SAC designations. There is no recorded evidence for Protected Species within the vicinity of the locks.

d) Conclusion

The proposed works, comprising the extension of emergency access ladders and ladder recesses, would result in a minimal loss of historic fabric and change to the ladder recess. Overall, there would be a minimal impact upon the monument's cultural significance. The works do not therefore conflict with paragraphs 3.16 and 3.18 of the policy statement. Furthermore, the works would mitigate health and safety risks to the public by providing access to the emergency ladders when the water lies at its lowest level. Although not extensive the proposals would therefore be compliant with paragraph 3.19 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	Sam Fox	Date	07 February 2017
Approved by	John Raven	Date	07 February 2017

Annex A – list of supporting documents

- Images of current ladder at low-water mark.
- Location plans of the proposed works.