



Case Information

Reference/Case ID	300019037		
Scheduled Monument	Caledonian Canal, Dochgarroch Lock - Muirtown Locks		
Index no	SM6499	Grid ref	NH 61900 40400
Date application validated	30 January 2017		
Summary of proposed works	Access for all footpath, Dalneigh		

1. Summary recommendation

This report recommends that approval for 'Dochgarroch Lock - Access for all footpath, Dalneigh' be granted.

2. Background

The monument is part of the Caledonian Canal, running north-eastward from Dochgarroch Lock to the flight of locks at Muirtown, in Inverness. The scheduled area includes the canal and the strip of ground extending up to 20m from the water on either side and containing the towpaths and embankments and any associated capstans, bollards, mooring hooks, mile posts, weirs and overflows.

The monument is of national importance because 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. 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 bridges or lock-keepers' cottages are also significant as they aid in understanding and appreciating the function of the canal and its wider context.

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This application is for the construction of a new access path up the eastern embankment of the canal at Dalniegh which will be to a standard which allows wheelchair users to access the canal towpath. It has been submitted by Scottish Canals.

HES Heritage Management Directorate has undertaken pre-application discussions with the applicant regarding the scope of works and a site visit was undertaken in August 2016. This application accords with the outcome of those discussions.

3. Proposals

The Proposed Works Include:

- Tree felling and scrub clearance
- Excavation and landscaping to create surface for path
- Laying of path surface

The path line and levels would be set out, and a historic stone mooring bollard at the head of the proposed path would be protected to prevent damage during the work (it may be temporarily removed and reinstated during construction if this is necessary to protect it). Existing trees and scrub would then be cleared to a maximum width of 5m from the centre-line of the proposed path. Topsoil would be stripped from the line of the proposed path and the embankment would be excavated by machine with the removed material being used to profile the ground to create the level platform for the path. A 100mm thick layer of type 1 gravel would be laid and compacted, which would then be topped with a 15mm layer of grit dust to match the appearance of the towpath.

The aim is to create a new access path to the canal towpath which would be suitable for use by wheelchair users and other users with mobility issues.

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.

3.16. 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.

3.19. 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 creation of a sloping access path on the canal embankment. This is intended to allow improved access to the towpath for wheelchair users, linking an existing tarmac path to the canal towpath. At present, there is a significant gap between similar 'access for all' paths as most of the existing paths nearby are too steep for some users of the canal.

The re-profiling of the embankment to create the path and to allow the proposed path to join it at the top of the embankment would result in disturbance of the canal material and changes to the towpath. The steepness of the canal embankment in this area would preclude any buildings or historic features, and this analysis is borne out by historic mapping research undertaken as part of a heritage impact assessment by the applicant. There should therefore be little potential for sensitive canal features to be disturbed by the works. The towpath at the top of the canal embankment is of largely modern construction and has been resurfaced many times throughout the life of the canal, there is therefore little change of disturbing sensitive historic fabric. Although there will be a significant impact on original historic embankment material to create the profile of the path, this material is likely to be comprised of homogenous deposits associated with the construction of the canal and due to the massive scale of the monument this disturbance would affect only a limited percentage of the canal embankment.



The proposed path would be largely screened from views to and from the canal embankment by thick trees and vegetation which will be retained, and it will not affect key views along the canal and of the canal's key features such as locks, historic bollards, or spillways. Due to the large scale of the embankment in this area the relatively small visual impact of the path will not affect the appreciation of the embankment itself. There would be a small visual impact at the top of the embankment where the proposed path would merge with the existing towpath, but again this would not affect key views along the canal and the path and junction would be in keeping with the present appearance of the towpath and similar locations across the canal network.

The works would allow a wider range of users to access the canal and would encourage its wider use and appreciation. Continued use is considered a key way to preserve the canal.

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

No impact on Protected Species and Places considered likely.

d) Conclusion

Although there will be some impact on historic fabric in order to create the path there is little likelihood of sensitive historic structures or features being damaged and the level of impact is minimal when the scale of the monument is taken into account. There will be a limited visual impact, but this should have little potential to affect the key views along the canal or its wider setting, and the proposed path would be in keeping with the existing towpath and character of the paths across the canal network. The works would not, therefore, constitute a significant departure from paragraphs 3.16 and 3.18 of the Policy Statement. The works would improve public access and encourage use of the canal from a wide range of users, and therefore be in compliance 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.

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8. Approval

Case officer	Kevin Grant	Date	14 February 2017
Approved by	John Raven	Date	15 February 2017

Annex A – list of supporting documents

- Location Plan
- Cross section of proposed path
- Heritage Impact Assessment