



| | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| Case reference | SMC-HLD-002 |
| Application details | Construction of Caol and Lochyside Flood Protection Scheme |
| Site address | Caledonian Canal, Corpach to Banavie section, Fort William (SM - 6491) |
| Applicant | The Highland Council |
| Determining Authority | Historic Environment Scotland (HES) |
| Local Authority Area | The Highland Council |
| Reason(s) for notification | Notification Direction 2015 – works to be granted Scheduled Monument Consent by Historic Environment Scotland go beyond the minimum level of intervention that is consistent with conserving what is culturally significant in a monument |
| Representations | Nil |
| Date notified to Ministers | 21 September 2018 but not fully documented until 24 September 2018 |
| Date of recommendation | 05 October 2018 |
| Decision / recommendation | Clear |

Description of Proposal and Site:

- Scheduled Monument Consent (SMC) is sought for flood protection works immediately alongside the Caledonian Canal, South West of the Loch gates at Neptune’s Staircase. The site is located to the westernmost part of the proposed embankment for the Caol and Lochyside Flood Protection Scheme, where it would meet the existing embankment of the Caledonian Canal, outside Fort William. The works would also require the diversion of a ditch, formation of a ramped access path, and formation of a new access path.

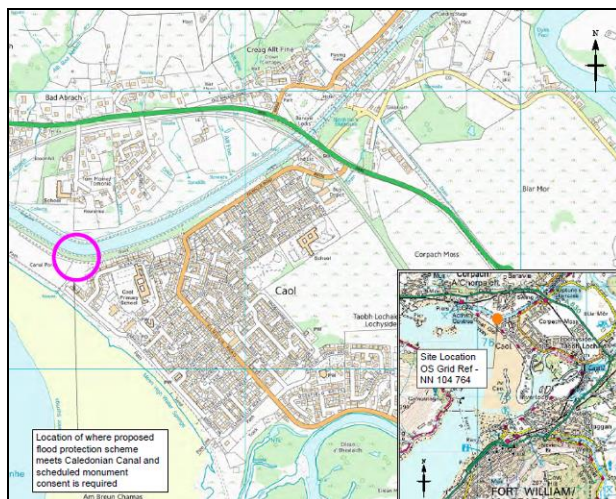


Figure 1. Site Location

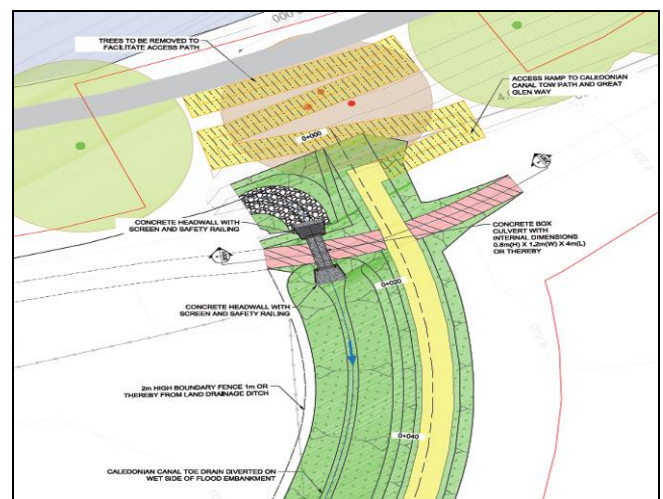


Figure 2. Proposed works

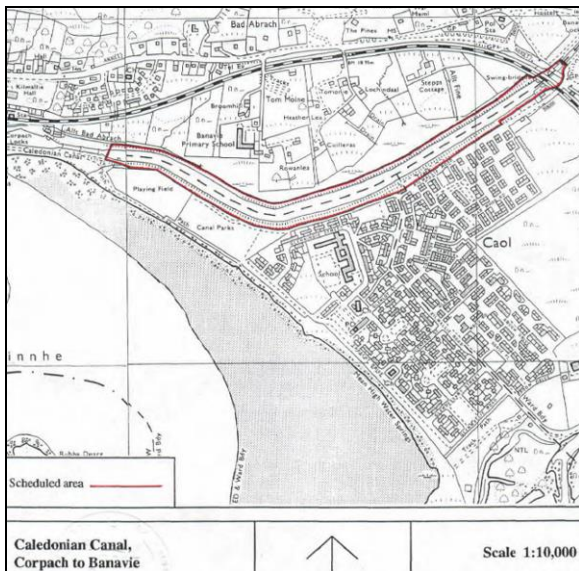


Figure 3. Scheduled Area



Figure 4. Aerial view

This application is related to a previous SMC granted in 2015 for flood protection works. As further amendments are proposed, a new SMC application is considered necessary.

Consultations and Representations:

- PAD consulted SG Culture and Historic Environment Division following notification and they have no comments to make on the proposal.

Assessment:

1. Assessment is limited to the works subject to this Scheduled Monument Consent (SMC) application. Separate consideration of the Flood Protection Scheme would be undertaken when that proposal comes before the Scottish Ministers.
2. That said, in Flood Risk terms, the proposed works are necessary to protect Caol from flood risk. The village is on low lying land at the entrance to the Caledonian Canal and The Great Glen. The Highland Council is delivering the Caol and Lochside Flood Protection Scheme, which will deliver flood defences to reduce the risk to these settlements from tidal surges from Loch Linnhe and flooding from the River Lochy. The villages are currently at risk of flooding from Loch Linnhe.
3. The SMC application was accompanied by a protected species and places assessment, a method statement for the proposed works, and various drawing and sections of the proposed works.
4. In natural heritage terms, the proposals adjoin the Caledonian Canal, built 1802-1822. The Canal is a Scheduled Monument, its designated area extending to approximately 30 metres either side of the Canal itself. The canal connects the west coast of Scotland at Fort William, with the east coast at Inverness and follows the geological fault line of the Great Glen.
5. HES note that the works would see the addition of a new Flood Protection embankment which will abut the existing canal side embankment. This will place

an additional loading upon the existing canal embankment, and the canal wall. The method statement identifies slight concerns over the structural performance of the canal walls being impacted, by forces exerted on them by the new flood bund embankment to the South, but also notes that this will be addressed by the Flood Scheme designers as part of their detailed design works. The method statement sets out the phasing of the proposals, and outlines commitments for “Structural Verifications” to be undertaken prior to works commencing. These verification works will be further overseen by the imposition of 2 conditions to the Scheduled Monument Consent.

6. HES note that the addition of the flood embankment will affect the character of this section of the Caledonian Canal, as the canal embankment will no longer be perceived as a single phase structure supporting the canal. The new flood bund has to butt up to the canal embankment in order to protect adjoining dwellings from flood waters from Loch Linnhe, which is the sea loch at the canal entrance.
7. Protection of the character of the canal must be balanced with the requirement for residents and business of Caol and Lochyside to be protected from flooding. There are also further benefits arising from these proposals in the form of improved access to the canal and improvements to connectivity through the provision of new paths and the access ramp.
8. Given that the canal infrastructure remains in active use, and the cultural significance of the canal is in this continued use and its overall form, it is justified that an archaeological response is not proposed, and HES accept this position.
9. The proposed flood protection works will have an adverse impact upon the character and appearance of this section of the Canal, and an impact upon the cultural significance of the monument. The works are therefore considered to conflict with paragraphs 3.16 and 3.18 of HES policy statement. However consideration must also be had to the need for suitable flood protection to be provided to homes and businesses in the area, and to the improved access and to the monument, and as such, it is clear that the works are therefore justified in accordance with paragraph 3.17 of the policy statement.
10. The impacts on the Scheduled Monument are limited in their scope relative to the overall scale, and form of the scheduled canal. Reducing the height of the bund would reduce the degree of flood protection it affords. The proposals are considered to be a justified, and necessary set of works.

Recommendation:

- The application should be cleared back to HES to issue Scheduled Monument Consent subject to the recommended conditions.