

SCOTLAND'S NATIONAL NEWSPAPER

Public inquiry called for Battle of Killiecrankie road plan



The memorial to the Battle of Killiecrankie in Highland Perthshire. PIC: www.geograph.co.uk.



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A public inquiry is to be held into controversial plans to widen and re-route the A9 through the site of the Battle of Killiecrankie.

Proposals to widen the road at the site of the major battle of the first Jacobite uprising in 1689 have been put on hold following significant opposition.

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Transport Scotland confirmed the plan to dual the Killiecrankie to Glen Garry stretch of the A9 is now “subject to statutory process” with an inquiry to take place in due course.



The existing road already cuts through part of the battlefield but Historic Environment Scotland said the latest proposals would have a “significant” impact on the site where Jacobites loyal to deposed James VII claimed victory over government forces.

More than 200 objections were received by Transport Scotland over the battlefield plan, with campaigners for Killiecrankie 1689 leading the opposition to the proposals.

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George MacLean, of Killiecrankie 1689, said around 200 objections had been received by Transport Scotland.

Mr MacLean said: “At first, Transport Scotland refused to tell us how many objections had been received but weeks after the objection period closed, they confirmed the number.

“The process has been flawed from the start. The area of the designated battlefield should have been central plan so that the sensitive part of it is not damaged.”

Mr MacLean said Historic Environment Scotland (HES) had highlighted “gaps” in Transport Scotland’s assessment methodology.

He said: “HES says that far too little research and fieldwork has been done on archaeological and physical remains relating to the battle of Killiecrankie and Transport Scotland has not understood the relevance or importance of the battlefield’s topography and landscape.

“Transport Scotland is now considering what extra metal detecting, geophysical studies and trial trench work to be done to satisfy HES’s demands. Exactly who will be responsible for archaeology studies still seems moot.

A Transport Scotland spokesperson confirmed the public inquiry would now go ahead, adding: “This section of the A9 is now subject to the statutory process and evidence will be heard at a public local inquiry in due course.

“Scottish Ministers will thereafter be called upon to determine this case and it is not therefore appropriate to comment on the proposals or indeed the objections that have been raised.

“As the existing A9 already runs through the site of the battlefield, any of the dual carriageway widening options, for example widening the existing road on its northbound side or widening the existing road on its southbound side -- will have some impact on the battlefield.”

The Battle of Killiecrankie is thought to be the first in Britain in which hand grenades were used.

The Jacobite victory came at an enormous cost. Nearly one-third of the Jacobite force were killed including the leader John Graham, Viscount Dundee, who was fatally wounded towards the end of the battle.