



THE FRIENDS of PRIORSLEE LAKE

Bovale Planning Application – August, 2006

Introduction

Bovale is a development company with an office in Shrewsbury and it owns the Celestica site situated on the north side of Priorslee Lake, currently shielded from the Lake by a band of trees, shrubs and scrub. It has been known for quite a while that Bovale wishes to demolish what is left of the Celestica building (part was demolished some time ago) and replace it with buildings overlooking the lake. It appears that having buildings overlook the lake is a great attraction to the Company and this would, of course, endanger the north shore wildlife area – which is the most important wildlife area around the lake, as it would mean the destruction of the trees, shrubs and scrub bordering that shore.

In August, 2006, Bovale submitted a planning application for offices, industrial buildings, a hotel and housing on the site to the Borough of Telford and the Wrekin. Our worst fears about Bovale's intentions have proved to be correct in that the plans submitted show the destruction of most of the vegetation on the north shore and replacing it with an artificial lake-side walk and water frontage.

Planning Application Details

There are three planning applications involved.

W2006/0966 Industrial area, offices, 250 bed hotel, 700 houses, new boat Club, access roads and infrastructure, off Castle Farm Way.

W2006/0967 As above but no houses.

W2006/0968 New access, internal road and infrastructure.

The Application. This is a considerably thick set of documents and maps. The application can be viewed at Darby House, Lawn Central, Telford, where a copy is held on reception, at least up to the last date for objections.

Objections due by: 30th August, 2006.

Objections, in writing, to:

By letter Planning Department,
 Borough of Telford and the Wrekin
 Darby House, Lawn Central,
 Telford. RF3 4JB.

By e-mail adam.shreeve@telford.gov.uk

Bovale's Application

The writer of the report has not read the application in full due to its size and the time reading it would take. However, the writer has "scanned through" most of the application and the following is the most relevant parts with respect to the wildlife areas of Priorslee Lake. Comments are shown in square brackets. [xx]

Design Statement Describes the area. Does not mention the wildlife aspect of the Lake.

Development Principles Does not mention retaining the natural qualities of the Lake for wildlife or as an area where people can walk or take leisure in peace and quiet away from the bustle of modern life.

Development Design Framework Mentions a walkway promenade shown on the map as along the north shore of the Lake. [This would destroy the wildlife value of the Lake as the north shore is the most bird friendly side of the lake and the map shows almost all the tress/ shrubs/scrub cut down to make way for the walkway.]

Mentions the retention of green areas. [This appears to be a small area around where Wesley Brook enters the Lake, a small area along Wesley Brook and an area on the south side of the Lake.]

Plan SK001 Concept with the Design Statement. Does not show the existing trees, shrubs and scrub on the north bank of the Lake. (Presumably as it is hoped they will be cut down.) [The prime ecological habitat land shown on the plan is incorrect as the north bank of the Lake is the most important ecological area.]

Preliminary Plan SK009 This shows all the vegetation along the north shore as no longer present in favour of a lakeside walk and water frontage. [This would be of no use to wildlife at all, especially to birds and would destroy the site as far as its ecological value is Concerned.]

[Note. It is suggested in the planning application that the wildlife area on the north shore could be replaced by planting

areas elsewhere, mainly on the south shore. This is not viable as such areas would take 30 years to mature and the birds would have no where to go in the meantime. See below.]

Environmental Statement

Paragraph 7.4.19. This mentions birds and admits the site is an important habitat for birds.

Paragraph 7.4.21. This admits the site contains features of a of a considerable nature conservation value.

Paragraph 7.4.22. This admits that Priorslee lake is an attraction to a great number of birds and also of a considerable nature conservation value in a local context. it states that the Lake and its shoreline provide an important habitat to birds.

Paragraph 7.6.1. Admits that there would be a loss of scrub and woodland to create the lakeside frontage as envisaged. It says that to compensate a similar area would be created to the south and east of the Lake.

[The east side has a stone barrage which retains the water in the Lake, a grass verge, lay-by and main road. Most is not suitable for trees and scrub. The south side would be more suitable but, as mentioned above, a newly planted area would take perhaps 30 years to mature and so exceed the lifetime of most people currently likely to appreciate it!]

[Nowhere in the report does it mention retaining the existing north shore habitat as an asset either to the Priorslee area or to the overall environmental status of Telford. It does not mention that Priorslee Lake is a unique habitat for birds and together with the Granville Country Park and the Ironbridge

Gorge nature areas forms a set of three habitat ranges spread over the whole of the Town. This is an asset which should not be lost to the Town. The report does not mention either the importance of Wesley Brook as a wildlife corridor.]

The report fails to mention the number of scarce birds seen at the site in the last few years – almost all on the north shore – nor the three different orchid plants found on site.]

Main Plan

The main plan submitted with the planning application shows a feeder road from Castle Farm Way running north of the Lake, quite close to the Lake, and parallel to it, as far as Wesley Brook where it turns south to run around the western side of the

Lake. Two roads lead off this road going north away from the Lake and into the Celestica site area.

The area between the feeder road and the northern shore of the Lake contains the hotel, at the eastern end, then offices and houses going west. The lakeside walk and water frontage lie between this development and the edge of the Lake with only a few odd trees left in situ.

Wesley Brook has some small green areas around it but the new boat house is in the same area.

The south-west corner of the Lake has an industrial unit and office block and the feeder road ends at this point.

Green Areas

The whole of Priorslee Lake, including its north shore as far as the boundary with the Celestica site, is included in the map of Telford's "Green Areas". The planning application ignores the "green areas" as though they were insignificant! If granted, the application would leave Telford and Priorslee with less "green area" than before – although with many more people due to the new housing and industrial buildings. The proposed enhancement of other habitat areas in place of the lost north shore is in no way adequate compensation. The area would be a net loser.

Wesley Brook

Any road going in from the east side will need to cross Wesley Brook to access Ricoh to avoid Ricoh traffic passing through the Priorslee estate. Wesley Brook is an important wildlife corridor from Priorslee Flash to Priorslee Lake and on towards Shifnal. The Bovale plan shows the road simply passing over the brook and presumably this would be piped under the road. This would seriously damage the wildlife corridor. A bridge high enough to allow the brook and wildlife to pass under it with relative ease is needed.

Objections

The Friends of Priorslee Lake will be objecting to this planning application.

It is earnestly suggested that those to whom this report has been sent also seriously consider objecting to the application. Obviously, the more who object the better and those people or organisations with wildlife experience and responsibilities will add greater weight if they object also.

This report has deliberately refrained from giving an outline plan for objecting as it is felt that each objector should do so in his own way. The above information on the planning application should be enough to enable an objection to be made without further consultation of the documents. It is therefore recommended that anyone who objects as a result of this report extracts relevant information from the details of the

application given above and objects on that basis. However, the planning application can be viewed if preferred – see under Planning Application Details above. Do keep in mind the objection deadline – 30th August, 2006. Anyone living in the area can also object on local issues such as the density or number of houses proposed, the mix of houses and offices, the lack of local facilities, lack of open space, etc.

If anyone objects as a result of this report and the matter goes to a hearing, advice and support will be offered by the FoPL, if required. It would also be advisable before any hearing to read at least the relevant parts of the application.

Anyone wishing to discuss the matter with the FoPL co-ordinator can ring him on Telford (01952) 247783.

23RD. August, 2006.

Richard Camp,
Co-ordinator.