

Planning Matters – Berwick Wharf

You may recall from the last S&News that a planning application had been submitted for a conservatory and garden decking which projected over the old canal line at Berwick Wharf. A number of objections were submitted from Trust members and the Trust gave its official response expressing concern over the possible impact of the development on any future canal restoration. As a result of these the Trust was invited to a meeting on site with the householders concerned, John & Meena Templeman, and their planning consultants. This meeting proved both helpful and enlightening. When the detail of the supporting application was presented it was made clear that only the decking structure would project over the actual canal line and this had been very skilfully designed to cantilever from the wharf edge in order to ensure that the canal bed would not be damaged. The applicants also drew our attention to a condition within the terms of their land purchase from British Waterways which allowed for the re-purchase of the land by BW in the event of a future restoration of the canal for navigation purposes. Additionally, Mr & Mrs Templeman said they would be quite happy for this condition to be reiterated through a condition attached to any planning consent.

The meeting did not end there, however, as John & Meena were very keen to make clear to the Trust their real love for the canal and the very considerable amount of hard work and expense that they had already invested in carrying out their personal canal restoration project on the section that runs at the bottom of their garden and that of their immediate neighbour. To say that we were impressed would be to put it mildly as we were shown the end results of all of their work plus photographs of the stagnant, silted reed bed that it had been and pictures of excavators removing tons of material, whilst carefully preserving the clay puddle lining of the canal bed.

It became clear that the aims of the Trust were very much embodied within the work that the Templemans were carrying out and as a result we have gained two new members and a source of inspiration for the kind of restoration work that can be done by S&News – August 2002 11 an individual family with vision and determination – we just have to apply this to the other 25 miles!

As a result of our site visits, plus further consultations with the planning authorities, the Trust has written to Shrewsbury & Atcham complimenting the Templemans on their work on the canal within their property and withdrawing our objections to the planning application on the understanding that appropriate conditions will be applied in order to safeguard any future restoration. The planning officers come to a similar conclusion and the planning application was passed at the end of July with those conditions attached.

This brief account does not really do justice to the work that has been carried out on the canal by John & Meena's family at Berwick and we are sure that members would like to hear more of their personal restoration story and see some of the before, during and after photographs that go with it and we hope to bring this to you in a future S&News.