

Bitton Village Residents Association



- Meeting to discuss 'Draft Concept(2)' for the Golden Valley Mill site
– Conclusions from meeting
- 13th January 2011

Letter from the Chairman of Bitton Village Residents Association

Dear Mr Luton (South Glos), Mr Cooper(Colliers International), Mr Cameron (MI Developments), Ms Robbins (Bitton Parish Council) and Mr Skidmore (Member of Parliament for Kingswood)

I am pleased to share with you the views of the residents of Bitton following our Open Meeting on the 11th January 2011 regarding the Proposed Draft Concept (2) from Colliers International for the former Golden Valley Mill site in Bitton. We understand the need for housing and prefer this choice of use by M I Developments for the future enhancement of Bitton village.

This is a once in a generation opportunity to greatly improve and enhance the village for the benefit of both the proposed new and existing residents. This will also further enhance South Gloucestershire's standing and forward looking planning concepts that have been demonstrated and created at the high quality Hanham Hall Development. Your support to achieve this in the Golden Valley Mill site development is vital.

You will observe, as you read this report, that we do not consider that the Draft Concept (2) achieves this aim. Frankly, it is a rather ordinary development that does little to enhance the collective, community life in a conservation village such as Bitton.

The Bitton Village Residents Association Committee have used the limited time they have had to consult with as many residents as possible and to attempt to understand their views in order to identify the weaknesses in the Concept and demonstrate how it might be improved. This improvement can be achieved through the endorsement process by South Gloucestershire. We would be very happy to explain residents' views in more detail, should you so wish, at any time or place convenient to you.

We know that you have received similar views from Bitton Parish Council, who concluded ... "As the current generation responsible for the development of Bitton we must make sure that the success of those who went before us is repeated so that the Bitton of the future remains a place that people enjoy living in. The redevelopment of this site is absolutely pivotal to this. We must get it right"... I can assure you that the residents feel just the same. Generations of my husband's family have lived and worked in Bitton for many years, as we now continue to do.

Similarly to other residents, we feel passionately about the community spirit which must be enhanced by a suitable high quality development, bringing all elements of the village together. I hope that we can count upon your support and we look forward to working with you to progress this aim.



Marlene Gallop, Chairman, Bitton Village Residents Association, 13th January 2011

Open village meeting

- Meeting at St Mary's Church Hall
- 11th January 2011
- Purpose:
 - To gather the views of residents about the proposed Draft Concept(2) for development of the Golden Valley (Intier) site so that they can be sent to South Gloucestershire Council and Colliers International for inclusion in the endorsed Concept
 - To encourage residents to send their own views directly to South Gloucestershire Council
- Meeting facilitator
 - Andrew Ward

Participants

- All residents were invited to the meeting (letter through every door)
- 60 residents attended the meeting and submitted their views which are represented in this document

- M & R Ashbee
- G Green
- M Ward
- Jon Booth
- J Dugay
- Martin Crook
- Nicola Bennetts
- Jo Saville
- Alan Saville
- Judith Walker
- Tony Boulton
- Fiona Wilkins
- Glyn Wilkins
- Carole Williams
- Bruce Burnett
- Margaret Garlick
- Bryan Garlick
- Karen Smith
- Chris Palmer
- Di Garry
- Jo Garry
- Mrs Clemantine Smith
- David Smith
- Nicola Bebb
- Richard Bebb
- Tom Murphy
- Sue and Rod Nethercote
- J & S Veasey
- Laura Wheeler
- J Graham
- Jill Burnett
- Derek Dorsett
- Joyce Dorsett
- Elizabeth Greedy
- Bridget Hetzel
- T Sterry
- R Sterry
- T Cole
- Marlene Gallop
- Sarah Craddock
- Peter Hurst
- Barry Smale
- Dando
- Stephanie Bailey
- David Bailey
- Adrian Pike
- Marjorie Holden
- Carl Raine
- Angele Raine
- M Lear
- Mark Bevan
- Stephen Williams
- M Batemen
- Peter Batemen
- Gabriel Francombe
- Geoff Francombe
- Kate Ward
- J Heyes
- R Willis
- Martin Hetzel

The meeting agreed the 'vision' for a new and enlarged Bitton based on housing development of the Golden Valley Mill site

- Vision of new, enlarged Bitton includes:
 - A vibrant and attractive place to live blending the 1,000 year history of the older parts of the village together with the high quality newer buildings- a whole community
 - One village with a village green on the Bath Road at its heart
 - Vernacular architecture with density, style, consistent across the whole village
 - Pedestrian friendly and cycle friendly village with cycle link to Avon cycle track
 - Community centre/hall suitable for the new enlarged village
 - High quality recreational and sport facilities available locally
 - A village in tune with its setting within an area of outstanding natural beauty

The meeting agreed the set of criteria for a good development of the Golden Valley Mill site

Points that the Concept must include

1. At least Grade 5 (Code for Sustainable Homes) environmental and Building for Life gold quality housing (including a visual representation of the vernacular style of buildings in the concept)
2. Housing density of residential area of less than 30 dwellings per hectare with space for front and back gardens and no requirement to take wheelie bins through the house
3. Realistic off road car parking based on true expectation of number of cars owned by residents
4. Retention of Refectory, Gatehouse and Wesleyan Hall as living symbols of the village history
5. A Village Hall / Community Centre big enough for the whole village with parking
6. Improved access to recreational facilities for the village (Pound Ground)
7. Village Green facing onto the Bath Road incorporating the Wesleyan Hall, possibly open at both ends as a shelter
8. Small retail / commercial facilities with parking (e.g post office, cafe)
9. Good and safe access to river, wild areas and countryside
10. Views out to countryside from within site
11. Improved outlook for those residents living immediately next to the factory site
12. Safe open areas on the site for dogs, children, etc on the site
13. Retention of all trees, including the poplars, and more added
14. Allotments, fruit trees etc on the site
15. Low rise buildings throughout... especially on the higher/raised parts of the site

The meeting envisaged what a what a Village Green on the High Street might look like



From this.....

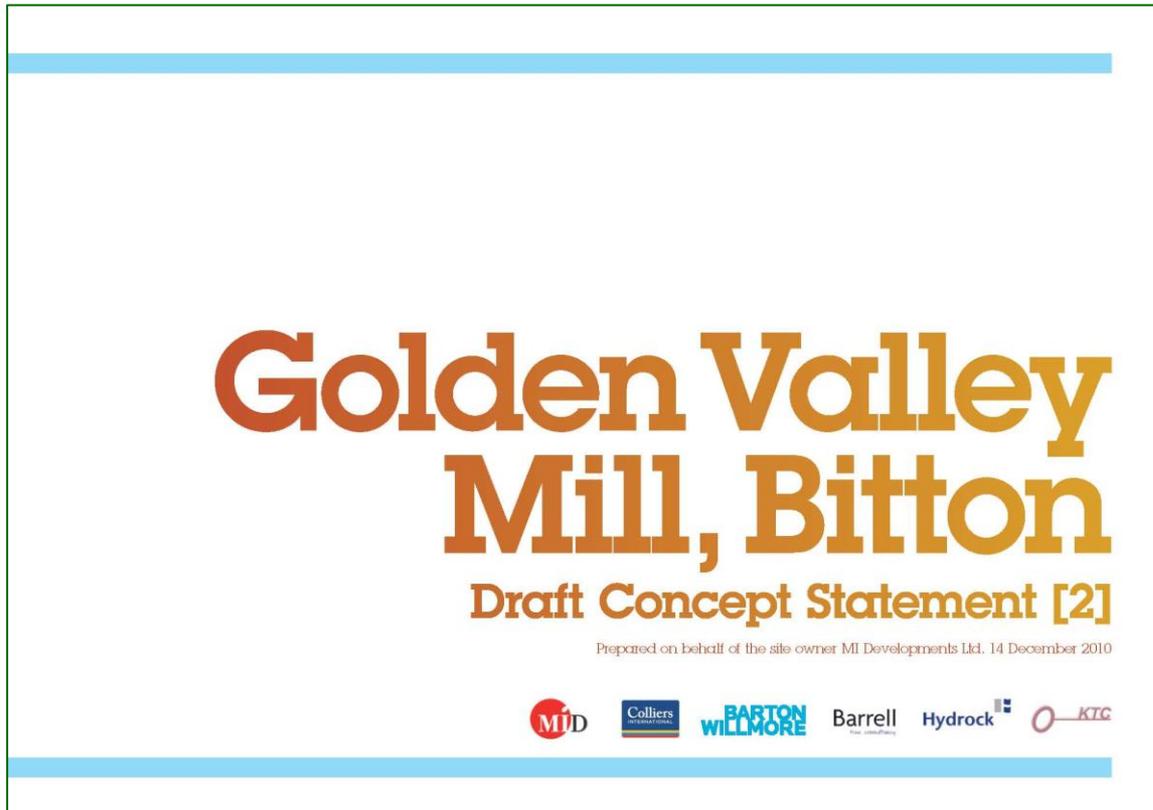


To this.....

The meeting agreed that South Glos and the developer needed to address other areas of concern

- Things we would like to comment on, but do not yet have the information to make an informed comment
 - Traffic, speeding and queuing on the Bath Road no worse than it is today
 - North/South bus route into the middle of Bitton
 - Good building and pedestrian layout
 - A sewerage system that does not overflow
 - Minimum possible raised levels subject to Environment Agency flooding rules
 - Economic use of renewable resources – hydro electric , solar, ground source heat pump
 - Sufficient pre-school and school places available locally
 - Protection of the wide variety of local wildlife (kingfishers, otters, bats etc)

The meeting then reviewed the Draft Concept Statement (2) although most participants had already studied the Concept in detail



Each participant was then given a form to express their satisfaction with the Draft Concept (2)

To Mike Luton, South Glos... from: Name		Address		e-Mail		
Golden Valley Mill site Residents' Assessment Criteria		Draft Concept (July 2010)	Score 0=Bad, 1=neutral or unknown, 2=good	Revised Concept (Dec 2010)	Score 0=Bad, 1=neutral or unknown, 2=good	Place X here if you do not agree with this criterion
Total %		Overall	33%	Overall	0%	
1	At least Code 5 (Code for Sustainable Homes) environmental and 'gold' quality (Building for Life) (including a visual representation of the vernacular style of buildings in the concept)	Code 3 only, and Building for Life Gold (but no visual representation of the design in the concept)	1			
2	Housing density of less than 30 dwellings per hectare. Front and back garden space to take wheelie bins through the site	150 dwellings plus 60 bed care home (~50 dwellings?) on 4 hectares = 50 per hectare	0			
3	Realistic road car parking based on true expectation of number of cars owned by residents	1.5 cars park space	0			
4	Retention of Refectory, Gatehouse and Wesleyan Hall as living symbols of the village history	Not in concept				
5	A Village Hall / Community Centre big enough for the whole village with parking	Not in concept				
6	Improved access to recreational facilities for the village (Pound Ground)	Not in concept				
7	Village Green facing onto the Bath Road incorporate the Wesleyan Hall, possibly open at both ends as a shelter	Not in concept				
8	Small retail / commercial facilities with parking (e.g. post office, cafe)	Not in concept	0			
9	Good and safe access to river, wild areas and countryside	Not in concept	1			
10	Views out to countryside from within site	Not clear in concept	1			
11	Improved outlook for those residents living immediately next to the factory site	Included in concept but not visualised	2			
12	Safe open areas on the site for dogs, children, etc on the site	Small area included in the concept	1			
13	Retention of all trees, including the poplars, and more added	Plan to remove poplars	1			
14	Allotments, fruit trees etc on the site	Not in the concept	0			
15	Low rise buildings throughout... especially on the higher/raised parts of the site	3 storey buildings on ground raised by 4M would be to				
16	Other					

Dec 2010!

Criteria

BVRA Assessment of previous Concept

Score for each criterion
 0 = Bad/dissatisfied
 1 = Neutral
 2 = Good/satisfied
 X = Not relevant criterion

Comments on new Concept

As each criteria was discussed, residents were invited to score the Draft Concept(2)

- For each criterion, residents had the choice of four 'scores' and the opportunity to provide comments

0 = Bad – Dissatisfied with the Concept

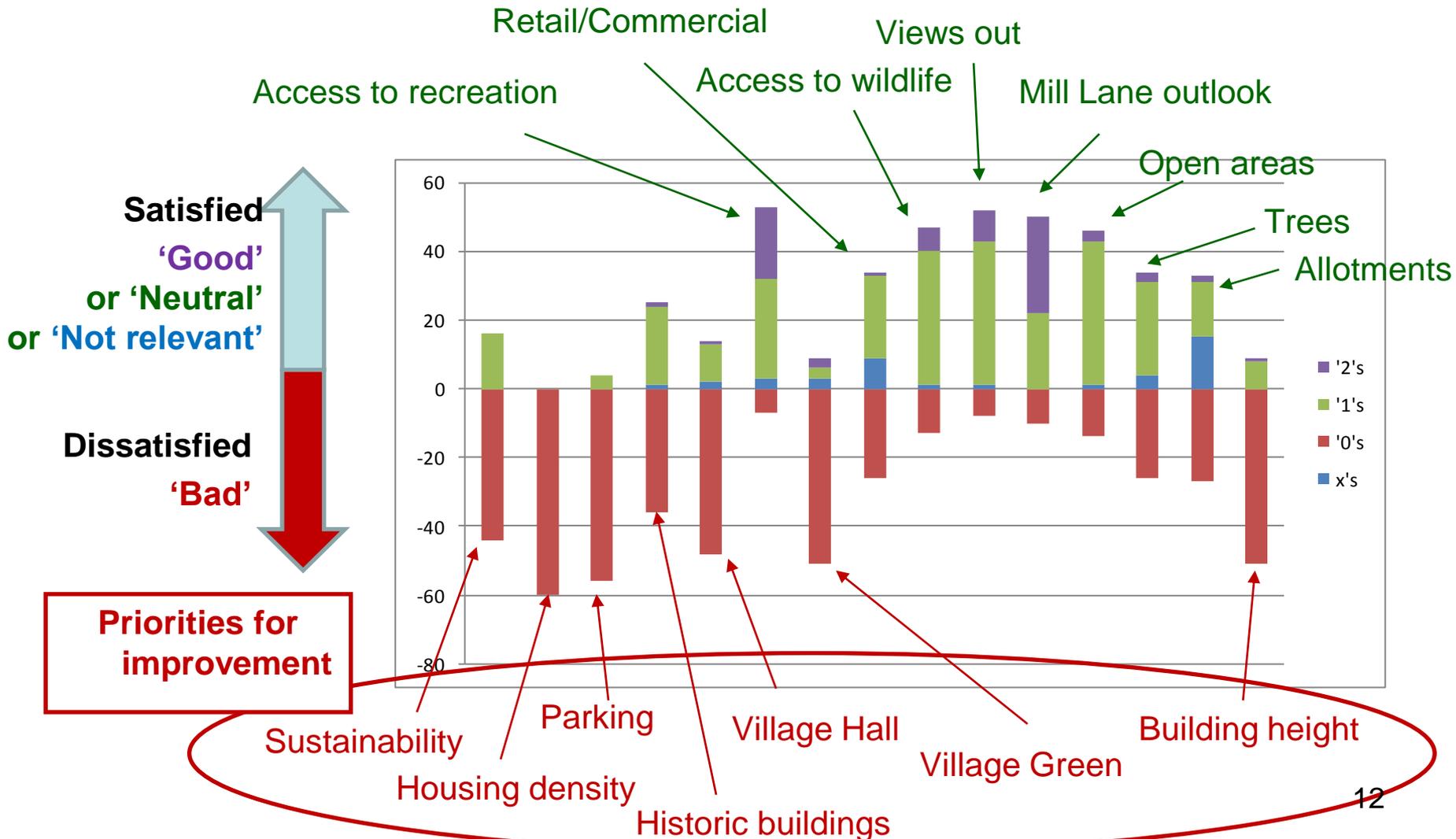
1 = Neutral – the Concept is neutral with regard to the criterion

2 = Good - Satisfied with the Concept

X = Not relevant criterion – the criterion is not one on which the concept should be assessed

- N.B. The 60 returned forms are available and should indeed be read by anyone involved with the project so that they fully understand the views of residents

The analysis of residents' views shows clearly the priorities for improvement to the concept



The Concept should only be endorsed if major improvements are made

- Housing density (100% of respondents considered current concept 'Bad')
 - The proposed density of ~50 dwellings per hectare is far too high to conserve the character of the village
 - The Concept should only be endorsed at a density of less than 30 dwellings per hectare
- Parking (93% of respondents considered current concept 'Bad')
 - The proposed allocation of 1.5 car park spaces is far too low and is no longer government policy
 - The Concept should only be endorsed at an allocation of at least 2 spaces per dwelling
- Village Green (85% respondents considered current concept 'Bad')
 - The current proposal of a Village Green within the site will help create two communities rather than one and will do nothing to improve the look of Bitton as seen from the A431
 - The Concept should only be endorsed with a village green facing onto the A431 with any safety issues mitigated by railings or other means (see Queen Square Bath which has busy roads on all four sides)
- Building height (85% respondents considered current concept 'Bad')
 - The current statement that buildings will be 'generally three stories or less' risks some buildings being more than three stories which would not conserve the character of Bitton
 - The Concept should only be endorsed stating that buildings should generally be two storeys with three stories being a maximum and for a few exceptions (less than 5%)
- Village Hall (80% respondents considered current concept 'Bad')
 - The current Concept does not provide a Village Hall big enough for the enlarged village
 - The Concept should only be endorsed with the proviso that the case for providing a realistically sized village hall is considered
- Sustainability (73% respondents considered current concept 'Bad')
 - The current commitment to following the legal minimum standards is not enough
 - The Concept should only be endorsed with a commitment to at least Code 5 (Code for Sustainable Homes) for all buildings
- Retention of historic buildings (60% respondents considered current concept 'Bad')
 - The destruction of two out of the three historic buildings is unacceptable
 - The Concept should only be endorsed to specify that all three should be retained (Refractory as community building, Wesleyan Hall as shelter for village green and Gatehouse as residential building of character)

N.B. Care Home

- The meeting expressed the view that the Care Home was too big and in the wrong place on the site

Together, we can do something really great for Bitton and South Gloucestershire

