



Report of Bitton Village open meeting to assess proposed development (South Glos reference PK15/0532/F) of Golden Valley Mill Site

Wednesday 25th February 2015.

Background

An open residents meeting was held on 25th February 2015 to assess the proposed development of the Golden Valley Mill site. Fifty residents participated in the meeting. The meeting also welcomed Councillors Williams and McNab and the chair and secretary of the Bitton Parish Council. After a brief introduction, the meeting reviewed the set of seventeen 'criteria' to assess the suitability of the proposed plans for Bitton. These criteria had been developed and used to assess a previous proposal in 2007. Participants at the meeting were also asked to complete a questionnaire to express their personal views. The results of both assessments and the conclusions from the meeting are expressed in this report.

Contents

- Conclusions
- Assessment Details
- Next steps
- Diagram

Conclusions

The overall conclusion from the meeting was that the current proposed development by St Congar / Icen / Linden Homes was indeed a great improvement on that submitted in 2007. Each of the seventeen criteria were discussed and assessed as being good '2', adequate '1' or poor '0'.

During the open meeting the net score was 57% overall. Participants were also asked to submit a form with their personal assessments. The result of these forms was 56%. Although these might seem low scores for the proposed development, it should be understood that these are far higher than the previous proposed development. A score of 100% was seen as ideal for residents but most unlikely to be achieved.

Overall it was felt that the development was appropriate for the site but that there were several areas where improvements could be made that would make a big difference to the village.

Specifically these were as follows:

- The opening from the A431 onto the community space needs to be longer in order to make it more usable and visible from along the A431. It would seem that that the length of the opening onto the A431 has been reduced significantly compared to that described in the concept statement. (see diagram below)
- The buildings on the A431 need to be set back to the line of the retained housing (Ash House) in order to improve the look of the development from the road. Maintaining the line of the existing red brick building is too close to the road and gives a very 'enclosed' feeling. (see diagram below)
- More trees are required to soften the look of the housing, particularly around the boundary, and better to blend with the neighbouring area of outstanding beauty.
- Although the overall density of houses is fine, it was felt that they were too dense in certain areas within the site.
- There is no proposed shelter/building in the community space on the A431. This was a change from the vision in the concept. Although there were mixed views about the need for a permanent shelter, on balance it was felt that something was needed to make the community space work. Something quite simple, perhaps using stone from the Wesleyan Hall would suffice.
- Need to ensure the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) payment is used to benefit Bitton for improved infrastructure such as a new/improved facility for a village hall. Options for such a facility could include extending the old Canteen building on the site, extending the facility at Bitton Recreation Club or looking to a new build elsewhere.

The meeting also discussed other aspects of the development and was concerned that these were fully considered by South Glos Council. These included:

- The effect of the raised levels on flood risk to other parts of the village is a matter of great concern and the residents seek assurance that this matter has been fully considered and that the raised level does not increase flood risk in the village.
- The ongoing maintenance of the wildlife area / Golden valley Fishing Club needs to be well understood to ensure it becomes a real village asset.
- The effect on the sewage system which is suspected to be at its limit today. Again, confirmation is required that this has been considered and that there will be no increased risk of failure.
- The effect on schools and transport is a matter of concern and the residents wish to be assured that these matters have been considered and resolved.

BITTON VILLAGE RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION
'WORKING FOR AN EVEN BETTER BITTON'



Assessment Detail

| | Golden Valley Mill site Residents' Assessment Criteria | Proposed development PK15/0532/F | Meeting 0=Bad, 1=adequate or unknown, 2=good | Forms 0=Bad, 1=adequate or unknown, 2=good |
|----|---|---|---|---|
| | Total % | Overall | 57% | 56% |
| 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) | Minimum building regulation requirement .. Not code 5 | 1 | 0.8 |
| 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 | 115 on 4 hectares = 29/hectare | 2 | 1.9 |
| 3 | Realistic off road car parking based on true expectation of number of cars owned by residents | 245 spaces for 115 houses | 1 | 1.4 |
| 4 | Retention of Refectory, Gatehouse and Wesleyan Hall as living symbols of the village history | No Wesleyan Hall | 1 | 0.8 |
| 5 | A Village Hall / Community Centre big enough for the whole village with parking | No provision for an adequate Village Hall | 0 | 0.1 |
| 6 | Improved access to recreational facilities for the village (Pound Ground) | Yes | 2 | 1.6 |
| 7 | Village Green facing onto the Bath Road incorporating the Wesleyan Hall, possibly open at both ends as a shelter | Yes.. But needs better frontage onto the A431 | 1 | 1.2 |
| 8 | Small retail / commercial facilities with parking (e.g post office, cafe) | Some opportunity | 1 | 0.8 |
| 9 | Good and safe access to river, wild areas and countryside | Yes | 2 | 1.8 |
| 10 | Views out to countryside from within site | Yes | 2 | 1.2 |
| 11 | Improved outlook for those residents living immediately next to the factory site | Same height | 0 | 1.2 |
| 12 | Safe open areas on the site for dogs, children, etc on the site | Yes | 2 | 1.7 |
| 13 | Retention of all trees, including the poplars, and more added | Needs plenty of planting to replace felled trees | 1.5 | 1.1 |
| 14 | Allotments, fruit trees etc on the site | No | 0 | 0.3 |
| 15 | Low rise buildings throughout... especially on the higher/raised parts of the site | No | 0 | 0.4 |

BITTON VILLAGE RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION
'WORKING FOR AN EVEN BETTER BITTON'



| | | | | |
|----|--------------------------------------|--|----------|------------|
| 16 | High quality of design and materials | Looks good but to be understood in greater detail | 2 | 1.6 |
| 17 | Look of development from outside | Better from above.. Worse from Golden Valley Lane because loss of poplars and raised ground | 1 | 1.0 |

BITTON VILLAGE RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION
'WORKING FOR AN EVEN BETTER BITTON'



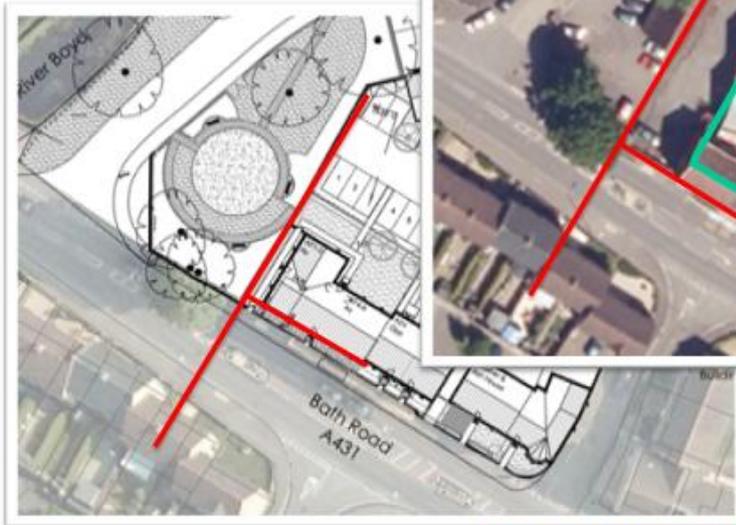
Next steps

- Submit this report to South Glos and St Congar/Iceni/Linden Homes
- Distribute this report via the village e-mail list, website, Facebook page, Bitton Parish Council and Chris Skidmore
- Request the opportunity to meet with St Congar/Iceni/Linden Homes to discuss opportunities for improvement
- Request the opportunity to present to the planning committee at South Glos
- Request to speak at any future South Glos public planning meeting
- Consider use of community buildings and open space areas for further discussion with developers

Diagram

The buildings on the A431 need to be shorter and further back from the road to provide a useable and clearly visible community space

Iceni planned line for buildings



BVRA proposed line for buildings