

Cottenham Village Design Group

Planning application comments

S/1715/03/F

15 Beach Road, Cottenham - extension

We have no comment on this application

S/1743/03/F

5 Cross Keys Court, Cottenham - conservatory

We have no comment on this application

S/1748/03/F

Land adjacent Brookfield Business Park, Twentypence Road, Cottenham
- extension to Malary Oils

On viewing a previous application for this site we commented as follows:

The Village Design Statement is broadly supportive of economic growth to create employment opportunities within the Village. In many ways this site, to the north-east of an existing development, seems suitable. The existing roadside hedge is of high quality, and could provide some screening for the development.

There are, however, some doubts over the potential scale of the development, and specifically over its impact on the adjacent Fen Reeves Community Wood, which is mentioned in the Design Statement as playing a positive role in the village landscape. The proposed site currently forms a buffer between the industrial estate and Fen Reeves; were the full development carried out over the whole area there seems to be a strong possibility that the setting of the Community Wood would be adversely affected, which we would find unacceptable.

Fruit trees are a legacy of the orchards that once covered large areas of the Parish and should be retained wherever possible.

The following Passages from the Cottenham Village Design Statement are relevant:

'The prosperity of the village depends on encouraging the normal processes of economic growth and development. The current drift towards becoming a dormitory area for people who work in Cambridge needs to be reversed.' (p.6)

'Cottenham is considered unsuitable for large-scale industrial development' (p.7)

'Use high quality buildings and layouts. Reduce the visual impact of new and existing sites by planting native broadleaf species and hedgerow shrubs.' (p.7)

'New developments on the village edge should give high priority to landscape design, to protect and enhance the external view of the village ... Shelter and contain the edge using appropriate native broadleaf species.' (p.9)

'Orchards are part of the village heritage and should be retained.' (p.10)

'Although Cottenham is a rural village, its share of open space per head of population is below the level recommended in the Local Plan. The village green is a focus for community events ... Other spaces have more limited functions, but play a positive role in the village landscape. These include ... Fen Reeves Community wood (1993).' (p.13)

'create community woods and orchards.' (p.18)

This new proposal appears more modest, and therefore more acceptable. We note, however, that there is ambiguity in the application regarding the positioning of the unloading shed, which on one drawing is shown close to the existing business park, but on another much nearer to the Fen Reeves woodland. We would hope that a deep 'buffer zone' of undeveloped or landscaped land could be maintained between the development and this important community resource.

S/1756/03/F

2 Dunstall Field, Cottenham - garage

We have no comment on this application

S/1759/03/F

Coolidge Gardens, Cottenham - access and parking

We have no comment on this application

S/1760/03/F

137 High Street, Cottenham - renewal of permissions

This is a prominent site within the Conservation Area; additionally, the building in question has some historical significance for the village as the site of Whitehead's bicycle factory. The site has been in an unfinished state some time and the Design Group is keen to see work progress in order to enhance the area. The applicant suggests that they may wish to revise the previously approved plans; in this case we would wish to ensure that we have the opportunity to view and comment on the revisions.

S/1825/03/F

213 High Street, Cottenham - change of use from shop to residential

This is a house of typical Cottenham type on a very prominent site which makes an important contribution to the character of the Conservation Area. We have previously objected to applications to use the dwelling and/or shop for catering purposes on the grounds that the requirements of such a business would be likely to result in damage to the character of the building.

The Village Design Statement seeks to encourage a wide range of businesses within the village; the Design Group would have preferred to see the shop portion of this building remain as a retail outlet. However, if this is not possible, a low key (and preferably reversible) conversion to domestic use, as seems to be proposed in this application, would be the next best option.

We note that the building as a whole retains many exterior features in near original condition; the character of the building depends on the sensitive treatment of these features. In particular, cleaning of the brickwork or re-pointing would be both unnecessary and damaging to the fabric and appearance of the building.

Applications viewed by John Williams and Steven Poole