

# Cottenham Village Design Group

## Planning application comments

S/1995/03/F

**3 Foundry Close, Cottenham - extension**

We have no comment on this application

S/1995/03/F

**Long Drove, Cottenham - agricultural dwelling**

The Design Group is in general opposed to new building on open land outside the village framework on the grounds that it is likely to disrupt the locally distinctive open character of the landscape. The present proposal would introduce a dwelling into an area which currently has few buildings, and no domestic ones. However, we do recognise that where a very strong need can be clearly demonstrated in relation to agricultural or related activities it is reasonable to permit limited development. Such development should be of good design using locally appropriate forms and materials.

*'This is a landscape of wide views and open spaces'*

Cottenham Village Design Statement p.10

*'Refer to local building forms and proportions ... Use good quality materials appropriate to Cottenham'*

Cottenham Village Design Statement p.23

S/1996/03/F

**101 High Street, Cottenham - alterations, extension, garage**

Commenting on previous applications for this site (1486/7) we expressed concern about the design and positioning of the proposed garage. Re-orienting this building and moving it to the rear of the site are considerable improvements and we are now happy with this aspect of the application.

However, we also noted that the insertion of an additional dormer window to the front elevation and the addition of a raised and decorated ridge to the thatch were inappropriate, and we are very disappointed to find that these aspects of the design have not been amended. We would like to reiterate why we object to these aspects of the design.

This building has been listed because it is a rare survival of a simple fen edge cottage in a relatively unaltered state. We are broadly supportive of the renovation of this cottage, and understand that some alteration is essential in order to bring it into use. However, it is essential that the fundamental character of the building, which is locally distinctive both in terms of design and materials, is retained. Unfortunately, the proposed alterations would change this character substantially; the building would cease to be an authentic example of local vernacular architecture. It is hard to see how such change can be acceptable to a listed building within a conservation area.

In previous applications relating to the restoration of thatch we have commented that the 'appropriate' design and material are those for which there is historical evidence in relation to the particular property. Best practice for the renovation of a listed building should certainly include research into the development of the structure. Photographic evidence for this building seems to show a simple flush ridge, probably with longstraw thatch. It is therefore our view that in this case these would be the appropriate design and materials. It is important to be clear that this is not a minor consideration; the two styles of thatching result in radically different appearances.

A study of photographic evidence also underlines that the use of just a few small dormers, and the

resulting large expanses of unbroken thatch, were characteristic of this building, and those of its type, in the past. The insertion of a second dormer to the front elevation would fundamentally alter this character and also reduce the present asymmetrical appearance of the cottage. We note that the room in question would still receive some light from one dormer to the rear; very small gable end windows might be a less visually damaging means of achieving additional light.

*'Buildings ... should acknowledge their Cottenham context ... Respect local characteristics and context of the particular site. Refer to local building forms and proportions ... Use good quality materials appropriate to Cottenham'* Cottenham Village Design Statement p.23

*'Buildings should be maintained using original or sympathetic materials and details. Thatch for roofs should be preserved or reinstated where appropriate'* Cottenham Village Design Statement p.22

**S/2007/03/F**

**139 High Street, Cottenham - extension**

This building is within the Conservation Area and we would therefore hope to see a high standard of design. The presentation of the plans in this case was poor, which has made it difficult to give the proposal the attention it deserves. Overall, the design appears somewhat awkward and the fenestration to the rear elevation in particular seems poor.

While weatherboarding is a traditional material in Cottenham, its use was largely confined to outbuildings; it was much more rarely employed for domestic accommodation. Given this, and the particulars of the site, we feel that a buff brick of locally distinctive character would have been a better choice, blending more easily with the other buildings in the area. A large area of flat roof is also not characteristic of traditional buildings in Cottenham; a pitched roof of natural slate would be more appropriate, although we recognise that this would present design challenges.

*'Buildings ... should acknowledge their Cottenham context ... Respect local characteristics and context of the particular site. Refer to local building forms and proportions ... Use good quality materials appropriate to Cottenham'* Cottenham Village Design Statement p.23

**S/2035/03/F**

**16 Leopold Walk, Cottenham - extension**

We have no comment on this application

Applications viewed by John Williams and Robin Heydon