

# Cottenham Village Design Group

## Planning application comments

### **S/2229/06/CAC**

#### **136 - 138 High Street, Cottenham – Total Demolition of Day Nursery, Workshop and Shed**

The Design Group is concerned by the loss of the valuable local service provided by the existing day nursery facility and the related employment opportunities. This building, a 19th century former Primitive Methodist Chapel, although not of particularly high quality, does contribute something to the character of this area of the High Street. Demolition must only be approved once a development proposal is agreed for the site which demonstrably preserves or enhances the character of the Conservation Area. We have no objection to the demolition of the other buildings on this site.

*'It is important that village community facilities are retained and increased to maintain vitality and provide for new residents.'* (Cottenham Village Design Statement p.5)

### **S/2230/06/F**

#### **136 - 138 High Street, Cottenham – Erection of 7 Dwellings**

In the main, we are pleased to find that this is a well designed and carefully considered proposal. The Design Group is satisfied with the more contemporary appearance of the buildings to the rear of the development; these appear to have been thoughtfully designed for the site, and the use of locally appropriate materials such as buff brick and slate should help to integrate them with the rest of the Conservation Area. Although the properties fit tightly on the site, the careful consideration given to parking, cycle and bin storage should help mitigate this.

We are less happy with the design of the building fronting the High Street, which is sited very prominently within the Conservation Area and therefore of particular importance. The use of buff brick and slate are appropriate, as is the choice of an overall 'villa' form. However, we feel that the detailed design falls uncomfortably between a fully contemporary interpretation and a 'pastiche' traditional design. In particular, the central recessed entrance and balcony section, while it appears clean and well integrated as depicted in the simplified perspective drawings, it seems fussy, awkwardly proportioned and less well integrated in the more detailed elevations. We would like to see this aspect of the design re-visited, perhaps shifting more emphatically either towards a more strictly traditional design, or towards a more purely contemporary (but still locally appropriate) interpretation. Attempting to integrate two entrances within the classical proportions of a villa façade in a satisfactory manner is a difficult design challenge which we don't feel the present proposals fully meet; a layout which only required one entrance on this elevation might prove easier to resolve.

We do not support this development in its current form; however we believe that relatively minor changes could make this a very acceptable proposal.

*'It is important to ensure positive opportunities for high quality contemporary architecture. Imaginative and original design can extend and renew the distinctive character and*

*traditions of Cottenham's built environment. Encouragement will be given to well-designed buildings on appropriate infill plots.'* (Cottenham Village Design Statement p.22)

*'Developments can maintain and strengthen the visual cohesion of the village, and help to renew the specific architectural traditions of Cottenham. Refer to local settlement patterns in layout. Respect local characteristics and context of the particular site. Refer to local building forms and proportion. There is a variety of proportions throughout the village: developments can reflect those which are adjacent. Use good quality materials appropriate to Cottenham.'* (Village Design Statement p.23)

Applications viewed by Steven Poole, Ann Doubleday, Alexander Thoukydides and John Williams, 8<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> December 2006.