

# Cottenham Village Design Group

## Planning application comments

### **S/1674/08/F**

#### **26 Rampton Road, Cottenham – Extension**

This proposed extension would fill the width of the plot and add a front projection that together would add significant bulk to the building when viewed from the street. The semi-detached pair would also be left quite unbalanced.

*'B/4: Extensions should remain in scale with the original building and are usually most successful when matching materials are specified. Avoid dominant or bulky additions to existing buildings. Setting back walls or lowering the roofline of extensions can help to reduce apparent bulk.'* (Cottenham Village Design Statement p.19)

### **S/1979/08/F**

#### **The Lakes Twenty Pence Road, Cottenham – Alterations to and change of use of existing dwelling to form 4 holiday lets and formation of replacement access**

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. Although this location is more screened than most, we consider this to be an inappropriate location for new development. However, this is an unusual application which proposes an imaginative conversion and separation of an existing dwelling with no increase to overall footprint. It is important that any conversion is completed to a high standard using matching materials as far as is possible.

The Design Group defers to the Highway Authority on matters of highway safety; any proposed change of access point should consider road safety as the foremost priority.

We also note the intention to reinstate the hedge and possibly add planting along the driveway - native and/or locally typical species are recommended for these areas.

*'L/4: This is a landscape of wide views and open spaces. Efforts should be made to minimise impact of developments on the character of this landscape.'* (Cottenham Village Design Statement p.6)

*'B/2: Buildings should be maintained using original or sympathetic materials and details.'* (Design Statement p.18)

*'H/4: Agents for developments need to consult with the highways authorities at an early stage. Additional highway access points should not be introduced in busy or dangerous locations without giving due consideration to road safety.'* (Design Statement p.20)

*'L/4: Plant native and/or locally typical species to retain landscape character and to benefit wildlife...'* (Design Statement p.6)

**S/0160/09/F**

**Land to the South-east of (Plot 2) 13 Church Lane, Cottenham – Dwelling & garage/store building**

This is an application which has clearly been designed with thought, carefully locating the buildings within the plot and specifying high quality materials. The landscaping element – the retention of existing trees as screening, planting of an orchard and native hedging – are particularly pleasing. The form of the garage design successfully echoes the accumulation of outbuildings along a plot boundary which is typical of the village.

The stated general aim of producing a building which reflects the local vernacular is laudable. However, the accurate choice of details and materials – and the way in which they combine – are essential if this aim is to be achieved. In this case we are concerned that the chosen details and materials do not accurately reflect the traditions of the local Cottenham vernacular, particularly in relation to the stated intention of producing a ‘barn-style’ building.

Outbuildings in Cottenham are predominantly roofed with pantiles of local buff clay (often replacing thatch), or sometimes with plain-tiles or tin. Slates were more usually reserved for dwellings; they are sometimes seen on outbuildings, but in the main these are buildings with lower pitched roofs than proposed. Given the ‘barn’ model and the 45 degree roof pitch, a pantile or plain-tile roof – provided the material was a buff colour clay – might be more appropriate.

The aim of producing a design with ‘simple facades’ is also a good one. Simple, flat-fronted buildings, with relatively few projections and relatively unbroken rooflines are typical of the Cottenham vernacular, particularly in relation to outbuildings, which are usually extremely plain, with few openings, wholly unbroken rooflines and a single walling material. Unfortunately we cannot agree with the statement that the proposed design has ‘simple facades’. The double-gabled projecting wing, the mix of walling materials, extensive fenestration and the use of gabled dormers combine to produce a design which is complex, and not at all barn-like.

The use of dormers seems inappropriate in a ‘barn-style’ design (and would perhaps be discouraged were this a barn conversion). The choice of the gabled dormer form increases the disruption of the roofline and contributes significantly to producing a building which reads more as a large ‘cottage’ than a ‘barn’. While gabled dormers are not unknown in the local vernacular, ‘cat-slide’ or simple flat-roofed box dormers are more typical of the area.

This is an important site on the edge of the village. While there are some excellent elements in this design, we do not feel that it lives up to all the aims set out in the Design and Access Statement. Further consideration is needed if it is to accurately reflect the local vernacular tradition. We therefore object to this development in its current form.

*‘B/6: New developments should acknowledge their Cottenham context and avoid pattern-book designs. 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 – whether modern or traditional – which are appropriate to Cottenham. Refer to locally distinctive details; accurately match these to the chosen building form and avoid mixing styles or historical references in the same building.’ (Cottenham Village Design Statement p.19)*

*‘L/3: New developments on the village edge should give high priority to landscape design and management of light pollution, to protect and enhance the external view of the village. Shelter and contain the edge using appropriate native broadleaf species. Achieve well-designed compositions using hedge and woodland screens.’ (Design Statement p.6)*

**S/0103/09/F**

**70 High Street, Cottenham – Change of Use from Residential to Dental Practice (Use Class D1) including amended garage roof, new entrance and provision of new rear car park.**

We welcome this proposal which will enable the development of this existing business and extend the dental service available locally. The conversion of this property to commercial use, given its location on the High Street, is acceptable.

*'E/1: It is important to retain and develop Cottenham's character as a working village offering a variety of employment.'* (Cottenham Village Design Statement p.3)

*'E/3: Commercial developments or conversions should be designed to harmonise with the predominantly residential setting.'* (Design Statement p.3)

*'E/4: Shops and business premises have a major visual impact. Use traditional non-illuminated non-reflective hand painted signs in quieter colours fixed flush to buildings. Reduce the visual impact of business parking by planting.'* (Design Statement p.3)

Applications viewed and comments prepared on behalf of Cottenham Village Design Group by Steven Poole and John Williams, 18<sup>th</sup> February 2009. All quoted text is taken from the Cottenham Village Design Statement, Supplementary Planning Document: <http://www.cvdg.org/design-statement-2007.pdf>. Comments are based solely on the principles and guidelines set out in this document.