

# Cottenham Village Design Group

## Planning application comments

### **S/0042/12/FL**

#### **Unit 15 Watsons Yard, 172 High Street - Erection of dwelling and change of use from B1 to C3**

The location of the site for this new dwelling does not readily allow for a cohesive addition to the village, tucked as it is out of sight within a still predominantly commercial area. However, the materials are appropriately specified and the design itself has some interest as an exercise in compact living. The Design Group does have some concerns as to the loss of this area for employment use.

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

*'E/2: An increase in the number and variety of shops and trades is to be encouraged.*

- *Small-scale enterprises will be welcomed within the village, especially those based on promotion of local produce.*
- *Barns and yards provide scope to locate businesses within the village: planning policies should encourage applications for their conversion to sympathetic business use.*
- *Residential developments could extend the local tradition of adjacent working and living quarters by incorporating office or small-scale workshop premises, and by providing small-scale retail outlets.*
- *Cottenham is considered unsuitable for large-scale development.'* (Design Statement p.3)

*'B/6: New developments should acknowledge their Cottenham context and avoid pattern-book designs. 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 – 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- *Refer to locally distinctive details; accurately match these to the chosen building form and avoid mixing styles or historical references in the same building.*
- *Respond to typical settings and garden forms and avoid large areas of hard surfacing.* (Design Statement p.19)

### **S/0073/12/FL**

#### **5 Eastlands Close - Single Storey Rear Link Extension**

We have no comment on this application.

**S/0041/12/FL**

**Smithy Fen - Change of use of 5, 5a, 6, 10 and 11 Orchard Drive and 15 Water Lane to 6 gypsy/traveller pitches, involving the siting of 6 mobile homes, 6 touring caravans, the erection of 6 amenity buildings and a stable; and change of use of plots 7, 8 and 9 Orchard Drive and 14, 16, 17 and 18 Water Lane to a community garden, involving the siting of children's play equipment and alterations to Orchard Drive.**

The Design Group welcomes the intentions towards landscape screening and the creation of a community garden and play area, but remains concerned by continuing applications in Smithy Fen. Despite some development, this area, which is outside the village framework, is still of essentially rural character with locally distinctive open views of fen edge landscape. We consider that the cumulative effect of additions to the planning consents already granted would seriously threaten the character of this landscape.

We also note that developments in this area do not conform to the essentially nuclear settlement pattern established within the parish and are likely to integrate poorly with the village and its facilities. We object to this development.

*'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)

*'S/1: Settlement patterns are a key to the distinctive nature of the village. S/2: New developments need to be integrated with the village and form part of a linked overall pattern.'* (Design Statement p.7)

*'B/8: The impact of mobile homes, whether sited individually or in small groups, should be minimized by landscaping or other mitigation measures.'* (Design Statement p.19)

**S/0022/12/FL**

**2 Twentypence Road - Two storey side extension**

We have no comment on this application.

**S/0088/12/AD**

**273, High Street - 10 wall mounted informative signs**

We have no comment on this application.

**S/0103/12/NM**

**Oxholme Farm, Lockspit Hall Drove - Non-material amendment to planning permission reference S/0101/11**

We have no comment on this application.

**S/2593/11**

**50, Church Lane - Variation of Condition 2 - Amended Design for Consent S/1247/10 - New Three Bedroom House with Outbuildings Replacing an Existing Dwelling**

We have no comments on the revised proposals, however, we still consider the proposed dwelling to have an overly complex footprint and roof plan; a simpler building with fewer projections would have better reflected the local vernacular.

**S/2458/11**  
**90 Rooks Street - New Dwelling**

As a site for a new dwelling the principle seems acceptable, however, the Design Group is of the opinion that the proposals show a building which is visually too bulky for the site and incongruous in its form.

The proposed design in its form does not reflect either a typical house or barn (such as may be seen to the rear of plots) and some features – notably the brown concrete tiles – are not typical of Cottenham.

It would be preferable for any design to be based either on a locally appropriate historical precedent (barns and outbuildings at the rear of plots are generally of very simple and functional appearance) or to be an honestly designed bespoke modern house of the highest quality. The Design Group respectfully suggests that a simpler physical design would also relate better to the highly distinctive historical settlement patterns of the parish. The use of locally appropriate materials should also be encouraged.

The intention towards the use of appropriate on site generating solutions is welcomed.

*'B/1: High-quality contemporary architecture is encouraged.*

- *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.'* (Design Statement p.18)

*'B/3: Relationships between buildings are as important as the design of buildings themselves.*

- *Make skilful use of spaces between buildings: this can help new developments to be assimilated successfully.* (Design Statement p.19)

*'B/6: New developments should acknowledge their Cottenham context and avoid pattern-book designs.*

*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 – whether modern or traditional – which are appropriate to Cottenham.*
- *Where possible, roof lights should be located on rear elevations or otherwise away from public view. In more sensitive areas they should be mounted flush with the roof and the number of openings kept to a minimum.*
- *Refer to locally distinctive details; accurately match these to the chosen building form and avoid mixing styles or historical references in the same building.* (Design Statement p.19)

*'B/7: Developers should provide perspective drawings, isometric drawings or artists' impressions to show how new developments will appear in relation to their overall surroundings.'* (Design Statement p.19)

*'B/9: Carefully considered local energy saving or generating solutions should be supported.*

- *Solar panels and other devices should be encouraged, so long as they can be installed without detrimental effect on the visual environment of the village.*
- *Locations should be selected for solar panels or similar equipment based on maximising energy savings and minimising disruption to the appearance or fabric of the building.* (Design Statement p.19)

Applications viewed and comments prepared on behalf of Cottenham Village Design Group by Alex Darby and Steven Poole, February 18<sup>th</sup> 2012. 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.