

Cottenham Village Design Group

Planning application comments

S/2258/12/DC

Cottenham Community Centre 250A High Street Cottenham - Change of Use from Methodist Church (D1) to New Community Centre (D2) Including Pedestrian Access Ramps and Cycle Rack - Discharge of Conditions

The Design Group remains in favour of the continuing use of this building as a Community Centre; these works will improve the amenity value of the building further.

S/2183/12/FL

288 High Street Cottenham - Change of use from Shop (Use Class A1) to Hot Food Takeaway (Use Class A5) including installation of extraction flue to rear.

The Design Group supports the creation of employment generating businesses within the village, which would also include food retailing. The Design Group is also in favour of the adequate provision of parking to serve these; the location of some on-street parking to the front of this unit actually makes this one of the more suitable locations for this type of business than some of the other shop units within the village.

It is recognised however that the expressed intent for the shop to serve fish and chips would likely mean a reduction in trade and therefore viability of the two competing businesses, both also serving fish and chips and both within 60 metres of this location, which is in itself a surprising point to make. Our concern would also lie with the loss of the existing shop unit, the next closest shop to the South of the village then being the Co-Op, which although not far is sufficiently further up the High Street to be discountable.

The amenity value of a shop unit to a village is high but it should also be recognised that they also have a major visual impact as well, it is noted that no improvements to the frontage of the shop have been proposed within this application which is in itself a disappointment. The Design Group raise again the issue of the shutters to the front of this shop which were installed without consent in the last refit of the store and remain an unnecessary eyesore within the conservation area.

The siting of flues and such should be inconspicuous from the street which these appear to be, the Design Group are unable to ascertain whether the filtration and height of these are sufficient enough to adequately dispel any odours.

'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.*
- *Establish further shops and amenities in a cluster to create a more cohesive shopping area.*
- *Create a pedestrian-friendly environment, particularly in the retail centre and around the Village Green, Village College, Pound and Parish Church, giving pedestrians priority where necessary.*
- *Improve cycle parking adjacent to retail outlets and community buildings.*

- Increase the number of short-stay parking spaces close to retail outlets.
- 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)

'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.

- Keep frontages in sympathy with upper storeys and with neighbouring façades.
- Minimise the size of plate glass windows on the street front.
- Use traditional non-illuminated non-reflective hand painted signs in quieter colours fixed flush to buildings.
- Traditional shop frontage features such as stall risers would enhance the character of the area. Avoid canopies.
- Restrict the brightness of external and internal lighting to minimise light pollution and glare. Just as we value the 'green belt' by day, we should preserve the 'dark belt' by night.' (Design Statement p.3)

Applications viewed and comments prepared on behalf of Cottenham Village Design Group by Alex Darby and Alex Thoukydides, November 15th 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.