

Cottenham Village Design Group

Planning application comments

S/0027/13/FL

King George V Playing Fields, Lambs Lane, Cottenham - Erection of new sports pavilion and associated external works

The Design Group welcomes this application, the provision of modern fit for purpose facilities for the use of the village is long overdue.

We are pleased that the positioning of the building no longer blocks the views of open space from the playing field entrance and car park, but it seems a shame that two good trees are lost for this to happen. The views from the front and side of the building will be improved by their loss however and this location seems to be the only one available so as not to lose sport pitches or further tennis courts. Overall this location should allow the building to provide a pleasing backdrop to the playing fields.

The design of the building is fairly simple, being styled in a manner reminiscent of a barn or other ancillary structure. Although not particularly typical of Cottenham, the building is generally wider in plan, comprises more roof than wall on the elevations and presents a gable on the front elevation, overall it seems to provide an acceptable impression, artist's perspectives may have assisted with a better understanding of the design.

The materials are generally appropriate and have been chosen with consideration towards their practicality and maintenance as much as their suitability for the locale etc - man made slate for the roof, dark cementitious wood effect weatherboarding to the walls, aluminium faced windows and a brick base course.

On the particular colours of the materials we do have a few comments; regarding the brick base course a buff colour would be a more locally appropriate choice for the building, rather than the red bricks currently specified, we feel that this would look much better with the existing village hall as well as with the village itself. The design group's normal preference is for windows to be white painted (when set within buff brickwork), however within weatherboarding, especially when the overall impression of the envelope is dark coloured as it is within the proposals, white windows and doors can stand out too strongly (they also have domestic references), which runs counter to the barn aesthetic and the use of the building itself. The use of grey doors and windows, or perhaps a more positive contrast colour, would on balance be a better choice in this situation and would also add a little more frisson to the designs.

Overall we consider this to be an improvement on the previously submitted design although, given it's isolated position, this might have been a good opportunity to create a more distinctive and contemporary design.

For the purposes of allaying any confusion we feel that we should also point out that the building on SD3 described as "Existing Community Center[sic]" is in fact the Village Hall, the Community Centre is an entirely separate building located in the centre of the village away from this site.

'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/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.

- *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: The appointment of architects and, where appropriate, relevant specialists is encouraged for all developments.

- *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)

Applications viewed and comments prepared on behalf of Cottenham Village Design Group by Alex Darby, John Williams, Mike Smith and Bill Miller February 5th 2013. 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.