

# Cottenham Village Design Group

## Planning application comments

**S/2544/13/FL**

**288 High Street Cottenham - Change of Use from Shop (Use Class A1) to Traditional Fish & Chips Take-Away (Use Class A5) including external flue**

The Design Group has previously commented on applications for the change of use of this retail unit and our comment here is along similar lines.

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 competing business, serving fish and chips within 60 metres of this location. One concern is the loss of the existing shop unit, the next closest shop then being the Co-Op, which although not far is sufficiently further up the High Street to be discountable. The shop unit has now been closed for some time.

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 again noted that no improvements to the frontage of the shop have been proposed within the application which is again a disappointment. The Design Group have raised the issue of the security shutters to the front of this shop, which were installed without consent in the last refit of the store, both within our numerous comments for this proposal and separately via the normal planning channels. The shutters remain an unnecessary eyesore within the conservation area.

The siting of flues and such should be inconspicuous from the street, the Design Group are unable to ascertain whether the filtration and height of these are sufficient enough to adequately dispel any odours. The intent of the applicant to disguise the flue is welcomed in part, but the Design Group would normally prefer designs, and the use of materials, to remain true to their character. We would respectfully suggest that disguising of the flue with a brick effect cladding indicates that the proposals are not suitable in this location either from a materials or a design standpoint.

*'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)

### **S/0585/14/FL**

#### **38 Histon Road Cottenham - Single storey front and rear extension and alterations to existing property**

We have no comment on this application.

### **S/0578/14/FL**

#### **215 High Street Cottenham - Ground floor extension to restaurant**

The Design Group supports the creation of employment generating businesses within the village, which would also include food retailing. The design of the extension has little merit architecturally but is generally undertaken within the confines of existing structures so will likely have little effect on the appearance of the building in this location.

*'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.*

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

### **S/0600/14/FL**

#### **35 Histon Road Cottenham - Erection of a double garage in the front garden of the dwelling**

The proposed garage is to be constructed within the front garden of this property, the house will be partially obscured from the street by an existing hedge and a new section of hedge where there currently exists a second driveway. The pitched roof of the new garage is likely to be visible above the top of the hedge.

The Design Group would generally prefer not to see this type of development as the fronts of buildings are generally seen as having an important role in defining and supervising the street.

*'B/6: Use good quality materials – whether modern or traditional – which are appropriate to Cottenham.*

*• New-build garages and car parking areas should not obscure house fronts; avoid blocks of garages.'* (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)

## **S/0567/14/FL**

### **27 Broad Lane Cottenham - Erection of single storey extension to rear and side of dwelling**

This extension is to a Victorian semi-detached house and is in a contemporary style. The new extension will be partially visible from the road, more so than the existing conservatory.

The existing house has been modernised at some point in the past with replacement windows and doors and it has also been painted, all of which have altered its character when compared to its neighbour.

It is thought that the materials have been chosen to provide a match to the existing house, shown as render but actually painted brickwork. Generally the use of materials and the form itself are acceptable and should provide a contrast to the existing house.

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

*'B/2: Brickwork should be retained in its original state, characteristically unpainted.*

*• Rendered walls should be painted either white or in pale pastel shades.'* (Design Statement p.18/19)

*'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.*

*• Conservatory or garden room extensions should respect the existing building: materials and colours should be carefully selected.*

*• Alternative materials can sometimes work, for example when it is important to separate components of an extended 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 and Alex Thoukydides May 5<sup>th</sup> 2014. 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.