

COTTENHAM Village Design Statement



Approved as Supplementary
Planning Guidance 1994 by
South Cambridgeshire
District Council

Funded by the

COUNTRYSIDE
COMMISSION

The Design Group moves out of its Teens this year... *but the growing pains were dealt with in those early meetings*

It was in 1993 when the Countryside Commission wished to improve Rural Design and approached Cottenham and two other villages with a view to facilitating the writing of the first three Village Design Statements. The first meeting here was held on 23rd September 1993 with Jo Rose of Landscape agents BDOR facilitating.

Maybe it was our suspicious nature that something was going to be done *to* us, but the attendance was impressive at each function and we walked the village, making notes and began to learn an enormous amount about the village we lived in – not least its architecture.

We realised that this knowledge along with our aspirations needed to be written down but who would do it and what would it say; there were clearly huge disagreements between these activists, let alone the silent majority.

Maybe Jo Rose realised this too since she soon announced that she was now withdrawing and leaving it to us to form a committee; indicating quite clearly that this was to be done *by* us and for the future of the village. Some nominations for the committee were clear but there was competition and the committee expanded as the process developed, leading to some very long meetings when every word and nuance was debated.

One thing the chair considered vital was that we had to start with the basics – the background, the history



and of course the principles – and that there would have to be consensus for each and every word of the future statement, not just from the committee but from all the village people who were prepared to comment.

Was this possible?

Future articles will show the development of consensus and why the Cottenham Village Design Statement, and the process by which it was written, is just as relevant today as it was twenty years ago.

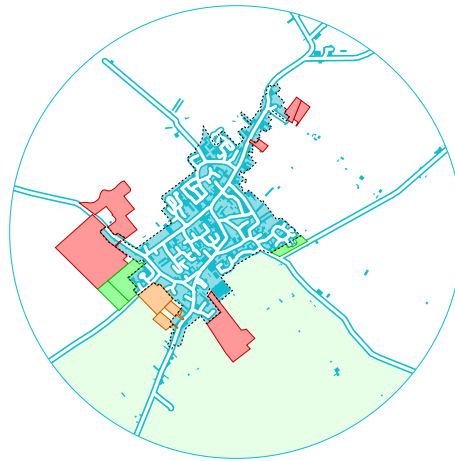
Mike Smith
Committee Member



How Big Should Cottenham Be?

Several options have recently been put forward for the future development of the village, ranging from 500 more homes to 4,500. On Wednesday 13th February 2013 the Design Group hosted presentations exploring some of these options and the issues involved.

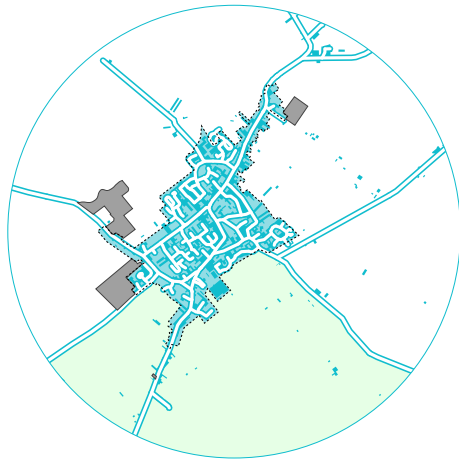
This meeting proved extremely popular, with over 100 people attending – the most ever for a Design Group meeting.



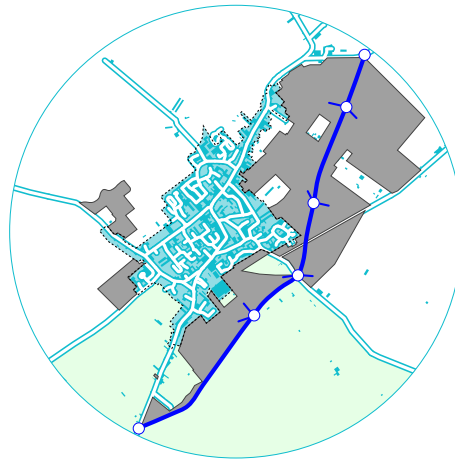
District Council assessment of Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment sites from Issues and Options part 1

- Current development framework boundary
- Current roads
- Current green belt
- SHLAA site with development potential
- SHLAA site with limited development potential
- SHLAA rejected site
- Potential site for development
- Potential park area
- Potential bypass
- Potential roundabout and access roads
- Potential traffic lights
- Current (Co-op) / proposed village centre
- 10 minute walk from village centre
- 500m radius from existing village facility

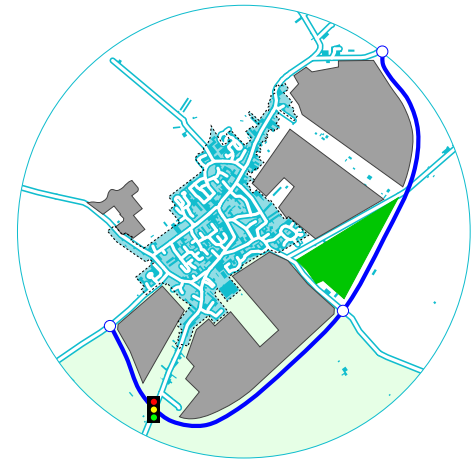
Contains Ordnance Survey data
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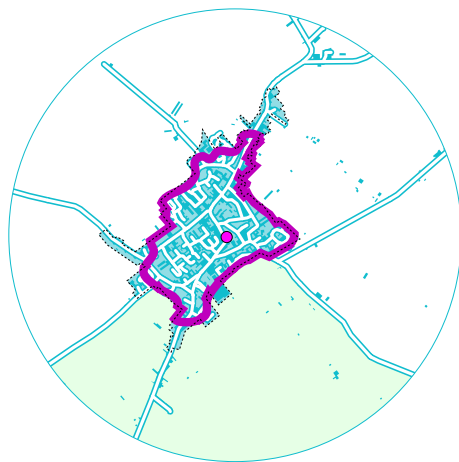
*Parish Council Option 1:
550 new homes*



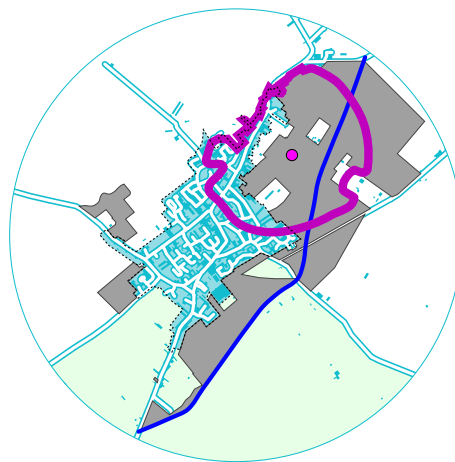
*Parish Council Option 2:
1,500+ new homes, a new village centre,
increased employment and a bypass*



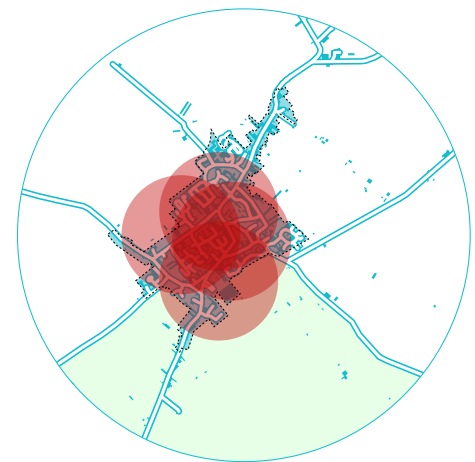
*Parish Council Option 3:
Up to 4,500 new homes and a bypass
(derived from Robin Heydon's proposal)*



*Approximately 90% of current residents
live within a 10 minute average speed
walk (800m) of the Co-op*



*Only 30% of current residents will be
within a 10 minute walk of the village
centre proposed in Option 2*



*Preferred locations near the Co-op,
Primary School, Village College, and
cluster of businesses around village sign*



Poundbury Revisited

Five members of the group spent 24 hours recently in Poundbury, Dorset; we ate lunch in the Octagon Café, dinner in the Poet Laureate pub and enjoyed an excellent breakfast after a comfortable night at Poundbury's only Bed & Breakfast accommodation. This was a return visit – a different group of members having visited in 1999 during the early days of the development.

Why all the interest in this urban extension to the Dorset town of Dorchester?

Well, the 'model' development was championed by Prince Charles, is reckoned to be a great example of radically different urban design based on unashamedly traditional architecture and enjoys an international reputation as an exemplar project. The settlement is based around a traditional high-density urban pattern, with businesses and housing intermixed – perhaps in some ways, it is not too dissimilar to the core of our own village? There is therefore much here to interest members of the group.

The masterplan for the 160 hectare site was drawn up in 1988 by architect and urban planner Leon Krier and the first phase of construction commenced in October 1993. By the beginning of 2013 there were approximately 2,250 residents – so development has been relatively slow. The

architecture is traditional with emphasis placed on the quality of design and materials, landscaping, and attention to detail. A variety of Dorset materials such as stone, slate and render are utilised with the whole brought together with pavements and parking courts throughout the development finished with the same loose gravel (residents apparently either love or hate the gravel).

The design is intended to reduce car dependency and encourage walking and alternative means of transport – although evidence of cycling

infrastructure and cyclists was almost non-existent compared to the norm in the Cambridge area. Parking provision is generally off-street in landscaped courtyards towards the rear of properties. Care has been taken to ensure these spaces are always overlooked for security reasons, often single 'sentinel' houses are located

within these courtyards. Some of these spaces though were dominated by garages with their generally blank black faces having more visual impact than the single trees and gravelled surfaces between them. Cars though seemed few in these areas – perhaps these garages were being used for their intended purpose?

We found the development to be highly permeable; parking courts, small streets, alleyways and pedestrian links meant that we could pretty-much navigate the development at will – we virtually



never found ourselves in a cul-de-sac situation.

Around 35% of the housing is provided by housing associations for rental or shared equity ownership. Uniquely this social housing is interspersed with the private housing and we found the two types to be indistinguishable. We considered this to be one of the more successful aspects of the development.

There is much more to Poundbury than just housing. There are many commercial properties and community buildings interspersed within housing areas. These range from small workshops, offices and shops to factories and larger retail units – offering employment opportunities and facilities within easy walking distance of homes. Some were 'significant' buildings, boldly placed to add interest and to aid navigation. For example, the first phase of development is centred on Pummery Square where the dominant Brownsword Hall, designed in the idiom of a traditional Cotswold market hall, provides focus for the commercial and residential buildings around it (we were told this was based on early designs, particularly the one in Tetbury, Gloucestershire – which just happens to be the home of Prince Charles.)

Development is split into four distinct phases. The smaller and

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Cottenham Village Design Group

Newsletter Issue 17 – June 2013 (cont.)

slightly lower density (most buildings being two-storey with some three-storey) and more village-like phase one was completed around ten years ago and the much larger and higher density phase two is nearing completion now. The focus of this phase is the Queen Mother Square, commemorating Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth, and around which larger multi-storey buildings are arranged to form the district centre for Poundbury. A supermarket, other retail and restaurant space, offices and flats are located here – although currently much of this commercial space remains unoccupied. Land on the north and east sides of the square and the whole of phases three and four remains undeveloped at this time.

Finally, having completed our peregrination, we headed up to Maiden Castle – the largest and most complex hillfort in Britain, extending to 45 acres and located just south of Dorchester. This was somewhat older than Poundbury (it was first occupied around 3000 BC)

and contains a complex arrangement of ramparts and ditches. The location afforded fine open views across Dorset's rolling landscape – and also an alternative view back to Poundbury and to Dorchester. The larger buildings of Poundbury were certainly very visible from this location with few trees or other vegetation softening them. This was in stark contrast to the older core of Dorchester and the surrounding (generally less attractive) suburban developments – these were largely hidden under a canopy of trees and greenery.

We enjoyed our visit – and hope that a future group of Design Group members will make a further return visit in another fourteen years. At this time the development is expected to be complete with approximately five to six thousand residents and increasing the population of Dorchester by about one-quarter.

*Steven Poole
Chair*



Cottenham Village Design Group Committee 2013–2014

Alex Darby	(2013), Planning Comments Coordinator (2011)
Cllr Sue Gymer	(Cambridgeshire County Council nominee)
Robin Heydon	(2012)
Cllr Alan Leeks	(Cottenham Parish Council nominee)
Bill Miller	(2013)
Deborah Milligan	(2013)
Steven Poole	(2013), Chair (2012), Membership Secretary (acting)
Alan Sidell	(2013)
Mike Smith	(Fen Edge Community Association nominee)
Richard Tallack	(2013)
Alexander Thoukydides	(2013), Information Officer (2011), Secretary (acting)
John Williams	(2012), Vice Chair (2012)
Cllr Tim Wotherspoon	(2012)

The position of Treasurer is currently vacant following Henry Le Brecht's resignation from the committee. There are also two vacant nominee positions which may be filled via co-optation.

If you are interested in these positions then please contact Steven Poole on 01954 203961 or at steven.j.poole@ntlworld.com.

Email membership@cvdg.org
Web www.cvdg.org

