

Objective E: Character – Heritage & Rural assets

Residents value the character of this working village set in Fen-edge countryside; any improvements must respect the village’s character as a rural working village developed around a Conservation Area rich in architectural heritage.

Spatially the village has evolved from its early rural settlement in and around the Lanes. Expansion along the High Street and reconstruction following the 1850 fire was complemented by ribbon development along the five arterial roads. Post-war cluster developments and several larger modern cluster estates, mostly within 800 metre easy walking distance of the core, complete the three-part character:

- The Rural Parish and Cottenham Lode
- The 19th century Conservation Area and the Lanes
- The 20th and 21st Century estates

Meeting the need

Certain policies from the Village Design Statement have stood the test of time; others have been absorbed into district or national planning policy. Some policies, while appropriate to the Conservation Area, only serve to increase housing costs and limit supply.

Land within 800 metres of the village core is scarce and often prevented from development by considerations ranging from flood risk, both on the site itself or to neighbouring areas as a result of run-off, to preservation of Green Belt or particular vistas. Some of these limitations will need to be revisited carefully if development within a sustainable distance of the village core is to be favoured over unsustainable extended ribbon development more than 1,200 metres from the core.

Evidence

Commission for Architecture & the Built Environment

“This way to better residential streets”

- Avoid isolated sites
- Aid navigation for walking and cycling
- Design for on-street parking

Chartered Institute of Highways & Transport

“Planning for Walking”

Walkable neighbourhoods are more sustainable especially for ageing populations.

Most people will only walk if their destination is less than a mile away with a typical catchment of 800 metres or 10 minute walk.

Cottenham Village Design Statement

Originally developed in 1994 and updated in 2007 with a substantial evidence base and widespread support in the village. Relevant policies are being adopted or adapted into this plan.

Policies to maintain Cottenham’s character

- The following policies are mostly retained or adapted from the Cottenham Village Design Statement

Policy Table C: Character

Ref	Policy	Objective met				
		1 amenities and	2 affordable	3 employment	4 impact of traffic	5 character
	The following policies are retained or adapted from the Cottenham Village Design Statement					
C/1	(VDS 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, especially for designs of affordable homes.		Y			Y
C/2	(VDS B/2) Buildings should be maintained using original or sympathetic materials and details, including use of subdued pastel shades.					Y
C/3	(VDS B/6) new developments should acknowledge their Cottenham context and minimise repetitious designs in form or proportion, keeping car parking areas to the sides rather than fronts.					Y
C/4	(VDS B/9) well-designed and engineered local energy-saving or generating solutions should be supported even in the Conservation Area					Y
C/5	(VDS S/2) New developments need to be integrated into the village and form part of a linked overall pattern					Y
C/6	(VDS S/3) infill developments or lateral extensions to existing buildings should maintain gaps where these provide views out of the village to countryside					Y
C/7	(VDS L/1) Landscape design criteria should form a key aspect in the layout, form and urban design qualities of new developments.					Y
C/8	(VDS L/2) Essential elements of the fen edge landscape character should be preserved especially Question C/1 – Which elements must be preserved?					Y
C/9	(VDS L/3) new developments on the village edge should prioritise landscape design with subdued lighting to protect the external view of the village.					Y
C/10	(VDS L/4) Landowners, community groups and individuals should be encouraged to plant native tree species to retain landscape character and to benefit wildlife within the village.	Y				Y
C/11	(VDS L/7) protect vistas that contribute to the character and attractiveness of Cottenham, especially: Question C/2 – Which vistas must be preserved?	Y				Y
C/12	A coherent overall strategy is needed to increase the extent and variety of public spaces suitable for informal recreation.	Y				Y
C/13	(VDS E/4) Shops and businesses have a major visual impact and their design should enhance not diminish their setting.	Y				Y
C/14	Minimise impact on the “big sky / open space” character of the fen-edge landscape when designing infrastructure such as bridges, gates, signs and stiles					Y
C/15	(VDS H/5) Efforts to be made to reduce the number and variety of road markings and signage commensurate with pedestrian safety					Y
C/16	(VDS O/4) new developments must add to the provision of open space for leisure and play, linked by off-road paths to existing developments	Y				Y
C/17	(VDS O/5) complete and expand the village footpath network both within and around the perimeter of the parish	Y				Y