

**BERA E-Newsletter 21<sup>st</sup> November (Part 2) –**  
[www.bera.co.uk](http://www.bera.co.uk)

**Dear Members**

**193/195 Thorpe Hall Avenue**

**Please find below BERA's response to the planning application of 193/195 Thorpe Hall Avenue. To ensure we get the message across to the council officers, please send an email which includes these objections, to the Planning Registration Team at: [planningregistrationteam@southend.gov.uk](mailto:planningregistrationteam@southend.gov.uk) . This should be sent by every member of your family as soon as possible and at the latest by the end of this week.**

**193/195 Thorpe Hall Ave 17/01738/FUL**

**Proposed Retirement Development**

1.1 The fundamental arguments advanced by the applicant in favour of the principle of the development are flawed. Firstly the evidence provided as to the demand for retirement homes is based solely upon national statistics. The applicant has not put forward evidence to show that the demand exists in Southend in general nor Thorpe Bay in particular. Indeed the only evidence that is available, Churchill's pre-application consultation, produced a resounding rejection of the proposal.

1.2 Secondly the proposal is contrary to the local plan insofar that does not provide for family housing. The argument put forward, again without specific local evidence, is that it will lead to the release of family housing through retirees taking up retirement living whereas the only certainty is the loss of two family houses.

1.3 And thirdly the statement that the development will lead to a more sustainable use of the land is nebulous. The demand emanating from the retirement homes in terms of surface water and sewerage, waste collection, the water usage, the impact on health services and increased transport use, will be far less sustainable than the two family units.

1.4 In consequence the application should be rejected on the grounds that it has failed to demonstrate that the local plan requirements for family housing should be

set aside; the development does not offer benefits sufficient to justify approval and no evidence has been provided to show there is a demand locally for the facility.

2.1 The proposals for car parking provision are significantly below the Council's expected standards. Justification for this lack of provision is based upon surveys of Churchill's other sites. Given that these surveys were of entry and exit to the respective car parks, they have not given any measures of the developments overall demand because they would have excluded all those unable to park on site and those discouraged from parking on site. The nearest street devoid of any parking restrictions is Wyatts Drive off Woodgrange Drive, a distance of 400m from the development, as is The Broadway shopping area which is in the opposite direction. The concept of "first come first served" postulated by the applicant for residents parking, implies a potential succession of vehicles entering the car park and driving out because no space is available. As for visitors, services and deliveries, it is difficult to envisage those activities all being parked some 400m away. There is every likelihood that the bus stop immediately to the west of the site will be abused on a regular basis, to the disruption of bus passengers, many of whom may be residents of the development, and parking on street in Woodgrange Drive causing a potential traffic hazard right at the exit from the roundabout.

2.2 It should not have escaped the applicant's attention that the Council recently approved an application for a 31 unit sheltered housing scheme in Chalkwell with car parking provision for 30 residents spaces.

2.3 The provision is inadequate for residents parking with no provision provided for visitors, staff, services such as doctors or health staff, etc. Deliveries are not catered for nor refuse collection. These deficiencies will result in kerbside parking, difficulties for bus passengers and traffic dangers. For these reasons the application should be refused.

3.1 The major pedestrian route for residents is likely to be along Acacia Drive towards shopping facilities, surgeries and the railway station. There is no dropped kerb at Thorpe Hall Ave, but there happens to be vehicular crossings to adjacent housing that are conveniently placed for pedestrians to cross. There is a clear need to assess this crossing point to ascertain whether a controlled crossing is necessary. But in any event there is no tactile paving for the partially sighted on any of the other crossing points on the roundabout and this should be dealt with.

4.1 The development is to have a ground floor some 30cm above what might otherwise be necessary because of the flood risk. The proposals are broadly acceptable to the Environment Agency as set out in a letter which accompanies the application. However, the Agency have also pointed out that the extent to which the development is considered safe for residents is dependent upon raised sea defences in the future for which no funding or guarantees of funding exist currently. This

degree of uncertainty is a significant factor which cannot be ignored when taken into account in assessing the application overall.

5.1 The development is cramped, the lack of car parking, the inadequate amenity space, the minimum sizes of the apartments themselves, the position of the building footprint tight to the site boundary are illustrative of over development. The arguments set out in the application for the low parking provision and the minimal amenity space are unconvincing. Where Crispins opposite and Mulberry Gate have been set back to maintain an open aspect, this development is set out to do the precise opposite, being close to the roundabout and by ignoring both the building lines in Woodgrange Drive and in Thorpe Hall Ave.

5.2 The elevations to the south and west are uninspiring tending towards three stories of unrelieved brickwork, subject to increased exposure by breaching the building line. In providing some form of flood protection by incorporating the second floor accommodation partially in the roof space, no attempt has been made to mitigate the increased height of the development, and therefore failing to show some attempt to respect the existing houses along Woodgrange Drive.

6.1 To summarise, the proposed development as submitted is unacceptable and should be refused for the following reasons:

1. No evidence has been presented to show that there is a demand for the development in the locality to overturn the current council's policy of family housing.
2. The car parking provision is inadequate to satisfy the demands of the development and will be detrimental to highway safety and the safety of residents.
3. The applicant has failed to adequately address the residents needs for pedestrian facilities.
4. The application does not provide a sufficiently robust long term solution for flood protection.
5. The development by reason of its forward projection, its scale and size is detrimental to the street scene.