

Concern over Midlothian party flats

by Marie Sharp Local Democracy Reporter

Council flats will be built on land earmarked for a community hub in the heart of a residential estate, despite objections from locals.

The plans to turn a 1.2-acre site in the middle of housing at Burnbrae Road, Bonnyrigg, into 16 flats, four houses and a shop attracted 15 letters from people living around the site when they were revealed.

Among concerns raised were that the new council units would become "party flats".

And there were calls for the site, which was previously marketed as a neighbourhood centre, to be retained for community services to support people already living in the expanding Hopefield estate.

Previous planning consent had been given for the land at the junction of Burnbrae Road and Burnbrae Road North to be used for retail units, offices and a crèche.

However, plans submitted on behalf of Midlothian Council to its planners for the new residential units have been granted planning permission.

A report by planning officers acknowledged concerns raised by

people living in surrounding estate over the new homes.

It said: "Some objectors support the principle of the land being redeveloped and the need for a shop at Hopefield, but have concerns over the proposal.

"Numerous objectors said that the site should be used to improve the area for the local community, such as a local hub with community facilities or doctor surgery."

Among objections were claims that the site, which is in a predominantly family area, would be "party flats" and that it would create road safety concerns for children playing in the area.

The planning officer's report acknowledged that the land had been identified in the masterplan for Hopefield as a 'local centre' but said that planning permission for the retail units previously approved had expired.

It said that with the exception of that application, there had been "little interest" in developing the site for its allocated purpose.

It added: "Whilst it is regrettable that this will not form the 'hub' that was envisaged, the site is one of the few remaining underdeveloped plots in Hopefield and the proposal would bring some community facility to the area."

The report also said that the new housing would be for council tenants, adding that the homes would be "offered to people on the housing list and only to people with no anti-social behaviour history".

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