

Sewell's House – 53 Alpha Road  
Now Flats 1-6, 53 Alpha Road



View of the chalet Bungalow before George Sewell had it redeveloped – photo 1973

The house was owned by George Sewell, the Margate Borough Surveyor and Engineer. It was he who drew up the plans to redevelop the property and site in the mid 1970s, just before he presented the Borough with a scheme to join up the two dual carriageways on the Canterbury Road from the western junction of Queen Bertha's Gardens with the section at the foot of Brooksend Hill.

This plan would have cut the village of Birchington into two separate units – so killing the sense of our original identity. This would have pleased the Borough leaders, who wanted to see the village as merely a large housing estate at the western end of their Borough – the purpose for which they incorporated Birchington into their borders in 1935. We have been fighting this notion ever since. The history of the village is as old and illustrious as Margate's and we have retained that sense of a distinct community ever since.

Owing to immense opposition from the people of Birchington, the scheme was eventually turned down – even after a very crowded meeting in Church House in 1969. At the end of the meeting, George Sewell stood up and said, "Well, I have listened to all your arguments against the dualling, but I don't understand what all the fuss is about. After all, what is Birchington? – "Just a few houses on the way to Margate!"

How he got out of that meeting alive, I'll never know!



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