

Campaigners continue fight at Chaucer Fields inquiry

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The Westgate Hall is expected to be packed on Monday for the start of a public inquiry into the protection of one of the city's most attractive green spaces.

A planning inspector is considering a village green application for the southern slopes of the University of Kent, known as the Chaucer Fields, where the institution wants to build student accommodation and a hotel and conference centre.

Residents in the area have been campaigning against the development for years and hope to persuade the inspector the land has a long history of recreational use by the community.

The city council has already designated the Chaucer Fields in the Local Plan as a 'green gap' to provide a buffer between the university and residents' homes.

But campaigners from the Save Chaucer Fields group believe that only the designation of vil-



UNDER THREAT: Chaucer Fields at Kent University

lage green status will guarantee it protection in the future.

The hearing, could last up to 10 days, is the culmination of a long battle by the group which has spent thousands of pounds on the campaign.

As many as 25 witnesses are expected to give oral evidence in favour of the application and a further 20 statements considered by the inspector. University representatives are expected to challenge the application.

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