

# University development inquiry hits a snag

A PUBLIC inquiry into the Chaucer Fields village green application was adjourned this week after campaigners submitted a late amendment.

Opponents are fighting plans by the University of Kent to build a hotel and conference centre on the southern slopes of the campus.

After taking legal advice, the Save Chaucer Fields group asked for new evidence dating back to the 1960s, showing the land's use by local people for recreation, to be considered by the planning inspector.

But university lawyers objected, claiming it would involve "unacceptable retrospective application of the current law".

On Monday, the inspector, Ross Crail,

heard the legal arguments but adjourned the hearing to decide whether to allow the amendment.

It will then have to be considered by Kent County Council and only then can the public inquiry proceed.

Save Chaucer Fields chairman David Smith said: "The upshot is that no end is in sight. It will be many months yet before the fate of the fields is settled.

"It seems likely the inspector's recommendation will not be considered by KCC until a new regulation committee member panel is in place following the May election, so possibly not until early June.

In the meantime, we have no intention of giving up or flagging."



Chaucer Fields, where the university hopes to develop

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