

# Woodland Trust backs fight to stop development

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THE campaign to save the area of green just south of Kent University has won the support of the Woodland Trust.

Campaigners are hoping to protect Chaucer Fields from being built on and wrote to the trust to ask it to help preserve the area.

Kent University wants to build a hotel and conference centre plus seven accommodation blocks to provide an extra 761 student rooms.

Richard Norman, secretary of the Save Chaucer Fields Group, says the trust approves of the efforts to try to protect a green area.

"Quite why the university wishes to sacrifice this much-valued green space in order to go into the hotel business remains unclear," he said. "Hoteliers are unlikely to welcome a development which will take business away from them and in these hard times students and lecturers would doubtless prefer the university to invest its money in education rather than in a speculative commercial venture.

"As for the accommodation blocks, we have always stressed that we are not opposed to the building of more student

accommodation on the campus but there are plenty of alternative sites which could be used for them.

"The destruction of these fields, hedgerows and trees which are a habitat for wildlife and a highly-valued local amenity and have unique views across the city to the cathedral, would be an act of vandalism."

The university has submitted its application to the planning department at Canterbury City Council but it has yet to be decided.

The trust's support also came with a £137 grant which the group used to publish a newsletter.

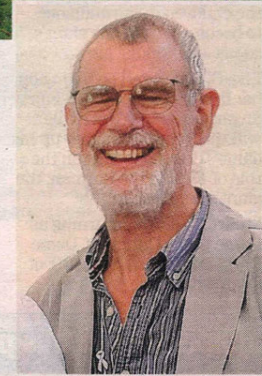
David Smith, the chairman of the Save Chaucer Fields Group, said: "I'm very pleased with the backing of the trust and obviously they approve of our efforts to save this area. We are also hoping that one day Chaucer Fields will be able to get village green status as a way of preserving them."

Kent University did not provide a comment before the paper went to press.

■ **What do you think? Email [kentishgazette@thekmggroup.co.uk](mailto:kentishgazette@thekmggroup.co.uk) or write to Gazette House, Estuary View Business Park, Whitstable, CT5 3SE**



**Chaucer Fields, overlooking Canterbury city centre, the planned site for a hotel, conference centre and accommodation for the University of Kent**



**Richard Norman: 'Hoteliers are unlikely to welcome a development which will take business away from them'**

Courtesy Kent Messenger