

Kentish Gazette

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Letters to the Editor

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University identified site for hotel long ago

ORIGINALLY, when there were plans for 10 not four colleges and before Kent University acquired additional land on the Blean side of Giles Lane, it was expected that the southern slopes would be built on (University Responds To Housing Plan Objectors, Kentish Gazette, February 3).

The land towards Blean was intended for recreation as it was flat and makes for good pitches, a characteristic not shared by the southern slopes.

Sport England has previously said that the number of pitches must be retained.

It has long been the university's wish to build a hotel and conference centre on the campus, and good quality accommodation for use by students during the academic year close by will clearly make those more attractive to major conferences and so on.

This will not only be an increasingly important source of income as cuts to university funding take effect, but will also provide employment and income for the city.

The site was identified as a possible one for a hotel and conference centre when I was a member of the council of the university (1998-2006) and, for a time, chaired the university's estates board.

Since then, the number of students has increased, giving rise to the need for on-campus accommodation.

Mary Berg, Orchard Street, Canterbury

■ I DO not live in the directly affected area by Kent University's plans, but I have done so and know the beautiful meadows, woods, stream and old apple orchard very well.

It has literally defined the university from the cathedral city since it was built in 1965.

The views over this area appear on just about every TV clip concerning the campus and the city.

I am also concerned no one has mentioned the impact such a large development will have on local schools.

Having a child that attends

Archbishop's School, I am extremely concerned about the described development and its effect on the children walking to and from the school.

During university term times there will be students and users of the hotel and conference centre, with only 200 parking spaces for them and the support staff who will add to this number.

When the university year ends, and before the school term ends, there will be potentially 1,000 visitors in holiday or conference lets on the site, with shops etc a stone's throw from the school gate.

Current campus facilities have a clearly defined space between them and the public footpath/bridle path, but this development will be running alongside it.

I am also greatly puzzled by the absence of the innovation centre from the photographs on the university's website and that of the commercial company carrying out this public "consultation" exercise.

There is also no mention of the current 400-room extension at Keynes College and the fact this could easily have been extended to incorporate these extra student residences with all the other support facilities already in place. It makes neither fiscal nor environmental sense.

Mrs J. Martin, St Michaels Close, Rough Common