

LETTERS to the editor

Our open spaces must be saved from development

ASPIRE, protect, enhance and promote (University Must Not Be Allowed To Build On Slopes, Letters, Kentish Gazette, April 21) – these are the core principles set out in the city council's admirable Open Spaces Strategy.

The protect policy asserts it is vital to protect existing open space from development.

It continues: "A semi-natural space may look ripe for development but is a key piece of open space from a biodiversity point of view."

The author could be describing the University of Kent slopes, a part of which is Chaucer Fields, which is referred to on the green spaces priority list and is among the priority projects (2009-2014) to be enhanced.

It is also a place of extraordinary and sublime beauty with a wonderful view over the city. In the middle of the fields stands a majestic, 200-year-old hedgerow taller than a man.

The university, however, thinks that it is ripe for development and plans to demolish this open space and replace it with a hotel, conference centre and student halls.

Les Lanagan, Beverley Road, Canterbury

■ YOUR recent star letter referring to the Chaucer Fields was so appropriate at this time.

Why on earth has the University of Kent decided to build an additional development so far from the colleges?

In its present setting, overlooking the city, the whole campus is admired and respected by residents and visitors from home and abroad.

Building to within 60 metres of residential properties could be hugely disruptive, with unforeseeable consequences.

Dennis Booth, Durnford Close, Canterbury

■ PROF Richard Scase is probably right to think that Canterbury is out of the loop in terms of demand for more conference and business innovation centres (Why We Should Expand Our Core Strengths, Opinion, Letters, Kentish Gazette, April 21).

But I think he is wrong to assume that there will be such a demand for student accommodation and to therefore support the use of Chaucer Fields for that purpose.

A likely consequence of the new student fees regime is that across the country there will be reduced demand for university places.

To save on accommodation, people will choose to attend universities that they can reach daily from their family home. University towns will be an endangered species.

This would limit Canterbury's potential as an educational and cultural centre and turn the Chaucer Fields development into an excrescence futile in every respect.

These points add support to Roger Power's argument in a letter on the same day that, because of the high cost of university education, there will probably not be a student demand for the new housing.

Tony Skillen, Norman Road, Canterbury



UNDER THREAT: Chaucer Fields, the planned site for a new conference centre and accommodation at the University of Kent

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