

Campaigners battle to save ancient hedgerow

EXCLUSIVE

by Gerry Warren

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MORE than 500 metres of ancient hedgerow could be grubbed up if Kent University builds student accommodation and a hotel on the Chaucer Fields.

The university has submitted a planning application to remove several hedgerows but campaigners fighting the development say it will have a devastating effect on local wildlife.

Already around 300 residents have objected, claiming some of the hedges date back to the 18th century and they are appealing to the city council to give them special protection.

Campaigner Oliver Fry said: "Some of the hedges mark the old track to Beverley Farm which is a listed building and are important for local wildlife, including nesting birds, dormice and bats. It could particularly affect the sparrow population, which is declining in numbers.

"We hope the city council will designate these hedges as



HEDGEROW PROTEST: Residents are objecting to plans by the University of Kent to grub out ancient hedgerows

Picture: Barry Goodwin PD1858633

important under the Hedgerow Regulations 1997 and save them for our wildlife, heritage and enjoyment."

Wildlife

In its application, the university says it has carried out a wildlife survey and claims the existing hedgerows are considered to be of "low value" to bats

and little dormouse activity was recorded.

The report added that a range of mitigation measures are proposed including woodland and scrub planting which, once mature, will offer enhanced resources for wildlife.

Anyone wishing to comment on the plans to remove the hedges should contact the city council's planning department by

Thursday – quoting application number CA/11/00531/HDG or by emailing development.control@canterbury.gov.uk

■ **What do you think? Write to Gazette House, 5-8 Boorman Way, Estuary View Business Park, Whitstable, CT5 3SE or email kentishgazette@thekmgroup.co.uk**

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