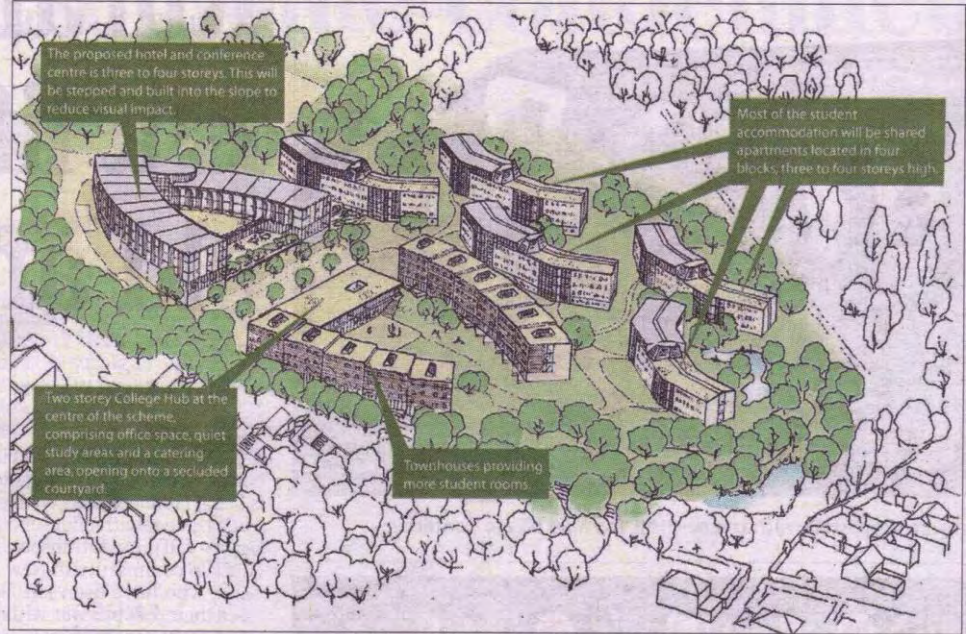


OBJECTORS' BID FOR VILLAGE GREEN STATUS LEADS TO PUBLIC INQUIRY



GREEN SPACE: Chaucer Fields, above, and right the proposed development

Picture: Chris Davey FM2215391



Chaucer Fields delays force university to revise its plans

EXCLUSIVE

by Gerry Warren
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DELAYS in getting permission to develop Chaucer Fields have forced the University of Kent to look elsewhere on the campus to build new student homes.

Bosses will announce new plans next week as the controversial scheme for accommodation for 700 students on the site faces further delay by a public inquiry.

County council officers have recommended the inquiry following an application by objectors for the fields to be granted protected village green status.

It is likely to be approved at a meeting of the county council's regulation committee panel in the Westgate Hall in Canterbury at 1pm next Tuesday.

Officers believe because of the contradictory views of both parties about the historic use of the picturesque southern slopes, it can only be resolved by a planning inspector.

University chiefs say they welcome



Campaigners at Chaucer Fields

Picture: Chris Davey FM2215368

the proposed inquiry but spokesman Martin Herrema would not be drawn on whether the scheme for Chaucer Fields would eventually be abandoned because of objections and delays.

He said: "There continues to be strong need for more residential accommodation on the university's Canterbury campus. Following extensive deliberations that have taken into account the strongly-expressed

views of local residents, the university will be bringing forward revised proposals for additional residences, so that the demands can be satisfied without further delay. Further details will be published next week."

Save Chaucer Fields campaigners have been fighting plans by the university to build seven blocks of student accommodation and a hotel.

If a public inquiry is approved, it

could be at least a year before it is heard, delaying further the university's plans to develop the land.

But the regulation committee panel has other options and could approve or reject the village green application.

Save Chaucer Fields Group chairman David Smith said: "We are very optimistic that the application will not be dismissed. However, if it is, the Save Chaucer Fields campaign will continue with full vigour to oppose any revised planning application."

"We've heard that this is likely to be coming very soon. We've been waiting 15 months since the university asked for deferment, and we are ready."

"Our support base has increased with time and local people are more determined than ever that the university should pursue their development proposals on less sensitive sites that do not affect the local community and do not destroy a valued green space."

■ **What do you think? Call 01227 475985, email kentishgazette@thekmgroup.co.uk or write to Gazette House, 5-8 Boorman Way, Wraik Hill, Whitstable, CT5 3SE.**

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