

The Canterbury Society

Professor Keith Mander
The Registry
University of Kent
Canterbury , Kent CT2 7NZ

27 November 2011

Dear Keith

Re Chaucer Fields development

We are writing on behalf of the Canterbury Society, to ask you to pass on to the appropriate committee the concerns of our members about the University's plans for the development of the Chaucer Fields site.

We should like to begin by welcoming the principle that student accommodation should be provided on campus and by expressing our appreciation of the consultation process in which the University has engaged. Our members are pleased that the University is planning to provide more housing for students, which will free up family homes in the city. They have also appreciated being able to see the plans and make comments on them.

Our concerns focus on the location of the proposed development. Building on the 'Chaucer Fields' site would have a very detrimental effect on a much-loved open space, located between the city and the university. This space is all that remains of an area where residents of the city have always walked and played and generally spent their leisure time. In addition the development would spoil the views of the city from the north, views which add greatly to the beauty of the University site. Finally, development of this site is contrary to Local Plan Policy, in which the site is described as having High Landscape Value.

We are also concerned about the height of the proposed development. The plans envisage a development rising about seventeen metres from the bridle path on the south edge. The hotel at the top rises to five floors and the whole development would have an unreasonably dominant effect upon the two-storey, family housing to the south.

Our main reason for contacting you now is to urge you to consider other sites. There are many other less visually sensitive sites on the University's land. For example, locating student accommodation along the road to Parkwood could turn what is currently a rather scary walk for students going home at night into a safe, well lit and attractive part of the university campus. The hotel and conference centre could well be located behind and to the north of the Innovation Centre, where they would be close to the main campus and to transport into the city, but would not be visible from the south.

We would also suggest that it might be helpful for both the University and the City Council if the University were to develop a land use Master Plan. This could be agreed with the City Council and would form the basis for future development. The plan could be reviewed on a regular basis to allow for changing circumstances. This would have the advantage of removing the element of surprise when planning applications come forward, since there would be a presumption in favour of granting planning permission if a proposal was in accordance with the agreed Master Plan.

Do get in touch if you would like to discuss anything we have said.

Kind regards

Professor Jan Pahl
Chair of the Canterbury Society
18 St Dunstan's Terrace
Canterbury
Kent CT2 8AX

John Walker
Vice-chair of the Canterbury Society
The Sail Loft, 5 Priory Courtyard
Ramsgate
Kent CT11 9PW

Cc Peter Czarnomski, Director of Estates