

Plans rejected for 98 room National Forest hotel and spa

Plans for a 98 room hotel and spa at a golf course on the edge of the National Forest have been rejected.

Golf club operator Sparsis Leisure had applied to develop land next to [Forest Hill Golf Club, in Markfield Lane, Botcheston](#), a few miles west of Leicester. Leicester City Football Club briefly considered redeveloping the golf club five years ago as its new training ground, but the £100 million training ground was built in Seagrave in the north of the county instead.

Last year Sparsis Leisure applied to Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council for outline planning for the new proposals months after another, bigger hotel scheme, was turned down.

It wanted to turn scrubland next to the club into a [luxury hotel resort with spa facilities](#), alongside wider plans to refurbish the site, which the applicants hoped would secure the club's future.

However planning officers decided the scheme would be 'incongruous' with its rural surroundings.

Desford Parish Council had supported the plans, saying: "Although this site falls outside the parish boundary, Desford Parish Council wishes to support the application as the benefits would be felt across the surrounding area. The proposed 98-bed hotel with leisure and spa facilities at the Forest Hill Golf Club will contribute significantly to the rural economy through the level of employment it would generate.

"The site is currently brownfield and the improved biodiversity would support the National Forest strategy. The

proposal would also encourage further tourism.”

But planning officers said in their report: “The proposed hotel would constitute an incongruous form of development positioned within a prominent location in this rural location in the National Forest.”

Documents submitted to the council on behalf of Sparsis Leisure said providing accommodation on the site would support the local economy and tourism. They said: “The public want and need more leisure facilities, more outside activities, better functioning buildings, structured engagement, supported programs and overall improved wellness, and therefore need to change this “traditional golf club” to one of ‘golf and wellness’.”

The company had previously submitted an application for a much-larger 152 bed hotel, which was turned down by the council in 2021.

The council said it had worked with the developer on the latest proposals, with planning officers adding: “In this instance, it has not been possible to overcome the concerns raised and the proposal remains in conflict with the provisions of the development plan and therefore the application has been refused.”

Planning officers turned the application down under delegated authority, which allows them to make decisions on behalf of the elected members of the council’s planning committee.

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