

Client: Oak Holdings plc
Source: Eckington Leader (Main)
Date: 04 February 2005
Page: 1,2
Circulation: 23192
Area(cm²): 268

Plans for £300m leisure complex

EUROPE'S largest indoor leisure and tourism centre looks set to be developed next to Rother Valley Country Park.

The £300 million YES! entertainment project would create almost 3,000 jobs and provide a huge boost for tourism in South Yorkshire and north Derbyshire.

Development company and property consultancy Oak Holdings plc, in association with Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council submitted an outline planning application on Monday.

YES! would regenerate 320 acres (130 hectares) of brownfield land adjoining the Rother Valley Country Park, and close to junction 31 of the M1.

Previously the site was the Pithouse West coal mine and coking plant which has been disused for many years since the pit closures.

It is anticipated that YES! would attract tourists from all over the country and create 2,700 new jobs across a broad spectrum of skills, addressing two of the Deputy Prime Minister's Northern Way targets, promoting tourism and leisure and tackling unemployment.

YES! would feature over one million square feet of entertainment facilities with supporting infrastructure including a unique combination of a major theatre complex, extreme sports centre, major indoor entertainment facilities, four-star resort spa and conference hotel, exhibition centre and golf range, along with restaurants, bars, cafes and festival retailing.

The new theatre, set to be the largest outside London's West End, would help bolster the area's growing reputation as a centre for the creative and cultural industries.

The major indoor themed leisure and world-class extreme sports complex would be integrated into Rother Valley Park's existing sports facilities, including an Olympic-standard canoe slalom course.

The Baydrive Group, promoters of the innovative TopGolf Centres, would open one of their innovative golf driving range centres and Oak Holdings say there has also been strong interest from several major global hotel operators.

Chief executive Steve Lewis says: "Undoubtedly, YES! will be a sensation, providing South Yorkshire and the UK with a tourism and leisure development to be proud of and encouraging people to travel into the area. It will certainly be the largest undercover tourism and

leisure development in Europe.

"Apart from creating up to 2,700 new jobs, YES! also has educational, environmental and cultural merits that will significantly benefit surrounding communities."