

New 50m Golf Complex for Northampton

1976 Open Champion Johnny Miller is to design his first 'own name' golf course at Northampton. Miller made a come back this year, winning the A.T.&T. at Pebble Beach, his first tour victory since 1983

Work on a £50 million golf complex in central England designed by Open Champion Johnny Miller, based on the concept of combining health and leisure facilities on one integrated site has started outside Northampton. It will be the first development of its kind in Britain.

Collingtree Park is the first integrated complex to be built by Health and Leisure International in Britain and is based on the concept of setting top quality executive homes into the beautifully controlled landscaped environment of a championship golf course similar in many ways to both Wentworth and St. George's Hill.

The Company intend to go several stages further by incorporating onto the golf course, Britain's first purpose-designed golfing academy to teach golf to people of all ages and abilities. This will be complemented by further leisure and health facilities designed to give tuition in many other sports. This concept is aimed particularly at senior business executives and professional people and includes a sports injury clinic capable of providing full rehabilitation facilities for top sports men and women. A luxury hotel and homes for retired people are also planned.

Planning authority has been granted by Northampton Borough Council for HLI to develop the 275-acre site a few minutes off the M1 motorway, near Collingtree village, between the motorway and the A508. The total development will cost approximately £50m and take up to five years to complete. Work on the golf course - the first phase

of the project - commenced in May and is scheduled to be open for play by the Autumn of 1989.

The site will contain 185 luxury houses on about 60 acres of grounds in a landscaped environment, set between eight lakes. The championship golf course built to USPGA specifications, with a club house, a four-star hotel, and 45 homes for retired people. Later the site will include a forward health sports teaching academy and health centre as well as a 60-bed nursing home.

Collingtree Park was chosen as the site for HLI's first golf complex because of its geographical position at the crossroads of central England and the access to it by motorway. It is within easy reach for executives and professional people to drive to for a day's golf from the Midlands and Home Counties. Watford and the outskirts of Greater London are only an hour or so's drive away. Access is a few minutes off Junction 15 of the M1 just three miles from the centre of Northampton.

The landscaping of 275 acres involves the moving of more than 350,000 cubic metres of earth and the formation of eight lakes with a surface area of approximately 11 acres. The water features will contain some 25 million gallons and will eliminate the occasional flood problems associated with Wooton Brook which runs through the park. Considerable sums of money are being spent on the woodland management scheme which will preserve existing trees and plant new areas.

The 18-hole golf championship course covering 160 acres will be one of the most spectacular in Europe. It is the second in Britain to be designed to full USPGA specifications - the first being at St. Mellion in Cornwall. Extensive drainage and irrigation will guarantee superb golf play throughout the year.

The course is the first to be designed by Johnny Miller under his own name. Johnny will be responsible for the golf course strategy and has the back-up of Golfforce Inc. for the technical

design aspects. The course has been specially designed so that the driving tees lead away from the houses making gardens safe from stray or sliced golf balls. Outlying houses will also be protected by the design of the course.

The club house will include dining rooms, bars and rooms for private functions and provide a personal service which will take care of golfers' needs from the moment they step out of their car until they leave the club.

The academy facilities will include three practice holes of golf - a par 3, a par 4 and a par 5 not provided anywhere else in Europe. There will also be the more usual facilities of a double edged driving range, chipping bunkers, practice greens and putting green.

This specially designed academy will run residential and non-residential courses for complete beginners through to advanced players in both golf and later tennis. A sports hall with squash, indoor tennis, cricket and bowls is scheduled for the latter development stages.

The 185 exclusive 4 to 5 bedroom detached homes will stand in a third of an acre looking on to the golf course. Contracts for building some of the homes have already been agreed with Bovis and Wimpey. It is expected that they will be completed and ready for occupation by 1991.

Negotiations are at an advanced stage for the four-star hotel which will have 150 bedrooms and aimed at both the strong mid week commercial corporate market and the weekend resort guest.

The health centre will be one of the most advanced in the world for dealing with stress among executives, treating sports injuries and sports rehabilitation.

A partner company International Resort Holdings, a golf development consultancy, represents Jack Nicklaus Golf Services in Europe and was the development consultancy involved in the St. Mellion golf course in Cornwall. Shanning Group the other partner is an international healthcare organisation, based at Berkhamsted in Hertfordshire. It has been responsible for hospitals, clinics and nursing homes around the world. Finance for the Collingtree Park project is being provided by Gammelstaden - the Swedish bank.

Mr. Graham Fisher, Chairman of Health and Leisure International said: "Collingtree Park will put Northampton on to the world's golfing map. Collingtree Park has been chosen as the site for HLI's first golf complex because of its geographic position at the crossroads of central England and the access to it by motorway and rail.

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