



Snoasis

I wish it could be Christmas eeverydaaay....

By Godfrey Spanner

This summer and autumn the British ski team could be found training on a German indoor ski slope at Nuess. In previous years the ski team would have headed for the high glaciers in the Alps. But climate change, global warming, is having an impact on the glaciers - which can no longer guarantee year round skiing. Leisure skiers are also facing a similar situation with the snow season shortening or at least less reliable. Skiers are being forced to look elsewhere. Step up indoor skiing centres.

Several indoor ski centres have already been established around Europe, most notably at Neuss in Germany, Xanadu in Spain and Xscape in the UK. However, plans are afoot that will change the indoor skiing landscape forever.

Snoasis will revolutionise the skiing experience. To be built around a disused quarry near Great Blakenham, Suffolk just a few miles North West of Ipswich, this innovative holiday destination promises a radical alternative for Britain's estimated 4.5 million winter sports devotees. It will create an active family leisure resort of unprecedented diversity as well as a training ground budding international skiers.

At the centre will be the world's biggest indoor ski slope.

The slope will measure a huge half a kilometre in length, with a near 100-meter vertical drop, and 75 metres wide. The slope will be able to accommodate over 2,000 skiers per hour. It will be covered in tonnes of real snow generated by huge snow machines. To put the scale of the ski slope into context it is the equivalent of putting Nelson's Column at Oxford Circus and skiing down Regent's Street to Piccadilly Circus. But while this world-record-breaking feature will be a huge draw for winter sports fans, Snoasis also hopes to offer a magnet for those not even remotely interested in skiing.

The 350-acre Snoasis site will include a 4-star 350-room hotel and 350 self-catering lodges as well as hostel accommodation for students. Catering for the skiing and snowboard fraternity, Snoasis will provide a wide variety of facilities including 14 different winter sports disciplines. But perhaps just as important, the mould-breaking plan calls for standards of facilities to accommodate 'Olympic standard' training to allow Britain's winter sports athletes to train for competitions at the highest level.

Snoasis will offer a year-round winter sports centre with broad appeal, to families, schools and snow sports training organisations. Due to its unprecedented scale, the slope will offer an outstanding and weather-proof training ground for national snow sports teams training, for example, for World



Planned site for Snoasis, Image Courtesy of Snoasis.

Cup slalom races and board half-pipe.

The Great Blakenham site, acquired by Onslow Suffolk Limited from Blue Circle three years ago, has the perfect terrain for building a slope and has allowed the architects to create a stunning design for the centre.

External ice hockey rink Speed skating rink Full length dry run bobsleigh track Ice climbing walls Cross-country ski run Bobsleigh run 18 hole golf course Water sports facilities Horse riding Multi purpose indoor sports centres (tennis, basketball, volleyball, football, badminton etc) Health and Fitness centre, including jogging trail 7,000 seat multi-purpose arena with ice rink and practice rink Outdoor sports pitches 8 screen multiplex cinema State of the art 24 lane ten pin bowling centre 12 restaurants, 6 bars and cafes, such as Conran 'Try and Buy' sports retail village, including 24 hour convenience store National winter sports academy 100,000 square foot casino, and nightclub Mixed-use developments, comprising office, residential and commercial space.

Planning consent

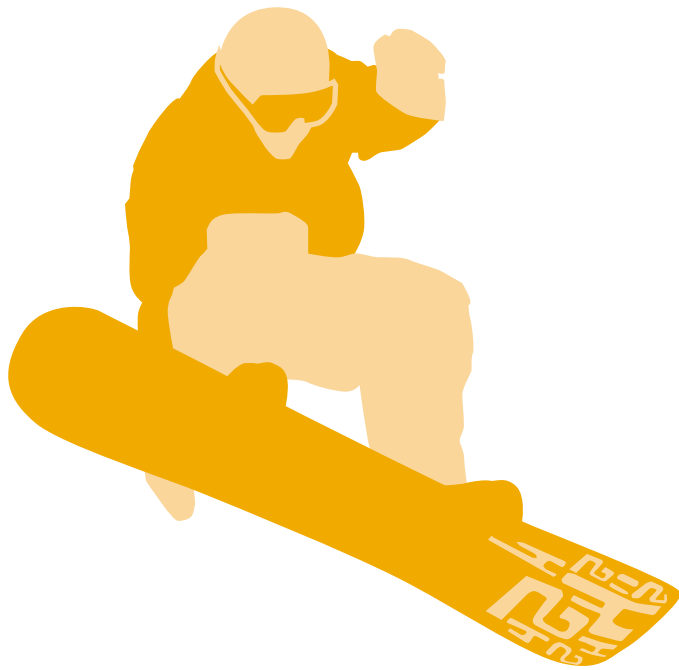
With design and the financing of the project well advanced, the realisation of Snoasis is now dependent on its progress through the planning system. An important first hurdle for Snoasis is to ensure that the current review of Regional

Planning Guidance (RPG) by the East of England Regional Assembly (EERA) makes an allowance for the development of a 'Snoasis type' project in the region.

Regional Planning Guidance provides a framework for development within the east of England region and contextual guidance for planning authorities when considering planning applications.

The legal advice we have received is that for a Snoasis planning application to be successful there would need to be a reference to a 'Snoasis type' development or Destination Resort in the regional planning guidance. We are currently concentrating our efforts on persuading the regional assembly that the revised PRG should make an allowance for a Snoasis type project in the East of England. Everyone locally is behind it and we are encouraging our supporters to make representations to the Assembly.

It is anticipated that EERA will make a decision on the revised Regional Planning Guidance in early in 2004 following which a full Snoasis planning application will be submitted to the local authority. If this goes through, the construction schedule is such that 2006 would be the target date for Snoasis's opening.



The benefits that Snoasis could bring to the local area and the region are substantial. Snoasis will provide a major tourist attraction for the East of England capable of bringing an estimated 2.5 million visitors annually to the area. It is expected to create around 3,000 jobs, while the construction phase will create over 1,500 jobs. As well as major catalyst the regeneration of the Ipswich / Cambridge corridor, Snoasis is a sustainable development – planned for a brownfield site the finished scheme will use the latest environmentally sensitive techniques such as renewable energy generated by methane gas from the adjoining landfill site. Snoasis, with its dramatic design, will also provide the region with an ‘Eden Project’ style landmark.

There is also the potential to build a dedicated rail station for the resort. We are looking at the possibility of reinstating a branch line connecting to the main London to Norwich line. This would give us the opportunity to run ski specials from London and Norwich to Snoasis.

The benefits of Snoasis to the region have not been lost on the local authority. “It’s the biggest thing that’s happening in mid Suffolk and it would be of national and international importance”, said Councillor Wendy Marchant.

Snoasis has also received endorsement and support from a number of winter sports organisations. Konrad Bartelski, Britain’s foremost World Cup downhill ski racer and Chairman of the selectors for the British Land Alpine Ski Team, said:

“I view the Snoasis project as a major asset to the training and selection of young winter sports athletes. Being a predominantly lowland nation, there have always been quite severe limitations in terms of convenience and cost of the development of our competition skiers and boarders. Snoasis clearly heralds a new era in which we will be able to advance the quality and depth of our athletes and I welcome the move”.

As well as providing an exciting alternative for the UK’s 4.6 million skiers, we hope that Snoasis will tap into the wider European market. We believe that Snoasis will be of such a quality, year-round winter sports venue that will be attractive to the 15 million skiers across Europe. Snoasis will not only be a major boost for the East of England, it will also make a significant contribution to the UK’s international tourism offering.

Our vision is a serious glimpse into the future and if it succeeds in becoming a reality, the British relationship with skiing and winter sports could be transformed forever. The British ski team could find themselves training in the unlikely setting of the flatlands of East Anglia.

Godfrey Spanner, Director of Onslow Investments.