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142nd Surrey golf course blocked

A HIGH Court judge has blocked plans to turn an estate once owned by the former press baron Lord Beaverbrook into a hotel, spa and golf complex.

Environmental campaigners opposed to the planned development on the 375-acre Cherkley Estate near Leatherhead in Surrey hailed a "great victory". They say the county already has 141 golf courses and does not need another.

Mr Justice Haddon-Cave said Mole Valley council had "misunderstood the meaning of need" when giving the current owner, Longshot Cherkley Court Ltd,

permission to build the hotel complex. He said the council's decision was perverse and unlawful.

Tim Harrold, chairman of the protest group the Cherkley Campaign and vice president of the Surrey branch of the Campaign to Protect Rural England, said: "This is a great victory."

The judge said: "The developers argued that proof of private demand for exclusive golf facilities equated to need. This is fallacious. The more exclusive the golf club, the less public need is demonstrated. It is a zero-sum game."