

IN PICTURES: 14-storey 'forest' building earmarked next to Hemel Hempstead station



An artist's impression of how the building would look



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- [In pictures: The proposed Boxmoor Forest building](#)

A 14-storey building designed to look like a forest could be built near Hemel Hempstead station.

The ambitious Boxmoor Forest project would see hundreds of apartments built with zero emissions – but some neighbours have labelled it as an ‘oversized monstrosity’.

The brownfield site, at 499 and 501 London Road, would consist of a total of 435 apartments along with office space, a gym, café and coffee bar, conference and banquet hall, a multi-purpose hall and underground parking.

There would also be a playschool crèche, a library, pet care centre, and satellite health care centre.

Sporting facilities would include a squash court, badminton room along with green roof, rooftop tennis court and a half basketball court.

A Mitsubishi car showroom, which is being closed down, and a Kwik Fit garage which is looking to relocate, would make way for the scheme if it was granted permission.

Lumiere Developments says Boxmoor Forest had two main objectives – to be emission free, and to be a mixed used efficient development.

Nik Vyas, an architect for Lumiere, told the Gazette: “Effectively we would be giving the residents free energy because it would be generated on site.

“Our buildings are 100 per cent renewable.

“Boxmoor Forest tries to resemble the landscape and the moorlands around it.

“Some councils seem happy to build on green belt land and that’s heartbreaking. This development is on brownfield land and it’s in a great location right next to the station.”

Lumiere saw its plans for a six-storey office development on the site rejected by the council two months ago.

The firm is also behind the Beacon development near Boxmoor, another eco-friendly building due to be constructed soon.

But nearby residents have flooded the council’s website with concerns over the proposed Boxmoor Forest.

Their main bugbears appear to be the appearance of the building, as well as worries over congestion due to the scheme’s close proximity to the rail station.

More than 60 comments have been filed at the online planning portal, all of which are objections. One neighbour, who lives in London Road, said: “The height of the development will cause significant overshadowing, loss of light, and pollution.

“Traffic along London Road is already gridlocked at peak times, and will be severely impacted by cars trying to enter or exit such a complex.”

Another added: “I am wholly opposed to this monstrosity. What lunatic puts a tennis court there? The risk to traffic and pedestrians from falling balls would represent a wholly foreseeable risk.”

Lumiere Developments has submitted planning applications for the scheme to be either 12, 14, or 16 storeys tall – giving the council some options on how tall it would want the building to be if it was approved.