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Baturina Buys Land for Golf Course

By Tatyana Romanova

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Her developer, Inteko, has acquired 35 hectares in a prestigious part of western Moscow for an 18-hole course. **Vladimir Filonov**

Yelena Baturina's building conglomerate Inteko has acquired a 35-hectare plot in western Moscow to build a golf club, possibly to be designed by U.S. golf legend Jack Nicklaus, Vedomosti has learned.

"The deal went through last year," a spokesperson at Inteko confirmed. Reno Immobilienhandels, which handles Inteko's foreign projects, bought the land from a private owner, he said. The plot was part of the Teplichi farm, located near Ulitsa Nizhniye Mnyovniki, in the western part of the city.

Although the value of the deal was not revealed, market analysts estimate the land at $175 million to $250 million.

"It's a great plot, with a hill and access to the river, " said a spokesperson for a real estate consulting company. The project will consist of a world-class 18-hole golf course, cottages

and low-rise buildings, several consultants said.

"There cannot be any housing on the property. Given the landscape, it's an optimal place to put a golf course," the Inteko spokesperson said.

According to the master plan of the city of Moscow, the territory is approved for "specialized sports and public recreation."

How much Inteko plans to invest is not clear, and the design is not ready. The developer has invited one of the most famous golfers in the world, Jack Nicklaus, to design the project, the company spokesperson said.

Nicklaus is the only golfer in history to win 18 major championships. His current company, Nicklaus Design, has created more than 350 golf courses around the world. In Russia, Nicklaus designed the Tseleevo golf course, belonging to Oleg Deripaska.

Bloomberg has reported that project cost $30 million to build. Nicklaus Design did not respond to questions from Vedomosti.

Back in the 1990s, more than 300 hectares in Nizhniye Mnyovniki was allocated to build Wonderland Park, a Russian equivalent of Disneyland, organized by sculptor Zurab Tsereteli.

But in 2007, the city government terminated land-use rights when it uncovered cement factories, commercial garages and automobile repair stations on the park's territory.

At the time, chief city architect Alexander Kuzmin announced that a multifunctional complex, including a world-class golf course, would be built in Nizhniye Mnyovniki. South Korean company Lotte Group was to design the project.

A source in the Mayor's Office told Vedomosti that the city has always planned to put a golf course in Nizhniye Mnyovniki, but he was unaware of Baturina's project. He said Baturina could own land in Wonderland Park because there was a lot of property belonging to many different owners when the project began.

Both Baturina and her husband, Mayor Yury Luzhkov, have said they enjoy golfing. Her company already owns a golf course in Austria.

"If Inteko can bring the project to fruition, it will become one of the city's most expensive, as there is nothing similar now, and the presence of a golf course increases the value of any project," said Maria Litinetskaya, general director of Miel-Novostroiki.

In Moscow and the Moscow region, there are more than a dozen golf courses, but only four are 18-hole championship courses: Nakhabino, Pestovo, Tseleevo and Agalarov Estate.

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