

Cabinet Office press release

FORMER NATIONAL SCHOOL OF GOVERNMENT SOLD

Cabinet Office sells 79-acre Sunningdale Park site to Berkeley Homes and Audley Retirement

The Cabinet Office has sold Sunningdale Park in Berkshire to Berkeley Homes and Audley Retirement

The 79-acre site, which until 2012 was home to the National School of Government, has been conditionally sold, contingent on planning permission being granted for residential and retirement scheme. A development opportunity brief has been drawn up, following consultation with Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead, outlining possibilities for the site.

Sunningdale Park includes 19,500 sq m of existing accommodation, including Northcote House, a Grade II neo-Georgian mansion, training accommodation with associated lecture theatres, residential accommodation and sports facilities. The north west of the site, totalling approximately 13 acres, has been designated as suitable for redevelopment, with the remaining space given over to the parkland.

Berkeley Homes and Audley Retirement will be working up their proposals for the site over the coming months. These will be display to Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead and the Local Community during 2017.

Minister for the Cabinet Office, Ben Gummer, said:

"The sale of Sunningdale Park shows our absolute commitment to shrinking the government estate so that it works in the best interests of the taxpayer. The deal not only offers the best value for taxpayers, but is also the scheme most sympathetic to Sunningdale Park's beautiful surroundings.

"The estate is now almost 25 per cent smaller than it was in May 2010 we continue to re-examine all our property contracts and holdings to make sure that the taxpayer is always at the front and centre of our property outlook."

The site has been owned by government since 1947 when it was offered in lieu of tax duties by the family of previous owner Sir Hugo Cunliffe-Owen. It subsequently became home to the Civil Defence Staff College and has been used by a number of Government organisations, including the Civil Service College and National School of Government, until 2014, at which point the College of Policing occupied it on a temporary basis.

Nick Sanderson, CEO of Audley said:

"The purchase of Sunningdale Park is a unique opportunity, and we are pleased to be developing this site in partnership with Berkeley Homes. This is the first time Audley has developed a site in a joint venture with a house builder, and it is partnerships like these that are vital to addressing the UK's housing shortage: creating housing that is not only aimed at first time buyers, but can free up much needed existing housing stock by giving older people a greater choice of suitable and aspirational housing.

"We are extremely proud of our exemplary record in securing planning permission and are looking forward to working closely with the local community and stakeholders over the coming months.

“We can’t wait to get started on Audley Sunningdale and look forward to the development of our 15th luxury retirement village.”

Gerald Eve advised the Cabinet Office, while Berkeley Homes and Audley Retirement were unrepresented.

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Info

The Cabinet Office held two local exhibitions to discuss possible future uses for the site, which it said included re-use or development of buildings in the major developed area and the potential to provide continued employment use or to "contribute towards alleviating" local housing need.

The site is identified in the emerging Borough Local Plan as suitable for 230 new homes.

The site was identified in the adopted Ascot, Sunninghill and Sunningdale [neighbourhood plan](#) as "an important site providing jobs in [the] area". The plan noted that "we would very much like to see it retained in this capacity". However, the plan also recognised that "it may ultimately come to pass that the only viable option for securing the site's future is for a change of use for residential".

The neighbourhood plan required that the local community be "involved in drawing up plans for any redevelopment of this important site", that community benefits be secured from any redevelopment and that the provision of jobs at the site be encouraged "if at all possible".

According to Cabinet Office materials produced last year, there is an opportunity to end the current land use arrangement on the site in 2017.

About Audley

Founded in 1991, Audley has since established itself as a pioneer in the provision of high quality retirement living. The first Audley village was built fifteen years ago in Kent and today Audley owns a portfolio of twelve across the country. Audley owners buy their own house or apartment on a 125 year lease with access to the Audley Club facilities and flexible care if needed, enabling them to live an independent and healthy life. Audley is an accredited care provider and a founder member of The Associated Retirement Community Operators, ARCO.

www.audleyretirement.co.uk