

Barnett Hill, A Sundial Group Venue
Blackheath Lane,
Wonersh,
Guildford.
GU5 0RF

01483 893361
01483 892836
barnett@sundialgroup.com
www.sundialgroup.com

Barnett Hill – The Site and its Surroundings

- The Barnett Hill site comprises of some 26 acres of gardens and grounds and is accessed off Blackheath Lane which, gives road access to the site from the village of Wonersh.
- The house itself was built around 1905 by the renowned architect Arnold Mitchel in Carolean style for Frank Cook a wealthy London businessman and grandson of the famous Thomas Cook
- The house became a Grade II* listed property in 1986 together with the associated stable block, lodge house, pavilion, garden wall and entrance gates to the car park which, was also built by Mitchel.
- Barnett Hill has been developed in the past and now includes 54 individually appointed guest bedrooms and eight main conference rooms
- Barnett Hill has been successfully managed by the Sundial Group since 1996 initially on behalf of the British Red Cross. During this time, the use of the property has changed in response to the needs of its clientele. Significant levels of weekend meetings and training events used to be placed by The British red Cross but this decreased substantially over time as did their overall use of the facilities until in December 2004 following an internal strategic review they sold the property to their long term partner, The Sundial Group

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Existing Activities

- Barnett Hill has planning consent which was granted in September 2003 enabling the use of the premises for mixed use purpose as a conference/training centre and for weddings and receptions
- The site is used first and foremost as a conference & training centre for both residential and day meeting business. Barnett Hill can provide overnight residential accommodation for up to a maximum of 99 guests if all the bedrooms were to be fully occupied. The main conference room can seat up to 70 delegates. Barnett Hill has also hosted some weddings and social events over the years under the previous and present owners since the 1950s
- As a key component of the facilities offered to guests, there exists on site leisure facilities including a sauna, spa bath, gymnasium, games room, volley ball, croquet lawn, boules court and jogging trails. The grounds are also used for participating in outdoor team building activities.
- The conference and training activities take place primarily between Monday to Friday consequently, Barnett Hill is often used very minimally or is empty during weekends. The premises are also not now being fully utilised as a conference & training centre during the week due to the recent economic downturn and resultant slowdown in business activity
- The Sundial Group's core business is as a specialist provider of facilities and services within the meetings industry which as such, means continually investing in our meeting rooms, accommodation, IT & communications technology and food & beverage services to meet the ever increasing demands of our customers
- On-going investment in our facilities even during the current economic downturn demonstrates our long term commitment to our key clients in this specialist market

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Weddings & Special Events

- Up to 60 weddings and corporate functions are now permitted at Barnett Hill until 2010. The permission prohibits the playing of amplified music which may be audible outside the site boundary. The use of outdoor fireworks is restricted to 12 occasions per year, although we have chosen not to have firework displays in the grounds since the permission was granted.
- These supplementary functions are necessary to maximise the use of the building and to supplement the Sundial Group's income however, these uses do not coincide or interfere with the site being used by the 'core business' delegates attending conferences, training courses and meetings at Barnett Hill.
- The site is an ideal venue for wedding receptions given that the on site facilities used by delegates for conferences and training, can also be used for overnight residential guests attending weddings and other special events. The main conference room can accommodate up to 70 seated guests and is ideally suited to catering for medium sized wedding receptions.

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Proposed Development

We seek to regularise the mix of uses permitted at Barnett Hill by having the flexibility of being able to interchange the use of the vacant bedrooms and facilities for use by other guests who are not attending one of our conferences or training courses

We are therefore seeking to apply for planning permission enabling a mix of conference/training and hotel use at Barnett Hill

However, we will not:

- Be seeking to increase the number of bedrooms
- Be undertaking any alterations – both internal or external to the building
- Because we are not proposing any additional bedrooms or facilities at Barnett Hill there will be no significant additional traffic movements on Blackheath Lane affecting road safety. This will be demonstrated in our transportation assessment which will be submitted as part of the application.
- We consider that the proposal does meet an identified need for additional quality accommodation for guests wishing to visit the surrounding countryside, tourist facilities and attractions within the vicinity of Barnett Hill

The proposal will also:

- Help generate employment and protect the long-term security of those already employed
- Make tenable the optimum use and upkeep of the grade II* listed buildings and the grounds

Waverley Borough Council has recently granted a similar consent enabling a mix of conference/training and hotel use at Branksome, Haslemere.