

History of Barnett Hill

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Barnett Hill was nothing more than a wooded hilltop when Frank Cook, the grandson of Thomas Cook, the travel agent, bought the site in 1905. He built the Queen Anne-Style house in 26 acres of land for the princely sum of £35 000.



The grounds are 360ft above sea level with magnificent views over the Surrey hills. From the Camellia bank Charterhouse School can be seen and Guildford Cathedral can be viewed from the Woodland Walk. The estate employed 14 gardeners in the days of the Cooks.

In 1940 the then-widowed Mrs Cook handed the house over to the Red Cross and St John War Organisation to use as a convalescent hospital. Four years later she handed the deeds of the house to the British Red Cross, who, after the war, turned Barnett Hill into their National Training Centre.

Due to the high running cost of the centre in the mid-1970s the Red Cross decided to open the doors to the business world and commercial courses and conferences have been held here since 1976.

In 1996 the British Red Cross leased the property to the Chudley family, who, at the time, had been operating Highgate House in Northamptonshire for over 30 years. Sundial Group purchased the property from the Red Cross in 2005.



The gardens are continually evolving and improving - many projects are taking place on the estate but the overall ambience is kept and many of the original features can still be seen in the grounds. The summer house, tea house and greenhouse are all in original condition and the yew hedges, Lilly pond and many mature trees show how the estate looked in the days of the Cooks.

