

= Hillingdon House =

Hillingdon House is a Grade II listed mansion in Hillingdon , Greater London . The original house was built in 1717 as a hunting lodge for the Duke of Schomberg . It was destroyed by fire and the present house was built in its place in 1844 .

The British Government purchased Hillingdon House in 1915 and it became a military hospital . In 1917 , what would become the Royal Air Force station RAF Uxbridge was established within the grounds . In military use , the house has served over time as the first headquarters for No. 11 Group RAF and RAF Bomber Command . The River Pinn passes through the grounds of the house from north to south , splitting the former RAF Uxbridge in two .

The Hillingdon House Farm estate to the north of the house includes the Hillingdon Sports and Leisure Complex (formerly Uxbridge Lido) . The farm ceased operations in 1965 after the local council served a notice to quit on the tenant . The farmhouse on Honeycroft Hill became a council depot , followed by a plant nursery , before it was sold for residential housing .

Under plans approved in early 2011 for the redevelopment of the RAF station , the house will be renovated and converted to include a restaurant . As of 2014 it is not accessible to the public while the site undergoes redevelopment .

= = History = =

= = = First house = = =

The first house on the site was built as a hunting lodge in 1717 for the Duke of Schomberg , a British army commander of German origin . He is said to have been very argumentative , to the point where he would argue with all those around him bar the enemy .

The house eventually passed to the Chetwynd family , who sold it to the Marchioness of Rockingham , widow of Prime Minister The Marquess of Rockingham , in 1786 for £ 9 @,@ 000 . The Marchioness lived there until her own death in 1804 , upon which the estate passed to her stepsister Elizabeth , widow of William Weddell MP . Her husband had left her Newby Hall in Mayfair , therefore having no need of Hillingdon House , she sold it to Josias Du Pré Porcher in 1805 . In 1810 the estate was sold to Richard Henry Cox , a member of the Cox banking family and the grandson of Richard Cox , founder of the travel company Cox & Kings .

= = = Second house = = =

After the first house burnt down , the present structure was built in 1844 , in a classical Victorian style . In 1892 , an area of the estate south of the house was established as Hillingdon Golf Club , founded by Charles Newton who lived at Hillingdon House , and Charles Stevens , a partner of a local timber company . The estate of Frederick Cox , Richard Henry Cox 's grandson , placed the house on the market in 1914 , describing it as " a brick and stone building , partly stuccoed , with extensive outbuildings and ornamental gardens . " The house and gardens , together with the surrounding parkland and artificial lake created by damming a section of the River Pinn , amounted to more 200 acres (81 ha) .

The British Government bought the house and grounds in 1915 , intending to construct a prisoner of war camp within the grounds . Local opposition to the plan led to the house becoming the Canadian Convalescent Hospital to care for troops evacuated from the front line during the First World War . The hospital opened on 20 September 1915 and closed on 12 December 1917 , having had four commanding officers and five sisters @-@ in @-@ charge .

On 19 November 1917 , 114 officers and 1156 men of the Royal Flying Corps (RFC) Armament School moved into Hillingdon House , with the RFC making a donation of £ 2289 12s 9d to the Canadian Red Cross . Needing a site for the training of recruits in ground gunnery , the RFC used parts of the estate not required by the Canadian hospital and established a firing range on the

opposite side of the river from the house .

The Royal Air Force was formed on 1 April 1918 , following the merger of the Royal Flying Corps and the Royal Naval Air Service . The Uxbridge site came under the control of the new service , becoming known as the RAF Central Depot , Uxbridge . The site was then split to form administratively two RAF stations : the area east of the River Pinn including Hillingdon House became RAF Hillingdon and the remainder RAF Uxbridge . Among the aircraftmen trained at Hillingdon was T. E. Lawrence (' Lawrence of Arabia ') , whose book The Mint , initially censored for its frank use of four @-@ letter words , describes his time there : " Hillingdon House looked forlorn , because of its black windows , behind whose wideness the clerks lounged with their first cups of tea . ' Jammy [cunts] , ' sneered Sailor enviously . "

On 1 March 1929 , the Royal Observer Corps established its headquarters at Hillingdon House , where it remained until transferring to RAF Bentley Priory on 1 March 1936 . No. 11 Group formed on the same day under the command of Air Vice Marshal Philip Joubert de la Ferté , using Hillingdon House as its headquarters . On 13 July , RAF Bomber Command was formed from the old HQ Air Defence of Great Britain and was also based in the house , remaining there until 1940 when the command moved to RAF High Wycombe .

No. 11 Group was relocated to RAF Martlesham Heath in 1958 , when control of RAF Hillingdon passed from Fighter Command to RAF Technical Training Command and the entire site became known as RAF Uxbridge . The RAF School of Education moved into Hillingdon House from RAF Spitalgate on 10 November . Southern Region Air Traffic Services HQ and the Royal Observer Corps ' South East Communications Centre moved into the house in 1960 . On 1 November , the Southern Region Air Traffic Services headquarters moved into Hillingdon House . The station had been home since the end of the war to the London Area Control Centre , renamed the London Air Traffic Control Centre in 1948 and the Uxbridge Air Traffic Control Centre in 1957 . This eventually transferred to RAF West Drayton , which operated as a satellite station of RAF Uxbridge . HQ Military Air Traffic Operations (HQ MATO) moved into Hillingdon House in January 1965 .

During the final years of military ownership , Hillingdon House was occupied by the Service Prosecuting Authority and the Civil Aviation Authority 's Air Proximity Board . The house was Grade II listed on 5 June 1984 .

= = = Redevelopment = = =

On 31 March 2010 , RAF Uxbridge closed as part of a rationalisation of Ministry of Defence facilities in Greater London . Under redevelopment plans approved by Hillingdon Council in January 2011 , the house will be converted to include a restaurant . Provision has also been made to retain the carpenter 's block beside the house .