

Ref: FOI2026-052

[REDACTED]

10 September 2026

Dear Ms [REDACTED],

We refer to your request for the following information:

"I have been a volunteer for the National Trust at Basildon Park in Berkshire for 19 years and am an active member of their History Group.

During WW2 Basildon Park was requisitioned and once the war was over it the house was used as a billet for mostly Irish labourers working for George Wimpey. We had always believed that the contract was with AERE at Harwell, but recent information suggests that perhaps they were in fact working for what is now AWE at Burghfield.

Do you by any chance have any archive records that would prove workers at Burghfield were billeted at Basildon Park? Any information you can provide would be greatly appreciated and could possibly solve a years long question regarding Basildon's history."

Your request has been handled as a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (the Act).

A search has been carried out to locate the information you requested and we can confirm that AWE do not hold any records confirming whether employees of George Wimpey who were accommodated at Basildon Park were working at the Burghfield site.

It may be helpful to note that, during the period in question, Burghfield was still operating as a Royal Ordnance Factory under the control of the Ministry of Supply and was managed separately from the Atomic Weapons Research Establishment (AWRE). In addition, available historical information indicates that the decision to reopen the Burghfield site was not taken until late 1952, after Basildon Park had been de-requisitioned.

Under Section 16 of the Act which places a duty on public authorities to provide advice and assistance where reasonable to do so, you may find it helpful to contact The National Archives, which holds historical records from the former Ministry of Supply. Records relating to the operation of Royal Ordnance Factories and post-war government construction projects may provide further information relevant to your research into the use of Basildon Park and the activities of George Wimpey employees during this period.

Please remember to quote the reference number above in any future communications. If you have any queries regarding the content of this letter, please contact this office in the first instance.

If you are unhappy with the way your request has been handled you have a right to request an internal review within 40 days of receiving this letter, by writing to information.requests@awe.co.uk or our postal address: Information Requests Team, AWE Aldermaston, Reading, RG7 4PR. If you are still unhappy after an internal review has been completed, under the provisions of Section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 you have the right to take your complaint to the Information Commissioner's Office. Please note the Commissioner will generally not consider a complaint until you have exhausted AWE's internal complaints process.

Yours sincerely,

AWE Information Requests Team