



Foreign &
Commonwealth
Office

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Foreign and Commonwealth Office
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26 June 2017

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 REQUEST REF: 0553-17

Thank you for your e-mail of 5 June 2017 asking for information under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) 2000. You asked:

- 1. Whether the Gertrude Bell table was being used for dining in the dining room of the ambassador's residence in 2006. If not, then I would be grateful for information on the Gertrude Bell table's actual function and location, as well as information on the actual dining table at the time.*
- 2. Information on the history of the British ambassador's 2006 residence in Baghdad, for example: the location, when and how it was acquired, whom it belonged to previously, and if possible, photographs (given it is no longer the ambassador's residence).*
- 3. The name by which Embassy staff referred in 2006 to the 'Embassy staff club' in the British Embassy Compound, which has a swimming pool and recreation room.*

I am writing to confirm that we have now completed the search for the information which you requested. I can confirm that the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) does hold information relevant to your request.

In answer to your first question, as far as we can establish, the Gertrude Bell table was used for decorative purposes and not as a dining table in 2006. This remains the case today. The actual dining table used in 2006 is a table purchased from standard FCO suppliers.

Regarding your second question, we are unable to trace an exact address for the Ambassador's Baghdad residence in 2006, however it was close to the site of Saddam Hussein's palace. We have conducted a search of our records and are unfortunately unable to find any information of when and how it was acquired. We also cannot find any photographs of the residence in 2006.

To answer to your last question, the Embassy staff club was originally called the “Whine Seller”.

Yours Sincerely

Estates Department



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