

# Audley Cooper's Hill

A rich and colourful history

## Early beginnings and a Royal past

Over the years the current site of Audley's Cooper's Hill has been passed through the hands of many notable owners. It was once owned by Lord Andrew Windsor in 1539, having been granted it by King Henry VIII, and passed on to the Harcourt family in the 18th Century. They remained in the old manor house until the start of the 19th Century when they built a new house on the current site, and the property became known as 'Coopershill'.



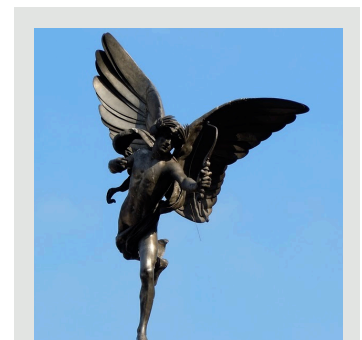
Photo of Audley Cooper's Hill from the 1950's

Sold off and passed through the hands of two other families, it's student history began when it was purchased in 1870 by the Indian Engineering College, whose work was to train engineers, telegraphists and forestry officers for the public services in India, Burma and elsewhere within the British empire of the time. After 35 years at the site, when the college moved to Oxford University in 1905, the grand estate was purchased by Baron Cheylesmore, a British Army Officer in the First World War, and his wife, for use as a family home. After Baron Cheylesmore was killed in a motor accident in July 1925, the estate was then used as a refuge for Belgian refugees, nuns and children and as a convalescence home for wounded soldiers.

## World War Two and an educational institution

In 1934, the site was bought by the London County Council. During World War Two, administrative staff were transferred over to Cooper's Hill and in 1939 the beloved Statue of Eros was removed from the top of the Shaftesbury Memorial Fountain in Piccadilly Circus to spend the War period protected at the site until it's safe return in 1948.

After the war, the Cooper's Hill Emergency Training College was founded by the London County Council to address an urgent need for teachers and operated at Cooper's Hill until 1951.



The Statue of Eros was sent to Cooper's Hill for safekeeping during World War Two.

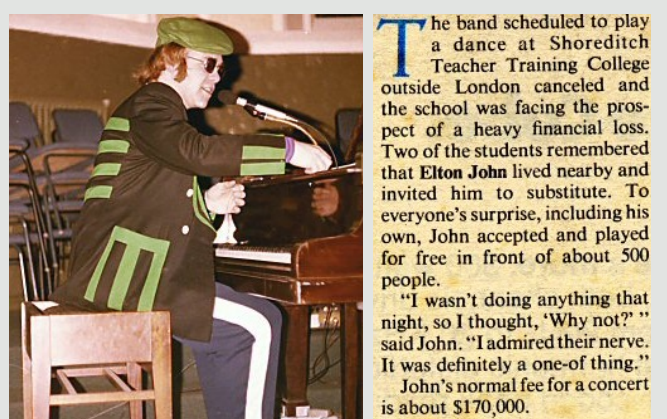
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The site of Cooper's Hill was then acquired in 1951, by the expanding Shoreditch Training College, who had outgrown their accommodation in Pitfield Street, Hoxton, London. The College was a teacher training institution for teachers of handicrafts with its origins dating back to the 1900's, when the London County Council set up a scholarship scheme for pupil teachers in handicrafts. The college later merged with Brunel University in 1980.

### A surprise guest

The Shoreditch Training College students were in for a very welcome surprise during their Valedictory event in May 1978. When the band who were scheduled to perform at the event in the College Chapel, had to cancel at the last minute. At this point two opportunist students approached the now Sir Elton John and asked him to perform at the event and to which he duly obliged.



Elton John (pictured) performing at the Shoreditch Training college and an article from the New Musical Express in 1978.

### A new and exciting future

In 2004, the Department of Design was moved to the main Brunel University Campus at Uxbridge and the Runnymede Campus became purely residential, providing accommodation for students from Royal Holloway College.

Now, the Cooper's Hill site is home to Audley's retirement village. Every effort to preserve and celebrate the history of the area continues to be made, and the first owners moved in in autumn 2019.



Audley Cooper's Hill luxury retirement village



### Bibliography

<http://www.shoreditchcollege.org/index.html>

<https://www.brunel.ac.uk/about/Archives/Shoreditch-College-Archives>

[www.audleyvillages.co.uk](http://www.audleyvillages.co.uk)

