

FOR SALE



NORTH DOWNS GOLF CLUB

Woldingham, Surrey CR3 7AA · Established 1899



A rare opportunity to acquire a freehold Surrey 18 hole private members' golf club situated inside the M25, in close proximity to Central London.

"A gem of a course in Surrey"

Peter Alliss



North Downs Golf Club
Woldingham, Surrey CR3 7AA

A friendly private members' club with
potential for commercialisation

Mature 18 hole 5,815 yard (par 69) golf course

Practice facilities

c. 664 sq m (7,147 sq ft) clubhouse

Golf reception / shop

Greenkeeping complex

Turnover c. £650,000 (excluding catering)

www.northdownsgolfclub.co.uk













Introduction

Established in 1899, North Downs GC has grown from its humble beginnings as a 5-hole course to the mature 18 hole course that exists today. In 1899, Mr Gilford had the foresight to allow his land to be used as a golf course, which enabled people - both locals and individuals from more suburban areas - to pursue a healthy pastime. In many ways North Downs has always been ahead of the times, including opening up its initial membership to both men and ladies. Originally known as Woldingham Golf Club, the Club was renamed sometime in the early 20th century, for reasons unknown.

Since opening in 1899, the Club has undergone two significant expansions. The first took place in the early 20th century, when the course expanded to 9 holes, and the clubhouse was constructed. More recently, in order to make the Club more financially viable, the course was

expanded to 18 holes to a design by the renowned course architect, J.J. 'Frank' Pennick. Since the grand opening of the newly redesigned course in May 1971, North Downs has remained largely as it is today. Its narrow, tree-lined fairways, undulating terrain, strategically placed bunkers and small greens combine to make the course one that attracts members and visitors of all ages and abilities.

The opportunity now exists to shape the next chapter of North Downs Golf Club's history. Following an EGM in February 2018, at which the members voted to sell the Club, a purchaser is sought for the property, one who will undertake to preserve the future of the Club, and to invest in the facilities, for the benefit of all.

Offers that meet the Club's stated objectives are invited for the property based on a guide price of £1.5 million.

Objectives

North Downs Golf Club trades as North Downs Golf Club Limited. The Company's Board has identified a number of key objectives for the marketing exercise, which are summarised below:

- 1) To preserve the future of the Club, and the playing of golf at the property.
- 2) To secure investment in the facilities (both clubhouse and golf course) to ensure that the business remains viable.
- 3) To attract a purchaser with proven entrepreneurial operational experience, ideally (but not necessarily) in the golf sector.
- 4) To achieve a seamless transfer of the business.

It is important to note that achieving these objectives, and thereby securing the future of the Club, is arguably more important to the Board and the wider Club membership than maximising the headline sale price. Offers for the property will be considered in the round, and the preferred bidder will be the party that is deemed best placed to deliver the Club's objectives.





Location

North Downs Golf Club is situated less than 19 miles from Central London, close to Croydon, Biggin Hill and Caterham; with the M25 / M23 and M25 / A22 interchanges nearby. This highly affluent area enjoys all the benefits of close proximity to Central London, whilst offering the attractions of a local semi-rural environment.

Approximate distances and journey include:

Central London (City of Westminster)	18.8 miles / 73 minutes
Croydon	8.3 miles / 23 minutes
Reigate	11.6 miles / 22 minutes
Sevenoaks	11.6 miles / 27 minutes
Bromley	14.3 miles / 35 minutes
London Gatwick Airport	16.5 miles / 26 minutes
London Heathrow Airport	38.2 miles / 47 minutes

(Source The AA)

The local village of Woldingham, which is understood to be one of the most affluent villages in Surrey, benefits from a mainline rail service to London Victoria, with a journey time of a little over 30 minutes.

Location plans are shown at the rear of the brochure.

Description of the Property

North Downs Golf Club is a picturesque course that is typical of its era. At over 850 feet in elevation, it is said to be the highest in Southern England. Far reaching views from the 14th and 15th tees provide vistas towards Crystal Palace, the Gherkin, the Shard and wider Central London, whilst local views abound elsewhere. Peter Alliss once described North Downs as 'a gem of a course in Surrey'.

The property is split by Northdown Road (a minor public road) and Southfields Lane (a private right of way). The clubhouse, golf reception, car park and holes 1, and 8 – 18 occupy the land to the east of Northdown Road, with holes 2 – 7 occupying the land to the west.

An aerial image of the property is available [here](#)

The facilities comprise:

18 Hole Golf Course

The 18 hole golf course extends to 5,815 yards (par 69) from the white tees and comprises four par 3's, thirteen par 4's and one par 5. Whilst the layout is essentially a single loop of 18 holes, the course's configuration permits a loop of 7 holes (1-7), a loop of 10 holes (1-8, short 17 and 18) or a loop of 11 holes (8-18) to be played from the clubhouse.

The current course layout was designed by renowned course architect, J.J. 'Frank' Pennick, and makes full use of the natural features of the site. The terrain is mostly gentle, albeit some of the striking terrain makes golf very interesting! Each hole has its own name, most of which reflect the make up of the hole.

Greens and tees are of traditional construction, with automatic irrigation laid to most greens, tees and approaches. The course is presented to a good standard throughout.

Feature holes on the course include:

9th hole – a demanding downhill par 3 with spectacular views of hills and valleys. This hole is the signature hole on the course and any shot missing the green makes par a very tough challenge

14th hole – With views from the tee of Canary Wharf over 30 miles away, your first decision is "can you reach the pond". If not, a lay up is required. The green nestles in front of woodland and requires a precision shot to enable the chance of a regulation par. At over 410 yards, when coupled with its natural hazards, the hole warrants its stroke index rating.

18th hole – A finishing hole which plays all of its length. A tough drive requiring length and accuracy followed by an approach to the green with out of bounds to the right and rear. Miss the green to the right will require a clever pitch from well below the level of the green. A great par 4 to finish.

The course had a 4 star (out of 5) 'highly rated' rating on Golf Shake as at February 2018 based on 45 reviews, testament to its popularity.

Practice Facilities

A 9 hole practice putting green is located to the rear of the 18th green and adjacent to the clubhouse, close to the first tee; with a chipping and bunker area nearby.

A secluded practice ground (suitable for iron play) is situated behind the 9th green, a short walk from the clubhouse.

A state of the art golf simulator is housed in the golf reception building (see below).





Clubhouse

The North Downs clubhouse, which is believed to have been constructed in the early 1900s and has been extended and refurbished a number of times since (with the latest major alterations occurring in 1990), occupies a commanding position on the northern boundary of the property. The focal point for all those who use the site, the clubhouse is situated overlooking the 18th green.

The building, which is primarily of traditional construction with rendered and pebble-dash elevations under a part tiled and part flat roof. The accommodation is principally single storey, albeit two storey in part. Extending to c. 664 sq m (7,147 sq ft) the accommodation includes:

Ground Floor

- Reception hallway
- Secretary's / Manager's office
- Dining Room (60 covers)
- Lounge Bar (50-60 seats)
- Spike Bar (25-30 seats)
- Men's changing room with showers and WCs
- Ladies' changing rooms with showers and WCs
- Kitchen (commercially fitted and equipped)
- Bar office
- Bar store and cellar
- Two offices with separate entrance
- Boiler room



First Floor

- Men's changing room with shower and WCs

The clubhouse has a wonderful traditional feel throughout, with fine easterly views over the golf course. Open and covered patios adjoin the clubhouse, with access from the Spike Bar and the main bar during summer months.

A catering storage shed, a general store, a trolley store, two personal ride-on buggy stores and a members' buggy store are all positioned next to the clubhouse.

Partially illuminated tarmac surfaced car parking facilities (in excess of 60 spaces) adjoin the clubhouse, with an additional overflow car park (for another 30 cars) available off nearby Church Road. Northdown Road is used on occasion to provide further informal car parking.



Golf Reception Building

The golf reception building is situated to the south of the clubhouse, with direct access from the car park.

Of traditional construction, with pebble-dash elevations under a tiled roof, the accommodation extends to c. 53 sq m (570 sq ft). The accommodation comprises:

- Golf reception and retail counter
- Indoor golf simulator with curtain divider
- Workbench
- WC

The indoor golf simulator facility provides video, practice, GC2 launch monitor tracking, and is ideal for practice and club fitting.

Greenkeepers' Office

The Greenkeepers' office is positioned behind the 18th green, and is of brick construction under a tiled roof. The accommodation comprises:

- Office (including irrigation control centre)
- Cloakroom
- WC
- Shower

An alarmed purpose built buggy store with electric hook ups (capable of housing 12 buggies) is located close by.

Greenkeepers' Facilities

The purpose built greenkeepers' facilities are located towards the centre of the site with access off Southfields Lane.

The greenkeepers' buildings are primarily of metal frame and concrete block construction, under profiled corrugated sheet roofs, with concrete floors and surrounds. The accommodation includes a machinery and equipment storage area, maintenance room / workshop, rest room and a bagged materials store.

A bunded diesel tank, irrigation tank, and storage bays for course materials are available close by.

Tenure & Possession

The entire property is held freehold, with the exception of: (a) a small area of land occupied by the 18th tee and the 17th green; and (b) the practice ground. The freehold land extends to c. 75 acres.

The 17th green / 18th tee land extends to c. 0.8 hectares (c. 2 acres) and is held under the terms of a lease from a neighbouring owner, at a peppercorn rent, and expires on 25th December 2049.

The practice ground extends to c. 1.5 hectares (3.6 acres). Following the expiry of a 10 year agreement in 2012, the land is currently held under the terms of a terminable annual agreement at a fee of £2,500 per annum.

All aspects of the business are operated in house with the exception of the clubhouse catering (only) operation, which is franchised to Domestic-Chef Limited under the terms of an annual agreement, which commenced on 18th July 2016. Until recently, two of the offices in the clubhouse had been let to a third party as self-contained office accommodation.

Parts of the property, including holes 2-7, are subject to restrictive covenants, the principal objective of which is to preserve the rural appearance of the land, and to restrict the construction of buildings on the land, without the consent of previous owners (which include the National Trust).



The Existing Business

Trading History

North Downs Golf Club is a true private members' golf club, trading as North Downs Golf Club Limited (a private company limited by shares). The Directors of North Downs Golf Club are all members of the Club, are responsible for the operation of the business, and serve on an unpaid basis. Being a private members' golf club, VAT is not currently charged on membership subscription income or visitors green fees, albeit that this will change under proprietorial control.

Trading accounts for North Downs Golf Club Limited for the years ending 31st December 2015 – 2017 (NB excluding food / catering sales) can be summarised as shown below:

Year End 31 Dec	2017 Draft	2016 Audited	2015 Audited
Subscriptions	£297,178	£318,733	£321,832
Locker rents	£8,547	£8,969	£9,720
Green fees	£75,891	£49,320	£52,507
Beverage	£135,272	£132,788	£127,932
Pro shop	£16,601	£16,016	£26,611
Misc	£110,084	£125,486	£86,506
Turnover	£643,573	£651,312	£625,108
EBITDA	£21,248	£72,095	£40,172

2016 Turnover and EBITDA includes an HMRC (net) VAT refund of c. £41,000 for previously miss-paid VAT on visitors green fees.

Detailed trading accounts will be made available to parties who undertake an accompanied inspection of the property and sign an NDA.

Golf Membership

North Downs offers various categories of membership - a selection of which are shown below. The membership year runs from 1st May to 30th April, but newer entrants to some categories renew on a rolling basis. Typical membership fees (exclusive of EGU fees) for the 2018 / 2019 season are:

<i>Category</i>	<i>Subscription</i>
Full	£1,440.00
5 Day Plus	£1,305.00
Intermediate (33-35)	£1,150.00
Intermediate (26-28)	£725.00
Flexible	£600.00
Twilight	£605.00
Academy	£495.00
7 hole	£360.00
Social	£25.00 (plus VAT)

No joining fee is currently levied. Prospective members are invited to meet the Club Captain and Vice Captain who explain the golfing and social activities of the Club, and how to get the best possible benefits from membership. The Club had a membership of 327 as at 28th February 2018.

5 Day Plus members are entitled to play unlimited golf Monday to Friday plus Sunday afternoons after 2pm. 7 hole members are entitled to play from 11.00 on Sundays and any time Monday to Friday on the holes west of Northdown Road. Flexible membership has recently been introduced and entitles members to 110 credits, which are redeemed when playing at rates that vary according to the day and time of each round.

Academy Membership is a one year programme designed to turn novice golfers into accomplished golfers. The package includes 7 hole membership; 24 x 45 minute

lessons; 12 monthly on course playing lessons; standard member discounts; and a dedicated 'golf buddy' to help new members integrate into the Club.

In addition members may elect to add the following to their membership:

Handbag locker	£15.00
Large locker	£50.00
Trolley store	£65.00
Buggy store	£110.00

All members are entitled to discounts on bar beverage prices, buggy hire and golf simulator use.





Green Fees

The headline 18 hole green fees for the 2018 summer season are:

	<i>Weekday</i>	<i>Weekday (after 15.30)</i>	<i>Weekend</i>
Visitor	£25.00	£15.00	£35.00
Junior	£10.00	£7.50	£17.50
7 hole	£10.00	£10.00	£15.00
Guest	£15.00	£15.00	£20.00

Buggy & Trolley Hire

Typical buggy and trolley hire charges are:

	<i>Buggy</i>	<i>Trolley</i>	<i>Electric Trolley</i>
Visitor (18)	£25.00	£3.00	£8.00
Visitor (all day)	£35.00	£5.00	
Member (18)	£15.00	£2.50	
Member (all day)	£20.00	£4.00	
7 hole rate	£10.00	£2.00	

Societies

North Downs Golf Club offers fine facilities for societies up to 40 players, albeit that the course is also available for charity days for up to 80 players. The Club has a good reputation with society organisers and enjoys high levels of repeat business. Typical summer society packages include:

<i>Bronze Package</i>		<i>Silver Package</i>		<i>Platinum Package</i>	
Coffee & bacon roll		Coffee & bacon roll		Coffee & bacon roll	
18 holes		18 holes		27 holes	
Sandwiches		One course meal		Lunch	
				Two course meal	
<i>Weekday</i>	£30.00	<i>Weekday</i>	£35.00	<i>Weekday</i>	£50.00
<i>Weekend</i>	£40.00	<i>Weekend</i>	£45.00	<i>Weekend</i>	£60.00

Upgrades to the standard packages are available on request.

Roundage

The Club's records show that the following rounds were played at the course during 2017:

Member	13,655
Guest & Green Fee	3,221
Society	529
Total	17,405



Weddings, Functions & Private Parties

The clubhouse is available for members and non-members to hire, with a maximum capacity of 60 for a sit down meal, and up to 100 for buffet style events. Typical charges include:

- Hire of Dining Room and Lounge for reception / party £150.00 + VAT
- Hire of Dining Room for meeting or dinner £100.00 + VAT
- Funeral receptions £50.00 + VAT

Licences

Tandridge District Council granted a Club Premises Certificate (ref. TAND\CLUBPREM\05\030) on 17th October 2015, which permits the supply of alcohol to members and guests between the following hours:

Monday – Saturday	10.00 – 23.00
Sundays	12.00 – 22.30

The Club has the benefit of a PRS / PPL Licence dated 23rd June 2017.

Golf Course & Grounds Maintenance Equipment

North Downs has a full complement of mainly modern golf course maintenance equipment. The principal items of equipment, hand mowers, strimmers and hand tools are all owned outright, with only 4 items held on lease / HP agreements.

The Club's fleet of 8 buggies are held under a lease agreement, which is typical for the sector.

Services

Mains water, electricity, gas and septic tank drainage are connected to the property.

Clubhouse central heating and hot water is by means of gas fired boilers. Cooking is by means of electricity and gas.

Water for the golf course irrigation system is obtained from the mains.

Energy Performance Certificates

The relevant EPC ratings for the property are:

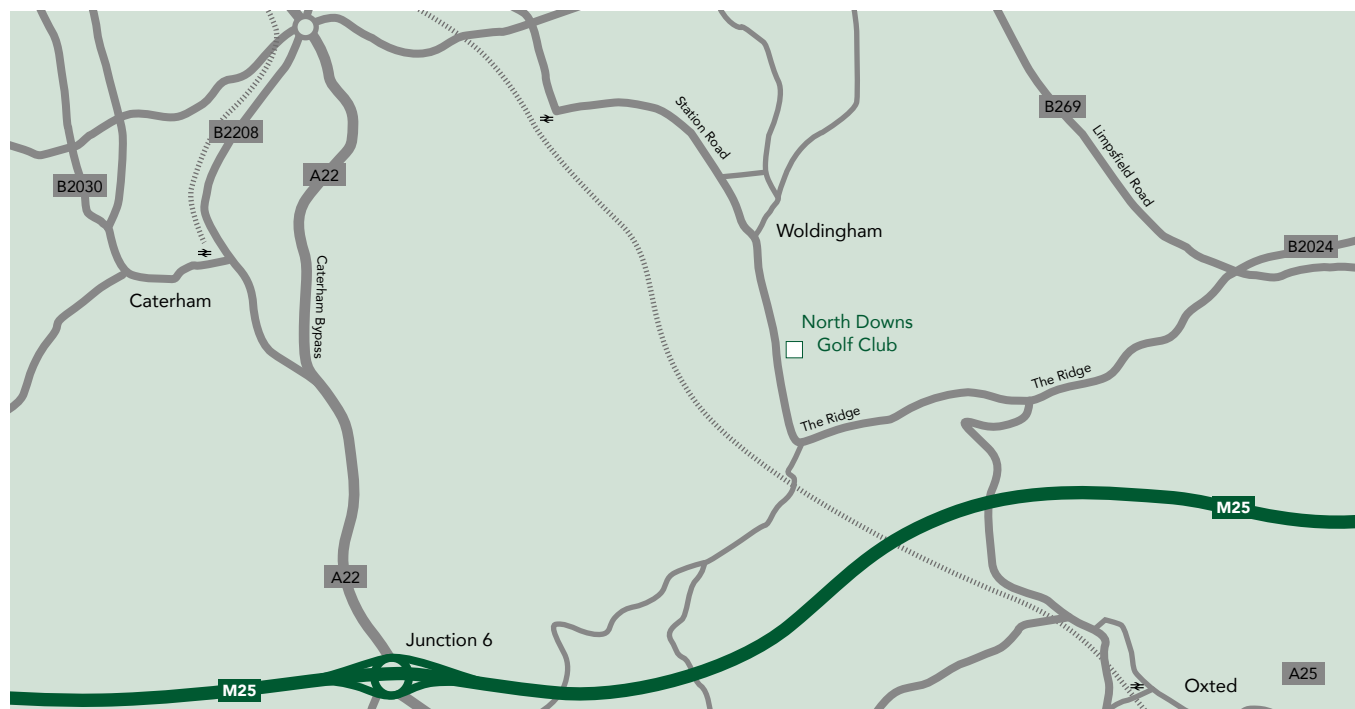
Clubhouse	C 52
Golf Reception	E 108

Town & Country Planning

Tandridge District Council confirms that it is in the process of preparing a new Local Plan for the District, which will provide planning policy until 2033 and will replace the Council's current policies as set out in Tandridge District Core Policy 2008.

Under the Core Policy 2008, the whole property is currently classified as Green Belt and as an Area of Great Landscape Value. Parts of the property are classified as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and as a Biodiversity Opportunity Area. For further insight visit: [Tandridge Core Policy 2008](#)

Whilst TDC's planning policy and the Club's own principal objectives appear to seek to restrict alternative / residential use of the site, it is anticipated that offers may be received for parts of the property that are conditional on planning permission being available for alternative use. Whilst the Club's preference is to receive unconditional offers for the whole property, conditional offers for part of the property will be considered, as long as such offers provide capital for reinvestment in the Club's golfing facilities.



Basis of Disposal

Offers in the region of £1.5 million are invited for the freehold property, fully fitted and equipped.

Consumable stocks are to be taken over by the purchaser at valuation on completion.

The sale contract will include a clause reserving a percentage of future residential redevelopment value to the vendors and / or restrictive covenants against development, the terms of which are to be agreed with the purchaser.

Web Site

For a further insight into North Downs Golf Club please visit: www.northdownsgolfclub.co.uk

Further Information & Viewing

For further information on the Club, or to arrange an inspection of the property, please contact:



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Important Notice

The Agents for themselves and for the vendors of this property and business for whom they act give notice that:

- 1 These particulars are prepared for the guidance only of prospective purchasers. They are intended to give a fair and overall description of the property and do not constitute the whole or any part of an offer or contract.
- 2 Any information contained herein (whether in text, plans or photographs) is given in good faith but should not be relied upon as being a statement or representation of fact.
- 3 Nothing in these particulars shall be deemed to be a statement that the property is in good condition or otherwise nor that any services or facilities are in good working order.
- 4 It should not be assumed that any contents, furnishings, furniture or equipment are included in the sale, nor that the property remains as displayed in the photographs. No assumption should be made with regard to parts of the property that have not been photographed.
- 5 Any areas, measurements or distances referred to herein are approximate only.
- 6 It should not be assumed that the property has all necessary planning, building regulation or other consents and these matters must be verified by an intending purchaser.
- 7 The information in these particulars is given without responsibility on the part of the agents or their clients and neither the agents nor their employees have any authority to make or give any representations or warranties whatever in relation to this property.
- 8 The Agents will not be liable, in negligence or otherwise for any injury or loss arising from the use of these particulars.
- 9 The property is offered for sale subject to contract and availability.
- 10 These particulars were first produced in March 2018 with photographs taken from the Club's archive.