



## Foreign & Commonwealth Office

Estates Department  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office  
King Charles Street  
London SW1A 2AH

Website: <https://www.gov.uk>

29 September 2016

### **FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 REQUEST REF: FOI 0880-16**

Thank you for your email of 15 September 2016 asking for information under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) 2000. You asked:

*Please release to me:*

*The database of the FCO's global estate, which contains the following information for each property:*

*Country, city, address, most recent valuation, use of property.*

*According to a National Audit Office report published on 11 February, 2010: "The estate currently comprises 4,062 properties (valued at £1.6 billion) in 279 cities and other locations."*

*Ideally I would like the up-to-date database, but if the most recent is from 2010 (as referenced by the NAO report) then I will gladly receive that.*

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

Under section 21 of the Freedom of Information Act, we are not required to provide information in response to a request if it is already reasonably accessible to you. Some of the information relevant to your request, the addresses of all FCO public-facing offices, can be found on the FCO website at <https://www.gov.uk/government/world>. However, the FCO does not release the addresses of our non-public-facing properties or those where our staff live, on security grounds. This information is exempt under section 38 (1) (a) and (b) (Health and Safety). Section 38 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (henceforth the 'Act') states that:

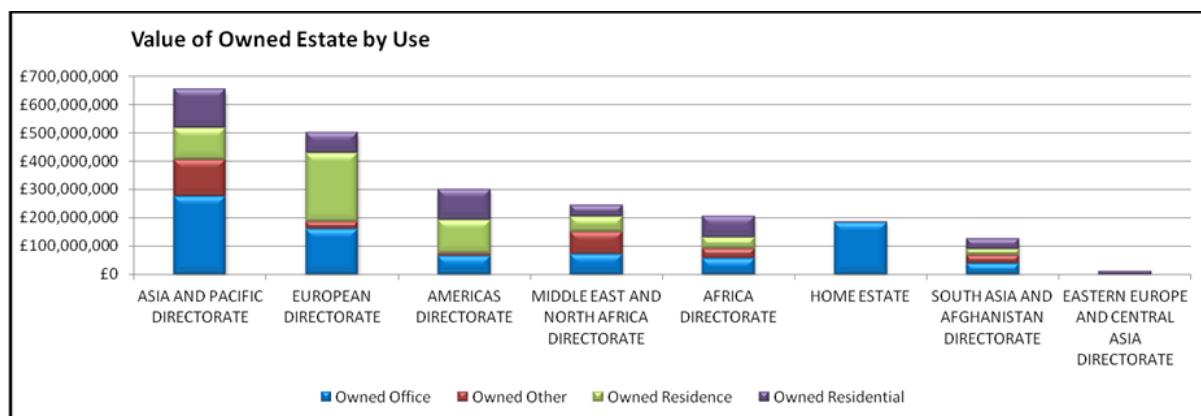
- (1) Information is exempt information if its disclosure under this Act would, or would be likely to—
  - (a) endanger the physical or mental health of any individual, or
  - (b) endanger the safety of any individual.

Section 38 is a qualified exemption and as such a public interest test had to be applied.

We recognise that there is a public interest in transparent and open government in releasing information that would inform public debate on the FCO's work. In this particular case we believed that disclosing the locations of our properties would be likely to compromise the physical security of staff. Officials and their families living overseas may be targeted by criminals or terrorists. For these reasons we believe that the public interest in maintaining this exemption outweighed the public interest in release.

You asked for the most recent valuation of each property. The FCO does not release the value of individual property assets and this information has been withheld under section 43 (2) (Commercial Interests) of the FOIA as its disclosure would or would be likely to prejudice commercial interests. In applying this exemption we have balanced the public interest in disclosure, that it would give more effective, open and honest use of public money, with the view that transparency also poses risks. The opinions of value of individual buildings provided by chartered surveyors are commercially sensitive and the disclosure of individual property valuations prejudices the ability of the FCO to extract best value for the UK taxpayer in negotiations with third parties. Therefore, we believe that the public interest in maintaining this exemption outweighed the public interest in release.

The total value of FCO estate assets is available in the FCO annual accounts. See Note 5 to the Consolidated Statement of Financial Position in the [FCO Annual Report and Accounts 2015-16](#). Breakdowns of the most recent valuations by region and use as at 30 September 2015 in graphical and tabular form are below:



Value of Owned Estate by Use					
	Owned Offices	Owned Other	Owned Residences	Owned Residential	Total
ASIA AND PACIFIC DIRECTORATE	£ 272,613,024	£ 61,959,372	£ 112,292,150	£ 136,985,677	£ 583,850,223
EUROPEAN DIRECTORATE	£ 157,544,337	£ 11,072,349	£ 240,550,798	£ 72,667,691	£ 481,835,175
AMERICAS DIRECTORATE	£ 63,260,999	£ 4,679,079	£ 119,597,509	£ 107,329,412	£ 294,866,999
MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA DIRECTORATE	£ 71,036,320	£ 57,264,385	£ 51,899,392	£ 40,824,684	£ 221,024,781
AFRICA DIRECTORATE	£ 54,877,964	£ 28,003,616	£ 40,051,446	£ 75,876,303	£ 198,809,330
HOME ESTATE	£ 182,999,900	£ 1,386,006	-	-	£ 184,385,906
SOUTH ASIA AND AFGHANISTAN DIRECTORATE	£ 36,914,915	£ 20,298,269	£ 20,461,793	£ 36,720,397	£ 114,395,374
EASTERN EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA DIRECTORATE	£ 3,207,470	£ 416,068	£ 2,561,483	£ 4,487,315	£ 10,672,337
Grand Total	£ 842,454,928	£ 185,079,145	£ 587,414,572	£ 474,891,479	£ 2,089,840,124

Yours sincerely,

Estates Department



We keep and use information in line with the Data Protection Act 1998. We may release this personal information to other UK government departments and public authorities.