

# Factsheet

## Apartment 1A at Kensington Palace

- In April 2003 responsibility of Apartments 1A and 3 (Princess Margaret's Offices) were transferred from the Royal Household to conservation charity Historic Royal Palaces. It was opened to the public for the first time in its 300 year history in 2004.
- Princess Margaret was the last resident of the apartment, living there until her death in February 2002, which marked the end of three centuries of private residential use.
- The south-west wing of Kensington Palace was constructed by Sir Christopher Wren in 1689 to create a ceremonial approach to the King's Grand Staircase and State Apartments (both open to the public). Some of the upper rooms of the apartment were then occupied by important officers of state and courtiers, such as the Lord Chamberlain and Lord Steward.
- In 1804 King George III granted his son, Augustus Frederick, **Duke of Sussex**, a large suite of rooms comprising the south and west sides of Clock Court. Although he may not have occupied the whole of apartment 1A he utilised the corridor above the Stone Gallery and several other rooms to house his growing book collection (by 1827 his collection numbered 50,000 volumes and formed one of the most important English private libraries ever assembled!). In his later years the Duke achieved great popularity and at his death, in 1843, his lying in state at Kensington was attended by up to 20,000 people. After the Duke's death, his widow lived at Kensington until her own death in 1873.
- **Princess Louise**, one of Queen Victoria's daughters, and her husband John Campbell, Marquess of Lorne, heir to the 8<sup>th</sup> Duke of Argyll, moved into the apartment in February 1875. Princess Louise was an accomplished sculptor – her large marble statue of Queen Victoria still stands to the east of Kensington Palace. One of the alterations she undertook was the construction of a new studio in the garden nearby. Following the death of the Duke of Argyll in 1914, Princess Louise continued to live at Kensington Palace until her own death in 1939.

- After the death of Princess Louise, the whole apartment remained vacant until part of it was taken over by Princess Marina in 1954.
- Following their wedding on 6 May 1960, **Princess Margaret and Lord Snowdon** lived in another smaller apartment at Kensington Palace while they set about transforming what is now called Apartment 1A to new designs. Much of the earlier scheme was removed and replaced by a modern apartment in 18<sup>th</sup> century style, largely designed by Snowdon and Princess Margaret with the assistance of the theatre designer Carl Toms, one-time assistant to Oliver Messel, Lord Snowdon's uncle, and a close friend of the royal couple.