

# Factsheet

## Kew Palace First Floor

The rooms on this floor are accurate, atmospheric reconstructions of how they would have looked in early 1800 when the royal family lived here. Detailed documentary and archaeological research has informed the recreation of the fashionable and comfortable interiors created for George III, Queen Charlotte and the princesses.

### Queen's Boudoir

- The Queen's Boudoir (or 'sulking' room) was a private drawing room that would have been used largely by Queen Charlotte and her daughters for daily pastimes including sewing, spinning, drawing, painting and embroidery. Servants would read aloud in French or English while they worked and on Sundays Charlotte read sermons in German, her native tongue, to her daughters.
- The rare Jacobean plasterwork of the ceiling shows a 'banquet of the senses'. All five senses are depicted, with 'hearing' in the centre, suggesting that this was probably originally a room for musical entertainment.
- The walls of the Boudoir are decorated with handmade green verditer wallpaper with a black Greek-key patterned border, archaeological evidence of which is found throughout the palace. It is shown as the drawing room described in 1809, with striking black and yellow curtains, draperies and upholstered furniture, chintz for which was specially woven to adorn this room. Objects displayed inside the room reflect the activities that took place here, as described above.
- *Radio play: Visitors to this room are privy to a conversation between the princesses and the Queen about the King's health and newspaper reports about him are displayed for reading.*

### The Drawing Room

- George III was passionate about music and it was in this room that intimate concerts, including the work of the King's favourite composer Handel, would have been performed. It was also the scene for the double royal wedding of William, Duke of Clarence (the future William IV) to Princess Adelaide of Saxe-Meiningen and of Edward, Duke of Kent (father of Queen Victoria) to Princess Victoire of Saxe-Coburg that took place in August 1818, just a few months before Queen Charlotte's death.
- The room still retains many of the architectural features from the 1630s including the marble and alabaster chimney-piece and the Jacobean-style plaster frieze.
- The room is displayed as we believe it looked when George III and his family used the room with replica red Regency-style curtains with a black velvet trim and Grecian-style chairs and sofas.
- The focal point of the room is the harpsichord made for George III's father, Frederick Prince of Wales, and probably once played by the King himself, who also played the violin and flute.

#### **Princess Elizabeth's ante-chamber**

- Satirical prints of the King and the Royal family are projected on the walls in this antechamber to Princess Elizabeth's bedroom.

#### **Princess Elizabeth's Bedchamber**

- In the early 1800's this would have been one of the most impressive rooms in the house. Princess Elizabeth, inspired by her elder brother's interest in exquisite European fashions and designs, remodelled and furnished this room in the French style. Elizabeth played an important role in the royal household during the King's bouts of illness, providing support for her mother as well as acting as an intermediary between the Queen (who found his illness difficult to cope with) and the King and his doctors.
- Like the Queen's Boudoir this room is adorned with distinctive green verditer wallpaper and matching border. The room is furnished in striking
- golden yellow and maroon chintz, a stark contrast to the wallpaper. Historic records provided us with detailed accounts of Elizabeth's bed in this room

from which we have recreated a replica Grecian couch-bed, draped with a domed tester located in the alcove.

- One wall is deliberately left undressed, exposing the architectural 'bones' of this fascinating building that has been altered over the centuries depending on its inhabitants tastes and requirements. Evidence of the original verditer wallpaper can still be clearly seen on this unrestored wall.

### **Queen's Bedchamber**

- This room was Queen Charlotte's private bedchamber and the room in which she died in 1818. Unlike those of her daughters, her room was not extensively re-modelled prior to their moving in and it retains its 1730s joinery and chimneypiece. When Queen Victoria opened Kew Palace to the public in 1898 she requested that her grandmother's room remain untouched and a place for reflection. However, over the intervening years the display in this room was vastly altered; our representation returns it to its former glory as Queen Charlotte would have known it.
- Compared to Elizabeth's bedchamber, Queen Charlotte favoured a more traditional style of décor. The green verditer wallpaper and border, favoured in many other rooms on this floor, features again. White dimity and green hangings furnish the bed, reconstructed using two surviving original bed-posts, and for the curtains.
- The very armchair that Queen Charlotte died in, in this room, has now been returned and is a very moving reminder of the Queen's final days at Kew Palace. An early 19<sup>th</sup> Century apothecary's cabinet reminds visitors of the treatments the King received.
- *Radio play: The death of the Queen in 1818 in this room is reflected in the storytelling in this room, through a conversation between Frederick, Prince of Wales (The Prince Regent) and his mother.*

### **Queen's Dressing Room**

- This room is left untouched, again revealing the ‘architectural bones’ of the building. In Charlotte’s time the room would have been wallpapered with the green verditer found throughout this floor and visitors can see a small portion of the room prepared for wallpapering, demonstrating Georgian wallpapering techniques that were used historically that have been used again in the represented rooms on this floor.
- The fireplace in this room has been altered over the years as new fuels requiring increasingly smaller fireplaces were introduced. Traditional plasterwork imprinted with fingermarks, living evidence of the workmen who worked on the building hundreds of years ago, is also revealed.
- A waistcoat worn by George III is displayed in this room alongside a portrait of the King in 1820, during his final illness, attributed to Joseph Lee.