

Historic Royal Palaces
Kensington Palace



“It was a most merry
and happy dinner,
the merriest we have
had for a long time ...
We laughed a great
deal together.”

Queen Victoria enjoys a celebration for
her cousins at Kensington Palace, 1836



Blaze of grace

This enchanting royal palace is full of surprises

Surrounded by parkland, Kensington Palace offers a welcome retreat from the nearby hustle and bustle of London. Its understated elegance makes the palace an ideal companion to the Royal Parks' tranquil gardens and ponds.

Yet behind this calm, peaceful façade your guests will discover a spirited venue of royal

extravagance and magnificent beauty, full of lively stories of rivalry, politics, heartache and romance.

A prestigious stage for hundreds of years, the state rooms are where powerful politicians and courtiers jostled for influence and the ear of the king. And the palace's exquisite interior and stylish character has been

shaped by centuries of artists, craftsmen and fashionable residents – from William Kent to Princess Diana.

Today, this beautiful palace offers you a variety of exciting, versatile spaces for hire. We will give you first-class, personal service from day one, right through to the end of what will be an unforgettable event for your guests.



A venue for the ages

For centuries, Kensington Palace has been a backdrop for spectacular social occasions, the scene of private intimate gatherings and a place for cementing royal business.

1689

King William III and Queen Mary II buy Nottingham House, the modest courtier's on the edge of town that will become Kensington Palace.



1698

'World leaders' meet at the palace. King William entertains the Russian Tsar, Peter the Great.



1691-1694

William and Mary oversee an era of magnificent balls and social events, at least 14 in this period.

1718

A birthday celebration is held for King George I in the garden. A member of the crowd recalled: 'About 10 o'clock the fireworks were fired and were very fine. The little princesses danced till 11.'

1727

George II and Queen Caroline make the palace their home. The palace enters its heyday as a setting for ceremony and entertainment.



1819

The future Queen Victoria is baptised in the Cupola Room (see p24) surrounded by the royal family.



1899

Queen Victoria celebrates her 80th birthday by throwing open the State Apartments to the public.



2012

Queen Elizabeth II re-opens Kensington Palace following its £12million re-presentation.



Summer 1734

A delegation of Cherokee Indians from the new colony of Georgia, named after the King, visit the palace and meet George II and Queen Caroline.

1837

Princess Victoria receives news her uncle William IV has died and she is now Queen. She holds her first Privy Council in the Red Saloon.



1960s

Princess Margaret and husband Lord Snowden move into the palace. Darlings of 'Swinging London', the couple entertain famous friends such as Peter Sellers, Britt Ekland, Noel Coward and John Betjeman.

A certain flair

Once a magnet for political ambition and royal intrigue, the palace may surprise your guests with an aura of artistry, fashion and style.



King William III and Queen Mary II were the first and only couple to rule jointly. The Queen's influence on the palace's design and furnishings is still felt today.

What to wear to a party with the king? Kensington Palace is home to over 10,000 objects that reveal the complex world of dress worn at court by members of the royal family.



This beautifully intriguing object is positioned over the fireplace in the King's Gallery (pp20-21). Connected to a wind vane on the palace roof, the dial told King William III which way the wind was blowing and where his navies were likely to be.



Kensington Palace's most famous resident, Diana was the embodiment of a modern princess. Her sense of style influenced a generation.

William Kent's fabulous painting of the King's Grand Staircase features the portraits of 45 servants who worked in the royal household. Kent even included himself in the artwork.

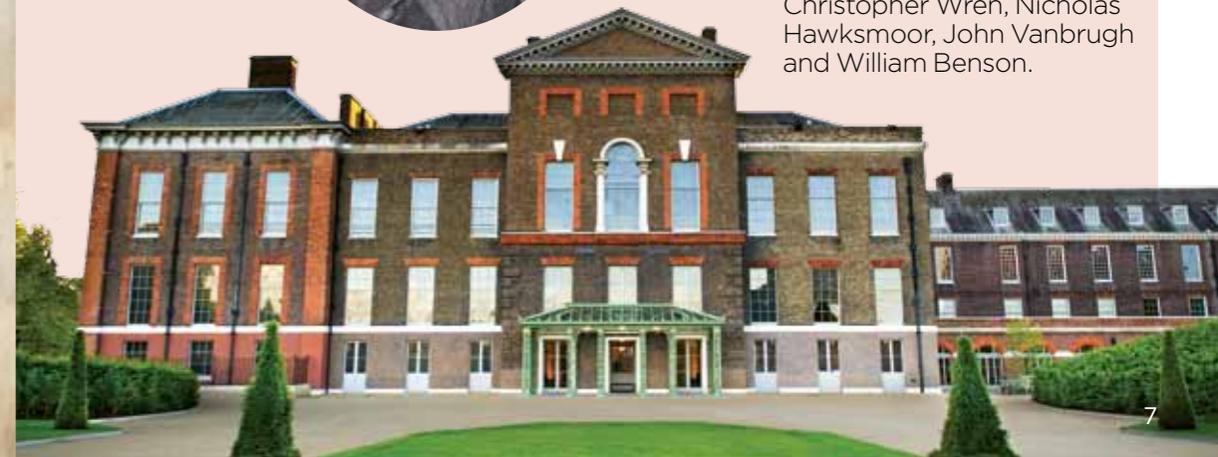


For the first decade of George II's reign (1727-60) the palace was a glittering centre of court life where courtiers, politicians and fashionable people vied for favour.



Queen Victoria's childhood home is also where she met her future husband Albert (see p14). Her statue in the gardens was commissioned by her daughter Princess Louise to celebrate the Queen's Golden Jubilee in 1887.

A showcase for some of England's most brilliant architects, Kensington was transformed from charming suburban villa into a royal palace by the likes of Christopher Wren, Nicholas Hawksmoor, John Vanbrugh and William Benson.





State Apartments, including Entrance Hall
(All rooms)
p12-13, 18-25
Capacity
700
Reception

Entrance Hall
Hub, Stone Staircase, White Court and Vestibule
p10
Capacity
300
Reception
140
Dinner

King's State Apartments
(All rooms)
p18-25
Capacity
420
Reception
310
Dinner

King's Gallery
p20-21
Capacity
170
Reception
100
Dinner
170
Recitals (200 without stage)

King's Drawing Room
p22-23
Capacity
100
Reception
90
Dinner

Queen's Gallery
p16
Capacity
170
Reception
70
Dinner

Cupola Room
p24
Capacity
100
Reception
80
Dinner

Privy Chamber
p25
Capacity
70
Reception
40
Dinner

The Orangery
p26
Capacity
300
Reception (570 with terrace marquee)
200
Dinner and lunch
120
Dinner with dancing
200
Theatre style
120
Cabaret style

Sunken Garden
p32
Capacity
80
Reception

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Grand
Stylish
Spacious



The Entrance Hall and East Front Gardens



Entrance Hall

Capacity

300 for reception*
140 for dinner*

Available for evening hire

*Hiring the Entrance Hall includes Stone Hall, White Court, Stone Staircase and Vestibule

The space

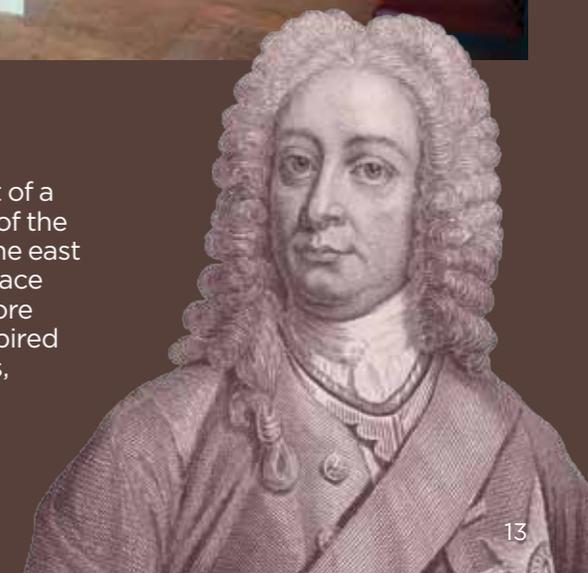
This newly refurbished entrance opens onto the beautiful East Front Gardens. The hall elegantly includes four spaces that lead guests into the heart of the palace, where they can mingle as part of a large drinks reception or assemble for a private view.

Features

- In fine weather, receptions spill out onto the beautifully landscaped East Front Gardens
- The unexpected light sculpture has two miles of electroluminescent wire, decorated with 12,000 Swarovski crystals

A palace story

The Entrance Hall was completed in 2012 as part of a £12million refurbishment of the palace and its gardens. The east and south sides of the palace were transformed to restore original sightlines and inspired by the old layouts of trees, borders and topiary of King George II's time.



Capacity

300 for reception*

140 for dinner*

Available for evening hire

*Hiring the Entrance Hall includes Stone Hall, White Court, Stone Staircase and Vestibule

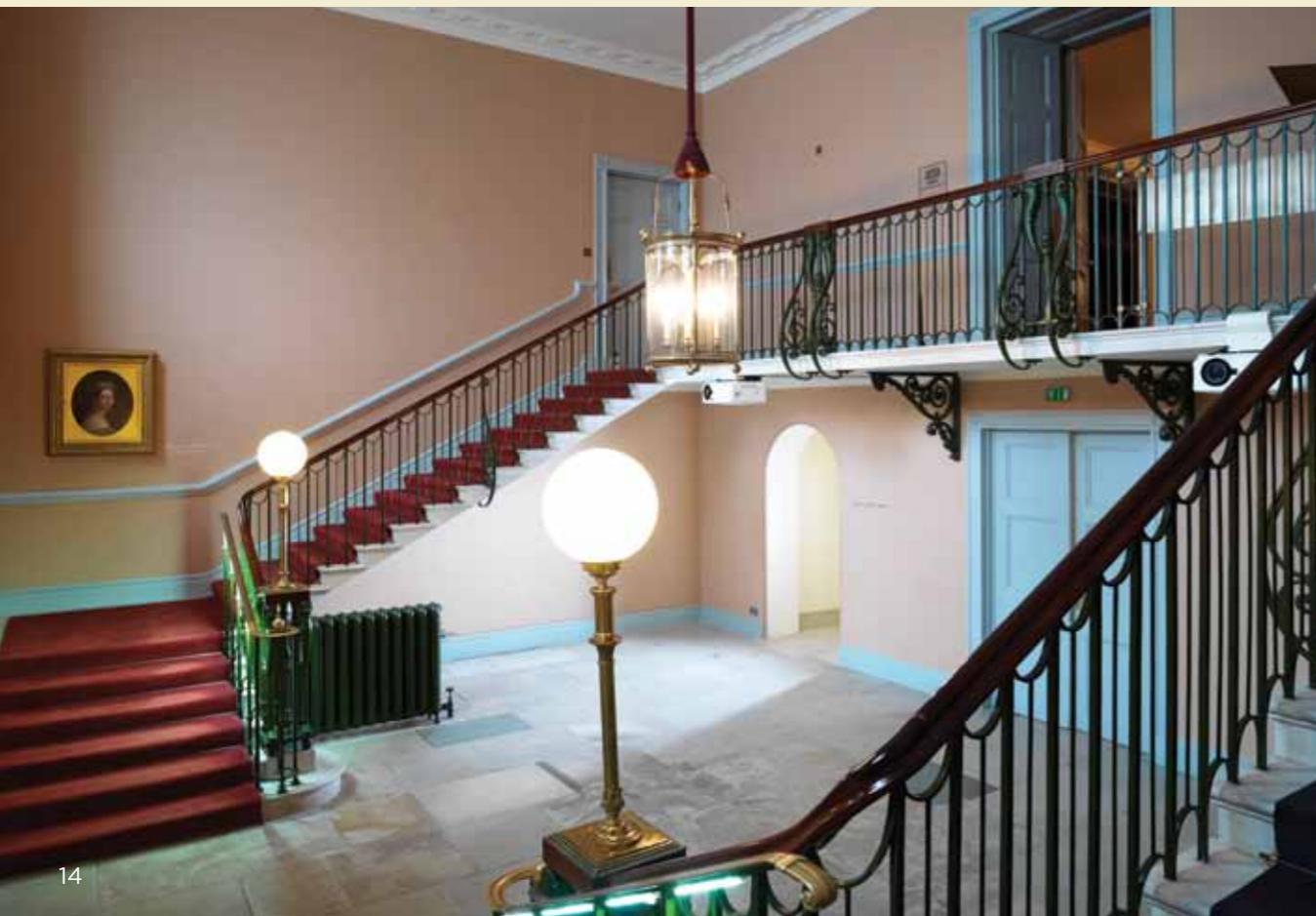
The space

It was on the Stone Staircase that Princess Victoria met her future husband Prince Albert for the first time in 1836. Airy and full of natural light, it's an elegant place for addressing guests and making speeches from the balcony. The soaring space of White Court is perfect for drinks receptions.

Features

- A small band can take position in White Court to entertain the entire Entrance Hall
- Victoria Revealed exhibition begins at the top of the stairs and explores the life and reign of Queen Victoria
- At the top of the staircase is the Red Saloon where Victoria held her first Privy Council

Stone Staircase and White Court



The Vestibule

Capacity

300 for reception*

140 for dinner*

Available for evening hire

*Hiring the Entrance Hall includes Stone Hall, White Court, Stone Staircase and Vestibule

The space

This bright room is lined with paintings and photographs of the palace's residents through history, up to and including the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge. Each of the palace's main visitor routes begins here, making it the perfect place to start guided tours for your guests.

Key features

- Visitor seating may be moved to open up the space for events
- Ceiling features a spiral motif of famous quotations from the palace's royal residents



Capacity

170 for reception
70 for dinner
Available for evening hire

The space

This long, spacious room offers stunning views over Kensington Gardens and the palace's Wiggly Walk. Once a domestic space where Queen Mary II and her ladies-in-waiting would embroider, the gallery has great acoustics and comfortably accommodates large numbers.

Features

- Popular for pre-dinner receptions used together with other spaces
- Decorated with Chinese porcelain collected by Queen Mary
- Hung with portraits of King William and Queen Mary

Queen's Gallery

“The Queen brought in the fashion ... of filling houses with China-ware which increased to a strange degree afterwards ...”

Daniel Defoe on Mary II's enthusiasm for porcelain



A palace story

Russian Tsar Peter the Great came to London in 1698 to learn about shipbuilding, but spent much of his time shopping and drinking with his friends. He accepted an invitation to dinner at Kensington Palace during his stay. King William persuaded the Tsar to sit for a painting, which still hangs in the Queen's Gallery.

Ambitious
Sumptuous
Powerful

King's State
Apartments



King's Gallery

Capacity

170 for reception
100 for dinner
170 for recitals
(200 without stage)

The space

An imposing image of King Charles I on horseback dominates the room's east end, first built to showcase King William III's finest paintings. Today, the palace's largest and longest room is filled with Royal Collection masterpieces and is popular for receptions and dinners as well as private concerts and recitals.

Gallery features

- Famous dial over the fireplace is still in working order (see p7)
- Great acoustics make it a wonderful space to enjoy music recitals
- Overlooks William III's statue and the palace's golden gate
- Easy access to the first floor lift



A palace story

In the days of William III this gallery was the true seat of power, where the King could talk freely with his spies and plan military campaigns. But the palace was also a royal family home and the King spent time here playing soldiers with his little nephew and intended heir, the Duke of Gloucester.



“I dressed me very fine to go to Kensington [it] being the King’s birthday, and about 2 went to Sir Wilfred Lawson’s and we went together and found a great crowd in the Gallery, where the King saw company.”

A William Byrd, a rich planter from Virginia visiting London in 1718



King’s Drawing Room

Capacity

100 for reception*
90 for dinner*

Available for evening hire

*capacity can be increased by using with Cupola Room

The space

Fantastic views and spectacular artistry await guests in this wonderfully light and warm room. The avenues of Kensington Gardens converge outside the chamber’s central window, giving guests a vista over Queen Victoria’s statue, the Round Pond and the rest of Kensington Gardens.

Features

- Renaissance artist Vasari’s Venus and Cupid was once the source of a huge row between George I and his queen when Caroline re-organised the room
- The King and his closest aides would play cards here late into the night

A palace story

Not any courtier gained access to the King’s Drawing Room during a royal party. Those who did packed this room in search of power and patronage. Those judged unworthy – or unable to bribe the King’s guards who controlled access – huddled and peered in from the Cupola Room next door.





Capacity

70 for reception
40 for dinner

The space

Queen Caroline loved entertaining the finest writers, thinkers, artists and scientists of her day here. Filled with beautiful objects and stories, the Privy Chamber works well for drinks or gatherings before dining in another of the King's State Apartments.

Features

- Lined with 17th-century tapestries, a magnificent ceiling painting shows Mars, god of war, and Minerva, goddess of wisdom
- Busts of Queen Caroline's contemporary heroes line the outside, including Sir Isaac Newton who would demonstrate his experiments to her in this room



Privy Chamber



Cupola Room



Capacity

100 for reception*
80 for dinner*

*capacity can be increased by using with the King's Drawing Room

The space

A setting for countless nights of music, dancing and celebration, this splendidly-decorated room is also where the future Queen Victoria was baptised surrounded by close family. Guests look out over the palace's Wiggly Walk, Sunken Garden and the beautiful Orangery.

Features

- The room's curious centrepiece is a clock, a Handel-playing music box and a piece of art. It was purchased by George II's daughter-in-law
- William Kent's spectacular trompe l'oeil was painted for the princely sum of £500 and creates the illusion of the ceiling being an elaborately gilded dome



The Orangery and gardens

Light
Inspiring
Elegant



The Orangery

Capacity

300 for reception
(570 with terrace
marquee)
200 for dinner/lunch
120 for dinner with
dancing
200 theatre style
seating
120 cabaret style
seating

Available for evening and
limited daytime hire

The space

It is perhaps the world's most beautiful orangery. Popular year-round, this palatial venue can accommodate receptions for up to 570 when using the terrace and marquees. Queen Anne intended it as a greenhouse for her orange trees in winter, but it was frequently used as a party venue for balls and celebrations.

Features

- Great for large events such as performances, conferences and award ceremonies
- Guests can spill out onto its large, wide stone terrace
- Accommodates dancing and amplified music
- Easy access to the Orangery Gardens, where pyrotechnics are permitted



A palace story

In the summer of 1704, Queen Anne conceived a new 'greenhouse' with a terrace where she could grow citrus trees and exotic plants in ceramic pots. The design of the beautiful building involved not one, but three famous architects of the day - Christopher Wren, Nicolas Hawksmoor and John Vanbrugh.

The Orangery



One of London's most beautiful and perfectly formed buildings





“a might fine cool place...
with a great layer of
water in the middle.”

Samuel Pepys (1664)



Sunken Garden

Capacity

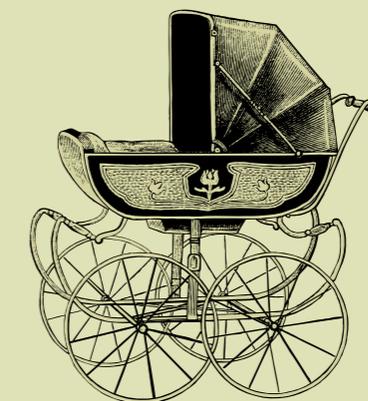
80 for reception

The space

A lovely, secluded English garden, this tranquil space comes into its own in fine weather from April to October. Guests can mingle on the terraces among the exotic, vibrant flowers, which rotate during through the year. Tulips and pansies bloom in spring and geraniums, cannas and begonias provide colour in summer.

Features

- Ideal for drinks receptions before moving to dinner in the State Apartments
- Connects to the palace via Wiggly Walk
- King Edward VII instigated its creation in 1909. It replaced a clutter of old greenhouses and potting sheds



A palace story

In the early 20th century the Sunken Garden's covered walkway of limes was a popular meeting place for flocks of Kensington nannies pushing perambulators and walking their charges in the park. It's known as 'cradle walk'.

Space specifications

Entrance Hall

Capacity
300
Reception
140 Dinner



- Great for large drinks receptions or intimate dinners with dancing
- Nearby field kitchen available
- Disabled access

Queen's Gallery

Capacity
170
Reception
70 Dinner



- Great for dinners and receptions
- Accessed via the lovely Queen's Staircase
- Disabled access

King's Gallery

Capacity
170
Reception
100 Dinner



- **170** Recitals (200 without stage)
- Great acoustics make it popular for recitals and concerts
- Nearby field kitchen available
- Accessed via grand King's Staircase
- Located immediately next to first floor lift

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King's Drawing Room

Capacity
100
Reception
90 Dinner



- Great for dinners and receptions
- Field kitchen inside the palace is available for caterers
- Accessed via the grand King's Staircase
- Disabled access

Cupola Room

Capacity
100
Reception
80 Dinner



- Great for drinks receptions and dinners
- Accessed via the grand King's Staircase
- Disabled access

Privy Chamber

Capacity
70
Reception
40 Dinner



- Great for intimate dinners and pre-dinner receptions
- Accessed via the grand King's Staircase
- Disabled access

The Orangery

Capacity
300
Reception
(570 with terrace marquee)
200 Dinner and lunch
120 Dinner with dancing
200 Theatre style
120 Cabaret style



- Great for large events such as performances, conferences and award ceremonies
- Flexible area for events use
- Day and night time hire
- Can be used with the Orangery Lawns
- Disabled access

Sunken Garden

Capacity
80
Reception



- Ideal for pre-dinner drinks receptions in fine weather
- Wonderfully secluded and intimate
- Flexible space can be combined with Orangery, Entrance Hall or the State Apartments

Getting here

Kensington Palace is located in Kensington Gardens on the edge of Hyde Park, just off Kensington High Street.

By tube or rail

Nearby underground stations are Queensway, High Street Kensington and Notting Hill Gate. Nearest mainline station is Paddington.

Closing times

Carriages are at 22.30 hours however with permission these times may be extended.

Vehicle access

Vehicle access for suppliers and guests is via Jubilee Walk and Orme Square Gate.

Contact us

T. 020 3166 6115
E. kensingtonpalaceevents@hrp.org.uk
www.hrp.org.uk/HireAVenue

Kensington Palace
Kensington Gardens
London
W8 4PX



Giving history a future

By hosting your event at Kensington Palace you're not only contributing to the upkeep and protection of this magnificent building and its splendid grounds, but also to the conservation of four other very special historic buildings.

Historic Royal Palaces is the independent charity that looks after the Tower of London, Hampton Court Palace, the Banqueting House, Kensington Palace and Kew Palace. Our aim is to help everyone explore the story of how monarchs and people have shaped society in five of the greatest palaces ever built.

Your event directly supports this mission, as we raise all our own funds and count on the support of our visitors, members, donors, sponsors and volunteers in our continuing work to conserve these palaces and their stories for future generations.

In good company

We are pleased to invite you to discover some of the benefits of corporate partnership with Historic Royal Palaces.

Every year, we entertain and engage millions of visitors. Every day we are forming new relationships, as we help people explore the stories of the five famous royal palaces in our care. At Historic Royal Palaces our business is very much about welcoming people, and creating surprising, enriching experiences they will never forget.

So, whether it is sponsoring a blockbuster exhibition, lending support to an award-winning outreach or education programme or getting involved in one of our corporate partnership schemes, you can be sure we will welcome your employees and clients with the same panache we do our visitors and guests, while offering you exclusive benefits and opportunities not found anywhere else.

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venues to exclusive exhibition openings and supporters' dinners.

For more information please contact us on 020 3166 6321 or email development@hrp.org.uk. We look forward to hearing from you.

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If you are looking for an unusual and unique gift for your guest, may we suggest that you look to Historic Royal Palaces for inspiration. All our products are inspired by our five magnificent palaces, so we know you will find just the right gift for your event, whether you are searching for one special present or entertaining a large number of guests.

If you would like help in choosing gifts, our experienced team can discuss individual requirements. We pride ourselves in offering high quality products, unrivalled customer service and working with all our customers' varied requirements to provide the complete gift service.

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Hosting magnificent and unforgettable events since 1514



Banqueting House

One of London's most desirable venues and home to the irreplaceable Rubens' ceiling



Kensington Palace

Where style meets power, this elegant royal retreat enchants and surprises



Kew Palace

A hidden gem of a palace tucked away among beautiful royal gardens



Historic Royal Palaces Kensington Palace

William III and Mary II wanted to live in fresh country air away from the damp and smoke of Whitehall, so they commissioned Sir Christopher Wren to build Kensington Palace. We use William's royal coat of arms, with his family motto 'I will maintain', words that aptly reflect the palace's special collection of historic and modern royal dress.

The stylish deep pink silk wall covering in the King's Gallery inspires the Kensington Palace pattern.

We raise all our own funds and depend on the support of our visitors, members, donors, sponsors and volunteers.

Contact us to arrange
a site visit

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