

Buckingham Palace is a royal residence in London and the administrative headquarters of the monarch of the United Kingdom. Located in the City of Westminster, the palace is often at the centre of state occasions and royal hospitality. It has been a focal point for the British people at times of national rejoicing and mourning. Originally known as Buckingham House, the building at the core of today's palace was a large townhouse built for the Duke of Buckingham in 1703 on a site that had been in private ownership for at least 150 years. It was acquired by King George III in 1761 as a private residence for Queen Charlotte and became known as The Queen's House. During the 19th century it was enlarged by architects John Nash and Edward Blore, who constructed three wings around a central courtyard. Buckingham Palace became the London residence of the British monarch on the accession of Queen Victoria in 1837. Buckingham Palace, the iconic residence of the British monarch located in the heart of London, boasts an impressive area and size. Covering approximately 39 acres in total, Buckingham Palace stands as a symbol of royal grandeur and architectural magnificence. The palace itself spans over 108 meters in length and features over 775 rooms, including lavish state rooms, private apartments, and administrative offices. The expansive grounds surrounding Buckingham Palace further contribute to its grandeur, encompassing beautifully landscaped gardens, ornamental lakes, and picturesque pathways. The gardens alone extend across 40 acres and are meticulously maintained, providing a tranquil oasis amidst the bustling cityscape of London. Visitors to Buckingham Palace have the opportunity to witness the splendor of its interior during select times of the year, marveling at its regal decor and historical significance. Additionally, the Changing of the Guard ceremony, a time-honored tradition, takes place regularly outside the palace gates, attracting crowds of spectators from around the world. Overall, Buckingham Palace's vast area and size, coupled with its rich heritage and cultural significance, firmly establish it as one of the most iconic landmarks in the United Kingdom and a must-visit destination for tourists and royal enthusiasts alike. The last major structural additions were made in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, including the East Front, which contains the well-known balcony on which the royal family traditionally appears to greet crowds. A German bomb destroyed the palace chapel during the Second World War; the Queen's Gallery was built on the site and opened to the public in 1962 to exhibit works of art from the Royal Collection. The original early-19th-century interior designs, many of which survive, include widespread use of brightly coloured scagliola and blue and pink lapis, on the advice of Charles Long. King Edward VII oversaw a partial redecoration in a Belle Époque cream and gold colour scheme. Many smaller reception rooms are furnished in the Chinese regency style with furniture and fittings brought from the Royal Pavilion at Brighton and from Carlton House. The palace has 775 rooms, and the garden is the largest private garden in London. The state rooms, used for official and state entertaining, are open to the public each year for most of August and September and on some days in winter and spring. Interior Piano nobile of Buckingham Palace. The areas defined by shaded walls represent lower minor wings. Note: this is an unscaled sketch plan for reference only. Proportions of some rooms may slightly differ in reality. The front of the palace measures 355 feet (108 m) across, by 390 feet (120 m) deep, by 80 feet (24 m) high and contains over

830,000 square feet (77,000 m²) of floorspace. There are 775 rooms, including 188 staff bedrooms, 92 offices, 78 bathrooms, 52 principal bedrooms and 19 state rooms. It also has a post office, cinema, swimming pool, doctor's surgery, and jeweller's workshop. The royal family occupy a small suite of private rooms in the north wing. Principal rooms The principal rooms are contained on the first-floor piano nobile behind the west-facing garden façade at the rear of the palace. The centre of this ornate suite of state rooms is the Music Room, its large bow the dominant feature of the façade. Flanking the Music Room are the Blue and the White Drawing Rooms. At the centre of the suite, serving as a corridor to link the state rooms, is the Picture Gallery, which is top-lit and 55 yards (50 m) long.[82] The Gallery is hung with numerous works including some by Rembrandt, van Dyck, Rubens and Vermeer;[83] other rooms leading from the Picture Gallery are the Throne Room and the Green Drawing Room. The Green Drawing Room serves as a huge anteroom to the Throne Room, and is part of the ceremonial route to the throne from the Guard Room at the top of the Grand Staircase.[82] The Guard Room contains white marble statues of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert, in Roman costume, set in a tribune lined with tapestries. These very formal rooms are used only for ceremonial and official entertaining but are open to the public every summer. Directly underneath the state apartments are the less grand semi-state apartments. Opening from the Marble Hall, these rooms are used for less formal entertaining, such as luncheon parties and private audiences. At the centre of this floor is the Bow Room, through which thousands of guests pass annually to the monarch's garden parties.[85] When paying a state visit to Britain, foreign heads of state are usually entertained by the monarch at Buckingham Palace. They are allocated an extensive suite of rooms known as the Belgian Suite, situated at the foot of the Minister's Staircase, on the ground floor of the west-facing Garden Wing. Some of the rooms are named and decorated for particular visitors, such as the 1844 Room, decorated in that year for the state visit of Nicholas I of Russia, and the 1855 Room, in honour of the visit of Napoleon III of France. The former is a sitting room that also serves as an audience room and is often used for personal investitures. Narrow corridors link the rooms of the suite; one of them is given extra height and perspective by saucer domes designed by Nash in the style of Soane. A second corridor in the suite has Gothic-influenced cross-over vaulting. The suite was named after Leopold I of Belgium, uncle of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert. In 1936, the suite briefly became the private apartments of the palace when Edward VIII occupied them. The original early-19th-century interior designs, many of which still survive, included widespread use of brightly coloured scagliola and blue and pink lapis, on the advice of Charles Long. Edward VII oversaw a partial redecoration in a Belle Époque cream and gold colour scheme. Between 1847 and 1850, when Blore was building the new east wing, the Brighton Pavilion was once again plundered of its fittings. As a result, many of the rooms in the new wing have a distinctly oriental atmosphere. The red and blue Chinese Luncheon Room is made up of parts of the Brighton Banqueting and Music Rooms with a large oriental chimneypiece designed by Robert Jones and sculpted by Richard Westmacott. It was formerly in the Music Room at the Brighton Pavilion. The ornate clock, known as the Kylin Clock, was made in Jingdezhen, Jiangxi Province, China, in the second half of the 18th century; it has a later movement by Benjamin Vulliamy circa 1820.

The Yellow Drawing Room has wallpaper supplied in 1817 for the Brighton Saloon, and a chimneypiece which is a European vision of how the Chinese chimney piece may appear. It has nodding mandarins in niches and fearsome winged dragons, designed by Robert Jones. At the centre of this wing is the famous balcony with the Centre Room behind its glass doors. This is a Chinese-style saloon enhanced by Queen Mary, who, working with the designer Charles Allom, created a more "binding" Chinese theme in the late 1920s, although the lacquer doors were brought from Brighton in 1873. Running the length of the piano nobile of the east wing is the Great Gallery, modestly known as the Principal Corridor, which runs the length of the eastern side of the quadrangle. It has mirrored doors and mirrored cross walls reflecting porcelain pagodas and other oriental furniture from Brighton. The Chinese Luncheon Room and Yellow Drawing Room are situated at each end of this gallery, with the Centre Room in between. Investitures for the awarding of honours (which include the conferring of knighthoods by dubbing with a sword) usually take place in the palace's Throne Room.[95] Investitures are conducted by the King or another senior member of the royal family: a military band plays in the musicians' gallery, as recipients receive their honours, watched by their families and friends. State banquets take place in the Ballroom, built in 1854. At 120 feet (36.6 m) long, 60 feet (18 m) wide and 45 feet (13.5 m) high, it is the largest room in the palace; at one end of the room is a throne dais (beneath a giant, domed velvet canopy, known as a shamiana or baldachin, that was used at the Delhi Durbar in 1911). State Banquets are formal dinners held on the first evening of a state visit by a foreign head of state. On these occasions, for up to 170 guests in formal "white tie and decorations", including tiaras, the dining table is laid with the Grand Service, a collection of silver-gilt plate made in 1811 for the Prince of Wales, later George IV. The largest and most formal reception at Buckingham Palace takes place every November when the King entertains members of the diplomatic corps.[99] On this grand occasion, all the state rooms are in use, as the royal family proceed through them,[100] beginning at the great north doors of the Picture Gallery. As Nash had envisaged, all the large, double-mirrored doors stand open, reflecting the numerous crystal chandeliers and sconces, creating a deliberate optical illusion of space and light. Smaller ceremonies such as the reception of new ambassadors take place in the "1844 Room". Here too, the King holds small lunch parties, and often meetings of the Privy Council. Larger lunch parties often take place in the curved and domed Music Room or the State Dining Room. Since the bombing of the palace chapel in World War II, royal christenings have sometimes taken place in the Music Room. Queen Elizabeth II's first three children were all baptised there. On all formal occasions, the ceremonies are attended by the Yeomen of the Guard, in their historic uniforms, and other officers of the court such as the Lord Chamberlain.