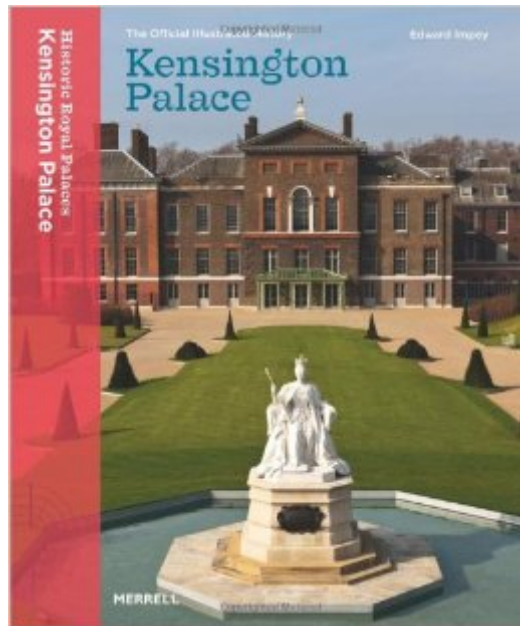


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Kensington Palace: The Official Illustrated History



Synopsis

Reopened to the public in spring 2012 after major renovation, Kensington Palace has been a royal residence for more than three centuries. Formerly a private house enlarged by Christopher Wren to suit the needs of William and Mary, this nonetheless unpretentious property was the favoured home of five sovereigns until the mid-eighteenth century, and during this period was restyled and decorated by some of England's greatest architects, artists and designers. It was the birthplace and childhood home of Queen Victoria, and towards the end of her reign she approved a pioneering restoration of the State Apartments. More recently, Kensington was the home of Diana, Princess of Wales, during the last years of her life. This revised illustrated history, published to mark the palace's latest transformation, tells the fascinating story of the site, recounting not only the architectural development of the building and the creation of its magnificent gardens, but also the dramas and intrigues of court life.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

An extremely nice paperback history book about Kensington Palace. You get the history of the place from it's beginnings (there's been something built on the site for about a 1000 years) but mostly covering the period from the 17th century onwards through today. There are a lot of photographs of various sections of the building complex, some more than 100 years old, both inside and out as well as maps and diagrams from past centuries. The history of the place is very detailed with period illustrations and covers many of the occupants as well as the structure itself. I really like

the book and would recommend it to anyone who has been or is thinking of going to London. You will learn a lot about the Palace but be warned, this isn't a guide book. You will learn about a lot of what is there but you aren't told just what isn't open to the public (if you are it isn't very clear and I missed it) and there is no Prince (or Princess) lived here detail (Charles & Diana barely mentioned in comparison to some past inhabitants).

This is an illustrated history, not a tour guide, of Kensington Palace which details its origins and Royal Occupants from 1605 to the present day. Kensington had private owners until 1689 when it was bought by King William and Queen Mary and passed into Royal hands. We learn from this illustrated history that Kensington's survival was in question until Queen Victoria came along. It was her childhood home, and she had great affection for it so ensured that it endured. More recently it was the home of Princess Diana and is now home to Prince William and Kate. There are a lot of images of its royal occupants throughout history, floor plans, paintings of rooms and some photos. There are not a lot of images of recent interiors as it has been a private home to royalty. You can see photos of the rooms which Diana occupied on Pinterest, if you are interested. However, this is an excellent illustrated history with about 2/3 text and 1/3 images. One of its more fascinating occupants which I learned about in this history was Princess Louise who lived in Kensington Palace from 1875 to 1939. She was the daughter of Queen Victoria and attended art school and knew many of the leading artists and aesthetes in the late 1800's. She created the sculpture of her mother, Queen Victoria, in her coronation robes which is at Kensington Palace today. If you are fascinated by English royalty and their homes, this is a large, colorful, appealing and comprehensive history.

Kensington Palace will likely receive more attention by Americans now that Prince William and the Duchess Catherine of Cambridge are about to make it their home. This book provides a detailed history of the palace including why the location was chosen for a royal palace. It also gives a history of the many royals who have and do call it home.

So much information on this overlooked but important building. I've heard how the main parts of the palace, such as Clock Court, the transformation of the original house, and the core apartments of the King and Queen, and the Hanover remodel but to learn where the other wings- such as the part of apartments 8&9 that the Princess of Wales called home- was fascinating. The most famous modern portions of the building are never talked about anywhere else. To hear how the Georgian

part of the Palace, which became the very public front of this building due to the attention given to it world wide upon the death of the Princess of Wales in 1997 came into being and then to hear the even lesser known history of how the most famous apartments of the most famous resident (again the Princess of Wales) Apt 8 and 9, very famous for being her home, but the story of their construction is basically unknown outside those walls, is given in detail, making this book for anyone interested in history of architecture, royalty and the lives of those living within the palace at any point of its history, will enjoy

Read this instead of going there - there's very little content, even for those wanting to worship at the Shrine of Diana, and what is there is not very well explained or presented - the paintings in particular are very badly lit, almost unviewable in fact. Hampton Court is (just) worth the 15 quid they charge to get in, Kensington at 12.50 is a complete rip off by comparison. Stick to the book.

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