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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

Ground-breaking and elegant new study - MAJESTY MAGAZINE Edward Impey used to be curator of Historic Royal Palaces and so knows Kensington Palace well, as can be seen by this admirable book which packs a thorough social and architectural history into the economical framework of an extended guidebook - COUNTRY LIFE --This text refers to an alternate Paperback edition.

EDWARD IMPEY, formerly Curator of Historic Royal Palaces, is a Director of English Heritage. He

has written widely on architectural and historical subjects, and has been involved in the history of Kensington Palace, and its presentation to the public, since 1995.

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.

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

Great book exactly what is sold in the store at Kensington Palace. Includes pictures of areas that you can not access on the tour.

A palace in the truly English tradition, not a grand architectural monument but a manor house on a more intimate scale. Sure it has impressive interiors that lend it that grand house persona. I think many readers will find this a truly interesting story of a house that has grown to be an important part of the nation's history because of those that have lived here and also the contribution they have made to the way it has grown to be a palace reflecting chiefly the style and decoration of the eighteenth century.

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.

The guide is very informative, however, I was at Kensington Palace in 2011 when it was being refurbished and had hoped this new guide would include photos of the completed renovation. Not so much.

Very good book

I have not had time to read it all but love the parts I have read because I love history.

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