

The Historical and Architectural Importance of Buckingham Palace

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Abstract

Buckingham Palace is a timeless icon of British history, the monarchy, and great architecture. This article examines the Palace's history, cultural significance, and artistic beauty – from its origins as a small townhouse to its status as the official home of the British monarch. The essay shows how Buckingham Palace represents national identity and royal history by looking closely at its neoclassical architecture, lavish interiors, and ceremonial activities. It also talks about the Palace's role in government, public events, and its recent modernization works, giving readers a full picture of one of the most famous buildings in the UK. Buckingham Palace is more than just a royal home; it is a symbol of Britain's long-lasting monarchy, a place for national celebrations, and a work of historical architecture. The Palace lies in the middle of London and has been the official home of the British monarch since Queen Victoria's reign in 1837. It has seen many important events over the years, including royal weddings and jubilees, political changes, and international diplomacy. Buckingham Palace is still a major part of British culture and a source of interest around the world because of its majestic façade, luxurious state chambers, and famous balcony. This page goes into detail on the Palace's long history, stunning architecture, and ceremonial importance, giving readers a taste of the beauty that makes it one of the most famous royal homes in the world.

Keywords: Royal residence, architecture, heritage, ceremony, monarchy

INTRODUCTION

Buckingham Palace is an important building and a historical icon. It is the home and administrative headquarters of the British monarch in London. The beautiful 19th-century palace is famous all over the world as the place where official ceremonies and royal hospitality take place. It is also a place where the British people come together to celebrate and mourn. The palace is a very important part of British history because it was the home of the monarch from whom the country gets its name [1].

There is no doubt that Buckingham Palace is important from an architectural and historical point of view. Architects, like John Nash and Edward Blore, have helped the palace change from a huge private home into a spectacular royal palace. The façade is now known all over the world because of materials like Bath stone. The palace's enormous gardens and physical location, which include Green Park, St. James's Park, and The Mall, make its architecture stand out even more. Historically, multiple phases have been very important to its growth, from the Duke of Buckingham's first use of it in 1703 to the many changes it has made to meet royal needs up to now. The palace was used as a Royal Military Hospital during World War I, and it had a cultural and political role in the creation of the London Blitz memorial garden in the early 1950s [2].

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A LOOK BACK IN TIME

Since 1837, Buckingham Palace has been the official home and office of the British royal family in London. Monarch George V was the first to call it Buckingham Palace, and every monarch and queen since then has lived there, except for Edward VIII. The palace lies in the City of Westminster, in Central London, and is often the center of state events and royal hospitality. In 1703, the Duke of Buckingham erected the foundation. In 1761, King George III bought it as a private home for Queen Charlotte and their kids. King George IV started turning the structure into a neoclassical palace, but he gave up on the project. Sir Edward Blore finished it during King William IV's reign. Queen Victoria was the first queen to live in the palace in 1837 [3].

In the 1800s, three wings were built to the main home to make a courtyard. This changed the look and feel of the building a lot. Sir A. Blomfield designed the east wing, which was built between 1847 and 1850 to make room for the Picture Gallery and the Royal Collection drawers. During Queen Victoria's reign, the palace was enlarged further, and the iconic balcony was erected in 1850. Sir Aston Webb constructed the stone façade and balcony that now dominates the street vista of Buckingham Palace in 1913 at the request of King George V. The location was still available to the public, but it was only used for royal events. The Queen also has a lot of formal duties when she lives there. For example, she hosts heads of state for state visits, holds investitures and garden parties, and welcomes new ambassadors and high commissioners. By this time, the palace had become a symbol of the British Empire and the monarchy. This image still exists in the 21st century, even though the Empire has become the Commonwealth of Nations [4].

THE BEGINNING AND BUILDING

The queen of the United Kingdom lives and works at Buckingham Palace in London. The palace lies in the City of Westminster and is often the center of state events and royal hospitality. The first part of the structure was a big townhouse erected for the Duke of Buckingham in 1703. King George III bought it in 1761 as a private home for Queen Charlotte, who was then known as "The Queen's House." Architects John Nash and Edward Blore built three wings around a central courtyard to make the home bigger in the 19th century. When Queen Victoria became queen in 1837, Buckingham Palace became the home of the British royal family in London [5].

The last big changes to the building's structure happened in the late 1800s and early 1900s. The East Front, which has the famous balcony where the Royal Family greets people at important events, was one of these changes. During World War II, the royal chapel and ballroom were destroyed. The current ballroom was finished in 1956. The palace has been restored for a long time. The most recent work was done outside of the building in October 2017.

CHANGES IN ROYAL RESIDENCES

Originally, Buckingham Palace was meant to be a private retreat for George III. However, after Queen Victoria became queen in 1837, it became the British monarch's home in London. The Palace had 775 rooms and was part of a bigger construction complex that changed into its contemporary shape during Queen Victoria's reign. In 1715, Alexander Pope said that "Buckingham House is rather too large." The palace was built in 1883 to prepare for the arrival of Prince Arthur of Connaught, Queen Victoria's youngest son, who would later become the Duke of Connaught and Strathearn. The palace is not only the royal residence, but it is also used for several state events and receptions. During World War II, a German incendiary bomb devastated the palace during the Blitz in 1940, and in 1840, a fire seriously damaged an entire wing of the palace. These are only a few of the important events that have happened there [6].

IMPORTANT EVENTS AND MILESTONES

When Queen Victoria took the throne on June 20, 1837, it marked the start of a new chapter in the history of Buckingham Palace. The palace was still used as government offices for a short time, but Queen Victoria moved into the east wing in 1837 and quickly made it her official home. She personally

oversaw a lot of building work to make the palace bigger to fit her increasing family and the needs of public life. The palace was totally covered in slate in 1847, and the whole building was twice as big. Even though IKEA later landscaped the gardens, the building mostly kept its original shape, albeit with changes that were often made.

When Queen Victoria's husband, Prince Albert, was killed in 1861, the palace became a place where people could show their sadness and support for the country. The Queen had black shutters on the first level. In 1887, a huge iron and concrete screen was built around the forecourt to keep the Royal Family safe during public events. Thomas Chambers Hine additionally added the three back wings during renovation work done for Queen Victoria between 1862 and 1864. Aston Webb made substantial changes to or rebuild these wings between 1913 and 1914. In 1871, Barry's Green Park front was covered in white Portland stone to make it look more classical and imposing [7].

FEATURES OF ARCHITECTURE

Buckingham Palace was often used as a setting for official occasions. After a fire, it got its current look. During World War II, its coach houses were seriously bombed. The palace was a big part of the parties for Queen Elizabeth II's Silver Jubilee, Golden Jubilee, Diamond Jubilee, and the weddings of Prince William and Prince Harry. The State Rooms were open to the public throughout the summer months of the late twentieth century. The palace is still an office and a home for government officials, and it also hosts big events and receptions for visiting heads of state. A recent planning permission for a 10-year restoration program in category A intends to meet a lot of maintenance needs.

Buckingham Palace is one of the best examples of English Neoclassical architecture. It was made to look like the grand style of older aristocratic townhouses, and it employs classical features in a way that is both strict and unyielding. Ionic pilasters are placed atop an ashlar base, and an empty stone entablature is placed above them. The pilasters separate regular bays into strongly fenestrated stucco parts. A molded architrave and a deeper molded sill give each window more shape. The Palace's façades are made to look like stone with stucco. The Garden and East wings both have unique raised basements; one made of stone and the other of stucco.

Style and Design

The architecture of Buckingham Palace uses classical design concepts that were popular with the English aristocracy and early monarchy. Charles Long noticed in the 1820s and 1830s that classical influences made the work feel, like it was in pockets, which took away from the symmetrical center. Stones from Kempton Park and Kent, as well as bricks, concrete, stucco, and fine limestone from Norman's Shaw, show that the building is connected to Dick's Yard in Portland and the Portland quarries. Parterres, lawns, and terraces stretch from Palace Yard to Green Park. Capability Brown's influence can be seen in the re-landscaped gardens, which have a lawn and serpentine shrubbery on the south side [8].

The architectural materials and methods used to build the palace are based on the area's geological and industrial history. The gardens and grounds around the palace are shaped by the landscape gardening trends of the time.

Building Materials and Methods

Much of the palace is still in the classical style, but the main façade is Victorian, and the central Health Council block is a more recent addition that doesn't add much to the building's architecture. The main body of the mansion was made of brick, but later encasements were made of Portland stone. The building's back façades are known for their solid construction, which gives good views from The Mall. The White Drawing Room has a glass dome supported by gilded bronze leaf-shaped columns.

The history of Buckingham Palace is closely linked to the history of London. Tourists and Londoners alike are drawn to the palace, which has been home to the Changing of the Guard ceremony for

centuries. The palace became a royal residence in 1762, and it has long been known as the world's most famous address. The Sovereign lives in Buckingham Palace in London. In 2014, it opened to the public in August and September, and on certain winter dates. Today, the palace has more than 50,000 works of art.

Gardens and Landscaping

The landscaping and gardens around Buckingham Palace have a big impact on how the building feels. The extensive Buckingham Palace Gardens, which were designed by Capability Brown in the 18th century, provide a large area of well-kept greenery. Capability Brown was especially known for these gardens, which were marked out in a layout plan from 1751. An elegant circular lawn from the back of the Palace extends in a sweeping semi-circle to the lake that was added in the mid-19th century.

EFFECTS ON CULTURE

Buckingham Palace is one of the few major classical buildings left in London, along with St. James's Palace. It shows King George IV's strong interest in classical architecture. It was designed as an Italian palazzo and is based on the first phase of Wren's reconstruction of Hampton Court Palace at the turn of the eighteenth century. When Queen Victoria moved her official residence from St. James's Palace to Buckingham Palace in 1837, Sir William Beechey painted the queen's state portrait.

Queen Victoria opened the palace to the public for a few days each year, which started a tradition of access for people from the empire and around the world. This tradition has mostly continued to this day and has helped create a shared cultural identity through representations in popular culture, like the Royal Doulton figures of the First World War, that showed members of the royal family in traditional British costumes. The royal family's move during the war also helped strengthen the relationship [9].

The Palace's Meaning

As the official London home of Queen Elizabeth II, Buckingham Palace is a symbol of British culture and is closely tied to the British monarchy. Since 1837, it has been the site of many royal events. The palace's famous front is especially well-known from its frequent appearances in news reports and British pop culture.

At the top of the main entrance to the palace, there is a massive, gold-plated inscription that says, "The Palace of Buckingham House."

Part of British Identity

Two of the most important events in national identity are directly linked to the gates of Buckingham Palace. Victory in Europe Day (8 May 1945) marked the end of World War II throughout most of Europe, and celebrations centered at the palace. Both the royal family and the armed forces appeared on the balcony to celebrate. Furthermore, the gates feature in the annual National Service of Remembrance, with the wreath-laying party walking from the gates to The Cenotaph. Weddings are also an opportunity for members of the public to link personal events to the palace, with the royal family appearing on the balcony again during the most notable occasions. Canadian artist Ernest Fosbery captured the public's thoughts when he painted "A Wedding View," showing the crowd outside the gates during the 1893 marriage of Princess Louise, a daughter of Queen Victoria.

The palace is a place where people can celebrate and mourn together. It is also a symbol of the British people's rich cultural heritage, an inspiration for artists and architects, a major tourist destination, and a famous place for film and television. The Changing of the Guard and pools of red remembrance poppies under the gates are two of the most famous British images.

Impact on Pop Culture

Even though the public cannot go inside Buckingham Palace, its facades have come to stand for British society during the time when the UK was a major player on the world stage. State events, like

investitures, state dinners, and garden parties, help shape how people think about the British Monarchy and the country. The building, along with other state buildings, is reminiscent of the Elizabethan Period, which is still popular even though it was a time of great tragedy. The Palace itself:

BUCKINGHAM PALACE NOW

Buckingham Palace is a working royal residence where The King holds a variety of official events and receptions to support his role as Head of State. Other members of the Royal Family also use the Palace for official entertainment. The State Rooms are open to visitors during the summer months, but the north front and the Quadrangle are closed. The King hosts institutions and audiences with foreign Heads of State and other visiting guests in the Palace.

The State Rooms of Buckingham Palace are open to the public in August and September. They are also used by military and civil officials from the UK for official and ceremonial events. People who visit the Palace often also want to see the nearby Victoria Memorial and watch the ceremonial Changing of the Guard at the Palace's main entrance. Because it is a Grade I listed building, any changes or repairs are closely watched to make sure they do not ruin historical features.

WHAT IT IS USED FOR NOW AND WHAT IT DOES

Since 1837, Buckingham Palace has been the official London home of the UK's monarchs. It is also the administrative headquarters of the monarch. The State Rooms are used to host state events and royal hospitality, and modern working areas provide accommodation for those who carry out the varied tasks required to deliver the official duties of The Sovereign and the Institution of the Monarchy.

The palace is getting major repairs that will take 10 years to finish. Queen Elizabeth II will spend most of her time at Windsor Castle while the work is going on. Parts of the palace will be open to visitors during the repairs. The gilded railings that were put up during George IV's reign were taken down during World War II for extra security. The chapel was turned into an air-raid shelter.

Tours and Access for the Public

Buckingham Palace has been the official home of the UK monarchy since 1837. Because it is a symbol of the monarchy, it needs a lot of money to keep up its art collection and maintain the building. To meet these costs, the palace opens to the public every year and offers guided tours of its most beautiful rooms. The Grand Ballroom (renamed the Ballroom by George V) was built around 1854 and was meant to be the palace's most beautiful room, where state balls and banquets could be held.

The Grand Staircase is a beautiful architectural feature that guides visitors along the processional route. It provides elegant access to the main reception rooms and a formal entrance to the Ballroom. The Ballroom is the largest room in the Palace and is also used for investitures because it needs a formal but flexible setting. During times of public mourning, a special arrangement allows the Great Chairs of the Throne to be placed next to the Grand Fireplace, where a Queen's or King's Coffin rests before the funeral procession. More formally known as the Garden Pagoda, the Music Pavilion was built in 1903 by Sir Edward Lutyens at the request of King Edward VII for Queen Alexandra. Lutyens's ability to combine the Royal Pavilion with the Surveyor's Garden is reminiscent of the tradition of the grand old English garden.

Efforts to Preserve and Restore

Buckingham Palace is both a residence and an important historical building, so many parts of it are open to the public at certain times. The Queen's Gallery shows off many of the royal collection of paintings when the Queen is not using it. The Royal Mews is home to the horse-drawn carriage and the garage that holds the State Limousine. Its large size makes it easy to store Black Cabs and other vehicles of similar length. The Queen's State Coach can also be found in the Mews, but it is often taken.

Buckingham Palace is very important to the history of the United Kingdom, so it has been the focus of some big and costly restoration projects. In recent years, the palace's entire steel frame and terracotta masonry body have been cleaned from the inside. Major restoration projects in the past include building a new inner steel frame supported by a concrete raft in the 1960s, fixing the terrazzo floors in 2000, and reglazing the main windows between 2005 and 2007. After Winston Churchill died.

ANALYSIS OF DIFFERENCES

It is hard to compare Buckingham Palace to other royal homes because many palaces, castles, mansions, and manors around the world have the same main purpose: to house a monarch or other royals. However, the palace's unique mix of importance, beauty, and grandeur only makes sense when compared to other official residences, both in the UK and in other countries. Other official royal homes are often small and hidden away on side streets, while the homes of other heads of state are often grand but not very interesting from an architectural point of view.

The UK is often the best in the world at many things, and the architecture of the country's official royal residences has definitely influenced the architecture of palaces in other parts of the world that have adopted Western ideas about court ceremony and protocol. However, it is almost impossible to name an official royal residence anywhere in the world that is more famous than Buckingham Palace.

A Comparison with Other Royal Homes

Buckingham Palace is not one of the largest or oldest royal homes in Britain or other European monarchies. Windsor Castle is bigger and older, and the Palace of Holyrood House in Edinburgh is much older. Hampton Court Palace, the Palace of Westminster, and the Palace of Whitehall (which was torn down around 1690) are or were bigger, and the Palace of Versailles outside Paris is much bigger. However, Buckingham Palace is unique as a late Georgian palatial building, so it looks less Baroque or Baro.

Some people say that the Palace of Holyrood house is the only other royal residence in the UK that has a bigger difference between the grandeur of its outside and the beauty of its inside. This difference may be saved by the palace's rich history. Windsor Castle and the Palace of Holyrood House are still used as royal residences, with real monarchs living in them, but many people still think of Buckingham Palace as the monarch's main residence. The old State Apartments of Windsor and Holyrood House are, like the fancy State Rooms at Buckingham Palace and the tradition of guest apartments (which Queen Mary added to St James's Palace in 1913) continues at many of the royal residences [10].

IMPACT ON CONTEMPORARY ARCHITECTURE

There was almost a 100 years between when Buckingham Palace was the most fashionable and prestigious home in London and when it was rebuilt in the 19th century. The Duke of Buckingham left school at the beginning of the 20th century and told architect John Nash, who oversaw the enlargement and reconstruction, that the appartement de parade had to be done by the end of the current season. In the 19th century, a new phase of architectural development began at Buckingham Palace. Nash's transformation, which was very grand and magnificent, had to give way to a new style of homes that were smaller and more comfortable.

In the middle and late Victorian eras, wealthy people lived in rural retreats, and George IV was very alone. The prince used to brag that he had never seen London without a horse-drawn taxi. He responded to painters who praised London's streets with great fans of architectural detail. The elegant homes of Kensley, which allotment holders really wanted, do not owe their charm to the number of floors or the generally irregular arrangement of their façades, but to the exceptional grace and liveliness.

PROBLEMS AND ARGUMENTS

Many political, social, and cultural changes and controversies have happened at Buckingham Palace. The palace has been the subject of criticism and debate at times, such as when it caught fire in 1834 and

almost burned down, or when World War II bombing raids damaged the Palace Chapel. More recently, protests, scandals, and criticism of the monarchy itself have been the focus of controversies. Some conservative commentators criticized the idea of opening the palace temporarily to the public as a refugee shelter in 2023.

There have also been concerns about the environment around Buckingham Palace. Artists sent paintings made of air, dust, and traffic fumes from London's polluted streets to the palace as a way to criticize the monarch's ties to the fossil fuel industry. On November 1, 2022, during a protest by Extinction Rebellion, the building was briefly covered in pollution. The palace has taken many steps to become more sustainable over the past 10 years, including installing solar panels, heat pumps, and be

Criticism of Politics and Society

Buckingham Palace has been the center of British life and history for a long time, and it has also been the center of some of the biggest arguments and controversies in recent years. Political discussions often include questions about the monarchy and whether it is good or bad for the people it represents. Similarly, so-called Royal Watchers argue about whether having a dynasty is a good idea, with some comparisons to original monarchy schemes that stress the need for a regular change in leadership.

The Palace is also criticized for its environmental impact and the effects of keeping a historical monument in a world that is changing quickly. Critics point out the institution's so-called carbon footprint and call for a re-examination of ecological responsibility considering the beauty of the country's landscape. People from different backgrounds have shared their views on Palace View, which is a collection of different points of view.

Concerns About the Environment

Buckingham Palace has environmental problems that go beyond just managing tourism. Plans released in 2020 for the construction of a permanent home for the Royal Ceremonial Way have drawn criticism for the emissions from basic materials, even though the goal was to build an eco-friendly structure. Public opinion about the shape of Buckingham Palace has changed over time, and in 2023, eco-activists protested during the coronation, calling the monarchy a waste of money for their country.

The huge Palace Gardens cover 40 acres, which is five times the size of the gardens at the Houses of Parliament. The south garden has a lake that was the first in London to be graced by the royal license ornamental swan, along with a herd of red and fallow deer that are kept up through cycles of renewal and replacement. Today, skaters glide on a lake that William IV made by clearing the land, draining the marsh, and building the palatial residence for Queen Adelaide, which was all destroyed.

THE FUTURE OF BUCKINGHAM PALACE

Before Prince Charles and Diana, Princess of Wales got married in 1981, there were major renovations. Midland Bank gave a large loan to fix up Buckingham Palace and Clarence House in time for the royal couple's arrival in London. In 1985, the palace's façade was cleaned for the first time since the 1930s. During this work, the original brown brick was revealed for the first time, and it was decided to paint the entire façade cream, which is how the palace looks now. More recent renovations include turning the palace chapel into the ballroom and putting in a centralized air-conditioning system throughout the complex.

The palace needed repairs that would cost £369 million. The Future of the Royal Estate plans, which were made public in July 2016, called for major renovations to fix old infrastructure, improve the museum, lower maintenance costs, and move some staff away from the palace.

Changes and Developments That Are Being Suggested

Buckingham Palace is to undergo an extensive 10-year £369 m refurbishment programmed. The aim is to repair decaying fabric, upgrade outdated wiring, heating, and plumbing, and make the building

more environmentally friendly – reducing CO₂ emissions by 40 per cent. The funding will be invested in energy-saving measures and in preserving the Palace’s “heritage assets”. At present, the money is expected to come entirely through a planned future sale of Crown Estate assets by the Government. An artist’s impression of one of the two new 10-storey office blocks that could be built in the Palace’s mews yard. It was revealed in June 2020 that the Palace requires an additional 650-bedroom staff accommodation complex. There are plans to build some of these bedrooms in two 10-storey office block extensions above the existing 1930 mews block on the palace’s east side. These high-rise additions would support the Government policy by reducing the spread of COVID-19 among staff. The additional high-rise wings would be the tallest buildings in the entire Buckingham Palace Conservation Area.

The British government announced plans in October 2020 to spend a billion pounds over the next 50 years to restore all royal homes and offices. This was mentioned in the Queen’s Speech to Parliament. As part of the project, Buckingham Palace will get an additional £30 million in renovations, focusing on keeping the building in good shape and giving the royal offices more space. With 775 rooms, Buckingham Palace is the largest royal residence in the world. Three hundred of those rooms are private.

Programs for Sustainability

The £370 million Building a Greener Buckingham Palace project will add energy-efficient features like 4,000 solar panels on the roof – some of the largest solar installations in central London – four geothermal wells that can heat and cool 350,000 square feet of space, and new systems for managing energy, water, and waste. The work is scheduled to be finished by 2027 and will cut the palace’s carbon footprint by 40%.

The refurbishment plan also includes updating the palace’s energy infrastructure, such as new electrical wiring and a centralized distribution system in the basement. Other projects include fixing the Royal Mews and The Queen’s Gallery. The upgrades are meant to make the royal family and staff more comfortable, since there is no air conditioning. Legal measures introduced in 2016 ensure that listed-building consent granted for such renovations remains valid regardless of the reigning monarch.

CONCLUSIONS

Buckingham Palace is a narrative duet, with architecture and history working together to make each other stronger. Its walls, designed by William Winde and remodeled by John Nash, are grand in a symbolic way, while the gardens that surround it are grand in a formal way. The structure has changed over time, first by leaving marks of change and then by the hand of time, which has changed how it is used.

Once the biggest house in London, Buckingham Palace first became a town palace, then the British seat and monument of pre-eminence, and finally the main London home of the reigning monarch of the United Kingdom. History tells us about a series of changes that were made to meet the needs of the sovereign and her royal household while also keeping the palace’s status and prestige. Now, the focus is on how the palace looks rather than what it needs to do.

Did you know India has a palace 36 times bigger than Buckingham Palace? That is the Lakshmi Vilas Palace in Vadodara – 135 years of history, grandeur, and living heritage.

Occupied Royal Palaces, such as Buckingham Palace, are not the private property of The Queen. They are occupied by the Sovereign and held in trust by the Crown Estates for future generations. The Queen privately owns two properties, Balmoral Castle and Sandringham House, which are not publicly funded.

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