**White House**

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*For other uses, see* [*White House (disambiguation)*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/White_House_(disambiguation))*.*

See also: [Executive Office of the President of the United States](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Executive_Office_of_the_President_of_the_United_States)

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| **White House** | |
| South façade of the White House | |
| **Building** | |
| **Town** | 1600 [Pennsylvania Avenue](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pennsylvania_Avenue) [NW](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Northwest,_Washington,_D.C.) [Washington, D.C.](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Washington,_D.C.) 20500 |
| **Country** | [United States](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States) |
| **Construction** | |
| **Started** | October 13, 1792 |
| **Design team** | |
| **Architect** | [James Hoban](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James_Hoban) |

The **White House** is the [official residence](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Official_residence) and principal workplace of the [President of the United States](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/President_of_the_United_States). Located at 1600 [Pennsylvania Avenue](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pennsylvania_Avenue) [NW](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Northwest,_Washington,_D.C.) in [Washington, D.C.](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Washington,_D.C.), it was built between 1792 and 1800 of white-painted [Aquia sandstone](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aquia_sandstone) in the late [Georgian style](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Georgian_architecture) and has been the residence of every U.S. President since [John Adams](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Adams). When [Thomas Jefferson](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thomas_Jefferson) moved into the home in 1801, he (with architect [Benjamin Henry Latrobe](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Benjamin_Henry_Latrobe)) expanded the building outward, creating two [colonnades](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Colonnade) which were meant to conceal stables and storage.

In 1814, during the [War of 1812](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/War_of_1812), the mansion was set ablaze by the [British Army](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/British_Army) in the [Burning of Washington](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Burning_of_Washington), destroying the interior and charring much of the exterior. Reconstruction began almost immediately, and President [James Monroe](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James_Monroe) moved into the partially reconstructed house in October 1817. Construction continued with the addition of the South Portico in 1824 and the North in 1829. Due to crowding within the executive mansion itself, President [Theodore Roosevelt](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theodore_Roosevelt) had nearly all work offices relocated to the newly-constructed [West Wing](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/West_Wing) in 1901. Eight years later, President [William Howard Taft](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Howard_Taft) expanded the West Wing and created the first [Oval Office](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oval_Office) which was eventually moved as the section was expanded. The third-floor [attic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Attic) was converted to living quarters in 1927 by augmenting the existing hip roof with long shed dormers. A newly constructed [East Wing](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/East_Wing) was used as a reception area for social events; both new wings were connected by Jefferson's colonnades. East Wing alterations were completed in 1946 creating additional office space. By 1948, the house's load-bearing exterior walls and internal wood beams were found to be close to failure. Under [Harry S. Truman](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harry_S._Truman), the interior rooms were completely dismantled, resulting in the construction of a new internal load-bearing [steel framework](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Steel_frame) and the reassembly of the interior rooms.

Today, the [White House Complex](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/White_House_Complex) includes the [Executive Residence](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Executive_Residence) (in which the First Family resides), the [West Wing](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/West_Wing) (the location of the [Oval Office](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oval_Office), [Cabinet Room](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cabinet_Room_(White_House)), and [Roosevelt Room](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roosevelt_Room)), and the [East Wing](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/East_Wing) (the location of the office of the [First Lady](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/First_Lady) and [White House Social Secretary](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/White_House_Social_Secretary)), as well as the [Old Executive Office Building](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Old_Executive_Office_Building), which houses the executive offices of the President and [Vice President](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vice_President_of_the_United_States).

The White House is made up of six stories—the Ground Floor, State Floor, Second Floor, and Third Floor, as well as a two-story [basement](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/White_House_Basement). The term *White House* is regularly used as a [metonym](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Metonym) for the [Executive Office of the President of the United States](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Executive_Office_of_the_President_of_the_United_States) and for the president's administration and advisors in general. The property is owned by the [National Park Service](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Park_Service) and is part of the [President's Park](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/President%27s_Park). In 2007, it was ranked second on the [American Institute of Architects’](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American_Institute_of_Architects) [List of America's Favorite Architecture](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_America%27s_Favorite_Architecture_according_to_the_AIA).

**History**

**Architectural competition**

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| A 1793 elevation by [James Hoban](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James_Hoban), the selected architect from the competition |
| The North Portico of the White House compared to [Leinster House](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leinster_House) |
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The President's house was a major feature of [Pierre Charles L'Enfant](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pierre_Charles_L%27Enfant)'s plan for the newly established federal city, [Washington, D.C.](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Washington,_D.C.) The architect of the White House was chosen in a competition, which received nine proposals, including one submitted anonymously by [Thomas Jefferson](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thomas_Jefferson). The nation's first president, [George Washington](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/George_Washington), traveled to the site of the federal city on July 16, 1792, to make his judgment. His review is recorded as being brief, and he quickly selected the submission of [James Hoban](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James_Hoban), an Irishman living in [Charleston](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charleston,_South_Carolina), [South Carolina](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/South_Carolina). Washington was not entirely pleased with the original Hoban submission, however; he found it too small, lacking ornament, and not fitting the nation's president. On Washington's recommendation the house was enlarged by thirty percent; a large reception hall, the present East Room, was added. This was likely inspired by the large reception room at [Mount Vernon](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mount_Vernon_(plantation)).

**Design influences**

The building Hoban designed is verifiably influenced by the first and second floors of [Leinster House](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leinster_House), in [Dublin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dublin), [Ireland](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Republic_of_Ireland), which later became the seat of the [Oireachtas](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oireachtas) (the Irish parliament). Several other Georgian era Irish country houses have been suggested as sources of inspiration for the overall floor plan, details like the bow-fronted south front, and interior details like the former niches in the present [Blue Room](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blue_Room_(White_House)). These influences, though undocumented, are cited in the official White House guide, and in White House Historical Association publications. The first official White House guide, published in 1962, suggested a link between Hoban's design for the South Portico, and [Château de Rastignac](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ch%C3%A2teau_de_Rastignac), a neoclassical country house located in La Bachellerie in the Dordogne region of France and designed by Mathurin Salat. The French house was built 1812–1817, based on an earlier design. The link has been criticized because Hoban did not visit France. Supporters of a connection posit that [Thomas Jefferson](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thomas_Jefferson) while visiting the [*École Spéciale d'Architecture*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/%C3%89cole_Sp%C3%A9ciale_d%27Architecture) (Bordeaux Architectural College) in 1789 viewed Salat's drawings, and on his return to the U.S. shared the influence with Washington, Hoban, Monroe, and [Benjamin Henry Latrobe](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Benjamin_Henry_Latrobe).

**Construction**

Construction of the White House began with the laying of the cornerstone on October 13, 1792, although there was no formal ceremony. The main residence, as well as foundations of the house, were built largely by [enslaved](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Slavery_in_the_United_States) and free [African-American](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/African-American) laborers, as well as employed [Europeans](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Europe). Much of the other work on the house was performed by immigrants, many not yet with citizenship. The sandstone walls were erected by [Scottish](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scotland) immigrants, employed by Hoban, as were the high relief rose and garland decorations above the north entrance and the "fish scale" pattern beneath the pediments of the window hoods. Much of the brick and plaster work was produced by Irish and Italian immigrants. The initial construction took place over a period of eight years, at a reported cost of $232,371.83 ($2.8 million in 2007 dollars). Although not yet completed, the White House was ready for occupancy on or circa November 1, 1800.

Shortages, including material and labor, forced alterations to the earlier plan developed by French engineer [Pierre Charles L'Enfant](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pierre_Charles_L%27Enfant) for a "palace" that was five times larger than the house that was eventually built. The finished home would contain only two main floors instead of the planned three, and a less costly brick served as a lining for the stone façades. When construction was finished the porous sandstone walls were coated with a mixture of lime, rice glue, casein, and lead, giving the house its familiar color and name.

As it is a famed structure in America, many [replicas of the White House](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Replicas_of_the_White_House) have been constructed.

**Naming conventions**

The building was originally referred to variously as the "President's Palace", "Presidential Mansion", or "President's House". The earliest evidence of the public calling it the "White House" was recorded in 1811. A legend emerged that during the rebuilding of the structure white paint was applied to mask the burn damage it had suffered, giving the building its namesake hue. The name "Executive Mansion" was used in official contexts until President [Theodore Roosevelt](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theodore_Roosevelt) established the formal name by having "White House–Washington" engraved on the stationery in 1901. The current letterhead wording and arrangement "The White House" with the word "Washington" centered beneath goes back to the administration of [Franklin Delano Roosevelt](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Franklin_Delano_Roosevelt).

Although it was not completed until some years after the presidency of George Washington, it is also speculated that the name of the traditional home of the President of the United States may have derived from [Martha Custis Washington](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Martha_Custis_Washington)'s home, [White House Plantation](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/White_House_(plantation)) in [New Kent County](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_Kent_County,_Virginia), [Virginia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Virginia), where the nation's first President and First Lady had courted in the mid-18th century.

**Evolution of the White House**

**Early use, the 1814 fire, and rebuilding**

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| [Jefferson](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thomas_Jefferson) and [Latrobe](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Latrobe)'s West Wing Colonnade in this nineteenth century engraved view, is now the [James S. Brady Press Briefing Room](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James_S._Brady_Press_Briefing_Room). |
| Principal story plan for the white house by [Benjamin Henry Latrobe](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Benjamin_Henry_Latrobe), 1807. |
| Earliest known photograph of the White House, taken c. 1846 by John Plumbe during the administration of [James K. Polk](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James_K._Polk). |

On [Saturday](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saturday), [November 1](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/November_1), [1800](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1800), [John Adams](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Adams) became the first president to take residence in the building. During Adams' second day in the house he wrote a letter to his wife Abigail, containing a prayer for the house. Adams wrote:

I pray Heaven to bestow the best of blessings on this House, and all that shall hereafter inhabit it. May none but honest and wise men ever rule under this roof.

Franklin Delano Roosevelt had Adams' blessing carved into the mantel in the State Dining Room.

Adams lived in the house only briefly, and the home was soon occupied by [Thomas Jefferson](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thomas_Jefferson), who gave consideration to how the White House might be added to. With [Benjamin Henry Latrobe](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Benjamin_Henry_Latrobe), he helped lay out the design for the East and West Colonnades, small wings that help conceal the domestic operations of laundry, a stable and storage. Today, Jefferson's colonnades link the residence with the East and West Wings.

In 1814, during the [War of 1812](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/War_of_1812), the White House was set ablaze by British troops during the [Burning of Washington](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Burning_of_Washington), in retaliation for burning [Upper Canada](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Upper_Canada)'s [Parliament Buildings](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Parliament_Buildings_of_Upper_Canada) in the [Battle of York](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_York); much of Washington was affected by these fires as well. Only the exterior walls remained, and they had to be torn down and mostly reconstructed due to weakening from the fire and subsequent exposure to the elements, except for portions of the south wall. Of the numerous objects taken from the White House when it was ransacked by British troops, only two have been recovered — a painting of George Washington, rescued by then-first lady [Dolley Madison](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dolley_Madison), and a jewelry box returned to President [Franklin Delano Roosevelt](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Franklin_Delano_Roosevelt) in 1939 by Alan Van Dyke, a Canadian man who said that his grandfather had taken it from Washington. Most of the spoils were lost when a convoy of British ships led by [HMS *Fantome*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/HMS_Fantome_(1810)) sank en route to [Halifax](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Halifax,_Nova_Scotia_(former_city)) off [Prospect](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prospect,_Nova_Scotia) during a storm on the night of November 24, 1814.

After the fire, President [James Madison](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James_Madison) resided in [The Octagon House](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Octagon_House_(Washington,_D.C.)). Meanwhile, both architect Benjamin Henry Latrobe and Hoban contributed to the design and oversight of the reconstruction, which lasted from 1815 until 1817. The south [portico](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Portico) was constructed in 1824 during the [James Monroe](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James_Monroe) administration; the north portico was built six years later. Though Latrobe proposed similar porticos before the fire in 1814, both porticos were built as designed by Hoban. The similarity between the South Portico and an elliptical portico, with nearly identical curved stairs at [Château de Rastignac](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ch%C3%A2teau_de_Rastignac) in La Bachellerie, [France](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/France) is speculated as the source of inspiration, although this matter is one of great debate. The decorative stonework on both porticos were carved by Italian artisans brought to Washington to help in constructing the [U.S. Capitol](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_Capitol). The North Portico was not modeled on a similar portico on another Dublin building, the [Viceregal Lodge](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Viceregal_Lodge) (now *Áras an Uachtaráin*, residence of the [President of Ireland](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/President_of_Ireland)), for its portico postdates the White House porticos' design. For the North Portico, a variation on the Ionic Order was devised incorporating a swag of roses between the volutes. This was done to link the new portico with the earlier carved roses above the entrance.

**Overcrowding and building the West Wing**

By the time of the [American Civil War](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American_Civil_War), the White House had become overcrowded. The location of the White House was questioned, just north of a canal and swampy lands, which provided conditions ripe for [malaria](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Malaria) and other unhealthy conditions. Brigadier General Nathaniel Michler was tasked to propose solutions to address these concerns; he proposed to abandon the White House as a residence, and use it only for business. A new estate for the first family was planned at [Meridian Hill](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Meridian_Hill_Park) in Washington, D.C., but the plan was rejected by Congress.



The White House [North Lawn](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/North_Lawn_(White_House)) in the 1860s, during the [Abraham Lincoln](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abraham_Lincoln) administration

When [Chester Arthur](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chester_Arthur) took office in 1881, he ordered renovations to the White House to take place as soon as the recently widowed [Lucretia Garfield](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lucretia_Garfield) moved out. Arthur inspected the work almost nightly and made several suggestions. [Louis Comfort Tiffany](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Louis_Comfort_Tiffany) was asked to send selected designers to assist. Over twenty wagons of furniture and household items were removed from the building and sold at a [public auction](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Public_auction). All that was saved were bust portraits of [John Adams](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Adams) and [Martin Van Buren](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Martin_Van_Buren). A proposal was made to build a new residence south of the White House, but it failed to gain support. In the fall of 1882 work was done on the main corridor, including tinting the walls pale olive and adding squares of [gold leaf](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gold_leaf), and decorating the ceiling in gold and silver, and colorful [traceries](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tracery) woven to spell "USA". The Red Room was painted a dull Pomeranian red, and its ceiling was decorated with gold, silver, and copper stars and stripes of red, white, and blue. The glass doors that separated the main corridor from the north vestibule were replaced by a fifty-foot jeweled [Tiffany](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiffany_%26_Co.) glass screen supported by imitation marble columns.

In 1891, First Lady [Caroline Harrison](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Caroline_Harrison) proposed extensions to the White House, including a National Wing on the east for an historical art gallery, and a wing on the west for official functions. A plan was devised by Colonel Theodore A. Bingham, which reflected the Harrison proposal. In 1901, [Theodore Roosevelt](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theodore_Roosevelt) and his family moved in to the White House and hired [McKim, Mead, and White](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/McKim,_Mead,_and_White) to carry out renovations and expansion, including the addition of a [West Wing](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/West_Wing). President [William Howard Taft](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Howard_Taft) enlisted the help of architect Nathan C. Wyeth to add additional space to the West Wing, which included the addition of the [Oval Office](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oval_Office).

The West Wing was damaged by fire in 1929, but rebuilt during the remaining years of the [Herbert Hoover](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Herbert_Hoover) presidency. In the 1930s, a second story was added, as well as a larger basement for White House staff, and President Franklin Roosevelt had the Oval Office moved to its present location: adjacent to the [Rose Garden](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/White_House_Rose_Garden).

**The Truman reconstruction**



[Truman](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harry_Truman) reconstruction, 1949–1952, a steel structure is built within the exterior shell.

Decades of poor maintenance, the construction of a fourth story attic during the Coolidge administration, and the addition of a second-floor balcony over the south portico for [Harry Truman](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harry_Truman) took a great toll on the brick and sandstone structure built around a timber frame. By 1948, the house was declared to be in imminent danger of collapse, forcing President Truman to commission a reconstruction and move across the street to [Blair House](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blair_House) from 1949 to 1951. The work, done by the firm of [Philadelphia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philadelphia) contractor [John McShain](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_McShain), required the complete dismantling of the interior spaces, construction of a new load-bearing internal steel frame and the reconstruction of the original rooms within the new structure. Some modifications to the floor plan were made, the largest being the repositioning of the grand staircase to open into the Entrance Hall, rather than the Cross Hall. Central air conditioning was added, as well as two additional [sub-basements](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/White_House_Basement) providing space for workrooms, storage, and a bomb shelter. The Trumans moved back into the White House on March 27, 1952. While the house's structure was kept intact by the Truman reconstruction, much of the new interior finishes were generic, and of little historic value. Much of the original plasterwork, some dating back to the 1814–1816 rebuilding, was too damaged to reinstall, as was the original robust Beaux Arts paneling in the East Room. President Truman had the original timber frame sawed into paneling; the walls of the [Vermeil Room](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vermeil_Room), [Library](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Library_(White_House)), [China Room](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/China_Room), and [Map Room](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Map_Room_(White_House)) on the ground floor of the main residence were paneled in wood from the timbers.

**The Kennedy restoration**



The [Red Room](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Red_Room_(White_House)) as designed by [Stéphane Boudin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St%C3%A9phane_Boudin) during the administration of John F. Kennedy.

[Jacqueline Kennedy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jacqueline_Kennedy), wife of President [John F. Kennedy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_F._Kennedy) (1961–63), directed a very extensive and historic redecoration of the house. She enlisted the help of [Henry Francis du Pont](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Henry_Francis_du_Pont) of the [Winterthur Museum](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Winterthur_Museum) to assist in collecting artifacts for the home, many of which had once been housed there. Other antiques, fine paintings, and improvements of the Kennedy period were donated to the White House by wealthy philanthropists, including the [Crowninshield family](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Crowninshield_family), [Jane Engelhard](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jane_Engelhard), Jayne Wrightsman, and the Oppenheimer family. [Stéphane Boudin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St%C3%A9phane_Boudin) of the [House of Jansen](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maison_Jansen), a Paris interior-design firm that had been recognized worldwide, was employed by Mrs. Kennedy to assist with the decoration. Different periods of the early republic and world history were selected as a theme for each room: the Federal style for the [Green Room](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Green_Room_(White_House)), French Empire for the [Blue Room](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blue_Room_(White_House)), American Empire for the [Red Room](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Red_Room_(White_House)), Louis XVI for the [Yellow Oval Room](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yellow_Oval_Room_(White_House)), and Victorian for the president's study, renamed the [Treaty Room](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Treaty_Room). Antique furniture was acquired, and decorative fabric and trim based on period documents was produced and installed. The Kennedy restoration resulted in a more authentic White House of grander stature, which recalled the French taste of Madison and Monroe. In the [Diplomatic Reception Room](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Diplomatic_Reception_Room) [Jacqueline Kennedy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jacqueline_Kennedy) installed an antique “Vue de l'Amérique Nord” wall paper which [Zuber et cie](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zuber_et_cie) designed in 1834. The wallpaper hung before on the walls of a mansion until 1961 when the house was demolished for a grocery store. Just before the demolition, the wallpaper was salvaged and sold to the White House.

The first White House guide book was produced under the direction of curator Lorraine Waxman Pearce with direct supervision from Jacqueline Kennedy. Sale of the guide book helped finance the restoration.

**The White House today**

As a means of preserving the history of the White House, no substantive architectural changes have been made on the house since the Truman renovation. Since the Kennedy restoration, every presidential family has made some changes to their private quarters of the White House, but changes to the State Rooms must all be approved by the [Committee for the Preservation of the White House](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Committee_for_the_Preservation_of_the_White_House) (formerly the Kennedy's Fine Arts Committee). Aimed at maintaining the historical integrity of the White House, the congressionally authorized committee works with the First Family—usually represented by the First Lady, the [White House Curator](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/White_House_Curator), and [Chief Usher](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chief_Usher_of_the_White_House)—to implement the family's proposed plans for altering the home.

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| [Cross Hall](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cross_Hall), connecting the [State Dining Room](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/State_Dining_Room) and the [East Room](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/East_Room) |
| [Marine One](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marine_One) prepares for landing on the South Lawn where [State Arrival Ceremonies](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/State_Arrival_Ceremony) for visiting heads of state take place |

During the Nixon administration (1969–74), First Lady [Pat Nixon](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pat_Nixon) refurbished the Green Room, Blue Room, and Red Room, working with Clement Conger, the curator appointed by President [Richard Nixon](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Richard_Nixon). Mrs. Nixon's efforts brought over 600 artifacts to the home, the largest acquisition by any administration. Her husband created the modern press briefing room over [Franklin Roosevelt](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Franklin_Roosevelt)'s old [swimming pool](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Swimming_pool). Nixon added a single-lane bowling alley to the White House basement.

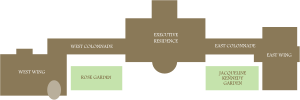
Computers and the first laser printer were added during the Carter administration, and the use of computer technology was expanded upon during the Reagan administration. Redecorations were made to the private family quarters and maintenance was made to public areas during the Reagan years. The house was accredited as a museum in 1988.

In the 1990s, [Bill](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bill_Clinton) and [Hillary Clinton](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hillary_Clinton) refurbished some rooms with the assistance of [Arkansas](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arkansas) decorator Kaki Hockersmith, including the Oval Office, the East Room, Blue Room, [State Dining Room](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/State_Dining_Room), Lincoln Bedroom, and Lincoln Sitting Room. During the administration of [George W. Bush](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/George_W._Bush), first lady [Laura Bush](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Laura_Bush) refurbished the Lincoln Bedroom to make it as if it were in the time of Lincoln; the Green Room, [Cabinet Room](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cabinet_Room_(White_House)), and theater were also refurbished.

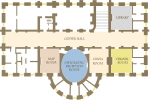
The White House is one of the first government buildings in Washington that was made wheelchair-accessible, with modifications having been made during the presidency of [Franklin D. Roosevelt](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Franklin_D._Roosevelt), who needed to use a wheelchair as a result of his [paraplegia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paraplegia). In the 1990s, [Hillary Rodham Clinton](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hillary_Rodham_Clinton)—at the suggestion of Visitors Office Director Melinda N. Bates—approved the addition of a ramp in the East Wing corridor. It allowed easy [wheelchair](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wheelchair) access for the public tours and special events that enter through the secure entrance building on the east side. The president travels from the White House grounds via [motorcade](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Motorcade) or helicopter. President [Dwight D. Eisenhower](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dwight_D._Eisenhower) became the first president to travel by helicopter to and from the White House grounds.

**Layout and facts**

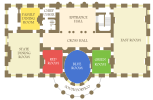
Today the group of buildings housing the presidency is known as the [White House Complex](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/White_House_Complex). It includes the central [Executive Residence](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Executive_Residence) flanked by the [East Wing](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/East_Wing) and [West Wing](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/West_Wing). Day to day household operations are coordinated by the [Chief Usher](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/White_House_Chief_Usher). The White House includes: six stories and 55,000 ft² (5,100 m²) of floor space, 132 rooms and 35 bathrooms, 412 doors, 147 windows, twenty-eight fireplaces, eight staircases, three elevators, five full-time chefs, a tennis court, a (single-lane) bowling alley, a movie theater, a jogging track, a swimming pool, and a putting green. It receives about 5,000 visitors a day.



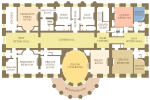
[White House Complex](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/White_House_Complex)



Ground floor



State floor



Second floor (residence)

**Executive Residence**

Main article: [Executive Residence](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Executive_Residence)

The original residence is in the center. Two [colonnades](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Colonnade) — one on the east and one on the west — designed by Jefferson, now serve to connect the East and West Wings, added later. The [Executive Residence](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Executive_Residence) houses the president's home, as well as rooms for ceremonies and official entertaining. The State Floor of the residence building includes the [East Room](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/East_Room), [Green Room](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Green_Room_(White_House)), [Blue Room](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blue_Room_(White_House)), [Red Room](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Red_Room_(White_House)), [State Dining Room](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/State_Dining_Room), [Family Dining Room](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Family_Dining_Room), [Cross Hall](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cross_Hall), [Entrance Hall](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Entrance_Hall), and [Grand Staircase](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grand_Staircase_(White_House)). The Ground Floor is made up of the [Diplomatic Reception Room](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Diplomatic_Reception_Room), [Map Room](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Map_Room_(White_House)), [China Room](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/China_Room), [Vermeil Room](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vermeil_Room), [Library](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/White_House_Library), the main kitchen, and other offices. The second floor family residence includes the [Yellow Oval Room](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yellow_Oval_Room), [East](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/East_Sitting_Hall) and [West Sitting Halls](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/West_Sitting_Hall), the White House Master Bedroom, [President's Dining Room](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/President%27s_Dining_Room), the [Treaty Room](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Treaty_Room), [Lincoln Bedroom](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lincoln_Bedroom) and [Queens' Bedroom](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Queens%27_Bedroom), as well as two additional bedrooms, a smaller kitchen, and a private dressing room. The third floor consists of the White House Solarium, Game Room, Linen Room, a Diet Kitchen, and another sitting room (previously used as President George W. Bush's workout room).

**West Wing**

Main article: [West Wing](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/West_Wing)

The West Wing houses the President's office (the [Oval Office](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oval_Office)) and offices of his senior staff, with room for about 50 employees. It also includes the [Cabinet Room](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cabinet_Room_(White_House)), where the president conducts business meetings and where the [United States Cabinet](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_Cabinet) meets, as well as the [White House Situation Room](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/White_House_Situation_Room), [James S. Brady Press Briefing Room](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James_S._Brady_Press_Briefing_Room), and [Roosevelt Room](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roosevelt_Room). In 2007, work was completed on renovations of the press briefing room, adding [fiber optic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fiber_optic) cables and [LCD](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/LCD) screens for the display of charts and graphs. The makeover cost $8 million and took 11 months, of which $2 million was paid by news outlets. Some members of the President's staff are located in the adjacent [Old Executive Office Building](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Old_Executive_Office_Building), formerly the State War and Navy building, and sometimes known as the Eisenhower Executive Office Building.

This portion of the building was used as the setting for the popular television show [*The West Wing*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_West_Wing_(TV_series)).

**East Wing**

Main article: [East Wing](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/East_Wing)

The East Wing, which contains additional office space, was added to the White House in 1942. Among its uses, the East Wing has intermittently housed the offices and staff of the [First Lady](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/First_Lady_of_the_United_States), and the White House Social Office. [Rosalynn Carter](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rosalynn_Carter), in 1977, was the first to place her personal office in the East Wing and to formally call it the "Office of the First Lady." The East Wing was built during [World War II](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_War_II) in order to hide the construction of an underground bunker to be used in emergency situations. The bunker has come to be known as the [Presidential Emergency Operations Center](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Presidential_Emergency_Operations_Center).

**Grounds**



The White House and surrounding grounds



Overhead view of the White House grounds and [President's Park](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/President%27s_Park)

The White House and grounds cover just over 18 acres (approximately 7.3 hectares). Before the construction of the North Portico, most public events were entered from the [South Lawn](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/South_Lawn_(White_House)), which was graded and planted by Thomas Jefferson. Jefferson also drafted a planting plan for the [North Lawn](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/North_Lawn_(White_House)) that included large trees that would have mostly obscured the house from Pennsylvania Avenue. During the mid to late nineteenth century a series of ever larger green houses were built on the west side of the house, where the current West Wing is located. During this period, the North Lawn was planted with ornate carpet-style flower beds. Although the White House grounds have had many gardeners through their history, the general design, still largely used as master plan today, was designed in 1935 by [Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr.](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frederick_Law_Olmsted,_Jr.) of the [Olmsted Brothers](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Olmsted_Brothers) firm, under commission from President Franklin D. Roosevelt. During the Kennedy administration the [White House Rose Garden](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/White_House_Rose_Garden) was redesigned by [Rachel Lambert Mellon](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rachel_Lambert_Mellon). The Rose garden borders the West Colonnade. Bordering the East Colonnade is the [Jacqueline Kennedy Garden](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jacqueline_Kennedy_Garden) which was begun by [Jacqueline Kennedy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jacqueline_Kennedy) but completed after her husband's assassination. On the weekend of June 23, 2006, a century-old [American Elm (*Ulmus americana* L.)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American_Elm) tree on the north side of the building, came down during one of the many storms amid [intense flooding](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mid-Atlantic_United_States_flood_of_2006). Among the oldest trees on the grounds are several magnolias ([*Magnolia grandiflora*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Magnolia_grandiflora)) planted by Andrew Jackson.

**Public access and security**

See also: [White House Visitors Office](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/White_House_Visitors_Office) and [White House intruders](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/White_House_intruders)

Like the English and Irish country houses it was modeled on, the White House was, from the start, open to the public until the early part of the twentieth century. President [Thomas Jefferson](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thomas_Jefferson) held an open house for his second inaugural in 1805, and many of the people at his swearing-in ceremony at the [Capitol](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_Capitol) followed him home, where he greeted them in the [Blue Room](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blue_Room_(White_House)). Those open houses sometimes became rowdy: in 1829, President [Andrew Jackson](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Andrew_Jackson) had to leave for a hotel when roughly 20,000 citizens celebrated his inauguration inside the White House. His aides ultimately had to lure the mob outside with washtubs filled with a potent cocktail of orange juice and whiskey. Even so, the practice continued until 1885, when newly elected [Grover Cleveland](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grover_Cleveland) arranged for a presidential review of the troops from a grandstand in front of the White House instead of the traditional open house. Jefferson also permitted public tours of his home, which have continued ever since, except during wartime, and began the tradition of annual receptions on New Year's Day and on the Fourth of July. Those receptions ended in the early 1930s, although President [Bill Clinton](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bill_Clinton) would briefly revive the New Year's Day open house in his first term.



[Pennsylvania Avenue](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pennsylvania_Avenue) is now closed to all vehicular traffic, except government officials

The White House remained accessible in other ways; President [Abraham Lincoln](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abraham_Lincoln) complained that he was constantly beleaguered by job seekers waiting to ask him for political appointments or other favors, or eccentric dispensers of advice like “General” [Daniel Pratt](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Daniel_Pratt_(eccentric)), as he began the business day. Lincoln put up with the annoyance rather than risk alienating some associate or friend of a powerful politician or opinion maker. In recent years, however, the White House has been closed to visitors because of terrorism concerns.

In 1974, a stolen Army helicopter landed without authorization on the White House grounds. Twenty years later, in 1994, a light plane crashed on the White House grounds, and the pilot died instantly. As a result of increased security regarding air traffic in the capital, the White House was evacuated in 2005 before an unauthorized aircraft could approach the grounds.

On May 20, 1995, primarily as a response to the [Oklahoma City bombing](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oklahoma_City_bombing) of April 19, 1995, the [United States Secret Service](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_Secret_Service) closed off Pennsylvania Avenue to vehicular traffic in front of the White House from the eastern edge of Lafayette Park to 17th Street. Later, the closure was extended an additional block to the east to 15th Street, and East Executive Drive, a small street between the White House and the [Treasury Building](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Treasury_Building_(Washington,_D.C.)). The Pennsylvania Avenue closing, in particular, has been opposed by organized civic groups in Washington, D.C. They argue that the closing impedes traffic flow unnecessarily and is inconsistent with the well-conceived historic plan for the city. As for security considerations, they note that the White House is set much further back from the street than numerous other sensitive federal buildings are.

Prior to its inclusion within the fenced compound that now includes the [Old Executive Office Building](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Old_Executive_Office_Building) to the west and the Treasury Building to the east, this sidewalk served as a queuing area for the daily public tours of the White House. These tours were suspended in the wake of the [September 11 attacks](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/September_11_attacks). In September 2003, they resumed on a limited basis for groups making prior arrangements through their Congressional representatives and submitting to background checks, but the White House remains closed to the general public. The White House Complex is protected by the [United States Secret Service](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_Secret_Service) and the [United States Park Police](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_Park_Police).