

The White House

An Historic Guide

**Photographic Supplement to the
Twenty-Second Edition**

WHITE HOUSE HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION
Washington, D.C.

A nonprofit organization, chartered on November 3, 1961, to enhance understanding, appreciation, and enjoyment of the Executive Mansion. Income from the sale of the association's books is used to publish other materials about the White House, as well as for the acquisition of historical furnishings and other objects for the Executive Mansion.

This supplement is intended as an educational resource to readers of *The White House: An Historic Guide*. It contains recent photographs and descriptions of rooms that have changed since the twenty-second edition was printed in 2003.

To obtain a complete copy of the twenty-second edition, contact: www.whitehousehistory.org or 1-800-555-2451.

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THE GROUND FLOOR

THE LIBRARY

REFURBISHED 2006

This recent photograph shows the room following a 2006 refurbishment that introduced a new color scheme echoing the bold mid-nineteenth-century Kirman rug. The pine walls, milled in 1951 from post-fire beams removed during the Truman renovation, were repainted in a warm cream color, while the interiors of the bookshelves were painted a dark red, inspired by the painted wooden chandelier installed in the room in 1962. New silk draperies with red and cream stripes were hung at the windows. All of the seat furniture received new silk or hair cloth upholsteries.

In 2005, Mrs. Laura Bush, an avid reader and one-time librarian, endorsed the recommendation of the Committee for the Preservation of the White House to update the book selection for the first time since the creation of the Library in 1962. More than six hundred new titles were carefully selected to replace some outdated books. The Library is a favorite site for the president to tape interviews and other public addresses.



THE VERMEIL ROOM

REFURBISHED 2006

This recent photograph shows the freshly painted walls, re-designed draperies, and new upholsteries of the 2006 refurbishment. The mid-nineteenth-century Hereke rug and many other furnishings were retained, but a center table—made by Anthony Quervelle of Philadelphia in 1829 for the East Room under Andrew Jackson—and an Empire-style sofa once owned by President Martin Van Buren were added to the room.

The Vermeil Room, a formal ladies' sitting room, takes its name from a collection of gilded silver objects, some of which are showcased in cabinets on its west wall. The vermeil collection, received by the White House in 1958 as a bequest of Mrs. Margaret Thompson Biddle, includes the work of such renowned early-nineteenth-century European silversmiths as Paul Storr and Jean-Baptiste-Claude Odier.



THE STATE FLOOR

THE GREEN ROOM

REFURBISHED 2007

*This photograph reflects the 2007 refurbishment, including a new carpet; new upholstery and drapery fabrics in shades of green, cream, and coral; and a fresh application on the walls of a green watered silk introduced in 1962 by Jacqueline Kennedy. A French Savonnerie rug in the early-nineteenth-century-style, with a green field and robust neoclassical decoration, was used as a model for a new rug woven to fit the room. For the first time, paintings were triple hung on the north wall; this permitted the introduction of a 2007 acquisition—Jacob Lawrence’s *The Builders*, painted in 1947, which is paired in the lower tier with John Marin’s *The Circus No. 1*, painted in 1952; they are two of the most modern works in the White House collection. Hanging above the Lawrence is a 2003 acquisition—*Three Children* painted by George Bellows in 1919.*

Thomas Jefferson used this room as a dining room, as architect James Hoban had intended. Decorated with green silks when James Monroe moved into the post-fire house, it was called the “Green Drawing Room” under his successor, John Quincy Adams. It remains that today, a parlor for small teas, large receptions, and even an occasional formal dinner.



THE SECOND FLOOR

THE QUEENS' BEDROOM

REFURBISHED 2006

The Queens' Bedroom, once called the Rose Bedroom, was refurbished in 2006, with a deeper rose color on the walls and new striped and floral silk fabrics to complement the mid-nineteenth-century Hereke rug that has been in the room since 1971. Most of the art and furnishings were retained, including the Empire-style bed, thought to have belonged to Andrew Jackson. The late-seventeenth-century trumeau—a mirror and painting framed together—was a gift from King George VI in 1951; it was presented by his daughter, the current Queen Elizabeth II. As queen she would later stay in the room, one of seven reigning queens to do so. New to the room is a Federal desk-and-bookcase attributed to Baltimore cabinetmaker, Joseph Burgess.

The Queens' Bedroom and the nearby Lincoln Bedroom are the two principal guests rooms in the White House.



THE LINCOLN BEDROOM

REFURBISHED 2004–2005

The Lincoln Bedroom, once President Lincoln's office and cabinet room, was fully renovated in 2004–2005. Mrs. Laura Bush worked with the Committee for the Preservation of the White House to create a bedroom consistent with the surviving historical record, the styles of mid-nineteenth century America, and the needs of a modern guest bedroom. Period documents were consulted to create replicas or sympathetic adaptations of the marble mantel, wallpaper, and carpeting used in Lincoln's office and the bed and window cornices and hangings used in the principal guest bedroom of the Lincoln White House. Hanging beside the bed is an engraving, First Reading of the Emancipation Proclamation before Lincoln's Cabinet, after a painting by Francis B. Carpenter. Both this 1862 reading and the 1863 signing of the proclamation took place in this room. While painting the scene at the White House in 1864, Carpenter produced sketches and photographs that helped with the recent renovation decisions.



THE LINCOLN BEDROOM

CONTINUED

Part of the presidential office suite until the creation of the West Wing in 1902, the Lincoln Bedroom came into being in 1945 when President Harry S. Truman directed that objects associated with the beloved president be collected in this room where Lincoln made so many of his momentous decisions during the Civil War. They included chairs, a clock, and a portrait of Andrew Jackson that had been in Lincoln's office, but also a bedroom suite purchased by Mrs. Lincoln in 1861.

The enormous bed, over eight-feet long and nine-feet tall, is carved with exotic birds, vines, and grapes, lush Victorian ornamentation also found on the marble-topped center table. That table, from the 1861 suite, and the pair of sofas donated to the White House in 2004, are attributed to the New York cabinetmaker John Henry Belter. The American shield seen on the bed cornice, recreated from photographs, is also found on the reproduction window cornices and on the 1853 overmantel mirror that the Lincolns would have seen in the Green Room.



THE LINCOLN SITTING ROOM

REFURBISHED 2005

The Lincoln Sitting Room, the corner room once the office of Lincoln's senior secretary, John Nicolay, was renovated in 2005 to harmonize with the adjoining Lincoln Bedroom. Matching carpeting, paneled wallpaper, and window hangings of the same yellow brocatelle were introduced. The only surviving Victorian marble mantel original to the White House was installed.

Seat furniture placed in the room includes one of the 1846 side chairs that would have been used by Lincoln's Cabinet, two of the 1861 bedroom suite side chairs, and a pair of armchairs attributed to the Lincoln White House. Newspaper engravings of contemporaneous events at the White House were hung, along with a portrait of Mary Todd Lincoln painted from photographs in 1926 by her niece, Katherine Helm. Against the north wall stands a lacquered and gilded wood cabinet, known as a chigai-dana, one of the gifts from the Emperor of Japan delivered to President Franklin Pierce by Commodore Matthew C. Perry in 1855. In one corner is a marble-topped table, probably the only surviving piece of a suite purchased by President Buchanan in 1859.



THE PRESIDENT'S DINING ROOM

REFURBISHED 2005

The President's Dining Room was refurbished in 2005 with the introduction of a yellow brocatelle for the wall covering and draperies. The furniture remained the same, including the mirror with a highly ornamented crest, acquired in the mid-nineteenth century, and hung over the mantel in 2001. At the request of Mrs. Laura Bush in 2002, Georgia O'Keeffe's 1932 painting, Jimson Weed (on loan from the Georgia O'Keeffe Museum) was hung between the windows. In 2005, Daniel Garber's 1931 Tunicum Hillside was received as a gift and hung to the left of the mirror.

In 1861, this room was the principal guest bedroom for which Mary Todd Lincoln purchased the furniture now in the Lincoln Bedroom. Later it was the bedroom for both President and Mrs. Grover Cleveland and President and Mrs. William McKinley. In 1948, this was Margaret Truman's sitting room, where her grand piano broke through the floor, leading to the Truman renovation of the White House from 1948 to 1952. Converted into a private family dining room by Jacqueline Kennedy in 1961, it continues in this role.



THE WEST WING

THE WEST WING RECEPTION ROOM

REFURBISHED 2005

The West Wing Reception Room was refurbished in 2005 with the installation of a classical-grid-motif carpet and deep red upholsteries on the reproduction eighteenth-century sofas and chairs. With the creation of new facilities for the press in what had been the indoor swimming pool in the West Terrace in 1970, the former Press Lobby was renovated to provide a smaller, more intimate reception room for the guests of the president and vice president and members of their staffs.

A late-eighteenth-century English bookcase, housing the published papers of the recent former presidents, is flanked by two large American paintings—William Henry Powell’s Emigrant Scene of American settlers, c.1837, and Eastman Johnson’s 1851 reduction of Emanuel Leutze’s monumental painting, Washington Crossing the Delaware, which is on loan from a private collection. The immense popularity of Leutze’s image was due, in part, to the engravings made from Johnson’s smaller copy.



THE CABINET ROOM

REFURBISHED 2004

The Cabinet Room was refurbished in 2004. The specially designed wool rug features a border of olive branches framing a star-spangled red field. New wool damask draperies, on rods copied from those used in John F. Kennedy's Oval Office, were hung at the windows that look out into the Rose Garden. Six gold-finished eagle-form sconces, used in the Cabinet Room 1930–1970, were installed again. The bell-shaped dish lights, contemporary in design to the patriotic Art Deco sconces, were reproduced. The chairs around the 1970 conference table bear plaques identifying the cabinet officers; at the end of an administration, members are permitted to purchase their cabinet chairs as mementos of their service.



THE ROOSEVELT ROOM

REFURBISHED 2001

Used by the president for conferences and addresses and by his staff for meetings, the Roosevelt Room, across the hall from the Oval Office, was refurbished in 2001 with a new paint color, carpeting, and upholsteries. The furniture, mostly eighteenth-century-style reproductions, was installed in 1969 when President Nixon renamed the room to commemorate both Theodore Roosevelt, who built the West Wing in 1902, and Franklin D. Roosevelt, who enlarged it in 1934. A media center, based on an English bookcase, was installed opposite the fireplace. The American and presidential flags are grouped with the standards of the five military services. The room is gently illuminated by a backlighted 1988 recreation of a 1934 skylight.

