## **Kensington Palace Access Guide**

**Screen Reader Version**

###  **Introduction**

Welcome to Kensington Palace.

We are committed to making every visit enjoyable and accessible.
 This guide is designed to support blind and visually impaired visitors by describing all routes, spaces, and sensory details.

Our team is here to help. Our on-site hosts wear red, white, and black uniforms. Volunteers wear badges that say, “Here to Help.”

Please ask anyone if you need assistance at any point during your visit.

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### **Wheelchair Hire and Hearing Loops**

**Wheelchairs:**

* Free internal wheelchairs are available for exhibitions.
* External wheelchairs are available for use in the gardens with staff assistance.
* Please speak to the Security Liaison Officer at the ticket office, located left of the main entrance, for these provisions.

**Hearing Loops:**
 Induction loops are available at:

* Ticket Office
* Bag Search
* Scanner
* Front Shop

Switch your hearing aid to the “T” setting to activate.

**Additional Equipment:**

* Bluetooth adapters for hearing aids
* Noise-cancelling headphones

Please request these at the Audio Guide desk in the Entrance Hall.

### **Audio Guides and Folding Stools**

* Free audio guides are available at the handout desk in the Entrance Hall.
* QR codes are also available in the printed access guide onsite.
* Written transcripts of the audio guides are available on request.
* Folding stools are also available for visitor use throughout the Palace.

Please speak to a Host at the handout desk.

### **Accessible Toilets**

Step-free accessible toilets are located at:

* The Stone Hall
* The Palace Café
* The Orangery Restaurant

This guide will describe where each one appears during your visit.

There is a changing Places toilet located in the Clore Learning Centre. Please speak to a member of staff to assist you as this is located behind the Orangery Restaurant.

### **Building Rules**

**You can:**

* Take photos without flash
* Record videos (excluding staff)
* Ask staff for help
* Use the audio guide

**Please don’t:**

* Touch historic objects or artwork
* Eat or drink inside exhibition areas
* Leave your bags unattended
* Record staff without consent

### **The Entrance Hall and Ticket Hall**

The Ticket Hall is at the front of the Palace located to the left of the main doors.
 Here you can:

* Buy tickets
* Borrow a wheelchair

After collecting your ticket, exit the way you entered then go to the main doors on your right to enter the Entrance Hall. If you already have a ticket, you can go straight into the Entrance Hall.

**In the Entrance Hall:**

* Tickets are checked, and bags are screened
* The space is step-free but often crowded
* The Audio Guide desk is located here
* The Palace Shop is on the right side
* The Palace Café is beyond the shop with two small steps down. There is a platform lift.

**Toilet Access:**
There is a platform lift for the small step between the Shop and Café. Ask staff if you require this lift.
Toilets (including accessible and baby changing) are at the end of the Café.

### **Choosing Your Route**

From the Entrance Hall, you will move into the Vestibule which then leads furhter into Stone Hall.
These two rooms are the starting point for all Palace exhibitions.

The four main routes are:

1. Gole Route – *King’s State Apartments*
2. Green Route – *Victoria A Royal Childhood*
3. Blue Route – *Queen’s State Apartments*
4. Black Route – *Dress Codes*

The Stone Hall can be difficult to navigate without vision. Hosts are available for assistance.

**Access Lifts:**

* A lift to the first floor is located to your left as you exit the stone hall straight ahead, near the base of the large staircase known as The Kings Staircase. All our routes involve upstairs areas.
* Please speak to a member of staff if you need assistance.

### **Route 1: Gold Route King’s State Apartments**

The King’s State Apartments are on the second floor and are accessible via lift or stairs located to the left of the Stone Hall. Please ask a member of staff for navigation assistance if needed.

Subject matter includes themes of death and illness.

This route is linear, leading from one room to the next.

**Room 1: The King’s Staircase**

* The King’s Staircase is how you get to the King’s State Apartments.
* This staircase has a handrail on both sides
* Low light.
* The steps are made of marble so please mind your footing.

**Room 2: The Presence Chamber**

* This is a large open space
* There is low light levels

**Room 3: The Privy Chamber**

* This room has low light

**Room 4: the Cupola Room**

* There are mannequins on display in this space

**Room 5: The King’s Drawing Room**

* There are tactiles
* This room can get crowded
* There are mannequins on display in this space

**Room 6: The Council Chamber**

* This room is a gallery on the side of the main route. You will need to turn back and exit the way you entered via Room 5, The King’s Drawing Room.
* This room has low lighting

**Room 7: Queen Caroline Closet**

* This room has low light
* There are mannequins on display in this space and there may be talks happening.

**Room 8: King’s Gallery**

* This room has high ceilings and large walkways but can often become crowded. There may be talks happening.

### **King’s State Apartments Visual Overview**

* The rooms on this route are vast and tall
* Decorative wooden paneling is heavily featured in each room
* Walls are papered in an elaborate bright red pattern with a wooden skirting
* The ceilings are painted in incredible detail reflecting the Hanoverian period.
* Regal furniture is set against the walls, this is for display and cannot be used.
* Marble busts are set upon coloured marble plinths
* There are many historical paintings on the walls
* Chandeliers hang from long red rope from the painted ceilings.

### **Route 1: Green Route – Victoria: A Royal Childhood**

This exhibition is on the first floor. Access is via The Stone stairs to the left of the Stone Hall or via the lift.

This route is linear. You move from one room to the next in order.

**Room 1: The Jewel Room**

* Large, open space
* Low lighting
* Some seating available

**Room 2: Young Victoria**

* Tactile objects available
* Sound effects playing

**Room 3: The Princess at Play**

* Large, open space
* Includes projections
* Tactile displays
* Sound effects

**Room 4: Educating Victoria**

* Tactile displays and sound effects

**Room 5: A Royal Performance**

* Open, spacious layout
* Low light
* Tactile displays and sound effects

**Room 6: Family Feuds**

* Tactile displays and sound effects

**Room 7: The Birthday Ball**

* Low lighting
* Sound effects

**Room 8: The Baby in the Palace**

* This room is a side gallery.
* You must turn around and exit the way you entered.

**Room 9: Becoming Queen**

* Re-joins the main path
* Possible crowding
* Tactile objects and sound effects

This route ends back at the Stone Staircase. To access the lift please speak to a member of staff who will escort you back to the lift entrance.

### **Victoria a Royal Childhood – Visual Overview**

* This route has large Victorian style rooms with high ceilings and walls.
* Most of this route is plush carpeted in elaborate, multicoloured patterns.
* Each room has a chandelier hanging from a ceiling rose, some of these are crystal.
* Heavy, velvet fabric curtains hang over the windows.
* Some of the rooms have Victorian style striped wallpaper with paintings hung on them.

### **Route 3: Black Route, Dress Codes**

Dress Codes is on the first floor and accessible via lift or staircase. The staircase is located at the end of a long corridor to the right leading from Stone Hall. The staircase has a hand rail but is quite steep. This area is often crowded and has low light. The lift is located to the left of Stone Hall at the base of the large staircase. Please ask a member of staff to assist navigation to Dress Codes.

**Entrance : Garden Room**

* This space is open and spacious.
* There is a film playing about the Exhibition.
* There are seats to sit on.

**Room 1: Exhibition introducition**

* This area has glass exhibition cases that are floor to ceiling. Please do not lean or use the wall in this area for guidance due to gaps between cases.
* There is low lighting
* There is possible crowding
* There are sound effects playing

**Room 2: Writing the Codes**

* This room has a large glass exhibition cases across both walls
* There are displays on the walls
* There is seating in this space if needed
* There is low lighting
* A musical soundtrack plays throughout

**Room 3: Writing the Codes continued**

* This room is small
* There is possible crowding
* There are sound effects playing
* There are tactiles on the wall such as fabric swatches

**Room 4: Resetting the codes**

* This room is large with an exhibition in the centre
* There is a soundtrack playing
* There is possible crowding

### **Dress Codes Visual Overview:**

* Dress codes is a large exhibition with blue and pink as prominent interpretation colours.
* There are many glass exhibition cases containing historical dress.
* The carpet is a bright red colour
* Some rooms have swatches of tactile fabric on the walls.
* There are benches in the centre of some of the rooms.
* Costume in the final room is laid out like a fashion show.

### **Route 3: Blue Route – Queen’s State Apartments**

The Queen’s State Apartments are located on the second floor.
They are accessible via the lift beside the King’s Grand Staircase or by using the staircase located at the end of the long corridor off Stone Hall. Please ask a member of staff for assistance with navigation.

Subject matter in this area includes themes of death and illness.

This is a linear route from room to room.

**Room 1: The Queen’s Staircase**

* This staircase has a handrail on one side
* Low lighting
* Painted wall panels showing 17th-century court figures

**Room 2: The Queen’s Gallery**

* Large open space
* Low lighting
* Possible crowding
* There may be talks happening

**Room 3: The Queen’s Closet**

* Small room
* Low lighting

**Room 4: The Queen’s Dining Room**

* Low light levels
* Historic objects behind barriers

**Room 5: The Queen’s Drawing Room**

* Low lighting
* Possible crowding
* Seating is available

**Room 6: The Queen’s Bedchamber**

* Low light
* Historic furnishings behind barriers. This is a gallery room that cannot be fully entered.

This route exits via the Queen’s Staircase.

**Queen’s State Apartments – Visual Overview**

* Rooms on this route reflect a late 17th-century royal residence.
* Expect decorative wall paneling, painted ceilings, and elaborate fireplaces.
* Rooms are carpeted or wood-floored with roped-off historic furniture.
* Large windows let in natural light, but lighting in most areas remains low.
* Benches are positioned near windows for seated rest.

### **Palace Gardens**

The Palace Gardens are generally flat but do include some steep slopes and uneven surfaces. Most paths are made of smooth tarmac. There are a few stairs and where stairs are present there is a ramp alternative.

* There is a wheelchair accessible ramp from the Palace exit
* Some areas have cobbled or gravel surfaces, these are avoidable
* The Garden may be very sensorily stimulating, especially in Summer due to Kensington Palaces location in a park and the Sunken Garden.
* The Garden can be loud and crowded during summer months.

**Paths and Landmarks:**

* The Sunken Garden includes views of the Diana Statue
* The Gold Gates are accessible via sloped paths.
* The Clore Learning Centre sits on a gentle incline.

Please note that weather can affect accessibility; surfaces may be slippery in rain.

### **The Orangery Restaurant**

The Orangery Restaurant is fully wheelchair accessible.
 There is level access to the entrance with smooth flooring throughout.

**Features:**

* Indoor and outdoor seating available
* Table service is provided
* Step-free toilets, including accessible and baby changing facilities

**Menu and Experience:**

* Breakfast, lunch, and afternoon tea available
* Vegetarian, vegan, and non-gluten containing options offered
* May be crowded during busy service times

Please speak to a member of staff on arrival for seating assistance.
Please speak to a member of staff regarding allergies.

### **Shop at Kensington Palace**

The Palace Shop is located beside the Café, near the Palace exit.

**Access Information:**

* Step-free access is provided by a platform lift
* Ask a member of staff for lift assistance
* Layout includes wide aisles, though the shop can become crowded.
* Displays are at varying heights.

**Sensory Details:**

* Ambient background music may be playing
* Lighting is bright
* Flooring is smooth

Products include books, gifts, and souvenirs.

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