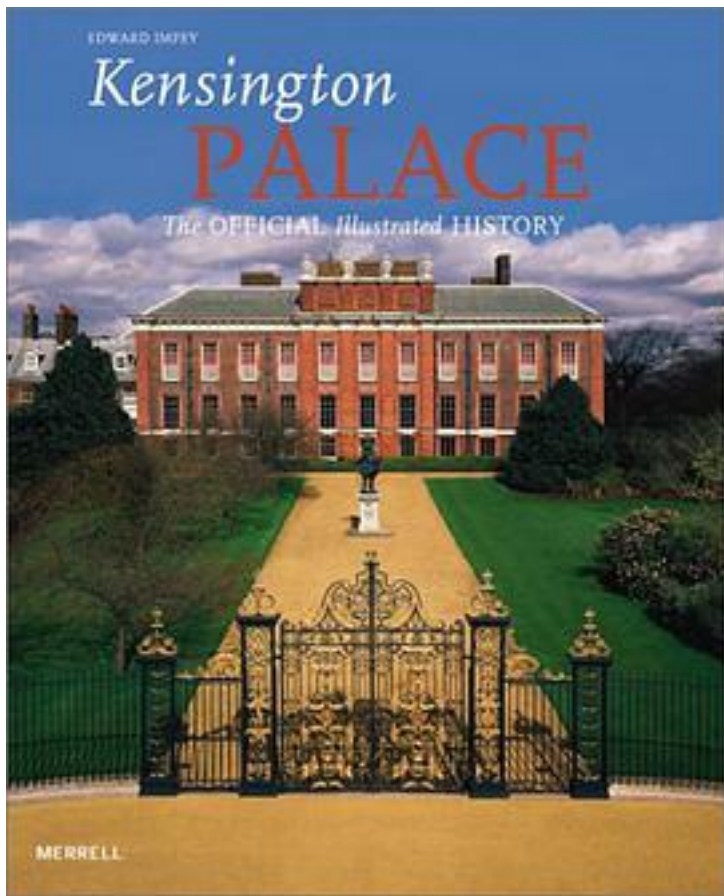


Kensington Palace



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With the death of Diana, Princess of Wales, in 1997, Kensington Palace, her London home, became known throughout the world. But as an architectural gem, a repository of great works of art, a favoured home of kings and queens, the scene of many major events in English history, for many it remains to be discovered. In 1689 King William III

and his wife, Mary, bought the modest early seventeenth-century house from the Earl of Nottingham. Under them and their successors the greatest architects and craftsmen in Britain-Christopher Wren, Nicholas Hawksmoor and William Kent among them-transformed it into a royal palace complete with magnificent gardens. But for all its splendour and importance, the architecture and history of Kensington Palace reflect its use for the more private side of royal life: here the monarch retreated from government business at Westminster, and the court and royal family enjoyed their house, gardens and the cream of their collections in an atmosphere of relative informality. Beautifully illustrated with antiquarian material paintings, historic plans, new photography and specially prepared reconstructions, The Official Illustrated History tells the fascinating story of Kensington Palace from its origins to the present day.

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