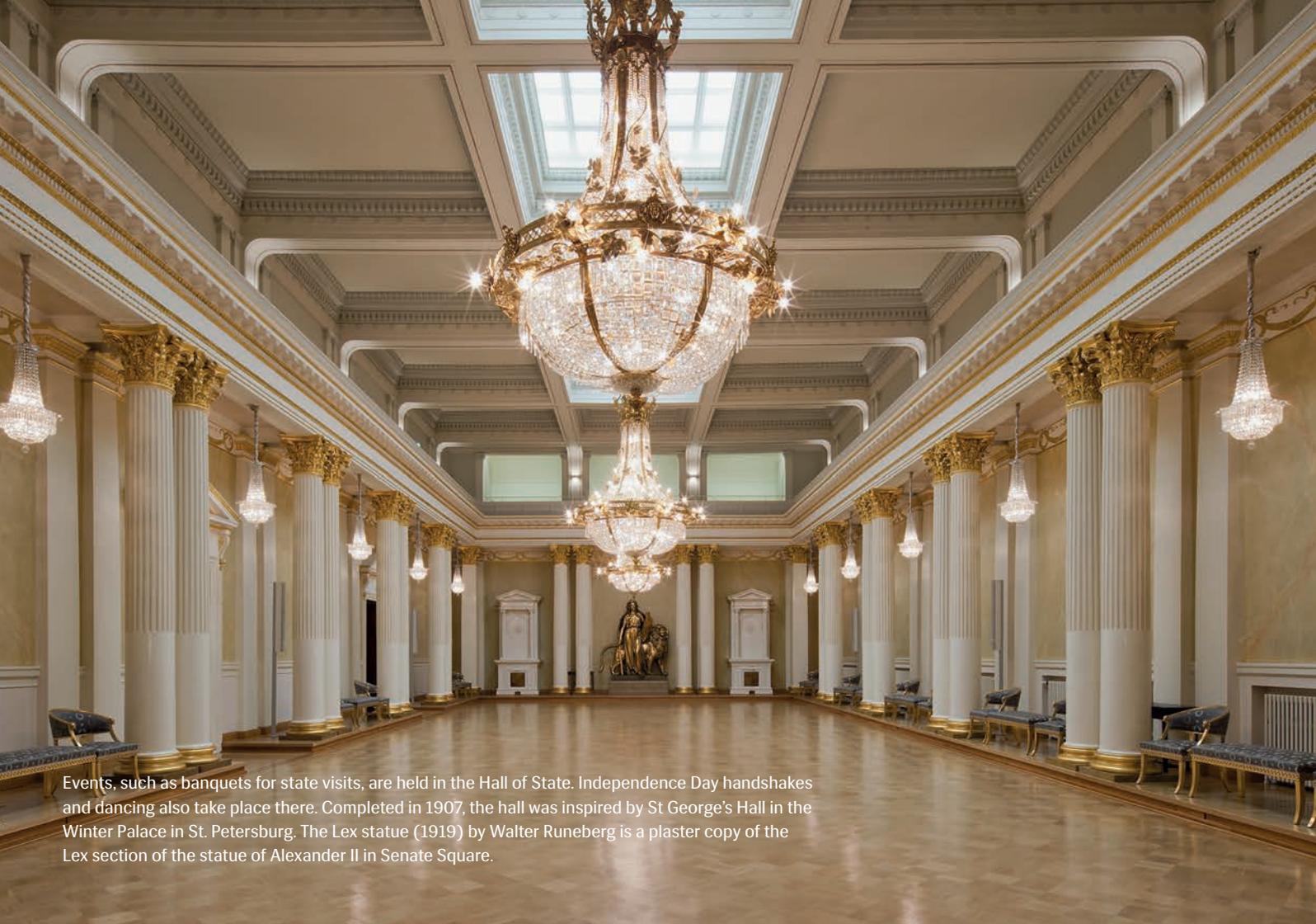




The Presidential Palace



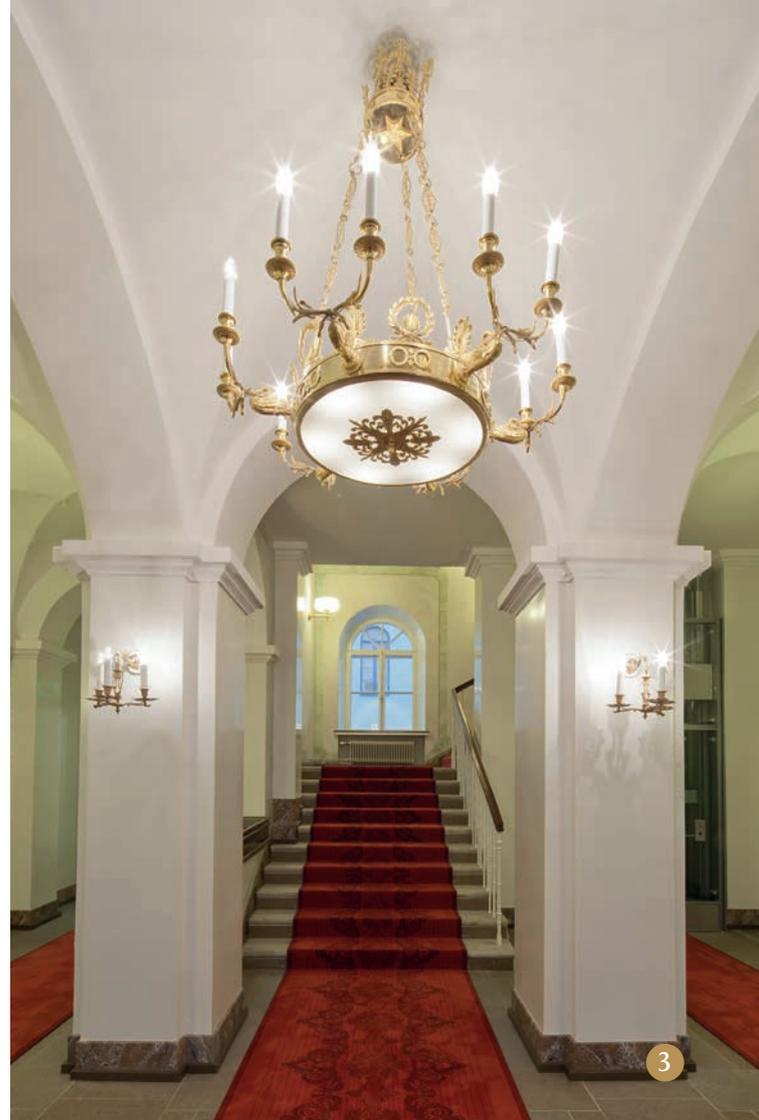


Events, such as banquets for state visits, are held in the Hall of State. Independence Day handshakes and dancing also take place there. Completed in 1907, the hall was inspired by St George's Hall in the Winter Palace in St. Petersburg. The Lex statue (1919) by Walter Runeberg is a plaster copy of the Lex section of the statue of Alexander II in Senate Square.

Welcome to the Presidential Palace!

The Presidential Palace is located in Helsinki, at the corner of Pohjoisesplanadi and Mariankatu, on one side of the Market Square. Drawings for the building, which was originally completed in 1820 as a merchant's manor and designed by Pehr Granstedt, were finalised by Carl Ludvig Engel. This Empire-style building with three floors houses the study, the official reception rooms and the Office of the President of the Republic. The Palace hosts the annual Independence Day Reception and other receptions, such as state visits, meetings and negotiations.

Guest arriving at the main entrance of the Presidential Palace enter via the Esplanade foyer. An Empire-style hanging basket from the 1810s is located in the foyer. The old-style marbling has been restored on the staircase walls.





From merchant's manor to Imperial Palace

The history of the Presidential Palace dates back about 200 years, and the building has gone through quite colourful phases. In 1809, Finland was detached from the Swedish Kingdom and became a Grand Duchy of the Russian Empire. Around this time, merchant and shipowner J. H. Heidenstrach commissioned distinguished architect Pehr Granstedt, a fortress designer, to design a residential house on a commercial plot Heidenstrach owned in Helsinki's South Harbour. Its drawings were inspected by Italian architect Giacomo Quarenghi, who had worked in St. Petersburg. Final corrections were made by architect Carl Ludvig Engel, who was in charge of the reconstruction of Helsinki after a devastating fire. Work on the foundations was started in 1813, and the Palace was completed in 1820.

- ◀ The Gothic Revival-style decorative paintings on the ceiling and cupola of the Gothic Hall probably date back to 1870–1880. The 22 provincial and civic coats of arms bordering the roof of the Gothic Hall date back to the same period. Originally designed and made for this hall in particular, the chairs were created by Helsinki carpenter Gustaf Lindh in 1843. This room was originally on two levels. One floor was removed and the cupola was built when the merchant's manor was renovated to form an Imperial Palace. Events such as presidential press conferences are now held in the hall.

In 1812 Helsinki became the capital of the Grand Duchy of Finland, and the plan was to construct a residence for the Grand Duke, that is the Emperor of Russia in the city. Several plans for an Imperial Palace were made for various parts of the city: In the location of the Uspenski Cathedral in Katajanokka, in Ullanlinna and in the Meritullintori area in Kruununhaka. However, the plans were considered to be too expensive. Finally, state authorities decided to purchase the Heidenstrauch House in 1837.

Architect C. L. Engel was commissioned to renew the Heidenstrauch House to such a state that the Emperor of Russia and his entourage could be accommodated in it. In accordance with the plans made by Engel and his son,

In the Yellow Room, the President of the Republic receives smaller delegations and the credentials of ambassadors of foreign states, for example. The walnut sofa set is one of the finest Empire collections in Finland. This Biedermeier-style furniture was purchased from St. Petersburg for the Governor-General's house in Helsinki in 1819 and then moved into the Imperial Palace in 1837. The furniture was designed by architect Vasily Stasov. ▶





Carl Alexander Engel, an extension was added to the building, containing, for example, a Greek Orthodox chapel, a dance hall and a dining hall, as well as a spacious kitchen with auxiliary facilities. At the same time, accommodation was constructed for the staff of the Palace and the imperial entourage. The reconstruction was completed in 1845. For the festive opening of Parliament in 1863, the dance hall was changed into a throne room (now the Hall of Mirrors). The throne, originally brought from Moscow for the Diet of Porvoo in 1809, was moved there from the Government Palace. The throne is currently located in the National Museum of Finland.

The grand Industrial Exhibition held in Helsinki in 1876 was attended by Emperor Alexander II, Empress Maria Aleksandrovna and the Tsarevitch - the future Emperor Alexander III - and his spouse Maria Feodorovna. For this occasion, the Palace was thoroughly repaired, works of art were acquired and service equipment was supplemented. The imperial entourage was so extensive at the time that it was impossible to accommodate everyone in the Palace.

- ◀ Official talks and coffee receptions are arranged in the Dining Hall. Serving tables are arranged there on Independence Day. Paintings in the grisaille style, which were restored during the renovation of the 1970s, can be seen on the ceiling. Being representative of the Empire style, these paintings on botanical subjects accord with the original model. Paintings from the imperial art collection can be seen on the walls.

Therefore, plans were made to extend the Palace before the next imperial visit in 1885. However, Alexander III did not approve the plans.

The extension work was not carried out until 1904-1907, in accordance with the plans prepared by architect Johan Jacob Ahrenberg. The extension included a new entrance from Mariankatu and a more extensive Hall of State. In this connection, the current Atrium was also attached to the Palace. The Atrium was originally a dining hall of the adjacent hotel. St George's Hall in the Winter Palace in St. Petersburg was used as the model for the Hall of State. Ahrenberg also designed the furniture for the Hall that was manufactured by Boman's furniture company. Around the same time, the Palace was modernised: the first telephone was taken into use in 1890, and gas lighting was replaced by electricity at the turn of the century.

During World War I, the Palace was used as a military hospital, and during the Russian Revolution it was used as the headquarters of a Russian military and labour committee. During the Finnish Civil War in 1918, the headquarters of German forces and later of Finnish forces were housed in the Palace. After the Civil War, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland temporarily operated from the Palace.



Alterations to the Palace since independence

Although the building has had many users, including a merchant and Emperor, it has longest served as a Presidential Palace. When the political struggle had been resolved to the benefit of the republic, renovations were started on the Palace so that it could be used as a Presidential Palace. The top floor was changed into residential premises and an intermediate floor was constructed in the church hall, so that a dining hall was located upstairs and a library downstairs. The vestry was made into a private library for the President of the Republic with a spiral staircase leading to the third floor. The first Presidential session of the Government was held in the Hall of State on 30 July 1919. When it was concluded, President K. J. Ståhlberg organised a

- ◀ The Atrium serves as a lobby for the Hall of State. Journalists interview guests here at the reception held on Independence Day. Built in 1904–07, this was originally the dining room of the Hotel Russie located next to the Palace. Walter Runeberg's sculpture, *Psyche with Zephyrs* of 1872, which is located in the middle of the room, was a present from the Finnish Senate to Empress Maria Alexandrovna, the wife of Alexander II. The busts of past presidents are also situated in the Atrium.



reception in the Presidential Palace for top officials and the diplomatic corps.

In the 1930s, a new entrance was constructed on the Mariankatu side as well as a spacious foyer and a staircase leading to the Atrium. These alterations were designed by architect Martti Välikangas. Central heating was installed in the Palace in 1938; there are old tiled stoves only in the halls on the second floor. The foundation of the building was reinforced in the 1930s and 1960s. In the early 1970s, the Palace was renovated in accordance with plans drawn up by architect Sirkka Tarumaa.

The most extensive renovation and restoration work in the Presidential Palace's history was performed in 2013–2014. The crumbling foundations were reinforced, the ageing



Most guests arrive via the Mariankatu foyer on Independence Day. Completed in 1938, the foyer is representative of the functionalist style. During the foyer's renovation, the original clay grey shade was restored on the ceiling.

building systems were renewed and the safety of the building was improved. Passages between the rooms have been improved on several occasions, to make the building more suitable for various state occasions. The aim has been to provide the building with a level of dignity in keeping with its age, by restoring the surfaces in the spirit of the 1800s. The principal designer of the renovation project was Pauno Narjus of LPR Arkkitehdit Oy. The current layout and design of the Presidential Palace reflect the various styles prevalent during the history of the building; one of the most prominent of these is the so-called Empire style of St. Petersburg.



Artefacts from Finland and abroad

When the Imperial Palace was being constructed, Finnish craftsmanship was used as much as possible for the interior design. Painting work was completed by master craftsman Källström, chandeliers were cast by copper-moulder Lih, carpentry was commissioned from master craftsmen Skogberg and Österling. However, some acquisitions also had to be made abroad. The finest pieces of furniture were ordered from St. Petersburg as well as parquet floors, the wall sconces in the Dining Hall and the interior design of the church in the Palace.

The considerable art collection located in the Presidential Palace was mainly acquired in 1856-1882, when the Palace was managed by Baron, General J. M. Nordenstam. It was during this period that the Palace's best-known works of art were purchased. These include

- ◀ Smaller state lunches or dinners and change of government ceremonies are held in the Hall of Mirrors. Designed by Carl Ludvig Engel, this room was originally the Emperor's throne room and ballroom. It was modelled on the Berlin Schauspielhaus designed by German architect Karl Friedrich Schinkel. The Hall of Mirrors was originally more austere in style; most of the gilding was added after Finland became independent.



Ferdinand von Wright's Goose scolding a mallard (1858), Werner Holmberg's Forest in rainy weather (1859) and Mill scene in Norway (1859), Viktoria Åberg's Monrepos (1865), Adolf von Becker's At the sick bed (1874) and French interior (1877), and Hjalmar Munsterhjelm's October evening in the archipelago after first snow (1883). The imperial art collection consists of 35 pieces. Several works of art owned by the Ateneum Art Museum are also located in the Presidential Palace.

During Nordenstam's period, the linen was also renewed, new silverware was acquired and new china purchased. In the 1970s, the silverware was supplemented from the same company in England from which it was originally purchased - the mould used in the 1860s was still available. Most of the rugs in the Palace were purchased from Belgium and France for the opening of Parliament in 1863. Acquisitions have also been made in recent years, but the majority of the old articles are still in safe keeping and partly also in use.

During the renovation of 2013-2014, the furniture and lights in the Presidential Palace were repaired and conserved by professional Finnish craftsmen as well as students in the field.



Presidents and employees as residents

Finnish presidents K. J. Ståhlberg, Lauri Relander, P. E. Svinhufvud, Kyösti Kallio, Risto Ryti, J. K. Paasikivi and Mauno Koivisto have all resided in the Presidential Palace. The Palace was the only official residence of the Finnish Head of State in Helsinki until Amos Anderson donated Tamminiemi in Meilahti as the summer residence for the President. Urho Kekkonen, who was elected President in 1956, moved to Tamminiemi, where he resided until his death in 1986. Currently, Tamminiemi is used as a museum. The present residence of the President of the Republic, Mäntyniemi, was completed in 1993. Presidents have resided there ever since.

Some of the staff members of the imperial residence and later of the Office of the President of the Republic also resided in the Palace. The residence of the Major-Domo in charge of the property and housekeeping was located on the ground floor, and for decades, the first Aide-de-Camp of the President of the Republic resided in the east wing of the Presidential Palace. The residences of the porter and the attendant of the cloakroom were located in the west wing, and the butler also resided in the Palace. Currently, all residential premises have been changed into working facilities.



Bilateral meetings with the President of the Republic are held in the President's official study. The President also delivers his annual New Year's speech from there. All presidents of Finland have used the desk lamp. This room also has one of the four working fireplaces in the Presidential Palace. Paintings from the imperial art collection are hung on its walls and a painting called *The Nyländska Jaktklubben Harbour in Helsinki* completed by Albert Edelfelt for the Paris World Exhibition of 1900 hangs behind the desk.

The staff of the Office of the President work in the Palace

The Office of the President of the Republic that operates in the Palace assists the President of the Republic in taking care of official duties and looks after services, safety and administration needed by the President and his family. A small part of the Office staff works in Mäntyniemi and at the summer residence of the President of the Republic in Kultaranta.

The Presidential Cabinet, which consists of the Secretary General and the President's closest advisers and assistants, works in the Palace. Aides-de-Camp, who are in charge of the practical preparation and implementation of the President's and his spouse's programme, also work there.

In addition, the ground floor of the Palace contains the offices of administrative staff and a kitchen. The work facilities of the Office have also been extended to the other side of Mariankatu in the Main Guard Post building that contains office, service and training facilities.



Portraits of the spouses of Finnish presidents are located on the upper balcony of Atrium. The lamps were bought for the Presidential Palace during the renovation of the 1970s. During the major renovation of 2013–2014, the decision was taken to leave them in place in order to counterbalance décor representing the fin-de-siecle period. ▶



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The Office of the President of the Republic of Finland

Mariankatu 2, 00170 Helsinki, Finland

Tel. +358 9 661 133

www.president.fi

@TPKanslia

