

Historic Royal Palaces
Hillsborough Castle



“Does not all this seem
extraordinary to you?”

Benjamin Franklyn referring to the
hospitality he received on a visit to
the Hillsborough Estate in 1771.



History happens here



Among the bluebells and sequoias you'll find a gentle Georgian mansion with a staggering past

It's not unusual in Ireland for a house to be known as a 'castle'. However, Hillsborough Castle is actually a Georgian country house - and it's one of our finest.

Today, it is the official residence of the royal family in Ireland, and home to the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland.

This graceful house boasts a rich history of royal occasions and state affairs; from its 18th

century origins as home to Wills Hill, Secretary of State for the Colonies, to its place as a working royal residence and role as secluded venue for Irish and British politicians discussing the Peace Process.

Now, you can enjoy the same elegant spaces and professional service previously reserved for presidents and princesses.

Set within 96 acres of spectacular gardens, this timeless venue is the perfect location for creating a classic experience your guests will never forget.

A host at heart

This welcoming venue has a vibrant history of state dinners and summits, not to mention royal garden parties and impromptu sing-a-longs



© National Portrait Gallery, London

Wills Hill built Hillsborough Castle in the 1770s. He was Secretary of State for the American Colonies, and welcomed Benjamin Franklin to a previous home in Hillsborough. However, Hill's completed mansion would later welcome prominent American politicians for dinner – nearly 200 years later (see p12).

A long list of VIPs have enjoyed warm welcomes here, including the Dalai Lama, the Crown Prince of Japan, Princess Diana, Hillary Clinton and Eleanor Roosevelt.

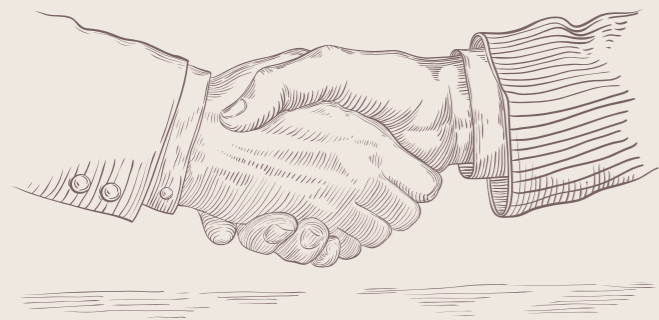


Picture courtesy of The Belfast Telegraph.



In recent years, the castle and gardens have opened to the visiting public. They've also become a venue for all types of functions, from weddings to corporate events. All funds raised go toward improving the everyday visitor experience.

Historic meetings between British and Irish politicians have taken place here. The castle has been an important venue in the Northern Ireland Peace Process (see p10).



The peaceful gardens have been the setting for many wonderful events, from royal garden parties to Northern Ireland's biggest garden festival.



Secretary of State Mo Mowlam loved Hillsborough Castle and made it her own. After seeing the Rocky Horror Picture Show at the Belfast Opera, she invited the cast to a party at the castle.



All state rooms

Capacity
250
Reception



State Drawing Room

p10
Capacity
110
Reception



State Dining Room

p12
Capacity
70
Reception
50
Dinner



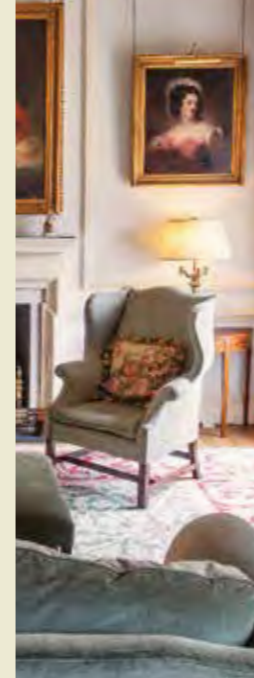
Red Room

p14
Capacity
20
Reception
10
Dinner



Throne Room

p16
Capacity
120
Reception
80
Dinner



Lady Grey's Study

p18
Capacity
10
Reception



Privy Council Chamber

p19
Capacity
20
Reception
20
Meeting



Gardens & marquee sites

p20
Capacity
350
Reception
350
Dinner



Stately spaces. All yours.

Elegant, yet relaxed. Graceful and intimate.
A magical venue, just 20 minutes from Belfast.
Call us on +44(0)28 9268 1342 to arrange a site visit.

State Rooms

Elegant
Welcoming
Tranquil





Capacity

110 for receptions

The space

This large, wonderful space was once a library. Now, the marble fireplace, paintings and antique furniture give it a homely, welcoming grace. The room is a favourite for standing drinks receptions.

Features

- Terrace access gives guests views over the beautiful grounds
- Soft light pours through four large sash windows on fine days
- Lady Grey's Study (see p18) can serve as a quiet break away space for larger events
- Wonderful backdrop for wedding photography

State Drawing Room



A castle story

In 1985, UK Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and Irish Taoiseach Garret FitzGerald signed the Anglo-Irish agreement in this room. The agreement was ground-breaking, but controversial, as it set out a framework for the two countries to discuss matters in Northern Ireland.

Capacity

70 for receptions
50 for dinner
40 for ceremonies
40 theatre style

The space

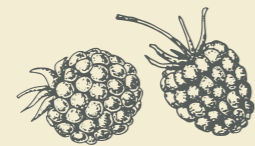
The scene of countless state dinners, this room has welcomed historic figures such as Eleanor Roosevelt and Dwight Eisenhower. More recently, ambassadors and international delegates dined here in 2013, as the castle hosted the largest investment conference outside America. Today, it remains popular for dinners and corporate entertaining.

Features

- Royal Collection portraits of King George III and Queen Charlotte, by Scottish artist Allan Ramsey
- Tall sash windows offer views of Granville Garden (see p20) and Europe's largest rhododendron
- Guests can enjoy pre-dinner tours of the Castle with fascinating stories that bring its history to life.



State Dining Room



A castle story

This room showcases the best of Irish manufacturing. A Waterford crystal chandelier hangs above the table. And the carpet's design takes inspiration from both the flax flower, Northern Ireland's national flower, and the linen trade, significant in County Down.

**“Crèmes d’Oeufs en Aspic,
Navarin de Mouton, Pâté
Porc, Galantine Salade,
Framboises Chantilly”**

What do you serve the American first lady?
The menu for Eleanor Roosevelt (1942): eggs in jelly, mutton stew, pork pâté, poultry salad and raspberries with chantilly cream.



A castle story

During high-level political talks this space had a special role. Its intimacy nurtured complex political discussion, and its round table removed traditional hierarchy. It is also where President Mary McAleese met HM The Queen in the first ever meeting in Northern Ireland between the UK and Irish heads of state.



Red Room

Capacity

20 for receptions
10 for dinner
30 for ceremonies
30 theatre style

The space

Deep crimson damask linings give this wonderful space its name. They evoke an intimacy that makes the Red Room perfect for smaller ceremonies and dinner parties. Remodelled after a fire in 1934, it boasts a beautiful solid oak floor and impressive paintings from the Royal Collection.

Features

- Exquisite mahogany table can be used for smaller dinners (10 people)
- Your guests can access the beautiful gardens through a modern French window
- Impressive fireplace designed by the eminent architect and furniture designer William Kent (1685-1748)

“It was a very special day for Anglo-Irish relationships.”

Irish president Mary McAleese, after meeting HM Queen Elizabeth in the Red Room in December 2005.



Capacity

- 120 for receptions
- 80 for dinner
- 120 for ceremonies
- 120 theatre style

The space

The castle's largest space is also its most versatile. Hung with paintings by old masters, the Royal Family and Heads of State often use this room for official functions. It can host a range of events such as corporate dinners, wedding ceremonies, receptions, charity fundraisers and concerts.

Features

- This 'saloon' space was once three smaller rooms; its official uses include political meetings, press conferences, citizenship ceremonies and investitures
- Coat of arms behind chairs is a silk amorial made by the Belfast School of Needlework (1937)
- Chairs of state, or 'thrones', represent the monarch when she's not in residence

Throne Room



A castle story

Hillsborough is a working royal residence. The royal family are regular visitors. They use the Throne Room and other apartments for official and charity events. Hillsborough staff carefully prepare for visits, selecting flowers and planning menus. County Antrim salmon and local beef are royal favourites.

Capacity

10 for receptions

The space

This very popular space was once a reading room for the library (now State Drawing Room, see p10). Elegant, yet quirky, it has two sets of two-leaf doors that access both the drawing room and entrance lobby. It's perfect for intimate occasions, and in combination with other state rooms.

Features

- Your guests will enjoy views over the terrace and Jubilee Parterre, a formal garden created in 2012 to commemorate the Queen's Diamond Jubilee
- Room is named after Lady Grey, Esme Burcher, wife of Lord Grey, the last governor of Northern Ireland (1968-73)

Lady Grey's Study

A castle story

Secretary of State Mo Mowlam (1997-99) had great affection for Hillsborough Castle and Lady Grey's Study was her favourite room. Mowlam was a central figure in the complex Peace Process negotiations that took place here during her tenure.



Privy Council Chamber

A castle story

A devastating fire ravaged the state rooms in 1934. It started when one of the governor's guardsmen climbed on the roof to lower the flag to half-mast, to mark the death of German President Paul von Hindenburg. His cigarette set the castle on fire.

Capacity

20 for receptions
30 theatre style

The space

Prior to 1972, this is where governors of Northern Ireland would meet the Privy Council: their appointed council of senior advisers and politicians. The space has since continued as a venue for political meetings, which makes it perfect - with its impressive table - for conferences and board meetings.

Features

- Lord Downshire originally built the room in the 1840s for his billiards table
- Conference table was refurbished when Hillsborough was the alternative venue for the 2013 G8 talks, held at Lough Erne
- Hiring any state room includes access to exhibitions in the Downshire Gallery



Castle Gardens

Peaceful
Inspiring
Picturesque

Capacity

(with marquee)
350 for receptions
350 for dinner
5,000 for open air concerts

The space

Bursting with colour and full of surprises, Hillsborough's gardens make any occasion memorable. The castle's 96-acre grounds descend gently from the terraces and include mossy glens, formal gardens, rushing waterways and immaculate lawns. These special gardens offer countless places to unwind, contemplate, socialise and seek inspiration.

Features

- Choose from a number of established marquee sites within the gardens
- Guests will enjoy strolling around the lake or along Yew Tree Walk's wide path, flanked by lines of Irish Yew trees
- Daffodils and primroses sprout along the moss path of the spectacular Lime Tree Walk, a popular spot for wedding photography
- Home to badgers, foxes, kingfishers and wildfowl

Castle gardens



A castle story

The lovely Granville Garden was planted and nurtured by Lady Granville, Rose Bowes-Lyon. She was wife of Northern Ireland's second Governor. She was also the aunt of HM The Queen. As young princesses in the 1940s, HM The Queen and HRH Princess Margaret would visit Hillsborough with their mother.



“The demesne in which the castle is situated is beautifully wooded and the walks tastefully laid out. The (kitchen) garden is extensive and in it are green houses, hot houses and a pinery...”

Ordnance Survey Memoirs of Ireland: Parishes of County Down, 1833-38



Features

- Spaces licensed for religious or civil weddings and partnership ceremonies include: State Drawing Room, State Dining Room, Red Room, Throne Room, garden marquees
- Dance the evening away in spacious garden marquees
- Discreet bridal room available with private WC before and during weddings in the Castle
- Fresh flowers displayed throughout the castle on the day
- Gardens and house provide beautiful backdrop for photography
- Plenty of parking nearby

Our service

It's fit for royalty; so take advantage! You'll enjoy personal service from a team dedicated to your ideas and vision. On the big day, house staff will attend to every detail, supporting you from morning till night, as yours will be the only event at the castle.



Where you make history

It's our privilege to offer you Hillsborough Castle's elegance and history as the backdrop for your unforgettable day

The space

Help us understand your vision and we'll help you make the most of a majestic venue. The elegant rooms of this royal home have made smaller, intimate weddings hugely successful. Larger weddings, too, have proven timeless affairs, making use of the state rooms and a marquee, extending into the magnificent gardens.

A wedding story

Your guests will enjoy Lady Alice's Temple, a striking garden outpost. It offers scenic views over a large pond and dramatic Yew Tree Walk. The building was a wedding gift to Lady Alice Hill from her brother Colonel Arthur Hill, the 5th Marquess of Downshire. Lady Alice's marriage to the Earl of Bective was a happy one.

Space specifications

All State Rooms

Includes the entire ground floor

Capacity
250
Reception



- Great for large scale banquets and drinks receptions
- Wonderful space for weddings
- Disabled access

State Drawing Room

Capacity
110
Reception



- Great for lively drinks receptions
- Direct access to the gardens and outside areas
- Disabled access

State Dining Room

Capacity
70
Reception
50 Dinner



- Great for intimate dinners or receptions
- Catering options
- Disabled access

Red Room

Capacity
20
Reception
10 Dinner



- Great for Private dining events
- Unique location for intimate wedding ceremonies
- Disabled access

Throne Room

Capacity
120
Reception
80 Dinner



- Great for conferences and events
- Summer parties and formal ceremonies work well in this space
- Disabled access

Lady Grey's Study

Capacity
10
Reception



- Great for distinguished small receptions
- Disabled access

Privy Council Chamber

Capacity
20
Reception



- Great for meetings or small conferences
- Disabled access

Gardens and Marquees

Capacity
350
Reception
350 Dinner



- Great for large scale events or award shows
- Choose your location in the castle grounds
- Disabled access

Getting here

Elegant, yet relaxed.
Graceful and intimate.
A magical venue, just
20 minutes from Belfast

By bus or rail

There are regular bus services from central Belfast to Hillsborough Castle. The nearest stations to the castle are Lisburn and Moira train stations.

By car

On site parking is available for disabled badge holders only. There are two public car parks in Hillsborough, one at the bottom of the village and one at the top of the main street.

Contact us

T. +44 (0)28 9268 1300
E. hillsboroughcastle@hrp.org.uk
www.hrp.org.uk/HireAVenue

Hillsborough Castle
The Square,
Hillsborough, Co. Down
BT26 6AG



Giving history a future

Hosting your event at Hillsborough Castle means you're contributing to the upkeep and protection of this beautiful and important building, but also to the conservation of five other very special historic sites.

Historic Royal Palaces is the independent charity that looks after the Tower of London, Hampton Court Palace, the Banqueting House, Kensington Palace, Kew Palace and Hillsborough Castle. Our aim is to help everyone explore the story of how monarchs and people have shaped society in six of the greatest palaces ever built.

Your event directly supports this mission, as we raise all our own funds and count on the support of our visitors, members, donors, sponsors and volunteers in our continuing work to conserve these palaces and their stories for future generations.

Corporate partnerships: you're in good company

We're pleased to invite you to discover some of the benefits of corporate partnership with Historic Royal Palaces.

Every year, we entertain and engage millions of visitors. Every day we are forming new relationships, as we help people explore the stories of the famous buildings in our care.

At Historic Royal Palaces our business is very much about welcoming people, and creating surprising, enriching experiences they will never forget.

So whether it is sponsoring a blockbuster exhibition, lending support to our award-winning Learning & Engagement programme or getting involved in one of our corporate partnership schemes, you can be sure we will welcome your employees and clients with the same panache we do our visitors and guests, while offering you exclusive benefits and opportunities not found anywhere else.

We have designed partnership packages to help you access the royal palaces in ways that will best meet your company's aims. But you will also receive a highly individual range of benefits, tailor-made to suit your interests. We can inspire your employees with exclusive events, private views and volunteering opportunities. And we can help you build client relationships and extend your networks in a variety of ways - from the use of our breathtaking venues to exclusive exhibition openings and supporters' dinners.

For more information please contact us on +44(0)20 3166 6321 or email development@hrp.org.uk. We look forward to hearing from you.

Corporate gifts

If you are looking for unusual or unique gifts for your guests, let us suggest looking to Historic Royal Palaces for inspiration. All our products are inspired by the six royal buildings in our care, so we know you will find just the right gift for your event, whether you are searching for one special present or entertaining a large number of guests.

If you would like help in choosing gifts, our experienced team can discuss your needs. We pride ourselves in offering high quality products, unrivalled customer service and working with all our customers' varied needs to provide a complete gift service.

Please visit our website www.historicroyalpalaces.com or contact us on +44(0)20 3166 6857 or email corpgifts@hrp.org.uk

Historic Royal Palaces is an independent charity. For a thousand years the palaces in our care have witnessed dramatic events that have shaped our nation.

We exist to ensure their future, and rely entirely on your support. Play your part by hosting your next event at Hillsborough Castle.

Historic Royal Palaces is a registered charity (no. 1068852)



Tower of London

Breathtaking fortress and iconic symbol of a world city



Hampton Court Palace

Hosting magnificent and unforgettable events since 1514



Banqueting House

One of London's most desirable venues and home to the irreplaceable Rubens' ceiling



Kensington Palace

Where style meets power, this elegant royal retreat enchants and surprises



Kew Palace

A hidden gem of a palace tucked away among beautiful royal gardens



Hillsborough Castle

This welcoming Georgian mansion is a working royal residence



Historic Royal Palaces Hillsborough Castle

Hillsborough Castle was for 150 years the focus of the estate of the Marquesses of Downshire. After the partition of Ireland, it became the Monarch's official residence in 1925 and the seat of the Governors of Northern Ireland. More recently, it has been the primary location for the series of talks that brought peace to Northern Ireland.

We are proud to use the coat of arms of HM Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother. Her sister Lady Granville was the wife of the second Governor and, as a visitor, she loved the house and gardens. The flax flower is the national emblem of Northern Ireland. The pattern we use for Hillsborough Castle derives from the stylised floral design of the locally-woven carpet in the State Dining Room.

We raise all our own funds and depend on the support of our visitors, members, donors, sponsors and volunteers.

Contact us to arrange a site visit

Hillsborough Castle events
T. +44(0)28 9268 1342
E. hillsboroughcastleevents@hrp.org.uk

Hillsborough Castle
The Square, Co. Down, BT26 6AG

www.hrp.org.uk/hireavenue