Kensington Palace is a royal palace in London. Originally a private country house, the building was acquired by William III and Mary II in 1689 and was adopted for royal residence by Sir Christopher Wren. Kensington House as it was known became William and Mary’s principal residence. For the next 70 years the palace was at the center of the life and government of the kingdom and played host to the courts of William and Mary, Queen Anne, George I and George II.

In the XIX century Kensington was the birthplace and home of Princess Victoria (later Queen Victoria). By the end of 19th century, the State Apartments at Kensington Palace were in a very bad state of repair having been used as stores for paintings and furnishings from other palaces. In April 1897 a decision was made to restore the palace and Parliament agreed to fund the work on the condition that the building should be opened up to the public. Parts of the palace remains a private residence for members of the royal family, the State Apartments and Royal Ceremonial Dress Collection are open to the public.

Buckingham Palace is the London home of the Queen and Prince Philip. The Palace is also the administrative headquarters of the monarchy. The Queen receives visiting heads of state at the palace and it is here that the Queen holds garden parties and bestowed knighthoods and other honours. Foot Guards from the Household Division in their distinctive red tunics and black bearskins, can be seen on guard duty outside the palace daily. The Changing the Guard ceremony now takes place only every other day in the winter but it is still daily in the summer months. After a serious fire damaged Winsdor Castle in 1993 the Queen allowed the Palace State rooms to be opened to the public for the first time, to help pay the Winsdor Castle repair bill.

The Tower of London doesn’t belong to the City, though it stood there for almost 900 years. It is more connected with the royal dynasties than with the world of business. It was originally built as a fortress to guard the river approaches to London. The Tower of London was begun by William the Conqueror in 1078 as a castle and palace. Since then it has been expanded, and used as an armoury, a zoo, a royal mint and a prison, a treasury and an observatory. A group of ravens live at the Tower. The tradition goes that if they disappear the building will collapse. For centuries a royal zoo was kept in the grounds. It once included a polar bear, which fished and swam in the moat. Now it is a museum and the Beefeaters (Yeoman Warders) guard the Tower. They used to be the monarch’s private bodyguard. Beefeater was a medieval nickname for well-fed servants. They wear a Tudor-style uniform of blue or red. They willingly show visitors the main places of interest. In some Tower rooms there are inscriptions carved on the walls by former prisoners. In Salt Tower you can see a complicated astronomical clock carved by a sixteenth century prisoner accused of black magic.