



THE OVAL OFFICE

The Oval Office is the official office of the President of the United States.

The office was designed by the architect Nathan C. Wyeth at the order of President William Howard Taft in 1909. Named for its distinctive oval shape, the Oval Office is part of the complex of offices that make up the West Wing of the White House. Badly damaged by a fire in 1929, the office was rebuilt by President Herbert C. Hoover. In 1934, President Franklin D. Roosevelt enlarged the West Wing and added today's Oval Office, designed by Eric Gugler.

The architectural features of the Oval Office, which draw from baroque, neoclassical, and Georgian traditions, have become symbolic of the power and prestige of the Presidency in the minds of Americans and people across the world. There are three large south-facing windows behind the President's desk, as well as four doors into different parts of the West Wing. The ceiling is adorned with an elaborate molding around the edge, and features elements of the Seal of the President.

Presidents generally change the office to suit their personal taste, choosing new furniture, new drapery, and designing their own oval-shaped carpet to take up most of the floor. Paintings are selected from the White House's own collection, or borrowed from other museums for the President's term in office.

The President uses the Oval Office as his primary place of work. It is positioned to provide easy access to his staff in the West Wing and to allow him to retire easily to the White House residence at the end of the day. The President commonly chooses the Oval Office as the backdrop for televised addresses to the nation, and countless foreign leaders have traveled to the office to meet with the President.