



THE WHITE HOUSE
HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

White House Historical Association Funds Restoration of Historic White House Bellangé Suite

Furniture Dates to 1817, Originally Purchased by President James Monroe

September 21, 2018 (Washington, D.C.) — The White House Historical Association is honored to have funded the restoration of the historic Bellangé furniture, a collection made for the White House in 1817 by Pierre-Antoine Bellangé in Paris for use in the Oval Drawing Room, now known as the Blue Room, following the historic White House fire of 1814. The Office of the First Lady made the announcement of the restoration yesterday.

“The White House Historical Association was founded in 1961 by First Lady Jacqueline Kennedy with a mission to help the White House collect and exhibit the very best artifacts of American history and culture,” said Stewart McLaurin, President of the White House Historical Association. “We’re honored to continue her legacy of preservation, research and education to ensure the White House decorative arts collection can be enjoyed by generations of White House visitors to come.”

The White House Historical Association has invested more than \$450,000 in the restoration of the Bellangé suite since 2013.

In 1860, nearly all of the Bellangé suite pieces were sold at auction and it was not until 1961 under First Lady Jacqueline Kennedy, that the White House began to reacquire pieces from the original suite with funding from the White House Historical Association. Replica arm and side chairs were made to supplement the original pieces. The suite, made up of both the original and reproduction pieces, has remained in the Blue Room since the Kennedy administration.

[See a complete history of the historic Bellangé suite.](#) Acquired by American agents Joseph Russell and John LaFarge, the Bellangé furniture suite and everything else needed for the Oval Drawing Room cost \$18,417.17 when purchased in 1817. While some members of Congress and the American public questioned the president’s spending of public funds, Monroe’s reputation as a national hero quieted most of these critics.

In 2005, in response to the deteriorating condition of the historic Blue Room furniture, the White House curatorial staff began to study how to restore the suite to its original appearance. Plans were submitted to the Committee for the Preservation of the White House, which approved the restoration project. For more than 10 years, a dedicated team of White House curators has been working with experts to complete the restoration.

In consultation with experts on early 19th century French upholstery and gilding, the White House curatorial staff selected new upholstery fabrics for the Bellangé suite based on receipts dating from 1817, which detailed the suite's original patterns and trims. The gilding of the furniture was done based on evidence of its original appearance from microscopic samples taken from the original 1817 furniture.

The First Lady plans to reinstate the Bellangé suite in the Blue Room in the fall of 2018.

For media inquiries, please contact press@whha.org or Jessica Fredericks, Communications Director, at JFredericks@whha.org.

About The White House Historical Association

First Lady Jacqueline Kennedy envisioned a restored White House that conveyed a sense of history through its decorative and fine arts. In 1961, the White House Historical Association was established to support her vision to preserve and share the Executive Mansion's legacy for generations to come. Supported entirely by private resources, the Association's mission is to assist in the preservation of the state and public rooms, fund acquisitions for the White House permanent collection, and educate the public on the history of the White House. Since its founding, the White House Historical Association has contributed more than \$47 million in fulfillment of its mission. To learn more about the White House Historical Association, please visit www.whitehousehistory.org.

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