

Parliament Buildings The Senate Chamber



Northern Ireland
Assembly



The Senate Chamber

The Senate Chamber has changed very little since it was opened in 1932. Its features include Italian marble, genuine 1930s Irish damask linen on the wall panels and a particularly fine ceiling.

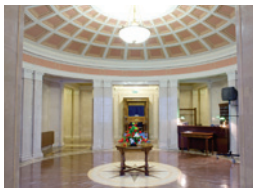
There are also three 'arabesques' – decorations based on curving leaves and branches. The arabesques are painted on the ceiling of the Strangers' Gallery. They show the three main industries in Northern Ireland at the time Parliament Buildings was constructed: linen, shipbuilding and agriculture.

The single change to the Senate since 1932 is the 1950s inscription carved into the marble of the Press Gallery. This records thanks from



THIS INSCRIPTION RECORDS THE GRATITUDE OF HIS MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT
IN THE UNITED KINGDOM FOR THE USE OF THIS CHAMBER AS AN OPERATIONS
ROOM BY THE ROYAL AIR FORCE DURING THE SECOND WORLD WAR





the Westminster Government for the use of the Chamber as an RAF operations room during World War II.

As the Senate was originally similar in function to the House of Lords, it has many features that are like the Palace of Westminster. These include a grand throne-like Speaker's chair, red dispatch boxes and leather seating similar to the House of Lords.



Two paintings by famous local artists hang in the Senate. A William Conor original illustrates the opening of Parliament in 1921. The other is by Belfast artist Noel Murphy. Called 'The House will Divide', it shows all the MLAs elected in 1998 to the Northern Ireland Assembly.



Today, the Senate Chamber is used as a Committee room and for important events.

Why not visit?

You can arrange a tour of Parliament Buildings by contacting the Events Office on +44 (028) 9052 1802/1975 or e-mailing eventsoffice@niassembly.gov.uk. Tours last 30–45 minutes and provide information on Parliament Buildings, past and present. You will find out how political life in Northern Ireland has developed, and about the architecture of the building and Stormont Estate.



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