

The Cost of Tryon Palace ^[1]

Its elaborate architecture made Tryon Palace the most expensive house in British North America. Located on the banks of the Trent River in New Bern, North Carolina, the construction of the house and grounds were commissioned by William Tryon soon after he was appointed governor in 1765. As a display of power and wealth, Tryon wanted a grand structure, and he selected architect John Hawks. Born in England, Hawks was the first professionally trained architect to design buildings in North Carolina. He developed the plans and supervised building the mansion and its gardens.

Until the establishment of the governor's mansion at New Bern, the colonial capital had moved around the colony. With the impressive new building, New Bern became the colony's first permanent capital. And the large and imposing structure sent a strong message about royal colonial power to the colony's residents. The cost of the building, at at least 15,000 pounds, also sent a message to the residents of the colony. Many of them were poor farmers. The cost of the palace would be paid for by increased taxes on residents.

Tryon threw a big celebration in December 1770 to celebrate the project's completion. Eventually the mansion would take on the name "Tryon's Palace," as an insult. Today the site is still known as Tryon Palace.

The text below is a transcription of Hawks's original itemization of the cost of building the mansion and grounds.

A rough calculation of the expense of a mansion house executing at Newbern for the governor of North Carolina for the time being.

Turning in the Lotts	£55
Digging the Foundation	£15
Bricks and Lime	£1250
Bricklayers Work	£600
Boards and Scantling , including Mahogany for ye Staircase	£600
Carpenters and Joiners Labour, including Nails and Brads	£1900
Plastering, including Lime, Lath , Nails, Labr, and Stucco Work	£900
Sashes, Glass, Skylights, Lead and Plumbers Labour to Gutter &c, and Six Stacks of Lead pipes	£1100
Chimney pieces, and Stone Steps to two Fronts	£600
Painting inside and outside, Including Oil and Colours	£550
Locks, Hinges, Fastenings, Screws, and Smiths Work about the Roof &c	£650
Labourers time attending Workmen and levelling Grounds	£200
Shingles	£45
Paving the Cellars, and Area, Area Wall and pallisadoes Do	£200
Digging and laying drains from the House, and Making Reservoir Labour and Materials	£400
To the Superintendant for four years overseeing and directing the Works of the House, Officers &c	£1200
	£10265
Twelve Lotts of Land for the Building purchase not yet Completed estimated at	£400
	£10665

Expenxe of the two Wings or Offices of the said House, Including Collonade, dwarf Wall, and Pallisadoes to form the Court.

Digging the Foundations	£20
Brick and Lime	£900
Scantling and Boards	£500
Carpenters and Joiners Labour, including Nails and Brads	£780
Bricklayers Word	£400
Locks, fastenings, and Smiths Work	£190
Glass and painting including the painting of the Shingles on the Roof	£250
Shingles	£55

Two Wells with Pumps Compleat	£40
	£3135
Circular Collonade , with Wall, Columns, paving, Cornice, and Roof &c	£750
Dwarf Wall, Pallisadoes, piers, Gates &c, to form a Court Yard	£160
	£4045

Digging and laying drains from the House, and Making Reservoir Labour and Materials £400
 To the Superintendant for four years overseeing and directing the Works of the House, Officers &c £1200
£10265

Twelve Lotts of Land for the Building purchase not yet Completed estimated at £400 **£10665**

Expence of the two Wings or Offices of the said House, Including Collonade, dwarf Wall, and Pallisadoes to form the Court.

Digging the Foundations	£20
Brick and Lime	£900
Scantling and Boards	£500
Carpenters and Joiners Labour, including Nails and Brads	£780
Bricklayers Word	£400
Locks, fastenings, and Smiths Work	£190
Glass and painting including the painting of the Shingles on the Roof	£250
Shingles	£55
Two Wells with Pumps Compleat	£40
	£3135
Circular Collonade , with Wall, Columns, paving, Cornice, and Roof &c	£750
Dwarf Wall, Pallisadoes, piers, Gates &c, to form a Court Yard	£160
	£4045

User Tags:

[architecture](#) ^[2]
[colonial](#) ^[3]
[economics](#) ^[4]
[history](#) ^[5]
[North Carolina](#) ^[6]
[North Carolina History](#) ^[7]
[Page](#) ^[8]
[politics](#) ^[9]
[Students](#) ^[10]
[Teachers](#) ^[11]
[Tryon Palace](#) ^[12]
[William Tryon](#) ^[13]
[Creative Commons BY-NC-SA](#) ^[14]

From:

[ANCHOR: A North Carolina History Online Resource](#) ^[15]

Copyright Date:

2009

People:

[John Hawks, Architect](#) ^[16]

Places:



[17]

Tryon Palace ^[18] (NCpedia) ^[18]
 Tryon Palace (Historic Site) ^[19]



[20]

The palace built by Governor William Tryon in the 1760s stands in marked contrast to the homes of most backcountry settlers. Image from the Carol Highsmith Collection at the Library of Congress.



[21]

Like upper-class English houses of its time, Tryon Palace had formal gardens with curved paths, ornamental plantings, and statues.

Related Topics:



[22]

How Much is That
in Today's Money?

From Colonial Williamsburg [23]

North Carolina Colonial
and State Capitals [24]

The Regulator Movement for K-8 Students [25]

Primary Sources:

*A Rough calculation of the Expence of a
Mansion House executing at Newbern for
The Governor of North Carolina for the time being*

<i>Lining on the Laths</i>	<i>55</i>
<i>Digging the Foundation</i>	<i>15</i>
<i>Bricks and Lime</i>	<i>1250</i>
<i>Bricklayers Work</i>	<i>600</i>
<i>Boards and Scantling, including Makeing for if Haircan</i>	<i>600</i>
<i>Carpenters and Joiners Labors, including Nails and Brads</i>	<i>1900</i>
<i>Plastering, including Lime, Lath, Nails, Sal, and Stucco Work</i>	<i>900</i>
<i>Sashes, Glafs, Skylights, Lead, and Plumbers Labours</i>	<i>1100</i>
<i>to Gutters &c, and Six Stacks of Lead pipes</i>	
<i>Chimney piece, and Stone Steps to two Fronts</i>	<i>600</i>
<i>Painting inside and outside, Including Oil and Colours</i>	<i>550</i>
<i>Locks, Hinges, Fastenings, Screws, and Smiths Work</i>	<i>650</i>
<i>about the Roof &c</i>	
<i>Labourers time attending Workmen and leveling ground</i>	<i>200</i>
<i>Shingles</i>	<i>45</i>
<i>Facing the Cellars, and Area, Area Wall and</i>	<i>200</i>
<i>Palisades on d.</i>	
<i>Digging and laying drains from the House, and Making</i>	<i>400</i>
<i>Runners Labours and Materials</i>	
<i>To the Superintendant for four years occuring and</i>	<i>1200</i>
<i>directing the Works of this House Office &c</i>	
	<i>10265</i>
<i>Twelve Lots of Land for the Building purchase not</i>	<i>400</i>
<i>yet completed Estimated at</i>	<i>10665</i>

John Hawks

View the [original document](#) [27] of the cost of Tryon Palace at North Carolina Digital Collections

Regulator Movement Digital Collection, State Archives of North Carolina[28]

3 January 2018

Source URL:<https://ncpedia.org/anchor/cost-tryon-palace>

Links
 [1] <https://ncpedia.org/anchor/cost-tryon-palace> [2] <https://ncpedia.org/category/user-tags/architecture> [3] <https://ncpedia.org/category/user-tags/colonial> [4] <https://ncpedia.org/category/user-tags/economics> [5] <https://ncpedia.org/category/user-tags/history> [6] <https://ncpedia.org/category/user-tags/north-carolina-5> [7] <https://ncpedia.org/category/user-tags/north-carolina-6> [8] <https://ncpedia.org/category/user-tags/page> [9] <https://ncpedia.org/category/user-tags/politics> [10] <https://ncpedia.org/category/user-tags/students> [11] <https://ncpedia.org/category/user-tags/teachers> [12] <https://ncpedia.org/category/user-tags/tryon-palace> [13] <https://ncpedia.org/category/user-tags/william-tryon> [14] <https://ncpedia.org/category/user-tags/creative-commons> [15] <https://ncpedia.org/category/entry-source/anchor-north> [16] <https://ncarchitects.lib.ncsu.edu/people/P000209> [17] <https://www.ncpedia.org/media/image/tryon-palace-winter> [18] <https://www.ncpedia.org/tryon-palace> [19] <https://www.tryonpalace.org/> [20] <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2011631094/> [21] <https://ncpedia.org/media/gardens-tryon-palace> [22]

<https://www.ncpedia.org/media/image/series-1880-united> [23] <https://www.colonialwilliamsburg.org/> [24] <https://www.ncpedia.org/capitals-colonial-and-state> [25]
<https://www.ncpedia.org/regulator-movement-k-8-students> [26] <https://www.ncpedia.org/media/image/rough-calculation> [27]
<https://digital.ncdcr.gov/digital/collection/p16062coll24/id/13456> [28] <https://digital.ncdcr.gov/digital/custom/regulator-movement>