

TELEPHONE ROOM: NEW BEHIND-THE-SCENES ROOM OPENING IN MARCH

Wilfried Zeisler, Deputy Director & Chief Curator
February 2023

The move to the Collections and Research Center in 2021-2022 vacated several spaces in the mansion's basement and third floor. As relocations and moves continue, several spaces formerly used as storage will be transformed into new, accessible "behind the scenes" spaces. They will be slowly installed throughout 2023 and will include the telephone room on the first floor of the mansion (right across from the women's powder room). This room, originally used to take or make phone calls, will be refurbished using some of the historic pieces featured in the only archival photo taken before the mansion became a museum (fig. 1). When Hillwood opened as a museum, the collections team used the small room as a closet to store tools and materials they needed for their daily cleaning routines. The collections closet has been relocated to another space in the mansion. The telephone room, its historic wallpaper (fig. 2), and the various documents on the wall (focusing on travel—notably the history of the *Sea Cloud* and the *Merriweather*, Post's yacht and plane respectively) will be visible from behind a stanchion. The original framed documents have been unframed and scanned or photographed to create replicas. The original documents have been rehoused and stored following a process the collections team continue to do for all photographs or works on paper on permanent view in the mansion, progressively replaced by replicas for their protection from long exposure to light. The telephone room will open to the public in March. Be on the lookout for additional information later this year as other behind-the-scenes spaces become available.



Fig. 1-2

Telephone room, 1958-73, Archives and Special Collections, Hillwood Estate, Museum & Gardens, and view today before installation