

**CONCEPTUAL + TECHNICAL BRIEF FOR:****ARTISTS CARPETS AT GOVERNMENT HOUSE WELLINGTON**

This is a site specific art work for Government House Wellington.

**CONTEXT**

Government House, located on Rugby St, Wellington, was built in 1910 and is coming up for its 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Designed by John Campbell and Claude E Paton in the English Domestic Revival style as the official residence of the Governor General and his or her family, the building is now listed as a Category 1 Heritage Place by the New Zealand Historic Places Trust. It is an historic building in an award-winning landscape and forms an important part of New Zealand's cultural heritage.

A recent review determined the building had a number of significant issues, due largely in part to its age that required urgent attention to ensure its ongoing effectiveness in its various roles. The house is currently undergoing a comprehensive conservation project that includes various restorations and alterations to the exterior and the interior.

The Government House Conservation Project is tailored to address the necessary conservation of heritage fabric balanced with the requirements of typical day to day operations and the growing range of events and celebrations that occur at Government House. A 2006 review indicated the house should cater for the following five functions:

- § A house and home for the Governor General in which to live and host family and friends;
- § A place of work for the Governor General and associated support services;
- § A venue to host regal, vice regal guests and heads of state;
- § A venue for state ceremonies and events regarding the constitution; and
- § A venue for engagement with the community.

From inception, the Conservation Project has endeavoured to accommodate contemporary activities and amenities within the heritage fabric of the building in an appropriate manner. A museum-like restorative approach was considered unsuitable for the building given the ongoing inhabitation of the house, and the many other activities the house continues to facilitate. Instead, it is intended to introduce new elements that respond sensitively to the historic surroundings and context.

It is proposed to knit the contemporary and traditional roles of the house together by commissioning an artist or artists to prepare custom designs for several interior elements. These elements will provide a showcase for New Zealand art and design, with the intention of celebrating the historical and contemporary methods of occupying the house.

A copy of the documents prepared for the Heritage Advisory Team (HAT) shall provide contextual background of the house and the architectural principles that have been applied to the design process thus far.

Conservation plans for the house and for the grounds are available in digital format on request. Additional information on the house, can be found on the official website: <http://www.gg.govt.nz/government-house>

**DIRECTED BRIEF**

Artist/s shall be commissioned to produce a carpet design/s (artwork) for a selected room/s at Government House Wellington:

- § The Drawing Room
- § The Main Hall, Corridors and Stairs

Flooring is the foundation element from which all free standing elements in the room are placed. Room decoration relies on the integration of all finishes and furnishings, not one finish shall be considered without

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the others in mind. The development of an artist carpet design shall be a collaborative process between the artist and the architect. The artist shall respond to the existing conditions of the room and these given elements/ finishes are listed below under Room Condition.

*“The floor is meant to be walked upon, therefore its covering must not resemble a flower garden nor be filled with birds and animals, since no one would walk upon such things in real life. Thus the picture which a room should present, or must present, is conventional both in its background and in its middle distance; the only realism permitted is in a few well placed vases of flowers and in the human life that peoples the foreground.”<sup>1</sup>*

The art work is to be situated within one of the grandest and most prestigious homes in New Zealand. It is considered imperative that the work responds to the contextual conditions of the site from a macro level (New Zealand/Aotearoa, Wellington) to a micro level (the house and its grounds, the rooms in which the work will be laid). Of particular concern should be New Zealand’s cultural milieu and the role of both indigenous and colonial histories of the site.

Also of importance will be the showcasing of New Zealand product and design. New Zealand has a long history with the production of wool and the manufacture of wool-based products and this exercise is intended to draw upon and further that history. The artwork shall be a contemporary New Zealand Design informed by, but not limited to, the traditions of Axminster and woven carpet technologies and pattern making from early 1900s. The rooms chosen for this brief are often frequented by heads of state, foreign dignitaries and members of the public. It is intended that this work be seen as a demonstration of New Zealand design to foreign visitors, and a celebration of New Zealand design to local residents.

The room characterisation, placement of elements, soft furnishings and room decoration should also inform the carpet design.

The artist shall work collaboratively with the architects, manufacturers and other artists involved in other elements for the house.

The artist shall be receptive to additional artwork/ textile design opportunities in these rooms.

**THE MEDIUM****THE DRAWING ROOM CARPET SPECIFICATION**

A Hand Tufted wall to wall carpet shall be produced from 100% New Zealand Wool. This product is not restricted by pattern repeat or conventional woven broadloom widths. This medium has been selected as a locally manufactured product, its lush appearance and the potential for maximising design opportunities for the artist.

- § Construction: Hand Tuft (Dilana Workshop Christchurch)
- § Pile content: 100% wool
- § Yarn count: 380tex single
- § Total Pile Weight: 144 oz /sq.yd. (4500 g./sq.m.)
- § Pile Height: 13mm to 18mm
- § Pile type: Cut with option for loop pile detail
- § Colours: No restriction
- § Pattern repeat: Room size
- § Maximum frame size: 3.3 metre by 12 metre single piece

<sup>1</sup> Sparrow, W. Shaw. *Hints on House Furnishings* Pg. 83, John Lane Company: New York, 1909.

### **THE MAIN HALL/ STAIR CARPET RUNNER SPECIFICATION**

An Axminster woven carpet runner shall be produced as 80/20 New Zealand Wool/ Nylon blend. The design of this product will involve pattern repeat and standard broadloom widths. This construction has been selected as a high quality product with a plush appearance and the potential for pattern and borders.

§	Construction: Woven Axminster.
§	Pile content: 80% Wool - 20% Nylon
§	Yarn count: R 660 tex/2 or 2.47's Dewsbury
§	Pitch 7 / inch: (27.56 / dm)
§	Rows / inch: (Rows / dm): 12 / inch (47.24 / dm)
§	Tufted Density: 84 / sq.inch (1301.93 / dm <sup>2</sup> )
§	Total Pile Weight: 64.34 oz /sq.yd. (2182 g/ sq.m.)
§	Effective Pile Weight: 52.35 oz /sq.yd. (1775.15 g/ sq.m.)
§	Pile Height Above Backing: 0.37 inches (9.50 mm.)
§	Colours: Preferably 8 or less, maximum 12.
§	Pattern repeat width: divisible by 3.6metres or 4 meters
§	Pattern repeat length: less than 2 meters preferable

### **THE NATURE OF THE ROOM**

#### **THE DRAWING ROOMS**

*Withdrawing room*

*Formal display*

*Ceremonial*

*Interlude*

*Light and cheerful*

*Social entertainment*

*Openness*

The Drawing Rooms are situated prominently between the conservatory and the ballroom and the main hall at the sunny north east corner of the house. The Drawing Rooms exist as two adjacent rooms the Small Drawing Room connects to the Main Drawing Room via a set of bi-folding timber doors. Both rooms are highly visited.

Traditionally the drawing room was a room in which the owners of the house would unashamedly display their wealth. Today these rooms host many small and large formal gatherings and ceremonies and as such have a requirement for multiple room arrangements.

*“As the primary consideration of the formal living room is the entertainment of guests, there will be, first, chairs in number and style planned to dispose of people in harmonious groups. No one need sit alone because of the inept isolation of a chair. The sociable grouping of two or more seats is the soul of the room, whether it centres about a fireplace, a window, a piano, or a table.”<sup>2</sup>*

The notion of “social groupings” shall be investigated by the artist in relation to a series of multiple furniture compositions that overlay the artwork carpet.

The openings into a room, windows doors, fireplaces, establish an order of engagement, their presence emanates comfort, light, heat and access. Furniture placements were frequently focused around these elements, fireplaces and large windows. This brief invites the artist to explore his/her artistic position in relation to the openings of the Drawing Rooms and their surrounding context, the house, garden and vistas of Wellington landscapes.

<sup>2</sup> Aronson, Joseph. *The Book of Furniture & Decoration: Period and Modern*, pg. 329, 330, New York: 1941

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*“Before beginning to decorate a house it is necessary to make a prolonged and careful study of its plan and elevations, both as a whole and in detail. The component parts of an undercoated room are its floor, ceiling wall spaces and openings. The openings consist of the doors, windows and fireplaces; and of these,<sup>3</sup> as has already been pointed out the fireplace is the most important in the general scheme of the decoration.”*

Refer to the HAT Strategy Document- Interior Finishes, 30 March 2009, pages 21.1 to 21.3, for information relating to the room characterisation.

**DRAWING ROOM FINISHES**

Room colour finishes are to be inspired by but not limited by our native Tui Bird.

<i>Ceiling</i>	<i>Plaster with mouldings, painted a white.</i>
<i>Walls</i>	<i>Metal Lath &amp; Plaster, painted an off white hue.</i>
<i>Floors</i>	<i>Wall to wall hand tufted carpet, Artist to design</i>
<i>Drapery</i>	<i>Indigo Blue Taffeta JAB Parsifal 1-6462 with translucent technical sheer, JAB Cristallo 1-6460 to front and rear faces.</i>
<i>Lighting</i>	<i>Two existing crystal droplet pendants in combination with brass floor standing lamps.</i>
<i>Furniture</i>	<i>Refurbished existing antique timber furniture in combination with new New Zealand made contemporary furniture. Existing artist folded screen by Peter McIntyre. This work was commissioned by Lady Freyburg in 1951.</i>

A CD containing photographs of existing room condition and all existing and know new elements that shall be installed/ placed within the room shall be provided to the artist.

<sup>3</sup> Wharton, Edith and Codman Jr. Ogden. The Decoration of Houses, Pg. 23, 24, London, 1898.

**THE MAIN HALL***Formal**Theatrical procession**Grandness**Dignified**Orderly**Display—people, furniture, art, artefacts**Welcoming/ farewells/ departure*

The main hall, corridors and stairs provide a sequential experience of formal procession. It hosts a formal display of artwork, furniture and objects.

The carpet runner shall be conceived as a formalising element and a unifying thread that weaves through the core and primary access ways of the house.

The runner flows centrally along the corridor. A restored Matai timber border along each side acts as a pedestal for the display of furniture and artefacts. At each door threshold an extension of the carpet runner shall bridge the gap between the room and the main hall/ corridor. These carpet bridges provide a smooth transition, they behave functionally and formally.

It is envisaged that the carpet bridges at the thresholds to doors shall read recessively sitting sensitively alongside the Matai timber border and distinct to the splendid central runner.

We invite the artist to investigate the notion of “formal procession” and of “sequential experience.”

The Main Hall and Corridors are experienced from within every formal room in the house. Its character and finish is the measure for all rooms that are entered off it.

*“Every house should be decorated according to a carefully graduated scale of ornamentation culminating in the most important rooms of the house; but this plan must be carried out with such due sense of the relation of the rooms to each other that there shall be no violent break in the continuity of treatment. If a white and gold drawing room opens on a hall of a Brussels carpet and papered walls, the drawing room will look too fine and the hall too mean”.<sup>4</sup>*

This brief requires the artist to explore ideas of “graduated scale of ornamentation” the axminster medium provides an opportunity for pattern and border design.

“Red” is historically the colour of this runner, we require the artist to produce a design for a red carpet runner that is inspired by but not limited to our native red flora, Rata and Pohutakawa.

**HALL FINISHES**

<i>Ceiling</i>	<i>Plaster with mouldings, painted a white.</i>
<i>Hallway Walls</i>	<i>Existing rimu panelled walls of the entrance hall feature carved coats of arms of the former Govenors and Govenors-Generals who have lived in the house. Fibrous lathe and plaster walls above timber panels to be selected paint finish.</i>
<i>Corridor Walls</i>	<i>Lincrusta dado wall panels to match the original design, paint finish, colour to be determined. Fibrous lathe and plaster walls above dado to be selected paint finish.</i>
<i>Carved Pou</i>	<i>Two existing pou carved out of Totara in the Taranaki style. They were installed during the term of Sir Paul Reeves.</i>
<i>Stairs</i>	<i>Existing Rimu balustrades and hand carved Newell posts, existing Matai timber</i>

<sup>4</sup> Wharton, Edith and Codman Jr. Ogden. *The Decoration of Houses*, Pg. 24, London, 1898.

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	<i>steps and landings with new Artist designed red carpet runner. Existing reconditioned brass stair rods and eyes to be re-instated.</i>
<i>Floors</i>	<i>Existing Matai timber floor border with new Artist designed red carpet runner. Colours are to be reference as mentioned above: reds, sienna and browns.</i>
<i>Drapery</i>	<i>Red patterned silk on brass curtain rod and rings. Fabric selection to be confirmed.</i>
<i>Lighting</i>	<i>Original crystal faceted pineapple shaped pendants in combination with brass floor standing &amp; table lamps. Existing track lighting to have new LED fittings for wall mounted artwork along corridor walls.</i>
<i>Furniture</i>	<i>Refurbished existing antique timber furniture in combination with new New Zealand made contemporary furniture</i>

A CD containing photographs of existing hallway and stair condition and all existing and know new elements that shall be installed/ placed within the room shall be provided to the artist.

**COLOUR**

Colours for the interior of the house shall be sensitively akin to our unique New Zealand environment. It is intended that local flora and fauna shall inspire the interior decor for many of the rooms.

Colours shall be applied as a contemporary interpretation of traditional colour theory of the period and historic colour charts, see below.

*"A simple plan, and one in which it is scarcely possible to make a mistake in choosing a combination of colours, for the decoration of a room, a costume, or a picture, is to select some objects of nature, maybe an animal, bird, insect or flower, the colours of which pleases the eye, or strikes one as suitable for the purpose and circumstances. Be guided by this, keep as near as possible to the proportion of the colours nature as used, and you need have no hesitation in following so wise a master."*<sup>5</sup>

**HERITAGE COLOUR CHARTS**

BS 381C: BRITISH STANDARD HISTORIC PAINT COLOUR CHART.

§ [www.e-paint.co.uk](http://www.e-paint.co.uk)

RESENE HERITAGE COLOURS

§ Resene BS2660 & old BS5252

§ [www.resene.co.nz](http://www.resene.co.nz)

AALTO

§ HPT: Victorian & Edwardian

§ HPT: Interwar Period

§ HPT: Postwar period

§ [www.aaltocolour.com](http://www.aaltocolour.com)

**SUBMISSION**

Artist submissions shall include the following documentation:

1. Artist Curriculum Vitae;

<sup>5</sup> Duveen, Edward. J. Colour in the Home Pg. 151, George Allen & Co: London, 1912.

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2. Relevant examples of the artist's work:- particularly in site specific spatial work and works in collaboration with Architects/ Designers.
3. References and / or referees;
4. Artistic Position: provide a response that demonstrates how their artistic position aligns with the conceptual brief. The response shall be submitted in either a written or a visual format; and
5. Program. Artist shall confirm their availability to meet the draft program deadlines. A final program shall be prepared at the time the artist is commissioned for this work. Dilana in conjunction with Athfield Architects Limited reserve the right to alter the program to suit the main house contract program. Prior notification shall be provided in writing to the artist for any program changes.

Submissions shall sent to Dilana Rugs, attention Hugh Bannerman and be received by 5pm on 11 September 2009.

**ASSESSMENT CRITERIA**

Artists shall be assessed on the following criteria:

1. Artistic Position: This shall be assessed on the extent to which the artistic position aligns with or compliments the architectural intentions;
2. Experience: It is preferable, though not essential, to demonstrate successful experience in installation artworks of varying scales;
3. Technical knowledge: It is expected that the artist demonstrate an understanding of the technical aspects of design and the manufacturing process of carpets, including a knowledge of restrictions of construction and production and, where applicable, a strong design proficiency to produce pattern and repeat;
4. Design Competency: This shall be assessed on the range of examples in relevant mediums that demonstrate the artist's breadth and quality of previous work, an ability to translate complex design briefs into finished projects, demonstrates a strong ability to engage and respond to context that will produce a New Zealand focused response and clearly illustrates an aptitude for producing spatial work in collaboration with others. .
5. Fees;
6. Programme: This exercise is part of a strict construction programme. It is crucial that the design, production and installation of the work be completed within the time frames noted below; and
7. References: Confirmation of experience and competency.

The items above have varying values and will not be assessed equally. The assessors reserve the right to mediate these value weightings. Emphasis shall be placed on design competency, references and the Artists artistic position.

**PROGRAM**

<b>ACTION</b>	<b>WEEKS</b>	<b>DATES</b>
1 Briefing Workshop, Site Visit & Concept Design.	1	21 - 25 Sep 2009
2 Design development in consultation with AAL & DILANA. Prepare design options and colour ways for review.	4	28 Sep - 23 Oct 2009
4 Developed Design Review in Wellington.	1	26 - 30 Oct 2009
5 Hand Trials. & review in Christchurch.	2	2 - 13 Nov 2009
6 Approval Meeting in Wellington.	1	16 Nov 2009
7 Order.	1	17 - 20 Nov 2009
8 Refinement & Manufacture.	10	23 Nov 2009 - 19 Feb 2010
9 Delivery.	10	22 Feb - 30 Apr 2010
10 Installation.	4	3 - 28 May 2010