

Towards an interior décor for Coffman

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Since I had the honor of joining the AIC, I have been seeking a path toward a unified interior décor that would combine the “mood” we desire with the architectural features of our beautiful building. This is a work in progress. I offer these ideas as suggestions, in the hope they may prove useful. Although I’ve been writing most of my life, I now see how hard it is to convey visual effects in words. While I have divided my remarks into different categories, they all overlap: color, shape, light, must work together.

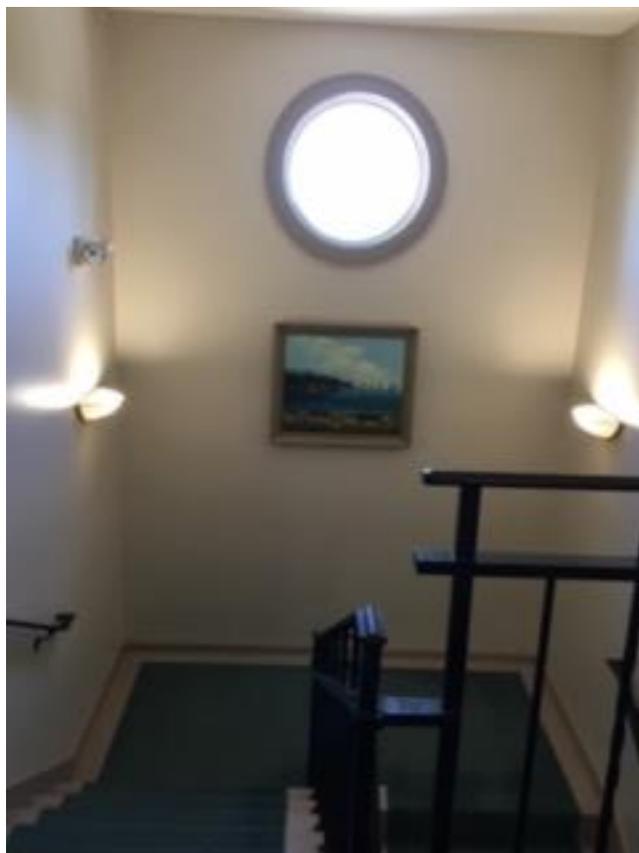
I began by creating a process to guide my work. You might not like the final results, but I hope we’ll consider following a similar process, individually or as a group, to arrive at a unified vision. We could share such a vision with an interior designer if we decide to hire one.

1. I reflected on the mood we might wish to convey visually.
2. I walked through the building, trying to look at its unique Palladian features with new eyes.
3. I documented the ways our present décor complements (or not) the architectural features, and what we might want to do differently.
4. Thinking about mood and architectural heritage, I identified a style and landscape that might offer color ideas.
5. Finally, I have suggested some broad ideas for a palette, which could vary from light to dark, and some carpet samples that illustrate it.

Mood or affect: residents and committee members have used terms like “light, airy, calm, open, spacious, elegant, classic” to describe the mood they feel or would like to feel in the building. The 2009 master upgrade study called for colors that create a “warm, rich feeling.” Some of these qualities are already inherent in the Palladian-influenced interior design.

Palladian influence. Some of the outstanding Palladian features to carry forth in carpet and lighting design are pillars; colonnades; arches; round and demi-lune windows; symmetry, and perspective (vistas).







Lighting. Leaving aside the need for lighting improvements, which we will be considering shortly, the original fixtures themselves were chosen to chime with the round and demi-lune motifs:



While some people think the hall sconces give insufficient light, especially in the windowless halls, the succession of half-moon shapes accentuates the vistas and perspectives inherent in the architectural design.



Although we are not considering replacing the fixtures now, which would be prohibitively costly, we should keep these design issues in mind for the future.

Color: towards creating a palette.

What we have now:

While the architectural design offers extended vistas, the dark, contrasting colors now seen through some hall archways cut off these perspectives. (see photo)

(comment: This vista would look wonderful with a statue at the end against a lighter background)

To get ideas for a possible palette that embodies some of the subjective qualities we've mentioned (calm, balance, light, expansiveness, etc.) I have been looking at pictures of Mediterranean style and landscape. The "palette of warm, natural colors" called for by the 2009 Master upgrade study is exemplified in Mediterranean tones. I have gathered some examples from Pinterest, which I also sent everyone thru the AIC email:





Possible palette: ranging through shades of cream,/beige, honey, coral, light blue and/or yellow gold accents (yellow suggested in 2009 report). I have gone for blue rather than green because it is a very calm color—suggesting sky, water, distance-- that is always popular for interiors. Also, we have had turquoise for a long time and maybe could use a change.

These carpets (not for sale) contain variations on the palette:





The carpet in this photo of a contemporary Palladian villa found by Cathy shows a blend of lighter colors. Note the border.

<https://www.houzz.com/photos/classic-palladian-villa-mediterranean-living-room-santa-barbara-phvw-yp-6783616>

Carpet design:

Like the recessed apartment entryways, the breaks in the current carpet pattern delineate smaller spaces and avoid the look of an endless hotel corridor, while the borders give it flow (see picture of corridor, p. 6 above.) The AIC did a good job, under Dee's direction!

Hope this sparks some positive ideas!!