

PROJECT N° 003

CIGA

Nine government agencies – and their respective interior identities – are comfortably housed together.

WORDS | BARNABY BENNETT | PHOTOS | PROVIDED & JASON MANN

PROJECT NAME	Christchurch Integrated Government Accommodation Project	CLIENT	Statistics New Zealand
DESIGN	Pelorus Architecture	PROJECT TYPE	Workplace
LOCATION	Christchurch	FLOOR AREA	6,000m ²

THEY SAY that necessity is the mother of invention, and the first part (stage one of the BNZ Centre) of the Christchurch Integrated Government Accommodation (CIGA) project illustrates this proverb twofold. Statistics New Zealand is the lead agency of the first fit-out, home to the New Zealand Transport Agency, Internal Affairs, Te Puni Kōkiri, the Ministry for Pacific Peoples, the Human Rights Commission, Creative New Zealand, the Health Promotion Agency and the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority.

The four large buildings that constitute CIGA – which will house around 1,700 government workers – need to be understood in the context of the post-quake planning decisions. In 2012 the central government took over control of the central city from the local council. One of the dominant goals of the government’s rapidly composed 100-day plan was to build investor confidence and attract international capital to the rebuild.

As a response the Government commissioned four large new buildings to be tenanted by 20 central Government agencies. The buildings are privately owned and constructed but built for large and long-term tenancies for government agencies.

There are a number of benefits to this move. Thousands of workers are introduced into the city, and this creates demand for accompanying cafés, bars and amenities. There are efficiencies in various agencies being together in one building, with associated cost and energy savings. It also enables the kinds of fruitful incidental engagements that happen when people from different organisations work together physically, as evidenced in other post-quake temporary accommodations such as the courts and hospital.

The buildings themselves share common post-quake characteristics of being squat and horizontal, with chunky steel structures and large floor plates – what some are calling ‘corporate urbanism’. There is some minor attention to energy efficiency with louvres and other sun-angle treatment. Like most other government and council buildings in Christchurch, car parking is not provided for the buildings’ users. However, lockable bike storage and showers have been included.

The challenge is how to replace nine different agencies working in the same space without it becoming an arms race of branding and marketing or a suburban territorial competition for space. The skill with which the co-location has been achieved is the second notable aspect of this project.

Eight of the agencies share a single front-of-house for public interaction; rather than each agency having its own entry, the public are welcomed by a desk with the name New Zealand Government (the exception to this is the Department of Internal Affairs, which has a separate public interface with different designers).

The offices occupy two levels of the building, and provide what looks like relatively conventional commercial space. However, subtle adaptations are evident. Issues of confidentiality and privacy are addressed by providing a range of small meeting rooms and break out spaces away from the shared area.

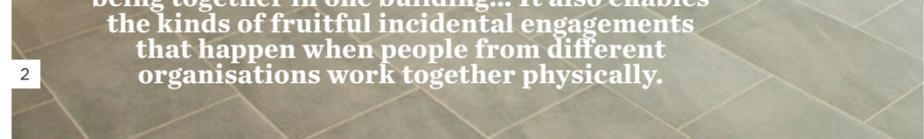
The co-location has some future-proofing; designer Allan Collins says that “allocated desking has been arranged in a consistent manner to enable each agency to grow, shrink and flex” and envisages the possibility of other agencies joining the site.

Finishes are consistently warm and welcoming with particular attention on the kitchen and eating areas shared by all the agencies, which have natural light and feature timber and soft colours used



There are efficiencies in various agencies being together in one building... It also enables the kinds of fruitful incidental engagements that happen when people from different organisations work together physically.

2



throughout. Collins says “a palette of muted colour and texture” was used, “with design features drawing upon familiar aspects of the Canterbury Plains and Christchurch’s public green spaces”.

Somewhat miraculously the data and IT systems of all the agencies are integrated with shared servers and printers, thus reducing a great deal of duplication of expensive hardware and even more expensive space. While each staff member has a workstation, wireless technology enables movement of staff to different spaces without disrupting their work.

The 6,000m² fit-out provides office space for 400 staff across three storeys. The paradox of this design is that the relatively safe and comfortable treatment of the interior is the result of progressive thinking within government and a skilled and subtle response from the designers. ♦

- 1. (Previous spread) Acoustic wall detail from the CIGA fit-out.
- 2 & 3. Natural light and a mix of colours make this a vibrant space.
- 4. Co-locating various government offices meant creating a variety of meeting spaces for more private or confidential work.



3



4



5



6

The challenge is how to get to get nine different agencies working in the same space without it becoming an arms race of branding and marketing or a suburban territorial competition for space.

5 - 8. In communal areas, the colour scheme of the carpet tiles and acoustic panels has been inspired by the Canterbury Plains.

INTERIOR COLOUR SCHEME REVIEW
BY: ZENA O'CONNOR

THE OVERALL brief for the site needed to address the requirements of nine different government agencies. The colour scheme therefore needed to satisfy all occupants while avoiding colours that may have favoured or appear to feature the corporate colours of any of the nine agencies.

The colour scheme brief was quite specific and detailed. The interior palette was to reflect the natural elements and seasons of the Canterbury region; specifically, tones that referenced spring/summer and autumn/winter, as well as visual references to the mountains, rivers and sky. These themes neatly avoided palettes or schemes related to any one of the government agencies.

Flooring featured either spring/summer or autumn/winter colour-themed carpet tiles: saturated yellows, oranges, sand and red, together with green, mid-blue and mid-grey in an apparently random placement of the more saturated colours. While mid-blue and mid-grey dominated, it was difficult to distinguish between the two season-based themes even with the background information provided on site.

Work areas featured partitioning in muted green, blue and grey partitions; again the colours were randomly allocated. These office work areas featured minimal tonal value contrasts and these colours, as well as a relative lack of strong contrasts, contributed to a sense of calmness and quiet – conducive to a work environment.

Partitions featuring timber panels and design elements depicted in saturated oranges and yellows provided an effective visual barrier between workspaces and break-out areas.

Break-out areas often featured blue ceiling details – reminiscent of the sky. Feature walls depicted mountains and streams in slightly stronger, more saturated colours. These more saturated colours and the timber detailing helped to distinguish the break-out areas from the work areas. The blue ceiling imbued the spaces with a sense of lightness and encouraged a sense of going outdoors: an effective visual respite.

Kitchen areas featured functional, clean white surfaces with a mix of coloured tile details. The overall whiteness helped distinguish kitchen areas from work and break-out areas. The predominantly white colour scheme may have been specified as a strategy to encourage staff to keep these areas clean.

Lounge/meeting areas featured tones of mid-blue and mid-grey accented with more saturated colours; introduced via pendant lighting and seating. The saturated colours helped to distinguish these areas from work and break-out areas.

The interior design featured a relatively plentiful use of timber detailing and the colour of this detailing visually linked with the sand colour in the flooring tiles.

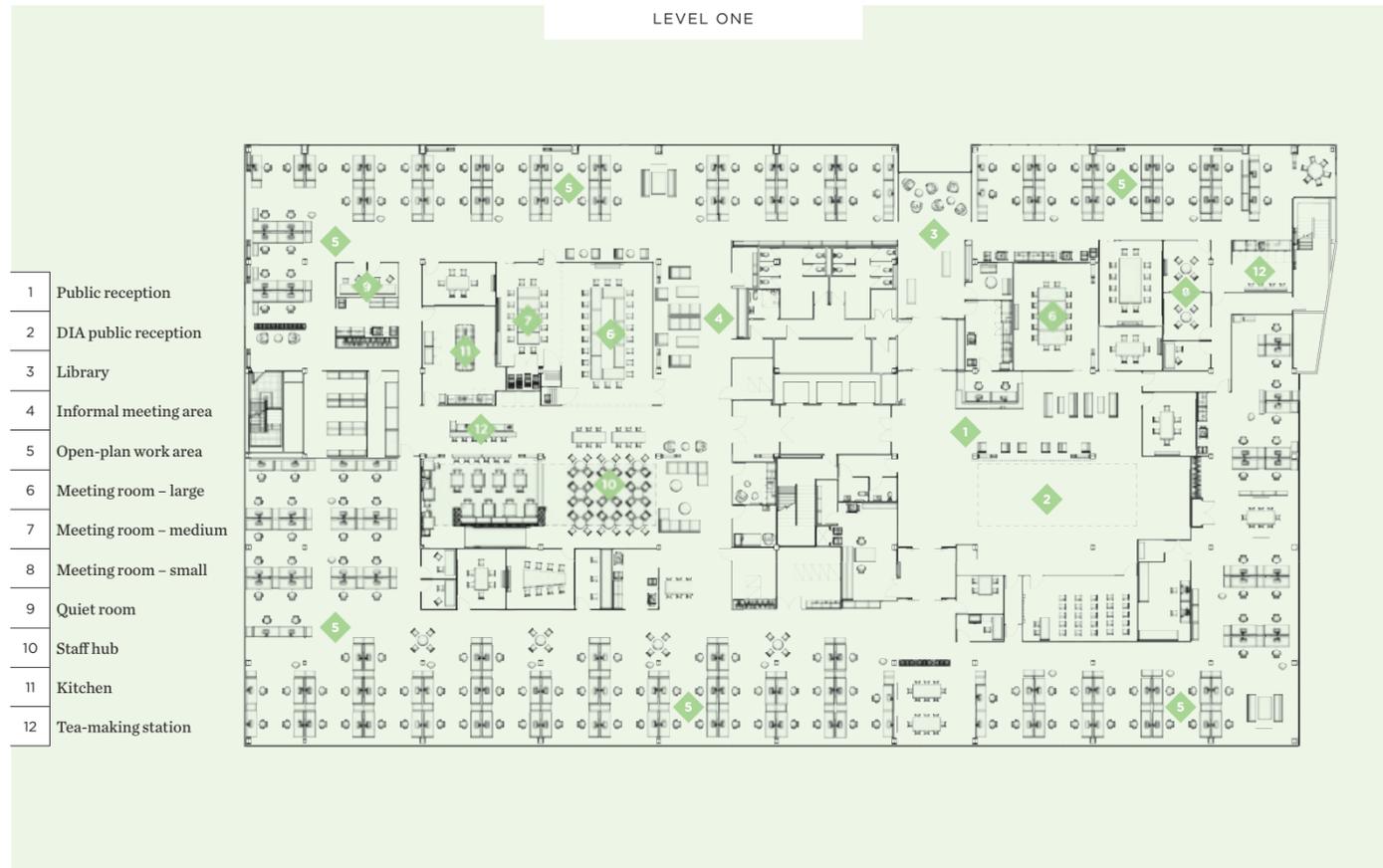
It is certainly a colour scheme to suit the needs of an open-plan office space shared by nine different government agencies. In this respect, no single colour palette and no single colour scheme treatment dominated, thereby keeping all clients happy and ensuring that no single agency's corporate colours dominated. The overall colour scheme also ensured that colours flowed from one area to the next with minimal visual and cognitive dissonance, while simultaneously distinguishing one type of area from another. ♦



7



8



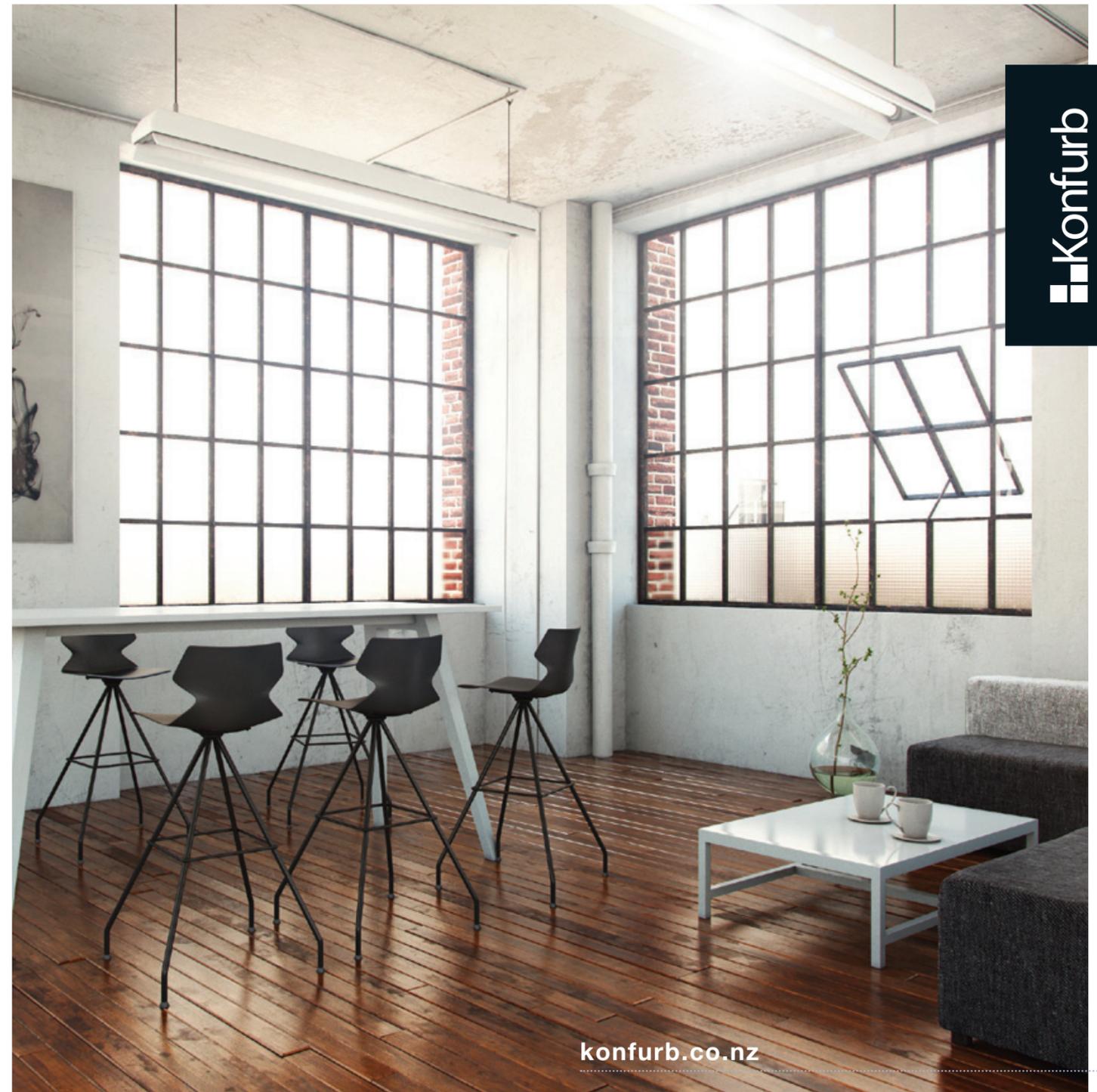
9. More traditional, monochromatic work spaces.



9

PROJECT DETAILS

Client: Statistics New Zealand
Property owner: Lichfield Holdings Ltd
Design practice: Pelorus Architecture
Design team: Allan Collins, Sarah Russell, Anne-Sophie Creugnet
Project size: 5,965m²
Construction company: Leighs Construction
Engineer: Sawrey Consulting
Project manager: The Building Intelligence Group
Blinds/Drapes: New Zealand Window Shades
Ceiling: Gib
Door: PSL; Dorma
Flooring: Interface Carpet Tiles; Ekowood (NZ) Limited
Furniture: Aspect Furniture; Vidak
Internal walls: PSL; Plytech
Acoustic panelling: Autex
Laminates: Laminex; Plytech
Lighting: Inlite
Paint: Resene
Signage: Deneefe Signing Systems



konfurb.co.nz

Fly. Fly Series
 by Claudio Bellini

