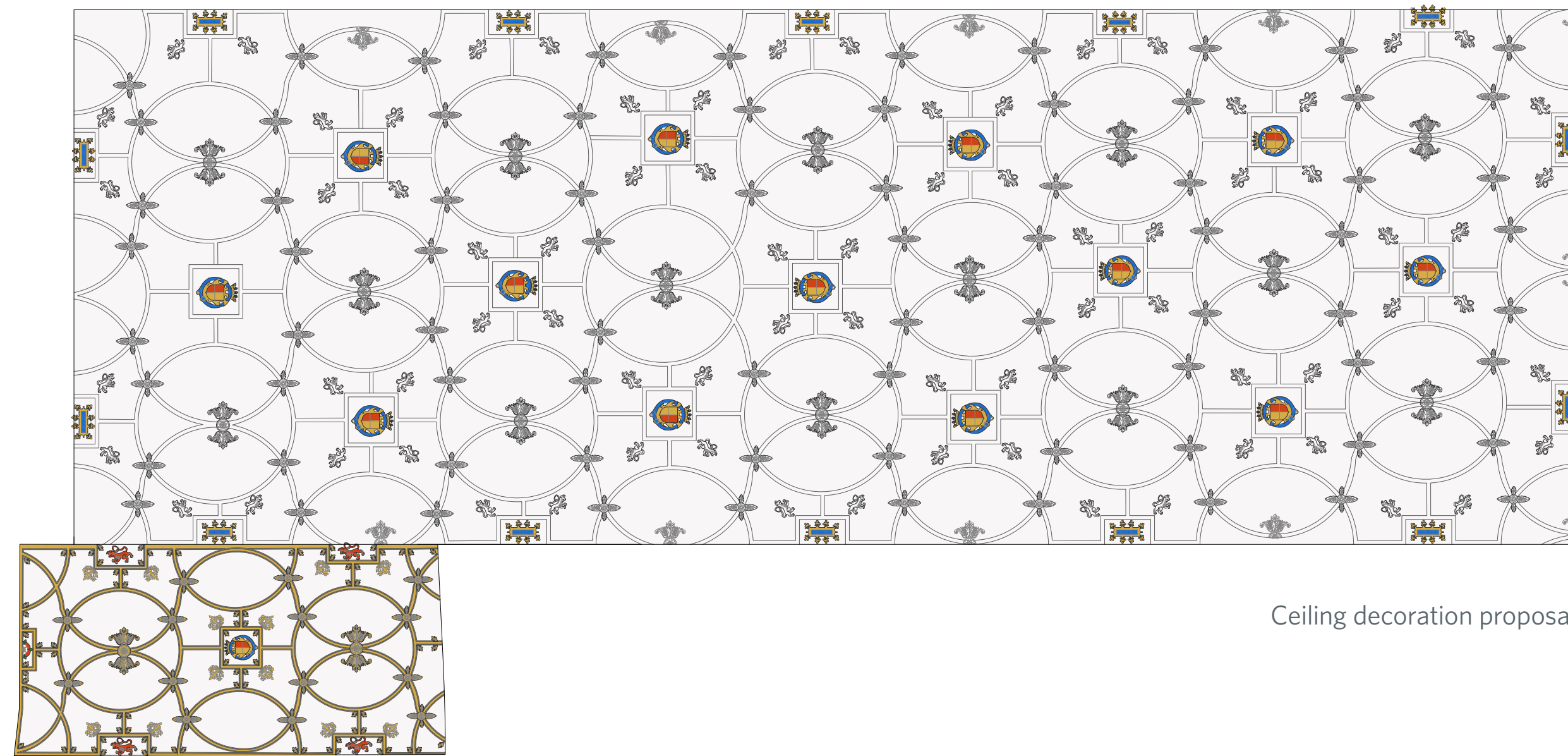


# The Great Chamber: Proposals



Ceiling decoration proposal

## Ceiling

The decorative ceiling dates from the restoration work carried out for Seeley and Paget by G. Jackson & Sons, who rebuilt the majority of the ceiling following bomb damage in WWII, based on evidence of a 'gilded chamber' that had existed pre-Sutton's Hospital in 1612. Extensive repair work was carried out in the 19th century by John Jay and later by Crace & Sons under the direction of the architect Edward Blore, who re-gilded the ceiling. The original ceiling created in the 16th century by the Duke of Norfolk survives in the alcove at the west end of the room.

Expert opinion is that the ceiling would originally have been finished with white soft distemper, with only the heraldic shields painted in heraldic livery, and that the reference to a 'gilded chamber' relates to gilded elements on the walls, rather than to the ceiling. Indeed, paint research carried out on the surviving plaster ceiling in the bay window seems to show that the ceiling may have been painted white with a line of blue verditer on one of the mouldings. Further research is to be carried out.



Wide oak floorboards at Sutton House



Moire fabric sample; wall at Rijks Museum



Picture rail; with lighting by TM Lighting



Pre-war image of Great Chamber chandelier  
proposed radiators

## Floorboards

In the Tudor and Jacobean rooms in Knole and Aston Hall the surviving floors are of wide oak boards, as would have been characteristic of notable buildings of the period. Replacing the post-war floor of narrow European Oak boards with generous 12-16" wide boards (as we have done at Sutton House, the Tudor National Trust house in Hackney), will help restore the Great Chamber to its original grandeur.

## Walls

We intend to use the grey-green decoration found on the plinths of the surviving original Tudor fireplace as the basis for the redecoration of the doors, and Blore's dado and cornice. The skirting and top of the dado panelling will be decorated in black (to match the Tudor fireplace) with gilded highlights. We propose a green moire finish for the walls, green being the traditional colour used to bring out the flesh hues in portraiture, particularly dark oils, as seen in Kensington Palace, Clandon House and Upton House.

## Picture hanging

To allow a flexible arrangement for future hanging of paintings, we propose a brass picture rail below the cornice, allowing paintings to be hung on chains clear of the wall hangings. These will be lit by picture lights, and spotlights fixed to the cornice will light the Tudor fireplace and other accents in the room. The holes in the ceiling from which the Seeley and Paget lanterns were hung (to be removed and one hung in the entrance hall) will be re-used to fit LED downlights, to allow good lighting of tables set up in the middle of the space for functions and meetings.

## Services

We propose new cast iron radiators below the windows, with oak seats fixed to the top. UV protective film will be applied to the leaded lights, and blinds fitted in the window reveals (replacing the inappropriate existing curtains and pelmets), to protect the paintings from exposure to UV and natural light. Power sockets below hinged pieces of floorboard will allow flexibility of servicing and use, and will allow the introduction of free-standing candelabra lining the long walls for evening functions, the light being reflected in the gilded highlights. Furniture stored in the Withdrawing Chamber will allow flexibility for a wide range of uses.



Internal west elevation  
Initial proposal

Internal east elevation  
Initial proposal

