

THE ARCHITECT'S GUIDE TO CHOOSING THE RIGHT CARPET



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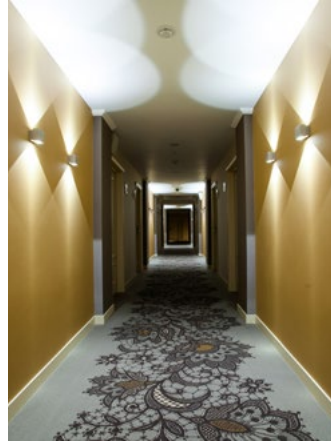
THE URGE TO EXPLORE SPACE

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CHAPTER 1





WHY CHOOSING THE RIGHT CARPET IS CRUCIAL TO YOUR PROJECT

Choosing the right carpet is among the most influential interior design decisions, as it determines both the look, feel and sound of the largest interior part of the building

Flooring is a major component in any interior project, having a critical impact on the overall design and often taking up a considerable slice of the budget. There are also many factors to take into account when selecting flooring for a commercial project, from health and safety issues to durability, maintenance and sustainability.

So, with today's broad range of choice in flooring materials, why should you choose carpet, and how do you choose the right one for a particular project? We hope you'll find all the answers you need in this comprehensive guide to carpet selection.

First off, let's take a look at what you need to consider, and why it is so important to get your carpeting decisions right.



*Purely from a design point of view,
carpet offers greater design flexibility
than any other flooring material.*

Why and how to choose carpets

Purely from a design point of view, carpet offers greater design flexibility than any other flooring material. With new high velocity dye-injection technology, custom carpet manufacturers offer limitless opportunities for you to create your own unique designs on high performance carpet faster and more cost-effectively than in the past.

Remember that your considerations should be area specific, particularly if the different carpeted areas will see different use. How much foot traffic will each area of the project be subject to? Is there an area, such as an open plan office, where acoustics will be an issue? Which carpet type would be most durable in areas with castor chairs?

As detailed in Chapter 10, the answers to such questions are readily available. Commercial carpets are rigorously tested for the above properties and certified accordingly. For any other questions you have, or problems you face, we recommend that you turn to your custom carpet supplier for expert advice and guidance.

Besides the mentioned properties which you should always consider, here are some further factors which will assist you in your choice of carpet:

Indoor climate

Carpets are known to improve indoor air quality. Studies have shown that carpet fibres catch particles and allergens as they fall to the floor where they become trapped in the fibres. Regular vacuuming then removes these particles and allergens from the carpet, creating a healthier environment.

This makes carpet a good flooring choice for environments where indoor air quality is important, including schools, offices and hotels.

Lower noise levels

Carpets provide exceptional acoustic benefits and reduce noise by absorbing sound, rather than reflecting it as hard surfaces do. Certain types of backing can improve a carpet's acoustic qualities even further.



This makes carpet the ideal flooring choice for any environment where noise levels are an issue, including open plan offices, busy restaurants and bars, conference rooms and schools.

Antistatic

Static electricity can cause considerable discomfort in many indoor environments. A carpet that contains conductive fibres and is certified as permanently antistatic will prevent this problem occurring.

Thermal comfort and energy efficiency

Carpet can significantly improve the thermal comfort of indoor environments. Carpet offers not only a feeling of warmth and comfort but also a measurable contribution to overall heat retention. Generally, a thicker carpet means a greater degree of thermal insulation. Installing a quality underlay will magnify these benefits even further. The thermal insulation can be a significant selling point towards your client, as it will mean a noticeable cut in heating costs.

Safety factors

Carpets are often recommended as a flooring choice in order to prevent back pain and injuries to joints as the soft and springy fibres have a cushion-like effect and the surface adapts itself to the foot, balancing body weight evenly on the joints. Carpet also provides a better foothold than smooth flooring materials, acting as an adhesive friction which lightly grabs the soles of the feet, making slips and falls less likely and providing a much softer landing should an accident occur.

This makes carpet a good flooring choice for any environment where safety is a factor, such as hospitals, nursing homes, senior citizens' homes and schools.

And that's just the beginning of our journey into the wonderful world of carpets as we next take a look at the aesthetics and design impact, followed by different carpet construction variables, wall to wall carpet versus carpet tiles, questions to ask your client before specifying carpet and so much more...

When choosing your carpet specifications, regardless of the project type and demands, we recommend that you consider these properties:

- Underfoot comfort
- Insulating properties
- Wear resistance
- Acoustics
- Footstep suppression
- Fire resistance
- Soil resistance
- Moisture resistance
- Antistatic
- Colour fastness
- Light fastness
- Light reflection
- Sustainability



CHAPTER 2



HOW TO TELL YOUR STORY WITH CARPETS

*A carpet is a pen. A paintbrush. A notebook. A canvas.
If you want your design to tell a story, carpets can
help you tell them*

Every interior tells a story. A story of who inhabits the space and what its purpose is. Carpet, with its large range of standard designs and colours and limitless custom design potential, is a vital tool in your armoury for stories that are lively and vibrant, hushed and peaceful, whimsical or conservative.

Carpet not only has a major impact on the look of an interior, but also on the sound and feel through its acoustic properties and the warmth and comfort expressed by having something soft underfoot. That tactile sensation is a critical part of the story you tell through interior design. There is just something about a soft, comfortable floor that gives a room a special ambience that can't be recreated with hard or smooth flooring options such as hardwood, polished concrete or vinyl.



Every interior tells a story. A story of who inhabits the space and what its purpose is.

If you wish to tell a truly unique story in an interior then custom design carpet is now a faster and more cost effective option than in the past. A quality custom carpet supplier will partner you with one of their designers to help you move from initial inspiration and ideas to the actual carpet design and the production of an installation plan to ensure the results are perfect.

Telling a brand story

With custom design carpet it's possible now to go far beyond incorporating corporate colours or company logos. Think laterally and use a custom carpet to allude to the brand's products or values in the carpet design.

Some possibilities might include designing a carpet with bold brushstrokes for a paint manufacturer, or a design of fizzing bubbles for a soft drink manufacturer. If the company's values include a strong emphasis on social responsibility, employee wellness and environmental responsibility, these values can be reflected in a carpet design using organic colours and patterns that mimic nature.

Creating 'chapters' in your story

In many interiors, especially large open plan offices, carpet can be used adroitly to indicate the functions of different spaces. Activity based working arrangements now free employees to work where they want, when they want rather than being chained to a single desk all day.

Carpet is not only the best flooring option in such environments for its acoustic qualities and ability to absorb noise but can also be used to delineate areas with different functions. A patterned carpet, for example, can be used in collaborative areas, and a solid colour carpet in muted tones for quiet areas intended for focussed work. Different carpets again can be installed in reception areas, break-out areas and in-house cafes, bars or gyms.

Telling tales of luxury

After many years of minimalist interiors, more decorative (even maximalist) interiors are a rising trend with an emphasis on jewel colours, luxurious textiles and multiple patterns. Luxurious and plush, wall to wall carpet is an important element in creating lavish interiors for high-end hotels and restaurants, opulent bars and even some workplaces. Use a custom carpet in an exotic and ornate design, reference historical design elements or choose a luxury carpet with a silky soft finish and sheen like panne velvet.

Whether you choose the luxury and high end design possibilities of some wall to wall carpet types or the practicality and economy of simple carpet tiles, there's a carpet available to tell your story. And if you can't find it, a quality custom carpet supplier can always help you create it.

Next, we delve into the different carpet types and what to consider when specifying them.

CHAPTER 3





CARPET CONSTRUCTION AND WHAT TO CONSIDER

Among the many decisions to be made when selecting carpet, colour and design usually get the majority of the attention. But before these come the critical choice of carpet type and construction

Among the many decisions to be made when selecting carpet, colour and design are actually the final aspects. First come important decisions as to the type or types of carpet most suitable for your project, and your choices will impact aspects such as delivery time, cost, quality, durability and, finally, design options.

Should you choose wall to wall or carpet tiles? Tufted, woven or needle-punched construction?

A knowledge of carpet construction can assist you as you make important decisions in the specification phase, buying phase and, not least, the fitting phase of your flooring project.



While wall to wall means increased waste, higher cost and more complicated installation, it also means unmatched design versatility and a stunning, seamless finish.



Carpet type

Wall to wall

Wall to wall carpet (also known as “broadloom”) is manufactured in long, wide rolls. Most manufacturers have different backing options, some of which allow installation directly on the subfloor, but wall to wall is most often laid on underfelt over a substrate floor. Despite the perhaps confusing name, “wall to wall” does not necessarily need to cover the entire room. It can just as easily be installed in a specific area only, integrating with another carpet or a different flooring.

For projects with high design ambitions or for large spaces, wall to wall carpet more than makes up for its shortcomings. While wall to wall means increased waste, higher cost and more complicated installation, it also means unmatched design versatility and a stunning, seamless finish.

Carpet tiles

Carpet tiles are small squares of carpet that can be laid in many versatile ways. While squares are most common, carpet tiles are also available in other shapes such as planks, triangles and hexagons. Standard tile shapes are faster and easier to lay than wall to wall carpet and result in considerably less wastage, saving on both time and money.



Carpet construction

Tufted carpets

Around 95 per cent of all commercial carpets on the market are tufted, mainly due to the fast production time, lower price point and high design flexibility of this type of construction.

Tufted carpet also offers a broad range of pattern possibilities, using pre- or post-dyed yarns, varying loop height and cut or uncut pile.

When choosing between tufted or woven carpet, installation is an important consideration. A woven carpet is essentially stitched together along the side, while a tufted carpet can be easily seamed both along the sides and across the ends. This means that less carpet is required for a tufted carpet installation, the process is usually speedier, requires less skill and is less prone to errors.

Tufted carpet will produce great results in most applications, however there are times when the generally superior quality and durability of a woven carpet may be preferable.

When choosing between tufted or woven carpet, installation is an important consideration.

Woven carpets

Weaving was the production process of choice for carpets up until the 1950s, when advances in machinery and the introduction of synthetic materials began the era of tufted carpets.

Today, most carpet suppliers still carry woven carpets as an option due to their exceptional quality and durability. This is especially true of woven carpets using natural materials such as 100 % wool or wool blends. The quality and purity of the wool are important factors influencing the long-term appearance and durability of the carpet.

The plush appearance of woven carpets make them ideal for high-end projects where a luxury look and feel is required.

Needle punched carpets

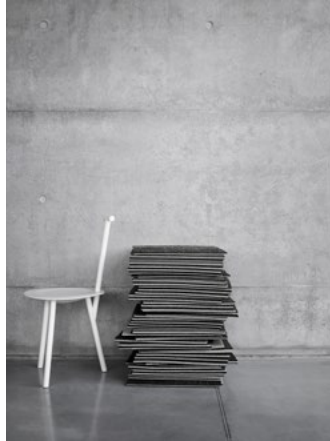
Needle punched carpet is exceptionally colourfast, dry quickly and is highly resistant to sunlight and fading. It is, however, fairly lacking in design versatility and offer little in the ways of look and feel. Needle punched carpet is not recommended for general use, but is an excellent choice for areas where moisture could be a problem, such as pool decks, locker rooms and patios. Needle punched carpet is most commonly used for entry mats and is available in both broadloom and carpet tiles.

Wall to wall or carpet tiles?

Wall to wall is essential if you wish to use large-scale patterning or are seeking a superior luxurious effect. Standard uni-colour wall to wall carpets and carpet tiles are great for most other applications and offer a great and cost effective alternative if the budget is tight. Carpet tiles are also ideal when the timeline on your project is restrictive or regular maintenance and replacement is an issue – or if you simply have no need for the high design factor of wall to wall carpet.

CHAPTER 4





WHY YOU SHOULD CONSIDER CARPET TILES FOR YOUR NEXT PROJECT

They're modular. They're cheap. Easy to install and easy to replace. And very fun to play with when designing. The carpet tile market is booming, and for a good reason

Carpet tiles, also known as modular carpet, are a versatile flooring option growing in popularity for commercial projects of almost every type. Cut from wall to wall carpet (usually tufted) carpet tiles are most typically available in a range of square sizes – 48 x 48, 50 x 50, 60 x 60 and 96 x 96cm – and also in 'planks', which are long rectangular shapes. Some manufacturers also offer hexagons or triangles among others.



More “out of the box” uses are gaining popularity, like using patterned tiles for traffic areas and solid colours to delineate break-out areas.

For projects requiring a large amount of custom design or for very large spaces, wall to wall carpet offers unmatched design versatility. For almost all other purposes, carpet tiles are a lower cost alternative that can still be used to great effect and with most or all of the benefits from wall to wall.

How to use carpet tiles in your designs

Carpet tiles can be installed in numerous configurations to create different effects. Most commonly, the same tile in either a solid colour or a simple pattern, is used for the room. But more “out of the box” uses are gaining popularity, like using patterned tiles for traffic areas and solid colours to delineate break-out areas, for example, or changes in colour and pattern for wayfinding, such as indicating where people should form a queue.

Seams between carpet tiles can be disguised or accentuated, depending on the overall effect desired and the modularity of carpet tiles makes them an amazing creative tool for architects and interior designers to play with. We recommend you to order some samples so you can play around on site with different sizes, colours and patterns.

Cost and time advantages

Apart from the amazing flooring effects you can achieve, carpet tiles also offer significant savings in both cost and time over wall to wall carpet. Here’s how and why:

- The initial cost of carpet tiles can be lower than for wall to wall carpet, though for some projects, standard pre dyed uni-colour wall to wall carpet can have equal initial costs
- Carpet tiles are much easier to lift, move and install than wall to wall carpets and can be laid in a shorter timeframe
- The installation of carpet tiles creates much less wastage than occurs with the installation of wall to wall carpet, generally only 1-3 % compared to around 5-25 %

All these factors make carpet tiles ideal for projects on a tight budget or tight timeline.



Maintenance advantages

- If wear and damage occur, individual tiles can be readily removed and replaced from excess stock ordered for this purpose, rather than replacing a whole carpet or undertaking expensive and difficult spot repairs to wall to wall carpet.
- Tiles can be readily lifted if access is required to the substrate floor beneath. This allows technicians to easily gain access to underfloor cabling if needed, an advantage in spaces such as conference halls and agile workplaces that are constantly subject to change.

Today's carpet tiles offer practically all the warmth, comfort and health and safety benefits of wall to wall carpet. They may lack the wider options for custom design, but carpet tiles definitely have their own advantages and can readily be used to striking effect in most commercial and institutional projects, as the inspiring images throughout this guide show. Maybe it's time to get creative with carpet tiles for your next interior project?

Continuing on, we next tackle the vital questions you should ask your client before specifying the flooring for their project.

Wall to wall vs. carpet tiles

For projects requiring a large amount of custom design, custom wall to wall carpet offers unmatched design versatility. For large open spaces, pre dyed standard wall to wall carpet is also a reasonably cost-effective choice. For almost all other purposes, carpet tiles are a lower cost alternative that can still be used to great effect and with most or all of the benefits from wall to wall.

CHAPTER 5





9 QUESTIONS YOUR CLIENT SHOULD ANSWER BEFORE CHOOSING FLOORING

These questions and their answers are a great starting point for any project in order to assess your client's flooring needs and wishes

Whether you are dealing directly with the business owner or CEO, a management team or a facility manager, there are many questions you need answered before proceeding with any interior design project. While some clients will have prepared a comprehensive brief others may need a little encouragement in extracting the information required to ascertain that your design will align with their needs. Here are a few suggestions of questions to ask to get things moving in the right direction:



1. Do you have a preferred type of flooring?

If the client has no fixed preference, talk them through the advantages and disadvantages of various flooring choices and the cost involved so you can lead them to a preference.

2. What is the budget?

Obviously, the amount of the overall budget you can allocate to flooring will affect your ultimate design. If carpet is the flooring choice, then it will affect the budget whether you specify bespoke design, wall to wall or carpet tiles and the level of quality that can be attained. Bespoke design is more expensive than standard wall to wall and carpet tiles with that latter also being easier and faster to install.

3. Is indoor air quality important?

If this is the case, and it should be for the majority of fit-outs, outline the advantages of carpet in improving indoor climate from the perspective of both air quality and thermal comfort.

4. Wall to wall or carpet tiles?

Assuming that carpet is the client's preference, talk them through the different properties, effects that can be achieved and costs for both wall to wall and carpet tiles. Also cover the possibilities for custom design and colours.

5. What will the amount of foot traffic be on a daily basis in each area of the project?

The amount of daily foot traffic needs to be estimated if data is not already available. Pay particular attention to high traffic areas like corridors or between desks.

6. Will furniture on castors be used and if so, where?

By defining areas where chairs and other furniture with castors will be used you will be able to specify carpet rated for use with castors for those areas.



7. Will acoustics be important?

You will need to determine from the client where sound levels could be a problem and the right carpet and backing will be required to suppress these to provide a comfortable noise level. This can vary greatly within sectors as well, e.g. with some office areas being very quiet while call centers or open office spaces may generate a large amount of noise in an otherwise preferably quiet environment.

8. Is sustainability an important part of material choices for this project?

If so, explain that there are environmentally responsible new fibres available on the market for carpets such as ECONYL®, which is made from recycled fishing nets and other waste materials, as well as carpet backings made from used water bottles. You can source carpet from a responsible manufacturer with Cradle to Cradle™, BRE, Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) and ISO 14001 certification, registration under The Economic Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS) and fully documented environmental claims. You can also look for carpet suppliers who offer recycle system for old carpet.

9. Do you have strong preferences as to colour and design for the flooring?

This is your opportunity to ascertain, not just aesthetic preferences, but practicalities such as whether colours and patterns should be chosen that best disguise soiling and require less regular vacuuming. You can also get to know what atmospheres the client wishes to evoke, such as welcoming and relaxed in the reception area, bold and inspiring in collaborative areas and calm and soothing in focussed work areas. They may also be interested in incorporating elements of biophilic design to promote well-being using organic colours, textures and patterns to evoke the natural world in the indoor environment.

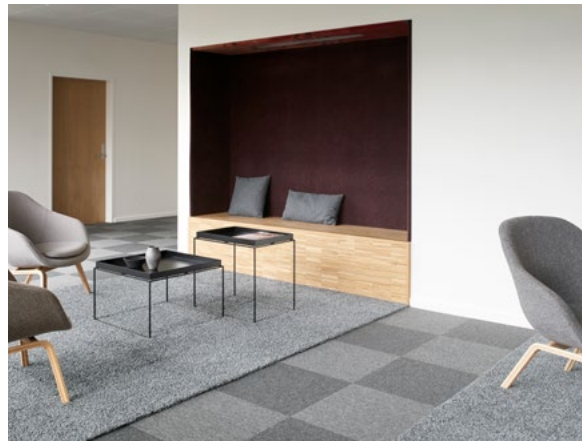
Moving on, our next chapter guides you through how carpets impact acoustics.

Using the questions and answers

As part of your overall brief, the answers to the above questions will guide you in the right direction towards achieving a design that fulfils all the overarching aesthetic and practical requirements of the project. The answers are also a great tool for your local carpet expert to help you with choosing just the right specifications and design, should you opt for assistance.

CHAPTER 6





IMPROVING THE SOUNDS OF THE ROOM

Carpets are among the best tools in the architect's acoustic toolbox. Here are the things you need to know about carpet acoustics and how to utilize them in design and specification

Carpet is an outstanding sound absorptive material. Indeed, carpet absorbs airborne noise as efficiently as many specialised acoustical materials.

This ability to absorb sound and mute noise levels makes carpet an ideal flooring choice for many applications, from open plan offices to busy restaurants and bars, call centres, auditoriums and multi-level buildings such as apartment blocks and especially hotels where it serves to muffle noise from floor to floor.

Using acoustics to improve working environments

Today's open plan office environments are intended to encourage knowledge sharing, collaboration and flexibility, however without consideration for a number of elements in the interior design there may be a downside to these open spaces – constant distraction from noise levels being the foremost of these.



A study carried out by the Danish National Institute of Occupational Health¹ indicates that more than half of all employees working in open space office environments are negatively affected by noise. Telephone conversations, footsteps and chairs being pulled back and forth are all sounds that, if ignored in the interior design, may lead to an uncomfortable working environment and negative impact on employees' ability to concentrate and work productively. Ultimately, this may lead to an increase in absenteeism.

Thinking out of the acoustic box

Acoustics should always be a primary concern when designing for working and hospitality environments. Some of the more creative interior designers are even starting to utilize the muffling properties of carpet for tapestry and wall covering when using it for flooring is not enough or not an option.

You can also consider using acoustically optimized carpet for areas requiring extra quiet like reading nooks or lounge areas often used for phone conversations.

You should definitely also consider the paths of traffic in the office and design your carpet accordingly to counter noise from footsteps. We find that a good way to gain insight is an informal chat with the end users of the site, about who works with whom and which desks, offices or areas are the most visited. Regarding hotels, corridors have traffic 24/7, so carpets here are essential to ensure peace and quiet for the guests who are sleeping and relaxing.

Acoustic carpet backing

Carpet is the complete antithesis of hard, echoing surfaces. Sound waves are absorbed by carpet and the padding used beneath it, and the level of sound absorption can be further enhanced by the use of thicker underlay. Some manufacturers even offer an acoustic-optimized carpet backing.

A study carried out by the Danish National Institute of Occupational Health¹ indicates that more than half of all employees working in open space office environments are negatively affected by noise.



Carpet is highly effective in controlling noise within buildings or even areas by absorbing airborne sound.

Acoustical test programs conducted by the Carpet and Rug Institute showed the following results, which your manufacturer can help you implement in your carpet specification:

- Cut pile carpet provides a greater Noise Reduction Coefficient (NRC) than loop pile construction with otherwise identical specifications, as it provides more “fuzz”.
- Increasing pile height while holding pile weight constant in loop pile carpet results in improvements in absorption.
- Foam-backed loop construction resulted in an increased NRC value when compared to conventional, secondary backed carpet.
- As a general rule, the more permeable the carpet backing, the more sound energy can penetrate into the cushion and the higher the resulting NRC.
- Cushion underlay with higher weight and thickness also improves NRC.

In conclusion, carpet is highly effective in controlling noise within buildings or even areas by absorbing airborne sound, reducing surface noise generation and reducing impact sound transmission in multi-storey buildings to rooms below. Properly specified carpet/cushion combinations are proven to be capable of handling the vast majority of sound absorption requirements in indoor environments.

When specifying carpet for areas such as theatres, broadcast studios or open plan offices where sound absorption is critical, be sure to consult your carpet supplier for full details of a carpet’s impact insulation properties and noise absorption characteristics and the best backing and/or underlay to further improve these properties.

In the following chapter, we’ll be discussing other ways in which carpet can affect the tone and feel of specific interior spaces.

Projects requiring extra sound absorption

When specifying carpet for areas such as hotel corridors, theatres, broadcast studios or open plan offices where sound absorption is critical, be sure to consult your carpet supplier for full details of a carpet’s impact insulation properties and noise absorption characteristics and the best backing and/or underlay to further improve these properties.

CHAPTER 7





4 BOLD DESIGN TRENDS TO WATCH

In the grand calendar of carpet design trends, the grey winter of minimalism has come and gone. Spring is here, and so are vibrant colours, biophilic designs and floral patterns.

Interior trends come and go but right now we're experiencing an exciting movement away from the purity of minimalism and a return of richness, pattern and bold colour. There's also a significant move towards biophilic design – bringing the healing energy of nature into urban environments – and a trend towards bold, statement flooring that stands out as the key element in a space.

All these movements in design make carpet an ideal element for creating dynamic interiors that don't pull their punches in making a striking design statement.

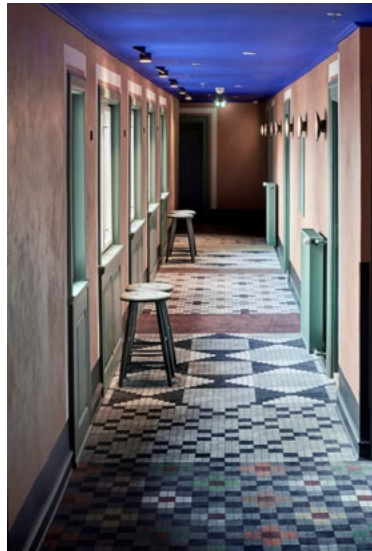
Here's just a few examples of how carpet can be used in new and exciting ways:



TREND 1: THE NEW OPULENCE

Bold, exotic and complex, the new opulence overwhelms with pattern on pattern, jewel-like colours and rich textiles. Highly decorative interiors are distinctly modern, while referencing historical elements such as traditional textile patterns and classical artworks.

To achieve this no-holds-barred look of decorative delight, custom carpet is an essential element in rich jewel tones and bold patterns such as florals and paisleys based on traditional textile and wallpaper designs or classical artworks. It's all about achieving a balance that is at once lush and untamed, witty and supremely elegant.





TREND 2: BIOPHILIC DESIGN

Nature equals nurture and bringing nature into urban environments is important to our well-being. Studies have shown that if we can't bring real nature indoors, then colours and patterns that mimic nature still have a beneficial effect. Being close to nature and natural forms is known to reduce stress levels and increase productivity and the concept of biophilic design that incorporates natural elements is being increasingly embraced in modern workplaces.

Carpet can be an essential ingredient in creating a healthy environment based on the principles of biophilic design. Custom designed textured carpet that mimics the random patterning and colours of watercourses, forest floors or cloudy skies subliminally brings the outdoors in, introducing the organic into the urban.

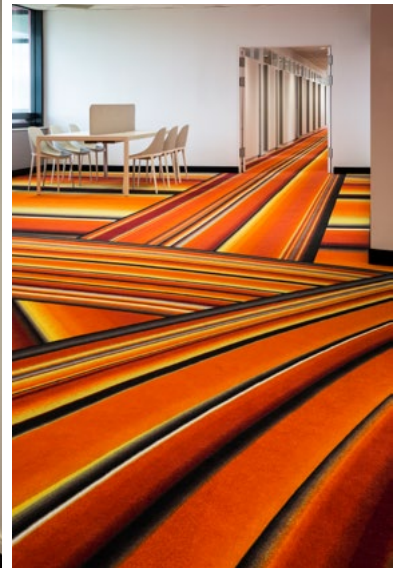




TREND 3: FLOOR POWER

With custom carpet designs now more accessible than ever, and available in fresh and exciting colours, we're seeing more commercial interiors where a bold carpet design throughout is the major design statement, with all other materials being much more subdued.

In many cases the carpet design alludes to the company or its products, making a subtle but powerful brand message. A prime example is the office of French paint manufacturer Akzo Nobel, where a design of bold brush strokes on the custom carpeting takes centre stage and makes an electric design statement.





TREND 4: GEOMETRY LESSONS

The improvement in the quality of carpet tiles and the greater number of shapes they are available in has led to a movement towards geometric designs for flooring of almost endless variety.

While wall to wall carpets can offer many different geometric designs due to advanced dye injection technology, designers are also playing with carpet tiles in different sized squares, planks, hexagons and triangles to create flooring designs that are energetic and lively for many different applications where the versatility of carpet tiles is preferred over wall to wall carpeting.



Limitless customization options

These days, there really are practically no limits to what can be dyed onto a custom carpet. You could literally forward a jpeg image and (with some help from the manufacturer) have it made into a carpet. So whatever tone or style you are seeking to create in an interior, there's a carpet right for your project. And if you can't find it, a quality carpet supplier can create it for you. Whether you're inspired by a textile, a scrap of wallpaper, a photograph of clouds or an ancient symbol, the trained designers at your manufacturer can readily help you turn it into a carpet.



CHAPTER 8





CHOOSING AND PLANNING CARPETS FOR YOUR OFFICE PROJECT

With all your new knowledge of carpeting, this short step by step guide helps you to zoom in and make the right decisions for each area of your next office project

The design of large office environments can be a complex process, not least the flooring.

Once you have chosen to go with carpet, and decided on either wall to wall, carpet tiles, rugs or runners, or a combination of both, here are some of the factors to take into account:

1. Life expectancy and end-use

First of all, determine the desired carpet life for the project. In all likelihood, the longer the lease, the higher quality carpet will be required. A quality commercial carpet typically has a life expectancy of 10-20 years. It will remain looking good throughout this period if specified correctly and maintained regularly.



If soiling and spills are a particularly big issue, and your client is keen on keeping a spotless carpet, consider carpet tiles. They are significantly easier to replace than pieces of a wall to wall carpet.

Next, determine the levels of use for each particular area of the project. Pay close attention to foot traffic and the movement of furniture, especially furniture on castors. Private offices and conference rooms may only have light to moderate use, while corridors and common areas may receive heavy use.

In Chapter 10 we delve deeper into the classifications of commercial carpet for different levels of usage, acoustic qualities and other performance attributes that may be required for different areas of your office project.

2. Check samples in situ

Your carpet supplier should be more than willing to provide you with samples. These can be viewed in the intended space or under the same type of lighting used in the building, as different types of lighting can drastically affect the look and colour tone of your chosen carpet. Taking samples on site also allows you to play around and refine the overall flooring design. Make sure that the sample is made in the same quality as specified for the final carpet as it will also influence the look and feel.

3. Test for stain resistance

High quality commercial carpet generally offers good stain resistance properties. Nevertheless, it's a good idea to test a few samples for how well the design or colour hides stains and soiling. This is especially important for areas such as cafeterias and corridors with heavy foot traffic. Be aware that samples are mainly made for design and colour check and may not have the anti-soil treatment that will come with the final carpet.

The optimum choices are colour values falling into the medium range, neither so dark they show up light stains nor so light that they show up dark stains. Medium range colours offer little contrast to any accumulated soil and do the best job of concealing daily soil build-up and stains.



Also test if typical stains, such as spilt coffee, are easy to get out for daily spot removal. If soiling and spills are a particularly big issue, and your client is keen on keeping a spotless carpet, consider carpet tiles. They are significantly easier to replace than pieces of a wall to wall carpet.

4. Select carpet backing

Backing is perhaps the most important aspect to consider, as it has all or most of the selling points you can tell your client, for why carpets are perfect for offices. For one, cushion backing increases underfoot comfort, which alleviates back pain from standing. It also absorbs the impact of foot traffic, allowing the fibres to look better and last longer.

Backing also plays a key role in acoustics, which is why some manufacturers offer specially designed carpet backings optimized for acoustic dampening. The acoustic aspect is always important, but in office projects this is more so.

Backing also helps set the mood of certain areas, and you can even consider adding details like an extra plush backing in the lounge areas, to give that subtle tactile sensation of added comfort.

Regardless of your ambitions and carpet expertise, we recommend that you consult with your carpet supplier to be sure you specify the right backing for each end use area, as it is such a critical part of an office carpet.

5. Prepare a flooring plan

Carpet installations for large office environments can be complex and mistakes are expensive and cause costly delays. Prepare a detailed carpet placement plan and have your carpet supplier check it to ensure all details are correct – especially with wall to wall carpet where extreme care needs to be made with seam placement and direction for optimal results.

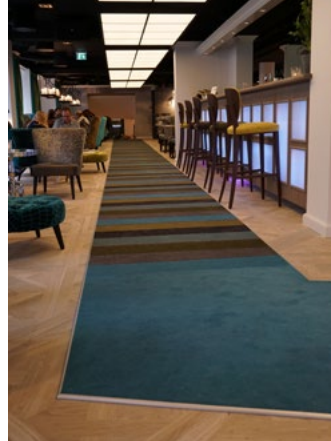
6. Prepare for installation

Costly mistakes are common at the installation stage unless careful preparations are made. Make sure you have all details in hand from your carpet supplier and carpet installer prior to delivery. Have a logistics plan in place and take into account any delays such as the 24 hour wait time for wall to wall carpet to settle flat and carpet tiles to acclimatise before installation and whether the space will require airing for 48 hours or more after installation due to the type of adhesives used.

In the following chapter we cover similar steps to choosing carpets for hospitality projects.

CHAPTER 9





CHOOSING THE RIGHT CARPET FOR YOUR HOSPITALITY PROJECT

Hotels, restaurants, bars, clubs. These are places where aesthetics and acoustics are primary concerns, so naturally, carpets are among the most popular design choices here. But no two hospitality projects are alike, so how do you go about choosing the right carpet?

The actual process of selecting carpet for a hospitality project is much the same as outlined in the previous chapter for office environments. However, the design emphasis is entirely different. Hotels, restaurants, bars, clubs and other hospitality venues are, after all, where people go to get away from the workaday world, to relax, socialise, indulge and have fun. Each project needs to be a unique experience, with its own special ambiance that attracts its intended target market.



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Carpet for high-end hospitality projects

There's nothing quite like the subdued hush of entering the lobby of a well-designed five-star hotel or the entrance to a silver service restaurant. It should whisper immediately of luxury and exclusivity like the one created by a high quality custom wall to wall carpet. The immediate sense of luxury and beauty is further amplified by the plush textures and comfort underfoot, as well as the soft ambience created by acoustic carpet backing that is essential for hospitality projects where there will be traffic 24/7 and an expectation of quiet relaxation.

The wonders of custom carpet

Seamless, large-scale patterning, subtle texturing and complicated constructions and design elements are all possible with high end wall to wall carpet, plus exceptional flexibility in customisation of pattern and colour. Working closely with a custom carpet company, it's possible to create a truly unique experience in any high end hospitality environment for the visual, tactile and sensual pleasure of customers and guests.

With a quality custom carpet company, it is even possible to order custom designs in runs as small as 4 x 4 metres, enabling individualisation of every guest room in a boutique hotel.

Project type recommendations

For mid-range projects, with more limited budgets, it's possible to make lavish use of wall to wall in lobbies and other public areas, while using more cost-effective carpet tiles or standard wall to wall in areas such as corridors and guest rooms.

For the ultimate luxury effect, we recommend that you choose quality wall to wall carpet in high density, heavier weight, high lustre and cut-loop.

Properties to look out for

The main hospitality carpet properties to keep in mind are acoustics, durability and soil resistance. The latter includes choosing colours, textures and patterns that camouflage soiling and the inevitable spills that occur in places serving food and drinks.



Carpet for more casual hospitality spaces

As an alternative to wall to wall carpet, versatile and cost-effective carpet tiles are becoming an increasingly popular choice for more casual hospitality spaces such as bistros, pubs and clubs.

Providing that you choose the proper backing, carpet tiles can have all or most of the acoustic effect of a wall to wall carpet, dampening the noise levels in places where people gather and chatter socially.

They also offer the practical ability to order extra stock for replacement of tiles when needed, which is considerably easier than replacing sections of wall to wall carpet.

Available in a range of sizes and shapes including square, plank and hexagon, carpet tiles offer much greater design flexibility today than in the past and, of course, the opportunity of custom colour and pattern further widen the design options.

Take inspiration for your next hospitality project from the amazing examples featured in these pages, where the comfort, texture and warmth of carpet have been used to stunning effect and custom colours and designs used to create spaces of individuality and great atmosphere.

As an alternative to wall to wall carpet, versatile and cost-effective carpet tiles are becoming an increasingly popular choice for more casual hospitality spaces such as bistros, pubs and clubs.

See more great examples on the blog

Want more great examples of hospitality carpets? Check out the catalogue of some of our favourite projects in the hospitality section of **The Urge to Explore Space blog**.

Finally, overleaf we take a comprehensive look at carpet properties, certifications and classifications – all you need to know to choose the right type of carpet for every end use and achieve great results.

CHAPTER 10





UNDERSTANDING PROPERTIES, CERTIFICATES AND CLASSIFICATIONS

There are literally hundreds of carpet properties, certificates and classifications, so it is only fair that you can't master all of them. These are the ones you need to know and consider

Choosing carpet with the right properties for use throughout a project is essential. While one carpet might be suitable for high traffic areas, for example, another might be more suitable for areas where acoustics are an issue.

The properties to look for in carpet include:

- Underfoot comfort
- Insulating properties
- Wear resistance
- Acoustics
- Footstep suppression
- Fire resistance
- Soil resistance
- Moisture resistance
- Colour fastness
- Light fastness
- Light reflection
- Sustainability

Depending on which properties are most required for your project, or sections of your project, look to the certifications and classifications to show you which carpet and carpet backing would be most suitable.

Here are some of the most important classifications and certifications to look for to judge a carpet's performance:

Long term appearance retention: EN 1307

The European standard for test and classification of textile floorings, EN 1307, is a standard that rates carpets on long term appearance retention. In order for a carpet product to be EN 1307 certified, it must go through an extensive testing program to determine both identification and performance characteristics.

In order to determine identification characteristics, various elements are measured such as total mass, pile mass, pile density, total thickness, pile thickness, tuft number and backing thickness.

Performance characteristics are divided into basic requirements such as long term appearance retention, colour fastness and additional requirements such as castor chair suitability, suitability for use on stairs, electrical properties, thermal resistance and fraying behaviour.

Further requirements are imposed on carpet tiles, including total carpet weight, dimension, variation of size, squareness and straightness of edges, curling, damage at cut edge and dimensional stability.



On the basis of the EN 1307 test results, the carpet is categorised according to domestic and commercial performance area classification:

Class 21: Domestic moderate and light usage. Suited for rooms and bedrooms. Not recommended for commercial use.



Class 22: Domestic general and medium usage. Suited for living rooms. Not recommended for commercial use.



Class 22+ and class 23: Domestic normal usage and domestic heavy usage respectively. Suited for living rooms, entrance halls, hallways and offices. Only recommended for very light commercial usage.



Class 31: Moderate usage. Suited for light traffic areas like storage rooms, hotel rooms, residential facilities, conference and meeting rooms etc.



Class 32: Normal usage: Suited for most commercial projects. Recommended for areas with a high, but not extreme amount of traffic like offices, libraries, cinemas, retail stores and restaurants



Class 33: Heavy usage. Suited for areas with very high amounts of traffic like airports, elevators, hotel reception halls, office entrance areas. Also recommended for projects with a high amount of expected spilling or soiling like educational institutions and in rooms or areas with a large amount of traffic from muddy outside areas.



Fire classification

The flammability characteristics of building materials, including carpets, greatly affect the speed at which a fire can spread. The slower a fire spreads, the greater the chance a building's occupants can escape safely.

Two fire tests and smoke tests are required for a carpet to achieve classification under European standards.

For additional safety, many carpets are also treated with flame retardants. Brominated fire retardants are banned in some countries due to adverse effects on health and the environment. A safer alternative are flame retardant fillers that prevent flame spread and suppress smoke by releasing water molecules to ensure a prolonged evacuation time.

Look for this symbol

In most European countries, class C_{fl}-s1 is required before a carpet can be used in escape routes. Make sure to ask your carpet supplier about the local laws and regulations for your project if you are the least bit in doubt.



Additional noteworthy test symbols

Look for the following symbols to quickly see if a carpet has undergone testing for various suitabilities:

- Permanently suitable for castor chairs
- Suitable for castor chairs – occasional use
- Suitable for stairs
- Suitable for stairs – residential
- Permanently antistatic
- Suitable for heated floors





Colour fastness testing

Carpets are tested for colour fastness using dry rubbing, wet rubbing and wet spot resistance tests. When testing is completed, any colour change is assessed against a standard grey scale from 1-5, with 5 being the best result.

Light fastness

Carpets are tested for light fastness using artificial light to simulate exposure to daylight. The result of the light fastness test must be a minimum of 5 out of a total 8. In rooms with skylights or large windows, consider a carpet with a higher value.

Light reflection value

The ability to adjust the levels of light reflection is important for the comfort and final look of your project. A light-coloured carpet will reflect a greater proportion of light and will also require more maintenance to protect the appearance of the carpet. Understanding the light reflectance will also help you to efficiently plan lighting and visual contrast.

Light reflection denotes the percentage of visible light reflected to the light of the human eye. If you have a LRV of 15, the surface in question reflects 15 % of the light striking it.

Vettermann Drum test: ISO 10361

To qualify for ISO 10361 classification a carpet must undergo the Vettermann Drum test, which is applied for detecting changes in appearance, which makes it comparable to the EN 1307. While the EN 1307 is a measurement of properties and attempts to give an idea of the recommended use on a general level, the ISO 10361 is a simulation test and is only concerned with foot traffic.

By simulating walkways, the Vettermann Drum test provides an indication of the carpet's ability to retain its appearance, which is particularly important for high traffic projects and areas like walkways and entrances.

After testing, the carpet is given a rating on a scale of 1-5, with 5 being the best result:

- 5: No change
- 4: Insignificant change
- 3: Clear change
- 2: Considerable change
- 1: Heavy change

A result of 2 or more is needed to pass and a result of 2.4 or above is needed for being approved for intensive use.

By ege carpets

ege is one of Europe's leading companies in regards to design, development and production of unique, high-quality carpets with respect for the environment.

The company, founded in 1938, has moved with the times and possesses the carpet industry's most modern technology. ege can supply carpets with any imaginable design and in the industry's shortest lead time.

“Visit [The Urge to Explore Space](#) blog for more inspiration and knowledge”



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