

GOVERNMENT HOUSE NOTES

1844: The first GH in Stanley was a single storey wooden building to the north-west of the current house; it was erected in 1844 and served as a combined office and dwelling house until 1847 when it was used for residential purposes only. After 1859 when Governor Moore moved to the present Government House the original building was used as offices and later taken over by the Colonial Secretary and known as The Quarters. They were sold by public auction in 1929, pulled down and partly re-erected at 5 Brandon Road. [GOV/GHO/2#9] The house was demolished 2014/15 after a modern house was built behind it.



Watercolour of Government House & Offices probably circa 1845 – FIC Archives, JCNA

- 1845-1848: Governor Moody started to build the central stone block. By the end of 1847 it had cost £1,142 and work was suspended. [S14]
- 1848-1855: Governor Rennie continued the work. Over the decade the sitting room and smoking room were built but these were used as public offices only.
- 1855-1859: Governor Moore completed the central stone block. The drawing room, governor's bedroom and dressing room were built above. From 1844 to 1859 it was used as the offices of the Governor, Colonial Secretary, etc. The next portion of the house was commenced in 1858. The Governor and his family moved in and the wooden cottage formally occupied as Government House was then used as offices. [S14]
- 1859 Aug 12: James Lane, FIC Colonial Manager reports to his directors that *"It is universally condemned (by Government Officers particularly) that the Govt Workmen are chiefly*

occupied on the new Govt House & will be for the next 2 years, if it is to be finished... The present Governmt House is an excellent one, but it is to be turned into Offices & a large Wing added & the former offices to be the Governor's House, because he does not like to live in the former." By September 1859 James Lane reported that Governor Moore was "living in the old part, formerly the Govt Offices". He was still complaining about the expense in December when he wrote "It wd enlighten the Colonial Office if they wd apply for a statement of the outlay on the new Government House & the pulling to pieces the old one."

1868: Complete list of GH furniture & value in Blue Book for 1868

1869 May 23: "Government House is now furnished throughout in a substantial and comfortable manner at the public expense." [B14, 324]

1870: Conservatory 12 ft x 8 ft built connecting the drawing room and dining room.

1872 Mar 22: Governor D'Arcy reported that "This settlement has been singularly free from the calamity of a dwelling house taking fire. The first occasion of any moment took place I am sorry to say, in Government House on the afternoon of Friday the 22nd of March at 5 past 5 when suddenly the garret bedroom over the dining room was found to be in flame, and so dense and overpowering was the smoke in this very narrow confined staircase which led to the room, that it was impossible to enter it. By the prompt aid of the Garrison and the Inhabitants, the fire as you know was got under, not, however, until the room in question and the roof of the dining room were destroyed." This event highlighted the risk of fire in Stanley and a short Ordinance for fire control was brought before Executive Council two months later. [P2, 1; B20, No. 65; GOV/GHO/2#9]

1874 Blue Book report of condition of GH. Originally designed in 1844 consisted of a centre and two wings. At present the centre and right wing only are completed. The house consists of a drawing room 32 feet x 21 feet, a dining room 19 feet x 19 feet, a small study 10 ft x 10ft, a bedroom on the ground floor 12 ft x 8 ft. Off this bedroom in 1870 a conservatory 12 ft x 8 ft was built and connects the drawing and dining rooms. Upstairs there are only two bedrooms, one 21 ft x 21ft, one 11 ft x 21ft and a small room 10ft x 6ft. In a wooden building added to the original plan are the kitchen, scullery, butler's pantry, servants bedroom and outhouses. Furniture is supplied from public funds, the Governor paying a percentage on the cost price.

1870 May 17: "I am minded to give GH an air or rurality by adding to it a verandah of Musty's metal. Will you the order on the part of the govt. and get it on in your next "Chislehurst". Byng has the measurements. 10ft 6in – height of wall, 36 ft – length, 8 ft width" Governor D'Arcy to Fred E Cobb. Work commenced 7 September 1870 and the cost was £75-7-3. [S25]

1880 Dec 31: Governor Kerr wrote to the S of S for sanction to increase the accommodation of the Governor's family at Government House. [ExCo; P2, 139]

1880 Dec 31: Governor Kerr asks for permission to purchase "small but complete best services of crockery for dinner, dessert, tea & coffee as well as glass, cutlery & electro-plate, all of selected patterns chosen by Crown Agents." [B20, 16]

1881-1883 Governor Kerr added the wooden west wing roofed with shingles. Single storey timber construction with 4 bedrooms and two attics “*completely disregarded the architecture of the earlier buildings*”. [GOV/GHO/2#9]



GH circa 1884 showing the verandah & wooden west wing – photograph Rupert Anson

- 1886: Building of greenhouse with chimney, brick floor, top & front glassed. [H41, 219-20]
- 1890: An epidemic of a form of influenza complicated with bronchitis and pneumonia swept through Stanley in September and October. Governor Kerr’s two grandchildren Walter Vernon & Philip Thomas Archibald ANSON, who were visiting, died in Government House within four days of each other. Walter, age 6 months died 22 October from pulmonary collapse and Philip, age 4 years & 4 months died 26 October from pneumonia.
- 1890 Jun 19: The Secretary of State had informed Governor Kerr that under Rule 284 of the Colonial Rules and Regulations he was to pay a percentage of the Government House furniture. Previous to now the rule had not been applied to him or his predecessors. Government House furniture to be valued by J J FELTON & G TURNER, both of whom had experience as auctioneers. [ExCo P3; 39]
- 1887 Jan 18: Governor Kerr informed ExCo that the repairs which had been carried out on GH were not completed, many windows leaking badly and the Hall required lighting. The Council were unanimous that the repairs be effected as soon as possible. [ExCo; P2, 293]
- 1893 Sep 20: The Administrator, George MELVILLE brought the matter before ExCo of allowing the present structure as a conservatory being made into the front entrance as the

present one was at the back of the house too near the kitchen and almost opening into the pantry. ExCo were unanimous that it was an improvement to GH. LegCo voted £50 towards removal and reconstruction of conservatory and altering the front entrance. [ExCo P3; 195; LegCo 9 Oct 1893]

1898: ADC's office & Governor's office plus hall outside them built. A sum of £2,000 was asked for from the Land Sales Fund to cover the cost. [ExCo P3]



GH circa 1900 – photograph JCNA Felton Albums

1901 Feb 19: HE stated to ExCo that steps had been taken in connection with the erection of the new stone stables and lofts overhead built south of the main building. £200 of the cost charged to Public Works extraordinary and the balance to the general Public Works vote. [ExCo P3]

1901 Dec 31: GH described as having: five reception rooms –

- Governor's office (15' x 12' x 10')
- Drawing room (32'4" x 31' x 10')
- Dining room 19' x 18'9" x 11'6"
- Library (12'4" x 10' x 11'6")
- Small room (12' x 10' x 11'6")

Six family bedrooms –

- one (19'3" x 21' x 8')
- two (21' x 12' x 8')
- three (16'6" x 18' x 10')
- four (16'6" x 18' x 10')
- five 9' x 6' x 7'3"

one servants bedroom (13' x 9'7" x 6') and one bathroom. Heating was from fire and lighting by oil lamps; fuel at the expense of FIG and oil at the Governor's expense

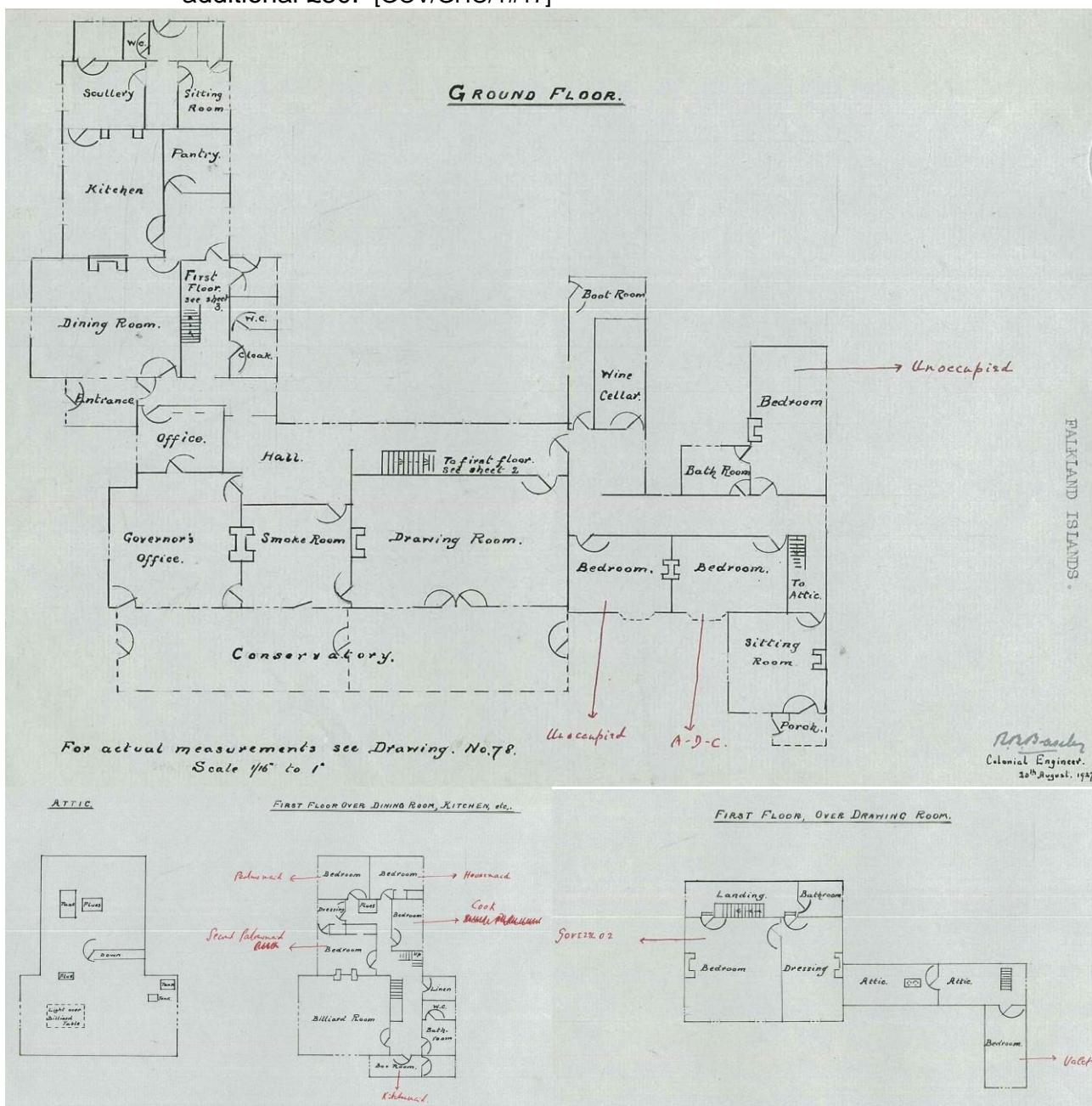
- 1901-1902: Two large conservatories built on north of building; these are typical heated Edwardian. Basement dug under the smoking room [GOV/GHO/2#9]
- 1900 May: Footings for new wing nearly completed. [B25, 203-210]
- 1901 Feb 20: Foundations completed. [B25, 203-210]
- 1901: Governor Grey-Wilson built the red brick wing at the south east end of the house. It contained a new dining room, small kitchen and offices on the ground floor, a billiard room over the dining room & servants bedrooms over the kitchen and offices, and the whole roofed with slate. [B25, 203-210] The bricks are a mixture of locally fired bricks on the lower level and 40,000 imported bricks for the upper level. The mullions of the red brick wing are stone on the east side and pre-cast concrete on the west side. The stone is said to be from Port Louis. The wing is not completed by 1904. He complains about the seventeen different roofs.
- 1902: Hot water apparatus for heating the house installed. Billiard table imported – cost £65.
- 1902 Dec 31: the new wing is described as containing:
- New dining room (24' x 19' x 10')
 - Kitchen (20' x 14'6" x 10')
 - Passage (staircase) (19' x 7'6" x 10')
 - Servants hall (10'6" x 9'6" x 10')
 - Pantry (10'6" x 9'6" x 10')
 - Scullery (12'6" x 10' x 10')
 - Larder (10' x 8'6" x 10')
 - Passage between old & new buildings (21'6" x 4' x 10')
 - Bathroom (8' x 8' x 10')
 - WC (4'6" x 8' x 10')
 - Servants WC (3'6" x 6' x 8')
 - Servants bathroom (7' x 6' x 8')
 - West porch (8' x 6' x 10')
 - South porch (7'6" x 6' x 8')
 - Meat safe (6' x 4' x 8')
 - Bedroom (15' x 10' x 8')
 - Bedroom (13'6" x 7'6" x 8')
 - Bedroom (13' x 9' x 8')
 - Bedroom (15' x 10'6" x 8')
 - Dressing room (7' x 7' x 8')
 - Billiard room (19' x 24' x 8')
 - Bathroom (8' x 8' x 8')
 - WC (4'6" x 8' x 8')
 - Linen closet (8' x 6'3" x 8')
- 1908 Aug 03: Sophie Lois Phillip SCHMETZER, cook to Governor Allardyce, was married to Charles GLEADELL at Government House.
- 1909 Sep 27: Mr & Mrs C G A ANSON; presentation of Grueze painting for Government House, hung on south wall of drawing room "in memory of many happy hours spent at Government House in the period 1884-1890". Returned to the heir, N P Anson, Nov 1947 [ExCo; P5, 30]

1920 Oct 27: ExCo approved the sum of £500 to be allowed to Governor Middleton to order certain furnishings for Government House. [ExCo; P6, 220]

1923 Jan 20: GH furniture which Governor is required to pay a percentage on assessed at £535-17-10, payable £26-15-10 [ExCo; P7, 26]

1916: New heating system installed. [GOV/GHO/1#2]

1927-1928: Governor Hodson requests that the Colonial Secretary arranges for alterations to the stone building (*old stables*) behind GH as he wished to move the servants as he had no room for guests and wished to entertain for the Xmas races. Converted to 5 bedrooms, 1 bathroom & usual offices for a cost of £400 and suitably furnished for a further £150. The work was completed by July 1928 and a lined covered corridor with windows connecting the new servants' quarters to the servants' entrance cost an additional £80. [GOV/GHO/1#17]



GH layout 20 August 1927 – plans JCNA

- 1927: A new bathroom is erected at GH at a cost of £100. [GOV/GHO/1#18]
- 1928: The old timber framed, weather boarded with iron roof peat shed measuring 30' x 14' is sold by tender to W H Sedgwick for £12, to be removed before 24 December 1928. [GOV/GHO/1#20]
- 1928 Nov 29: John Medicott ELLIS was married to Estelle CLEMENT in Government House.
- 1932 Jun: 35' x 15' x 13' plus 7' to ridge timber building clad with corrugated iron and containing 4 stalls and harness room with loft over and a 400 gallon water tank in Government paddock used as stables sold by tender to Messrs Miller and Morrison for £30. [GOV/GHO/1#27]
- 1934 Dec 30: Governor Henniker-Heaton enquires about the cost of building a squash court at Government House. [GOV/GHO/1#30]
- 1935 Sep 28: A fire caused by a spark from the boiler breaks out in the large greenhouse, which measures 90' x 14' x 9'6" constructed from brick on the lower part & timber and glazing on the upper part with a boiler house at the west end constructed of brick & concrete. Most of the damage to the roof of the boiler house with some damage to top plates & sashes of the adjoining cucumber house. [GOV/GHO/1#32]
- 1936 Sep: A second hand 1935 Austin Ascot saloon car is purchased for £145 to replace the current GH car, a Morris motor car given to the Medical Department in Jan 1937. [GOV/GHO/1#34]
- 1945 Feb: Laid-out garden in front of Government House started. [FI Weekly News 15 Feb 1945]
- 1946: Red brick wing still not completed. East end main entrance opened out by the removal of obsolete and non-weight carrying walls. The new rooms over are a ladies retiring room, or bedroom if required, and lavatory shared with the billiard room. [GOV/GHO/2#9] Porch originally opening out from the north wall transferred to the west end of the house; over its door is a representation of the Royal Arms. The "official" part of the house is moved to the west end. The walls in the central block are stripped & covered with ply in mock panelling and painted. The old Governor's room & ADC's room converted into a private drawing room and study. [GOV/GHO/2#9]



- 1946 Feb 15: Front garden set out by Howell Evans per instructions of the Governor. [Weekly News 15 Feb 1946]
- 1947 Jan-Mar: An additional bay window to be added to the Governor's office. The two existing windows in Shackleton's Room (*west end*) filled in and a single new window to match the ADC's office window. [GOV/GHO/2#9]
- 1947 Aug: Dry stone wall to be completed as soon as labour is free. [GOV/GHO/2#3]
- 1948 Nov 08: A new piano was requested out of the Town Hall insurance money as the GH one had been lent to the Town Hall and was lost in the 1944 fire.
- 1949: Passé libra inserted where the west drive connects with Ross Road. [GOV/GHO/2#9]
- 1953 Oct 19: Suggested that the "*present oak horror*" is replaced with a new mahogany dining room table and chairs. [GOV/GHO/2#9]
- 1956 Aug 11: "*Work on Government House has exposed fresh horrors and we are further committed there.*" [GOV/GHO/2#9]
- 1956/7: Governor's bedroom panelled and refurbished for Prince Phillip's visit in 1957.
- 1965: Double bedroom in the red brick wing formed by joining two rooms into one.
- 1995 Oct: A restoration team from the British firm of Millbrook Industries Ltd, team leader David Birch, were in GH restoring furniture and pictures including the large gilt mirror in the drawing room, and a picture of Queen Victoria dating back to 1845.
- 1997 Jul: A major refit was started including replacing wiring, plumbing and single-glazed windows. The West Wing offices, apart from the Governor's office were practically gutted and then rebuilt. [Article in Penguin News 22 August 1997]
- 1999 Jun 03: Government House, the Governor's offices and the former stable block (used as staff quarters) were designated buildings of architectural and historic interest.

Other:

The long passage to the old section was called the Straits of Magellan. Gov Hodson 22 Aug 1927

The stone in the fireplaces in the drawing room and the sitting room came from Charles Point, Port William. The fireplaces were designed by Colonel James Austen Woodgate, executive engineer, and built by Thomas Braxton, a local stonemason. Thomas Braxton also built the two stone pillars at the eastern approach to GH and the steps in the north lawns.

