

Lighting in hotels

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Light is the sole medium of spatial interpretation and incorporation of lighting, whether natural or artificial, has always been an indispensable part of space planning. In hospitality design, emphasis is placed on providing built environments that are visually interesting, intriguing, mystical, magical and highly themed for the end users. Simply put, good lighting is the future for us.

Role of light in the overall guest experience

Lighting, while creating the most dynamic of images, is intimately responsible for the well-being of the guest. A role, that when taken seriously, creates an ambience that elevates his physical and emotional state to a higher level. Good lighting has the ability to create lasting memories, emotional connections and memorable conversations.

Both interior and outdoor hospitality lighting needs to be flexible and dynamic and provide visual continuity while maintaining the individual identities of each space but creating a space within a space. The luminous process starts at the drop-off or entrance porch leading up to the reception counter. It carries one through the grand atrium/s and restaurant/s or lounge/s, through the well lit lift lobbies and finally to the guest rooms. The process is one of transitioning through outdoor,



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public, semi-private and ultimately private spaces. It is all about providing spatially rich illuminated environs, in oneness to the guest, elevating his experience to a level that he feels compelled or delighted to repeat.

Latest technology in hotel lighting

The 'new' big thing in lighting design is the ability to have better control and more energy efficiency. Light sources are improving tremendously and a lot of research is being carried out on various light sources. LEDs are going to be widely used in the hotel industry, being recommended by lighting designers around the world. However, high capital cost is still a concern for many hoteliers. Infrared halogen sources which are more efficient than standard halogens are also available with high lumen package with low wattage. CFLs are available in a variety of sizes and shapes for practically every application. Furthermore, the quality of CFLs have dramatically improved with high efficacy and performance demands as well as requirements such as instant-on and excellence in colour rendition.

Suitable lights

Lighting design needs to be integrated with the architecture and decor of the individual hotel brand. It is, therefore, in many cases, specific to the language of the operator. The common thread is to provide a sense of comfort and safety.

In the guestrooms, the lighting needs to be aesthetically pleasing while providing a functional and comfortable at-

mosphere that guests expect of a private living space.

Bathrooms require various lighting moods within one space. For starters, it is important to make sure that all fittings are suitable for wet areas (appropriate IP rating). To create a cosy atmosphere in your bathroom, consider a light source in an alcove or around the bottom of the bath or maybe colour changing settings behind it. A downlight above the bath is also nice, as it creates an interesting effect on the ceiling when full. Mirrors require brighter lighting and fixtures on either side provide well distributed light.

One of the biggest challenges for lighting is banquet/function halls. Mood lighting inside may be needed for varied events. Company meetings will need job lighting, spotlights and podium lights for speakers and also capability to show video or slides and to use computers. Trade exhibits will need great general lighting of the entire space, in addition electrical points at individual booths should be provided. All of this demands an enormous amount of electricity, which must be hidden in wall panels or beneath the flooring to keep the large banks of connections and cables out of guests' view.

The light fixtures themselves may be mobile, such as chandeliers with power winches to be moved up or down from the ceiling as essential. Sconces, recessed lighting, rope lights, and spotlights all help provide a good lighting environment.

Conference rooms are comparatively simpler to design because they primarily require functional lighting. Fluor-

rescent fixtures are common to use but preferably with dimmable ballast. Dimmable halogen or compact fluorescent downlights can be used with correct electrical looping to produce the desired effect.

Corridor lighting should be designed for use through the day. Many decorative compact fluorescent fixtures are available for hallways and lobbies, such as surface- and pendant-mounts as well as wall sconces. Due to the long operating hours in these hard-to-reach areas, long-life energy-efficient sources are desired. LED's is fast becoming a choice due to its long life and capability to produce less heat in corridors.

Lighting of luxury hotel rooms

Lighting of luxury rooms should be based on the emotional value of the user. One should be able to change the environment with the press of a button. Lighting should be simple, straightforward, dynamic and should tempt the guest to set the mood of the room. Different lighting scenes can be provided for different ambiances and also for work spaces within the same room.

Lighting of budget hotel rooms

Lighting should be very themed and pre-set for assigned tasks. Specific scenes can be created depending upon the spatial quality of the room with emphasis given to ambient lighting, task lighting and night lighting. Effects

of highly cultivated scenario's can be rendered for the business traveller.

Hotel lobby

There is no single/specific design principle to follow in the lighting design of lobbies. It is defined by the nature of the hotel, luxury or budget, with due significance given to the high points or image of the specific project. There is always a play of natural daylight and artificially provided light within the ambience of the hotel lobby. This has to be achieved systematically by curtailing the ingress of daylight for the right light requirement for the space. A mix of chandeliers and other decorative fixtures with CFL/Halogen down lighters can be provided for a grand and posh look for reception/concierge/bell desk areas. Subtle lighting can be provided for other public spaces.

Facade lighting

Lighting the facade of a hotel adds visual appeal and makes the structure stand out and gives the structure its identity. Of course, colour rendition is usually a priority so metal halides are always a preferred choice depending upon the exterior definition of the facade. Media facades are fast becoming an option for small hotels as they have the ability to intrigue a guest and make a bold statement in terms of design aesthetics and physical presence. Although dynamic lighting (colour changing LED) is an option, it should form a part of the design





vocabulary only if imperative for a specific project and if the lighting designer sees a justification in its usage.

Energy savings/eco friendly lighting options with cost implications

CFLs can achieve savings up to 75% and a 13W CFL can replace a 60W incandescent bulb but all this application cannot be done without any prior light planning as per spatial requirements and effects. As LED's evolve and become better designed and prolific in both the residential and commercial markets across the globe, the advantages will eclipse all other lighting technologies. Unlike incandescent light bulbs that waste over 80% of the electrical current heating up the metal filaments to a temperature high enough to generate light, LED's generate virtually no heat and thus utilise a fraction of the energy required to produce an equivalent lumen of lighting. When it comes down to energy efficiency, no other lighting technology compares to LED. Because LED's are so efficient, you can literally save as much as 90% off your electrical lighting bills.

Preferred products/brands in lighting

Preference for a certain product/brand is dictated by the nature of the project. All light sources (Incandescent, CFL, Metal Halide, LED) are used depending upon the typology (residential, corporate, hospitality, heritage) to

create a sustainable interior and/or exterior luminous environment for clients and end-users. Products could be recommended or specified from India as well as Asia, South East Asia, Europe, USA and other countries globally to adequately render the image envisioned for the specific project.

Case Study: Raas Haveli, Jodhpur, forty-room boutique hotel

Raas Haveli is a 40 room boutique hotel in the heart of old Jodhpur city with the famous Mehrangarh Fort in the background. This hotel is a mix of the older heritage structure with a new added contemporary block of rooms in Jodhpur Stone. The objective of lighting in this project was to create elemental accentuations for the architectural details, edges, jharokhas while maintaining low light levels through the whole site. New architecture has been illuminated from within and renders an effect of a lantern at night time. All the external lighting is on dimming system which makes the space very flexible in terms of the usage for varied occasions. The challenge of working on an existing stone building was tremendous but certain lighting details were envisaged to provide the right lighting environment for Raas Haveli. The experience of walking in the landscape is very subtle with glare-free fixtures and creating the right accentuations for a warm, mystical space in the hotel.