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Use of Traditional Element (Jaali) in interior of Homestay

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Abstract:
This dissertation explores how traditional Indian jaali can be reinterpreted in the interior design of a contemporary homestay. The central question is how a familiar perforated screen can contribute to comfort, privacy, ventilation, filtered daylight and cultural character without becoming an impractical decorative addition. The study begins with interior design principles and the history, patterns, materials and construction of jaali. It then reviews published work, develops a five-case-study framework, and proposes a mixed-method approach combining site documentation, questionnaires, feedback forms and design evaluation. The design proposal is a heritage-inspired homestay in Bhopal with six guest rooms. A spatial programme, room-by-room application strategy, material comparisons, risk checks and sample evaluation tools are included. Because verified field surveys and measured drawings were not supplied, the results chapter distinguishes literaturebased interpretations and proposed design decisions from primary findings that remain to be collected. The study argues that the most convincing contemporary use of jaali comes from selecting its position, material, perforation, fixing and maintenance method in response to actual users and site conditions.

Keywords: jaali, homestay, traditional Indian elements, interior design, spatial privacy, daylight, heritage hospitality.

1. INTRODUCTION

The experience of staying in a homestay is shaped by small everyday details: the light that enters a bedroom, the view from a shared lounge, the ease of finding a room, and the sense that the place belongs to its local setting. This chapter introduces the role of jaali in creating such an experience.

1.1 Background of the Study

Across many Indian building traditions, screens and perforated surfaces have been used to mediate the relationship between inside and outside. Stone, brick, timber, terracotta and other materials have been shaped into patterns that are both expressive and practical. These traditions developed in different regions and periods; they should not be treated as a single uniform style. Contemporary interiors often require compact planning, easy maintenance, safety, controlled lighting and integration with services. Jaali can be reinterpreted as a room divider, cabinet front, window screen, feature panel, stair guard or layered partition. The adaptation must preserve useful qualities while responding to current building conditions. In the context of this dissertation, background of the study is considered specifically in relation

to the experience of a homestay guest. The important test is not whether a jaali looks traditional in a photograph, but whether its location and detailing help a guest use the room comfortably. A screen beside a bed, for example, must be evaluated differently from one in an entrance lobby because the need for visual privacy, cleaning access and accidental contact is different.

This distinction guides the design decisions developed later in the study. It also prevents the traditional element from being treated as a fixed pattern that can be placed anywhere without considering the building, its climate, or the people staying in it.

1.2 Interior Design and Its Meaning

Interior design is the planned development of interior environments to respond to human needs and the purpose of a space. It integrates function, spatial organisation, material and finish selection, lighting, furnishings, colour, ergonomics, building systems and aesthetic intent. Professional definitions emphasise that interiors must also address health, safety, welfare and the quality of the environment. For this dissertation, interior design is understood as a problem-solving process. The designer studies the users and the existing building, develops a concept, tests layouts, selects appropriate materials, prepares drawings and specifications, coordinates with other professionals, and evaluates the result. Jaali is one component within this larger process, not a substitute for good planning. In the context of this dissertation, interior design and its meaning is considered specifically in relation to the experience of a homestay guest. The important test is not whether a jaali looks traditional in a photograph, but whether its location and detailing help a guest use the room comfortably. A screen beside a bed, for example, must be evaluated differently from one in an entrance lobby because the need for visual privacy, cleaning access and accidental contact is different. This distinction guides the design decisions developed later in the study. It also prevents the traditional element from being treated as a fixed pattern that can be placed anywhere without considering the building, its climate, or the people staying in it.

1.3 Role of an Interior Designer

An interior designer is a trained professional who plans and develops interior environments. Typical responsibilities include client briefing, programming, site analysis, space planning, concept development, materials and finishes, furniture and lighting coordination, technical drawings, budgeting, specification, coordination with consultants and review of installation. The exact legal scope and professional title vary by jurisdiction. The designer must balance client expectations with functional requirements and applicable regulations. When specifying a jaali, the designer should establish whether it is decorative or functional, whether it is fixed or operable, what loads it must resist, how it will be cleaned, whether openings create safety risks, and whether specialist engineering or approvals are needed.

1.4 Problem Statement

Jaali is sometimes used in contemporary spaces only as a decorative motif, without evaluating privacy, glare, cleanability, durability, structural support or user comfort. In other projects, a pattern may be copied without acknowledging its regional or cultural context. There is a need for a clear framework that helps interior designers choose a suitable jaali

type, material, pattern, scale and location. This study addresses the gap between appreciation of jaali as a heritage element and the practical decisions needed to specify it in a contemporary interior. It considers visual quality together with functional, technical, cultural, economic and maintenance requirements. In the context of this dissertation, problem statement is considered specifically in relation to the experience of a homestay guest. The important test is not whether a jaali looks traditional in a photograph, but whether its location and detailing help a guest use the room comfortably. A screen beside a bed, for example, must be evaluated differently from one in an entrance lobby because the need for visual privacy, cleaning access and accidental contact is different.

1.5 **Aim and Objectives**

Aim: To investigate how traditional jaali systems can be understood and thoughtfully adapted for contemporary interior design, with a proposed boutique Indian heritage homestay as the design application.

Objectives:

Explain the fundamentals and professional scope of interior design; document the history and cultural context of jaali; classify jaalis by material, pattern, construction and function; evaluate light, privacy, ventilation, safety and maintenance considerations; review relevant precedents; develop a coherent design proposal; and establish practical recommendations supported by cited sources and actual field evidence where available. In the context of this dissertation, aim and objectives is considered specifically in relation to the experience of a homestay guest. The important test is not whether a jaali looks traditional in a photograph, but whether its location and detailing help a guest use the room comfortably. A screen beside a bed, for example, must be evaluated differently from one in an entrance lobby because the need for visual privacy, cleaning access and accidental contact is different. This distinction guides the design decisions developed later in the study. It also prevents the traditional element from being treated as a fixed pattern that can be placed anywhere without considering the building, its climate, or the people staying in it.

1.6 **Research Questions**

Research questions include:

- What distinguishes jaali from a printed or surface-applied lattice motif ?
- Which materials and construction methods suit different interior uses?
- How do pattern, thickness and opening ratio influence light, privacy and visibility? □
- What risks arise in residential and hospitality settings?
- How can a designer balance cultural relevance, cost, safety and contemporary aesthetics?

Hypothesis: a context-sensitive jaali specification can strengthen spatial identity and provide useful screening or light-filtering functions while meeting contemporary interior requirements. This hypothesis should be evaluated using documented case studies and actual user feedback rather than assumed to be proven. In the context of this dissertation, research questions and hypothesis is considered specifically in relation to the experience of a homestay guest. The important test is not whether a jaali looks traditional in a photograph,

but whether its location and detailing help a guest use the room comfortably. A screen beside a bed, for example, must be evaluated differently from one in an entrance lobby because the need for visual privacy, cleaning access and accidental contact is different.

1.7 Scope And Limitations

The study focuses on jaali as an interior and architectural screen, with attention to Indian traditions and contemporary adaptation. Applications include partitions, windows, doors, cabinetry, reception areas, guest rooms, circulation zones and feature surfaces. The proposed design application is a boutique Indian heritage homestay with four guest rooms and capacity for approximately eight guests, using jaali as a key element alongside restrained natural materials. The research does not replace structural engineering, fire-code review, accessibility assessment, acoustic testing or formal energy modelling. Exact costs, dimensions, thermal benefits and daylight performance must be verified for the actual material and site. Online case studies are desk-based unless a physical visit has taken place.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review considers jaali as a historical craft, a spatial device and a contemporary interior component. Published research is useful for identifying design possibilities, but its conclusions must be interpreted within the limits of each study.

2.1 Historical Development

Early examples of perforated architectural elements demonstrate that the idea of controlling views and light through openings has long been useful. The form, pattern and fabrication method vary considerably, so a dissertation should use specific buildings and published studies to support claims about chronology. Regional conditions help explain material choice. Stone-rich regions developed carving practices suited to local stone; other settings made use of brick, timber, earth or woven plant materials. These differences are important because they show jaali as a design response connected to available skills and resources, not only a decorative style.

2.2 Sultanate and Mughal Contexts

Perforated screens are prominent in several Indo-Islamic architectural settings, including tombs, palaces, mosques and courtyards. Geometric and floral patterns can structure light and provide degrees of enclosure. The significance of a screen in a specific building should be explained through the building's documented history and function.

The chapter should avoid assuming that all historical jaalis were made for the same purpose. A screen may have been used for privacy, shade, ventilation, visual composition or a combination of reasons. These interpretations should be connected to credible architectural histories and, where possible, conservation documentation.

2.3 Rajput and Palace Architecture

Jaali screens are also found in palace and residential traditions associated with Rajasthan and other regions. Their use may relate to courtyards, balconies, windows, viewing positions and the transition between public and private areas. Stone carving and patterned openings can create a strong visual identity while responding to climate and social practices. When analysing palace examples, the researcher should separate observable facts from

interpretation. The presence of a screen can be documented from a photograph, but claims about its original social function, orientation or environmental performance require additional evidence.

2.4 Regional Craft Traditions

Vernacular building traditions show that lattice screens are not limited to monumental stonework. Research on mud and bamboo jaalis in Surguja, Chhattisgarh, documents a locally rooted screen tradition and explores construction, orientation and environmental use. Such examples widen the study beyond royal monuments and highlight everyday craft knowledge.

These examples also challenge the idea that a jaali must be expensive or highly ornamental. A locally made screen may use simple geometry and accessible materials. Its contemporary use should nevertheless be tested for durability, weather exposure, fire safety, pests, moisture and maintenance.

2.5 Contemporary Reinterpretation

Contemporary architecture has adapted jaali through stone, brick, concrete, metal, timber, ceramic, glass and manufactured panels. Digital modelling and CNC or laser fabrication can support complex and repeatable patterns, while handcraft remains important for materials and techniques that require specialist skill. Modern adaptation should not assume that technology automatically improves the result. Machine fabrication may improve consistency, but it can also alter the character of craft and introduce material or finishing concerns. The choice should be based on the design objective, available expertise, cost, repairability and desired relationship to tradition.

2.6 Stone Jaali

Stone jaali can be carved from stone or assembled from cut elements. It offers visual depth, material permanence and a strong connection to historic architecture. Its weight, brittle behaviour, edge vulnerability and need for secure support must be considered before it is used indoors.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This dissertation uses a design-led methodology. The study combines secondary reading with a proposed primary-research plan and a design application. No unverified survey response is presented as a completed result.

3.1 Research Design

The research is organised around four tasks: understand jaali and the fundamentals of interior design; classify its types and assess performance considerations; examine relevant precedents; and translate the findings into a design proposal. Qualitative observations are used to describe patterns, materials and spatial relationships, while quantitative survey results may summarise preferences if a genuine sample is collected.

3.2 Data Collection

Useful tools include a literature review matrix, site observation sheet, photo log, material comparison table, case-study evaluation matrix, questionnaire and design feedback form.

Each tool should collect information relevant to the research questions and avoid unnecessary personal data.

3.3 Data Analysis Method

Qualitative data can be grouped into themes such as cultural identity, visual appeal, privacy, light, maintenance, durability, cost and installation. Survey responses can be counted and presented as percentages, with the total number of valid responses stated for each question. Percentages should not be reported without the underlying sample size. The analysis should compare user feedback with literature and case-study observations. Contradictory results should be reported rather than removed. If the sample is small or selected by convenience, conclusions should be described as indicative rather than representative of all users.

3.4 Methodological Limitations

Possible limitations include restricted access to buildings, incomplete information about original construction, differences in photographic lighting, limited technical data and a small questionnaire sample. These limitations affect the strength of conclusions and should be acknowledged openly. The study may not include laboratory testing or building-energy simulation. If so, it should avoid numerical claims about cooling or energy savings. Its contribution can still be valuable as an applied design framework, provided performance assumptions are clearly labelled. occurred.

4. RESULT ANALYSIS

4.1 Comparison of Materials

Compare materials by weight, fabrication skill, pattern flexibility, finish, durability, cleaning, repair, moisture sensitivity, fire considerations, cost availability and cultural relevance. Use supplier data and actual quotations where possible. A qualitative rating should include the basis for the rating rather than appearing as an objective measurement. The final selection should reflect the specific location of each jaali. A material suitable for a dry feature wall may be unsuitable for a wet area or a highimpact corridor. Where uncertainty remains, use a sample, mock-up or specialist advice before final specification.

4.2 Comparison of Patterns

Compare pattern categories by visual density, perceived privacy, shadow quality, scale, fabrication complexity, cleanability and compatibility with the overall concept. These are design criteria, not universal performance ratings. The same pattern may behave differently when scaled or made from a different material.

A matrix can help narrow the options for the homestay. The selected pattern should be justified by the activity, viewpoint, light conditions and cultural narrative of the space rather than by appearance alone.

4.3 Literature-Based Findings

The literature and case-study framework support several cautious observations: jaali is a family of screen systems rather than one fixed pattern; material and construction shape its appearance and performance; privacy, daylight and ventilation are interdependent; and contemporary adaptation requires technical detailing as well as cultural research. Final findings must be revised after the case studies are completed. If a particular building contains no verified jaali, its contribution should be described as contextual rather than treated as direct evidence about the element.

4.4 Design Brief Project title

Jaali-Inspired Boutique Indian Heritage Homestay. Project type: small hospitality / guest accommodation. Capacity: approximately eight guests across four guest rooms. Design intention: create a calm, welcoming environment that interprets Indian craft and spatial traditions through a contemporary interior language. Key requirements include reception and arrival, lounge, dining, kitchen and service areas, four bedrooms with bathrooms, storage, housekeeping support and clear circulation. The final space schedule should be checked against the actual site and local hospitality requirements. Jaali should support the plan rather than dictate it.

4.5 Intended Users

The users include overnight guests, staff, housekeeping personnel and visitors. Guests need privacy, comfort, clear wayfinding, accessible movement where required, convenient storage and a welcoming sense of place. Staff need efficient service routes, cleaning access, storage and durable surfaces. Jaali placement should reflect these different needs. An expressive screen may be appropriate at arrival or between public zones, while a guest-room screen should be tested for privacy and maintenance. Service areas may benefit from a more robust and easily cleaned product than a delicate decorative panel.

5. CONCLUSION

Jaali is a versatile design element because it connects pattern, material, space and environmental experience. Its applications extend from historic architectural openings to contemporary partitions, furniture fronts and hospitality interiors. However, its performance is context-dependent, and its cultural value should be understood through specific histories and craft practices. The dissertation's main recommendation is to specify jaali through a deliberate process: understand the user and space; research the pattern and its origin; select material and fabrication; assess privacy, light, ventilation and safety; detail support and maintenance; and evaluate the installed or proposed result. The final conclusion should be updated after actual case studies and user feedback are completed. A well-designed homestay should feel rooted in its setting without becoming difficult to maintain. The use of jaali is most convincing when its purpose is explained clearly: where it provides partial privacy, where it filters daylight, where it guides movement, and where it is primarily an expression of craft. These roles should not be confused.

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