

Chronological Progression of Interior Design in Bangladesh with the Historical Faction and Scrutiny

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Abstract

The study of Interior design history of any country or society signifies the history of the settlement of the particular society, their level of culture, heritage, education and environment. All these several aspects indicate to the originality, individuality or in a word, 'Design statement' of a specific society or country. Design Statements serve to present intent, process, and the context of work. They vary from addressing a specific piece to looking at the overall approach to design. Design as art is the choices that the designers make in distinguishing themselves from others, and design statement is an expression of those choices. Modern human life actually evolves within one Interior to another. One may prefer open air, cool breeze or open field once or twice in a day but for resting purpose, executing household works, education or profession the ultimate destination is within the enclosure of four walls, a ceiling and a floor, an Interior space. So Interior plays a very significant role in life. There are several perspectives to look into Interior design; it may be professional or armature but the important aspect of it is impossible to escape.

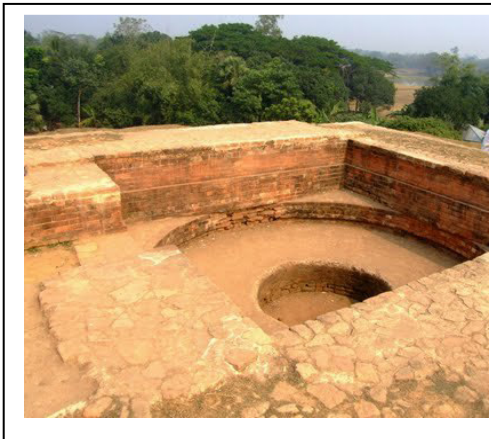
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Introduction:

The study of interior design, its development and changes throughout the history, is a useful way both to explore the past and to make sense of the spaces in which modern life is lived. Professional interior designers are expected to study design history, to know the practices of the past in terms of "styles," and to know the names and the nature of the contributions of those individuals who generated the most interesting and influential approaches to design. Adding design statement to Interiors or thinking about it based on own style, culture and heritage is least practiced in Bangladesh. The Civilization history may be one of the major reasons behind this. Urbanization in this part started at a limited level during Mughal era and built on ideas and styles borrowed from Mughal Architecture. Almost all historical sites, mosques, forts or other establishments bear this example of influence. Afterwards during British colonial rule, western styles and themes started to be adopted in this Interior design. And sometimes a blend of two, created a mixed style. In the following paragraphs there will be elaborate exploration of step by step development and changes in the Interior design history of Bangladesh and the different influences worked behind those transformations. It will be easier if the study of interior design history of Bangladesh, its development and change through decades is done within three basic eras like classical, medieval and modern. The classical period was mostly influenced by Buddhist and Hindu Architecture. Whereas medieval is basically Muslim influenced and modern era is a continuation of British raj to Bangladesh republic.

The Classical Period:

Buddhist and Hindu Jain influences in Bangladeshi Interior Design history. Mahasthangarh is the oldest known city in Bangladesh. The word 'Mahasthan' means a place that has excellent sanctity and 'garh' means fort. The extensive ruin of Mahasthangarh presents a glorious past of about two thousand and five hundred years of Pundranagar. The capital city of ancient Pundra is Vardhan Bhukti. The site spreading along the western bank of Korotoa, is situated about 13 km north of Bogra town. This earliest and largest city of entire Bengal, dated back to at least the 3rd century B.C., is fortified successively by mud and brick wall.



The whole area is rich in Hindu and Buddhist sites. The Buddhists were here until at least the 11th century. Their most glorious period was the 8th to the 11th centuries, when the Buddhist Pala emperors of North-Bengal ruled. It is from this period that most of the visible remains belong. The citadel was probably first constructed under the Mauryan empire in the 3rd century B.C. It fell into disuse around the time of Mughal invasions. Most of the visible brickwork dates from the 8th century, apart from that added during restoration. Outside the citadel, there is a remaining of a 6th-century Govinda Bhita Hindu Temple, which looks like a broken-down step pyramid.

The earliest surviving Buddhist interiors are preaching halls, cut into solid rock to create interior design that is without any corresponding exteriors. Such early structures have a high vaulted central space flanked by side aisles. The form of earlier wooden structures of similar design can be estimated from the interior patterns of arched ribs that form the vaulted ceilings in this rock-cut structures. At the front, a large window is placed above the entrance portal, giving the only light to the interior.

Hinduism, produced in later centuries temples that were buildings of a symmetrical plan, with a statue of a deity at one end of the internal hall. A corbeled stone roof over the interior shrine rose to a great height that was reflected by the external mass of the building. Horizontal moldings were closely spaced on the tall, upwardly tapering exteriors, forming bands that were filled with sculptures of gods and other figures in every imaginable grouping and activity.

Medieval Period

Muslim influenced in Bangladeshi Interior Design history. A marked characteristic of Islamic design is the avoidance of any depiction of human, animal, or plant forms as elements of design or decoration, as required by the teaching of the Koran. This necessity compelled the development of a vocabulary of surface ornament of purely geometric character in a combination of calligraphic elements using text from the Koran or other religious works.

Lalbagh Fort

Lalbagh Fort (also Fort Aurangabad) is an incomplete 17th century Mughal fort complex that stands proudly before the Buriganga River in the southwestern part of Dhaka, Bangladesh. The construction was started in 1678 AD by Mughal Subahdar Muhammad Azam Shah who was son of Emperor Aurangzeb and later emperor himself. His successor, Shaista Khan, did not continue the work, though he stayed in Dhaka up to 1688. For long the fort was considered to be a combination of three buildings (the mosque, the tomb of Bibi Pari and the Diwan-i-Aam), with two gateways and a portion of the partly damaged fortification wall. The southern fortification wall has a huge bastion in the southwestern corner. On the north of the south fortification wall were the utility buildings, stable, administration block, and its western part accommodated a beautiful roof-garden with arrangements for fountains and a water reservoir.



Mosques

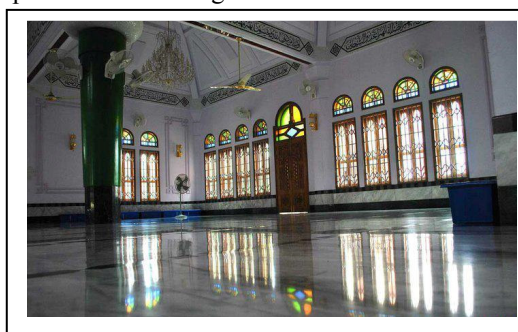
Muslims erected mosques wherever necessary to meet the fundamental religious requirement of congregational prayers five times a day. Thus, the mosque became the symbol and the central feature of the Islamic way of life, and it formed an inseparable part of Muslim settlements over the course of time. In a Muslim majority country like Bangladesh, mosques serve as the focal point of each neighborhood.

Apart from their principal religious purpose, mosques also act as a nucleus of sociocultural activities and as a symbol of identity in a locality.



Darasbari Mosque (before reconstruction): Chapai Nawabgang

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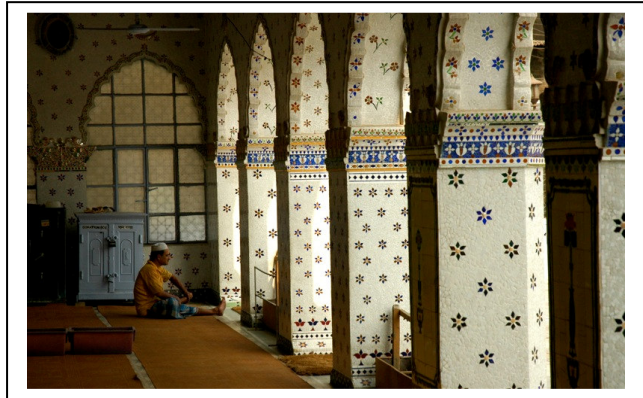
Baitul Aman Mosque, Guthia, Barisal



Arches: Satgambuj Mosque

The key structure in any Islamic community was the Mosque. Unlike the temples and churches of other religions, the mosque is not a “house of God” but rather a prayer hall, where the faithful assemble to pray, facing toward Mecca, and to hear readings from the Koran. Although mosques vary greatly in design and in size, they

share certain characteristics. The enclosed portion of the mosque is sometimes partly an open space but is also often columned, forming long aisles. A small niche on one wall is the Mihrab marking the direction to face toward Mecca. Another usual element is a Mimbar or pulpit for preaching and Koran readings. There is often an open court in front of the mosque proper, with a pool or fountain for the washing called for by Muslim practice before entering the mosque itself. A tower (or sometimes several towers) related to the mosque is known as a Minaret. It has a specific function as a high point from which a call to prayer can be made to summon worshippers to the mosque several times each day.



Star Mosque Interior



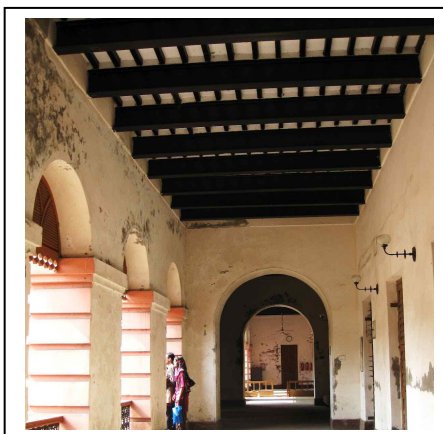
Mihrab

Interior Design in Bangladesh during the British Raj:

In the British colonial age predominantly representative buildings of the Indo-European style developed, from a mixture of mainly Indian, European and Central Asian (Islamic) components. After the glorious Mughal Architecture, India saw the development of the Indo-European Architectural heritage, which was the amalgamation of the styles of the European countries, like Portugal (Portuguese), Holland (Dutch), France (French) and finally culminating in the colonial occupation by the British. The buildings built by the British were not as elegant and grand as that of the Mughals, but were civic and utilitarian buildings and commemorative structures. Amongst the more prominent works are Ahsan manzil, Rose garden, Korotia Jamindar bari.

Ahsan Manzil

Ahsan Manzil is one of the most significant architectural monuments of Bangladesh. The building structure was established on a raised platform of 1 meter, the two-storied palace measures 125.4m by 28.75m. The height of the ground floor is 5 meters and the height of the first floor is 5.8 meters. The thickness of the walls of the palace is about 0.78 meters. There are porticos of 5 meters height on the northern and southern sides of the palace. The palace Ahsan Manzil is divided into two parts: the eastern side and the western side. The eastern building with the dome is called the Rangmahal and the western side with the living rooms is called Andarmahal. The high octagonal dome is placed on the central round room. There is a large drawing room, card room, library, state room and two other guest rooms are located on the east side of the palace.



Wooden stairs in the room that is attached to the north of the domed room roof

The ballroom, the Hindustani room and few residential rooms are situated on the western side. A beautiful vaulted artificial ceiling, made of wood, decorates the drawing room and the Jalsaghar. A splendid dining hall and few smaller rooms are placed on the west part. The floors of the dining and Darbar Halls are decorated with white, green and yellow colored ceramic tiles. The famous store room, where the valuables of the Nawabs used to be stored, was in the middle of the five rooms located in the western half of the ground floor. Along with those rooms a Darbar Hall or assembly hall and a chest room is also place there.



There are attractive wooden stairs in the room that is attached to the north of the domed room. The balusters were ornamented with vine leaves made of iron along the railing of the stairs. The wooden ceiling of the room, decorated with geometric designs, is very elegant. The verandas and rooms are covered with marble. The doorways are placed within semicircular arches. The inner doors had multi-colored glasses. Wooden beams supported the roof of these rooms. The architecture and the decoration is one of a kind in whole Bangladesh.

Rose Garden

Rose garden an architectural legacy of British Raj, a most beautiful mansion ever built in Dhaka during British period. The spectacular villa with lush ground and sprawling garden proudly stands on its own raiment to watch everything around it. The noticeable aspect of the mansion, is the detailed and intricate design that are evidence almost in every single part of the house i.e., on the four tall Corinthian columns, the semirural arches over the window, the staircase banisters and balconies and the parapet.



This lavish room was the Jalsha Ghar of the palace



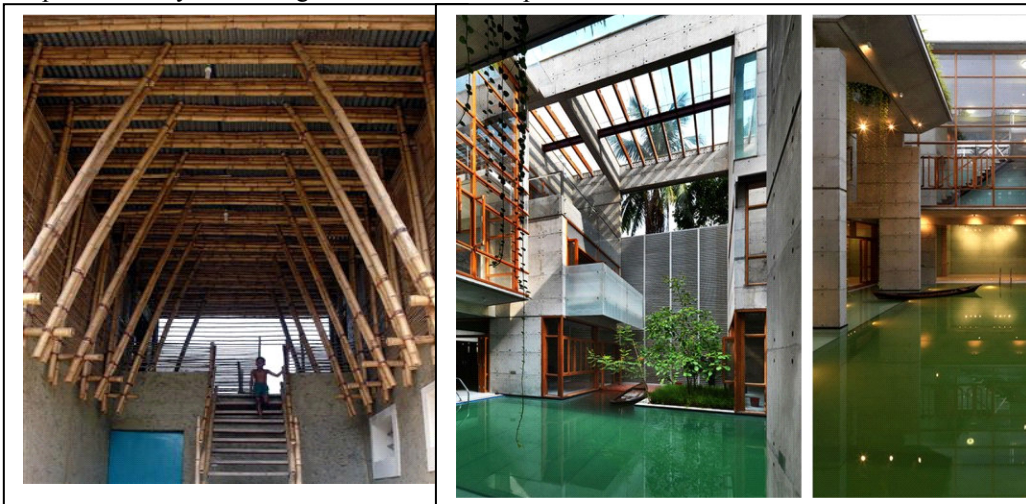
The most attractive spiral stair from first floor to roof

The main attraction of the white villa is the dance hall room which boasts 16 doors. Ten of the doors are made of Belgian green glass and the rest of them are of white mirror. The ceiling used to be ornate with hand pointed motifs and delicate glass work. A semi-circular balcony projects from the first floor providing a panoramic view of the grounds. The balcony is flanked on both sides by two smaller balconies.

The attraction of the mansion is the spiral staircase with intricate patterns that are congruous with the motifs depicted in the rest of the mansion. The staircase leads to the roof. A hemispherical dome sits at the center of the roof. The dome consists of a series of short Corinthian columns and rests on an octagonal body.

Contemporary Interior Design in Bangladesh:

The profession of interior design in Bangladesh has been a consequence of the development of society and the complex architecture that has resulted from the development of industrial processes. The pursuit of effective use of space, user well-being and functional design has contributed to the development of the contemporary interior design profession. The work span of an interior designer start from designing, remodeling, and creating theme based environments for apartments and restaurants or in case of designing an office space workspace appraisal or retail shops on the way to creating a new and vibrant space in which to do business.



Use of local sustainable materials in contemporary interior design in Bangladesh

Recently as the society progressed and interior designers of Bangladesh are trying to recreate the missing link of their urban and rural culture. While working on these influences interior designers should treat both aesthetic and function equally. As these two complements each other.

As an example Interior design in a home, If everything is about emphasizing on aesthetic it loses its' homey feeling and becomes museum like. In the same manner If everything is about function the home loses its' beauty. Again when applied to a model home or in a commercial setting such as a hotel must be primarily about aesthetics, at the same time required to be functionally solved also. So aesthetic place right alongside function and they balance out one another.



Contemporary interior work with eco friendly materials

Practicing all these design values, factors and Adopting influences derived from Bangladeshi style, culture and heritage, interior designers of our country should try to generate design statements which are very much 'Original', of our own.

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I.Ar. Farhana Choudhury is a illustrious Philanthropist and correlated named as a contemporary Interior Designer. She accomplished MA and BA (Honors) in Interior Design from Shanto-Mariam University of Creative Technology, Bangladesh. She consummated some of the professional experiences in several arenas of education learning-teaching institutions. Furthermore she attained BA (Honors) in English as a second Major to accelerate her career in anticipations. At present she is functioning as a Senior Lecturer and Students' Adviser in the Department of Interior Architecture at Shanto-Mariam University of Creative Technology. Her vicinity of concentration is historical and chronological understanding and analysis based on Interior Design, English Literature, and Contemporary Design Adjustment and so on. Se is one of the esteemed members of nationally reputed professional clubs in Bangladesh and awarded as a Faculty Excellence in her professional fingerprints.