

Colours Philosophy for Interior Residential Spaces Derived from the Principles of Feng Shui

Rahaf Amr Abd El Aziz ¹ Ola Ali Hashem ² Dalia Mohamed Ezzat ³

1- MSc Student Interior design department ,Faculty of applied arts ,Helwan University ,Egypt.

2- Professor of Interior Design Department at Faculty of Arts and Design, MSA University

3- Professor of Environmental Design and Program Leader of Interior Architecture and Design, School of Creative Arts, University of Hertfordshire.

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ABSTRACT:

Feng shui is an ancient traditional Chinese wisdom that relates built environment to the nature. As the feng shui concept is creating a harmony between environment, buildings and people and this harmony is to guide people to interpret human behaviour to settle their own living space in a more harmonious place and that to improve the relationship between human and the environment. Feng Shui adds the dimension of feelings as how people react emotionally to a residential space. It is essential that people feel comfortable in their residential spaces in order to create a happy and healthier environment. A Feng Shui interior design meant to bring balance and clarity to the residents who enter and reside in the space and that by choosing the right style of furnishings and colour schemes.

According to the principles of Feng Shui, it is important to consider the philosophy of colour in the interior of residential buildings. As human being is influenced by the colours of the surrounding environment either positively or negatively.

Research Problem:

How the color philosophy effects the interior design principles of Feng Shui for the residential spaces?

Research Methodology:

The research follows the descriptive approach.

Research Objectives:

This paper investigates the effect of colour's philosophy on interior design derived from the principles of Feng Shui in the interior of the residential spaces.

Introduction

Feng Shui is a body of ancient Chinese wisdom in knowledge and experience related to the built environment that has been accumulated for more than three thousand years.

The primitive knowledge of Feng Shui was based on the observation from three sources: astronomical phenomena, natural phenomena and human behaviour (Feuchtwang, 1974).

As the nature of design falls between science and art. Feng shui is for improving the relationship between environment, buildings and people. (Mak ,2010). The principles and practices of Feng Shui aimed at creating a harmonised built environment for people to live in. (Lee,1986).

From ancient times in China, colours played a significant role in religious and political ceremonies. The Chinese used colour from the second millennium B.C., As They analysed their surroundings by examining the varying hues of nature: earth, sky, sun, moon, leaves, and rocks.

The Chinese colour theory is a way to enhance our lives, moods and stimulating our minds, increasing and creating better physical and mental health to increase our effectiveness.

Colour has been a component of many Chinese practices and beliefs as medicine, art , poetry and feng Shui. In feng shui, colour can enhance a land plot, a house and a room (Rossbach & Lin, 1994, 13-18).

Colours are affecting the residential atmosphere as they are powerful influences on residents, moods and chi.

Colours used in residential spaces should be restful and relaxing, to help residents shift from the outside stimulations and stress to a calmer and more nurturing environment.

As colours can be employed to enhance a desired area, using appropriate colours in residential spaces is to improve residents' lives (Yun & Rossbach,1998,p.157).

Feng Shui schools

Feng Shui considered as a philosophy rather than belief or religion. And this philosophy is divided into two main schools which are schools of thought and practice the "Form School" and the "Compass School".

The Form School emphasizes the manifestations in on the surface of the earth while Compass School focuses on cosmic pattern and magnetic fields (Erdogan & Erdogan ,2014).

The Form School approach has been accepted as comprising the scientific bases in the analysis of built environment (He,1990; Cheng and Kong, 1993). It provided a holistic approach that allows integrated components and elements to be considered for the built environment (Mak ,2010).

1-The philosophy of colours derived from the traditional Chinese culture

1-1-Tao

Tao, which translates the "way," it is both a concept and a process.

As a concept, it is the way of nature, evoking the natural rhythms and balance of the universe.

As a process, it is a continually moving pattern of the cosmos (Rossbach,1998,p. 20-29).

The Taoist theory of yin and yang concerning the effect of colour. As the yin and yang concept is complementary opposite are harmonious united in Tao.

1-2-Yin and Yang

Yin and yang are primordial forces. Yin is dark, female, passive. While Yang is light, male, active. together they create a harmonious whole which is the "Tao".

The relevance of yin and yang to the Chinese colour theory as one yin and one yang create the unity of "Tao "one colour and one emptiness create one universe (Rossbach & Lin, 1994, 19-21).

The circular symbol of Tao epitomizes the concept of nothing is totally black or white. black and white halves are divided by a wavy line, and the interior of each half contains a small circle of its opposite.

Yin and yang should naturally exist in a dynamic state of balance, the way of Tao (Rossbach,1998,p. 20-29)



Figure 1: Yin and Yan Symbol
<https://images.app.goo.gl/5etF8iw3kye9CHfr8>

1-3-Ch'i

Ch'i is a unifying principle of energy which translated as "breath" ch'i circulates in the earth creating colours and shapes of the mountains, directing rivers, nourishing trees. Also, ch'i is the energy that moves in our bodies.

From the ways to improve the individual ch'i is to apply colour within this application of colour here

comes the importance of the five elements concept.

The force that links us with colour is ch'i. as Ch'i is essential to maintain the physical, environmental, and emotional balance. And colours are factors that can stimulate or depress our ch'i. Colour also can harmonize and balance our ch'i and thus improve our life.

Colour is regarded as a manifestation of cosmic energy ch'i that can also shape and individual's personal energy. Adding colours to an environment can stimulate a positive or negative response (Rossbach & Lin, 1994, 13-23).

In the practice of feng shui, it is important to consider the philosophy of colour when painting

the interior of a residential building. As we are influenced by the colours of our environment, but the extent of this influence depends on the state of each person's ch'i, which may be positive or negative.

In Feng shui the colours we used in our residential spaces affect our ch'i and this is because we spend a greater amount of time indoor .as certain colours depress, relax, or stimulate our bodies, Colours are used as a cure to improve our ch'i.

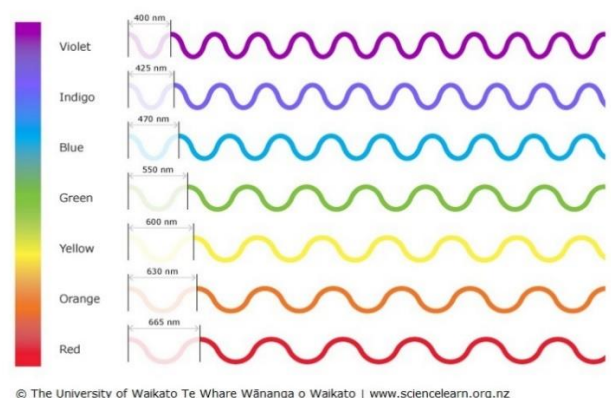
2- Nature of colours

Colour, the aspect of any object that may be described in terms of hue, lightness, and saturation. In physics, colour is associated specifically with electromagnetic radiation of a certain range of wavelengths visible to the human eye.

The Radiations of the wave lengths constitutes the electromagnetic spectrum known as the visible spectrum.

The perception of colour can be influenced by various factors, including the intensity of light, the surrounding colors, and individual variations in color vision.

Objects appears in different colours because they absorb some colours (wavelengths) and reflected or transmit other colours. The colour we see is a result of which wavelengths are reflected back to our eyes.



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Figure 2: Colour wavelengths
<https://www.sciencelearn.org.nz/resources/47-colours-of-light>

Each color corresponds to a different wavelength of electromagnetic spectrum. Violet has the shortest wavelength, at around 380 nanometers, and red has the longest wavelength, at around 700 nanometers.

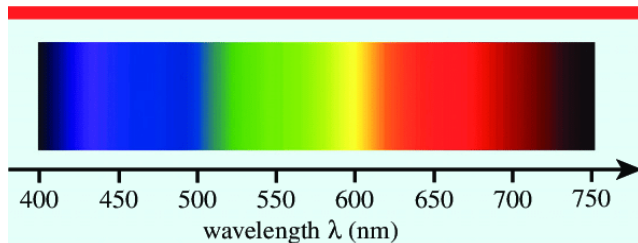


Figure 3: Colour wavelengths

https://www.researchgate.net/figure/The-electromagnetic-spectrum-in-the-visible-region-in-which-is-shown-the-correspondence_fig5_231052215

The electromagnetic spectrum in the visible region, in which is shown the correspondence between colour and wavelength in nm.

3-Applying feng shui to colours in residential spaces

3-1- Colour associations

The associations and connections between certain colours and the emotions or concepts they can elicit.

■ Red

- is a powerful colour.
- considered as an auspicious colour.
- It signifies happiness, warmth, strength, and fame.
- In feng shui red properties considered as a colour that create energy which stimulate good ch'i.

■ Pink

- it stands for love and pure feelings, joy, romance, and happiness.

■ Purple or deep red

- it connotes nobility, richness, power and inspire respect.

■ Blue or indigo

- has dual meanings, can be either positive or negative.

- Known as a secondary mourning colour.

- blue is associated with wood as it represents the wood element which is associated with spring, hope, and new beginnings.

■ Green

- represents hope, development, spring, freshness and growth.

- It is a colour of wood element. In plants and vegetation.

- green indicates good, healthy earth ch'i.

■ Yellow or gold

- It stands for power.

- Yellow gives a sense of tolerance, patience, wisdom, perspective, power, and loyalty.

■ Orange

- It is a mixture of red and yellow it is saturated with the characteristics of these two colours as happiness and power.

■ Peach

- implies attraction and romance.

■ Brown

- used to create a stable, established impression.
- It's also indicates stability, depth, elegance, passage of time, and sturdiness.
- It symbolizes the depth and roots of wood.

■ Tan or café-au-lait

- symbolizes new possibilities and successful beginning.

■ Black

- invoke a quality of spiritual, psychological, intellectual depth, wisdom and perspective.
- represent depression and lack of hope.

■ Gray

- Gray has a dual meaning.
- it represents frustration and hopelessness

-it signifies balance and the resolution of conflict(Rossbach & Lin, 1994, 45-48) (Rossbach,2000,p. 147-154).

2-2-Colour implications according to Feng Shui in residential spaces

Colours can be applied in the residential spaces from the interior walls of a house to accents within a room (Rossbach,2000,p. 147-154).

▪ Red:

-is a warm colour associated with vitality and adventure.

-it creates a cozy comfortable atmosphere.

-It is preferable to use in living rooms as it is a cold room

-The strong red has a stimulant effect on nerves system so, it should be used moderately.

-Choosing red for dining rooms as it increases appetite and the desire to eat.

-It implies the hospitality and generosity of the house owner.

▪ Purple and violet:

-Purple and violet imply royalty (royal violet), luxury, sensitivity, and philosophy.

-Violet is associated with maturity and aging.

-it symbolizes mourning.

▪ Blue:

-is a calm colour.

-colour of harmony, peace, devotion, and sincerity.

-It has a various pale and light shades related to peculiarity, royalty, wealth and simplicity.

-Greenish blue is a stimulating colour that generates vitality and implies strangeness.

-In Feng Shui using blue in residential designs adds dimensions to the residential spaces and reduce anxiety, stress and high blood pressure.

▪ Green:

-is the colour of nature, harmony, peace, hope, and balance.

-It is a symbol for fertility and youth.

-it creates a quiet atmosphere that encourages relaxation and meditation.

▪ Yellow:

- it symbolizes energy, intellect, intelligence, power and richness.

-The light yellow is a strong stimulus colour for activity and excitement.

-In small residential areas it is better to be used with calm colours.

▪ Orange:

-It combines with the physical energy of red and the intellectual energy of yellow.

- it creates a vital atmosphere.

-It is preferred to be used in children's bedrooms and in entrances.

-Light orange shades create a warm welcoming effect.

-And for the dark shades they are decorative colours. Which create a warm comforting atmosphere when they are used as main colours with white or off white.

▪ White:

-It symbolizes innocence, purity, and honesty.

-is associated with hygiene, cleanness and health.

-It is used in hospitals, kitchens, bathrooms, etc.

▪ Black:

-black colour refers to the fading of light, nightfall, and the absence of colours.

-For Feng Shui, black means affectation, strength, and money.

▪ Gray:

-means shadows and partial darkness.

-associated with wisdom and aging.

-Gray is suitable for dining rooms as it has a peaceful calm effect (Farran,2018, 27-55).

3-Colour methods to improve personal ch'i:

Colour is a manifestation of cosmic energy ch'i. The force that links human with colour is ch'i. that can shape an individual's personal energy. Colour influences our ch'i, moods, impulses, behaviour, mental activity and physical existence.

Colour harmonize and balance human ch'i to improve our life. As the properties of colour are both emotional and physical. Adding a new colour to an interior residential space can stimulate a positive or negative response (Rossbach & Lin, 1994, 14-18).

3-1-The five Elements

According to Feng Shui, everything in the world is part of the five elements. balancing and organizing the five elements in the interior space would create conformity and harmony within the environment (Erdogan, 2014).

The five elements are not physical substances they are power or essences that describing all matter and attributes.

The five elements are: metal, wood, water, fire and earth.

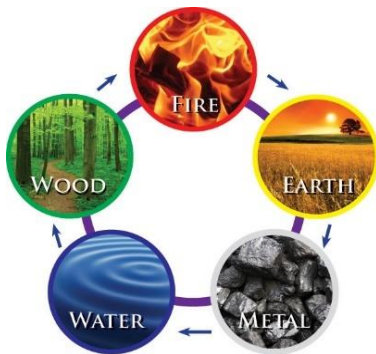


Figure 4: the five elements
<https://images.app.goo.gl/hwXoUnnbu2FpNEk86>

The Chinese assign to these elements' seasons, directions, internal organs and colours. The five elements have relative effects by creating and destroying one another.

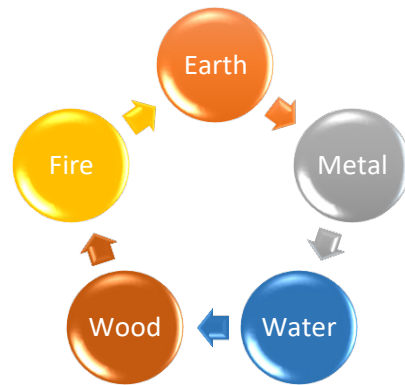


Figure 5: Productive cycle of the five elements

Designed by the author

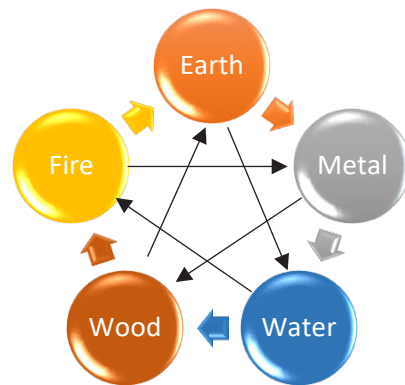


Figure 6 : Destructive cycle of the five elements

Designed by the author

The theory of the five elements used to harmonize and improve ch'i in the residential spaces.

The Chinese apply the five elements when defining and enhancing a person's ch'i. And that enhance achieved through the choice of colours and the colours of surroundings(Rossbach & Lin, 1994, 23-25).

3-1-1-Colours harmonization with the five elements:

First: Wood:

Green and blue are the colours harmonize with wood.

Second: Metal:

White, Gray, and metallic the original metal colour that harmonize with metal.

Third: Water:
Blue and indigo harmonize with water.

Fourth: Fire:
Shades of red and purple harmonize with fire.

Fifth: Soil (Earth):
Brown, yellow and orange harmonize with earth (Farran,2018, 27-55).

3-2-The Ba-gua Five-Element Colour Octagon

The Five-Element Ba-gua Colour Octagon can be applied to the interior of the residential space.

The corresponding colours can be applied to a specific area of the residential space to activate or enhance this same area of your life.

The ba-gua is a map of life situations that can be overlaid on the layout of a room or a building. it is based on the trigrams of the I Ching. Overlaid on the ba-gua are the five elements (Rossbach & Lin, 1994,75 -80).

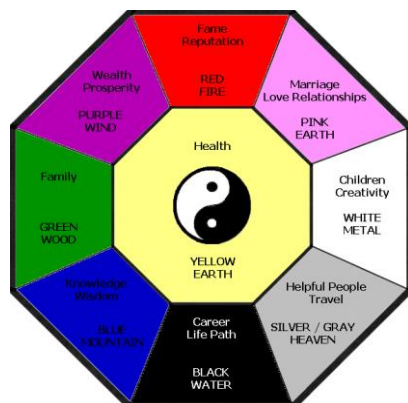


Figure 7:The five elements on Bagua

<https://zenlifetime.wordpress.com/2013/06/06/feng-shui-color-guide-how-to-use-colors-in-feng-shui/>

3-2-1-The five elements of feng shui represented by colours in residential spaces

1.Fire Element

- Red indicates wealth and luxury. It should be used as accent colour, avoid using red as a major colour in interior spaces.
- Orange colour has active and friendly vibes. It is used for living rooms.



Figure 8: orange living room

<https://www.pinterest.com/pin/365495326026540787/>

2.Metal Element

- White is the colour of purity and clarity.it can be used as a background for strong colours such as red and orange.
- Gray can be used as an accent colour in living rooms and bedrooms.



Figure 9: Using grey living room

<https://www.pinterest.com/pin/111675265754929972/>

3.Earth Element

- Beige represents humility and stability. It can be mixed with any colour in Interior residential spaces, As it neutralize the striking colours and create warmth.
- Yellow is a radiant colour it uplifts the mood of the residents. It can be used in kids' room and living area.



Figure 10: Using beige and yellow in Livingroom
<https://www.pinterest.com/pin/39054721767077644/>

4. Wood Element

- Brown brings nourishing energy. It is used in kitchen or as accent colour in living room and bedroom.
- Green signifies healing energy as it provides a healthy atmosphere. It is good to display it with plants in the interior spaces.



Figure 11: Using brown in kitchen cabinets
<https://www.pinterest.com/pin/365847169746730107/>



Figure 12: Using green colour in bedroom
<https://www.pinterest.com/pin/25192079161039490/>

5. Water Element

- Blue has calming and soothing effect especially the lighter shades. It can be used in bedroom and living room.
- Black is the colour of money and power. because of its effect on the psyche, it should be used carefully(Ahmadnia et al.).



Figure 13: Using Blue shades in living room
<https://www.pinterest.com/pin/49750770879081642/>

3-3- Application of colours in residential spaces through feng shui principles

The residential spaces are similar to our human bodies. Each room is like functions.

▪ Entrance

Using light wall colours as blue, green, pink and white (Yun & Rossbach,1998,p.153).



Figure 14 : blue and white entrance

<https://www.pinterest.com/pin/422281211180663/>

▪ Foyer

The best colours used for an entrance foyer are light or bright colours. As off-white, shades of blue, green, or pink. As these colours are for hope and welcome.



Figure 15: off- white foyer

<https://www.pinterest.com/pin/876161302525321765/>

■ Kitchen

White is the best colour to be used in the kitchen. As it is the colour of purity and cleanliness.

It is the colour of metal-is compatible with the kitchen's basic element, fire (fire overcomes metal). Beside this it shows off the colours of food.

Avoid black kitchens, because black is a water element colour which destroys fire.

Also avoid using red as it will be there too much heat in the kitchen. (Rossbach & Lin, 1994, 77-80) As red associated with the fire element.

Red and black can be used as accent colours (Yun, Rossbach,1998,p. 173-176)



Figure 16 : white kitchen

<https://www.pinterest.com/pin/293015519516183353/>

■ Bedroom

Pink is the best colour for the master bedroom. As it symbolizing marital bliss This is because the marriage position of the ba-gua sits between fire (red) and metal (white).

Also, Light green and light blue for bedrooms, as they are colours of hope and cultivation. These colours can create a powerful metaphor and cure.



Figure 17: Using pink colour in bedroom

<https://www.pinterest.com/pin/1759287347474945/>

■ Living room

Off- white ,Yellow, beige or tan, green or blue are living room best colours.

As the living room is the hub of the house, As the centre of the earth which symbolized by brown, tan, yellow, and orange is the element at the centre (tai-chi) of the ba-gua.

It is preferable that the Livingroom should be full of many colours, shades, and patterns. (Rossbach & Lin, 1994,75 -80)

By using of accent colours on cushions, in paintings or decoration. (Yun, Rossbach,1998,p. 172)



Figure 18 : colours in livingroom

<https://www.pinterest.com/pin/13299761395301142/>

■ Dining room

Dining rooms as it is the place where the family eats and entertains. It should be appetizingly colourful.

light and bright colours as Pinks, greens, and blues are best colours for dining rooms.

Avoid using black or white or a mixture of them. As these colours are less conducive to enjoy eating (Rossbach & Lin, 1994,75 -80) (Yun, Rossbach,1998,p. 176).



Figure 19 : Dinning room

<https://www.pinterest.com/pin/291115563431674179/>

■ Bathroom

Bathrooms can be black, white , grey ,Pink or pastel colours.

Accent brighter colours can be used in towels or accessories (Rossbach & Lin, 1994,75 -80)

In a master bathroom using of pastel shades-such as pink, peach, light blue or green encourage family and marital harmony.



Figure 20 : White bathroom

<https://www.pinterest.com/pin/541135711493050466/>

■ Child's bedroom

Child's room colours as pastel blue and green and pink. can enhance the child development (Yun, Rossbach,1998,p. 172-183)



Figure 21: Pink and blue colours in children room

<https://www.pinterest.com/pin/633387442929871/>

Colour/ Room	Blue /Green	Brown	Red	Pink	White	Grey / Black	Beige /Yellow	Multicolor
Foyer	Yes (Light)			yes	yes			
Kitchen					yes			
Master bedroom	Yes (Light)			yes				
Child's bedroom	yes							
Living room	yes	yes			yes		yes	yes
Study room	Yes (Light)	yes		yes				
Dinning room	yes			yes				
Bathroom				yes	yes	yes		

Figure 22: Room-by-Room wall Colours

Designed by the designer

4-Example for using colours in feng shui in residential projects:

4-1-Feng shui house by steffen welsch architects



Figure 23:Feng shui house

<https://thelocalproject.com.au/galleries/feng-shui-house-by-steffen-welsch-architects-project-gallery-the-local-project>

This house was designed by applying principles of Feng Shui. designed of well-considered environment for entering sun and fresh air, balanced natural light, comfort and privacy, balance of materials. the Feng Shui house aims to balance user needs and environment. This is achieved by applying principles of balance, planning and well using of space. Feng Shui residential design applies three core principles:

allow energy to flow, balance between natural elements with their own sets of attributes including colour, texture and shape, and place objects within a space. Feng Shui calls on to place objects to allow for the flow of positive energy through the space.



Figure 24:House plan

<https://steffenwelsch.com.au/projects/feng-shui-house/>

The curved timber wall, enclosing a store, leads into the kitchen planned to greet visitors at arrival. Behind the store a stair void appears.



Figure 25: Entrance

<https://steffenwelsch.com.au/projects/feng-shui-house/>

Between stair and kitchen, we placed the dining room, a engaging and open space, designed to encourage conversation. The timber floor of the dining continues into the ceiling of the adjacent lounge, a retreat with a sense of calmness.



Figure 26: Dining room

<https://steffenwelsch.com.au/projects/feng-shui-house/>



Figure 27: Kitchen

<https://steffenwelsch.com.au/projects/feng-shui-house/>



Figure 28: living room

<https://www.archilovers.com/projects/280732/feng-shui-house.html>

4-1-1-Colour and materials used

- White is used as a background for strong colours symbolizes purity. And is associated with cleanness and health. using white colour in the kitchen as white is the best colour to be used in the kitchen.
- Using Wood Elements that brings nourishing energy. It is used in the floor and ceiling in the kitchen and used as accent colour in living room

- Using blue in the sofa in living area as blue associated with wood. Also, it is a calm colour.
- Using green colour in plants displayed in the court yard and plants in the entrance foyer as it signifies healing energy. Also, green indicates good and healthy ch'i. It is the colour of nature.

4-1-Mt Gravatt NDIS Housing

Mt Gravatt NDIS Housing is for the designer Robust yet vibrant. The Mt Gravatt NDIS houses utilise uplifting colours that infuse each space with energy and positivity, enhancing the occupants' mood and well-being.

The interiors are designed for comfort and accessibility, featuring spacious layouts, ergonomic furniture, and sensory-friendly elements to cater to the diverse needs of the residents.



Figure 29: Dining room and kitchen

<https://clementsclarke.com.au/portfolio/mt-gravatt-ndis/>



Figure 30: Livingroom and dining area

<https://clementsclarke.com.au/portfolio/mt-gravatt-ndis/>

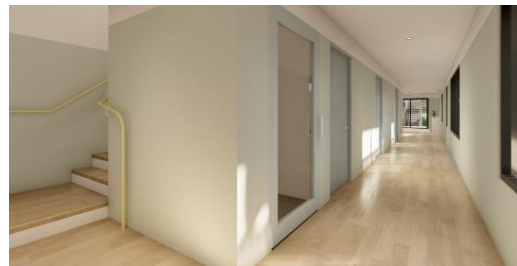


Figure 31: Foyer

<https://clementsclarke.com.au/portfolio/mt-gravatt-ndis/>



Figure 32: Bedroom

<https://clementsclarke.com.au/portfolio/mt-gravatt-ndis/>



Figure 33: Bathroom

<https://clementsclarke.com.au/portfolio/mt-gravatt-ndis/>

4-1-1-Colour and materials used

- In kitchen using white colour as it is the colour of purity and cleanliness.
- Dining area is appetizingly colourful with light and bright colour as Pink.
- Livingroom is colourful by using pastels colours as pink in furniture and mint green colour in wall colours. Pink stands for pure feelings, joy, and happiness.
- In the Foyer the colours used are light and bright mint green and off-white. As these colours are for hope and welcome.

- In Bedroom white is the colour of purity and clarity. it is used as a background for strong colour as green. Green is used as an accent brighter colour, it is colour of hope and freshness .it creates a quiet atmosphere.
- In Bathroom using white colour as it is associated with hygiene, cleanness and health.
- Using Wood Element in the floor. As it creates a stable, established impression.

Conclusions

Color has been a component of Chinese practices as feng shui. In the practice of feng shui, the philosophy of colour is important to be considered in designing interior spaces.

As the force that links human bodies with colour is ch'i ,it is essential to maintain the physical, environmental, and emotional balance.

Colour influences our ch'i and lives and affects our moods, feelings, impulses, behavior, mental activity, and physical reactions

Colours are affecting the residential atmosphere, as they are powerful influences on residents, moods and ch'i. so , it is important to consider the colours applied in the interior of the residential spaces it also affects the feeling of dimensions of the residential spaces.

Colours can be employed to enhance a desired area by using appropriate colours in every space, colours should be restful and relaxing, to residents with its assigned uses, to improve residents' lives.

This paper is to contribute significantly to the importance of consideration of colour theories and philosophy while designing the interior design of the residential buildings and that because of the effect of colours on human chi and that to create a more harmonious and effective interior environment to achieve comfort of the space residents to create a better life.

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