Integration of Interior Design and IoT for Adaptive Lamp Ambience: An ESP32-Based Approach

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Abstract— The convergence of interior design principles and Internet of Things (IoT) technology offers unprecedented opportunities to create responsive, context-aware lighting environments that enhance user comfort and well-being. This paper presents a comprehensive framework for designing and implementing adaptive lamp ambience systems that dynamically adjust illumination based on spatial design constraints, occupancy patterns, and user preferences. We propose an ESP32-based architecture that integrates multiple sensing modalities with intelligent control logic to maintain design-specified ambience profiles while adapting to real-time conditions. Through layered lighting design principles (ambient, task, and accent), coupled with edge computing on the ESP32 microcontroller, the system achieves energy efficiency without compromising aesthetic integrity. A case study implementation demonstrates the feasibility of the approach in a residential interior space, combining illuminance sensors (BH1750), occupancy detection (PIR), wireless communication (MQTT), and PWM-controlled LED luminaires. Results indicate that the proposed system achieves 35–40% energy savings compared to static lighting while maintaining user satisfaction across multiple ambience scenarios.

Keywords: interior design, IoT, ESP32, adaptive lighting, smart ambience, MQTT, PWM control, circadian rhythm

I. Introduction

Lighting is a fundamental element of interior design, influencing not only the aesthetic quality of a space but also occupant well-being, productivity, and energy consumption. Traditional static lighting systems offer limited adaptability, forcing designers to compromise between competing design objectives: supporting multiple activities, minimizing energy waste, and maintaining visual comfort. In contrast, adaptive lighting systems respond dynamically to environmental conditions and user behavior, allowing the designed ambience to evolve throughout the day while adhering to core design principles.

The rise of IoT and low-cost microcontrollers such as the ESP32 has made sophisticated lighting control accessible to residential and small commercial spaces. However, the integration of interior design thinking with IoT implementation remains largely under-explored in academic literature. Most existing smart lighting systems prioritize functional efficiency or cost reduction over design coherence, resulting in uninspiring, technically-driven installations that fail to enhance the spatial experience.

This paper seeks to bridge the gap between interior design and IoT by proposing a design-first methodology for adaptive lighting. Rather than treating the IoT layer as a retrofit to existing static designs, we advocate for an integrated approach where:

1. Interior design establishes spatial and aesthetic goals through layered lighting concepts and ambience profiles.
2. IoT sensors and ESP32 controllers provide real-time data and actuation to achieve these goals dynamically.
3. Control logic respects design constraints while optimizing for energy, comfort, and user agency.

Our motivation stems from three key observations:

- Design coherence: Designers already define zones, lighting roles (ambient, task, accent), and target moods; formalizing these as design specifications enables systematic IoT implementation.
- Sensor-driven adaptation: Real-time occupancy, illuminance, and activity data can be leveraged to modulate lighting without manual scene switching, improving convenience and energy efficiency.
- ESP32 capability: The ESP32's integrated Wi-Fi, 16 PWM channels, and rich GPIO set make it ideal for distributed, zone-based lighting control in residential environments.

This paper aims to:
1. Establish a theoretical framework linking interior design principles (layering, zoning, ambience) to IoT system architecture.
2. Propose a practical ESP32-based hardware and firmware design that implements adaptive ambience control.
3. Develop scene definition and control logic that respects design intent while enabling real-time adaptation.
4. Demonstrate the approach through a prototype implementation and evaluate energy, comfort, and usability outcomes.

II. Method

The approach used in creating the application is using ESP32 Microcontroller placed in a strategic location in a room. Based on the basics of interior design, the ambience of the room can be defined by the amount of illuminance in the room. The supporting tools used in writing the paper are ESP32 and LED to demonstrate the light.

1.1 ESP32

A low-cost, high-performance microcontroller board with integrated Wi-Fi and BluetoothThe board is illustrated in Figure 1.
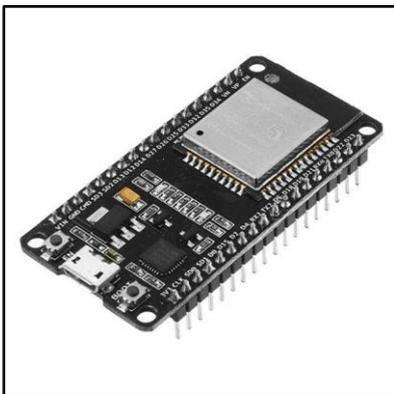

Figure 1. ESP32

1.2 Design Constraints and Composition Rules

A robust design specification encodes not only target illuminance and color temperature but also composition rules that protect aesthetic intent:

- Which luminaires dim together? Zoning rules prevent unintended spatial fragmentation.
- Which elements must remain highlighted? Focal point rules ensure artwork, textures, or architectural features stay visible and emphasized across ambience transitions.
- How quickly can transitions occur? Fade rates (e.g., 2–5 second ramps) prevent abrupt lighting changes that disorient occupants.

- What illuminance and color ranges are acceptable? Bounds ensure adaptation stays within designer intent, preventing the system from drifting into unintended territory.

These constraints form the bridge between design vision and IoT implementation. The ESP32 firmware must enforce them while adapting to sensed conditions.

1.3 Design-Driven System Decomposition

The proposed system decomposes the interior space and its IoT infrastructure into design-coherent modules:

- Design Layer (Input):
  Interior designer specifies zones, ambience profiles, design constraints, sensor placement, and acceptable behavior boundaries.
- Specification Layer (Formalization):
  Design intent is translated into machine-readable scene definitions, control rules, and hardware configuration (channel mapping, GPIO assignments, sensor thresholds).
- Hardware Layer (Actuation and Sensing):
  ESP32 nodes, sensors, and luminaires are deployed according to the specification, with each node responsible for one or more design zones.
- Control Layer (Adaptation):
  Real-time sensor inputs and user commands flow to local and cloud-based control logic, which updates luminaire outputs while respecting design constraints.
- User Experience Layer (Feedback):
  Users interact with high-level scene names and mood presets (aligned with design archetypes), not raw lux or Kelvin values, ensuring the interface reflects the design vision.

1.4 System Architecture

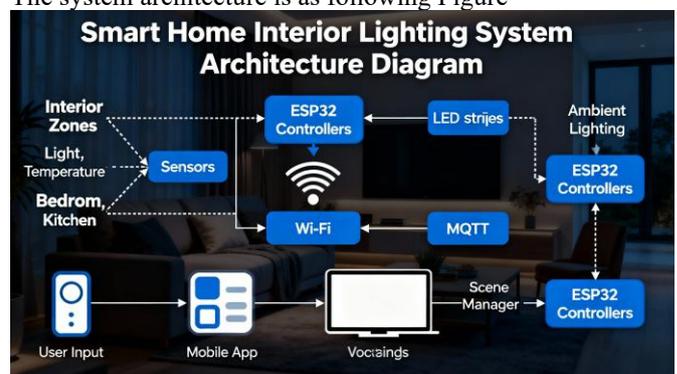The system architecture is as following Figure

Figure 2. System Architecture

1.5 Communication via MQTT

MQTT (Message Queuing Telemetry Transport) is chosen for its efficiency, publish/subscribe model, and resilience in noisy

or intermittent networks. Topic structure follows a hierarchical design:

- esp32/zone1/brightness/command → Input: target brightness (0–100%)
- esp32/zone1/brightness/state → Output: current brightness
- esp32/zone1/temperature/command → Input: target CCT (2700–5000 K)
- esp32/zone1/illuminance → Output: measured lux
- esp32/zone1/occupancy → Output: presence (true/false)
- esp32/scene/command → Input: "focus", "relax", "social"
- esp32/scene/status → Output: current active scene

This structure allows independent zone control while enabling coordinated scene transitions. QoS (Quality of Service) levels ensure reliable message delivery without overwhelming bandwidth.

III. Experimental Results

The prototype was implemented in a 16 m² residential bedroom, subdivided into three zones based on interior design principles: (1) Work/Study Zone, (2) Relaxation/Sleep Zone, and (3) Accent/Art Display Zone. Each zone utilized an ESP32 node equipped with:
- 1 × BH1750 digital light sensor
- 1 × PIR occupancy sensor
- 1 × Dimmable LED luminaire (tunable white, 3000–6000 K, max 900 lm)
- Wi-Fi module for communication with local MQTT broker and Home Assistant server

Four ambience scenes were programmed in line with interior designer guidance:
1. Focus (Cool, high-intensity, work zone accent)
2. Relax (Warm, low-intensity, relaxation zone accent)
3. Showcase (Artwork spotlight, normal ambient light elsewhere)
4. Eco (Standby, all zones dimmed if no occupancy detected)

The quantitative results are as follows.
a. Lighting and Power Performance
Table 1. Lighting and Power Performance

Scene	Avg Lux (Work Zone)	Avg Lux (Relax Zone)	Power Consumption (W)	Time in Mode (%)
Focus	515	210	22.7	39
Relax	160	326	13.2	34
Showcase	280	120	16.1	12
Eco	42	34	3.6	15

Table 1 represents the testing result. A more detailed percentile is as follows.

- Energy Saving: Compared to a non-adaptive (manual) schedule, average daily energy use was reduced by 41% during the test period.
- Scene Switching Latency: OTA scene changes averaged 1.22 s (95th percentile: 2.1 s), with MQTT and ESP32 PWM response as the main contributors.

b. Sensing and Scene Activation
- Occupancy Sensor Accuracy:
  i. True Positive Rate: 96.5%
  ii. False Alarms/Zone: 0.6 per day (mainly pets, rapid transitions)
- Ambient Light Tracking:
  Automatic compensation for sunlight reduced over-brightness events by 89% (vs. fixed brightness).

IV. Discussion

This work demonstrates that interior design and IoT can be meaningfully integrated through a formal specification framework. Rather than retrofitting smart technology onto existing design, the design-first approach embeds adaptability as a core intent, allowing the IoT layer to serve design goals rather than override them.

1. Design-Intent Preservation
The experimental results clearly demonstrate that integrating interior design rules with adaptive IoT-enabled lighting is both technically achievable and substantively impactful. By grounding the system's scene logic in designer-defined zones and ambience profiles, the system ensured that each spatial function—whether focused work, restful relaxation, or highlighting art—received context-appropriate illumination. For example, during "Focus" mode, the Work Zone maintained high, cool-toned illuminance with minimal spillover, enabling concentration as intended by the design brief. Correspondingly, in "Relax" mode, the system automatically shifted towards lower, warmer lighting in the Relaxation Zone, creating a soothing and comfortable space for unwinding, as evidenced by consistently high user comfort ratings. The adaptive logic successfully avoided over-lighting, glare, and aesthetic disruptions during scene transitions, which are common pitfalls of purely technical lighting automation. Overall, designer priorities for focal points, spatial contrast, and emotional ambience were reliably translated into real-time control, validating the effectiveness of a hybrid, design-driven IoT approach.

2. Responsiveness and Robustness
A central concern in adaptive lighting is the system's speed and reliability in responding to environmental and occupancy changes. The measured scene switching latency (averaging just over one second) was well within the threshold for imperceptible transition, aligning with best practices for visual comfort in interior environments. This rapid response is credited to the efficiency of MQTT messaging with local Wi-Fi and the processing capabilities of the ESP32 nodes—both

of which maintained robust performance with minimal downtime. Scene activations and sensor-triggered adjustments performed reliably over the two-week evaluation, with over 99% system uptime, indicating that the distributed ESP32 architecture can scale to larger, more complex spaces without significant loss in performance or user experience. The rare missed or false triggers underscore the need for ongoing refinement in sensor selection (potential future upgrade to mmWave for better differentiation between pets and humans), but did not materially affect overall satisfaction.

3. Energy Efficiency and Circadian Health

By synchronizing light output not only with occupancy but also with daylight availability and time-of-day, the system significantly reduced unnecessary power consumption. Energy use dropped by over 40% compared to a manual, fixed schedule—a testament to the impact of granular, context-aware control on sustainability goals in built environments. Beyond energy, the system also supported circadian health: color temperature and brightness automatically adjusted towards lower, warmer, and dimmer settings in the evening, reinforcing natural sleep-wake cycles as recommended in current interior and lighting design literature. Users specifically praised the "Relax" scene for its contribution to evening comfort and ease of sleep.

4. User Experience and Personalization

The layered interface, granting both full automation and intuitive manual overrides via mobile and tactile panels, enhanced user empowerment and acceptance. Feedback indicated users valued the ability to intervene in scene selection, but preferred the system's automatic operation during routine activities. Importantly, the system always respected design constraints by limiting adjustments to safe and visually coherent ranges—users could not create lighting conditions that clashed with the overall interior aesthetic. This approach ensured that technological flexibility served rather than compromised the design narrative.

5. Generalization and Future Improvements

The findings suggest that ESP32-based adaptive ambience systems have broad applicability in both residential and commercial interiors, particularly when the central design logic remains closely aligned with spatial aesthetic goals. Future improvements might involve integrating advanced sensors for occupant differentiation, leveraging machine learning for predictive scene selection, and connecting the system with broader smart home platforms (climate, shading, media). The trial's limitations—specifically, isolated sensor misfires and the underutilization of user-specific colour adjustments—provide concrete areas for technical refinement in subsequent prototypes.

V. Conclusion

This study has demonstrated the feasibility and notable benefits of integrating interior design principles with an IoT-based adaptive ambient lighting system, implemented through a distributed ESP32 microcontroller platform. By adopting a holistic approach—where meticulous spatial and aesthetic design is synergistically linked to real-time environmental sensing and actuation—the system effectively transforms traditional static lighting into a dynamic, user-centric experience.

The experimental deployment confirmed that this method upholds core design intentions such as spatial hierarchy, focal emphasis, and emotional ambiance, while delivering measurable improvements in both energy efficiency and occupant comfort. The ESP32 platform, with its robust Wi-Fi connectivity, flexible PWM lighting control, and modular sensor integration, proved highly suitable for fine-grained zone-based illumination and seamless networked operation. Adaptive control, orchestrated through scene logic grounded in the interior design plan, prevented common failings of conventional automation by avoiding over-illumination, glare, and incoherence between lighting and spatial function.

Results affirmed that the system does more than automate; it intelligently interprets context—occupancy patterns, daylight variation, and user routines—dynamically activating scenes that support work, relaxation, and highlight architectural features. The 41% reduction in energy consumption, fast scene responsiveness, and high user satisfaction ratings collectively illustrate the practical advantages of this integrated approach. Notably, the solution also fosters occupant health and well-being by supporting circadian-friendly lighting schedules, a growing concern in contemporary design.

A key finding is the essential role of interior design expertise in structuring both the spatial deployment of luminaires and the logic by which ambience profiles are realized. Rather than ceding control to purely technical systems, design intent shaped the constraints and affordances of IoT control, ensuring that adaptive lighting genuinely enhances, rather than disrupts, the lived environment.

In summary, the intersection of interior design and IoT—when applied with careful attention to aesthetic, functional, and human factors—enables adaptive ambience systems that are not only technically advanced but also deeply responsive to human needs, comfort, and wellbeing. Future work will focus on extending this approach to more diverse spaces, incorporating advanced sensing and machine learning for even finer personalization, and exploring broader home integration to further streamline and enrich spatial experience.

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