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Literature Review

Improving Guest Comfort and Operational Efficiency Through Lobby Redesign: A Case Study of a New Zealand Urban Boutique Hotel

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ABSTRACT

Urban boutique hotels often operate within space-constrained environments where lobbies must accommodate multiple guest and operational functions. Guided by Servicescape Theory and Lean Service Theory, this study examines how lobby redesign may support guest comfort and workflow and circulation efficiency within a New Zealand urban boutique hotel. A qualitative case study approach was employed using 200 hours of non-participant observation, supported by a literature review and benchmark analysis. The findings identified five key themes: spatial perception and comfort, physical environment and service quality, space optimisation, ergonomic and sustainable design, and sensory and visual comfort. Based on the observational findings and supporting literature, a conceptual lobby redesign incorporating improved circulation, clearer spatial zoning, dedicated waiting areas, ergonomic seating, biophilic elements, and enhanced wayfinding is proposed. The findings suggest that strategic spatial reorganisation may support guest comfort, perceived service quality, and more efficient circulation and service workflows without requiring physical expansion. The study provides practical insights that may inform similar space-constrained urban boutique hotel environments.

Keywords: Boutique hotels; Hotel lobby; Servicescape Theory; Guest comfort; Operational efficiency.

INTRODUCTION

The hospitality industry is increasingly shaped by intensified competition, evolving customer expectations, and a growing emphasis on delivering memorable guest experiences. Although service quality remains a central factor influencing customer satisfaction, contemporary hospitality research highlights the significant role of the physical environment in shaping guest perceptions, emotional responses, satisfaction, and behavioural intentions (Buhagiar et al., 2024; Rather et al., 2023).Within hotel environments, the lobby is particularly important as it forms the primary point of contact between guests and the property. As the gateway to the hotel experience, the lobby contributes substantially to guests' initial impressions of comfort, service quality, value, and overall satisfaction (Rather et al., 2023). Therefore, the design and functionality of hotel lobbies have become important considerations for hospitality operators seeking to enhance customer experience and maintain competitive advantage.

The strategic importance of lobby design is especially relevant within urban boutique hotels. Boutique hotels are typically characterised by their smaller scale, personalised service, distinctive design identity, and connection to local culture and place (Buhagiar et al., 2024). Unlike larger hotel chains, which often have extensive public areas, urban boutique hotels commonly operate within space-constrained city-centre environments where high land costs and compact building footprints limit opportunities for spatial expansion. As a result, lobby spaces are required

to accommodate multiple guest-facing and operational functions simultaneously, including arrivals and departures, reception services, waiting, luggage handling, circulation, and informal social interaction. Balancing these functions within a limited spatial footprint presents significant challenges for lobby design and operational management.

Poorly planned lobby environments can negatively influence both guest experience and operational performance. Congested circulation routes, inadequate seating, unclear spatial organisation, and overcrowding may contribute to guest discomfort, increased perceived waiting times, reduced privacy, and lower satisfaction levels (Kim & Kwak, 2025; Rather et al., 2023). From an operational perspective, inefficient layouts may restrict staff movement, create service bottlenecks, and reduce productivity. Hospitality studies suggest that spatial design, environmental comfort, and ease of navigation significantly influence customer experience and operational effectiveness, reinforcing the need for functional, user-centred design in hospitality environments (Kim & Kwak, 2025).

This issue is particularly relevant within New Zealand's urban hospitality sector, where boutique hotels often operate within compact city-centre buildings and face increasing pressure to differentiate themselves through service quality and guest experience. Growth in international visitor arrivals, sustained hotel occupancy levels, and continued expansion of accommodation supply in major destinations such as Auckland, Wellington, and Queenstown have intensified competition among hotel operators (CBRE, 2025; Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment, 2024). In this context, the effective design and management of lobby spaces have become increasingly important, as they influence both guest perceptions and operational performance without requiring costly physical expansion.

Despite growing academic interest in hotel design and customer experience, limited research has examined how lobby redesign may support both guest comfort and operational efficiency, particularly in space-constrained urban boutique hotels in New Zealand. Addressing this gap is important because spatial redesign may provide opportunities to improve guest experience and support more efficient workflow and circulation without requiring substantial physical expansion. Through improved circulation planning, functional zoning, flexible furniture arrangements, clearer wayfinding, and more effective use of available space, hotels may be able to create more comfortable and functional lobby environments (Dedeoglu et al., 2018; Rather et al., 2023). Therefore, this study examines how lobby redesign may support guest comfort and workflow and circulation efficiency within a New Zealand urban boutique hotel. The study addresses the following research question: **How can lobby redesign support guest comfort and workflow and circulation efficiency within a New Zealand urban boutique hotel?**

METHODOLOGY

This study employed qualitative non-participant observation within an urban boutique hotel in New Zealand. A qualitative approach was considered appropriate because it enables researchers to explore complex phenomena within their real-world context and gain a deeper understanding of human experiences and environmental interactions (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Yin, 2018). The study focused on a single urban boutique hotel as the case study site, allowing detailed examination of how the existing lobby layout influenced guest experiences and operational activities.

Primary data were collected through 200 hours of non-participant observation conducted from October 2025 to the end of March 2026. The observations were conducted by the lead author across two study blocks spanning 16 weeks, covering both peak and non-peak operational periods. This extended observation period enabled the examination of variations in guest movement, congestion, seating utilisation, and circulation patterns under different levels of lobby activity. Secondary data was obtained through a review of relevant academic literature and benchmark analysis.

Observation notes documented circulation patterns, queue formation, seating utilisation, waiting behaviours, congestion, and the overall use of lobby space. Following the Braun and Clarke (2006) thematic analysis approach, the observation notes were reviewed to identify recurring patterns and issues. The analysis involved reviewing the observation notes, identifying recurring issues and behaviours, and grouping similar observations into initial categories. These categories were subsequently compared and refined to identify common patterns relating to guest comfort, spatial organisation, and operational efficiency. This process resulted in five themes: spatial perception and comfort, physical environment and service quality, space optimisation, ergonomic and sustainable design, and sensory and visual comfort. The benchmark analysis examined lobby layouts and design features to identify relevant spatial planning and best practices. Findings from the observations and benchmark analysis were interpreted alongside contemporary hospitality and interior design literature. Permission to conduct the study was obtained from the case-study hotel through a signed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), and ethical approval was granted by the AIC Ethics Committee. To protect privacy, no identifiable information about guests or staff was recorded.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Servicescape Theory and Hotel Lobby Design

The physical environment has long been recognised as a significant factor influencing customer experiences within hospitality settings. Servicescape Theory, developed by Bitner (1992) , provides a useful framework for understanding how built environments shape customer perceptions, emotions, and behaviours. The theory proposes that environmental dimensions such as spatial layout, functionality, ambient conditions, and signs or symbols influence how customers interpret and evaluate service experiences. Despite being developed over three decades ago, Servicescape Theory remains highly relevant within contemporary hospitality research, where physical environments are increasingly viewed as strategic assets that contribute to guest satisfaction, service quality, loyalty, and behavioural intentions (Dedeoglu et al., 2018; Rather et al., 2023).

Within hotels, the lobby represents a particularly important component of the servicescape as it is often the first physical space encountered by guests. Initial impressions formed within the lobby can influence perceptions of professionalism, comfort, and service quality (Rather et al., 2023). Boutique hotels, in particular, frequently utilise distinctive interior design and atmosphere to communicate brand identity and create memorable experiences (Buhagiar et al., 2024). However, while Servicescape Theory has been widely applied to examine customer perceptions and emotional responses, comparatively limited attention has been given to understanding how physical design influences operational outcomes. Existing research suggests that spatial layout, circulation, and environmental organisation may affect both guest experiences and service delivery processes (Nanu et al., 2024). This highlights the need to examine how specific lobby design interventions can enhance both guest comfort and operational efficiency within space-constrained urban boutique hotels.

Guest Comfort and Spatial Perception in Hotel Lobbies

Guest comfort is a fundamental aspect of the hospitality experience and is closely associated with customer satisfaction, perceived service quality, and behavioural intentions (Rather et al., 2023). Environmental psychology suggests that individuals interpret environmental stimuli to form perceptions of comfort, privacy, safety, and control within a setting (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974). Within hotel lobbies, these perceptions are influenced by factors such as spatial density, seating provision, circulation flow, lighting quality, and overall spatial organisation. Research indicates that

perceived crowding, restricted movement, and limited personal space can negatively affect comfort and evaluations of hospitality experiences, demonstrating that comfort depends not only on the amount of space available but also on how effectively it is organised and utilised (Dedeoglu et al., 2018; Rather et al., 2023).

Beyond physical convenience, guest comfort also includes psychological and emotional dimensions. As transitional spaces, hotel lobbies play an important role in shaping first impressions and influencing perceptions of service quality (Buhagiar et al., 2024). While existing studies identify spatial clarity, ease of movement, and reduced perceptions of crowding as important contributors to guest comfort (Dedeoglu et al., 2018; Nanu et al., 2024), much of the literature focuses on identifying factors that influence comfort rather than examining how specific design interventions can address these issues in practice. This limitation is particularly evident within space-constrained boutique hotel environments, where achieving guest comfort often requires balancing user needs with operational demands.

Operational Efficiency and Lean Service Theory

Operational efficiency is a key objective for hospitality organisations seeking to maintain service quality while operating within spatial and resource constraints (Johnston et al., 2020). Lean Service Theory provides a framework for improving service performance by reducing waste, optimising workflows, and creating customer value (Suárez-Barraza et al., 2012).Within hotel lobbies, operational inefficiencies often result from poorly organised spatial layouts, congested reception areas, unclear queue systems, and conflicts between guest and staff movement. These issues can increase waiting times, disrupt service flow, and reduce both operational performance and the overall guest experience.

Recent research highlights the close relationship between spatial design and operational efficiency. Spatial features such as circulation flow, functional zoning, reception layout, and accessibility influence the efficiency of service delivery and guest experiences (Nanu et al., 2024). From a Lean Service perspective, effective spatial planning reduces unnecessary movement, minimises congestion, and supports smoother service workflows, enabling more efficient use of limited lobby space. Consequently, spatial design represents an important consideration for improving operational efficiency while maintaining high-quality service delivery in hotel lobbies.

Spatial Redesign Strategies in Urban Boutique Hotels

Urban boutique hotels typically operate within space-constrained city-centre environments where opportunities for physical expansion are limited. Consequently, the efficient organisation and utilisation of existing space are essential for maintaining service quality, operational efficiency, and guest satisfaction (Buhagiar et al., 2024). Recent studies indicate that spatial redesign strategies, including functional zoning, improved circulation planning, optimised reception layouts, dedicated waiting areas, and enhanced wayfinding, can improve the functionality of compact hospitality environments by reducing congestion, supporting smoother movement, and making more effective use of available space (Nanu et al., 2024).

Effective spatial redesign extends beyond improving the physical organisation of space by influencing both operational performance and the guest experience. Clear circulation pathways, well-defined functional zones, and efficient space utilisation can facilitate smoother service delivery, reduce unnecessary movement, and create a more comfortable and intuitive environment for guests (Johnston et al., 2020). Collectively, the literature suggests that thoughtful spatial planning is an important strategy for enhancing operational efficiency and guest comfort within compact urban boutique hotel lobbies (Buhagiar et al., 2024; Nanu et al., 2024).

Research Gap

Existing literature demonstrates that hotel lobby environments significantly influence guest experiences, customer perceptions, and operational outcomes (Bitner, 1992; Dedeoglu et al., 2018; Rather et al., 2023). However, hospitality design research has primarily focused on guest satisfaction and environmental comfort, while operational studies have concentrated on service efficiency and performance (Johnston et al., 2020; Nanu et al., 2024). As a result, limited attention has been given to understanding how spatial redesign strategies can simultaneously enhance guest comfort and operational efficiency. This gap is particularly relevant within urban boutique hotels in New Zealand, where operators often face significant spatial constraints and must optimise existing facilities rather than pursue physical expansion. Despite growing interest in user-centred design and space optimisation, limited empirical research has examined how specific spatial interventions can address both guest and operational needs within compact hotel lobbies. Therefore, further research is required to investigate how spatial redesign strategies can improve guest comfort and operational efficiency in small hotel lobbies within urban boutique hotels in New Zealand.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The findings are presented and discussed by integrating observational data, relevant literature, and benchmark analysis to examine guest comfort and workflow and circulation efficiency within the case study hotel.

Table 1: Identified Themes and Supporting Observational Evidence.

Theme	Observational Evidence	Supporting Literature
Spatial Perception and Comfort	Congestion around reception during peak check-in periods restricted movement, despite the lobby operating within its physical capacity.	(Kim & Kwak, 2025); (Chang & Lin, 2024)
Physical Environment and Service Quality	Guests demonstrated uncertainty about queue formation and waiting locations. Temporary luggage placement contributed to visual disorder.	(Ryu et al., 2021); (Amer & Rakha, 2022)
Space Optimisation	Guest activity was concentrated around reception, while other lobby areas remained underutilised.	(Sirirat et al., 2024); (Nanu et al., 2024)
Ergonomic and Sustainable Design	Seating arrangements lacked flexibility and provided limited support for guests carrying luggage or waiting for extended periods.	(Elshaer et al., 2025); (Yao et al., 2021)
Sensory and Visual Comfort	Luggage storage, informal queuing, and overlapping activities created visual clutter, while unclear visual organisation contributed to spatial confusion.	(Liu et al., 2024); (Zhang et al., 2023)

Source: Created by author.

Spatial Perception and Guest Comfort

Spatial perception emerged as a critical determinant of guest comfort within the case study hotel. Observations revealed that congestion was concentrated around the reception area during peak check-in periods, resulting in restricted movement and reduced perceptions of personal space. Importantly, these conditions occurred despite the lobby operating within its physical capacity, suggesting that guest discomfort was driven more by the spatial arrangement of activities than by actual occupancy levels. These observations provided the basis for identifying spatial perception and comfort as a theme, highlighting how the concentration of activities around reception contributed to perceived crowding. This finding is consistent with research highlighting the relationship between environmental

characteristics and individuals' perceptions of atmosphere in leisure environments (Kim & Kwak, 2025).

The findings indicate that crowding was primarily caused by overlapping activity zones, unclear circulation routes, and limited waiting areas rather than insufficient floor space. This aligns with research suggesting that spatial perception significantly influences emotional comfort, satisfaction, and service evaluations (Chang & Lin, 2024; Kim & Kwak, 2025). The results further suggest that improving circulation legibility and visual openness may be more effective than increasing physical area, reinforcing the importance of strategic spatial redesign in compact urban boutique hotels.

Physical Environment and Service Quality

The relationship between the physical environment and perceived service quality emerged as another significant theme. Although staff operations appeared efficient, guests frequently demonstrated uncertainty regarding queue formation and waiting locations. These behaviours created visual disorder and inconsistent movement patterns that influenced perceptions of the service environment. The observed uncertainty surrounding queuing and waiting arrangements highlighted how the physical layout influenced the organisation of service activities, contributing to the identification of this theme.

The findings support evidence that customers evaluate service quality through environmental cues as well as direct service interactions (Amer & Rakha, 2022).Physical surroundings act as indicators of professionalism, reliability, and organisational competence (Ryu et al., 2021). Within the case study hotel, temporary luggage placement and unclear waiting arrangements contributed to perceptions of inefficiency despite effective staff performance. These findings suggest that service quality is co-produced through the interaction of operational processes and physical design, highlighting the value of improved circulation management and spatial organisation.

Space Optimisation

Space optimisation emerged as a central factor influencing guest comfort and observed workflow and circulation efficiency. Observations showed that guest activity was concentrated around the reception area, while other sections of the lobby remained underutilised. This uneven distribution created congestion within key operational zones despite the availability of additional space elsewhere. The contrast between congested and underutilised areas provided observational evidence that inefficient space allocation, rather than insufficient floor space, was a key operational challenge.

These findings support research emphasising the importance of functional zoning and circulation planning in compact hospitality environments (Sirirat et al., 2024). The results suggest that the primary challenge is the allocation rather than the availability of space, reinforcing arguments that adaptive layouts and multifunctional furniture can improve performance without increasing floor area (Nanu et al., 2024). For urban boutique hotels operating within spatial constraints, optimising existing space may provide a practical strategy for balancing guest comfort with operational requirements.

Ergonomic and Sustainable Design

Ergonomic and sustainable design emerged as important contributors to guest wellbeing and environmental quality. Observations indicated that existing seating arrangements lacked flexibility and provided limited support for guests carrying luggage or waiting for extended periods. Furthermore, the close proximity between seating zones and circulation routes reduced perceptions of privacy and comfort. These observations provided evidence of ergonomic

limitations within the existing lobby, while sustainable design opportunities were identified through the supporting literature.

Research on biophilic interior design in hospitality environments highlights the importance of incorporating natural elements into interior spaces to support environmental quality and guest experience (Elshaer et al., 2025). The results also identify opportunities to incorporate sustainable design features, particularly biophilic elements such as natural materials and vegetation, which can reduce stress and enhance psychological wellbeing (Yao et al., 2021). Together, these strategies can improve both environmental quality and the overall guest experience.

Sensory and Visual Comfort

Sensory and visual comfort emerged as another key factor shaping guest perceptions of the lobby environment. Visual clutter generated by luggage storage, overlapping activities, and informal queuing arrangements reduced the overall sense of order within the space. Although lighting levels were generally adequate, the absence of a clear visual hierarchy appeared to contribute to perceptions of congestion and spatial confusion. These observations demonstrated that visual clutter and unclear spatial organisation were more prominent concerns than lighting levels, providing the basis for identifying sensory and visual comfort as a theme.

This finding aligns with research demonstrating that sensory conditions play a fundamental role in hospitality experiences (Liu et al., 2024). Research suggests that perceived crowding in small urban public spaces can contribute to negative emotional responses (Zhang et al., 2023). The findings indicate that improving storage solutions, spatial zoning, and lighting strategies could enhance visual coherence, strengthen perceptions of quality and professionalism, and may improve guest comfort while supporting more efficient workflows and circulation.

BENCHMARK AND BEST PRACTICES

A benchmark analysis was conducted using Sofitel Auckland Viaduct Harbour and Park Hyatt Auckland to identify relevant design and operational best practices. These hotels were selected as premium urban hospitality benchmarks rather than direct comparators to the case study hotel. Benchmark information was collected from official hotel websites, publicly available photographs, and published information relating to Sofitel Auckland Viaduct Harbour and Park Hyatt Auckland. Unlike the case study hotel, where primary data were collected through non-participant observation, the benchmark analysis relied on secondary sources. The analysis focused on circulation, seating, queue management, spatial organisation, visual design, and guest experience. Information from the benchmark properties was organised according to these six aspects and compared with the observational findings from the case study hotel to identify relevant design practices and potential improvement opportunities. As these properties are larger luxury hotels, the identified practices were considered only where they could be adapted to the spatial constraints of the case study hotel.

Note. Comparison developed by the authors using primary observations and secondary benchmark information (Accor, 2026; Hyatt, 2026).

The benchmark analysis identified that successful hotel lobby environments consistently incorporate clear spatial zoning, organised circulation routes, distributed seating arrangements, and structured reception areas. Both benchmark properties demonstrated a stronger separation between reception, circulation, and waiting functions, as indicated by the secondary information reviewed. These design characteristics suggest potential benefits for spatial organisation,

Table 2: Comparison of Existing Lobby Conditions and Benchmark Best Practices.

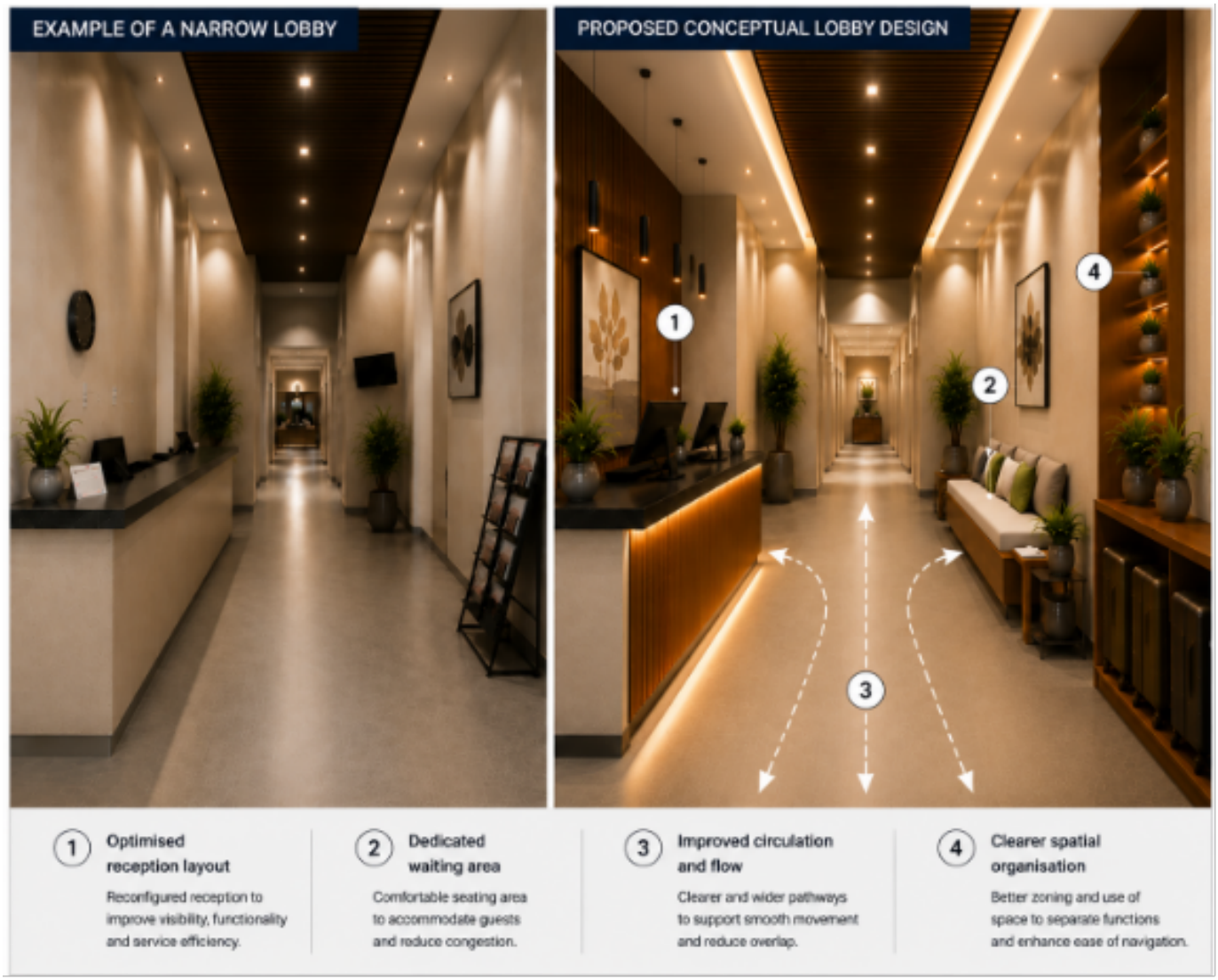
Aspect	Case Study Hotel	Sofitel Auckland Viaduct Harbour	Park Hyatt Auckland	Best Practice	Improvement Opportunity
Layout and Circulation	Overlapping movement patterns	Clear zoning and open circulation	Organised lobby flow	Defined pathways improve efficiency	Introduce spatial zoning
Seating Arrangement	Limited seating capacity	Multiple seating zones	Spacious seating areas	Flexible seating improves comfort	Add modular seating
Queue Management	Informal queues	Organised reception layout	Structured front desk operations	Defined waiting areas improve flow	Create a queue management system
Spatial Perception	Perceived crowding	Open visual environment	Spacious interior design	Layout and lighting enhance openness	Increase visual openness
Visual and Sensory Design	Visual clutter and neutral lighting	Strong aesthetic identity	High-quality interior design	Sensory design enhances comfort	Improve lighting and reduce clutter
User Experience	Functional but basic	Comfortable and refined	Premium guest experience	Environment influences service perceptions	Enhance first impressions

although their operational effects were not directly observed or measured in this study. In contrast, primary observations conducted at the case study hotel identified overlapping activity zones and concentrated guest movement around the reception area, contributing to perceived crowding and operational inefficiencies. These findings support previous research suggesting that functional zoning and organised layouts contribute to more effective hospitality environments (Nanu et al., 2024; Sirirat et al., 2024).

The benchmark properties also demonstrated the value of high-quality lighting, cohesive interior design, multiple seating zones, and clearly defined waiting areas. These features were identified through secondary benchmark information rather than direct observation of guest behaviour or operational performance at the two properties. The comparison suggests that these design features may contribute to a more organised and comfortable environment while supporting efficient guest movement and service delivery. Overall, the benchmark analysis supports the need for clearer spatial organisation, enhanced seating provision, improved wayfinding, and stronger visual coherence within the case study hotel. These findings provide practical guidance for the proposed redesign and support the adoption of user-centred design strategies within compact hospitality environments.

PROPOSED LOBBY REDESIGN

Figure 1: Existing Lobby Layout and Conceptual Spatial Redesign.



Source: Conceptual design created by the author using ChatGPT (OpenAI)

Note. Generative AI (ChatGPT) was used only to assist in producing the visual representation of the conceptual re-design under the authors' direction and review. The analytical findings and design decisions were developed from the study data, benchmark analysis, and literature rather than generated by the AI tool.

The proposed conceptual redesign was informed by the observational findings, benchmark analysis, and evidence synthesised from the literature. As illustrated in Figure 1, the redesign incorporates four key spatial interventions: an optimised reception layout, a dedicated waiting area, improved circulation and flow, and clearer spatial organisation. Each intervention responds to specific issues identified through the observations. Reception congestion and informal queuing informed the revised reception and queue zone; underutilised lobby space informed the relocation

of the waiting area; overlapping movement patterns informed clearer circulation pathways; and visual clutter and temporary luggage placement informed improved storage and spatial organisation. Guided by Servicescape Theory and Lean Service Theory (Bitner, 1992; Suárez-Barraza et al., 2012), the redesign proposes a more organised use of the existing lobby space to support guest comfort and circulation efficiency. Additional design features, including ergonomic seating, improved lighting, and biophilic elements, were incorporated to address environmental comfort and visual quality (Elshaer et al., 2025; Liu et al., 2024; Yao et al., 2021). As the proposed redesign has not been implemented or evaluated, its anticipated benefits remain conceptual and require further investigation.

CONCLUSION

This study investigated how spatial redesign strategies may support guest comfort and workflow and circulation efficiency within a space-constrained urban boutique hotel in New Zealand. The findings indicate that the primary challenges affecting lobby performance relate to perceived crowding, unclear circulation routes, limited seating provision, visual clutter, and weak spatial zoning. Importantly, these issues were found to result not from the physical size of the lobby but from the organisation and utilisation of the available space. Observations and benchmark analysis indicated that clearer zoning, organised circulation, improved seating arrangements, and stronger visual organisation may improve guest experience and support more efficient circulation and service workflows. These findings support previous research highlighting the influence of spatial perception, circulation planning, and environmental design on guest comfort and service quality (Amer & Rakha, 2022; Chang & Lin, 2024; Kim & Kwak, 2025; Sirirat et al., 2024).

The findings provide practical guidance by identifying potential spatial strategies for supporting guest comfort and operational workflows within existing spatial constraints. However, the proposed redesign has not been implemented or evaluated, and its effectiveness requires further investigation. While the study focused on a single case study hotel, the findings may provide useful insights for similar urban boutique hotels operating within spatial constraints. Future research could examine multiple hotel properties and evaluate the effectiveness of implemented redesign strategies to improve the generalisability of the findings.

PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

The findings suggest that the lobby layout should be reconfigured to establish clearer functional zones for reception, waiting, circulation, and information services. Improved spatial zoning is expected to reduce congestion around the reception area, support more efficient circulation flow, and create a more organised and intuitive guest experience. This recommendation is supported by research highlighting the importance of circulation planning and spatial organisation in enhancing both operational efficiency and perceptions of service quality (Amer & Rakha, 2022; Sirirat et al., 2024). The introduction of flexible seating and a dedicated waiting area is also recommended to improve guest comfort and minimise congestion within key circulation routes. The proposed use of modular furniture may provide greater flexibility in seating arrangements while helping to maintain clearer circulation pathways.

Finally, improvements to lighting, visual organisation, and biophilic design should be considered to strengthen environmental quality and guest wellbeing. Reducing visual clutter, enhancing lighting quality, and incorporating natural elements could create a more welcoming and psychologically comfortable environment. Previous studies have demonstrated that visual clarity, lighting quality, and biophilic features positively influence guest perceptions and overall satisfaction (Liu et al., 2024; Yao et al., 2021). These recommendations are specific to the case study hotel but may provide useful insights for similar space-constrained urban boutique hotels.

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