



## **Contemporary challenges and innovative practices in the field of interior design**

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### **Abstract**

This author is an Interior Designer with experience in the field for more than 15 years. During the course of her career as an Interior Designer, she has built a reputation and practice of refurbishing old furniture, making it her speciality. She has always felt that the scarce resource of wood is not only depleting, but cutting wood also depletes natural resources with adverse environment impact. This is not a typical empirical or statistics based research, but a more experiential one.

This study focuses on optimizing resources to tackle the contemporary challenges in interior designing due to scarcity of natural resources through innovative methods such as reuse, reform, and refurbishment. Wood, in particular, serves as a prime example of a material that can be repeatedly utilized, Just as energy undergoes transformation rather than being lost, wood too can be treated similarly, undergoing multiple reuse cycles before it reaches its final stage of decomposition. The principle behind this is to extend the life-cycle of wood products, reducing waste and promoting sustainability. Refurbishing wooden furniture is not only a

practical solution but also an art, requiring skill and creativity to restore items to their original functionality and aesthetic appeal.

Contributing to the circular economy, refurbishing offers a cost-effective alternative to purchasing new furniture, providing significant savings. As the demand for resources increases and the environmental impact of raw material extraction becomes more concerning, reusing wood in furniture refurbishing helps alleviate the pressure on natural resources. This process helps minimize deforestation and reduces the carbon footprint associated with manufacturing new wooden products. By treating wood as a renewable resource that can be reused, repurposed, and restored multiple times, that extends its useful life and conserve valuable raw materials.

The need for refurbishment is becoming more urgent in the context of environmental conservation. With the depletion of natural resources and growing environmental awareness, refurbishing wood is not only a practical and economic solution but also a necessity in the effort to protect the planet. This study highlights the importance of wood as a resource that can be continually reimagined and reused, encouraging sustainable practices that promote long-term environmental benefits. By focusing on the art of refurbishing, this study aims to contribute to a more sustainable future by advocating for the effective reuse of wooden furniture.

## Introduction

We are rapidly consuming non-renewable resources like fossil fuels and minerals at an unsustainable rate. This leads to Resource Scarcity and Environmental Damage. Eventually, these resources will become scarce, leading to economic and social disruptions. Moreover, extraction and processing of these resources often cause significant environmental harm, including pollution, habitat destruction, and climate change. The overexploitation of timber, even from renewable sources, can lead to deforestation, impacting biodiversity and contributing to climate change (Yang & Vezzoli, 2024).

The interior design industry plays a crucial role in resource consumption. By adopting sustainable practices, we can minimize our environmental impact by prioritizing recycled, reused, and renewable materials like reclaimed wood, bamboo, and recycled glass. We can also design spaces that maximize natural light, utilize energy-efficient appliances and lighting, and incorporate renewable energy sources. Implementing water-saving fixtures like low-flow toilets and showerheads is another method, so also choosing materials with low or no volatile organic compounds (VOCs) to improve indoor air quality.

According to Sian Moxon humans, as the primary cause of environmental damage, bear the responsibility for nature's

preservation. Given their intelligence, they possess the capacity to protect Earth's creatures. Recognizing the construction industry's significant environmental impact, she emphasizes its responsibility to mitigate the damage. Moxon believes interior designers play a pivotal role in this effort by creating sustainable designs and making conscious material choices. Sian Moxon emphasizes the responsibility of the interior design sector in selecting appropriate materials. While recycling materials like marble can be challenging, wood offers a more viable solution. Circular design principles, prioritizing reuse and recycling, align perfectly with wood's inherent renewability (Sian, 2012).

In UK, 4 million tonnes of waste wood are generated per year, of which only 1.3 million tonnes are recycled, 2.5 million tonnes turned into biomass and the rest exported. We see a similar scenario in southern Europe: Italy collects about two million tonnes of wood per year and recycles 63% of this amount into panels. This results in two million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> savings and less wood waste being landfilled. In the US, on the other hand, approximately 18.1 million tonnes of wood waste have been generated, and only 17% of the amount was recycled in 2018.]

Wood, much like energy, can be transformed and repurposed repeatedly. Reusing and refurbishing existing wooden furniture are the most efficient approaches, requiring less effort and resources compared to recycling. Refurbishing also offers significant cost

savings. For instance, a refurbished sofa can often be purchased for half the price of a new one.

Recycling should be considered a last resort, as it typically involves dismantling furniture and transforming its components into new products. While socio economic angle of refurbishing or reuse show some other perspective (Matas, 2022).

The social aspect of reusing and refurbishing furniture is multifaceted and cannot be overlooked, especially in contexts where reusing items might be associated with economic limitations. In countries like India, where a significant portion of the population may perceive reusing items as something done due to financial constraints, it's crucial to shift this perception.

Instead of solely focusing on the economic benefits, we need to emphasize the broader societal and environmental implications of these practices (Granström, 2006).

Challenges to sustainable interior design include insufficient sustainability education for designers, their limited experience and technical understanding, a lack of specific regulations and codes, client disinterest, and inadequate designer training (Zhang , Zhu , & Qi, 2023).

Investing in education and awareness within the refurbishment sector can cultivate a skilled workforce. As the demand for sustainable practices grows, refurbishment and recycling will

become increasingly vital. This shift will create a surge in employment opportunities, fostering a new wave of skilled artisans and craftspeople.

By investing in training programs that focus on traditional repair techniques, upcycling methods, and sustainable materials, we can empower individuals with valuable skills. This not only benefits the environment but also contributes to economic growth and community development.

Furthermore, promoting the artistry and craftsmanship involved in refurbishment can elevate its social standing. By showcasing the beauty and value of restored pieces, we can inspire a new appreciation for traditional skills and encourage a more sustainable approach to consumption (Mojtaba, 2022).

To successfully achieve sustainable design goals and conserve resources, a multifaceted approach is essential. Every avenue must be explored to address the challenges. In order to effectively create awareness and address socioeconomic concerns, we can present refurbishment as an art form, emphasizing its contribution to cultural preservation. By highlighting the artistic and cultural value of refurbished pieces, we can make sustainable practices more appealing and socially acceptable (Kans & Löfving, 2024).

## **Methodology**

This study uses exploratory and experiential approach. This author is an Interior Designer with experience in the field for more than 15

years. To complete this study, three experience based cases are evaluated

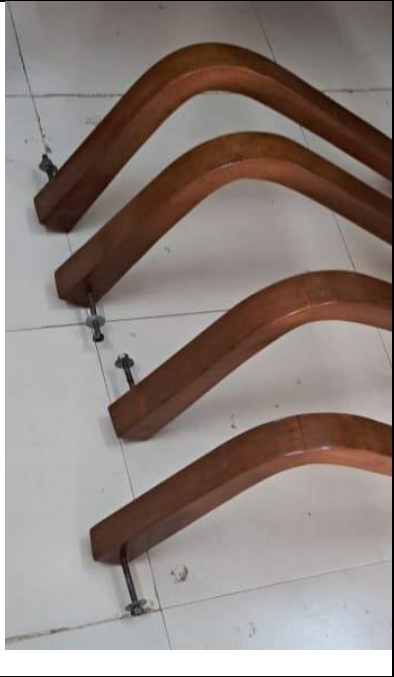
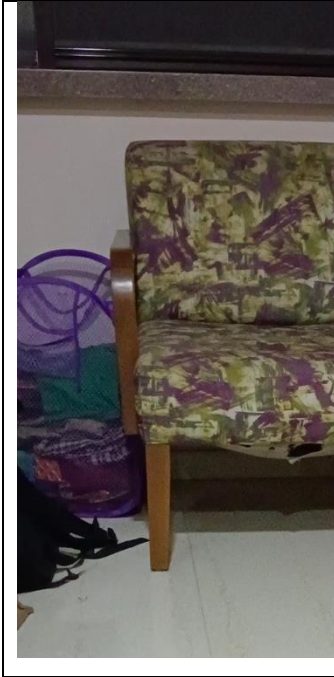
Experiments			
Sr. No.	Object	Problem	Solution
1	Household Furniture 7' long 2 sofas, 1 swing, 4 antique chairs, 6 dining chairs, dining table, centre tables 3 nos.	The owner was disappointed with the outdated aesthetic.	A transformation was achieved by replacing the upholstery and carefully refinishing the wood, resulting in a renewed sense of charm.
2	Partly wooden upholstered chair	Having weathered countless seasons, the chair displayed clear signs of age. The supporting framework had grown frail, and the fabric had become threadbare and worn.	The entire chair was taken apart, and all screws and bolts were replaced with new ones. The old seat foam was removed and replaced with fresh foam for added comfort. The supporting nylon straps were tightened to ensure stability. All wooden parts were meticulously polished, and finally, the chair was carefully reassembled.
3	Fully upholstered sofas	An inspection of both sofas revealed	Both sofas underwent a significant transformation.

		<p>multiple issues, including insufficiently sturdy wooden supports, low-quality foam that had lost its shape, and upholstery that was showing signs of significant wear and tear.</p>	<p>The frames were strengthened, the old foam was replaced with premium-quality high-density foam, and additional sinuous springs were incorporated for improved support. Finally, they were reclad in new upholstery.</p>
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Before	After









## CONCLUSION

This case study highlights the successful refurbishment of six large sofas, ten chairs, a dining table, and several center tables, demonstrating that refurbishment plays a key role in circular design. It helps reduce waste and makes better use of resources. By renewing existing furniture, we save valuable materials like timber and lower the environmental impact linked to manufacturing and transporting new pieces.

Refurbishment also offers strong economic benefits. This case shows how cost-effective it can be, with significant savings compared to buying new furniture. It proves that sustainable practices can be financially viable in the interior design industry.

In addition, focusing on refurbishment helps build a skilled workforce and supports the growth of a circular economy. This approach not only benefits the environment and cuts costs but also provides a

fulfilling career path for people interested in craftsmanship and sustainability.

The scarcity of natural resources, while a significant challenge for contemporary interior design, also presents a unique opportunity: the art of refurbishment. Refurbishing old furniture not only conserves resources and reduces costs but also preserves cultural heritage and cherished memories. In the future, refurbishment may evolve into a major industry, offering promising career paths for many.

While this study primarily focuses on wood refurbishment, the principles can be applied to other materials, particularly those with limited availability, such as marble. With the dwindling supply of authentic natural marble, innovative methods for preserving and reusing existing pieces will become increasingly crucial. This approach not only promotes sustainability but also celebrates the unique beauty and historical significance of these materials.

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