

FOCUS ON

Architectural lighting

Creative ways to integrate lights in the structure of your home

WORDS JO MESSENGER

LED lighting in this project by UV Architects (020 7407 9343; uvarchitects.co.uk) was chosen to provide both interior and exterior light around the minimally framed sliding doors with LEDs within the open rafters of the ceiling

Good lighting is an integral part of a successful build or renovation and is something that should be considered at the very early stages of a project. Well-planned schemes incorporate layers of light sources that can be used together or independently and, with advances in LED technology, architects and designers are integrating lighting into the very fabric of a house.



ALL IN THE PLANNING

It's never too early to think about your lighting plans. Integrating it into your home is a long-term investment so you will want to get it right first time. It is crucially important that all the necessary electrics are in place before your walls are plastered, and any lighting that is built into a floor will require cabling and necessary fittings completed before underfloor heating is laid.

'Architectural lighting should be discussed at the outset of a project,' says Rebecca Weir, creative director at Light IQ (020 8749 1900; lightiq.com). 'It needs to be part of the dialogue with your architect or design team. There are cost implications to this type of lighting, which should be present in your tender documents. One of the mistakes that is often made with new-build projects is that only a simple lighting scheme, often consisting of basic downlights, is included. Anything above and beyond this becomes an extra.'

Sally Stephenson, design director at Owl Lighting (01962 738 689; owl-lighting.co.uk), recommends splitting lighting into different circuits to set up lighting scenes. 'Each type of light source may be wired in a different way,' she says. 'Setting the lighting design down on paper will help your electrical contractor install the cabling quickly and effectively.' >>

LEFT Light IQ (020 8749 1900; lightiq.com) used discreet recessed linear profiles to create an illuminated framework to the kitchen of a remodelled house by Norton Ellis Architects (020 7226 2004; nortonellis.co.uk)



THE FLEXIBILITY OF LED

LED has opened up a wide range of design options. 'Cool to the touch and available in all manner of shapes and sizes, LED allows a new range of possibilities for building light into our homes,' says Melanie Shaw, director at Brilliant Lighting (01845 525 664; brilliantlighting.co.uk). 'Use continuous linear LED fittings to create striking effects up and down walls, across ceilings and around key architectural elements. They will need hidden drivers to step down the mains supply and deliver a constant current. For low glare, plaster-in profiles make the light source indirect.'

'Don't be afraid to not light everything, and remember that it is important where the light falls in a space and not where the fitting is positioned'

SALLY STOREY, CREATIVE DIRECTOR,
JOHN CULLEN LIGHTING



This recessed display shelving is backlit with a Contour HD24 LED strip light, £117 per metre, from John Cullen Lighting (020 7371 9000; johncullenlighting.com). It can be cut to size with 5cm cutting points and has a white light. Plus, closely grouped LEDs produce a less dotted light with a higher definition



HOW TO SET THE TONE

Eleanor Bell from Eleanor Bell Lighting Design (07930 442 515; eleanorbell.co.uk) offers advice on choosing the right colour temperature for a scheme

● **Colour temperature** is an important consideration when designing lighting into the structure of the home. If the lights are different shades of white within the same space, it jars the eye and draws attention to the light source rather than what is being lit.

● **A light's colour** can also affect us both emotionally and physiologically. In a home, the warmer colours of 2500K to 3000K are relaxing and create a cosy atmosphere.

● **Extra warm white** is similar to the colour of a halogen light. For living rooms and bedrooms, 2500K and 2700K are good as they have a restful colour and prepare the body for bedtime.

● **Warm white 3000K** is commonly used throughout the home and is best for kitchens, studies and utility rooms, where you may want a slightly whiter white for task lighting.

● **Natural white** is best suited in offices and rooms that are in use during the day. The whiter colour temperatures, including 4000K, contain more blue light and this has a stimulating effect. However, it can interrupt our sleep cycle if viewed late at night.

● **Daylight white** is 5000K-6000K and is often used for painting and needlework, and other activities where the user needs to see they are true colours, as it is in natural daylight.

ON THE UP

Dropped ceilings or coffers (built-in recesses in a ceiling) can be emphasised with clever lighting. Lights fitted around the edge of a ceiling, creating a darkened centre, will help reduce the height of a room, while lights in the centre of a ceiling shining outwards will draw the eye, helping to add a sense of height and space. As LED fittings are small, it can be possible to fit recessed linear fittings into a ceiling without dropping it. LEDs can also be fitted behind panelling or cabinets for a warm glow. Choose good-quality products for long life-expectancy; you won't want to change them too often. >>



Milward Teverini (020 8994 6612; milwardteverini.com) installed an LED strip into the top of bespoke panelling in this bedroom to add atmosphere and to light the feature wallpaper mural

This staircase is part of the renovation of a listed cotton mill in Manchester by Scott Donald Architecture (0161 962 9962; scottonaldarchitecture.co.uk). Opaque lenses on the circular plaster-in fittings create a diffused effect, rather than scallops of light on the treads



AT GROUND LEVEL

Lighting the floor adds another dimension to a scheme and can increase height and drama. 'Uplighting is another way of adding an extra layer, whether recessed into the floor or freestanding,' says Sally Storey, creative director at John Cullen Lighting. 'A grid of downlights does nothing for a room. Try to focus light where you need it, so it has a practical role, or towards a feature that you want to highlight. Shadow is also important so that the things you illuminate stand out.'

There are many ways of lighting a staircase. Concealing it within the structure itself can also solve the problem of a lack of wall space. 'As well as fitting recessed wall lights evenly spaced up the stairs, LED strips can be recessed within the stringer, beneath each tread or below the handrail,' says Eleanor Bell, owner of Eleanor Bell Lighting Design (07930 442 515; eleanorbell.co.uk). 'This should be done in conjunction with the joiner so the recesses can be cut and the drivers are properly hidden.'

WALL WASHING

Fitted in the ceiling or the floor, wall washers illuminate a vertical surface, providing ambient lighting with a soft, diffused glow. Painting the walls in a pale, matt colour creates the best effect and it is a clever way of making a narrow room feel more spacious. Avoid light washing windows or mirrors to prevent reflections. Wall washing is also a good way to introduce elements such as creative colour but be careful not to overdo it. **GD**

The internally lit dividing wall in this lighting project by Brilliant Lighting (01845 525 664; brilliantlighting.co.uk) features a linear LED fitting mounted in the base of the glass wall. The contemporary freestanding bath is softly lit with recessed floor LED uplights



3 OF THE BEST RETROFIT SOLUTIONS

Introduce ambient lighting with these easy-to-install options



DOOR DESIGN

This unit from Ikea (0203 645 0000; ikea.com) is fitted with a Surtre LED light door with a dimmable wireless control, from £70.



QUICK AND EASY

Plug-and-play LED strip lights from Ledhut (0333 772 2111; ledhut.co.uk), can be cut to size and stuck to a surface. From £6.54 per metre.



ON THE SHELF

These 11W dimmable LED under-cabinet strip lights can be fitted without an electrician. From £49.99, Lighting Direct (0843 317 7824; lighting-direct.co.uk)