

GETTING LIGHTING RIGHT

A well-designed and planned out lighting scheme can transform an interior — not to mention help make life that little bit easier. But there's a lot to consider before even buying a single bulb, says **Claire Lloyd**

Cast your eyes over the images which line these pages and you'll begin to glean how a 'designed' lighting scheme can lend wow-factor. These rooms exude a certain luxury which we're perhaps more familiar with seeing in a boutique hotel or restaurant. This is because the commercial world cottoned on to how a well-designed lighting scheme could work wonders for interiors long before us homeowners. By contrast, the central ceiling-hung pendant has been the 'default' option in most rooms in our homes, with a couple of wall lights thrown in for good measure.

However, building a home from scratch or undertaking a renovation (where rewiring is often involved),

provides an unrivalled opportunity to create a unique scheme designed around your lifestyle. But it should be thought on early.

Lighting tends to be left to the last minute, sometimes even as late as when the electrician is on site wanting to know where fittings should go. This often leads to mistakes and/or missed opportunities. "People mistakenly think that lots of light in the ceiling will result in a bright room and so install uniform rows of downlights," explains lighting designer Sally Stephenson of OWL Lighting. "The resulting brightness is from glare rather than high light levels, so the room may have a 'flat' appearance. The high glare causes the human eye to subconsciously protect itself and close down, let-

ting in less light — not more. Good lighting schemes need a contrast of light and shade, and layers of light from a variety of sources."

LAYERING LIGHT

There are different types of artificial lighting which can be introduced into the home, the first being general or ambient lighting. This, as the name suggests, provides general illumination. Add to this 'task' and 'accent' lighting, which can both provide more targeted focus, and you begin to build up layers.

Task lighting is designed to facilitate activities around the home; be it reading in the living room, preparing food on a worktop or checking emails within a home office. It can be a fixed source, but a degree of flexibility is usually important here. Wall lights mounted either side of a bed, for example, with built-in adjustable reading lights can go a small way to making life a little easier.

Accent lighting is used to highlight and draw attention to architectural features, artwork or other areas of interest in the home. An oak frame, for instance, can become lost in a dark corner at night, but strategically angled spotlights can ▶

Layered Lighting

Demonstrating how lighting can transform a room is this scheme by John Cullen. Metal Cube downlights (£108) wash the simple white units with warm light, while LED Eyelid Undercabinet Lights (£56 each) provide task lighting above the kitchen worktop. 'Contour' (£146/m) lighting also features (johncullenlighting.co.uk)



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1 This scheme by John Cullen features their Bari (£60), Lucca (£99) and Polespring LED, £155, lights (020 7371 9000)

2 This Jim Lawrence Highgate pendant in 'Antiqued Brass', £335, has been paired with Cranfield Spot Lights (£38.90 each) in the same finish and a Tulip Table Lamp in 'Old Gold', £109.20, for a cohesive finish (01473 826685)

3 A stunning feature pendant (see 'Series 14' at Holloways of Ludlow for similar) sets the tone for this bespoke Bisca staircase (01439 771702)

4 Recessed light voids provide illumination and architectural interest in this Coffey Architects extension scheme

5 Demonstrating how light fittings can add considerably to an interior are Cue & Co.'s lantern pendant lights. From £375 (020 7731 4728)

6 This dynamic scheme consists of Sensio's Quadra LED overcabinet lights, from £18.90, Quadra LED undercabinet lights, from £17.90, and LED Square Plinth Lights, £33 (0845 591 8244)

7 Tokyo Wall Lights with white glass shades, which cost £54.23 from Ace Lamps, provide a relaxing ambience (023 8086 6728)

8 An illuminated alcove lends a relaxing glow about a bath in this scheme designed by OWL lighting (01962 738689)



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highlight the grain. Lighting has been increasingly used to make an architectural statement too (see NUMBER 4 on page 72).

Things to consider with accent lighting include the width of the beam. A narrow beam can be used to illuminate a targeted point, such as prized possession on a shelf; a wider beam on the other hand provides a more expansive spread and glow.

PLANNING A SCHEME

So a well-designed scheme requires planning from an early stage, ideally as soon as you begin to formulate the floorplan and where fixtures are likely to go. This would hopefully include the kitchen and bathroom layout, the location of fireplaces, built-in bookcases, etc., and if possible, where key pieces of furniture such as the bed or dining table are to be positioned, so that you can plan lighting around them accordingly.

At this point have a thorough think about how you intend to use each room too; will some tasks undertaken require additional lighting, and are there features you may wish to draw attention to?

Also, give thought to the mood you hope to create. You may aim for several in rooms such as a kitchen/diner. 'Cooler' and more targeted light might be required for practical tasks such as food preparation, or perhaps for aiding concentration whilst working at a breakfast bar. The cosier glow given off from a warmer light bulb set within a low-hung pendant will help create a more relaxed atmosphere for entertaining. You may have to introduce more than one circuit to accommodate different options. You may want to



add dimmable lighting too. There's also option for smart lighting which can be controlled remotely with pre-set lighting scenes programmed in.

Open plan arrangements need particular attention. Lighting can be used to great effect to visually 'zone' different areas. The addition of floor sockets can be a good idea too, allowing floor and table lamps to be added centrally without having to trail leads from wall sockets.

Good lighting design is all about pre-empting problems, with particular care taken over where to position lights. Wall lights located too close to the ceiling will lose their impact, so too will spotlights; also avoid installing pendants too low for practical purpose. Care needs to be taken to prevent glare from light

Statement Lighting

Not all lighting fittings are specified for just the light they provide — some are chosen to make an aesthetic statement, as here with the Big Bang which creates diffused and reflected halogen light, £434 in red at Spazio Design (01245 299331). The sculptural form serves to emphasise the clean lines on offer in this sleek, contemporary interior

bouncing off computer or television screens, or reflective surfaces like high-gloss kitchen units.

Of all the rooms in the home, the bathroom, with water and high levels of humidity present, is subject to a different set of challenges too. Accordingly, under regulation it's divided into zones, with areas nearest water sources like the bath requiring lighting with a dedicated IP (ingress protection) rating; so bear this mind when specifying lighting here.

One professional who could prove invaluable to interpreting and enhancing your ideas is a lighting designer. "They will be able to apply lighting in a creative and flexible way to enhance the architecture of the house and suit the way you live within it," says Sally Stephenson of OWL Lighting. In addition to ensuring you comply with Part L of Building Regulations (LEFT), they can offer invaluable advice on what's possible and conversely on the more challenging aspects of a project; a fine example being retrofitting LEDs, and matching up dimmable LEDs with switches (see page 77).

A designer can be hired to design and create working plans for an entire house, but many also offer a single room design service too — for which they may charge a fixed fee of around £100-300.

INTERIOR SCHEMES

Lighting should not be considered in isolation, but alongside the interior design — its impact upon finishes and colours in the home, and vice versa, can be considerable. Some surfaces are light hungry and will require more illumination — dark and textured finishes absorb light more readily. White and other light neutrals, pastels and smooth surfaces absorb comparatively less, while glossy finishes can help reflect and bounce light around a room.

Lighting can also be used to transform the perception of a room. A narrow room can be made to feel more expansive with the addition of wall lights on the narrowest walls, while a table lamp positioned at the end of a long corridor can visually reduce its length. Large feature pendants provide the perfect focal point within double-height rooms, helping to make the space feel more intimate. Also consider how 'cool' and 'warm' light bulbs can be used to enhance and work with colour in a room.

The fittings we choose are increasingly integral to aesthetics too, whether it's to create a focus, or to develop the interior theme. Some fittings even have iconic status; the Flos Arco floor lamp, for example, is instantly recognisable and often used to make a design statement.



CHOOSING BULBS

The incandescent light 'bulb' (or 'lamp' as referred to by the industry) was traditionally the bulb of choice, with most of us familiar with outputs provided by 100W or 60W, etc. However, due to its inefficiency — most of its energy is wasted as heat — the incandescent bulb has been phased out by the EU in recent years. The final stage, which saw a ban on the sale of all incandescent bulbs to the domestic

LEDs are emerging as the top choice

market, was instigated in September 2012. Whilst retailers can sell existing stocks, new incandescent bulbs are no longer available.

It's a common complaint that 'energy-saving' options don't provide the same light output, or that they take time to reach their full brightness; the latter tends to be based on the misunderstanding that the CFL (compact fluorescent lamp) is the only energy-saving option out there. When it comes to output, products are improving all the time, and it's a case of re-educating ourselves as to what to look for when specifying; namely understanding the lumens output rather than Watts (*Which?* provide a good guide on the topic).

The options now on offer include CFLs, halogen and LEDs. Halogen bulbs are now typically the cheapest, but they also offer, comparatively, the lowest energy savings and durability; lasting a couple of years, compared to quality LEDs which can last a couple of decades. They provide around 30% energy savings compared to traditional incandescent bulbs, and are a good solution if you require dimmable lighting.

ENERGY-EFFICIENCY REQUIREMENTS

"Currently Part L of the Building Regulations state that 75% of the total number of light fittings within a new build or renovation must be energy efficient," says Luke Thomas, Senior Designer at John Cullen (johncullenlighting.co.uk). "Energy-efficient fittings should have lamps (bulbs) with a luminous efficacy greater than 45 lumens per circuit-watt and a total output greater than

400 lamp lumens. Light fittings whose supplied power is less than 5 circuit-watts are excluded from the overall count of the total number of light fittings.

"Proposed updates to Part L1a and L1b are expected shortly but at present it can be assumed that the efficacy requirements for compliant fittings will be increased along with the total percentage of fittings required."

1 MacMaster's handmade Flux Pendant Light is available in different woods, from £395 (0208 316 4006); 2 The world's first 'designer' energy-saving bulb, the Plumen ES light bulb has a 8,000 hour lamp life, £19.95 at Lamps and Lights (01223 750153); 3 Lolita Pendants, £368.55, from Holloways of Ludlow (020 7602 5757); 4 Metal Trawler Pendant Light, £84.99 from The Contemporary Home (0845 130 8229); 5 Dyce LED Twin Cube Pendant, £120 from KES Lighting (02476 317022); 6 B&Q's Barock Hammered Shade in 'copper', £29.98 (0845 850 0175); 7 Dunelm Mill's 5 Light Cluster Fitting, £59.99 (0845 165 6565); 8 BoConcept's Facet pendant in clear glass, £120 (boconcept.co.uk); 9 Pesaro 3 Watt LED Pendant Light, £55.15 (023 8086 6728); 10 The Caboche Suspension Lamp (shown in 'gold yellow') costs from £491 at Spazio Design (01245 299331)

CFLs cost a little more than halogen, but offer much greater energy savings. The downside is that bulbs contain a small amount of mercury, meaning they need to be disposed of at a dedicated recycling point (you should handle broken bulbs with care). They can also take time to glow at full brightness (look out for 'quick start' options, or the latest generation of products for better results), nor do they perform as well as halogen and LEDs in colder environments such as an uninsulated garage.

LEDs (light-emitting diodes) are emerging as the top choice among lighting designers. They offer the highest energy savings and longevity. LEDs also provide instant light — making them a better solution than CFLs for areas such as the hallway and above staircases.

"People think LEDs are more expensive," says Keith Scott of LED Hut. "Whilst you do pay more upfront, the bulbs typically pay for themselves in less than 12 months and will then continue to save you 90% on your bills thereafter, over their 25-30 year lifespan. They are also incredibly durable so you won't ever have to worry about them fading over time, breaking or burning out like most other bulbs."

Available in many a format including bulbs, strip lighting and downlights, and with many a product on offer, how do you begin to choose? "The golden rule, as with most things, is that you get what you pay for," says lighting designer Sally Stephenson of OWL Lighting. "The more expensive LED downlights, for example, will be manufactured from top-quality materials and components with a non-reflective finish, recessed to reduce glare, and with maximum tilt function.

"Beware the claims: 'same as a 50W halogen'. The range in price reflects not only the quality of the components and finish, but also, crucially, the quality of light output. There are two key things to look for in LED downlights. Pick a selection and compare firstly the output in lumens — which is the measure of light — and secondly the K (Kelvin) figure. The latter measures the colour of the light; the higher the figure, the cooler the light."

LEDs can be specified as dimmable too, but must be specified with a compatible switch (LED manufacturers will often provide a list of switches). But, it tends to be a more complex area to get right than with halogen bulbs. ■

Further Contacts

LED Hut: 01534 764778; Franklite: 01908 691818
Switches and sockets Hamilton litestat: 01747 860088;
 The Decorative Switch Company: 0161 633 3690



This reclaimed GECORAY Glass Reflector (circa 1930) provides a slice of history — £280 from Skinflint (01326 314528)



The Ravello from Astro Lighting, £80 excluding the shade (01279 427001)



Blue Bell Wall Light, £294 from Holloways of Ludlow (020 7602 5757)



Dunelm Mill's Twin Glass Wall Light, £12.99 (0845 165 6565)



Taylor's Architectural's Twin Study Swing Arm Wall Light, £451 (01530 440341)

RETROFITTING LED LIGHTING

Renovators face a more complex set of challenges, as Luke Thomas, Senior Designer at John Cullen, explains: "Simple updates to the lighting schemes within homes using the latest LED fittings can be challenging. Existing wiring may need to be replaced or added in order to meet the requirements of the fitting of choice. Currently, the most reliable method for dimming LEDs is using a 0-10v signal. This requires a signal cable running from the LED driver to the dimmer. Generally this would not be present in a renovation meaning that damage to existing walls and ceilings is inevitable. Mains dimmable drivers have started to emerge but they struggle to offer smooth dimming and cannot achieve the very low levels that a dynamic lighting scheme demands.

"It's best to consider the lighting before a house, or room, renovation begins. If causing a mess just isn't an option then there are retrofit LED solutions which

can be installed into existing fittings. However, using these can cause knock on effects to the existing transformers and dimmers which can result in flashing and buzzing — usually caused by the power demands from the new LED being so low that they are simply not registered. Ultimately this means that replacing the dimmer and transformer can be required.

"Although retrofit LED lamps (bulbs) have not quite reached the level where they can honestly be called 'direct 50W halogen replacements' there have been developments which give homeowners belief that they will get there in the near future. Currently the best lamps have a lumen output equivalent to a 35W halogen. Many of these replacement lamps are now compliant with Part L 2010, furthermore prices are falling. Dedicated LED light sources are still the most attractive option in terms of light output, efficiency and colour rendering."