

Architectural Lighting

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In a previous article on exterior architectural lighting, we focused on the placement of outdoor lighting for purposes of security and comfort during nighttime arrivals. In another such piece we discussed the techniques for lighting the yard and garden at night.

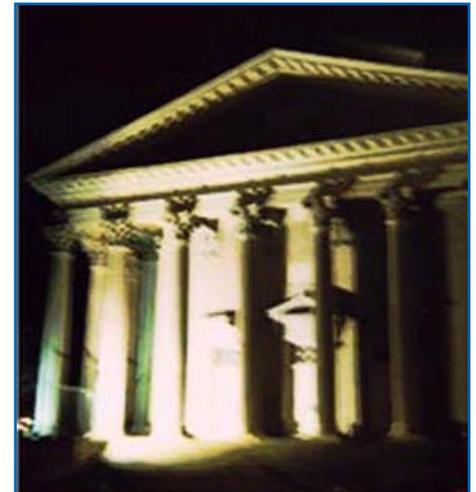
Now, in this installment, we'll spotlight (pun intended) some approaches to the illumination of the main architectural element – namely, the building itself – through artificial lighting.

Given the task of lighting a building, whether an office or home, the flat out approach is to throw enough light at it from a position far enough away to illuminate the entire facade. But this is not necessarily the best – and certainly not the most imaginative – way to go about it. Right from the start we should understand the essential difference in effect between daylight and night lighting. Daylight is all inclusive; notwithstanding reflections and shadows, sunlight falls relatively evenly on everything out in the open. Night architectural lighting, on the other hand, is not so all-encompassing. It is a minimalist art in which we pick a few specific features to be

lit in order to develop an implied whole from those dramatically selected parts.

It was said of the Renaissance master Michelangelo that he would sit for days studying some great hunk of marble in order to develop an overall artistic concept. Only when he could completely envision the sculpture he wished to wrest from the marble would he begin to lay chisel to stone. On a lesser level – one that hopefully would not require days of staring – we might emulate this technique to a degree by studying our structure to find its unique and key features: a rake to a roof line, say, or a dentiled architrave, perhaps a handsome bay window or a protected balcony.

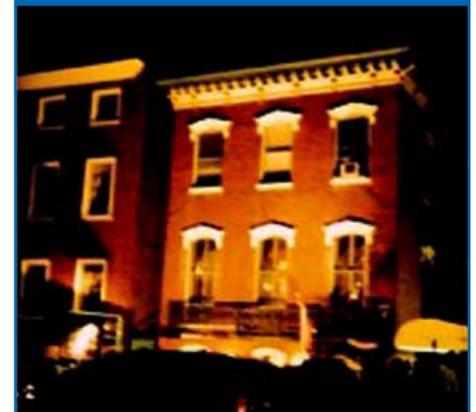
ing, making it bold or soft by the nature, strength and angle of the light.



High powered, single punch, metal halide – a dramatic effect!



Accent plus uplights as seen through the street view treeline – a different look from that seen in the daytime



The use of flood lighting to accent a facade



Multi-use metal halide to point out architectural features – a contrast from the daylight look!

From our article on yard and garden lighting, you may recall the process known as “painting with light.” Using portable lights at night, the “light painter” moves the lights around to see their effects on the structure to be lit. There is no attempt to light up the whole but to make dramatic segments with highlights and shadows to suggest the whole. With lights you can select what you want to show. And you can affect the character of what you're show-

Above all, be willing to experiment. Put lights on extension cords and move them all over before you commit to a fixed solution. Put all the pieces together and re-examine the results from various viewing angles until you are satisfied with the

whole. In this way you can create a night-time world that is not just a poor copy of its daytime reality but an enchanting wonderland of its own. ■

About the Author

Bill Joel received his B.A. from Brown University with creative design courses at the Rhode Island School of Design. He did further studies in interior and lighting

design at the New York School of Design and Pratt Institute.

A professional member of AID-ASID from 1963 to 1993, Bill received a Fellowship from ASID in 1978. In 1992, he became one of the first Certified Interior Designers of the Commonwealth of Virginia. His work experience includes residential, commercial and institutional remodeling and new structures, as well as a number of feasibility studies, all with an

emphasis on effective, energy-conscious, quality-lit environments. For more details, consult *Marquis Who's Who in America*. Bill has also served as a member of the FIDER Board of Visitors and Accreditation Committee, Foundation for Interior Design Education and Research; set and lighting designer for the Richmond Forum and Barksdale Theatre; and guest speaker on various radio and TV spots. Bill may be reached at Rich@RichArtCo.com.