

Light London: Creativity & Sustainability

Light London Principles

Sustainable approaches for the long term are inherently creative – using technology as a tool. Sensitive site-specific responses bring about lower energy consumption and cost savings. *High quality approaches with light mean **making sustainable places through creativity and collaboration.***

The Light London principles are intended to support sustainable approaches by promoting more strategic thinking and creative practice. Creative approaches use technology as a tool or catalyst for innovation rather than an end in itself. Utilising specialist expertise and knowledge – encouraging a multi-disciplinary and collaborative approach by architects, artists, professional lighting designers and others – supports aspirations for sustainability whilst at the same time showcasing London's contemporary and historic environment and its wealth of creativity.

Background

We have an enigmatic relationship with light when it comes to sustainability – we realise that it burns energy but we need light to see, and illuminating spaces is often linked to perceptions of safety alongside the many associated meanings light has for us. Some cities, looking at their environment and the ways streets are used, are now thinking in much more sustainable ways for their street lighting and other lighting initiatives. For example, in both Oslo and Helsinki, where dimmable and more responsive street lighting has been installed, giving huge energy savings (in the region of 60%).

Creative Approaches for London

To be sustainable means thinking across these functional concerns and recognising the cultural and environmental role that light plays in our lives. Ensuring lighting schemes are sensitive to the impact on their surroundings is also key: lighting one area brightly may be to the detriment of another. Thinking laterally and intuitively in response to space and recognising that light is only perceptible through its contrast with darkness will help us recognise that lighting places more brightly does not necessarily make safer places.

The following could all be relevant when considering issues of sustainability for light:

- Energy consumption and carbon emissions
- Cost of equipment and its maintenance
- Light pollution
- Long term ownership and giving value to a place
- Scale of an intervention
- Dimming and turning off lights in response to times of day and the use of a space
- Using equipment that has a long life
- Evaluating the existing lighting of a place.