

Landscape Lighting Magic

Well conceived lighting for residential landscapes and gardens creates a mood and ambience that lifts the exterior night experience well beyond the ordinary, visually dramatising site features and disguising site limitations.

Landscape lighting is both art and science, blending these approaches to create zones of theatrically inspired light and shade and making night magic for residential landscapes and gardens.

DESIGN TECHNIQUES

Practical factors need to be considered for safety on pathways and steps, but creative effects are the mainstay of effective landscape design. There is a wide portfolio of techniques with many options borrowed from theatrical lighting:

- Uplighting – Dramatic highlighting of tall targets
- Downlighting – Enhancement of spatial form and texture
- Accent Lighting – Strong highlighting of artistic features
- Path Lighting – Practical lighting of pathways and driveways
- Area Lighting – General lighting of open and circulation areas
- Wall Wash Lighting – General lighting of vertical surfaces
- Wall Skim Lighting – Surface texture enhancement of vertical surfaces
- Step Lighting – Discreet low-level lighting for function and safety
- Silhouette Lighting – Image projection on surfaces for theatrical interest.

LIGHT CONTROL

The basic principles of light control for landscape lighting are very elemental:

- Avoid glare, avoid glare, avoid glare
- Accentuate selected site features
- Create areas of light and shade
- Understatement is the essence.

LANDSCAPE LUMINAIRES

Precise optical control is paramount and the use of light control lenses and shielding accessories is necessary. Longevity for outdoor luminaires demands first rate materials, and there are no shortcuts. Marine grade aluminium alloy, cast bronze, solid copper and stainless steel are the only choices. IP65 to IP68 ingress ratings deliver water and dirt resistance according to application.

PLANNING PROCESS

New tools and techniques need assistance to understand, so seek specialist supplier input at an early stage and heed the planning phases:

1. Lighting effects planning always comes before equipment selection
2. Integrate lighting into the architectural and landscape plans
3. Identify target features and areas to highlight
4. Determine the desired lighting effects
5. Design the lighting scheme – select luminaires, design electrical and controls layouts.



PROJECT MANAGEMENT AND INSTALLATION

Informed project and contract management is a necessity:

- Detail the site drawings and equipment specifications
- Define the scope for the licenced electrical contractor
- Define the scope for the landscape contractor.

There are many considerations for wiring layout and sizing of extra low-voltage cabling, as well as choices of control gear, switching and occupancy sensing controls. Specialist quality luminaires, astute planning and careful implementation are the keys for creating night magic for residential landscapes and gardens.

Lighting Council New Zealand is the industry association for lighting manufacturing, importing, and distribution companies in New Zealand, and associated lighting industry participants. www.lightingcouncil.org.nz

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