

GRAND DESIGNS

DREAM HOMES FOR THE REAL WORLD

APRIL 2006

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The ultimate **DECORATING** guide

KEVIN McCLOUD

searches for a
building's soul

TAKE TWO

The TV couple
who built twice

BATHROOM BLUES?

Freshen up your look

LIGHTEN UP

Lighting made easy

WIN

A HOME
AUDIO SYSTEM
WORTH **£1000**

Easter treats

Excellent egg cups,
natty napkins!



Terminology:

Tungsten

The traditional incandescent light bulb that has changed little since Edison invented it.

Verdict: Cheap, warm, attractive light, but not very energy efficient

Fluorescent

Quality is improving and they're getting smaller and more versatile. The tubes can be used with coloured filters (gels) to create single blocks of colour or be made to change through an infinite range of colours using a control system.

Verdict: Initially more expensive than Tungsten, but cheaper long term through energy efficiency

Cold cathode

To all intents and purposes, coloured neon. Low voltage and with a very long life, it is used primarily in concealed locations such as coves, to produce intense colour washes over surfaces.

Verdict: Energy efficient, great creative potential, but strictly big budget and installation is best left to the experts

Tungsten halogen**Low voltage**

Used for recessed downlights and floorstanding uplights, halogen is becoming increasingly popular for its flattering, sparkling, white light. It can be used creatively in different beam widths to produce dramatic effects or highlight art objects and other points of focus.

Verdict: More efficient than the bog-standard bulb, but less efficient than fluorescent. It is relatively inexpensive, highly versatile and produces good quality light. Make sure the transformer is a reliable make

Mains voltage

A more recent development, mains voltage mimics the look of low voltage and makes life easier by having no transformer. However, the quality of light is not as good as low voltage and is not suitable for tight pinspotting as the beam of light is too wide.

Verdict: Lamps are coming down in price and it can be a viable alternative to low voltage, but they're not as energy efficient

Fibre optics

Light is bounced from the source down glass-lined fibres to appear as a point of light at the other end. Electricians are remote from the point of light making it ideal for lighting anything heat or ultraviolet sensitive (such as an artwork) or for use in water. It can also be used where access for changing a bulb might be difficult as the light box itself can be located more conveniently.

Verdict: Best suited to strictly decorative uses such as starry ceilings. Expensive

LEDs

Energy efficient and long lived, but they're still working on the quality. Mainly used decoratively.

Verdict: Still expensive, but impressive colour-change effects. Beware of cheap versions

**SIMON GILL**

Brief: To keep the lighting simple and low cost

Budget: £3,500

Location: Fulham, London

Architect and lighting designer:

Simon Gill Architects (020 7610 6874)

In a project that veered from the expensive (concrete worktops) to the cheap, the lighting for this conversion of a 1990s live/work space into a house fell into the second category, says Simon Gill. 'Very little money is spent on the light fittings. The idea is that you make the budget work harder by putting them in interesting places.'

There are three strands to the lighting, which is mainly low voltage tungsten halogen with some concealed fluorescents behind bulkheads. First, there is light to emphasise the architecture (under the floating step, behind the bulkheads in the kitchen and shower). Second, there is the occasional decorative lighting such as the elliptical lampshades from Habitat, which Gill has given a characteristic quirky twist by inverting them ('I like the slightly odd look'). Third there is the feature/ambient lighting, which is concealed in unusual locations: behind a jar of honey over the front door; in a shelf in front of a stuffed Bulgarian pine marten ('to give him

a Scooby Doo shadow behind'); inside a water channel under red stained glass in the centre of the dining table; and behind an egg whisk in a recess. In the dining hall conventional light switches are replaced by stainless steel pull cords so a small painting on a shelf can be specially illuminated by pulling them. 'More than anything else this is the result of a fascination with the paintings of Tintoretto,' says Gill. 'He used light in very unusual ways, and his light sources are frequently in unexpected places. The intention is to create a slightly surreal interior, but at the same time the lighting is useful, cosy, and presents various personal effects in interesting ways.' ▶

Basic lighting tips

- Early consideration of lighting is essential. Plan your lighting scheme at the same time as your plumbing to ensure that you get the most from a scheme by integrating lighting into the architecture and making sure that power points are positioned where they are needed.
- Before any decisions are made, think about the uses that will be made of a space at different times of the day. A living room may be used for watching TV, reading, hobbies, listening to music, eating, entertaining and so on. All require a different atmosphere and varying levels of light.
- Fitting dimmers will allow you to change the mood of the room and having more than one will allow you to create a variety of lighting effects. For instance, table lamps could be on one circuit, low voltage downlights emphasising pictures on a second and downlights focusing on the centre of a table on a third.

- The eye is always drawn to the brightest point of the light, so the key is to find downlights which conceal the bulb. If it is well recessed in its fitting, the object you are lighting will become the focus rather than the light source itself.
- When using low voltage downlights, don't become obsessed with symmetrical ceiling layouts. Instead think of what you want to light and focus the downlight in the centre of a picture, say, or over a dining table. Don't create lines or grids of downlights as the effect will be more like an office.
- Think of layering lights at different levels and don't rely on downlighting. Use low level uplights and wall-recessed floor washers, and consider individually lighting shelves and niches.

With thanks to Sally Storey
Lighting Design International



Opposite page, top, floor-washer lights under the bed give the impression that it is floating; below, Simon Gill placed a pot of honey in a recess in front of a light source to give a rich, warm glow. This page, concealing the source of lighting can create sculptural forms from basic architectural features