

Light Relief

In recent years it has become increasingly common to be awarded planning consent only to be burdened with onerous conditions relating to the control and reduction of light pollution - particularly when in relation to rural and isolated development proposals.



The key issue [for us at least] is that the majority of applicants likely to be adversely affected by 'lighting conditions' are involved in small, modest projects.

While it is thankfully not [yet] a statutory requirement to produce rafts of lighting data at submission stage, UK Planning Legislation requires Authorities to provide 'Environmental Protection' as standard. Confusingly therefore the Planning Authority can *currently* provide permission while still requiring further [detailed] information from the applicant;

Enter planning conditions...

...Cue much wailing and gnashing of teeth!

As is so often the case, the implications of this retrospective approach to planning may not be immediately apparent... The Local Authority are able to demand extensive information at the applicant's further expense - often causing a major headache and, perhaps more importantly, substantially delay building works while satisfactory detail is sourced, provided, considered and approved...

The [b]right idea;

Before going to the extent of specifying exterior lighting a few simple questions should be answered (and

ideally included for information within the initial planning application - thus avoiding the need for onerous conditions):

Is lighting actually necessary?

Could safety or security be achieved by other measures, such as segregation or screening of an area?

Will lights be in use constantly / all night - or will they be controlled by timers or passive infrared sensors, etc?

Is the proposed lighting likely to be affected by interference from vandals or by other mechanical means (for example; wind, snow or deflection by foreign objects) which may inadvertently misalign the lamp *after* installation - if so, can protection measures be implemented?

If lighting *is* considered necessary, a number of design measures can be taken to avoid causing nuisance or creating a light pollution problem:

For small scale and domestic security - a 150w lamp is usually more than adequate - it is typically not necessarily to specify anything bigger; High power (300/500W) lamps create much glare often reducing security in smaller projects. Larger installations may be justified in some agricultural and industrial situations where large areas need to be covered to aid site safety...

Designers should ensure that lights are correctly specified (and detailed) so that they only illuminate the surface(s) intended and do not throw light onto neighbouring property - no matter how much your neighbours wind you up there's no justification in lighting up their property like the Gulag!

Where needed, security lights should be appropriately located so that they only pick up the movement of persons in the zone required and not beyond.

Light should always be directed downwards if possible. *If* up-lighting *has* to be used then specify shields or baffles above lamps to reduce the amount of escaping upward light...

For further guidance with regard to applications that need external lighting - particularly rural projects (farms, warehouses etc) - the *GUIDANCE NOTES FOR THE REDUCTION OF LIGHT POLLUTION (2000 rev 05/03)* from the Institute of Lighting Engineers - is available for your interest [here](#) [1]...

Source URL: <https://www.keithfarmer.co.uk/planning-development/light-relief>

Links:

[1] <http://www.darkskies4ni.co.uk/images/ile.pdf>

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