

Architectural Lighting Design Guidelines



Architectural Lighting Design Guidelines: Mississippi State University realizes that architectural lighting enhances a building during the twilight hours and into the night. It is therefore the requirement that architectural lighting adhere to the following guidelines.

- Each building has its own unique characteristics that give it texture and form. Features such as wood doors, arched window openings, detailed cornices, columns or arcades are prime elements for lighting accent.
- Brick or stone building facades can benefit from a “close-in” lighting approach that grazes the light across the surface and calls attention to its textural quality by creating shadows and drama.
- Emphasize the base, middle and top of the building. This allows the building to be viewed from several different vantage points, both near and far from the structure, without looking unnatural.
- All fixtures and wiring should be well hidden in the architectural details so that the lighting has a minimal impact during the day. Fixture size, shape, color and mounting details are important considerations in the integration process.
- Situations where a building facade is washed with bright light from a distant location are to be avoided. This approach “flattens” out the building’s texture and causes unnecessary glare to the nighttime users.



- Light fixtures should be designed so that the light goes exactly where it's intended. Special care should be taken to include louvers, glare shields, or barn doors to the front of floodlight fixtures to prevent light pollution. Extra light bouncing into the atmosphere interferes with the work of astronomers and can disrupt the neighboring buildings.
- The intent of lighting a building is to enhance the best qualities of that building, not to become a "beacon" on campus. The brightest is not necessarily the best. Maintain an average light level of 2-5 foot-candles on illuminated surfaces, in accordance with the Ninth Edition of the IES Handbook.
- High Pressure Sodium has an orange tint and standard Metal Halide is blue-white. Careful consideration should be made to choose colors of light that complement the building's materials. Different light sources render colors differently.
- Mount light fixtures in accessible locations so that the lighting will be maintained regularly. Specify fixtures that have simple methods for lamp changing, where parts will not fall out of the fixture and get lost. Use long-life sources wherever possible. Specify tamper-resistant screws in any area that may be accessible to the public.
- Due to the difference between summer and winter daylight hours, lighting should be connected to a photocell to turn fixtures on and a time clock to turn them off.

