

**SPEIRS  
MAJOR**

City of London SPD,  
UK

**LIGHT  
ARCHITECTURE**

8 Shepherdess Walk  
London,  
N1 7LB  
United Kingdom

T +44 (0)20 7067 4700

Co-lab Shibuya Cast  
23-21, Shibuya 1-Chome  
Tokyo 150-0002  
Japan

T +81 (0)3 3400 8855

[info@smlightarchitecture.com](mailto:info@smlightarchitecture.com)  
[press@smlightarchitecture.com](mailto:press@smlightarchitecture.com)

# SPEIRS MAJOR



In July 2023, the City of London Corporation Planning and Transportation Committee voted unanimously to adopt a ground-breaking Lighting Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) - a statutory set of guidance for the design, delivery, maintenance and operation for lighting for building exteriors and the public realm. It also includes best practice guidelines to help reduce the impact of internal lighting on external areas.

CLIENT  
City of London

PHOTOGRAPHER  
James Newton

DATES  
2022 - 2023

PROJECT TEAM  
Mark Major, Benz  
Roos

# SPEIRS MAJOR

- 1.1 The City of London has become a diverse 24-hour destination – one which seeks to meet the needs of its residents, workers, and visitors by day and, increasingly so, after dark. Given the international dimension of our businesses, many operate around the clock. In addition, our night-time economy is growing in terms of leisure and hospitality. The 'Culture Mile' transformation seeks to cement the position of the City as a major cultural destination both by day and after dark. It is also a 'Destination City' for local, national, and international tourists.
- 1.2 The City of London is also home to a significant residential population. Achieving a vibrant and thriving City at night, which works for all its communities, will depend on lighting that is not only intelligent, functional, and safe, but also creative, sensitive, innovative, and beautiful.
- 1.3 Lighting also has a place in delivering on our Climate Action Strategy (2020-2027) and reducing energy consumption.
- 1.4 In October 2016 we adopted the most comprehensive, holistic Lighting Strategy in London ('Light + Darkness in the City' / 'A Lighting Vision for the City of London'). This provides the roadmap to the City of the future which sees lighting contributing to our three overarching aims: A flourishing society, a thriving economy and creating outstanding environments. This SPD should be read in conjunction with that document.
- 1.5 The Lighting Strategy made the following recommendations related to planning:
  - Promote best practice on lighting around design and environmental considerations;
  - Require lighting strategies to be provided as part of the pre-application process where appropriate;
  - Improve communication between key stakeholders regarding function and aesthetic outcomes;
  - Publish detailed planning guidance as to the use of lighting within the City of London to support and enhance the implementation of policy.

- 1.6 This SPD also builds on our Corporate Strategy and policies in the Development Plan, detailing how we will deliver on the Lighting Strategy through the planning system.
- 1.7 Whether it is a proposal for a new building, the alteration of an existing one or new or upgraded public realm, these all have an impact on the character of the City after dark. Artificial light can provide positive benefits, not only on how public and private space is used and how safe it feels, but also how attractive it is. It can also have a negative impact on the ability of residents to enjoy their homes due to obtrusive light, can cause highway safety and accessibility issues and create environmental damage, including harm to local biodiversity.
- 1.8 The aim of this SPD is to ensure that these opportunities and constraints are identified and addressed. It seeks to consider light as a valuable commodity to be managed in an intelligent, sensitive, and innovative way and provide the guidance needed to ensure that a lighting approach to any development meets specific requirements. It aims to provide support in the preparation of lighting information as part of the pre-application process or for an application submission.
- 1.9 Owners, occupiers and managers of existing buildings will be encouraged to adopt the principles set out in this guidance by signing up to the 'Considerate Lighting Charter'. A copy of the Charter is included in Appendix A of this document.
- 1.10 A key aim of the SPD for City occupants is to consider and discuss lighting on an early stage to ensure issues are understood from the start.



## Topic B: Residential amenity

- 4.9 Lighting can adversely impact residents' quiet enjoyment of their properties after dark. Consideration should also be given to temporary residents including workers who live in apartments during the week and tourists who stay in hotels and rented apartments, particularly at the weekend. Light spill through windows, even those fitted with blinds and curtains and the direct view of bright external and internal lighting schemes and light sources can not only cause a nuisance but also contribute to health issues including anxiety and sleep deprivation through the disruption of circadian rhythms. The following general principles should be observed:
  - a. Minimise and mitigate the visual brightness of interior lighting, particularly of highly glazed buildings, when seen from residential properties including the visibility of light fittings and their sources. This includes distant and near views.
  - b. Use good optical control and/or baffles to light fixtures to help reduce glare from interior lighting.
  - c. Include well-designed presence detection systems to reduce lighting accidentally being left on as well as saving energy.
  - d. Consider the odds to void ratio of facades or the use of blinds for developments directly impacting residential areas to help reduce the visibility of interior lighting at night.
  - e. Put robust management protocols into place that seek to reduce over-lighting and waste.
1. Developments should ensure all external lighting is managed in accordance with the lighting curfew times, and all non-essential lighting turned off after 2300h if near to residential properties.
- g. Newly installed street lighting, where visible from residential properties nearby, should be provided with a shield/louver or similar to protect against glare.



1. Bright interior lighting schemes and highly visible light sources can not only cause a nuisance but also contribute to health issues.



2. Blinds, coatings, tilt patterns and other facade design techniques can help reduce the visibility of interior lighting at night while occupants can still perform their tasks. All developments should switch off the interior lighting when the building is not occupied.

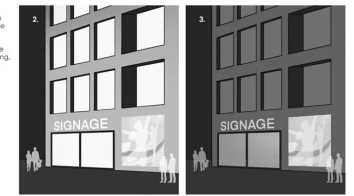


3. Good optical control and baffles to light fixtures can help reduce glare from interior lighting. Photography by James Newton.

## Topic C: Public realm

- 4.10 Lighting directly contributes to the character of the City of London after dark. This can range from the experience of pedestrians at street level to an appreciation of the skyline and key landmarks such as St Paul's Cathedral when seen from a distance. The lighting of all developments should seek to make a positive contribution to the experience of the public realm after dark. Lighting schemes within the public realm should observe the following general principles:
  - a. All developments should consider how architectural and public realm lighting can contribute to place-making, character, and ambience to ensure attractive and safe places after dark.
  - b. All developments should consider the accommodation of street and amenity lighting from early in the design process from both a functional and urban design perspective.
  - c. All new developments should determine the requirements for City of London Street and amenity lighting to their facades if required to do so early in the design process.
  - d. Where new developments are providing street or amenity lighting (irrespective of scale, colour temperature and mounting height) this should be in strict accordance with the City Corporation's Lighting Strategy (2018) unless otherwise agreed.
  - e. Public realm lighting should seek to create a legible environment that reveals key vertical as well as horizontal surfaces but without recourse to creating obtrusive light or glare.
  - f. The illumination of all areas of hard and soft landscape should balance the requirements for safety and security after dark with any potential impact on residential amenity and biodiversity.

- g. All public realm lighting should have the provision to be dimmed and controlled to help manage and balance visual brightness. The requirements for lighting to support key soft landscape features may be highlighted, but only where appropriate to do so.
- h. Key soft landscape features may be highlighted, but only where appropriate to do so.
- i. Schemes should retain natural darkness in green spaces / corridors where safe to do so. Natural darkness is defined as the general condition without the addition of artificial light from any development.
- k. Colour rendering and colour appearance should be considered such that materials and their surface textures, where illuminated, are well lit. Schemes do not necessarily mean brightly lit.
- l. Consideration should be given to the appearance of any exterior lighting equipment and its associated architectural and electrical infrastructure by day.
- m. Illuminated signs and advertisements, including media screens, should be fit in line with the requirements of Advertising Consent.
- n. The lighting of signs, and external and internal media screens (where visible from the public realm) should be fully dimmable and controllable to help manage visual brightness.
- o. There is a general presumption against the use of non-white spectrum coloured lighting, unless there is a strong justification in the wider public interest.



1. Key landmarks such as St Paul's Cathedral are part of the character of the City of London after dark. Photography by James Newton

2. The high brightness of signs and media screens can negatively impact the public realm experience.

3. Controlled signs and media screens can enhance the public realm experience.

Following the recommendations made as part of the City of London Lighting Strategy (2018) which we helped author, the City identified a series of desired outcomes, including reducing energy waste and light pollution in support of their climate action plan and improving the quality of the public realm. These objectives formed the basis for the SPD, which aims to ensure that all new developments include proper consideration for how lighting will complement the architectural and heritage context, as well as addressing important issues of sustainability, safety, accessibility, inclusion and amenity for residents, workers, visitors and tourists. We worked closely with the City in an advisory capacity as they developed their Lighting SPD, which is focused on shaping a positive experience of the City after dark for all users while supporting their sustainability goals.

Supporting this, a series of guidance topics are in place to help applicants to achieve the desired outcomes. A simple methodology limits light spill and brightness based on a series of identified 'District Brightness Zones' including residential and heritage areas, cultural and tourist areas, and commercial, retail and transport hubs. Each of these has varying 'curfews' to help control external illumination and the impact of interior lighting, particularly for highly glazed buildings.

While the guidance is mandatory for all new developments, the SPD also includes an innovative "Considerate Lighting Charter" (CLS). This is for existing building owners, operators, and occupiers to encourage them to manage their lighting systems in ways that positively contribute to the City, its character, culture, and night-time economy.

The SPD also includes a Code of Practice for temporary lighting, primarily for construction lighting, which can cause nuisance on a long-term basis.



# SPEIRS MAJOR



Two images taken of the 'Eastern Cluster' of towers in the City of London. The left hand image was taken the year before the COVID-19 pandemic. The right hand image shows the same view during the first lockdown when many office workers were working from home. Whilst an extreme situation it provides a unique glimpse of the City when less lighting is spilling from the interiors of buildings.



One of the many objectives of the SPD is to reduce the environmental impact of highly glazed buildings after dark but without compromising the enjoyment of their internal space by users