

Leading Lights

THE RIGHT LIGHTING CAN MAKE ALL THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A GOOD AND A GREAT KITCHEN OR BATHROOM PROJECT. WE ASKED LIGHTING EXPERTS TO SHARE THEIR ILLUMINATING INSIGHT

Kitchen lighting scheme by John Cullen Lighting



It's fair to say that design – in most of its many and varied forms – can also be something of an art form. Getting it right is based largely on a solid foundation of technical requirements of course, but is achieved only through a fair bit of added skill and judgement.

That is certainly the case when it comes to interior lighting, and the kitchen and bathroom are the most vital and potentially complex spaces to light up correctly. Graeme Smith, Senior Designer at PWS, says: "You can simplify kitchen lighting into two camps: task and mood lighting. Both aspects have important roles to play in the space. Task lighting – such as under-cabinet lights or internal cabinet lights – aims to aid the functional and ergonomic requirements of the kitchen where on the flipside, mood lighting responds to the aesthetic and emotional side of the scheme. The trick is getting the balance of the two just right."

Luke Thomas, Associate at John Cullen Lighting, believes that versatility is key: "The most important aspect to get right is to ensure the lighting is flexible. A dimmer is the minimum requirement to give both bright task lighting as well as softer more relaxing light. You can take it one step further by introducing accent lighting and scene setting."

In the context of an ever-broadening array of textures and materials in kitchen and bathroom spaces, the issue of ambient lighting comes to the fore, not least because it can have a big impact on how those surfaces appear.

Ellie Coombs, Associate Lighting Designer, Paul Nulty Lighting Design, said: "The positioning of the lights need to be considered as not only should they each focus on a specific task, but they can be used to pick out materials and textures – for instance, downlights positioned over taps will provide sparkle.

"A downlight over the bath or shower is a good idea in theory but once in the bath will create a direct angle between

Bathroom lighting design by Light IQ



the eye and the light source, which is not so great in practice. To prevent this, consider positioning the lights elsewhere, by moving them to the corners to frame the space or using a number of smaller downlights positioned close to the wall to 'wash' it with light."

Washing walls with light can change the perception of a space, making a small space appear larger, while still providing a soft ambient lighting adds Coombs: "Washing walls is also an effective way of showing off a feature wall finish. However, the lights will not only highlight the quality of the material but also any uneven tiles."

Even experienced designers can become somewhat set in their ways when it comes to prioritising elements of their projects, and there are a number of aspects of lighting that are regularly overlooked. PWS's Smith says: "Mood lighting is probably the area that is often disregarded or sacrificed from a design. Items such as plinth lighting, above-cabinet lighting and dimmable feature lights all can add to the ambience of the room and turn a kitchen into a more appealing, welcoming and versatile living space."

Thomas of John Cullen Lighting says that one of the biggest bathroom

lighting mistakes is to position lighting in a grid format to spot light down into the room. "This can cause harsh shadows under the eyes and chin making make up and shaving challenging while also not being the most flattering. It is important to have lighting either side of the face using a wall light or similar."

As for the kitchen, he points out that unlit, shadowy areas can easily drag down the overall look of a scheme. "In a kitchen with a bar area and stools, the space under the bar can often be dark and gloomy. The simple introduction of an LED strip on the underside of the overhang can add an extra dimension and gives a soft illumination at low level. This is a more subtle effect than lighting in the plinth."

Phillip Pini, Residential Business Development Manager at Crestron, adds: "One of the common mistakes designers make when lighting a bathroom is rushing to install as many LEDs as possible. You can overdo it and make the area look overcrowded. You may not get the most flattering light either. Another mistake made is not planning the lighting at the initial stage of a bathroom project. Installing light fittings last minute can make the space look untidy, especially if cabling is required."

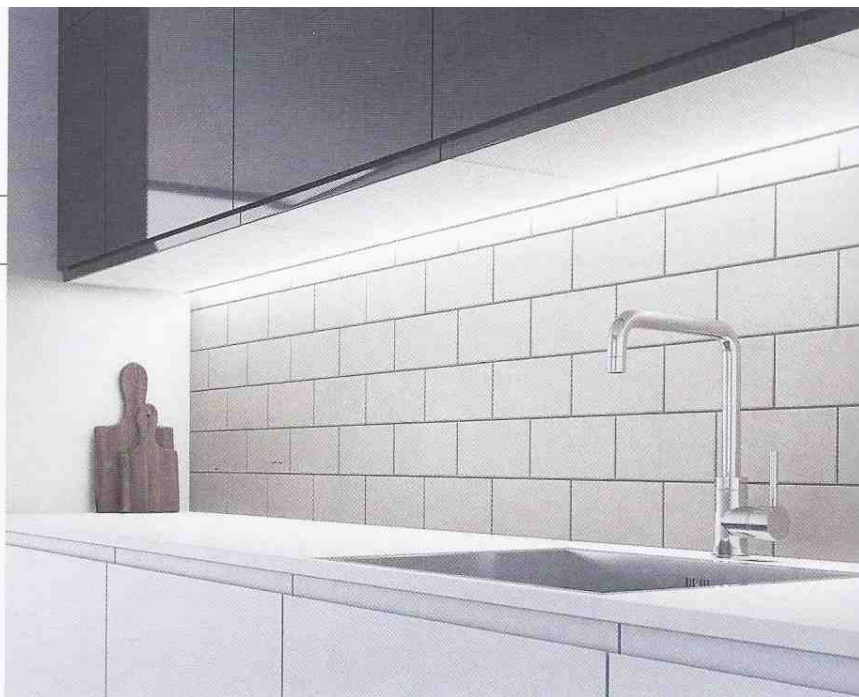
Nicki Massey, Founder of home accessories company DesResDesign, believes the area most commonly overlooked is the use of decorative lighting to provide atmosphere and style to a room. She explains: "Since open planned spaces and the idea of having 'living' kitchens has increased over the last few years, the important role of lighting and how it's used is rapidly changing."

"Quality lighting is important for usability, style and longevity. Glass is a particularly wonderful medium to use as you can have size, brightness of light and still the space of the room through it."

Rebecca Weir, Creative Director at Light IQ, believes that task lighting remains a key consideration but is easy to get wrong: "The misplacement of downlights can cause heavy shadows and the mis-specification of pendants often means they are bought for their aesthetic qualities as opposed to light distribution. Often, starting with the task lighting in the kitchen and bathroom and ensuring correct positioning and light output will then allow you to balance the rest of your lighting scheme."

John Craig, Head of Sales for KBB at Leyton Lighting, said: "The most important aspect of lighting to get right in any room is that it should be considered as part of the design and fabric of the room itself and not as an individual element which is an afterthought to everything else."

Craig says that the key to a good lighting design is to apply layers of light, starting with a 'canvas' or background on which to apply other types of lighting. "To do this you must consider the primary function of that room and the activities that take place in it. Bathrooms are primarily activity based whilst kitchens are multi-functional rooms and here you need to build in greater flexibility through zoning and controls such as dimmers."



Sensio has launched a suite of LED kitchen lighting models which use the latest diffused LED lighting technology. Surface Light Source (SLS) lighting enables a room to be designed and lit with diffused LED lighting. Each light is available in a choice of cool or warm LED colours that will suit both contemporary and tradition kitchen designs.



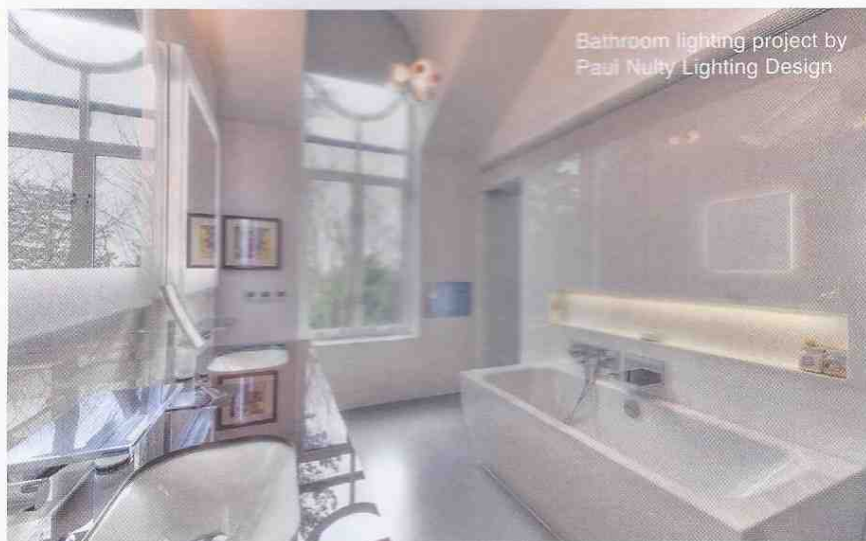
The Balto range featuring LED lighting, part of the 2015 Pelipal collection

Once you have established the 'canvas', you should consider secondary activities that happen in a room, such as reading and dressing in a bedroom and shaving in a bathroom, both of which require a strong purposeful direct light source whereas a relaxed bathing experience requires a gentler, warmer less direct light source.

Craig adds: "Lastly, it's all about 'filling in' the detail and to do this you should consider any aspect or feature in the room that you want to accentuate whether that's structural, textural, a specific colour, or simply a shape or an object within that space."

The challenge for designers in lighting – as with so many other product categories that they specify for projects – is keeping up with the fast changing nature both of consumer tastes and trends as well as the rapid evolution of technology.

PWS's Smith says: "Consumers have become more aware of the options available and now see lighting as an important feature on their wish list. Technology has improved the style and kind of lights that are on offer, not just in terms of energy efficiency opening up the option of including more of them in the kitchen, but also in terms of what can be achieved design wise."



with lighting, such as strip LEDs. The priorities have shifted from being solely focused on task lighting to having a leaning towards a more ambitious and creative output."

Leyton Lighting's Craig adds: "Today's consumers are becoming more educated as to the importance of lighting and how it can enhance their interior designs. They are looking for fully integrated lighting solutions within the KBB market. The growth in open plan living and the trend for islands means instead of just supplying cabinet lighting the opportunity exists to provide a complementary range of lighting to enhance the kitchen, such as decorative pendants for example."

"This enhanced awareness means that designers who embrace lighting early on in the design process end up with a more engaged customer – and a better end result."

Mirrors can be a focal point. Many have integrated lighting whilst others require a carefully considered lighting accompaniment. John Fearon, Managing Director at Astro Lighting, says: "While illuminated mirrors are a great feature in a domestic bathroom, they come in fixed sizes which is not ideal for hotels or where designers want more flexibility with the mirror in any context. Fortunately, there are endless

options for pairs of luminaires which fit either side of any size of mirror. Go for slim, vertical lights for a pared-down, sophisticated effect, or a more gas-lamp style fitting if the look is more traditional. With an adapter kit, mirror lights can be fitted on the mirror surface, which has a great visual impact. A welcome extra touch for shaving and make up is an illuminated magnifying mirror."

Light IQ's Weir says that LEDs remain the big factor in determining the direction of the lighting opportunities within the K&B sector: "The integration and development of LEDs has now changed the market forever. LEDs, cool to touch can be integrated into complex veneers and finishes without risk of damage to the surfaces. Many LEDs are sealed fixtures with high ingress protection which is wonderful for wet areas. The only limit in lighting is really your imagination and budget – the rest is just a beautiful canvas in which to paint shadows so as to highlight the light."

Daniel Collins, Managing Director of London lighting retailer The Lighting Store, agrees that LED lighting has brought about the biggest change in the modern approach to lighting but that other technology is playing a part too: "In the bathroom there are lots more possibilities and one of the things our customers love is having lights with sensors that are placed around the floor on the skirting

boards that come on at night, so when you use the bathroom at night you don't get fully woken by bright lights."

Russell Vanstone, Technical Director and Co-Founder of Erosphos, believes that technology has opened up a host of new and exciting possibilities. "We have been involved with many barn conversions, houses and house renovation projects where discrete energy efficient lighting is paramount. Utilising LED lighting systems, combined with lighting controls, ensures we control the light correctly from multiple positions around the house, avoiding having groups of switches which even after 10 years of occupancy no one can remember. It enables smart phone/tablet control along with AV (audio visual) integration to provide seamless human interaction to the lighting installation."

BRIGHT IDEAS

Russell Vanstone, Technical Director and Co-Founder of Erosphos, on some key lighting factors to consider...

- The colour of lamp which, depending on the lamp type, can be warm white, white (neutral) or cool white. Other colours can be achieved by combining RGB (red, green and blue).
- The light fixture design itself – is it practical or just decorative? Decorative fittings at times do not offer great light output.
- Controllability. In locations such as over a bathroom mirror or under kitchen units, lights don't need to be on all the time so can be dimmed. They can also be controlled individually using time schedules via a lighting control system, so a bathroom mirror may be the only light that turns on at night time when presence is detected by a sensor.
- Lighting can be an important part of the home decoration. Varying brightness and colours create changing moods which can make the space completely different.



The PWS Remo White Gloss range with LED interior and under cabinet mood lighting

Vanstone adds: "The advancement in LED technology also allows us to introduce colour, be that static colours, changeable by means of a control system or instances where more dynamic effects are required. This could include where media/video is played back over an array of lighting fixtures – perhaps concealed within a ceiling of floor – providing a welcoming, cutting-edge and well-designed environment.

"This type of installation means that video images of sea waves, the sun, snow, pictures of grandchildren, stars at night or even a full length feature movie can be streamed seamlessly over a feature wall, floor or ceiling."

Crestron's Pini says that designers should consider the benefits of a smart lighting system to bring a multitude of functions within easy reach for the user. "Lighting scenes can be programmed to cover everything from first thing in the morning with lights gradually illuminating to a daytime level, to an evening scene with certain lights being dimmed to create a peaceful ambience to relax and unwind in."

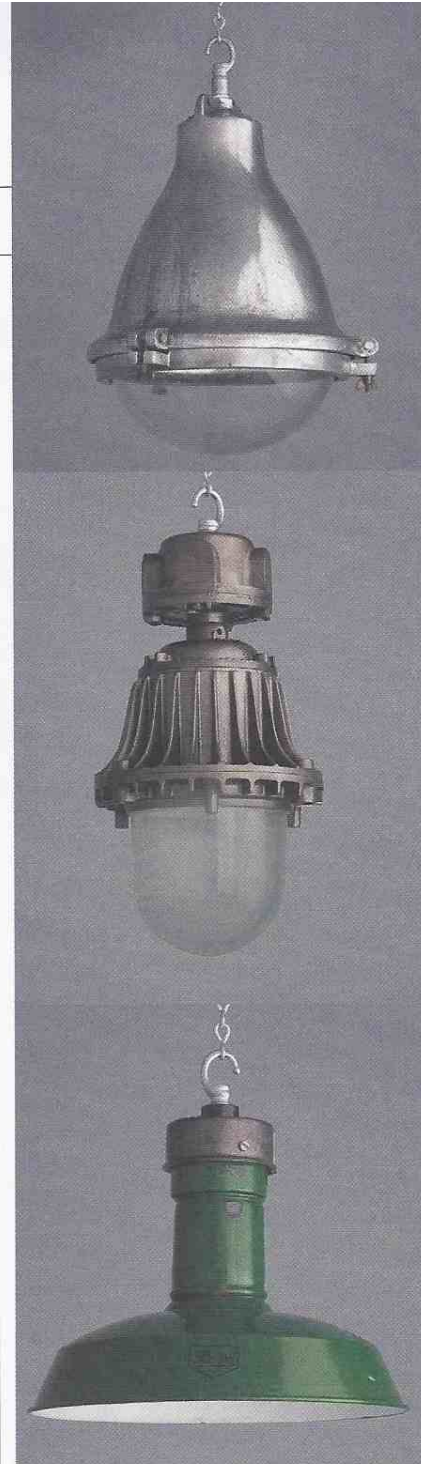
He adds: "You can also achieve a much better quality of light with varying colour temperatures using LED over traditional light sources. By using lighting control alongside LED, you can reduce the amount of energy that is wasted

by lighting unoccupied spaces. LEDs create decorative and interesting lighting scenes that change throughout the day."

As is often the case, a bit of experimentation and having the bravery to try new solutions can yield the best results when it comes to lighting. Light IQ's Weir adds: "Our team is always trying new possibilities. I am currently designing my own children's bathroom and it will include a digital backlit LED projection behind the bath. We use a lot of edge-lit light sheet which backlights through Corian, onyx and other materials. The lighting of bathrooms is a wonderful opportunity to go the extra mile and do something a little special for clients." **d**

Contacts

The Lighting Store /
lightingstore.com
PWS / pws.co.uk
John Cullen Lighting /
johncullenlighting.co.uk
Erosphos / erosphos.com
Leyton Lighting / leyton-lighting.co.uk
Sensio / sensio.co.uk
Astro / astrolighting.co.uk
Light IQ / lightiq.com
Skinflint / skinflintdesign.co.uk
DesResDesign / desresdesign.co.uk
Crestron / crestron.eu/showroom
Paul Nulty Lighting Design /
paulnulty.co.uk



FEATURE LIGHTING

There is also scope to step outside of the conventional, with characterful feature lights which bring a touch of their own focal-point style to a space. Sophie Miller, Co-founder of Skinflint, said: "We often specify feature lighting for bathrooms and kitchens. Our enamel pendants are perfect for illuminating a kitchen counter with task light and they look attractive as objects in their own right when the mood is changed to a relaxed dining environment. Bathrooms require IP rated lights in the wet zones, but our lights are frequently utilised outside the wet area with our opaline wall lights and nautical bulkheads a perennial favourite."