

# No leap of faith required



It is already possible to design sustainable lighting without compromising on sustainable design, says Søren Tjønneland, who heads up the international Roblon Lighting Division.



Environmental correctness has generated a certain air of excitement in the lighting industry. Sustainability is now a common requirement for private and commercial clients alike, which makes it a requirement for lighting designers and manufacturers too.

This has inspired a lot of constructive creativity within the industry, but also created something of a dilemma for designers. How to achieve a lighting solution that is environmentally sustainable without having to sacrifice design sustainability? How to be sure today's newfangled solution is still viable in five, 10 or 20 years?

How to avoid a specification becoming a leap of faith? How to be sure that an infant product hasn't been 'continuously improved' so much in the interval between specification and installation that the actual lighting result is unexpected? How to be sure that the product does exactly what it says on the tin?

How to ensure that rigid functionality doesn't tie designers' hands before they've had a chance to put their

thinking caps on? How to be sure that sustainability doesn't come at the expense of design ingenuity?

By their nature, new technologies can give rise to such dilemmas, not least when R&D is taking place at a helter-skelter pace in a helter-skelter industry race. Fibre optic lighting, on the other hand, is an industry veteran with a documented track record of sustainability on various levels.

In California, where a long-standing energy crisis has led to stringent state regulations, environmental sustainability is a typical deciding factor for US lighting distributor Dan Haydt of Visual Lighting Technologies. 'Fibre optic lighting is an energy efficient solution,' he says. 'You can light a whole store with just 11 150W light generators.'

Economic sustainability was one of the determining factors when a Roblon fibre optic lighting solution was chosen for the Battle of Britain monument on London's Victoria Embankment. A 10-year life-costing was required by Westminster City Council when it donated the site, and fibre optics proved to be the cheaper long-term solution in a field



which included an LED proposal.

Where fibre optic lighting has been particularly ahead of its time is in fulfilling environmental requirements without sacrificing design sustainability. Minutely customized designs with any required fibre length can be precisely calculated, and the calculations are true to real-life performance.

They are also consistent with lighting industry standards, which is why Roblon designed its free Lux Calculator programme so that fibre optic calculations can be exported as IES files and then imported into professional lighting design programmes, e.g. Dialux.

There is no risk of variation, even when specifying the most wildly creative and subjective lighting design. And as the fittings, light sources and fibres are designed as an integral solution, there are no weak or new links in the product chain.

Nor is there a risk that today's design solution cannot be rethought tomorrow. Even as new products are added, the tried, tested and documented products remain available. In 20 years, if you need to extend a solution, you can just add the same product with the same specifications and get the same lighting output as you did 20 years before.

That environmental and design sustainability should be mutually inclusive has already been signalled by US energy giant Con Edison. Both were requirements when it illuminated four clock faces, each six metres in diameter, 27 storeys up in its landmark New York clock tower.

'The fibre optic solution created a dramatic reduction in energy,' said Con Edison lighting specialist Peter Jacobson afterwards. 'And it improved lighting effectiveness without compromising any aspect of the project.'



## Contact

Roblon Lighting Division is a part of the international Roblon Group.

It is represented in the UK by Light Projects.

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