

LIGHT MY WAY

TECHNICAL



As winter approaches, proper illumination of walkways is important from a safety as well as aesthetic point of view. **Robert Webber** outlines some of the options

It's the time of year when we start to believe we are nocturnal animals! It's dark when we leave the house and dark when we get home. Getting to and from the car becomes an assault course, especially when you have two apple trees dropping their bombs on you plus dogs' toys and kids' footballs. Effective and reliable path lighting becomes your guide through the jungle.

Not so long ago, path lighting was fairly basic. There wasn't much choice of fittings and styles. Bollards or lampposts were the only way of raising the light source over the path. In the last five years both technology and design has enabled solutions to suit most tastes and architectural requirements.

Path lighting can take many forms, from traditional Victorian lamp posts to smaller architectural bollards, moon lighting from an adjacent tree or recessed way-finder lights that shine beams of light across a path. As a rule, most downward facing bollards illuminate an area with a radius

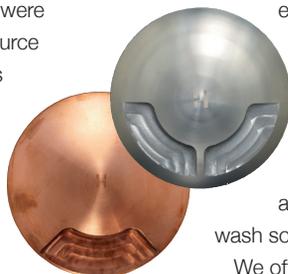
approximately 1.5 times their height. So the light from a 50cm bollard will extend around 75cm from the post, enough to cover a standard width path. To cover a wider area or take a different approach, you can use bollards with angled reflectors to control the projection, emitting light only on one facet or on a certain trajectory.

One solution for lighting paths that run alongside a building or planting bed is to highlight the building or planting and use the overspill of light to wash soft light across the path.

We often place lights in the gravel strip alongside buildings, as seen in the picture on the left. It's a great way of highlighting two places from one source, avoiding over-lighting and glare as well as being more cost effective.

The majority of front of house path lighting is placed on a timed or PIR (Passive InfraRed) circuit, so it's always there when you need it. We often use a Light Symphony system and sensors for control. This way we can set the lighting system to 30% capacity after dark, rising to 100% when it senses movement, providing a 'welcome home' effect. These same controls can extend to higher level moon lighting when you need that extra brightness to unload the car.

Hunza, a lighting manufacturer from New Zealand, makes a fabulous recessed



RULES TO FOLLOW

- Paths are often overlooked when lighting is designed. **Functional light** should always be No1 on your checklist.
- Think about a **simple control system**, so lighting levels change as the use requires.
- **Be imaginative**. There are so many creative ways to use 'out the box' solutions.
- **Mock up**. We continually test new lights and products. Most manufacturers will be happy to send a sample for you to test light levels and colours.

faceted light that we often use. Whether placed in sleepers, a deck or a stone path, the surface is seamless and emanates light across the face of the paving. It's a great solution when a designer requires virtually zero effect to the visual design, but optimal architectural lighting. Great for any path where disability access is required. It eliminates trip hazards from lighting.

ABOUT ROBERT WEBBER

Robert Webber is the founder of Scenic Lighting, a specialist exterior lighting company based in Berkshire. He designs and installs garden lighting throughout the UK and internationally. Robert can be contacted on rob@sceniclighting.com or via his mobile on 07766 051 000.

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