Lighting Strategy

5.10~Wayfinding / Archeology / Management...

Wayfinding and Interpretation

The Chester Interpretation Masterplan (IMP) and PRDG wayfinding strategy make detailed proposals for orientation and interpretation panels, along with educational and visitor events, all of which have the potential to integrate well with the public realm lighting. The authors of the IMP draw reference to the experience in York, where lighting has been used as part of an approach to interpretation in the city. Liverpool also used lighting in a similar way in the run up to and during European Capital of Culture in 2008, organising tours and night walks to view some of its architectural heritage, along with temporary lighting projects.

If the proposals in the lighting strategy are implemented in Chester, then there will also be excellent opportunities for guided walks, tours and events in the city at night. An event such as the 'Chester Illuminations' described in the IMP could easily be realised.

The Amphitheatre presents an opportunity for lighting within the space for both arts and educational events and this is explored in the conceptual lighting designs (section 5.13).

The proposals for self illuminated orientation and interpretation panels fit within the lighting strategy and will work well at the gateway locations identified previously where there are no opportunities to light existing landmarks. This type of illuminated signage could be used on Brook Street

for example, were no opportunities currently exist to use lighting to guide visitors arriving by train toward the city centre.

The panels could use concealed LEDs for longevity. Low maintenance Illuminated panels in public spaces will have a functional purpose, but will also add interest and contrast. Where it is not possible to integrate lighting into a signage element, public lighting can be coordinated so that light is directed to make these a feature at night, integrating them into the night time public realm.

Watergate Street, Chester

Archaeology and Conservation

Chester is an Area of Archaeological Importance. Lighting can be used to enhance archaeological sites and historic buildings, contributing to the public realm as public art or as an aid to interpretation. The installation of lighting can also impact on archaeology and the historic fabric of the city, the laying of cables in trenches for example,can destroy the archaeology. Archaeology is about more than artefacts, so that the act of digging alone can destroy archaeological features. Procedures exist to protect sites of archaeological importance and details are provided in the specification section (section 5.12) regarding the duties when working in such a historic environment.

Management

Whilst the implementation of lighting projects bring a range of benefits to a town or city, these are quickly lost if the schemes are not managed, operated and maintained properly. All schemes, whether publicly or privately owned, must be monitored to ensure they continue to deliver throughout their design life. It should be the responsibility of the local authority to do this. Private companies by their nature cannot be counted upon to ensure the upkeep of lighting schemes, as policies, personnel and priorities change. It is especially important for Cheshire West and Chester Council to ensure schemes that have received public funding are run correctly throughout their design life.

All designers must ensure they submit detailed information to facilitate the correct operation and maintenance of their schemes to enable long-term management. In particular, details of focussing, the colour temperature of lamps and the programming of controls should be included. These details are not normally provided in a contractor's operation and maintenance manual, which is generally a technical document that does not deal with the aesthetics of what the scheme should look like.

However this information is essential if a client is to ensure the installation is maintained to look as it was designed.

Chester Cathedral