

# Lighting up our Heritage

Listed buildings have many restrictions in place to ensure that they are kept in the same condition for years to come. We look at how lighting systems are designed and installed to be in keeping with the style of the building.

Lighting is an integral part of the world we live in today, with offices and buildings designed to allow natural light to flood in and contemporary lighting systems installed for when the sun goes down. But, think back to a time where lighting didn't exist or was seen as a luxury. Many of the beautiful buildings that are now national treasures were built before the inclusion of electric lighting and this gives lighting designers a tough brief when working on a listed building.

Listed buildings have many restrictions on them and work cannot be done without the prior consent of a conservation officer. When renovating a listed building, materials will need to be replaced in a like for like manner or restored if necessary.

John Cullen Lighting Design have a proven track record of lighting listed buildings. Luke Thomas, Senior Designer comments "Before planning a lighting scheme for a Listed Building check with the Local Planning Authority what work will be permitted. A listed building will usually have interesting architectural features to

highlight. If recessing into the floor is possible then Lucca uplights can be used to accent columns, fireplaces and archways and a length of Contour LED strip can be used on top of kitchen units, dressers and wardrobes to highlight the cornice and ceiling. If recessing into the floor is not possible then a floor standing Square Highlight can be plugged into a 5 amp socket for the same effect. The Pocket of Light is ideal for creating focused pools of light by seating areas for reading and can also be used to highlight artwork. Lighting integrated into joinery units can add to the ambient light levels and also creates an interesting feature which doesn't affect the integrity of the building."

Edinburgh's historic Assembly Rooms celebrated their one year anniversary after being refurbished this July. The refurbishment cost £9.3m and Chelsom were commissioned to restore the magnificent crystal chandeliers to their former glory.

A total of 25 chandeliers were restored throughout the venue and both modern and

Main Image: Reception Square, RSA Building. Lighting designed by Mindseye.

Right hand Images top to bottom: Refurbished Chandeliers at the Assembly Rooms, Edinburgh. Image supplied by Chelsom. Listed Building, lit by John Cullen Lighting. Keith Gunn from Chelsom, restoring Chandeliers at the Assembly Rooms, Edinburgh. Image in Text: Great Room at RSA Building, lit by Mindseye.



traditional skills were needed for the work to be done. Three of the energy efficient chandeliers were located in the Ballroom - an elegant addition to this spectacular listed Georgian interior dating back to 1787. The ballroom is a stunning vision with a pallet of soft greys and ducky whites; floor to ceiling mirrors run at either end making it seem the room goes on forever.

To complete the renovation each chandelier was dismantled section by section then boxed and labeled accordingly. The larger fittings were dismantled and refurbished in component form and then reassembled on site over a three week period. The chandeliers had more than half a million crystals to be cleaned and replaced correctly and this was done alongside Keith Gunn Electrical services. With the chandeliers surviving the ages of candlelight, gas and electricity, it was vital

Assembly Rooms has got its sparkle back.”

The historic RSA (Royal Society of Arts) building is grade 1 listed and originally designed by Robert and John Adams in 1774. Over the years it has been through many transformations. Mindseye were invited to provide a lighting scheme for the building by Matthew Lloyd Architects. Their brief was to support the architects vision; to produce a state of the art facility whilst still remaining true to the original features. Part of this vision prohibited the use of any recessed fittings. The main difficulty when choosing a lighting system was the multiple functions each room was needed for. The Great Room in particular was difficult as it was used for seminars, presentations, weddings and exhibitions. The Great Room also housed 18th century oil paintings which clad all four walls of the room. To preserve these paintings all lighting needed



every piece was restored and replaced correctly.

One challenge faced by Chelsom was to install a lighting system throughout the venue that not only was in keeping with the buildings aesthetics. Osram Halogen 42W candle and GLS lamps were selected due to the amazing sparkle these create with crystal, further emphasising the overall impact of the lighting restoration.

Manager of The Assembly Rooms, Shona Clelland, said “The chandeliers throughout the Assembly Rooms are what makes the building iconic and the Chelsom team did a wonderful job of restoring them to their former glory. When visitors come into the Ballroom, it is the moment they see the three large chandeliers that leaves them speechless. Thanks to Chelsom, the

to be kept below 150 lux to prevent degeneration.

Both these projects show that with a good brief and a respect for the buildings heritage and materials, lighting schemes can be tailored to work to certain confines, while still producing a beautiful end result. 

**Contact**  
**Chelsom**  
 +44 (0)1253 831400  
[www.chelsom.co.uk](http://www.chelsom.co.uk)

**Mindseye**  
 +44 (0)20 7923 0508  
[www.mindseye3d.com](http://www.mindseye3d.com)

**John Cullen**  
 +44 (0)20 7371 5400  
[www.johncullenlighting.co.uk](http://www.johncullenlighting.co.uk)

