

International hotels are characterised by a high level of comfort, excellent service, and a correspondingly good atmosphere. However, it is no longer mandatory to include a permanent "lightshow" at the expense of all environmental and economic considerations.

A hotel manager casting an eye over his electricity bill a few years ago could only shudder. But what alternative was there? No 'Big Brother' would check all rooms to see if lights were left on, or whether parts of the restaurants, the bars or the conference rooms really needed to be lit. Once they had been switched on, the lights mostly stayed on.

This was good news for power stations and lamp manufacturers, particularly the latter, since this practice had a pronounced effect on the life of their products. But all good things come to an end, and canny designers started to ask why the possibilities offered in theatre or event lighting could not be put to good use architecturally as well, taking into account the particular setting of the building in question. And thus the concept of architectural lighting controls was born.

Professional architectural lighting controls offer the possibility of setting up and storing many different lighting cues, or scenes, individually. This means that the usual, time-honoured "static" style of lighting need no longer dominate in all areas of a hotel.

In the UK, Copthorne Hotels Ltd. decided that it was time to investigate variable lighting for different function areas and at the same time to install facilities such as projection screens and blinds integrated with the lighting control to optimise use of the special events areas in particular.

A few months ago in Hanover, internationally famous for its trade fair, Copthorne opened their first hotel on German soil. Close to the site of the Expo 2000 World Fair there now stands an elegant four-star hotel building belonging to the British chain, which is innovative in its use of internal architectural lighting. Extravagant colours are mixed with British period furniture and modern seating units, set against marble, wood and metal finishes. The technology is also of the very highest quality, with everything controlled electronically.

Copthorne Hotels are one of many German hotel chains who have so far chosen the flexible Premiere™ architectural lighting control system offered by Strand. It was a new departure for the hotel company in that the entire building (with the exception of the bedrooms, of course) was to be controlled as one - the foyer, the restaurant, the corridors, the bars and the English pub as well as the conference and function rooms. Two central computers are used to do this, with 24 decentralised outstations on a data network. Data

COPTHORNE PREMIERES IN GERMANY

from the local controls go to the central processor and from there to the eight LD90™ dimmer racks which control the 238 channels in the building.

With the help of a PC, the programmable control system can in theory be adapted to any conceivable lighting situation by the hotel's technical manager Thomas Wehr. This means he can not only control the screens and blinds mentioned above but also manage complex functions like the combination of a number of rooms into one. "One of the advantages of

this system for us, apart from the reduced energy costs, is that we need involve far fewer technical staff. A hotel guest can soon learn to use the presets and then press the button himself to dim the lights, bring down the projection screens and darken the room with the blinds", according to Wehr.

In order to make the use of presets in the Copthorne Hotel straightforward, not only for the guests using the conference facilities, but also for the staff, all the outstations are identical. The only exception is the foyer. Here there is



The exterior of The Copthorne Hotel, Hannover.



One of the Meeting Rooms



The Copthorne's bar and buffet area.



The main foyer.

a large LCD display on which the operator can see the name of the lighting scene selected. Up to 128 scenes can be identified by name and called up at the touch of a button. Thomas Wehr believes that, "the system offers great flexibility and the concept has been very well designed."

Compared with the complex refinements offered by such an architectural lighting system, installing it is relatively straightforward. At least, Jörg Lendeckel of the contractors Landwehr and Schulz in Heiligenstadt had no problems at all. "Although it was the first time we had installed a Premiere system, thanks to the excellent support by Strand, we managed it without difficulty. The system and the plans of it are so easy to understand that the installation is almost child's play," said Lendeckel.

The Copthorne Hotel Hanover is the first in the chain (Stuttgart will be the second, following shortly) to have a Premiere system. It is also the first in which the architectural lighting control system controls almost everything. However, other "Premiere" hotels including the Radisson Plaza and the Interconti in Berlin are similar in that the screens and blinds have been integrated with the lighting control.

In the "Trigon" conference section of the Interconti in Berlin alone there are 16 LCD outstations, four pushbutton outstations (each with eight buttons) and 2 fader outstations, distributed once again over 2 Premiere processors. Apart from the design of the system itself, the technical events manager Thomas Schliebe particularly appreciates the Premiere's ability to combine function rooms. The system here has been integrated into a complete PC network which is the platform for the integration of audio/video equipment, via a digital patch field, including the existing chain hoist suspension system and of course the architectural lighting control. In practice this means that the user can take his PC and programme directly in situ in the function room, for example, which increases the flexibility of the system even more.

