



Walker Tower – façade illumination against the New York skyline

The Walker Tower in New York was converted from office space to a high-end apartment building. The detailed Art Deco façade and spires are illuminated precisely with ERCO Grasshopper and Lightscan projectors, without any spill light to detract from the view of the skyline.

Walking through Manhattan at night, one cannot fail to see the Walker Tower. Accentuated by the dramatic lighting, the brick façade with metal pilasters and panels is a huge eye-catcher. The skyscraper dates back to 1929 and was designed by the architect Ralph Thomas Walker. It can easily be referred to in the same breath as the Empire State Building or the Chrysler Building, which were built at the same time, also in Art Deco style. A short while ago the Walker Tower was converted from a commercial property into one of the city's most luxurious apartment buildings by the New York architecture firm, Cetra Ruddy. The Walker Tower has an asymmetrical shape that narrows in steps as it goes upwards. The idea here, in keeping with the New York City 1916 Zoning Resolution, was to ensure that the people down on the street had adequate sunlight and fresh air. While the windows are set back, the walls project outwards and are adorned with a line pattern which visually accentuates the height of the building. The Tower also features complex ornamentation with geometrical, floral, graphic and figurative motifs.

The façade is illuminated with more than 100 ERCO projectors – 7 W Grasshoppers with narrow spot distribution of a 6° beam angle. The New York lighting design firm, Kugler Ning, chose the outdoor luminaires, using beams of light that pointed upwards over several storeys, in order that the building's proportions appear more sculptural, emphasise the soaring lines of the façade, and accentuate the structure of the built details in a play of light and shadow with grazing light. This precision lighting approach guarantees outstanding glare control and avoids the penetration of spill light through windows or onto balconies. Residents and visitors alike can therefore enjoy the view of the skyline and the sky at night without glare. The Grasshopper's housing, based on geometrical shapes, blends in discreetly with the façade. Because LED technology has been used the luminaires, mounted in high, hard-to-reach places, are virtually maintenance-free.

The Walker Tower features a four-spined crown, which was completely replaced during the refurbishment. The current design

Project data

Project:	Walker Tower, New York / USA
Architecture:	Cetra Ruddy, New York / USA
Lighting design:	Kugler Ning, New York / USA
Photography:	Edgar Zippel, Berlin / Germany

was based on the original drawings by Ralph Thomas Walker, at which the colours of the metal surfaces were particularly important. The entrance area of the Walker Tower is ornamented with reliefs in bronze and nickel silver and the architects wanted to repeat these two colours at the top of the building. For the illumination Kugler Ning chose the ERCO Lightscan projector, which delivers such powerful

luminous flux that even the uppermost part of the skyscraper is highly visible. For each spire, one lighting system with just 20 W output and a 7° narrow spot distribution has been fastened to the corner of the building and the inner side of the crown. Lightscan's slender, digital-looking design fits in well with the historic architecture and even seems to create a connection with the present day.

Luminaires used in the project



Grasshopper



Lightscan

About ERCO

The ERCO Light Factory in the German town of Lüdenscheid is a leading international specialist in architectural lighting using LED technology. The family business, founded in 1934, now operates as a global player with independent sales organisations and partners in 55 countries worldwide. Since 2015 ERCO's portfolio has been 100% LED. Inspired by "light digital" as its leitmotif, ERCO in Lüdenscheid develops, designs and produces digital luminaires with focus on photometrics, electronics

and design. Working closely with architects, lighting designers and engineers, ERCO develops lighting tools used primarily for applications in the following fields: Work, Shop, Culture, Community, Hospitality, Living, Public and Contemplation. ERCO understands digital light as the fourth dimension of architecture – providing highly precise and efficient lighting solutions to support creative designers in turning their visions into reality.

Copies and links requested.

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