

St. Stephen's Walbrook

St. Stephen's Walbrook is perhaps Wren's finest City Church and considered to be one of the ten most architecturally significant buildings in the UK. The dome was the prototype for St. Paul's Cathedral and possibly the first of its kind in the country.

PROJECT TEAM

Lighting Consultants:
Light Perceptions
www.lightperceptions.co.uk

Architectural Consultants:
Caroe & Partners

Main Contractors:
Mid Essex Electrical
Engineers

The Samaritans was founded at St. Stephen's by Rev. Chad Varrah who was appointed vicar in 1953. It is now the home of The Internet Church as well as being one of the busiest concert and reception venues of any City church.

Sir Christopher Wren understood the impact of natural light on an interior space. Arguably, he knew more than anyone how best to employ daylight for the purposes of internal illumination. He achieved this at

St. Stephen's by allowing light to flood in through the lantern and clerestory as well as the lower level windows; especially at the east end. The light colour tones and curves of the internal surfaces of the dome and arches above the windows all reflect the incoming daylight around the space creating an open and even flow of light throughout the interior.

In the 1980s Lord Palumbo sponsored a number of works including the Henry Moore altar and a new lighting scheme. ➤





This included four modest chandeliers and a number of 500W halogen floodlights distributed around the dome, clerestory and lower soffits. By 2005 almost all of the floodlights had failed and the artificial lighting was limited to the four understated chandeliers.

The new lighting scheme was commissioned because Wren's iconic structure acts as a setting for so many different important functions that a modern lighting system flexible and building sensitive was needed. The requirements were for liturgical lighting set round the Henry Moore altar, concert performances, receptions, exhibitions, lectures and other educational requirements. The London Internet Church is based at St. Stephen Walbrook and the church is a television studio for the very popular Night Prayer and other video programmes.

The new lighting scheme mitigates the reduction in daylight by introducing cold cathode at both dome and clerestory level. Two colour temperatures are used with a cool colour for "daylight" and a warmer tone used for the many evening events. The system was installed by Oldham Lighting after tests to assess the optimum colour combination. The two colour temperatures can be used independently or together. The warmer colour temperature works beautifully in conjunction with four new Flemish brass chandeliers from Dernier & Hamlyn which use energy saving halogen lamps to create an intimate ambience above the congregation. For ease of maintenance the chandeliers are on manual counterbalances.

Two smaller Flemish pendants light the vestibule at the west end of the church whilst a Georgian porch lantern hangs over the entrance staircase. This is installed on an electric raise and lower system for maintenance. To complete the lighting at the entrance a new oak handrail was designed which has integral LED downlights which illuminate the steps from street level to the vestibule.

Low voltage spotlights from Mike Stoane Lighting are carefully positioned around the perimeter of the church to provide accent lighting to the Henry Moore and Wren altars as well as the font and organ. Additional spotlighting is used for weddings and baptisms, concerts and receptions. Three circuit tracks are used so that the spotlighting can be controlled area by area via a number of different circuits

A Lutron 4000 Grafik Eye system is used to balance the natural and artificial lighting elements and provide a series of lighting presets which are used for a variety of services, concerts and other functions. A radio control system is used to operate the lighting from the central altar. ■



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*We are proud to have been the
Electrical Contractor for the
new lighting scheme at
St. Stephen's Church, Walbrook*

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