Together at last

LUTRON FORUM SERIES

Senior lighting designers and leading architects recently discussed how their different fields can work together.
Richard Brass presents the second of two excerpts from the forum, hosted by Lutron

Different strokes
Incandescent lamps are considered 'yucky, warm and gunky' in Japan, says Dominic Meyrick

Ray Molony: What is it that architects want from lighting? Is integration still the holy grail?
Jude Harris: I think the quality of light's becoming quite important - the quality that one gets from a tungsten bulb through to what's perceived as a lack of quality from a fluorescent solution through to the potential of LED. It's not just about the fitting, but about the type of light that's given off. Hopefully energy reduction will drive solutions. The big challenge for me seems to be how the retail environments are going to deal with the energy reduction strategies that the commercial world is addressing head-on and dealing with admirably, compared with some of the higher-energy users like retail and restaurants. There's been a reliance on halogen that's still there. Australia have banned the tungsten bulb, which is great, and maybe Europe will do that in a few years, but is there a qualitative replacement for it?
Dominic Meyrick: Any lighting quality is nurture not nature. Eighty per cent of the domestic market in Japan is fluorescent. They regard incandescent as yucky, warm and gunky, and why would you have that in the house? There is a fear among retailers that if I'm the first and I get it wrong, I go out of business, whereas if we all do it together, then there are no other choices. If all tungstens go, then everybody's got to go that way. People are still going to buy their clothes.
Damien Hodgson: We do hotels, retail and residential, and I think across the board it's balancing the look and feel of the colours that can be achieved. It's less about very expensive lights that say something, and more about what can you achieve in a more subtle way, whether it's in hotels and how we do corridors with LEDs or in retail where you are trying to demonstrate the wares.
Graham Hoad: We do appreciate quality of light. It's a very difficult subject, and it's almost into cognitive science, but we are appreciative of the different ways that walls are lit, and where the light is focused.
Anthony Hudson: Especially now with new building regulations and having an increasing amount of low energy, I'm finding it very difficult to find fittings that are visible which actually meet those requirements.
Rebecca Weir: I think a lot of the problem comes down to the manufacturers and the information they're giving out, because it's so unclear. We had an architect approach us yesterday with all their drawings, and an LED system that they were hoping to use. And once I'd looked into it, it wasn't even Part L compliant. The architect, not knowing any better because it looked very energy-efficient and the marketing behind it was absolutely overwhelming, thought he was absolutely doing the right thing, but come October it's not going to hit the new Part L. You've really got to know your technical specification and detail to determine whether the fitting is actually that energy-efficient in the first place. There's a complete lack of information out there. Most people

"ALLOW FOR DARKNESS AS WELL. IT'S OKAY. DARKNESS IS GOOD"
REBECCA WEIR, LIGHT IQ



Opportunity knocks Jude Harris, right, says architects have a 'fantastic' opportunity to work with lighting designers to make light a part of the architecture. Anna Woodeson, centre, and Damien Hodgson, Ray Holden and Felix Mara look on

didn't even understand the 2006 regulations, so I think looking at 2010 people are just thinking "Where do I go here?"

Anthony Hudson: The parallel of not understanding about light is about the emotion and the poetry of how light falls. Some buildings are fantastic if they're dark. Some buildings are lovely if they're light. There's a sort of parallel with this neglect in looking at historical architecture. We've tended generally in colleges to look at modern buildings. We don't cover the history of architecture at all, and if you go into a church or a cathedral, you see where the light comes from; why some bits are dark and why some bits are light. We don't cover that enough now in architectural education, and I think that would release a deeper understanding of how you use natural light.

Rebecca Weir: And allow for darkness as well. I have clients who say "Rebecca, my tiles here between the workstation and the window are a little dark." It's okay. Darkness is good.

Anthony Hudson: Five years ago I went to Ljubljana and saw Plecnik's library. You go into this dark, black hall, and beyond you see this brilliantly white library, and it's just a fantastic experience. I don't think that emotional aspect of lighting is at all taught. The 3D modelling works against it, because it gives this flat patina of light. You cannot model the qualities of light or the poetry.

Ray Holden: I think there's something to be said for technology. It needs to catch up in a big way, but the kids in the office are picking it up and using it. It's starting to help inform the design process.

Ray Molony: In the seventies there was basically one lighting designer in the country. And now it's a profession, another seat at the design team table. Is there an irritation that it's another thing that architects have given away, that it's another specialism that's turned up? Or do you welcome them?

Damien Hodgson: We do. To use the word value again, it's that something extra that they can bring to the table.

Graham Hoad: One of the things specialist lighting engineers can bring to the table is that you can specify fittings which are more efficient, and they're more efficient because they've got the reflectors right and the prismatic diffusers right, and you can actually make a scheme work with less fittings, so it's not necessarily more expensive. All round it's a win-win.

Dominic Meyrick: The biggest use of electricity in a building is its lighting. It far outweighs the IT, the mechanical and everything. You have to get the owner to understand that if he's going to sell that building on in the future, one of the conversations he's going to have is about energy efficiency.

Ray Molony: Are any of the architects among us getting involved in exterior lighting schemes?

Jude Harris: We light the immediate environment of the building. We light school sites, campuses – it very much »

"YOU CANNOT MODEL THE QUALITIES OF LIGHT OR THE POETRY"
ANTHONY HUDSON, HUDSON ARCHITECTS



Photos: www.redshift-photography.co.uk

Welcome to the team Architects such as Damien Hodgson, right, welcome lighting specialists to the design team table. MoreySmith's Andrew McCann and Lutron's Guy Simmons join in the dabate

›› becomes part of the overall solution. We're doing a project in Leicester Square working with Jason Bruges where the lighting is an integral part of the architecture, because by day it's a glass veil and by night it's a multi-coloured lit piece of art, essentially. That was an opportunity for the light to become part of the architecture, and there Jason Bruges was involved from the beginning of the project. The opportunities are fantastic.

Ray Molony: Do you have clients talking about LEDs?

Jude Harris: I'm not sure it's clients necessarily. I think architects are very excited by LEDs and their potential. The colour potential is one thing that does appeal to architects. To be honest, most clients' experience of LEDs is that they're too expensive, but I think they're probably going to be brought to the fore by the energy debate and the requirement to reduce energy use. Hopefully that will provide the impetus to bring the costs down and make them more effective.

Dominic Meyrick: LEDs will probably drop in price drastically in the next 18 months, which is excellent news. There are big suppliers of LEDs who haven't even come into the architectural lighting market yet who are now talking to the luminaire suppliers.

Andrew McCann: I think at the moment they're quite often used as feature lighting in areas you can't access. Because of their longer life they allow you to put lights where you couldn't in the past because of the maintenance issues.

Ray Holden: It does seem to be a product that's evolving very rapidly. The light output you got two or three years ago from an LED is like lighting a candle compared to the high-output stuff you get today. So I personally feel a bit funny about suggesting we should be going to an LED solution knowing that in 12 months' time we're going to be getting a cheaper product with twice the light output. There's a little bit at the moment about waiting to see where the technology goes, but to be honest it's been the same for the past three years.

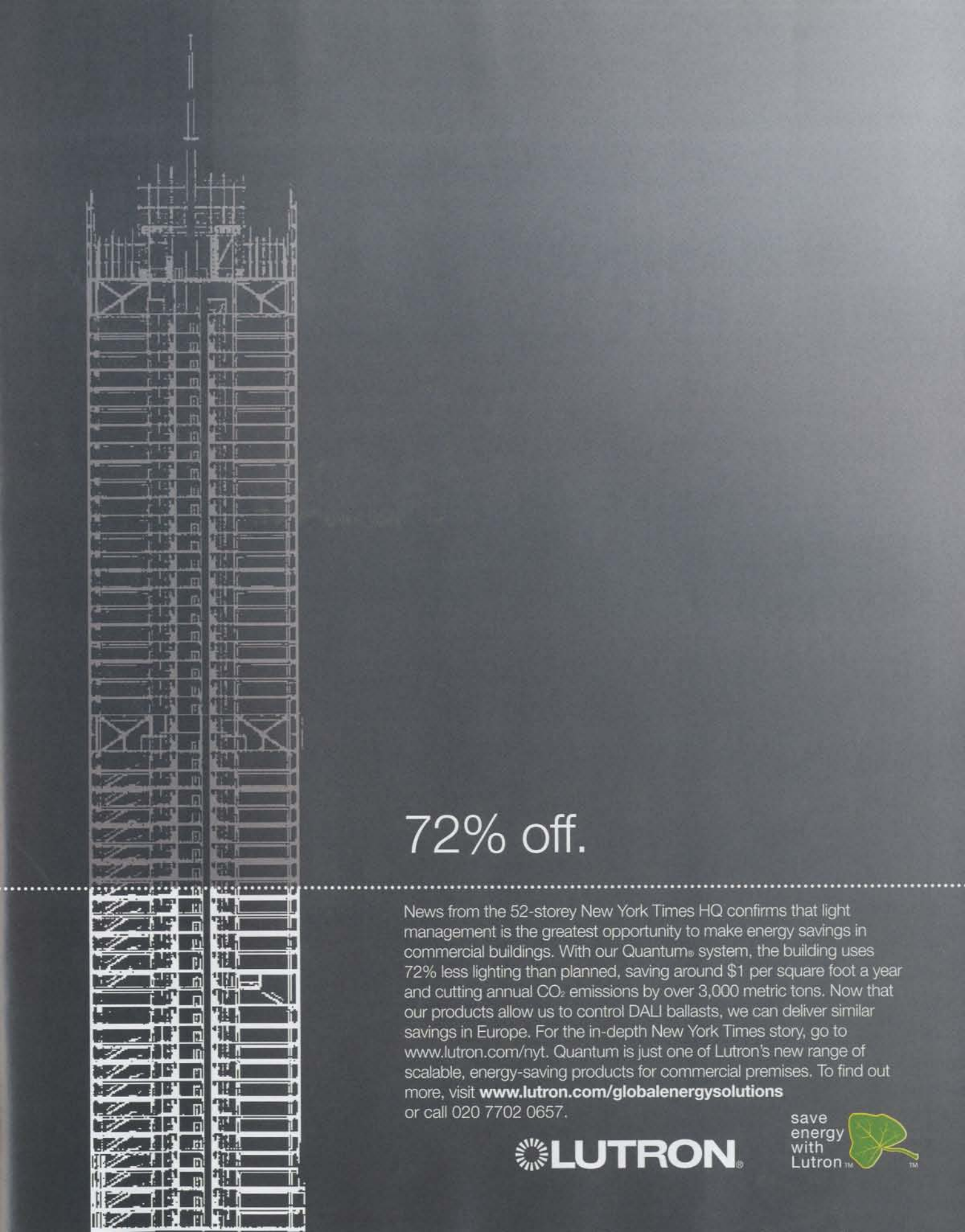
Dominic Meyrick: And I think it will continue for the next three years. The colour is there, but I think it has another two or three years before it settles down. There are places for all sources. It's about control.

Around the table

The participants at the Lutron lighting and architecture forum were:

- Guy Simmonds, Lutron
- Ray Molony, *Lighting* magazine
- Felix Mara, *AJ Specification* magazine
- Rob Honeywill, Maurice Brill Lighting Design Associates
- Rebecca Weir, Light IQ
- Andrew McCann, MoreySmith
- Ray Holden, Fletcher Priest
- Damien Hodgson, 3DReid
- Jude Harris, Jestico + Whiles
- Anthony Hudson, Hudson Architects
- Anna Woodeson, Wilkinson Eyre
- Graham Large, Waterman Lighting Design
- Graham Hoad, GMW Architects
- Anoushka Sulley, Lutron
- Dominic Meyrick, Hoare Lea

"IN 12 MONTHS' TIME WE'RE GOING TO GET A CHEAPER LED WITH TWICE THE LIGHT OUTPUT"
RAY HOLDEN, FLETCHER PRIEST



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