

ERCO SSL highlights neo-Gothic architecture in ancient German church

Historic and sacred buildings are an application in which LED-based lighting can excel given the flexibility of form factor and the fact that LEDs generally require less power than legacy sources, and therefore no new infrastructure. The Lucente Lichtplanung lighting design firm located in Sittensen, Germany faced such a challenge when it renovated the St. Mary and Bartholomew Church in Harsefeld, Germany. The team was able to install ERCO LED lighting products with minimal impact on the structure and architecture and deliver state-of-the-art aesthetics in the historic building.



Photo: Frieder Blickle, Hamburg

The church dates to the first millennium and is a historically-listed building. The design team was tasked with delivering outstanding visual comfort without any major change to the interior new-Gothic architecture. Moreover, the church features a cross vault that presented its own lighting challenges.

The design team worked with ERCO's core principal of providing "light not luminaires" in developing the concept for the church. The team focused its efforts on using the architectural pillars as a host for the lighting while not distracting from the aesthetics of the pillars. Lucente Lichtplanung and ERCO developed custom rings that were mounted near the top of the pillars that blend with the architecture and provide a platform for both direct and indirect light in the church.

The rings incorporate ERCO Quintessence LED luminaires that are typically applied as downlights. In the case of the church, the fixtures are also mounted in such a way to deliver dramatic lighting upwards to highlight the iconic ceiling structure and arches. Meanwhile, the same products mounted on the underside of the ring deliver the required comfortable ambient lighting for worshipers.



Photo: Frieder Blickle, Hamburg

The cross vault was lit with ERCO Optec spotlights. The team sought to use the lights to accentuate individual elements of the vault including the church organ that is among the striking features in the space. As the nearby images illustrate, the combination of natural light and the Optec fixtures deliver a compelling scene in the restricted space of the vault.

The design team also sought to add controls to the church lighting. But many control schemes requiring new wiring would have proven problematic in the historic space. The solution was a wireless DALI (digital addressable lighting interface) system that can be controlled via a tablet computer.

The results of the renovations are compelling as the images of the neo-Gothic interior illustrate. Lucente Lichtplanung characterized the completed project as "delivering a harmonious synergy of historic structure and modern LED lighting technology."