

# LANGLEY CAMERA CLUB



Sept. 2017

Theme:  
Architecture  
At Night



The following links will provide you with inspiration and assist you with this theme:

- How To Take Great Photos At Night: <http://www.ramyad.net/blog/how-to-take-photos-at-night/>
- Photographing Architecture: <https://digital-photography-school.com/photographing-architecture/>
- Tips For Night Time Architectural Photography: <https://jameswhitephotography.co.uk/photography-tips-advice-manchester/night-time-architectural-photography/>

The following was copied from:

<https://www.ephotozine.com/article/6-architectural-night-photography-tips--4766>

## Architectural Night Photography Tips

When buildings are illuminated at night their shapes and features are enhanced in a very different way than by daylight and it's a great time to take **photographs**. The most challenging thing is getting the exposure and colour balance right, which we'll help with, otherwise the standard rules of composition apply which we'll cover briefly first.



Photo by [David Clapp](#)

### 1. Composition - Don't Forget The Basics

When shooting upwards expect the building to slope inwards at the top, especially when a **wide-angle lens** is used. Move to a higher position to reduce the distortion or use a special shift lens that's designed to correct perspective but these are expensive and aren't really a sensible option for the casual shooter.

Try to include the whole building by using a wider angle lens or stepping back to a more suitable viewpoint. Choose the position carefully. The same building could be shot head-on, at an angle of, say, 3/4 or by using a telephoto to capture a section with a more graphical feel. Don't forget you can zoom with your feet as well as your lens, too. When it comes to focus, manual is your best option.

### 2. Exposures

When the sun goes down the light changes in two ways; firstly the exposure time required increases and secondly the colour of the light becomes warmer. Let's first look at the exposure. In low light the shutter speed that's necessary to ensure a good exposure will usually be too long to avoid camera shake when hand holding the camera. Using a tripod enables you to shoot at these long exposure times of between 1/15sec and several seconds or even minutes. If you don't have a tripod you can usually find a wall, lamppost or tree to support the camera, which can help considerably. Or you can try switching to a higher ISO as most cameras now cope well in the higher ranges. This means that in low light situations, such as shooting buildings at night, you can take photos with minimal noise or blurring. You'll also want to put your camera's self-timer into action or use a remote release if you have one as even pressing the shutter button can introduce shake that'll leave you with blurry shots. Consider using the Mirror Lock-up function, too which can be accessed via your camera's menu.

### 3. Metering

Low light can also fool the camera's meter and this happens because it looks at the mass of dark and tries to compensate to make it mid grey. By doing so, you get an exposure time that is too long for all the illuminated parts of the scene, such as neon lights, street lights or spot lit areas of a building as they become grossly over exposed.

To avoid this, you need to compensate for it. As a guide, use your exposure compensation setting to reduce the exposure by a couple of stops when most of the area is in darkness and by one stop when the building has a medium coverage of illumination.



Photo by [David Clapp](#)

#### 4. Colour Balance

Illuminated buildings offset against a dark sky can look great, but you have to be careful with the colour as there can be a slight orange or yellow cast created. Buildings illuminated by artificial light can also be problematic, depending on the lighting used in them. Two popular types are: Fluorescent and Tungsten. Fluorescent tend to be used inside in offices and Tungsten in spot lights that part illuminate buildings.

With digital cameras you can preview the image to check the colour balance and if it doesn't look right, just change the white balance setting you're using. Cloudy will warm your shots up while the Tungsten options will give your images a more blue tone.

#### 5. Security

Take care when carrying a camera around at night, especially if you're venturing off the beaten track. Keep alert and where possible, take a friend with you.

#### 6. What To Capture

Look for tall buildings you can shoot from. From up high you'll be able to shoot skylines as well as focus on single buildings. For something different, try to shoot the same location in daylight and in the evening. You'll soon see how buildings have a very different feel at night. Cropping in on illuminated buildings can make the image more striking and reduce the black from surrounding, unlit areas. To give streetlights a 'starburst' use a small aperture which will also give you front-to-back sharpness in your shots too. Exposure times will be longer but if you have your tripod, this won't be an issue. If people are still exploring the city you can use them to add more interest to your shots. Get creative with silhouettes against well-lit structures or how about using a slightly longer shutter speeds, say 1/2 a second, to blur the movement of people who pass through your shot. Don't increase your exposure times too much if you want to keep the patterns people create passing through your images though as anything above 15 seconds will probably remove them from your image. Bridges can be used to draw the eye through the image to a particular structure or focus your attention on famous buildings and landmarks which are guaranteed to be lit-up at night.



Photo by [David Clapp](#)