

A matter of balance

Fashion retailer Superdry had to balance its edgy brand identity with energy efficiency when lighting its flagship store – all without breaking the bank. **Pennie Varvarides** finds out how



Superdry's flagship store in Regent Street needed a strong visual identity. Branding was key, so the store needed equally strong lighting design. But Superdry also has a strong sustainability ethos, so the store also had to be energy efficient.

Paul Nulty, of Paul Nulty Lighting Design, says: 'There is a trend towards dark spaces with high contrast. Quite often these are so dark you can't see the merchandise and yet these schemes manage to use huge amounts of energy.'

'We looked at stores that are lit in this way and considered at the pros and cons of how lighting was used. At Superdry the levels are bright enough for customers to see the merchandise, but the luminaires use 20W lamps and, therefore, much less energy.'



EXCLUSIVE

The store – formerly a branch of Austin Reid – was completely refurbished. Everything was stripped back and redesigned. Nulty worked with the interior designer, Sen Ken Ken, to craft the space to meet the demands of client Supergroup.

Nulty admits: 'One of the main challenges was how to keep it very dark, but provide enough light to see. The two are in opposition.'

Challenge of time

Another challenge was time – the project had a 12-week build time. PNLN prepared a detailed specification and worked with the equipment manufacturers. 'There was a lot of management of the project to ensure we kept to time,' Nulty says.

The three major concerns for Superdry were

CLIENT Supergroup ... **INTERIOR DESIGN** Sen Ken Ken ... **SUPPLIERS** Nordic (track and spot), Popple Projects (linear LED), Lucent lighting (downlights), Skinflint Design (reclaimed feature lights), Precision lighting (Vitrine LEDs and track)

The main challenge was to keep the shop dark, but still provide enough light to see





Eight 10kW reused searchlights from a sewage canal illuminate the signage

))) efficiency, finances and brand image; and it was up to Nulty and Sen Ken Ken to balance all three. Nulty says: 'Superdry is socially responsible and social responsibility affects the bottom line. So you're saving money too, which is key.'

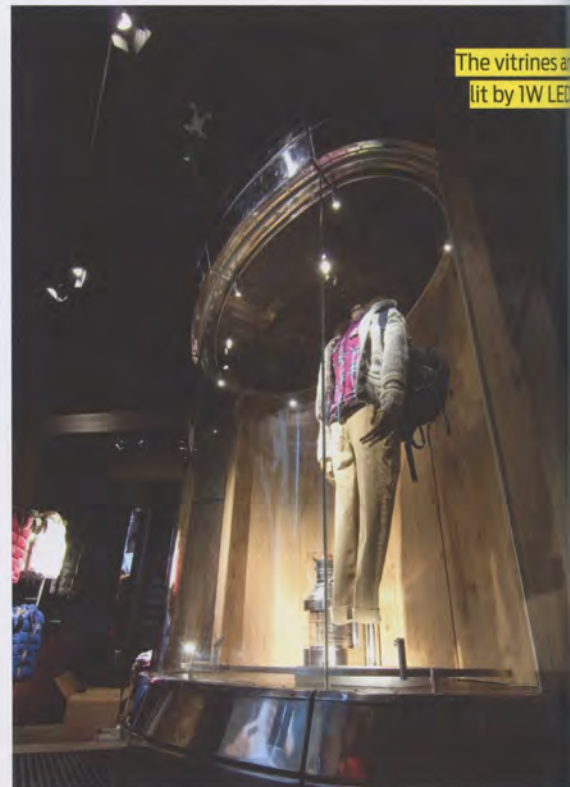
Unusually, the focus on energy and finance didn't lead the designers to specify a scheme dominated by LED sources. 'We wanted to use LEDs on the job, but couldn't make the figures stack up,' says Nulty. 'There was no possible payback shorter than three years with track-mounted LEDs. We couldn't justify increasing capital expenditure on LED fittings.'

To achieve the three-year payback, it worked out much cheaper to install metal halide sources. Track-mounted 20W CMDs from Nordic were used throughout the 914m² store. That's not to say that LEDs didn't make an appearance, however. They play an aesthetic, rather than practical role. The vitrines (glass display cases) and shelves are all illuminated with 1W LEDs from Precision Lighting.

Customer focus

Nulty explains: 'It's a low energy project with high contrast, you can really see what you're doing.' Contrast is kept around 15-20:1, which ensures the customer's attention is focused on the merchandise as they are led around the store. The designer was specific about what had to be lit. Light levels on the products ranges from 200 to 600lx.

To boost energy efficiency further, Mode lighting controls have been installed, which lets the store




The vitrines are lit by 1W LEDs

management turn groups of lights to on and off at particular times. The LEDs and feature chandeliers are all dimmable.

It was an important to the retailer to be able to change the layout of the store, and the lighting scheme was designed so light can be redirected to products that have been moved.

The edgy, moody tone of the Superdry brand was reinforced with a number of reclaimed fittings from Skinflint Design. This created what Nulty called the 'gritty, urban feel' of the store. Eight 10kW searchlights from a sewage canal were used to illuminate the 'Superdry' signage on the wall. These were relamped to save energy, bringing the wattage down to 35W.

Linear fluorescents were vertically mounted on the staircase. T12 fluorescent tubes were replaced with dimmable T8s and the cashdesk counter is made from a reclaimed railway carriage. 

ENERGY DASHBOARD



10.91W/m²
Installed load

The installed load for the 914-square-metre area is 10.91W per square metre, with 20W metal halides used throughout the space. If the window displays are included in the total, the installed load rises to 14.23W per square metre for the 963-square-metre space. Mode lighting controls have been installed to save more energy savings.