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Strategies for Applying LED Lights in Night Space Lighting for Bridges

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Abstract: LED lights have been widely used in urban night space lighting in recent years as they are small, energy-saving, and efficient. This article explores the use of LEDs in bridge night space lighting and their application strategies. The aim is to offer valuable insights and references for urban planners and bridge lighting designers in China. By advancing the application of LED technology in bridge night lighting, the goal is to enhance the city's nighttime ambiance, making the bridge an iconic landmark and a defining feature of the city.

Keywords: Bridge night space lighting; LED application; Color band and gradient; Artistic value

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1. Introduction

Bridges are a crucial aspect of modern urban construction. Urban overpasses, river-crossing bridges, and footbridges often serve as regional landmarks and play a significant role in urban landscape planning. The distinctive night lighting design of these bridges showcases a city's unique style to both residents and tourists. LED lighting is commonly used in modern bridge designs for night illumination. Designers frequently incorporate LEDs as a key element in bridge decoration, leveraging their characteristic lighting effects to create visually pleasing and impactful designs for nighttime bridge lighting.

2. Characteristics of bridge night lighting project

(1) Significance of bridge night lighting

Bridge night lighting plays a crucial role in urban construction and development. Firstly, the night view of a bridge can enhance the city's nighttime landscape, maintaining its vitality after dark and providing rich visual effects that significantly boost the city's appeal. Secondly, a well-crafted lighting design can highlight the structural aesthetics of a bridge, enhancing the urban space's artistic ambiance. This not only elevates the city's image and sophistication but also positively impacts the quality of life for its residents. Thirdly, bridge night lighting design

can help convey cultural information. Through innovative lighting technology and design, bridges can be imbued with symbolic meanings that reflect the city's history, culture, technological advancements, or future aspirations. The deeper meanings and narratives expressed through lighting can transform a bridge from a mere functional structure into a symbolic representation of the city's identity and spirit.

(2) Characteristics of bridge night lighting project

Each bridge's structure, length, shape, and location are distinct, necessitating differentiated lighting strategies tailored to these characteristics, creating a unique visual effect for each bridge. Secondly, the interactivity of light and the environment is crucial. Bridge nightscape lighting must harmonize with the bridge's architectural aesthetics while considering the surrounding environment's impact. During the design phase, factors such as light pollution control, reflections on water, and the interplay between light and nearby buildings are typically addressed. Thirdly, advanced lighting technology has expanded artistic possibilities in bridge night lighting. Modern technologies, particularly LED light sources, offer advantages such as long life, energy efficiency, environmental friendliness, and full-color range. Intelligent lighting systems can adaptively adjust the bridge lighting based on environmental conditions and events, enhancing both the lighting effect and user experience. Fourthly, public safety is a significant consideration in bridge night lighting projects. Designers must ensure that the lighting setup does not impair visibility while providing sufficient illumination to create a safe and visually pleasing environment. Lastly, bridge night lighting plays a role in cultural dissemination. Beyond their transportation function, many bridges also serve as historical and cultural landmarks. A thoughtfully designed lighting scheme can highlight these cultural characteristics, making the bridge a focal point in the urban nightscape and effectively showcasing the city's image and character.

3. Bridge night lighting requirements

(1) Night scenery and functional lighting coordination

Bridge night lighting, as a crucial element of urban art lighting systems, must prioritize functionality in people's lives. This type of lighting needs to create an elegant and captivating nighttime effect while ensuring the safety of pedestrians and vehicles through synergistic functional lighting. Designers must carefully calibrate lighting intensity, illuminance, and evenness in the nightscape lighting design. Additionally, they must consider factors such as light color temperature, color vividness, and visual comfort to ensure that the lighting harmonizes seamlessly with the surrounding night scene.

(2) Integration and coordination of night scene lighting and environment

Bridge night lighting design must fully consider the surrounding environment. First, the lighting program should account for environmental influences on the light source, including recommended lighting styles for the area, the bridge's location, and both soft environmental factors (like vegetation and nearby water bodies) and hard environmental factors (such as weather and seasonal changes). Additionally, during the design stage, it is crucial to ensure visual unity with the surrounding buildings and environment. This coherence and consistency helps create a more natural and harmonious visual effect.

(3) Set the installation position of the lamp reasonably

The positioning of lamps is crucial for achieving the desired light and shadow effects and overall visual impact. During the design phase of a bridge night scene lighting project, the installation positions of the lamps should be carefully determined based on the bridge's structure and shape and the angles and ranges of illumination. The placement of the lamps directly influences the effectiveness and safety of the night lighting. Therefore, the design phase must also consider future maintenance and management of the lighting, ensuring that replacing lamps and performing maintenance tasks are convenient and efficient.

(4) Artistic design needs

A bridge night lighting project serves as a canvas for urban nightscape art, making it essential to emphasize artistic design needs. The design should adhere to the principle of "less is more," ensuring each light source achieves optimal display through skillful lighting techniques. Designers should prioritize the color and emotional impact of light, fully leveraging the expressive power of light and shadow. This approach allows the creation of thematic styles that evoke a festive atmosphere, a sense of history, technological innovation, or artistic flair, aligning with the bridge's design. Ultimately, the goal is to satisfy people's emotional responses and aesthetic pursuits [1].

4. Application of LED in bridge night scene lighting

(1) Highlighting the outline of the bridge with LED

In bridge night lighting design, LED lamps, known for their compact size, durability, energy efficiency, and controllable color temperature, color, and brightness, can effectively highlight a bridge's outline when properly arranged.

In the process of applying LED lighting for bridge night illumination, designers first conduct a detailed analysis of the bridge's structure and characteristics to establish clear lighting objectives. During the implementation phase, they deepen their understanding of the bridge's architectural design by studying drawings and conducting on-site assessments to grasp the surrounding environment and landscape. The primary goal is to emphasize the bridge's outline using LED technology, creating a vibrant and layered night scene. In designing the LED lighting program, designers use their understanding of the bridge to plan the placement of LED lamps, considering factors like installation positions, quantities, types, power ratings, color temperatures, and brightness levels. They also carefully design the angles and directions of illumination to ensure comprehensive coverage and a cohesive lighting effect across the bridge's floor and piers [2]. This plan undergoes optimization and implementation phases, including model testing, computer simulations, and meticulous lamp selection and procurement based on design outcomes. Following installation, the overall lighting system undergoes thorough debugging according to a predefined schedule. Finally, a comprehensive LED lighting control program is developed to ensure the lighting not only delivers high-quality visual effects but also prioritizes energy efficiency, environmental sustainability, and the protection of structures and surroundings. Adjustments in the brightness and color of LED lamps are made based on local weather conditions, traffic patterns, and time considerations, thereby optimizing the lighting's performance effectively [3].

(2) Highlighting gradient effect with LED

In bridge night lighting design, a common and effective technique involves using LEDs to highlight rich color bands and create gradient effects. This approach is widely adopted in contemporary bridge lighting design because it imbues bridges with distinctive artistic characteristics and enhances their recognizability [4].

To achieve the desired effect in bridge night lighting design, designers must possess a thorough understanding of the bridge's structural characteristics and its surroundings. This includes parameters such as shape, structure, direction, height, length, and their visual relationships with the environment. Using this data, designers can plan the overall arrangement of light bands and gradient effects, specifying details such as LED color configurations, the length and positioning of light bands, and the range and transition rate of gradients. During the design phase, particular attention should be paid to the visual impact and artistic expression of the color bands and gradients. Implementing these elements requires designers to apply artistic aesthetics and innovative thinking while deeply understanding LED characteristics. The ribbon and gradient effects should harmonize with the bridge's form and structure, creating a visually pleasing relationship with the surrounding

environment and enhancing the bridge's nocturnal appeal in the urban landscape. Furthermore, designers must optimize LED lamp selection, considering factors such as color temperature, color rendition, brightness, and angle to precisely achieve the intended color bands and gradient effects. This comprehensive approach ensures that the bridge lighting design not only meets aesthetic goals but also integrates seamlessly with its architectural and environmental context [5]. In addition to considering the aesthetic aspects, the layout of lamps in bridge lighting design should align with the bridge's shape while carefully managing sightlines and irradiation angles to minimize visual disturbance and light pollution for pedestrians and vehicles. Moreover, for LED lamps installed on bridges, an intelligent control system is essential. This system enables dynamic gradient effects by independently controlling each light. While ensuring basic functional lighting, the control system automatically adjusts parameters such as light color, brightness, gradient speed, and strobe frequency based on preset schemes. This approach ensures the bridge achieves a rich and gradual color band effect in its night lighting.

For instance, the Jacques Cartier Bridge in Montreal serves as a prime example of effective lighting design. As a prominent landmark in the city, the bridge utilizes LEDs to create captivating color bands and gradual transitions, as illustrated in **Figures 1 & 2**.

Figure 1. LED design of Jacques Cartier Bridge 1

Figure 2. LED design of Jacques Cartier Bridge 2

As shown in **Figures 1 & 2**, the Jacques Cartier Bridge employs LED light sources in the form of lines spanning the entire bridge. Whether viewed from a distance or up close on the bridge itself, one experiences the striking and gradual beauty of the color bands across the Jacques Cartier Bridge. The slow, rhythmic transition of the nighttime illumination resembles the natural pace of breathing, creating a highly harmonious and perfectly integrated contrast with the surrounding environment, sky, and water [6].

(3) Highlighting the artistic value and significance with LED

Bridges serve as vital connectors in physical space, transcending geographical boundaries and linking urban areas. Through flexible and creative LED lighting design, bridges can acquire significant artistic and even existential value [7]. In the design of bridge nightscape lighting, emphasis is placed on artistic expression, considering every element including structure, shape, and color. LED lamp selection, tailored to these characteristics, aims to reveal the bridge's design details and create a distinctive visual experience that enhances its artistic depth. Furthermore, at the design stage, integrating the bridge's symbolic role in human life adds profound meaning. Serving as a metaphorical journey from one stage to another, bridges symbolize life's transformative essence. LED lighting can symbolically represent this journey, imbuing night lighting designs with deep symbolism and emotional resonance [8]. For instance, the Double Helix Bridge in Singapore exemplifies this approach, where LED lamps simulate the dynamic flow of a DNA double helix structure in the night scene, as illustrated in **Figures 3 & 4**.

Figure 3. Singapore's Double Helix Bridge 1

Figure 4. Singapore's Double Helix Bridge 2

(4) Creating landmark buildings with LED

In recent years, nighttime lighting design for landmark buildings has become increasingly crucial in urban lighting design, with LED light sources emerging as the preferred choice due to their numerous advantages [9]. In designing nighttime lighting for landmark buildings like bridges, designers focus on enhancing the structural characteristics through precise light control and directional lighting, ensuring the texture of surface materials is fully highlighted. Emphasizing the contrast between light and shadow accentuates the bridge's lines and streamlined forms, creating a powerful visual impact at night. Dynamic changes in LED colors and brightness adjustments are utilized to create flowing light and shadow effects, enriching the spatial perception and evoking the profound beauty of the bridge. For example, the Binhe Yellow River Bridge exemplifies this approach by employing LED design concepts that span from macro to micro, emphasizing the overall bridge outline for enhanced nighttime recognition. Additionally, targeted local lighting highlights architectural details, as illustrated in **Figure 5**.

Figure 5. Binhe Yellow River Bridge

In the design of the Binhe Yellow River Bridge, the designer maximizes the versatility of LED lights, utilizing their dimmable capabilities to create vibrant color changes that produce a visually dynamic effect. Moreover, through the implementation of an intelligent control system, remote operation, and preset scene switching are achieved, enhancing the usability and flexibility of the lighting setup. This strategic approach to LED night lighting design has transformed the Binhe Yellow River Bridge into a stunning nocturnal landscape, resembling

a ship navigating the Yellow River. It now stands as a dynamic and historically resonant landmark, uniquely identifying the city and significantly boosting the image and influence of the Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region [10].

5. Conclusion

The thoughtful use of LED lamps in bridge night lighting can enhance both the visual impact and cultural significance of bridges. This approach not only fulfills the practical lighting requirements of bridge structures but also plays a crucial role in promoting urban branding efforts. By employing LED technology effectively, designers can achieve unique visual effects and convey cultural meanings through bridge night lighting. This not only enhances the aesthetic appeal of bridges but also contributes to their broader societal and historical significance. Drawing on the strategies outlined in this paper, which emphasize the application of LED lamps to highlight rich ribbon and gradient effects, accentuate artistic and existential values, and leverage LED technology's potential in bridge night lighting, can significantly enhance urban imagery and foster sustainable development within the bridge engineering industry and urban planning and design sectors.

Disclosure statement

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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