

PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS: SPECIAL LIGHTING POLICY

INTRODUCTION

1. Parliament Buildings has been the location of a variety of Northern Ireland parliaments and assemblies since it was opened in 1932. It is presently home to the Northern Ireland Assembly, is a Grade-A listed building, is one of the most iconic buildings in Northern Ireland and indeed is recognised internationally.
2. The building has an external lighting system that, in addition to its use for essential operational lighting (eg security, health and safety etc), allows the building to be lit in a single colour wash (including blackout). Such lighting can not only help highlight the building's architectural features, but can in turn help the Northern Ireland Assembly to participate in celebrations and commemorations in the wider community, strengthen public engagement and promote Northern Ireland, all of which can have a positive reputational impact. However, conversely, inappropriate and over-use of the special lighting facility could adversely affect the reputation of the Northern Ireland Assembly.
3. This special lighting policy sets out the parameters and criteria that must be met for special lighting to be allowed and the process through which applications can be made, considered and, if approved, put into effect. Certain definitions are also contained herein and apply in relation to this policy.

DEFINITIONS

4. In this policy:
 - a) **Special lighting** means any form of lighting of Parliament Buildings other than essential operational lighting.
 - b) **Essential operational lighting** means the normal white lighting of the building for operational reasons.
 - c) **Occasion** may mean one single day or a period of unbroken days. On any day, the special lighting will normally be from sunset to midnight.
 - d) **Year** means a calendar year (1 January to 31 December). Where an occasion overlaps two calendar years, it will be counted as having been held in only the earliest of the two years.
 - e) **Commission** means the Northern Ireland Assembly Commission.

SCOPE

5. This policy does **not** cover essential operational lighting of the building, but rather covers all special lighting of the building.

6. Where there is any conflict between the use of essential operational lighting and special lighting, the essential operational lighting of the building will take precedence.

SPECIAL LIGHTING CRITERIA

7. In order to ensure that special lighting is appropriate, in keeping with the purpose and dignity of the building, and not over-used, certain parameters and criteria have been agreed by the Commission.
8. The Commission may agree to light Parliament Buildings for occasions that are significant in the wider community.
9. The occasions on which the Commission will light Parliament Buildings will include:
 - a) International Women's Day – Purple
 - b) Saint Patrick's Day – Green
 - c) Twelfth of July – Orange
 - d) Armistice Day - Red
10. In addition, and upon referral by the Speaker, the Commission may authorise special lighting of the building in exceptional circumstances.
11. The Commission's officially appointed charity of the year may schedule up to two occasions during the year for special lighting, subject to the normal approval process in paragraphs 18 to 22.
12. The Commission may grant permission for special lighting in connection with other occasions, subject to receiving a request that fulfils the criteria in paragraphs 13 to 17 and the normal approval process in paragraphs 18 to 22.
13. Requests for special lighting of the building as referred to in paragraph 12 may be made only by:
 - a) A registered charity, or a public-sector or a community or other non-profit making organisation.
 - b) Members of the Northern Ireland Assembly, subject to the request having cross-designation support, namely the support of three members, one of whom must be designated as "unionist" and one designated as "nationalist", and the primary sponsor is encouraged to seek the sponsorship of a Member designated as "other".
14. Individuals and commercial organisations may **not** apply for special lighting.

15. Approval for special lighting will be given only when such lighting is in connection with one or more of the following:

- a) An event of exceptional local, national or international significance and/or achievement.
- b) An event of constitutional or democratic significance.
- c) A significant anniversary of a significant local, national or international event.
- d) An event that is considered as being of significant benefit to Northern Ireland from a promotional, reputational or engagement perspective.
- e) An event being held in Parliament Buildings and/or the Stormont Estate, but only where this also meets one of the above criteria at a) to d) in this paragraph.

16. Requests for special lighting will **not** be approved where such lighting is:

- a) Linked to business that is currently before the Assembly; and/or
- b) Linked to a party political issue, or a campaigning issue that is novel, contentious or politically sensitive; and/or
- c) Obviously contentious and risks reputational damage to the Assembly; and/or
- d) Generates a commercial advantage; and/or
- e) Is not in keeping with the purpose and dignity of the building.

17. Other than those days scheduled under paragraphs 8 to 11, special lighting will not be approved to mark an event/occasion that occurs repeatedly, for example an annual Day or Week, unless it is a significant anniversary of that event/occasion. In addition, no event/occasion scheduled under paragraph 12 can be marked by special lighting more than once in any three-year period.

PROCESS

18. Requests for special lighting should be made on a special lighting application form, which is available from the Events Office. The completed application form must **be received by the Events Office no later than four weeks before the date(s) on which special lighting is being sought.**

19. The request will be evaluated by the Events Manager, who will determine whether it meets the requirements of this policy. If the requirements are met, the request will then be considered by the Head of Public Engagement or a Director or the Clerk/Chief Executive and a decision made as to whether approval should be given.
20. The Commission will be informed of all requests for special lighting that meet the criteria in paragraphs 7 to 17.
21. If the request is of a novel, contentious or politically sensitive nature, the request will be referred to the Commission for decision. Commission approvals for special lighting requests must be based on consensus.
22. The requestor will be advised of any decision as soon as possible after it has been made. Where approval has been given, the necessary arrangements will be put in place to effect the special lighting.

COSTS

23. Any costs incurred in providing special lighting over and above those costs that would normally be incurred through essential operational lighting will be charged to the requestor.

CANCELLATION

24. The Commission may, at its absolute discretion and with or without notice, cancel any approved requests for special lighting.

JANUARY 2020