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Walker Tower apartment building, New York



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Report

## Walker Tower, New York



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- **Walker Tower, New York / USA**
- Project: Walker Tower, New York / USA
- Architect: Cetra Ruddy, New York / USA
- Lighting designer: Kugler Ning, New York / USA
- Photographer: Edgar Zippel, Berlin / Germany
- [www.walker-tower.com](http://www.walker-tower.com)
- 
- Architecture: Cetra Ruddy, New York / USA
- Lighting design: Kugler Ning, New York / USA
- Photography: Edgar Zippel, Berlin / Deutschland
- Place: New York / USA
- Country: United States
- 23.02.2016
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The Walker Tower in New York was converted from office space to a high-end apartment building. The detailed Art Deco façade and spires are illuminated precisely with ERCO Grasshopper and Lightscan projectors, without any spill light to detract from the view of the skyline.

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The photo shows him dressed as a skyscraper, wearing a checked shirt that reminds of a façade, with a hat in the silhouette of a towering high-rise. It was his belief that the future belonged to skyscrapers, motivating him to build one of the most widely recognised skyscrapers in the United States. The building today officially bears the name of its architect. He is Ralph Thomas Walker and the skyscraper alludes to the Walker Tower dating back to 1929. As one of almost 6,000 skyscrapers in New York City, the Walker Tower can easily be referred to in the same breath as the Empire State Building or the Chrysler Building, which were built at the same time, also in Art Deco style.



## Art deco façade against the New York skyline

Walking through Manhattan at night, one cannot fail to see the Walker Tower. Accentuated by the dramatic lighting, the brick façade with metal pilasters and panels is a huge eye-catcher. The Walker Tower has an asymmetrical shape that narrows in steps as it goes upwards. The idea here, in keeping with the New York City 1916 Zoning Resolution, was to ensure that the people down on the street had adequate sunlight and fresh air. While the windows are set back, the walls project outwards and are adorned with a line pattern which visually accentuates the height of the building. The Tower also features complex ornamentation with geometrical, floral, graphic and figurative motifs, with abstract plant designs, for example, embellishing its doors and windows.

## Precise building illumination without spill light

The façade is illuminated with more than 100 ERCO projectors - 7W Grasshoppers with narrow spot distribution of a 6° beam angle. The New York lighting design firm, Kugler Ning, chose the outdoor luminaires, using beams of light that pointed upwards over several storeys, in order that the building's proportions appear more sculptural, emphasise the soaring lines of the façade, and accentuate the structure of the built details in a play of light and shadow with grazing light. This precision lighting approach guarantees outstanding glare control and avoids the penetration of spill light through windows or onto balconies. Residents and visitors alike can therefore enjoy the view of the skyline and the sky at night without glare. The Grasshopper's housing, based on geometrical shapes, blends in discreetly with the façade. Because LED technology has been used the luminaires, which are mounted in high, hard-to-reach places, are virtually maintenance-free.



## **Tower spire replaced and illuminated with Lightscan**

The Walker Tower features a four-spired crown which was completely replaced during the refurbishment. The current design was based on the original drawings by Ralph Thomas Walker whereby the colours of the metal surfaces were particularly important. The entrance area of the Walker Tower is ornamented with reliefs in bronze and nickel silver and the architects wanted to repeat these two colours at the top of the building. For the illumination Kugler Ning chose the ERCO [Lightscan](#) projector, which delivers such powerful luminous flux that even the uppermost part of the skyscraper is highly visible. For each spire, one lighting system with just 20W output and a 7° narrow spot distribution has been fastened to the corner of the building and the inner side of the crown. Lightscan's slender, digital-looking design fits in well with the historic architecture and even seems to create a connection with the present day.

## **From corporate headquarters to elegant residences**

The restoration of the Walker Tower was overseen by the New York architecture firm Cetra Ruddy, which converted the former office space into private apartments. Today, the Tower is a luxury condominium residence featuring 50 units, which sell for up to fifty million US dollars each. In the course of its history, the Walker Tower once housed the corporate headquarters of several telecommunications companies resulting from a number of company mergers. The skyscraper was originally designed for the New York Telephone Company before it became the home of NYNEX, Bell Atlantic and Verizon.

See also our [interview with lighting designer Sunhee Lim of Kugler Ning](#).



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