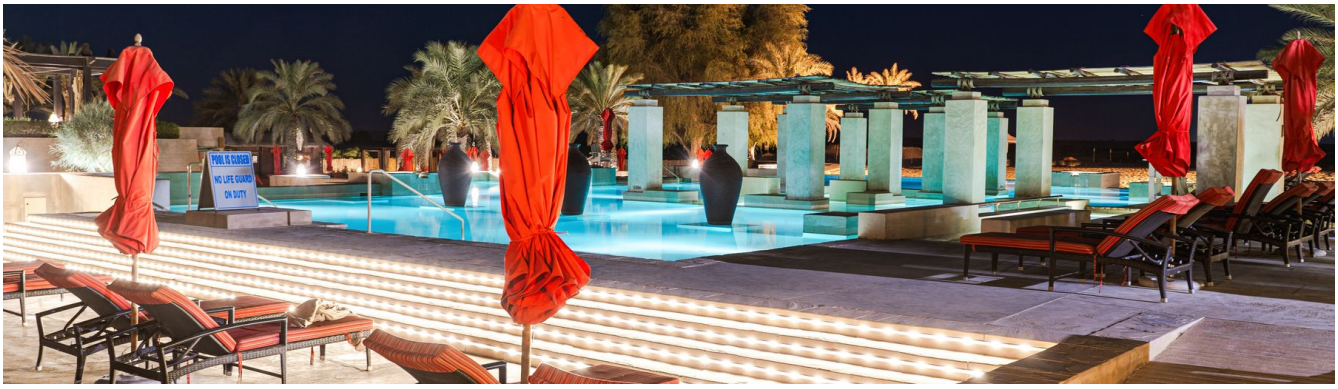
FIELD NOTES 05 / EXTERIOR LIGHTING

Facade and landscape lighting with restraint

Reveal architecture, support movement and keep unwanted light under control.



A memorable night scene needs a clear focal point and areas of visual rest. Lighting every surface equally can flatten the architecture, increase glare and waste energy. Begin by deciding what should remain dark, then place light only where it serves a defined purpose.

Build the composition from the approach

Review the building from the entrance, street and neighbouring properties. Identify one principal architectural feature and a supporting route through the landscape. Treat the facade, paths and planting as a single composition, but give them separate control zones so their operating hours can differ.

Control direction, quantity and timing

The DarkSky and IES principles call for purposeful, targeted, low-level, controlled and warmer-colour outdoor lighting. Apply that thinking by choosing suitable optics, shielding and schedules, then checking the result from outside the site. A warm source can still create glare or spill if its aiming and output are poorly controlled. [1]

Resolve installation and maintenance

Coordinate recessed fittings with drainage and accessible cable routes. Select protection, materials and corrosion resistance for the actual exposure, and follow installation instructions. Keep irrigation, soil and future plant growth in the review. A fixture that looks discreet on opening night still needs to be serviceable after the landscape matures.

FIELD NOTES 05 / IN PRACTICE

Review the scene at three scales

View	Typical concern	Design response
Close to the fitting	Visible bright source or uncomfortable glare	Review shielding, location and viewing angle.
Across the architecture	Patchy emphasis or excessive contrast	Test optics, mounting position and aiming.
Beyond the boundary	Spill into windows or unnecessary upward light	Limit beam extent and output; review operating times.
After curfew	Decorative light remains on without purpose	Separate functional and decorative schedules.

Worked example: a villa entrance and pool terrace

Use a controlled entrance accent to establish arrival, low-level guidance where movement needs support, and restrained planting accents that do not compete with the facade. Set a later scene that reduces decorative emphasis while retaining the functional lighting needed for use. Review the pool and glazing for reflected bright sources. The final levels and operating hours must follow the project brief and applicable local requirements.

Project checklist

- Review the effect from neighbouring windows and public approaches.

- Check beam spill and glare with the actual mounting positions.

- Confirm environmental suitability, drainage and service access.

- Commission after dark with the landscape and finishes in place.

- Record aiming, schedules and a maintenance review after planting matures.

Document the approved night scene with photographs, aiming notes and control settings. Keep the records useful for the maintenance team: an unrecorded adjustment can turn a careful composition into a brighter, less comfortable one when a luminaire is replaced.

Sources & further reading

[1] DarkSky International and IES, Five Principles for Responsible Outdoor Lighting

Sources checked 2 November 2026. Original practical guidance by OMEGALUX Studio; examples are illustrative. Confirm project criteria against the governing standards and approved product information.