

Lutron® | case study

Astor Place, New York City, v1.0 12/6/06



Client:

Astor Place
New York City, New York

Equipment provider:

Lutron Electronics Co., Inc.
Coopersburg, Pennsylvania

Interior Designer:

Janice Weingrod
Rearrangement Interior Design
Berkeley, California

Window Systems Provider:

Décor Installations
Bergenfield, New Jersey

Lighting Designer:

Marcie L. Shefren
Architectural Lighting Design
Kensington, California



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The Challenge: Use shades and lights to enhance the view and maintain privacy at a breathtaking new condominium in downtown Manhattan.

Astor Place in New York City is a luxurious 21-story, all-glass residential tower. The elegantly designed structure is remarkable for its unique triangular block location, and has been hailed by some as downtown's equivalent of the famed Flatiron building. Quickly becoming famous in its own right, Astor Place is an urban landmark that offers sophisticated technology and a sweeping panorama of the Manhattan skyline. Combining Lutron's Sivoia QED shading system and RadioRA lighting control system preserves these spectacular city views while optimizing a mix of natural and electric light.

Located at the crossroads between west and east Greenwich Village in New York City, Astor Place is uniquely situated, with wide-open spaces around three sides of the building. It's a new kind of luxury residence, with floor-to-ceiling windows providing a distinctive opportunity to integrate Lutron shades and lighting control technology.

Designed by architect Charles Gwathmey, the all-glass exterior of the 270-foot, 21-story building offers breathtaking views of the city and has been featured repeatedly in the architectural press. "Glass is the new brick," commented Metropolis magazine, noting the reversal of residential and office architecture. "For years New Yorkers were much more likely to work in glass towers than live in them. No more."

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On the fourteenth floor, in a bright, sprawling 2,500-square-foot apartment, is a professional couple that splits time between Northern California and Manhattan. The husband teaches at NYU and the wife is an attorney. The couple wanted to maintain the magnificent floor-to-ceiling view of the New York skyline by day, but they also needed privacy at night and relief from the early morning sun. They turned to their Berkeley, California-based interior designer Janice Weingrod to get the ball rolling.

Weingrod specified the Lutron® Sivoia QED™ (Quiet Electronic Drive) shading system for the windows and worked with lighting designer Marcie L. Shefren from nearby Kensington, California, to strategize lighting and control. Weingrod called into the Lutron customer service line where rep Royce Shappel answered the call. Sensing the complexity of the job, he handed it to an account supervisor.

“Here was a case where a homeowner on the West Coast was using her local contacts to design the window treatments and lighting for her new apartment on the East Coast. I saw the potential for the project to get lost in the shuffle, so I dropped what I was doing and stepped in to do whatever was needed to make it happen smoothly,” says Christ Surunis, a Lutron Senior Account Supervisor. “As the local rep, I helped guide the selection of the fabrics for the shades and assisted with a review of the control component specifications, ultimately putting the homeowners in touch with a window systems provider in the New York area. [Window systems

provider] Pam Kisberg and I were like bookends on both sides of the country. We made sure this project was successfully implemented. It not only looked good and operated reliably—the customers had a positive experience and felt that everything was handled properly.”

“The biggest challenge was the curved shape of the building,” says Kisberg, president of Decor Installations of Bergenfield, New Jersey. Her solution was to install two Sivoia QED motorized shades in front of each of the 29 floor-to-ceiling windows, for a total of 58 shades. Each window is approximately 48 inches wide and 100 inches tall. The shades are aligned so that their borders perfectly align with the metal mullions between the glass panels. Kisberg coordinated with the general contractor to build custom recessed openings in the ceiling, so when the shades are up, they completely disappear.

The dual-shade arrangement reduces harsh sunlight, preserves the view, and provides complete blackout where needed. Shading combinations were used in three areas: the living and dining rooms, the bedrooms, and the media room. All three spaces employ a Sheer Shade with the Lutron Fiberglass Basketweave 1 with a 10% openness factor. The fabric maintains the view and limits harsh glare. In the media room and bedrooms, the second shade uses the Lutron Flocked Premier Blackout fabric to provide complete privacy and light blockage. In the living room and dining areas, dual-sided Fiberglass Basketweave with a 5% openness factor was chosen, with a white back that reflects light to

reduce solar heat gain. The shades are grouped by location within the unit. They can move up or down simultaneously at the touch of a single button under the control of Sivoia QED Multigroup Keypads. Kisberg lauds the symmetry of the QED drive design, which allowed her to space shades a tight 1.5 in. apart from each other (less than the width of the mullions). She also credits the low-voltage control system for their quiet operation, another key factor in the project’s success.

“For me, the biggest challenge was the reflections in the glass,” said Marcie L. Shefren, principle of Architectural Lighting Design, “because we had to be very careful with glare.” Decorative fixtures in richly saturated colors were specified to minimize glare, so when the occupants do see reflections in the window, they provide a soft, colorful addition to the night skyline views, including the Empire State Building, the Chrysler Building, and the East River bridges.

In order to complement the sophistication of the lighting design and the fixtures, Shefren recommended wireless dimming and scene control. Lutron’s RadioRA® system was the ideal choice. This cutting-edge, radio frequency solution offers the convenience and ambiance of whole-home light control. GRAFIK Eye® wallstations work in tandem with the RadioRA

seeTouch™ controls. These simple, intuitive keypads provide localized control of multiple zones of lights and shades, grouped by room. The touch of a single button adjusts electric and natural lights to preset levels. “In the morning we just push a button and we’re looking out on this fantastic city view,” says the client. “The screens work exactly the way I want, and they maintain the unique look of the building, and provide protection. The Lutron people did a terrific job.”

“This project was particularly interesting because the all-glass building with the floor to ceiling windows, and curvilinear facade is a new genre of residential architecture.”

In the final analysis, it was the tight teamwork of Lutron’s global network of representatives, lighting designers, and qualified window systems providers that made the installation a success. “We’re global and we do have the ability to reach out and take care of a multifaceted project like this,” Surunis says. “This project was particularly interesting because the all-glass

building with the floor to ceiling windows and curvilinear facade is a new genre of residential architecture. The convenience of being able to push a button and instantly have privacy is a real paradigm shift in how we optimize daylight, control ambience and maintain privacy.”

