

## **Living with Darkness**

Human experience of space, nature, and perceived safety in the dark hours.

The project, Living with Darkness, examines how people live with darkness in places where outdoor lighting is sparse. How does darkness affect people's experience of outdoor spaces and outdoor behavior? Which nature experiences can the darkness give us? and how does darkness affect our experience of safety?

There is a need to reduce lighting levels in our outdoor environments. Due to climate changes, increased light pollution and an increased awareness of how too much light harm insects, animals, and plants. Humans are also affected, our circadian rhythm is disturbed when we are exposed to too much light in the dark hours and this affects our health.

We have become used to the fact that more lighting gives more perceived safety. But when the lighting levels are increased in one area, more light is needed in the surroundings, or the space will appear too dark. Therefore, the lighting levels needs to be dimmed, balanced and context specific.

To investigate human experience of space, nature, and perceived safety in the dark hours, studies will be performed on the island of Anholt, which is described as Denmark's darkest island. Through workshops and walking interviews with a group of residents from the island, the project will seek a closer understanding of their experiences of living with darkness.

The studies at Anholt are based on the latest research within people's experience of light and darkness, perceived safety, light pollution, and biodiversity and how to create inviting outdoor spaces with subtle lighting layers.

The results will be presented to several experts and practitioners within lighting design to discuss, how the experiences from the investigations on Anholt can be used in an urban context.

The expected result is a series of recommendations about the benefits of lower and balanced lighting levels and how we by minimizing contrasts can create increased visibility in lower lighting levels.

The recommendations will provide a view on the connection between lighting levels and perceived safety and serve as a toll for clients and practitioners in the design process to incorporate both lighting and darkness in outdoor lighting solutions. Furthermore, the results will create an increased awareness of the importance of preserving the human experience of nighttime, darkness, and view to the stars.