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SMART BUILDING
AWARDS
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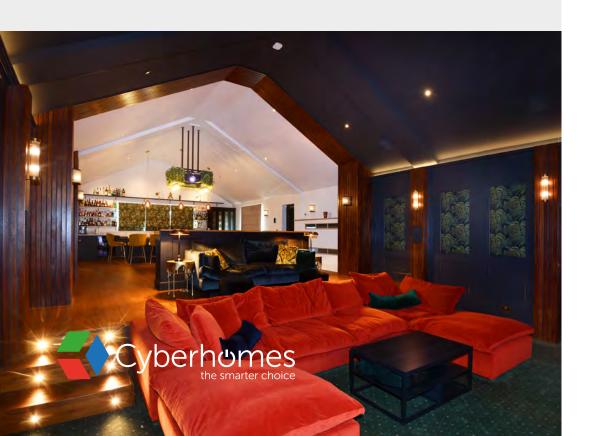McIntosh
Sonus faber®

Jungle Atmos Media Room, Hitchin

Transforming an outbuilding into a stunning home cinema

Adding smart home technology during a house renovation is common. The opportunities a large renovation brings about are huge, including the running of new cables inside walls and planning space to house equipment to power new technologies.

It's also common for new areas of the home to be added during renovations. These can include cinema rooms, a pool area, or a gym. However, these new rooms weren't additions, they were where the project started.

A multi-functional space

Keen on fitness, and especially martial arts, the client's focus from the beginning of the project was to turn an outbuilding into a multi-room space, featuring a gym with separate karate room, socialising space, pool table and cinema room. In fact, the socialising space and cinema were to be conjoined, keeping those enjoying the 'big screen' experience together with those simply enjoying time with friends or family.

While the client was keen to embrace the latest technology, the tech itself was not their primary concern. To this end it was imperative to choose a system that made the whole building as simple to use as possible. The Cyberhomes design team chose a Savant control system for its unique and user-friendly graphical interface - a choice which was very well received by the client.

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The challenges

Having an open social space and cinema that seamlessly blend from one into the other did bring challenges. For example, there is no rear wall to the cinema, as this is where the cinema joins the bar area. As an upshot, this means there is nowhere to mount rear speakers or, more importantly, a projector!

Smart lighting

Where the social space has windows and bright décor with a calm and relaxing feel, the cinema (by its very nature) needed to be a darker space. This was achieved using several individual, but integrated, elements. These included blinds in the social space and carefully selected Orluna light-fittings in both areas. Easily controlled lighting 'scenes' were created using a Lutron lighting system, with keypads for control and integration into the wider cinema system. Further 'mood' lighting was also created using coloured LED strips placed around the room's perimeter.

The cinema

The options for cinema equipment are huge, but thankfully Cyberhomes have years of experience in putting together just the right combination of equipment.

For this project the 'missing' rear wall drove the Cyberhomes team to design a new concept for the projector mount. They designed and built a hanging fixture, which not only houses the projector, but also contains some of the room's light-fittings. To top things off, an organic plant-based décor was added to the fixture, which both disguised the projector within and helped maintain sufficient airflow to keep the projector cool.

The speaker array chosen was a 5.2.4 configuration using side speakers (integrated into pillars of the room) and ceiling speakers for Dolby Atmos soundtracks. The front wall houses the main Sonus Faber left, centre and right speakers that are powered by Mcintosh amplification housed in a remote equipment rack.

The speakers are positioned behind an acoustically transparent projector screen. This ensures the sound is locked to the picture but remains crystal clear.

Also hidden at the front are two JL Audio subwoofers that feature an ultra slim outer casing, helping with placement while still providing very large sound pressure levels.

Project partners

- **Tracey Andrews Interiors**
  (Interior design)
- **M Spindler Construction**
  (Building contractor)
- **Convergent AV**
  (ISF Calibration)
- **Finesounds UK**
  (Mcintosh & Sonus Faber)

> "We were delighted to work with the Cyber Homes team from concept through to implementation. Our project was a lifetime dream fulfilled, and we wanted to execute to the highest possible standard and needed somebody to help us understand what was possible.
>
> Everyone walking into our cinema simply says 'wow' and that is a testament to the whole team's professionalism and vision. We have had many happy nights in there already and expect to have many more for years to come."
>
> - Homeowner

State of the art housing equipment and main house systems

As with any large install, there are several pieces of electronic equipment that need to be housed in an appropriate environment. A large 19" equipment rack was used, located in an area away from the main 'public' rooms.

As mentioned earlier, the cinema / socialising space and gym are in a separate building from the main house, with systems for the main house to be completed later. After much thought it was agreed that equipment for the main house would also be housed in the outbuilding.

As the main house project was still to be started, a great deal of planning went into the design of the systems in the outbuilding, to support the future work in the main house. This included 10GB/s cabled network connections between the two buildings and support for a smaller equipment rack in the main house for future developments.

Other systems

While the cinema, control and lighting systems were the main concern of this project, other systems were installed too. These included CCTV (using Ring X professional products), audio and video distribution and extended control, all ready for the main house to be integrated into the same system as the wonderful new gym, bar and cinema building.

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