

Fit for Kings

A London Penthouse with Total Home Automation via Crestron

An extensive Crestron-based system to give the owner of a central London penthouse full control of his hi-tech home

Imagine being able to control your home's heating, lighting, air conditioning, security and home entertainment systems all at the touch of a button? For one lucky man it's a dream come true. A prominent football chairman and successful businessman he employed top Architect, Jonathan Pitt of the Design Buro who turned to CEDIA approved custom installer Smartcomm to fit the latest integrated technology. This newly built penthouse apartment, built right on top of a London hotel, is walled almost completely in glass commanding impressive views over London's west end. Just about every aspect of the property is automated from the door entry system that uses fingerprint recognition technology right through to the blinds which cover the huge four bedroom apartment's floor-to-ceiling glass windows.



Above left: Crestron TPM C-10 colour touch screen control panel. Above right: View of the apartment

Key to the apartment's hi-tech set up is the Crestron control system. Using Crestron's colour touch screen panels the owner can monitor security cameras which are strategically placed on the outside of the apartment, talk to people outside the property's entrance, even make adjustments to the room's temperature and lighting. This apartment features the Polaron lightlink architectural lighting control system (also installed in the only 7-star hotel in the world, the Burj Al Arab in Dubai) to provide 36 channels of mood lighting and up to 250 scene settings for each channel. There's also a holiday mode which will replicate the home's lighting pattern for the last two weeks – so it seems that you're in even if you're not.



Unusually, the home also offers full air-conditioning and heating control throughout via a Daikin climate control unit connected to the Crestron control system. Sensors under the apartment's limestone flooring monitor the temperature of the underfloor heating and send this information to the Crestron system. Sensors in the wall are then able to control the temperature in each of the various zones to keep the rooms at the exact temperature required. It's even possible to control the gas fire in the living room under the plasma screen via a touch screen panel.

When it comes to home entertainment the apartment is equally as sophisticated. In addition to the Crestron in-wall panels there's also a portable touch screen Crestron display (TP-MC10) and docking station for controlling the extensive home entertainment system. As with most digital home set-ups, simplicity is the key to success here. Says Paul Hewson, Smartcomms IT Systems Manager, who spent weeks programming the system to the client's requirements: "The client has tried many of these systems in the past, but he says this is the easiest and most intuitive he's ever had to use. He can look at the panel and knows instantly what each button does."

Turn the system on and the speakers automatically fire up and the Hitachi 55inch plasma screen magically appears from behind the elegant wooden panelled walls which divides the large reception area from the more modest kitchen. A motorised Future Automation mechanism ensures the plasma sits exactly flush with the wall when switched on and returns to its resting position when the system is switched off.



In order to keep the installation as discreet as possible, 5.1 channel home cinema surround sound is provided by three Speakercraft Aim 8 in-ceiling speakers (left, right and centre) above the plasma screen and two rear Speakercraft speakers above the sofa. Adding the necessary bass welly is a Speakercraft in-wall subwoofer. This is located in the bottom right hand corner of the 'plasma wall' behind an acoustically transparent grille. Various sound sources are available to choose from including two Crestron FM/AM radio tuners and a new 160Gb hard-disc based sound server from iDyl. Video is provided by a Denon DVD player, JVC multi-standard VCR and two Sky boxes (including Sky+). Most of this equipment is tucked away in a pull out Middle Atlantic rack in a specially built cupboard at the side of the plasma wall. The rack also houses additional equipment including all the Crestron HVAC room stats, a 24 port Ethernet/wi-fi hub and a Pioneer AV amplifier.



Above left: AV Mid Atlantic rack Above right: Panelled wall containing plasma



Nor is entertainment confined to the reception area. All of the bedrooms feature discreet in-ceiling speakers so guests can enjoy listening to their favourite tracks throughout their stay. There's even a pair of outdoor Speakercraft speakers on the large patio for entertaining guests during parties. These are cunningly disguised to look ornamental rocks. In addition each of the guest bedrooms features a 23inch Philips LCD TVs for watching terrestrial or satellite TV while the large master bedroom boasts a Hitachi 42inch plasma. This is mounted on another Future Automation motorised wall bracket so the owner can view the screen from wherever he happens to be in the room.



Best of all is the 15inch Aquavision in-wall television in the large ensuite bathroom. Sitting behind a distinctive mirrored bathroom cabinet, this is perfectly placed for viewing from the large Antonio Lupi designed bath in the centre of the room. Like other areas of the property, the ensuite also features a Crestron touch screen panel in the wall. Not only can this be used to control the temperature of the heated limestone flooring, it also controls the music which comes through the in-ceiling speakers and the blinds which cover the floor-to-ceiling windows.

When it comes to hi-tech properties you simply don't get much more advanced than this stunning central London apartment. Just about aspect of the property has been automated, giving the busy owner time to relax when he comes home on an evening. What more could you ask for?



Above: TPMS-10 colour control panel in docking station Below left: beside controls Below right: designer light fitting

Top: Biometric entry system Bottom: Aquivision LCD concealed behind mirror

PROJECT FACT-FILE

Cost: £18,000 (home cinema);
£150,000 (total including all automation)

System Designer: Steven Worrell

Time: 11 months (accommodating building work)



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integrating technology with vision

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Smartcomm Ltd
45 Cressex Enterprise Centre, Lincoln Road, Cressex Business Park,
High Wycombe, Bucks, HP12 3RL
Tel: 44 (0) 1494 471 912 – Fax: 44 (0) 1494 472 464
Email: info@smartcomm.co.uk – Web: www.smartcomm.co.uk