



Perfectly Integrated Barn Conversion

When a Hertfordshire based property developer set out to create a stunning showcase for his company's talents one of the many challenges along the way was how to incorporate the latest in integrated technology – specifically how to hide speakers within the walls of a 16th Century listed Barn. A prestigious industry award for best integrated technology home was up for grabs...

Set in the heart of rural Hertfordshire within the grounds of a private estate, the 4000ft² barn blends many traditional building techniques with the latest technologies and is now home to a growing family who enjoy its many features. One of the key design goals was to keep the technologies as discrete as possible so as to allow the original design features of the interior to take centre stage. And, of course, one of the hardest pieces of technology to hide is the loudspeakers which led the developer to Amina Technologies. Already aware of Amina's range of plaster-over speakers and their typical use in plasterboard walls and ceilings, the developer's challenge was that the barn required a slightly more bespoke approach due to the traditional construction and materials used.

The main open plan living area of the barn features two zones of audio. The first is the show-piece of the installation and comprises of six AIW5X (80W) speakers in a full 5.2 surround sound system. Cleverly, the centre channel uses two AIW5X positioned either side of the central chimney breast. Traditional placement of a single centre speaker was ruled out due to the chimney breast housing the TV which itself is part of a clever Future Automation lift mechanism which hides the screen when not in use. Complemented by two Velodyne SC-IWDVR in-wall subwoofers vented through the skirting board, this truly invisible cinema experience has to be heard to be believed.

The second zone of audio uses two AIW3X (40W) speakers to provide background music in the dining area.

One of the challenges for any audio system in a large open plan room is how to maintain sound quality throughout the space. The barn has a very high ceiling which, along with the large length and width can present a difficult acoustic, however the unique dispersion characteristic AIWX Series speakers allows them to fill the room with sound quite effortlessly. In fact the sound quality from the main surround sound system is quite astonishing, even at moderate volume levels, when heard from the kitchen at the other end of the barn!

The result of successfully merging several automated products (Creston lighting control and audio distribution, Lutron blinds and curtains, Future Automation hidden TV) alongside a truly invisible, high-end multi-room sound system earned project a CEDIA 2012 Best Integrated Home award (£30,000 - £100,000 system) - A great achievement and a perfect showcase for Amina in a fantastic period property.



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