

Pounds Install Facts

Home cinema fan Ewan's extra-high ceilings threw up a unique problem for the Pounds team when installing the projector. Not only that, but Ewan's wife didn't want the room to look too 'techie'. The result is a stunning setup that melts into the surroundings when not in use.

www.poundstv.co.uk

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◆ Designer: Pounds/Martin Redwood

◆ Project Taken: Three months

◆ Cost: £40,000 (Approx)





Home theatre

HANG UP

David Murphy visits an install where everything hinged on where the projector would hang

Every room presents a challenge when it comes to home cinema. Some challenges are less demanding than others, but it's fair to say that the road to home cinema nirvana is rarely without a few potholes along the way.

The challenge for home cinema installer Pounds with this Cambridgeshire project was straightforward: how to accommodate a projector. The room in question is longer than it is wide, with high ceilings. It also incorporates an atrium, which has the effect of raising the ceiling still higher in the middle of the room, where the projector would normally hang. Before Pounds got involved, another installer had been to size the job up. Their solution was to orientate the cinema across the width of the room. This would have solved the problem caused by the atrium, but it would have looked a little odd.

'I didn't want to go with this idea,' says Pounds' designer Martin Redwood. 'When I saw the room, I started thinking about how we could accommodate the projector, but have it firing down, rather than across the room.'

Lift off

The solution came in the form of a motorised lift which would lower the projector into place when it was needed and retreat back into a hole in the ceiling when it wasn't. It's by no means a new idea - this magazine has featured many installs that have used such a system, but with a 1m drop, this is the biggest one we have covered by some distance. It's such a descent that the installers had to rig up

a scaffolding tower in the room in order to install the lift and calibrate the projector.

If the truth be known, when the lift, made by US AV furniture specialist Future Automation, descends it doesn't make for the most attractive piece of home furniture. But as Martin points out, how it looks is not really an issue.

'It's not the sort of thing you would want on show,' concedes the installer, 'but as it's behind the viewing position, it's never seen anyway.' And while he agrees that it's a large drop, Martin claims he has seen much bigger ones, up to 10m, in American installations.

Epiphany moment

The owner of the system and the house, Ewan, says he can't remember when the idea for a home cinema room first came to him.

'It was one of those epiphany moments where my wife and I were sitting around in our new house wondering what to do with the billiard room and I thought "cinema",' he says. 'I'm fairly techie, but I had never put a lot of money into AV stuff. I have high-end audio recording equipment for music, but I was reasonably happy with a cheap DVD player and the TV.'

Having made the decision to go for the cinema, there were other problems to overcome, as well as the one with the projector. As Ewan explains: 'The project was challenging for everybody, since it wasn't a new-build house and all the work had to be done without destroying the fabric or the decoration,' he says. 'Also, ►

Due to the unusually high ceiling, a retractable lift housing the projector was required



THE KIT

- ◆ Runco CL710 long-throw lens projector
- ◆ Future Automation projector lift
- ◆ StewartScreen 8ft electric screen
- ◆ Denon AVC-A1SR amplifier
- ◆ Denon DVD-2900 DVD player
- ◆ Panasonic NV-SV120 S-VHS VCR
- ◆ Sony Freeview box
- ◆ MK S150 THX front speakers
- ◆ MK MX350THX subwoofer
- ◆ Two pairs Triad IWS Bronze in-wall/in-ceiling speakers
- ◆ Philips Pronto Pro RF remote control
- ◆ Marata MCU300 automation controller
- ◆ Lutron 3104 lighting controller
- ◆ Automated blackout blinds



'A motorised lift lowers the projector into place when needed, and then retreats back into the ceiling when it's finished with'

◀ my wife was keen that it didn't look like a techie disaster, so getting the carpentry and heating right, without ruining the look of the room was as important to her as the AV component.

'Having a great builder to deal with that was important and Martin and the guys from Pounds worked really well with them. Sometimes when you're dealing with multiple trades from various companies it can get out of control, but I left it to Martin and Alex, the builder, to sort it out and I ended up with a great system.'

The building firm in question, Cambridge-based Daniels Construction, was responsible for the attractive cabinet housing the front speakers and the screen, as well as the storage unit to the left of the screen.

Cable challenge

Cabling is always an issue for any big system. As Ewan points out, this was a retrofit, rather than a new-build situation, which always makes things more challenging. In this instance, the cabling from the projector, and from the side and rear speakers, was channelled into the roof void and from there into a second, higher void running over the top of the atrium. To get from one side of the atrium to the other, one of Pounds' more vertically-challenged installers volunteered to crawl through the tiny space with the cables in his hand.

If the kit itself is modest by the standards of some of the UK's more exotic installs, it's more than up to the job in hand. 'We didn't go completely mad with the equipment,' says Ewan. 'I wanted a great system, but I didn't want racks of amps and processors. The room acoustics just aren't good enough to fully appreciate super high-end stuff. That said, the amp, speakers, projector and DVD player chosen are all excellent.'

As well as the home cinema source material, Ewan also has all his music, which he estimates at around 10,000 songs, in MP3 format on a server in a room across from the home cinema room. From here, thanks to some clever cabling, he can set up playlists and drive the home cinema amp from the computer in the other room.

The amp in question, Denon's mighty AVC-A1SR, is renowned for its ability to handle music and movie soundtracks with equal aplomb. For an enthusiast like Ewan, for whom music is clearly important, it was a great choice. Sources include a Denon DVD-2900 DVD player, Panasonic NV-SV120 Super-VHS VCR and a Sony Freeview box.



It's not immediately obvious that this room houses a high-end home cinema installation

The front speakers, housed in that good-looking cabinetry, are from Miller & Kreisel, with three MK S150s for front left, right and centre, and an MK MX350THX subwoofer to extend the bottom end. The sub is housed in the bottom right of the cabinet. The matching speaker cloth to the bottom left is merely for symmetry.

The rear and side speakers are from Triad, a pair of IWS Bronze in-walls for the sides and in-ceilings for the rears. The projector that caused all the head-scratching, meanwhile, is a Runco CL710, fitted with a long-throw lens, and firing at a StewartScreen 8ft electric screen.

There are also motorised blackout blinds for the atrium windows, Lutron lighting control, and a Philips Pronto Pro remote control to keep everything running smoothly.

'I was concerned that I'd been a bit of a cheapskate in not putting in a really sophisticated controller, but the little Pronto is absolutely fine,' says Ewan.

Room with a view

Ewan says that he uses the room for movie viewing around three or four times a week, but he doesn't preserve it exclusively for movies and music.

'Some evenings, we just sit in there, because it is such a nice room,' he says. 'Most people who see the room don't realise that there's a cinema installed. It's a testament to Martin's design that everything is well concealed so that the room still looks good at the same time as functioning as a cinema.'

As for the room's cinema credentials, Ewan says it's fantastic. 'I'm extremely happy with the final result,' he says. 'The thing I like most is that the quality is not intrusive, which is down to the way that Pounds have set it up. You are immersed in the film. All in all, it's great and I am very happy with it.' And with a room like this, let's face it - who wouldn't be? ■