Case Study: St Hilda's College

Evolution goes back to College!

Evolution

(Electronic Security Systems) Ltd.

Protecting students, staff and visitors at one of Oxford University's leading Colleges presents a challenge to any security integrator. Doing so at a College that has a number of legacy technologies already installed, and Listed buildings within its property portfolio, adds to the complexity.

St Hilda's is one of Oxford's newer Colleges. Founded in 1893, it was originally a women-only College until 2008. Its grounds include six major buildings, which contain student accommodation, teaching areas, dining hall, the library and administration blocks: Hall; South; Milham Ford; Wolfson; Garden; and the Christina Barratt Building (opened in 2001). It also includes the Jacqueline du Pré Music building, named after the famous cellist, which serves as a popular concert venue.

Unobtrusive security

Responsible for managing the security at St Hilda's is Tom Anstey, the Head of IT: "We were looking to replace our existing analogue CCTV system with a more comprehensive IP-based solution with integrated access control," he explains. "Of course we wanted to protect our students and buildings from unwanted intruders, but we also wanted a system that was unobtrusive, and left us in control.

"Evolution was successful in competitive tender, both because of the knowledge they demonstrated and their approach of putting together a complete 'package' to include installation, service and maintenance."

Evolution, the integrated security and fire solutions business, proposed using the Tyco C-Cure 9000 security management system with integrated IP video surveillance from Exacq. A key requirement was that the door controllers, cameras and Network Video Recorders (NVRs) had to be capable of operating over the existing College network. Evolution used IP Megapixel cameras and Power over Ethernet (PoE) iStar Edge door controllers to complete a successful installation, working closely with the St Hilda's IT team.

Some existing cameras, which were already IP-based, were also successfully integrated with the 'new' system to protect the legacy investment.

Ease of access

Crucially, the new access system is able to integrate with the College students' existing ID cards, which now double as access cards as required. Temporary cards can also be produced for visitors, which Tom sees as a significant benefit: "We host regular events, including concerts, and it is important that our visitors feel welcome," he adds.

The system is also easy to use: "It does not require a high level of training for our staff to operate," he continues, "and this is another advantage."

"We also wanted a system that was unobtrusive, and left us in control."

In terms of installation, the Evolution team had to work around the College timetable to ensure minimum disruption. It certainly worked: "Feedback from our staff was always positive," Tom says. "They demonstrated good technical knowledge and competence and just got on with the job without getting in the way."

Installed over the summer of 2015, the new system is very much working as intended: "What we also like is the flexibility and scalability that the new system provides," Tom concludes. "As we expand, so can the system expand with us to accommodate our needs."