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AV integration

Design Install Maintain

The Academy of Medical Sciences partners with Whitwam AVI to overhaul the AV system in its purpose-built Wolfson Conference Suite

The Academy of Medical Sciences (AMS) is an independent UK body championing medical research and policy. Its headquarters, nestled in the heart of London's Marylebone district at 41 Portland Place, serves as both a home for the Academy and an events venue, hosting everything from scientific lectures to corporate presentations, seminars and receptions.

Whitwam AVI has been a trusted partner of AMS since 2010, delivering a wide range of audiovisual solutions that have evolved with the Academy's needs. The latest project, the comprehensive upgrade of the Wolfson Conference Suite, marked another milestone in that long-standing relationship.

Versatile Event Space: How The Academy Built a Multi-Purpose Venue for Conferences, Panels, and Hybrid Meetings.

"We're proud to have worked with AMS for many years, and our team understand not only their technical requirements and preferences but also the way they work and how the spaces need to feel," explains Andrew Pymm, Director at Whitwam AVI. "These considerations shaped our approach during the Wolfson Conference Suite project."

The refurbishment, designed in collaboration with Philip Meadow Cross Architects and interior designers Eve Waldron Design, took place between 2023 and 2024. The Wolfson Conference Suite works formed part of a wider building renovation, which included new lighting, upgraded interiors and digital signage throughout.

The Wolfson Suite is a conferencing space located on the lower-ground level. The limited flexibility of its previous AV setup no longer served the client's needs or visitor expectations. The Academy wanted to create a space that could host a wide range of events and meetings, from hybrid conferences with remote participants to panel discussions and lectures with high-

quality presentation capture or evening events and receptions requiring both lighting and audio.

Furthermore, the upgrade needed to respect the architectural character of the venue and the interior design elements being incorporated across further renovation works throughout the building.

The Academy's Vision: A Reconfigurable Space That Adapts to Any Event.

"Our role was to make that possible, without ever overwhelming the end user with complicated tech" continues Pymm.

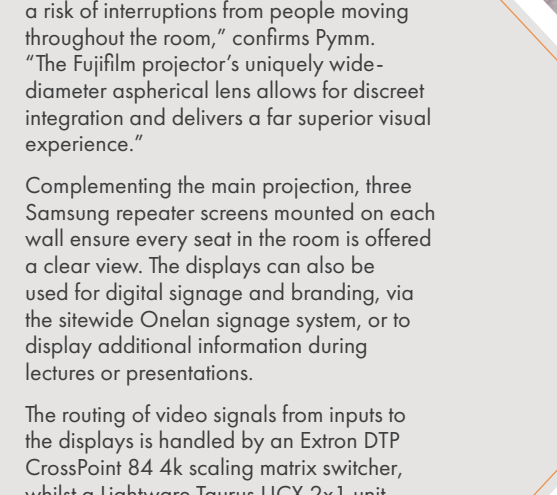
Whitwam designed and integrated a comprehensive AV and control system, underpinned by Crestron CP4 control and Q-SYS Core 110F DSP, delivering a flexible backbone upon which to build. Dual Netgear M4250 AV switch networks provide reliable AV-over-IP and Dante audio distribution, with Domotz remote network monitoring ensuring ongoing system support and minimal downtime in case of technical glitches.

For projection, a Fujifilm FP-Z6000 ultra-short-throw projector was a carefully considered choice. Its unique lens design allowed Whitwam to install the projector near the screen without the risk of distorted images, whilst eliminating the chances of shadows being cast over the display by presenters. Recessed into the ceiling, this integration has allowed for increased image size without the usual risks of interference during presentations.

"We needed a large, bright image without a projector hanging over the audience or a risk of interruptions from people moving throughout the room," confirms Pymm. "The Fujifilm projector's uniquely wide-diameter aspherical lens allows for discreet integration and delivers a far superior visual experience."

Complementing the main projection, three Samsung repeater screens mounted on each wall ensure every seat in the room is offered a clear view. The displays can also be used for digital signage and branding, via the sitewide Onelan signage system, or to display additional information during lectures or presentations.

The routing of video signals from inputs to the displays is handled by an Extron DTP CrossPoint 84 4k scaling matrix switcher, whilst a Lightware Taurus UCX 2x1 unit allows presenters to make use of the room's meeting peripherals via a single USB-C cable. Furthermore, a Barco Clickshare CX30 unit and button allow for one-touch wireless conferencing presentation.



For intelligible speech capture, Whitwam deployed a Shure MXA920 beamforming ceiling microphone, paired with multiple Sennheiser wireless systems and gooseneck mics for events with multiple speakers. Distributed audio is delivered via a combination of Tannoy ceiling loudspeakers and compact yet high-performance K-Array Domino KF26 loudspeakers, powered by Q-SYS Core processing and K-array Kommander KA-14 amplifiers. The Sennheiser Dante enabled MobileConnect system provides hearing assistance and accessibility.

On the video capture side, keeping remote participants engaged requires the right camera for every scenario. For standard boardroom meetings, the Q-SYS NC110 camera delivers reliable performance. When more flexibility is needed, Whitwam developed and supplied a portable hybrid system. The flight cased, portable hybrid solution can be deployed in several spaces. In the Wolfson Conference Suite it integrates with permanently installed fixed Marshall cameras, as well as utilising stand mounted Panasonic PTZ for precise shot composition. This engineer led solution provides greater control and streaming flexibility. For presentations requiring careful framing and speaker tracking, stand-mounted Panasonic PTZ cameras offer precise shot composition, ensuring remote attendees enjoy the same realistic experience as those in the room.

"Due to the variety of people using the room, ease of use was a priority for the Wolfson Conference Suite," explains Pymm. "A Crestron touchscreen by the lectern allows for simple AV control, whilst a further touchscreen at the back of the room takes care of room lighting adjustments. Full technical control, for more sophisticated management by the in-house team, is possible through a portable 10" Crestron touchscreen."

Designing the system with layers of control, simple options for day-to-day users, and deeper access for technical staff ensures the space is never intimidating for everyday users, but always capable.

Whitwam also commissioned bespoke walnut lecterns, designed in harmony with Eve Waldron's interior design. Each lectern features an integrated 32" LCD branding screen inset into the front unit, allowing AMS or its clients to display logos and event graphics.

"The custom lecterns are a great example of AV technology blending with architecture and room design," continues Pymm. "They help to elevate the sense of occasion for



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clients walking into the space."

Given the full ceiling replacement required for HVAC works, Whitwam AVI also designed and integrated a new DMX-controlled lighting system, including perimeter RGB strips and fully customisable stage-specific fixtures. This allows the Wolfson Conference Suite to transition from bright, functional conference mode to atmospheric event lighting at the touch of a button. Project challenges were primarily centred on this part of the project, where construction works for the new air conditioning system directly impacted the lighting installation timelines, requiring Whitwam to collaborate with building contractors Knight Harwood on all aspects of this complex phase of the renovation.

Working with Whitwam on our Wolfson Conference Suite has been a thoroughly positive experience," shares Frank Osborne, Head of Property & Facilities at the Academy of Medical Sciences.

"Their attention to detail, technical expertise, and ability to integrate seamlessly with our wider renovation works have resulted in a space that not only meets but exceeds our expectations. The AV system is intuitive, versatile and beautifully aligned with the architectural and design vision of the venue. We're confident this installation will serve us well for many years to come, and we look forward to collaborating with Whitwam again in the future."

Through Whitwam's turnkey AV and lighting integration, the Wolfson Conference Suite has been transformed into a flagship hybrid conferencing and events venue

that combines a hardworking technical backbone with design sensitivity. "Whilst the main goal of overhauling the projector system to increase the image size has been achieved, there are many elements of this project we are equally proud of," concludes Pymm. "The space is well equipped for almost any kind of event, and the level of customisation is very effective. The Wolfson Conference Suite can now continue to serve the Academy of Medical Sciences' conferencing needs for years to come."

