

## NATIONAL TRUST PROPERTY PROTECTED

# PRETTY AS A PICTURE

**The National Trust's Petworth House property in Petworth, West Sussex has long had an extensive security system internally. But when a major three-month exhibition of Turner paintings was held at the property last year, the Trust felt it was time to upgrade by adding external security. Nicola O'Connell reports.**

The loan of more than 70 watercolours, oil paintings and small gouache sketches from the Tate Collection brought wide press coverage. Petworth House provided a rare chance to view the Turner paintings in the setting for which they were commissioned, and displayed as they were first hung. Given the anticipated interest and value of the works, the National Trust knew security risks needed to be minimised as much as possible before the paintings were delivered.

### Detect and respond

Peter Gough, security adviser for the NT, says: "The police advised us to use a guard patrolling outside the buildings, but I decided that if we could cover all sides of the building with CCTV and put the guard in a secure control room, this would be a better investment. But I wasn't interested in video recording – I wanted to detect and respond to anyone before they got to the building, which obviously has robust physical security



arrangements monitored by an extensive alarm system." Despite the benefits of video motion detection (VMD), the technology has, traditionally, been associated with many false alarms generated by small animals, cloud, wind-induced camera movements, snow and rain. At a property like the Trust's Petworth House, which is surrounded by 700 acres of parkland, this could potentially lead to constant false alarms. Many trees surround the building, and birds, bats and deer roam the parkland. Mark Sharratt, building manager, Petworth House, says: "We were very concerned about how video motion detection

might cope with all the small animals." Following the advice of a consultant, the NT decided ADPRO Axiom video motion detector, from Vision Systems, suited its needs. Mr Gough says: "ADPRO has a pedigree in the CCTV world, so I was satisfied that the consultant had selected a reliable product."

### Installing the system

To accommodate its new security system, the Trust set up an on-site control room at Petworth, with guards monitoring the screens at all times. ADPRO Axiom's framestore is considered an added benefit, as this allows the guards to review any images, should they need to. The Trust reports it did take a little time to adapt to the new system following installation. Initially, the performance at night was inadequate, with the quality of images not sufficiently clear. After some adjustment of IR lighting, the problem was quickly rectified. Further fine-tuning of the video motion detection cells was also required. Placing the cameras was challenging, too, as Petworth is a 17th century Grade I listed building. It was essential that the cameras did not in any way affect the building's exterior. Following very careful positioning of the cameras, all now blend into the building, except for one that helps to serve as a deterrent to intruders. The Turner exhibition proved a big success, doubling Petworth House's visitor numbers. Nearly 100,000 people from around the world came to see the show, which coincided with the £550,000 restoration of one of the rooms. There were no security incidents. The ADPRO system remains in place. Mr Gough says: "I would now consider using ADPRO Axiom for other buildings if I had similar applications. Reliable, real time monitoring with early warning is more preferable than conventional video recording." The system is now being used to switch pictures through to an alarm receiving centre for monitoring to back up local arrangements. □



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## About the product

**O**f critical importance in an environment such as Petworth House was high probability of detection and low nuisance alarm rate. The system's automatic scene learning features is so that genuine human intruders are detected, but its area filtering capability reduces alarms from tree movement, camera wobble and small animals. Makers Vision Fire and Security report that the ADPRO Axiom video motion detector (pictured) features low and high contrast alarms for camera failure, and is expandable from one to 140 channels. The video motion detector can also withstand adverse weather, say

Vision. Moving cloud shadows, for instance, are the biggest cause of nuisance alarms and while a number of VMD systems detect cloud activity and suppress detection, ADPRO Axiom automatically improves performance on cloudy days and even determines presence of cloud activity. ADPRO Axiom has four selectable modes of operation to choose from (for application flexibility) and no need for external synchronisation, Vision say. The system is also compatible with standard CCTV systems, allowing a straightforward upgrade where applicable, the makers add. □

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