

Delivering in-building connectivity for The OWO and Raffles London

Reimagining connectivity for the 21st century without compromising an iconic building's historic aesthetic

Located in the heart of Whitehall, the Old War Office is a Grade II* listed building that's been meticulously restored and extended. Renamed The OWO, this landmark destination houses an iconic 120-bedroom Raffles Hotel, 85 luxury private residences, boutique shops, and more.

Alongside powering commercial operations across the site, providing fast, consistent and reliable 4G voice and data coverage is essential for delivering the seamless connected experiences guests, visitors and residents expect.

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A sensitive transformation

From day one, the forward-thinking developer knew implementing mobile coverage was a must. It turned to Cellnex UK to implement a Distributed Antenna System to deliver indoor connectivity, for all UK mobile operators, against a host of complex requirements.

The scale of the task confronting Cellnex was considerable. Alongside ensuring the solution was non-intrusive and in-keeping with the building's unique and impressive architecture, Cellnex needed to apply some clever thinking to overcome the significant challenges posed by the building's sheer scale and the signal blocking materials that make up much of the building's fabric.

Constructed of Portland stone, the 760,000 sq ft mixed use site features a four-storey basement extension, rooftop terraces, a cinema, spa and swimming pool. Delivering connectivity at scale and across all these indoor areas was a complex proposition – particularly in underground spaces such as the Whitehall Ballroom, London's largest subterranean ballroom, as well as into the two car lifts used to transport vehicles and large production sets direct from street level into the hotel's underground event spaces.

Cellnex UK ensured that the building's Edwardian architectural features – which include wood panelling and hand-laid mosaic floors – were sensitively preserved.

A collaborative effort

To accommodate these needs, Cellnex worked hand in glove with the site's development teams to identify where and how best to integrate the required connectivity infrastructure into the fabric of the building as the refurbishment programme progressed. By making its inbuilding infrastructure 'invisible' to the naked eye, Cellnex was able to ensure the visual integrity and aesthetic of the historic building was never compromised.

The highly dynamic nature of the project required close collaboration with multiple specialist contractors throughout the 8-year renovation programme. Coordination was key and the Cellnex UK team had to work in a highly proactive and iterative way. This flexibility was particularly important in reducing project disruption during the COVID-19 pandemic.

While ensuring its solution was non-intrusive and in keeping with The OWO's original architecture, Cellnex UK was able to accommodate all design changes and amendments requested by stakeholders during the extensive building transformation process.

Today, the Cellnex in-building connectivity solution provides fast, consistent mobile signal and data coverage across this iconic building. Which means that visitors to this historic and glamorous London venue are assured of experiencing the modern-day connectivity that is essential for today's 21st century lifestyles.

For more on how Cellnex UK In-Building Solutions enhance the experience in hospitality and real estate venues, [click here](#).

Benefits and outcomes

- ✓ **Ultra-fast** voice and data connectivity for guests, visitors and staff.
- ✓ **A multi-network operator solution.**
- ✓ **Future-proofed** infrastructure, featuring an upgrade path to 5G.
- ✓ **Seamless cross-site coverage** in all indoor areas, including the hotel's subterranean 600 capacity ballroom, nine restaurants, three bars, and 85 private residences.
- ✓ **A fully supported and managed** solution.

