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BARRINGTONS HOSPITAL ULTRA QUIET AND ULTRACLEAN FREEFLOW™



Medical Air Technology recently shipped one of its unique Freeflow™ ultraclean ventilation (UCV) canopies to Barringtons Hospital in Ireland. Housed in a beautiful historical building, Barringtons is one of the Mid West's leading private hospitals, and has a rich 200-year history, having been established in 1829 by the Barrington family as a charitable institution for the relief of the poor of their native city. It ceased to operate as a free hospital in 1988, but has since been reborn as an internationally accredited private hospital, with an exciting plan for expansion to facilitate more specialised technology. As part of this plan, the hospital wanted to offer the people of Limerick and the Mid-West region the most advanced environment for ultraclean surgery, increasing the range and scope of operations that can be carried out in its theatres.

The surgical teams at Barringtons had a key requirement for their new UCV canopy – theatre noise is known to cause fatigue and stress, and can be distracting, so they wanted a canopy that ran as quietly as possible, but also allowed space for equipment mounted at ceiling level, such as multi-movement pendants.



The almost silent Freeflow™ UCV canopy was the perfect choice for the hospital, as housing the fans remotely, rather than in the canopy, means it operates at NR45, a noise level significantly below that specified by HTM 03-01. The most advanced unit on the market, the Freeflow™ combines high performance functionality and durability with a clear response to the evolving requirements of modern operating theatres. Its screenless design means there is more space free at ceiling level, allowing greater flexibility in the choice of equipment and theatre practice. As there are no moving parts within the canopy, theatre downtime for maintenance is also kept to an absolute minimum. MAT worked very closely with the main equipment supplier and project manager, SISK Healthcare, designing and supplying the Freeflow™, and then with the mechanical contractor, Aircon Mechanical, on the installation.

The new canopy was positioned in a repurposed space within the main hospital, which clearly presented particular challenges as carrying out major work in a historical listed building meant that careful planning and sensitivity to the building's architecture was essential at all times. The existing windows in the theatre space were also listed and could not be altered in any way, so SISK Healthcare designed a second inner glass pane to provide the theatre air seal required. The flat roof above the theatre was mainly of timber construction and therefore all theatre equipment supports were very carefully planned, designed and installed. The main air plant located on the roof was offset away from the timber roof and supported on new steel beams bearing on existing structural walls.

The project ran smoothly with minimum disruption for staff and patients, and behind its historic doors, Barringtons now boasts a world-class 21st century operating theatre. James Mulcahy, project manager with SISK Healthcare, says: "On this project, MAT was SISK Healthcare's project partner for provision of the UCV canopy. The company's approach and technical input was exemplary from start to finish."

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