

Merging the Historic with the State-of-the-Art

Haywood House, an extraordinary mid-1800s East Texas home turned restaurant, preserves the luxury and charm of a bygone era with hidden loudspeakers and a flexible audio control platform from AtlasIED.

Built as a hotel in 1865, the Haywood House in Jefferson, Texas, has served as a grand hotel, a local history museum and a personal residence. Today, the historic Haywood House is an upscale Euro-American restaurant and cocktail bar. Owners Teresa and Alan Ponder purchased Haywood House in 2020 and have been updating and renovating the building's infrastructure, including the installation of a new state-of-the-art, facility-wide sound system from AtlasIED, featuring the company's unique Strategically Hidden loudspeakers and Atmosphere audio control platform.

Michael Chism, Account Manager at [Visual Techniques](#) (VTI-TX), was the point person for the historical Haywood House sound system project. Based in Longview, Texas, VTI-TX is an AV systems integration firm providing a range of products and solutions, including high-quality audio and control systems, visual presentation and video wall solutions, and other interactive technologies. VTI-TX has been an AtlasIED reseller and installer for more than 15 years.

Chism noted that the charming, historic nature of the building presented unique sound system challenges. First and foremost, any installed speaker system had to be as discreet as possible and not detract from the restaurant's classic ambiance. Haywood House also required high-quality sound for each space, with easy control to accommodate different guest events, often at different volumes with different web streaming or Bluetooth-connected content, so flexibility was vital.

"This was a fun project because we were helping bring a very historic building into the 21st century," said Chism. "The aesthetics had to be just right, the sound quality had to be excellent, and because it's a fairly small staff for a facility of this scope, the system had to be easy and efficient to use. The AtlasIED strategically hidden loudspeakers and their Atmosphere control system were perfect for this project."

Haywood House is a two-story brick building with highly-detailed period furnishings and architectural elements throughout. The downstairs area features the main restaurant and a large bar area with an overlooking mezzanine that can accommodate additional diners. Upstairs areas include the Haywood House's famous cigar bar and private banquet room. The restaurant's new sound system includes audio coverage split into four zones for all indoor spaces and the outdoor balcony and porch areas on two sides of the building.

The restaurant's cigar bar features an elegantly ornate, tiled ceiling that needed to be preserved. It's an elegant 1860s-style space, and the hanging or wall mounting of speakers within the room was not an option. But at the same time, it's a popular destination and quality background music was needed. Doug Hall, Director of Technology at Mizzen Marketing, assisted the VTI-TX team with product recommendations, system design and setup.

"The system needed to blend with the environment, and the architectural ceiling tiles were to be disturbed as little as possible," explained Hall. "A set of AtlasIED SHS-6T2 strategically hidden in-ceiling speakers were specified and installed. After the sound lenses were color-matched, they disappeared within the room, and the depth of sound for such a small speaker is very impressive."

The Strategically Hidden Series (SHS) loudspeakers from AtlasIED perfectly blend into the aesthetic of any ceiling while retaining optimal sound performance. The SHS Series incorporates a unique, patented waveguide design that differs from other in-ceiling speaker systems. Only a shallow, 3-inch-wide acoustic lens and a micro trim ring are visible on the ceiling. The lens and trim ring can be painted or factory color-matched to render them virtually invisible. Inside the concealed enclosure is a 2-way driver that provides smooth, full-range, high-definition sound. SHS is easy to install and comes with three different adaptive dispersion lenses for various applications and installation locations.

To meet the acoustic needs of the low-ceiling dining loft, the VTI-TX team installed a set of low-profile, 4-inch [FAP42T](#) enclosures. The FAP42T series is ideal for high-intelligibility voice, music, and signal reproduction in commercial, industrial, and institutional applications. For sound coverage for the second floor, wrap-around outdoor balcony, the team installed a set of [SM42T-B](#) two-way, all-weather enclosures. The SM42T series has a 4-inch woofer and 1-inch tweeter, delivering a full-range frequency response perfect for foreground or background music systems.

For restaurant-wide audio signal distribution and control, the team turned to the [Atmosphere](#) signal processing platform from AtlasIED. Atmosphere is a powerful, full-featured, end-to-end DSP platform that's easy to install, configure and operate. Atmosphere's™ combination of digital audio processors, amplifiers, graphical user interfaces, programming software, and controls work together seamlessly. The platform's modularity, scalability, and versatility are ideally suited for multi-zone restaurants such as Haywood House, as well as churches, school campuses, and larger commercial environments.

"The Atmosphere system is fantastic and felt tailor-made for this application. It makes it very easy to control music selections and volumes anywhere around the building, indoors and out," said Chism. "As different spaces are used for different parties or events, they can easily adjust. If a musician comes in for a piano performance or background ambiance, this can be quickly and easily accommodated."

Chism added that the Atmosphere control interface is seamless and very user-friendly. A mix of wall-mounted connectors, volume controls, and touch panels installed throughout the restaurant make controlling each zone independently very easy.

"The system sounds absolutely fantastic and is so easy to use; it has exceeded our expectations. We now have high-quality, crisp, and easily customizable music in all zones," said Colt Johnson, General Manager, Haywood House. "And the SHS in speakers are terrific. We — like our customers — are amazed that such excellent sound quality and coverage can be produced by speakers that we can't even see. I'm very pleased with what the AtlasIED products have enabled us to do here."