



Photos courtesy of Replan

Mark Pugh, managing director

# Spatial awareness

**WHEN AV store Spatial Sound and Vision, in Northwich, Cheshire, underwent a refit in May of this year, there was a quite an unusual challenge to overcome – the shop is built on stilts.**

“There used to be salt mines underneath, which meant there was a high risk of subsidence,” says Mark Pugh, managing director of company Craig Hi Fi, which owns the store. Mr Pugh is also the director of Radius, the specialist consumer electronics buying group.

“The store has pillars where you wouldn’t normally have them, so we had an interesting debate with Replan [the company who did the refit] as to how things should be positioned. We changed our ideas a few times. Replan were very easy to work with – we sat down, gave them a brief, they came back with some drawings and that was it – they had some good ideas.”

He adds: “The whole installation was superb. A Samsung area was put in first, and then Replan came in for two days and did their bit. It was seamless.”

The Northwich shop was originally a Nordis store – Mr Pugh’s company took the business over from the receivers when it went bust about six years ago.

Spatial Sound and Vision sells purely brown goods, including TVs by Samsung, Panasonic, Sony and Toshiba and audio from Pioneer and Marantz.

## Transformation

“The store hadn’t had a refit for about 20 years – we wanted to revitalise it. We’re extremely pleased with the result. It’s transformed from horrible old red carpets to a very modern, clean look,” says Mr Pugh.

“Our clientele are mainly older people and they love it. It presents the products in the way in which they should be presented. We’ve been able to put a lot more products on show and make far more efficient use of the space.

“I think we were the first in the country to have the new Samsung look – it’s about a third of the store (which is about 1,600 square feet in total) and it has transformed sales of our flat-screen TVs. We can display them up on the walls, rather than on the shelves that we had before. The amount of Samsung business that’s come from the refit has been very positive. Smart TV and 3D are on show and being demonstrated, so consumers can really see the benefits.”

Commenting on business in Northwich, Mr Pugh says: “The area was famous recently for the two guys who organised a riot on Facebook and no one turned up! That’s Northwich, really. The town centre is in decline – people are not investing in retail, for obvious

The recent refit of Spatial Sound and Vision in Northwich, Cheshire, has enabled the store to properly display and sell new technology like smart TV. Sean Hannam reports



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reasons, but, although business is very tough, we are planning to do another refit in one of our other stores early next year. You have to bite the bullet. We did the refit in Northwich, but it was during a quiet period, so our loss of business was minimal.”

Craig Hi Fi, which is 35 years old and was started by Mr Pugh’s late father Brian, runs five stores that are branded Spatial.

Says Mr Pugh: “Our emphasis is on brown goods, however, we are looking to introduce white goods into a couple of stores in the coming months. I think if you’re

going to do white goods, then you have to do it properly, otherwise it’s not worth it. White goods are not showing the same sort of decline as browns.”

Looking at the next few months, Mr Pugh says: “We have a very positive outlook for next year, in terms of digital switchover in the South-East, the European Football Championship and the Olympics, however, I think it’s going to be undermined by continuing economic weakness.”

● To see videos of recent Replan shop fits, go to [www.replan.com](http://www.replan.com)

