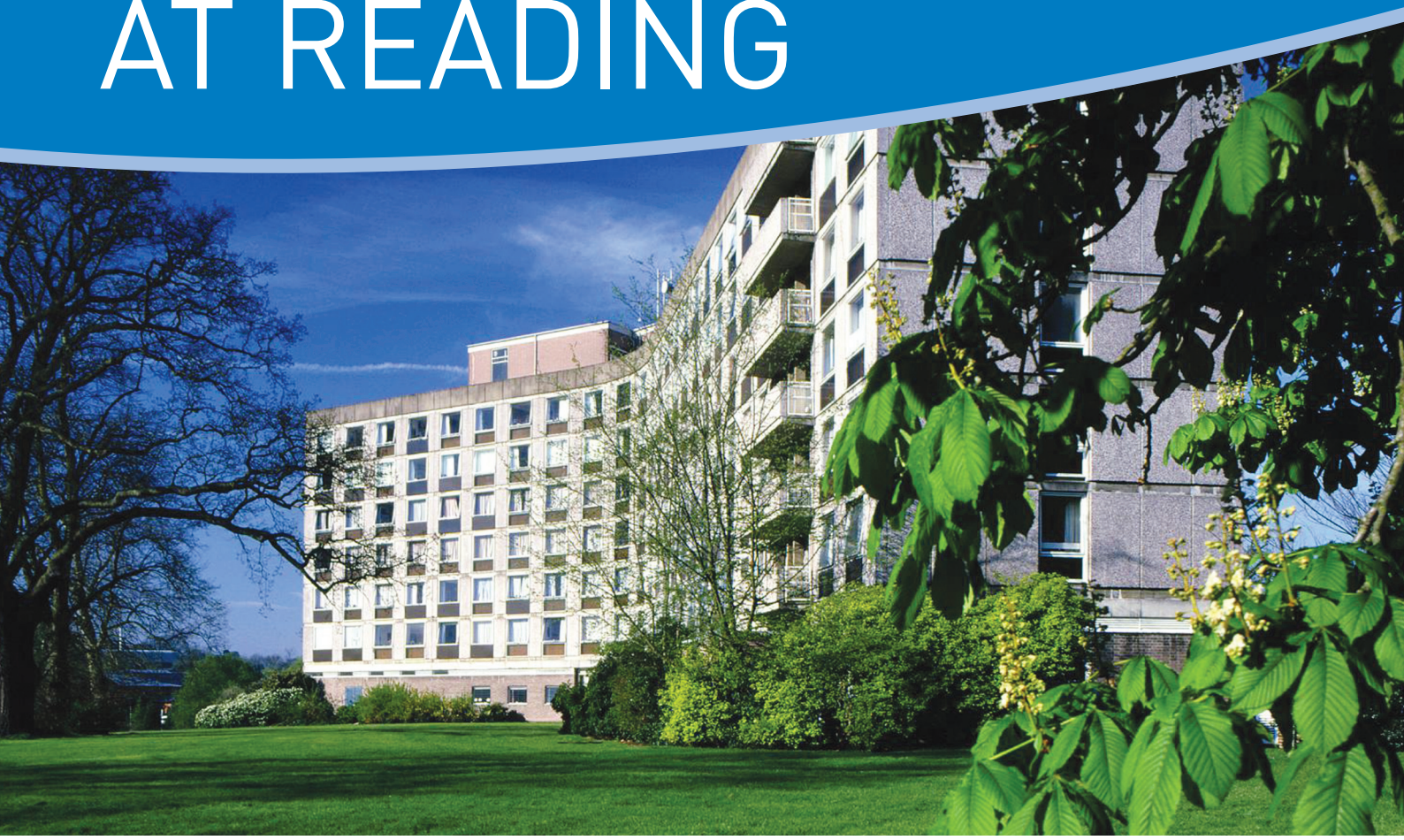
SECURE ON CAMPUS AT READING



The University of Reading has found a way to dramatically improve security within one of its most modern student accommodation halls, installing a state-of-the-art contactless access control system to keep undergraduates safe and secure.

Established in 1892, and receiving its Royal Charter in 1926, the University has a long tradition of research, education and training at local, national and international level. It has links with other educational institutions in over 90 countries and is one of the top 20 research-intensive universities in the UK.

Facilities at Reading are based around 3 campuses, all within 10 minutes of the town centre. These are the 320 acre White Knights parkland campus, and campuses at Bulmershe Court and London Road.

Student accommodation at the university is mainly based around 13 Halls of residence and one of the most popular is St Georges Hall, part of a major redevelopment at the university offering newly built en-suite accommodation. Made up of four accommodation blocks, all rooms in St Georges Hall are equipped with a data point providing a direct link to the university computer network and unlimited 24/7 high speed Internet access.

SECURITY REQUIREMENTS

With regard to security, although night patrols operate in all halls throughout the year, many new students like those arriving at any university bring expensive electronic equipment including laptop computers, mobile phones, DVD, CD and MP3 players with them with little thought that they could fall victim to thieves.

So as part of the build specification for St Georges Hall, security considerations were given a high degree of importance. To protect against unauthorised intruders and combat potential thieves, the university has adopted a strategic approach installing a security system that can also be implemented across the other halls of residence as time and budgets dictate.

SALTO Systems were chosen to provide an integrated solution and the installation was carried out by local SALTO business partner BMA Varsity Ltd, Oxfordshire's leading locksmiths. They installed SALTO's PRO-Access

electronic locking system, featuring distributed intelligence in both the lock and the key, together with 300 electronic handle sets from their Comfort and Security ranges and 10 on-line wall readers to provide real-time on-line access control for perimeter barriers and main entrance doors.

The PRO-Access software enables the entire building to be operated by one database (although it is powerful enough to control the entire campus) managing the intelligent electronic locks and Mifare proximity keycards for standalone wire-free operation. Because it is wire-free there is no need for manned guards to use a hand held programmer as they complete their rounds. All updating of locks is achieved via the software with virtual online performance provided by the Salto Virtual Network (SVN). This is a smart combination of on-line and stand alone readers that provide 90% of the benefits of a fully on-line access control system at the cost of a stand alone system.

FLEXIBLE NETWORK

One of the main objectives of a good access control system should always be to reduce the time needed to manage it, without the loss of functionality, flexibility, control and security. The Salto Virtual Network achieves this by allowing stand-alone locks to read, receive and write information via its operating smart cards. Since most user related access information is stored in an encrypted format on the ID carriers, on-line wall readers are able to update (and receive information from) the cards at any time anywhere in the building. This eliminates the physical restrictions of traditional stand alone electronic locks and allows both cards and locks to be updated, restricted or deleted remotely.

To gain access to their accommodation in St Georges Hall, students use their own personal ID card. This is a multi-application combination card that serves not only as a photo ID and electronic purse, but also as a proximity smart card, and is presented to wall readers controlling access via main entrance doors to the blocks themselves.

A really neat touch is that the readers are configured so that when an able bodied person presents their card the door unlocks and it can then be pulled open manually. However, when a disabled person presents their card, thanks to the way it was configured upon issue, the door will not only unlock but the built-in automatic opener will then electronically open the door. Such selective use is not only DDA (Disability Discrimination Act) friendly but also saves on wear and tear. Once in the building the student then simply presents their card to their individual off-line room lock, and this then allows entry only to that room.

SALTO's UK National Sales Manager, Ramesh Gurdev, says: "Having security that is reliable and dependable is obviously key for a building housing so many young people, many of whom are from overseas countries and living away from home for the first time. The flexibility of the system means the university can get the maximum benefit from our technology whilst providing a secure environment for their students."

Tricia Hambling from the University of Reading added: "Since installing the SALTO system there have not been any security incidents in any of the accommodation blocks within St Georges Hall. However, if a student should lose their ID card, we can quickly take it out of the system without compromising security."