



JOHN RYAN'S STORE OF THE WEEK

Uniqlo Le Marais, Paris

Anybody who's interested in retail will probably remember the first time that they entered a Uniqlo store. Piles of neatly merchandised and brightly coloured stock contained within a white box that boasts the occasional digital lightbox around the place would go a fair way towards describing the ambience. The sensation is fast-paced, contemporary and low-cost – well, the merchandise anyway.

What may be unfamiliar is what has been done in Le Marais in central Paris where the retailer has just opened its fifth store in the city. This 8,800 sq ft branch is housed in a former foundry dating from the mid 19th century. As well as a large amount of natural daylight, thanks to skylights that form part of the pitched roof, the store has a 35 metre red brick chimney at its heart.

There is, of course, the familiar stock, but the historic setting and the homage that has been paid to what was in place prior to Uniqlo are what set this store apart. Indeed, and almost certainly owing to the historic nature of the building, the exterior of the

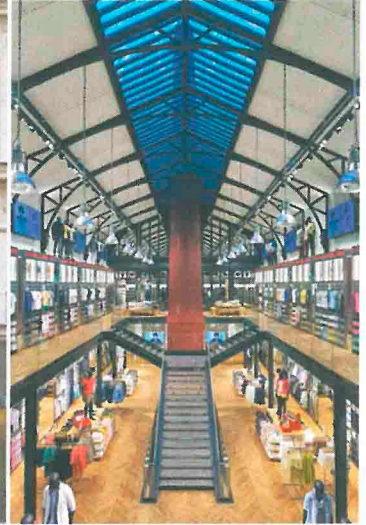


three-floor shop – basement, ground and first – provides few clues about what lies within, other than a couple of relatively small red Uniqlo signs.

The notion of mixing the very new with the distinctly old and coming up with something that is different from what has been done previously

informs what has been created in the Marais branch. This store is sufficiently different from the other four in the City of Light to make it worth a visit in its own right.

It also pulls off the trick of existing in an area which is better known for its independent retailers than for big



fashion chains. Everything about this interior says Uniqlo, but almost everything about it is different from what has been done before.



For more images of the Uniqlo store visit the website at retail-week.com/sotw