

Paperchase brings store designs up-to-date

BY MATTHEW CHAPMAN

Paperchase is updating its old stores from their 1980s and 1990s designs as part of a large-scale refurbishment programme.

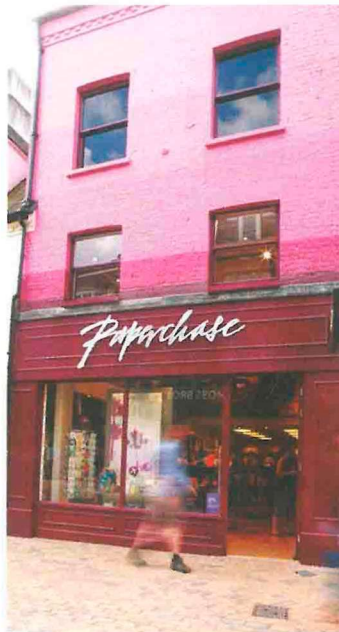
The retailer, which increased pre-tax profit 18% to £741,000 in the year ending February 1, has just completed the revamp of its Manchester flagship store as part of the initiative. The shop opened in 1997.

Other refits this year include the retailer's Bromley and Bath stores. More shops will be overhauled as the leases renew.

Paperchase chief executive Timothy Melgund said the refurbishments are not superficial and updated stores "don't look remotely the same".

Melgund explained the update programme "is the first time we have gone back and looked seriously at store design" of branches opened in the 1980s and 1990s.

He said: "You have got to keep on top of what the customer sees and make sure the brand is reflected in not just the product but also the envelope."



Paperchase overhauled its Bromley store in the summer, introducing quirky design elements such as a 'floating room'

New stores are being updated with a design that Paperchase said would still be fashionable until 2020 and are being made "much slicker and crisper".

Melgund is "positive" about the key Christmas trading period. He believes this year consumers will



have more disposable income as food prices deflate and fuel prices come down, while interest rates have not yet gone up.

The retailer has also partnered with Staples in the US and will sell products including notebooks and gifts across 1,200 of the

stationery giant's stores.

The retailer increased turnover 13% from £84.9m to £95.8m in the year to February 1. It now has 115 standalone stores, 28 UK concessions, 22 concessions in Europe and 10 franchise stores in the Middle East.