

Westfield expansion 'good for retail in London's West End'

CONTINUOUS reinvention is the strategy at developer Westfield, according to head of development John Burton. Citing the expansion of Westfield London, which will increase in size by 7,430 sq m by early 2018 (it opened in 2008) he says that developing existing assets, as well as building new schemes, is at the heart of Westfield's activity in Europe.

"The expansion at Westfield London is demand driven, rather than us taking a punt on the market being that size," Burton said. He added, however, that ex-

pansion and the creation of new shopping centres are not without their headaches, given the current trend towards ever-larger stores. "There's a lot of demand for the bigger space and the new space is very much spoken for," he said. "The problem with bringing new [smaller] brands into a centre is that unless consumers know the brand, they won't shop it."

Croydon and Milan are the two forthcoming projects in the Westfield pipeline, with the former due to welcome shoppers by 2020 and the latter by the final quarter of 2019. Burton says that the 140,000 sq m Croydon scheme will be "about 5-10% smaller

than Westfield London", which will place a particularly heavy premium on the larger spaces. He adds that the offer will be aspirational, but will not be luxury, as in Westfield London.

The arrival of a pair of Westfield centres to the east and west of central London, with Croydon still to come, has been good for retail in the city's West End, according to Burton: "It took the West End a long time to respond to what we did. Now, they've raised their game and they've added nearly another Westfield if you look at what's happened in Regent Street and surrounding. It's been good all round."



Westfield's John Burton: "It's been good all round"