

IN & AROUND

ST JAMES'S MARKET

Text: Lyndsey Dennis

St James's Market brings together world-class modern architecture with preserved historic façades in the heart of London's West End.

For decades, Lower Regent Street - now named Regent Street St James's - and the surrounding roads that form the heart of St James's have been the poor relative of Regent Street and Piccadilly, but not anymore.

In partnership with Oxford Properties, The Crown Estate is developing St James's Market, which will introduce more than 24,154 sq m of contemporary offices, shops and restaurants centred around a new public square. As part of The Crown Estate's long-term investment strategy across Regent Street and St James's, this landmark £400 million redevelopment includes the refurbishment of two historic blocks - 14-20 Regent Street and 52-56 Haymarket - alongside newly developed space, right in the heart of the West End.

The design, by Make Architects, is sympathetic with the surrounding architecture and will retain the heritage façade of the Regent Street block as well as echo the materials and scale of the neighbouring buildings using a mixture of solid and curved stone, characteristic of the St James's Conservation area. Already the development has extended St James's towards Haymarket to reclaim the site of the historical market, restore the link to the Royal Opera Arcade to the south, and expand the unique character of the

shopping and leisure destination.

'We have embarked upon a £500 million investment programme across our St James's portfolio, which includes Jermyn Street, Regent Street St James's and around half the buildings in the area. Our vision is to secure the area's long-term future through enhancing its reputation as a destination for high-quality shopping and dining, protecting its niche in the West End, and preserving its world class heritage,' says Anthea Harries, portfolio manager for St James's. 'With St James's Market we have created 19,509 sq m of new, modern office accommodation, six flagship stores for best-in-class lifestyle and fashion brands, and seven new restaurants, all set within over half an acre of revitalised public space.'

St James's Market has attracted a number of international retail and restaurant occupiers. 'Our retail mix is broad in the new St James's Market development, bringing what we hope is an exciting range for both locals and visitors alike. To date, new openings are Jigsaw's St James's Emporium, Assos, Paul & Shark and Smeg due to open in the coming months. Restaurants already trading are Aquavit from New York: a new concept, Veneta, from the Salt Yard group; Anzu, a Japanese concept brasserie and the latest to open, Ole & Steen bakery from Denmark. The Urban Tea >



IN & AROUND



Rooms will open this spring along with two more restaurant offerings,' continues Harries.

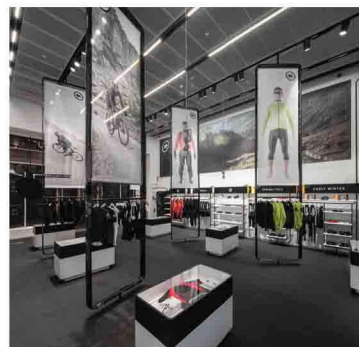
Away from the landmark St James's Market project, Aquascutum will launch a new, expanded menswear flagship store on Jermyn Street, while outerwear brand Arc'teryx Equipment has taken the final two retail units at the Eagle Place development, already home to globally renowned brands such as Joseph Cheaney & Sons, La Martina's, Tiger of Sweden, Barbour International, Osprey, Sunspel, and royal warrant holder Grosvenor Shirts. Specialist high-end cycle and accessory retailer The Bike Rooms has opened its first London flagship store in Regent Street St James's.

In terms of target audience, Harries believes the area will attract discerning, stylish consumers who appreciate the brands and environment. Younger consumers, both men and women, are being drawn into the area by our world class international restaurants and newer retail brands. With the opening of six flagship retail stores and seven restaurants, we feel the development offers visitors a unique blend that can satisfy an eclectic mix of consumer tastes, whilst all building upon St James's trademarks of quality, craftsmanship and bespoke customer service.

More widely across St James's, over the last 18 months we have implemented a strategy to bring in contemporary brands such as Tiger of Sweden, Norwegian Rain and Sunspel to sit beside established heritage brands in St James's. Pop-up stores like Wonderland and the arrival of Dover Street Market, and opening up space to designers like Lou Dalton and COTTWEILER during LFWM have also meant we have been able to raise the area's profile with the fashion conscious crowd.'

St James's Market is now a distinctive, recognisable place - somewhere to work, shop, dine, socialise and relax. The scheme has given the area a new identity that reconnects it to both its historical context and the future of St James's as a high-end commercial, retail and public destination. **RF**

Top : Jigsaw's St James's Emporium, designed by Dalziel & Pow.
Right : Cycling brand ASSOS of Switzerland opened its first international concept store in November at St James's Market, designed by Ab Rogers.



HISTORY



During the 17th century several new developments and large mansions were established to the west of the old City of London, where aristocrats and the wealthy could be close to the royal palaces. One of those developments was the new suburb of St James's.

As the name suggests, St James's Market was originally the provisions market serving the houses of St James's. Today, a new development is returning the site to its former identity, by serving the local population of St James's with amenity space and a public square.

