

FENWICK

THE LEXICON, BRACKNELL

Design: RFK Architects, BDP and HMKM
 Opening date: September 2017
 Store size: 7,432 sq m



Fenwick has opened its first department store for 14 years as part of the £240 million regeneration project in Bracknell, Berkshire - The Lexicon. Fenwick Bracknell spans 7,432 sq m with the largest area dedicated to beauty than any other Fenwick store compared to footprint. The retailer has committed £20 million to create a high-end shopping experience featuring three floors of the most sought-after fashion, beauty and accessory brands.

Fenwick has brought more than 30 flagship brands and concessions under one roof, including international designers such as Coach, Kate Spade New York and Max Mara, luxury beauty brands La Mer, Nars and Jo Malone London and premium high street names including All Saints, Ted Baker and Jigsaw.

In addition to its strong fashion and beauty collections, Fenwick invites customers to dine until late in the evening at its signature Mediterranean-inspired restaurant, Fuego, complete with private roof garden. Shoppers can also indulge in a range of beauty services from a designer fragrance area to luxurious beauty rooms and an Aveda Blow Bar.

RFK Architects was the lead architect on Fenwick Bracknell, and worked closely with BDP, the landlord architect, on the shell and core, as well as concept designer HMKM for the retail fit-out as well as the own-bought shopfit.

From the start the Lexicon Development's aim has been the Greening of Bracknell. Bracknell's location within Royal Forest is historically significant, however the brutalist architectural approach to the town made little reference to the heavy wooded surrounds.

The facade design not only creates an icon building for the >





Fenwick department store: the perforated aluminium cladding panels are designed to provide a dappled natural light to the interior which is reminiscent of sun on the forest bed through the tree canopy overhead. At night the facade is backlit and the perforations light up like the stars. A slow pulsing movement of the dynamic lighting reflects the movement of the leaves in a gentle wind.

Large areas of glass align the main pedestrian shopping street - this provides clear views into the activities of the beauty hall. With the retail landscape changing - and the growth of consultation - beauty halls have become a lively and interactive/social space. Clear views in versus static window displays therefore enliven the city street and make the store interior part of its surroundings.

At first floor 'the Bridge' protrudes to abut the adjacent Toyshop unit. This provides a Fenwick presence along the perpendicular vista as well as completing the enclosure of the street scape. The bridge has an external seating/dining area for Fenwick's Fuego restaurant on the second floor. The terrace is protected by a stretched sail to give an 'Ibiza' ambience but also a clear sign from afar that this is a place to enjoy.

The ground floor is home to beauty, accessories, menswear and men's accessories. A Mason + Rye cafe on a raised platform overlooks the store and provides direct access to an external terrace on the edge of the development which catches the sun.

The first floor houses womenswear, women's shoes, hosiery and lingerie. The second and top floor has childrenswear, toys, bed and bath, and cookshop leading into the Fuego restaurant. A glass express lift takes customers from street level straight into the restaurant for out of hours dining.

RFK Architects worked hard with the landlord team on the levels to insert an additional floor. As a result, Fenwick has three levels of retail compared to Marks & Spencer that only has two. The third floor truly enriches the customer experience as a full department store.

Centrally there is a clerestory lit atrium. The escalators are offset to the side to maintain clear sight lines across the store but also to provide a clear space for visual merchandising and a vertical display frame which houses digital screens surrounded by artificial plants that reflect the Bracknell Forest ferns.

'With the launch of our first new department store for 14 years, we have endeavoured to create an experience that will have an instinctive appeal to the Berkshire customer who doesn't always want to travel to London to shop. We have invested heavily, with £20 million to fit out the store alone, so it's a momentous occasion for us. The store will feature Berkshire's best and most comprehensive offer of premium beauty products and services. We look forward to welcoming our customers to enjoy the breadth of our fashion offer and to dine out with us until late into the evening,' says Hugo Fenwick, group trading director at Fenwick. **RF**

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