

IN & AROUND

LONDON BRIDGE

Text: Lyndsey Dennis

London Bridge is welcoming a host of fashion and luxury brands as part of its redevelopment.

The 50 million people that use London Bridge station each year will benefit from a wave of new retail arrivals - with a string of quality fashion and luxury brands opening at the station.

The station has already welcomed Cath Kidston, Hamleys, Mac, Rituals, Ted Baker and The Body Shop. They join a long list of exciting brands already open at London Bridge, with more to follow as Network Rail works to create a flagship destination where people can shop, meet, eat, socialise and travel.

Network Rail has introduced free Wi-Fi at the station as the focus on great customer experience continues. It also marks a significant expansion of these retailers' station presence, with Ted Baker, Mac, Hamleys, and Rituals all firsts in the Network Rail portfolio.

'The transformation of London Bridge station is one of the most ambitious projects that Network Rail has undertaken. It gives us the opportunity to use our expertise to create a great environment and produce a retail offer that exceeds people's expectations,' says Hamish Kiernan, commercial director of retail for Network Rail property.

'We understand that stations, large and small, and their surrounding areas are increasingly becoming the hubs of modern local communities. They are being recognised as places where people can travel, live, work and play, and at the same time provide the catalyst for housing, regeneration and economic growth in our towns and cities.

'As such we're working exceptionally hard to bring in established, quality brands and create a diverse and eclectic mix of retailers, food and beverage outlets, and places for entertainment.'

The £1 billion redevelopment project of London Bridge station, part of the Thameslink Programme, comprises a vast range of

improvements including a huge new concourse, modern facilities, two new entrances on Tooley Street and 15 fully accessible platforms. It also includes 8,547 sq m of new retail and more than 70 retail units - the most ever in a Network Rail station.

Ray Kelvin, CEO and founder of Ted Baker, said prior to the opening: 'London has always been close to Ted's heart; it's his home town, he knows it like the back of his hand, and it's where he gets his best inspiration. Given his love of travel - by train in particular - Ted's been following the development of the new London Bridge station complex closely, even before the success of the new St. Pancras store that opened last summer.'

Sue Carvell, commercial director at Cath Kidston, adds: 'We are delighted to announce the opening of our new London Bridge store. We have seen great success in our store at St Pancras station, and look forward to bringing our brand to this exciting new development too. London Bridge station is a prime location, ideal to offer a convenient shopping experience for our travelling customers. We feel our Modern Vintage offering will fit nicely with the exciting list of other brands confirmed for this new shopping hub.'

Upon opening, Mark Drummond, head of marketing at Hamleys of London, said: 'We are thrilled to be opening a toy shop in the middle of the newly developed London Bridge station. The new Hamleys store will be full to the brim with hundreds of exciting toys that will bring smiles to the faces of all our customers.'

Network Rail will be releasing more detail about its growing retail portfolio at London Bridge in due course, with announcements still set to be made on major food and beverage brands, entertainment in the station and further high-profile retailers joining the line-up.

