

## McLaren chosen to repurpose Oxford Street art deco department store

1 year ago



McLaren Construction has been appointed by Publica Properties Establishment to carry out the £132 million refurbishment and extension of 318 Oxford Street, repurposing the House of Fraser department store as a 34,000 square metre mixed-use development.

The project restores the art deco landmark, built in 1937 and occupied originally by DH Evans and then by the House of Fraser until it went into administration in August 2018. The building is badly damaged by 'Regent Street disease' and McLaren will be responsible for repairing the Portland stone façade, reinstating architectural features, and completing the Chapel Place façade.

The structural design relocates 10 steel columns retrieved from the demolished 5th floor to the new 8th floor. The remaining 11 columns from the fifth floor have been transported across London to be re-used within another project by the same structural engineer working with a third-party contractor.

The project's development manager, Joseph McNeil, commented on behalf of Publica Properties Establishment, "The project has been a fantastic opportunity to work with McLaren Construction on a truly 'retro-first' approach, bringing this building back to life with the minimum whole-life embodied carbon impact."

[McLaren Construction](#)'s London and South Managing Director, Darren Gill, comments, "More of these asset repurposing projects are coming through to the market. These are often familiar buildings in prominent locations. They present an opportunity to improve resilience through a variety of new uses – not just for the building, but for the area too."

"The construction industry will increasingly need the skills to repurpose historic buildings. It's essential if we want to balance the creation of quality spaces with reduced carbon footprints. McLaren's investment in this expertise is paying off with a raft of high profile cut and carve projects in central London."

The new building replaces a department store with ground-floor retail, including two new double-height entrances, and high-quality office space, plus two restaurants and a gym with a swimming pool. This resilient mix of uses is intended to bring greater diversity to Oxford Street and helps to develop an evening economy.

The 6th and 7th floors, originally designed with low ceilings for back-of-house uses, will be reconstructed, with the addition of a new terrace. A new set-back 8th-floor extension in lightweight construction is intended as a top-floor restaurant and has a terrace.

The internal area of the north-western and south-western corners of the building will be demolished and reconstructed to remove staircases, lift shafts and internal divisions, creating larger and more flexible floorplates.

Public realm improvements include wider footpaths with new paving to indicate the new layout and entrance points into the building. Decorative paving will feature along Chapel Place.

The building has deteriorated due to 'Regent Street disease', a condition affecting early 20th Century buildings with steel structures clad in masonry. Corrosion of the steel structure has cracked and displaced parts of the stone façade. The existing windows have decayed and rusting frames, contributing to damage. The façade has been covered in safety netting since 2020.

The project is McLaren's latest contribution to the reinvention of Oxford Street, as landowners bring a greater mix of uses to the street and where the company is currently refurbishing the flagship Oxford Circus store at 214 Oxford Street. Past projects include 58-60 Berners Street, combining four buildings to create a 7,000 sq m development, the redevelopment of the former Virgin/Zavvi store to create a 13,100 sq m mixed-use development and an eight-storey building between 11-12 Hanover Square and Oxford Street offering 4,500 sq m of office accommodation and 1,400 sq m of retail space.