



THE  
PORTMAN  
ESTATE

## Mayfair Times Portman Revamp Spurs Hotel Facelift

WORK IS UNDERWAY on a £70 million upgrade of one of London's largest hotels – the 1000-bed Cumberland Hotel on the western end of Oxford Street. The refurbishment project forms part of wider plans by landowner The Portman Estate to regenerate its 110-acre estate stretching along Oxford Street from Marble Arch to Selfridges, and north towards Marylebone Road, taking in Portman and Manchester Squares.

In October The Portman Estate agreed a new 50-year head lease for the Cumberland with the Royal Bank of Scotland, which bought the hotel with bank Nomura in 2000. A £70m upgrade including extensive bedroom refurbishment and new conference and restaurant facilities was agreed for the hotel, which will become the first of operator Le Meridien's new Art and Tech brand. The Portman Estate's wider plans for regenerating the area stem from the succession of the current Viscount Portman who has developed a new vision for the entire estate, committing £65m for investment.

The Portman Estate chief executive Hugh Seaborn said the regeneration plans centre on three areas – Gloucester Place, Portman Village and the Cumberland and its environs. A spend of £12m over the next 18 months to two years has been earmarked for Gloucester Place: "On either side you have the most wonderful Georgian terraced houses which are quite elegant, although dilapidated," said Seaborn. "A high priority is to capture the Georgian detail while servicing and high-tech cabling are being brought in."

The three-phase project will see the updating and creation of 50,000 sq ft of office space and 87 apartments. Seaborn has also begun talks with consultants on traffic issues on the busy street. At what Seaborn calls Portman Village – the area around New Quebec Street – more than 50 properties including 40 shops and 12 restaurants are being refurbished, recapturing the external Georgian detail of the buildings. New "characterful" tenants in the area include antique and restored Swedish furniture retailer Gustavian, shortly to be joined by a specialist sculpture outlet, while haute couture designer Sharon Cunningham has moved to a permanent shop in the area.

Finally, The Portman Estates' deal with the owners of the Cumberland hotel includes plans to enhance retail along the north side of the western end of Oxford Street.

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