

BRANCH
OPENING
Waitrose



KING'S CROSS RIGHT ON TRACK

Creating a truly Modern Waitrose inside a delapidated former railway goods shed took invention, imagination and a huge amount of effort, writes Kirsty Bennett

The hairs went up on the back of my neck and there were goosebumps on my arms – it was a feeling of sheer excitement,’ recalls Ed Barton, about the very first day he stepped off the tube at London’s King’s Cross and crossed the canal on his way to Waitrose’s construction site in the new city quarter in April this year. Fast-forward five months and Ed’s now Branch Manager at Waitrose’s new 21,000 sq ft King’s Cross shop, which, along with John Lewis Birmingham, opened its doors to the public last Thursday.

But a move to a new branch wasn’t always on Ed’s agenda: at first he wasn’t sold on leaving Waitrose Marylebone High Street,

where he had worked as Branch Manager for 16 years. Curiosity got the better of him, though, and he took a trip to King’s Cross to explore the area. “I’d always said I’d need something pretty sexy to take me away from the Marylebone branch and I didn’t know the King’s Cross area very well,” he says. “When I arrived I could feel my heart beating fast and that was before I even reached the site. In terms of why I made the move, it’s because at that moment I thought to myself ‘wow, I really need to be here.”

21K SQ FT FLOORSPACE
IN NEW KING'S
CROSS BRANCH



FACT FILE

WR King's Cross

The Grade II-listed Midland Goods Shed started life as a temporary passenger terminal, but was later used for handling and storing food goods brought into King’s Cross from across the country

Queen Victoria boarded a Scotland-bound train from the Midland Goods Shed in 1851

Following its restoration, today’s 165-year-old Midland Goods Shed is home to Waitrose and will also house the Guardian newspaper’s cultural space, which is set to open in 2016

The new King’s Cross city quarter has its own brand new postcode: NIC



ON LOCATION...

Since coach travel early in the 18th century, King’s Cross has been the destination for those looking to head out of London to the north of England and Scotland, while next door London’s St Pancras has been whizzing tourists and commuters to destinations throughout France since 2007. That’s a lot of footfall in the area, yes, but there’s plenty more to attract people to King’s Cross: the area includes 2,000 new homes, the renowned University of the Arts London Central St Martin’s school – with 6,000 students and staff – and multiple restaurants including the award-winning Grain Store from chef Bruno Loubet. The new Waitrose shop has Partnership neighbours, too! The little Waitrose King’s Cross convenience shop in King’s Cross station and John Lewis’s shop in St Pancras station both opened in 2014.



Where old meets new

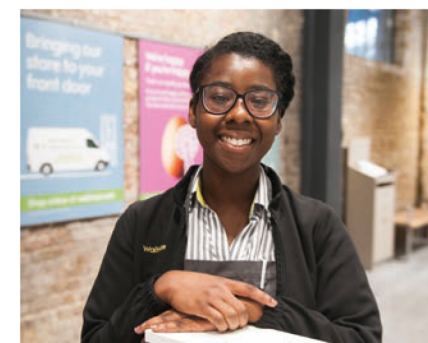
Here, Ed is. It’s opening day and we’ve decamped to the shop’s Wine Bar (not drinking wine, FYI!) where Ed’s telling me his story, and looking around it’s easy to see the appeal of the division’s newest shop. Before you even enter, the shop’s shell – the Grade II-listed, 165-year-old Midland Goods Shed – is visually arresting. Inside, the bold architectural mix of old meets new and strong reminders of the building’s Victorian heritage, such as original brick and iron work and historic signage, heighten its appeal.

Tony Jacob, Head of Construction, Engineering and Environment, is proud of what the many teams behind its transformation have achieved, describing King’s Cross as a ‘wonderful example of truly world class regeneration’. “We’ve worked with the developer, English Heritage and

our own internal and external design and construction delivery teams,” he explains. “In particular, Store Development, Future Planning and Engineering have created a strong identity that blends innovation and current design, while sensitively integrating our thinking into a Grade II-listed building.”

Given Tony’s words, Ed is conscious of the responsibility his team now has. “This place looks beautiful but our job is to give it a unique atmosphere, which goes beyond what the walls and stock can do, and what the space affords us. Our teamwork will create what a modern Waitrose shop means and it’s what will make this branch truly special,” he says. There may be many reminders of the

1850 MIDLAND GOODS
SHED OPENED
TO THE PUBLIC



Jemima Boateng
Supermarket Assistant,
Customer Services

‘I’M NOT NEW TO WAITROSE – I WORKED AT STRATFORD CITY – BUT IT’S AMAZING TO BE A PART OF THIS NEW BRANCH WITH NEW CUSTOMERS AND IN A NEW AREA’