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VISIONARY PROJECT TOOK INNOVATION AND COOPERATION

Refurbishing 94,000 sq ft of prime retail space on one of the busiest streets in the country was always going to be a challenge and it was Construction Programme Manager Chris LaThangue's (above) job to lead a team of consultants and contractors to undertake the technical design and complete the build process.

"The transformation of this space has taken many months to design, procure and build and the project has been touched by many Partners – all of whom have demonstrated passion, commitment and a desire to deliver something amazing," he says. "The refurbishment has many new ideas and concepts and it's imperative that John Lewis shows vision throughout to keep the brand ahead of the competition."

The new spaces were visited by both the press and public on launch day, but Partners at Oxford Street were also keen to get a peek at their new department. Scott Brown (below), Operations Manager Selling, Home, says: "We'll be making time for all Partners in the branch to check out the new areas. This refurbishment represents a huge change for John Lewis and there's been a lot of hard work put in to get this result. The new departments look exceptional and it's fantastic to see the excitement on Partners' faces."



PARTNER EXPERTISE

More than 290 Partners will be working in the new departments, with a combined 3,354 years of experience. That means that when it comes to customers making choices from, for example, 100,000 different sofa shape and fabrics combinations, there will be plenty of Partners on hand to share their expertise on what will work in the customer's home.

Tony Berardis, a Home Design Advisor at Oxford Street (left), says the changes will mean the advisory team is able to deliver a better customer experience. "It's going to be a wonderful experience for customers. It's so interactive now and each department is really spacious with a great feel – they're going to love it," he says. "But also for us as Partners. We've



never had a Design Studio like this before and it's a fantastic space." Caroline Mead (right), a Home Design Advisor at John Lewis Welwyn is on secondment at Oxford Street to assist new members of the team as they settle into their new roles and new environment. "It's an inspiring place to work and the new departments cover a huge space, which means there's



an enormous amount of Partner knowledge required to fulfil the advisor role," she says. "The new Home offer is incredible – it's tantalising! There's now no reason for a customer to leave without what they need as we really do cater for all budgets." Ian Stainsby (above), who's worked at Oxford Street for 21 years, adds: "Small touches like the everyday house objects

'THE NEW HOME OFFER IS INCREDIBLE – IT'S TANTALISING!'
Caroline Mead, Home Design Advisor

that have been painted to showcase the paint colours we sell, is such a great idea. We're really offering a vibrant John Lewis now."

Eye-catching, fun and funny

A house structure with its own staircase (below) is central to the refurbishment and it's a space that includes a state of the art Design Studio and the Head of Design, right in the middle of the second floor. Impressive? Yes. But how do you go about ensuring that all 94,000 sq ft of the floor is visually as exciting? It's all in the store design, says Steven Dempsey, Concepts Manager of Visual Merchandising (previous page, taking a bath!), who designed bespoke pieces of visual merchandising for the new spaces. Subtle touches such as brightly-coloured fish made from towels and origami parrots made with

pillowcases, to bolder features such as giant upholstered 'chill lamps' that function as seating areas, mean you can't turn your head without something catching your eye. "Visual merchandising's really playful. It shouldn't be serious," says Steven. "I want folks to laugh and joke and enjoy the design features because the more they do that, the more they dwell in the shop."

Technicolour tapestry

Walking up to the house structure, there's one design feature you cannot miss: an enormous lampshade that's suspended between the Home floors, which is lined with two tapestries



created by Herbert Parkinson Partners Heather Metcalfe and Ayesha Howorth (see p16 and right). Featuring London's skyline, and more than six metres in length, both tapestries were woven by Partners at John Lewis's Lancashire textiles and filled products factory using wool in 30 colours.



"I want the design to resonate with London customers and the skyline is iconic. The tapestries represent our heritage and the lampshade being suspended makes it appear that it's floating in space – all together, it's

modern, contemporary and cool," adds Steven. Venture into soft furnishings and you'll find a cushion spiral – affectionately named the 'cushion kebab' – which is already a hit on



Instagram, while the 'Coo-Coo' clock at one end of the second floor is one of Steven's original designs. "Continuing the London theme, pigeons make a 'coo coo' sound and I took the shape of a traditional cuckoo clock and incorporated pigeons and Big Ben," he says. "I'm forever taking pictures of visual merchandising when I'm abroad and if people want to do that in John Lewis, that's really exciting."

THIS SPREAD CLOCKWISE:
Chris La Thangue; Tony Berardis chats to a customer; guest designers Antoni Burakowski and Alison Roberts of Antoni & Alison; Ian Stainsby; Caroline Mead; guest designer 'Supermarket Sarah'; Steven Dempsey with Heather Metcalfe and Ayesha Howorth; Scott Brown with Roger Ndugwa and Catherine Chapman; the new 'house' joining the two floors; Scott Brown



IT ALL CLICKS

INSTAGRAM
@the_interiors_lab



#colour was having a lot of fun today at the @johnlewisretail #presspreview of the newly refurbished homeware floor reopening #headofdesign #TheInteriorsLAB #interiors #interiordesign #interiorstyling #design #Home

TWITTER
@shoptactics_st

We couldn't help taking a sneaky peek at #HeadofDesign @johnlewisretail on our trip round the city #London today! @KaterinaPospa The most selling @johnlewisretail products in one room #supermarketsarahroom #HeadofDesign @supermarket_sarah @Moregeous In the John Lewis #HeadOfDesign mood board room. Apparently I lean towards Modern Restoration #spoton @KitchensMag Super excited to see the new home dept at @johnlewisretail. Love #HeadofDesign - mood board magic! @gabrielle_fagan Gold and pink lobsters & crabs – surprises @johnlewisretail new home dept London. Dazzling decor @PrimaMag We're loving the newly made over John Lewis Oxford Street homes floors. Gorgeous and inspirational. #HeadOfDesign @TheInteriorsLAB Swooning over more @leebroom at the @johnlewisretail new home department #PressPreview this morning #HeadOfDesign @Blendworth1921 We are in fabric heaven @johnlewisretail #HeadofDesign!