

NEWS

Paris brand wraps up Mayfair

Parisian-based cashmere brand Franck Namani is to open its first UK store on Mayfair's Davies Street.

The retailer has signed a 20-year lease on the ground floor of 33 Davies Street, which totals 7,621 sq ft of retail space, at £700,000 a year, equivalent to £235/sq ft.

The scheme is a joint venture between Grosvenor and Stow Capital Partners, and has 28,856 sq ft of office space above. Franck Namani's store will open in June 2014.

Franck Namani has three stores – two in Paris and one in Geneva – and the London debut signals the start of its international

expansion plans, although there are no current plans for further UK stores.

It will open in New York in 2015 and then Tokyo.

Franck Namani, founder of the brand, said: "33 Davies Street was the obvious answer, combining both tradition and some of the world's most renowned fashion brands."

CBRE and Wilson McHardy advised Grosvenor and Stow; Cushman & Wakefield advised Franck Namani.

Taskforce tackles high street pain

■ Government group's 10 recommendations to save town centres

BY KAT SPYBEY
AND RHIANNON BURY

The UK's ailing town centres should be designated as national infrastructure; local councils should apply "aggressive use of compulsory purchase orders"; and a joint venture vehicle should be piloted to address fragmented ownership. These are three of 10 recommendations made this week by the Distressed Town Centre Property Taskforce, which was commissioned as part of the government's response to the Portas review of high streets in 2011.

"Beyond Retail" reasserts that towns need to diversify to offer more leisure, residential, healthcare and educational uses. To do this, fragmented ownership must be overcome to attract developers and investors through larger regeneration projects.

Mark Williams, chairman of the taskforce, told *Property Week*: "We are realists. We know this change needs to happen but we are being realistic about

what the obstacles still are."

The report comes as online retail is predicted to account for 28% of non-food sales by 2017 and more than 20% of total retail expenditure in the 2020s, while void rates in many weaker towns exceed 20%.

The report calls for a joint venture vehicle to be piloted to pool assets across high streets. It suggests a new government-supported expert working group should advise on ways to create local property vehicles to own and manage properties, which could allow landlords to pool assets in return for equity, or take the form of public-private partnerships between councils and developers.

The group should explore ways to set up a high street investment fund, supported by financial institutions and public funds, to provide loans to the local property vehicles.

The idea is already being worked up by the Future High Street Forum, which is expected to reveal its plans early next year.

To tackle funding gaps for high street regeneration, the government has been called

upon to designate town centres as national infrastructure to enable them to access existing funding pools, such as the UK's Infrastructure Guarantee Scheme or future rounds of the Local Infrastructure Fund.

A "high street infrastructure platform" should be established to find ways to attract infrastructure fund investment.

The taskforce also urged the government to allocate a proportion of Heseltine's £500m Local Growth Fund to high street remodelling.

Councils are also urged to help finance redevelopment by providing "income strip" developments, whereby councils take a long lease to provide stable income.

A key recommendation is that "aggressive use of compulsory purchase powers should be encouraged" with the complexity and costs of the process needing to be reduced to support councils. The taskforce is expected to meet with planning minister Nick Boles before Christmas to discuss simplifying this process.

■ Read all recommendations in full at propertyweek.com



Segro and Clipstone swap industrial assets

Segro and Clipstone have completed the off-market property swap of three industrial assets, including sports retailer Decathlon's first UK logistics hub.

Segro has bought a 190,000 sq ft distribution warehouse on the Brackmills Estate in Northampton from Clipstone for £13.6m, while Clipstone has bought two multi-let

industrial estates from Segro for £11.2m. Segro will pay Clipstone the balance.

The Brackmills Estate asset is let to Tesco until December 2018 but has been sublet

to Decathlon as its sole UK logistics hub.

The two industrial estates Clipstone has acquired are Bilton Industrial Estate in Bracknell, which totals 69,000

sq ft in 23 units, and the Whitby Road Business Centre in Slough, which comprises 10 units totalling 38,000 sq ft.

DTRE advised Segro and Clipstone on the transaction.

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Colliers poaches ex-LSH man
Colliers International has recruited capital markets specialist John Knowles to join the firm as a partner in its national investment team.

■ People moves at propertyweek.com

Grosvenor gallery approved
Grosvenor's plans for the creation of the new Gogosian Gallery at 20 Grosvenor Hill in Mayfair were approved this week.

■ More at propertyweek.com

Caan's £41m Kidderminster buy
James Caan's 90 North has bought Crossley Retail Park from Chesterton Properties for £41.5m, a 7.3% yield on behalf of a Middle Eastern investor.

■ Full story at propertyweek.com