

## **City billionaire to take over Plymouth Homebase site**

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Details of a city billionaire's ambitious expansion plans for Plymouth have been unveiled.

Retail tycoon Chris Dawson has just acquired the lease for the current Homebase store site in Peverell.

The store in Montpelier Road is set to close on September 27 following an 'everything must go' closing down sale.

Mr Dawson's retail chain, The Range, will invite all Homebase workers for an interview to work in its new store.

Meanwhile plans for a major expansion of The Range's Plymstock store have also been revealed. Two new storeys, an eye-catching new look, and a café overlooking the River Plym are among designs for the superstore.



The company has submitted the plan to Plymouth City Council and if it is given the go-ahead, two extra storeys would spring up on the existing store at Sugar Mill Business Park in Billacombe Road, and as well as the café there would be an extra 1,125 square metres of retail space.



The build would add 25 full-time equivalent jobs to the 120 already based at the site, according to documents submitted to city planners. Those behind the project describe it as a “benchmark” scheme.

Mr Dawson, Plymouth’s first billionaire, opened his first store, then under the CDS banner, at the site in 1989. He now has 88 branches of homeware chain The Range across the UK, and bought Sugar Mill Business Park itself in 2013 after it fell into administration.

The designs for the latest plans were put together by architect Paul Younger of Hewitt Studios LLP, based in Bath.

His design and access statement says: “The existing building is of poor architectural quality and contributes little to its surrounding environment. It is hoped that the project will become a benchmark scheme, acting as a catalyst for regeneration in the neighbourhood.”

The statement states that the proposals include the construction of a new two-storey extension to the south of the existing store. This will provide additional facilities and retail space while creating an architecturally distinguished street side elevation.

A perforated galvanised steel screen will give “character” and “depth” to the architecture through a combination of shadow and reflectivity, the statement adds.

Behind the screen aluminium cladding panels will be painted in The Range’s brand colours. “The proposed new café space is articulated externally through a projecting box on the prominent south-west corner of the extension,” the statement says.

“Large windows afford its occupants elevated views towards the creek to the south and River Plym to the west.





Link: <http://www.plymouthherald.co.uk/Major-plans-extend-Range-Plymouth/story-22737055-detail/story.html>