

getwestlondon

New-look Homebase set to dazzle shoppers in time for Christmas

Author: Chris Longhurst - GetWestLondon.com

Date: 5th December 2014

Argos, Habitat and a new coffee shop are among the extra features being added to Brentford's iconic store



Homebase in Brentford as it used to look. Photographed from above by Jo Reid and John Peck

Only a week remains until a refurbished and extended Homebase in Brentford is due to be completed.

Anyone's who's driven along the A4 Golden Mile in recent weeks cannot have failed to notice the major works which have been taking place at the DIY store.

Next Friday (12) customers will not only have a better and larger Homebase to explore; but they will also be getting an Argos, a Lots of Living and a Habitat.

The management are also confident of having the brand new coffee shop open and ready for business.

The expansion has been made possible by taking over the space which was previously occupied by the electrical retailer Comet and which has stood empty ever since it went into administration in 2012.

getwestlondon

The works are sure to provide a much needed boost in optimism for Homebase after its owners Home Retail Group announced back in October they would be closing 25 per cent of stores by 2019. The Brentford site is one of 26 around the country to be given the makeover treatment.

Between 4,000 and 5,000 customers pass through the doors a week and the store has always been looked upon as a flagship given its size, location under the Heathrow flightpath and its iconic design. The latter stems from the unmistakable 33 metre high tower which has stood since the building was constructed by Grimshaw architects way back in 1987.



Homebase' new illuminated sign on the roof of its Brentford store

It has now been painted a smart charcoal black - replacing the familiar green - and as an addition the logo on each side now is illuminated at night.

The design brief was to ape the appearance of an airplane with the nose being where deliveries are made, the tail being the tower and the wings being the roof.

It won several awards including one in 1988 from the British Construction Industry and one the following year from the Structural Steel Design Awards.

The word 'Homebase' is still spelt out across the roof to be visible to passing aircraft.

Store manager Matthew Rigby has only been in place six months - after previously working for Wilkinsons - but is hugely excited about the potential following the refit.

He said: "The aim was to strengthen our brand, enhance our customers' experience, and modernise what we do.

getwestlondon

“The store’s decor had become a bit unloved and so we took it right back to the fixtures and fittings. It was easy to knock through walls and move everything round because the tower structure is what actually holds this building up.

“The staff have all been given extra training and in total we will now be employing 85 workers.

“Customers will be encouraged to come to us with photos of their houses or specific rooms and using iPads we can design a new look from scratch for them.”

Other changes regular visitors will notice are the complete resurfacing of the car park, the relocation of the FS Car Wash service to another part of the site and the loss of the mobile burger van.

Of the last one Mr Rigby said: “Sadly that has to go because our coffee shop will now have the licence to provide food on site.”

The car park in question is managed by G24 Ltd which uses CCTV cameras to spot when anyone has overstayed the strict 90 minute free period and issue a £100 penalty charge.

Given Homebase is clearly trying to entice customers to linger longer and make a real occasion of a visit - especially if they want to get the car washed at the same time - there would be the potential for this to happen more often.

However, Mr Rigby moved to reassure people by saying: “We are extending the 90 minutes to two hours and besides a genuine customer will never have to pay a fine as long as they have bought something in store.

“The rules are mainly there to discourage commuter parking by people who would then take the train up to London from Syon Lane.”



Homebase as it used to look

Customers will be able to judge for themselves how successful the refit has been a week today - when money off reductions are being promised - but the official reopening is being held back until January 3 as Mr Rigby wants a local school to come and help cut the ribbon.

Link: <http://www.getwestlondon.co.uk/news/business/new-look-homebase-set-dazzle-shoppers-8234544>