

Press Release 2026



ALB GROUP BREATHESES NEW LIFE INTO FORMER M&S STORE AS PART OF MAJOR WOLVERHAMPTON REGENERATION

A major high street revival is underway in Wolverhampton after Nottingham-based developer ALB Group purchased the former Marks & Spencer building on Dudley Street, with plans to transform the landmark site into a mix of new apartments and modern retail units.

The building, which first opened as an M&S store in 1929, has been a cornerstone of the city centre for almost a century.

In August, M&S confirmed the store would close on 27 September 2025, as part of its national strategy to shift towards more food-led outlets.

Thanking staff 'past and present', Calum Telford, regional manager at M&S, said at the time that the "search continues for a suitable alternative food location" in Wolverhampton, which City of Wolverhampton Council is supporting them with.

ALB Group acquired the site as part of its mission to rejuvenate prominent but underused high street properties across the UK.

Under ALB Group's plans, the upper floors will be transformed into 71 contemporary residential apartments, while the ground floor will be reconfigured into three high-quality retail units aimed at attracting a mix of independent and national occupiers.

Home Values has been named as a temporary tenant in the ground floor space, and is set to open this weekend.

Arran Bailey, Managing Director of ALB Group, said:- *"This building has been part of Wolverhampton's story for generations, and we're determined to give it a future that is just as meaningful. Our approach is always about breathing life back into landmark properties that risk falling into long-term vacancy. Wolverhampton has huge potential, and this site deserves to play a major role in its next chapter."*

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He added: "By creating a mixed-use blend of homes and retail, we're helping build a more sustainable and vibrant city centre. We've done this successfully across the UK, and Wolverhampton is exactly the kind of place where regeneration can make a real difference."

As part of the wider redevelopment, ALB is also creating further retail units within the same block, and interest from regional and national retailers is already strong.

John Morgan, Director at Leonard Design, the architect on the project, has welcomed the proposed transformation of the long-vacant department store in Wolverhampton, describing the scheme as a powerful example of how collaborative regeneration can breathe new life into struggling high streets.

He said: "Across the country we are seeing far too many beautiful former department store buildings left empty," said John Morgan. "The danger is that they can remain vacant for years, gradually deteriorating and dragging down the surrounding high street. This often leads to a domino effect, with further vacancies appearing nearby."

"What is so encouraging in Wolverhampton is that this entrepreneurial developer has stepped in, recognised the potential of this landmark building, and is now reconfiguring the ground floor retail units to suit modern occupiers, while converting the upper floors into much-needed residential apartments."

The planning application has now been submitted and subject to approval, the works are expected to commence swiftly.

"This proactive approach will ensure the building does not fall into further decline," added Mr Morgan. "Instead, it will be brought back into productive use, with people living in the city centre once again. That residential presence is vital in supporting the surrounding shops, bars and restaurants and in restoring confidence in the wider area."

"There are many towns and cities across the UK that could learn from this model of partnership between the public and private sectors," Mr Morgan concluded. "This kind of collaboration is exactly what is needed to bring life back into failing high streets."

Oliver Marshall of FHP Property Consultants, who advised on the acquisition, said: "Dudley Street remains the prime shopping location in the city, and ALB's plans ensure this iconic building continues to contribute to its success. The demand we're seeing for space here demonstrates the enduring appeal of Wolverhampton's high street when high-quality opportunities come forward. The redevelopment is expected to boost footfall, support local employment, and contribute significantly to the ongoing regeneration of Wolverhampton's retail core."

"Repurposing former department stores is playing a crucial role in transforming high streets across the country and the redevelopment of the former Marks & Spencer on Dudley Street is another great example. Working alongside our client ALB Group, who are hugely experienced in repositioning underused retail assets and have delivered numerous successful schemes nationwide, we're excited to help bring this landmark building back into life."

The creation of modern, prominent retail units at ground level combined with high quality residential apartments above will bring vibrancy, footfall and long-term sustainability to Wolverhampton city centre. The new retail units at ground floor will offer space from 1,200ft² up to 7,000ft² with good interest already being received.

At FHP, we're proud to support projects like this that breathe new life into key locations and help shape more resilient, future-focused high streets."

City of Wolverhampton Council Cabinet Member for City Development, Jobs and Skills, Councillor Chris Burden, said: "We are keen to see this important site at the heart of our city centre brought back into use."

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"It's clear that city and town centres across the country are changing and in Wolverhampton we are undergoing major transformation, driven by the council's vision to reinvent the city centre and ensure it thrives.

"We welcome the planning application from ALB Group, which demonstrates great confidence in our city.

"In the meantime, we continue to work with M&S in their search to identify suitable locations for a food hall in Wolverhampton that fits their new business model."

The redevelopment is expected to boost footfall, support local employment, and contribute significantly to the ongoing regeneration of Wolverhampton's retail core.

For further information please contact Oliver Marshall on 07887 787 885 or email oliver@fhp.co.uk.

ENDS

Oliver Marshall
5th January 2026

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