

John Lewis, Cheltenham

Image courtesy of Haskoll Architects
and Designers



Integrated planning strategy to repurpose a failing shopping centre

CLIENT

BlackRock

LPA

Cheltenham Borough Council

STATUS

Project completed

SERVICES

Planning & Heritage

Our role

- We devised a robust planning strategy and submitted a series of planning applications as part of a proposal to convert Beechwood Shopping Centre in Cheltenham to a John Lewis department store.
- Working closely with John Lewis' design and development teams to develop the proposals and secure officer and member support.
- The shopping centre was anchored by Debenhams but had been under-performing for a number of years and failed to attract the necessary footfall to fill the majority of other units.
- Our planning strategy comprised several parts. A CLOPUD for a number of necessary internal works and changes in floorspace, including the establishment of a John Lewis restaurant and branded coffee shop, followed by a series of planning applications to secure a new building facade, further mezzanine floorspace, a basement gym and associated external works.
- The proposals were subject to extensive pre-application consultation with the council's planning and conservation officers, and independent review by an external Design Panel and the Cheltenham Civic Society. Turley Heritage provided heritage support.

Results

- Creating shared objectives with local stakeholders and the Borough Council enabled our planning applications to be determined in line with our client's master programme.
- Planning permissions were secured in December 2015 and the store opened on 18 October 2018.
- The entire shopping centre is a full line John Lewis 'small store', alongside a fully refurbished and extended Next store in the adjacent property.
- Additional funds were leveraged to deliver public realm enhancements in advance of the store opening.
- The store has revitalised the eastern end of the high street, with an increase in lettings and investment activity.