

Co-operative Financial Services



The COOPERATIVE BANK



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News Release

LETTINGS SUCCESS AT LEOPOLD SQUARE SCHEME

Sheffield's £25m landmark leisure scheme, Leopold Square, which was officially launched this summer and was funded by the Co-operative Bank, is now almost fully let.

Developed by Ask Developments, Sheffield's newest leisure destination on the site of the former Sheffield Boys School on Leopold Street has been totally transformed thanks to a multi-million pound development and investment package arranged and underwritten by The Co-operative Bank.

Ask Developments, who were selected by Sheffield City Council to refurbish the Grade II listed buildings have already let five units to a niche mix of high-quality restaurant and bar operators with a further two under-offer, leaving only two units remaining.

Already trading is Mediterranean restaurant and bar Platillos and up-market Italian restaurant Zizzi. Chic bar/lounge Popolo has also signed up to the scheme, as has Strada restaurant which will provide rustic, authentic Italian food and is set to open on 13th November and Kashmiri restaurant Aagrah, which will open on December 2nd.

And the refurbishment of the former Firth College and school offices on Leopold Street and West Street has been completed. This has been sensitively converted into a 90-bed 50,000 sq ft boutique four-star hotel called The Leopold, which is now

trading and has already been accepted as a member of the exclusive group Small Luxury Hotels of the World – a first for Sheffield.

Ask Developments' Chief Executive Ken Knott, said: "We have been delighted at the take-up of the scheme, which is set to be the best leisure destination in Sheffield. Without the backing of the Co-operative Bank, who shared our enthusiasm for this project, this scheme would not be the success it is today.

"Ask has been quite selective with the operators we set out to attract as we were adamant that we did not want a cluster of 'chain' bars and restaurants. We wanted to secure operators – including one or two local ones - who share our passion for creating something really special at Leopold Square."

The Co-operative Bank's senior manager, Andrew Sykes said: "This is an imaginative development which has increased the sophisticated leisure offering now available in parts of city centre Sheffield. We worked closely with Ask to find a funding solution to match their needs at the different stages of the development. We are proud that we have had a hand in helping Ask deliver Leopold Square on time, on budget and to widespread approval from Sheffielders."

John Franklin, senior corporate manager, The Co-operative Bank's South Yorkshire Corporate Banking Centre, says: "We have a wealth of expertise in the property market in Sheffield and this is exactly the kind of project we want to help finance."

Along with the bars and restaurants, 42 one and two bedroom apartments have been built by Gleeson Homes. Many of these will overlook the scheme's breathtaking new public square, which boasts a stunning water feature and bronze seating – complete with witty anecdotes and heartfelt inscriptions written by some of the former pupils of the Boys School cast into the bronze as a reminder of the scheme's history.

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Ask Developments has previously been involved in delivering high quality regeneration schemes in Manchester including the Malmaison Hotel and Deansgate Locks. The company is currently developing Central Park - the UK's first large-scale mixed-use urban business park just 1.5 miles from Manchester City Centre, and also has an extensive portfolio of mixed-use schemes including Rossetti Place in Manchester, St Petersfield, a major new urban business quarter in Ashton-Under-Lyne, as well as developing shopping and retail centres in Gorton, Urmston and Bury.

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