

# Trinity Leeds raises the bar for retail destinations

Many shopping centres have upped their game to battle the digital onslaught but it was the new and transformative Trinity Leeds that impressed most this year. By Rebecca Thomson

**T**rinity Leeds was the only large scale debut of 2013, ensuring all eyes were on the development when it opened its doors in March.

Its first year of trading has been a runaway success. The centre is let, and has brought a host of new retailers to the city including Apple, H&M, Fossil, Mango and Superdry.

It was created in the city centre, designed to help reignite the city centre's retail offer.

Trinity links three of the city's busiest areas – Briggate, Albion Street and Commercial Street – to create a single 1 million sq ft retail destination.

By providing Leeds with a strong focal point, the development has not just attracted big name overseas retailers such as Victoria's Secret, it has enabled UK retailers such as Primark, Topshop and Next to open flagship stores, giving shoppers another reason to visit Leeds city centre.

The judges said: "It has been truly transforming for Leeds town centre. The impact it has had on city visitors is fantastic."

One judge observed: "It is essentially a high street regeneration, and it being a city centre sends a message back into retail that we have got to protect city centres."

Another added: "It is somewhere you absolutely want to go. The regeneration aspect of it is really important, and the complexity of that regeneration."

A large part of the centre's success, as highlighted by the judges, has been its revolutionary approach to dining. Of the development's units, a higher percentage than most are food-based and Trinity Leeds has taken the trend for improved shopping centre food offers and run with it.

Its Trinity Kitchen area has been designed to bring the trendy street food concept into a shopping centre environment.



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One of the judges said: "They have reinvented the food proposition. I thought Westfield had taken a food proposition on to the next level but the scale of this goes even further. There is constantly changing street food through to fine dining. It's really impressive."

The team behind Trinity has also focused heavily on technology.

It is using large video walls to broadcast to shoppers, a CRM system to collate and use customer data, and a mobile app that can be personalised according to shopper preferences.

## HIGHLY COMMENDED: WHITELEY

The redevelopment of the retail park in Whiteley, near Fareham in Hampshire, has revolutionised the offer.

The scheme, which is 98% let, replaced a former factory outlet that was in dire need of a facelift, and British Land and USS focused on several aspects, focusing on creating a pleasant environment and on fostering good community relations – local retailers have discounted rent.

Many of the UK's big names, such as Next, Fat Face and Marks & Spencer, have all revised their sales expectations upwards after outperforming expectations.

One judge said: "Whiteley is the most significant thing British Land has done. It's so innovative. It has brought in good quality architecture, the right mix of tenants."

Another added: "The sales numbers blew us away. It's a very interesting scheme."

The centre has also used social media to attract new visitors. Since its opening, Trinity Leeds has attracted more than 13 million shoppers, increasing the city's overall visitor numbers by 1 million. The team says it has managed this in part by using digital and social media to reach younger shoppers, which make up nearly half of the catchment.

In addition, it has successfully held large-scale events – such as student lock-ins, and its grand opening, when the centre was the eighth highest trending topic in the world on Twitter – to generate engagement with the local community.

Trinity's approach to retailing in 2013 has been many-faceted – its success provides a blueprint for how shopping centre development should be done. ★