

Western Gazette

H&M's possible move to Yeovil is 'game changer' for Quedam Shopping Centre

By [WG_Sherborne](#) | Posted: June 26, 2014



AN international fashion brand could set up shop in Yeovil if plans to expand existing retail units get the green light.

High street favourite H&M could move into the Quedam Shopping Centre creating 20 jobs, it was announced today.

Last month centre owners Benson Elliot submitted a planning application to merge the long vacant former Internacionale and Mothercare units on Vicarage Walk.

If South Somerset District Council approves the plans, the Swedish

retailer – known for its reasonably-priced fashion clothing for all ages – could move into the town by Easter next year.

David Mills, Quedam Centre manager, said it was the most significant addition to the shopping centre since it opened 30 years ago.

He said: "To know the world's largest fashion retailer is coming to Yeovil is incredible news. H&M are a game changer. Although we already have a very strong fashion line up, H&M's arrival will instantly boost the profile of the centre and the town.

"It is the most requested brand by our customers so we were keen to persuade them to open here. Our plans to reconfigure vacant shops will bring life back to empty units and provide H&M with a bespoke and contemporary store, creating new jobs and adding to our expanding line up at Quedam. We hope the council will support our investment plans so we can start work this summer. In just ten months time we could have a huge new H&M store open right here in Yeovil, which is a very exciting prospect.

"The people who make the decisions about where to open new stores for all sorts of retailers will look at Yeovil and the Quedam in a much more positive way."

Benson Elliot and its architects Allies and Morrison said they worked closely with the council to prepare "sensitive, high-quality designs" for the 15,000 sq ft unit – around twice the size of New Look – that are "fresh and exciting" but aim to complement the area's historic surroundings.

And the plans have already won praise from district council leader Ric Pallister and district councillor Jo Roundell Greene, the portfolio holder for economic development, and Jason Livingstone, president of Yeovil Chamber of Trade and Commerce.

The company bought the shopping centre from UBS Global Asset Management (UK) Limited for around £15. million in November last year.

The acquisition forms part of Benson Elliot's "reach for the regions" campaign, where the company hopes to regenerate "unloved" town centres up and down the country.

Previously Nigel Poad, managing director of Insite Asset Management, working on behalf of Benson Elliot, believes Yeovil has "huge potential".

It hopes to expand on to vacant land on Vincent Street to make room for a department store. But so far a prospective brand for the site has not been disclosed and no further details have been released.

Mr Mills said: "This letting is an early move to re-establish the Quedam Centre and demonstrates there is a positive way forward. A town-centre first policy is important for supporting this, particularly in respect of larger sites such as the former Vincent's Garage area. Providing we continue to have support from the council we can begin to evaluate a viable proposal for our adjoining land holding."

A decision on the plans is expected to be made by July 3.

Read more: <http://www.westerngazette.co.uk/H-M-s-possible-Yeovil-game-changer-Quedam/story-21295126-detail/story.html#ixzz35pd4qSgX>