



Guildford Debenhams store gets green light for redev



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Native Land's plans to redevelop the 1.7-acre former Debenhams department store site in Guildford were approved at a planning meeting last night.

Guildford Borough Council gave the green light for a 300,000 sq ft redevelopment to be called St Mary's Wharf.

It will comprise 185 private and affordable one- to three-bedroom homes, 21,000 sq ft of shops and restaurants and almost an acre of newly created riverside public realm. The buildings will be all-electric and net zero carbon in operation.

St Mary's Wharf is part of Native Land's strategy to acquire opportunities to reposition former retail assets in fundamentally strong UK towns and cities.

The development will feature two new buildings, designed by architects Squire & Partners to respond to the surrounding heritage of the area. It will also unlock publicly accessible spaces including a new civic square, pocket park and a riverside walk giving access from the high street to the River Wey for the first time in more than 50 years. It aims to deliver a biodiverse environment for the long term.

Native Land said the scheme would be set in a biodiverse environment, replacing a Debenhams building which offered limited and poor public realm and was constructed when environmental standards were substantially lower than today.

The developer has also committed £1m to riverside infrastructure spend, which could include the provision of a new footbridge bridge.

Robert Harris, managing director of acquisitions, at Native Land said: "Our plans for St Mary's Wharf will inject new life into Guildford town centre by transforming a redundant retail asset into a vibrant mixed-use destination.

"By reconnecting the town centre with the riverside, the scheme will provide new stimulus for the high street. St Mary's Wharf exemplifies our strategy to create high-quality, sustainable developments which reimagine high street locations in the face of continued challenges from online retail."