

Universal to fashion fresh **Mulberry** interiors concept

By Sarah Harris

Luxury British fashion brand Mulberry has appointed interiors specialist Universal Design Studio to create its new store concept.

Universal won the brief following a paid five-way pitch in mid-September, and will be working on developing Mulberry's fresh interior look over the next few months.

The consultancy has revealed that, initially, it will focus on a new £600 000, 325m² store in Manchester, which opens next autumn, as well as one unspecified smaller store, to 'test' the concept over a range of scales.

Mulberry brand director Georgia Fendley says the design brief called for a 'hard-working retail space that reflected our core brand philosophy of intelligent English luxury, excellence in craftsmanship, authenticity and a sense of playfulness'. She adds, 'As a business, we create fashionable things that

become favourite things – and it is crucial for the interior scheme to embrace that.'

With more than 300 stores internationally, Mulberry is fast becoming one of the UK's leading high fashion labels, and Universal director Jonathan Clarke believes it is important to express that progression.

'Mulberry's current look sits alongside what the brand used to be, which was a very confident luxury accessories store. What it doesn't have is the edginess that has been injected into the brand over the past couple of years,' says Clarke.

'Our work seeks to reflect Mulberry's progression into an interesting, tough couture and lifestyle brand.'

Clarke hints that close attention will be paid to the manufacture of bespoke joinery items within the stores, to mirror this new balance between fine craftsmanship, lifestyle and couture.

Mulberry previously worked with interior design group Four



IV, which created the scheme for Mulberry's White City store in London, set to open later this month, and also for its store at Heathrow Airport's Terminal 5 (pictured).

Fendley says that the relationship with Four IV worked very well, 'but by next year it will be four years old, and it is time to move on'.