

Imperial College's empire expands

Imperial College plans to develop a single office building of up to 200,000 sq ft as part of its Imperial West scheme (pictured) at Wood Lane in White City.

Before the end of the year, Imperial is expected to submit an outline planning application that totals 1m sq ft, which includes a School of Public Health of around 100,000 sq ft, a four-star hotel, retail, a healthcare centre and residential uses. The application is expected to be determined in the middle of next year. This would constitute the second phase of the development. The first phase was a 606-bed postgraduate student accommodation scheme called Wood Lane Studios.

Vordea Capital is acting as development manager and Santander is providing finance for the project, which comprises four blocks that together make up 247,500 sq ft.



Work started on the Aukett Fitzrobinson-designed development in May. It is due to be completed in July next year, in time for the 2012/13 academic year. "Organisations related to Imperial want to come together around the college," says Tracy Collins, director at Savills, which is advising the college. "New start-up businesses would take space there. With the backing and involvement of Imperial, this sort of building will work."



Ugii truth: BBC-owned campus houses a community of creative companies

"Rather than simply branding something a 'media village' we have actually made it the case," says Richard Pearce, director at TCN. "This is a place where genuine grassroots businesses are clustering, able to share ideas and trade services."

Tenants are encouraged to meet and communicate through communal blackboards, move nights and their own bespoke social network. "It's a very discerning crowd, who are progressive and don't suffer fools gladly," says Jeanette Pritchard, managing director of JP Creative. "But this area is starting to have the credibility that Soho, Hoxton or Brixton do."

Ugii offers suites from around 200 sq ft to 5,000 sq ft on a monthly, two-way break at around £17/sq ft. This gives occupiers the flexibility to expand and downsize as contracts are acquired and then fulfilled.

TCN and JP have been approached by interested bidders for the neighbouring 1m sq ft BBC television centre, who are hoping to emulate Ugii's success. "Ugii is grassroots and the natural progression would be to have somewhere similar but with slightly more established businesses. It would be for part of it, not the whole, as it needs to be a mixed-use environment with leisure and entertainment too," says Pearce.

Wereldhave makes way for Ealing Broadway



Wereldhave Property Management has completed the purchase of Ealing Broadway Shopping Centre (pictured) from Legal & General Property for £155.5m, as tipped by PropertyWeek.com (22.11.11). The price paid reflects a yield of 6.5%. Wereldhave fought off competition for the 275,000 sq ft centre from ING Real Estate Investment Management, Land Securities and Prupim. The mall contains 82 shops. Tenants include Argos Extra, Marks & Spencer, New Look, Primark and Tesco. Knight Frank acted for Legal & General; Jones Lang LaSalle acted for Wereldhave.

Few developers would have the courage to brand their building "Ugii", but in west London there is an exception to the rule. The BBC has teamed up with developer TCN and creative communications company JP Creative to refurbish an unglamorous-looking 100,000 sq ft building in White City, which is now known as the Ugii Campus (pictured). It was originally known as Centre House and housed the BBC's scriptwriters. Before the partners agreed to the development a year ago, 60,000 sq ft had lain vacant for four years. It is now home to around 60 creative and small business tenants. The remaining 40,000 sq ft is occupied by the BBC's iPlayer team. TCN and JP are paying for the refurbishment that has made it "beautiful inside" and pay a turnover rent to the BBC under a 15-year lease. In February, 25,000 sq ft of the building was completed followed by a further 10,000 sq ft in July. All of this is fully let. Last week, Imperial College agreed an eight-year lease for the final 25,000 sq ft, - which will be completed in April next year - for start-up businesses associated with the university.

David Hatcher reports

BBC is transforming one of its abandoned London bases into modern media hub.



Ugii is beautiful