

# project of the month

projects



As found: Concepts for Hobbs' concessions and a new Hobbs store were created by Found Associates, in order to enhance the womenswear chain's brand and attract a wider clientele



## Taste testing

The Hobbs retail experience has always been a happy one, largely because it makes us feel at ease. A favourite of the more mature shopper, the store has a kind of homely appeal; the clothes, and its footwear range, which forms a substantial part of the business, are known for their quality and yet aren't too fussy or fashion led.

Customer service is accordingly efficient, delivered by shop assistants who are stylish without being scary and who know how to maintain a pair of suede loafers.

The Hobbs interior, with its refined but cosy air, was obviously designed in keeping with its image and customer-friendly ethos, and yet this new concept, developed by Found Associates is a significant and timely improvement for the brand.

Brought on board primarily to work on Hobbs concessions for Selfridges London, the forthcoming Selfridges Birmingham, and a new Hobbs in Canary Wharf, the Found team was required to give the brand a more contemporary edge, perhaps attracting a more youthful customer on the way, while being careful not to alienate existing customers.

The concession for Selfridges' London store, due to open this month, is perhaps the most restrained out of the three concepts, comprising bespoke shelving units and rails suspended by sections of forged steel, while an existing wall has been lined with mirrors imprinted with the Hobbs' logo.

Although smaller than the London concession, covering just 110 sq m, the design for Selfridges Birmingham, to launch in its entirety in September, appears



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slightly more adventurous. Its main feature is a luxurious brown velvet curtain – a nod to the existing Hobbs shop-fit with its plush furnishings and weathered, antique-style furniture.

The floor-to-ceiling fabric sweeps around the space, which is broken up by a centrally positioned mirrored block, housing the boudoir-style fitting rooms which are swathed in muslin, a colonial reference that is again in

keeping with the Hobbs of old.

The new Hobbs in London's Docklands, also set to open this month, has the same mix of modern but luxurious styling with the sweeping velvet curtain and mirrored theme, the latter having the effect of visually increasing the length of the space.

Additional touches include long, walnut, hanging and shelving units and screed flooring.  
*Sarah Brownlee*

## Facts

Hobbs concepts

Found Associates

The brief was fairly open but Found had to bear in mind the tastes of the existing Hobbs customer as well as creating a space that might attract a younger shopper