# Great Portland Estates accelerates focus on AI tenants amid shifting London office demand



Great Portland Estates (GPE), a prominent London landlord, is strategically positioning itself to capitalise on the burgeoning artificial intelligence (AI) sector by leasing significant office space to AI-related companies across the capital. According to the company’s recent disclosures, 7% of its substantial 2.9 million square foot London office portfolio is already occupied by AI firms, with this proportion escalating sharply to 18.5% within its 582,000 square foot fully managed flexible office segment.

This trend reflects the wider surge in AI investment in London. Data cited by GPE from Tech Nation indicates that AI-focused businesses based in the city raised £2.7 billion in 2024 alone, contributing to a £9.9 billion total AI investment over the last five years. This influx accounts for 71% of all UK AI funding, highlighting London as a leading hub with over 1,600 startups in the sector. GPE’s latest transaction demonstrating this focus is a 7,500 square foot lease in Kent House, Fitzrovia, to Vanta, a company specialising in compliance automation and trust management platforms.

GPE’s CEO Toby Courtauld acknowledged the nuanced impact of AI on office space demand. While AI technologies may reduce global office needs by enabling automation, Courtauld emphasised that premium workspaces in global cities like London will remain magnets for high-calibre AI talent and businesses. He suggested that such locations offer not only workspace but also the vibrant ecosystems and amenities critical for innovation and collaboration in this rapidly evolving field.

Fitzrovia emerges as a key hotspot for GPE’s flexible office offerings. The company is expanding its footprint here with acquisitions like 19-23 Wells Street, earmarked for conversion into fully managed flexible office space with enhanced amenities. This strategy complements other leasing successes in the area, including GPE’s largest fully managed deal to date with retail giant Next at 31 Alfred Place, where Next will occupy over 11,500 square feet across four floors starting from March. Alfred Place, now newly refurbished, offers premium office space with communal terraces and wellness facilities, embodying the increasingly sought-after qualities of urban office environments.

Moreover, GPE continues to foster a strong cluster of flexible workspaces within Fitzrovia, supported by several assets such as Wells&More, Elsley House, and Kent House. The lettings activities underline a broader market trend where tenants seek well-located, amenity-rich spaces that balance flexibility with quality. Heineken UK’s recent 17,000 square foot lease at Wells&More further exemplifies GPE’s successful tenant engagement and highlights the demand for modern, adaptable office environments in strategic London locations.

While the industry's embrace of AI is driving office leasing in certain segments, the overall repercussions of AI for office demand are mixed. For instance, Salesforce, a leading technology company, recently announced the elimination of 4,000 customer service roles due to AI automation, reflecting how some roles and their associated office needs may decrease.

In conclusion, GPE’s position in London’s office market, especially within flexible spaces tailored for AI and other high-growth sectors, is a strategic response to shifting market dynamics. The company’s intensely curated Fitzrovia portfolio and focus on premium workspaces underscore the belief that despite automation trends, top-tier office environments in major cities will continue to attract leading businesses and talent in AI and beyond.

### 📌 Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.bisnow.com/london/news/office/almost-a-fifth-of-gpes-flex-portfolio-is-ai-tenants-130882), [[2]](https://www.bisnow.com/london/news/office/almost-a-fifth-of-gpes-flex-portfolio-is-ai-tenants-130882)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.bisnow.com/london/news/office/almost-a-fifth-of-gpes-flex-portfolio-is-ai-tenants-130882), [[2]](https://www.bisnow.com/london/news/office/almost-a-fifth-of-gpes-flex-portfolio-is-ai-tenants-130882)
* Paragraph 3 – [[1]](https://www.bisnow.com/london/news/office/almost-a-fifth-of-gpes-flex-portfolio-is-ai-tenants-130882)
* Paragraph 4 – [[4]](https://www.bisnow.com/london/news/office/gpe-buys-fitzrovia-office-as-it-continues-1b-flex-target-126527), [[3]](https://www.twinfm.com/article/gpe-lets-fitzrovia-office-to-retailer-next), [[7]](https://www.investegate.co.uk/announcement/rns/great-portland-estates--gpe/gpe-secures-largest-fully-managed-deal-with-next/8769995)
* Paragraph 5 – [[4]](https://www.bisnow.com/london/news/office/gpe-buys-fitzrovia-office-as-it-continues-1b-flex-target-126527), [[5]](https://www.voxmarkets.co.uk/articles/great-portland-estates-inks-new-lease-agreement-with-heineken-uk-273b27d/)
* Paragraph 6 – [[1]](https://www.bisnow.com/london/news/office/almost-a-fifth-of-gpes-flex-portfolio-is-ai-tenants-130882)
* Paragraph 7 – [[1]](https://www.bisnow.com/london/news/office/almost-a-fifth-of-gpes-flex-portfolio-is-ai-tenants-130882), [[3]](https://www.twinfm.com/article/gpe-lets-fitzrovia-office-to-retailer-next), [[4]](https://www.bisnow.com/london/news/office/gpe-buys-fitzrovia-office-as-it-continues-1b-flex-target-126527), [[5]](https://www.voxmarkets.co.uk/articles/great-portland-estates-inks-new-lease-agreement-with-heineken-uk-273b27d/)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.bisnow.com/london/news/office/almost-a-fifth-of-gpes-flex-portfolio-is-ai-tenants-130882> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.bisnow.com/london/news/office/almost-a-fifth-of-gpes-flex-portfolio-is-ai-tenants-130882> - Great Portland Estates (GPE) has reported that 7% of its 2.9 million square foot London office portfolio is occupied by AI-related companies, with this figure rising to 18.5% in its 582,000 square foot fully managed flexible office portfolio. The most recent AI lease is a 7,500 square foot agreement with Vanta, a compliance automation and trust management platform, at GPE's Kent House office building in Fitzrovia. In 2024, London-based AI companies raised £2.7 billion, bringing total AI investment to £9.9 billion over the past five years, accounting for 71% of all UK AI funding. London now hosts over 1,600 AI startups. GPE CEO Toby Courtauld stated that despite potential global reductions in office space demand due to AI, premium workspaces in major cities like London will remain attractive to top-tier AI talent and businesses.
3. <https://www.twinfm.com/article/gpe-lets-fitzrovia-office-to-retailer-next> - Great Portland Estates (GPE) has secured its largest 'Fully Managed' deal to date, letting over 11,500 square feet of space to Next at 31 Alfred Place, WC1. Next will occupy four floors, including the lower ground, duplex, third, and fourth floors, starting at the end of March. Alfred Place is a newly refurbished 42,000 square foot building in Fitzrovia, adjacent to GPE's recent acquisition, Whittington House. David Korman, Senior Leasing Manager at GPE, highlighted the strong demand for well-located, amenity-rich, premium Fully Managed spaces, demonstrating the expanding appeal to larger corporates seeking flexible arrangements.
4. <https://www.bisnow.com/london/news/office/gpe-buys-fitzrovia-office-as-it-continues-1b-flex-target-126527> - Great Portland Estates (GPE) has acquired 19-23 Wells Street, W1, for £19 million from British Land, as part of its strategy to double its flexible office portfolio. The 19,200 square foot office building in Fitzrovia will be converted into GPE's fully managed flexible offer, with plans to transform the ground floor into amenities for its customers. The building is within walking distance of several of GPE’s existing holdings, including Wells&More, Elsley House, Kent House, and 7-15 Gresse Street, adding to GPE's growing cluster of fully managed buildings in Fitzrovia.
5. <https://www.voxmarkets.co.uk/articles/great-portland-estates-inks-new-lease-agreement-with-heineken-uk-273b27d/> - Great Portland Estates (GPE) announced that Heineken UK has signed a new office lease for 17,000 square feet at its wells&more asset in West London. Heineken will move in early next year on a 'Ready to Fit' basis. The move from Elsley House, another GPE office, will enable GPE to create five additional 'Fully Managed' units and amenity space at Elsley House, further expanding its cluster of Fully Managed spaces in Fitzrovia. GPE senior portfolio manager Rob Russell-Smith highlighted the strong customer relationships and flexible, well-located portfolio that allow GPE to meet evolving customer requirements.
6. <https://www.rightmove.co.uk/properties/149520482> - Portland House, located at 4 Great Portland Street, Fitzrovia, offers refurbished open-plan offices ranging from 860 to 2,656 square feet. The offices feature wood flooring, excellent ceiling height, windows on three sides, LED lighting, passenger lift, sash windows, central heating, multiple cable management solutions, video entryphone, kitchenette, and air-conditioning. Leases are available from three years or longer, with immediate occupancy subject to contract. The property is well-connected, with Oxford Circus just one minute away and Tottenham Court Road six minutes away.
7. <https://www.investegate.co.uk/announcement/rns/great-portland-estates--gpe/gpe-secures-largest-fully-managed-deal-with-next/8769995> - Great Portland Estates (GPE) has secured its largest Fully Managed office space deal to date, letting over 11,500 square feet to FTSE 100 retailer Next at its newly refurbished 31 Alfred Place, WC1. The space has been let on a five-year term, ahead of estimated rental value. Next will occupy a total of four floors, including the lower ground, duplex, third, and fourth floors, starting at the end of March. Alfred Place is a newly refurbished 42,000 square foot Fully Managed building offering premium offices, a communal roof terrace, private terraces on selected floors, a spacious shared lounge and meeting room suite, and flexible wellness space. It is located in Fitzrovia, adjacent to GPE's recent acquisition Whittington House and opposite another GPE Fully Managed building, the Courtyard, which recently achieved planning permission. Together, these buildings form an appealing cluster of premium workspaces within walking distance of the Elizabeth line.