# Liverpool’s historic Coopers Building advances as plans for hotel conversion emerge



A prominent Liverpool building from the "era of genteel shopping" is set to receive a new lease of life, as plans have been submitted to transform its vacant upper floors into a high-rise hotel. The Coopers Building, located above the River Island store on Church Street, has a rich history dating back to 1895 when it first opened as a department store specialising in quality foods, tea, coffee, exotic fruits, and fine wines.

The building's grand exterior, designed by the Scottish architect Gerald de Courcy Fraser in 1914, reflects its heritage as a key part of Liverpool’s commercial and social fabric during a period of bustling business activity. The former Cooper & Co store was well-known not only for its extensive stock but also for its café, which could seat over 900 people, and for hosting jazz-filled wedding receptions. Its ornate interiors and use of live window displays made it a celebrated up-market shopping destination. Despite its former glory, the business closed in 1972 amid the rise of supermarkets and changing retail habits, leaving the upper floors of the building vacant.

The current redevelopment proposal by Amar Seth of Seth Hotel Ltd seeks to convert the third to sixth floors into hotel rooms, with the addition of a new seventh floor comprising amenity space and a restaurant open to both hotel guests and the public. This design aims to retain the building’s vernacular architectural characteristics and keep the existing facade intact, honouring the site’s prominent position and historical significance. The development would result in approximately 4,456 square meters of gross internal floor area spread over seven floors, including new lobby space on the lower floors.

This hotel plan follows earlier initiatives to revive the building's upper floors, including a previous application to convert them into 80 residential units, which was started but not completed. More recently, Dorset Projects secured planning consent to transform these floors into 77 serviced apartments featuring studios and one-bedroom units, alongside communal facilities such as a reception and fitness room. These various proposals underscore a strong interest in revitalising the historic Coopers Building to contribute meaningfully to Liverpool’s visitor economy and tourism sector.

Structural work is also underway to preserve and maintain the building’s integrity. Williams Tarr has been awarded a contract to carry out extensive repairs and refurbishment, including masonry and steel frame restoration and roof structure maintenance, ensuring the building remains safe and sustainable for future use.

The redevelopment of the Coopers Building aligns with broader regeneration efforts in Liverpool city centre, where historic structures are being adapted for modern commercial and residential uses. Experts suggest these initiatives not only breathe new life into architectural landmarks but also help reinforce the city’s appeal as a destination for visitors and locals alike.

### 📌 Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.liverpoolecho.co.uk/news/liverpool-news/liverpool-building-era-genteel-shopping-32448244), [[2]](https://www.liverpoolworld.uk/news/liverpool-coopers-building-hotel-plans-5253044), [[3]](https://www.insidermedia.com/news/north-west/hotel-planned-for-prominent-building-in-liverpools-shopping-district)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.liverpoolecho.co.uk/news/liverpool-news/liverpool-building-era-genteel-shopping-32448244)
* Paragraph 3 – [[1]](https://www.liverpoolecho.co.uk/news/liverpool-news/liverpool-building-era-genteel-shopping-32448244), [[2]](https://www.liverpoolworld.uk/news/liverpool-coopers-building-hotel-plans-5253044), [[3]](https://www.insidermedia.com/news/north-west/hotel-planned-for-prominent-building-in-liverpools-shopping-district)
* Paragraph 4 – [[1]](https://www.liverpoolecho.co.uk/news/liverpool-news/liverpool-building-era-genteel-shopping-32448244), [[4]](https://servicedapartmentnews.com/news/industry/liverpool-serviced-apartments-given-planning-consent/), [[7]](https://www.broadgrove.co.uk/serviced-apartments-approval-in-liverpool/)
* Paragraph 5 – [[1]](https://www.liverpoolecho.co.uk/news/liverpool-news/liverpool-building-era-genteel-shopping-32448244), [[5]](https://williams-tarr.co.uk/phase-2-awarded-at-coopers-building/)
* Paragraph 6 – [[1]](https://www.liverpoolecho.co.uk/news/liverpool-news/liverpool-building-era-genteel-shopping-32448244)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.liverpoolecho.co.uk/news/liverpool-news/liverpool-building-era-genteel-shopping-32448244> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.liverpoolworld.uk/news/liverpool-coopers-building-hotel-plans-5253044> - Plans have been submitted to convert the upper floors of Liverpool's Coopers Building into a hotel with a roof terrace and restaurant. The proposal includes transforming floors three to six into hotel rooms, with the addition of a seventh floor for amenity space and a restaurant. The building, located above River Island on Church Street, was originally a department store known for its quality foods and coffee aroma. The development aims to revitalise the historic structure and contribute to the city's tourism industry.
3. <https://www.insidermedia.com/news/north-west/hotel-planned-for-prominent-building-in-liverpools-shopping-district> - Seth Hotel Ltd has submitted plans to convert parts of the Coopers Building on Church Street into a hotel with a roof terrace and restaurant. The proposal involves transforming floors three to six into hotel rooms, with the addition of a seventh floor for amenity space and a restaurant. The building, which houses River Island on the ground floor, has been vacant on the upper floors since 2014. The development aims to revitalise the historic structure and contribute to the city's tourism industry.
4. <https://servicedapartmentnews.com/news/industry/liverpool-serviced-apartments-given-planning-consent/> - Dorset Projects has received planning consent to convert the upper floors of the Coopers Building on Liverpool's Church Street into 77 serviced apartments. The proposal includes studio and one-bedroom apartments, along with a reception and fitness room on the third floor. The building, which houses River Island on the ground floor, has been vacant on the upper floors since 2014. The development aims to revitalise the historic structure and contribute to the city's tourism industry.
5. <https://williams-tarr.co.uk/phase-2-awarded-at-coopers-building/> - Williams Tarr has been awarded the second phase of structural repairs and refurbishment for the Coopers Building in Liverpool. The project involves extensive structural repairs and refurbishment to various elements of the building, including the masonry and steel frame on the south and west elevations, and the roof structure. The building, located on Church Street, is occupied on the lower floors by the River Island store. The development aims to preserve the building's heritage while ensuring its structural integrity.
6. <https://www.insidermedia.com/news/north-west/backing-for-six-storey-liverpool-apartment-block> - Falconer Chester Hall has secured planning permission for a six-storey residential development in Liverpool. The building, located on Kirkdale Road, will comprise 49 apartments, including 29 one-bedroom and 20 two-bedroom units. The development also includes undercroft car parking facilities for 21 cars and 26 cycle spaces. The project aims to restore the urban fabric of the area and act as a marker for wider regeneration.
7. <https://www.broadgrove.co.uk/serviced-apartments-approval-in-liverpool/> - Broadgrove Planning and Development has secured planning approval for a change of use on floors 3 to 6 of the Coopers Building in Liverpool City Centre. The proposals permit four vacant floors, previously operating as office spaces, to be converted into 77 serviced apartments. The development aims to bring the vacant upper floors of this prominent building back into beneficial use without any adverse impact on the retail function of the area.