

Jenners to close down in May

Fraser's Group plc have been unable to reach an agreement with owner Anders Povlsen to continue their tenancy on the Jenners building in Edinburgh. As a result, the store which is now run by House of Fraser will close on 3 May 2021.

A spokesperson for Fraser's said: "Despite the global pandemic, numerous lockdowns and the turbulence caused for British retail, the landlord hasn't been able to work mutually on a fair agreement, therefore, resulting in the loss of 200 jobs and a vacant site for the foreseeable future with no immediate plans.

"Our commitment to our Fraser's strategy remains but landlords and retailers need to work together in a fair manner, especially when all stores are closed."

It is understood that around 200 people will lose their jobs. The Danish billionaire Anders Povlsen who owns the Asos site

and the company Bestsellers, bought Jenners for a reputed £53 million in 2017. Mr Povlsen who is a substantial landowner in Scotland with estates in the Highlands has said previously that he plans to create a hotel with a rooftop restaurant in the iconic Jenners building.

Liz McAreavey, Chief Executive of Edinburgh Chamber of Commerce, commented: "It is a shame to see such an iconic name leaving an equally iconic building in the heart of Edinburgh, and with a loss of 200 jobs in our already hard-hit retail sector. Never has our city centre needed more support than it does now.

"We need to balance this loss against the huge potential the £1billion St James Quarter development is bringing, which has led to ongoing recruitment for 3000 new jobs. The St James Quarter has already made it plain that it is committed to the wider success of the city and city centre, and will continue working in partnership to bring international names and brands to Edinburgh.

"In turn, that brings us to the need to have a clear vision for our city centre – and in particular for the future of Princes Street. City Plan 2030 is a major policy initiative by The City of Edinburgh Council, and will outline options for this iconic street and the wider city centre.

"Retail is changing, and our city centre is changing with it. Add in the impact of the global pandemic over the past year and the need for a clear strategy backed by a plan that we can all support has never been clearer. Businesses want to play their part in the next successful instalment of our city centre's life, but we need policy-makers to help us set out the road map."

Council Leader Adam McVey said: "This is terrible news for Edinburgh, Jenners is an iconic institution in the Capital and a lynchpin of our retail offer in the City centre. The retail

sector has been hit extremely hard during this pandemic and this is yet another blow. As a Council we're doing a huge amount to help businesses weather these challenging times, administering over £100m in grants and supporting to highlight local businesses through the Forever Edinburgh campaign.

"This announcement will obviously have the biggest impact on the employees and we're linking with partners on many other projects supporting those individuals and families who are most at risk of falling into financial hardship and face additional barriers to employment. The pandemic has had a major impact on jobs so we're actively engaging with leaders in the employability and skills sector about how we support people back into fair work. We'll make a determined effort over the coming weeks and months to see how we can help those who are at risk of losing their jobs from this closure."



Jenners Christmas Tree. Photo: Martin P. McAdam
www.martinmcadam.com