

# Lew plants Seed in Pitt

Carolyn Cummins  
COMMERCIAL PROPERTY EDITOR

RETAILER Solomon Lew has expanded his footprint in the country's busiest shopping strip with his lease at 182 Pitt Street.

It is understood Mr Lew's Seed fashion outlet will open next month opposite his Witchery store and next to the Australian flagship site for the popular Zara brand.

The new building is one of only three independently owned properties along the mall outside the \$2 billion Westfield Sydney centre. The owner, Goddard Investments, held firm against selling the site to Westfield and it has now become a prime location for retailers keen to be on the mall.

Pitt Street Mall was voted the fourth most-expensive strip in the world based on rent per capita by the recent Cushman & Wakefield retail strips survey, beating out the fashionable Avenue des Champs-Élysées in Paris.

The exclusive leasing agent to the site, Alex Alamsyah, the director of retail leasing at Knight Frank, would not comment directly on Mr Lew's move but confirmed "one of the best retailers of their category is taking the site".

Mr Lew's purported lease comes as his Premier Investments group said it would not renew leases of non-performing stores but, instead, would focus on new labels and new, busier locales.

Mr Alamsyah said the new tenant would not only get a prime location but would lease one of the more dis-



Fashion stakes ... Solomon Lew's brands will feature prominently as the retailer moves into 182 Pitt Street.

tinctive buildings in the country, by virtue of its construction.

He said the landscape of Sydney's busiest inner-city retail precinct was changed within 72 hours when a "flat-pack"-style four-storey building was erected.

Mr Alamsyah said the benefits of using such a method were a significant reduction of on-site activities, minimal disruption to neighbours and the provision of open, column-free tenancy to maximise use of the retail footprint. He predicted that, given the ease of the construction and success of getting it done without inconveniencing the public, demand could rise for the model,

particularly for small or non-traditional shaped properties.

Paul Di Cristo of Cerno Management, the project manager and development manager of 182 Pitt Street, said that to erect a building's structure of this size in just 72 hours "has to be some sort of a record".

"Essentially, the aim of this structure is to construct a building in a factory and deliver it to site so it can be slotted into a space with ease, similar to building with Lego," he said.

"Just like Lego can be assembled and connected in many ways, so, too, can high-calibre retail projects like 182 Pitt Street. I truly believe this project will become the bench-

mark for Australian construction going forward."

Mr Di Cristo said another benefit included maximising the commercial return for the site owner, by reducing the overall construction period and significantly reducing the period of time when income was not being generated.

Mr Alamsyah said Goddard Nominees bought the site in 1994 for about \$7.2 million and the new store would be unveiled later this year.

Robert Goddard of Goddard Nominees said he was "proud to be a part of the project that adds value and unique character to our prime location in Pitt Street Mall".