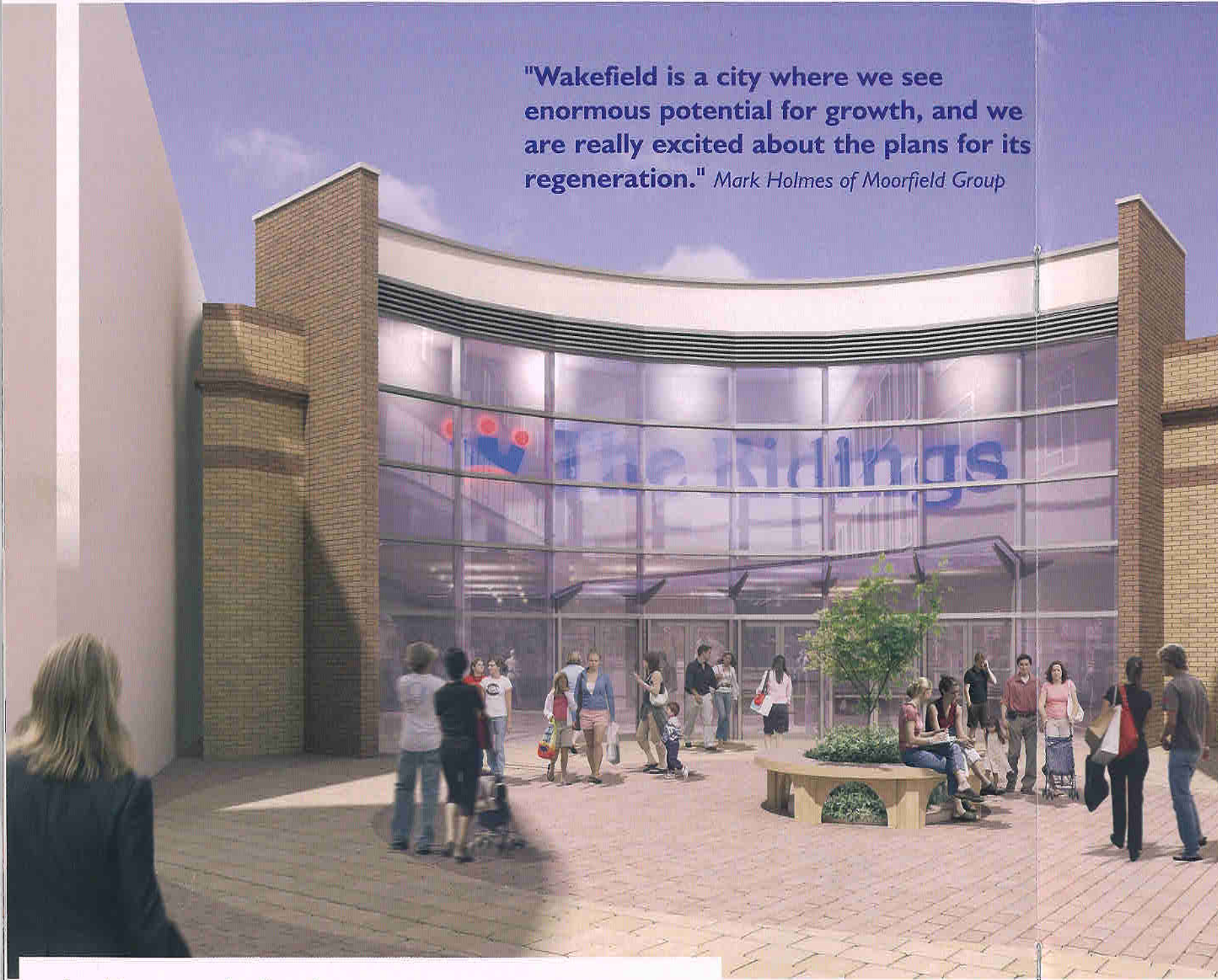


"Wakefield is a city where we see enormous potential for growth, and we are really excited about the plans for its regeneration." *Mark Holmes of Moorfield Group*



riding high

City's shopping centre to receive a £25m face lift

The Ridings Shopping Centre is set for a major facelift as its owners, the Moorfield Group, look to spend £25m on what is currently the city's largest shopping centre.

Set to begin in 2008, the list of improvements include a three-storey extension to the centre using land located between Rodney Yard and the existing service yard entrance of Southgate. Since its acquisition of the centre, Moorfield Real Estate Fund has already welcomed a wealth of retailers

including T Mobile, Hair Express and Bank Fashion. They expect the extension to bring in even more retailers as well as offering existing tenants larger units.

The multi-million-pound makeover will give the existing centre a fresh and modern new look, with striking new entrances at Cathedral Walk, Almshouse Lane and Kirkgate that will use glass and natural light to enhance the shopping environment and improve interaction between the centre and its setting.

The improvements won't only be for the centre's retail offerings, as The Ridings' food offer will also benefit. These improvements include plans to not only re-design the existing food court and install new feature lifts, but also to create a new café at the Cathedral Walk entrance.

Aside from works to the centre, Moorfield will also build a new 12,000 sq ft building with its own dedicated car park for Johnston Press, home of the Wakefield Express, as part of the extension proposals.

Speaking about their new offices, Helen Oldham from Yorkshire Weekly Newspaper Group, commented: "We are delighted to be staying in the city centre in new offices which will improve the working environment for all of our staff and customers."

Award-winning architects DLG have been appointed by Moorfield Group to draw up the proposals for the centre which will help to improve the appearance of all three entrances. Those living in the nearby Waterfront will be glad to hear that there will also

be improvements to Almshouse Lane. This links in with the focus the Council is placing on the key pedestrian link route between the city centre and the new Waterfront development with a programme of lighting, environmental and public art projects to improve the area.

Speaking about the proposed changes, Mark Holmes of Moorfield Group said: "Wakefield is a city where we see enormous potential for growth, and we are really excited about the plans for its regeneration."

"When we first acquired The Ridings back in November 2005, Moorfield recognised the

huge potential that Wakefield has to establish itself strongly as a retail destination, and we are committed to helping this process through further investment in the centre."

Shoppers who already use the centre will be glad to hear that the improvements will avoid the busy Christmas trading period and the construction process will be carefully phased to prevent disruption for shoppers and retailers alike.

VITAL STATISTICS

- The Ridings was the first shopping centre in the UK to have a food court
- The Ridings comprises 345,000 sq ft of retail space over three levels
- It is currently home to more than 100 shops
- It's annual footfall totals nearly 13 million
- The centre has more than 1,000 car parking spaces