

# RetailWeek

## Opinion: Is Tottenham Court Road becoming the new Oxford Circus?

7 December, 2015 [John Ryan](#)



Consumers are starting to return to this overlooked West End shopping district, as it becomes an attractive alternative to Oxford Circus

There is a strip of Tottenham Court Road where, back in the day, if you wanted to pick up an exotic electronic item such as an Aiwa personal stereo you could save a bob or two.

This was London's consumer electronics wonderland, the place where the new products you might have heard about, but probably had never seen, would be on view and on offer.

Then the rot set in, the stores all began to look the same and shoppers started looking elsewhere – but now they're starting to come back. There are still a few electronics shops on this long, long thoroughfare but, increasingly, they are disappearing and furniture and food stores are dominating the area.

## New blood

The furniture stores have been around for eons, in the shape of retailers such as Heal's and Habitat, but the food stores are new and can be found at the southern end, close to Tottenham Court Road station.

For months, there have been hoardings across the frontages that used to boast mainly Japanese electronics brands as their fascias, but now these have been taken down and T2, [Hotel Chocolat](#) and Planet Organic are just a few of the new names that have been revealed.

And perhaps it all started with [Primark](#).

The retailer straddles the corner where Oxford Street and Tottenham Court Road meet and used to be the home of the Virgin Megastore, latterly Zavvi. When that all disappeared, the big gun of discount fashion pounced and Oxford Street's centre of gravity began to shift.



Did the opening of Primark start the shift from Oxford Circus to Tottenham Court Road?

"What is happening is nothing less than a complete reinvention of a major part of central London's shopping centre – and it looks good and fresh"

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Now that shockwave has rippled up Tottenham Court Road, what is happening is nothing less than a complete reinvention of a major part of central London's shopping centre – and it looks good and fresh.

What we are in fact witness to is a demonstration of the fact that almost nothing is set in stone and that, generally, things are getting better in London's West End – think the upper and lower parts of Regent Street.

It will be interesting to see whether Oxford Street East and New Oxford Street – and the tourist-tat purveyors on the opposite side of the road from [Selfridges](#) – will finally go the way of all flesh.

When Crossrail finally becomes a reality, could this be the new Oxford Circus?