



Mystery luxury department store targets Brickell

Written by [Scott Blake](#) on April 16, 2014

The posh Brickell area offers some of Miami's finest urban amenities, but one exception has been a scarcity of retail stores, particularly the lack of a department store.

That's going to change in a big way in late 2015 or 2016, a developer said Tuesday.

Miami Beach-based Whitman Family Development is working to wrap up an agreement with a luxury department store to anchor the retail component of the \$1 billion-plus Brickell City Centre project, Matthew Whitman Lazenby told Miami Today.

"The Brickell area is clearly ripe for a department store," said Mr. Whitman Lazenby, Whitman Family Development's president and CEO.

He wouldn't name the company, but said it is a high-end brand like Harrods, Neiman Marcus or Saks Fifth Avenue.

The department store would anchor the west end of City Centre. Whitman Family Development also may bring a second department store to the north end, one he described as a more mainstream but still upscale brand like Bloomingdale's, Lord & Taylor or Nordstrom.

However, he said, the north retail anchor may end up being something else, perhaps a restaurant or home supplies outlet.

Whitman Family Development has partnered with Hong Kong-based Swire Properties – City Centre's main developer – to produce the project's retail component.

In another major retail project, Whitman Family Development also is expanding the Bal Harbour Shops, a longtime fixture of luxury shopping north of Miami Beach.

At City Centre, the department stores, at about 100,000 square feet each, would be part of a total of 625,000 square feet of retail. In addition to shopping, City Centre's 85-story tower and other buildings will consist of condominiums, apartments, offices, hotel rooms, a wellness center, below-ground parking, and more.

The project's one or two department stores are expected to open "by the end of 2015 or into 2016," Mr. Whitman said, most likely coinciding with the opening of the other City Centre stores.

Overall, he added, the project will feature a three-story “open air” shopping mall covered by a “climate ribbon” – a \$20 million trellis of steel, fabric and a continuous surface of glass spanning 150,000 square feet.

The mall’s first two levels will be stocked with dozens of stores, while the third level will be tied to the nearby Metromover rail loop and feature a “food and beverage” area. A “luxury dine-in” movie theater will sit above the third level, he said.

The mall will serve City Centre residents and the public. The stores and the retail complex will have street-level sidewalk entrances and be accessible from the complex’s interior, as well as from the below-grade parking, he said.

He promised the mall will feature “some of the finest dining in Miami” and be “lushly” landscaped similar to the Bal Harbour Shops.

A number of retailers already have preliminary agreements or provided verbal commitments to move into City Centre, he said, and details are now in negotiations.

At 625,000 square feet, he added, City Centre’s retail will be about 200,000 square feet larger than the current size of the Bal Harbour Shops that his family started.