



■ Operations director Mark Suddes outside Seckford Hall.  
Picture: CONTRIBUTED

# First phase of hotel investment unveiled

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Seckford Hall Hotel at Woodbridge has celebrated completion of the first phase of work on an extensive refurbishment.

The work within the historic building has been overseen by Mark Suddes, operations director at the hotel, working alongside local architect Mike Ashton, contractor Carters, interiors expert Sarah Foster and English Heritage.

It has focused on the ground floor, including the relocation of reception to a new open-plan area and the conversion of the hall's east wing, which

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Mark Suddes

was formerly private owners' accommodation, to provide new conference, function and lounge facilities.

The restaurant (now renamed 1530 - the year the earliest part of the hall was built) has been refurbished and a new Champagne and cocktail bar has also been

created.

Mr Suddes said: “We are very pleased with all of the areas that have benefited from refurbishment, not only with the décor and ambiance but the improvement in services on offer to our guests.

“We implemented the refurbishment in stages, carefully timing these stages to minimise disruption to our guests and customers.”

Further phases of work will continue over the next 18 months, with a new snug bar due to be completed by the end of September.

Plans have also been submitted to extend facilities within the hotel's leisure club, which based in a Tudor tithe barn close to the main hall.

## Rate swap mis-selling payouts commence

Banks have begun compensating small firms that were mis-sold rate swap financial products.

The Financial Conduct Authority yesterday confirmed that 10 firms have agreed compensation deals totalling £500,000 after 210 offers were sent out, with another 1,700 due to go out shortly.

Lenders have identified more than 30,000 cases of potential interest rate swap mis-selling.

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# Services sector growth accelerates

Britain's services sector saw its strongest growth for more than six years during August, according to a survey published yesterday.

The closely watched Markit/CIPS Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) for the sector, where any reading above 50.0 represents growth, advanced to 60.5 last month from 60.2 in July.

This confounded a consen-

sus expectation among economists of a slight slowdown in growth and represents the highest reading for the sector since December 2006.

Yesterday's PMI figure for services represents an eighth consecutive month of growth for the sector and follows upbeat PMI reports for August from manufacturing and construction.

On Monday, the index for

manufacturing rose to 57.2, representing highest reading for the sector since February 2011 and the fastest rate of growth since August 1994.

And on Tuesday, the PMI index for construction showed a fourth consecutive month of expansion, with the increase to 59.1 in August representing the fastest rate of progress in the sector since September 2007.

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