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## 'There have been some questions about the management of the company'

**F**or House of Fraser as a whole, the question is, what do they offer people that is different and distinctive that no-one else does?

Also, consumer patterns of behaviour are a factor. While in the past, travelling into the big city and having a day at the department store may once have been an activity for a lot of people, that is no longer the case.

Finally, there have also been some questions about the management of the company over the past 30 to 40 years and what has been bought when.

When these things were being rumoured a few weeks



### Analysis Leigh Sparks

ago, the west end store in Edinburgh was what everyone thought would go. When House of Fraser took over Jenners 13 years ago, there was already questions as to why they needed two stores on the same street. It was almost inevitable that it was going to be the west end one if there were any closures.

There may also be good

financial reasons for letting that store go. It is an attractive store in a good position and there are not many gaps in retail property in Edinburgh, so it could prove very appealing to someone.

The fact the chain has decided to close the London Oxford Street store is a surprise though, as is the Cardiff cut – the other stores are mainly in smaller English towns, often in buildings cobbled together from various smaller shops to be made into a department store, and I suspect they are finding them quite difficult to manage.

● *Leigh Sparks is professor of retail studies at Stirling University.*