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Xu docks for a night at the museum

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A luxury museum-themed hotel chain is set to make its UK debut at the redevelopment of the Royal Albert Docks in east London.

Xu Weiping (pictured), chairman of Chinese developer ABP Holdings, which in May agreed to buy the 35-acre site, said he planned to bring the Maya Hotel chain to the development.

Xu, who has an avid interest in the Mayan culture, has already brought the concept, which he designed, to ABP's Beijing business park.

And while Farrells has been appointed to masterplan the £1bn Asian Business Port, Xu said he planned to design the

3.5m sq ft Docklands project himself so that all ABP developments had a "single soul".

The flamboyant businessman was in London this week to sign a deal with Savills for the agent to be ABP's sole global adviser on all of its projects.

Xu said that China and the UK's blooming relationship resembled "a couple falling in love" and that he looked forward to "mixing both races together" through the Royal Albert Docks project.

The first plans for the scheme will

be submitted to Newham council in March next year, with a hope that construction of a 1m sq ft first phase can begin soon after for delivery by 2016.

ABP will take one of four flagship buildings for a new global headquarters, with a major Chinese bank expected to occupy at least one of the other three.

Savills said it was already in detailed discussions with four potential occupiers, understood to include a Chinese fashion house.

More than 60 Asian companies have shown interest in the project.

