

MEDIA RELEASE

Renaissance Southend Ltd

For Immediate Release

Design for Seafront and 'the Victorias' Moves Forward

Following confirmation of project funding through the Government's Thames Gateway Growth Fund, Renaissance Southend, in consultation with Southend Borough Council, has appointed Landscape Architects to lead on preparing design schemes for two of the town centre's most important public spaces; the Seafront from the Pier to the old Corporation Jetty, and 'the Victorias' encompassing Victoria Roundabout, Queensway, London Road and Victoria Circus. Gillespies will be leading on the Seafront and Chris Blandford Associates will lead on the Victorias.

Each firm will be responsible for design development in support of preparing a detailed planning application, and managing workshops and public consultations to inform the design process. The work will build on the principles set out in the Company's Central Area Masterplan Development Framework, and at the Victorias, tie in with funding for transport improvements announced by the Government last November through the Community Infrastructure Fund.

Renaissance Southend Chair, Theo Steel, commented, "This marks a further step towards implementing an ambitious programme of change and improvement for our town centre. Better access and public realm around the Victorias will open up new business and leisure opportunities and improvements to the Seafront, a defining feature of Southend, will support new and increasing levels of private investment'.

Landscape Architect Mark Holland for Chris Blandford Associates said, 'We are delighted to be working with Renaissance Southend and their partners and in particular we are looking forward to hearing the views of stakeholders and the public. We are contemplating important changes and it is essential that these are supported by Southend residents and businesses, and respond to their needs and desires'.

Landscape architect Steve Wardell for Gillespies said, “We are really looking forward to working in Southend as it has significant potential to capitalise on its waterfront. We hope to create some inspirational designs that will really make a difference to the people of Southend and also enhance the reputation of the area on a regional level”.

Councillor John Lamb on behalf of Southend Borough Council said “We are very pleased to support these appointments. Our objectives are to rejuvenate the quality and attraction of the Seafront for both residents and visitors, and, at the Victorias, to create an exciting and improved gateway to the town centre”.

New Energy, New Spirit, New Future

Notes to Editors

The Lead Landscape Architects will programme, monitor and coordinate the work of everyone engaged on the project. The Lead Landscape Architect will develop options and prepare design proposals that are in line with objectives set.

London Road/Victoria Circus

London Road is a cul de sac entered from the A13 roundabout and terminating at Victoria Circus. It is a busy mixed use commercial area including bars and restaurants offering opportunities for evening recreation. Victoria Circus, at the north end of the High Street is an urban ‘square’ providing (inter alia) access to the Victoria Shopping Centre and the Odeon Cinema. The two spaces provide an opportunity to reinforce their attractions, improve road safety and create a distinct urban place.

Within the RSL Central Area Masterplan, adopted LTP and Southend Core Strategy (Policy CP3) this location is highlighted for significant improvements to the public realm, transport integration and accessibility. Substantial parts of both streets can potentially be rejuvenated by high-quality, high-impact public realm design. Some problems have recently been addressed through the introduction of a new bus and taxi interchange at Victoria Station and links to the refurbished shopping centre but the junction remains detached yet surrounded by new and exciting opportunities.

One of the main objectives of the Masterplan is to improve connections between the town centre to the seafront, bridging the level difference between the town centre and the Esplanade and establishing better physical and functional links between the different quarters of the town. The Masterplan identifies this area of the seafront as one presenting major growth and development opportunities and having *'a major role to play in meeting people's leisure expectations in the 21st century and changing perceptions of Southend at a national level'*.

The Eastern Esplanade proposals seek to encourage redevelopment and regeneration of the area retaining Southend's heritage whilst linking the rejuvenated town centre to the seafront. As part of the Thames Gateway Parkland strategic framework a number of ambitions for the scheme have also been considered and one of these is that the project should aspire to be a Thames Waterfront project, bringing people into contact with the natural environment as part of a new Estuary path that will be developed along both banks of the river as part of the wider proposals of the Thames Gateway Parkland. Improvements to the Public Realm at Eastern Esplanade should also aspire to become a Waterfront Project as such projects may also be eligible for further public investment.

A focus for project area is the urban beach concept. RSL's and SSBC's ambition for the project is for a high quality solution consistent with Southend's status as famous coastal town and a 'Great British Resort'.

www.renaissancesouthend.co.uk

<http://www.gillespies.co.uk/>

<http://www.cba.uk.net/>

Renaissance Southend was incorporated as a not for profit, private limited company on the 18th March 2005.

The Company is run by private and public sector Board of Directors who's Founder Members are Southend-on-Sea Borough Council (SSBC), East of England Development Agency (EEDA), English Partnerships (EP), University of Essex (UoE) and South East Essex College (SEEC), supported by Communities and Local Government (CLG), Government Office for the East of England, the Housing Corporation and the Thames Gateway South Essex Partnership.

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