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OUTCOME OF VINEYARD GATE DESIGN COMPETITIONS ANNOUNCED

The preferred design concepts for key elements of Colchester's proposed Vineyard Gate retail scheme have been announced by developer Vineyard Gate Developments Ltd (VGD). The move is the latest in a series of steps taken by VGD as it continues to develop its plans for this major new regeneration project.

The chosen design concepts will help to determine the look of three important components of the new scheme:

- the exterior of the department store building
- a new bridge over Southway
- and a new public space adjacent to the historic Town Wall

Proposals by Hakes Associates (the 'Flint' department store exterior), MLM/Hakes Associates ('Ribbon' bridge) and GROSS.MAX. (public space) were chosen from nine entries submitted by leading designers from across the UK and Europe and showcased at the recent public exhibition. The concepts will now be worked up in more detail for integration into the plans for the overall development, which are being drawn up by Colchester-based Stanley Bragg Architects.

In choosing the preferred designs, the jury panel chaired by Peter Stewart, formerly Director of Design Review at the Commission for Architecture & the Built Environment (CABE), took account of public comments made during last month's public exhibition and via the Vineyard Gate website (www.vineyardgate.org).

The jury commended Hakes Associates' 'Flint' department store exterior for its exciting high quality design and felt that the building had the potential to become a local landmark. The 'Ribbon' bridge, designed by MLM / Hakes Associates, was praised for its sleek, fluid lines and interesting use of materials. In the competition for the design of the public space, the jury panel were impressed with the elegance of GROSS.MAX.'s design concept. These were the three design

concepts which also received the most positive comments from residents who completed questionnaires at the public exhibition or submitted feedback online.

Vineyard Gate aims to make a real contribution to the regeneration of St Botolph's and the wider Colchester area with a high quality, well designed development with new shops (including a department store), a new bus station, parking and town centre homes. The scheme will also provide an improved setting for the Town Wall and retain and incorporate a number of existing buildings.

Richard Weatherhead from VGD said: "We are pleased to announce that three top class design concepts have been chosen. We are confident that this will help us to create a new landmark destination for Colchester of which the town can be proud.

We would like to thank everyone who sent us their feedback for taking an interest in the scheme and helping the jury panel make their decision. We look forward to working closely with the chosen designers to integrate their ideas into the overall scheme as we develop the proposals further before submitting a planning application".

Councillor Brian Jarvis, Colchester Borough Council Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regeneration said: "We were extremely pleased with the level of feedback we had to the public consultation. This announcement marks another important step in the regeneration of St Botolph's and the overall vision for Colchester to become a prestigious regional centre with top quality facilities."

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Notes:

- Hakes Associates are recognised as one of the leading young architectural practices of their generation in the UK. Established by Julian Hakes and Cari-Jane Hakes, the practice has recently worked on The Mobius Bridge in Bristol, the St John's Shopping Centre in Liverpool and several projects with Selfridges in London. Both Cari-Jane and Julian have taught and lectured at Cambridge University for five years.
- MLM is one of the leading regionally based consulting engineers with a passion for enhancing the built environment. It has offices in Ipswich, Chelmsford, London, Ashford, Cambridge and Norwich, and employs nearly 200 staff. Established in 1966, the practice has recently designed impressive footbridges in Callus and Granollers in Cataluna which are acting as catalysts for regeneration. It has also been involved in parts of the Colchester Garrison redevelopment and is the highways consultant for the proposed Vineyard Gate Development.
- GROSS.MAX. is widely regarded as one of a new generation of contemporary European landscape architecture practices. The practice has won numerous competitions and awards for its public spaces and was presented with the prestigious European Landscape Award earlier this year. At present GROSS.MAX. is working on the Royal Festival Hall and Potters Field Park in central London, and has recently been involved with numerous competition winning designs for public squares in the Capital such as St John's Square, Lyric Square, and Brixton Central Square.
- Heritage specialists Feilden + Mawson managed the competition process on behalf of VGD.
- Vineyard Gate Developments Ltd is a wholly owned subsidiary of Caddick Developments Ltd. Established in 1979, Caddick is a leading developer with a strong track record of delivering high quality projects throughout the UK. The company is active in all sectors of the commercial and residential property market and has recently worked on major schemes in Norfolk, Merseyside and Yorkshire.
- Vineyard Gate will be a contemporary shopping scheme that will be fully integrated with the town centre. It will include over 65 new retail outlets over four levels (including a major department store), a variety of places to eat and drink, a new bus station, parking and town centre homes. The proposals will provide a proper setting for the Town Wall and retain and incorporate a number of other historical structures that positively contribute to the fabric of the town. Furthermore, the development will create a new gateway to the town centre by improving links with southern parts of Colchester including the Garrison site.
- VGD expects to submit a planning application to Colchester Borough Council at the end of 2007. After proper consideration by the Council's planning department, the developer hopes that planning permission will be granted during 2008. If planning consent is granted, preparatory works would then begin and the three-year construction programme would commence in 2010. This timing, however, is dependent on a number of factors that are outside VGD's control and might therefore be subject to change.

- The Vineyard Gate project team includes:

Developer:	Vineyard Gate Developments
Lead architects:	Stanley Bragg Partnership
Planning:	Drivers Jonas
Environmental:	Waterman Group
Conservation:	Feilden + Mawson
Archaeology:	RPS
Transport:	MLM
Accessibility:	Turner & Townsend
Service engineers:	Halloran Payne Associates
Quantity surveyor:	Tillyard
Agents:	CB Richard Ellis