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NEXT PHASE OF BRIGHTON SEAFRONT REGENERATION BEGINS

The next phase of regeneration for Brighton’s western seafront around the future i360 has been formally unveiled today. This included a new creative retail quarter on Brighton beach and ground was broken for the construction of the Brighton i360 attraction.

Members of the community, local businesses and the i360 team gathered to see Brighton & Hove Mayor, Cllr Brian Fitch, cut a ribbon to open the arches, which have undergone a painstaking restoration, between Alfresco and the future i360 site, with eight independent small creative firms opening for business.
Brighton & Hove Council leader, Councillor Jason Kitcat led a group including David Marks, the architect behind the i360 and the London Eye, putting the first ceremonial spade in the ground to formally start building works for the Brighton i360, the world’s first vertical cable car observation tower, expected to attract millions of additional visitors to Brighton.

Said Cllr Jason Kitcat, “This is a momentous occasion for Brighton & Hove, which will kick start the regeneration of the wider area, both down on the beach and including Preston Street. Our seafront is our most important asset that helps make our tourism industry such a great success in Brighton & Hove. Our innovation here will make all the difference to helping the city continue as one of the UK’s most desirable and successful tourist destinations in the years to come. Bold decisions by the council and our partners have made sure this work has happened.”

Said Cllr Ian Davey, deputy leader of the city council, “The restoration of the arches has been carried out as part of ongoing work to strengthen the A259 seafront road by the council’s transport team, with external funding from the Local Transport Plan.

“The arches are stunning, with some really superb businesses already leasing them and helping to make a very special new creative retail quarter on the seafront.”

Said David Marks of Marks Barfield Architects, “It has taken over eight years to get to this point, but the Brighton i360 will now be a reality and will be one of the most exciting visitor attractions in the world. The i360 will be the world’s first vertical cable car; an engineering wonder and a major new performing arts, conference, dining and hospitality venue for Brighton. It will generate more footfall to this part of Brighton – and we hope bring about the sort of transformation that the London Eye helped create on the South Bank.”

Said Rachel Clark, West Pier Trust, “This is a very special occasion for the West Pier Trust because it marks the beginning of a long awaited new era. The i360 will be a brilliant attraction and entirely in the spirit of the West Pier – a vertical pier. It will transform the site and the entire city.. We would like to thank our members for all their support for the i360 and getting us to this point. We are delighted that two of our traders from the West Pier market, (Magi Altwegg and Dorian and Dinah Delap) have moved into the new arches.

Ron Crank, Chief Executive of Coast to Capital LEP said, which has made a seven year loan of £4m to assist the Brighton i360, “All the elements are here to create a true economic regeneration of this area, attracting investment and visitors to this location whilst increasing employment growth within the Coast to Capital region. We are delighted to be supporting this important project and look forward to seeing its progress as it develops on Brighton’s iconic seafront.”  

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Background info re: new seafront arches:
The city council began a £5 million project to rebuild, strengthen and refurbish the Victorian arches in November 2012, between Alfresco and the West Pier. The work was needed due to Victorian structural deterioration, causing cracking and subsidence of structural elements; and allowing rain to leak into the arches below. The seafront arches work is part of the council’s long-term seafront strategy designed to encourage business and enhance the city and will complement other work taking place in the area, the centre piece of which is the i360.

Premises to the west of the former West Pier have now been rebuilt using a reinforced concrete frame and roof, together with ornate brick facades. The brick arches themselves have been fabricated off site and brought in. All the bricks have been specially made by Ibstock following the careful mapping and surveying of the old façade. Many new bricks are special non-standard shapes and sizes.

New wooden frames, doors and windows have been made by Seth Evans Joinery near Worthing. Iron railings above have been re-cast from moulds dating back to the 1880s. Council Project Manager Leon Bellis has worked closely with the design engineers, Amey, architects Solar Architecture and the contractor C J Thorne. Council conservation and planning experts, together with English Heritage, have been closely involved to ensure authenticity.

The first phase of the works is now complete, delivering 26 new arches which provide 10 double-arched business units or artists’ studios; plus a newly refurbished seafront toilet block at the eastern end, which opened last month (on 27 June).

The West Pier arches will house a range of retail outlets selling designer gifts and home ware, children’s clothing, photographic prints, frames and books, and a hairdresser and beauty salon.

The list includes:

**The Lollipop Shoppe**
Contemporary Gifts and Interiors
www.thelollipopshoppe.co.uk

**Brighton Photography**
Photography gallery
www.brightonphotography.com

**Banana Louis**
Hair Studio
www.bananalouishairstudio.co.uk
Artist Anon Brighton
Original clothing and artwork
www.artistanon.com / www.paperkutz.co.uk

Bailey Alexander Gallery
Art Crafts and Jewellery
www.baileyalexander.co.uk

Small Folk Run
Children's clothes and interiors
www.smallfolkrun.com

Mia Beach
Knitting and crochet specialist and ladies clothing
www.i-foundyou.com

The Hat Hut
Hats, bags and accessories

The arches will be lit at night with lights programmed to produce sweeping blues, whites and sea greens to represent waves. The lighting scheme was designed and installed by Urban Projects who are the lighting design company behind the award winning Bandstand lighting scheme visible from the West Pier Arches. www.urbanprojects.ltd.uk

About Brighton i360
At 162 metres high, and with an observation pod rising to 138 metres, the i360 will be the world’s first vertical cable car and the tallest observation tower outside London, offering a new perspective on the fun loving seaside city of Brighton. Sited at the root end of the historic West Pier on Brighton’s seafront, the i360 has a slender, elegant design, with a futuristic pod allowing 200 visitors at a time to enjoy the surrounding view as it slowly unfolds. The visitor centre incorporates a 400 seat restaurant, a shop, exhibition space and conference and event facilities.
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www.brightoni360.co.uk

About Marks Barfield Architects
Founded in 1989 by Julia Barfield and David Marks, Marks Barfield Architects (MBA) conceived and designed the London Eye in 1993 and also has a diverse portfolio of projects that includes schools, cultural, transport and sports buildings as well as the Kew treetop walkway and Pier outside Tate Britain. Marks Barfield has won more than 60 awards for design, innovation and sustainability.
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