

Construction specialists RG Group confirmed as new contractor for St James



NEW CONTRACTOR: The site of the St James Development

Local firm scoops £53m scheme for retail development

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A NEW contractor has finally been announced for the St James Development in Dover.

Legal & General announced last Thursday that Kent-based construction specialist RG Group will be the main build partner for the St James retail and leisure regeneration development in the town.

The project hit a speed bump last year when former contractors Kier jumped ship, initiating a scrambling search for a new set of builders.

Despite DDC, L&G and Bond City saying they were "finalising terms" with a new contractor in December 2016 none have been announced until now.

Contractor

The company took over the site as the main contractor on April 3 and Maidstone-based, Gallagher Group has been on site since December 2016 and will continue as a sub-contractor.

The £53.25 million development forms part of Dover District Council's wider regeneration for the town which aims to create jobs and drive economic and social growth.

According to Legal & General, the scheme will provide Dover with a modern retail and leisure provision to support the town's growing population.

The retail element will include Marks & Spencer and



CHANGING: Early plans for the development, by architects Lyons+Sleeman+Hoare

Next, whilst the leisure section will include a six-screen cinema, a 108-room Travelodge hotel and six restaurants.

Work on the 157,000 square foot scheme is already well under way with construction work progressing well for the Cineworld, the restaurant block, and the main retail block on Townwall Street. Construction of a 108-bed Travelodge hotel is also underway.

The development is currently 80 per cent pre-let and recent lettings at the scheme include Shoe Zone, Card Factory, Carphone Warehouse and Greggs.

Neil Crawford, head of retail and leisure development at LGIM Real Assets, said: "Already significantly pre-let,

St James, Dover will provide a modern, fit for purpose and highly prominent retail and leisure destination for the town.

"We are continuing to see significant demand from retailers wanting to sign up to the scheme, and it is great to see works progressing, bringing to life the transformation of the town centre."

Clive Lynton, development director at developers Bond City, added: "We are delighted to be working with a Kent-based construction company. We were impressed with RG's credentials in the retail sector and look forward to working with them to complete this exciting development for Dover."

Legal & General say substantial progress has been made on site and practical completion of the development is scheduled for the first quarter of 2018.

Dover and Deal MP Charlie Elphicke said the announcement of the new contractor was another step toward a "brighter future" for the town. He said: "This is hugely welcome news. It's been fantastic to see a new cinema and shops rising at the St James site."

"Getting Burlington House down last year was a massive victory. And there has been incredible progress in recent months."

"Today's announcement means we keep up the momentum in building a brighter future for Dover."



REPLACEMENT: The development will be built on the site where Burlington House once stood



DIGGING IN: Building work has begun on the site

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