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## Launch of Brompton Design Project at Victoria and Albert Museum

On May 24, the Brompton Design Project was announced by Mark Jones, Director of the Victoria and Albert Museum and Toby Anstruther, Managing Director of Brompton Estates, at a breakfast for key representatives from the design community and South Kensington community at the Victoria and Albert Museum. In South Kensington, on one side of the Cromwell Road is 'Albertopolis' the UK's foremost cultural and education quarter, on the other side there is one of the capital's most vibrant fashion and design-led retail areas. Yet there are few links between the two. Initiated by Brompton Estates and the V&A, Brompton Design Project's purpose is to encourage the commercial sector to work with these world-class institutions to play a significant role in making the Exhibition Road scheme and the renaissance of South Kensington a reality.

Design provides a starting point for this regeneration: embedded in the DNA of the Brompton area, it is the glue that holds together this meeting point of the arts and sciences, creative industries and the retail sector. South Kensington is already London's largest cultural tourist attraction but as the Exhibition Road scheme acknowledges a lot can be done to make a more enjoyable and rewarding experience. Unusually for such a project most of the pieces of the jigsaw are already here but at the moment it is fragmented. It is a question of assembling them to create a bigger picture. The future strength of South Kensington, Knightsbridge, Brompton Quarter and Brompton Cross rests in this outstanding mix of culture and commerce. Models for Brompton's regeneration should include the South Bank and Bankside, Museum mile on New York's 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue or the Marais district in Paris.

With the unparalleled combination of museums and education South Kensington is not just a reminder of past achievements but also the seedbed for future intellectual, cultural and social capital. The creative industries now account for more than 7% of the UK economy, and are growing at a rate of 5% per annum, faster than the economy as a whole. In a recent speech at Tate Modern, Tony Blair attributed this success to the model of a mixed economy combining public funding with private enterprise, and partnerships between the creative and business sectors. The Brompton Design Project will provide a hub for the commercial sector and link to the institutions. We are also exploring the potential for more far reaching collaborations between the public and private sector that could be instrumental in making South Kensington a test bed for imaginative partnerships. This will begin with the London Design Festival 2007 as well as developing the objectives and branding for the area as a whole.

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