

RNS Reach

24th June 2019

### Aukett Swanke Group Plc

#### Confirmation of Commencement of work on Samanea Market Dubai

The Board of Aukett Swanke Group Plc. (the "Group"), the international group of architects and interior designers, is pleased to announce that they have now received formal instructions for the commencement of the Samanea Market project in Dubai. This follows the original award of the contract announced in November 2017.

Chief Executive Nicholas Thompson said *"This project has required an enormous amount of time and effort and the application of considerable resources. We have spoken on several occasions about our strategy and the rationale behind our investment in the development of our Middle Eastern operations in order to build the scale necessary to compete for and deliver the very biggest projects and this announcement demonstrates our team's success in doing that. The expenses we have incurred have been very evident and the Board is very confident that with this and other future projects the rewards for shareholders will follow"*.

#### **Samanea Dubai Market**

On Monday the 29th of April 2019, Mr. Wong Luen Hei, Chairman of Samanea Group, a Singapore based International developer of trade centres, formally instructed the construction of their Samanea Dubai Market. The 1,180,000 sq ft (Gross Floor Area) Samanea Market designed by Aukett Swanke, is to be constructed in Dubai International City at a cost of \$272M and is scheduled for completion in Q3 2021.

The Market will focus on furniture and home appliances manufactured by international manufacturers who are seeking to establish a foothold in the Gulf. The development of the Market is evidence of fast-growing relations between Asia and Dubai.

A high-level cooperation body called 'Hala China' has been established, which includes some of the largest Emirati and Chinese companies and is a platform designed to encourage bilateral cooperation between China and Dubai in the economy, trade, investment, tourism and culture. The commitment to build the Samanea Dubai Market is evidence of growing Asian confidence in the region and a deepening relationship between Asia and the Gulf countries.

#### **The Design**

The design of the Market takes references from both Asian and Arabic Cultures. Aukett Swanke has interpreted these influences in a unique retail experience that reflects the spirit of Chinese culture within the unique Arabian landscape and climate.

The curved form of the Market was inspired by Arabian Desert dunes arranged around an oasis; the "wadi" canyon runs through the centre of the Market and which creates the primary retail experience.

The entrance forms the welcoming part of the "wadi" canyon. It respects Feng Shui principles and creates a focal point for customers and visitors, leading them into the main public areas of the Market. The canyon forms a linear atrium covered by a glazed roof which allows natural light to filter down to the retail units below, as if through an intricate date palm canopy.

The retail units, circulation and associated amenity areas are distributed over three levels to maximize the leasing space and create an interesting shopping experience. The Market is serviced with six levels of shaded car parking as well as surface parking on the roof of the annex.

**Stephen Embley**, Aukett Swanke UAE Managing Director, said:

"Aukett Swanke is delighted to be associated with the design of Samanea's first major investment in the Middle East, the team has exceeded expectations in the visual impact and economic layout of the Market and will oversee the completion of the design and construction of Samanea Market."

## **Enquiries**

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