

# Landscape

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## URBANISATION



# Expanding a vision



*A*l Dhakira is a small city developing on the oriental coast of Qatar, only 60 km from the capital, Doha. Grown on a natural creek, where the sea extends itself to the desert, Al Dhakira holds a fertile oasis where mangroves flourish and local animals can find shelter in a natural habitat unique in the area.

The city-as for the rest of the country-in recent years is being driven by the future event of 2022 FIFA World Cup, pulling together a progressive urbanisation of the different urban realities of the country. It is in this context of urban growth that the expansion plan for the city of Al Dhakira is located.

The project is set as the correct mix between the city's need to grow and the will to preserve its natural-landscape value, protecting the territory from the urban undifferentiated growth with no quality. The master plan combines the aesthetical and functional aspects focalising the attention on the sustainable land use and on the optimisation in terms of dimension and settlement of the different constructions, in order to develop not only sustainable buildings but also a new vision of the city based on the quality of spaces and on energy conservation.







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The project involves the development of a new part of the city with residential and commercial settlements of 275.000 sqm and introduces a continuous increase in terms of density starting from the sea inland. The coastal area features a park that hosts several public functions, among which a museum, a multimedia library, a congress centre, connecting in a unique landscape belt the two natural reserves on the south-east and north-west sides of the city. Such reserves are among the most important of the area because they are characterised by the presence of the mangroves and of a delicate local fauna.

The design of the park defines different spaces, some of which more natural, other more urban, filling it with constructions, of diverse destination of use, inserted in harmony within the nature. In the south-west area of the park, where the vegetation is left wilder and the mangroves are thicker, sits the museum of the natural reserve. With its nature paths and footbridges on the water discovering the uncontaminated, and a resort with measured constructions, it integrates with the surrounding landscape thanks to their materials and forms.







The central part, the seafront of the historical city and of the expansion features a geometrical and neat design. This area, the most lively and picturesque of the coast, presents two wide equipped beaches separated by the touristic port and the by the marina building. Commercial buildings such as bars and restaurants with sea view terraces are located here and, just beyond the park, in the first built area, the accommodation facilities. Here a luxury hotel is organised with a central body destined to the rooms, main services and several amenities to satisfy all the needs of a wealthy

clientele. The north-east side of the park goes back to nature, until houses and vegetation fade into the desert.

The urban design, in harmony with the surrounding and the existing architecture, features different building typology and meeting places in order to promote community awareness and to carry out common activities or to simply relax. The residential area is present in different typologies of blocks featuring detached villas, multi-family residences, condominiums and private complexes.



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Villas arise from the composition of white pure volumes in opposition to the blue sky. Such buildings are completed with pierced and shimmering volumes, made of technical insert, in blue and white ceramic tiles which rotate with the wind and filter the sunlight. The complexes, more or less closed towards the road, are open to inner courtyards, protected and shady thanks to the presence of vegetation and some specific architectural elements characterised by movable curtains.

The condominiums, out-and-out urban blocks, are composed by volumes of different height and width, able to create multiform spaces. Through narrow passages it is possible to get to the inner court—an oasis made of water and palm trees.

The financial and business district of the city is collected around the renewed stadium where the highest skyscrapers of the city are located. The towers, along with multi-storey buildings of similar aesthetics present a stone facade which highlights an accurate study of light, volumes and widths. This guarantees the right balance of light where a variety of activities can take place comfortably.

The architectural choices configure the buildings mixing aggregations of forms and traditional elements and are reinterpreted with specific technical and technological solutions committed to energy conservation and to urban and landscape sustainability. The sun, the wind and the water are indeed elements defining urban design and are exploited for

the benefit of the environment through a sensitive landscape and treatment plants.

Around the stadium the shape and placement of the buildings create a closed urban space, a sort of square built around the new sports centre where the commercial buildings overlook large windows and porticoes spaces. The architectural design indeed presents two different formal results which characterise the interior, toward the square, transparent and porous, and the exterior, toward the residential areas, solid and essential, in order to invite the user to enjoy the interior spaces of the complex.

Each single building, composed of different levels, is set as a container of the commercial and leisure activities, accommodating retail spaces, several activities such as the cinema, the library, exhibition spaces and an indoor square with restaurants and bars.

The building, on the facade and on the roof presents a modular skin made of a steel structure and circular ceramic tiles. This solution, through the use of integrated technological systems, allows the control of natural light into the building in order to reduce the need for electrical lighting. The building—besides this light control device—presents several other advanced technological systems which facilitate natural ventilation or control the internal microclimatic comfort to make the complex an example of sustainable architecture.

