

## MOHAMMED BIN RASHID GARDENS Detailed Project Information

### A SPECTACULAR NEW CITY FOR DUBAI

HH Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Ruler of Dubai, and Vice-President and Prime Minister of the UAE, has unveiled ambitious plans for an entire city to be built in the desert.

Respectful of the region's cultural heritage in both scale and form, this new metropolis has been specifically designed to meet the needs of the modern Arab world.

Extending over 800 million square feet, the project incorporates new homes, outstanding educational, financial and commercial facilities, iconic civic buildings and tourist landmarks. Threading them together is more landscaped parkland than can be found in London and New York combined.

Set to become one of the world's most spectacular urban developments, the Mohammed Bin Rashid Gardens will cost over US\$60 billion to construct. **Dubai Properties** will shortly begin work on the scheme, designed by the internationally renowned architect, **Eric Kuhne** of London-based **CivicArts**.

Arranged around the city are four centres, that will host world-class facilities in their respective fields - these are 'four houses' for a new century's social agenda that places health and education at the top of its policies.

*"We have used the word 'house' in honour of the Caliph who built the House of Wisdom just outside of Baghdad in the 9th Century," says Kuhne. "It establishes a charter of hospitality: generosity, intimacy, welcome, and family are all symbolized by the word 'house.'"*

### INSPIRED BY ARABIAN ORNAMENTAL PATTERNS

All 4 city centres, or "Houses" of Mohammed Bin Rashid Gardens are inspired by Arabian Ornamental patterns.

- Nested squares based on the symbol 'The Breath of the Compassionate' have been used for the **House of Commerce**
- The crescent moon/star has been used for the **House of Nature**
- Nested equilateral triangles, the most intricate of the primary geometric symbols illustrating the Congress of Faiths, have been used for the **House of Humanity**
- The sphere, tetrahedron and cube, part of the primary mathematics, geometry and algebra of Arabian scholarship (symbolising the building blocks of life itself) have been used for the **House of Wisdom**

## **HOUSE OF NATURE**

A huge wildlife sanctuary will be the heart of the first of the four city-centres in Mohammed Bin Rashid Gardens.

A Crescent Zoological Garden will replace typical dense urban city centres with robust conservation, education, research, and recreation as part of the zoological sciences of Mohammed Bin Rashid Gardens.

Eco-resort hotels will overlook the Continental Animal Kingdoms representing the exotic range of ecosystems around the globe.

*"The House of Nature's wildlife sanctuary will become the 'Noah's Ark' of the Middle East," says Kuhne. "We have worked with some of the finest zoological institutions in the world through Grant Leisure\*."*

The House of Nature house will include family parks, world parks, laboratories, natural sciences institutions and colleges, hotels, clubs, a zoo, flower gardens and herbal medicine clinics.

\*Andy Grant was past Deputy Director of the San Diego Zoo

## **HOUSE OF COMMERCE**

The House of Commerce has been designed around an Arabian ornamental pattern called 'The Breath of the Compassionate' and takes into account the fact that trust and trade are the fundamentals of Middle Eastern law.

The pattern of nested squares manifests itself in the design of canals, parks, streets, marinas, boulevards, and divides up the land into elegant and striking building blocks.

The House of Commerce celebrates the next generation of business and commerce in the Middle East.

Built upon the advanced design that Eric R Kuhne & Associates completed with Mohammed Al Dabal for the Dubai International Financial Centre, the House of Commerce will expand the exceptionally successful Business Bay developed by Dubai Properties on an extension to Dubai Creek.

The House of Commerce will include centres for trademark agents, institutes of higher finance and banking, insurance companies, leading international companies and Islamic and international banks.

## **HOUSE OF HUMANITY**

With over 190 nations represented in the population of its Emirate, Dubai hosts the full range of the world's religions and beliefs and is extremely tolerant of the diversity of faiths.

The House of Humanity will include the Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum Charitable and Humanitarian Foundation, UNICEF, museums and charitable foundations.

At the centre will be a Congress of Faiths for the scholarship of the history of religions and faith.

*"Too often religion divides what faith unites," comments Kuhne. "The Congress of Faiths will restore a scholarship to honour the diversity of the world's religions, beliefs, and faiths."*

In the House of Humanity, sacred places will be created to celebrate the world's diverse religions and faiths. Three overlapping equilateral triangles will represent the nine great religions of the world:

- The points of the first triangle will represent monotheistic faiths: Islam, Christianity and Judaism
- The points of the second triangle will represent polytheistic faiths: Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism
- The points of the third triangle will represent the pantheistic faiths including Shintoism and Aboriginal
- The centre of the triangles represents the Congress of Faiths

The iconic buildings in the House of Humanity will be two star-catcher towers in the shape of praying hands ... the universal symbol of faith.

## **HOUSE OF WISDOM**

The House of Wisdom was inspired by the great Caliph al Manum, who in 830 CE built the Bayt al Hikmah as one of the centrepieces of the Islamic Golden Age and was responsible for translating the great manuscripts of ancient Greece and Rome and distributing this knowledge throughout the known world and for helping foment the Renaissance in Europe.

*"It is time for a new House of Wisdom in the Middle East, a new centre of learning and translation that will spread the world's knowledge throughout the Middle East and in turn bring the world's knowledge to the Emirates," says Kuhne.*

The House of Wisdom will include translation offices, a library, knowledge parks, international organisations' offices, international universities and colleges for science and history and Sheikh Mohammed's Grand Mosque.

## **THE MASTER PLAN**

Not only will Mohammed Bin Rashid Gardens include the most generous collection of gardens, civic buildings and spaces ever created in the Middle East, the innovative master plan offers a culturally-resonant alternative to the sterile Western-style street grids that dominate Middle Eastern cities.

The masterplan, set to re-establish Dubai as a 'traditional city,' was inspired by the planispheric astrolabe; an instrument perfected by Islamic scholars, craftsmen and

astronomers. Fusing the spheres of art and astronomy into one object, the astrolabe was designed to map the movements of the celestial bodies through the heavens. As a result, sweeping arcs and circles replace rigid rectilinear street patterns at Mohammed Bin Rashid Gardens.

More than 56 million square feet of parks and gardens will effectively divide this new city into a network of sustainable neighbourhoods, each offering shops, healthcare and educational facilities, all within walkable distance of the residential properties. It is anticipated that the creation of such 'neighbourhoods' will counter the 'commuter culture' whereby people work, shop and socialise at a distance from their homes, eroding the rich sense of community traditionally found in the Gulf states.

*"His Highness Sheikh Mohammed should be applauded for his commitment to a new Dubai which will redefine the quality of civic life for the citizens and guests of the Arabian Gulf. His vision can be compared to that of Shah Abbas I who created Nisf-e-Jahan, the elegant capital of Persia in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, with parks, gardens and libraries that reflected the heavens, or that of Walter Burley Griffin, the American architect who created Canberra, Australia's beautiful garden city," says Kuhne.*

*"The design of any city needs to capture the soul of its people and, with healthcare and educational facilities and a strong focus on preserving the environment, Mohammed Bin Rashid Gardens reflects modern lifestyles and aspirations like no other city in the world," continues Kuhne. "The gardens and parks will be the city's 'lungs,' purifying the air and providing shaded green corridors. Drawing on the heritage of the Islamic landscape, this will be a city of canals and fountains, pools and lakes. With golf courses, bridleways, cycle paths and promenades, the citizens will have ample opportunity to enjoy a healthy and active lifestyle."*

## **BRINGING WATER TO THE DESERT**

Ornamental canals will bring water to the desert, nourishing the new Mohammed Bin Rashid Garden City.

*"Instead of pouring sand into the Gulf, we will bring the nourishing waters of the Gulf into a new desert oasis," comments Eric Kuhne.*

Mohammed Bin Rashid Gardens will open the waterfronts of Dubai to everyone, not just wealthy tourists and palatial estates. With over 72 kilometres of public waterfront, this new city will provide the most democratic and generous public parks, gardens, boardwalks, riverfronts, parkways, and greenways created anywhere in the Middle East over the past 1,000 years. Over two-thirds of the land will be dedicated to conservation, leisure, recreation, and wildlife sanctuaries. In fact, there will be 76 kilometres of canal boardwalks, promenades, waterfronts, riparian and wildlife habitats designed to nurture human life as well as aquatic life.

*"These wetlands will rival any natural wetlands in the Gulf region by establishing one of the largest wildlife sanctuaries along their entire length," comments Kuhne. "As the first of its kind, this new Dubai Properties project will preserve and protect the environment and help to 'green' the country."*

## **ASTROLABE GARDENS**

The parks and parkways take their inspiration from the intricate ornamental metalwork of Arabian Astrolabes that reflect the heavens on the desert. These star-pointers of the 'reti' of a 13th century astrolabe define the luscious, verdant landscape parkways that define the villages of Mohammed Bin Rashid Gardens. 26 Kilometres in diameter, this magnificent garden park will become the largest built in the Middle East in over 1,000 years. The outline of the canal is based on the arcing alignment of the Milky Way drawn upon the earth.

## **TRADITION OF GREAT CITIES**

Mohammed Bin Rashid Gardens bring the tradition of divine inspiration and artistic ornament to the Middle East and follows in the footsteps of the following:

- Pope Sixtus V and Domenic Fontana weaving together the monuments of Rome
- Shah Abbas I creating the expansive gardens of Nisf-e-Jahan (Isfahan, Persia)
- Peter The Great in the planning of St Petersburg
- L'Enfant's creation of Washington DC
- Hausmann's vision for Napoleon III's Boulevard Paris
- The Commissioners and Olmstead's Manhattan
- Lutyens' work in New Delhi
- Walter Burley-Griffin's work in Canberra

## **TRADITION OF GREAT CANALS**

Mohammed al Dabal, the Canal Builder of Business Bay in Dubai has established a reputation as the fastest canal builder in the world. His leadership on the Mohammed Bin Rashid Gardens project combines his industry with a vision to create a canal in the spirit of the great canal cities of the world: Amsterdam, Birmingham, Venice, Shuzou, and the intricate canal systems of England and France.

Arabian Gulf water brings irrigation, traffic, activity, life, leisure, and recreation into the heart of Dubai's desert conservation area. "I want to build canals that bring life to the desert as much as nourishment of the soul," said Mohammed al Dabal.

*"The city has been and always shall be the greatest work of art." says Kuhne, "The visionary plans developed by Dubai Properties' Hashim al Dabal and Mohammed al Dabal brings the full development force and leadership to the delivery of this new garden city."*

## **HEALTH & EDUCATION LEADS DEVELOPMENT AGENDA**

Developed over the past 18 months, this city will change the provision of health and education from antiquated 20th Century precedents.

Both health and education will reverse the trend to exile these essential services to the perimeter of communities and offer primary services in the heart of Mohammed Bin Rashid Gardens.

Instead of relegating education to unwanted land, the schools and universities will form the heart of each of the four city centres.

Health care will bring services into the villages instead of asking people to drive to primary health care.

This promise to reverse an 100-year precedent of separating citizen from services will dramatically reduce the extent of daily trips taken for routine life needs.

*"We need to change from exploiting natural resources to empowering human resources," says HH Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Maktoum.*

## **RESEARCH PRECEDENTS ON THE SOUL OF GREAT CITIES**

*"We have shown in our research and design work for Eastern Quarry in the UK, Titanic Quarter in Belfast, and the City of Silk (Madinat al Hareer) in Kuwait that the social-fabric of a community depends upon the dimensions of a walkable neighbourhood. Here the molecule of family life is the building block of a great city: places to learn, shop, play, pray, and meet are all within walking distance of people's homes," says Kuhne. "This is nothing new, for the great Middle Eastern cities throughout history all made the exchange of commodities, services, ideas, and faith as the soul of these communities."*

## **PRECIOUS SHADE**

*"The ambitious goal is to bring 85% of weekly amenities within walking distance of 300 meters to everyone in Mohammed Bin Rashid Gardens," adds Kuhne. "We will create a walkable city in the harsh, arid climate of the Emirates by clustering services and products within walking distance of where people live."*

*"Shade is the most precious commodity in the Middle East, and we will change forever the planning mentality that is based on the conceit of the automobile and restore the molecule of the family as the building block of Mohammed Bin Rashid Gardens."*

## **LAUNCH CEREMONY ATTENDEES**

The launch ceremony was attended by:

- Dubai Crown Prince Sheikh Hamdan bin Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum
- Dubai Deputy Ruler Sheikh Maktoum bin Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum
- Cabinet Affairs Minister Mohammed Abdullah Al Gergawi
- Director of Sheikh Mohammed's Office Lt. General Musabbah Rashid Al Fattan Hashim al Dabal
- Chairman of Dubai Properties, Mohammed Al Dabal
- Project Development Director & CEO of InJaz

- The Development Group of Dubai Properties, Mahmoud Gerziry, Project Director, and several senior officials.

### **FURTHER PRESS INFORMATION**

This press release information has been issued by Craven Group on behalf of Eric Kuhne of CivicArts in association with HH Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai.

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