

Press release

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Work starts on new mixed-use development in Amman

Construction has begun on a new Foster + Partners project in Jordan. 'Living Wall' is a 150,000 sq m mixed-use complex at the heart of Amman, close to the new Al-Abdali city centre.

The site, an extraordinary carved-out rock shelf, its geology and history have been the inspiration for the scheme's unique concept. Set against a sheer 30m backdrop, the project presents physical challenges that are not unlike those faced at ancient Jordanian sites such as Petra, where the buildings were carved out of the rock itself.

A rough-hewn podium has been inserted with strong, vertical cuts into a line of natural rock. Grouped together on this podium will be a set of six inter-connected, sculpted towers. They include a boutique hotel, a variety of residential units, and offices. The podium on which they sit contains shopping and leisure activities. The deep spaces between the towers house a variety of sheltered public spaces, including a sunken amphitheatre and a large, sheltered piazza.

The towers have double-skin façades with screens whose horizontal lines again recall delicate rock strata. The screens function is to stimulate air circulation and to provide shading, and these become denser where the potential heat gain is greater. The spaces behind the screens provide balconies and terraces where people can enjoy outdoor space thus helping to animate the complex as a 'Living Wall'.

With transparency both at the higher levels and at the base of the towers, views across the city are unimpeded; there is a strong sense of place and, with so much permeability and connectivity, both laterally and vertically, the scheme also creates a vivid sense of community.

Living Wall won a Cityscape award in Dubai in December 2006.

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