

Press release

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**Carbon neutral design unveiled for resort on the Black Sea coast**

Foster + Partners has launched a masterplan for a carbon-neutral resort on the Black Sea coast in its first project in Bulgaria. A series of car free hill towns in an unspoilt setting of oak forests, meadows and river gorges, the development will create a year-round community for up to 15,400 residents. The residential clusters are tightly packed and integrated into the contours of the landscape, preserving the majority of the site as virgin terrain. Anchored by a 220-berth marina and with a lakeside spa, activity centre, sports park, restaurants and shops, Black Sea Gardens will become a key leisure destination.

The five hill towns are characterised by the nature of their immediate surroundings - to create a Sky Village, a Wilderness Village, a Meadow Village, a Cape Village and the Sea Village by the marina.

Coastal traffic has been kept inland, far away from the seafront, to create a calm and pollution-free environment for the community. Residents are encouraged to leave their cars in the underground car park at the entrance of each village, and to take advantage of the electric shuttle buses, electric pool cars and cycles. The compact plan and pedestrian-friendly nature of each village, further promotes alternative means of getting around.

Informed by the vernacular architecture of the region, the hill towns have narrow streets with a tight grouping of residences, which creates environmental benefits such as reduced wind speeds, as well as providing sunny balconies and cool streets. The material palette for the hill towns is taken from local, sustainable sources that will be key in lowering the embodied carbon of the buildings.

The arrangement and terracing of the hill towns also maximises sea views, and the microclimate is further enhanced by the preservation of the existing mature trees and integrated planting. Other sustainable strategies include using biofuels to power the CHP plant on site which will provide power for the five villages all year round. The landscaping of the two river valleys controls water run-off from the surrounding land by harvesting the water in naturally formed basins.

The first phase of the masterplan will be the Sky Village. Located on the highest point of the site, the village has been designed to exploit the wide views over the sea. Houses are dug into the hillside, creating terraces that offer uninterrupted views at every level.

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