

KATARA PHASE IV

DOHA, STATE OF QATAR

2017–2013

Katara Phase iv is the last parcel of a vast cultural masterplan developed by the Qatari Government to foster culture-based tourism in its capital, Doha. This important waterfront site, built on reclaimed land, stands halfway between the business district and the upcoming Lusail district. The plot has also been planned to receive the Sharq Crossing, a 12-km causeway with a series of tunnels and bridges connecting Hamad International Airport to Katara Cultural Village and the West Bay. This mixed-use development includes a mosque, residential, retail and hospitality buildings, in addition to a public square, a promenade and other leisure facilities.

The masterplan is based on the orientation of the Qiblah compass, which points towards the city of Mecca and specifically to the Holy Ka'bah. From this vantage point, the focus of the plan is the relationship established between the mosque and the iconic hotel, creating an emphatic sea gateway to Doha and Islamic culture as a whole. The four key components of Katara Phase iv are (a) the events square, (b) the mosque, (c) the residential quarter and (d) the iconic hotel and conference centre.

The events square is a multifunctional space devised as a large hexagon walled by arcades with a landscaped roof, which will service a number of different amenities. Surrounding it, there are small pockets of dedicated spaces also shaped as hexagons for family activities and local retailers. The adjacent mosque opens up into a monumental stairway, which descends right into the pond axis that refreshes the whole promenade and culminates in a large tank around which people can seat and meditate.

All units in the residential quarter are set one storey above ground floor, so visitors will drive up to the drop-off area in order to reach the lobby level of the apartment buildings. The latter are organised as L-shaped structures which rise from 2-storey (on the beachfront) up to 4-storey (at the back) of broken up volumes with interstitial waterfront views. The buildings on the South side are higher in order to reduce the negative visual impact of the adjacent St. Regis hotel, by creating an escalating profile which progressively reduces towards the beachfront.

Given that the residential buildings stand on a retail podium, there is a clear and natural distinction between public and private areas. Visitors can freely walk around and enjoy the ground level, whilst residents have their private courtyards and terraces above.

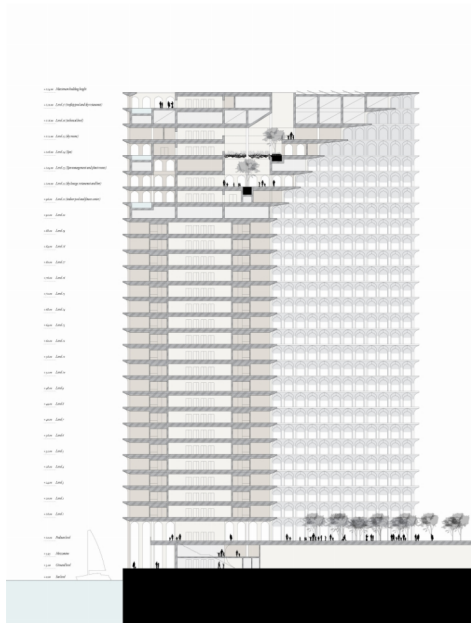
The hotel draws its inspiration from the metaphor of a 'gate', both religiously, in that it is aligned with Mecca, and visually, in that it will be perceived as a gate to those arriving to Doha via the future causeway, as well as those coming from land, travelling in the opposite direction. The ensemble is devised as a set of two 29-storey towers that form a perfect Islamic arch yet without touching each other; one being a hotel and the other serviced apartments.

Curving and extending on the top floors, they unfold in a monumental tree-like shape.

The towers and the lower volume of the conference centre stand partially on the water and are connected to each other by a square.

Looking at the towers, more closely, one finds layers of small floor-to-floor arches that create the facade in a series of arcades evocative of Islamic architecture, as if parts of a greater sum, which is the grand arch.

Architecturally, the building also pays homage to the exuberant late-modern architecture of the 1960s and 1970s, of the likes of Gordon Bunshaft, William Pereira, Tac, Kenzo Tange or Jørn Utzon, that forever left an imprint in the region. Following the competition and the conclusion of the concept design, the project is currently scheduled to be delivered as one of the key amenities for Qatar's 2022 FIFA World Cup.



Location: Katara Cultural Village, Doha, State of Qatar

Client: Katara Projects (Qatar Investment Authority) Technical Architects and Architects-of-Record Atkins Global

Scope of Services: Architecture, interior design and landscape

Project Brief: Mixed-use hotel (308 keys) and serviced apartments (127 units) towers, conference centre and marina plus low-rise residential (230 units), street retail, beachfront promenade, public square and mosque

Gross Built Area: 152,910 sq. m

Gross Leasable Area: 9,380 sq.m (retail)

Estimated Construction Cost: qar 2,623m (usd 720m)

Parking: 1,611 cars (63,794 sq. m)

Project Status: 2013 (invited competition/ concept design, 1st-prize) – 2017