

Subject Oman Botanic Garden | Final Press Release

Date 7th November 2017

Embargo Tuesday 14th November 2017

The breathtaking Oman Botanic Garden will be revealed to the world today by Arup, Grimshaw and Haley Sharpe Design (hsd), who have collaboratively delivered the engineering, landscaping, architecture and interpretative designs. Covering over 420 hectares, Oman Botanic Garden will be the largest within the Arabian Peninsula and in the world.

With guidance from His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said Al Said the garden will celebrate and conserve the country's botanic diversity which will be enjoyed by the people of Oman for generations to come. Two stunningly elegant biomes will contain a significant number of species. A high number of these are endemic and endangered. Located 35 kilometres from Muscat, in the foothills of the Al Hajar Mountains, the Oman Botanic Garden will be home to a visitor centre as well as education and research facilities.

The site chosen for the project is one of only a few locations in the world where the ancient sea bed is still visible after tectonic activity elevated the bed to a 100 metres above sea level. Arup and Grimshaw have worked with the existing natural ridges and ravines that traverse the site to design the buildings and walkways, within the spectacular undulating land.

Visitors will experience the entire flora of the Sultanate of Oman in just a few hours. The eight defined habitats of the country are sensitively arranged at the centre of the site, gracefully bounded by Jebel Sufra and the majestic Qurn Mubarak. Visitors will travel around the wadis, mountains and deserts of Oman within an immersive landscaped setting displaying only native species, many of which cannot be found anywhere else in the world.

Two of the more sensitive habitats are enclosed within separate biomes to mimic the natural temperature and humidity of the unique external environments. The Northern Biome is a sinuous glass enclosure which re-creates the varied habitats of the Northern Mountains, including their ancient terraces. The Southern Biome and its shimmering undulating glass form will enclose the rich and varied habitats found in the Dhofar region, where visitors will be immersed in a moist and green forest 'Khareef' setting.

Oman Botanic Garden delicately balances the diverse plant environments with visitor comfort, creating a design that uses passive and active shading, optimises natural daylight, cooling and efficient plant irrigation. Building form, shape and materials have been considered and selected in response to atmospheric conditions and the natural topography. Orientation of the sunlight, weather patterns and human behaviour have informed the design of visitor flow through the site. The buildings, along with the garden site, have been designed to achieve the globally recognised sustainable standard, LEED Platinum. With water such a precious resource, particularly in the region, Arup has developed a strategy for the irrigation and water features. Water is sourced sustainably and not a single drop is wasted.

Grimshaw Partner, Keith Brewis said, "The Oman Botanic Garden is an astonishing project with many layers of interwoven cultural and environmental significance. Its scale and diversity is truly world-leading, and we are honoured to work as the architects for a project that has the conservation of bio-diversity as a core design driver."

Subject Oman Botanic Garden | Final Press Release

Date 7th November 2017

Ed Clarke, Associate Director and Project Manager commented, “At **Arup** we have enjoyed the many unique challenges presented by the Oman Botanic Garden; from designing natural and authentic landscapes to recreating the cool mists of the Khareef. More than 700 of our multi-disciplinary engineers and specialist designers were engaged to explore and find solutions that would benefit such an ambitious and creative brief. The Oman Botanic Garden must surely be one of the most marvellous projects in the world.”

Alisdair Hinshelwood, Designer and Director at **hsd**, summed up, “The Oman Botanic Garden project set itself and the entire design team unique technical and cultural objectives, and aspirations. **hsd** has relished working on a project where the botanical, landscape and cultural heritage of Oman is being expressed through the detailed scientific research, technical design and sheer creative enthusiasm of the entire team, client and design alike.”

Working for the Diwan of Royal Court, **Arup**, **Grimshaw** and Interpretative Designers **hsd**, have provided full multi-disciplinary services from master planning through to construction design. The project is due to start on site imminently.

-ENDS

Notes to Editor

About Arup

Arup is the creative force at the heart of many of the world’s most prominent projects in the built environment and across industry. With over 80 offices in 35 countries Arup has more than 13,000 planners, designers, engineers and consultants delivering innovative projects across the world with creativity and passion.

Media@arup.com www.arup.com

About Grimshaw

Grimshaw is an award-winning, international architectural practice with offices in New York, London, Doha, Dubai, Kuala Lumpur, Melbourne and Sydney employing over 500 staff. Committed to providing architecture of the highest calibre, the company’s work is characterised by strong conceptual legibility, innovation and a rigorous approach to detailing, underpinned by the principles of enduring and sustainable design.

Complete architectural services are provided: master planning, feasibility studies and planning applications through tendering to construction and inspections on site. Grimshaw’s international portfolio covers all major sectors, and has been honoured with over 200 international design awards including the prestigious Lubetkin Prize.

communications@grimshaw.global <https://grimshaw.global>

About Haley Sharpe Design (hsd)

hsd, established in 1981, is an award-winning design consultancy with over 35 years of experience in the planning, design and production of interpretive and interactive visitor experiences. The company’s diverse portfolio includes social, historical and natural history museums, heritage buildings, children’s museums and science centres, as well as visitor attractions, branding and wayfinding. Projects range from small community-curated exhibitions and temporary installations, to over 40 major international museums.

With offices in Leicester (UK), Toronto and South Africa, **hsd**’s dedicated staff includes industry leaders in interpretation and design. With experience in the curatorial, management and design industries, **hsd** brings a coordinated design approach from project scoping and master planning, to creative development and realisation.

sophier@haleysharpe.com www.haleysharpe.com

High resolution images can be downloaded from the following site: <https://spaces.hightail.com/receive/Z6Fy3rdeo8/fi-a1bbeefd-ec0e-4b47-bb79-31006e23d6a1/fv-55fce354-3506-4180-bce9-036599d1a6d2/Oman%20Botanic%20Garden%20CGIs.zip>

Images copyright ©Arup/Grimshaw