



PRESS RELEASE

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BOSTON LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURAL FIRM WINS INTERNATIONAL COMPETITION TO DESIGN THE CENTRAL PARK FOR SHAMS ABU DHABI

Sorouh Investments, a publicly traded international real estate development firm in Abu Dhabi, UAE, has selected **CAROL R. JOHNSON ASSOCIATES, INC.** (CRJA), landscape architects of Boston, MA, to design the **Central Park** which will serve as a focal point of its **Shams Abu Dhabi** project — a major mixed-use development located on Al Reem Island off the northern shore of the capital city. CRJA successfully competed against three international design teams to win the competition. CRJA Principal **Bill Taylor** will lead the project for CRJA.

Shams Abu Dhabi on Al Reem Island is a landmark development within Abu Dhabi and one of the largest green developments in the region. It is intended to help meet the increasing demand for luxury residential housing and commercial office buildings in Abu Dhabi, which has witnessed expanded economic growth and a substantial increase in demand for residential buildings far beyond the existing supply in the market. When complete in 2011, the new city will accommodate approximately 100,000 people. It will be primarily a high-rise residential development comprising a series of themed neighborhoods linked by waterways and state-of-the-art transportation networks, with retail, office, entertainment venues and recreational activities interspersed throughout the community.

Under the prudent leadership of Abu Dhabi's President, His Highness Sheikh Khalifa Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, the project is being designed as a modern example of a green, sustainable city that will become an attractive place to live and work, reflecting the Sorouh's company slogan, "Life in Perfect Balance." Internationally renowned design and engineering firms, including



Arquitectonica, R.W. Armstrong & Associates, Inc., Aedas, and Perkins and Will, have been chosen to design selected plots within the overall development.

As envisioned in the developers' Master Plan, the **Central Park** will comprise approximately one million s.f. of open space and associated recreational amenities. Four kilometers of water canals are planned throughout the development, and the **Central Park** canals and lagoon will serve as the confluence of the city's canal and open space system. **CRJA's** winning design separates the park into three distinct areas: **The Island** is envisioned as a place that is easily accessible yet set apart from the city environment as an oasis of green. It is devoted to pure landscape with simple provisions to accommodate an ever-changing program of uses and activities. **The Tidal Lagoon** serves as a dramatic terminus of the canals which run through the park and provides a strong visual and physical connection to the island's waterfront and to nearby mangrove islands. The third area, **The Loop**, provides a one-way water route around the island for canal boats carrying park users and international visitors. Locks allow both flushing of canal water and also small boat access to and from the lagoon and the Persian Gulf.

The park design shows traditional respect for the privacy of families and women with children by separating the park into two domains, the upper park or **Belvedere**, and the lower park or **Plaisance**. The Belvedere is designed to be enjoyed in private pursuits, with places for children to play, or small cafes or sitting areas where groups can meet, while the **Plaisance** is an island with canal-side walks, a place to see and to be seen. Elevator cores and escalators on each side of the park move visitors vertically, while specially themed and lighted tunnels below the canals provide access from the island to the **Plaisance**.

The park includes retail shops and cafes bordering the canal promenades and three levels of parking below the entire park, serving park users and residents living around the park. The plan also features a new mosque, a landmark restaurant overlooking the "Water Theater," and an interpretive facility focused on the unique mangrove ecology.



Consulting Team Members

Carol R. Johnson Associates' consultant team includes EHAF Consultants of Cairo, Egypt, and Abu Dhabi, UAE, who will provide urban infrastructure; ZNA Associates of Cambridge, MA, the Team's urban design consultants and designers of the mosque and other cultural facilities within the park; Sites International of Cairo, Egypt and Dubai, UAE, who will serve as the Team's landscape architecture consultants; Arrowstreet Architects of Somerville, MA, the Team's retail architects; ARUP Partners of Cambridge, MA, who will provide special urban engineering services, and Walker Parking Consultants of Boston, MA.

Carol R. Johnson Associates, Inc. will serve as the prime consultant for both the Central Park design and development of the new city's public landscapes. CRJA is a 60-person, award-winning firm of landscape architects and environmental planners. Founded in 1959, CRJA serves a national and international clientele, from its offices at 115 Broad Street in Boston. The firm has a branch office in Knoxville, TN.