



# STREETS AHEAD



AS WELL AS PROVIDING THE HIGHEST STANDARD OF ROAD DESIGN QATAR IS MOVING AHEAD TO ENSURE THAT IT HAS SOME GREAT STREETS WHERE PEOPLE AND PLACE ARE THE PRIORITY



**THE CORNICHE**

IS PROBABLY QATAR'S MOST FAVOURITE STREET WHERE PEOPLE CAN ENJOY THE PUBLIC REALM

## LONG

before printing presses and magazines cities relied on town criers. These vocal busybodies were paid to shout or 'cry out' the news of the day as they walked from the heart of the city to its edge. It would take most of the day to reach the folk on the fringes and so those who lived in the streets nearest the center would have the advantage of early news and were said to be in the streets ahead.

Cities in the Gulf have been building roads at a world beating rate for the last decade and now as Qatar continues its programme to be the Gulf's most liveable city it has announced a

series of major infrastructure and road building contracts. Ashgal, the public works authority recently announced a five year programme of major and minor roads buildings adding up to billions. The programme involves creating new superhighways, improved junctions and Advance Traffic Management Systems (ATMS) and will equip Qatar with an enviable road network.

### **Streets play a vital role**

Meanwhile as the Gulf catches up and leapfrogs the road infrastructure of many Western countries Abu Dhabi in the UAE and

Qatar are already one step ahead in making sure that the public realm is considered and that roads will become more than just traffic movers. International best practice now recognises that whilst roads are a necessary evil providing space for petrol-driven vehicles the right of way is much more important. In the United States, terms like ‘complete streets’ are gaining vogue and recognise the vital role that streets play in the quality of life of cities. In many cases they are the key component of the public realm where the social and economic life of the city takes place.

The tradition of great streets is a European phenomenon and in the last few decades world leading initiatives in places like the Netherlands paved the way for a complete revision of the approach to designing the public realm of cities. Publication of ‘Better by Design’ in the UK and more recently the ‘Manual for Streets’ points the way to more sustainable solutions and gives clear guidance on how to achieve well-designed streets and spaces that serve the community in many more ways than simply providing roads space. These initiatives prioritise the pedestrian



DESIGNS FOR ATTRACTIVE INTEGRATED  
STREETS THROUGHOUT QATAR

and also public transport but mostly are concerned with making sure that the public spaces between buildings are designed for all users to create a safe, friendly, attractive and stimulating public realm. This is a cornerstone of a modern city and urban design.

The incredible popularity of the pedestrian space at Souq Waqif is made possible by ensuring that this is a safe and secure vehicle free environment but elsewhere in the downtown the lively active street frontages, shade canopies and narrow streets that calm the traffic all add to make for a strong identity and a vibrant, inviting and attractive public space that will eventually link together parks, squares and other public spaces like the proposed Grand Park and the ever popular Corniche.

Supplemented by street design codes that developers and government providers can follow, the major road programme will help maintain Qatar's commitment to individual transport. In the coming years the streets and Sikkas of Qatar's urban network will undoubtedly be designed as integrated complete streets where all users can enjoy a safe, attractive and well-connected experience as they move around the city. In keeping with best international practice Qatar is expected to have wonderful streets in readiness for 2022, streets where the pedestrian, the disabled, kids and visitors can enjoy efficient, seamless and comfortable access throughout the city. Qatar is paving the way to be streets ahead. ■

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