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### **Creating a contemporary institution with the context of an ancient culture – Woods Bagot's rises to the challenge in Qatar**

Woods Bagot reveals the first images of its acclaimed project at the campus for the College of the North Atlantic in Qatar. The project segues traditional Islamic culture with a modern infrastructure to produce a centre of academic excellence and a new landmark for Qatari culture.

Global architecture practice, Woods Bagot, was responsible for master planning, design and project management of the 25 building campus. It includes teaching spaces, workshops, offices, cafeterias, sports facilities, a 500-seat auditorium along with six smaller auditoria and is the largest pre-cast concrete projects completed in the Middle East.

The design team, based in offices in Dubai and Perth had to sensitively address the rapidity with which Qatari culture is undergoing change. This includes complex issues such as the segregation of sexes in education whilst ensuring that the University remains a creative hub for learning. As Qatar is a progressive Gulf state, flexibility had to be built into the planning of the design to address integrated education issues.

Ross Donaldson, Global Managing Director of Woods Bagot, said: "The design is a physical expression of Islamic culture's ambition towards accommodating modernity. This informs the planning and design, to create a university that generates continuity between the old and new."

The CNAQ campus replicates the traditional Middle Eastern town, which, typically, consists of a series of compound houses; these are formed of clusters of rooms based around courtyards that lead to an organic, meandering street network. This pattern of courtyards and houses finds a natural reflection in the warp and weft of Bedouin rugs, which provide an abstract representation of townscapes. A computer analysis of these rug patterns gave Woods Bagot a figure-ground basis for the master plan, and a circulation system that simulates that of a traditional Middle Eastern population centre.

Altogether there are ten main courtyards of different sizes which act as links between the buildings, providing cool transitional spaces for people moving around the campus. This creates a series of environmentally controlled exterior spaces that connect the interior.

Another of the key challenges faced during the CNAQ design process was combating the extreme heat of this desert location. The Qatari government was insistent that students should live on campus, thus climate abatement was a key concern. Woods Bagot has been able to dramatically reduce temperatures from the extreme heat of 60 degrees to a more manageable 30 degrees. This was achieved through the following techniques:

- Courtyards are shaded by building shadows and breeze funnelling is generated by the walkways around the edges as they open up to the courtyard. These "breezeways" seem to wrap around the lower levels of the buildings' façades to provide sheltered connections between different precincts of the campus.
- The imaginative use of landscaping and water (including grass and plantings) to capture Gulf breezes. Vegetation in the alleyways was reduced to 25°C, whereas in the exposed car parks readings were down to 30-37°C.

–Passive energy conservation was achieved through glazing that is protected from direct heat by pre-cast concrete and 5mm aluminium screens. These screens are also an interpretation of traditional mashrabyah screen, used to create cool cloisters with light filtered through decorative cut-out patterns.

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Notes to Editors

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## **About Woods Bagot**

International design practice Woods Bagot provides its clients with innovative design solutions that are both functional and inspiring. This is demonstrated by the successful delivery of a range of high profile projects within the commercial workplace, hospitality, mixed-use, education and science sectors.

Established in 2001, Woods Bagot's London studio now has a dynamic team of over 100. Since its inception, its young, integrated team has developed a diverse portfolio of significant projects including:

- Piccadilly Tower, Manchester
- Liverpool Central Village
- Minthis Hills Resort, Cyprus
- ANZ London
- Rolls building, London
- Walkers Cayman Islands