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Allen Jack+Cottier plans new community for ancient city of Xi'an

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One of the Four Great Ancient Capitals of China and home of the Terracotta Army, Xi'an is again experiencing a period of growth as the capital of Shanxi Province.

In May 2010, AJ+C won an international competition to master-plan a new community on an 1800 hectare site to the west of the old walled city of Xi'an.

Straddling the Feng River, the winning master plan uses the principle of ensuring the river's ecological sustainability as the project's design generator.

Rather than managing the flooding river with dams and levy banks, the design aims to use the natural benefits of the flood zones to create positive amenity for the site and its new occupants.

Wetlands on the east bank absorb run-off in flood periods, while a golf course occupies the unbuildable flood zone to the west.

Fingers of river feed through into the residential heart of the development, bringing an organic pattern of water and green space to lighten the formality of the residential blocks.

AJ+C cleverly used the Chinese character for Feng, the name of the river, to illustrate the design concept of smaller fingers of water feeding out horizontally from the mother river.

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