

Garitage Park

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MBB (Murphy Burnham & Buttrick Architects) has unveiled its competition-winning design for the final phase of Garitage Park, a forty one-acre complex in a growing district of Sofia, Bulgaria. The New York architecture and design firm won a 2017 international competition to serve as design architect for Garitage Park's first tower projects, and MBB also serves as design architect for the site's new K-8 school.

With several major multinational companies located nearby, the extensive mixed-use development by Garitage Investment Management will serve as home for a largely international mix of residents, says Taylor Aikin, AIA, an Associate with MBB. It is the second large project in the area by Garitage with residences and a school.

Oriented around central gathering spaces including lawns, a skating rink and play fountains, MBB's winning entry for the Phase IV project includes two high-rise condominium buildings of about 270,000 square feet each, and a 538,000-square-foot commercial tower with shops, restaurants, and event spaces situated at the base. The new buildings engage the ground plane on multiple levels, in a design "created to concentrate activity and invite community participation," says Aikin.

The apartment towers have "active façades" of light-

weight, precast high-performance concrete, operable windows, and terraces with sliding sunshades of perforated metal to control daylighting. Residents will enjoy impressive views to Bulgaria's snow-capped Vitosha Mountains. The gridded towers with activated terraces offer a modern echo vernacular housing in the region.

"Most important, we've created a memorable entry sequence and a vibrant public realm that entices community members and gives life to the new neighborhood," says Jeffrey Murphy, FAIA, founding partner with the award-winning firm MBB. "The towers recede, part of the visual backdrop of the urban fabric, as the spaces between buildings -- as much as the buildings themselves -- give life to the community."

Garitage Park's master plan and first buildings are designed by British firm Stephen George International, with subsequent work by Sofia's Planning Architectural Studio. For this final phase, MBB collaborates with Planning Architectural Studio, architect of record, and landscape architect RKLA Studio.

MBB (Murphy Burnham & Buttrick Architects) has won an international competition for the design of Garitage Park Phase IV, the new, 1.6 million-square-foot high-rise development for mixed uses in Sofia, Bulgaria. The winning entry features two 270,000-square-foot high-



rise condominium towers and a 538,000-square-foot high-rise commercial tower with retail, restaurants and amenities on multiple levels and an iconic entry plaza. The project also includes approximately 6 acres of landscaping and site amenities, and 645,000 square feet of underground parking.

“The design emerged from our urban sensibility and desire to create vibrant public spaces within the development,” said MBB in a statement. “We recognized that as architects, we tend to design towers from above, as objects, But in reality, they are experienced by most people at the ground plane as environments — part of the visual backdrop of the urban fabric. It is the space between buildings, as much as the buildings themselves, that gives life to a community.”

To that end, the key design objectives were to create a grand point of arrival, a sense of enclosure and human scale between the towers with an elevated perimeter path, and to design the towers themselves with a focus on the pedestrian experience as well as the quality of the spaces themselves. Both the urban entry sequence and the positioning of the towers seek to highlight

Sofia’s natural beauty—the dynamic views of the snow-capped Vitosha Mountains.

The Phase IV project completes the master plan for this development, creating a premier living community in the fast-growing city of Sofia. The preceding phases, currently under construction, include 375,000 square feet of midrise commercial development, 235,000 square feet of midrise multifamily apartments and townhouses, a 32,000 square foot sports complex, and a 215,000-square-foot international school for children in kindergarten through 8th grade.

The Garitage Park master plan and Phase I were designed by British firm Stephen George International, and Phases II and III were designed by Sofia-based Planning Architectural Studio, with MBB participating as design architect for the Phase III school. For Phase IV, MBB will collaborate with Planning Architectural Studio as the architect of record, and RKLA Studio for landscape design.



