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Eco-sensitive community in northern India harvests rainwater



Envisioned as a nature retreat for city dwellers, the Woodside is perched on extremely steep terrain that includes level differences of approximately 100 meters within the site boundaries. The development's 37 cottages and the internal roads were strategically placed to minimize cut and fill operations as well as to preserve the existing vegetation and body of water on site. **Locally sourced** natural materials, such as stone, timber and slate, were primarily used for construction.

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“The cottages are positioned on the slope in a manner that ensures unobstructed **panoramic views** of the scenic hills of the Shimla valley; the largest ones enjoy the farthest view,” the architects explained. The lush landscape is left mostly untouched save for agricultural uses. “This is achieved by maintaining a minimum height difference between the roof level of each cottage and the ground level of the preceding cottage uphill.”

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To minimize energy usage, the cottages, which come in four different types, all feature thick outer walls to provide a thermal mass to reduce reliance on air conditioning. The community's **rainwater harvesting** systems also help reduce water use. The collected water is used for irrigation or is stored in a sump downhill for later use.

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