

Londoner buys 'Great Britain' for \$63.3mn

Rebecca Bundhun / 18th January 2009

A Dubai-based real estate developer has bought the Great Britain-shaped island on The World archipelago for \$63.3 million.

On Sunday SafMus Holdings confirmed it is the owner and developer of the 11-acre island being built off the coast of Dubai.

One of the partners in the venture, Safi Qurashi, told *Arabian Business* that he was determined the island would not become "a Disney version of the UK".

The developer intends to build a mix of residential, hotels and commercial projects that will reflect British architecture.

But Qurashi – who grew up in Balham, London - denied reports that it will have its own traditional London pub.

"We are not looking to replicate any building from the UK," he said.

"We want to take the inspiration from some of the designs of buildings. We want to do it more in a tasteful fashion."

The island is still in the very early stages of design and the developer says this will be a long-term project taking four to five years.

"We want it to be environmentally friendly. We don't want it to be an island just for the super-rich," Qurashi added.

"We want people to take pride in owning something and that it is instantly recognisable as the island of the UK. We want people who sail past it to instantly know this is the UK island."

Mustafa Nagri is the other partner in the SafMus Holdings venture.

The World islands have attracted widespread interest from celebrities including David Beckham and Rod Stewart.

SafMus Holdings also owns Moscow on the man-made archipelago.