HOUSE OF CULTURE & ARTS

Beirut is a city where important social, economical, political, urban and architectural differences are held. These aspects are the guidelines and predominant factors for the designing and building of a "house of culture" for and in the city.

Our project is based on four main features:

1. History and identity - 2. Urban context

3. Program relationships - 4. Sustentability and enviroment

1. History and identity.

The first step was to ask us what was Beirut's historical truth?

In this investigation process we found a picture of the "green line" which is a physical limit generated by the civil war. This divided the city in two leaving Christians on the east and Muslims on the west.

After a while, this residual space that was land of nobody, was taken by nature that covered it generating a green mantle. This natural phenomenon transformed a gray image in a green one, evoking reconciliation and a healing space.

THE HOUSE OF ART &CULTURE
PEDESTRIAL STREET
GREEN LINE
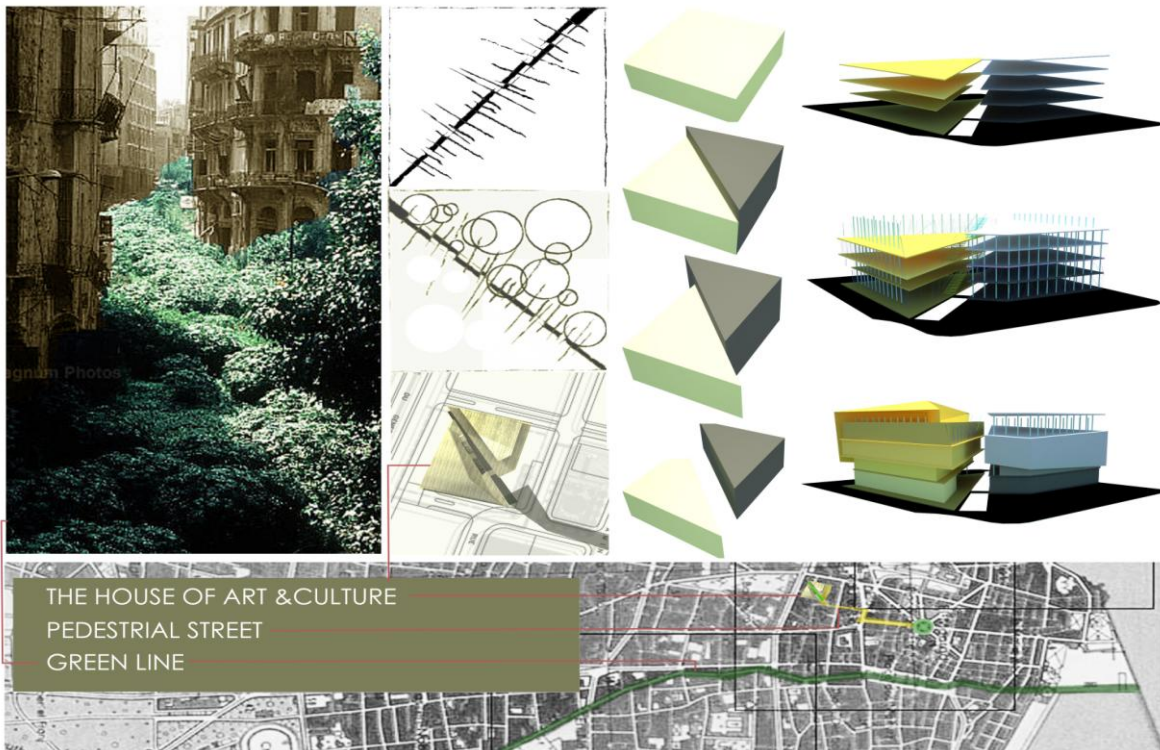
Inspired by this, the project design seeks to represent this spatial situation in its architecture, as a symbol of the conciliation and peace of the Lebanese people.

The project aims to be a representation of the collective memory of Beirut citizens and an icon of reconstruction. Its architectural body integrates many different architectural languages as a symbol of the whole world integration, and also, as to be an open door to the world.

2. Urban Context.

After understanding the urban context, the project was situated as to be the ending of the pedestrian axis that goes from De L´Etoile Square along the El Maraad Street.

It is configured as an important landmark that extends the pedestrian axis. It generates a new public green area and crowns the end of the street. All these are achieved and prompted by designing a first floor square and an important double floor underground area where the Exhibition Hall is located.

3. Program relationships.

As was mentioned before, the project's main objectives are to be a rallying point for culture, a place of social conciliation and the closure of the pedestrian axis.
This is achieved by the construction of two buildings that confront themselves in the diagonal of the site, that is the projection of the pedestrian axis and the place of nature generation.

These two buildings shelter two different types of programs. On one hand, the small one encompasses the ordinary and more technical program, such as the reception hall, exhibition spaces, work and training rooms, documentation centre, cafeteria, commercial spaces, miscellaneous spaces and technical rooms. On the other hand, the facing volume covers the more reserved program with more restricted flux, such as the performance and conference hall, administration and cinemateque.

Both building are independent one from the other, each of them comprise own elevators, emergency ladders and ramps for vertical circulation. However, every level is horizontally connected in a way to achieve better connection, fluctuation and spatial and programmatic relationships.
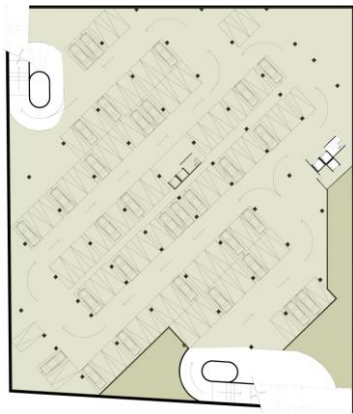
Level -2

Level -1

Level	Spaces	Areas Programme	Areas Project
-4	Parking	2500	2660
-3	Parking	2500	2660
-2	Parking	2500	2660
-1	Delivery area	300	500
-1	Administration	451	500
-1	National cinemateque	286	350
-1	Miscellaneos spaces	300	330
-1	Technical rooms	500	450

Level 1
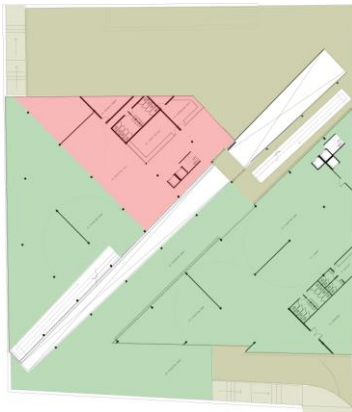
Level 2

Level	Spaces	Areas Programme	Areas Project
1	Reception information	435	440
1	Exhibition Spaces	2434	3000
2	Documental Center	640	700
2	Small multimedia performance hall	340	400

Level 3

Level4

Level	Spaces	Areas Programme	Areas Project
3	Work and training rooms	670	760
3	Meeting rooms	144	195
3	Movie Theater	210	250
4	Large performance and conference hall	1075	595
4	Cafeteria and comercial spaces	510	560
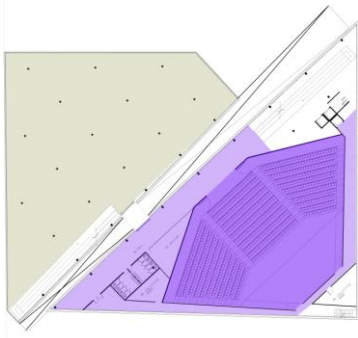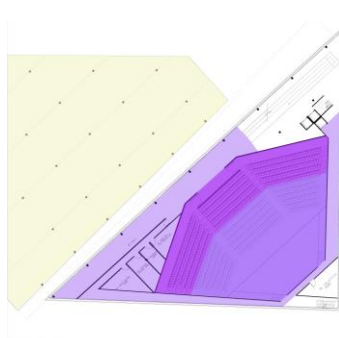
Level	Spaces	Areas Programme	Areas Project
5	Large performance and conference hall		482
6	Large performance and conference hall		360

Spaces	Areas Programme	Areas Project
Total useful surface	15.201	17.852
Horizontal and vertical circulation	700	830

Level 5   **Level 6**

4. Sustainability and environment.

4.1 Sun and light management:

The building separated in two sustained a green crack that besides being a historical fact also acts as a solar filter, a skylight directing sunlight inwards the project .

4.2 Cooling management:

The project uses two kinds of "ventilated skins":

On the one hand, the vegetable facades that work as a sun filter screen, and also, as a thermo regulator by cooling the inner skin and filtering the outside heat.[1]

The climbing plant selected is the Myoporum parvifolium. Commonly known in USA as 'myoporum', and in Australia 'Creeping Boobialla'. It is from the family of Myoporaceae and originally from Southwest Asia.

On the other hand, a fabric façade, which works as a second skin, projecting a shadow that contribute to a ventilated and sun protected intermediate area. The structure consists in tensile projected from the beams and poles.

By dividing the volume in two it enlarges the outside contact surface permitting more ventilation entrances, and also, the wind and natural air to cross all over the volume mass provoking it to lose heat.

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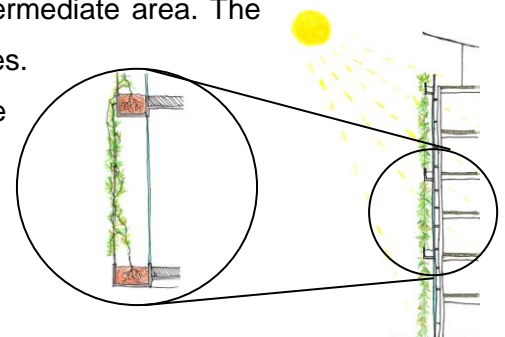
[1] Del Rio Javier, "Hombre ambiente, energía y arquitectura: Apuntes Curso Acondicionamiento físico ambiental" Escuela de Arquitectura UFT, Fondo de mejoramiento de la didáctica vicerrectoría académica y desarrollo. Universidad Finis Terrae 2005, pag 74, 75.