

### **The House of Arts & Culture**

This competition offers an important opportunity to construct a building to serve the people of Beirut. The proposals set out a solution to this difficult site addressing all the constraints as we perceive them and propose a building that would be fit for purpose and provide a centre for all the artistic and creative forces within Beirut and for the whole population of Lebanon.

We have divided this report into various headings that describe the proposals and offer by way of explanation the reasoning behind the design.

### **Spatial Planning and Movement**

The constraints of the site are the physical size, the noise associated with the elevated main road behind plot 128-4, the narrow streets east and west of the plot and the formation of an urban "green" space along the Rue de Ghalghoul.

It is important that this building is visible, friendly and welcoming to the visitor. It must be clear what programme of activities are taking place and what is planned. The building must communicate with the city if it is to become an integral part of the cultural life of Beirut and Lebanon. The building should be a symbol of the peaceful future and be a building block of civilised life within the state.

The building addresses the Rue de El Maarad and the Rue Mere Gellas and the proposed urban green space. Activities are visible on the Rue de Ghalghoul elevation. Wall climbing lifts give a sense of permanent activity within. A restaurant is visible to the passerby on the first floor. Large advertisements will form an integral part of the façade. Night time projections will advertise the activities within. This elevation will be active and dynamic and is in contrast with the other three elevations that are muted and secure.

The entrance is placed on the corner of the square with a pedestrian ramp leading to a lobby placed three meters higher than street level. This external space will be a natural meeting point away from the noise of the traffic and shielded by trees.

The entrance lobby contains an information desk and ticket office. This space will invite the visitor to the central atrium; natural light will attract the visitor to the centre of the building. The atrium space on the entrance floor will be dramatic, - a busy exchange, "a

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market place." The building and all the activities will be easy to understand and by placing the vertical wall climbing lifts at the four corners, it will make visible dynamic movement through the space like a busy railway station or airport. The spacial planning has been set out to create public movement and interaction through most of the building and give opportunity to visit several components – to look at an exhibition , see a film, have dinner go to a concert or read a book.

### **Acoustics**

The South Building. acoustically protects the atrium and more importantly the main hall from traffic noise, the elevated road is a main artery of the city and will be active at all times. The other hall and cinema are placed below ground and positioned to be acoustically isolated.

### **Light.**

The building has large areas of external masonry walls the reasoning for this is to provide protection from direct sunshine and provide acoustic isolation. If the outer walls contained excessive glazing the building would be expensive to run –too hot during the day and too cold at night. It is proposed to have automatic electrically operated brise soleil at the top of the north facing slanted glazing directing light down into the space and preventing direct sunlight . The exhibition space has been located on the third and fourth floor in order to exploit the natural light for the exhibitions.

### **Structure.**

It is prosed to have a reinforced concrete structure with a transfer slab above the car parks levels. The main loads of the main hall structure are tranmitted through the basements independantly.

### **Building services**

There is a large technical room across the full width of the building at ground level which will enable ease of access for plant and provide cross ventilation and supply air to the lower atrium, there is also adequate space on the roof for airhandling plant. It is proposed to use the atrium as a chinmey naturally ventilating the entire building, pulling air from the ground level to be exhausted at the top of the atrium.

**Car Parking**

The car park levels are accessed by two separate ramps that cross the entire width of the building, these ramps isolate the rear of the building so that the activities within are not adjacent to the rear boundary. The car parks allow for 270 spaces' access to the building is by way of the four vertical circulation shafts.

**In conclusion**

The building has a life of its own; a cultural haven where people interact; a forum for all artistic and creative endeavour. The programme of activities will be constantly changing and appeal to diverse audiences. The House of Arts and Culture will play an important part in the renaissance of Lebanese culture and offer a future of peace and civilisation.

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