

Introduction

The first glimpse thinking about “The house of Arts and Culture” was the anxiety of “Finally” having a “Public Space” in Beirut. This city that had many civilizations passing through, many political conflicts, as well as war, has the right of having an urban public space for its citizens, for at least meeting each other and sharing life lumber and burden...

No doubt, the war of 1975 was the most powerful harm on the city and on its urban evolution. After war, Beirut has revitalized and started to organize itself among other cities. Taking into consideration the Beirut Central District and the new masterplan, as well the new infrastructure surrounding it, that gave this city a new taste of urban space and design.

The main idea about creating a new cultural space was a challenge for me on two ways: First as a Lebanese and second as an architect. The first part is about a Lebanese man who lived almost the entire civil war and had enough of its consequences. Then after that civil, another new crises flowed over Lebanon in 2005 and destructed new-born hope.

This total chaos led the social and cultural life in Lebanon to a steep slope that never comes to an end, especially that same conflicts remain active till these days.

The House of Arts and Culture proposal was a hit and a stroke into this darkness to reincarnate the culture in Beirut, same as before back in 60's and 70's.

The Architectural Concept

As I mentioned earlier in the introduction, the need of an urban public space/domain is the first major aspire for this city and its citizen. And straightforward, from that need, I thought about creating an open environment accessible almost to everybody. The idea of creating steps from the highest point in the land till the lowest one is a reminder of the lengthy step “Saint Nicolas” in Gemmayzeh Area, which is a remarkable space for Socio-cultural activities and a live performance show all over the year. It reminds also, about the new modern age in Europe when citizens transferred classical and neo-classical steps and plazas to a modern arts-exchanging places for artists and designers...

Another main architectural concept that enriches and supports the first one is the elevated building above that step. Why do we need to have that building elevated is simply not to block interaction and to feel that open public space as well to create an outdoor area for arts exchange.

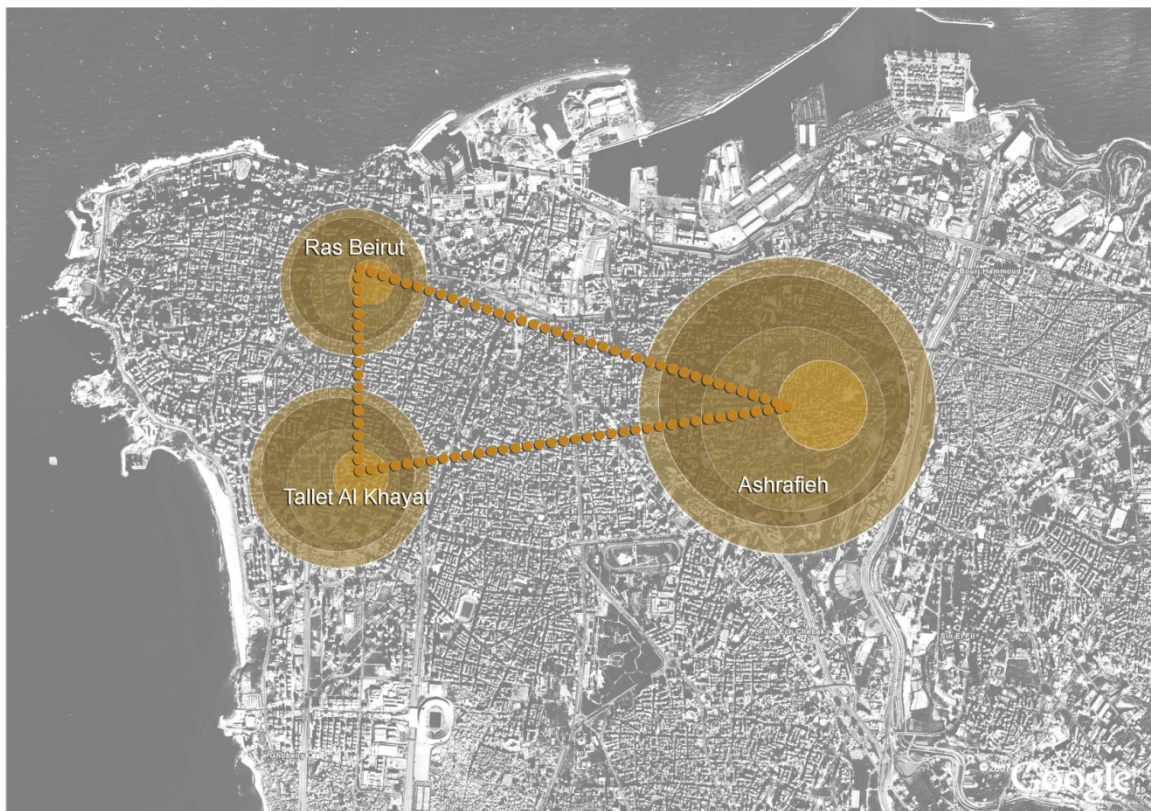
The third point enhancing the implementation of those ideas is: How to hold that Elevated Building? And what will be the structural challenge supporting all that mass? Many ideas rose when thinking about that, but the most influential one, was related to the great city Beirut.

This city is the base of a remarkable element that will be an attraction example for the entire world...thus I thought about having this city and its Topographical Elements to be the base of the House of Arts and Culture.

As we all know, Beirut has 3 hills in its geographical evolution. On these hills stand 3 major districts which are Ashrafieh, Tallet Al Khayat and Ras Beirut.

By having three hills underneath the building, I literally achieve the idea of **“Beirut would be THE BASE of HAC”**.

Simply the support of HAC is BEIRUT!



Many constraints faced me while implementing this idea into the building since the built-up area is limited to a certain number and the plot limit is too small comparing to what had the program and to what in my mind to achieve. One of the solutions I thought about those hills is to transform them into Supportive Walls to clear the Public Space Steps from Columns.

The third part of the building remains free of hill and an implementation of free-shaped columns would be incorporated for backup support.

Conclusion

After a long research on the PUBLIC SPACE, GREEN BUILDINGS and many CULTURAL SPACES, I hope achieving by my concept the idea of creating a real interactive space that serve up the culture, the Art, the Lebanese community and their social interactivity, as well as other worldwide societies.

Thank you,

