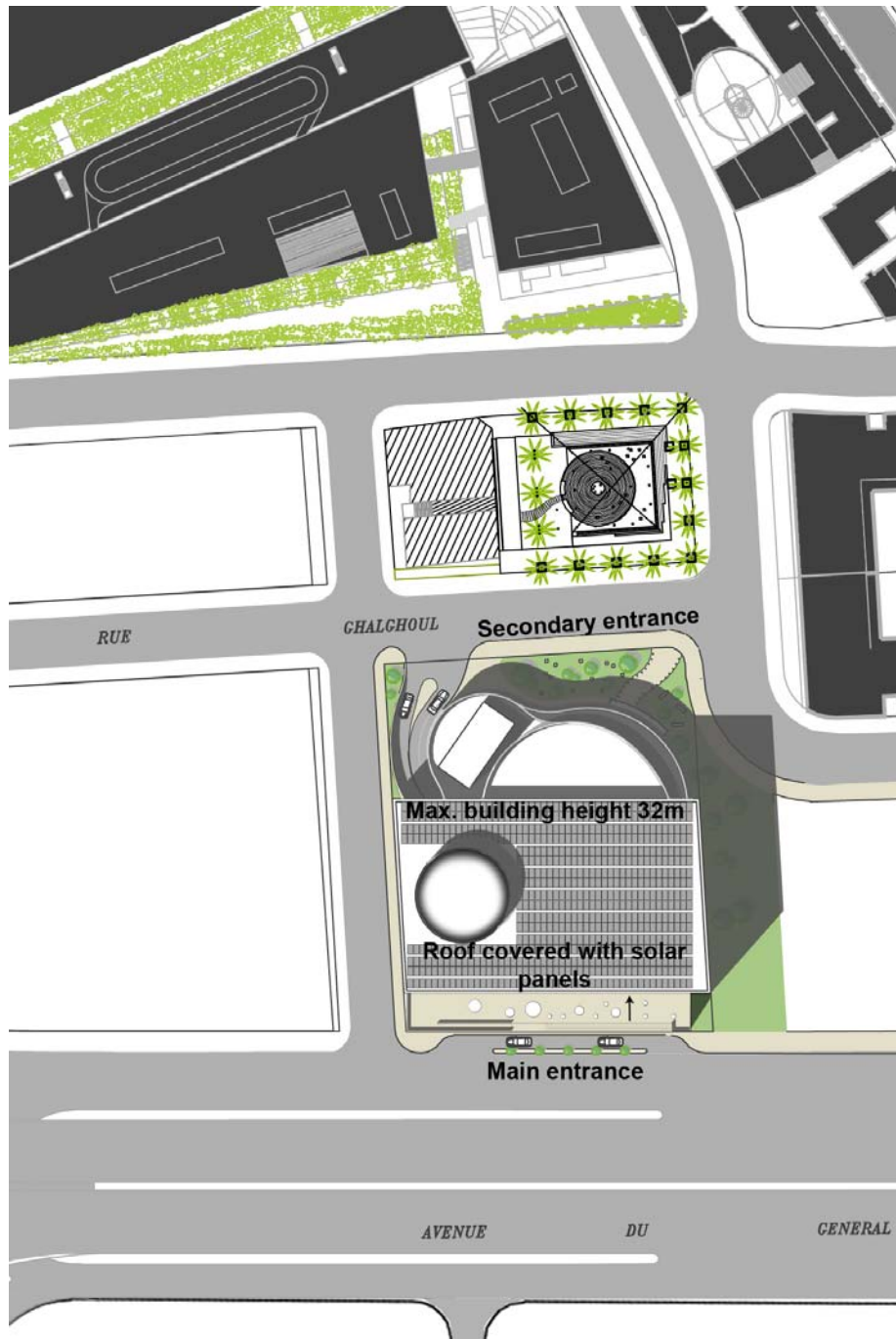


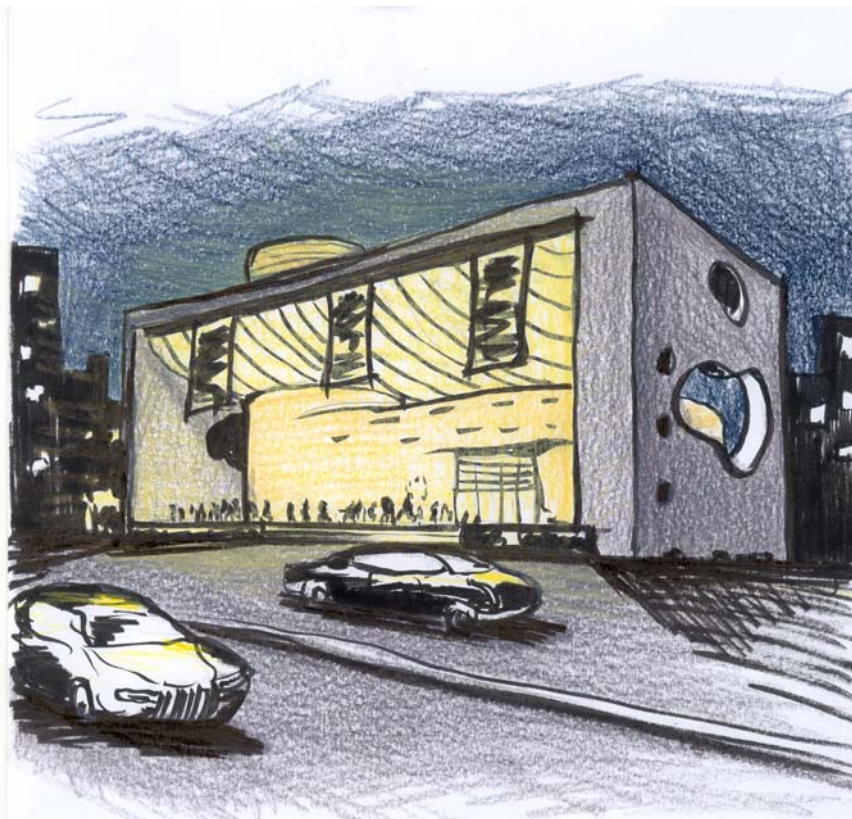
The House of Arts and Culture

The project is located along a very important highway of Beirut, bordering the newly built downtown. At an urban scale, the project aims to be a transition between modern Beirut and the more ancient one; a transition between urban chaos and the more rational planning of the French mandate.



This difference in the urban fabric of central Beirut is at the basis of the project concept. On the Ring side, a huge arch acts as the stage of an **urban theater**, attracting the drivers of the highway. It covers a big plaza designed as an open air theater with steps where people can sit and watch street artists and various happenings. This is where the entrance of 'The House of Arts and Culture' will be located, amid permanent artistic activity.

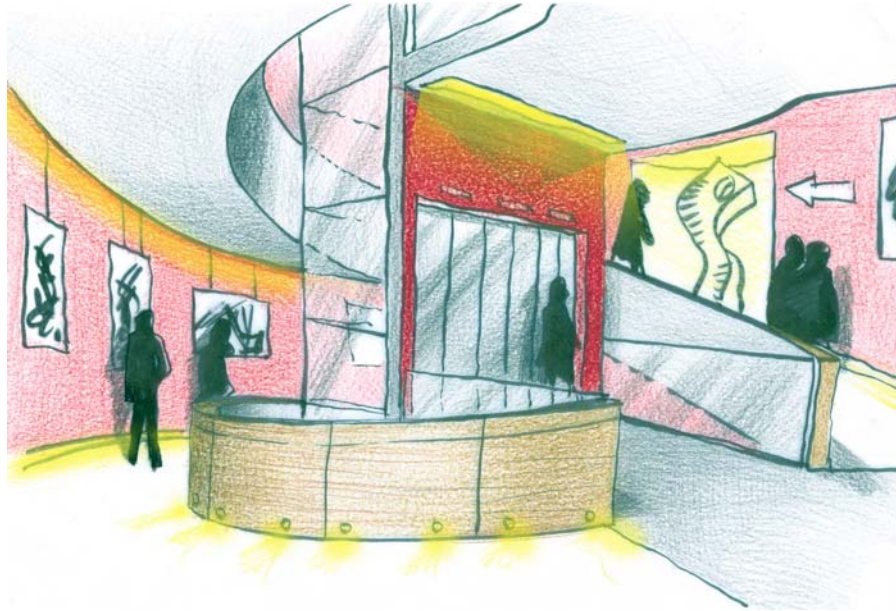
At night, **the illuminated arch and plaza** will be a focal point for all cars driving on the highway. In addition, the plaza floor is glazed with opaque skylights that bring a soft light to all the art workshops located at the first basement. By night, the skylights create a pattern of light adding dynamism to the plaza.



The volume of the building as seen from the lower level, the BCD level, is softer to avoid a volumetric clash with the architecture of the BCD. The round shapes and volumes of the building are reminiscent of silos, Silos of Culture. In contrast with the big Arch which is clad in dark grey Alucobond, the building is clad with yellowish beige stone, in harmony with the BCD buildings, to smoothen the project's urban impact. The backstage tower acts as a huge billboard to promote the building's various activities.

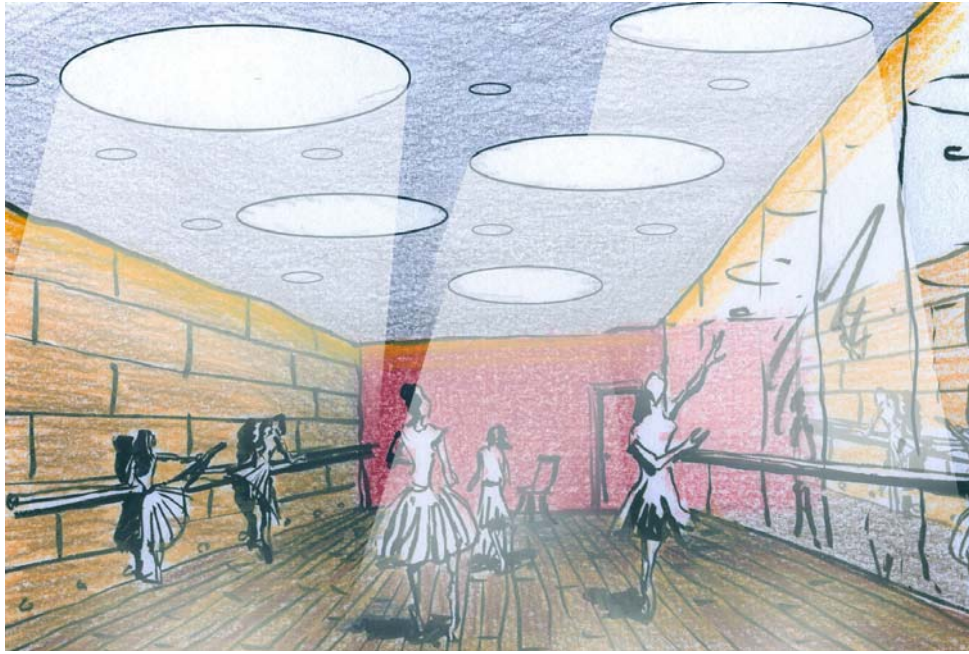
Upon entering the building from the ground floor plaza, a visitor could choose to rest at the cafeteria with its panoramic terrace overlooking the Beirut Central District, visit the bookshop or reach one of the different floors for cultural activity or workshops. Three panoramic elevators and a ramp that can be taken in either direction connect the various floors.

The ramp is bordered by temporary exhibitions on the walls or in various niches created in the dead angles of the building, which enrich the visitor's processional journey.



While going up, the ramp leads to the library on the first floor, but its final destination is a very big exhibition hall on the second floor. This 1000 m² hall is located within the mass of the Arch. Its structure consists of a pre-stressed concrete slab which allows the space to be completely devoid of columns, making it flexible for exhibition. This large hall also overlooks the Beirut Central District through openings in the concrete structure at its north side. The mass of the ramp protrudes the roof of the Arch and then funnels down to collect rainwater. The roof of the exhibition hall is covered with solar panels occupying a surface area of about 1500 m² reducing the building's energy consumption.

The ramp passes from various workshops and **classrooms** located at the first basement and leads to the concert hall at the second basement level. The main concert hall foyer is glazed on its northeastern side creating a secondary entrance from the BCD, provided with facilities for the disabled and another ticket booth. A bar and a cloakroom are located in the foyer, near the entrance of the concert hall, to serve the visitors and make them feel at ease while waiting for the show or conference to start.



Service stairs and elevators connect all the floors to the service entrance in the parking. Visitors who have parked in either of the parking levels can reach the external plaza through especially dedicated stairs and elevators located in the mass of the Arch.