

Objectives

Beirut is a city of many cultures, it is contrasting, from the people to the projecting peninsula it lies on. The House of Arts and Culture will be a living breathing heart of dynamism to connect the community. Accelerating artistic freedom and allowing the community at large to discover new worlds.

The House is to be the first of its kind in Beirut with its key objective being to support the creativity of the city and Lebanon as a whole.

The site of the project is on the heights of a redevelopment expanse of the Ghalghoul district. New infrastructures such as the House and improved transportation will modernise and reinvigorate an area of Beirut which sadly fell into disrepute over many decades.

Concept

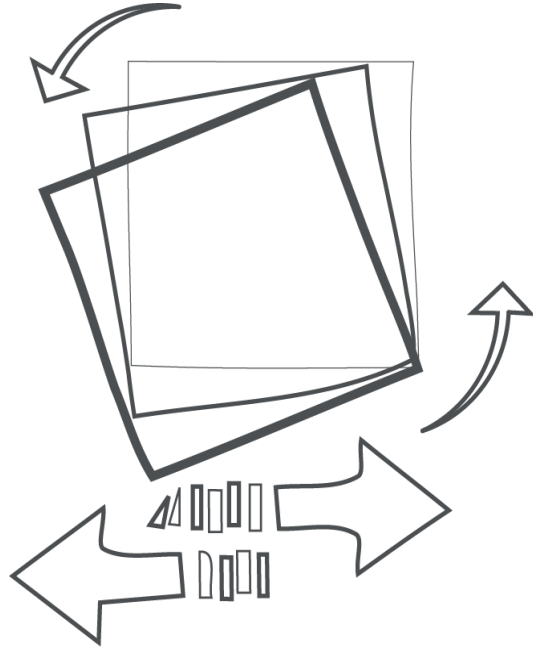
The building and its thriving new community are expected to play an important role in the major reconstruction of downtown Beirut. This larger project is expected to support 100,000 employees and 40,000 inhabitants. The House's attraction, interest and arts will be a critical focal beacon to them, Beirut and Lebanon.

This focal point to the community is conceptualised as a perfect cube, within it is located the old Beirut. The twist in the cube represents the different eastern and western influences in Lebanese culture, the interconnecting stair case illustrates bringing the community together. And this goal is strengthened by the interleaving façade elements that not only slide and wrap the shifting parts but entwine them.

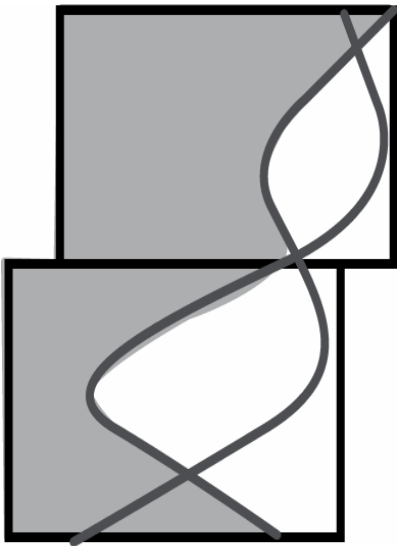
The cedar façades natural scent permeates the foyer welcoming visitors to The House. It is intriguing for all and therefore it will attract young and old generations. The façade's wooden material adds warmth, its composure a break from uniformity, both will invite new visitors and art forms.

The design is modern yet symbolic, eye catching and hence able to project the capital city in the art scene.

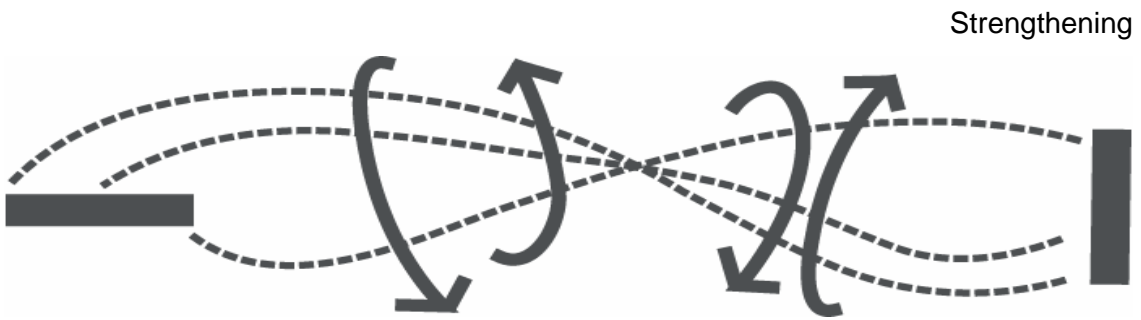
Conceptual Diagrams



Twisting



Connecting



Strengthening

Functional and Spatial Organisation

The building is accessible by pedestrians from the North of the building at its primary entrance and on the East and West sides of the building at its secondary entrances.

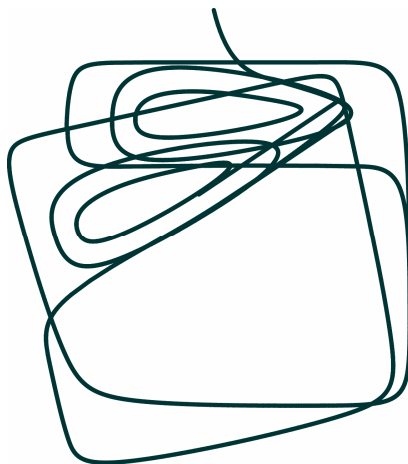
At the primary entrance the vale of the façade is lifted up inviting the visitors into the generous atrium space. There they are met by the grand staircase which leads them to discover different spaces of the building, it ascends 7 levels above the ground and descends 1 level below. The atrium will serve as an animated gathering space with a visual connection to the various levels.

In addition to the grand stair case people can travel throughout the building using the two speed lifts which go from level -4 to level 7. Parking covers levels -4 through to -2.

On level -1 there are two performance halls, one of 800 seats and another of 250 seats. Additionally on this floor there resides a back stage area for artists and performers which is connected to both of the halls.

On the ground floor the ticket office, information desk and security can be found. Administration offices of the building are spread over levels 1, 2 and 3.

On level 3 of the building the shifting of the stair case occurs, its spiral moves from the East side of the building to the West side. In this upper twist of the building visitors can find open plan exhibition space on level 4.



The façade becomes an open area space in the atrium in the last 3 floors. And on level 5 the cinematic next to the cinema and book shop are located. A key feature of the cinema is that the projector wall is against the face of the façade. An opening in the wooden façade elements allows the audience a view out of the building when the projector wall is raised before performances. This allows the cinema to be more flexible to support different performances and allow visitors a unique view over the city.

Level 6 contains the diverse workshops and level 7 the library, audio visual department and restaurant. On this top level there are splendid views for diners and library visitors.

Suggested Technical and Building Solutions

It is suggested that the wooden façade elements are constructed from cedar not only due to Lebanon's close tie to its respective cedar taxon but because of cedar's graphic impact in its finished material. It is noted that large deforestation has taken place in both Lebanon and Cyprus therefore another wood may be deemed more appropriate.

The wooden façade is self carrying allowing for a glass ceiling. The wooden façade elements act as sun screens which is very important for the climate in respect of the glass fronted base façades.

The main performance halls will be sound protected through 1.2m walls. In addition to these walls there are other structural elements such as the fire escape stair case which are located throughout the building. The fire escape exits are positioned on the East and West of the building.

On top of level 3 it is suggested that there is a large white beam to support the counter lever on the South and West parts of the building.