

Architectural Concept

The design I have prepared for this International Architectural Competition voices a fundamental urban protection concerning activities that will take place within the House of Arts and Culture in the city of Beirut.

The design suggests an appropriate configuration of internal spaces suitable for introspection and for the sensitive disclosure of art and culture conveyed from the permanent artistic creativity and such spaces are equipped with architectural elements that capture and filter the natural light for its internal use, according to the centuries-old tradition of Arabian architecture.

The use of concrete in its full technological expression allowed us to interpret different structural natures to obtain the spatial diversity required by the architectural typologies that the program suggests.

Thus, the architecture is defined by the structure which in its turn expresses the scale of the city through its design.

The analysis of the proposed program for this project allowed us to classify on one side and according to its function the spaces allocated to cultural artistic research and on the other side the representational spaces where through the different types of artistic expression the contemporary production of Art and Culture can be displayed so as to stimulate a live and permanent dialogue with the population.

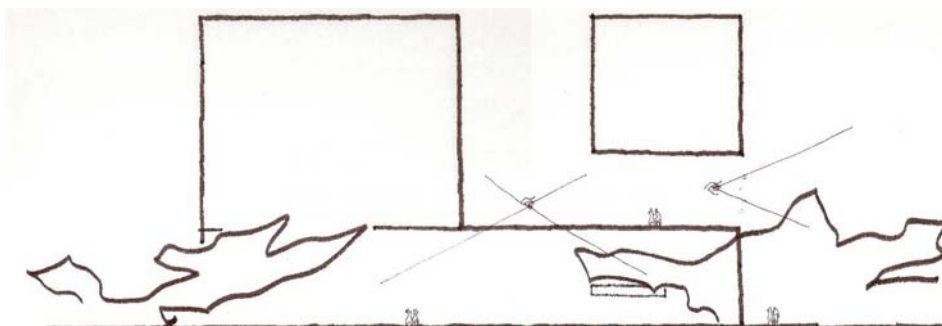
Furthermore, such spaces constitute sectors which demand different structural solutions to cover clear spans of 15 meters for the research sector and to cover clear spans of 25 meters for the exhibition and public performances sector.

Therefore the design of the House anticipates two architectural blocks set on a base which houses the service areas of the architectural complex.

Each block achieves a unique configuration and exhibits through its geometric mass the complexity of spaces articulated according to the program.

The building masses that comprise the architectural complex define in the void between them a simple and significant space – a small Courtyard of Culture – open to the city and designed to encourage gatherings and conviviality as well as the most diverse and spontaneous artistic and cultural manifestations of the population. It's possible to connect the Courtyard with adjoining buildings through elevated walkways built over the streets, thus integrating the Courtyard of Culture to the blocks of the Ghalghoul sector.

The greater building mass which houses the theatres and exhibition areas rests on the base whilst the building mass that houses the research areas rises above the ground to configure the open space, the Courtyard of Culture, which opens up wide vistas to the city landscape.

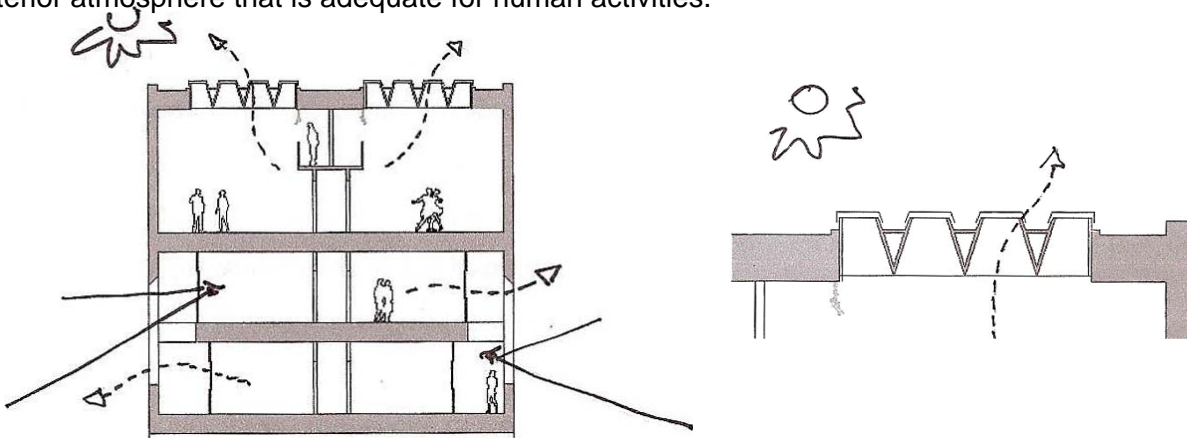


1. The block of the research areas sector

This block, elevated from the ground, houses the Documentation Centre, the National Cinematheque, Workshops and Training rooms and is articulated with the Great Hall, with the Projection Room and with the shop within the access area through the Reception Hall.

It is plastically defined by its structure which consists of high balanced beams braced by the floor slabs.

The design of the architectural elements that capture the natural daylight from the ceiling and at the same time provide ventilation for the external areas not only emulates, contemporarily, the purest Arabian architecture tradition but also produces a protection against urban noise and creates an interior atmosphere that is adequate for human activities.



Moreover, the element of support with a square section, composes an impressive 25 meters high vertical hall travelled over by panoramic metal lifts.

The façades of the suspended block facing General Fouad Chehab Avenue and Ghalghoul Street are equipped with led displays on the outside wall, measuring 15m x 14,20m and like great urban screens they display not only the events pertaining the House of Arts and Culture but also works as art to the city of Beirut, delineating a permanent and creative dialogue with the city.

Our drawing, for example, illustrates images of Pablo Picasso's temporary exhibition.

Public access is centralized and is characterized by a lowered space. This lowered space reinforces the welcoming of the people who can get here the information about their destination.

2. The block of the halls and exhibition spaces

This block houses, throughout several floors, the 800-seat hall the 300-seat black box, the great hall for exhibitions, the meeting rooms, and the administrative areas of the complex.

It is designed as a great solid sculptural form where filled spaces are predominant over hollow spaces. The hollow spaces carved into this great parallelepiped reveal, within the composition, the large Performance and Conference hall, the generous meeting rooms and administration terraces.

We propose, for the exhibition space, an internal courtyard with a pergola, acting as an extension of the lounge, thus configuring an element of environment regulation.

The concrete boxes of the theatre and of the black box constitute the structural elements whose walls are braced by the floor slabs.

A small square with lowered floor characterizes the central public access and configures a hall in which are located, externally, the ticket offices, the shop and boutique and the security room and internally the information desk which is situated in a frontal position relatively to the glass plane of the entrance.

I designed with this solution the surprising spatial variety of the vertical halls for the two sectors – one is provided with natural zenithal daylight and is 25 meters high and the other is 17, 75 meters high, limited by two great laminated glass planes with arabesque printed on its polyvinyl butyral layers.

The cafeteria is articulated with the central hall and opens up through a large terrace to the city of Beirut, on the north side of the base, and is also provided with an independent access.

The base houses the support areas such as Delivery, Miscellaneous Spaces, Technical Rooms, etc., and the cloakrooms and dressing rooms for the artists are articulated with the stages and the parking areas.

Structure

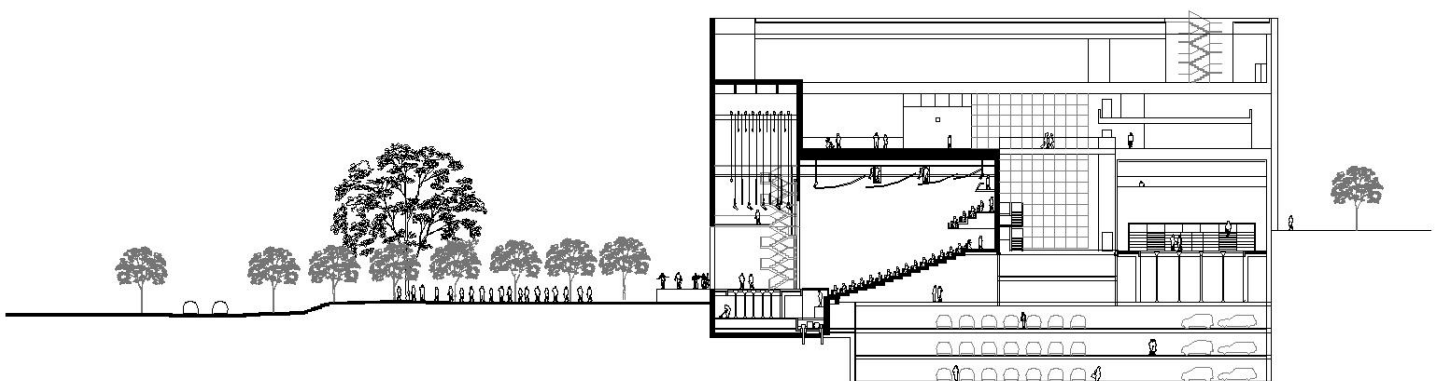
The same structural concept was used in both buildings – wide slabs supported by cantilever external walls are fixed in plate-columns, which in turn, absorb the huge bending moments and transmit them to foundation (which will be in time defined according to future geotechnical investigation). It is foreseen the use of 45.0 MPa compressive strength concrete, mixed and worked properly to obtain perfect finishing and desired texture.

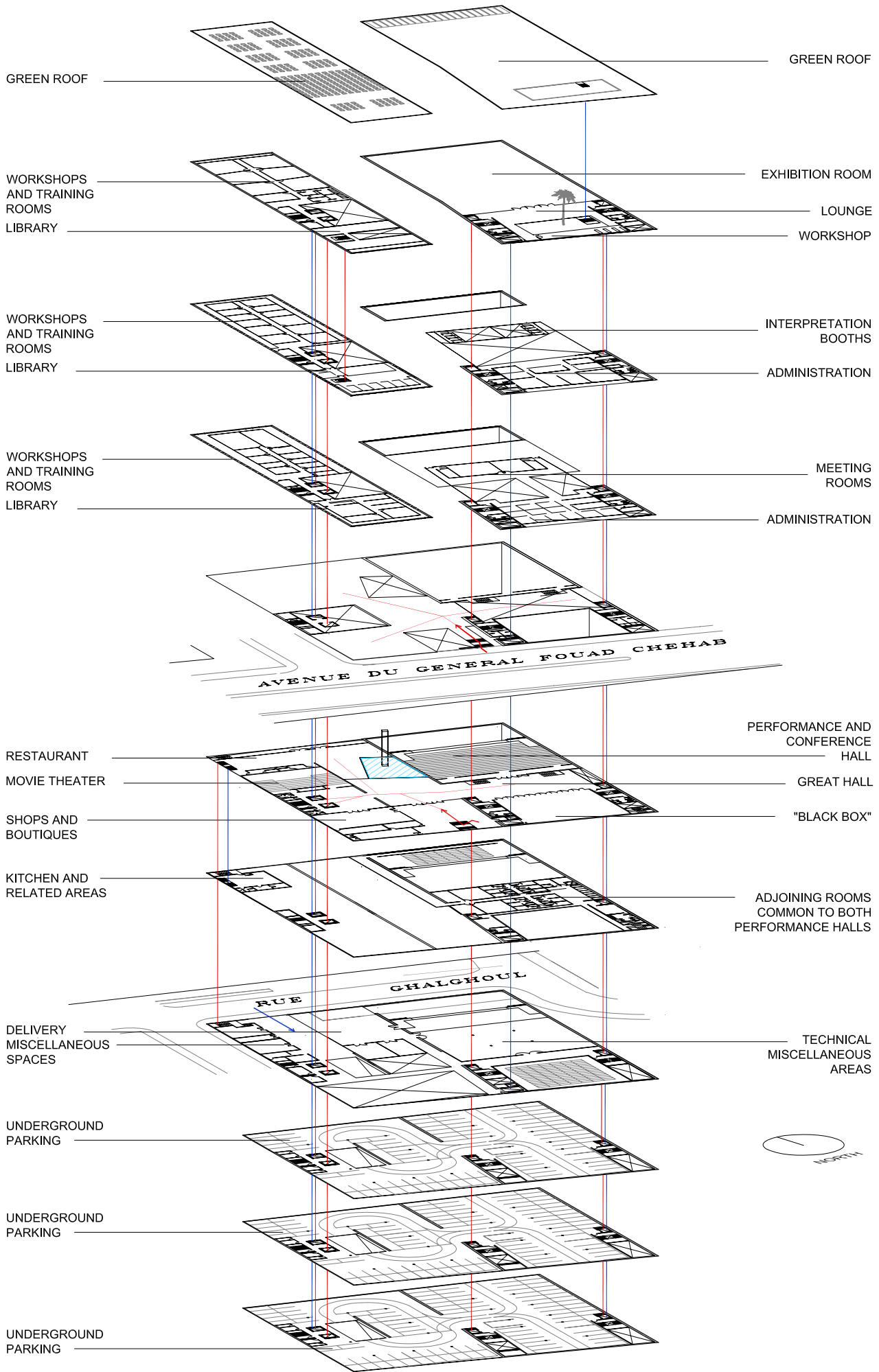
Thus I designed the House of Arts and Culture whose sculptural abstract character of its white geometric masses and its empty space designed as a new urban space yield the emotion and the surprise peculiar to the artistic and intellectual creativity.

Lastly, the design presents an urban design proposal for a landscaped garden square between the streets Emir Amine and Ghalghoul integrated into the complex and we suggest the insertion of an opening in the rear wall of the stage of the Conference Hall, thus incorporating the lawn into the complex and configuring an open air auditorium.

To achieve this, the Ghalghoul street would be interrupted up to the front building with the traffic flowing through the Emir Amine Street within this extent and then returning to the Ghalghoul Street.

On acceptance of this proposal, the city of Beirut will be able to take pleasure in an open air auditorium which will become a new collective space for leisure and cultural activities.





LEGEND FOR CIRCULATION:

PUBLIC



SERVICES

