

arch-

conserving
heritage
preserving
peace



A reflection paper on

CONSERVING HERITAGE PRESERVING PEACE

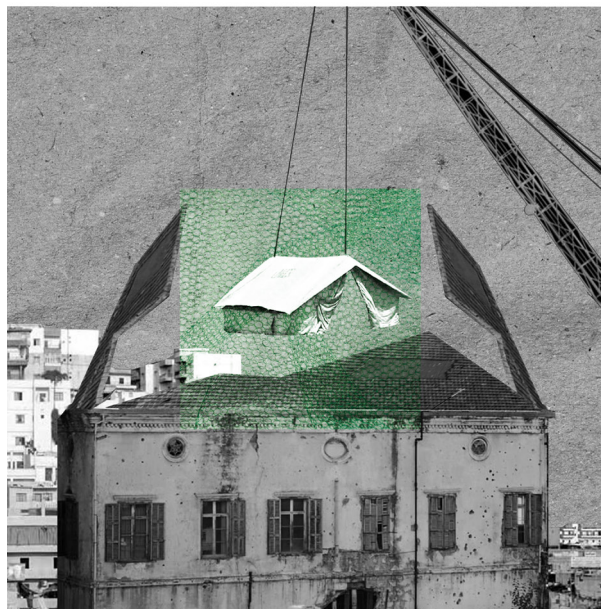
by

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abstract

This dissertation focusses on neglected built heritage in Beirut, as well as on the Syrian refugees in Lebanon who are unable to integrate into the new context that they are unwillingly stranded in. Through a design-research approach, this thesis will explore the possibilities and opportunities that might present themselves through introducing these two situations to one another.

Urban heritage in (re)developing contexts are often not acknowledged as a valuable resource for urbanisation. Traditional buildings in Beirut are currently, because of their state of neglect, regarded as a reminder of how Lebanese history has been damaged by conflict. These buildings are conceived as a collective slap in the face for a community that has lost so much during these fifteen years of conflict. Today they represent war rather than the vibrant city Beirut has once been. In the search for a possible meaning for Architecture of Peace, this

project suggests that heritage has the possibility to become a reminder of amity, rather than conflict. This project repositions the value of urban heritage from the Lebanese government and society that has failed to recognise its potential, to displaced people as an opportunity to advance out of the passive role they are forced to play. This dissertation illustrates built heritage as a medium for their integration and involvement as an active partner in a post-conflict reconstruction.

By presenting one issue, as if it were a tool, as an answer to the other with as ultimate goal progress towards its resolution, this encounter could tackle the delusion that heritage cannot be part of urbanisation as well as the delusion that refugees cannot be functional members of society.

This dissertation suggest that this encounter has the potential to render built heritage a true architecture of peace.

IF GIVEN THE CHANCE, COULD BUILT HERITAGE HAVE A ROLE AS RECONSILER BETWEEN THE DIFFERENCES OF PERSONAL PERCEPTION TOWARDS CONFLICT AS WELL AS PLAY A PART IN A POST-CONFLICT RECONSTRUCTION WITH THE INVOLVEMENT OF VICTIMS OF WAR TOWARDS A COLLECTIVE FUTURE?

preface

This master's dissertation will finalise my study in International Science in Architecture and was constructed within the Architecture of Peace studio. This studio has aimed to establish how—and if—we, as architects, can contribute peace to a world of conflict. Is it possible to materialise peace in the way that war has been materialised over and over? Emphasising the need for an interdisciplinary development of alternative strategies, this studio follows a design-research approach on the reconstruction of conflict-, post-conflict-, or pre-conflict situations. As a case study, the studio performed fieldwork in Beirut over the span of a week to get accustomed with a post-conflict reconstruction. Later I went back in order to focus on more specific research questions, as well as to connect with specialists on site.

My passion for other cultures and interest for heritage conservation has lead me to this subject, yet in truth I could not have achieved this result without the support and guidance of some vital individuals and organisations. First of all the curator of the Architecture of Peace studio Lilet Breddels, who gave me the opportunity to touch upon such an essential and contemporary subject and guide me through these uncharted waters, together with my fellow students in 'Studio Beirut'. Secondly I would like to give a special thanks to all the wonderful people I have met on my two trips to Lebanon, who provided me with all of the insight I have on this subject today. Thank you to the people at APSAD, to Samir Rebeiz who shared everything there is to know about the Rebeiz Residence, but also Paola Rebeiz, who on top of all of that showed me true Lebanese hospitality and kindness.

Most importantly I would like to express my gratitude to my mother, my brother and his beautiful family, and my friends, for their unwavering support and understanding when I would cancel plans and stepped on a plane without notice. I am especially grateful for my grandfather who I got to know even better in the past year and for his unbounded interest and appreciation in this project. Finally, a sincere thanks for their expertise and enthusiasm to Christophe Polack, architect and professor at KU Leuven, and to Bert Vanden Eynde, scaffolding engineer at Layher nv.

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introduction

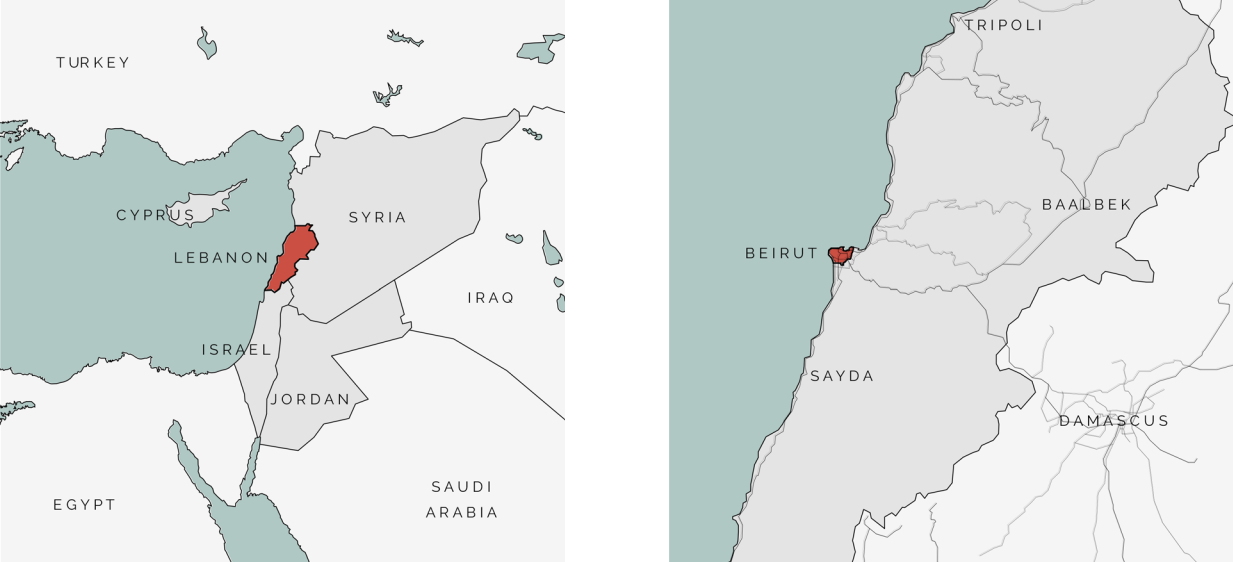


fig. 1 Location of Lebanon and Beirut.

After the Lebanese Civil War of 1975-1990, Beirut, the capital of Lebanon was in desperate need of a strategy to reconstruct the city. After years of absence of a functioning state, the government decided to continue this position and privatised governmental responsibilities. The post-conflict reconstruction of Beirut was one of these responsibilities that was now in the hands of a private company, with one clear given objective: a development that creates opportunities for investment.

Upon my first visit to the city, I was in awe of Beirut. Because of the general European view on Middle Eastern countries, this was not the type of city I expected to be confronted with. Beirut, the capital of Lebanon, is a city that is in constant

change. The rapid development over the past years make that many visitors would describe Beirut as a city ‘just like New York’. With which they would mean a generic city. But one layer underneath that superficial finishing of steel and glass, the city is all but generic. The more one learns about its jurisdictions and its history and culture, the more complex the urban fabric seems to get. A fabric of which the stitches might no longer appear as perfect, yet nevertheless as impressive. One of these dropped stitches within this fabric is the built heritage in the city. The way that globalisation and capitalism were introduced as the main focus points for the city’s reconstruction eventually lead to the destruction of Beirut’s traditional architecture. Heritage has been making way for large constructions, designed for economic

profit since the start of the gentrification of Beirut. Profit and capitalism has been the only driving force behind Beirut’s reconstruction as well as behind the absence of the working class Lebanese people. 2600 households who owned properties in reconstructed areas have been expropriated and have been bought out with a sum that was not enough to later afford moving back into these districts. These households had to leave the city behind in which their families have been living for generations. They left their history behind for the sake of an opportunistic ideal of urbanisation. An ideal that turned out to fail in many ways. Within the deficiency of order in Beirut’s reconstruction, the often high-rise buildings that replace the traditional Lebanese houses are predominantly empty. Apartments are rented out to companies for millions

of dollars and function solely as investment. This property, which could only be realised after pushing out a large number of families from the city, is for the share-holder more profitable when it is empty. This elite oriented market results in a negative impact on the social dimension of Beirut and its citizens, with as ultimate outcome a ghost town as City Centre. Beirut, its citizens and its architecture has suffered—yet survived—conquest, conflict, and war, however its ongoing urbanisation and political corruption seem to be the most threatening for Beirut’s culture and history. Built heritage in Beirut is a demonstration of this statement. Though still apparent outside of the city centre, the only reason that these properties appear so striking is because they are in an exceptional bad shape. Evidently during the Lebanese

Civil War many of the traditional buildings were harmed, of which some damaged beyond repair. However, most of these properties got through the conflict scarred by only bullet holes and perhaps some missing roof tiles. The state that they are in today might have been caused by the war to begin with, but their actual decay is due to the neglect of the owners and due to the apathy of the government.

March 15, 2011. The civil war in Lebanon’s neighbouring country Syria was officially announced. Seven years later over five million people have fled the country of which approximately 1.2 million to Lebanon in order to seek shelter with their families. During the studio’s stay in Lebanon, we visited two refugee camps in Bekaa Valley. As confronting as

one might expect this experience to be, it particularly struck me how open and welcoming these people were, even in the tough situation they find themselves in. We listened when they talked about their lives in the camp and how eager they are to put an end to the waiting and uncertainty that defines the life of every single refugee.

The amount of displaced people in Lebanon counts to one fourth of the total population of the country. Most of these people live as urban refugees amongst local communities, others live in settlements, but both have arrived in a new country, in a different culture, uncertain of the future. Daily, they face difficulties while doing their best to adapt and trying to integrate in order for their families to survive. However, the situation is not much easier for the host communities.

The extra million refugees in a country of 4 million people has had a huge impact on the country. With over 250.000 Syrian refugees located in Beirut, Issues such as supply shortages, unemployment, and dissatisfaction amongst the people are still rising. The general dissatisfaction of the community is the reason for the strong tensions between the refugees and local people and in turn the alienation of refugees, making it even harder for them to integrate.



fig. 2 Own photograph, first morning in Hamra, Beirut , November 2017.

**I QUIT (AT APSAD) BECAUSE THE ONLY WAY TO
SAVE THESE BUILDINGS/NEIGHBOURHOODS
IS TO CHANGE EXISTING ZONING LAWS AND/
OR INTRODUCE A LAW PROTECTING SUCH
BUILDINGS.
AFTER 15 YEARS OF EFFORTS, ALL OUR
LAW PROJECTS ARE LANGUISHING IN THE
DRAWERS OF PARLIAMENTARIANS (WHO ARE)
MORE CONCERNED TO CATER FOR PROPERTY
OWNERS THAN FOR THE PUBLIC AT LARGE.**

___ Statement of former APSAD member (personal contact)

During the devastating Lebanese Civil War of **1975-1990**, the government was completely out of the picture. For fifteen years it failed to perform its duties which resulted in several, often extremist, political parties taking these responsibilities on themselves. After the war ended, the country was desperate for one consolidated political power and in order to reinstitute the authority of the state, Prime Minister Rafik Hariri founded a new government and introduced a revised constitution. Reconciling the conflicting groups was one of the challenges of the post-war state, as well as solving the problem of thousands of displaced families, rebuilding the war-torn city, and securing enough financial recourses to carry out all of these projects.¹

¹ Sawalha, A., Reconstructing Beirut : Memory and Space in a Postwar Arab City, (Texas, 2010), 27.

Beirut, before the war known as ‘Paris of the Middle East’, has had the role of financial capital of the region. To bring this back, President Hariri considered reconstructing the Beirut City Centre as his priority. It used to be a place where different people, with different classes and religions, connected and merged. This was exactly the vision for the ‘new’ city centre. That, and to erase the Lebanese Civil War from the citizen’s memories.

The government came up with a long-term reconstruction project for the City Centre called Horizon 2000. Though as a result of the war and the amount of displaced people in Lebanon, the state was short on funds, and the reconstruction of Beirut, though a necessity, seemed unaffordable. For this

very reason, the government introduced a decree together with the Horizon 2000 project which would allow the Beirut City Centre to be completely privatised in order to attract local investment as well as foreign investment. In **1994**, the Hariri government appointed Solidere (Société Libanaise pour le Développement et la Reconstruction du Centre-ville de Beyrouth), a public-private joint-stock company, full authority to at all costs revitalise Beirut Downtown.

This authority meant that they have now been given the power to expropriate people from their homes in exchange for shares in the project. The negative impact of this plan on the residents of Beirut were ignored, and the vast amount of heritage, with both cultural and historical value, destroyed. Today, Beirut City Centre is a textbook example of a globalised



fig. 3 Some examples of unprotected traditional buildings throughout Beirut.

area, a cluster of high-rise generic architecture, housing offices, shops, and businesses unaffordable to the middle-class Lebanese society. By later implementing governmental buildings and with it, its military security, the whole area rendered unattractive, not only to the working class, but also to wealthier people and to tourists. All of these factors result in a Beirut Downtown completely void of its original texture and its buzzing atmosphere that used to characterise the city. It is a city centre now drained of history. A leader of a Sunni religious party described it as a conspiracy against the residents of the city:

Solidere’s only concern is to bulldoze buildings that survived two decades of war and to replace them

with glass towers and sell them to non Lebanese rich investors. Go to downtown Beirut, and see for yourself. Solidere has demolished the houses and all the old popular souks and left us, the people of the city, with bitterness and grief.²

In order to understand how it is possible that built heritage, and with that its memory and its cultural value can be demolished without consideration or even documenting the property, one has to look into the legal protection of heritage. The one decree that mentions heritage, and therefore the only decree safeguarding this built heritage, dates back to **1933**. This is ‘Decree n° 166: Reglement Sur les Antiquités’. The Regulation of Antiquities was established by the Direction du



fig. 4 Own photograph, Beirut City Center under construction, November 2017.

²Sheikh Ahmed, leader of Al-Jama’â Al-Islameyâ, Reconstructing Beirut, 38.



fig. 5 Own photograph, Beirut City Center, Nejmeh Square, November 2017.

Service des Antiquités, or Directorate General of Antiquities. As soon as article 1, it becomes clear that this decree has no impact on the demolished buildings in Beirut City Centre:

Art. 1 — Heritage is considered to be all the products of human activity, to whatever civilisation they belong: prior to the year 1700 (year 1107 AH).
Are assimilated to be heritage and subject to the rules of this decree, the real estate objects prior to the year 1700, whose conservation presents a point of view in the history or in the art to be of public interest, and which will be inscribed to the General Inventory of Historical Monuments provided for in Art. 20.³

By defining heritage as ‘all products dating from prior the year 1700’, this law excludes all the buildings constructed during the Ottoman era, as well as all buildings constructed during the French mandate. Both periods had an immense impact on the Lebanese society, culture, and architecture. These buildings are, in other words, left unprotected, and vulnerable for legal demolition.
Another aspect that translating this document has made clear is the importance of heritage to the Lebanese government. On many occasions within decree n°166, the Directorate General of Antiquities (DGA) is mentioned as the committee that has the power to make all decisions regarding tangible and intangible heritage. The DGA is a technical unit of the Ministry of Culture, responsible for the protection and documenting

³ Translation of Decree n°166: Regulation of Heritage, 1933.

of potential heritage in Beirut. The complete team, which carries all responsibility regarding heritage, consists in Lebanon out of 3 architects. Of which only 2 are working in Beirut. As a comparison, in Lebanon’s neighbouring country Syria, there are 650 architects working for the DGA. In Egypt, there are 3.500 architects working for the DGA. How serious does the Lebanese Government take the heritage issue if only three architects are meant to protect properties in the whole of Lebanon? In an article, Khaled Rifa, the head of the conservative department of the DGA stated: “We [the DGA] are working in one direction, and all the politicians are working in another direction.”⁴

In **1995**, the unmethodical demolition of traditional

⁴ Ghaith, N., ‘Passing heritage law more urgent than ever’, (The Daily Star, 2016).
⁵ Dagher, F., Introduction to heritage survey, (APSAD, 1996).

buildings continues out of the believe that there is no space for heritage in urbanisation. Because of this, the Lebanese government put out a new decree (n°2476/1995) in place, commissioning APSAD (Association pour la Protection des Sites et Anciennes Demeures au Liban), to list and thoroughly survey and document the remaining traditional buildings. APSAD is a NGO that, amongst other things, focusses on the protection & restoration of ancient buildings with historical and/or cultural value. The goal of this survey was clear in APSAD’s introduction:

(In order) to prevent the survey from being used as a “List of buildings to be demolished” in a city

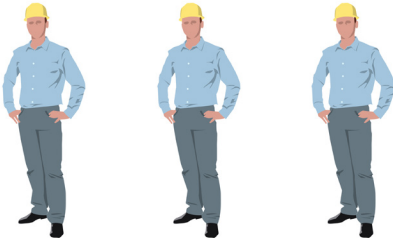
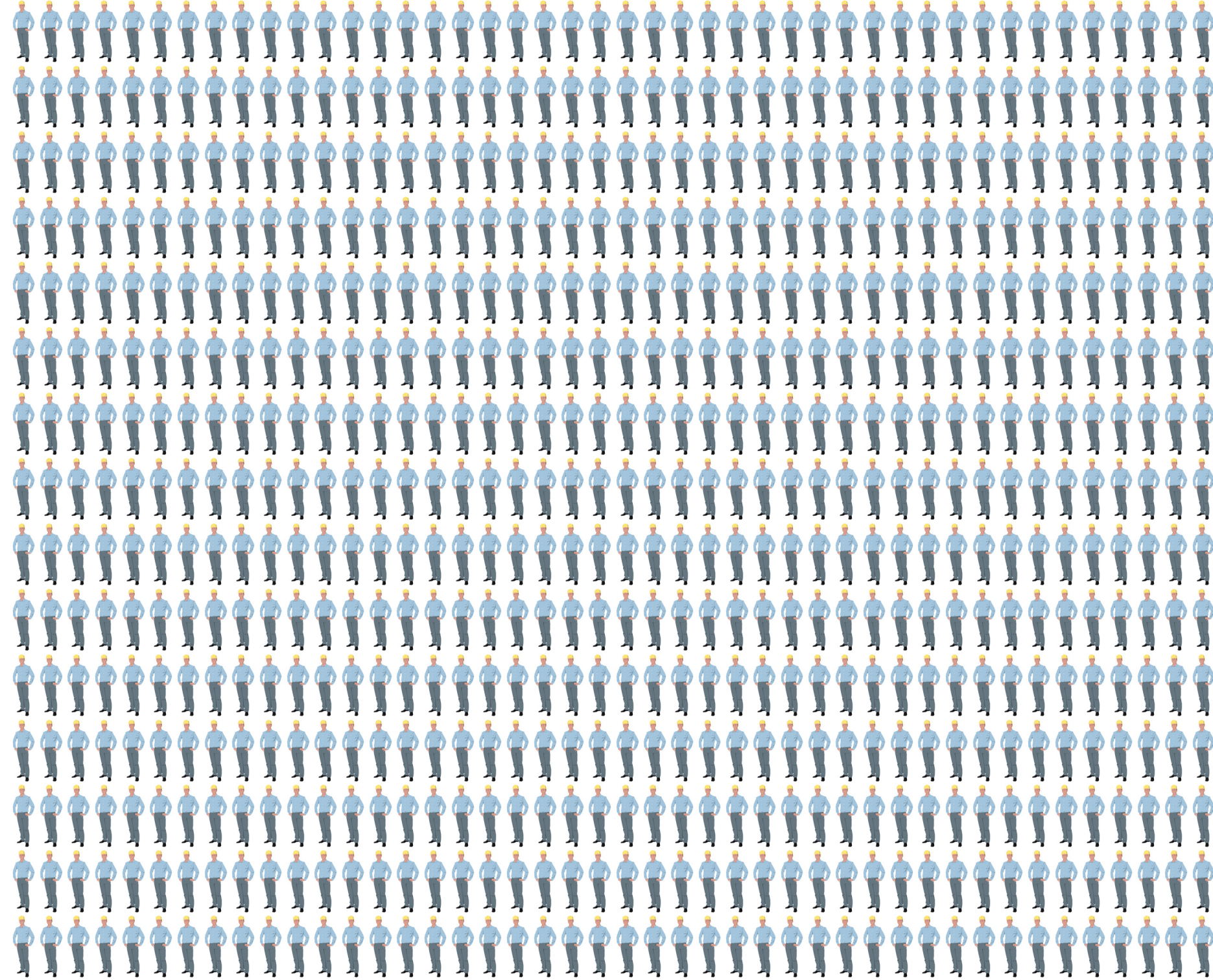


fig. 6 Visual comparison of amount of architects working for DGA in Lebanon (this page), Syria (p. 26), and Egypt (p. 27).



delivered to real estate developers, (...), to safeguard these buildings, it will be necessary to preserve their natural environment and built through consistent urban plans.⁵

In **1996**, after finishing the survey, APSAD established the number of traditional buildings, valuable enough to protect, on 1.016. This survey could not include the Beirut City Centre, since this district is legally, and solely, under the authority of Solidere. It only included certain areas around the city centre (fig. 7). The municipality of Beirut was asked to take measures prohibiting the demolition of these 1.016 traditional buildings on that list, which caused an uproar amongst the owners of these buildings. They were now unable to sell their property

to developers with the intention to demolish the building and make place for a new project. Instead their properties are now frozen, without any advantages for the owners, not potential developers and thus no income nor money for renovation. Many owners stepped up and complained to the government, demanding to take their properties of the Ministry of Culture's list of traditional buildings.

Because of that, in **1998**, the government issued yet another decree (n°33/1988) appointing the engineering consulting company Khatib & Alami to start from scratch in surveying the traditional buildings in Beirut, and to draft conditions and regulations in order to preserve these buildings or restore them to their original state. After this survey, the amount of traditional buildings they concluded

worth protecting was 463 (more than half of the original number of protected buildings), and this within the same zones as used in the APSAD survey (fig.7).

This survey classified the buildings per importance of preservation:

- A. Historical buildings, linked to historical figures, featuring special architectural and artistic qualities, generally in good shape and requiring a minimum of restoration work. (35)
- B. Buildings not linked to specific historical periods but featuring high architectural standards or a distinct structural build. (127)
- C. Are the category B buildings except that those buildings suffered significant damage caused by disrepair or war. (49)

- D. Buildings with no significant historical value and not linked to a specific period but which feature distinctive architectural elements. (164)
- E. Buildings with no historical or architectural value for the following reasons: (88)
- do not follow traditional criteria
 - dangerous to live in or in the vicinity of, due to flawed structure
 - too expensive too maintain in shape

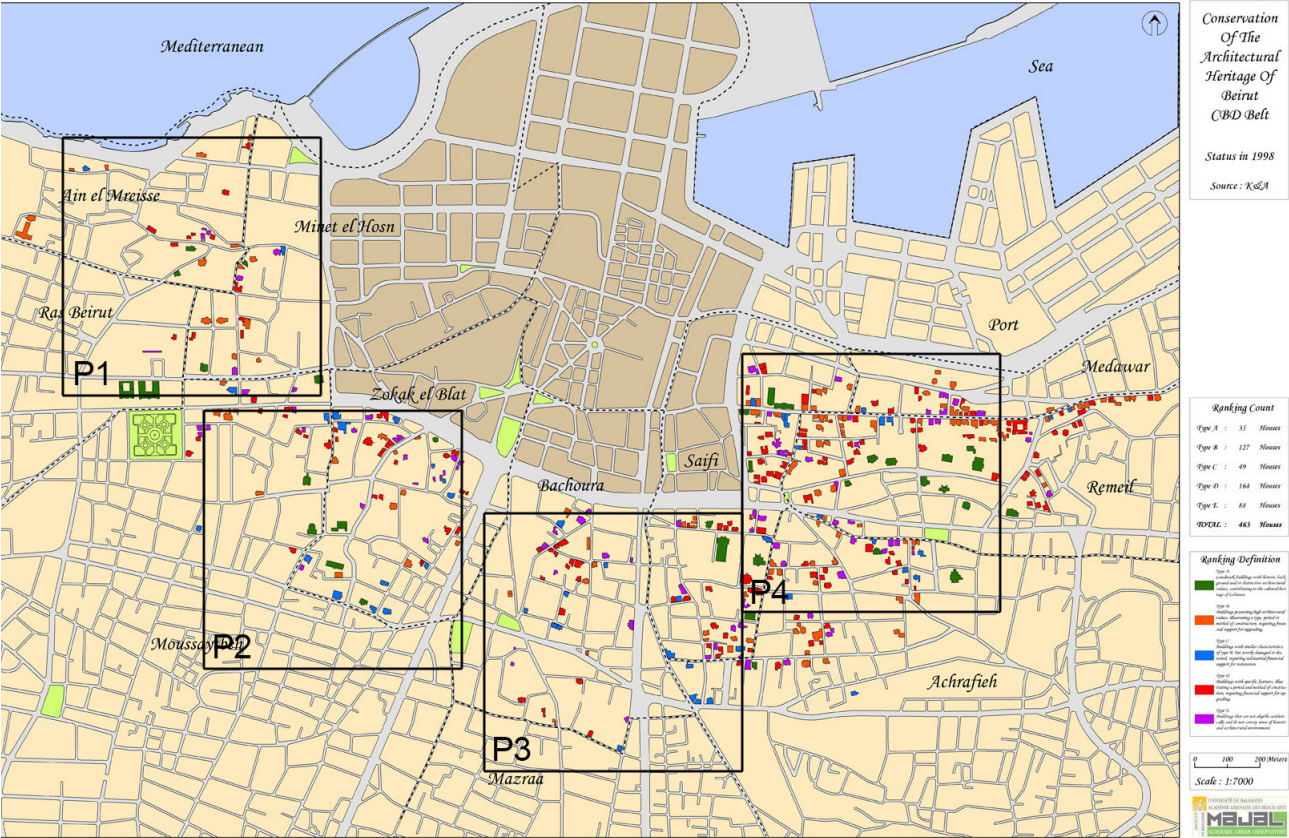


fig. 7 Map from Khatib & Alami's survey, showing the protected 'belt' around Beirut Downtown.

Even though the 1,016 buildings established to be worthy of protection have now been more than halved, the owners of these 463 buildings remain unsatisfied as the difference between their property's actual value and their potential value, known as the rent gap (already rising since the war), is growing wider apart due to these protection regulations.⁶ Therefore the government decided in **1999** to consider classes D and E as 'good for demolition', which brings the total of protected buildings in Beirut to 211 properties. These buildings are now protected from demolition, yet before conditions could be established to ensure their conservation, the committee fell apart during the same year, leaving the protected properties frozen without any space for moving back-or forward, and no further efforts have been made so

⁶ Preston, S., 'A lifeline for heritage out of thin air?'. (Executive, 2018).

far in order to keep the properties on this list in a good state. Many owners found that vandalising their own property, or just leaving it to its decay, was their only hope in the building losing its value and getting it scrapped off the Ministry of Culture's list. This would be the situation for the next 18 years, with several NGO's raising awareness and lobbying for the protection of heritage. Though generally without much success, NGO's such as Save Beirut Heritage and NANHOO have been able to save properties from the destruction of their owners, or their complete demolition. Many requests have been made for new decrees in the hope of protecting heritage and establishing regulations regarding how to conserve these properties.

Though it was only in **2017** that one of these proposals got approved by the Council of Ministers, and is now being discussed in parliament. This new law, which for many is a sparkle of hope, for others a lost cause, will act as an essential document for this dissertation.



A PERFECT PLACE
TO CALL HOME



LUXURY HOMES
BEIRUT, LEBANON



IN THE HEART OF
MAR MIKHAEL
654-MDAWAR

fig. 8 Example of how traditional buildings are seen by developers. Original facade on the left, new project on the right. By 'preserving' the facade, the project can be sold as living in a historical building, yet having all the required luxury, facebook.com/654MDAWAR, 2017.

drafting a turning point

the opportunities of built heritage



Something that is easily overlooked in the (re)construction of an urban context is that the historic fabric of a city can be part of urbanisation and that it is possible for built heritage to be re-instated as an active component in a developing society. Beirut has been a case-study on how the past has been excluded, neglected and frankly, ignored. While forgetting the past has been accepted as the only way to a better future, globalisation was being brought forward as the only solution towards urbanisation. In that way Beirut is a case-study of missed opportunities and if acted upon now, it could be a lesson for the remaining built heritage in Beirut. The reconstruction of a city like Lebanon's capital does not have to rely solely on western development or complex social strategies, yet instead it needs an improvement on the assets

fig. 9 Own photograph, interior of the restored Barakat Building, now functioning as Beit Beirut Museum, exhibition: A Collective Work of Lebanese and Syrian Artists on the Impact of War on Childhood, February 2018.

that are already established in the city. Today heritage might be seen as nothing more than an out of place, nostalgic glimpse to the past, in an ever-evolving context, pushing to move forward, yet these buildings are often exceptionally adaptive. Therefore reconstruction of heritage may lead to adaptive reuse for needs of our current generation, but also for future generations. If given the chance, built heritage can serve as an integrated component with a positive economic impact on the city, either through a public or a private function. Each one of these properties has the potential to become a dynamic beacon that adapts to changing circumstances and demands while still referring to the history of the society, and reintroducing history as a quality to be proud of. Its history and memory, even though not necessarily positive, could

function as a subject of political reflection, and a reminder that as an undivided community it is possible to strive for a better future. Rather than something to be ashamed of., the heritage of a culture should be the pride of the city, Even more the case for post-conflict cities, it is the history of the city and its traces that have the power to form a collective identity of the community.

Built heritage might not be the first word that comes to mind when one thinks about economic development., yet these buildings have exactly that potential. Aside from the social advantages—and likely to be more interesting for the Lebanese government—restoring heritage can also have a huge economical value. First of all it could have a positive

effect on property values in the area of the refurbished heritage site. The costs for these renovation works, in contrast to new development projects where the main investment is construction materials, is labour wages. As a consequence, restoring heritage leads to the creation of jobs, and thus household income from the restoration process, as well as the conserving process. Opposed to brick and steel, workers will eventually use that income to provide for themselves and their families and therefor add to the local economic cycle. By restoring the property into a public function, more jobs are created, more money spent in the local economy, but also the possibility to attract heritage tourism, for both locals and foreigners. Even though this would not be the main argument for conserving built heritage, tourism attracted by heritage

could easily become of vast importance for the Lebanese economy. More importantly it would attract middle-class citizens as well as creative-class citizens back into the city, where over the past few years they have been pushed out.

drafting a turning point
'by the esteemed minister of culture'

المادة الأولى:

يرمي هذا القانون إلى حماية وإحياء وإبراز المنشآت والمواقع الأثرية أو التاريخية، والمنشآت والمعالم والصروح والمباني أو أجزاء المباني ذات القيمة التراثية أو التاريخية، والعقارات المبنية وغير المبنية، التي تشكل وحدها أو في ما بينها نسيجاً عمرانياً أو تراثياً في المدن والقرى والبلدات والتي لها، بسبب طابع عمارتها أو تناسقها أو إندماجها في محيطها الطبيعي أو المدني، قيمة تاريخية أو فنية أو معمارية أو علمية أو تراثية أو طبيعية أو بيئية أو ثقافية

جانب معالي وزير الثقافة المحترم

الموضوع: الصيغة النهائية لمشروع القانون المتعلق بحماية المواقع والأبنية. التراثية

،إن القاضي المكلف لدى وزارة الثقافة ،بالإشارة إلى الموضوع المبين أعلاه وعطفاً على مطالعته المؤرخة في 2017/6/10, يرى اعتماد الصيغة التالية لمشروع القانون المقترح:

مشروع قانون
حماية المواقع والأبنية التراثية

By the esteemed Minister of Culture

Subject: Final version of the draft law on the protection of sites and heritage buildings.

The judge assigned the Ministry of Culture **with reference to the subject described above.** Further to his statement dated 10/06/2017, **the adoption of the following proposed draft law:**

Law Project
Projection of sites and heritage buildings

Article 1:

The purpose of this law is to protect, **revive and highlight** archaeological and historical sites and installations, monuments, buildings or parts of buildings that are of **historical or cultural value,** and built and non-built real estate, **either alone or in the form of urban context.** The nature of its architecture, its symmetry or its integration into its natural or civil environment, that is of historical, artistic, architectural, scientific, heritage, natural, environmental or cultural value.

fig. 10 Introduction and first article of the draft heritage project currently discussed in parliament. Source: A. Attalah, co-writer of draft.

Before getting into the specifics, the possibilities and the challenges of this new ‘law’, the difference between the terms ‘law’ and ‘decree’ should be taken in consideration for this case. This chapter is based on the final version of ‘The draft of the law on the protection of sites and heritage buildings’, with the emphasis on draft, because even though the proposal was approved by the Council of Ministers, it is still being ‘discussed in parliament’. Which means that the draft of this law is now somewhere on a pile of other drafts in parliament awaiting being looked into, instead of its former location: a drawer in the Council. As mentioned many times, heritage protection is not a priority for the government, nor for any minister. Judging from the time it took the council to even consider reviewing this draft, instating the document as

an official decree to the constitutional law might take even longer. The discussion of this subject with some experts ended often in expressing their doubt that this draft will ever make it there at all. When asked for her thoughts on ‘the new law’, one of the people working for APSAD said:

It is not a new law; it is a project. How many more years will it take? This is what the project looks like after all these years (of fighting for heritage) [holds up the 15-pages document]. in this time, many buildings have become rubbish.

The reason that this draft is even being considered by the government, besides its media attention and NGO’s lobbying

for it, is because the law mainly relies on private investment. Even though the law states that public investment could be a possibility, the protection of heritage heavily depends on investors and developers, as later explained. This means that this decree could be a way for the heritage problem to solve itself, without the financial support of the government. Although the document has not been made public, the possibility of a law which could protect private properties through private funding, has been the subject of several heated discussions. Which is exactly the attention that raises awareness on the heritage issue, and in turn provides a interesting angle to address a post-conflict reconstruction that includes heritage.

I have acquired the draft law through one of people who

co-wrote the draft, yet through translating the document from Arabic to English, some articles are left open for interpretation. The articles that are crucial to my research and architectural design were discussed with native Arabic speakers, in order to discuss the correct information.

As seen in article 1 of the law of 2017, in contrast to article 1 of the law of 1933 (p. 23), this law uses the term heritage in a much broader sense, not limiting the status of heritage to a time period:

Art. 1 — The purpose of this law is to protect, revive and highlight archaeological and historical sites and installations, monuments, buildings or parts of buildings that are of historical or cultural value, either built and non-built real estate, either alone or in the form of urban context. The nature of its architecture, its symmetry or its integration into its natural or civil environment, is of historical, artistic, architectural, scientific, natural, environmental or cultural value.

As shown above, this article not only includes properties such as houses or palaces, but also the possibility to consider a zone or context as heritage. One of the issues with the law from 1933 as well as the lists of traditional buildings from 1996 and 1998, is that these, if anything, only protect sole buildings. This is the reason that even though there are certain traditional buildings left in Beirut, they are most likely surrounded by high-rise buildings and seem completely out of place in its urban context. Because of this, the law is divided in regulations for ‘Zone Protection Management’ and ‘Property Protection Management’. Both have a slightly different approach towards protection, as well as a difference in involved actors and in consequences for the owner(s). Since zone protection would mainly be applied outside of

Beirut because of the current urbanisation situation in the city, property protection will be more essential to the topic of this dissertation.

According to article 8, several actors can submit a proposal for the protection of a zone of building based on the values of the property. A full survey can be requested by the owner, but also by concerned associations or NGO’s, the Directorate General of Antiquities, or even the municipality. However, for several reasons, the most ideal situation would be when the owner or owners apply for protection (as discussed later). The law does not mention exact factors or guidelines to decide whether or not property could be considered heritage, it only appoints the Directorate General of Antiquities as the deciding party

of when the building or zone is worth protecting (art.3). It is their responsibility to survey and to document the cultural, historical and architectural values of the property.

After labelling a property as valuable for protection, and thus initiating the property (or zone) protection measure, the DGA will team up with the municipality, and members from the Union of Engineers, the Directorate General of Civil Organisation and Directorate General Finance, to form the Joint Committee (art.11). The Joint Committee will be responsible for determining the current condition of the property, and consequently the needed measures and interventions. They will decide whether the works will be either of a restoration nature or if alteration or reconstruction is needed, etc. The Joint Committee will also decide on the

required materials for the restoration, as well as the area open for public or private investment. All of this will be submitted, by the Joint Committee, in the form of a document called ‘Conditions and incentives for the protection of real estate’. Each one of these documents will only be describing one single property, out of which can be concluded that this draft for a new decree is merely presenting the possibilities and urban advantages, as well as the urgency of protecting heritage in Lebanon, everything else is based on a case-to-case evaluation system.

drafting a turning point

transfer of development rights

The financial matter addressed through this decree i.e. the strategy to provide a budget for the restoration and preservation of the site, works in the same way for the protection of a zone or that of a property. The law has been constructed around a programme called Transfer of Development Rights. Its definition:

A transfer of development rights (TDR) program allows additional density where the community wants to grow in exchange for preservation of sensitive areas that the community wants to protect from future development.⁷

This strategy is not a new notion, considering it has been used globally, though this could be the first use of the system in Lebanon with the protection of heritage as the ultimate goal. It allows the owners of property that is now protected through the property protection measure as described earlier, to sell the unused area of their land to developers who can use these unused square metres for a construction on a (unprotected) plot where building in height is allowed. Any plot of land is subject to certain zoning regulations of the municipality. These regulations consider the land occupation density of the plot (in percentage) and a factor that determines the maximum build-up space. Since currently, even if the land might be of value because of beneficial regulations, by protecting a property as a traditional building, some of

these construction rights will render worthless and abortive. Even though the potential value of the land may be high, because of the traditional building, the actual value is low. For this reason, owning a traditional building is currently disadvantageous for the owner(s). By instating the possibility of Transfer of Development Rights, owners get the possibility of selling those beneficial regulations to another area of the city, or even another city, where these rights can be used in an unprotected construction. As a simplified example, let us say the owner of a protected building of 400 square metres (built-up area), located in an area where he could built up to 1000 square metres, would now be able to sell the remaining 600 square metres to a developer, to eventually use that money to renovate and

⁷ American Planning Association., ‘Planning for Hazards: Land Use Solutions’, (PAS, 2010).

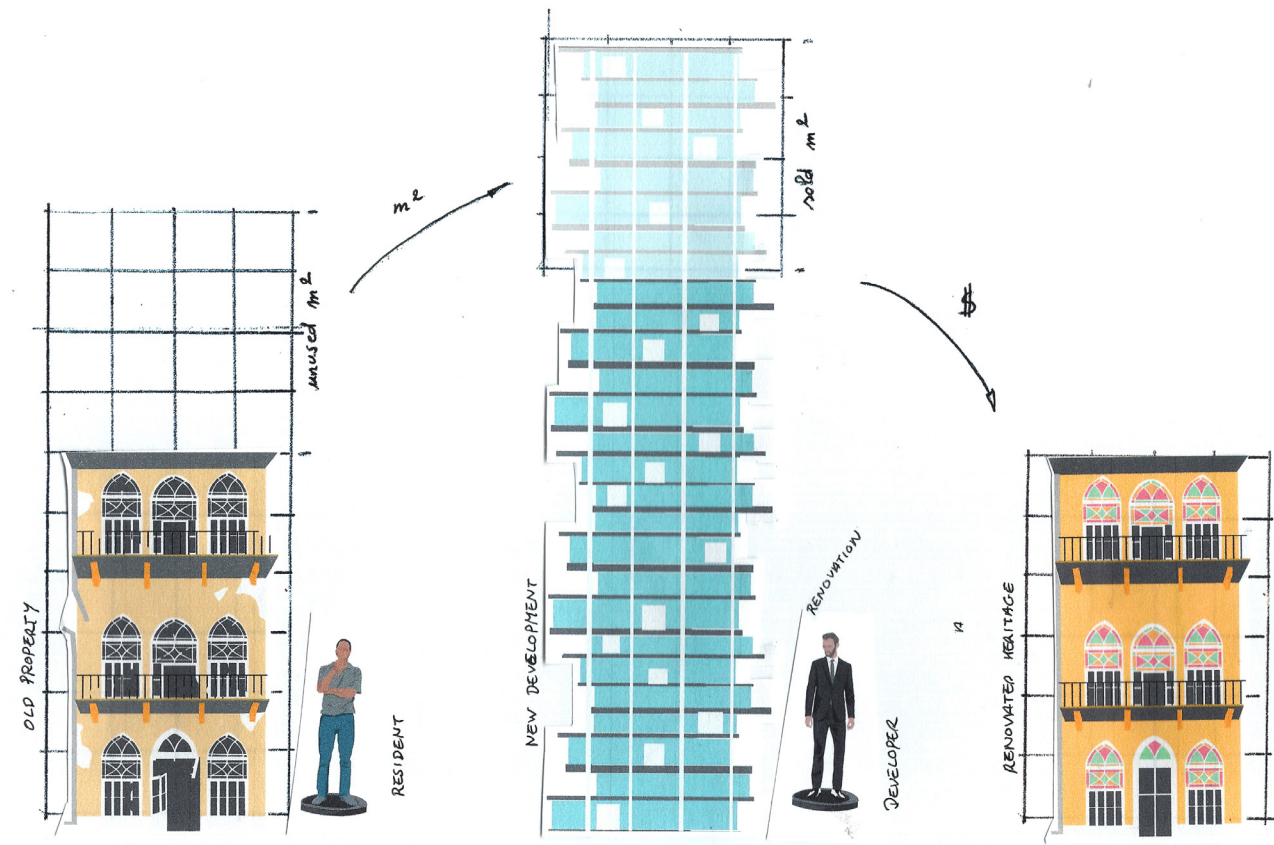


fig. 11 Conceptual scheme on TDR.

preserve the heritage building.

Wikipedia describes the system as a voluntary, incentive-based programme⁸, in other words, even though the protection of property can be decided upon by this law as well as the needed restoration interventions, the system only encourages owners to sell their rights to developers in order to have an income for the property’s restoration. The price of this area is mutually decided and depends on the real estate market. The agreement between owner and investor is completely based on the initiative of the involved. Which, as mentioned, is the only reason that this law even has the slightest chance of being accepted as an official decree; because it is based on private investment. That being so, after

submitting a property as heritage, the government can almost completely take their hands off the following responsibilities. And more importantly, without investing public funds.

The unused area of the property will be given to the owner(s) in the form of nominal certificates which can later be sold to investors. These certificates, representing phantom land, shall be signed and handed out by the Minster of Culture—after the ‘Conditions and incentives to protect the real estate’ has been issued (art.12)—yet calculated by the ‘Calculation Committee’. This is a committee that by law should consist out of an architect with at least 15 years of experience, a certified civil engineer and an architect specialised in heritage. They calculate the investment factor of the sending area, and decide

⁸ Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia. “Transfer of Development Rights”.

on which areas could be the receiving areas. Though through the transfer of rights, these certificates might alter depending on both the sending and receiving area. To continue the previously given example, if the owner sells the 600 square metres to a developer who is constructing on the Waterfront Area in Beirut, these 600 square metres might become 200 square metres for the developer, since the Waterfront Area is an expensive area. These matters will be calculated by the Calculation Committee, which results, again, in a case-to-case basis.

This paragraph shall summarise some given numbers and concrete regulations as described in the draft law. One of the rulings being that if the owner of a potential heritage

building himself applies for the above mentioned property protection measure, he will, according to article 15 of the draft law, receive the certificates for the full (100%) unused area of his land. However, if the initiative did not come forward from the owner, but from another party, such as an NGO or the DGA, the owner will only receive certificates for 75% of the unused area. In the case of multiple owners, the certificates will be divided according to the property share of each owner (art.16) Upon receipt, the nominal certificates can be sold to investors, yet they can only be put to use after one year from the date of the certificates have been signed by the Minister of Culture (art. 14). Moreover, the money received by the owner for selling this phantom land would have to partly be used for the renovation of the property and to ‘keep

it in good condition’ (art.20). Even though the concerning article uses a rather vague terminology in the meaning of a ‘good condition’ of the building, it is the responsibility of the Ministry of Culture and the DGA to oversee that the building is being looked after. The exact amount of money that would have to be spent on this intervention by the owner will be specified by the Ministry of Culture depending on the state of the property and the required restoration works. In case that they decide that the building has not been kept in a good state, the DGA can issue penalties, ranging from fines to imprisonment, either for the owner or for the person causing damage to the property.

The Transfer of Development Rights programme is a system that is already being applied in certain cities in the United States as well as in France and Brazil, each with their own specific uses and regulations. In the past, legally manipulating building envelopes has been the subject of debates amongst urban planners, and suggesting that this programme should be recognised in Beirut provoked just that. However, as this is the first time in nearly twenty years that the parliament even considers instating a decree that might lead to the preservation of heritage, the general opinion is optimistic. Nevertheless, at its core it is yet another system based on investment and profit. A team of lawyers and businessmen are strongly working against the project and are, amongst other things, accusing the decree to be ambiguous in its

terms as well as ignorant about the consequences of allowing the sale of all of the available unused area. They fear that selling all of this phantom land might lead to a fall in market value and affect the middle class. In an article of L'Orient Le Jour⁹ they even compared the TDR transaction between owner and investor to the ways of Solidere. Selling phantom land for trade-able certificates tend, in their opinion, to be as unfavourable as the system Solidere developed that evicted people from their properties in return for shares in the Horizon2000 project, with of a value that would never meet the actual value of their properties.

Antoine Atallah, architect and co-writer of the draft—who was kind enough to share the draft with me—defended the bill and refuted those arguments. The market value would

stay unaffected, he said, because this unused area is already on the market since the properties are currently unprotected. Developers can already buy these plots, unregarding their intentions for the building, and make use of its zoning regulations. Furthermore, the TDR certificates are based on the real estate market and agreed upon by both the owner and the investor, which would make for a complete different transaction compared to Solidere's strategy in the late 1990's. The TDR debate is a crucial one with valid points made by both opinions, yet it is true that the only way to protect Lebanese built heritage is by changing regulations, and in order to do that in a political environment such as the one in Lebanon, external investment and profit have to play a pivotal role in the re-integration of built heritage.

⁹ Makarem, M., 'Au Liban, vaut-il mieux restaurer sa vieille bâtisse ou faire de la prison?'. (L'Orient Le Jour, 2018).

integration: a restoration strategy

The Transfer of Development Rights programme is essentially a business transaction between the owner of a traditional property and an investor that invests in something intangible like zoning regulations, density and area. Even though the intention is to provide owners with the finances to preserve their potential heritage building, an important aspect is trust in the owner that he or she will invest this money with the right intentions towards the property at heart. Meanwhile, the investor has free reign to render a certain development even higher, grander and even more out of reach of the working class Lebanese.

By adding additional contractual agreements to the existing proposal of TDR as well as additional supervising parties, this programme could be managed in a more advised way.

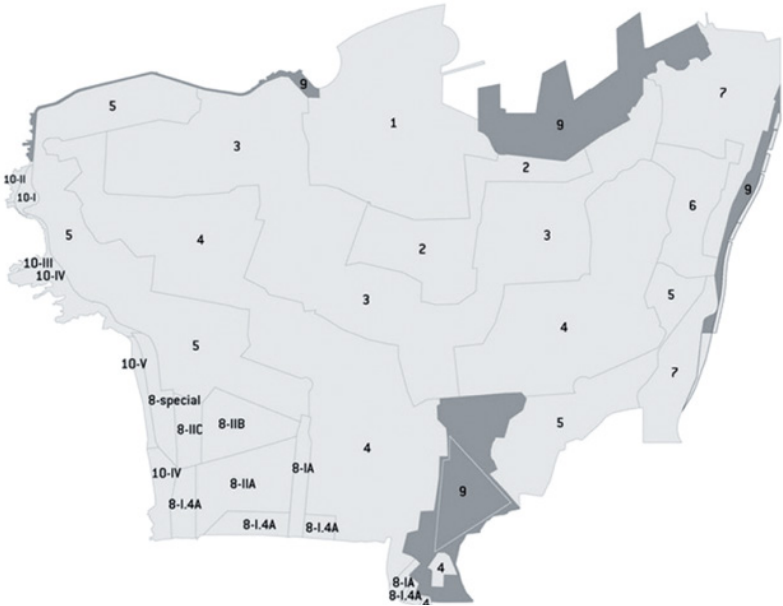


Table 2: Land occupation density and built-up space in the ten zones as per Decree no.6285 of 11/9/1954

Land occupation density and Built-up space in the ten zones as per Decree no.6285 of 11/9/1954										
	Zone 1	Zone 2	Zone 3	Zone 4	Zone 5	Zone 6	Zone 7	Zone 8	Zone 9	Zone 10
A	As per construction law	GF: As per construction law 1st floor and above: 70%	60%	50%	40%	50%	70%	As of Decree no. 2616 of 14/09/1953 amended by Decree no.14312 of 21/05/1970	0	As of Decree no. 4811 of 24/6/1966
B	As per construction law Decree no.2339 of 8/12/1971	5	4	4	3,5	2,5	3			
A: Land occupation density					B: Total Built-up space					

fig. 12 Gathered data on zoning regulations regarding density and built-up space. Source: ‘Mapping New Constructions in Beirut (2000-2013)’, (Jadaliyya, 2016).

The re-integration of heritage could be secured by not only handing the responsibility of restoration to the owner, but also to architects specialised in restoration. Investors in TDR could agree to selling the area certificates to multiple developers instead of one developer who holds all of the rights exclusively.

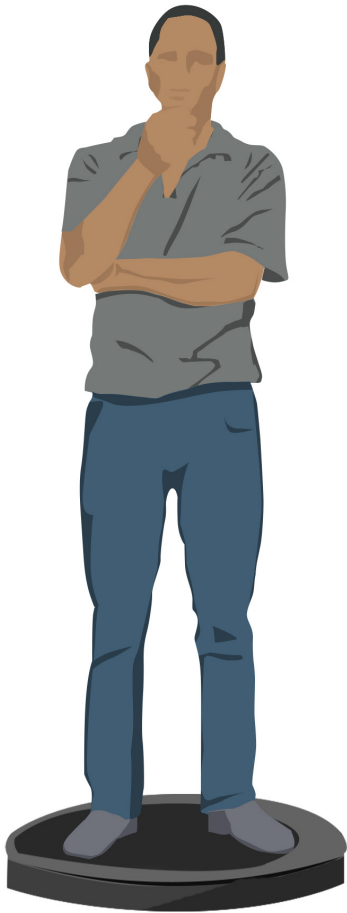
By introducing four main personas that will interact as actors in a newly developed programme with as base the Transfer of Development Rights, the advantages and challenges of the system are more easily comprehensible. These personas are purely theoretical and for explanatory purposes, since in reality there will be a lot more people involved such as lawyers, engineers, supervisors, etc. The first two actors are

the necessary people to make use of the TDR programme, as shown on fig. 11. The other two actors, or rather group of actors, will extend that programme, expand the cycle and involve—and in the long run reward—more people.



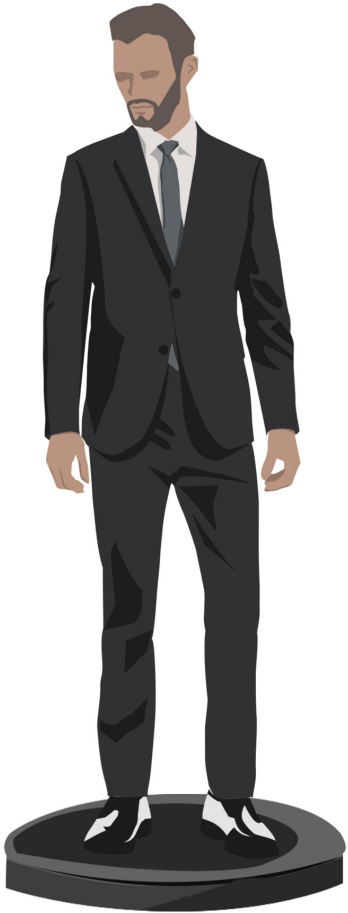
fig. 13 Own photograph, potential heritage surrounded by development, November 2017.

integration: a restoration strategy
the involved



[the owner]

He (in Lebanon more likely to be ‘they’) forms the basis for both the TDR system and the newly proposed system. Even though his property can be labelled as traditional without his consent, he has to be willing to sell the unused rights of his property. Compared to his current situation in which there are only disadvantages to own old buildings, this system is most beneficial for the owner as he is, compared to the others involved, in the best position. Participation should therefore be an easy decision for him. He remains the legal owner throughout the project.



[the investor]

He or she is the person who will buy the nominal certificates representing square metres from the owner. This can either be a developer, but this person can also be an angel-investor that will sell the certificates on the real-estate market after the project has been completed. During the project, he will rent these square metres to the specialist team that is supervising the project and thus to the people who temporarily stay on this area. Because of this, the profit of the investor is secured.



[the refugee]

The refugee will temporary move into the ‘unused’ area which is bought by the investor, through a temporary construction. Here, displaced people will have the chance to live, but also to learn restoration and conservation skills. Through this way she will not only be hired to renovate the owner’s heritage building for a limited time, she will also have the skill set to use in future jobs and gradually integrate in the local community.

[the specialist]

In the form of a team of specialists, with each their own field of expertise, possibly establishing an NGO, the specialist will supervise the whole project and take experiences from one renovation project to the next. She will assist the refugee with daily challenges, job searching, but also organise leisure related activities, and (education related) activities for the children of the refugee families. ‘The Specialist Committee’ stands for a whole team consisting out of restoration specialists, caretakers, teachers, etc.



The heritage issue in Beirut is a complicated matter and the Syrian refugee crisis is about twice as challenging, though could it not be possible to use those two issues in order to take one step towards a possible resolution for both? Figures from 2016 state that only 27% of the adult Syrian refugees have worked at least 1 day per month, with the average of working days being 14 days per month, with the average monthly income being \$177¹⁰ (average monthly rent for a 1 bedroom apartment in Beirut City Centre: \$952, 36, outside Beirut City Centre: \$512,2)¹¹. This project can offer the refugee workers the security of a steady job for a specified amount of time, and in the meanwhile support them in building up a plan for the future. Because of the refugee crisis, during the last seven years there have been many tensions between the locals and

the incoming refugees, which is why involving displaced people in the attempt to save Lebanese heritage might be deemed provocative. However, this provocation will result in a way to raise awareness for the significance of both issues. Backs have been turned on both heritage and the refugee crisis and both have been let down by the government. Therefore by introducing the Syrian refugee crisis as the solution to conserving heritage, it not only creates an opportunity to finally restore the remaining built heritage in Beirut, but with the help of a team of specialists, or even a NGO, refugees can have a better chance at integrating in the local community. They will be able to add a new skill to the skills they already gathered in the life they were forced to leave behind, and put them in practise—thus gain experience, on site.

¹⁰ Inter-Agency Coordination Lebanon, Syrian Refugee Livelihoods, Lebanon, 2016.

¹¹ Numbeo, “Cost of Living Beirut”, 2018.



fig. 14 Stills from an online video, Syrian refugees are being trained in stonemasonry in Mafraq, Jordan by WMF, 2017. (<https://youtu.be/Yk7CIglhFlw>)



fig. 15 Own photograph, Shatila camp (Beirut), November 2017.



fig. 16 Own photograph, settlement Beqaa Valley, November 2017

integration: a restoration strategy
the project

As established, Transfer of Development Right is based around the owner selling an area of phantom land, including its height and density regulations, to a developer who then uses these right for his own construction in an appointed receiving area. All of this is based on profit. The investor wants to build higher and denser in order to make his development project more profitable, and the owner wants the cash in as fast as possible since he is no longer able to sell his property because of the protection measures. After the Calculation Committee (p.51) has calculated the amount of marketable square metres, as well as the amount of money to spend on the renovation of the building, the owner will most probably calculate his winnings, supposing he only uses the minimal amount of needed recourses to renovate the building. There

is a high chance that the building will be rented out to a single tenant after the renovation—who will hopefully take care of the property—, instead of making the building and its history public.

By adding a specialist committee to the story, functioning as supervisor of the project—previously refered to as The Specialist , the whole process could be better organised and micro-managed. This committee can propose a future use of the building, which could be either private, public or a combination, in order to not only provide profit for the owner, but also to make the heritage available to others. By involving specialised people, this team can make sure that original materials are used and that the renovation runs smoothly

and stays true to the original architectural character.

By adding the refugee to the cycle, the opportunity present itself to use this system as a way for displaced people to integrate in the community: by giving something back to that community. As previously established, by introducing the negligence of built heritage in Beirut to the impact of the Syrian refugee crisis on Lebanon and vice versa, both can have a positive impact on the other. Both the local issue and the global issue can work towards a resolution or towards improvement for the other, and in the act of doing so, raise awareness for both issues.

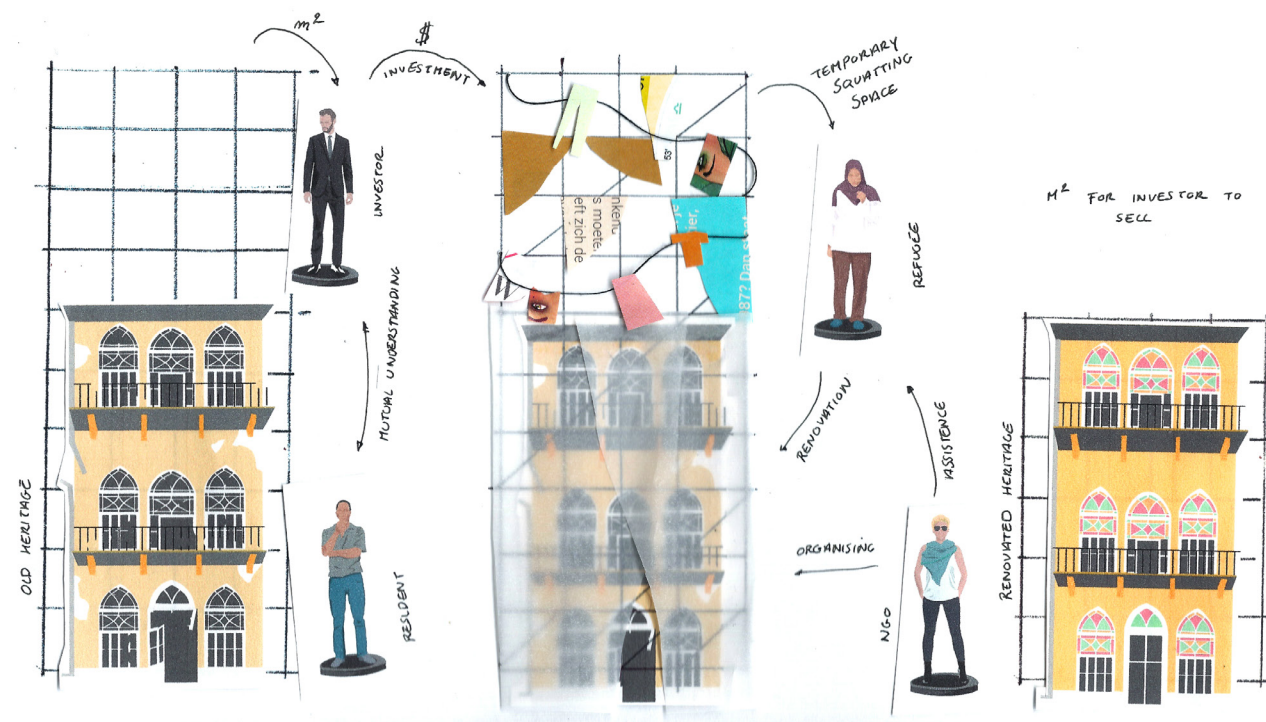


fig. 17 Conceptual scheme on the proposed system.

The refugees participating in the project will be schooled on the topic of restoration and conservation, so that after the conclusion of the project they know how to take care of the buildings they helped restore, and use those skills to find jobs and have an easier integration process.

The project builds on top of the new decree on Transfer of Development Rights: the owner (or another party) proposes the building to the Directorate General of Antiquities as a historical building with cultural values. The DGA then surveys the buildings and establishes the unused area which can later be sold. But instead of selling that area to a developer and start renovating right away, considering the imposed budget matters, a temporary construction will be build by using the

still available phantom land i.e. the until now unused square metres of built-up space. The temporary construction will be built on top of the traditional property using the still available floors of the plot according to its zoning regulations. In this construction there will be available units for the refugees to temporary stay, i.e. legally squat, yet also, and in combination with the actual property, to get schooled in techniques to restore the traditional building above which they live and work. The workers and their families will also be assisted by the Specialist Committee in matters such as integration, activities, schooling for children, and job possibilities.

Because of this additional construction, and later, the dissemblance of the temporary structure, the overall project

will take longer compared to the scenario in which the owner would have followed the regular TDR plan as described in the draft decree. Yet this time frame as well as the advantages for all parties, will be fixed and agreed upon with the owner beforehand, and though the owner remains in the possession of his property, the renovation will be supervised by the involved specialists. This committee will also make up a draft agreement between all actors, regarding the rent of the phantom area, its future use and the future purpose of the property. Because of this it will be possible to assure that for example the property will be partly used for public use, that the certificates will be sold to multiple developers instead of one specific developer, and that the refugees later have an opportunity to rent one of the private units, if a private

use would be part of the restoration project (fig. 19). In other words, the continuance of the project and of the involved people will be agreed upon before the project commences.

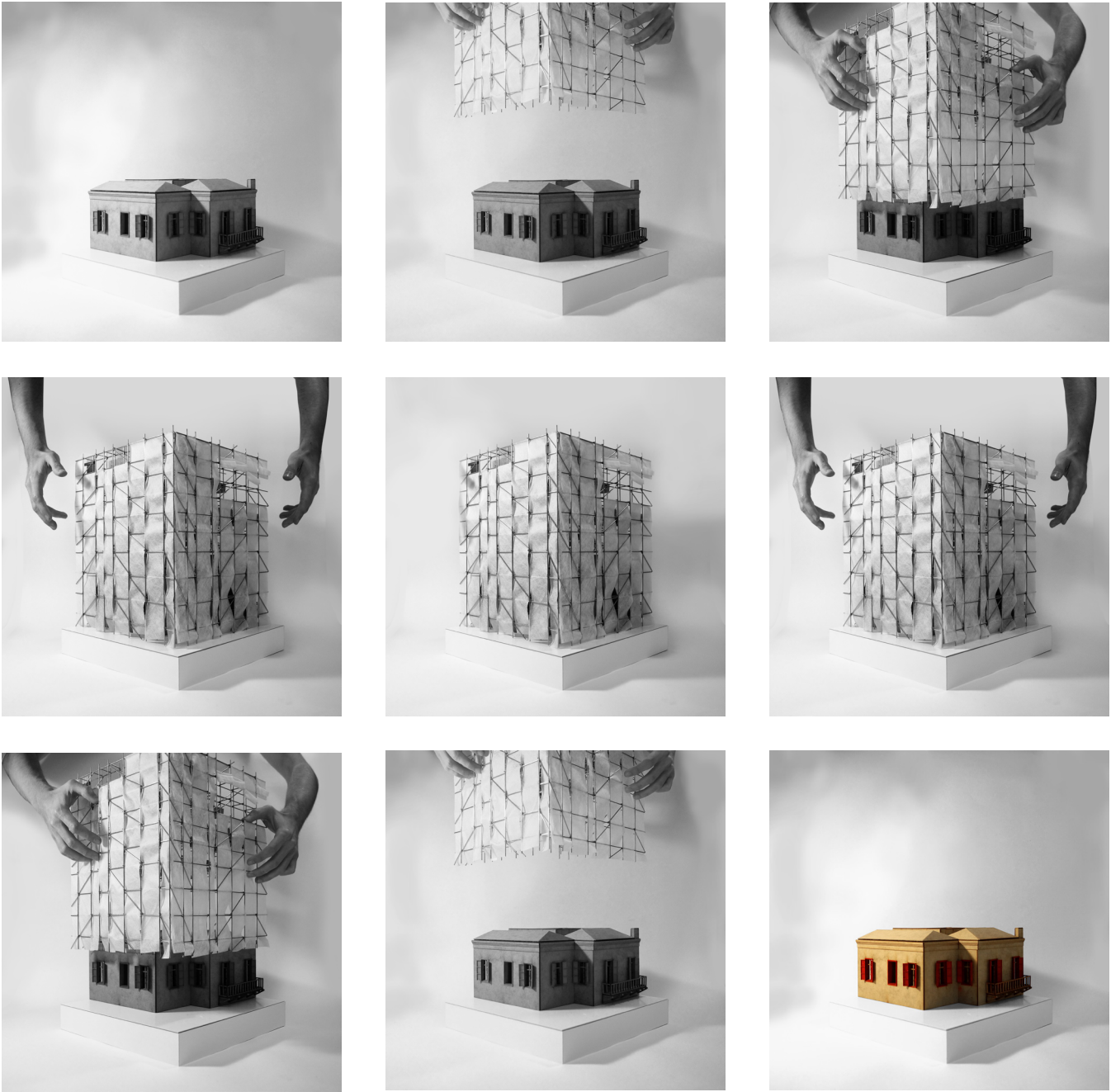


fig. 18 Photographs of model showing the principle of the temporary structure.

BUSINESS OPPORTUNITY
PURCHASE AND SALE OF PHANTOM LAND AGREEMENT

This agreement dated _____, regarding the purchase and sale of the phantom land of the property which address is _____, is made by and between _____, referred to as “Owner” AND _____, referred to as “Investor”. This agreement has been drafted by The Specialist Committee who has separate agreements with each of the Participants of the Transfer of Opportunity Program.

PURCHASE PRICE. The purchase price for the certificates representing the phantom land of the considered property is _____ Dollars (\$ _____), paid within thirty (30) days of signing date.

TERMS OF AGREEMENT

1. The phantom land of the traditional building will be acquired by the investor, following a financial transaction between the owner and the investor based on **decree #106/2017** art. 8 through art. 17., will be **leased to the participants** of the Transfer of Opportunity Program by the investor during a **beforehand agreed upon period** for a beforehand agreed upon rental fee. This fee, which must be stated in a separate lease agreement, cannot be increased during this specified period.

2. After this period has passed and thus in expected circumstances the Transfer of Opportunity Program has concluded, the investor can **sell the certificates** representing the phantom land at a certain time and a certain external party of his choosing, given that the certificates are divided and sold to **a minimum of three (3) unrelated external parties.**

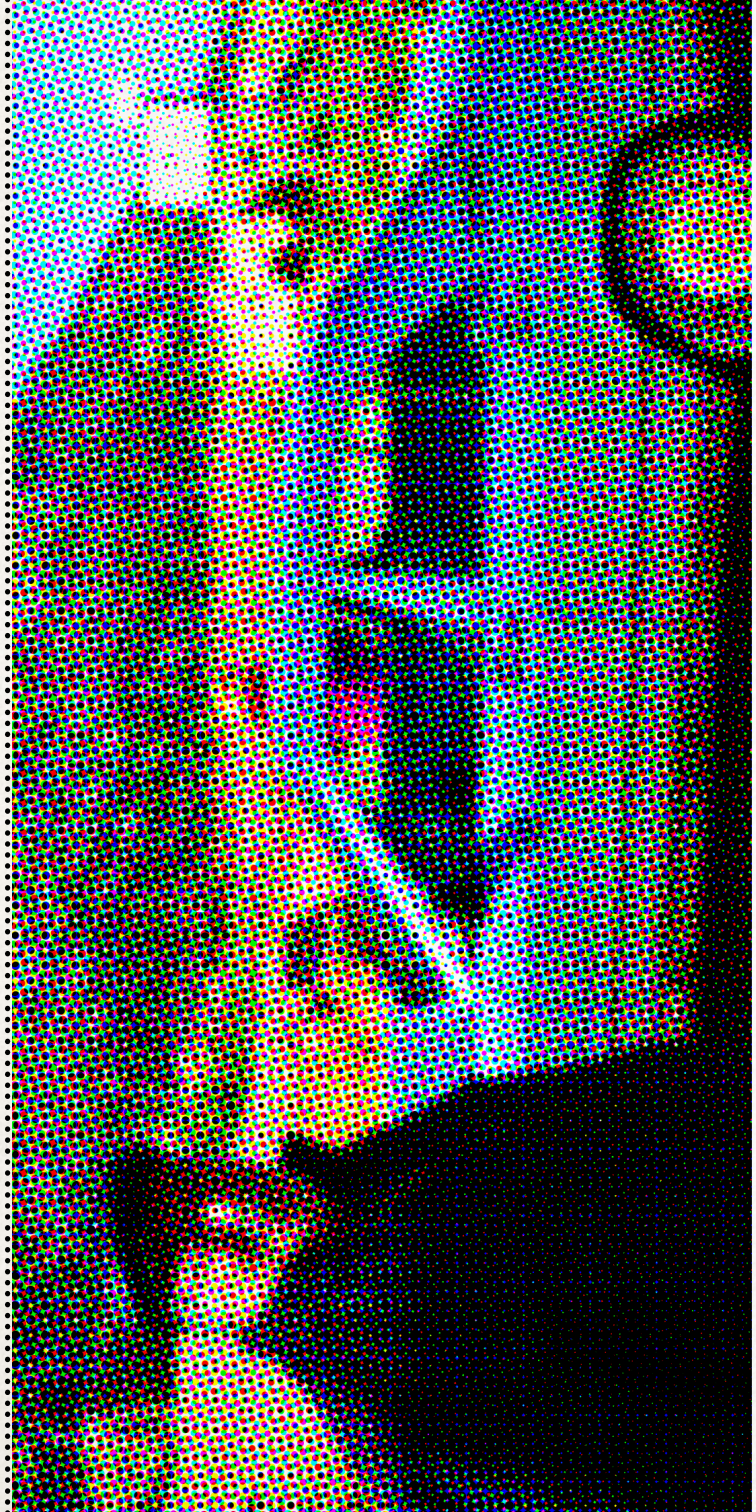
3. In the case that **housing** with as purpose to lease/rent, such as apartments, units, rooms, etc. is fully or partially the beforehand agreed upon use of the renovated property, the owner of the traditional building has to give the persons involved in the Transfer of Opportunity Program the **priority to become a lessee of this housing**, without increasing the rent which has been previously established in the by now ended lease agreement (art. 33) by more than thirty percent (30%) for the next five (5) years starting from the conclusion of the Transfer of Opportunity Program.

4. In the case that **a public function** is fully or be partially the beforehand agreed upon use of the renovated property, the owner of the traditional building has to give the persons involved in the Transfer of Opportunity Program the **priority to remain part of the managing team** in dialogue with the Specialist Committee.

Owner Signature: _____ Date: _____

Investor Signature: _____ Date: _____

If you are an **owner** of a traditional Lebanese property, please carefully rip out this page for safekeeping.



The exact value of your property.

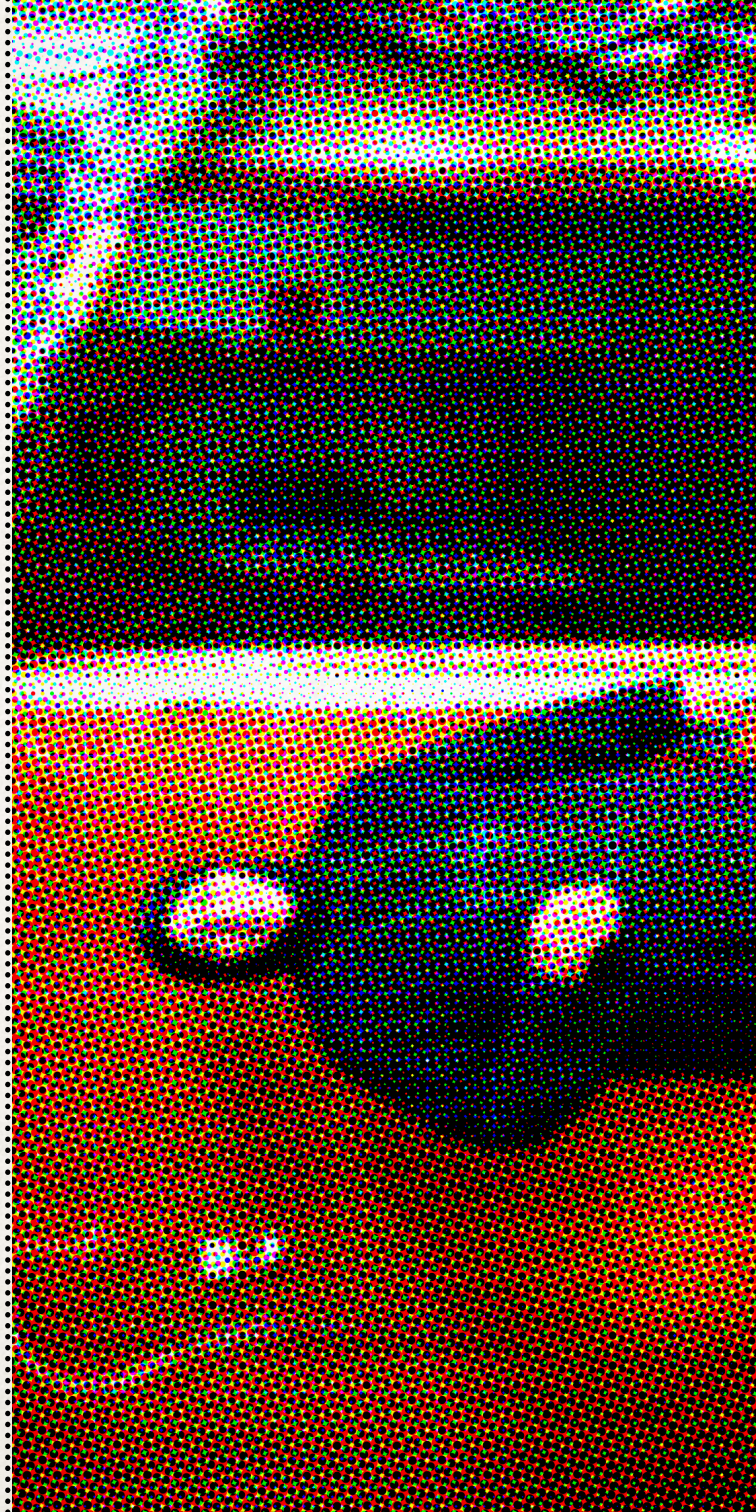
Priceless.

Your old property has the potential to become a beacon for you, for the city. A firm landmark that though proud of its history, is excited the future. We ask you to hand over only the responsibility of renovation, in order to transform your property into a monument for the people.

Saving Lebanese built heritage starts with you.
We ask you to become part of the history of these traditional buildings, by restoring it to its former glory, by instating it in its current context.
By living in it.

You.

The solution we have
been waiting for.



Please, copy this page and hand out to a **refugee** willing to participate in an integration programme.

Dear owner,
your advantages:

- Your property value will rise vastly.
- Your property will become a landmark and add to the identity and proud of the neighbourhood and city.
- Your property will mainly be restored through external funds, all lead by an Committee of Specialists who will take the renovation works in hands.
- Participating results in being exempt from built-up property tax.
- Participating results in being exempt from municipal fees on the rental value (no tax on rental contract).
- A possible public use of your property will secure a sustaining future for the building.



We are all **specialists**, please find out how you can help on the back. Do not litter.

Dear refugee, your advantages:

- You will be given a temporary squatting permit for a designated location in Beirut.
- You will be staying in a community based setting, designed to be adjust to your needs.
- You will learn renovating and preservation skills and put them to practise on-site.
- You will be the key factor in saving the built-heritage of Beirut by being part of it.
- You will be assisted and mentored through daily-life routines in order to integrate more comfortably in the city.

Today.

What if you could help one displaced family through the day in a new and unfamiliar city?
What if you could save one traditional building from demolition, and instead re-integrate it in the city?
What if you could do both?



In case you know a potentially interested **investor**, please cut out this information on the dotted line.

Dear specialist, your advantages:

- You will have the chance to train people with your skillset and give people in need a chance to make a living out of this.
- You will get the opportunity to renovate a building with historical and cultural value.
- You will be involved in a project focussing on the integration of displaced people.
- You will get the opportunity to manage and steer a public project.
- You will be raising awareness and invite external involvement for both the heritage issues and refugee crisis.

Air.

By investing in unused air-rights you invest in a historical building, you invest in people who are in need, you invest in the future of the city.

The best possible investment.

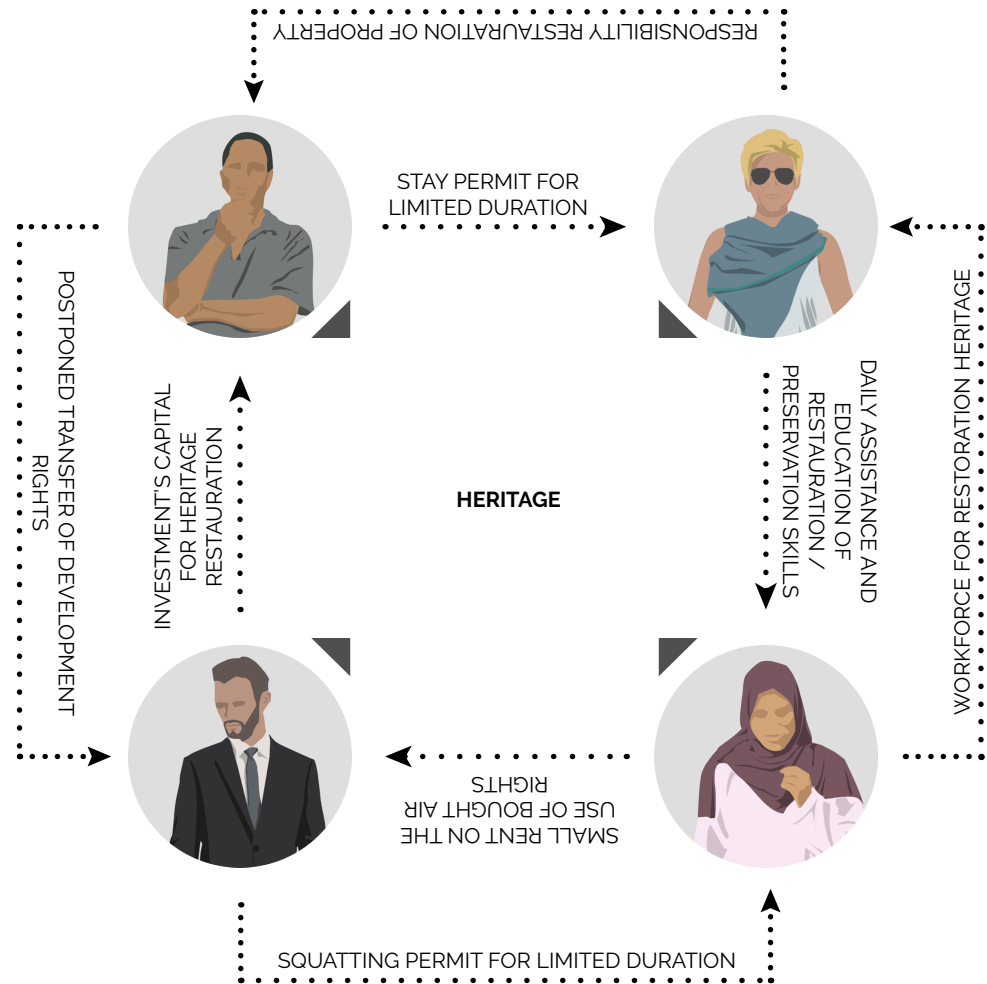


fig. 20 Visual representation of the main advantages.

Dear investor, your advantages:

- Through investing in the Transfer of Development rights, you will be able to later sell the bought phantom land on a real-estate market where demand is in the rising.
- After the project has ended you will be able to play out one offer from a developer against the other.
- During the project you will be receiving an in advance agreed renting fee for the sold square metres.
- By being involved you will have the opportunity to have a share in the property's future public use.

the head case

introducing Hamra's Rebeiz Residence

The reason I chose the Rebeiz Residence in Hamra as a head case to apply this system on is purely personal. I believe that this system, though with its own adaptations, could be applied to any heritage site. Hamra however is the neighbourhood in which the taxi driver dropped me off in the middle of the night when I first visited Beirut. I entered my hotel, went to bed, and woke up the next morning in a neighbourhood that was so vibrant, with such character and texture, specific to this neighbourhood. Before having even heard of the Rebeiz Residence, I had a personal connection to its context. A few months later The Red House was brought to my attention because of a petition that was going around on social media, in order to save the building. After having looked into what would seem as a heritage building, I learnt that this property

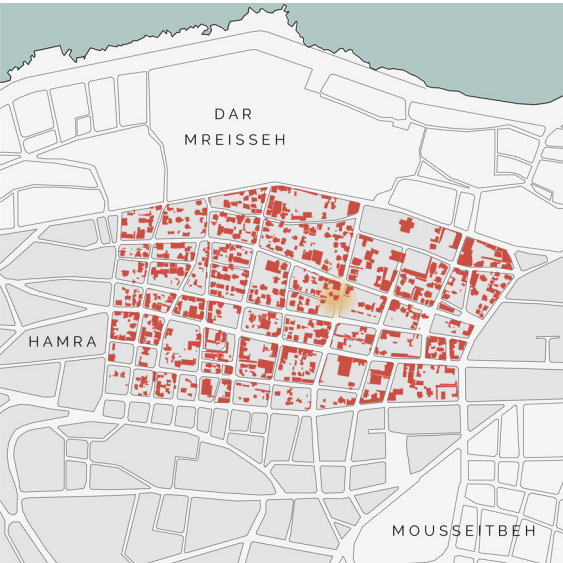
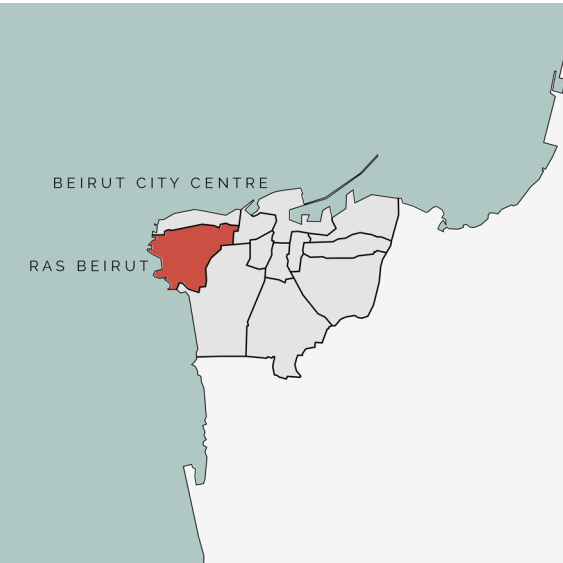


fig. 21 Location of the Hamra district.



fig. 22 Own photograph, the Red House in its current state, February 2018.

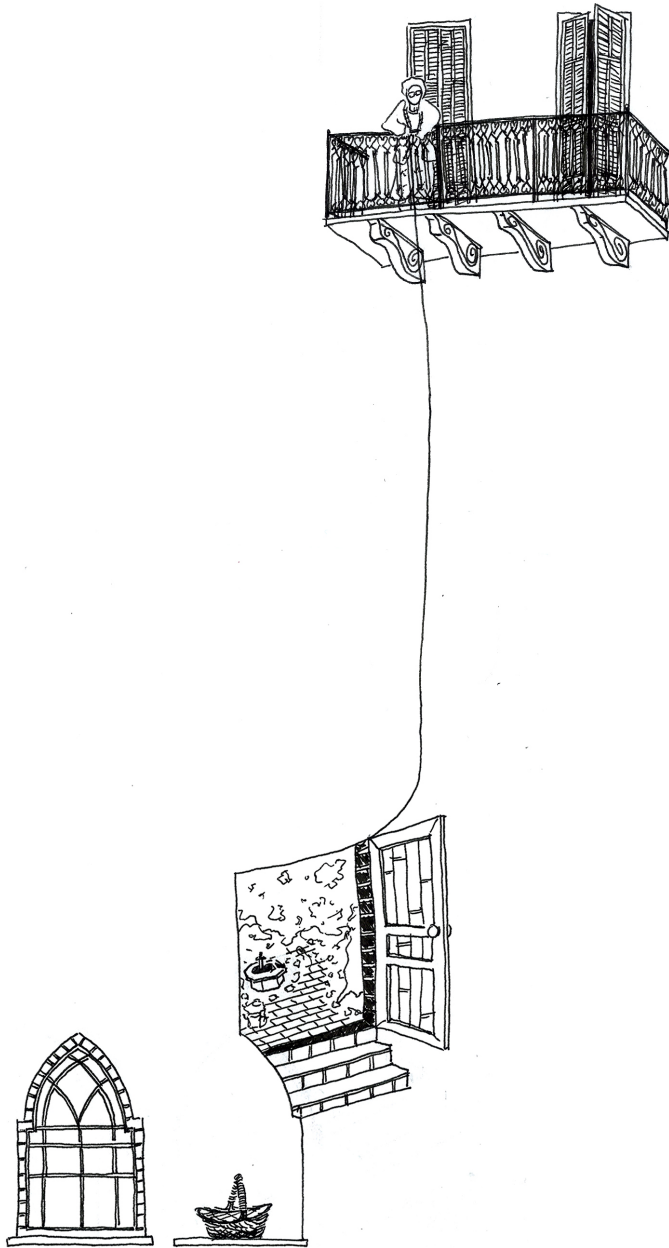
was once protected because of the efforts of a former owner. This is quite noticeable since owners of other traditional buildings do their best to get their properties off the list of protected properties. The building was constructed in the late 1700's, so not protected by decree 166/1933, and it wasn't part of the surveyed 'belt of heritage' (fig. 7), so without the tenant applying for heritage status, the building would have never been protected. Unfortunately after the death of one of the owners, a family feud arose. Half of the property went to the three children of the former owner, the other half would go to his brother. Yet before the owner's death, the children contractually establish that the full property would be divided between the three children, including the brother's share. The tenant at that time, Samir Rebeiz, also a member

of the Rebeiz family, was asked to leave the house. Because of outdated renting laws in Lebanon, they could not legally evict the tenant, the only way would be to apply for demolition, which was impossible since the property was protected. However, the Rebeiz family is a very large family (3000+ members and the family with the largest amount of members living in Hamra), and an overall very wealthy family, with a lot of contacts in higher places. By pulling some strings, family members managed to get the House scrapped from the list of protected buildings, in order to evict the family member who was still living there. The house was put up for sale and every now and then, small demolitions were made to the house. The former tenant Samir, who was born and raised in this house, called upon several NGO's in order to stop the sale

and demolition of the house. Because all of this, the House has gotten a lot of media attention. NGO's filed a law suit that temporary stopped the building from being demolished, leaving the property unattractive to developers. The Red House is thus still for sale today. I have met with several members of the Rebeiz family who shared a lot of stories of their family history and I also spoke with the former tenant who provided me with a lot information and pictures of the current state of the building. He renovated the roof construction, he reinforced the balcony and he replaced the window shutters. Unfortunately he also showed me that by now floor tiles have been taken out by the owners, the windows have been removed and they even destroyed the floors of several rooms in order to sell the construction beams.

fig. 23 (left) Own conceptual sketch showing the historical, cultural & architectural value of Red House.

fig. 24 (right) Photograph of model of 'The Red House' surroundings.



THE RED HOUSE, WHATEVER ITS FUTURE
MAY HOLD, DID ITS DUTY BY WORKING AS A
TURNING POINT FOR HOW HERITAGE IS AND
WILL BE TREATED.
I AM VERY HAPPY FOR THAT.

___ Samir Rebeiz, former resident of the Red House

*HERITAGE SURVEY
AND
EVALUATION*

The Red House
Beirut, Lebanon

REBEIZ RESIDENCE / RED HOUSE is assessed as:

A place of both state and local cultural heritage significance.

Assessment by:

Name: <i>VandenEynde Christophe</i>	Date: <i>February 2018</i>
-------------------------------------	----------------------------



fig. 25 Own photograph, the Red House, eastern elevation, february 2018.

Place name:

REBEIZ RESIDENCE / RED HOUSE

Address:

Omar Bin Abdul Aziz Street, Beirut 1103

Local authority:

Municipality of Beirut

Plot number:

491

Current owner(s):

Rebeiz Helene, Rebeiz Nelly & Rebeiz Abdallah

PRELIMINARY ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The property is important in demonstrating the evolution or pattern of the local government area’s history.

In the midst of all the negativity and neglect towards the traditional buildings in Beirut, the former tenant of the Red House requested this property to be surveyed in order to protect the house and garden as heritage property for its unique characteristics inherent to the Hamra district and its history. Even though the property was not protected by decree #166/1933—since it has been built after the year 1700 and therefore not acknowledged as heritage, nor included by any survey made in the 1990’s in view of the fact that the property is not located in the examined heritage belt around Beirut City Centre, the Directorate General of Antiquities and thus later the former Minister of Culture (Rony Araygi),



fig. 26 Unknown photographer, children by the Red House’s fountain, 1960’s.

granted the Red House of Hamra the status of heritage. Yet on March 16, 2017, the new Minister of Culture, Ghattas Khoury, published the decision to scrap the Red House from the protected buildings list, failing to give a specific reason. Through the strike of a pen, the Red House went from protected to ready for demolition, however it is because of this decision and its blowback that a great deal of awareness was raised towards the Red House, as well as heritage in Beirut in general. Assumptions of corruption were made, petitions were set up for its protection, and people started to understand the house’s opportunity and importance. The Red House was potentially the turning point for how heritage will be treated, and a reminder to not blindly accept every political decision.



your front door.
your garden.
your heritage.
Time to take care of it.

THE RED HOUSE IN HAMRA

The place or area is important in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a particular class of cultural places.

Since the whole Hamra quarter used to be farmland for growing silk, the most important place for any property in this district used to be the garden—usually positioned to the north—where the silk was hung to dry. Though because of urbanisation and migration to the available plots in Ras Beirut, the area rapidly grew from a farming community to a cosmopolitan place for the middle class inhabited by different ethnics and religions. People with different backgrounds were drawn to this district because of the growing opportunities. This rendered Hamra to the vibrant and busy city part as we know it today. Gardens, open plots, even hedges had to make way for high-rise buildings. Therefore the value

of the garden of the Red House should be emphasised, which is as a breath of fresh air in this dense area. If conserved, the house and its garden would act as a trace of the farm community that occupied Hamra before, as well as evidence for Hamra’s farm house architecture.

The place is important because of its aesthetic significance to the local community.

There are several elements in the architecture of the Red House that characterises the area as it once was. The most striking element identifying the Red House might be the red front door and the red window shutters (hence the nickname of the house). There are few other houses in Hamra where these red shutters are still integrated in the architecture. Hamra is Arabic for red, since during the time that Hamra was mostly

a farming area, red used to be a common colour used in the aesthetics of the farm houses in the district. Though the original shutters of the house have been replaced, they have yearly been repainted in order to preserve this characterising symbol for the Hamra area. On the east elevation, two of the large windows of the house are connected to a balcony, In Ras Beirut, as well as in the rest of the city, these balconies formed an elevated social space in the street scape. This is where neighbours would have a chat from one balcony to the other and be involved in the community.

The place has a special association with the life or work of a particular person, group or organisation of importance in the area’s history.

In the late 1700’s, the property has been built, and inhabited ever since, by members

of the Rebeiz family. With over 3000 members it used to be one of the main Orthodox families of Ras Beirut, and owned much of the land on which Hamra is built. The family has still got a high standing and it is the family with the largest amount of members living in Hamra. Four generations back, in the early 1900's, two young widows lived in the house : Marie Abdo Rebeiz, who was the owner, and Samira Rebeiz, who was her cousin. They made the house into the landmark it is today. Not only did they often organise gatherings in the house for other women in the area, they were also politically very influential and played a huge role in Beirut's politics at that time, mainly because they had a major say in both the Rebeiz family and the community of women in the area, which counts up to over 3000 potential voters. They influenced the career of many political people at that time. George Rebeiz, one of the sons of



fig. 27 Photograph by Samir Rebzie, the Red House's garden before the eviction of the last tenant, between 2010 and 2017.

Marie Abdo Rebeiz often invited influential people from all over the world, ranging from Belgian politicians to the American Jazz figure Louis Armstrong. Marie Abdo Rebeiz was also the one who decided to rent out parts of the plot (reducing the garden) to shopkeepers in order to have income and provide for her family.

The place has a strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons.

The people who live near the Red House, or regularly pass by it have gotten used to seeing 'the house with the red windows' and even though not many people know the history of the building, the red colour and high trees from the garden still catches their eyes when walking or driving by. It is an intriguing landmark in the neighbourhood

that is visible from every direction, and lately it has been even more the topic of many conversations, often by students of the American Beirut University, since many of them pass by the house every day on their way to school. Because of the three shops on the plot, the sidewalk in front of the Red House is a gathering point for shopkeepers, their clients, and passerby.

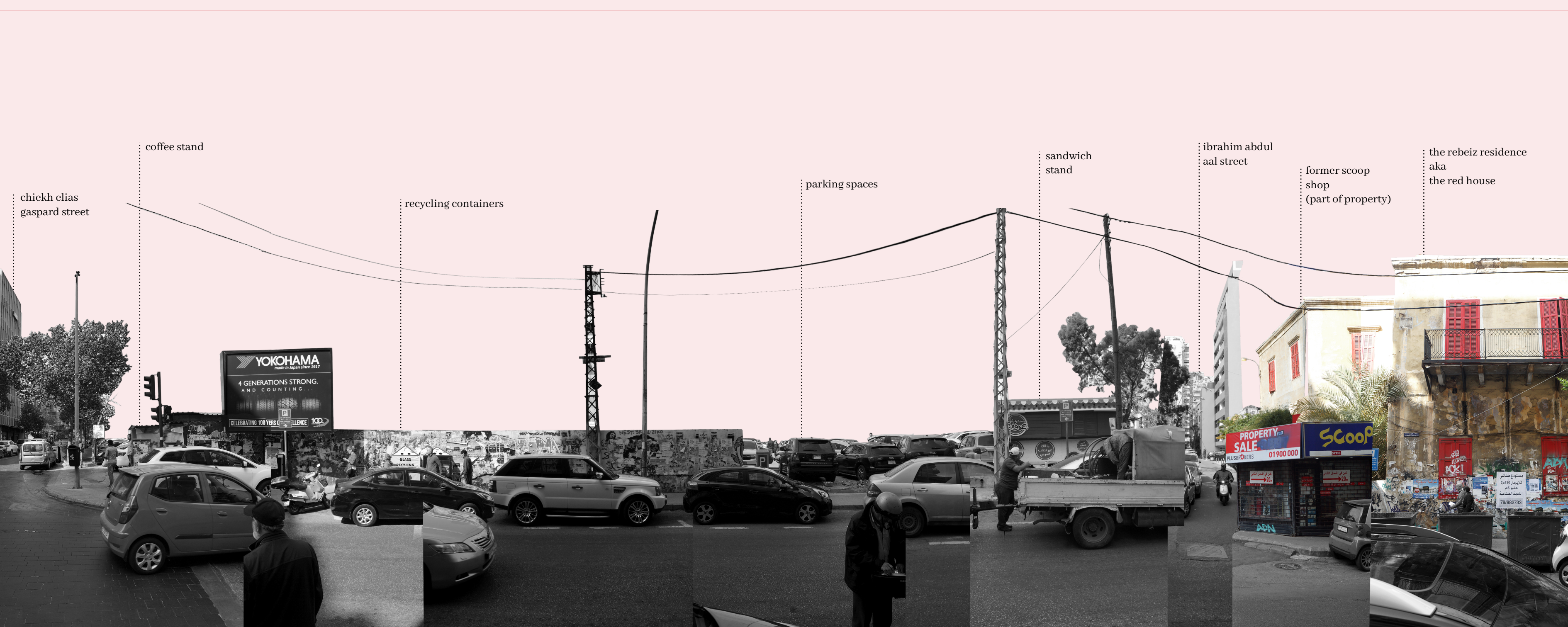
ENVIRONMENT

Character of Existing Streetscape

Omar Bin Abdul Aziz Street is a side street of the busy Hamra Street—the main road in the Hamra district, filled with commercial stores and restaurants. Traffic on Omar Bin Abdul Aziz Street is not nearly as dense as



fig. 28 Photograph by Samir Rebeiz, the Red House's interior before the eviction of the last tenant, between 2010 and 2017.



chiekh elias
gaspard street

coffee stand

recycling containers

parking spaces

sandwich
stand

ibrahim abdul
aal street

former scoop
shop
(part of property)

the rebeiz residence
aka
the red house



fig. 29 Collage showing The Red House in its streetscape

on Hamra street, yet it is still a busy streets with traffic and many pedestrians. The street was named after Omar Bin Abdul Aziz who was an Caliph of the Umayyad Caliphate, who ruled from 717 to 720.

The typology of the Red House used to be a common one for the houses in this area. Yet now it is one of the only, and the oldest, properties showcasing the traditional architecture that is used to be an immense part of the streetscape, The traditional house in front of the Red House has been replaced by a seven stories apartment block, as are all the buildings in Omar Bin Abdul Aziz Street, leaving the The Red House as the only low rise building in its proximity.

The southern elevation of the house faces (the side facing Hamra Street) faces a big open parking plot. Which makes the House completely visible from afar. As well as place for parking, this plot is also used for food- and coffee carts. Omar Bin Abdul Aziz

Street houses a butchery and a supermarket (both part of the property itself), several coffee shops and several specialised shops such as eyewear and creative supplies.

The Red House is separated from the street through a line of parking spots and and a narrow sidewalk on which a tree is planted in front of the house. The overhanging balcony shows that the sidewalk used to be larger and the street narrower.

Character of Existing Property

As the house used to be a common farmhouse where the family dried silk, the property is characterised by a generous garden, located in the northern part of the plot, occupying over half of the area. There are several mature trees located in the garden, visible from the street, as well as the original (currently not functional) fountain.

The property is based on a corner plot, part

of a cross roads, and visible from every direction. On the plot are three small shops, later added by a Rebeiz family member to bring in income. One of the shops, which is now empty, is on the corner of the building, two other shops are located on the right side of the house, in front of the garden, presently occupied by a small supermarket and a butcher shop.

Landmark status

The Red House or Rebeiz Residence is a property on a corner plot at the junction of four streets, visible from every connected road. Because of its striking aesthetics, the property is even visible from the very busy Hamra Street since there are no buildings in front of the house (only an open parking plot). The property lies on the road for many people going either to the city centre, or to the American University of Beirut.

Summery on Environmental Significance

The Rebeiz Residence is a textbook example of the typical Hamra houses dating back to the 18th century. Originally built as a farm house consisting of only a ground floor (+ the kitchen on top), adapted later to its changing environment by adding a floor in order to render to a suburban villa, still staying true to the traditional ‘Hamra architecture’, characterised by its red colour for the window shades and doors, the balcony and the garden with mature trees, together forming a high potential beacon in a rapidly evolving environment.

HISTORY

Trends

Ras Beirut, and thus Hamra was an area mainly used for farming, an area characterised by agriculture and its typical farmhouses. All of this land used to be owned by only a few landowners. After arriving in Hamra over 400 years ago and buying a large amount of land, a substantial part of Hamra was owned by the Rebeiz family. This land was later sold in order to build the American University of Beirut Medical Centre (a hospital). In 1866, with the arrival of the AUB in the area, there was a vast change in the use of this land, as well as the street network and building style. Over time more and more people built suburban villas in Hamra, leaving the area distinguishable through these two typologies of dwellings. This lasted until the end of World War II,

when apartment houses grew to be the answer for floor space scarcity, which in its turn lead to the transformation of Ras Beirut and the rest of Beirut, booming in the 1960’s. People with different ethnics and religions migrated to Hamra, for the unbuilt land, but also for the growing opportunities provided by the American University. Which led in tandem with the post Lebanese civil war reconstruction, to the Hamra we know today, another attraction for the international elite to construct high-rise apartment- and office buildings, yet still recognisable through the diversity amongst its residents.

Persons/Institutions

Marie Abdo Rebeiz and Samira Rebeiz had ties with many politicians, such as Bahije Takieddine, who helped writing the Lebanese constitution and according to Paola Rebeiz, remained Samira’s best friend

until her death. Another political figure who regularly visited the house was Habib Abou Chahla, he played an important role in the fight for independence in 1943. He has been the minister of the Lebanese parliament between 1946 and 1947, as well as minister of the Lebanese government, elected with the help of the former owners of the Red House, Other political figures whose careers have partly been shaped by the house and its residents are Fawzi el Hoss, Tamam Salam, Sami el Solh and Saeb Salam, all members of parliament, and even prime ministers.

The oldest son of Marie Abdo Rebeiz and father of the current owners, Georges Rebeiz had a lot of international contacts, such as European politicians. One of his most notable friends was Louis Armstrong, who visited George and thus the house in the 1960’s. After Armstrong’s death, George remained friends with his family.

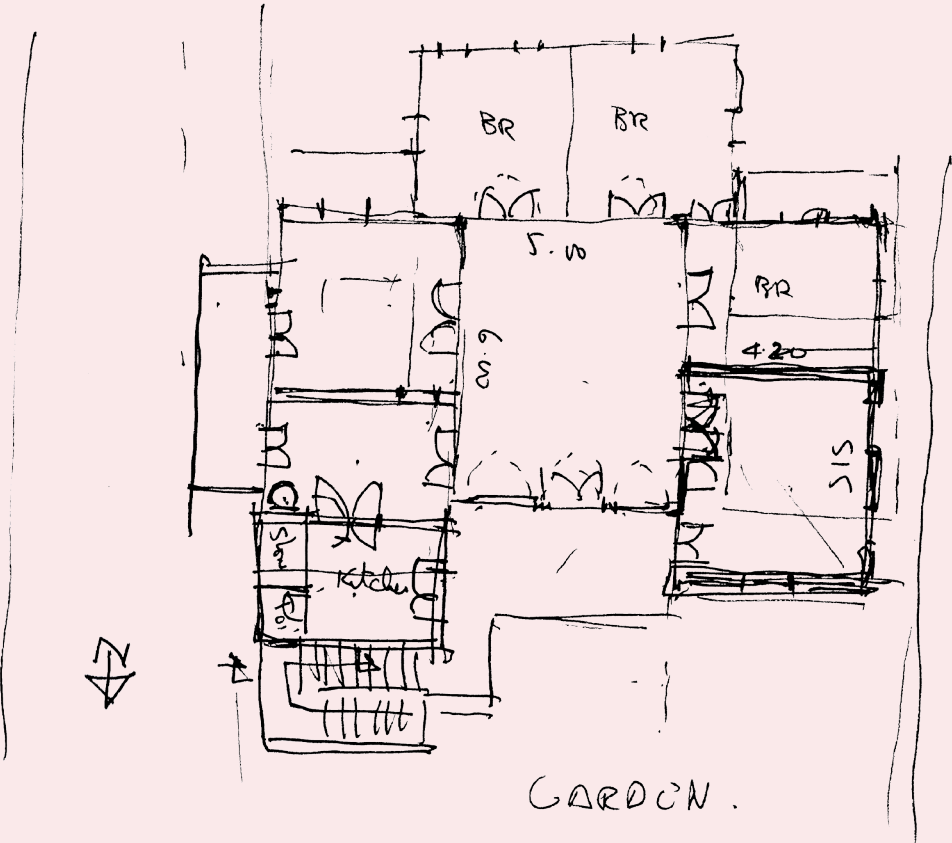


fig. 30 Sketch by Samir Rebeiz, upper floor plan Red House, 2018.

Summery on Historical Significance

Even though the Red House has only been built in the late 1700’s and therefore too late to legally be considered heritage, its historical significance is due to its chronicle and by serving as an active player in both

political and cultural circles. The Red House was built during the time that Lebanon was under Ottoman rule, yet flourished when the country was under French mandate, and later survived the Lebanese Civil War. The house has proven its ability to constantly and effortlessly adapt to changing environments.

your terrace.
your home.

your heritage.
Time to take care of it.



THE RED HOUSE IN HAMRA

ARCHITECTURE

(sections and plan p. 110-111)

Architectural Style

House with three arches (Ottoman
Modernity)

Designer/Builder/Architect

Rebeiz family

Architectural Design

The residence is a two storey building, with each floor composed out of three rectangular clusters of dwelling rooms, organised in a U-shape around a central space—the living room, which has three decorated arch windows opening onto a balcony with a view over the large private garden. Some of the rooms are linked to another. The original

building was only one storey high, being the ground floor, when later a second floor was added. The main entrance to the property is through the garden while an alternative entrance in the south-west of the building is connected to a smaller garden. An exterior staircase provides access to the upper level, allowing the two levels to work completely independent. Except for the three large arch windows in the central space, the upper floor has 16 large rectangular windows with decorative shutters, including the two doors leading to the street facing balcony. One window is blocked from any view because of the neighbouring apartment building. The ground floor has 15 windows, of which 3 are blocked by a wall and the added corner kiosk. The property is oriented following the Ottoman typology: the garden faces north, while the kitchen and toilet are on the eastern side, since the house makes use of natural ventilation through the dominant



fig. 31 Photograph by Samir Rebeis, original floor tiling (coloured cement 20x20), between 2010 and 2017.

winds to get rid of moisture and smells.

Architectural Integrity

Samir Rebeiz, the former tenant of the Red House and architect by trade, maintained the building and renovated when necessary, however with care and respect for tradition and the house’s architectural value. The red wooden shutters have been replaced by

new shutters made out of the original wood with the original hue of red, the balcony has been reinforced with a steel frame, part of the Marseille roof tiling has been renovated 10 years ago and some of the original beams, part of the roof structure, have been reinforced. Unfortunately, even while the house was still considered protected, the current

owners wanted to speed up the process of ridding the house from its protected status. They took out and sold the original floor tiles, as well as the window frames. They partly demolished the floor, connecting the two storeys, in order to sell the beams used for the floor construction.

Used Construction Materials

The walls are made from load-bearing ashlar sandstone and traditionally about 40 cm thick. The floors and the roof are supported by cedar wooden beams. The roof is partly flat and accessible, while the south and east cluster of dwelling rooms have a saddle roof with Marseille tiles. The interior walls are just like the exterior walls made of shlar sandstone, finished with lime plaster. The tiles were fixed with lime mortar.

Summery on Architectural Significance

The original single storey farm house was constructed in the late 1700’s when later, in the 1860’s, the second floor was added, following the ottoman principles of the house with three arch windows typology. The architectural features and spatial quality of the rooms have much to offer, despite the

recent damage done to the building.

Real estate speculation has endangered the house with three arches. It is in desperate need of typological study and systematic inventory reports, public preservation programmes, and protection against uncontrolled and ill adapted rehabilitation works.¹⁰

¹⁰ MEDA-CORPUS. Traditional Mediterranean Architecture, EU, 2016.



fig. 32 Photograph by Samir Rebeiz, the Red House's interior in its current state, 2017.



fig. 33 Photograph by Samir Rebeiz, demolished floor, 2017.



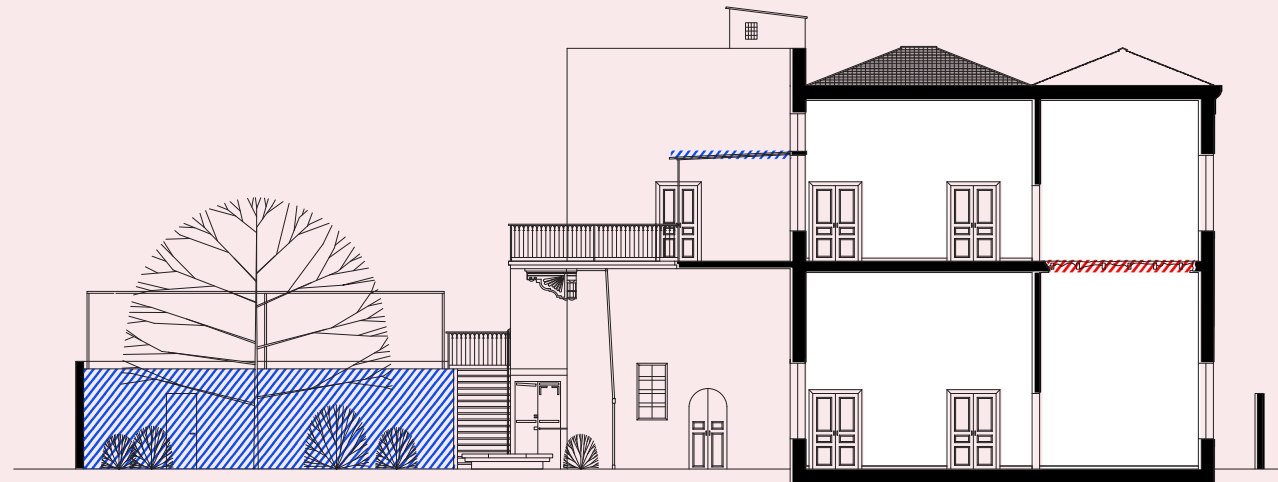
fig. 34 Photograph by Samir Rebeiz, original tiles being sold, 2017.



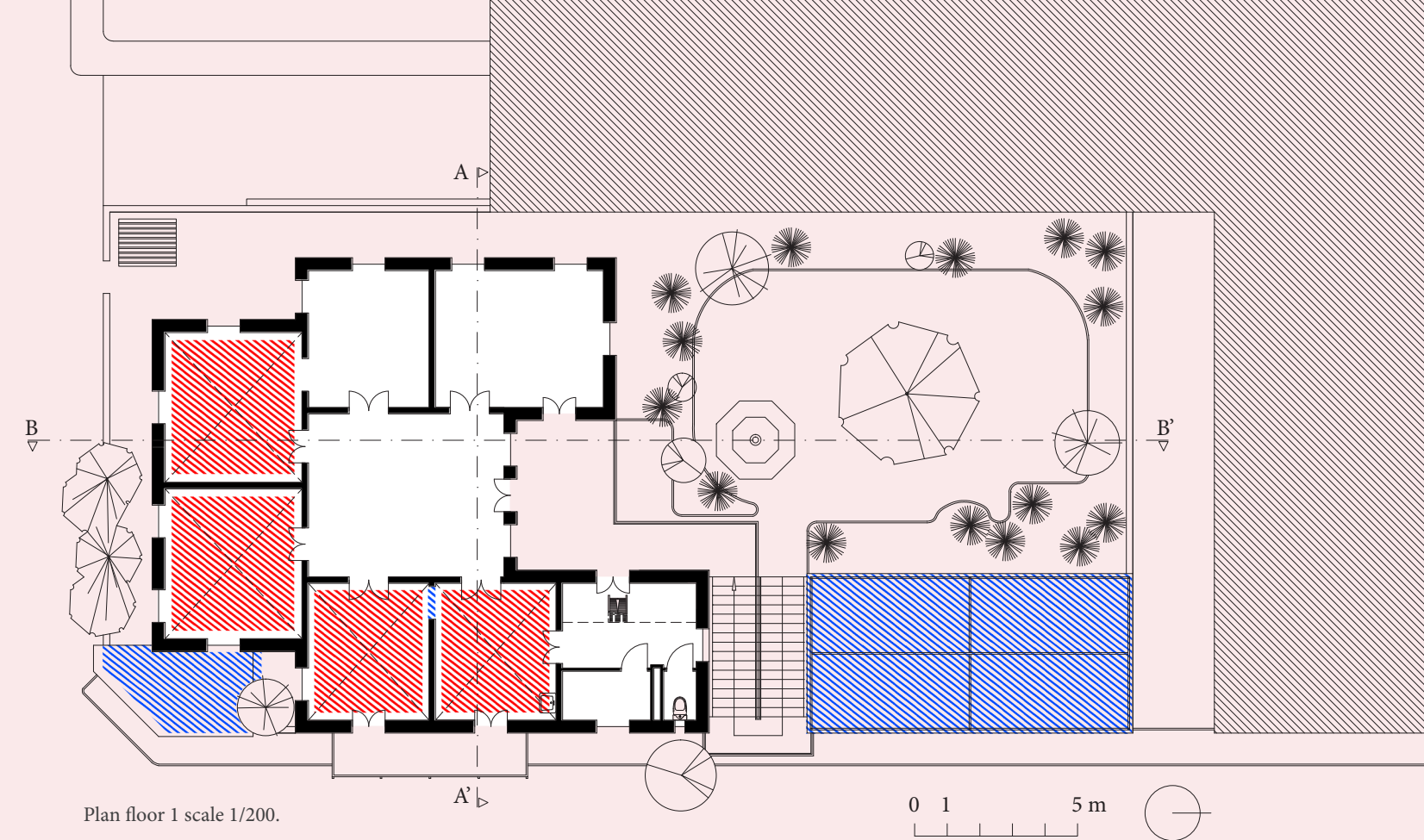
fig. 35 Photograph by Samir Rebeiz, doors and window frames being sold, 2017.



Cross section AA' scale 1/200.



Section BB' scale 1/200.



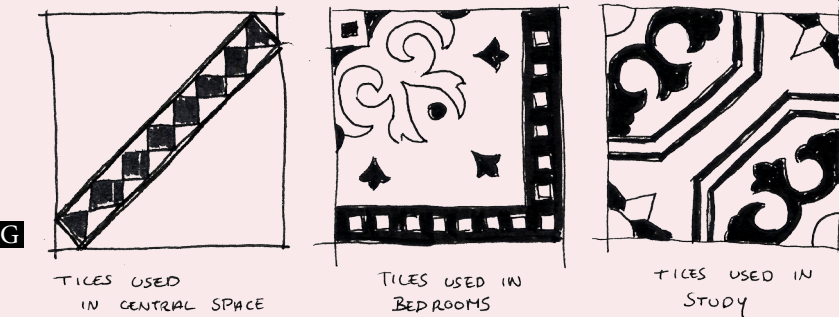
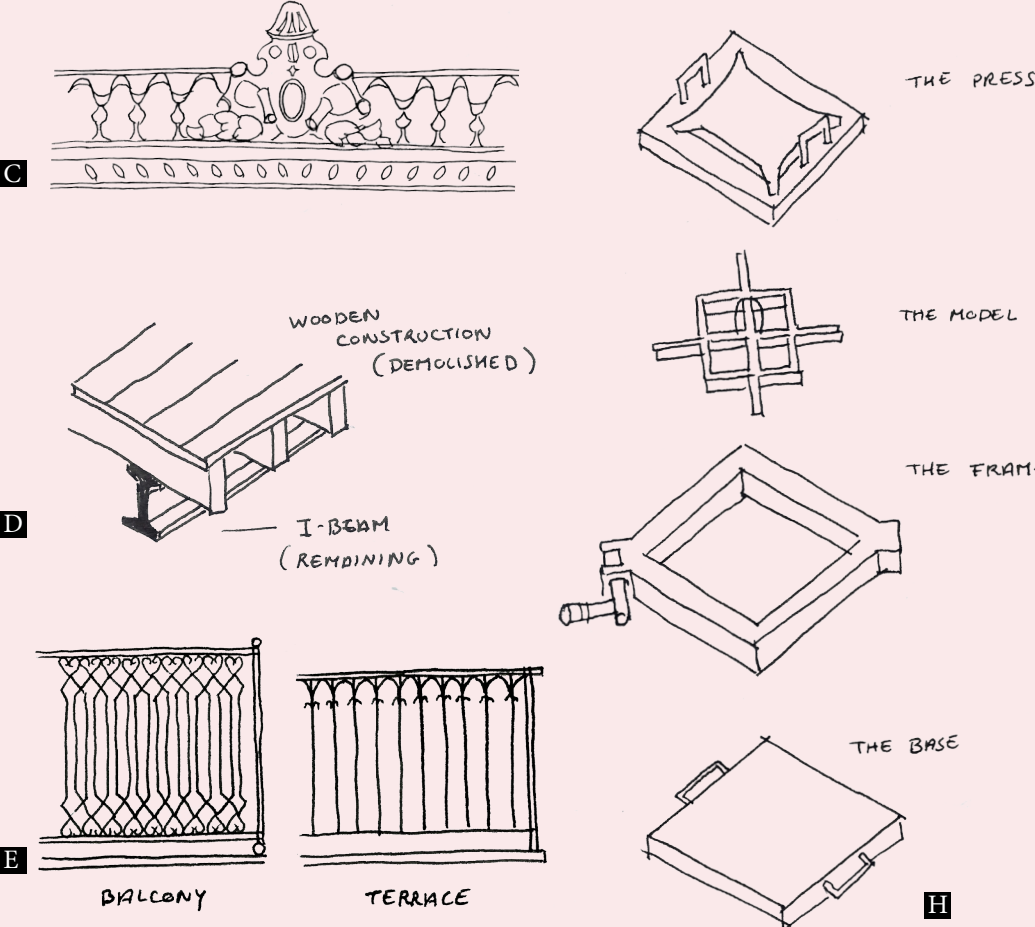
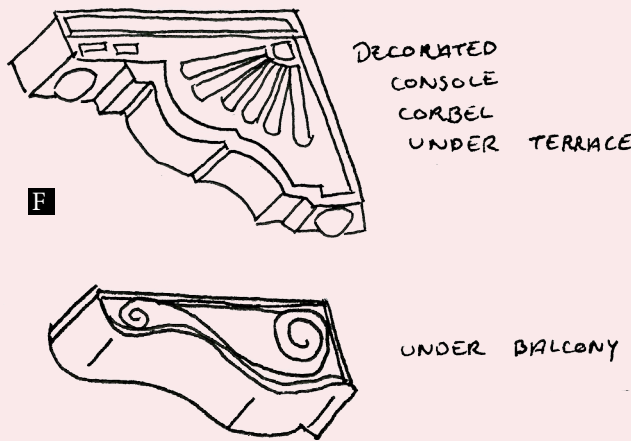
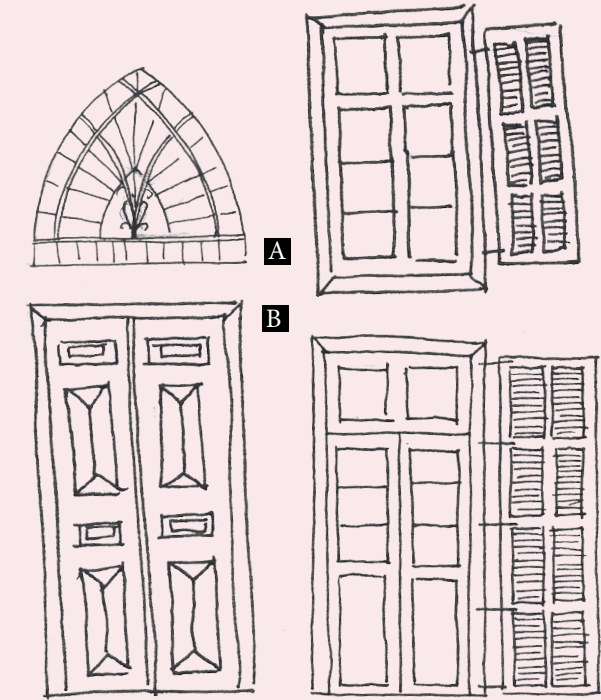
Plan floor 1 scale 1/200.

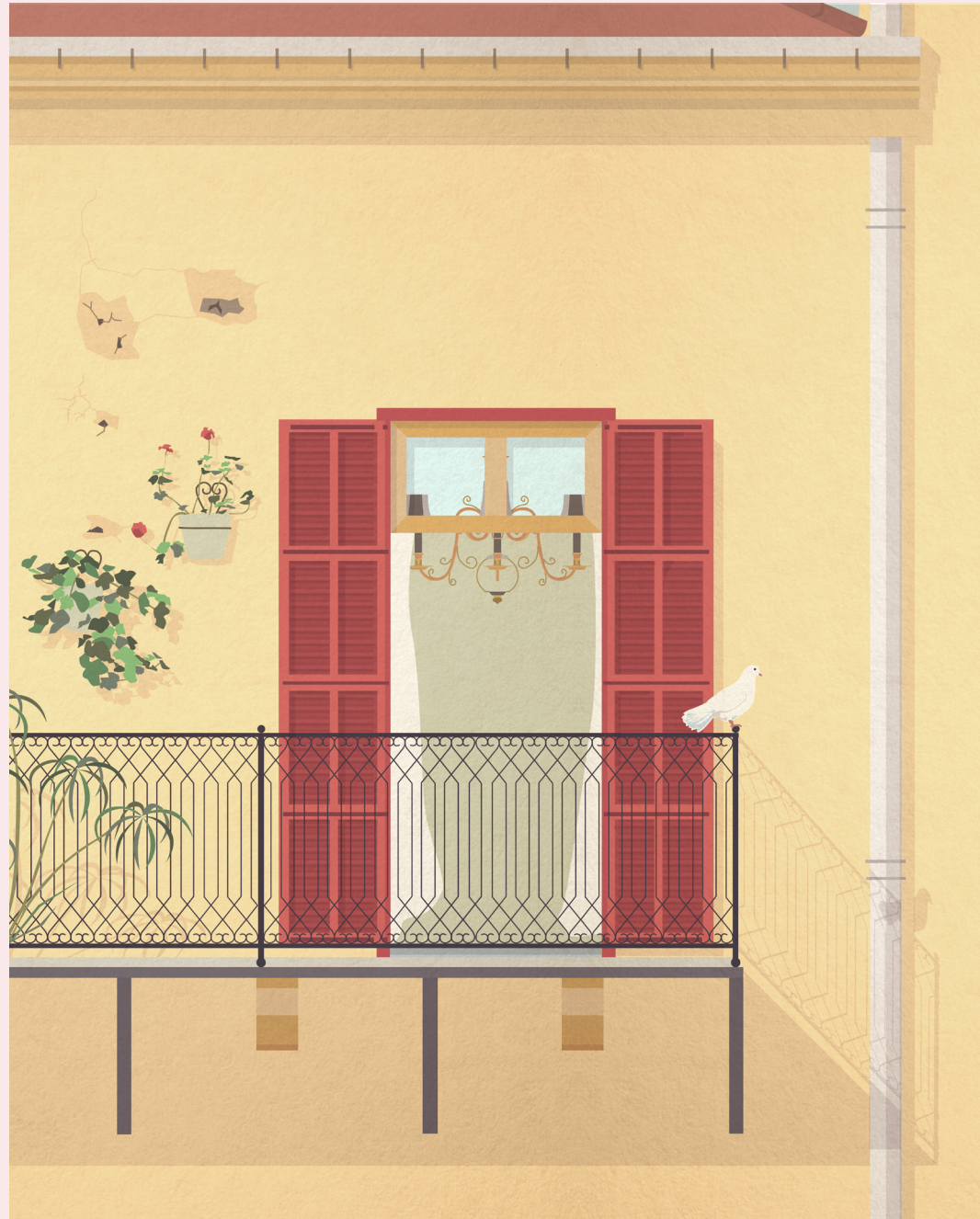
-  Alterations made over time.
-  Elements destroyed by lastest owners in 2017.

fig. 36 Plans and sections of the Red House in Hamra, showing modifications made over time.

List of architectural elements and their condition, part of the original spatial quality of the Red House.

- 1. window frames [sold - to be remade following original example] **B**
- 2. window- & door shades [to be renovated where needed] **B**
- 3. arch windows [to be maintained where needed] **A**
- 4. wooden floor construction [demolished - to be rebuild on remaining steel beams] **D**
- 5. wooden roof construction [to be maintained where needed]
- 6. wall construction [lime plaster to be renovated where needed (exterior & interior)]
- 7. decorated console corbels [to be renovated where needed] **F**
- 8. concrete floor tiles [sold - to be remade following orginial example] **G H**
- 9. window ornamentation [sold - to be remade following original example] **C**
- 10. steel balustrades [to be maintained where needed] **E**
- 11. ventilation / sewage utilities [to be refurbished for modern use]
- 12. garden [in need of maintanance]





your balcony.
your view.

your heritage.
Time to take care of it.

THE RED HOUSE IN HAMRA

the head case
conclusion: its potential

After surveying the history of any traditional building, the adaptability of built heritage can be fathomed. The main reason for its existence today is this flexibility to its spatiotemporal context throughout history. It is only now that people seem to have decided that heritage cannot be part of the ongoing urbanisation, and even though most of these properties in Beirut have survived past conflicts, only a few have survived the current development strategy—or lack thereof. Because of its logical division in spaces, the Red House shows a lot of potential for a wide range of purposes. In the case of restoring the house into a private function like it has always been, the clear floor plan allows people from different backgrounds with different religions and different ways of life to reflect this lifestyle onto the property. Designing

smaller housing units inside these traditional houses would be a good option in the current situation, since because of the large constructions across the city there is rising demand for smaller and more affordable apartments¹².

However, even though houses like the Red House were what identified the Hamra district, this property is the only one of its kind still standing in the area. Which is why as a counter proposal, a public purpose should be implemented in the house’s future function. A function that actively integrates built heritage back into the community. Unlike more passive uses such as a museum, these buildings should be given the chance to be part of local citizens’ daily life, and thus react to the current needs of that local community. Traditional

buildings should be considered in the first place whenever that community requires a place to house a certain use. Again, the urgent needs of this community might be of a private nature, such as apartments or offices and still re-integrate the traditional building in society.

However, not turning the building into a museum does not mean that the traces of history should not be visible. Do we have to erase all the signs of a history of which people would rather not be reminded? Do we have to deny that these buildings have been through conflict and war? Do we deny that owners vandalised their own property in the search for economic profit? These traces are apparent in the aesthetics of each one of these buildings, and though some of

¹² SyndiGate.info., ‘Real estate developers eye Beirut outskirts for affordable apartments ’, (Albawaba, 2015).



fig. 37 Own photograph, the food shop where Michel Rebeiz spends most of his days, February 2018.



fig. 38 Own photograph, Suham in the rosary shop she works at, near Hamra Street, February 2018.

these scars will have to be restored in order to bring back its original value, each layer of history that had its mark on the building, should be represented in one way or the other. It is this stacking of layers on top of layers of history that forms the evolution of a traditional building such as Hamra's Red House; with as its most current, yet not its final layer: the restoration through this project, by the hands of the very people who were involved.

While the future purpose of a traditional building is still in the hands of the owner of that building, a combination of a private function and a public function would be an ideal scenario. Which is even more the case for The Red House since this building will act as the catalyst for a project that

will raise awareness for some crucial issues. Because the two levels of house have always functioned autonomously, this will continue in its proposed future use. The upper floor will house smaller apartments that, after the conclusion of this project, can even be rented to the refugees who have worked on its restoration. The lower floor shall act as a public floor. As shown on fig. 24, the Hamra district is a very vibrant district that attracts people from different backgrounds, as well as from different parts of the city. All of this also means that a lot of western brands and chains put up venues here. These shops and restaurants are especially very appealing to tourists, but also to students of the American University of Beirut, which is very near the busy Hamra street and even closer to the Red House. All of this lead to proposal of a

restaurant for the lower floor of the Red House. A restaurant is a very accessible function for many different types of people and will immediately introduce them to the project, its underlying message, and the importance of built heritage in a city such as Beirut. The lower floor can be managed by the people living on the upper floor. It can be a small restaurant, serving traditional food from the country of where the tenants originate. If some of the Syrian participants decide to stay in the Red House after its restoration, this restaurant can attract people with their traditional Syrian kitchen. The enclosed garden and the richness and history of the Red House will make for a perfect setting and a topic of conversation.

In this proposal the house will be fully restored to the state in which the former tenant had to leave the property behind, except for one of the demolished floors on the upper level. As mentioned in the heritage survey and evaluation of the Red House, the owners destroyed the floors of four of the rooms on the upper floor in order to sell the wooden beams. However relatively easily renovated, by leaving one of the floors open, and therefore visually connecting the two levels of the house, it immediately becomes clear that there's a mutation in the original floor plan of the building, leaving that one layer of history exposed. This connection can be used as an advantage for the restaurant by linking the two kitchens, and hopefully later it can be a reminded of a time when the conservation of heritage was not an evident matter.



your history.
your community.
your identity.
Time to take care of it.

While two of the three small shops on the property will remain functioning as they are now (a butcher shop and a supermarket), the empty corner kiosk will act as an information desk of sorts during the renovation as well as after the renovation. The kiosk that used to be a small optical shop but now merely functions as a FOR SALE sign for the house, characterises the appearance of the Red House. Since the kiosk is currently empty, after some renovation itself, it can be furnished into an information desk for displaced people in Beirut as well as local people with questions about the project. Since this is the site where the project commences, this kiosk can be where an NGO forms, an NGO that connects other NGO's that separately focus on either heritage conservation or the wellbeing of displaced people.

The kiosk makes it accessible enough for urban refugees to ask where to apply for jobs, how to fill in certain documents, but also for local people to ask what on earth is going on in this scaffolding.

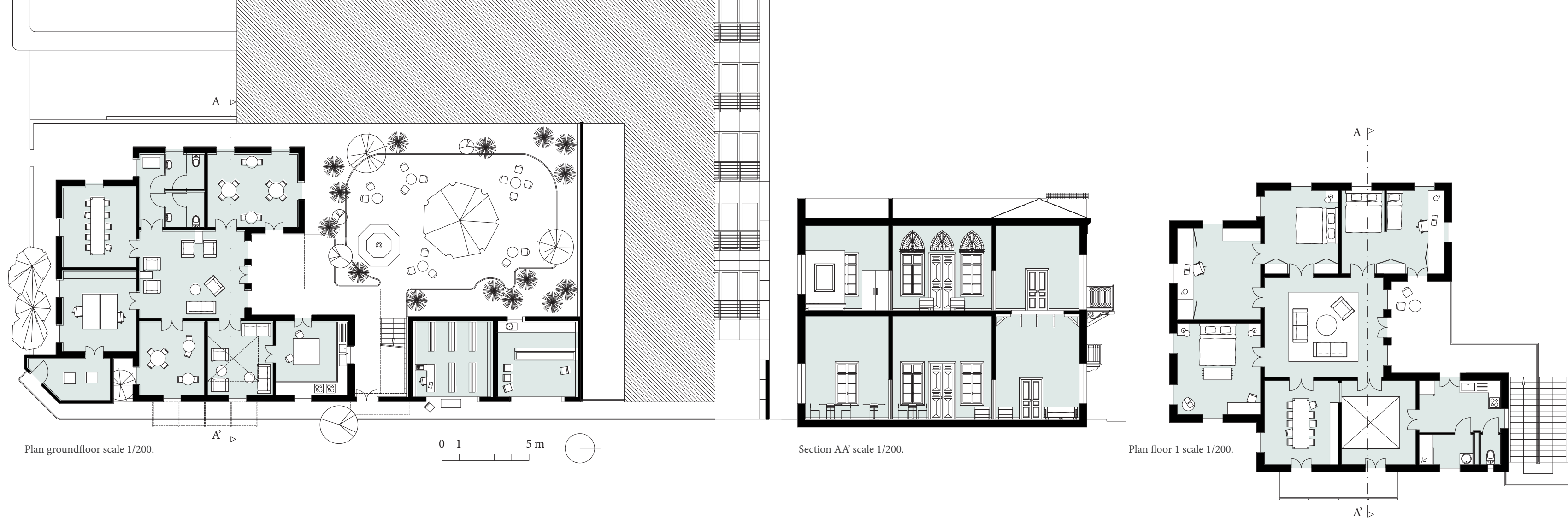


fig. 39 Plans and sections of the proposal for the Red House in Hamra.



fig. 40 Own photograph, informal squatting settlement on terminated construction site, February 2018.

the catalyst

behind the green drapes, a home

The Red House as well as other properties that are in a similar state will require thorough restoration works in order to re-purpose and re-integrate its value into its current context. Apart from all of the needed interior works, the exterior of a traditional property will most likely need an extensive amount of restoration itself. Facades require cleaning, certain parts of the exterior need a removal and renewal of the old plaster, and the balcony, as well as the rain pipes need restoration or complete replacement. In other words, during the restoration works the property will be hidden away by a scaffolding that is required for this type of restoration. The scaffolding, and the (usually) green netting that comes with it even references to the artists Christo and Jean-Claude, who wrapped public buildings in plastic. The idea of hiding a building that is in

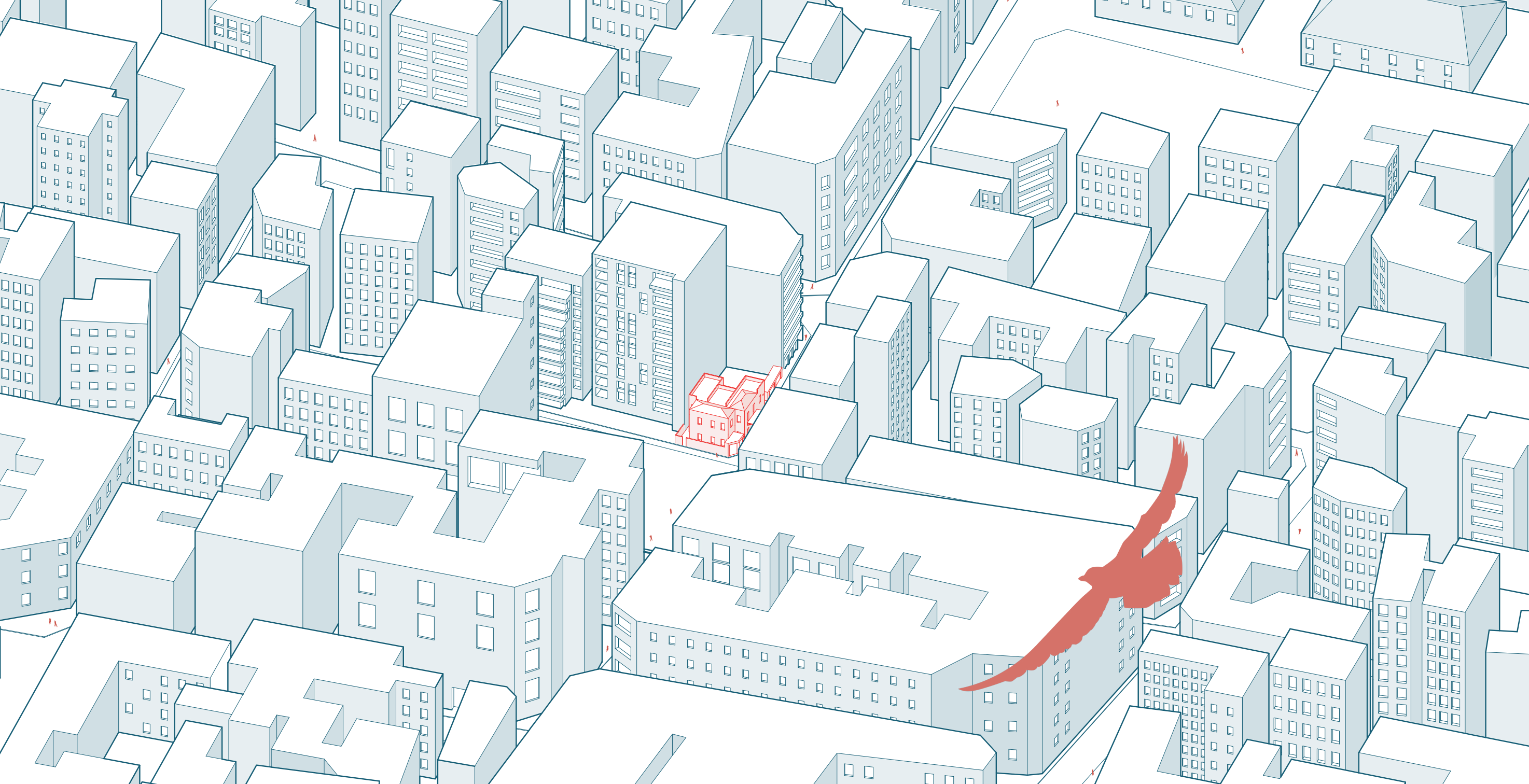
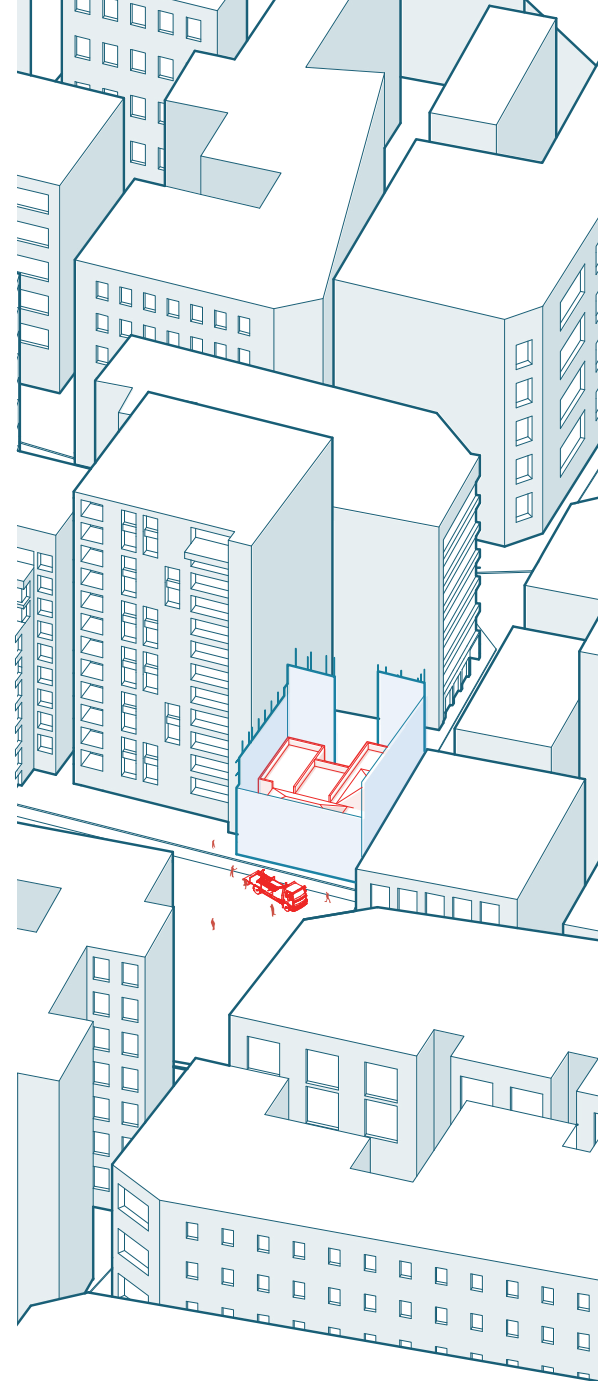
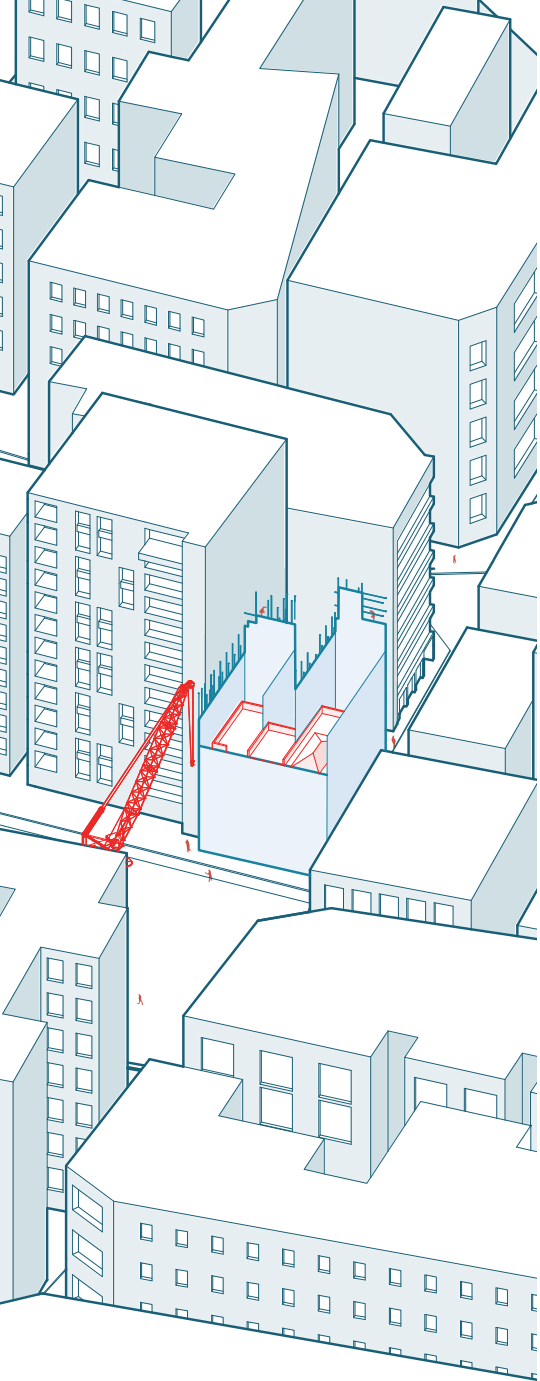


fig. 41 The head case of the project, The Red House, in its urbanised context.

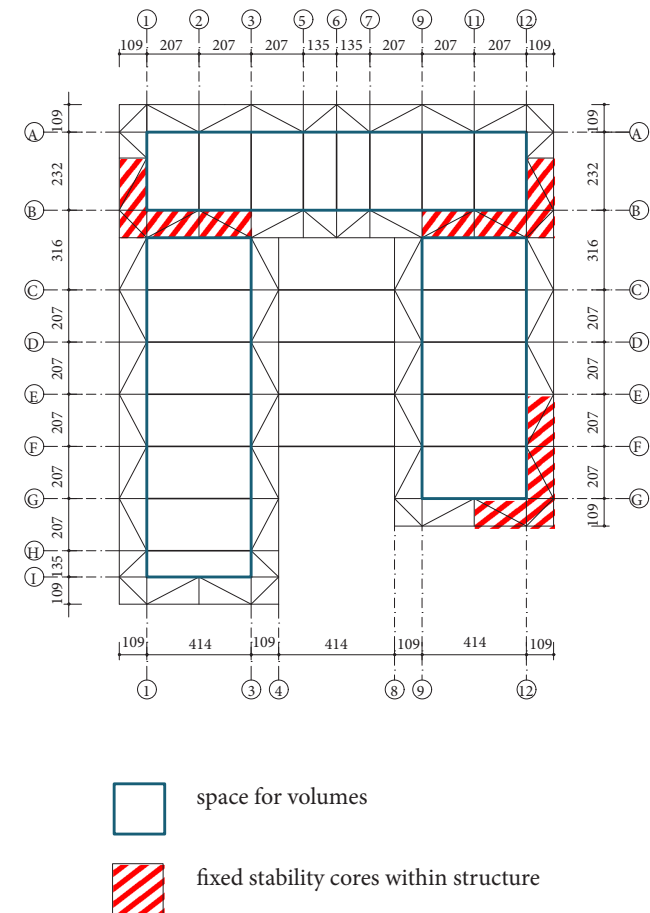
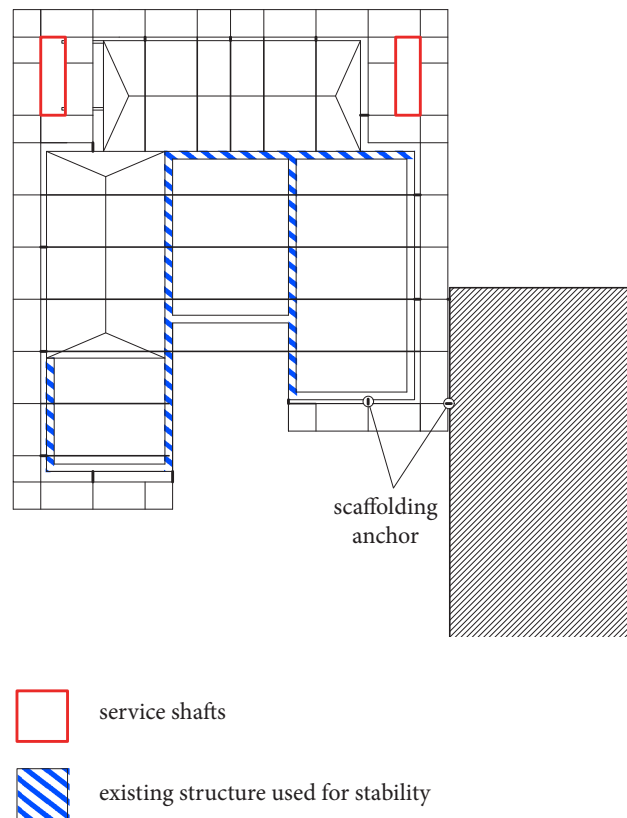
fig. 42 (next page) The three main phases of the project (from left to right): the construction of a temporary structure on top of the traditional building, the restoration of the traditional building, completion of the restoration works and disassembling of the temporary structure, ready for re-use.



general not actually wanted there, to then later give it back to the community, restored and loaded with a function—either private or public—, seems appealing in the sense that people will, after the period of restoration, look at the building with a fresh view, and a hopefully reconsidered opinion.

By adding a temporary construction on top of the traditional building, following the introduced system on p.17, this sense of taking something away in order to give back a restored version is even more apparent. Depending on the amount of available area of the plot, this construction can rise to the extent that it almost blends in with the high-rise buildings and developments across the city. The provocation of a whole new debate will start the moment that people understand that there are people living in that construction that do not

originate from Lebanon and yet are still restoring Lebanese heritage. This temporary construction will be formed through extending the scaffolding underneath. Except for the fact that is is already necessary for the restoration, using standard scaffolding elements is ideal in the way that the structure provides affordability and flexibility, without damaging the property of the land on which it stands. This flexibility is necessary for housing people from different backgrounds, with different needs. After providing them with a more general living and working environment, adaptations can still be made according to the needs of every individual or family.



Apart from the extended scaffolding around the house, additional elements of scaffolding will be connected above the roof of the house, supported by the structure of the underlying building. By interlinking these two constructions, the framework provides an opportunity to support volumes anywhere within the structure. These volumes, that will form the living-, social-, and work environments for the participants will ideally be constructed out of wood and can be fixed directly to the scaffolding. Light shall be provided through polycarbonate elements that are part of the standard scaffolding catalogue and can easily be assembled onto the scaffolding. This assembly technique also goes for the staircases, railings, and floor constructions throughout the scaffolding. The sewage system can be connected to the

existing system of the property and water can be circulated with the help of a pump. The netting around the scaffolding provides a wind- and dust-proof environment while still allowing fresh air to flow through the open central space of the construction.

In the case of a basic facade scaffolding, stability is easily created by fixing the scaffolding to the building. Of course by continuing the construction higher than the actual property, part of the structure acts as a detached scaffolding and additional ways of creating stability are needed. For the proposed construction on top of the Red House, three structurally fixed cores are assigned, creating wind stability and force distribution to the ground. Furthermore horizontal stability and wind-bracings are aspects that have to be

fig. 43 Structural schemes of the scaffolding as proposed for the Red House. Scale 1/300

taken into considering for this project. Structural aspects as well as the height of the construction are all case-to-case features depending on the size, regulations, and the needs of the traditional property. Compared to a smaller building, a larger property with a most likely higher demand of workforce can, assuming both are bound to the same zoning regulations, house a higher number of people in its temporary construction.

The timing of the project is another aspect that is case-to-case based. For the catalyst project, the re-integration of the Red House, 5 years is proposed, including the assemblyment and disassemblyment of the temporary structure. This is ample time for the restoration of a building, yet as this is the first location where the project will be applied, sufficient time is

taken into consideration for unforeseen circumstances as well as for the participants to become acclimated.

After the agreed timeframe for the restoration project has ended, the people involved in the project can choose to be part of a next restoration project or to use their skills elsewhere. The scaffolding elements of the construction will then either be rented to the next project or sold back to the community.



fig. 44 Stills from an online video, Living at a construction site in Laos, by vpro Metropolis, 2013. (<https://youtu.be/cpgDtEqHnR0>)

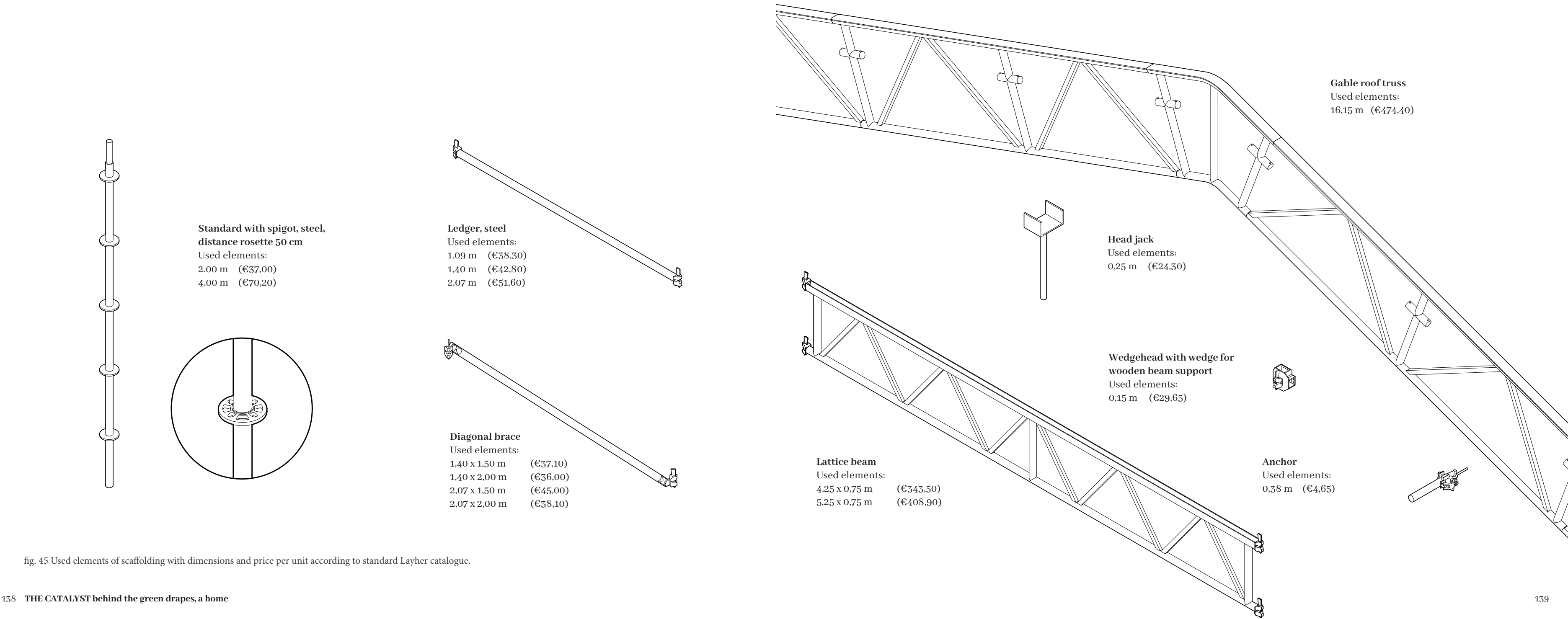


fig. 45 Used elements of scaffolding with dimensions and price per unit according to standard Layher catalogue.

budget calculation

The area of the plot on which the Red House stands:
420 m²

The maximum built-up space according to zoning regulations (Fig. 12 states that the Red House is located in zone 3 and therefore has a built-up factor of 4, with a density of 60%):
420 x 4 = 1.680 m²
current built area 215 m² x 2 floors = 430 m²

The unused and marketable area of the plot:
1 680 - 430 = 1 240 m²
1240 / 215 = 6 symbolic floors.

Expected budget after selling unused area of the plot using the current minimum market value per m²:
1 240 m² x \$1 500 = \$1 860 000

According to the draft decree, the DGA will decide on approximately \$1000 per square metres that will have to be spend on everything that involves the restoration.
430 m² x \$1000 = \$430 000 to be spent by law, including workforces etc.

Current average income per day amongst working refugees: \$12., which can be raised exceedingly.

Calculation cost scaffolding (in case of purchased)

Standards	€ 60.660
Ledgers	€ 121.861
Diagonals	€ 29.218
Lattice beams	€ 21.077
Roof trusses	€ 2.846
Accessories	€ 2.500

Total	€ 238.162
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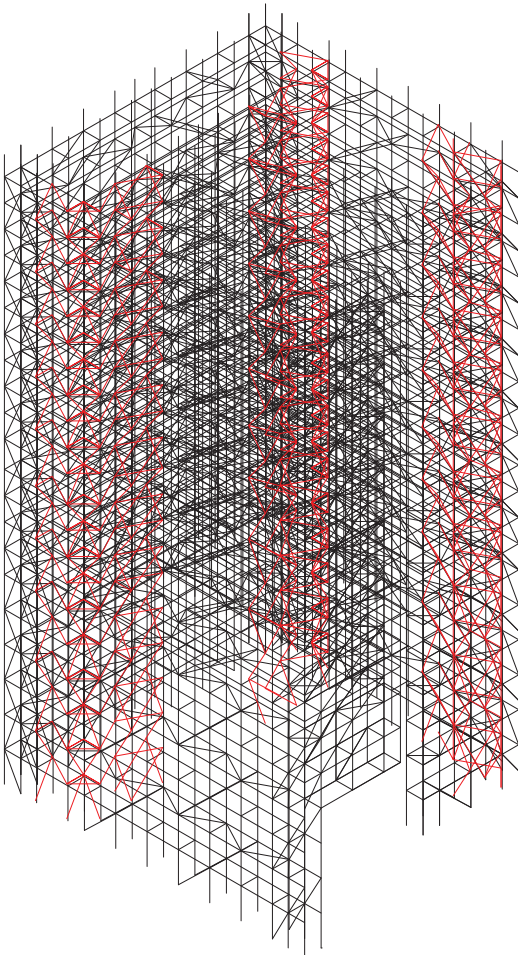
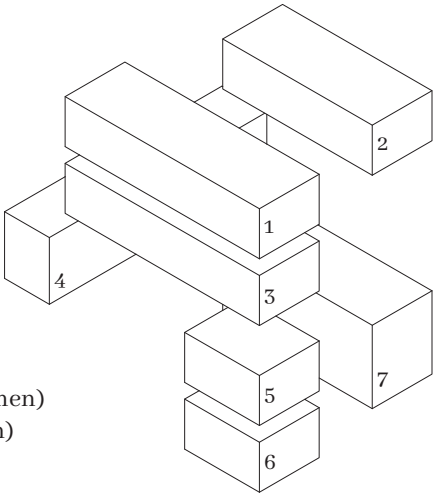
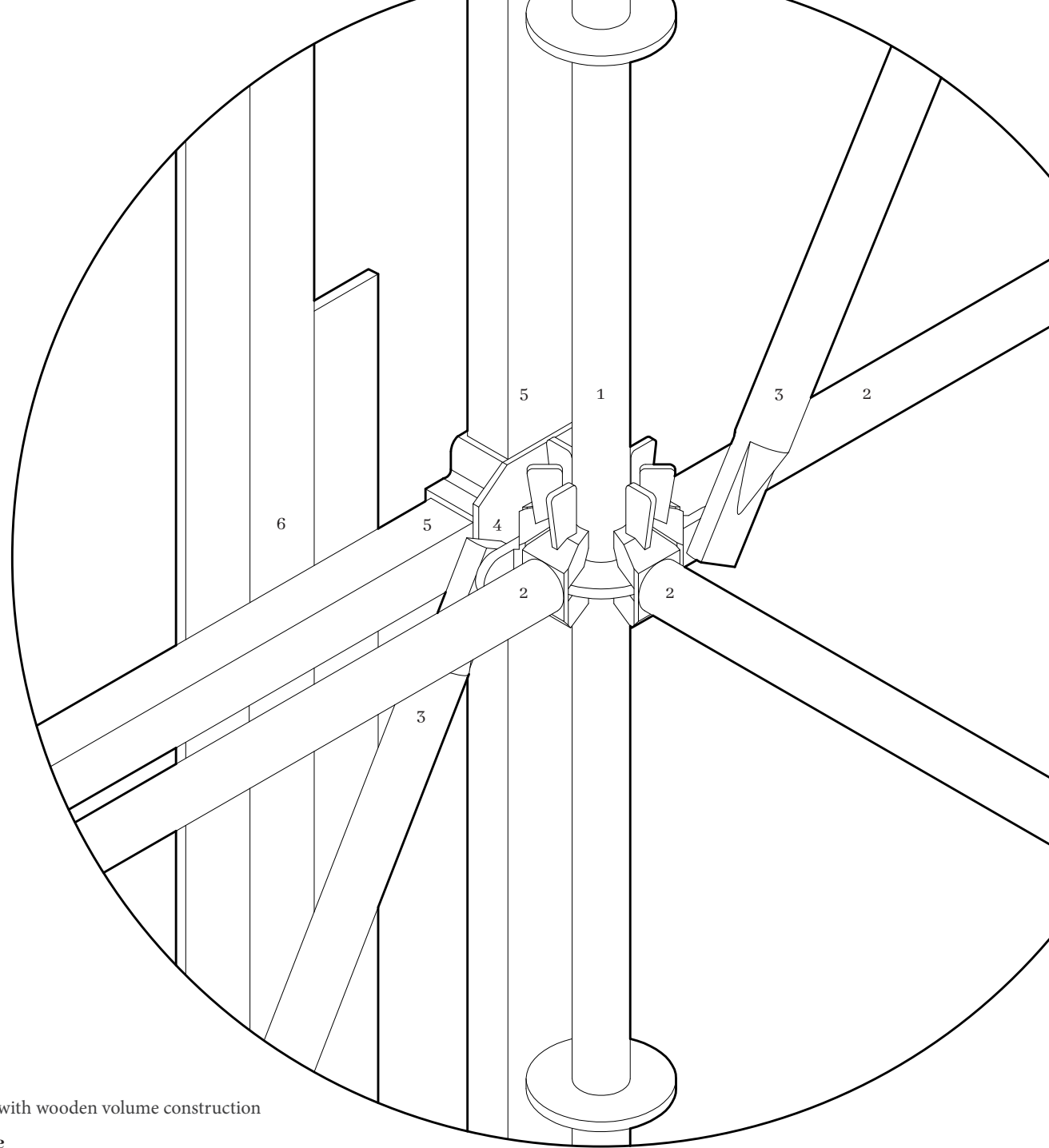


fig. 46 (left) 3D representation of scaffolding, highlighting the fixed stability cores (red)
fig. 47 (right) Organisation of volumes within the structure



- 1. apartment 3
- 2. apartment 2
- 3. apartment 1
- 4. social volume
- 5. praying space (women)
- 6. praying space (men)
- 7. workshop volume



1. Standard with spigot, steel, distance rosette 50 cm
2. Ledger, steel
3. Diagonal brace, steel
4. Wedgehead for wooden beam support
5. Wooden beam
6. Interior finishing of unit (wood)

fig. 48 Construction detail of scaffolding junction with wooden volume construction

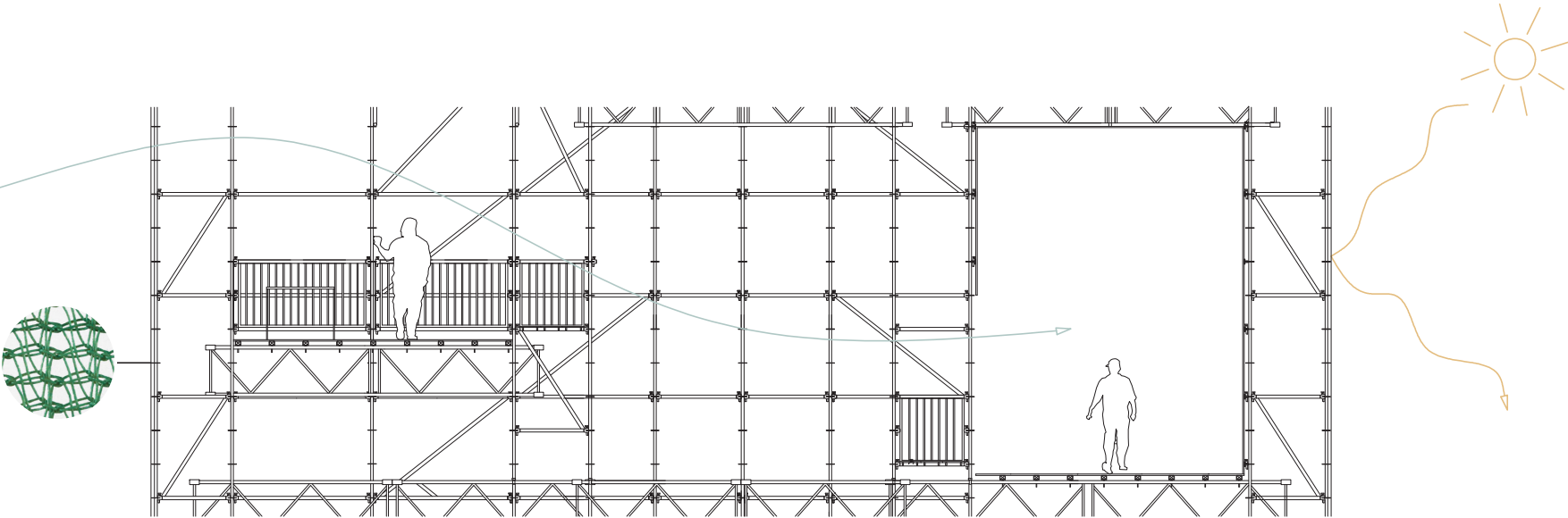


fig. 49 Representation of air flow and sun protection through the structure and volumes (advantages of debris netting).

The suggestion of giving aid to displaced people, not in their settlements or urban location, but in a designated temporary structure, presents as well as challenges, many additional opportunities. One of which might be creating the sense of a small community that shares similar issues. Assistance will be more personal and offered on a more regular basis and on a more accommodating level. However this living environment will be located in a context that is unfamiliar to most potential participants and therefore less accessible. By inviting people, displaced by war, to an urban context that is itself recovering from conflict, the understanding of their possible ways of living, and the notion of a safe haven, of a home for these people, is a delicate and crucial inquiry.

The concept of a home is different for every individual. Some defining factors could be people's living standards, their preferred or forced context, but also the environment in which people were raised. Religion can play a key role in the way that a family prefers to organise their lives at home, and if that is the case it is of paramount importance to get a grasp on this way of life in order to provide housing that adapts to these standards. If, for example, a Muslim family immigrates to a European city, it is difficult for them to continue their family patterns since the house has not been designed for this specific lifestyle. As an example, a lot of Muslim families require a gender segregation in spaces but find that most European houses lack a similar division of rooms which might for example lead to the young men in the family spending

their days in the streets. Because of the importance of family, common spaces in European houses will be considered too small to receive guests since private spaces are likely to be more spacious, which might lead to a lower quality of social occasions. In contrast to European cities, Lebanon's social framework and religious diversity is more comparable to that of Syria. However on a cultural level there are several differences that requires adapting. Is it possible to design housing that can adapt to this lifestyle, even within the context of another culture, in urgent times? In the case that a family is forced to find shelter in another context and adapt to another culture, their home should—even more so—be a safe place for the household. In order to make this way of life possible even in an

architecture as temporary as the one proposed through this project, three guidelines should be implemented. Since 75% of the Syrian population is Sunny Muslim¹³, these seemingly simple key words are derived from the Quran and described in several researches into Muslim homes.¹⁴

- privacy
- modesty
- hospitality

Many of the aspects described on the next pages are already the case for most traditional houses in Middle Eastern countries, mostly for religious reasons, but also in European countries, where for example a segregation was made between

spaces for the family of the house and spaces for personnel. It is this segregation that offers a flexibility in appointing and separating functions within a household. In the case of the temporary structure however, by using these three principles as the anchor around which the spaces above the heritage building shall be organised, a flexible environment can be created that can adapt to people with different needs.



fig. 50 Own photograph, settlement Beqaa Valley, November 2017.

¹³ Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia. “Religion in Syria”.
¹⁴ Othman, Z., et. al., Privacy, modesty, hospitality: a literature review, (Queensland, 2014).

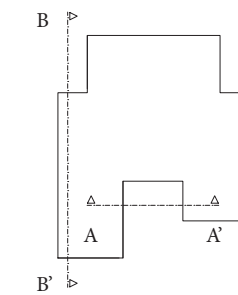
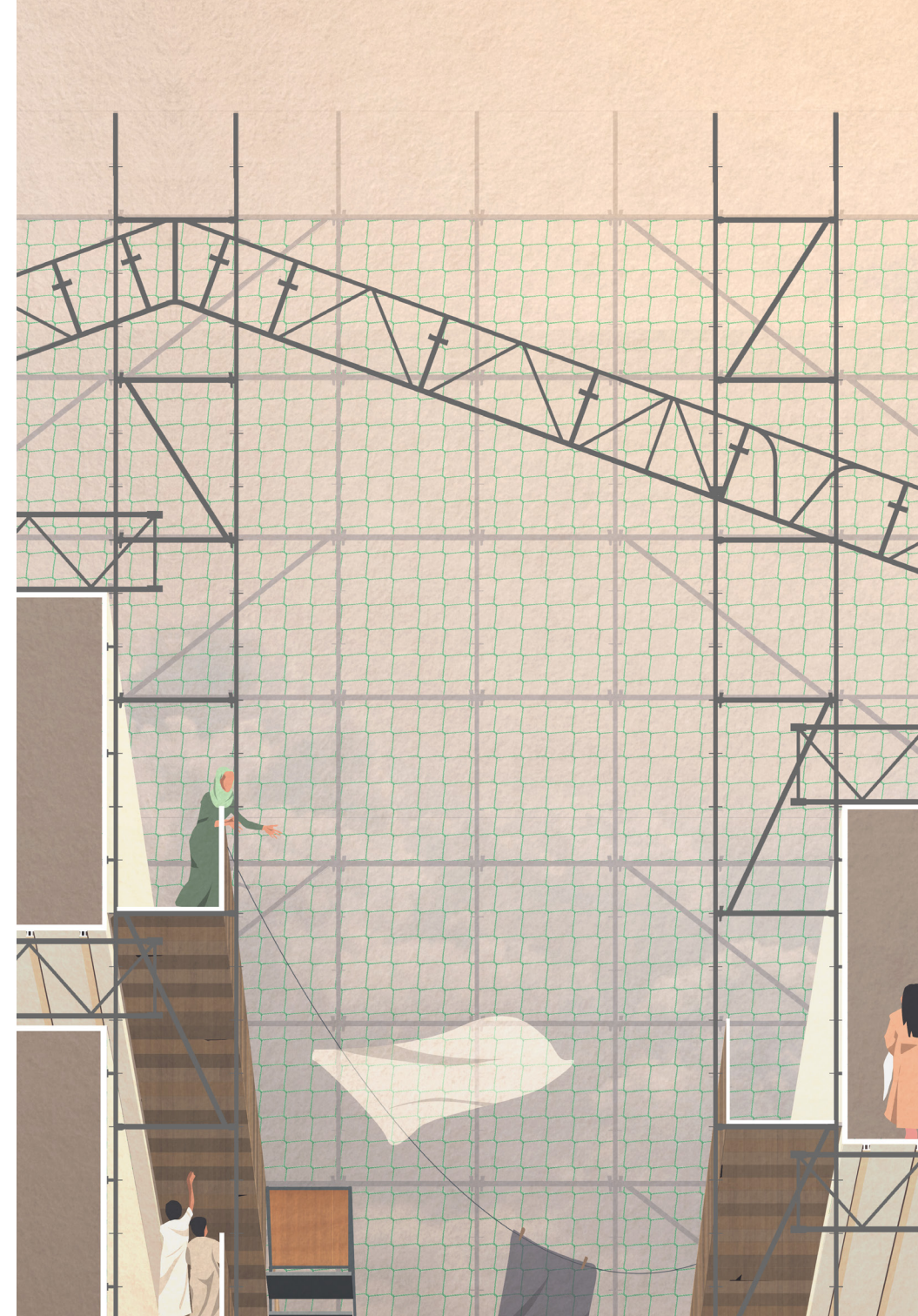
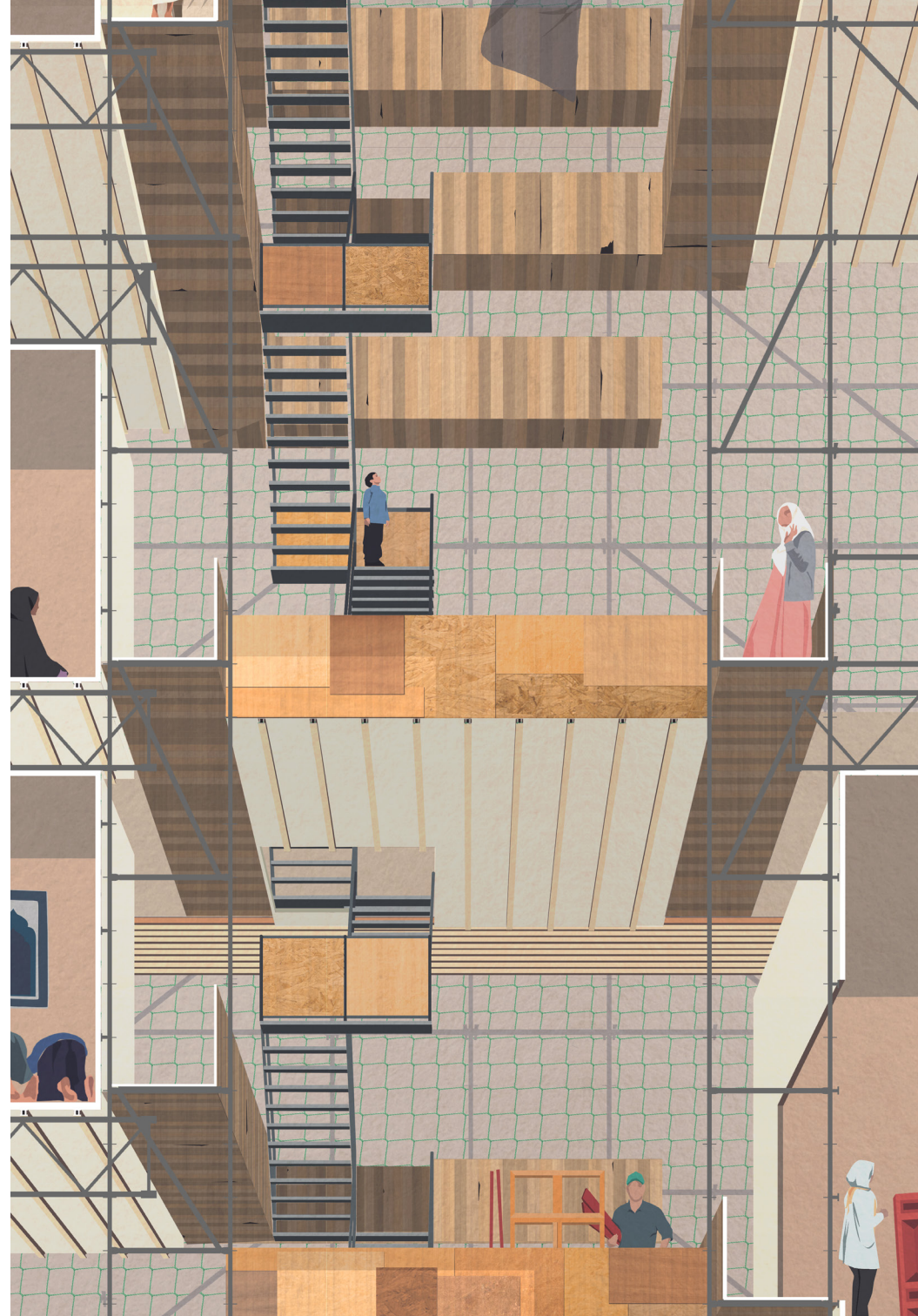


fig. 57 Visual section AA'

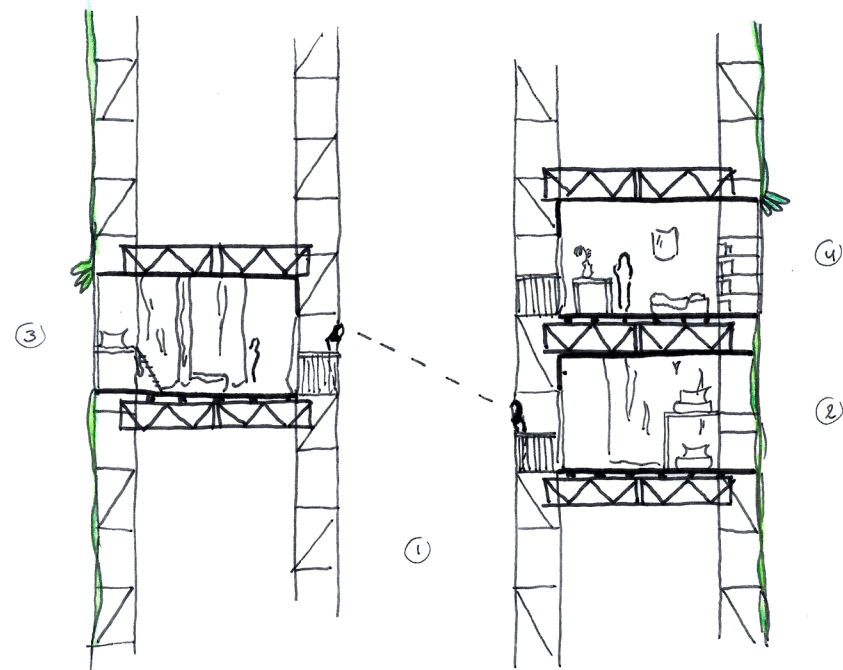
[alkhususia] { noun } الخصوصية

privacy { noun }

A home, and specifically a potential Muslim home should in the first place be a safe environment for the household, where they can rest and discuss family matters in a private environment. Privacy in that case must be achieved not only between neighbours, but also between members of the family as well as between the different genders.

Within the context of the project, privacy will be achieved by closing the most private spaces. The entrance and only opening to the living units will be to the room directly connected to the entrance of the volume, which can be closed with curtains for the comfort and safety of the female family members. Rooms within these units would be divided by curtains in order to assure both privacy and flexibility. By locating each one of the three provided spaces for housing

with a slight height difference in relation to each other, a family can choose to be free from interaction with others and physically separated from single men housing units, while the social aspect remains as well as the communication between the participants of the project through the visual connection with the lower social floor.



1. lower social volume + terrace
2. apartment 1
3. apartment 2
4. apartment 3

fig. 51 Sketch showing the proposed connection between the apartment units.

[tawadae] { noun } تواضع

modesty { noun }

Being humble is an important Islamic attribute that should be translated in design principles intended for followers of this religion. The use of materials is the most apparent sign of modesty in traditional Muslim houses. The use of standard scaffolding elements is a sustainable and affordable solution; the structure becomes reusable for other projects or presents the opportunity for selling it back to the community. The units within the structures are assembled mostly out of local wood, but the system also allows the use of corrugated metal sheets, polycarbonate & steel shielding. Furniture can be made out of these very materials using the provided workspaces and tools. These can be re-used, or disassembled after the project. Personal humility and devotion for the people participating in the process shall be met within designated praying spaces

that again, can be divided between a women’s praying room and a men’s praying room. The women’s praying room is located close to the domestic and social spaces, while the men’s praying room is on the workshop floor. While separating these spaces according to gender because of Muslim customs, the social space next to the women’s pray room is visually connected to the underlying workspaces, and thus to the predominantly men’s social space and their praying room.

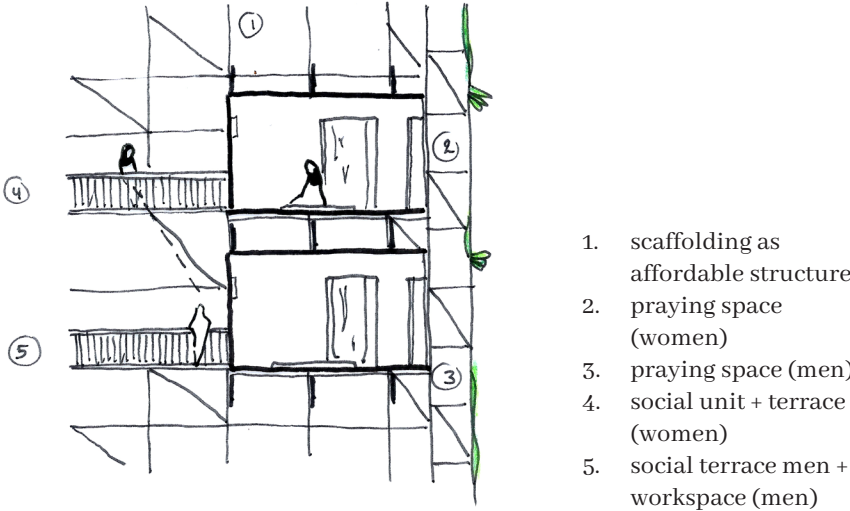


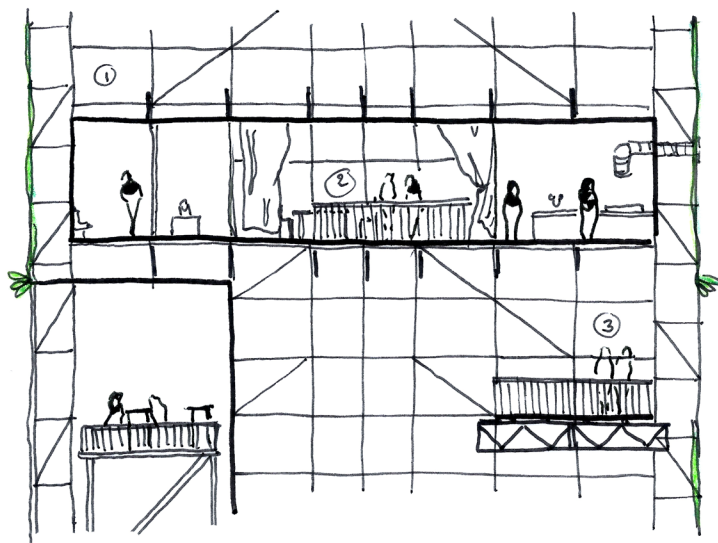
fig. 52 Sketch showing the proposed onnection between two praying units.

[aldiyafa] { noun } الضيافة

hospitality { noun }

Hospitality is not necessarily about inviting and entertaining guests in one's home. Besides that it is about social interaction and the act of sharing experiences . It is about the relationship between neighbours and with the community. When guests are invited to a family's home, the hosts will be sure to make them feel at ease in the most public space of the house, furnished in such a way that their hospitality is unquestionable. The decorations, rugs, and use of material have the sole purpose to express their sociability. Here, too, is a separation of gender ideal. As spaces within the structure, hospitality would be materialised into collective social spaces. The main social space which is visually—yet not physically linked to the housing units as well as the workspaces, contains some of the vital domestic functions, such as a spacious

cooking and washing area. This social volume is directly linked to a open space where gatherings can occur, as well as the interaction between the (most likely female) participants. A similar open space is provided between the social floor and the workshop floor, creating on the one hand additional work space, but on the other hand a space that the (most likely male) participants can use as a second social space. Besides space for social interaction, these platforms can be used for receiving guests. However most traditional buildings provide a large garden, which is more ideal for gatherings and for entertaining guests.



1. upper apartment units
2. social unit
3. lower social terrace + workspace (men)

fig. 53 Sketch showing the connection between the social spaces.



fig. 54 Own photograph, inside the home of a refugee, Beqaa Valley, November 2017.

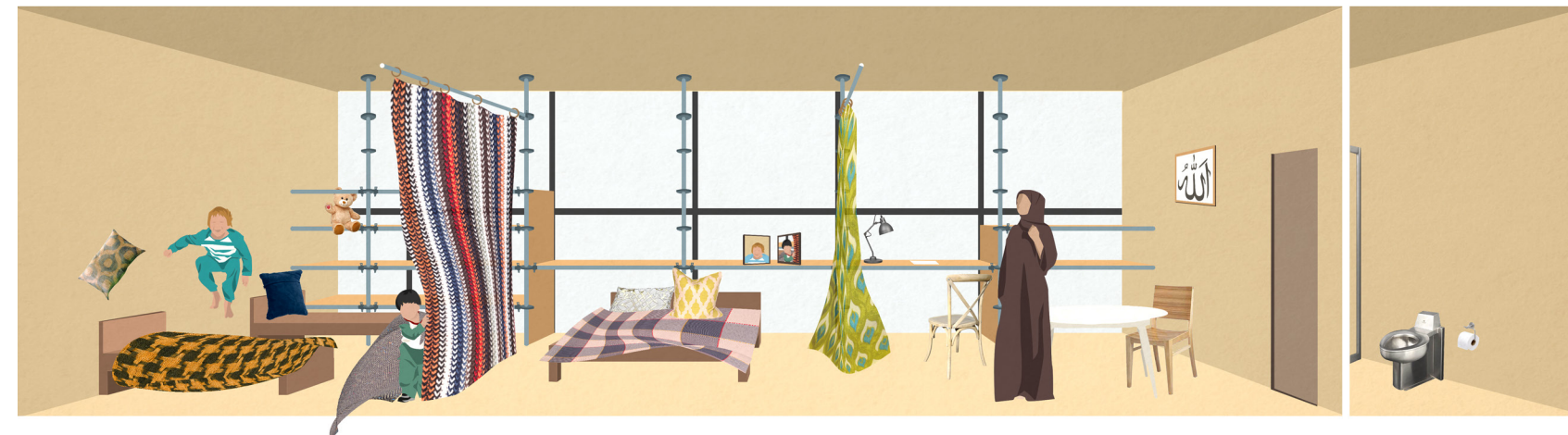
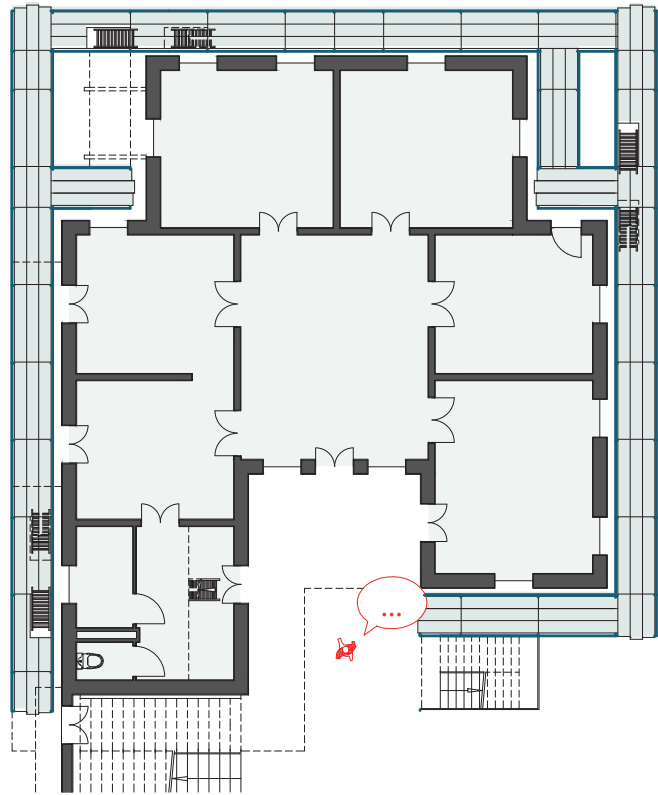
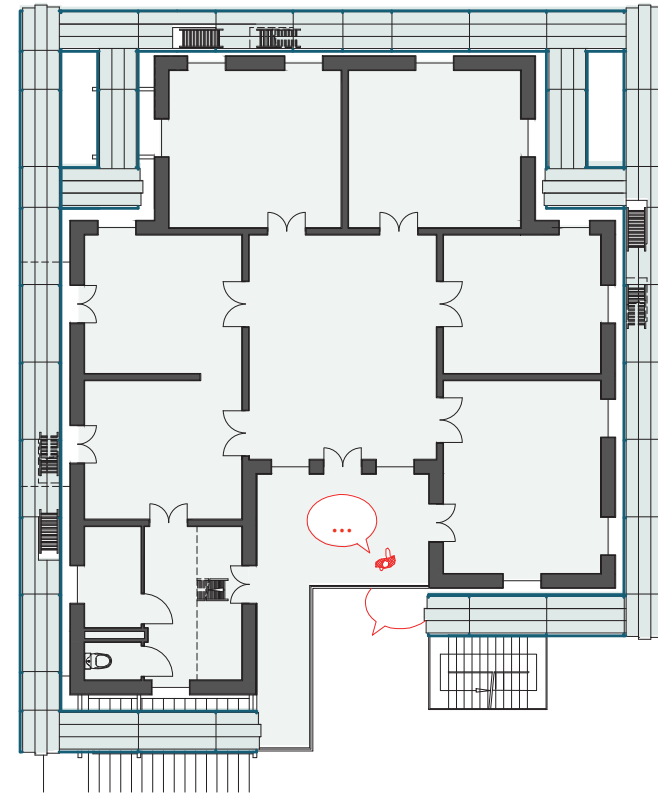


fig. 55 Visual representation of the proposed workshop unit, living unit and social unit.



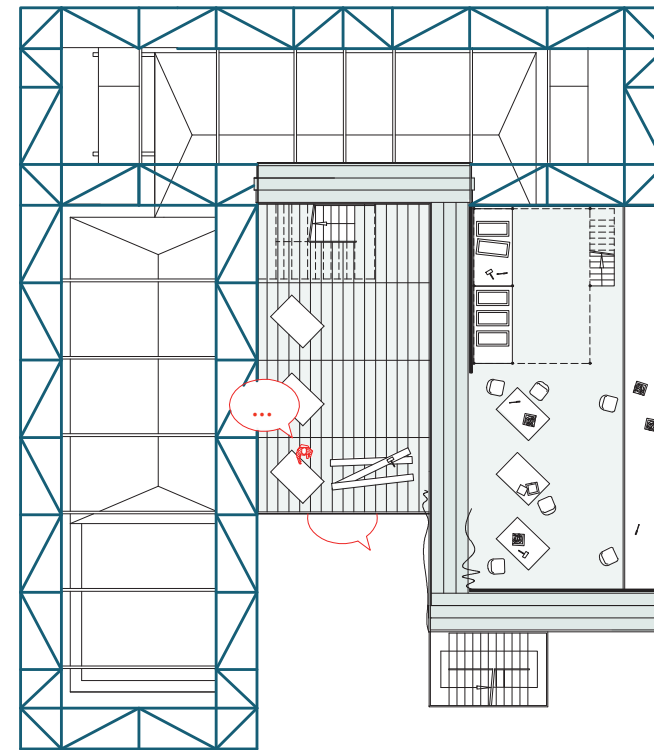
Groundfloor
Scale 1/200

أحتاج إلى التدريبات ، أين هي؟
'I need the drill. Where is it?'



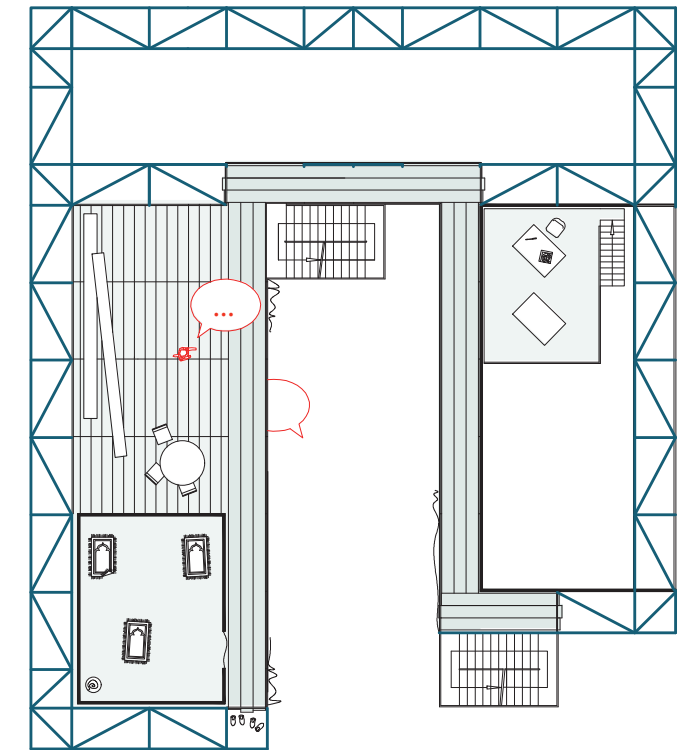
Floor 1
Scale 1/200

شباب هل رأيتم التدريبات؟
'Guys, have you seen the drill?'



Floor 2
Scale 1/200

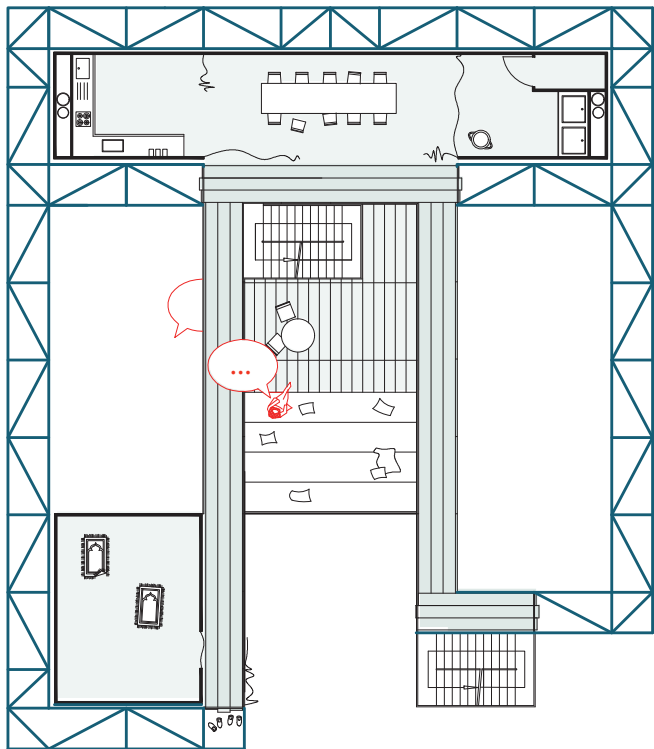
كانت مع سعيد ، أين هو؟
'Sayid had it last. Where is he?'



Floor 3
Scale 1/200

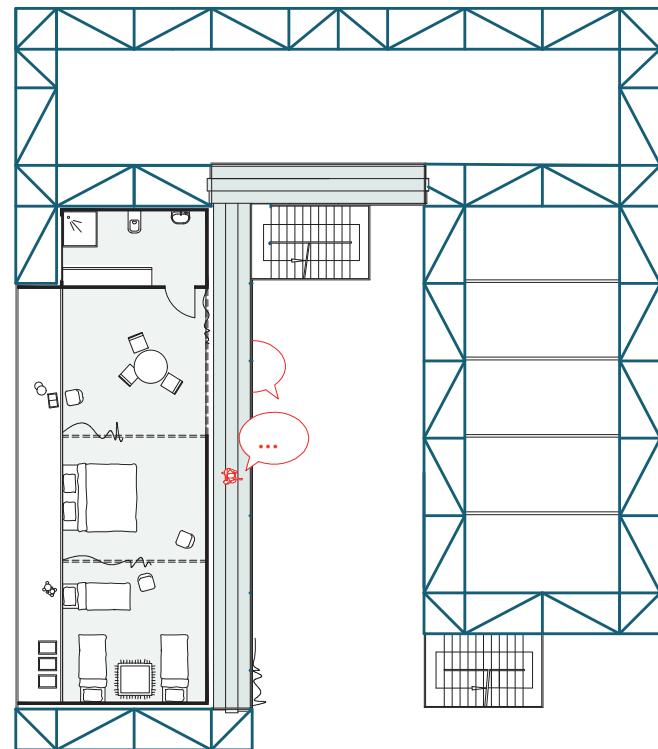
علا ، أين سعيد؟
'Ola, where is Sayid?'

fig. 56 Plans of the project, emphasizing the connection between each floor.



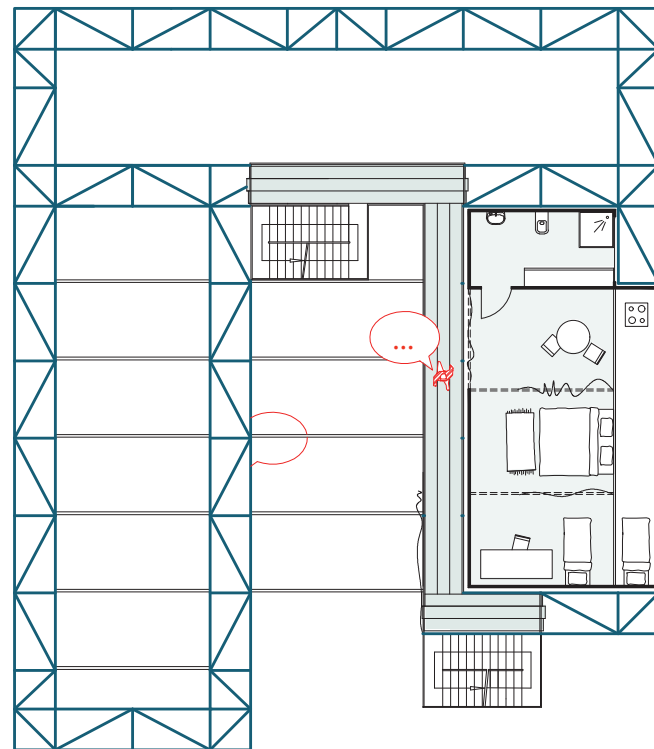
Floor 4
Scale 1/200

هل يمكن لشخص أن يستيقظ سعيد؟
'Can somebody wake up Sayid?'



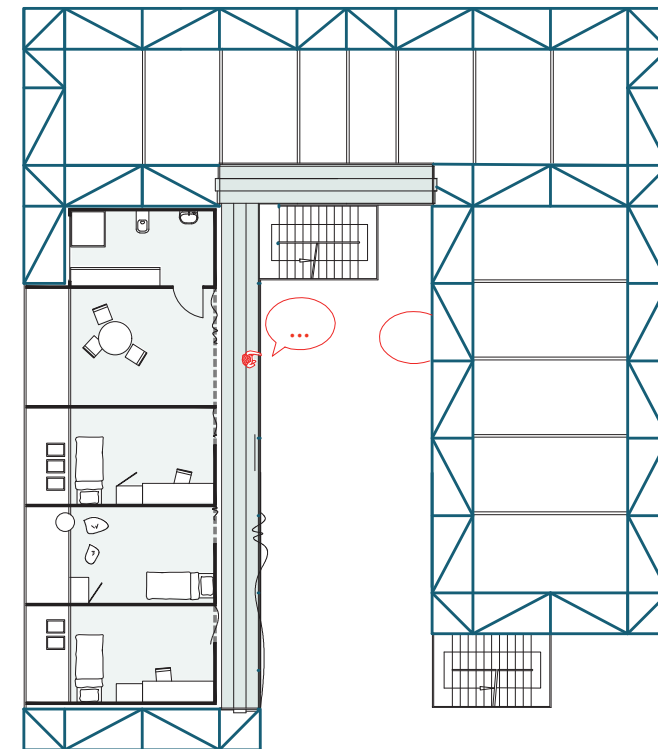
Floor 5
Scale 1/200

سعيد استيقظ!
'Sayid! Wake up!'



Floor 6
Scale 1/200

نعم نعم، استيقظت!
Yes, yes, I'm up!



Floor 7
Scale 1/200

ممکن بهدوء لو سمحت؟
Can you keep it down please?

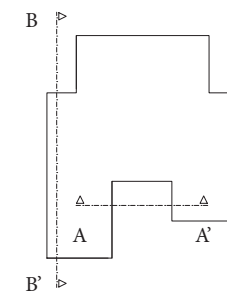
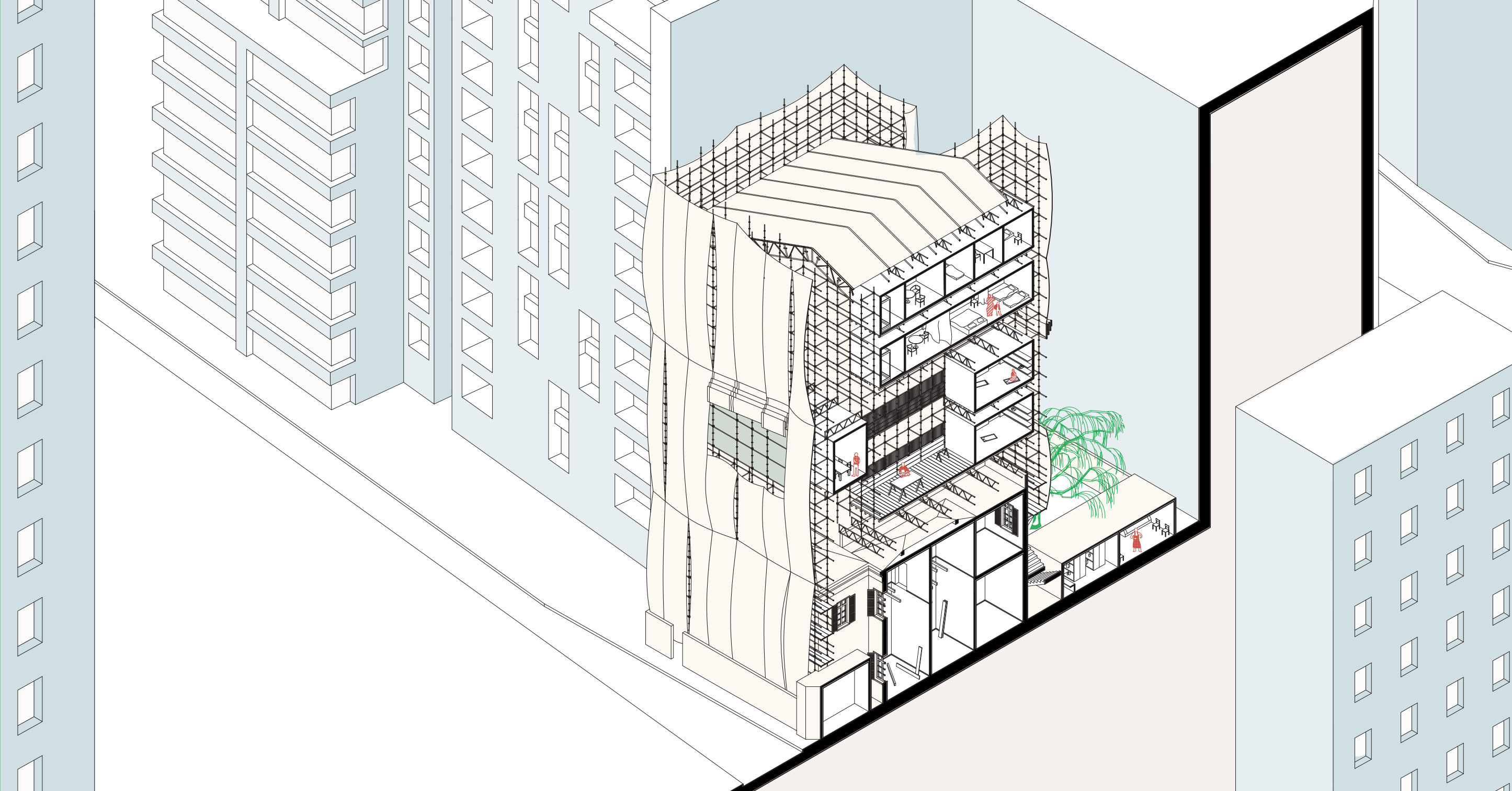


fig. 57 Section BB'
scale 1/300

afterword

The reconstruction of a city after times of conflict is a delicate subject for which unfortunately, there is no step-to-step guide. We can look at Beirut as an example for how not to rebuild a city and put the blame on anyone who had a say during this reconstruction, but there is no such thing as a failure-proof post-conflict reconstruction plan. While there might never be one, architects can work together in a multidisciplinary environment towards a pre-conflict attitude, through architecture but also through the endeavour of understanding social differences and the needs of a community. Unfortunately the errors made during the reconstruction of Beirut are substantially irreversible. The amount of history and culture that has been erased through the destruction of heritage is devastating. The importance of heritage and intertwined with it, the importance of unity

and identity is one of the many things that should be part of this pre- and post-conflict attitude. Does architecture have the power to manifest for the importance of built heritage if even the Lebanese government cannot see its potential? This project tries to reach people by not only raising awareness for the identity of the community, but also for people whose own identity is jeopardised by conflict. Both built heritage in Beirut and Syrian refugees in Lebanon are being ignored by its host communities in the hope that in doing so, the issue would evaporate. However by directly addressing both issues, this project demonstrates that there is plenty of value in both built heritage and in people; unregarding their origin or current situation.

Unlike volumes in a scaffolding, the future of a project like this cannot be designed and cannot, in a

social and political context such as Beirut, be certain. But while playing by the rules of the government, following their laws and relying on investment, it will in any way raise questions, awareness, and a debate. Each one of these constructions tackles the delusion that heritage cannot be part of urbanisation, and that refugees cannot be functional members of society; and behind those green veils, whether those of a single scaffolding, a handful, or more, there is a traditional building being re-integrated as a reminder of unity before the war, by the hands of people who are fleeing from their own war.

Which is why I believe that heritage can be a true architecture of peace.

— Christophe VandenEynde



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