

Renaissance

An Urban Revival of the Port of Beirut

University: Technical University of Crete

School: School of Architecture

Course: Final Project

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The devastating and fatal explosion in the port of Beirut had immense impact on a big part of the city both in economic and social terms. For this reason, we understood that we should elaborate upon the solution of those problems, by following two lines: the economic and the social one.

Guided by this plan, first we made a backbone-system with the construction Pavilions, which aims at achieving the co-existence of the different purposes that we present. That is not only a flexible system that may include a variety of usages, but it is also passing through all areas of interest. The basic characteristic of the Pavilions is to support renewable energy sources.

Focusing on further suggested usages, one of the main parts of our plan is the revival of the open-air market model, known as Souk. The support for small enterprises such as the stall owners is very important because it allows the local economy keeps moving.

Another part of our plan concerns the establishment of a new university for marine studies, which will be accommodated in a newly built complex along the sea front. At the same time, we also believe in the creation of Start-Ups as well as in the construction of new office-buildings.

Along with the University unit and the office facilities, the creation of green spaces, including a metropolitan park is proposed. Thus, we suggest that both the port should have public parks and the rest of the urban areas should have pocket parks for the improvement of the quality of life in all neighborhoods.

The most characteristic point of this study area is located on the 3rd dock. That is the center of the powerful explosion that occurred in the year 2020 and demolished a big part of the city. We suggest that a monument should be erected inside the large crater, which was formed; additionally, we believe that a museum building for the conservation of the modern history of Lebanon should also be erected.

Another part of our plan concerns the resettlement of the industrial facilities and the houses from the Karantina area. Because of the explosion, a major part of the industries, housing and the public hospital cannot operate anymore. At the same time, it is necessary to let more space to be used for the commercial needs of the port and for this reason, the industrial area is suggested that it should move south of the airport. Concerning the residential area, we suggest that new houses should be located at the old railway terminal area, along with the building of a new hospital near there.

It is significant for the above mentioned areas to be used by the commercial part of the port, because they would facilitate the transportation of goods to other cities, such as Damascus. The creation of the station has been suggested since the year 2020, including the creation of new facilities along with the central road network, such as the establishment of tram, metro and bicycle network. Concerning the old railway network, we suggest that a line park should be constructed, following the High Line model in New York.

In the framework of further elaborating the street network, we consider that the parking area and a part of the over-ground Charles Helou Avenue, near the 2nd and the 3rd dock has to be removed; instead this part should be constructed underground concerning the part from the social residences until the railway station, in order to achieve the best possible connection between the city and the port.

Finally, regarding the new storage units inside the commercial port area, we suggest that larger complexes than before should be constructed in order to create extra room for them and avoid having corridors. In addition to that, a new modern Silo should be built, by following the standards of the old one.

As a result, we believe that the only way for the rebirth of this city is to get many different systems that support each other and form a new network of public services. By supporting basic sectors such as education, commerce and transportation, the economic and cultural development will come back to the daily life of Lebanon.