

“The good city is a negotiation between form and life - the city’s structure and its residents’ activities.”
Jan Gehl

As our planet becomes increasingly urban, it is essential to set new standards for our cities, and to reassess the relationship between citizenship, well-being and the urban environment. According to the indicated theme, the project aims at achieving a novel Urban interpretation for the Manara area, exposing by that the context with its social, environmental and economic layers. Connectivity, identity and civic prosperity are the main goals to be achieved when planning for this project.



Manara is situated along Beirut’s coastal Cornish and is only a few minutes away from the renovated city center. Beirut’s coastal Cornish famous in the early 70’s and is attempting to regain its reputation. It has the highest concentration of luxury hotels in Beirut and hosts recognized coffee shops and the center military club. Today, Manara / Ras Beirut faces considerable challenges such as heritage destruction, loss of identity, lack of planning practices as well as lack of cooperation between various stakeholders.

Based on the above, and in line with the course description, students are required to study Manara (as indicated in the Project Site below) and propose solutions to overcome the above listed constraints and difficulties of the area. These solutions should give priority to the community needs as well as preserving the cultural and social diversity. The project also intends to improve the quality of the urban environment for a more livable, healthy and walkable Cornish by integrating the project to the surrounding context.

In that manner, the architectural approach is encouraged to create a community experience that is simultaneously a building, an urban plaza, a park, and an ecosystem. The convention center program should emphasize spaces for both public and private events, gatherings, and circulation, mixing the energy of convention visitors with the life of the city. The building’s landforms fold in specific ways to embrace the cornish street grid and preserve view corridors out to the water.

Socially, the project defines an urban district that is the focal point of the waterfront in a city of dire need for intense civic involvement and environmental awareness. Having increased the city’s convention capacity, the project is expected to reap major economic benefits for Beirut.