

AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT

THE SHIFTING DIVIDE
TOWARDS AN URBAN DESIGN STRATEGY FOR A GREEN
LINE IN MOTION
THE CASE OF BEIRUT

by
MAYA MOHAMAD EL ORAIBY

A thesis
submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Urban Design
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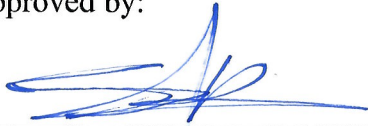
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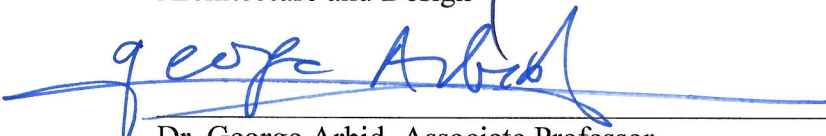
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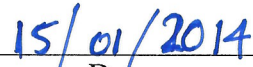
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AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

Maya Mohamad El Oraiby for Master of Urban Design
Major: Urban Design

Title: The Shifting Divide: Towards an Urban Design Strategy for a Green Line in Motion- The Case of Beirut

Since the end of the Lebanese Civil War (1975-1990), the “Green Line” in Beirut (as the dividing line between the two warring sections of the city has been known) has evolved spatially and physically. To begin with, although the 1975 Green Line has gradually weakened, it endures in the collective memory of city dwellers. The line is furthermore impacted by numerous policies and reconstruction processes that seek to transform and/or erase it in more or less concerted efforts. Moreover, the Green Line coincides today closely with emerging new lines that for almost a decade usher a new separation in the city.

This thesis seeks to address the Green Line as an integral part of the city’s process of reconstruction through a socially responsive approach which responds to the will of people to interact or separate. This thesis explores how urban design could be a tool for intervention in relation to the current dynamics of change that the Green Line is undergoing. It therefore explores how urban design could address the disappearing 1975-Green Line while acknowledging the emergence of a new line of separation since 2007, as part of an overall strategy of accommodation and commemoration.

More generally, the thesis seeks to contribute to a growing literature on divided cities. It attempts to research how divided cities could preserve the historical and political significance of demarcation lines while highlighting their socio-spatial dynamics and emphasizing their role as an essential feature in post-war urbanism.

The thesis builds on fieldwork in the area, through interviews, mental mapping, and participatory observations as a research tool.

This thesis affirms that divisions are not static. They are in constant motion and move not only from one level to another but also from one spatial edge to another. Thus, the intervention consists of a dual strategy. The latter serves the objectives of this thesis in two different ways; the first is one of commemoration of the former Green Line of 1975, while the second acknowledges the will of people to separate keeping the possibility of interaction through a dynamic intervention in response to the behavior of currently opposed communities who might be willing to interact again in the future.

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ABBREVIATIONS

CBD	Central Business District
CDR	Conseil du Développement et de la Reconstruction
DGU	Directorate General of Urbanism
IAURIF	Institut d'Aménagement et d'Urbanisme de la Région Ile-de-France
NMP	Nicosia Master Plan
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Program

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Motivation and Background

This research emerged from my interest in what remained of the 1975-1990 Green Line in Beirut; the line separating the city's Christian and Muslim areas, better known as East & West Beirut respectively. Twenty years after the "end" of the 1975-1990 Lebanese civil war, I started investigating how the Green Line in Beirut has evolved spatially and physically, then examining its endurance in the collective memory and its transformation as impacted by the public policies and reconstruction processes. This instigated the research of how urban design can become a tool for intervention in relation to the current dynamics of change that the Green Line is undergoing.

To begin with, it is important to define some keywords which will be mentioned recurrently throughout this thesis.

- **Boundary:** which refers to a defining line around a district that segregates between two areas from a socio-perceptual perspective.
- **Edge:** which refers to the physical borders defining the line of demarcation.
- **Line of demarcation/ separation:** which refers to linear spaces, mainly streets, that create a segregation between two areas.

Through my field investigations I have noticed that the Green Line has turned from a continuous edge into a segregated one. Four sections in the current geography of

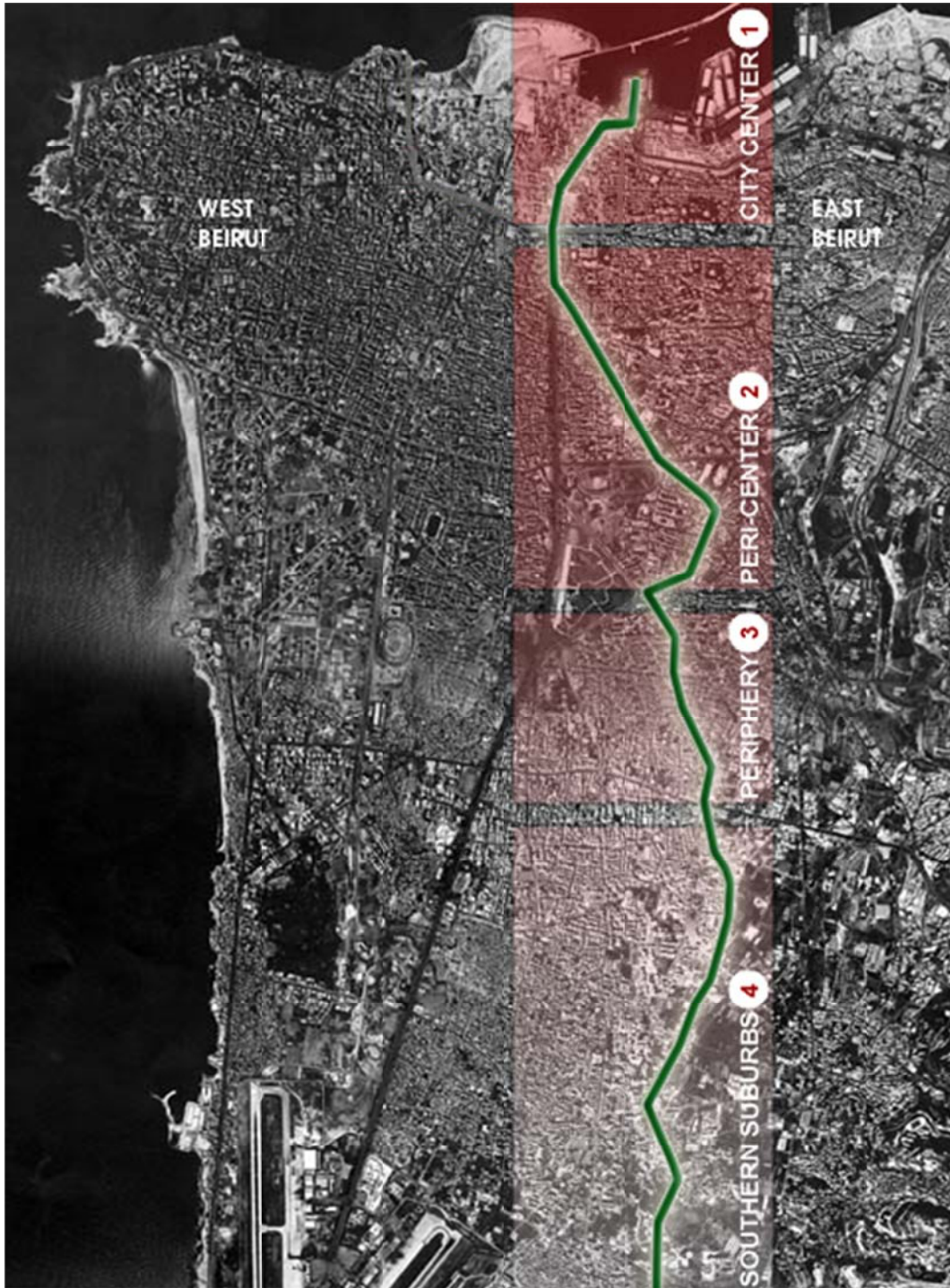


Fig. 1.1: 1975-Green Line - Contextual map. Original Map Source: [Untitled map of the Green Line in Beirut]. Retrieved October 15, 2013, from: http://almashriq.hiof.no/lebanon/900/910/919/beirut/greenline/moystad/beirut_03.html

the Green Line could be identified as affected by the dynamics of change in the adjoining sectors and neighborhoods (Fig. 1.1).

- The first segment falls in the city center. It extends from the Place des Canons all the way to the 1st Ring Road. It runs through Martyrs' Square, which has been integrated in the city center as part of the overall post-war reconstruction strategy undertaken by Solidère; a private real-estate company entrusted with the reconstruction of the city center.

- The second segment falls within municipal Beirut, at the peri-center. It extends from the 1st Ring Road to Tayouneh Roundabout. It runs along Damascus Road and is considered a spine for religious, educational, cultural and entertainment amenities, as well as a hub for some administrative facilities. This segment is currently undergoing wide real estate and infrastructural developments, changing the character of the area. Not only is this segment undergoing physical changes, it is currently a home to a new demarcation line emerging since 2007; a new separation in the city between Sunnis and Shiites which deviates from the 1975-1990 Green Line on Damascus Road and stretches along Beshara El-Khoury Road (Fig. 1.2).

- The third segment falls in the immediate suburbs of Beirut. It extends from Tayouneh Roundabout to Mar-Mikhael Church. It runs along Old Saida Road separating Chiyah [to the west] from Ain El-Roummaneh [to the east]. This segment has witnessed a recent spread of population from the west [Chiyah] to the east [Ain El-Roummaneh] triggered by housing needs and affordable market prices. However, and despite this population expansion, this segment is currently enduring a forced spatial division due to the newly constructed through traffic corridor between Chiyah and Ain El-Roummaneh.

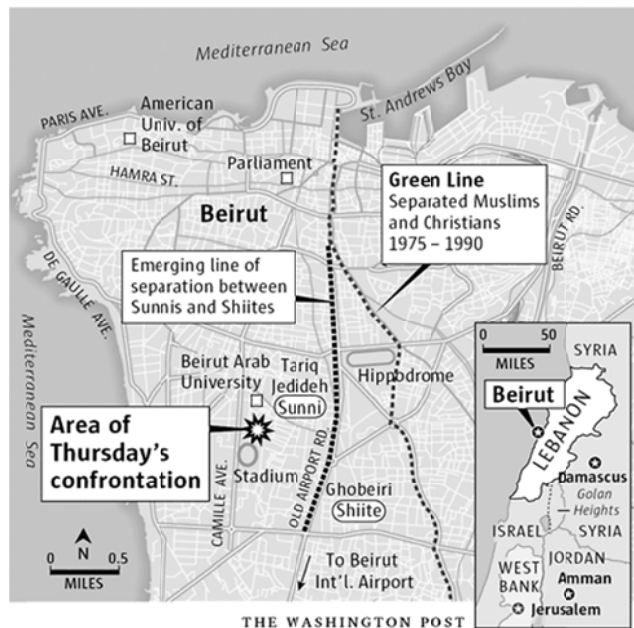


Fig. 1.2: [Untitled map of the 2007-Line of separation and 1975-Green Line]. Retrieved November 24, 2013, from: http://seattletimes.com/html/nationworld/2003544732_lebanon28.html

- The fourth segment falls in the southern suburbs of Beirut. It extends from Mar-Mikhael Church to Choueifat area. This segment has also undergone urban transformations and real estate developments since the 1990s and has also witnessed an expansion of population from the Muslim western side of the line towards its eastern side in Hadath which used to be predominantly Christian during the civil war.

Besides population and real estate dynamics, it is important to note that early 1990s, public policies attempted at erasing all war manifestations from the ground, as a first reaction to the war end. This was reflected in IAURIF report -an official document commissioned by the Conseil du Développement et de la Reconstruction (CDR)- which states “effacer les traces de la guerre et des destructions” (Refer to Appendix I) as one of its main objectives in the post-war reconstruction strategy for Beirut’s Green Line

(IAURIF, 1993, p.2). Such objective could currently be read in space through market development dynamics and current planning practices.

These physical manifestations of the Green Line are not the only expression of post-war townscape; the Green Line is also a mindscape. Having done a preliminary site reconnaissance and conducted some preliminary set of interviews at the beginning of this study, I witnessed a strong presence of the Green Line in the mind of people, irrespective of the twenty years that have passed since the war. This is mainly perceptible in the act of marking territories through stencil graffiti of political signs and figures of political leaders; a visual manifestation of the population state of mind. Furthermore, I have witnessed that East and West is still an established concept manifested through everyday commuting practices and public transportation. The latter, in my opinion, answers people's need to go back and forth alongside their "own" areas rather than "crossing" the Green Line transversally to the "other" side. Moreover, public buses and service-taxis either move within the eastern side of Beirut or within its western side. Crossing from one side to another requires to change buses or service-taxi either at the 1st Ring Road in the city center or at the 2nd Ring Road at the National Museum intersection, except for buses leaving Hamra to the Independence Road.

Thus spatial urban practices that aim at changing the perception of people create a wide discrepancy between townscapes and mindscapes, as is witnessed. Despite the passive neglect of the demarcation line by the authorities, the active erasure of the war manifestations and the efforts to disregard the separation, the Green Line is still a well-established divide and its permanence is manifested in the collective memory through above mentioned daily spatial practices.

B. Premise/ Hypothesis

This thesis starts from a premise that social divisions need to be accommodated and accepted rather than disregarded and rejected as stated in Kabbani's study of Beirut's Green Line of 1975-1990 (Kabbani, 1989). In this regard, demarcation lines in divided cities should be manifested as a significant layer of the city's past, rather than being the trial site of an attempted concealment through spatial transformations and market-oriented policies embedded in city structures.

In order to achieve a coherent perception of the reality of the city, the discrepancy between townscape and mindscape should be acknowledged in divided cities. This rationality should not be erased by planning practices and public policies, especially when mental perception dictates the spatial dynamics and shapes the city accordingly.

As is the case in other divided cities the Green Line in Beirut should be addressed as an integral part of the city's process of reconstruction. Moreover, the Green Line's state of motion should be addressed too as it has considerable impacts on the city's behavior and its morphological order.

C. Research Question

This thesis attempts to research how divided cities could preserve the historical and political significance of demarcation lines while emphasizing their role as an essential feature in post-war urbanism: how, in the case of Beirut, urban designers can address the issue of the Green Line in an attempt to reduce the discrepancy between mindscape and townscape? How the legibility and historical significance of the Green Line can be preserved within the dynamic changes of the townscape, imposed by

market development and public policies? How can urban design address the disappearing 1975-Green Line while acknowledging the emergence of a new line of separation, as part of an overall strategy of accommodation and commemoration?

D. Study Area

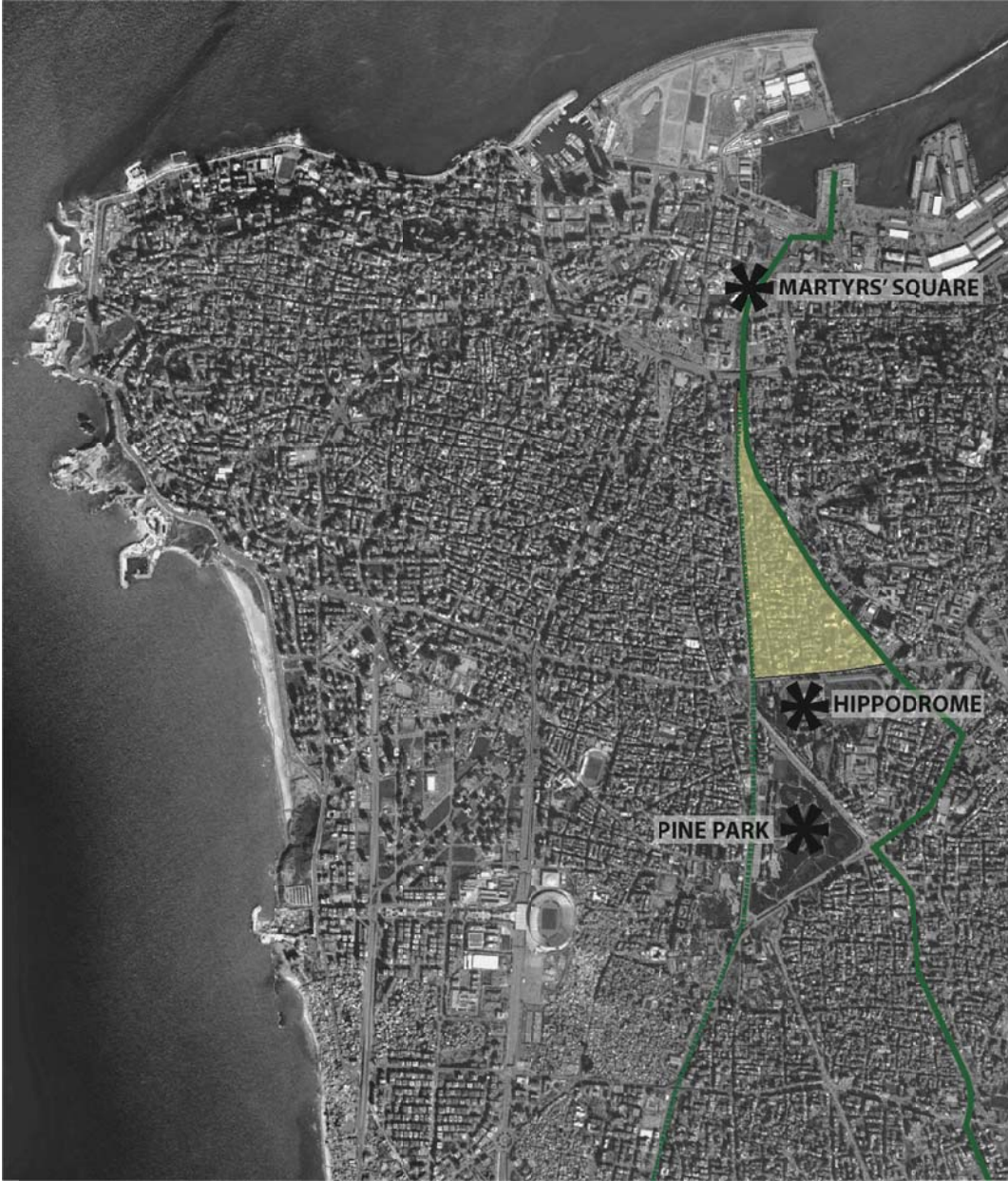


Fig. 1.3: Preliminary study area boundary. Original Map Source: Google Earth (2012)

The second segment of the Green Line's geography defined above (Fig. 1.1), which is undergoing a dual process of erasure of the 1975-1990 Green Line and emergence of the 2007 demarcation line will be emphasized in this study. This segment marks the city's physical and mental evolution twenty years after the war. It also represents a model of the fast changing socio-religious profiles of areas subject to market dynamics and new real estate developments. The field surveying and data collection will be mainly focused in the below highlighted triangle; Ras En-Nabaa, which falls between Damascus Road to the east and Beshara El-Khoury Road to the west, and limited by the Second Ring Road to the south (Fig. 1.3). Being trapped between two divides, Ras En-Nabaa becomes a significant area for urban research and a spatial opportunity to study shifting divides in contested cities.

The above defined study area boundary though is only preliminary. It will be redefined at later stages in this thesis once the diagnosis are defined. It extends to the immediate vicinities beyond its three sides, where needed, in order to accommodate the various communities to both sides of the defined social/sectarian edges where valid.

E. Research Significance

When space becomes a tool for division, "careful and responsive planning", though not the only tool for conflict resolution, has a role in "shaping spaces of opportunity" (Shirlow & Murtagh (2006) as cited in Gaffikin, McEldowney & Sterrett, 2010, p.494). Herein lies the significance of this thesis: it adds Beirut to the case study profiles which investigate the ability of urban design in integrating division lines within post-conflict cityscapes; it investigates the possibility of transforming the Green Line into an added value to the image of the city. It projects the memory into the future, to

make of it a dynamic object, adjustable to upcoming conditions rather than keeping it a still object –a collective incident to dwell upon. This thesis also puts forward a new perspective of the dynamics of division which can deviate, or shift to different levels, but not disappear.

F. Methodology

Having defined my study area - which represents the second segment of the Green Line (Fig. 1.3), and having identified my research problem, this study starts with an understanding of the production of the Green Line over major historical events to date.

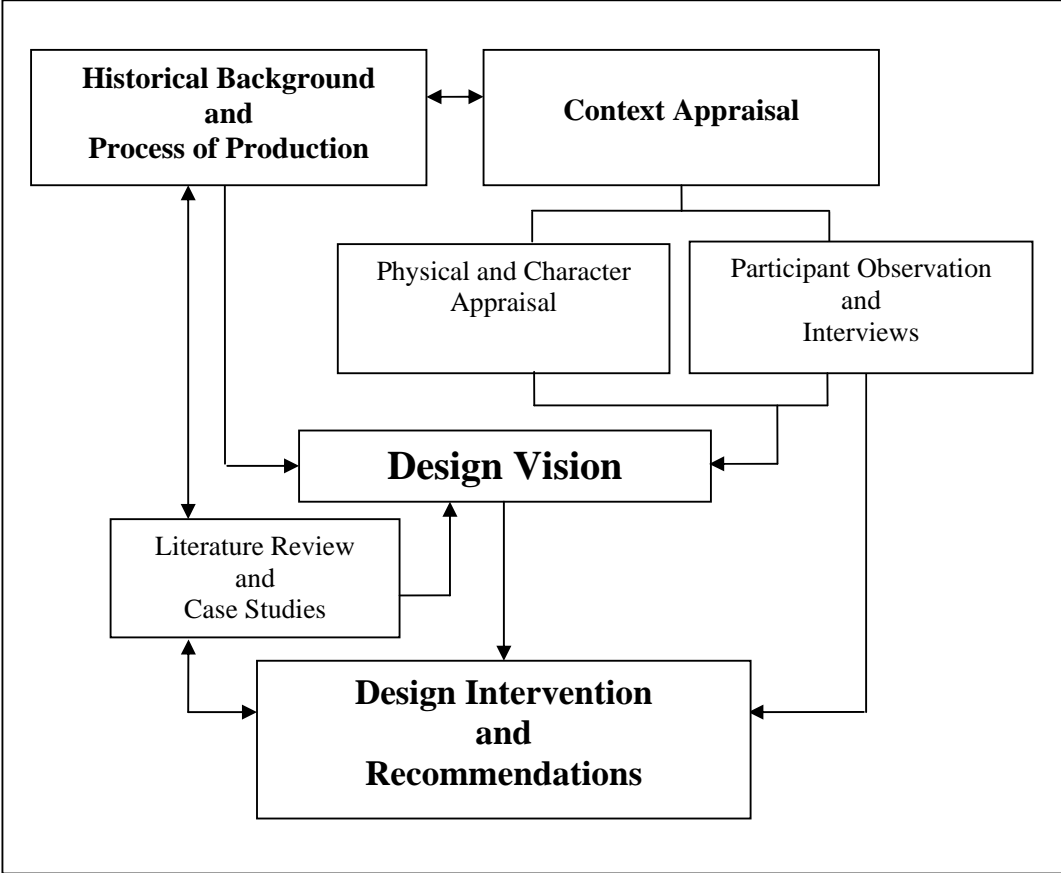


Fig. 1.4: Urban design process

Data collection is based mainly on field research and participant observation mapped, illustrated analysis, evaluation of collected and available data and literature review of theoretical and empirical references, all of which contribute to the design strategy and recommendations (Fig. 1.4). The last phase focuses on reporting outcomes and concludes with implementation ideas to be subject to further study in the future.

1. *The Spatial and Temporal Background* are based on literature reviews about divided cities and the formation process of demarcation lines over time. It is also based on historical map analysis extracted from researches and studies of the Green Line in Beirut.

2. *Literature Review* of case studies and academic research papers addressing division lines in Beirut and other contested cities. While the general literature determines common roots and causes of conflict, it sets common theories and issues considered essential in approaching urban strategies in divided cities. The literature is portrayed with case studies that help differentiate between normative and socially responsive approaches to division lines. The case studies also help compare the different urban tools and elements used in urban design strategies in contested spaces and contribute to the design intervention by assessing what could be extracted from them to fit the urban context subject to this thesis.

3. *Context Appraisal* is based on field research personally conducted using maps, photographs and sketches. It consists of both a physical appraisal and a character

appraisal of the study area boundary along with participant observation and interviews extracted from the site and its surrounding;

a. Physical Appraisal documents the physical aspect of the study area. It defines the physical elements within the site; street hierarchy and right of ways, building conditions, national assets and physical structures. It also defines the open spaces, undeveloped lands, and current developments and planned infrastructure.

b. Character Appraisal is the most crucial in defining the diagnosis of the area under study. It aims at deconstructing the study area along Kevin Lynch's five physical elements that contribute to the image of the city: paths, edges, districts, nodes, and landmarks. This helps define the overall character of the area and assess the permeability to the site in relation to adjacent neighborhoods, and the connectivity to and from immediate suburbs.

c. Observation of the Behavior of the different user groups along both the 1975-1990 Green Line and the 2007 socially manifested demarcation line. The neighborhood in between also helps in reading the character of the city and assess its national versus its local significance.

d. Interviews/ Mental Mapping with randomly selected individuals; current residents and employees within the study area and passers-by coming from its immediate vicinities and tourists in case valid.

4. Analysis and Evaluation of the Available Data

The analysis and evaluation of the available data could not be detached from the social and spatial context from which they are collected. They are evaluated in relation to the literature. Both the historical and existing context appraisal analysis

generate a diagnosis map. The latter is essential in defining key spatial concerns in relation to the mental maps and social perception of the area. It redefines the character of both edges to each side of the site thus helping adjust the study area boundary in relation to the socio-spatial analysis.

5. Urban Design Strategy

This section starts with defining a preliminary design vision regarding the outcomes of the analysis and illustrated diagnosis. The design vision translates into a dual design strategy which responds to the linear and compound spaces in different ways. The design elements extracted from the case studies help the design strategy acquire a spatial dimension thus turning it into a design intervention supported by a set of planning policies and recommendations. Moreover, the proposed design strategy ensures more effective public spaces and dynamic intervention, injected within the city reflecting on the act of erasure of 1975-1990 Green Line on one hand and the emergence of the new edge on the other.

G. Thesis Structure

This thesis is structured in three parts; the case studies from conflict cities, the spatial reading of the study area and the proposed design intervention.

The first part which examines case studies is divided into sections. The first section is an investigation of urban design theories and strategies extracted from western contested cities. The second section investigates case studies and researches which looked at Beirut's former Green Line since the end of the war late 1989 to date.

The second part investigates and analyzes the current physical and social conditions within the study area. Findings are then summarized into the five elements of design essential in portraying “The Image of the City” as by Lynch (1960) and dropped into a legibility map which identifies the major diagnosis extracted from the study area.

The third and last part proposes an overall urban design strategy which responds to the objectives of this study in reducing the gap between mindscapes and townscapes in contested societies. It also translates the general strategy into design and planning guidelines and concludes with a potential implementation strategy.

CHAPTER II

LEARNING FROM DIVIDED CITIES

The literature presented here focuses on urban strategies which have been applied in post-conflict planning of divided cities that could relate to Beirut in one way or another. Cases of divided cities portrayed in this chapter could be compared to the case of Beirut, either by the type of division over ethno-national identities, as is the case in Nicosia and Belfast, or by the physical manifestation of the division which creates an urge to dealing with the areas along the demarcation lines after reunification, as is the case in Berlin.

A. Theoretical Background

Some of the main theories on urban design approaches in contested cities mentioned throughout this chapter are extracted from Gaffikin, McEldowney & Sterrett (2010), who gathered some of the most significant theories on the concept of public space in relation to contested cities in an attempt to investigate the role of urban designers in shaping social space.

Gaffikin et al. (2010) believe urban design approaches have been used in contested cities as a tool to both “Manifestation of Division” and “Forces for Reconciliation” (p.508-509). They extracted their conclusion from both Nicosia and Belfast which were divided over ethno-national differences. According to Varshney (2002) in Gaffikin et al. (2010, p.494), national identities are usually translated into spatial territories which can turn into enclaves with edges subject to acts of violence. When division is manifested in space, some urban design approaches can help deepen

the segregation, as with defensive architecture or lack of permeability (Gaffikin et al., 2010). Moreover, division over ethno-national identities is a result of a long urban evolution processes (Gaffikin et al., 2010), the reason why it remains in people's psyche even after reconciliation. However, when the community division is acknowledged by public authorities, urban design, according to Gaffikin et al. (2010) can become a tool of reconciliation. This could be achieved through the implementation of integrative projects rather than segregating ones and challenging territorial division through "bi-communal" benefits as is the case in Nicosia (Gaffikin et al., 2010, p.509). Also, creating a network of shared spaces and community facilities is crucial in post-conflict cities as it aims at enhancing permeability and connectedness and therefore encourages more interactive communities. This network works best when it becomes part of a larger strategy which connects city centers to their outskirts.

Moreover, Gaffikin et al. (2010, p.499-500) refer to the McGlynn's "powergram" in McGlynn & Power, 1994, and quoted in Carmona et al. (2003) which considers the role of the urban designer influential through his participation, though not as influential as the developer's role being the powerful initiator, and the planner being in control of urban development. Accordingly, in contested cities, especially when conflicting interests over the concept of national identity -manifested in space- become more complex, urban designers face major challenges.

Despite this complexity, urban designers have had significant roles in dealing with division lines. Efforts in defining urban strategies and assessing solutions to demarcation lines in post-conflict societies, can be reflected in the case studies detailed below; the cases of Nicosia, Belfast and Berlin.

B. Case Studies of Divided Cities

1. The Case of Nicosia

Nicosia, the capital of Cyprus, is divided since 1974, and thus is presently the last divided city in Europe. A strip of land divides the city and its Venetian core from east to west (Fig. 2.1). The Green Line, also known as the Buffer Zone, was established in order to put an end to the tragic relationship between the Greek and Turkish Cypriots. It is put under military surveillance and controlled by the United Nations.

(Caramondani, 2006)



Fig. 2.1: UN Buffer Zone dividing Nicosia passing through the city's old core.
Original Map Source: Google Earth (2013)

The Buffer Zone has affected the economic growth of the city and its urban structure as it cuts the city's historical core into two independent entities (Fig 2.2-2.3). It is important to note here the disconnection of the Turkish occupied half of the city from its other administrative half. (Caramondani, 2006)

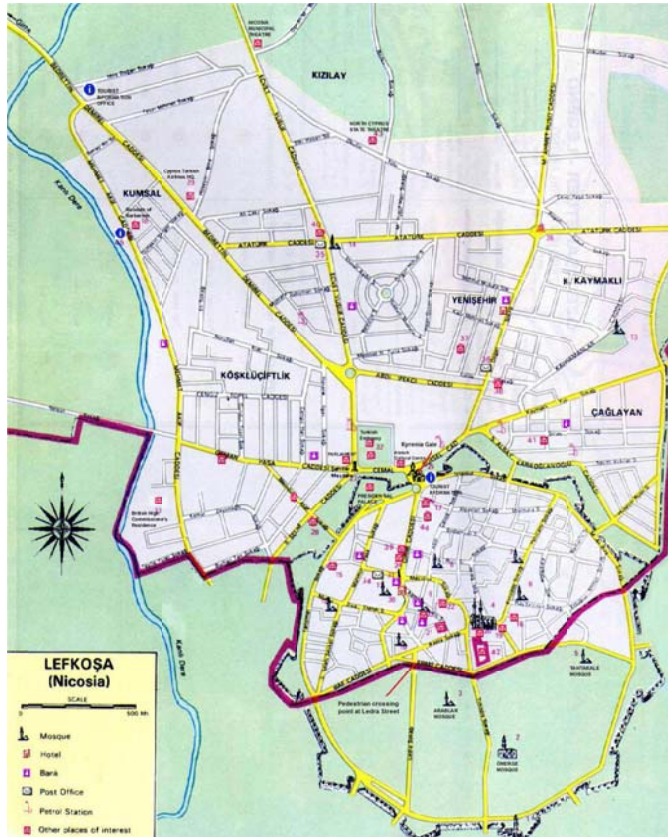


Fig. 2.2: *Central North Nicosia street map* [Map]. Retrieved October 15, 2013, from: <http://www.mapsofcyprus.co.uk/nicosia.php>



Fig. 2.3: *Central Nicosia street map* [Map]. Retrieved October 15, 2013, from: <http://www.mapsofcyprus.co.uk/nicosia.php>

Within its ongoing division, in 1979, the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) initiated a Master Plan for city revitalization in collaboration with local planners and engineers from both parts of the city. This resulted in agreement on a common ground for the city's unified infrastructural development (Gaffikin et al., 2010). At time of initiation, the Master Plan was not subject to legal administrative formalities which, according to the Mayor of Nicosia, made its implementation possible. Another reason for its success, according to the Mayor, could be attributed to the presence of the UNDP as an external funding agency and initiator of the project (E. Marvou, Personal interview, May 2008) in Gaffikin et al. (2010, p. 502).

The master plan addressed issues beneficial to both communities living on both sides of the Buffer Zone. Along with a unified infrastructural strategy, Nicosia Master Plan (NMP) has been successful in addressing and implementing a conservation strategy of the decaying old historic core of the city, and heritage buildings on both sides of the Green Line. It also initiated an adaptive reuse program for underused buildings. Moreover, the master plan created incentives to both public owners and public agencies for new developments in designated areas.

Along with the conservation strategy of the old city core and the preservation of heritage buildings -beneficial to all- the Master Plan of Nicosia addresses the current division of the city through an integration strategy. This is mainly achieved via pedestrian cross-buffer zone routes housing commercial activities (Gaffikin et al., 2010) essential in city regeneration. It focuses on the public realm where people happen to be in the same place at the same time for different purposes (Gaffikin et al., 2010). The remarkable economic impact of Ledra Street (Fig. 2.4-2.5) on the inhabitants made of it a successful initiative for the integration of two neighborhoods of a divided city. Ledra

Street, as per Gaffikin et al. (2010), has made a “symbolic statement to nascent integration” (p.502). This permeable edge treatment is both challenging and daring, yet turned both essential and successful in the case of Nicosia.



Fig. 2.4: *Ledra Street* [Photograph]. Retrieved November 24, 2013, from: http://www.whatson-northcyprus.com/interest/nicosia/south_nicosia/Ledra_street.htm



Fig. 2.5: *Ledra Street cross-Buffer Zone*. Original Map Source: *Nicosia, Cyprus* [Map]. Retrieved October 15, 2013, from: <http://maps.nationmaster.com/country/cy/1>

The master plan approach, via pedestrian routes across the Green Line, turns “boundaries” into “borders” which, according to Sennett (2004) in Gaffikin et al. (2010, p.500), are porous for communal exchange. The shared space for integration in the case of Nicosia was celebrated on the streets rather than in open spaces which in my opinion, could turn in post-conflict cities into “counter-public spheres”. The latter, according to Iveson (2007) in Gaffikin et al. (2010, p.496) causes more separation in relation to race, gender and other criteria. It is important to note here, that unlike the Nicosia Local Master Plan approached by a department affiliated to the Cyprus Government, which focused mainly on creating a network of open spaces in both parts of the city, and away from the buffer zone. The UNDP master plan according to Gaffikin et al. (2010) treated the Green Line as a major element for possible integration. According to Caramondani (2006), planning and environmental consultant, the buffer zone should be treated to commemorate the city history rather than being wiped away or remain a scar in the heart of the city. In this regard, the hopes rely on the buffer zone in stitching the city back together in Nicosia by introducing “gluing” activities along the buffer zone in order to revitalize the city and bring it back to its previous status as the vital heart of Nicosia (Caramondani, 2006).

2. The Case of Belfast

Unlike Nicosia, in Belfast the physical division of the city is not as linear and major in terms of scale (Fig. 2.6). As portrayed by Gaffikin et al. (2010), the city division is manifested through small scale physical barriers- called Peacewalls- that have created enclosures for different communities in Belfast. Some of the Peacewalls still exist to date mainly in segregated working-class neighborhoods.

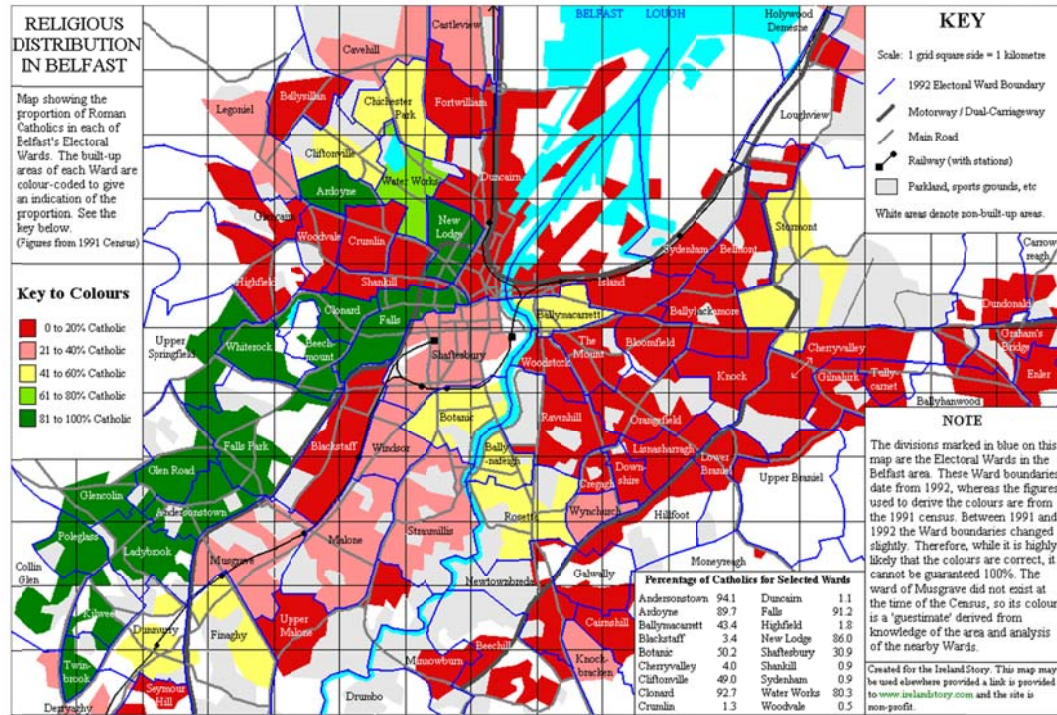


Fig. 2.6: *Religious distribution in Belfast* [Map]. (1991). Retrieved October 15, 2013, from: http://www.wesleyjohnston.com/users/ireland/map_index.html

The walls, as quoted by Gaffikin et al. (2010) from Sterrett & McEldowney (2001), did not appear overnight as is the case in Berlin; in Belfast the walls “appear to be built to last” (p.504). Peacelines of corrugated iron which appeared early 70s to control fights between Catholics and Protestants, turned later into permanent barriers of shuttered concrete and metal (Gaffikin et al., 2010) as illustrated in figure 2.7. Moreover, the walls are considered no more than a physical manifestation of the division that is rooted in the history of Belfast; the Peaceline which appeared during the seventies according to Brett (1986) in Gaffikin et al. (2010, p.504), overlaps with the demarcation line that separated the Catholic and Protestant communities 100 years earlier.



Fig. 2.7: *Peace Line along Cupar Way separating the Falls and the Shankill neighborhoods in Belfast.* [Photograph]. (2009). Retrieved October 15, 2013 from: <http://blogs.haverford.edu/cpgc-belfast/>

The Peacewalls in Belfast had significant implications on the city structure. According to Gaffikin et al. (2010), Belfast has undergone a “defensible space” approach to urban design due to division. This requires designing against crime, creating enclosed living space and providing tank-friendly roads. The presence of the Peacewalls turned residential enclaves into ethnic spaces while commercial areas became the only neutral spaces. The ghetto order in Belfast left available fenced off vacant land in some neighborhoods. It is important to mention here that the possibility of removing Peacewalls and turning those vacant lands into spaces open for the public was considered, but sectarian perceptions and illustrations seems to still be present to date.

Rogers (1998) as referred to by Gaffikin et al. (2010, p.506) differentiates between a “single-minded” and an “open-minded” space. According to Rogers (1998) in Gaffikin at al. (2010, p.506), when a city is subject to more civic space privatization against street life interaction, it loses its openness which consequently requires more

security and therefore loses its hospitable sociable character. Belfast, accordingly, could have turned into a single-minded city. According to Gaffikin et al. (2010, p. 506), Belfast has seen the emergence of what he described as “inward looking” projects which, unlike Victoria Square (Fig. 2.8)- opened in 2008- represents the example of an open-minded space. Victoria Square is a combination of a square, street and shopping mall. It is believed to be far more than a commercial complex; it is considered a social gathering node of divided communities while preserving existing urban fabric and street patterns, and allows public access and interaction all day long (Gaffikin et al., 2010, p. 506).



Fig. 2.8: [Untitled photograph of Victoria Square; a commercial center and social gathering point in Belfast]. Retrieved November 23, 2013, from: <http://www.bdp.com/en/Projects/By-Name/P-Z/Victoria-Square/>

With the success of Victoria Square in Belfast, commercial open spaces seem to characterize the liveliest public spaces in the city. Along with commercial spaces, the City Center Public Realm Master Plan proposes a city-wide network of accessible public/ civic spaces (Gaffikin et al., 2010). This could fall within the attempt of Belfast in creating more collective spaces- spaces to all. Though, in the absence of formal civic space in Belfast, Gaffikin et al. (2010) believe that the city should become more reliant

on “pocket” parks linked by a series of pedestrian friendly streets borrowed from Dutch and Flemish cities. This strategy is based on the concept of “connectedness”, which according to Gaffikin et al. (2010) should extend beyond the city center to the edges of the city in order to hold pedestrian paths with nodes along arterial routes, and allows a potential of city-wide greenway using disused railways and road lines to connect parks and other recreation areas (Gaffikin et al., 2010).

3. The Case of Berlin

Unlike Nicosia and Belfast, division in Berlin was not a result of ethno-national differences, which according to Gaffikin et al. (2010) is a produce of a long urban evolution process. The Berlin wall was built in 1961 by the Soviets to control emigration from East Germany to West Germany (Berlin Wall Memorial, 2013).

Similarly to Nicosia, the barrier in Berlin was linear (Fig. 2.9). It consisted of two walls with empty land in between (Nasr, 1996) dividing Berlin into an eastern German Democratic Republic and a western Federal Republic. The wall was considered a “Death Strip” after many people died trying to escape the Eastern German regime (The Berlin Wall, 2012).

In 1989- the fall of the pro-soviet governance caused what is referred to by Grichting (2010), “the liberation of a military landscape within a city”. This was followed in 1990 by the German Reunification.



Fig. 2.9: *General Berlin city map, 1961* [Map]. Retrieved January 11, 2014, from: http://www.dailysoft.com/berlinwall/maps/berlinwallmap_02.htm

The presence of the wall created radical transformations in the city structure. It mainly affected the infrastructure within areas adjacent to the wall. However, the act of bulldozing building structures along the border line allowed later- after the demolition of the wall- for a change in the city and therefore created opportunities for post-reunification urban design approaches (Grichting, 2010). The massive size of the wall created opportunities of vacant land for potential land uses such as infrastructure, green spaces and needed institutions (Grichting, 2010).

The deteriorating infrastructure was noticeable along the wall which turned away the interest of investors from the area (Nasr, 1996, p.31). This caused a decrease in land value post-division which usually enables the public authorities to acquire land for public services for low prices. This was a major advantage to the city development which later transformed the wall into a city asset revitalizing a wide range of neighborhoods in Berlin.

As a first reaction to liberation in 1989, very little remains of the wall structure when people in Berlin aimed at destroying the wall (Grichting, 2010). However, currently, attempts to preserving what has remained of the wall are taking place (Grichting, 2010) through planning initiatives which aims at transforming the wall into a city asset and significant landmark (Fig. 2.10).

Major commemoration stations along the wall consist of the Berlin Wall Trail, border crossings, memorial sites, documentation centers, open air wall museum, open spaces and other initiatives.



Fig. 2.10: Remains of Berlin Wall structure (2011)

Furthermore, in 2006, Berlin Senate approved the Master Plan to Preserve the Memory of the Berlin Wall. The plan aims at reinforcing and connecting the different stations/ nodes along the wall in Berlin. (The Memorial, 2012)

The Berlin Wall Trail-[Berliner Mauerweg] 2002-2006 which ties all major memorial and cultural stations along the wall (Fig. 2.11) is considered one of the most significant projects to tell the history of the wall (Berlin Wall Trail).

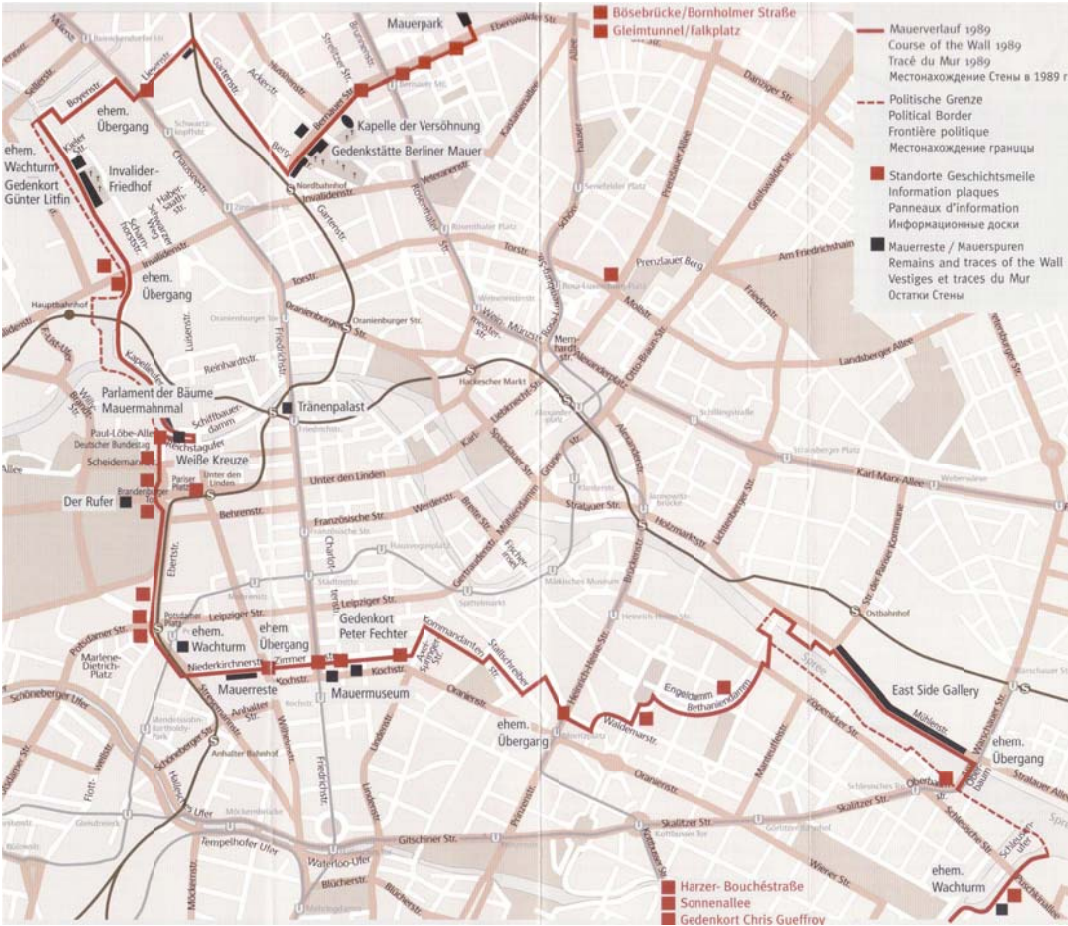


Fig. 2.11: [Untitled map of the Berlin Wall Trail]. Retrieved November 25, 2013, from: <http://www.susette-berlin.de/>

The trail consists of different commemoration stations. It is connected to public transportation stations which, along with the numerous wall segments provide a more pleasant biking and pedestrian experience (Berlin Wall Trail).

Berlin Wall Memorial (Fig. 2.12-2.15) is another major project which was initiated by the German Federal Government in 1994 and represented by the German Historical Museum. The design proposal by Kohlhoff & Kohlhoff, which was awarded the project in 1995 design proposal aims at addressing commemoration within an artistic dimension. It consists of an open-air exhibition. It holds the Monument in Memory of the Divided City, the Chapel of Reconciliation, a Visitor Center, a Documentation Center with a viewing platform and the Ghost Stations. (The Memorial, 2012)

It is important to mention here that many other project initiatives were addressed by local populations and organizations. Some of them adopted ecological approaches while others relied more on artistic dimensions.

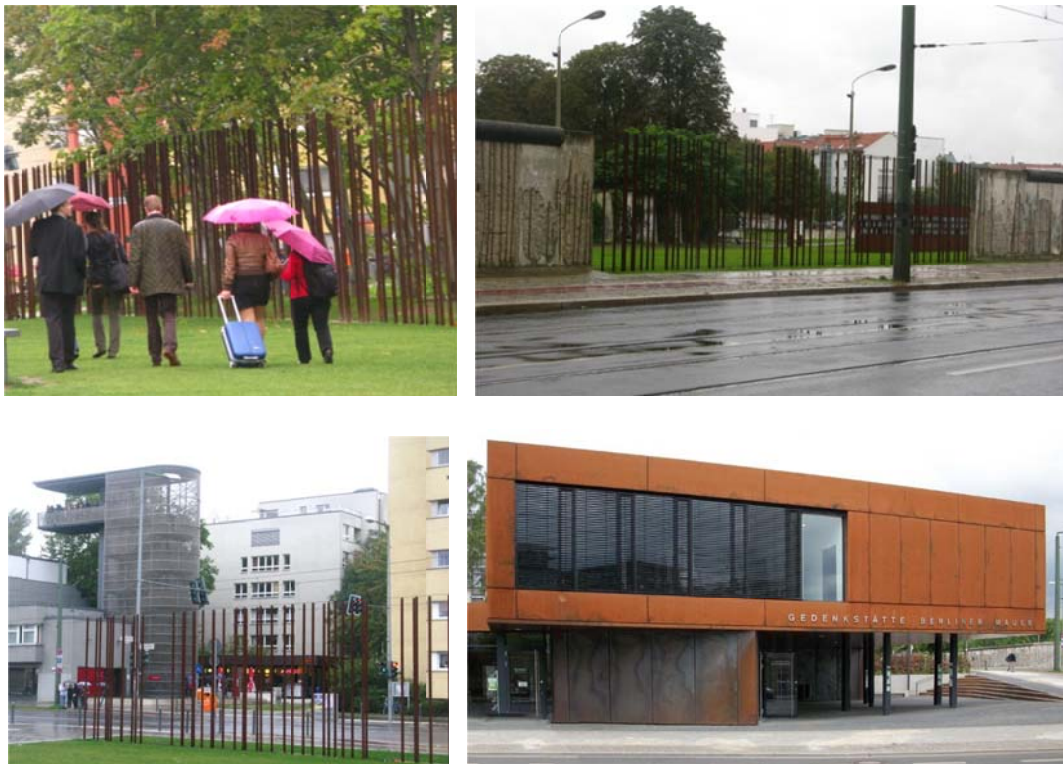


Fig. 2.12-2.15: Berlin Wall Memorial; the visitor center and documentation center (2011)

C. Conclusion

The above literature and case studies discussed a wide range of urban design strategies and tools used in approaching demarcation lines in divided cities. All three types of division lines portrayed above constitute a major urban element in the city which, when treated properly, is believed to contribute significantly to the reconciliation process of divided communities. Creating pedestrian networks of recreational nodes, commercial streets, commercial centers and open spaces are tools used to achieve porosity, permeability and connectedness which are essential in planning post-conflict cities along demarcation lines.

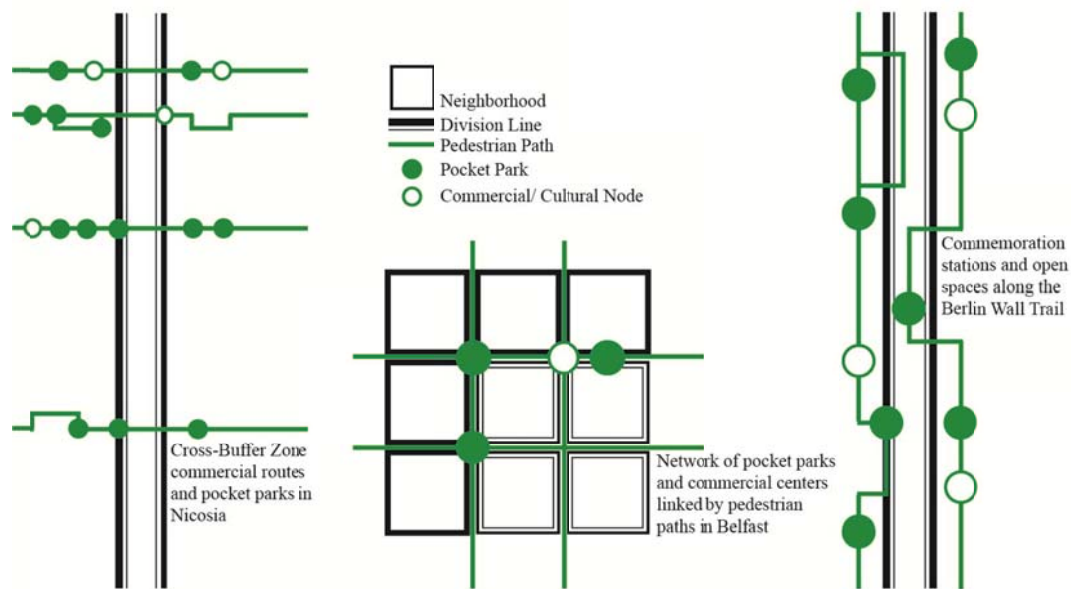


Fig. 2.16: Abstraction of three approaches of integrating division lines in contested cities

The illustrations above represent an abstraction of three different approaches to integration (Fig. 2.16); the first two illustrations are deduced from the master plans of Nicosia and Berlin, whereas the third one is deduced from a strategy that seems suitable

for the case of Belfast proposed by Gaffikin et al, (2010). They could be summarized in the following three main concepts:

- a. Integration using transversal cross-buffer zone pedestrian commercial routes inspired by the medieval city structure and the compact city essential for communal exchange, extracted from Nicosia.
- b. Integration through a network of pocket parks and pedestrian friendly streets, connected to major parks and recreation areas, proposed by Gaffikin et al. (2010) for Belfast.
- c. Accommodation of past division through commemoration trail, information stations and interaction spaces along the wall, extracted from Berlin.

CHAPTER III

BEIRUT'S GREEN LINE HISTORICAL AND SPATIAL BACKGROUND -CASE STUDIES TO DATE-

As discussed in the previous chapter, division lines in contested cities are not the produce of today but rather a result of a long urban evolution process that started sometime in the past but is enrooted in the mindset of the public to date (Gaffikin, McEldowney & Sterrett, 2010). Such is the case of Beirut's Green Line which, according to a study made by Kabbani (1989), is a produce of religious sectarian entities since ancient times. This chapter extracts the historical background of Beirut's Green Line and its implication on the city morphology from Kabbani's study. It also tracks the evolution of urban design processes that dealt with the Green Line in Beirut since the end of the war in 1989 to date.

A. Historical Background

1. National Identity and Spatial Territories

According to Hepburn (2004) in Gaffikin et al. (2010), a "contested city" consists of two or more groups from different religious backgrounds where one group does not acknowledge the other (p.494). The conflict is mostly about national identity and is usually translated into spatial territories (Varshney (2002) in Gaffikin et al., 2010, p.494), which could eventually turn into enclaves with edges subject to acts of violence.

The case in Beirut is not so different; the lack of national identity resulted in an ongoing spatial agglomeration of different groups sharing similar sectarian ideologies and political affiliations. This phenomenon resulted in social segregation decades ago

and was encouraged, later, by colonial forces, thus creating what was referred to by Kabbani as the mosaic pattern (Kabbani, 1989).

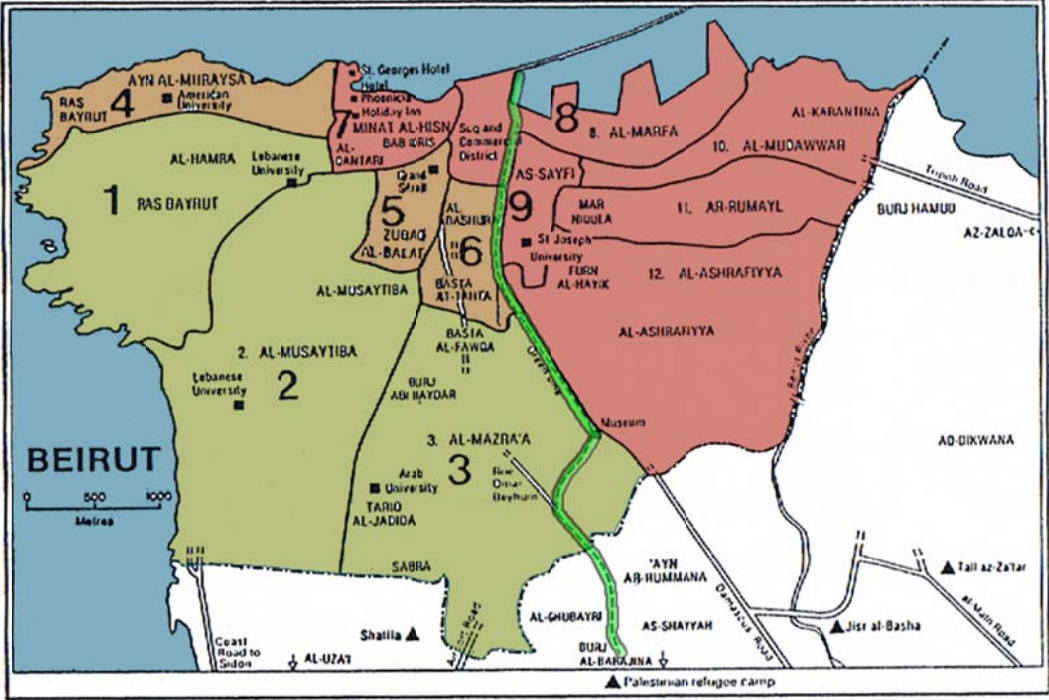


Fig. 3.1: Illustrating the Social Mosaic of Beirut. Original Map Source: Kabbani, O. (1989). *Election districts of Beirut* [Map]

The figure 3.1 above illustrates the spatial agglomerations in relation to religious affiliations in Beirut represented by Oussama Kabbani (1989). It shows the agglomeration predominantly Sunni Muslim to the west [divisions 1 to 3] versus the pre-dominantly Christian agglomeration to the east [divisions 7 to 12]. The center was more or less mixed: housing Muslims and Christians. The civil war came to shape the division more severely; the noted migration of Christians from western to eastern Beirut caused the decrease in the number of Christians in division 7. This caused Beirut to become a polycentric city which made the Green Line appear more obviously. Accordingly, Beirut was defined as a divided city.

2. The Implications of the Green Line on the City Structure

The Green Line in Beirut had major implications on the city structure. It caused businesses to move away from the city center to other neighborhoods on both sides of the line (Fig. 3.2). Consequently, both parts of the city had to function separately and

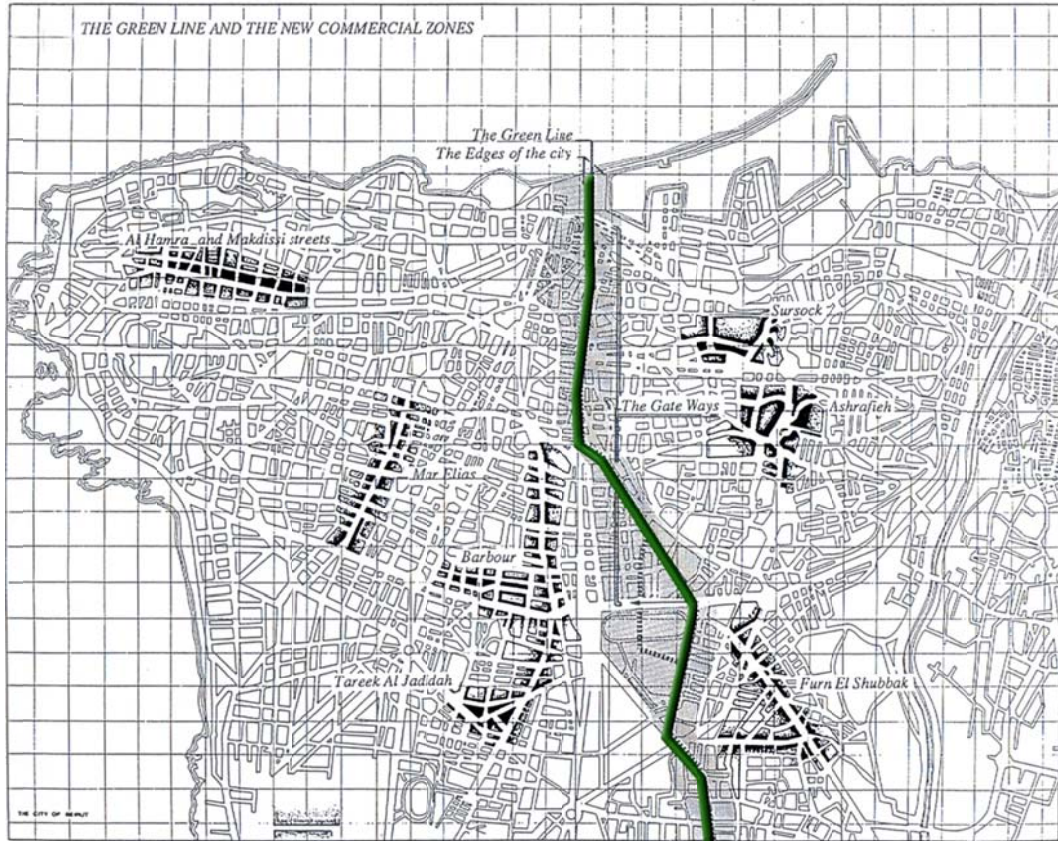


Fig. 3.2: The polycentric structure of Beirut during the 80s. Original Map Source: Kabbani, O. (1989). *The Green Line and the new commercial zones* [Map]

thus build their urban infrastructure independently. As a result, the monocentric structure was completely replaced by a polycentric structure which only accentuated the division between East and West Beirut until late 80's, with the end of the civil war. (Kabbani, 1989)

Right after the war ended, urban studies focused mainly on the reconstruction of Downtown area, in an effort to help Beirut regain its political, economic and social role in the region (Shwayri, 2002, p. 214). At the time, money generating businesses were an essential factor in the rebirth of a post-conflict city. For this reason, attention was deviated from the Green Line and focused mainly on the reconstruction of the Central Business District (CBD) in order to attract investors back to Beirut without delay. Unlike those studies that have focused primarily on Beirut city center, the studies discussed throughout this chapter stand for post-war urban design approaches to the Green Line in Beirut since the end of the war to date, twenty years later. The following case studies help to trace the evolution of the mindset reflected in urban design strategies in a post-conflict city over two decades.

B. Case Studies in Beirut

1. 1989- Beirut- The Arena of Conflict. A Vision of Optimism. A Master Thesis by Oussama Kabbani

Based on the lack of urban identity that was one of the major causes of conflict in Beirut, and one year before the end of the civil war, in 1989, Oussama Kabbani, in his Urban Design Master Thesis, believed the Green Line could be a main component that could shape the future of Beirut. The Green Line in Kabbani's thesis is presented as a "neutral fragment" that has a potential of generating a neutral identity to the divided city. Consequently, it could become the backbone to the city and could help stitching the city back together. (Kabbani, 1989)

Kabbani (1989) believes that the "mosaic nature" of Beirut, portrayed above, is the problem. In his opinion the city needs to "be understood as an "Urban Mosaic", a

collection of communities living near each other” (p.33). Kabbani (1989) considers that urban division, in case read properly, has the potential to becoming an opportunity. In this regard, Lynch (1981) asserts that, “seeing a difficulty, one may not try to remove it, but simply seeks to understand it and to predict its future course so that one can adapt, survive and prosper if possible” (as cited in Kabbani, 1989, p.35).

In this intent, Kabbani portrays abstractly his understanding of the “mosaic-like” structure of the city – produce of a long historical evolution process. In order to relate social division to spatial territories, Kabbani analyses divisions at the scale of a community going down to the scale of the individual. He starts from “two pieces, two edges and one line” and breaks it down to the boundaries surrounding the microcosm which defines the relationship between a group of microcosms. Kabbani (1989) believes that “boundaries are self-imposing entities. They shape and are shaped by the individual microcosm. Boundaries and microcosms are interchangeable, for a group of microcosms is by itself a boundary”. He deduces, in the case of Beirut, that the line between Muslims and Christians- being the two pieces- is neutral and belongs to both communities. Its international significance, along with its national identity, makes it stronger than the pieces. And even though both communities are well defined as two separate entities, Kabbani believed they can still intersect at the line but cannot be united. (Kabbani, 1989) (Refer to Appendix II)

As a result of his analysis, comes the proposed solution of Kabbani who concluded that the solution to division between two communities occurs in a “no man’s land”- the Green Line - which could be integrated within the existing urban fabric and could contribute to the future image of the city. This cannot happen without the contribution of a multidisciplinary team of social skilled professionals, designers,

planners and decision makers, who only by working together can achieve a comprehensive approach to post-war reconstruction. Such plan, according to Kabbani should address the Green Line and adjacent neighborhoods as a whole instead of planning each fragment on its own. (Kabbani, 1989)

Kabbani's vision is only a response to people's will to interact while living separately in their own enclaves (Fig. 3.3). The response to social will was reflected mainly through infrastructure which, according to Kabbani, is a powerful means to social dichotomy or interaction (Fig. 3.4). He proposed an underpass for vehicles in the city center in order to allow for a vital pedestrian activity at the ground level: a means to interaction. Along the segment between Chiyah and Ain El-Remmaneh, however, Kabbani proposed a dividing highway. Back in 1989, the communities on both sides of the street were in total refusal of the other, and division along that stretch was still needed. He believed that creating open spaces on both sides of the highway helps discouraging direct interaction between the two communities. However, he proposed a mall at Tayouneh round about to slowly amend the social division between Chiyah and Ain el-Remmaneh by creating a space of common interest and benefit. (Kabbani, 1989)

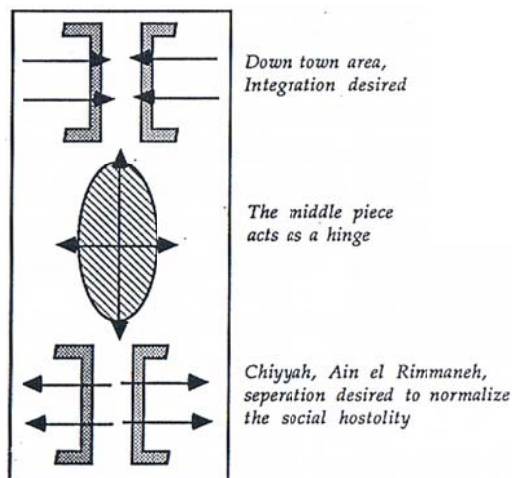


Fig. 3.3: Kabbani, O. (1989). [Untitled diagram showing the social conditions of Beirut in 1989 along the Green Line]

While separation was the solution in the southern segment of the Green Line, as proposed by Kabbani (1989), and the city center was seen as a space to all, the middle segment between Downtown and Chiyah-Ain El-Remmaneh was left as a “hinge”– a cultural spine, a boulevard along which are located landmark buildings and museums. The cultural spine would house a public library, a children’s cultural center, an opera house and a civil war museum, all connected via a network of public parks and gardens. Furthermore, Kabbani made of the pine forest a major park, and a center for remembrance. He proposed next to the hippodrome, other sports facilities, a hotel and a viewing tower among other recreational stations. The land value along the Green Line after the war makes the project possible: the building conditions make it cheaper on the public authorities to expropriate abandoned properties for public projects. (Kabbani, 1989)

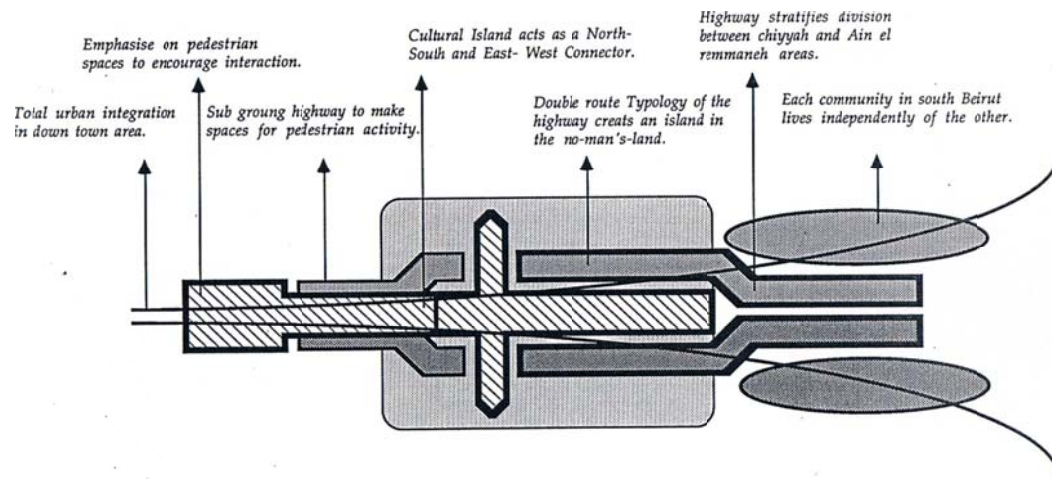


Fig. 3.4: Kabbani, O. (1989). *The social concept of the scheme* [Diagram]

In conclusion, Kabbani’s overall strategy reflects a “great social concern”, where he believes that “the social mosaic” created by the civil war “should be accepted and accommodated rather than camouflaged and rejected” (Kabbani, 1989, p.44).

2. 1993- *The IAURIF Plan*

The Green Line was also the subject of a study by the ‘Institut d’Aménagement et d’Urbanisme de la Région Ile-de-France’ (IAURIF), who were assigned by the Conseil du Développement et de la Reconstruction (CDR) in 1993, in the context of studies for post-war reconstruction in Beirut, to present a master plan of the Green Line and adjacent neighborhoods.

The research and study done by IAURIF aims at understanding the Green Line area and its morphology and shaping structure, not only as a post-war result, but as a consequence of the history of the city and its dynamics.

The study’s objectives are concentrated around a rapid reconstruction process that would negate the war and its effects, erase its traces, and above all, avoid the rigid cut between the city’s two areas; namely East and West Beirut. (IAURIF, 1993)

The 'old demarcation line' as described in the study is stated as a “linear area with no depth”; however, its impact and its presence are deeply embedded in the city and its dwellers’ mindscapes. This is especially due to the line’s historical and geographical connotations being enrooted in the country's administrative system divisions. The roads along which the Green Line cuts the city into the Muslim and Christian areas correspond to the Damascus Road, “the road which cuts municipal Beirut into two electoral circumscriptions: east and west”, and the Old Saida Road which separates the two municipalities of Chiyah and Ghobeireh. The war came to further differentiate these areas and aggravate the psychological barriers between the different groups. (IAURIF, 1993)

Although the area of the IAURIF study (1993) extends from the Ring Road, south of the city center, to the Old Saida Road and Mar Mikhael church, the area

delimited by this thesis is of major significance. With the “Col de Beyrouth” and Beshara El-Khoury Road as key intersection and Ras En-Nabaa as “an authentic neighborhood”, this segment was conceived and regarded as a potential reconstruction area that will have a main impact on the reconstruction of the city and on erasing the war memories of the demarcation line. IAURIF, in this regard, proposed many alternative design solutions along that segment by addressing densification, right of ways, greening spaces and streetscaping, which plays a major role in shaping the character of the neighborhood. “Green liaisons” and landscaped routes were proposed (Fig. 3.5) along the limits and within the area of Ras En-Nabaa area in order to enhance the connectivity between Ashrafieh and the Pine Park. (IAURIF, 1993)

Not only did IAURIF address the segment along Ras En-Nabaa area, it has also produced different alternative solutions to each of what was referred to as “autre pole” in their study area, using the same tools of design cited above. The different alternatives are meant to help authorities decide “which type of city” is needed. These “poles” or nodes presented in IAURIF plan are located at major road intersections expected to become the exchange nodes which might contribute to the reconciliation process at the city scale (Fig. 3.6). The IAURIF plan addresses reconstruction and city planning by assessing the various characters of the islands across the Green Line, and proposing, in addition to the building guidelines and objectives, a Green Plan that connects the various green areas, existing and proposed, from the city center to the pine forest (Fig. 3.5).

The study aims at extending the works, conceived for the Beirut city center to the south, to create harmony in the city, while acknowledging the difference of the social fabric in the neighborhood subject to study. The area is “less prestigious,” and

targets the middle-class first and foremost. It was therefore important to build on its various cultural, social and leisure attributes.

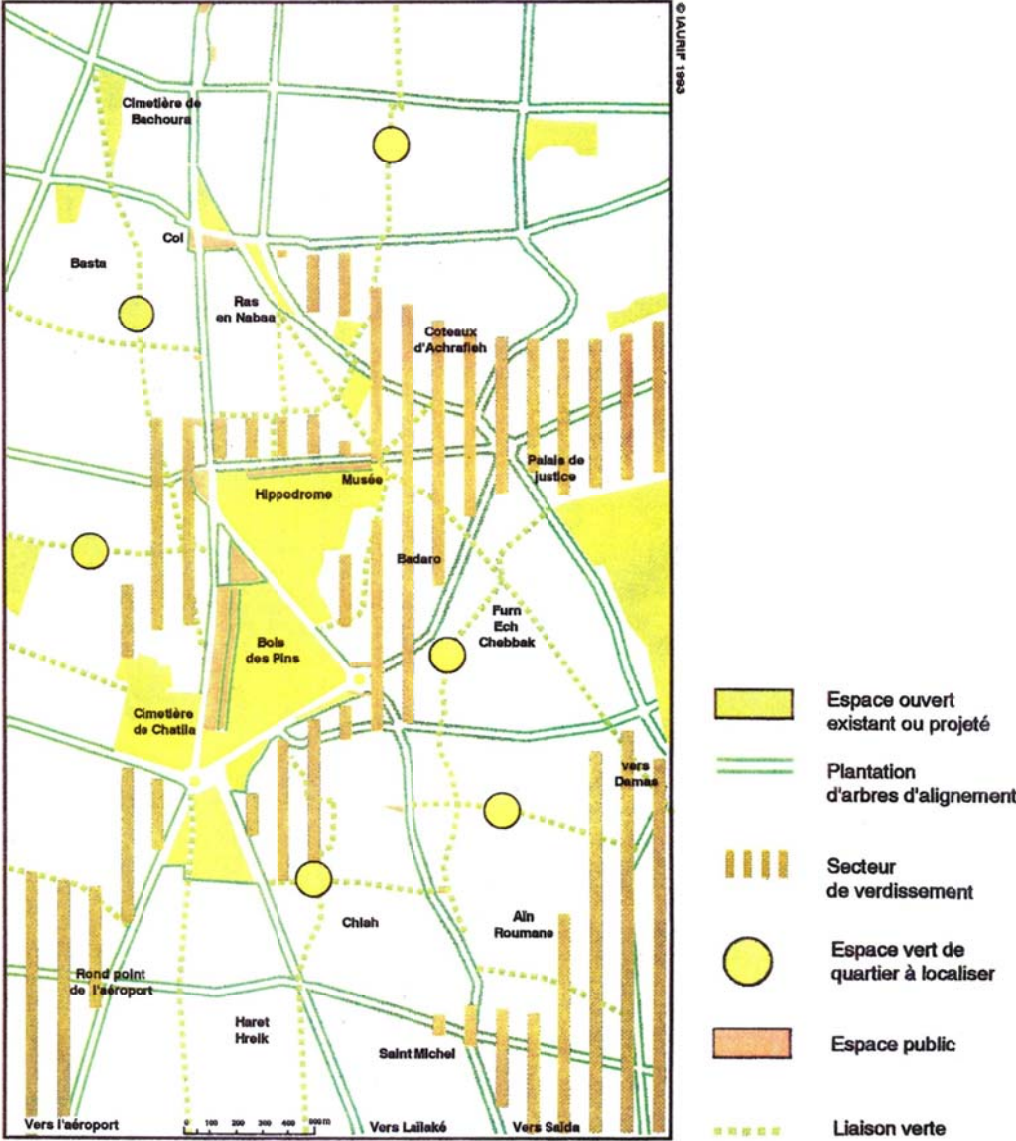


Fig. 3.5: IAURIF (1993). *Green plan proposal for the neighborhoods of the old demarcation line* [Map]

The Green Line is also set to be a major transit axis and transportation node, one of the city's main gateways.

This study thus assesses the advantages and disadvantages of different implementation strategies for reconstruction and their impact on the neighborhoods character. The options varied between a regulatory approach to the real estate company for the development of the sector as one coherent entity or only at “pole principal” or key nodes. Another operational strategy was to make those same key nodes open to as many investors and developers.

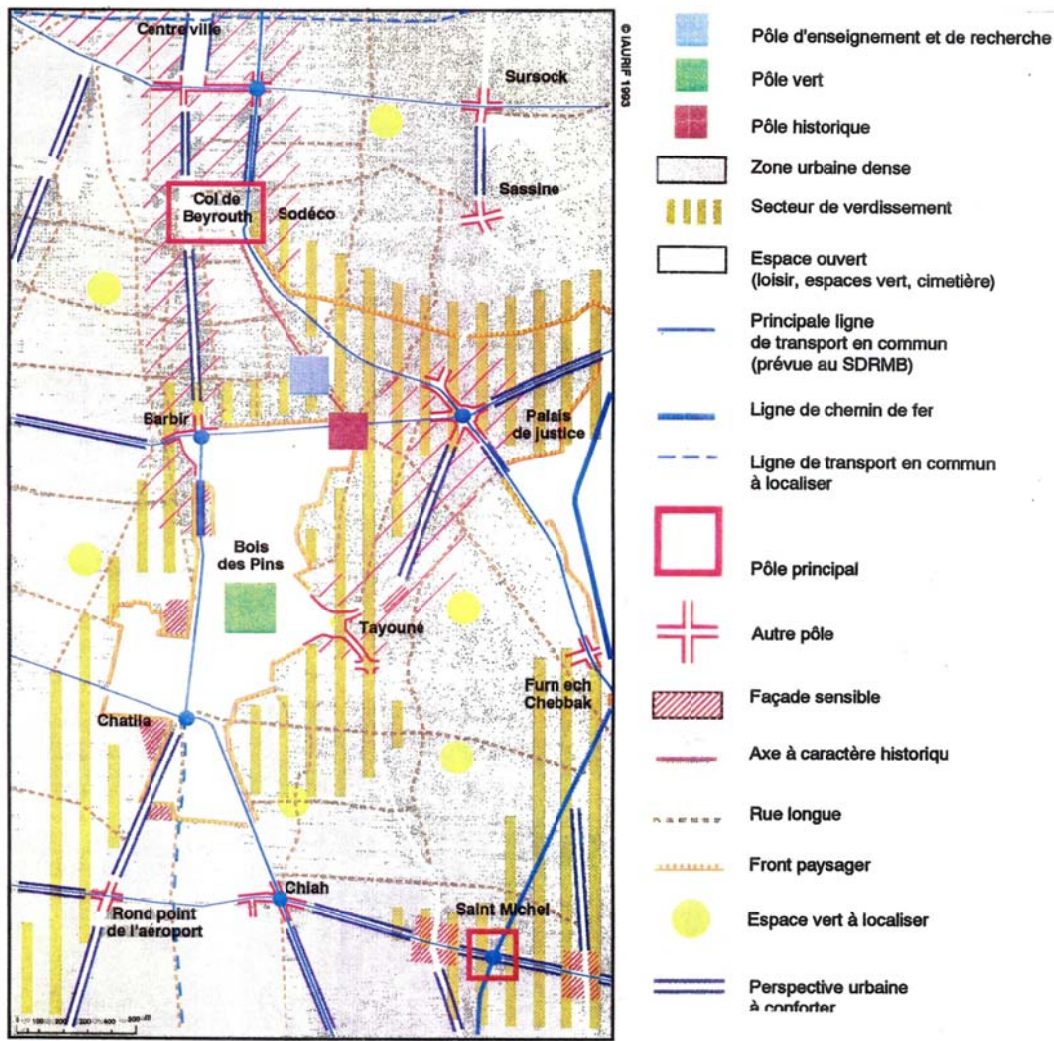


Fig. 3.6: IAURIF (1993). *Organic scheme for the neighborhoods of the old demarcation line* [Map]

3. 2007 to Date- Planned Projects

The Soft Connection is the most recent project that is being currently developed along the former Green Line of 1975. The project is financed by the municipality of Beirut with the technical consultancy of Ile-de-France (Shayya, Asfour & Salman, 2012). The project overlaps with one of the green alignments proposed in 1993-IAURIF Green Plan (Fig. 3.5) along Damascus Road and its sidewalks. The Soft Connection consists of a green landscaped route dedicated for pedestrian and cycling mobility. It aims at reducing traffic while connecting Downtown area to the Pine Park both of which constitute significant fragments of the Green Line. The Pine Park, being closed to date and the “exclusionary” spaces in Downtown- as described by Shayya et al., (2012) represents an obstacle to the objectives of the project. All public spaces in Downtown, the Park, and the Soft Connection in between- being located along the division line between east and west Beirut- follow a planning model of post-war reconstruction which requires, according to Shayya et al. (2012), a neutral identity. The Soft Connection typology seems to resemble Kabbani’s proposed boulevard along Damascus Road, which acts as a hinge between Downtown and Chiah -Ain El-Remmaneh area.

In line with the Soft Connection project, the Memory Museum, at the “Col de Beyrouth” –a very strategic location along the Green Line- was chosen to commemorate the history of the city. Barakat Building was built between 1920 and 1930 (Lahoud, 2011), and falls along the same segment where Kabbani proposed a civil war museum at the end of the war in 1989. For years, activists worked on saving the building from demolition, for it has an architectural and historical significance (Lahoud, 2011). It wasn’t until 2003 that the Lebanese government finally expropriated the building, also

known as the yellow house, to transform it into a public space; a cultural center, a documentation center and a museum- in the memory of the civil war (Lahoud, 2011). The Memory Museum inherits again the neutral identity of the Green Line in order to allow people from both sides of the city to watch their history.

C. Conclusion

While Kabbani's vision and the Soft Connection project treated the line as an edge- a linear path, the approach of IAURIF to the Green Line included all adjacent neighborhoods and existing major road networks. All three approaches, although they overlap in one way or another, differ in terms of vision and objectives. While Kabbani's solution aims at accommodating the division and adapting to it, one of the IAURIF plan's objectives is to erase all traces of the war by enhancing the character of the Green Line and its adjacent neighborhoods. The former reflects a social responsibility while the latter had a vision that focused on the economic aspect and development potential in the city. The Soft Connection was an updated version of the "green liaisons" proposed by IAURIF in 1993 along Damascus Road and has in common with Kabbani's vision the concept of the hinge between the periphery and the center. All three studies compare to Belfast by including a connectivity strategy between periphery and center as one tool for integration. Commerce was used as a tool for interaction as was also used in Nicosia and Belfast. Similarly, pocket parks and pedestrian networks used as a means for connectivity compare to Nicosia's open space network. While in some areas the urban design tools in Beirut were similar to the elements used in other divided cities, the commemoration strategy -which was used and proved successful in Berlin- is almost

invisible along Beirut's former Green Line. The latter, twenty years after the war ended, is still in constant process of demolishing all war traces, unlike the case in Berlin.

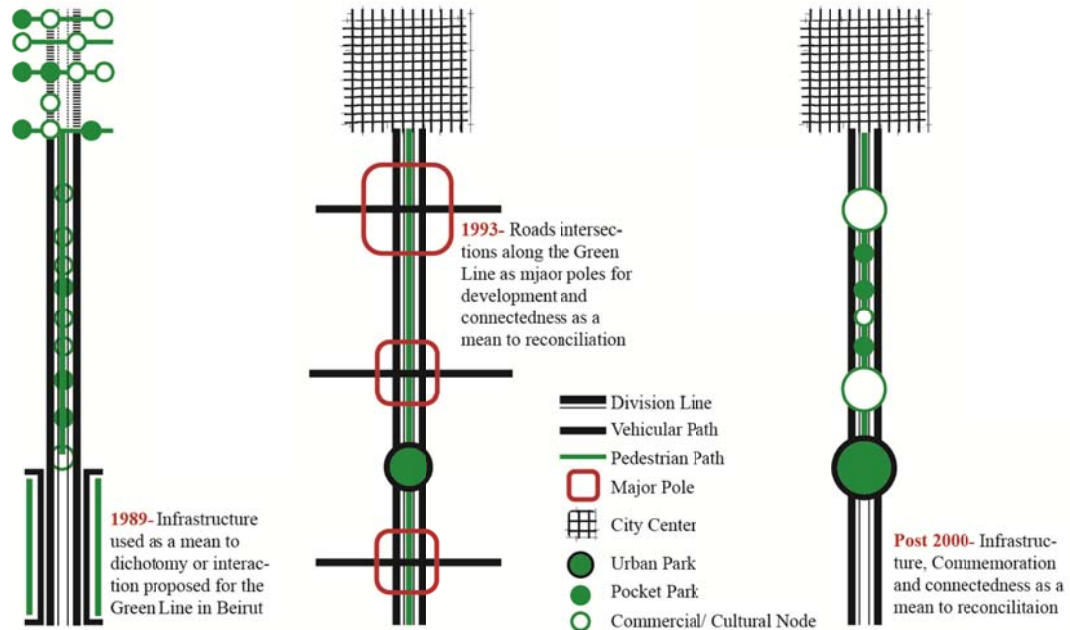


Fig. 3.7: Abstraction of three approaches to division lines in post-conflict cities as extracted from Beirut

The illustration above (Fig. 3.7) abstracts the different spatial strategies used in addressing the Green Line in Beirut from an urban design perspective. It reflects both a responsive and normative approaches to post conflict cities to be summarized as follow:

- a. Infrastructure superimposed on the Green Line as a way to social dichotomy or interaction- extracted from Kabbani's Master Thesis proposed plan.
- b. Integration through reinforcing poles of major significance at main road intersections for potential developments, extracted from IAURIF plan.
- c. Integration through connectedness using pedestrian mobility and the creation of cultural landmarks along the Green Line, extracted from the Soft Connection and the Memory Museum projects.

CHAPTER IV

THE SHIFTING DIVIDE ANALYSIS AND DIAGNOSIS

While Chapter 3 highlights the evolution of the urban studies related to the Green Line over two decades since the end of the war in 1989, this chapter explains the rationale behind the need to redefine the study area boundary -delimited by the former Green Line of 1975 along Damascus Road to the east and the new line of separation emerging along Beshara El-Khoury Road to the west. It gives a historical glance at its spatial growth. It then abstracts the study area components into spatial typologies and examines its current spatial and social conditions and relation to its immediate surrounding based on participant observation and interviews. This chapter also correlates the conclusions with previous studies discussed earlier in Chapter 3 while defining the major socio spatial dynamics on site, their changing aspect and anticipated future.

A. Redefinition of Study Area Boundary

In chapter 1, the study area consisted of Ras En-Nabaa, a triangular neighborhood shaped by three main axes; Damascus Road to the east, which separates it from Ashrafieh. To the west, Beshara El-Khoury Road separates it from Basta and Bashoura, and Abdallah Al-Yafi or 2nd Ring Road to the south separates it from the hippodrome (Refer to Chapter 1, Fig. 1.3). The tip of the triangle extends towards the north, up to General Fouad Shehab or 1st Ring Road which defines the city center boundary. (Fig. 4.1)

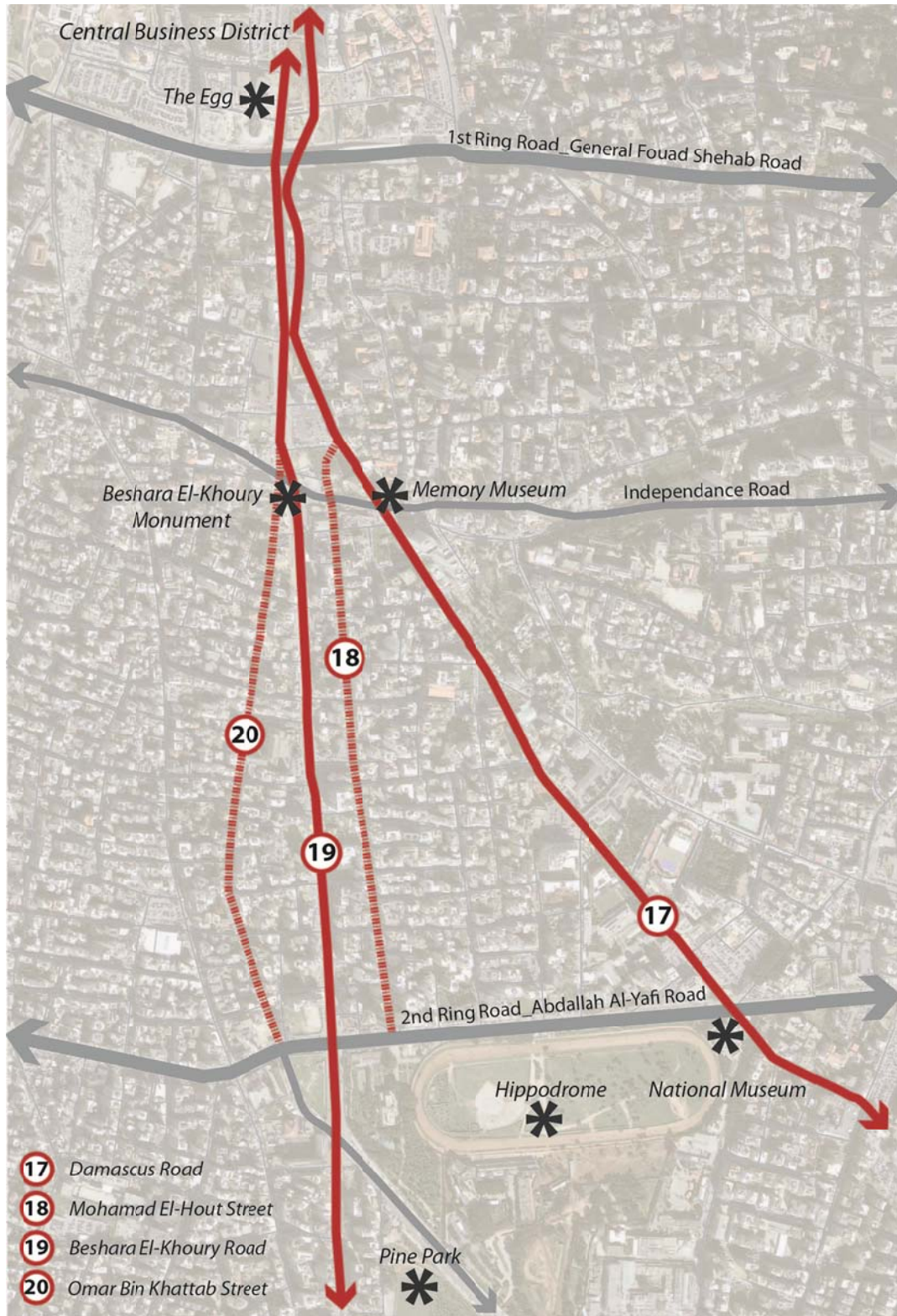


Fig. 4.1: Study area limits

After a preliminary reading of the site, the emerging sectarian edge condition along Beshara El-Khoury Road became clearer, thus requiring the study area to extend one block to the west onto Omar Bin Khattab Street, for it is essential to compare the socio-political context between the two adjacent neighborhoods (Fig. 4.2). The boundaries of the study area remain unchanged to its eastern and southern sides, for it is already defined by physical barriers - fencing the hippodrome properties and other private and public institutions- which seem to have little or no potential of being removed at present. To the north, the 1st Ring Road represents a similar physical break from the city center.

Thus, the study area becomes delimited to the west by Omar Bin Khattab Street which falls within a neighborhood of traditional character (حي ذو طابع تراثي) (Fig. 4.2).



Fig. 4.2: Study Area Boundary-Redefined . Original Map Source: Google Earth (2012)

This redefinition of the study area boundary allows one to understand the dynamics of the site both as a separate entity and part of the fragmented context it belongs to.

B. Spatial Growth of the Study Area

Ras En-Nabaa, as illustrated in figure 4.3 from IAURIF plan (1993), developed between the late 1800s and 1960s. The first tip of the triangle emerged as an expansion from the city center. It later developed into a separate, predominantly residential neighborhood and reached the Second Ring Road from the 1960s onwards gaining its current geographical boundaries.

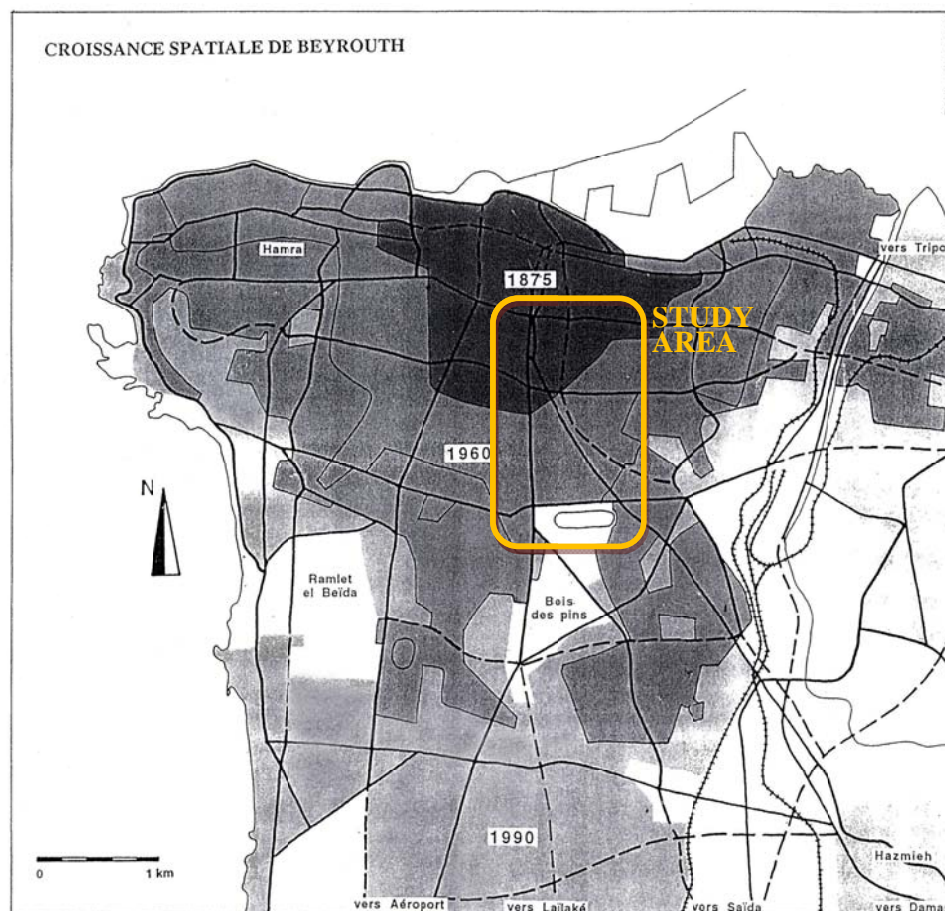


Fig. 4.3: Study area growth period. Original Map Source: IAURIF (1992). *Spatial growth of Beirut* [Map]

C. Abstracting Site Components

The study area morphology allows to differentiate between two spatial typologies; linear and compound spaces. This makes it easier to read the site in a more defined order and thus to come up with a comprehensive assessment of the outcomes, when all elements are brought together.

1. Linear Spaces

The linear spaces as portrayed in this thesis consist of transport infrastructure corridors having a linear dimension in comparison to the compound spaces which have a width and defined inner spaces. They represent Damascus Road and Beshara El-Khoury Road which have a national significance as infrastructure and edges.

a. Linear Spaces as Infrastructure

i. Damascus Road- Boulevard for Servicing

Damascus Road (Fig.4.4) is a major link between Damascus and Beirut which exists since antiquity (IAURIF, 1993, p.6).

Historically, Damascus Road gained important national significance due to the travel of goods between Damascus and Beirut. Its significance is also attributed to the location of educational and cultural facilities dating back to the late Ottoman and French Mandate periods, between 1516 and 1920 (Kabbani, 1989).

More recently, Damascus Road became a hub to a variety of community facilities and civic services as well as a hub for night life and entertainment. It could be read and subdivided into two sections:

- The first one extends from Downtown -just beyond General Fouad Shehab Road or 1st Ring Road- at its northern tip to Sodeco Square at its intersection with Independence Road.
- The second one runs from Sodeco Square to the National Museum at its intersection with Abdallah Al-Yafi Road or 2nd Ring Road.

The first section is home for educational French missionaries and the French cultural center. It also houses the medical and human sciences faculties and institutes of Saint-Joseph University and the Lebanese University Headquarter. The national significance of the road is also due to the location of national administrative institutions and facilities. It is home to Sodeco Square offices/ commercial center which became a landmark at the city level. Damascus Road is also a significant sports hub due to the location of the reputable Chayla Stadium and its proximity to the hippodrome –built in 1918 (IAURIF, 1993, p.6)- located along Abdallah Al-Yafi Road. It also takes a cultural character due to the presence of the National Museum at its intersection with Abdallah Al-Yafi Road. Damascus Road is also home to the planned Memory Museum at its intersection with Independence Road.

This section is also marked by the presence of a group of cemeteries - concentrated just to the southern side of Sodeco Square- which, along with the presence of institutions, marked with a fencing wall, create a continuous physical barrier and plays a role in minimizing porosity and reduce social interaction between adjacent neighborhoods. It is also important note here the presence of private/ public security means serving the existing public and private institutions and depriving the road from retaining a welcoming character.

The second section, just beyond Independence Road, and before it intersects with the 1st Ring Road, Damascus Road becomes lively with dining venues and entertainment facilities. Its success is mainly due to its proximity to Monot Street and the location of Saint-Joseph University in Ashrafiieh to the east.



Fig. 4.4: Road 17_Damascus Road (2012)

Due to the concentration of all the above mentioned facilities and institutions, Damascus Road currently functions both as a section of a national highway linking Beirut to Damascus and as a major vehicular artery at the scale of the city, connecting the vehicular traffic commuting from Mount Lebanon and the eastern periphery to

Beirut city center. This makes noteworthy the vehicular traffic congestion of Damascus Road at peak hours.

The road has a significant pedestrian/ student activity, also due to the concentration of educational/ sports facilities, cultural centers and entertainment facilities for all age groups to both its eastern and western sides. The pedestrian activity is mainly transversal and does not percolate to the inner adjacent neighborhoods. The sidewalks are well shaded with trees on both sides of the road. Moreover, Damascus Road will be softened even more to allow a better pedestrian mobility between the city center and the pine park as part of the Soft Connection project described earlier in Chapter 3.

ii. Beshara El-Khoury Road- Undergoing Transformation

Built during the 1960s (IAURIF, 1993, p.6), Beshara El-Khoury Road (Fig. 4.5) came to replace the role of its parallel streets: Omar Bin Khattab and Mohammad El-Hout. The mentioned streets were called during the 1920s, Rue des Pins and Rue des Cèdres respectively (Refer to Appendix III), both of which were used to connect to the city center.

Beshara El-Khoury Road is currently predominantly commercial. It houses banking facilities and insurance companies and local educational and religious facilities. The significant presence of used-car parks is important to mention, for they become subject to land speculations due to the constant increase in land value.



Fig. 4.5: Road 19_Beshara El-Khoury Road (2012)

Beshara El-Khoury has always been and still is a transport infrastructure corridor connecting the southern suburbs to Beirut city center. It is also part of the trajectory of public mini bus Line 4 and service –shared taxis- commuting from the southern suburbs. At the intersection with Abdallah Al-Yafi Road at Barbir intersection, Beshara El-Khoury Road is channeled underground into a through traffic corridor which causes a vehicular speed increase. Beshara El-Khoury Road is currently undergoing significant transformation; it is turning into an underpass at the intersection with Independence Road.

Pedestrian activity along Beshara El-Khoury Road is not as heavy as the one along Damascus Road. Even though there is a pedestrian bridge along the road, crossing from one side to another remains difficult compared to Damascus Road as the right of way becomes wider. Pedestrian crossing to either sides of the road is expected to become even more difficult due to the underpass under construction. As a result, the through traffic is channeled underground and thus expected to flow at a higher speed which makes crossing the street problematic. The underpass, similarly to the Barbir

intersection mentioned earlier, does facilitate the traffic movement from the suburbs to the city center, but also restricts the interaction between adjacent neighborhoods on both sides of the road.

b. Linear Spaces as Edges

The phenomenon of road transformation is not limited to Beshara El-Khoury - Independence Road intersection; it is part of a wider road network upgrade strategy to facilitate vehicular flow from periphery to city center. It is noticeable that the intersections of the main road network- referred to as “poles” in IAURIF (1993, p.65)- delimiting the study area either have turned or are under the process of turning into heavy infrastructure breaks, except for the intersection of Damascus Road with Independence Road at what is referred to as “Col de Beyrouth” in IAURIF (1993, p.65) (Refer to Chapter 3, Fig. 3.6). The latter remained the least affected by the road network upgrading strategy which affects both traffic behavior and pedestrian mobility.

Along the Second Ring Road or Abdallah Al-Yafi Road, the major “poles” intersecting Damascus Road and Beshara El-Khoury Road both turned into heavy infrastructure- underpasses. Along with the width of the right-of-way, the underpasses interrupt the pedestrian connectivity to the hippodrome and the Pine Park which is partially closed to date.

It is important to note here that infrastructure breaks, although they facilitate the vehicular movement from one district to another, they reinforce potential edges between adjacent neighborhoods. This also applies to pedestrian behavior interrupted by heavy infrastructure planning which prevents cross-neighborhood interaction.

Both Damascus Road and Beshara El-Khoury Road, delimiting respectively the study area to the east and west, could be defined as edges.

i. Damascus Road- An Edge from the Past

It is known as being a part of the former Green Line and has represented a divide between eastern and western Beirut since 1975. It overlaps with the administrative limits between Ashrafieh to the east, and Bashoura and Mazraa to the west (Fig. 4.11), producing spatial manifestation of the civil war. House to intense Christian-Muslim division during the war, this division line shows currently signs of degeneration. Although it still shows in stencil graffiti of the various political parties and figures, used in the process of marking territories (Saleh, 2009), the Christian-Muslim division is not as intense as it used to be and this is expressed in the various interviews carried on site and illustrated later in this chapter.

The division that was predominant during the civil war has been shifting in the past few years to Beshara El-Khoury Road, creating a new edge, this time, between Sunnis and Shiites. The deviation of traffic at recurrent incidents/delicate times on Damascus Road is currently one of the measures taken to prevent any potential clashes along Beshara El-Khoury Road, further showing the shifting divide. Ras En-Nabaa is thus left as an island between the old slipping divide and the new emerging one.

ii. Beshara El-Khoury Road- A Growing Edge

Beshara El-Khoury Road has been considered since 2007 a new line of separation between Sunnis and Shiites (Refer to Chapter 1, Fig. 1.2). Unlike Damascus Road, which falls between predominantly Christian and Muslim neighborhoods, Beshara El-Koury Road falls between two Muslim neighborhoods; one that is predominantly Sunni and the other is predominantly Shiite. Beshara El-Khoury Road, also unlike Damascus Road, is not an administrative boundary; part of Beshara El-Khoury Road falls within Bashoura municipal limit and the other part of it falls within

Mazraa municipal limit (Fig. 4.11), both of which are currently predominantly Muslim. Although the clashes between Sunnis and Shiites in Beirut are not concentrated along a single edge, Beshara El-Khoury Road is an interesting case as it represents a shift in separation from Damascus Road in the city center. Moreover, the separation is emphasized along Beshara El-Khoury Road by the through traffic underpass that is currently under construction. The coming section below and the relation between Ras En-Nabaa and its surrounding context asserts even more the growing edge along Beshara El-Khoury Road.

2. Compound Spaces

Compound spaces, as used in this thesis, are spaces that fall within two linear spaces having a defined width and urban fabric, as is the case in Ras En-Nabaa and Basta/ Bashoura neighborhood, both of which fall within my study area.

While Beirut is believed to be “a city revealed through its graffiti” (Saleh, 2009), the compound space should not be read through the conventional physical urban structures but also through visual illustrations which reflect the perception of the residents and their political/ sectarian affiliations.

This analysis of the compound spaces also compares the relation of the administrative boundary of Ras En-Nabaa –falling within two already defined edges; one from the past and a newly developing one- to its perceptual boundary as extracted from interviewing different user groups within or around the study area. This could help defining the “others” who appropriate neighborhoods both sides of the two edges.

a. Ras En-Nabaa Neighborhood- The “Other”

Ras En-Nabaa is a dense neighborhood. It is predominantly residential with the presence of some commercial activities mainly along Mohammad El-Hout Street (Fig. 4.6). The latter is crossed by neighborhood streets that run uninterrupted across Ras En-Nabaa, from Damascus Road to the other side of Beshara El-Khoury Road and then to Omar Bin Khattab Street. These local streets (Fig. 4.7) contribute to the high permeability characteristics of Beshara El-Khoury but less to the Damascus Road side due to the presence of walls and fences which reduce the permeability between Ras En-Nabaa and Ashrafiieh. These local streets are single-loaded one-way streets with on-street parking to both sides. They are quite dark and have minimal activities and are used as shortcuts between Damascus Road and Beshara El-Khoury Road at peak traffic hours.



Fig. 4.6: Road 18_ Mohamad El-Hout Street (2012)



Fig. 4.7: Compound spaces' general character (2012)

Ras En-Nabaa neighborhood is also undergoing gentrification: old buildings are being replaced with new high-end fenced towers (Fig. 4.8) that go up to twenty five floors. This also extends to both sides of Beshara El-Khoury Road (Fig. 4.9) and Damascus Road (Fig. 4.10) where new high-end towers are emerging. This phenomenon of neighborhood transformation should bring guidelines and planning policies to direct future developments while contributing to enhancing the image of the city. It is though important to note here the power of money in changing the socio-political status of the area. The current real estate movement and the increasing land value that is encroaching on the original fabric of Ras En-Nabaa is allowing well off people, regardless their religious beliefs or sectarian affiliations, to appropriate new

towers replacing the original inhabitants. The latter are being obliged to move to other affordable neighborhoods. This issue was expressed explicitly by the remaining original inhabitants during the interviews and puts forward the changing socio-political profile of the study area which should be accommodated and acknowledged at the design stage.

The neighborhood is currently marked with political/sectarian stencil graffiti and figures that mark a territory of predominantly Sunni community.



Fig. 4.8: Old vs new buildings (2012)



Fig. 4.9-4.10: New building heights (2012)

Moreover, Ras En-Nabaa falls within the municipal boundary of Mazraa- adjacent to the municipal boundary of Ashrafiéh intersecting at Damascus Road. Mazraa municipal zone is predominantly Muslim and adjacent to the municipal boundary of Ashrafiéh, which is predominantly Christian. Just beyond Independence Road, the tip of the triangle falls within the administrative boundary of Bashoura, adjacent to Saifi municipal boundary.



Fig. 4.11: Administrative boundary of the study area

The administrative boundary though, is different from the perceptual boundary of residents and employees within or around the study area. The below perceptions of Ras En-Nabaa limits are extracted from interviews from around the study area.

The interviews focused on extracting what residents and passersby from around the area believe the limits of Ras En-Nabaa are. They also extract whether people believe Ras En-Nabaa relates more to its eastern or western vicinities being Ashrafieh or Basta/ Bashoura area. The outcomes of the interviews are illustrated below to summarize the general perceptual boundaries of Ras-En Nabaa.

Out of the people I interviewed, rare are those who related Ras En-Nabaa to its official municipal boundary in Mazraa and the tip of the triangle -part of my study area- to Bashoura municipal boundary.

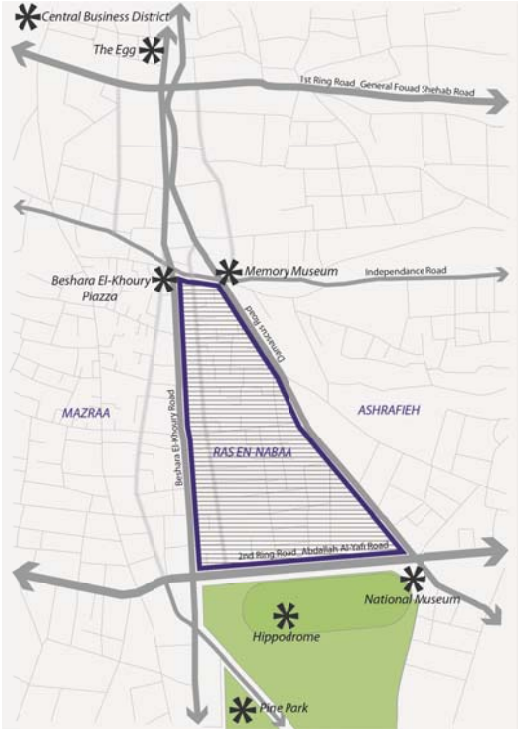


Fig. 4.12: Perceptual boundaries extracted from interviews within the study area

While some people within Ras En-Nabaa described their neighborhood as being an island -delimited by Independence Road to the north, Abdallah Al-Yafi Road to the south, Damascus Road to the east and Beshara El-Khoury to the west- (Fig.4.12) the majority of people relate Ras En-Nabaa to Ashrafieh municipal boundary or believe it relates more to Ashrafieh than it does to Bashoura or Mazraa in terms of character. The different interviewees though, had different responses relating to the tip of the triangle. Some related the said area to Bachoura while others related it to Ras En-Nabaa. (Fig. 4.13-4.14)

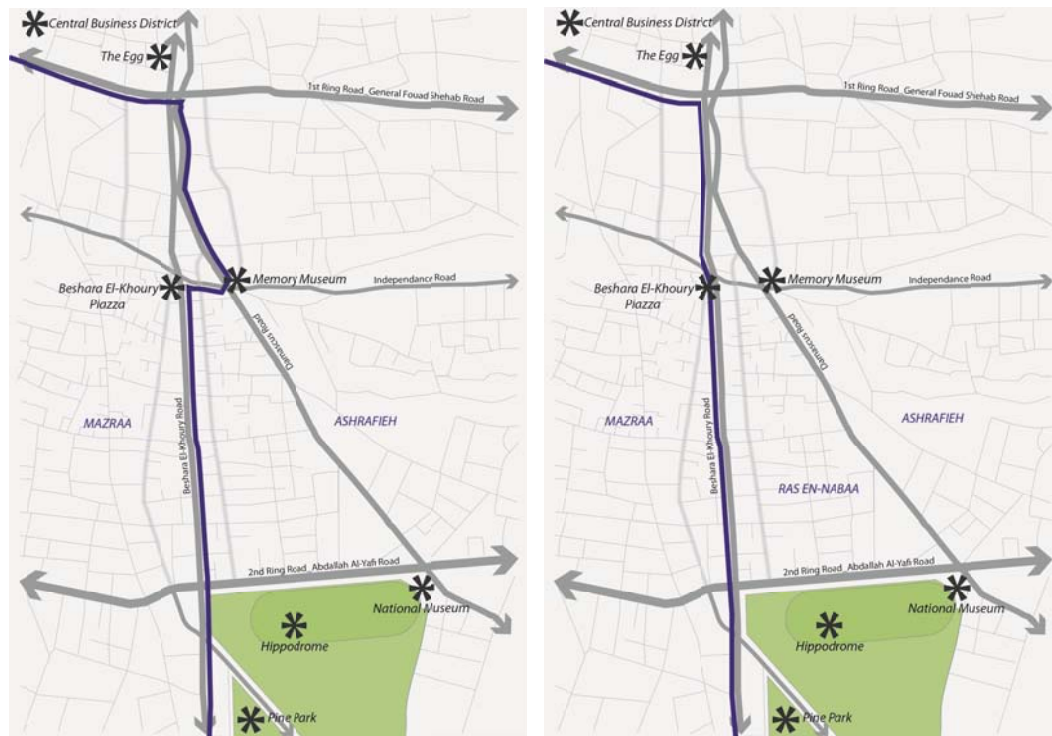


Fig. 4.13-4.14: Perceptual boundaries extracted from interviews within the study area

Furthermore, some people, and mainly the residents, insisted on relating Ras En-Nabaa to Ashrafieh (Fig 4.15), or have considered Mohamad El-Hout Street another

limit that separates Ras En-Nabaa from Basta/ Bashoura area leaving the block between both Mohamad El-Hout Street and Beshara El-Khoury Road undefined (Fig. 4.16).

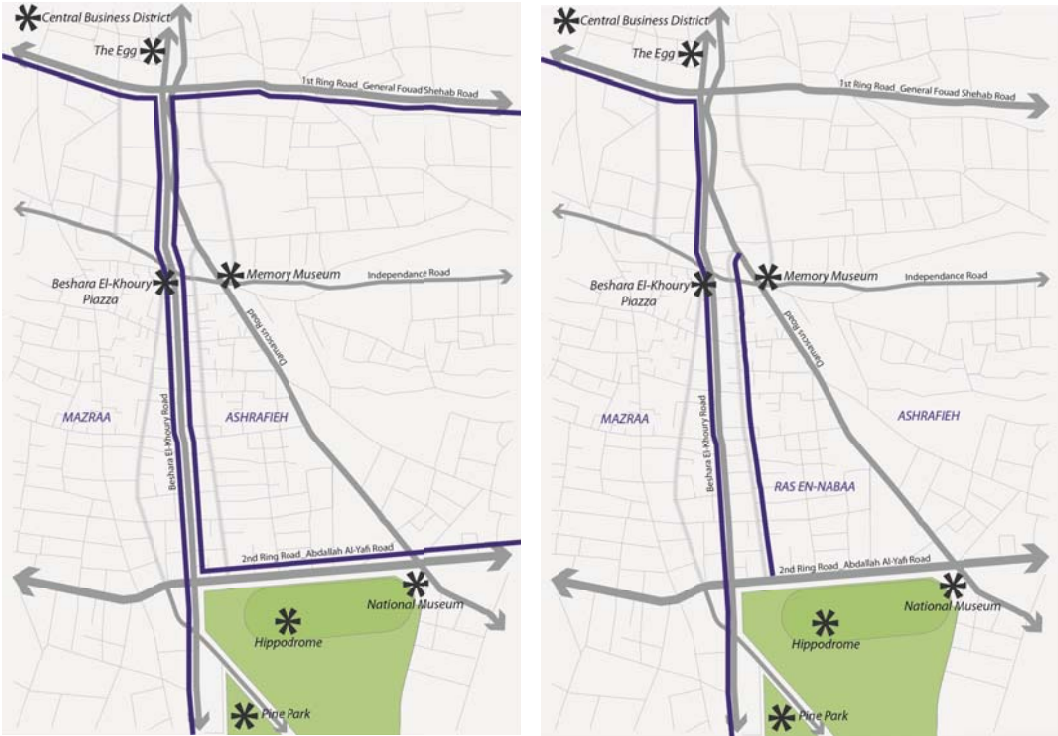


Fig. 4.15-4.16: Perceptual boundaries extracted from interviews within the study area

The above perceptions along with people’s views of the area during the interviews, and which were at points genuinely sectarian, confirm a new edge along Beshara El-Khoury Road. This answers Wheeler’s (2007) question and affirms that maybe Beirut is ready for a memory museum along Damascus Road and former home to the Green Line of 1975. Beshara El-Khoury Road, to the contrary, is subject to potential division. Thus, as mentioned earlier, this division could not be taken as a static and definitive line in the presence of economic and market driven dynamics.

b. Basta/ Bashoura Neighborhood- The Other “Other”

To the western side of Beshara El-Khoury Road, the neighborhood resembles enormously Ras En-Nabaa area to the eastern side of Beshara El-Khoury Road. This area falls within Mazraa municipal boundary (Fig. 4.11), similarly to Ras En-Nabaa area.

The physical aspect of the neighborhood, in terms of local street width and building typologies, resembles much the urban fabric in Ras En-Nabaa. The social fabric also compares to the variety of classes that exist in Ras En-Nabaa. The neighborhood is on the way to gentrification and is, therefore, subject socio-political changes. Omar Bin Khattab Street, functions as a local/ commercial street similarly to Mohamad El-Hout Street in Ras En-Nabaa. They both serve their immediate surroundings.

Along Omar Bin Khattab Street, are many buildings of traditional architectural typology in deteriorating conditions (Fig. 4.17). People along the street run grocery shops and some traditional food and sweets shops. They also appropriate the sides of the street as their main gathering space in the absence of public open spaces.



Fig. 4.17: Road 20_Omar Bin Khattab Street (2012)

The one and most significant aspect, which differentiates this neighborhood from Ras En-Nabaa, are the political/sectarian affiliations which could be read on the

walls and balconies through flags and stencil graffiti of political parties and illustrations of political figures. While in Ras En-Nabaa, marking territories reads a predominantly Sunni community, the illustrations of marking territories along Omar Bin Khattab Street read a predominantly Shiite community. This explains the status of Beshara El-Khoury Road defined earlier in this chapter as an edge.

D. Legibility Study

While the above analysis of the study area highlights the edge condition moving from Damascus Road to Beshara El-Khoury Road the legibility study below (Fig.4.18) is a more comprehensive reading. It summarizes the site conditions through the five major elements of design: paths, edges, districts, nodes and landmarks. Those five major elements will define the layers of intervention portrayed in the following Chapter 5.

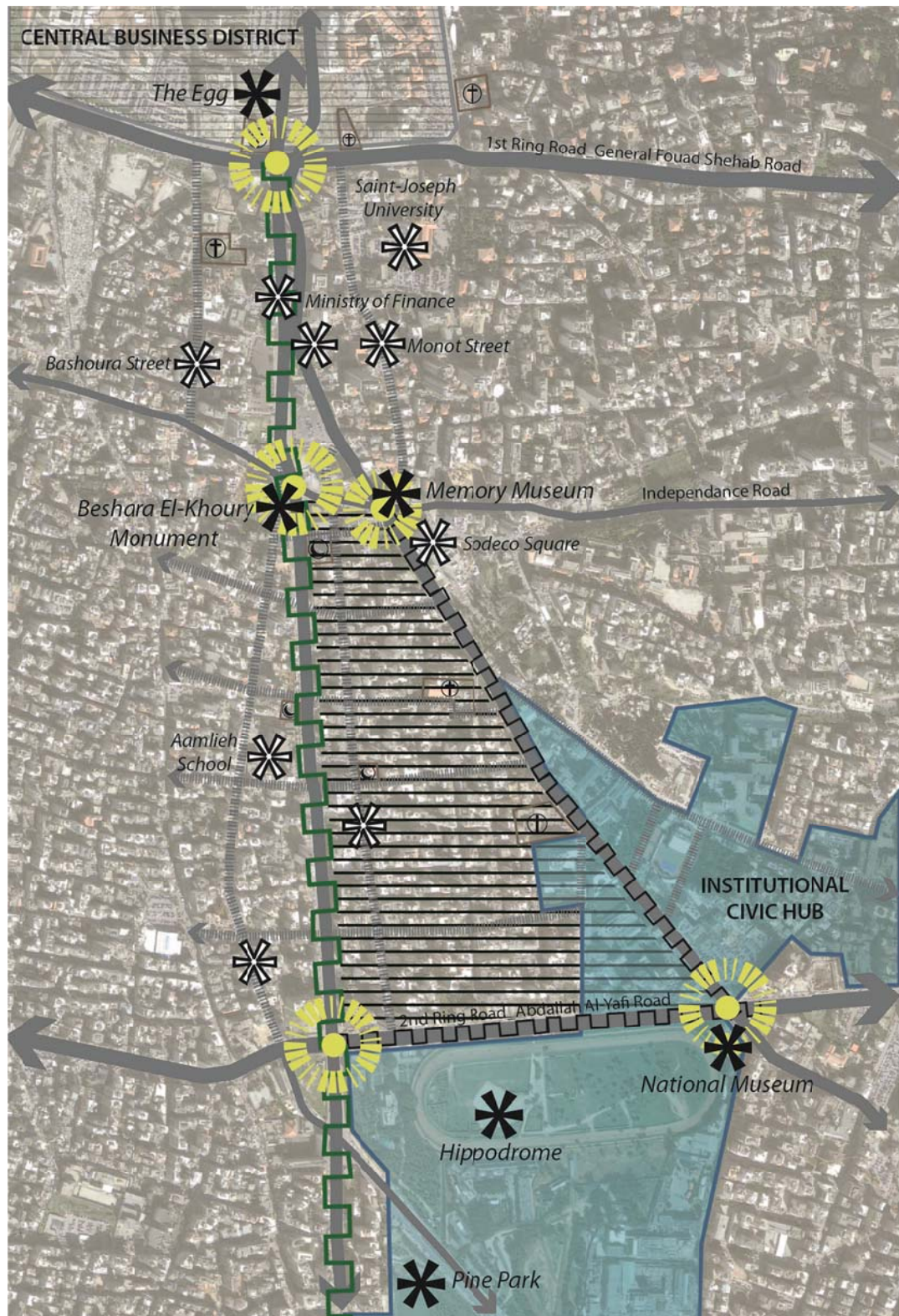


Fig. 4.18.1: Legibility study

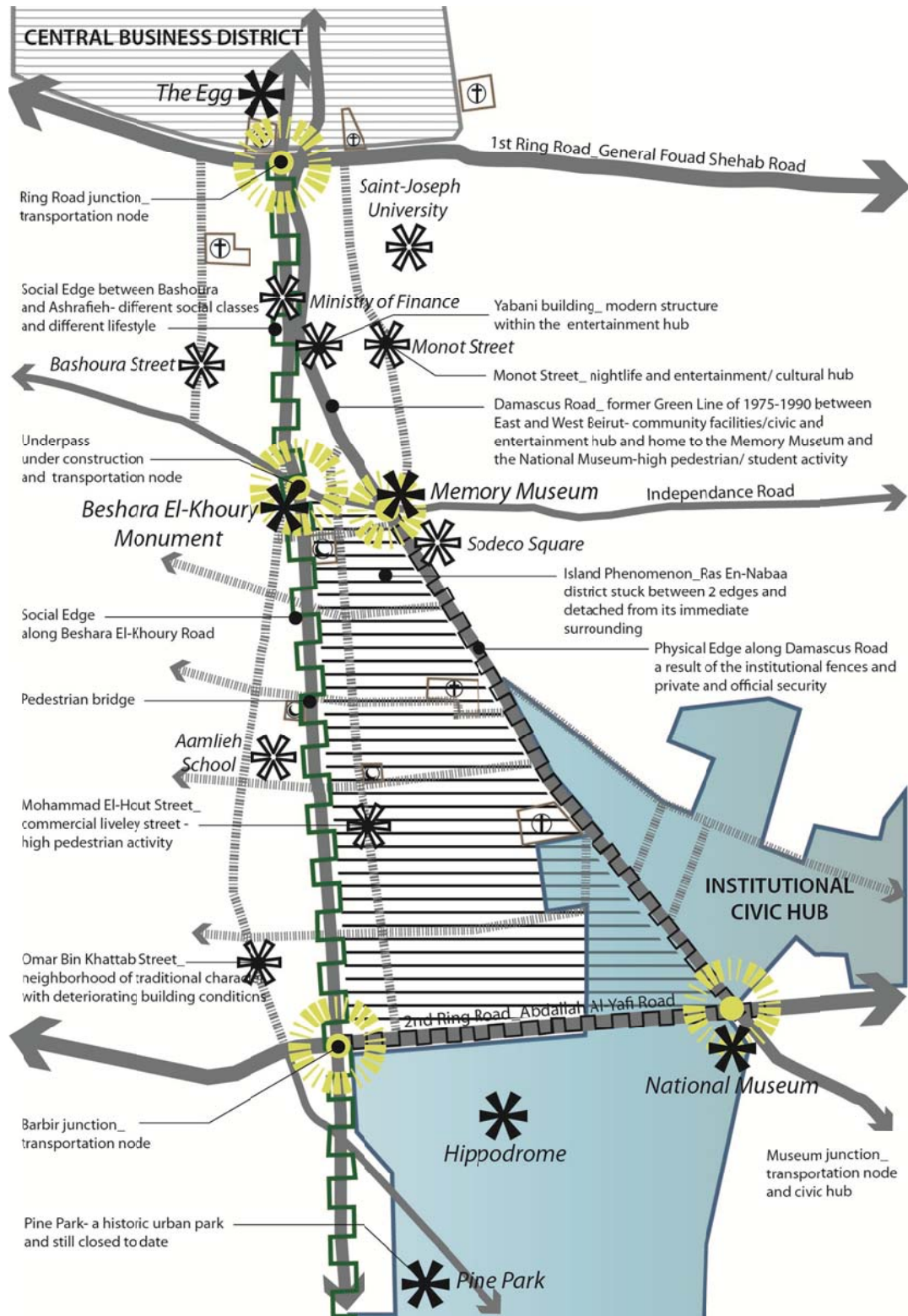


Fig. 4.18.2: Legibility study

CHAPTER V

THE SHIFTING DIVIDE TOWARDS AN URBAN DESIGN STRATEGY

Throughout my case studies research about Beirut, along with other divided cities, I have noticed an inclination towards normative urban design approaches in order to integrate division lines within post-conflict cities. Such a position has been the result of joint efforts between the public sector, social institutions, planners and urban designers.

Very rarely was the approach to city division responsive to the will of people sharing similar ideologies to live in their own enclaves. Having learned earlier in this study the significance of acknowledging social differences and ethnic beliefs, it becomes crucial to respond to such differences rather than act against them. This, at the moment of conflict, reduces violence and keep clashes away. A responsive approach in this regard has the ability to narrow the gap between shared values and territories and consequently improve the coherence between mindscapes and townscapes; a way to better integrate people in their spatial context. Thus my position in this thesis in being responsive via a strategy that is split into responding to a former edge –currently disappearing- and another edge which, according to the mental mapping in this study, has the potential to becoming a division line at any point in time. The strategy addresses both lines of demarcation separately and in relation to the surrounding neighborhoods and the space in between. (Fig. 5.1)

Division lines do not remain still forever. Throughout time, division lines have the ability to change their alignment and are able to move from one level to another. This comes as a result of major forces and factors affecting cities evolution at all social,

political and economic levels. The division can move from socio-political differences into social segregation and/or other levels, thus affecting the urban context where it reigns. For all these reasons, a dynamic urban intervention strategy is proposed in this study as it is more sustainable and responsive to both current and future urban dynamics in divided cities.

This thesis is an example of a shifting divide which not only deviates from its same old origin, but also leaves in between a neighborhood in constant transition. Ras En-Nabaa currently faces on a daily basis the memory of a former division on one side, and the emergence of a new separation line on the other side. Furthermore, and like many other neighborhoods, it also faces gentrification, which will eventually result, in changing its social structure.

A. The Dual Strategy- An Overall Design Strategy

In response to the site analysis and the diagnosis extracted from the legibility study of the current situation and marked in the previous chapter, it becomes obvious that the strategy which could be applicable to the former Green Line of 1975 along Damascus Road could not be applied on the emerging line of separation along Beshara El-Khoury Road. For this reason, this chapter proposes a dual urban design strategy which serves the objectives of this thesis in two different ways. The first is one of commemoration of the former Green Line of 1975, while the second acknowledges the will of people to separate, keeping the possibility of interaction through a dynamic intervention. (Fig. 5.1)

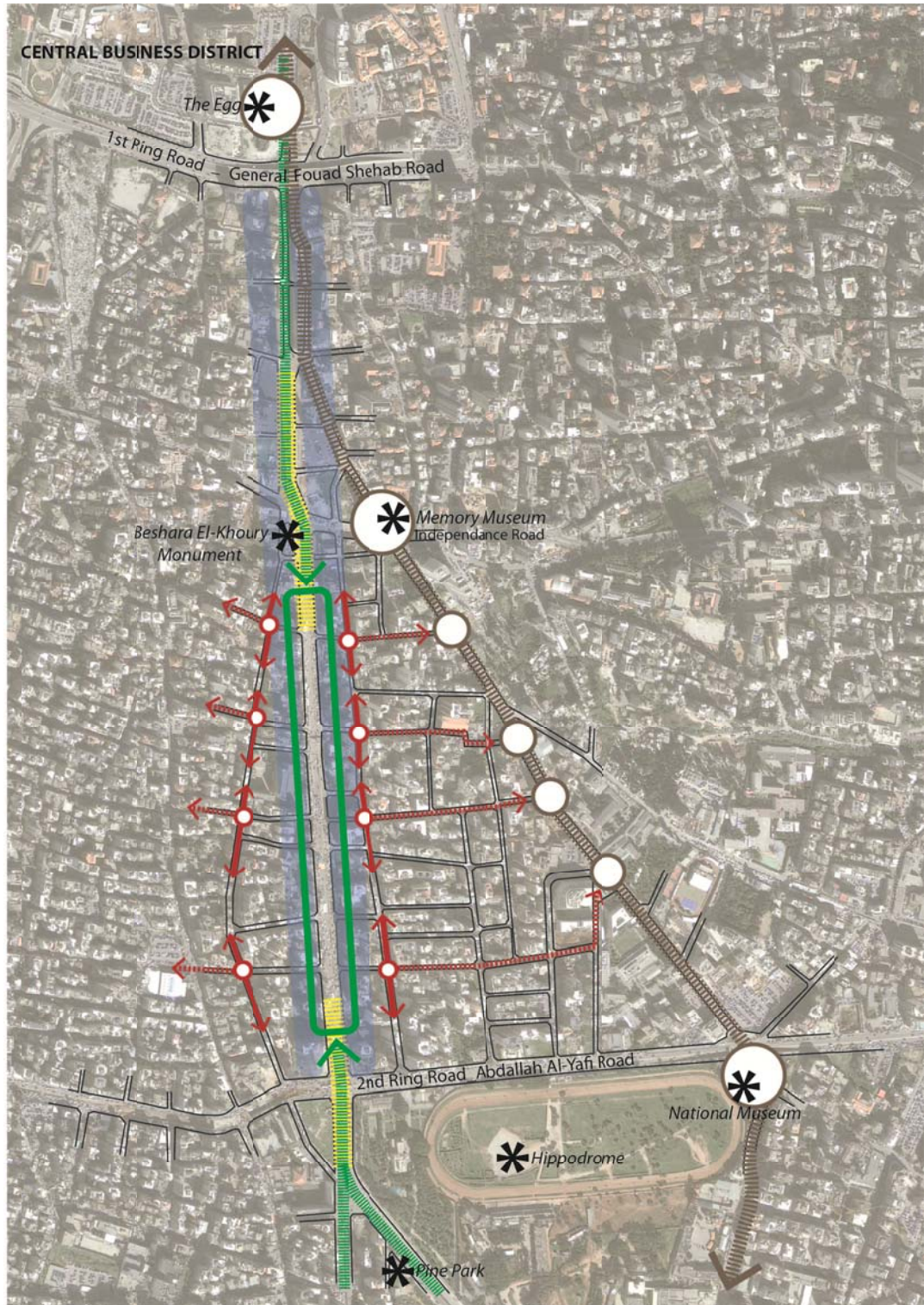


Fig. 5.1.1: Proposed overall design strategy

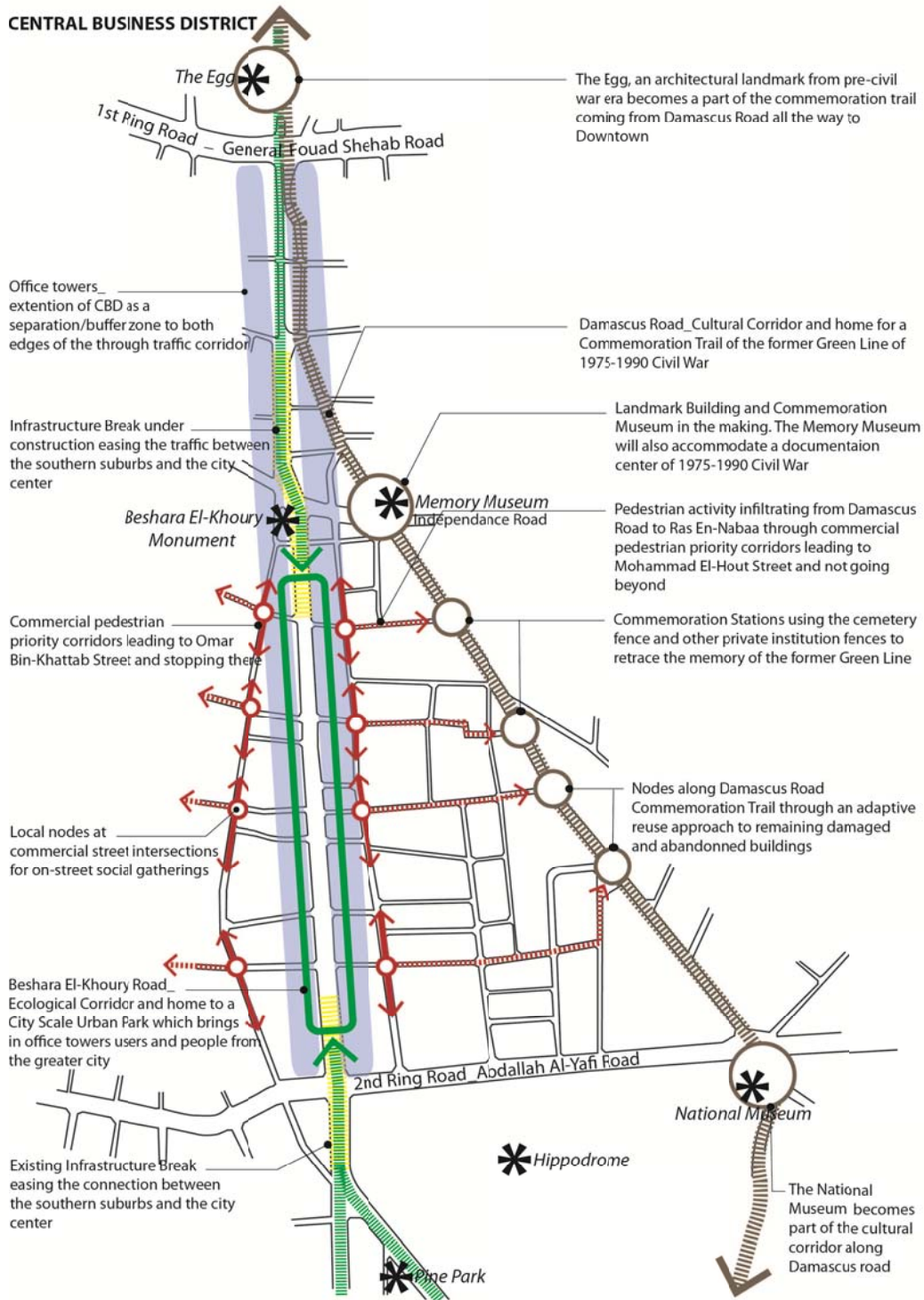


Fig. 5.1.2: Proposed overall design strategy

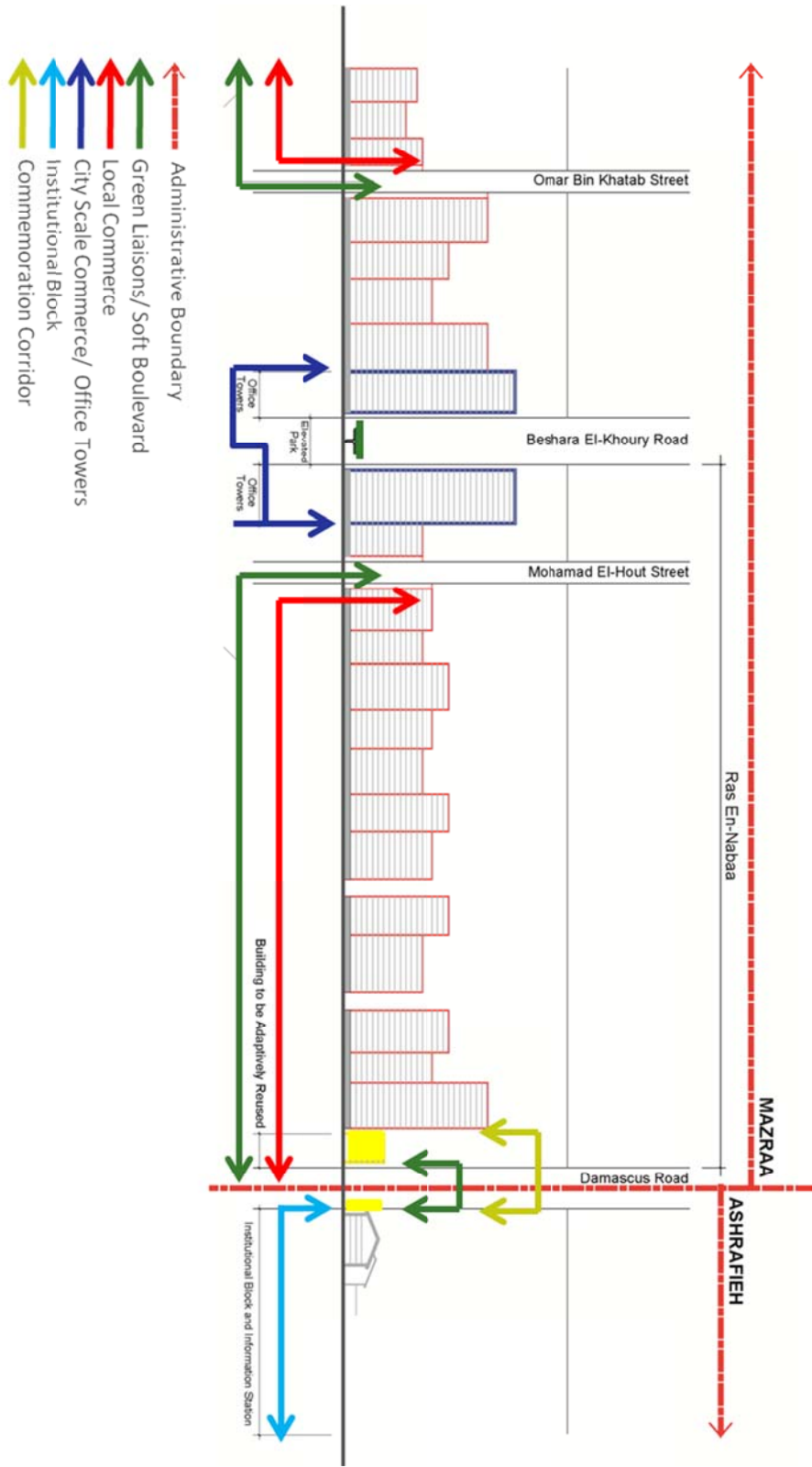


Fig. 5.1.3: Proposed overall design strategy in section

1. Commemoration Strategy along Damascus Road

The social and spatial analysis along Damascus Road shows that people are ready for a commemoration strategy of their city past as deduced from the previous chapter through interviews and mental maps.

Being a hub to community facilities and civic centers, and having a lively pedestrian activity during the day and night, Damascus Road represents a strategic corridor for a commemoration trail. The city's memory layer, added to the colonial historical layer, will enrich and revitalize the already existing landmarks and cultural assets. The commemoration trail also represents an added value to the Soft Connection project -described in Chapter 3, which its major role is linking the Pine Park to Downtown through a pedestrian friendly corridor.

The commemoration strategy, in this thesis, consists of a pedestrian corridor connecting major nodes of national significance and secondary nodes around local landmarks, which relate to, or are just commemoration stations of the Civil War of 1975. These nodes are subject to studies and competitions for artists in order to get the best scenario for the commemoration trail. (Fig. 5.2-5.3)

Damascus Road will house both a documentation center and a convention center. The commemoration strategy also proposes preservation and adaptive reuse of old abandoned buildings where possible. It also suggests a preservation strategy of the skin of the few remaining affected buildings during the war for the memory. These buildings could be turned into convention centers or transformed into artist spaces in support of local artists who, themselves, can turn the former Green Line into an artistic object and an added value in the city as is the case of the wall in Berlin. It is important to note here the alignment of this road with the Egg structure affected by the war in

Downtown and the Martyrs' Square both of which add more value to the commemoration strategy along this former edge.



Fig. 5.2: Commemoration strategy along Damascus Road

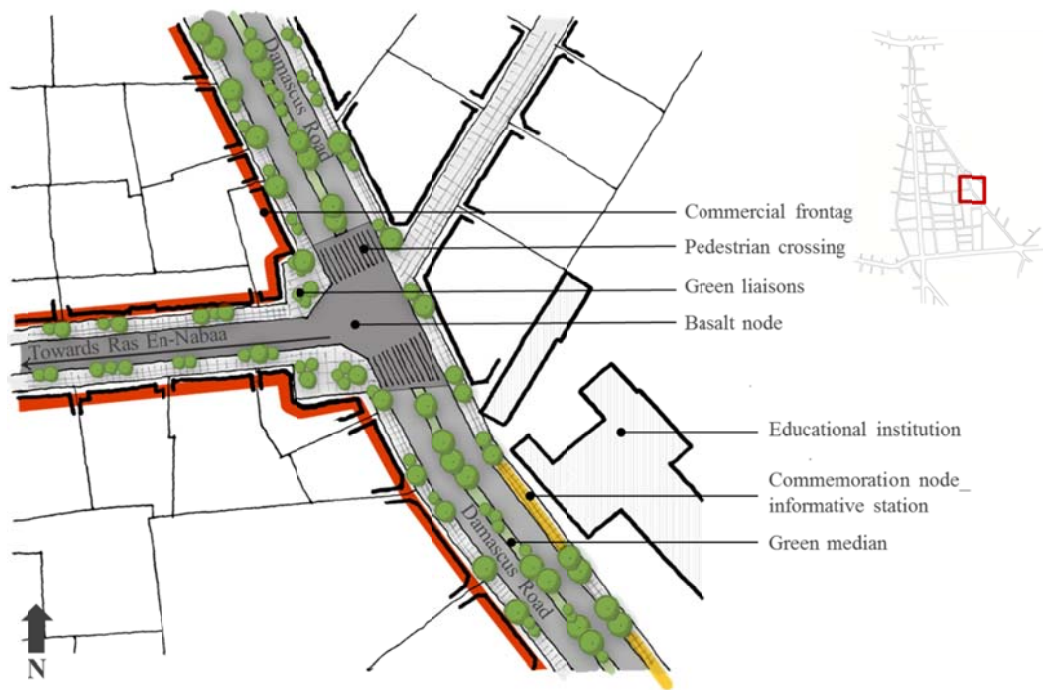


Fig. 5.3.1: Commemoration node in plan

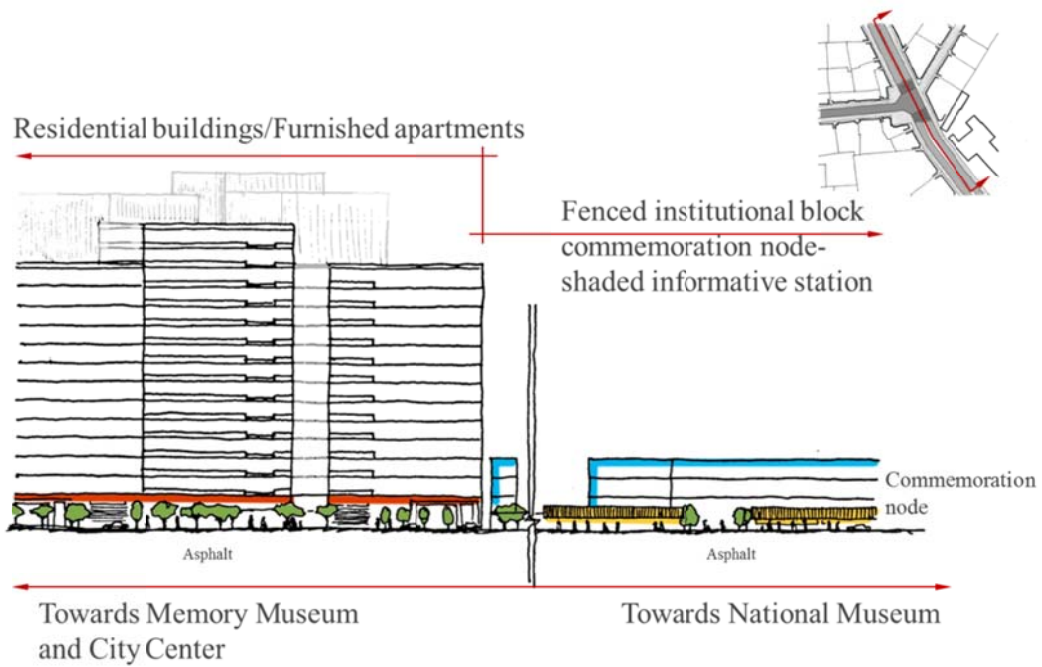


Fig. 5.3.2: Commemoration node in elevation

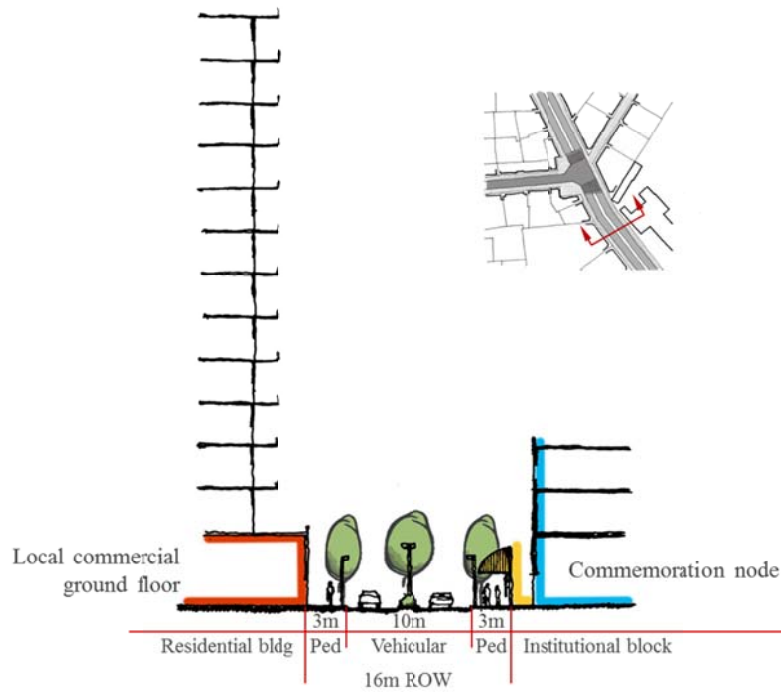


Fig. 5.3.3: Commemoration node in section

Note: Building heights are approximate and reflect the projected heights from current market dynamics. This applies to all sections and elevations in this chapter.

2. Acknowledging Strategy along Beshara El-Khoury Road

The analysis of the relation between the two neighborhoods to both sides of Beshara El- Khoury Road is more complicated. That is one of the issues people had expressed during site visits and interviews. Accordingly, the road has been diagnosed to being an edge in the legibility study in the earlier chapter. This explains the need for an unconventional and more sensitive urban approach to such a growing edge, compared to most of the urban design strategies in contested cities. This seems to be more convenient to the current situation than just a conventional automatic act of reconciliation using open spaces, commercial activities and a suitable land use plan for the study area.

The design strategy along this social edge responds to the need of adjacent neighborhoods for minimal interaction at present. Thus, this strategy is inspired by interventions which accommodate green lines in cities, in response to people's will to live in their own enclaves. One strategy is Kabbani's, which –as explained in Chapter 3- relied mainly on infrastructure as a means to responsive planning.

a. The Urban Park- A Dividing Landscape

While in Beshara El-Khoury, the infrastructure break is on the way to function through the underpass which is currently under construction, it seems right at the moment to preserve it and not intervene on that layer. An additional layer to reinforce such an urban corridor seems even more responsive to the edge condition. This layer will be superimposed on the traffic corridor; it borrows a green aspect from a green line. While serving the city as an urban park, its impermeability minimizes the pedestrian access and connection from both sides of Beshara El-Khoury Road. The elevated park, similarly to the Soft Connection project becomes a connective tissue between Downtown and the Pine Park. (Fig.5.4)



Fig. 5.4: The urban park: a dividing landscape along Beshara El-Khoury Road

Providing the green corridor for the larger city context, creates a need for green nodes at the neighborhood level for they need to breathe due to the existing and projected building density. While providing green nodes needs special building regulations to be adopted in any new construction, this strategy could be implemented in the course of new developments taking place in the area and replacing old building blocks. As illustrated in figure 5.4, the green nodes are located on the local road intersections to both sides of Beshara El-Khoury for its convenience to the local residents' current behavior in using sidewalks and streets in front of their shops as a vital space for social gatherings and interaction. These nodes are connected locally via green liaisons; they flow to both ends of each of Mohamad El-Hout and Omar Bin Khattab streets and are completely detached from the urban elevated green corridor (Fig. 5.5). However, they are dynamic in nature, in response to the constant dynamics of division.

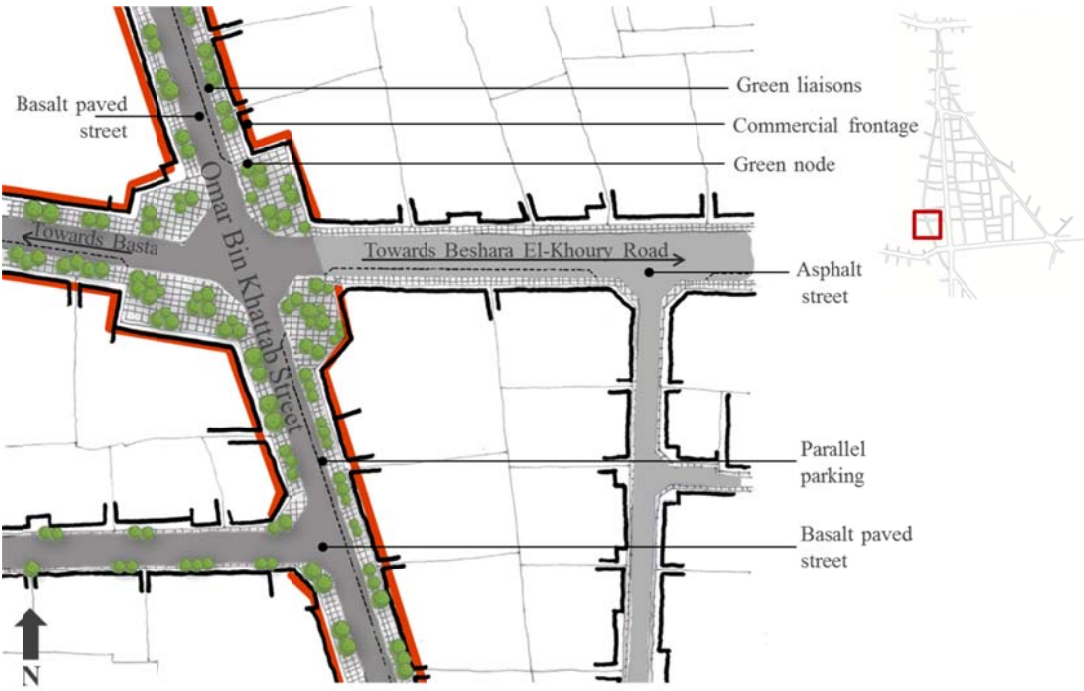


Fig. 5.5.1: Sample local green node along Omar Bin Khattab Street in plan

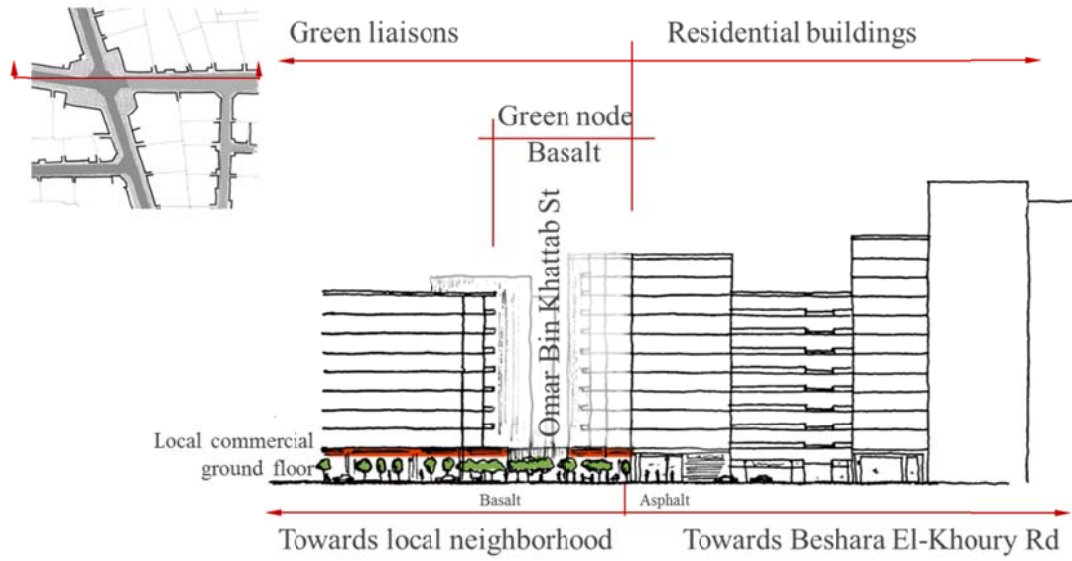


Fig. 5.5.2: Sample local green node along Omar Bin Khattab Street in elevation

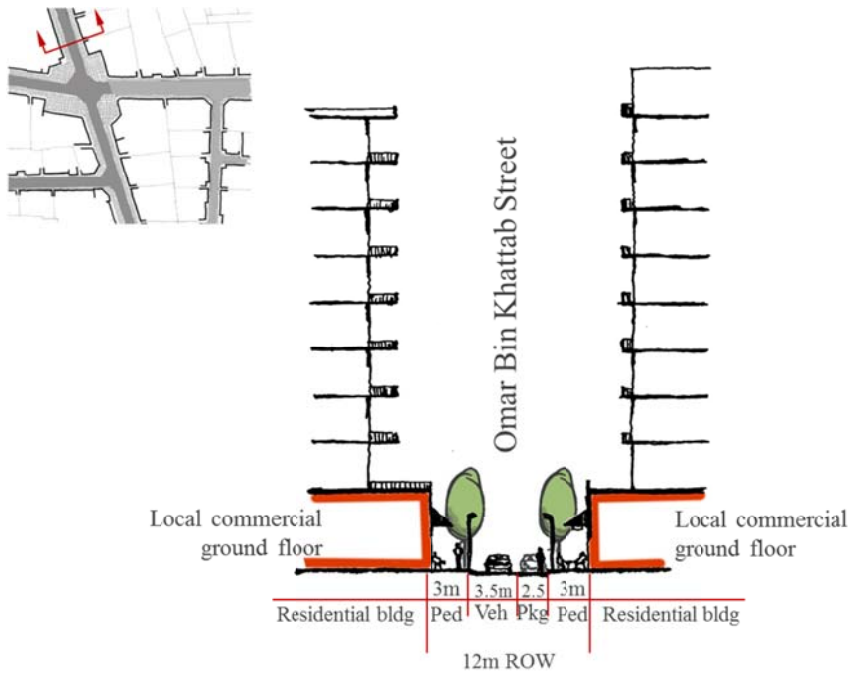


Fig. 5.5.3: Sample local green node along Omar Bin Khattab Street in section

b. Commercial Activities for Pedestrian Flow

Controlling the physical space and imposing a certain type of building frontages can change immensely the character of a street, thus diverging where needed both pedestrian activities and pedestrian flow in a defined area.

Commercial streets and centers are essential urban elements in encouraging social interaction. In divided cities, they have been used as major vital arteries for integration. Thus an intervention within Ras En-Nabaa neighborhood using commercial activities should be reassessed in response to the widespread sectarian perception.

Not only commerce could be used as a means to neighborhood regeneration, also the proximity of Ras En-Nabaa to the civic institutional hub along Damascus Road, makes the grid street component within the study area another asset to build on, for providing permeability and ensuring the flux of people to the area.

While attracting people from Ashrafieh is difficult due to the physical barriers along Damascus Road, the increased porosity to Ras En-Nabaa side acts as a permeable membrane which brings people from Damascus Road and into Ras En-Nabaa neighborhood. A mix of traffic control measures with both hardscape and softscape elements are able to enhance the character of the neighborhood and make it more pedestrian friendly and therefore more appealing to visitors. This could have positive results on the socio-economic regeneration of Ras-En-Nabaa which could delay the act of gentrification. The commercial activities within the local streets could be mixed with coffee shops and small restaurants to service the students and employees in the neighboring institutions. This, along with green shaded walkways, could attract people in, and bring them to Mohammad El-Hout commercial local street- eastern side of Beshara El-Khoury Road- and disperse them to both ends, back to the outer skirts of

Ras En-Nabaa and out to the larger city context without reaching Beshara El-Khoury Road. (Fig. 5.6)

City scale commercial services along Beshara El-Khoury Road- the way it functions currently- could be encouraged to go with the road profile and the elevated green corridor both serving the city in its greater context while housing insurance companies, banks and used car parks-currently prevailing. (Fig. 5.6)

To the western side of Beshara El-Khoury Road, one block beyond, Omar Bin Khattab Street has a similar commercial local identity as Mohammad El-Hout Street, being able to satisfy the needs of the residents of Mazraa (Fig. 5.6). It differs though with its predominantly traditional character mainly related to the presence of buildings of architectural significance. Working on the streetscape elements could also enhance the experience of this street for both residents and passers-by.

CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT

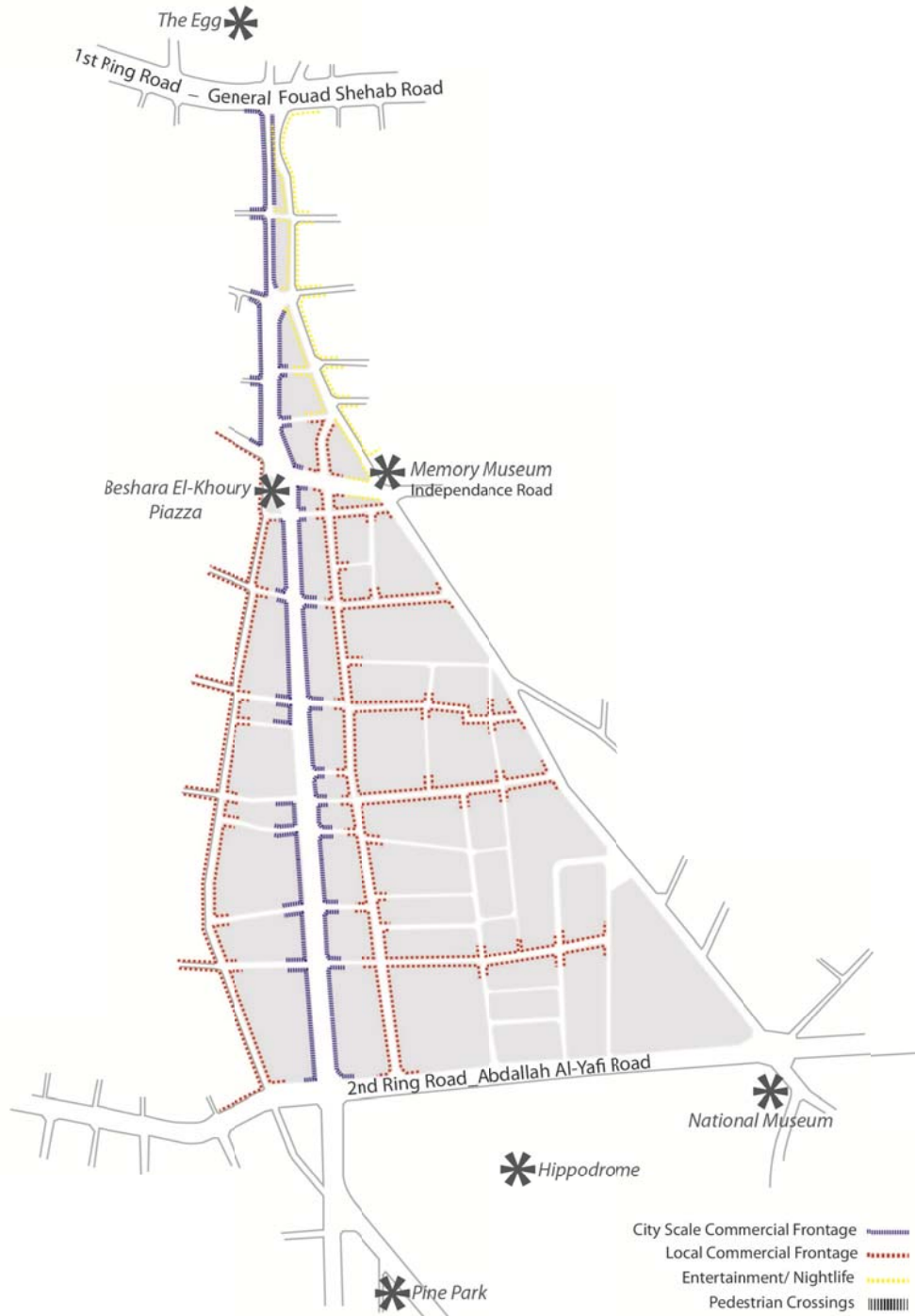


Fig. 5.6: Proposed frontage usage to serve the overall design strategy

Building frontage control measures make the neighborhoods to both sides of the growing edge commercially independent thus dispersing the flow of residents and people from the city wide context to move transversally along Beshara El-Khoury Road, leaving no need for people on both sides to cross-street interaction.

c. Land Use for Neutralizing the Edge

While the land use along Damascus Road is predominantly civic and institutional, it fits with the commemoration strategy proposed in this thesis. Thus, the need for an intervention on the land use along Beshara El-Khoury becomes essential in order to complete the responsive strategy which enhances the detachment of both neighborhoods to both sides of this growing edge.

As illustrated in figure 5.7, after defining the character of both edges, one being a cultural corridor and the other one being an ecological corridor along with the natural expansion of the business district towards Bashoura -beyond the 1st Ring Road- makes the 'Col de Beyrouth' where all three corridors intersect a convenient location for a hotel district. As "Col de Beyrouth" is considered to be a major pole as noted in IAURIF plan (IAURIF, 1993, p.65), a hotel district in such location becomes a step towards neutralizing the potential growing divide. (Fig. 5.8)

Injecting office towers along Beshara El-Khoury Road on both sides also helps neutralizing the edge. It detaches the adjacent communities and concentrates the local residents within their neighborhoods and apart from the edge. This should help stabilize the edge condition and keep it from growing until both communities are ready for social interaction again. This type of land use helps bring people from the larger city context into the area while bringing Beshara El-Khoury Road once again –along with the

previous design interventions- to the larger city level and making it an artery of the central business district. (Fig. 5.8-5.9)

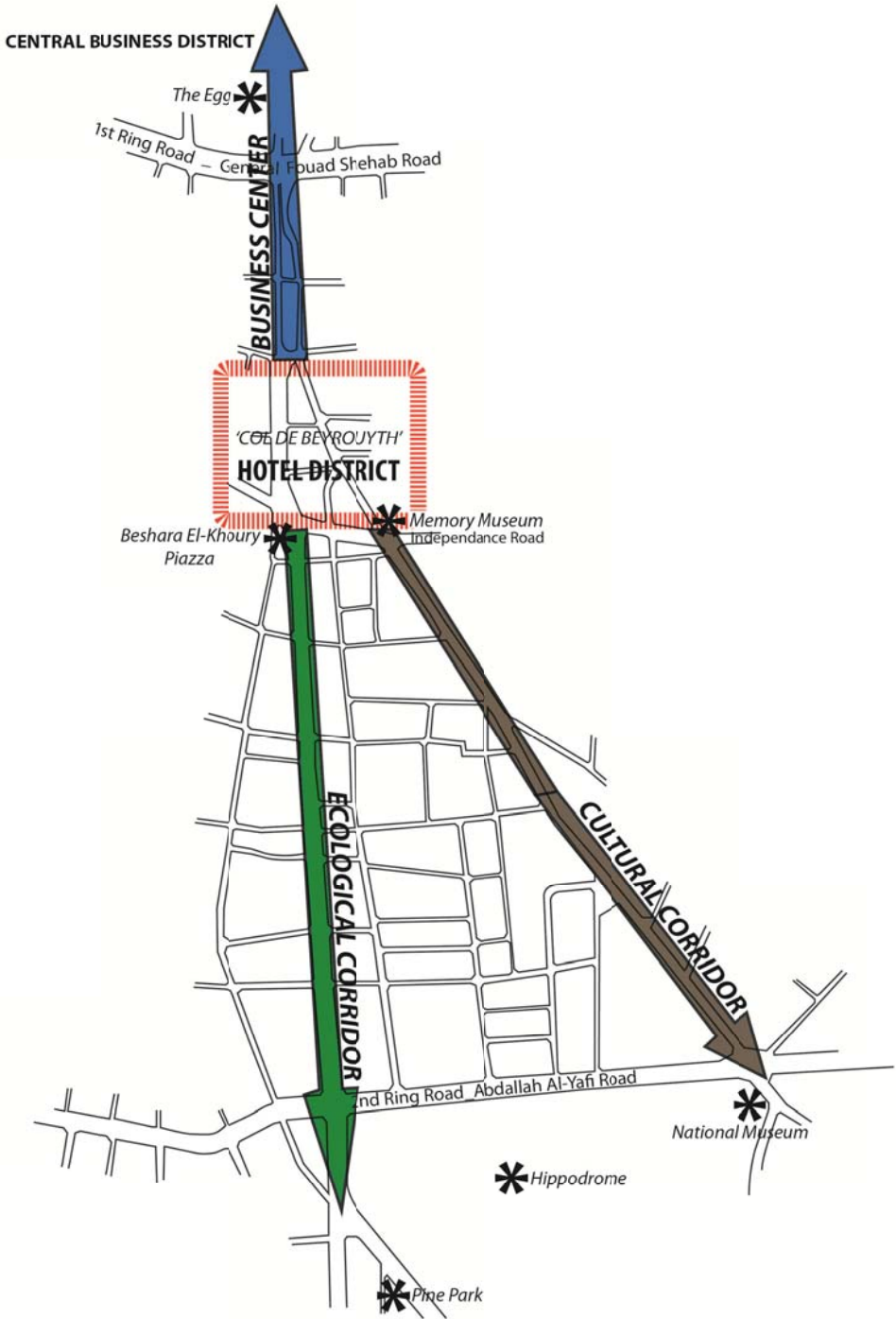


Fig. 5.7: Diagram showing the proposed location of the hotel district



Fig. 5.8: Proposed land use to serve the overall design strategy

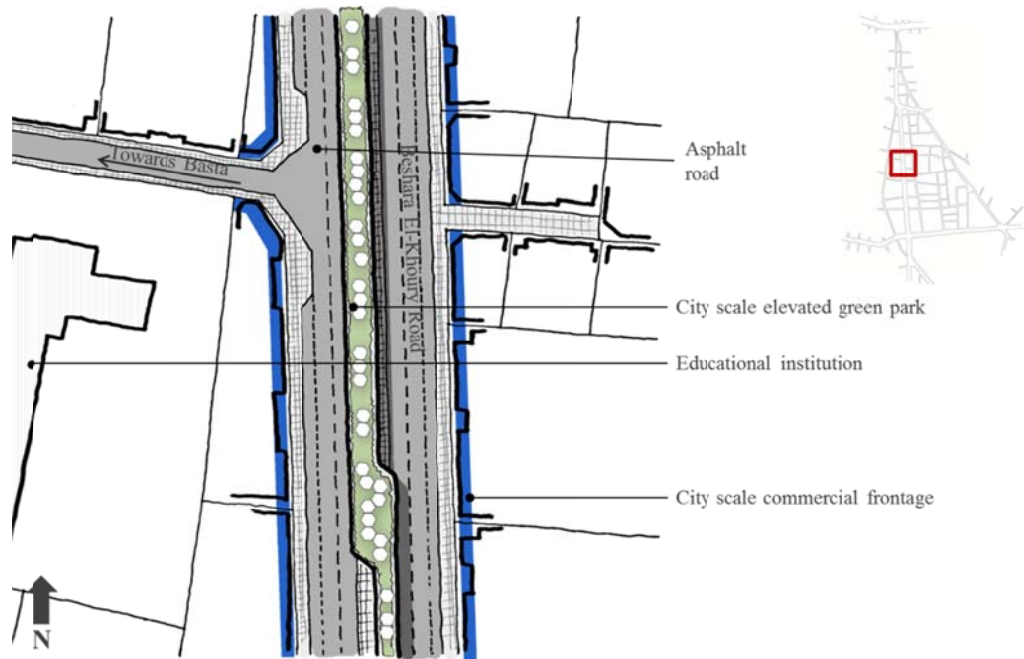


Fig. 5.9.1: Acknowledging Strategy along Beshara El-Khoury Road in plan

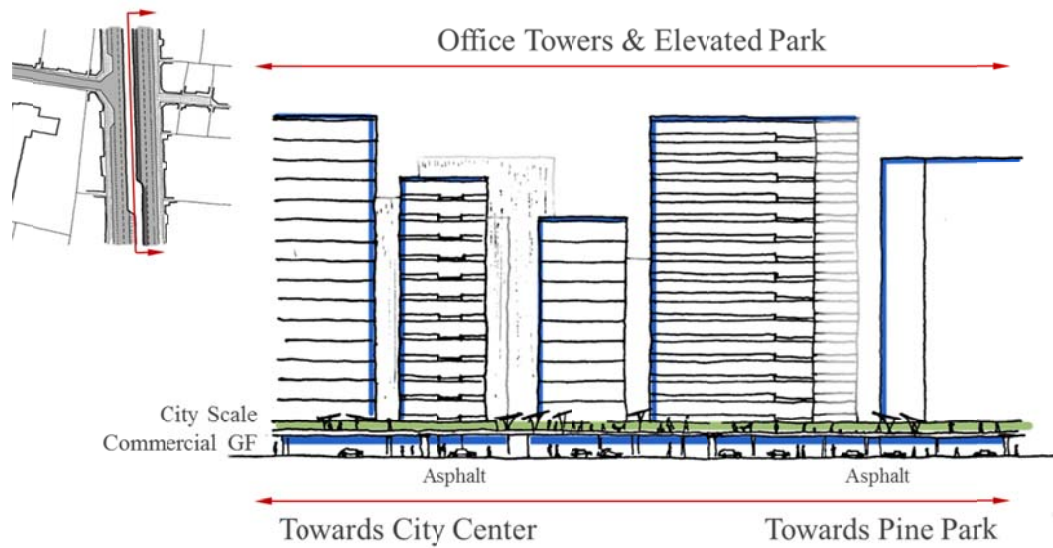


Fig. 5.9.2: Acknowledging strategy along Beshara El-Khoury Road in elevation

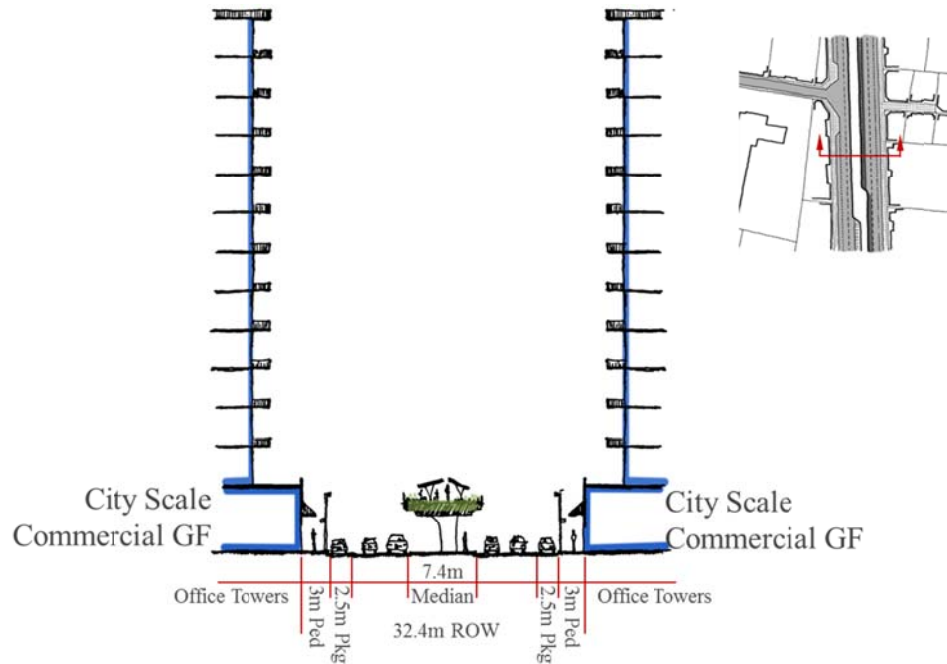


Fig. 5.9.3: Acknowledging strategy along Beshara El-Khoury Road in section

Both strategies, whether along the former edge or the growing line of separation, have been used in this study as objects which have as role, not only to serve the city at the national and local scale but also to add value to the city. This makes both edges go beyond their dividing nature into changing the image of the city –where lies the significance of this thesis.

B. The Dynamic Properties of the Design Elements

Changing the image of the city does not only rely on a static design intervention which deals with a static object at a specific moment in time. A city is changing in nature, as are edges and division lines.

While this thesis addresses a shifting green line, it adds a dynamic layer to some of the elements in the proposed overall design strategy. It is one that could be

projected onto the future to accommodate new different ideologies resulting from the mentioned gentrification process. Similar to the shifting divide subject of this thesis, the new growing edge could keep moving to respond to changing socio-political affiliations. The urban park, being the object which acts as a buffer between the two currently differing communities adjacent to Beshara El-Khoury Road, does not only have a role in turning the edge, where it lies, into a national asset. It also has a dynamic structure (Fig. 5.10-5.11) which makes it subject to transformation, from a city scale attraction, to a local gathering point in response to the constantly changing social dynamics and their spatial implications on the urban fabric. The green liaisons proposed earlier in figures 5.4 and 5.5 have the potential to extend towards the green corridor (Fig. 5.10) thus making it porous on both sides to allow for cross-street interaction (Fig. 5.11.2) at both the street level and the green park level. This enriches the design intervention to fit both the present and the unpredictable future which may carry a different social structure due to a natural act of city evolution.



Fig. 5.10: The urban park: an example of a dynamic structure to serve local neighborhoods

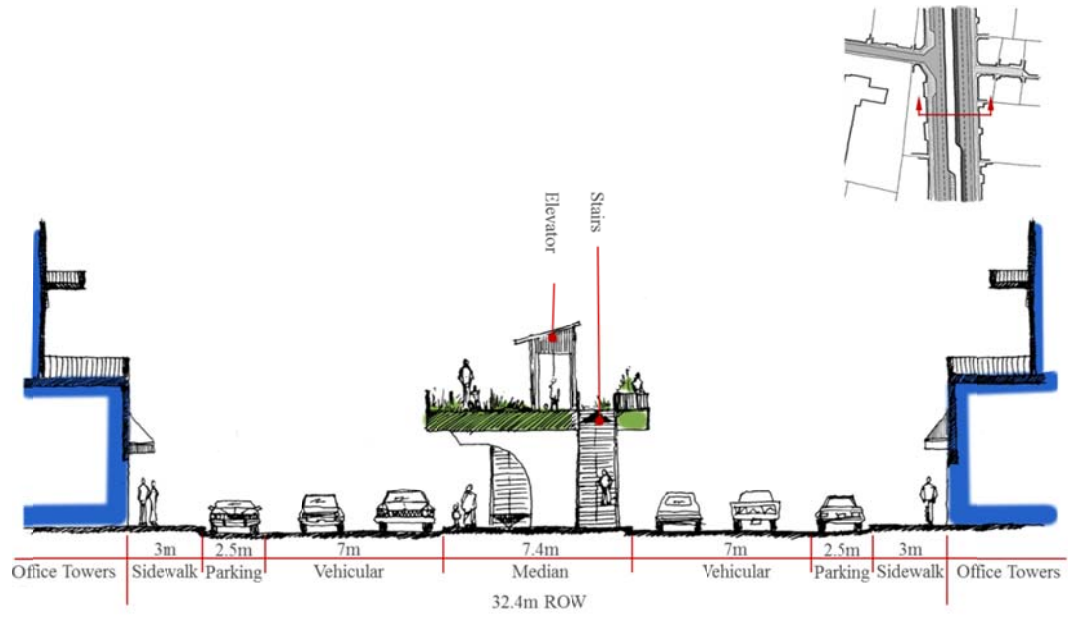


Fig. 5.11.1: The urban park: a dividing landscape

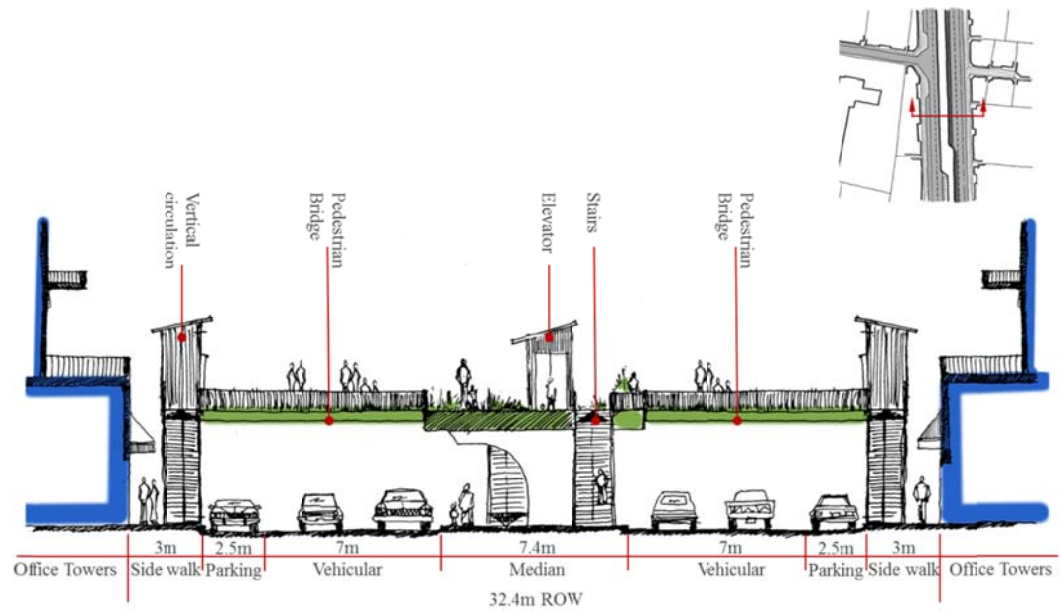


Fig. 5.11.2: The urban park: a permeable landscape

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

Whether they are from the past or are growing edges, division lines need to be acknowledged and accommodated for a better coherence between the mindscapes and townscapes, an act that does not enforce an automatic reconciliation strategy on differing communities but rather design in response to their will to separate or interact.

The outcomes of this thesis, in this regard, second Kabbani's 1989 responsive approach to planning in divided cities.

Furthermore, this thesis proposes a sustainable approach to responsive planning. It proposes a dynamic urban design intervention through urban design elements which are susceptible to change at any point in the future, in response to the turning socio-political and real estate dynamics, which in turn affect the urban fabric.

The significance of this thesis is even more complex. It deals with a dual edge of separation which requires a dual urban strategy of both commemoration of a former division line and another growing line of separation both emerging from the same place.

In the case of post-war reconstruction, commemoration helps the city accommodate its past rather than disguising it, thus keeping it ready to reactivation sometime later in the future. But again, despite the observations and findings of this thesis, it remains crucial to question whether the former Green Line is really gone forever or is it only in state of dormancy? Is a commemoration strategy valid at present?

In the case of a growing edge, respecting the will of people to live in their own enclaves prevents potential clashes, and even more, neutralizes the tension between differing communities until the time comes when they become ready to interact again.

In this regard, this thesis affirms that green lines are not static. They are in constant motion and move not only from one level to another but also from one spatial edge to another. Cities are changing quickly within the current real estate movements and the power of money, thus keeping the social fabric in the same neighborhood in constant change. Edges deviate accordingly in response to socio-economic transformations. The green line of yesterday is not a green line today. And the separation line of today might not be the division line of tomorrow. This does not only question the longevity of the accommodation strategy, but also validates its dynamic structure presented in this thesis, which falls in between two neighborhoods in the course of gentrification. The latter process is currently transforming the social and religious profile of both neighborhoods.

Lastly, this thesis concludes with an opening to a potential implementation strategy of the overall vision which requires an efficient collaboration between the different stakeholders. As extracted from case studies of Beirut and other divided cities, such vision cannot be realized without the combined efforts of the public sector, community agencies and associations responsible of the making of urban design interventions at the scale of the city and local neighborhoods.

The collaboration of the public sector of the Directorate General of Urbanism (DGU) and municipal efforts to make implementable the green corridor -which falls along the median on Beshara El-Khoury Road- as it involves an intervention on a public space. This could happen through the initiation of a competition project to create an elevated park, an artistic object which also helps in changing the image of the city. Moreover, building guidelines -within the current phenomenon of urban transformation-

becomes an opportunity to create open spaces at the local level to anticipate future developments and secure public spaces as per the residents need.

The commemoration strategy along Damascus Road is probably more complex for it requires the state to expropriate some of the buildings affected during the Civil War. Intervening on the physical barriers and institutional fences requires neighborhood initiative and other community agencies like the American University of Beirut's Neighborhood Initiative and the Center for Civic Engagement and Community Service who work closely with the Beirut Municipality and the CDR to create local interventions.

The above are only an introduction to implementation which is open to further investigations in new studies and requires further stakeholder analysis for the complexity of the proposed vision itself.

APPENDIX I

IAURIF PLAN_1993 OBJECTIVES

Les objectifs

Cette étude a pour objet de définir un schéma directeur d'urbanisme local et des outils de mise en œuvre capables d'accélérer la reconstruction de ce secteur. La situation difficile de l'après-guerre incite à faire appel à un minimum de moyens publics. Il sera donc proposé un jeu de procédures souples faisant la plus large part à l'initiative privée. Le plan d'urbanisme devra être capable d'orienter les choix opérationnels des autorités compétentes en s'intégrant dans le programme global d'action du CDR.

Plusieurs objectifs peuvent d'ores et déjà être mis en avant:

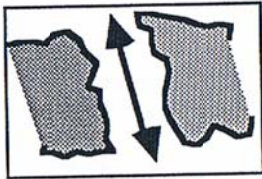
- Banaliser l'ancien secteur des combats afin de revenir à une vie normale.
- Mettre en place des instruments favorisant une reconstruction rapide des zones détruites
- Effacer les traces de la guerre et des destructions
- Eviter de créer un glacis par une barrière d'équipements ou d'immeubles trop hauts le long des boulevards.
- Affirmer le caractère de cœur de l'agglomération de ce secteur, avec ses nombreux nœuds d'échanges à l'échelle de l'ensemble de la ville.
- Placer des équipements appropriés à la localisation aisément accessible pour tous les quartiers.
- Mettre en valeur un secteur qui assure les accès au centre ville à partir de toute la partie sud de l'agglomération

Source: IAURIF (1993, p.2)

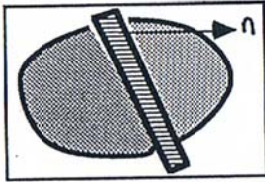
APPENDIX II

THE MORPHOLOGICAL MOSAIC NATURE OF DIVIDED BEIRUT BY KABBANI

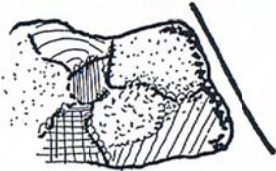
Two Pieces, Two Edges, and one line:



The Pieces in Union and Intersection:



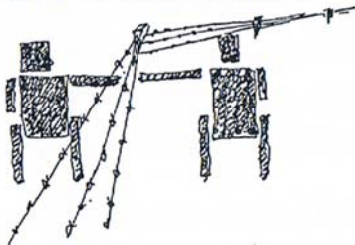
A Piece, its Fragments and Boundaries:



The Boundary and its Microcosms:



Microcosm A vs. Microcosm B:



Source: Kabbani (1989, pp.33-34)

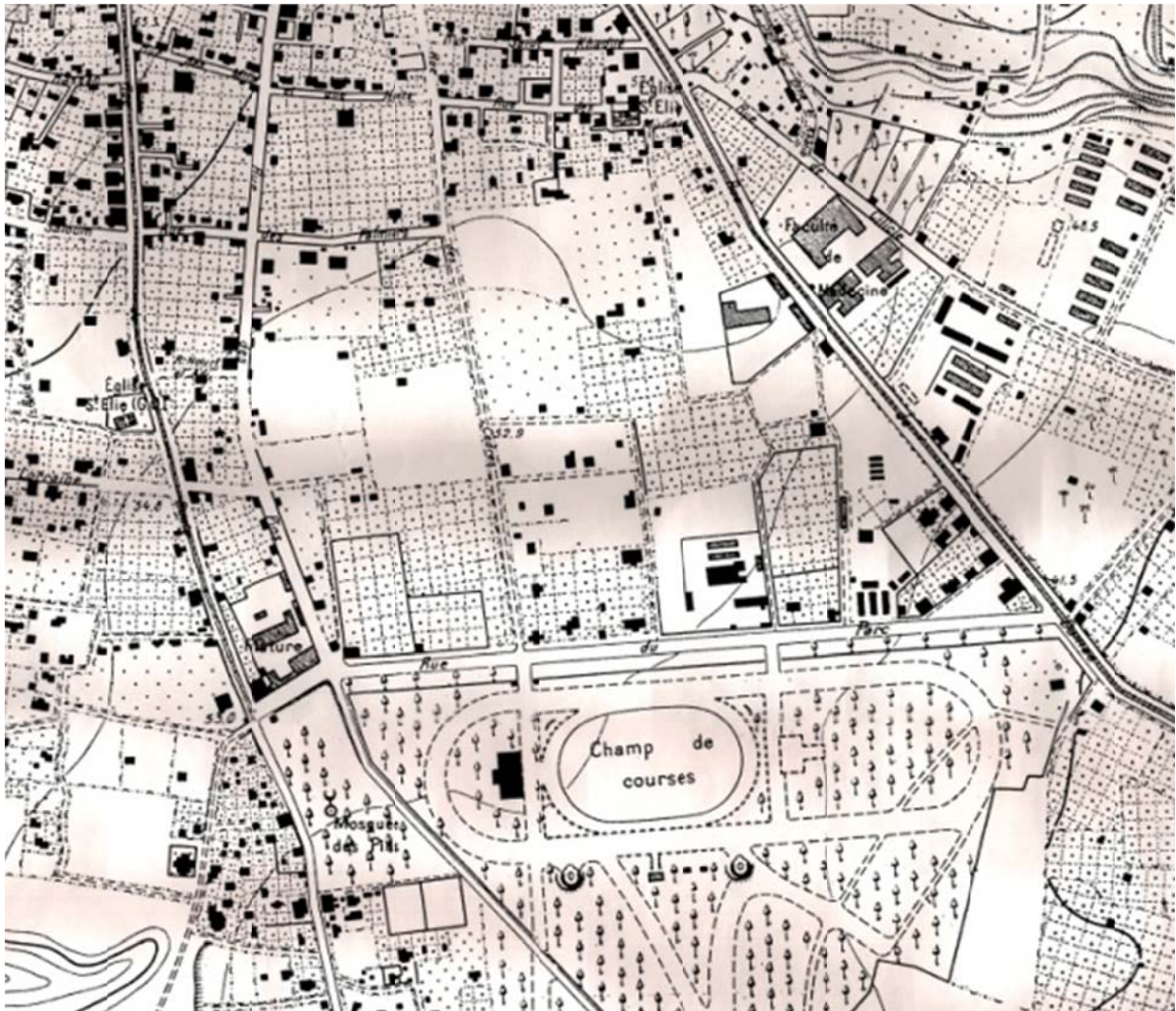
The Morphological Mosaic Nature of Divided Beirut

- Two pieces separated by a line
- The relationship of the pieces can happen through the line
- The line create the edges of division
- The edge is more powerful than the line
- The intersection of the pieces is possible
- Union of the pieces is impossible due to polarity in each
- The piece is a container of fragments
- Unlike the container the fragment is dynamic
- The fragment is composed of collection of boundaries
- The boundaries are in constant motion within the fragment
- The boundaries are self imposing entities
- They shape and are shaped by microcosms
- Boundaries and microcosms are interchangeable
- Microcosms are indefinable

Source: Kabbani (1989, pp.33-34)

APPENDIX III

EXTRACT FROM 1921_PLAN OF BEIRUT



Source: Cartothèque IFPO-Beyrouth

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