



## Garden of Forgiveness

BEIRUT | 2000-2006

The Garden of Forgiveness is considered allegorically as representing three essential principals, the past, present and future. Lebanon's position at the eastern end of the Mediterranean, placed it at the cross roads of invading civilisations and to this day the cultural exchanges that have occurred throughout history, give Lebanon its distinct identity.

The Garden is placed at the heart of Beirut's Central District and is surrounded by historic churches and mosques. The El Omari, El Emir Assaf and Mohamed Al-Amin Mosques, St Elie's Catholic, St George's Greek Orthodox, and St George's Maronite, Cathedrals and the Nourieh Shrine, shared by both Christian and Moslem women. These six buildings like the rest of the city look into the site, an archaeological excavation at times five metres deep.

Where there had once been souks where fresh fruit and vegetables were sold before the war, the remains of past Hellenistic, Roman and Medieval cities have been revealed. It was clear that this archaeology, located in the southern half of the site would represent the cities shared past and history.

To provide easy access to the Garden from the rest of the city, it was clear that parts of the site had to be reburied. This led to ramped routes being positioned through terraces to its north and south sides, keeping clear of the most important archaeological features.

The present represented by fertile terraces depicting Lebanon's agricultural landscapes is arranged along a typographical time line; a ramp that leads north from the archaeological layers up to a walled garden arranged around a shallow pool at the city level; an entrance space that will hold the future meetings and shared conversations of a diverse city community.

The Garden of Forgiveness will be an oasis of serenity and contemplation within a frenetic city, but at every turn it will bear evidence of Beirut's past and present history. Natural and man made layers and events will drift in and out of focus, held within its surface or momentarily brought to it from outside. The garden will be a reflection of the vibrant city that surrounds it.

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Gustafson  
Porter +  
Bowman



PROJECT TITLE  
Hadiqat As-Samah  
CONTRACT VALUE  
Confidential  
CLIENT  
Solidere  
PROJECT DURATION  
2000-2006  
SIZE  
2.5ha  
STATUS  
On hold  
COLLABORATORS  
ARUP - Engineers  
Dar Al-Handasah - Local engineers

