

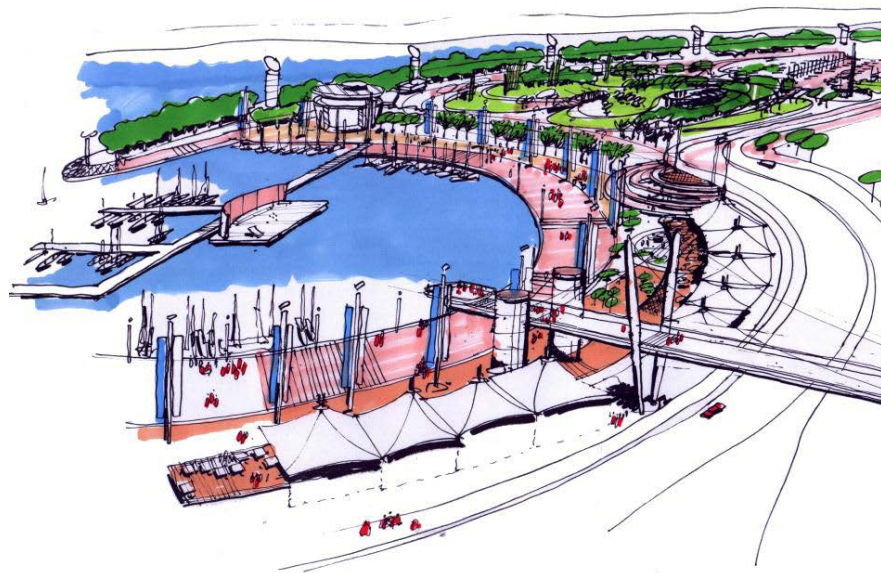
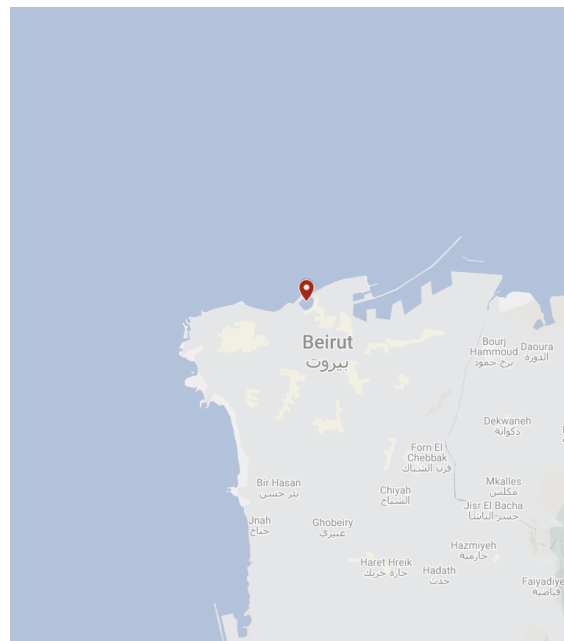


BEIRUT WATERFRONT EXPO & GARDEN FESTIVAL

Lebanon

After Lebanon's highly destructive 15 year civil war came to an end in 1990, the country began a long rebuilding process. Solidere was set up in 1994 by then Prime Minister Rafik Hariri, as a joint stock company reporting to the Council of Development and Reconstruction, in charge of planning and redeveloping Beirut Central District.

By 2000 a reconstruction masterplan had been agreed and well progressed with much of the central area completed or underway. terra firma director Lionel Fanshawe was residing in the city for three months at the beginning of the Millennium and had made contact with Solidere who later that year approached terra firma to undertake a vision and feasibility study for an EXPO/ Garden Festival event that might kick start the renovation of the waterfront while showcasing the the extraordinary work undertaken in rebuilding the city to date.



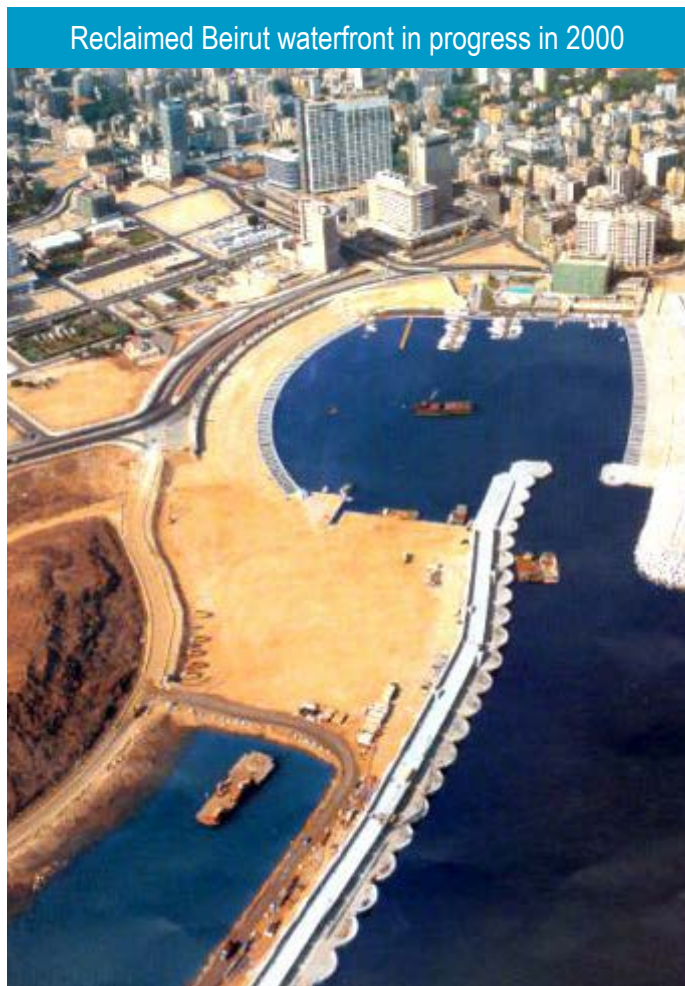
The brief was to create a layout and vision for the area at that time being reclaimed from the sea, which would include the potential permanent provision of a new downtown park, incorporate the newly completed harbour wall and corniche and then provide a temporary area for the event that would link into the reconstructed old city centre. The concept emanated from World EXPOS and International Garden Festivals which would typically showcase a city's cultural heritage alongside latest technological advances or themes of interest that would attract crowds from around the world to a festival lasting several months. To create the space for such events it was also common practice to use the event as a catalyst to regenerate an underused or despoiled area and provide not only the temporary facilities for a celebration but a permanent legacy of improved infrastructure and amenity. The London Olympic Park is a later example of this. Solidere saw this as the ideal way to re-open Beirut to the world.

terra firma were able to draw on the resources within Solidere for guidance on the context and also the events feasibility but engaged their own subconsultant team to assist in conceptual designs of structural, highways, engineering and costing elements, while leading on the overall masterplan vision and spatial design. Previous visits and studies to EXPOs and Garden Festivals as well as direct experience of designing for a Commonwealth Games gave the team confidence in their approach and this was strengthened with the inclusion of a lead landscape architect from one of the British Garden Festivals as a subconsultant.

Matters that had to be considered included all the usual factors that a landscape architect takes into account ; from the physical -topography, soils, hydrology, microclimate, ecology; amenity- zones of use, facilities, access and circulation, approach and arrival, screening and views, legibility and hierarchies; and then vision – themes, branding, spirit of the place.

The design process took three months and evolved through exploring sketch options and their feasibility , obtaining feedback from client as the scheme evolved and two key presentations with the Solidere board. The illustrations here show various stages along the way and the Final Report was well received.

Sadly however, just as detailed design was about to be instructed, a timeline could not be agreed due to delays announced in the reclamation programme meaning the site could not be delivered in time enough to reach the client’s intended year for the event and there subsequently proved little opportunity for postponing it accordingly. The masterplan sat ready for resurrection for a number of years while events overtook including varying degrees of political instability and the rebuilding programme advancing into the area, negating the opportunity for the size and nature of event envisaged.



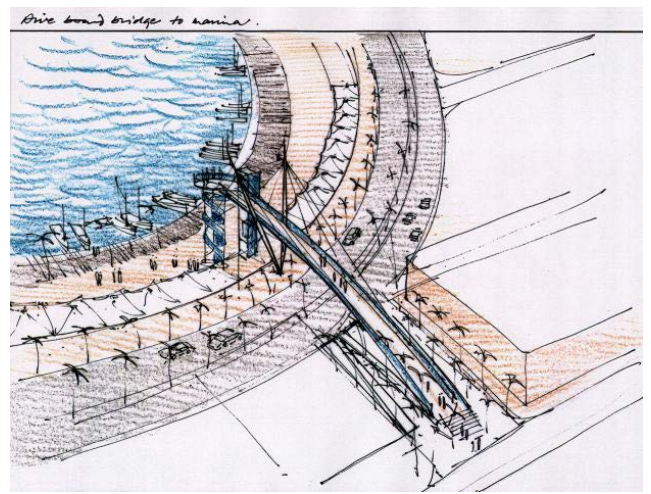
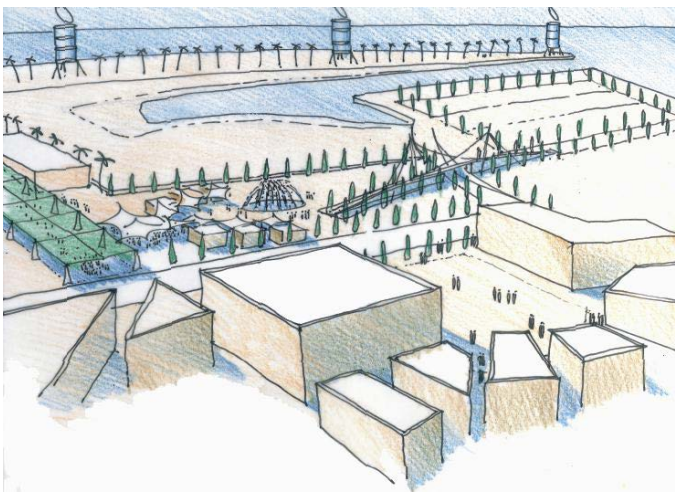
Reclaimed Beirut waterfront in progress in 2000



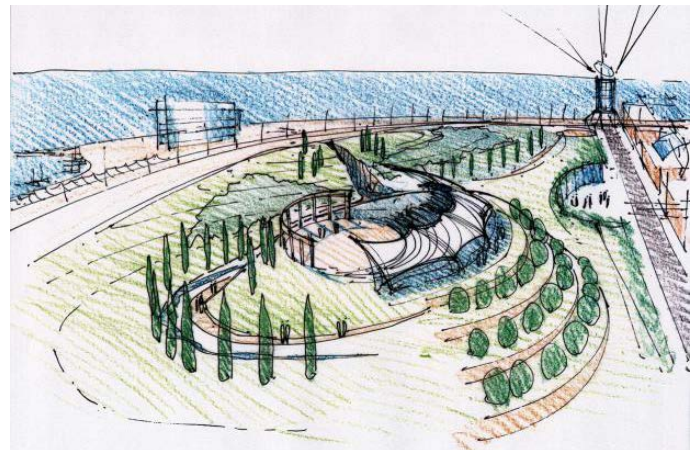
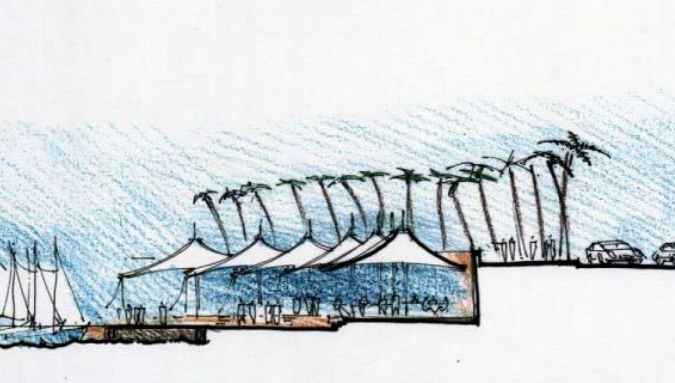
SOLIDERE
BEIRUT FESTIVAL 2003
'WORLD CITY REBORN'
SITE PLANNING STUDY FESTIVAL OF GARDENS
DRAFT SITE PLAN
1:2000 (@A1) terra firma

Illustrative masterplan showing a permanent marina and park, with temporary event space and parking space

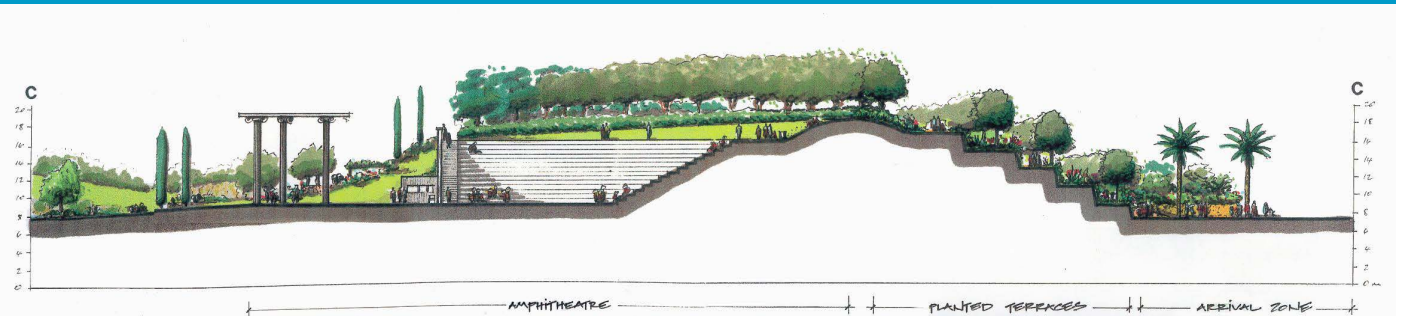
Site area survey plan in 2000



Conceptual sketches for park



Illustrative section of amphitheatre and planted terraces



terrafirma

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS

