



Rmeil 358 Sursock Palace

Scope of work

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Scope of Work (SOW)

for Restoration of the Lateral Elevation in Sursock Palace

1. Project Overview:

Following the devastating explosions that occurred on August 4, 2020, the built cultural heritage of Beirut suffered numerous damages and was exposed to new risks. The neighborhoods located near the port, which were strongly affected, are a mesh of the historical fabric of the city. Most of the damaged historic masonry buildings are located in these quarters overlooking the Mediterranean Sea.

With an unimpeded view to the Beirut Port and the Mediterranean Sea, the 19th century Sursock Palace suffered horrendous damage due to the port explosion. The lateral elevations (east and west) are the remaining 2 elevations not restored yet. Being only about 800 meters away from the center of the explosion, the palace elevations suffered from numerous deformations. Every single window and door was shattered, leaving the entire edifice open to the elements. Photos showing the damages quickly surfaced on social networks and media outlets, for the level of its destruction and its symbolism to the Beirut community. It became an image of the destructed Beirut.

This project aims at contributing to the restoration of the Sursock Palace and falls under the priorities identified by national and international stakeholders and UNESCO following the Port of Beirut explosions, namely the **LiBeirut initiative**.

2. Objective:

The objective of this project is to restore and preserve the lateral elevations (East and West) of the Sursock Palace to its original state, maintaining historical value while ensuring structural integrity and compliance with modern safety standards.

The project shall be a natural complement to the restoration of the other two elevations (North and South) that were previously executed. By executing the remaining restoration works the Palace will be properly protected from the natural elements in accordance with the initial plan of restoration that is being implemented by phases.

In this project, it is proposed to execute the remaining urgent interventions, namely works related the two lateral elevations restoration (east and west) at the Sursock Palace to recreate the affected Architectural morphology of the palace.

The main works will be covering consolidation of wall-to-slab connections in the two lateral elevations including consolidation of wall-to-wall connection and restoration of facades lime plaster and protruding typical joints, restoration of doors (21) and windows (87) carpentry included in these two elevations, windows crowns and molds, restoration of marble slabs balconies and related balustrades and corbels, restoration of entrance stairs, access terraces and related balustrades.

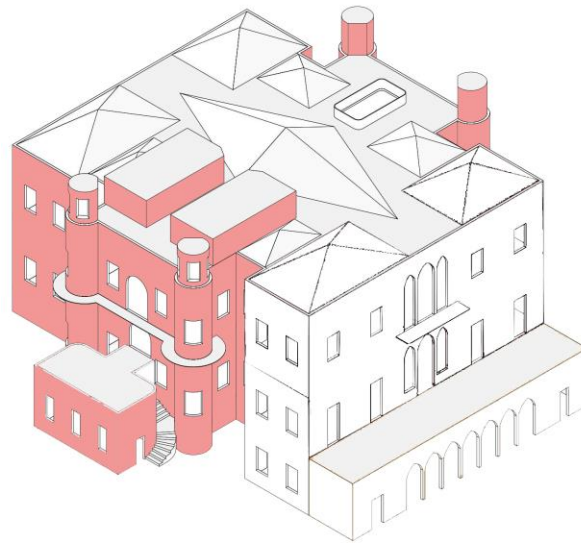


Figure 1: Axonometry highlighting the lateral elevations

3. Background

Historical Value: The Sursocks, a Byzantino-Ottoman family, had, since the early 18th century, managed the wheat trade for the Ottoman Sultan and acquired in the process a monopoly of that market and estates ranging from southern Turkey, through Syria and Palestine to Egypt where the grain processing industries were located. In 1848, in a British consulate report, the Sursocks were included among the most respectable merchant houses of Beirut. By the mid-19th century, in fact, by virtue also of the good offices of the foreign diplomatic corps and of their numerous connections abroad, the Sursock family had accumulated considerable wealth, which was then reinvested in the creation of the “Banque Sursock et frères”. By the end of the 19th century, they had reached the peak of their influence: recognized by the European consulates as one of the “great merchant notable families” of the city, their prestige increased with the charity work carried out by some of its members, and, above all, due to their excellent relations with representatives of the rival foreign powers in Istanbul.

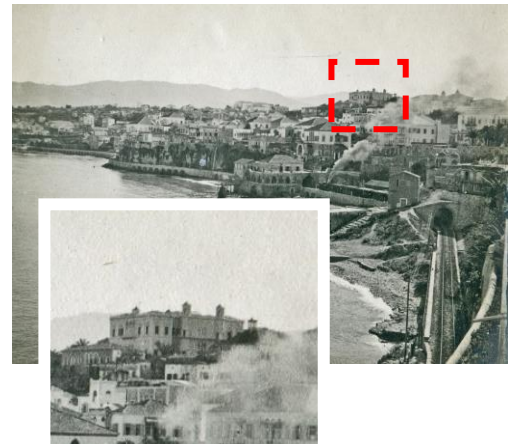


Figure 2: Historic photo showing the Sursock Palace and the towers on the side elevations, 1910s, Web source

In the second half of the 19th century, the most important and wealthy Greek-Orthodox families in Lebanon began to inhabit the Ashrafieh hill and buy its lands. When Moussa Sursock, son of Dimitri who was between the first Sursocks to reach Beirut in the early 1820s, married Anastasia Dagher, the daughter of a Beirut merchant, she insisted that her husband commission a suitable residence on a cliff overlooking the harbor and the bustling small city. Here, the construction of the present-day Moussa Sursock Palace began at 1863 and took around 7 years to be completed. The elegant palace became the main family residence around 1870.

Neighborhood Value: The neighbourhood of the palace was named after the Sursock family, because during the 19th and the 20th century, several branches of the family followed the steps of Moussa Sursock and settled in smaller, but nevertheless spectacular, Villas and Mansions along the same street. They also built two churches in the region, Saint Nicolas and Saint Dimitrios with its monumental cemetery, and Saint Georges Hospital for the poor as well as various educational institutions.



Figure 3: The lower level of the Sursock neighborhood - Joe Kallas, September 2020

Between the Sursock street and the street below, known as Gemmayze neighbourhood, there is an area of Beirut that has been spared the wrecking ball of the developers. With the exception of the Greek Orthodox archiepiscopal building and two other buildings on Gemmayze, this area contains over a dozens of buildings, representative of the Beirut architecture from the mid-19th century to the early 20th century, that are part of an estate that got protected by Sir Desmond Cochrane and Lady Yvonne Sursock Cochrane, locally known as Lady Cochrane. Those historic buildings were purchased between 1960 and 1970 by the Cochranes in order to save the historic built environment and the spectacular views towards the Mediterranean Sea and the Lebanese mountains from the Sursock Palace and retain the unique urban cohesion.

In light of the above, by contributing to the rehabilitation of this key Beirut heritage landmark this project will contribute to enhancing the liveability of Beirut, foster economic development and social cohesion in the damaged areas by drawing business and residences back to those areas.

4. Current status:

Following the explosions, emergency interventions were directly implemented through support from international organizations and local personal efforts. In September 2020, ALIPH foundation funded the propping and urgent consolidation of the Northern elevation that was the most damaged. Naggiar organization donated as well the metallic TOT sheets that were used to cover all the damaged wood pitched roofs and protect the inner spaces from the water infiltrations in the rainy seasons.

In September 2021 Association for the Sursock Palace was also created and registered as a foundation by the Sursock family., The aim of the association is to contribute to the community's social, environmental and educational fabric through the preservation and management of Beirut's heritage and cultural scene. This will be achieved through holistically opening the palace after its restoration to the public, to host cultural

events, and to give a space (indoor and outdoor) for small cultural and creative industries to expose their works to the public and engage with the community.

In 2021, UNESCO, through its Heritage Emergency Fund, implemented the 3D documentation and digitization of the damaged zone on the urban level, conducted by the French start-up ICONEM. Giving the important value of the palace, UNESCO also insisted on fully documenting the Sursock Palace (exterior volume and interior highly decorated spaces) to help with its future restoration, through this overall documentation project.

In 2021 the architect restorer Mr. Joe Kallas, prepared an overall restoration study that includes: an exhaustive assessment report, a detailed rooms logbook, a complete set of drawings and schedules, bills of quantities, cost estimation and technical specifications related to each task to be done and material to be used, in order to help with the restoration phase of the palace and accelerate the funding procurement process.

Despite the damages inflicted by the Port explosions and thanks the initial cleaning and propping works, the palace continues to play an important role to the revival of the cultural life in Beirut. In a city where spaces for artistic performances are missing, by hosting several cultural events including performance and exhibitions, the palace continues to be a unique place that allows artists to showcase their work. In some cases, the space is provided free of charge; in other instances, the proceeds are used to partially cover the costs of some minimal segments of the palace rehabilitation works and its artistic collections.

In 2023, UNESCO provided funds for the restoration of the Northern Façade outstanding triple Arches and integrated a training school of traditional carpentry techniques through the same project. This intervention on built cultural heritage is aimed to be as an initiative on both the physical environment and the young population with the main objective of sustainably maintaining and promoting the cultural and heritage values, and involving job creation and traditional building techniques knowledge. Thus, transforming cultural heritage into a tool for economic and cultural development.

5. Scope of Work:

- **Lateral elevations (East and West):** both elevations need some structural interventions caused by the Port blast. Plaster and protruding joints patterns need to be restored as well to protect the ramleh stones from weathering. Finish paint shall be also applied to these two elevations.
- **Doors and windows:** Lateral elevations include several glazed windows and wooden shutters as well as some doors damaged by the blasts. The carpentry work of these openings is crafted using traditional assembly techniques and frames and leaves are by made from finest Qatrani wood. Through this intervention phase the openings will be restored to initial state using similar wood and traditional techniques.
- **Windows Crowns:** Ornamentations crowns above windows will be restored to initial state; remaining parts shall be consolidated, and loose or missing parts will be replaced using traditional materials and techniques.
- **Balconies:** Restoration of Marble slabs balconies and related balustrades shall be also included in this package. These are linear balconies and supported by stone corbels inserted in the elevation's walls. Outstanding decorations can be found in the corbels, marble slabs edges and balustrades.
- **Entrance stairs:** Entrance stairs, related balustrades parapets and stairs supporting walls shall also be included in this package. These elements are connecting the Palace to its garden and plays a major role in the Palace visitor's approach