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Cover image
Courtesy:
Hiroshi Nakamura & NAP

Topping on the Vertical

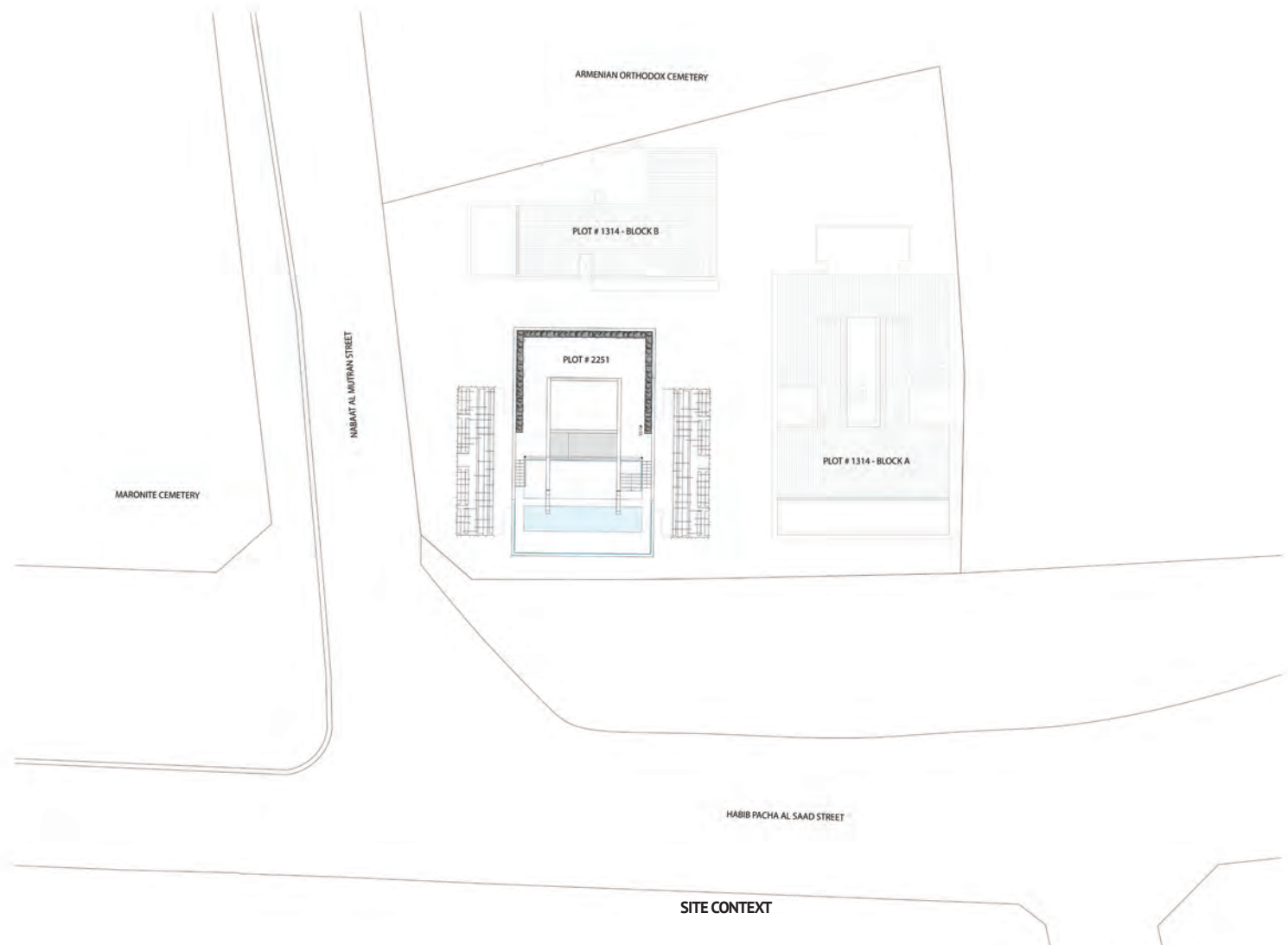
Text : Team Design Detail

Located at Beirut, the residential project conceived by Bernard Khoury Architects is a three-storey apartment articulated through an independent structure capping the building. The 4000 sq. ft. N.B.K. Residence Two is spread across three levels on the ninth and last level of the apartment block and offers a spectacular view over Beirut and the surrounding mountains.

Structurally, the apartment shares only the building's vertical circulation core, as well as the perimeter along which its two peripheral walls lie. Beyond the ninth level, the structure of this residence becomes autonomous, rendering it morphologically detached from the edifice. The result is what resembles an independent house placed atop a building, rather than what is commonly known as a penthouse or roof level apartment.

The articulation of this project is also related to its geographic location. Virtually situated on the former demarcation line which separated





SITE CONTEXT



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ABOVE
View of the illuminated N.B.K. Residence Two at night

BELOW
The cityscape in the background of the illuminated pool terrace

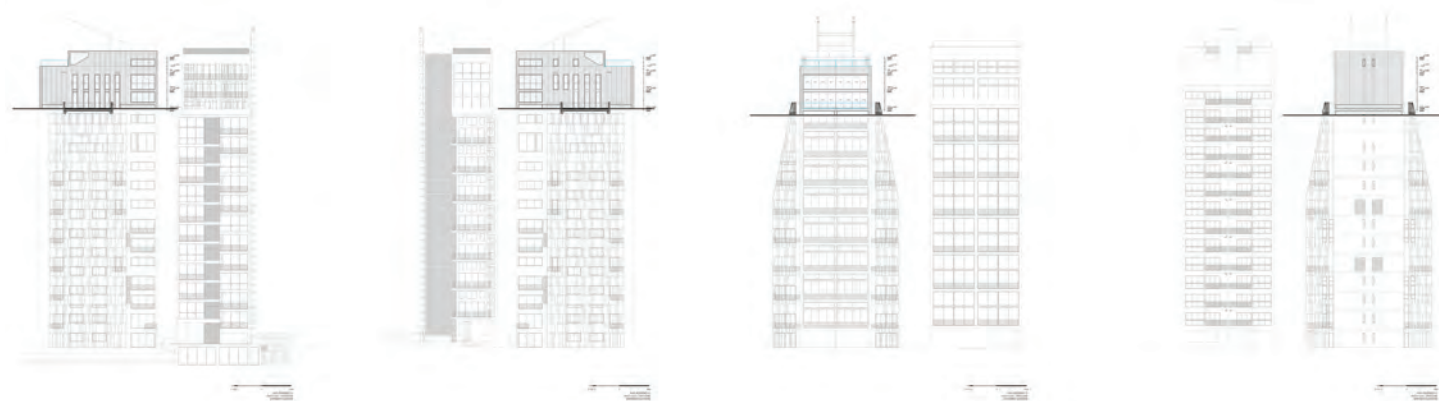
East and West Beirut, this apartment opens up onto 'the hell' of its city, placing it neither East nor West, but in between. Whereas usual preference for Mediterranean roof apartments is to turn their backs on the urban fabric in exchange for a sea view, this apartment is oriented toward the city,

taking advantage of the setbacks imposed due to the surrounding projects defining its entire periphery. These include the Maronite Cemetery, the Beirut Hippodrome and various institutional buildings. All relatively low-rise, these guarantee view corridors extending in the south-western direction



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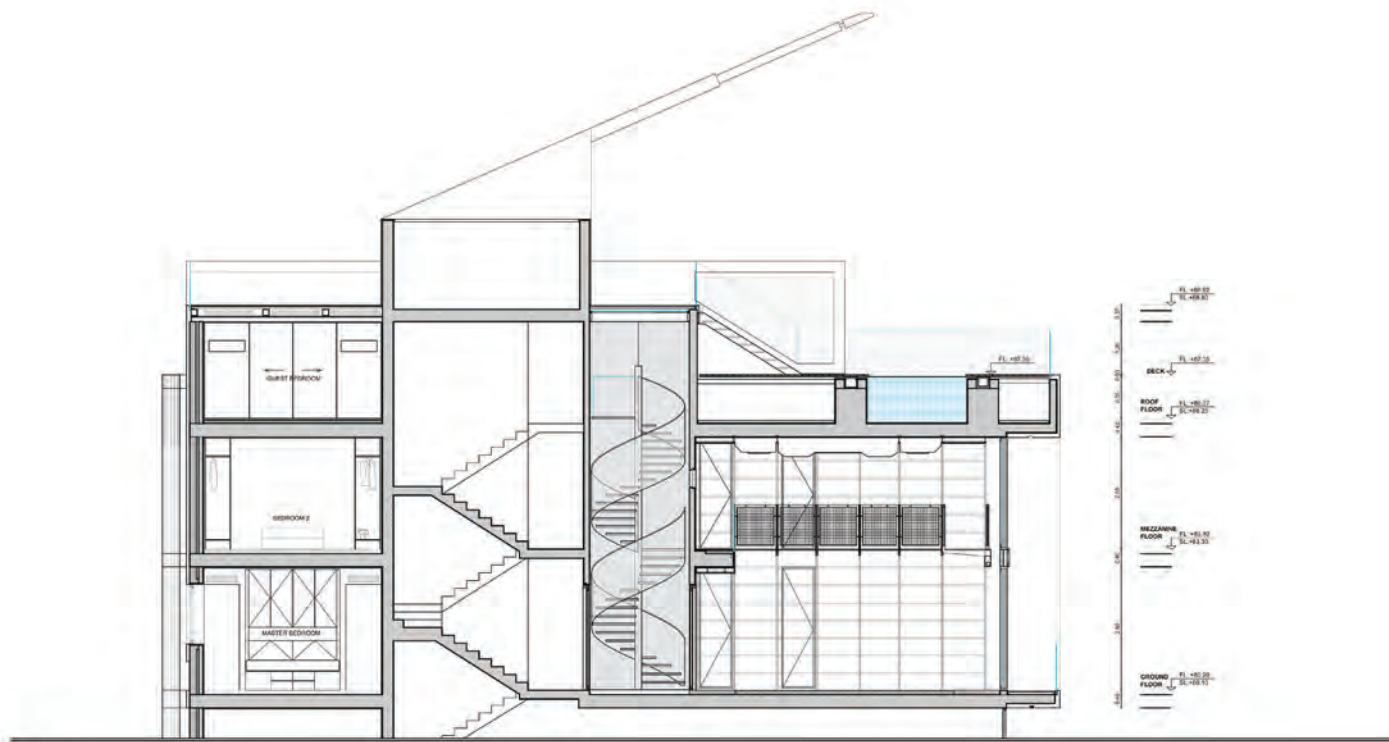
RIGHT
View of N.B.K. Residence Two as seen from a distant road



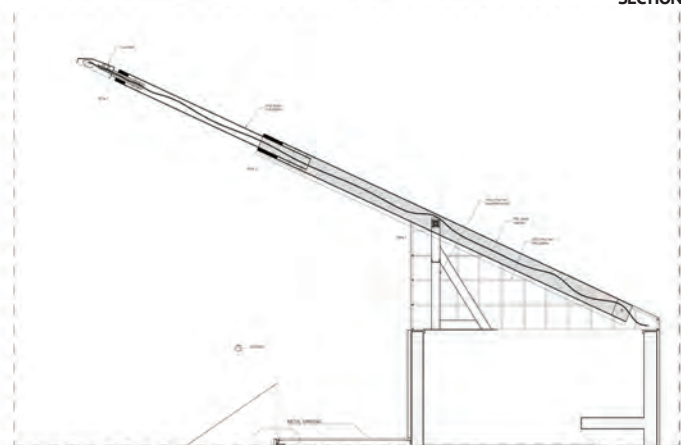
ELEVATIONS



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SECTION



BLACK STEEL ANTENNA

towards the Chouf mountains which subside in the southern suburbs of Beirut, as well as in the western direction and towards the former demarcation line defined by Damascus Road.

This situation in fact informed and defined the large frame instantaneously experienced upon one's arrival to the apartment. Twelve meters wide and six meters high, the reception which extends from the landing is an almost exaggerated, unobstructed and completely open space.

The apartment comprises of three levels, the reference level being the landing floor



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ABOVE

The steel grating bridge that looks into the beautiful cityscape

RIGHT

The Mezzanine Level and the reference level

OPPOSITE PAGE

The uppermost level housing the pool terrace

throughout which the vital programmatic functions take place - the reception space, the dining room, the master bedroom as well as the kitchen. The mezzanine level accommodates two additional bedrooms, as well as the continuation of the floor-to-ceiling library accessible at this level by a steel grating bridge crossing the entire frame of the reception that seemingly floats once the floor-to-ceiling glazing is retracted. Lastly, the uppermost level houses the pool terrace, as well as a guest studio and staff quarters.

N.B.K. Residence Two resumes certain experimentations with interior layouts, furnishings and materials used in various projects throughout the years, including N.B.K. Residence One which was conceived 12 years earlier. The experience gained by these allowed for the development of a certain knowledge related to the misappropriation and reinterpretation of traditional materials, through the reanimation of specific artisanal practices. Alliances formed with local artisans over the years were thus rekindled and materialised

FACT FILE

PROJECT	: N.B.K. RESIDENCE
LOCATION	: BEIRUT, LEBANON
TYPE	: RESIDENTIAL
ARCHITECT	: BERNARD KHOURY
BUILT AREA	: 600 m ² (including 200 m ² of terrace)



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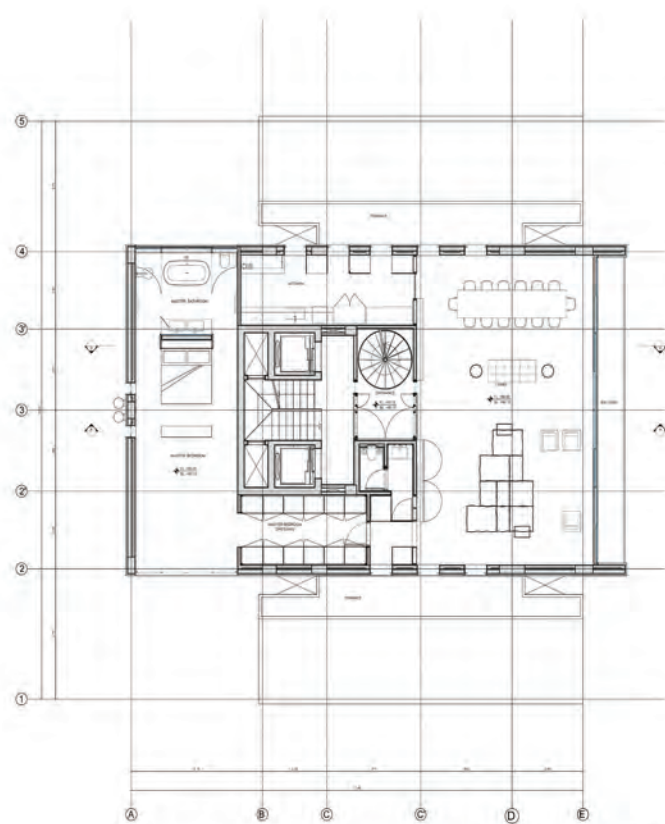
ABOVE
Landing floor exhibiting the elaborate and sustainable wood work

RIGHT
Reference Level showing the reception space and the dining space

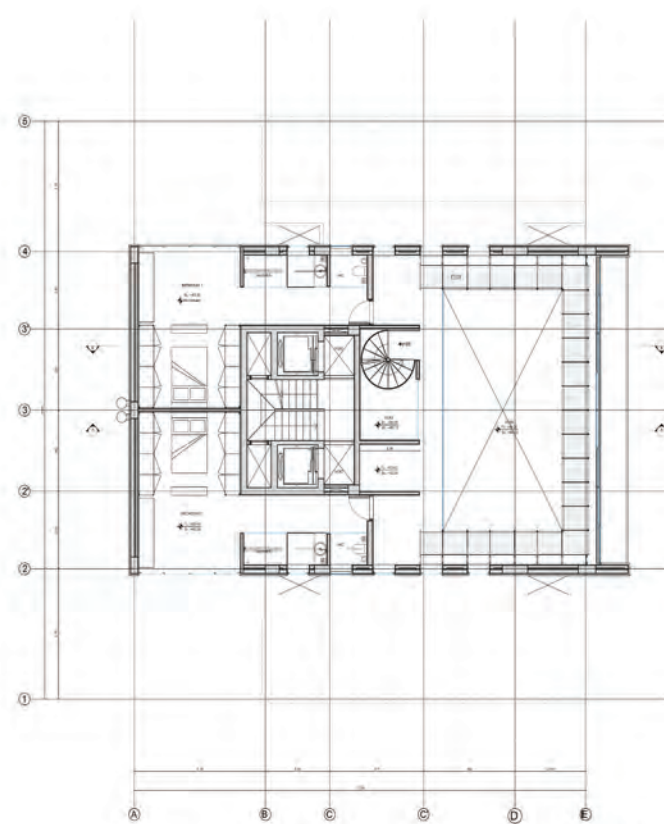
OPPOSITE PAGE
Minimalistic and spacious Reference Level and the steel grating bridge of the Mezzanine Level

in the intricate steelwork and elaborate woodwork of the apartment, notably in the reception area.

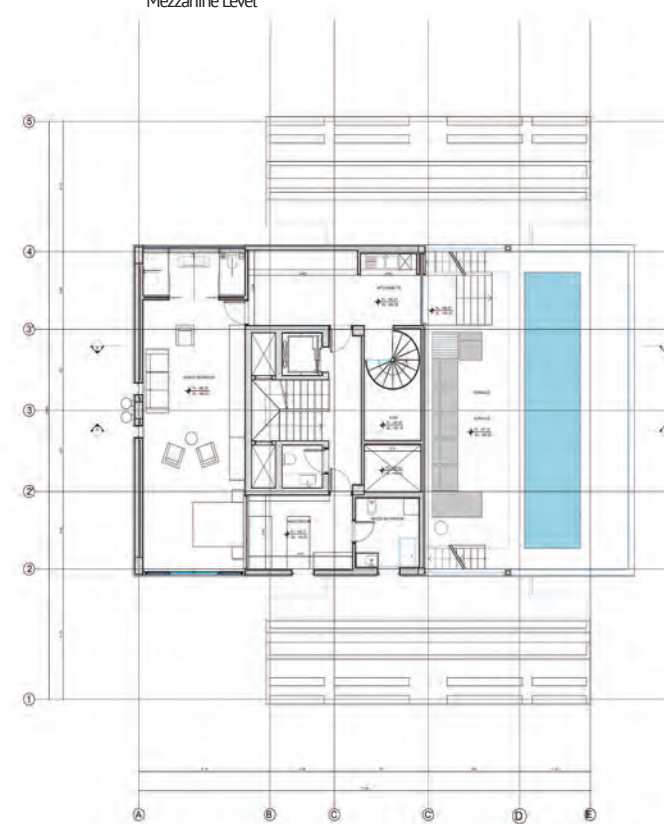
The wood panel cladding of the reception space is defined by a layout that starts at the floor, folding onto the walls and ceiling and extending throughout the rest of the rooms. This same cladding layout defines the steelwork, which ultimately frames the focal point of the room, a piece affixed to the ceiling, housing all air conditioning and ventilation equipments. This element takes us back to traditional



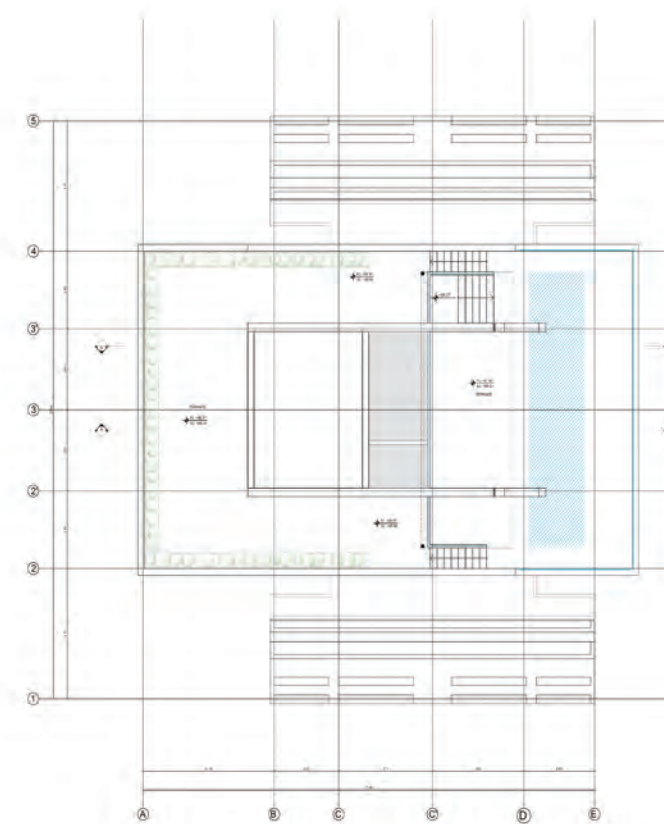
N.B.K. RESIDENCE (2)
GROUND FLOOR PLAN
PLOT # 2251 - 9TH FLOOR



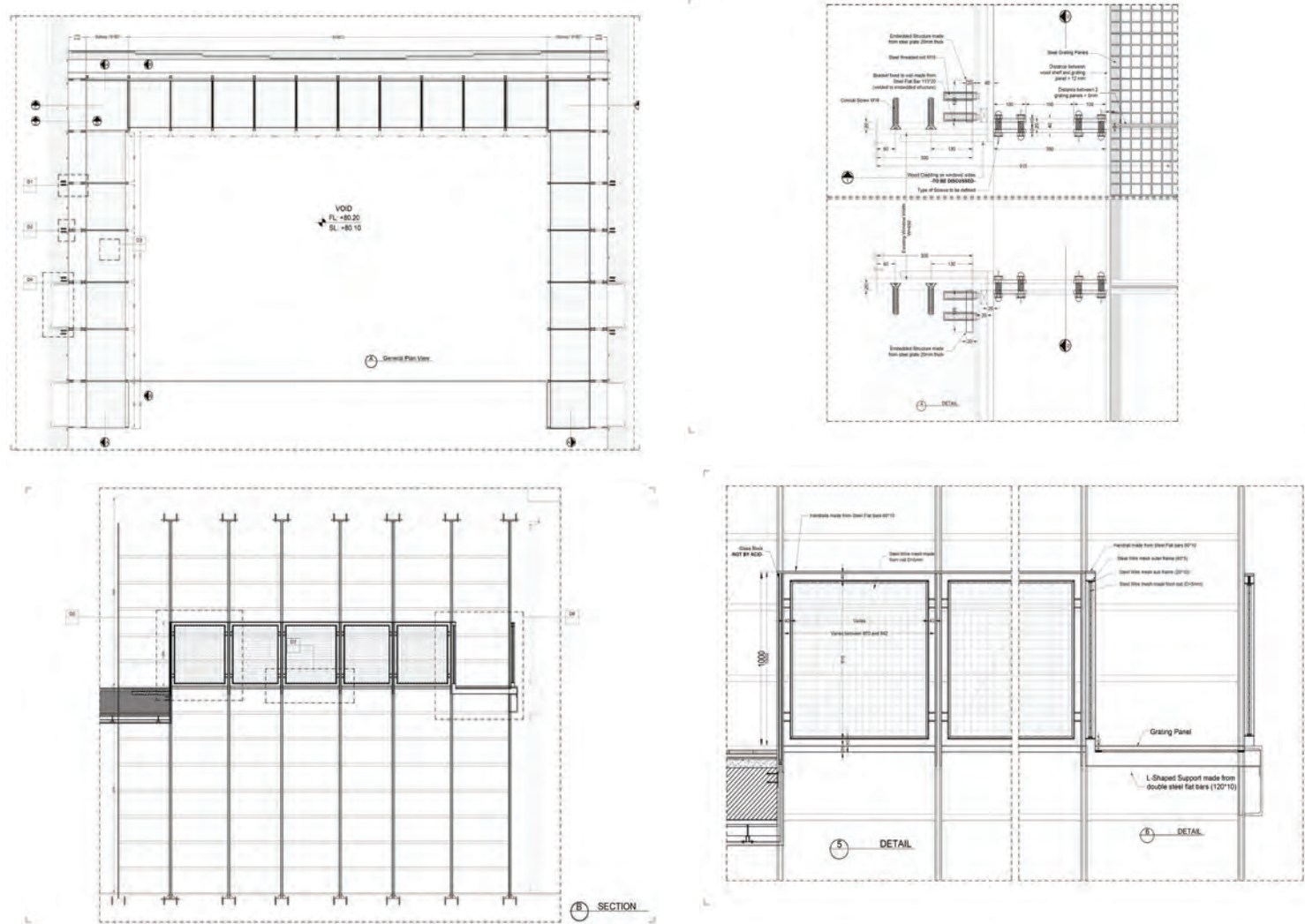
N.B.K. RESIDENCE (2)
MEZZANINE PLAN
PLOT # 2251 - 9TH FLOOR



N.B.K. RESIDENCE (2)
ROOF PLAN
PLOT # 2251 - 9TH FLOOR



N.B.K. RESIDENCE (2)
TOP OF ROOF PLAN
PLOT # 2251 - 9TH FLOOR



LIBRARY AND WALKWAY



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ABOVE
View of the illuminated cityscape as seen from the steel grating bridge

RIGHT
Steel grating bridge looking onto the library on the Mezzanine Level

interior architectural practices. However, rather than a fresco, this installation consists of an extremely dense hood-like structure, designed to perfection in coordination with a mechanical engineer, with plaster as the material of choice. A traditional material typically associated with ornamental cornices and mouldings within a typically classical language, the plaster, is in this case painted

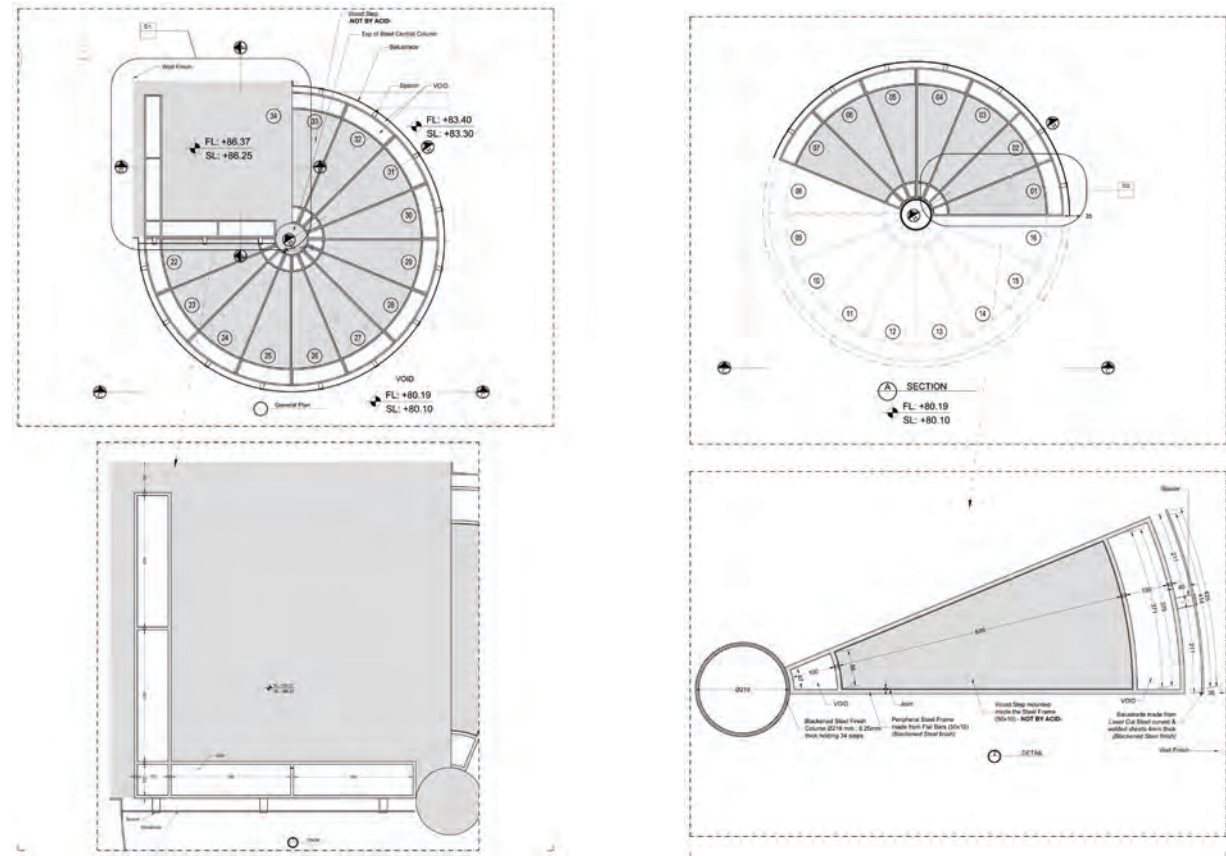


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OPPOSITE PAGE
View of the Reference Level as seen from the steel grating bridge



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STEEL STAIRCASE

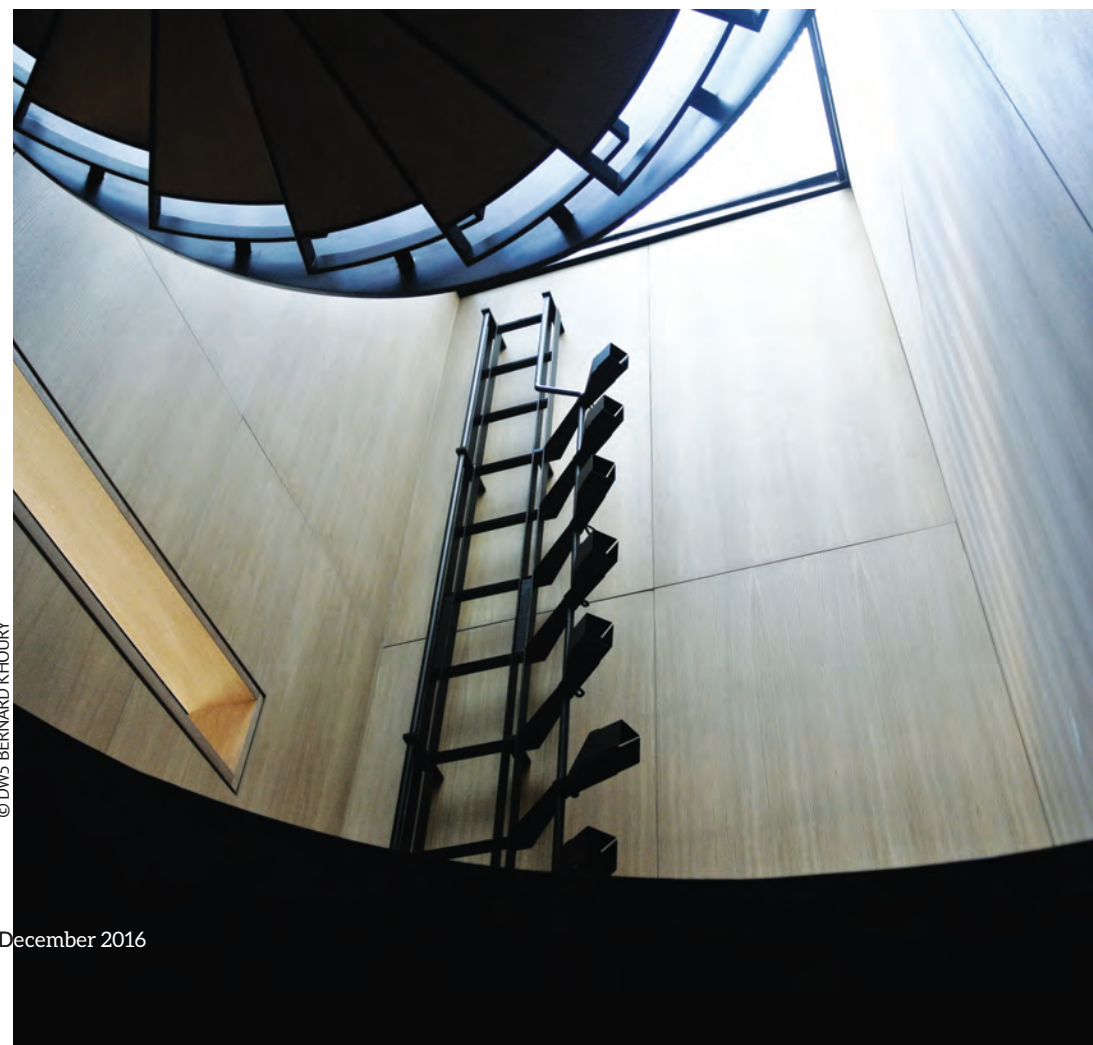


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RIGHT
Entry to the installation
on top

OPPOSITE PAGE TOP
Wood panel cladding with
the Reference Level and
Mezzanine Level in the
background

OPPOSITE PAGE BOTTOM
Wood panel cladding hous-
ing all air conditioning and
ventilation equipments



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BERNARD KHOURY



leva.Saudargaite

Bernard Khoury is a Lebanese architect who lived in and out of Lebanon during the Civil war. He received his Bachelor in Fine Arts in 1990 and Bachelor of Architecture in 1991 from Rhode Island School of Design and his Masters in Architectural Studies from Harvard University in 1993. Khoury began his professional career in post-war Beirut. His first built project was the B018 which was completed in 1998. He has built a reputation for being able to produce critical interventions in problematic zones. Some of his recent works include the Seashore (Lebanon), Bank of Beirut (Biyada, Lebanon) and N.B.K residence (Beirut, Lebanon). Khoury has taught at the American University of Beirut, École Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne and l'École Spéciale d'Architecture in Paris. He is the co-founder of the Arab Center for Architecture.



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black rather than white, and misappropriated to portray a much more contemporary and machinist expression. The result is an alien-like object seemingly hovering above the space, clearly portraying an unconventional form and aesthetic, conceived using an artisanal trade as well as the perversion of a traditional material.

Lastly, the outdoor pool terrace at the roof level is crowned by two antennae containing the area's light fixtures. Southwardly oriented, these probe-like pivoting projections exceed the height average of their adjacent buildings, making them visible from surrounding neighbourhoods.

