Abstract

The Old City in Jerusalem faces dilemmas in its urban and architectural development - the interfaces of ancient (old) and modern (new), of spiritual (metaphysical) and material (physical). The question to investigate: how a new, and yet distinct, intervention fit into this old historic place. The design issues, at both urban and architectural levels, probe this synthesis between contemporary and vernacular architecture and spaces, in the attempt to bring continuity to the city.

The site chosen is located at the south-west corner in the Armenian Quarter of Old City. The vehicle is an Armenian Hospice: a temporary place of stay for travelers with lodging and commercial facilities.

The design is conceived as a complex that consists of clusters of spaces (volumes) linked by streets that seem to 'grow' out from its surrounding buildings, which constitutes the urban design of the scheme. The clusters are grouped based on program: hostel rooms, dormitory, bathhouse and commercial. As one moves through these spaces at street level, one experiences perceptually and tactiley the scale, proportion, composition, silhouette (light and shade), rhythm and texture (material): characteristics and experience inspired from the vernacular model. The continuity of these characteristics is thus being developed in the new insertion, even for its architectural design.