



Al Zorah Resort

Ajman, UAE

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Mixed Use Development

In Progress

2013

The Al Zorah project is part of a touristic development carried out by Solidere International, a sister company of the developing firm that was in charge of the postwar reconstruction of the Beirut Central District. The intervention is part of a resort that will include four hotels with a total of 750 keys as well as recreational, retail and leisure activities. The site is situated along the northern coastal strip of Ajman, 25 kilometers northeast of Dubai.

The project is located in the center of the resort and is connected to three hotel complexes currently under development. Along the northeastern edge of the site, Piero Lissoni is designing a five star resort hotel. To the southeast of the plot, Denniston International Architects are proposing several structures that include a hotel and additional retail spaces. The plot south of this one is being designed by BRC Imagination Arts, with plans for a water theme park.





The design mission consists of two different blocks, the Beach Club and the Boardwalk, merging together and feeding off each other to form one cohesive whole. The project was therefore developed around three prerogatives, the first being the Boardwalk. This compact axis is the project's main pedestrian access linking the main vehicular circulation along the southeastern direction to the beachfront. Developed as a commercial spine, the Boardwalk sits on a plot area of 14,690 square meters and accommodates a mix of retail and dining destinations proposed by the developer.

In such situations, typical strategies usually consist of replicating traditional strip conditions by simply aligning commercial fronts. As the majority of these commercial outlets are considered "generic" spaces to be leased and operated by undetermined future tenants, they felt it important to provoke specific extraordinary instances around reinterpreted and celebrated parts of the suggested program. These include the proposed exhibitionist lap pool that overlooks the pedestrian street, placing its swimmers on display. Other instances include the "bridge bar" connecting the garden paths which spread over the roofs of the retail spaces. These occurrences are dispersed along, within and above the generic spaces, which are tucked under a succession of horizontal terraced platforms that overlap and vary in height and size.



The second aspect of the project is the Beach Club. With a surface area of 25,152 square meters, the Beach Club plot extends approximately 100 meters in depth in the southeastern direction and 269 meters in width along a sandy beach. It includes 1,190 square meters of food and beverage outlets, a 1,000-square-meter nightclub and 1,230 square meters of additional facilities comprising a spa, fitness center and outdoor swimming pool area.

Lastly, the third element is a residential development to be located on the southeastern tip of the site, running approximately 100 meters in length and 60 meters in depth. The intention was to principally connect the residential block to the terraces which start along the beach and knit themselves above and around the Beach Club. These would continue to link and form the base of the residential development.

The proposed scheme essentially consists mainly of a formation of topographic plates that start from the ground building their way up, in addition to another inhabitable topographic formation hovering above and enabling most residents' access to their apartments directly from the open-air terraces.