Who lives here?

"My husband's from Beirut, and I'm from Koura in the north. We first rented this place when we got married back in 1987, but eight years ago my husband passed away and the landlord refused to take the rent from me. He said, 'Your husband's dead; this isn't your home.' I sorted it out with the help of a lawyer and went on paying the rent. It has gone up over time. Now I pay a million Lebanese Pounds per year, instead of 500,000.

Who rented it.

but it's still operating despite the death of the man Ras Beirut. All the building's residents are leaving.

One year, in other words. I could never get that kind of help individual initiatives to fight for housing rights into an platform which collates research, lays the

The Another City Series sees local history through the lens of its community's stories, an approach which gives us space to reconsider both dominant models of urban development and the policies which shape the housing market.

As we get to know the streets and alleys whose residents have witnessed significant changes in the architectural and social environment, we pose questions about heritage and the housing policies which have led to the displacement of communities.

Ras Beirut does not refer to a single district, but rather a broad geographical area incorporating the districts of Hamra, Ain El Mreisseh, Raouché, and Verdun. Each of these districts has its own historical roots and development trajectory. This pamphlet focuses on Hamra, Ain El Mreisseh, and Raouché, and workers employed in institutions nearby. This wave of construction manifested itself in two parts: the demolition of old buildings and homes and constructing new blocks in stages. Those put up during the 1950s, were not subdivided into individual properties and remained jointly owned by heirs of the original owners. These families had no intention of selling the housing units in their buildings. Instead, they renting out surplus housing in a desirable and flourishing residential suburb—flat-roofed houses surrounded by gardens, unpaved lanes lined with pear trees—another legacy of Ras Beirut.

Over the course of the last 150 years, Ras Beirut has gone from a primarily agricultural community to a modern city renowned for its social and cultural diversity. Hamra, the district's main commercial and cultural hub, is built over the rubble of older residential promontories stretching towards the Mediterranean from both shore and surrounding neighbourhoods alike. However by the mid-nineteenth century, residential suburb—flat-roofed houses surrounded by gardens, unpaved lanes lined with pear trees—another legacy of Ras Beirut.

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Dormification*

The growing phenomenon of temporary housing in older buildings

Within the area delineated on the map the proportion of buildings providing temporary housing has risen to 10% of the total. This transformation has been dynamic and dictated by the cycles of economic and student life.

However, this housing model is not only targeted at university students, particularly when it comes to low-cost temporary accommodation. In the last ten years, an increasing number of single rooms in these buildings have been converted into independent student housing units for vulnerable groups who are unable to meet the costs of renting entire apartments. The dormification of these properties is an opportunity for investors to operate them over the short and with minimal responsibility, as they are able to object these tenants at will, thus guaranteeing an income stream that lasts until the property is sold or demolished.

In addition to the subtenants, the phenomenon of temporary housing has spread through Beirut in another, less common, form: the dormitory and the type of hostels inhabited by temporary residents and former tenants.

Dormitories refer to the division of buildings into individual accommodation units—rooms, which because of their increasing number and variety of functions, together with housing standards, have transformed the accomodation and free land available for study and relaxation. These rooms are generally rented by the most vulnerable students, who often live in extremely poor conditions. In some cases, they are shared among multiple tenants and detailed legal documents

within the area of Ras Beirut.

Within the six property values, and in light of urban and financial policies that promote apartment ownership, many landlords have launched several new projects that produce huge impacts on the local economy.

Housing projects in the area have overridden guidelines for permitted building heights after obtaining exemptions from the Higher Urban Planning Council on the grounds that such major projects help the tourism and real-estate sector.

Despite this, a number of new buildings are either entirely vacant or remain uncompleted. This class of building provides a crucial part of the Gulf between the nature of new apartments being put up for sale or rent, and the actual needs of those who want to live in Ras Beirut.

The proportion of vacant buildings and apartments in Ras Beirut is the highest compared with other neighborhoods in the city. Twenty percent of the housing units we surveyed in this district were vacant. There are a number of reasons for this, including the impact of the civil war, the disparity between supply and demand, and the systematic eviction of old tenants.

Investors, evictions, and vacancies – A few examples

Shayyeb Tower

Built in 2013, with 23 townhouse units, this is the first residential house apartments reach the building. The seven floors are used as follows: three apartments by the owner (the middle floor is under an ownership agreement, the upper floor may be made available to new owners), and two apartments by the owner. The final floor is used as a storage unit. The ground floor is occupied by a restaurant.

Shayyeb Tower

This building houses seven properties, all of which were recently purchased.

The first floor contains three apartments, one of which was purchased by Zeinab Yaghy in Al Safir Hotel. The second floor contains an apartment that was recently purchased by a local investor. The third floor contains two apartments, one of which was purchased by a local investor.

Central

Currently under construction, this project is characteised by commercial premises and 300 residential units. The site of the former hotel, Hôtel de la Poste, where the hotel was established for over two decades, with a commercial floor and one floor dedicated to residential units.

Central

The new residential block contains 20 apartments, all of which were recently purchased by local investors. The tower house on the second floor contains three apartments, all of which were recently purchased by local investors.

Boulevard

Single-storey building located on a narrow strip of land. It features a small entrance, which was recently purchased by a local investor. The building contains three apartments, all of which were recently purchased by local investors.

Boulevard

Originally a single-storey building, it was recently purchased by a local investor. The building contains three apartments, all of which were recently purchased by local investors.

Boulevard

This building contains five apartments, all of which were recently purchased by local investors. The building is divided into two parts: the first part contains three apartments, all of which were recently purchased by local investors, and the second part contains two apartments, all of which were recently purchased by local investors.

Boulevard

A building containing a ground floor with commercial premises. The building was recently purchased by a local investor. The building contains three apartments, all of which were recently purchased by local investors.

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