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*Recognised Leader in Urban Design
 & Masterplanning - Spain*

Xabier Barrutieta

Xabier Barrutieta architects is an Architecture, Urbanism and Design firm specialising in innovative solutions and integrated projects. The firm provides us with a unique insight into the stunning designs they produce.

Our work philosophy rests on the premise that best design comes from a completely integrated approach from the project conception to completion, and we make ourselves stand out offering tailored solutions that are not common to traditional architecture firms.

Xabier Barrutieta architects focuses on three different fields that mainly correspond to three scales of action. Each of these scales has quite different positions according to clients and services we offer.

On the bigger scale Urban Design and Masterplanning projects usually have to find a dialogue with existing urban reality and need to apply strategic thinking methodologies and complex management tools. We act as an urban think-tank for clients that are usually public and we offer them a research methodology with an out-of-the-box approach, proposing proactive ideas on the situations that we identify to have an outstanding potential.

On the building scale we mainly focus on NZEB buildings and green architecture solutions. In the last years we worked with clients of companies that needed new and fresh working environments for their innovative companies. We work hand in hand from the beginning to choose the right plot, study their brand culture and DNA with the aim of designing a tailored project that sums a new asset for the business strategy and brand culture of the companies.

Finally, the smallest scale corresponds to the interiors of any kind, workplace consultancy, industrial design and design of temporary spaces. We love working with artists and sculptors to give us new insights and help create spaces with a soul. At this scale we have more freedom to test new materials, technologies and be open to peripheral disciplines that enrich our practice.

But at complex projects the limits between scales usually blur, which does not mean it is bad news. One interesting aspect of our professional research comes at the scale between the building and the neighbourhood, which we name as 'Urban Cells'. This approach embraces the building and its close urban surrounding, which together open interesting paths of the design and implementation of integrated sustainable design solutions that take into account the effective mix of uses, the centralized energy management, creating dense and healthy urban developments, the use of road space and parking, optimization of centralized facilities, etc. As you can imagine, this is an especially interesting field for interdisciplinary projects that we can lead and drive applying LEAN management for instance.

One particular example of this was Orona Ideo, a milestone project in our evolution where we implemented many of the ideas on Urban Cell design and we applied innovative management tools borrowed from the industrial processes.

Orona Ideo is a Campus size development of several buildings that integrate business, research and university for a lift manufacturing company near San Sebastian. We managed an integrated process that started from the Master planning and the urban and landscape design of the campus, and went down to the design of each building and the conception of the inner spaces. The architectural design is particularly sensitive to bioclimatic issues and this approach has shaped most of the architectural solutions. This approach has led to build a Net Zero Energy Campus, where four buildings are connected to a common District Heating-Cooling system powered on 100% renewable energy sources: geothermal, thermal solar and biomass. This was also the first project in Spain that has been



certified simultaneously both in LEED Gold and BREEAM Excellent, and we were awarded the First Extraordinary Point for Innovation ever granted by Breeam Spain. But our role does not stop here, we are still learning from the in use real data of the urban spaces and the buildings' performance, because we want to keep improving our future designs.

The fact that Orona Ideo was benchmarked in the Health, Wellbeing & Productivity in Offices report of the World Green Building Council highlighted many quality aspects of the design perceived by the occupants beyond the rational efficiency of the building, and that is a very valuable aspect that strengthens our philosophy. The natural light, the views, the acoustic comfort, the connection with nature and vegetation, these are some of the most appreciated aspects, which we made note of and will endeavour to integrate into our other projects in the future.

When working in a technology driven world we think we have to be active on the frontlines, ensuring we integrate the right technology into our projects. There are many new possibilities to do lots of new things in our cities and buildings: smart components, internet of things, data management, although we also understand that we have to listen to our customers and clients, because they tell us which are the problems we need to solve by means of our best design solutions. By combining these approaches we ensure that we are working as efficiently as possible whilst simultaneously meeting the customer's needs.

The integrated sustainability design approach we take is much more complex to manage than achieving good energy efficiency, and therefore we face early in the design the issues regarding health and wellbeing of the occupants and the building facility management requirements during its lifetime. This may change the general mind-set in the industry in the future and currently it opens the debate of need to evaluate not only the measurable quantitative aspects, but also the quality of our architectural and urban designs.

Looking to the future, we will work on strengthening our position on integrated projects because we know that it is the way to ensure that our clients receive the highest added value of every project we complete, and at the same time we would like to increase the participation on international projects.

