

FRANCISCO MANGADO  
BUILDING FOR NEW NORVENTO HEADQUARTER  
LUGO, SPAIN































































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The site of the new research center for Norvento is located on the border between an industrial zone of little worth and a woodland. The design knows to adopt a form that will open up to and engage in a continuum with the forest, capitalizing on all that it can contribute to the architecture, while shutting out the featureless industrial side of the surroundings. An existing urban problem is thus taken as an opportunity to create a clear-cut scheme with good architectural, typological, and spatial attributes.

The project sets a new work and research method that deviates from the typical concept of a large building with identical office units. It provides more personal spaces where one can connect with nature; spaces of a domestic character where the staffer or researcher can be alone or in the company of colleagues or team members, as he or she deems fit. The structure of volumes integrated into the park also allows a clear-cut layout of the various departments, which can be expanded in the future, just as the company that called for the ideas competition intended.

The idea was to come up with an image that would be easily recognizable, identifiable, different from what is habitual in office buildings; an architecture that was simple, so simple and logical as to be subtle and thrilling. It is not about shouting louder, using fancy materials, creating complex architectures, but about being convincing, suggestive, in creating architecture that is silent but highly attractive. To attract attention? Yes, but elegantly, discreetly. Architecture is thus presented as the physical exponent of a corporate attitude.

What is needed is a project that clearly echoes the clarity of the specified program. Each department is independent and immediately identifiable, but the project makes it easy for departments to interact when interaction is necessary, and anyone on their way to the cafetería, for example, in effect goes for a walk enjoying crisscrossing views of the surroundings.

The interior has to be simple and stunning. Day after day it must give a picture of efficiency, but also show a capacity to surprise through the space, which always depends on the light but also on the viewer; an interior, thus, that surprises because it is different, never boring in any way. Inside, the spaces are clean but complex, not at all obvious.

Light is the most important element inside, so transparent glass is proposed for all the main dividers. In this way, as one walks through, there is the constant feeling of being in a bright place. Wherever depth or use does not allow it, the project creates skylights, so in any space, light always comes in from two sides.

Norvento is ideologically committed to pursuing a certain way of relating with the environment. The architecture is designed with the idea of maximizing the building's quality in energy-use terms, aspiring to zero carbon in BREEAM ratings. In addition, it uses simple, locally available materials like dyed eucalyptus wood, easy to work with and maintain, environment-friendly, ecological, economical, and beautiful.

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