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BAAS & Espinet/Ubach to design the new Vall d?Hebron building

Imatge:
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The team of Catalan architects that forms **BAAS Arquitectura** [2] and **Espinet/Ubach** [3] have won the award for the new VHIR building and the reorganization of the Vall d?Hebron Campus that was put out to tender in November 2016. Their design was selected from among five finalists by an international panel featuring well-known names from the world of architecture.

The name of the winner was announced on Friday, 12 May, at a press conference held at the Architects? Association, attended by the Minister for Health, Toni Comín; the manager of Hospital Universitari Vall d?Hebron , Dr Vicenç Martínez Ibáñez; the director of the Vall d?Hebron Research Institute (VHIR); Dr Joan X. Comella, and the dean of the COAC, Lluís Comerón.

The dean confirmed that the Architects? Association wished to highlight the exemplary way in which the tender was conducted, as ?not only was it very well planned but also demonstrated a great awareness of how quality architecture can transform the city and the hospital?.

The proposal from the team headed by Jordi Badia, Antoni Ubach and Miquel Espinet addresses the internal

mobility of the Campus by means of a vertical column of escalators, eliminating internal vehicle traffic and opening up the Campus to adjacent neighbourhoods. The new research building will be structured around a system of courtyards and squares, covering an area of 5,000 m2, which can be extended, with a budget of 15 million euros, partly financed by the ERDF.

Proposal for reorganizing the Campus
The hospital complex of Vall d?Hebron is currently a chaotic jumble of unplanned buildings arranged on a steep slope that is entirely unsuitable for people with reduced mobility. The open spaces are mainly occupied by parking for private vehicles while pedestrian and public transport access is inconvenient. The buildings and their annexes were built as and when they were needed without any kind of overall planning, all with different styles and characteristics and no sense of overall harmony. The professional prestige of the hospital contrasts hugely with its actual image and it is impossible to solve all these accumulated problems with timid or one-off actions that can have no real impact on the situation. It is therefore necessary to have an overall plan, even if its implementation has, by necessity, to be a slow and gradual process.

From this point of view, the construction of a new research building must essentially provide an excuse for redesigning the new complex and generating a sense of order. The objectives of such an ambitious intervention should be:

1. To improve the accessibility of the complex both vertically and horizontally, by improving the cohesion of the Campus not only with the city and its public transport but also with the neighbourhoods of Montbau and Sant Genís.

2. To stop private vehicles from entering the complex and get rid of car parks on the surface and obsolete structures in order to increase the amount of landscaped space and hence rekindle the idea of a park with buildings. To do so, it will be necessary to group the uses of any eliminated buildings into a new space whose location and shape is as discreet as possible.

3. To build a new entrance to the complex that will convey the new image of the Vall d?Hebron Campus.

Proposal for the new research building
The winning project includes a building that seeks to blend into its surroundings with its sustainable, Mediterranean architecture. The proposal is for a single façade situated between the current UAB building and the Traumatology and Rehabilitation building on the land where the hospital?s old laundry used to stand. The layout is defined by three courtyards, one of which opens onto the façade, and continuous terraces. As Jordi Badia points out, ?the working spaces will be structured around these courtyards, and a large perimeter terrace that will create outdoor spaces between the researchers and protect the building from the sun?.

The tender panel
The panel was made up of Joan Comella, Director of Vall d?Hebron University Hospital and Research Institute Foundation (FIR-UHVH); Vicenç Martínez Ibáñez, Hospital Manager and Chairman of the VHIR Board; Antoni Comín, Minister for Health at the Government of Catalonia; Lluís Comerón, Dean of the COAC; Tomàs Pumarola, Head of the Vall d?Hebron Microbiology Service; Soledad Romea, Vall d?Hebron Process Manager; Jaume Raventós, Head of Research and Innovation Operations and Institutional Relations at the Ministry of Health; Xavier Montalban, head of the Neuroimmunology Research Group at VHIR; Cristina Garmendia, former Minister for Science and Innovation; architects David Chipperfield, Beth Galí, Carles Ferrater and Anne Lacaton, and urban planner Martha Thorne.

Exhibition of the finalists? projects
From Friday, 19 May, though to 28 May, an exhibition of the five finalists in the tender was held in the Mezzanine of the COAC. For more information, **click here** [4].

View the video of the winning proposal here:

View the presentation of the project at the COAC headquarters:

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