TWO PROJECTS, ONE HEADQUARTERS

luis vidal + architects
STUDIO LEGAL:  
A NEW REFERENT OF CORPORATE MODERNISM

luis vidal + architects is designing the future Studio Legal Terrero & Mejía Real Estate plan, a two-phase project that aims to become a referent of innovation in work and residential experience in the Dominican Republic.

Studio Legal Terrero & Mejía is a prestigious law firm from Dominican Republic with a constant aspiration of being at the forefront of this continuously evolving world. In this regard, Studio Legal simultaneously with its growth in business and firm is moving its office in a new tower located in the financial heart of Santo Domingo.

luis vidal + architects, has been appointed to define the new office image as well as the architectural strategy that will reflect Studio Legal’s growth process, implementing an integral design method for both temporary and final headquarters.

luis vidal + architects approached a design process based on the values that characterizes modernity, evolution and opening followed by a flexible, transparent and dynamic corporate and residential tower for co-working uses. The mixed use is, therefore, introduced in the Dominican Republic, along with the architectural innovation, principle and value of luis vidal + architects and reflection of what best defines Studio Legal.
The Studio Legal tower responds to an iconic design that however it sits in perfect harmony with its context and surroundings.

Adapting to urban planning requirements, the volume sets back from the neighbours while it is sculpted to achieve a nicer proportion on the main facade, accommodating different uses and modulate the heights allowed.
ONE PROJECT, MANY CONTENTS

As a first approach to the design process of the Studio Legal tower, the existing conditions were checked conscientiously which included the analysis of the urban context, the site and the planning parameters: the future building is located in a regular urban mesh where the plot, a long rectangle, has just one of the sides onto the street, which hinders the way to access. Regarding the legal framework, planning establishes 4m setbacks on every side of the plot (but the streetfront) and 8 storeys as the maximum height.

Using these conditions as a starting point, the strategy developed was based on achieving the maximum volume as possible while sticking to the square metres allowed. The result is one elegant piece that reflects a unique sense of place which distinguishes between what faces the street and what doesn’t. Making the most of this duality, and deeply inspired by the innovative attitude of the law firm, a cutting-edge building typology is proposed: the mixed-use building. In it, offices, housing and co-working are brought together, having co-working place on the ground floor, while the upper floors remain for housing, offices to rent and Studio Legal headquarters.

In order to respectively represent the law firm, the headquarters are located on the main facade, while homes are placed on the quieter back part of the plot. In addition, the volume is sculpted so that the streetfront is higher than the rest of the massing, to offer a slimmer streetview image. Therefore, the massing achieved is a double-faced volume that meets both an aesthetic and a functional consideration.

The outcome is a tower that acts as a dynamic and versatile element that hosts a constant activity, both during the day (offices and co-working) and during the night (housing). Together with this, flexibility and open program are the main characteristics of the proposal.

The building is covered with a transparent, light and reflecting skin which mirrors the firm’s corporate spirit. Its double layer made out of glass and mesh acts as a solar control, being it part of the sustainability strategy tailored for the tower, which on one hand will reduce energy consumption, and on the other, increase energy efficiency.

GROUND FLOOR PLAN

Studio Legal tower emerges from level 0 offering a welcoming space under a permeable and bell-shaped roof that extends around the whole perimeter of the plot.

The variety of uses turns the ground floor into a real design challenge considering the amount of flow, such as the independent use of office, housing and co-working area requiring separate access points on one side and pedestrian and vehicular traffic on the other.

In order to coordinate the flows successfully and avoid clashes, luis vidal + architects designs the entrance area as a square, extending the pavement while the main facade sets back, inviting to come in. Therefore, a major access space for the building users is achieved which, at the same time is given to the city and the pedestrians.
VOLUMETRIC AND GROUND FLOOR PLAN STUDIES
GROUND FLOOR PLAN

1. OPEN PLAN

2. BELL-SHAPED ROOF

3. CIRCULATION

4. RECEPTION SPACE
In the plot where the Studio Legal Tower will be built currently stands a one-storey building, a pavilion-like piece, lacking existence in the city and playing a scarce urban role.

While the project of the tower is developing, Studio Legal has temporarily moved its headquarters to this building, which has required a small intervention.
PHASE: TEMPORARY HEADQUARTERS

Taking the pre-existing construction as a starting point, the proposal consists of a “light touch”, a minimum intervention that allows a temporary occupation while the final project is being developed.

The indoor space is reorganized adequately to the firm’s needs. In addition, as a part of introducing a rational and balanced program, a small extension located in the access area was proposed. This new piece hosts a waiting room, which helps separate flows.

The outdoor has a complete change of image, addressed by the design of an innovative skin of Danpalon, a recycled polycarbonate that wraps the existing volume, acquiring a contemporary look. Together with this, and in order to achieve a greater urban presence, the volume-height is increased: the new white skin stretches upwards and bends in the main facade, giving the city a more powerful street front.

Due to the characteristics of the material, this front plane acts as a showcase that reflects the sky; reflections which turn the facade into a scenography that changes according to the time of the day, offering the viewer a dynamic and evocative image.

This phase was developed in collaboration with MARA ESTUDIO and AYBAR as main contractors.
The screen facade is completed with a piece that hosts the waiting room and which pops out towards the street covered with the same material that wraps the rest of the building, but dyed with the corporate colour. This protruding volume generates a more controlled access area which, at the same time, is inviting to come in.

The result to these specific actions is a new, decontextualized and clean piece that offers a fresh, provocative and modern image that reflects the values and the evolution of Studio Legal.

DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY
THE NEW SKIN

In order to achieve unity with a clear and specifically defined style, an innovative skin of Danpalon covers the whole front volume and extends around the building perimeter.

Danpalon is an architectural system made out of polycarbonate translucent panels which provides a high-quality constructive solution where reflections play an exceptional lighting effect.

The Danpalon system colonises part of the inside offering a fresh and up-to-date image of the internal spaces. The play between transparency and crossed views enriches the user experience while reinforces space functionality and use characterization.