

# Working in the recycled inner city

## Insertions and extractions

### Authors:

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The contemporary city grows and becomes a relentless movement of expansion from the conquest of new territories. Extensive growth set the pace of large cities development throughout the last century. However, the city also extends looking inward from mechanisms that increase its density and alter its uses as a process of continuous overlapping and recycling actions. This is the main model that have followed the historic structures in the continuous consolidation and updating of its urban fabric in Europe, a model that modern urbanism decided to forget in order to focus on the potential of its edges and peripheries, that was previously considered infinite.

The *tabula rasa* of the modern city has spread unstoppable today through a voracious urbanism that devastates the territory. In a moment when major developments and urban expansion, especially in the Western world and Europe, have been nipped in the bud by the crisis that has affected greatly to the construction sector is imposed cater for back to the city to find new opportunities inside it for a measured and sustainable growth. Gaps in the urban fabric, obsolete infrastructures (transportation, industrial, military ...) or unused equipment have acquired a new value for new models of urbanity based on the idea of transformation with the least possible energy investment.

From our architecture office, inserted in the dense Hispanic-Muslim historical fabric of Granada, we reflect on the organic structure of urban settlements without separating it from its processes, many of them invisible, which take place in its heart itself. It is about overlays processes derived from the various cities that have lived on top of each other, throughout its history. Cities characterized by cyclic reconstruction of physical or energetic elements of their streets, public spaces or buildings but also of other intangible, symbolic components, corresponding to its inhabitants: their customs, activities or their collective imagination.



Fig 1. Atelier in San Jerónimo street, Granada: interior infrastructures insertion. Photograph: Fernando Alda

This idea of recycled inner city is conceived from its own account as a living heritage in constant transformation that does not depend on a deliberate formal strategy but on the intertwining time, materials and activities.

In the last fifteen years we have studied its many forms and scales through our own work of constructing sites and projects. These projects assume that the activity builds different cities at all times: superimposed cities, running in parallel, continuously enriched.

In this sense we can highlight two of our proposals that can clearly reflect this way of understanding the act of recycling the European city, both of them located in Granada (Spain): The first one, *Atelier in San Jerónimo*, is a cheap intervention, our own architectural atelier. On a small scale, we propose a course of action based on recycling material and symbolic of a collection of fragments of the city that are physically and conceptually displaced within an old premises (a mortuary and a parlour afterwards). The second one, *Babydog Office*, is an advertising office inserted in an old building in which the existing brick loading walls are cut, forming, through the reflections, an infinite interior landscape of discharge arcs.

**Project/s:** Atelier in San Jerónimo & Babydog Brick Office

**Location/s:** San Jerónimo street nº 17 & Darrillo de la Magdalena (both in Granada, Spain)

**Date of all phases:** Atelier in San Jerónimo (design, 2014 – building, 2015); Babydog brick office (design 2016, building 2017). **Surface area/s:** Atelier in San Jerónimo: 146 m<sup>2</sup>; Babydog Brick Office: 96 m<sup>2</sup>.

**Agents involved:** Collaborators architects: Alvaro Castellano, Pedro Salinas, Miguel Jiménez, Francisco Ruiz; graphic designer: 2041/ Fernando Cienfuegos; students: María Encarnación Sánchez, Marta dell'Ovo, Helena Doss, Alessandro Remelli. Carpenter: Jorge Calvo (Lauxa); metalwork: Leonardo Cena

**Estimated budget:** Atelier in San Jerónimo: 21.000 €; Babydog Brick Office: 45.320€

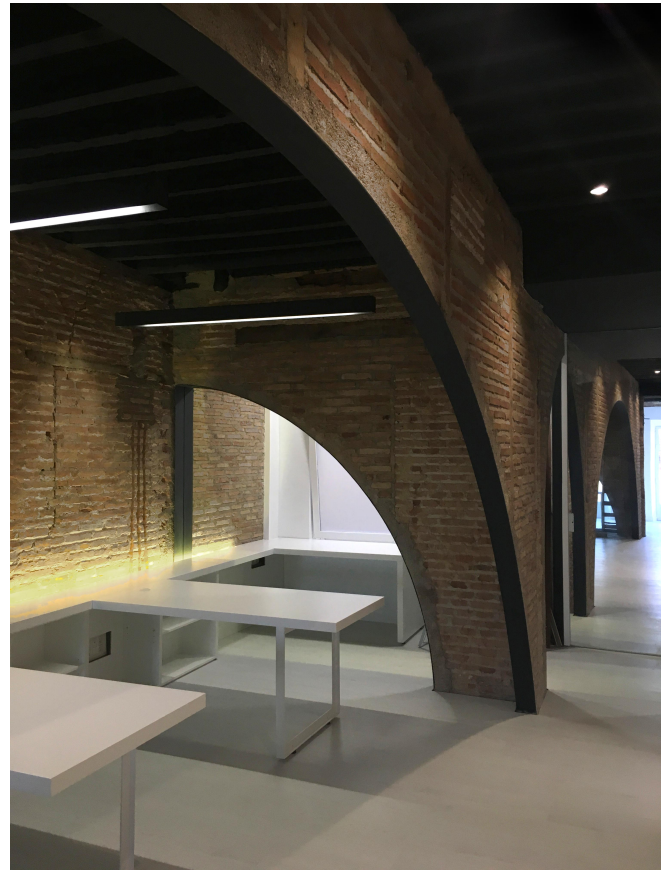


Fig 2 Babydog Office in Granada: structural extractions forming discharge arcs. Photograph: CUAC Arquitectura