

# 10 Design: Shaping the Greater Bay Area Skyline

The rapid development of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (GBA) is opening doors for architectural companies like 10 Design, shaping a dramatic skyline for this new megalopolis.



Across the border from Hong Kong in the GBA, some of the world's sleekest, greenest, and best-designed buildings are rising fast. Designated by China's Central Government as the nation's economic powerhouse, this dynamic region of two Special Administrative Regions (Hong Kong and Macao) and nine cities in Guangdong Province, with a combined population of over 86 million, needs high-quality infrastructure and architecture to support its aspirations. As investment floods in and confidence booms, the GBAs urgent need for new shopping malls, office blocks, community buildings and industrial premises is presenting unique opportunities for architects and designers. For Hong Kong-based international architecture firm 10 Design, the GBA has become an exciting new frontier.

10 Design was launched in Hong Kong in 2010 by current CEO Ross Milne and partners. Building on long experience in architectural design in Hong Kong and China, the practice quickly established a strong reputation. It started from a team of 30 architects in its Wan Chai serviced office in 2010 to a diverse studio of 380 architects and designers today. Since its inception, the business has always had a strong international focus. As projects proliferated and the business won major international awards and recognitions, 10 Design established offices in strategic locations, including Edinburgh, Dubai, Miami, Singapore, London, and Shenzhen. In 2017, 10 Design's acquisition by global consulting and engineering leader Egis Group enabled them to grow more robustly in Asia and expanded further into Europe and the US. Last year, 10 Design announced its merger with SB Architects, a San Francisco-headquartered architecture and design practice that specialises in creating international hospitality destinations. The merger not only

broadens 10 Design's geographical reach in the US but also enhances the practice's expertise in hospitality design.

What are the secrets to 10 Design's success? They include exceptional levels of design expertise and service quality and a readiness to follow the progress of their built designs to ensure everything works as planned. All their buildings are bespoke, with design details developed in close consultation with clients and a strong focus on sustainability. In China, their success was boosted by winning a major architectural design competition for a big shopping mall in Zhuhai. "Shopping malls are important public buildings in China", says Milne. "That project really showcased our abilities and cemented our reputation among Chinese clients." The CEO emphasises that working with China clients often involves a different mindset than elsewhere. "In the West, we often follow a step-by-step linear design process, but our Chinese clients prefer to work with a narrative - a story that connects their buildings to the local culture or a romantic theme from a poem or proverb."

Also instrumental to 10 Design's success has been their Hong Kong base, which acts as a worldwide operational hub. "Hong Kong works perfectly as our centre of operations," says Milne. "All our department heads are based here, and it's easy for them to fly to different offices around the world." But Hong Kong is much more than an administrative centre. Its design studio is a vibrant one that leads the way for projects across Asia and the Middle East. "Hong Kong is still a magnet for architects wanting to work in Asia," says Milne. "In our Wan Chai office, at least 30 different nationalities are at work, proof of the great multicultural environment here. That facilitates the exchange of ideas, which is crucial in our profession".

**“Our work in the GBA has really been instrumental to our business success. We couldn't have grasped these opportunities if we weren't based right here in Hong Kong.”**

**Ross Milne**  
Chief Executive Officer  
10 Design

With its proximity to the GBA, 10 Design's Hong Kong base also brings significant advantages for expanding across the border. "There is an enormous potential market on our doorstep," says Milne. "Our Shenzhen office currently has around 20 architects, but we expect that to change rapidly as the GBA continues to grow." He adds that one of the unique opportunities of doing business in China is the appetite there for creativity in architecture, a boon for ambitious architectural firms like 10 Design. "Clients in China want the best and most creative solutions, and that's bringing massive opportunities for creative industries like ours," says Milne. However, he also notes a very practical benefit of the Shenzhen office, that of managing practical on-the-spot issues like handling local authorities and dealing with regulations.

Milne never fails to be amazed by the changes he has seen in his time in Hong Kong. "Design as an industry has grown enormously in China," he notes. "When I first visited Shenzhen 30 years ago, it was just paddy fields: look at it today!" According to Milne, the increasing coherence of the different parts of this dynamic region can only bring benefits for businesses. With Hong Kong as the GBA's international design and financial hub, he sees a great future for any Hong Kong business with the energy and vision to cross the border.

## 10 Design

- 10 Design is an architectural design company originating in Hong Kong. Now part of the Egis Group, 10 Design employs over 380 architects and designers across 10 office locations to provide design services for over 60 cities worldwide
- 10 Design has cemented its global reputation with over 80 international awards and major design competitions. The practice has been ranked one of the world's top 100 architectural practices by Building Design since 2012

 [10design.co](http://10design.co)