



GELM Annex



GELM Annex

by [Diaz-Paunetto Architects](#) as Architects

[FOLLOW](#)



Abstract

“This project aspires to be an example of how the recycling of existing structures can potentially serve as a vehicle for a sustainable development of our built environment. The challenges of demonstrating how adaptive reuse could be seen as a new model for redevelopment was intertwined with the challenges of a designer also working as the builder with an extremely limited budget and time for the execution of this project. GELM Annex is a second commission of the joint Early Head Start and Pre-School Program of Guardería Ecológica La Mina (GELM). The design solution for the rehabilitation of this existing structure dating back to the 1960’s and abandoned since the 1980’s had to strive for simplicity, uniformity and longevity. To this effect a corten steel skin perforated in a pattern derived from the abundant and extensive bamboo hedges that surround the site was designed in an effort to establish a dialogue with the immediate natural context. The skin becomes a sunscreen and jointly with the colored glass panels, introduced in reference to the existing pre-school the building serves, help bathe the interior space with filtered and colored light.”

GELM Annex

The project involves a second Commission at Guardería Ecológica La Mina (GELM). Like the first intervention, the structure was abandoned for over 20 years, and was part of a set of buildings dedicated to vocational instruction and facilities for the Volunteer Corps. The building was used for recreation and sports education on the first floor and cosmetology in the second. The structure is a typical pre-designed concrete structure used by the Department of Education as a module for school expansions since the 1960s, with a second floor built out of concrete block walls and a wooden ceiling that we found totally collapsed upon arrival at the site. Given the project's ecological nature, the building footprint was to remain unchanged and the option of total demolition, although tempting, was immediately discarded with rehabilitation as the only viable choice.

The structure would now serve as a multipurpose hall where meetings could be held by parents, seminars and trainings for teachers, among other uses, as well as a warehouse on the first floor to serve as a support to other schools in the area belonging to the client.

The building presented some challenges in terms of cost and time given the 6 months granted for this design build award, concept under which the Commission was requested. In design terms, the second floor had the potential of having a visual command of the original single level pre-school and the children's recreational area. A concrete slab roof was added which extended to the existing staircase as a shelter from

0 [Tweet](#)

Tags

Project Passport

Location [Puerto Rico](#)

Discipline [Architecture](#)

Program [Primary Schools](#)

rain and sun, and a projected glass volume was placed facing the playing area and the existing massive bamboo. Formally, this volume would act as display or showcase for the pre-school, provoking different readings from users, providing enjoyable views, and at the same time allowing light to enter the space. The challenge of harmonizing the rest of the structure bordered on its demolition, so we decided to cover the building in a skin of Corten Steel, a material of high durability and low maintenance, perforated in a pattern allusive to the bamboo trees next to the building. The skin filters the light entering the space, while at the same time establishing a dialogue with the environment. Colored glass strips are incorporated in the enclosure skin, in reference to the colors used in the pre-school, allowing colored light to bathe the interior space.

Related Links & Articles

 [Diaz-Paunetto Architects Website](#)

Connected Products

Your Opinion

JOIN

to share your opinion. Already joined? [Sign in](#)

Connected Companies & People

Diaz-Paunetto Architects as Architects

FOLLOW

+ Connect Company

Discover more Primary Schools



Mølleholm School



Preschool of Aknaibich