

## 2 months ago Conversions: abandoned concrete structure into classroom

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The Guarderia Ecologica La Mina (GELM) in Corozal, Puerto Rico, is a campus containing several decrepit concrete structures left 20 years in abandon. Upon the school's need for additional classroom spaces, the board commissioned local practice [Díaz Paunetto Arquitectos](#) to take the existing concrete mass and convert it into a functional and architecturally distinct annex.



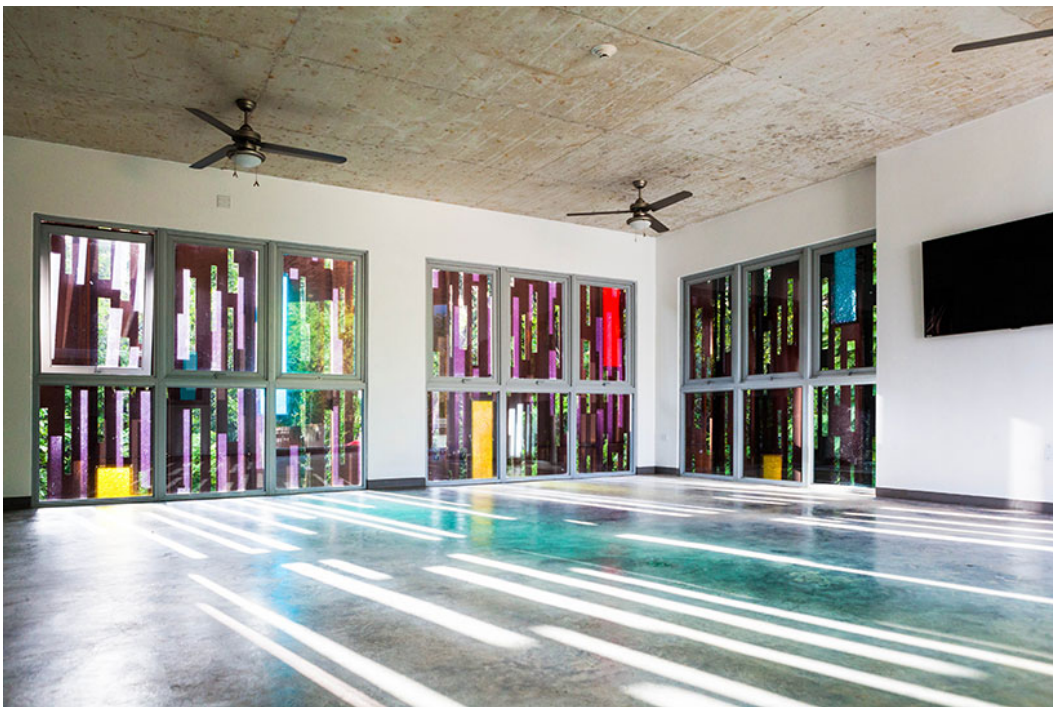
The existing building consisted of a solid concrete lower level and CMU block second story covered by a collapsed wooden roof. For ecological reasons, a total demolition was impossible and the building's footprint was to remain the same, shaping the nature of the project into an exercise in adaptive reuse.



The renewed structure contains a warehouse on the ground level to support the other surrounding buildings and a multifunctional hall above to be used for meetings, teacher training, and seminars, amongst other uses. The external shell was punctured for the installation of several large windows, most notably the projecting white glass cube at the corner extending views over the children's play area.



In addition to the views, this feature also opens the interior space and floods it with light to make it suitable for a wide range of activities. A new concrete roof was installed that wraps the entry staircase providing shade and shelter.



In order to finish the derelict facades, the architects wrapped the entire structure in a second corten skin perforated with long thin vertical penetrations that mirror the same lines and density of the adjacent bamboo forest. Within the cutouts, colored glass panels are inserted to add a touch of color appropriate for the children's preschool. This

metallic membrane completely transforms the previous structure as well as provides shade on the concrete walls of the building, helping to reduce heat gain from direct sunlight.



[Source](#)

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