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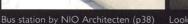
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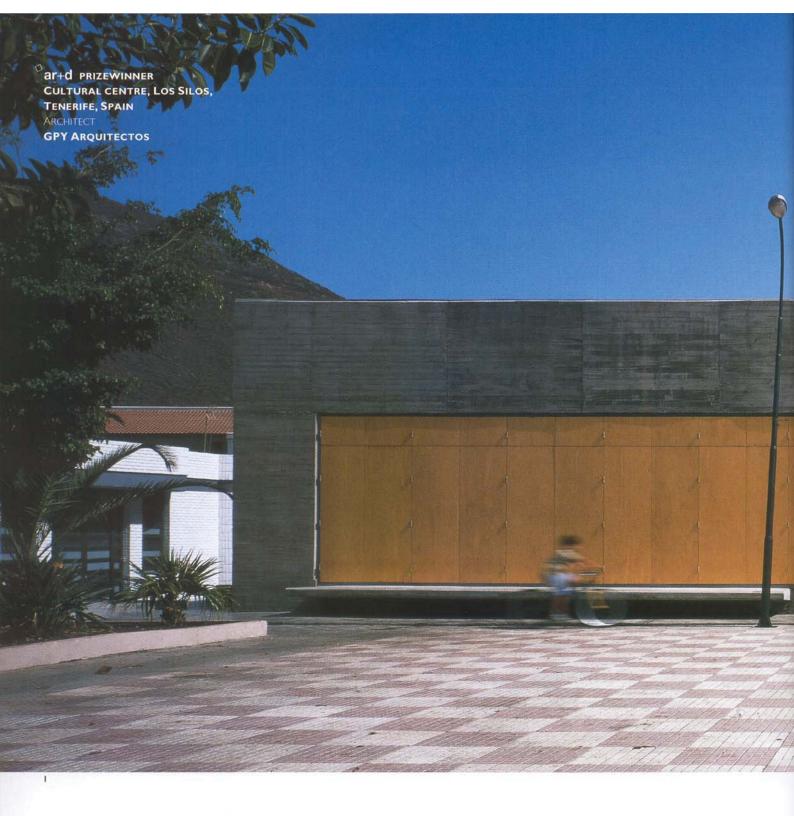
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# SHEDDING LIGHT

A new community centre between two small squares in Tenerife ingeniously interprets the strong light and adds to the public realm.

I Community building allows little chapel to continue to dominate square, while ...

... being very tough and direct.

Los Silos is a little town on the north-western slope of the island of Tenerife, and if you landed there after a blindfolded journey, you might think you were in a provincial Spanish settlement, rather than on an island in the Atlantic some 100km from the north-west coast of Africa. One of the main public spaces in Los Silos is Plaza San Bernardo, where GPY have built their cultural centre.

It serves the whole community and has to offer a very wide range of functions: an assembly hall, a place for conferences, exhibitions and small performances, as well as providing spaces for a library and continuing education. GPY Arquitectos responded to the brief with what is essentially a very simple building on a tight 15m square site. At the level of the San Bernardo plaza is the general purpose hall. To the north is a new public space, the Plaza Príncipe de Asturias, which is lower than San Bernardo, so the building can be at two levels on the Asturias side, with the lower one being devoted to workshops that can be amalgamated as a single space or used as three separate ones.



Next to the new building is the little, modest, but tough (though elegant) San Bernardo chapel, white and Spanish colonial, in a timeless Counter-Reformation style that can be seen from Cadiz to Cartagena. GPY's cultural centre is just as tough (or even tougher), but it politely allows the chapel to continue to command the square, while having a strong presence of its own. Facing on to the square is a blank wall of beton brut and wood with, between the centre and the chapel, a welcoming but mysterious and cavernous entrance.



In good weather, the wooden wall can be folded back to make the assembly room a generous roofed extension of the Plaza San Bernardo, becoming almost a loggia, with dramatic views of the landscape through the mullionless glass north wall. The hall roof has an ingenious section of Z-shaped elements that filter sky light, so the interior is flooded with sunshine that has been modified to avoid glare, while still projecting patterns of light and shade on floor and walls. Down on the Plaza Principe de Asturias, beton brut is little modified: very tough, but a not uncivilized contribution to the new square.

While some jury members had reservations about this side of the building, we were all entranced by the notion of a hall that can become a part of a square, and by the way in which the subtropical light is so carefully and discreetly modified by the ingenious section.

### Architect

GPY Arquitectos, Santa Cruz de Tenerife

### Project team

Juan Antonio González Pérez, Urbano Yanes Tuña, Constanze Sixt, José Domingo Bethencourt, José Miguel Navarro Structural engineer

### Arcal S. L.

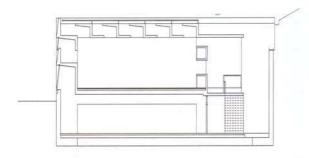
**Photographs** 

Miguel de Guzmán, José Ramón Oller

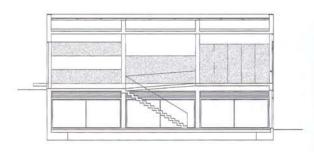
Folding timber wall can be drawn back to make centre part of square.

Tough as the mountain behind it.

Light ingeniously modified by Z-shaped wall and roof details.

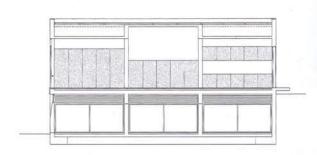


cross section



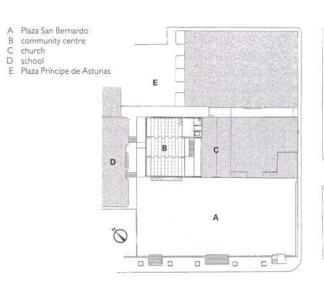
longitudinal section through stairs





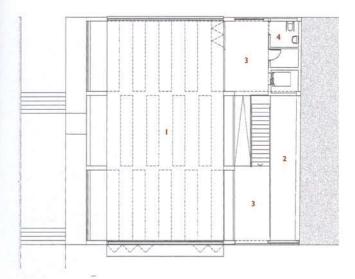
longitudinal section through hall







l hall 2 patio 3 foyer 4 lavatory 5 workshop



5 3 2