Laguna Chapel
Recycled timber church and community center, Zoh Laguna, Mexico

Main authors
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Summary by the jury
The project comprises the rebuilding of a church of an old lumber town on a lagoon in the province of Campeche in Mexico. Wood from the original chapel and other buildings is recycled to erect a modular structure adapted to local timber construction. Respecting the site, the new church and community center define a square for public use, including cultural and educational programs that complement religious activities. The building ensemble uses passive ventilation; rainwater for drinking and irrigation is collected from the roof and outdoor surfaces; polluted water from the lagoon is cleaned.

Appraisal by the jury
To explore the role of memory, both in a spiritual and material sense, is at the core of the project – an investigation strongly commended by the jury. Specifically appreciated is the idea to recycle the wood of previous structures on site to build a new house of worship as well as a community center for the region. The design borrows from tradition without copying historically established forms. On the contrary, a new vocabulary is developed, one taking its cues from new methods of construction and assembly, giving due respect to the tectonic sensibility of the local culture.

Project data

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<th>Context</th>
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Further authors

Image 1: The project tries not only to recycle the wood of the original church, but to recycle the memory of the town, creating a building that has a similar essence to the old one without copying the original typology exactly as it was – but by improving it.

Image 2: Thanks to the indirect light from the roof panels, the interior acquires a deep atmosphere of darkness which is arguably the best light for prayer.