

WORK



AWARD 990 TUCSON, ARIZ.

ROB PAULUS ARCHITECTS • There's something inherently satisfying in a good makeover—the diamond in the rough, buffed and shined. If Eliza Doolittle had her Henry Higgins, then the disused auto repair shop on a dusty Tucson, Ariz., street had Rob Paulus. His design team adapted what was on site, transforming the utilitarian building surrounded by gravelly asphalt into a 4,300-square-foot design office with a landscaped courtyard for the firm.

Constructed in 1978, the existing metal panel building was never a beauty, but it did have an efficient steel structural system. Paulus kept the steel frame, added a new aluminum skin, and heavily insulated the walls against the brutal Arizona sun. There's also a new energy-efficient roof and shaded skylights. Along the north façade, large glass windows take the place of the roll-up doors that used to lead into what was the repair shop; CAD monkeys have replaced grease monkeys inside the modern, open office. An undulating wood-slat ceiling hovers over the workstations, mitigating sound and

taking the edge off of the angular steel structure that denotes the building's industrial past.

Calling the project "very intelligent," the jury was struck by how much of the original structure was repurposed and up-cycled. "I thought they took sustainability really seriously on multiple levels, from adaptive reuse to the systems to the landscaping," Yolande Daniels said. The roll-up doors and leftover structure became a fence on the property, and a demolished CMU wall and steel from an old overhang were transformed into organic garden beds planted with native species (and watered by an onsite water collection system). On-grade parking remained in place, while an old concrete apron was busted up and the pieces used as a mosaic sidewalk. Even the outdoor sculpture was reclaimed: A dramatic cylinder in the garden is actually an old jet cowling. "The thing that appeals to me so much about adaptive reuse is that it's a timely subject," Bill Valentine said. "Frankly, it's a part of a cultural change toward not wasting." **MIMI ZEIGER**