



didea



Prior Ecclesia Project: NEW PATTERNS OF LIGHT

Studio Didea has transformed a deconsecrated 16th-century church in the heart of Alcamo into a luminous contemporary workspace.

Through bold design choices, they've brought light back into the space—creating an environment that speaks to those who inhabit, experience, and work within it.

Their approach reflects a Mediterranean minimalism—one that enhances rather than imposes, bridging historical architecture with contemporary needs.



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Ph. Anna Positano

Palermo, Italy – In downtown Alcamo, a **16th-century deconsecrated church** has become the canvas for an ambitious architectural endeavor. **Studio Didea** took on this challenge, reimagining the historic structure as a contemporary office.



The transformation began with limited original elements. Following extensive interior gutting in the latter half of the 20th century and the addition of a reinforced concrete support structure, only the outer walls remained intact. A significant initial hurdle was the first floor's complete lack of windows.

At the heart of the **Prior Ecclesia** project is the desire to eliminate darkness—removing one of the ceilings to reveal a soaring double-height space, crowned by a generous skylight. *"Light is the most precious element in all our work—always paired with what we call Mediterranean minimalism,"* says **Nicola Andò**, CEO and Creative Director of Didea. *"We work by subtraction, aiming to highlight the inherent charm of a space—in this case, a striking example of Sicilian religious architecture—while meeting the functional needs of its users."*



The Eloquence of Beauty

Natural light pours in from above, illuminating every corner and accentuating the texture of the ancient tuff stone walls, now revealed as a striking architectural backdrop.

The interior design is defined by contrast and lightness, deliberately avoiding additional masonry. The robust concrete frame already in place has been repurposed to support a pillar that spans both levels, organizing the space into four distinct sections that alternate between wood and glass.

Spaces That Tell Stories and Embrace Sustainability

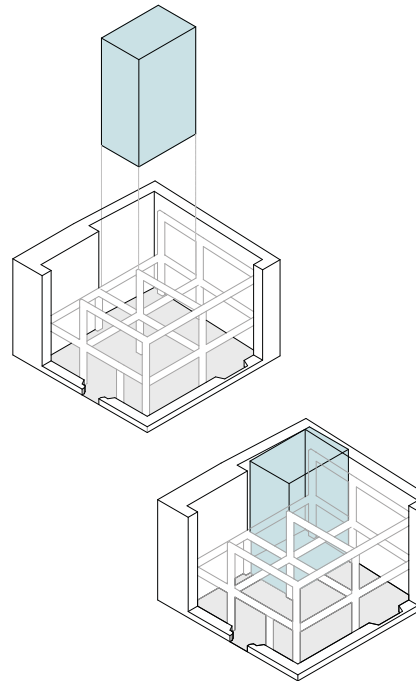
The interiors of Prior Ecclesia evoke the blank pages of a refined notebook—ready to be filled by those who inhabit the space, making it uniquely their own. The layout offers versatility and openness. Flexible workspaces for laptop users flow into quiet concentration areas and dynamic zones for meetings and casual interactions. The design also includes administrative offices, a spacious meeting room, and an open-air relaxation area surrounding the skylight. The material selection is refined and natural. Concrete and wood blend to create a contemporary atmosphere that resonates with the building's history, offering continuity with the ancient stone wall.



Partition elements combine transparency with custom oak components, serving as both storage and architectural articulation—ensuring flexibility and order. Bespoke craftsmanship and user-centered functionality go hand in hand with sustainability principles: the preservation of the existing structure, minimal demolition, and the selection of eco-conscious materials such as aluminum frames and wood fiber roofing that ensure energy efficiency and acoustic comfort.



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Refined, Essential Design

Studio Didea's minimalist approach welcomes rather than dictates. Its Mediterranean essence emerges in the choice of materials, a warm, subtle color palette, and the way it shapes space through light. It's also globally inspired, drawing from design, art, and photography. *"Several influences guided our creative process for Prior Ecclesia,"* concludes **Nicola Andò**. *"Luigi Ghirri's sensitivity to space and light, John Pawson's essential architectural language, and James Turrell's evocative use of light as a transformative architectural element."*



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Notes to Editors

Studio Didea



Founded in 2012 in Palermo by architects Nicola Andò, Giuseppe De Lisi, Emanuela Di Gaetano, and Alfonso Riccio, the studio now operates in both Palermo and Valletta, Malta. The studio specializes in architectural and interior design for residential, commercial, retail, office, and hospitality spaces. Didea is known for its distinctive Mediterranean minimalism – an approach that combines the purity of light with thoughtfully chosen materials to create sensory, sustainable elegance. The firm designs spaces where beauty, history, and the rhythms of contemporary life coexist harmoniously.

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