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CHANNEL GLASS SETS MIXED-USE BUILDING APART
IN ECLECTIC SEATTLE NEIGHBORHOOD

Project: Building 115
Location: Seattle, WA
Architect: Graham Baba Architects
Product: Pilkington Profilit™ with Lumira™ aerogel insulation



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In Seattle's Fremont neighborhood, a collage of vertically oriented, transparent channel glass strips run up the street façade of a new, three-story building. This unexpected and artistic structure is Building 115, a mixed-use residential building developed by Dave Boone, Dave Boone Construction, and designed by Graham Baba Architects of Seattle.

Constrained by zoning requirements, the building makes efficient use of its space by extending up rather than out. Concrete masonry units form the sides of the building, while the bay – a linear sequence of channel glass slots on the front – stretches into the sky. Strategically placed windows and cantilevered floor slabs add dimensionality to the glazed front, which thins as it extends upward to create the illusion of length.

The top portion of the bay conceals a deck and residential unit from the busy street. On the interior, diffuse daylight streams through the channel glass to illuminate the bottom two floors – a bicycle shop and workspace. At night, the bay transforms into a backlit façade.

For Boone, the inspiration for the multi-faceted building came from a desire to consolidate the home, workspace and retail environments in a visually engaging, yet functional fashion: "Fremont is a great neighborhood that describes itself as the "The Center of the Universe" with a lot of eclectic, publicly accessible art. I wanted a building that would contribute to its funky, mixed-use district," says Boone. "A utilitarian place that is a home, an office, a workshop and a retail space while offering something uplifting to the everyday foot and street traffic as they pass by."

In implementing Boone's vision, one of the challenges for Graham Baba Architects was to find a structurally stable, yet aesthetic material that allowed building occupants to engage with the outside environment.

"We wanted to create a building that would visually interact with the street activity. But in order for the space to be livable, we needed to balance transparency with privacy," says Jim Graham, principal, Graham Baba Architects. "We needed a material that would allow us to let in as much light as possible during the day and act as a lantern at night."

The architects found their solution with Pilkington Profilit™ channel glass from Technical Glass Products (TGP), Snoqualmie, Washington. The linear, "U"-shaped, cast-glass channels are self-supporting and mounted in an extruded metal perimeter frame. In the case of Building 115, framing holds the vertical mullions in place on cantilevered floor slabs to add dimension to the uniform surface.

The cast-glass channels are available in a variety of colors and textures with varying translucency, which allows for the passage of natural light without loss of privacy. The channels can be installed vertically or horizontally and can be configured as straight, curved or serpentine walls. Intermediate vertical mullions are generally not required for vertical installations. The channels come in long-lengths: up to 23 feet.

In Building 115, the architects incorporated Lumira™ aerogel in the enclosed space between the channels to further enhance energy performance and reduce sound transmission.

"Pilkington Profilit helped tie the different elements of the building together; it adds character to a structure made of mostly steel and concrete," adds Graham. "It lets in light, allows for privacy and is visually interesting day or night."

For more information on Pilkington Profilit, along with TGP's other specialty architectural glass and framing products, visit www.tgpamerica.com.

To learn more about the work of Graham Baba Architects, visit www.grahambaba.com.

