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CHANNEL GLASS HELPS ATTRACT PUBLIC
TO A MIXED-USED DEVELOPMENT IN AN
INDUSTRIAL NEIGHBORHOOD

Project: Parc on Powell

Location: Emeryville, CA

Architect: Kava Massih Architects

Glazing Contractor: Frisco Pro Building Services

Product: Pilkington Profilit™ channel glass system



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When Equity Residential tapped Kava Massih Architects to design Parc on Powell, a mixed-used development in Emeryville, California, a key project goal was to capture the attention of the public without losing sight of the area's industrial origins. The firm also needed to preserve certain elements of the two buildings on the existing site.

"The building on the north side of the site had a brick façade, which the city and neighborhood wanted to maintain," said J. Connor, principal, Kava Massih Architects. "But, we didn't want both buildings to be the same. We wanted to give them their own identity to bring distinction to the exterior."

Kava Massih Architects' solution resulted in an intriguing addition to the Emeryville neighborhood. The firm chose an industrial material palette for both exterior façades, utilizing stucco, metal siding, brick, and wood components. To differentiate the two structures, they contrasted the materials on the southernmost building with approximately 3,600 square feet of Pilkington Profilit™ channel glass from Technical Glass Products (TGP).

The linear, "U"-shaped, cast-glass channels are self-supporting and mounted in an extruded metal perimeter frame. They can be installed in vertical and horizontal orientations, as was the case in Parc on Powell, and provide a depth and profile not found in conventional glazing.

"By incorporating the channel glass as a design element, we were able to provide a distinct identity for one of the buildings, while offsetting it with wood elements on the second building. This helped us give the two main buildings on the site their own identity and also reduce the apparent scale of the project," said Connor.

In addition to differentiating the buildings, Kava Massih Architects used channel glass to engage pedestrians at the street level. This was particularly true for an expansive four-sided, channel glass tower at the corner of the building, which faces the prominent intersection of Powell and Hollis streets.

"The channel glass tower is designed to serve as a marker and help identify this corner of the city," explained Connor. "The material's translucency allows it to glow at night from the interior lights, welcoming the public. During the day, it is reflective from the nature of the glass."



To create the defining tower, the firm used horizontally glazed channel glass segments that extend 194-7/8 inches at their widest point. Since the typical limit for channel glass in horizontal openings is 156 inches wide, the firm worked with TGP to develop a custom wind and dead load clip system. It helps brace the cast-glass channels and allows them to extend beyond what is normally achievable. This approach also eliminated the need for two smaller independent elevations joined together in the middle by back-to-back jamb frame members, which would have prevented the seamless look the design team wanted.

The channel glass tower also incorporates stepped transitions. In these instances, single-width modules and flange cut pieces of channel glass (L-shaped pieces) allow the assembly to move around fixed objects and create the striking anchor feature that Kava Massih Architects desired.

To complement the channel glass tower, the firm designed balconies with horizontal channel glass strips inset into elevations. Vertical channel glass fins add variation and movement. The fins protrude perpendicularly from the flat face of the building and extend up, often continuously, between sunshades at the fourth story of the building. According to Connor, these fins serve both a design and functional purpose.

“In the elevation, the channel glass fins appear as vertical lines. But, when you view them in perspective, as you would from the street, you see the actual side of the fin and the channel glass. As you get closer to each fin, you see more of the glass,” Connor explained. “They provide a rhythm to the building and tie the main corner entry to the entire project. From a functional standpoint, they serve as a privacy panel between two decks.”

Pilkington Profilit channel glass from TGP soars up to 23 feet, can be installed vertically or horizontally, and formed into straight or curved walls. It is available in a variety of textures and colors with varying degrees of translucency, allowing light through while maintaining privacy. Pilkington Profilit can be used in interior or exterior applications, with Lumira® aerogel to provide energy efficiency.

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

