

Case Study



Pittsburgh Glass Center

PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA

Architect

Indovina & Associates

Vitro Glass Products

VacuMax™ Vacuum Insulating Glass (VIG)
Solarban® 72 Starphire® Glass

Vitro Certified® Fabricator

United Plate Glass

Glazing Contractor

Southwest Aluminum & Glass Co., Inc.

General Contractor

The Albert M. Higley Co.

Photographer

Jim Cunningham



As a devoted supporter of the Pittsburgh Glass Center (PGC), Vitro donated Solarban® 72 Starphire® glass and VacuMax™ VIG to the landmark renovation and expansion of PGC.

PROJECT BACKGROUND

The Pittsburgh Glass Center (PGC) recently completed a historic \$15 million expansion, a project that underscores its dedication to artistic innovation, community enrichment and education. This ambitious undertaking not only expanded physical capacity but also elevated the center's ability to provide inspirational programming and support to the community it serves.

A pivotal contributor to this transformation was Vitro Architectural Glass, whose donation of VacuMax™ Vacuum Insulating Glass (VIG) and Solarban® 72 Starphire® glass significantly enhanced the center's functionality, sustainability and aesthetic appeal.

VacuMax™ VIG is one of Vitro's highest-performing products, offering exceptional energy efficiency and design flexibility. Featuring two 4mm glass lites separated by a vacuum space and a proprietary edge seal, VIG delivers center-of-glass (COG) R-values comparable to the thermal performance of traditional walls.

Notably, this project marks the first use of VIG in a Pittsburgh-based development.

Solarban® 72 Starphire® glass provides high visible light transmittance (VLT), exceptional clarity and superior solar control performance. In a standard one-inch insulating glass unit (IGU), Solarban® 72 Starphire® glass delivers a VLT of 68% and a solar heat gain coefficient (SHGC) of 0.28.

Western PA Connection

Vitro is the largest glass manufacturer in North America, celebrated for its industry-leading, high-performance, low embodied carbon glass that graces iconic skylines around the world. With roots tracing back to the founding of Pittsburgh Plate Glass (PPG) in 1883 in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, Vitro remains deeply committed to supporting local organizations like PGC, which has a profound impact on the communities of Pittsburgh and western Pennsylvania—regions special to Vitro.

Nestled in Pittsburgh's Friendship neighborhood, the Pittsburgh Glass Center has been a vibrant hub for glass art since its establishment in 2001. Offering workshops, classes and exhibitions for everyone from beginners to seasoned artists, PGC has flourished over the past two decades, earning a reputation as a premier destination for creativity and glassmaking education. To meet growing demand and expand its reach, PGC embarked on its historic renovation and expansion, adding housing for apprentices and visiting artists, a gallery showcasing emerging talent and enhanced programming, to better serve the community.



PGC's new look facade.

Additional partners who contributed to this project include, United Plate Glass, the glass fabricator, and the glazier, Southwest Aluminum & Glass Co., Inc., both of whom are based in western Pennsylvania, further strengthening the regional connection.

Boosting Performance, Expanding Possibilities

The expansion added 11,000 square feet to PGC, introducing new studio spaces, a retail store, and enhanced community programming. This growth also allowed PGC to broaden its unique apprenticeship program, reinforcing its dedication to fostering talent within the glass-blowing community.

One of the most striking features of the expansion is the state-of-the-art glass-blowing studio on the third floor, complete with the Vitro Patio—an outdoor deck designed for visitors to enjoy glassblowing demonstrations and other engaging activities in an open-air setting.

The extensive renovation has revitalized this vibrant community hub, gallery and studio, reigniting excitement and pride among the artists and patrons who gather here. Through the innovative use of Vitro Glass, PGC has crafted a truly unique space designed to inspire and serve the community for generations to come.

"We take pride in integrating our glass into this historic renovation and expansion, ensuring that visitors from around the globe can enjoy the finest views and optimal occupant comfort while visiting PGC," said Vitro Architectural Glass President Ricardo Maiz.

This transformation highlights the power of collaboration between the arts and industry, showcasing how such partnerships can fuel cultural enrichment while driving economic growth.

To learn more about Vitro's architectural glass products, or to find a member of the Vitro Certified® Network, visit vitroglazings.com or call 1-855-VTRO-GLS (887-6457).

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