GLASS & METAL ALLIANCE

AMERICAN BIBLE SOCIETY VESTIBULE
PHILADELPHIA, PA

Proactive planning makes the difference for an all-glass entry.

By: Amanda Gibney Weko

CASE STUDY

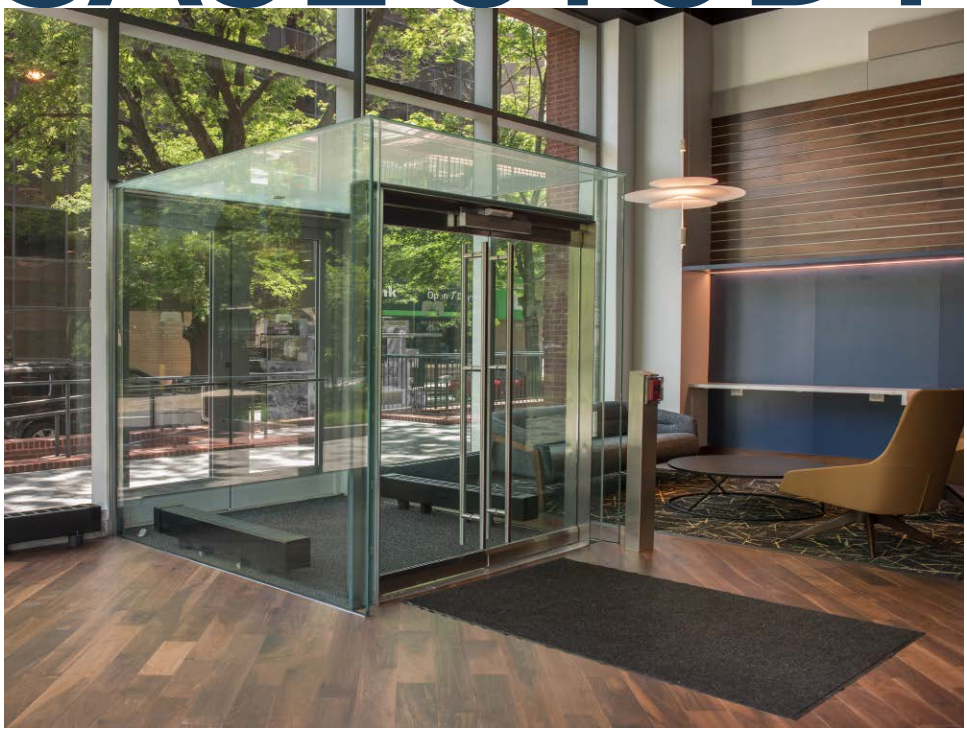
GMA Glazier
Paul Rabinowitz Glass Co., Inc.
Philadelphia, PA

Team
GC: INTECH Construction
Architect: Jacobs Wyper Architects
Owner: American Bible Society

Scope
All-glass entry vestibule and interior fit-out

Project Size
56 square-foot vestibule
12,750 square-foot fit-out

Completion
November 2021



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INTRODUCTION

Headquartered in Philadelphia, the American Bible Society (ABS) is a non-denominational Christian network that translates, prints, and distributes Bibles worldwide.

ABS recently opened a 40,000-square-foot interactive museum at its Independence Mall location. GMA member glazing contractor Paul Rabinowitz Glass Company, Inc. fabricated and installed an all-glass vestibule that welcomes visitors into a new area created for presentations and events. Additional project scope included interior storefront glass, doors, and framing.

GLASS BOX

Jacobs Wyper Architects envisioned a minimalistic, all-glass box for the new vestibule. Rabinowitz Glass answered the call with a structurally glazed solution. Roughly cube-shaped, the vestibule extends from existing exterior doors into the space eight feet deep and seven feet wide. It is just over eight feet tall.

The company collaborated with a vendor who fabricated two portals of custom stainless steel into which Rabinowitz Glass erected 13/16-inch thick panels, each comprised of two pieces of 3/8-inch clear tempered glass laminated together using SentryGlas® interlayer for superior strength. The vestibule walls are capped with a frosted glass lid that allows light on all sides while obscuring the view above. A custom hole within the glass ceiling fits a sprinkler head for fire safety. New interior doors are also full-glass Herculite style with custom brushed stainless steel-wrapped pulls to match the portal structure. A small transom and side lites surround the interior doors.

ADVANCE PLANNING

"Coordination and correspondence with the design team were critical in releasing material into production prior to having substructure in place," explained Rabinowitz Glass Project Manager Kevin Moran. Rabinowitz Glass was awarded the project

in April 2021. As construction on the space continued over the summer months, the team needed to confirm heights for the floor and structural steel – neither of which were yet installed. "We followed our rigorous process of checking and re-checking to ensure accuracy along the way," Moran added.

NACC IMPACT

Rabinowitz Glass has held the North American Contractor Certification (NACC) since 2016. The comprehensive certification program assesses glazing contractors on an annual basis, ensuring they meet high standards for glazing practices, business, and operations. According to Moran and Rabinowitz Glass Director of Operations Steve Weiner, the company implemented additional project oversights and an intense safety program because of certification. The systems of checks and balances limit risks that might negatively impact customers or delay projects.

The Rabinowitz Glass vestibule project team consisted of Moran, Weiner, and Project Engineer Adam Rosenwasser. Weiner handled all labor in the shop and field for installation. Rosenwasser was in charge of submittals and maintaining material lists and field correspondences. They were supported by a crew of glaziers.

"The glaziers are critical players who assemble the final product and make us all look good," emphasized Moran, but the well-oiled machine behind the scenes meant the project stayed on track without any issues. In fact, when vestibule construction began in early October, that portion of work was completed in about a week. Despite the project's complexity, the advance planning paid off. Rabinowitz finished its scope on schedule in November.

ADDITIONAL SCOPE

Beyond the vestibule, Rabinowitz Glass did additional glazing for the presentation area fit-out including interior storefront glass, doors, and frames. The presentation space features bleacher-style seating for video programs and events. Butt-glazed, one-way mirror glass forms a frameless corner window for the A/V production room located beside the bleachers. Additional glazing scope included custom architectural glazing films etched with the ABS logo and a purple full-coverage film to obscure views toward the adjacent Wells Fargo museum located on the same floor of the building.

GC SATISFACTION

The performance and proactive planning of Rabinowitz Glass impressed the general contractor, INTECH Construction. "The glass at American Bible Society was a critical element in the new design. It required seamless detailing and installation so the interior spaces could feel integral to the active city sidewalks," said INTECH Project Manager Patrick Reilly. "Kevin Moran and his team at Rabinowitz Glass did an excellent job at realizing the design vision."