

Case Study



Renewal



Sustainable



Color



Education



Recreation/Civic

PROJECT CREDITS

Owner

United Neighborhood Organization (UNO)
Charter School Network

Architect/Designers

UrbanWorks, Ltd.
Chicago, IL

Vitro Products

Solarban® 60 glass

General Contractor

F.H. Paschen/DENCO Construction
Management (Design/Build)

Glazing Fabricator

TRACO
Cranberry Township, PA

Glazing Contractor

Auburn Corporation
Chicago



United Neighborhood Organization (UNO) Veterans Memorial Campus at Archer Heights

CHICAGO, IL

PROJECT BACKGROUND

When UrbanWorks, a Chicago-based architectural firm, joined with the United Neighborhood Organization (UNO) to turn an abandoned warehouse into an urban charter campus school, they did more than remake a building. They also made sustainability part of an entire neighborhood curriculum.

Located near Chicago's Midway Airport, the UNO Charter School Veterans Memorial Campus at Archer Heights is a 175,000 square-foot, LEED® Gold certified structure that houses two elementary schools and a high school under a single roof.

Juan Rangel, chief executive office of UNO, selected UrbanWorks because the firm's commitment to socially and environmentally responsible design dovetailed with his organization's desire to promote sustainability and environmental awareness in its schools and surrounding neighborhoods.

The result of their collaboration is a stunning brick and concrete structure with a sparkling glass façade fabricated from *Solarban*® 60 solar control low-e glass by Vitro Architectural Glass (formerly PPG glass). Project manager and project architect Maria Pellet, AIA, LEED AP, an architect with UrbanWorks, said the choice of *Solarban*® 60 glass was made with functional and design considerations in mind.

"Specifying the appropriate type of glass for the application is extremely important in our projects," she explained. "The glazing products we selected for this project provided the appropriate level of noise and temperature insulation, vandal resistance, clarity of vision and color variety we needed."

Pellet's point was echoed by Jim Price, manager of business development for Auburn Corporation, the glazing contractor. He cited the school's proximity to Midway Airport as a particular challenge. "On all floors above the first floor, acoustically enhanced laminated glass was used for lowering the noise levels and sound transmission from overhead planes flying into and out of the airport," he said.



UNO Veterans Memorial Campus at Archer Heights

Along with making the school safer, quieter and more comfortable, glass was critical to establishing boundaries within the building itself. Pelot said one of the most difficult tasks was incorporating a design that would accommodate two elementary schools and a high school in a single building shell.

“We used the glazing on this project as an extension of the color schemes within the schools,” she explained. “The use of colored glass allowed for the individuality of each school to be read from the building exterior.”

Solarban® 60 glass enabled UNO to fulfill its commitment to making the school both “green” and “functional.” When combined with conventional clear glass in a one-inch insulating glass unit, *Solarban*® 60 glass blocks more than 60 percent of the sun’s energy, which helps to lower air-conditioning costs. In the winter, a south-facing glass wall captures warm air to help heat the building, which the *Solarban*® 60 glass coating helps to retain.

The transparent appearance of *Solarban*® 60 glass and its ability to transmit up to 70 percent of the sun’s natural light was another asset. “With a movement toward more environmentally and socially conscious architecture, daylight and views are becoming key design features,” Pelot explained. “Client awareness and expectations in this area have increased.”

In addition to being a learning center for students during the day, the building was designed to be a gathering place for the local neighborhood during off-school hours. Community spaces are multi-functional and the building serves to educate parents and other adults about the actions they can take to reduce their environmental impact.

Rangel believes the extensive application of *Solarban*® 60 glass was important for communicating the school’s role as a community center to local residents. “The glass makes a bold statement in the building design, and the whole structure beautifies the neighborhood,” he said. “The school is very symbolic of transformation. Being responsible for future generations and taking that responsibility seriously is our mission. We believe anything is possible.”

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Jim Price agreed that the glass helps the school seem more friendly and approachable. “The glass entrance is a warm welcome sign to invite in both the students and the community,” he noted.

The UNO Charter School at Archer Heights is the second green renovation Rangel’s organization has undertaken in Chicago. Now that the building is open, he views the project as an unequivocal success. “This was once an abandoned industrial bakery,” he said. “Now the facility features a glass façade and community space, environmentally sustainable elements, and abundant natural light. It is a building worthy of the children who are educated there.

“This facility alleviated severe overcrowding at other Archer Heights’ schools, and it was completed at half the cost of a traditional school on an aggressive construction schedule,” he added.