



Important Information for Architects

About the articulation of light within your building

Many inexperienced or inadequately trained glass artists do not have any understanding of the effects of colors and light in a building. Some designers see the window as their canvas, as a painter would. They do not consider the projection of the light, or the relationship between the window and the other forms in the architectural design. This, unfortunately disappoints many architects, ruining the realm for carefully trained artists who do. Stained glass art does not stop at the window edge. Because it articulates light, it pervades the entire interior of whatever space it is installed in. It is therefore essential that stained glass designer and architect maintain a good dialogue throughout the design process. Bringing the glass designer into the process early in the design phases of the architecture is most beneficial to everyone involved, most especially the owner. Many glare problems can be avoided, many opportunities can be explored in the fenestration of the building. Proper frames, with reasonable panel sizes and adequate protective glazing should be specified in the initial plan in order to avoid additional costs of retrofitting later.

Maximum size of panels, general rules of thumb: 12-15 sq. ft.

A leaded stained glass window generally weighs: 6-8 lb per sq. ft.

A faceted stained glass window (1" thick glass pieces cast in an epoxy resin matrix) generally weighs: 12-15 lbs per sq. ft.

It is advisable, but not essential that faceted glass have exterior protective glazing.

Frames, whether steel, wood, or aluminum, should be of a profile that provides a channel for the protective glazing (glass or plastic) installable from the exterior; and an interior channel of 3/8" for leaded glass or 3/4" for faceted glass, installable from the interior. There should be a minimum of 1/2" of space (preferably an inch or more) between the exterior glazing and the stained glass. The interior of the frame should be somehow vented to allow for the dissipation of any moisture that may occur between the panels. Of course the exterior glazing should be weather sealed. At no time should the two layers touch. Generally, the frames and exterior glazing can be provided under construction contract, with the stained glass installed near the end of the construction, or after completion of construction.

Important note on scheduling a stained glass window for a new building:

Though the design of the window should proceed in the early stages of architectural design, it is quite impossible to fabricate a window until the frames can be measured in the field, or sometimes at the frame manufacturer's plant. Unfortunately, most window frames are installed rather late in the construction schedule of the building. This creates a "time pinch" since stained glass of any significant size can take months to construct. The exterior protective glazing allows for the sealing of the building, but clients should be prepared to wait for the stained glass in the case of a major size window commission.