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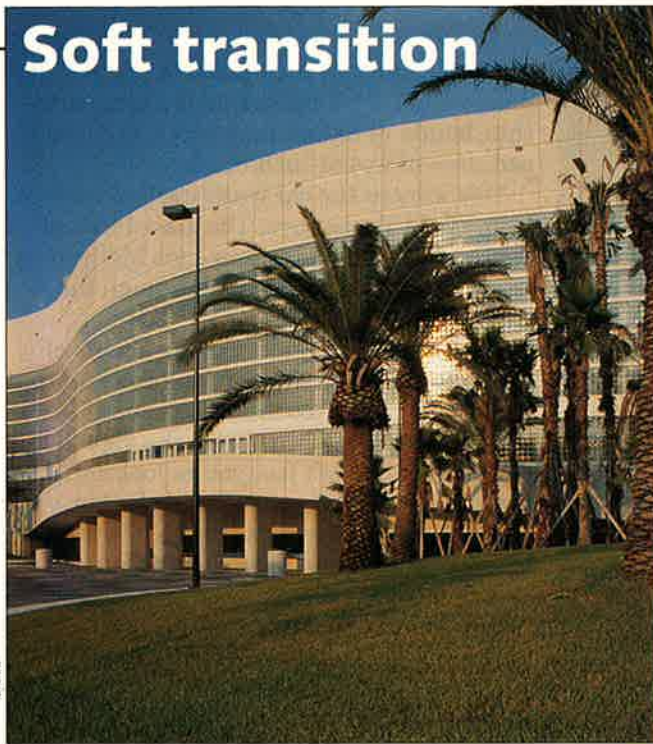
The Aberdeen Group[®]

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Glass block ■ Special shapes ■ Trucks & trailers

Soft transition

Weck Glass Block/Glashaus Inc.



The Orlando Sports Arena includes 23,500 pieces of translucent glass block, chosen to soften the building's impact on a residential neighborhood nearby.

The Orlando Sports Arena contains 23,500 pieces of 12x12x4-inch translucent glass block, as well as precast concrete and clear plate glass. To the west of the stadium is a residential neighborhood; to the east, the city's central business district. By using glass block on the 470,000-square-foot building's east and west surfaces, "we were trying to minimize the apparent mass of the building," explains Bob G. Fillpot of Lloyd-Jones-Fillpot, a Houston-based architectural firm.

Spectators enter through the stadium's north and south sides, which are predominantly plate glass. But for people approaching the building from the east or west side, "we wanted to diffuse the activity inside the building," Fillpot says. "We wanted to soften the distinct lines of the seating and the interior architecture. We wanted the interior to appear more mysterious than it would through clear glass windows."

At night, when the Orlando Sports Arena is lit, the glass block diffuses the light through the east and west walls, so it isn't harsh.

From the interior, the glass block allow spectators negotiating the concourse to perceive the surrounding landscape. "There is enough visibility for people to see the shapes of palm trees," Fillpot observes. "Glass block allows us to relate the interior to the exterior in a subtle manner. It softens the transition of one space to another."

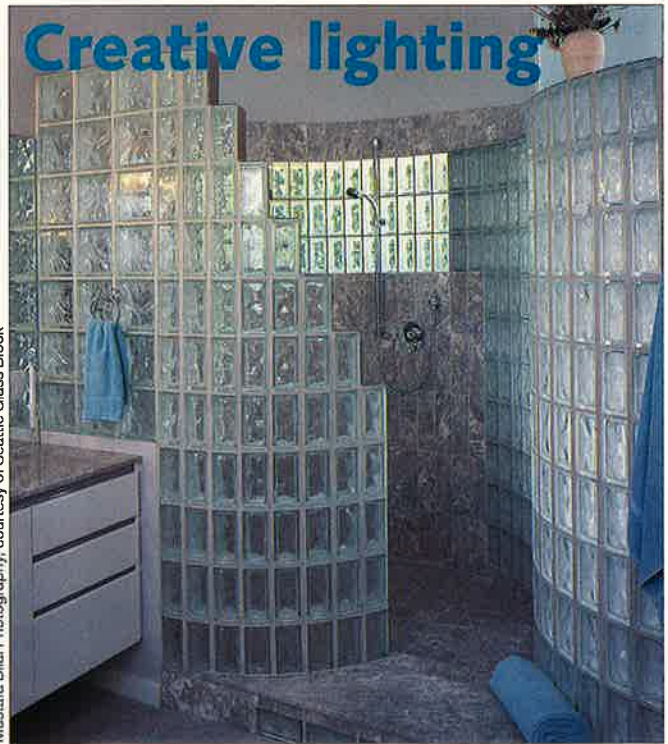
Orlando Sports Arena

Architect: Lloyd-Jones-Fillpot, Houston

Masonry contractor: Pyramid Masonry, Orlando

Creative lighting

Mustafa Bilal Photography, courtesy of Seattle Glass Block



Above: Curved glass block walls in the shower impart a feeling of openness. Facing page: Green neon lighting shines through the glass block base of the island counter, complementing the green tint of the units under the cabinets and the visible Pacific Northwest woodland.

The 4,700-square-foot Wright residence in the Seattle suburb of Woodinville, Wash., features glass block in three different sizes—8x8, 6x8, and 4x8 inches—all nominally 4 inches thick. The translucent units are used in the kitchen and bathroom and along a staircase by the entryway.

In the kitchen, glass block were placed under the cabinets to let natural light illuminate the counter work area, notes Roger MacPhearson of MacPhearson Construction & Design in Issaquah, Wash. Tinted green, these units are etched with a diamond-shaped pattern. This green strip complements the lush Pacific Northwest woodland seen through the large plate glass window on the adjacent wall.

The base of the kitchen's high, semicircular island consists entirely of glass block, lit from behind by low-voltage, green neon lighting. "Glass block allows me to be more creative in the design and do things you don't see every day," MacPhearson says. "It allows me to tie together many different areas in a house."

Curved glass block walls in the bathroom's shower area complement the home's other architectural curves. "We use glass block in showers to create a feeling of openness and light," MacPhearson explains.

Moreover, a glass block shower enclosure doesn't require cleaning, he says. "Clients don't even have to wipe it down; it doesn't show soap scum as do clear glass shower doors."

Wright Residence, Woodinville, Wash.

Builder/Architect: MacPhearson Construction & Design, Issaquah, Wash.

Installer: Seattle Glass Block

(more)