



SUBARU OF AMERICA, INC. HEADQUARTERS CAMDEN, N.J.

Contractor flexibility balances interior glazing and cost savings.

By: Amanda Gibney Weko

CASE STUDY

AGI Glazier

Eureka Metal & Glass Services, Inc.
Philadelphia, Pa.

Team

Owner: Subaru of America, Inc.
General Contractor: Turner
Architect: Granum A/I

Scope

1,750 linear feet (16,000 SF) of
glass partitions and aluminum
framing in over 150 rooms

Completion

April 2018



Meeting rooms with angled glass and aluminum partitions (photo © Jeffrey Totaro)

INTRODUCTION

The April 2018 grand opening of Subaru of America's headquarters in Camden, N.J., marked the company's consolidation of four facilities into one campus. Subaru of America, Inc., President and CEO Thomas J. Doll remarked at the time, "Our move to Camden is the next chapter in the long-term future of Subaru in the Delaware Valley. We have called this place 'home' for 50 years and we are thrilled that we will continue to be a part of the local community we have supported for so long."

From the \$90 million corporate headquarters and \$48 million National Service Training Center, Subaru markets and distributes vehicles, parts, and accessories through a network of over 630 retailers across the U.S. For the first time, 900 area employees, contractors, and vendors can share space, foster communication, and encourage efficiency. Architecture of the new 250,000-square-foot, LEED Silver certified facility by Granum A/I reinforces Subaru's culture, atmosphere, and values with a flexible, light-filled design.

FLEXIBLE AND LIGHT-FILLED

Strategic project goals included providing an agile workplace to support multi-generational and multi-departmental collaboration as well as environmental responsibility. On each of five office floors, glass-walled conference and meeting rooms ring a central commons area. The use of interior glass partitions serves to reinforce visual connectivity and provide access to natural light.

OPEN TO OPPORTUNITY

AGI member glazing contractor Eureka Metal & Glass Services, Inc. performed the interior glass scope of work, encompassing 1,750 linear feet (16,000 square feet) of glass partitions and aluminum framing in over 150 rooms. Eureka's attention to detail and willingness to suggest an alternate during the bid phase identified a cost-saving opportunity.

As proposed by a furniture vendor, the glass was intended to be demountable, or able to be removed with minimal impact to the



Left to right: conference room with back-painted glass (photo © Jeffrey Totaro), detail of butt-joined glass corner; detail of caulk and aluminum framing showing butt-joined glass detail and acute angle (final walkthrough photos © Amanda Weko)

surrounding walls. Demountable installations typically require finished drywall surfaces, so that if the partitions are removed only minor patching of anchor holes is required. Demountable glass offers accelerated tax depreciation and the flexibility for future space reconfiguration. ([Read more about demountable glass here.](#))

As Eureka President Terry Webb explained, the two primary benefits of demountable glass weren't relevant: the headquarters' open-concept design already incorporated spatial flexibility and Camden is in a targeted tax zone. Subaru opted to go instead with traditional stick-built glass. "During the shop drawing phase, Eureka was engaged in conversation with Turner regarding changing the jambs and heads to eliminate over 4,600 linear feet of finished drywall," Webb said. The change to traditionally mounted glass also eliminated 4,600 linear feet of dual corner beads and spackle finishing, offering significant cost savings for Subaru. "We were nimble enough to make the change on the fly, executing the change without affecting the schedule."

CHALLENGING ANGLES

Eureka Foreman Steve Metzger led the project through installation of most of the glass partitions. The angled walls of many of the meeting rooms required precision cutting and assembly of aluminum framing. Inconsistent angle dimensions – some as small as 35 degrees – necessitated the use of a contractor's compass in the field and a great deal of coordination with McGrory Glass. "Once we figured out the angles, the shop would cut pieces before sending them out," Metzger explained. He personally handled many of the most difficult room installations and

together he and his crew matched every angle with precision. Metzger is quick to point out that Eureka Project Manager Cory Webb's coordination of equipment and materials kept the project organized and efficient.

DECORATIVE GLASS

Eureka Foreman Steve Finkbiner led installation of 135 linear feet of back-painted decorative glass, which involved the use of ultra-clear water caulk. The caulk began to set in as little as five minutes, meaning every caulk joint had to be installed perfectly to avoid bubbles. The clear nature of the caulk also made it nearly invisible – with the potential for someone to accidentally touch or disrupt the caulk before it fully cured. Finkbiner literally hung a 'wet caulk' sign on each panel (400-500 in total) as a precaution.

LOADING BY LULL

The building's lack of exterior hoist or elevators during construction presented a final challenge. All loading of framing and heavy half-inch glass partitions was done by lull, a type of telescoping reach forklift. Advance planning couldn't save the crew having to walk up and down five flights of stairs but did ensure glass and aluminum deliveries were made to specific floors to avoid material transport.

Finkbiner believes the planning, coordination, and teamwork led to the project's successful completion. "I had a good crew who worked really hard and we knew and worked together with all the other trades. It seems like a little thing, but it makes a project stand out."