

# USGlass

METAL & GLAZING

THE MAGAZINE OF RECORD FOR ARCHITECTURAL GLASS INDUSTRY LEADERS

Volume 56  
Issue 4  
April 2021

## Renovation and Retrofit Opportunities

A  
**KM&R**  
PUBLICATION

Free Subscriptions Available at [glass.com/subcenter](http://glass.com/subcenter)  
LARGEST CIRCULATION OF ANY GLASS MAGAZINE

# New Life for Old Buildings

Renovation Projects Pose Unique Challenges for Glaziers



“Whether it’s the owner of an architectural home who wants to preserve or enhance its beauty, or a global luxury retailer whose interior design must adhere to strict aesthetic standards, clients expect perfection.”

**F**rom outfitting luxury homes with architecturally significant glass installations, to refreshing outdated office spaces with new and exciting glazing concepts, our team is well-versed in the transformative power of a makeover. A beautifully executed redesign or addition can breathe new life into a building, retaining its essence and history while adapting it to meet the ever-changing needs of the present.

Like any construction project, renovations never go precisely as planned. Unlike new construction, renovations can sometimes unveil a series of historical layers that present unique challenges. Whether renovating a private home or a major commercial building, it’s important to approach each project as a new opportunity to learn. Here are some of the biggest lessons we’ve accrued over the years.

## Preparation Affords Flexibility

Glazing is a finish trade, meaning that on any construction site, our crews are among the last to install their work. This position can be a challenge. Not only is our schedule dependent on the progress of multiple other trades, but because we’re the last to get to work, we also tend to bear the brunt of project delays – either in blame or in requests to make up the lost time. Add to that the unpredictability of renovation work—where a preexisting structural issue can domino into multiple major hold-ups—and you’re looking at substantial scheduling woes.

To ensure that we can complete our work as quickly and effectively as possible, contract glaziers have to prepare for many different scenarios. We need to gather all information, and communicate with general contractors as soon as we learn of a potential delay. We must have alternative work plans ready for another trade’s delay. We need to share those alternative plans, and cultivate strong relationships with material manufacturers and equipment suppliers, so we can efficiently adjust deliveries and rentals as our sched-

ule changes. Essentially, it means having all of our resources align so we can proactively problem solve, no matter what arises.

## Be Efficient

Renovation projects can involve high-end homes, luxury retailers, highrise office buildings, condos, and apartments. Each structure carries its own limitations when it comes to accessibility. Due to their exclusive nature, high-end homes are often tucked away into steep hillsides, and reside in zones where local ordinances limit work hours to mitigate noise. Highrises are, as the name implies, extremely tall, and demand specific equipment and well-trained teams to navigate. They also often require city permits and/or street closures for both access and safety. Retailers and office spaces can’t be worked on easily during office hours, while work on apartment buildings must consider tenants at all hours.

## Be Vigilant

Whether it’s the owner of an architectural home or a global luxury retailer, clients expect perfection. That means being vigilant in every area of work, whether it’s requiring glaziers to wear slip-on booties to keep surfaces clean, or speaking up when an ambitious architectural design does not pass code, and could put safety at risk. Do everything you can to make sure all work is completed to the highest standard. Should issues arise, assess your role in contributing to them, take responsibility, and do what’s needed to make it right.

By applying these principles, contract glaziers can continue to grow and evolve. Come to think of it, that sounds a lot like the goal of a renovation itself: preserving integrity while adapting and shifting to meet the needs of the future.

**USG**

➔ **Nataline Lomedico** is the president and CEO of Giroux Glass, headquartered in Los Angeles. The company has been in business since 1946.