



Photography: © Perzel Photography Group

ARCHITECT

GGLO Design
Seattle, Washington

OWNER

Washington State University
Pullman, Washington

GENERAL CONTRACTOR

Absher Construction Company
Puyallup, Washington

CONTRACTOR/INSTALLER

Skaug Brothers Glass
Moses Lake, Washington

KAWNEER PRODUCTS

1600 SS Curtain Wall System
for serpentine curtain wall

1600 Wall System®1 Curtain Wall
for all other curtain wall

500 Wide Stile Standard Entrances
for interior locations

AA®425 Thermal Entrances
for exterior locations

Trifab® VersaGlaze® 450 Framing System
1-3/4" sightline for interior locations

Elson S. Floyd Cultural Center, Washington State University

PULLMAN, WASHINGTON

Elson S. Floyd Cultural Center Washington State University

PULLMAN, WASHINGTON

PROJECT PROFILE
EDUCATION

A TRIBUTE TO CULTURE AND DIVERSITY

Designed to celebrate the multitude of cultures as well as education and diversity on the Washington State University campus in Pullman, the Elson S. Floyd Cultural Center serves as a gathering space that, according to the university's website, "provides inclusive, creative and educational programming to empower and transform individuals and communities." The 16,000-square-foot building was a design-build concept developed in partnership between Seattle-based GGLO Design and Puyallup, Washington-based Absher Construction Company. Inspired by the native Palouse Prairie landscape, the building features curved walls and an overlapping roof that pay homage to the rolling hills and topography of the area. Additionally, the building includes four knowledge rooms, an art gallery, a patio, a meditation pavilion, and a demonstration kitchen to help bring the community together for education and critical dialogue.

DESIGN HIGHLIGHTS

To reflect the natural landscape of the area, the building's shape is intentionally organic, with undulating walls absent of any 90° angles. A sizeable glass façade allows occupants to view the outside while the singular, iconic sweeping roof incorporating local Oregonian cedar further connects the building to nature. Though the building features a serpentine façade, durable, rigid systems with right angles were required to support the weight of wood and glass. Skaug Brothers Glass, based in Moses Lake, Washington, worked with Kawneer to identify a screw spline curtain wall system that would provide the design flexibility and performance the project required.

CHALLENGES

- To imitate movement, the design featured a multitude of angles (none of which were right angles) in various planes.
- An aggressive construction schedule and winter weather conditions required the serpentine wall to be prefabricated, installed and glazed to minimize the interior building's exposure to the elements.

- Large pieces of glass (58" x 113"), each weighing between 300 to 325 pounds, were specified to be used on the façade. The curved roof structure projected out in front of these large pieces of glass, creating an installation challenge.
- Washington state energy codes require a high level of thermal performance, and sustainability and resource efficiency were essential to the project.

SOLUTIONS

- 3D models were used to address the curves of the rooflines and walls from planning to execution. The serpentine curtain wall on the project featured Kawneer's 1600 SS Curtain Wall System with screw spline joinery, which allowed the product to be segmented and shop-fabricated off site for quality control.
- Tube steel was required at every other mullion to support the weight of the glass and address wind load requirements. The façade was outside glazed using specialty lift equipment.
- Kawneer's AA®425 Thermal Entrances were used due to their thermal roadblock capabilities, which include thermal breaks in the door, door frame and threshold; a door rail and stile design with a double air cavity; and dual weathering around the perimeter of the door in conjunction with a low-conductance polymer door stop to minimize air infiltration.
- Fiberglass pressure plates were incorporated into the 1600 SS Curtain Wall System to further enhance thermal performance.

The Elson S. Floyd Cultural Center is situated at the main entrance to the Washington State University Pullman Campus, inviting students, staff and visitors in with awe-inspiring architecture and warmth. To turn design dreams into reality, teams worked closely together and leveraged their expertise and technologies to ensure a smooth construction process. The project is LEED Gold® and offers the community a place to celebrate heritage and embrace cultural awareness and acceptance.



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