

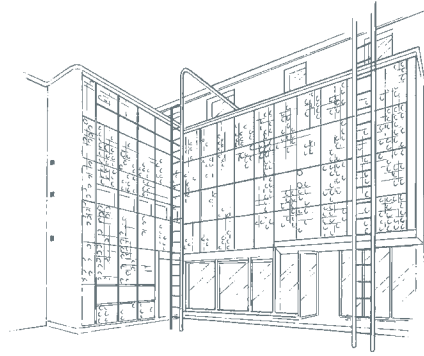
MATERIALS

Glass

Clearly curvaceous

Lake Lugano House, by Italian practice JM Architecture, uses glass to provide contrast in this house on two levels. The lower level has more conventional solid walls with windows but the upper living area is a beautiful fully glazed pavilion with curved corners that add to the luxurious feel of the house. Highly efficient, low-emittance glass insulated with argon gas optimises the thermal efficiency of the shell.

What did we do before glass? Windows were holes in the wall, which may or may not have been covered by animal hide, wooden shutters or similar before glazing became affordable. Flattened animal horn made a translucent covering around the 14th century, but it wasn't until the 17th century that glass became widely used. Today, entire buildings are built of glass. It can be crystal clear, coloured, textured, opaque or solar-reflective. Glass is a vital part of almost all houses and the way it is used often indicates the style of house, too. Small leaded window panes suggest an historic bent, while expansive sheets of clear glazing lean more towards the Modernist ideals. Glass is an integral part of our home both functionally and as part of the style and ambiance of the house.

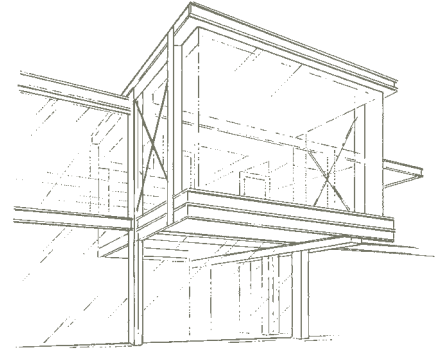


Glass bricks (left)

Built entirely of glass brick, Maison de Verre (house of glass) in Paris, France, was a collaboration between a designer, Pierre Chareau, and an architect, Bernard Bijvoet, in the late 1920s. The design uses industrial materials, including glass bricks. Here the bricks, being structural, are laid as conventional bricks would be – with a mortar joint.

Recycled glass (below)

Glass comes in many forms, and, long before flat panes were manufactured for windows, craftsmen were making bottles and other glass vessels to put things in. Therefore, it seems fitting to use such bottles to build a house. Here glass bottles are used like bricks to build the walls: the air inside creates an insulative barrier, so keeping the home warm.



Modern ideals (above)

Clad almost entirely in glass, a modern Romanian house, by WigWam Design, uses the material as the wall infill to the rolled steel beam framework. This is Modernist architecture taken to its logical end – the materials used are few, the design is clever in its simplicity, and the glass accentuates the minimalistic nature of the entire building.

