

Laurier Architectural's innovative solution provides a fresh bird's eye view on urban high-rise glazing

Sainte-Julie (Québec), April 12 2023 – Laurier Architectural, an affiliate of Novatech Group with more than 70 years of refined expertise in glass products for the commercial and institutional construction market, proudly introduces BirdCare, an innovative solution to an environmental issue with regulatory implications. The company's introduction of a new bird-friendly glass product provides the market with a unique and timely alternative that rises to the challenges of new building code regulations.

"Since 2016, Laurier has been part of a working committee dedicated to finding solutions to address a very important environmental issue," says Mélanie Mercier, general manager of Laurier Architectural, a Novatech Group company. "BirdCare is our informed response, and it is a complement to our extensive offering of specialized glass products for high-rise buildings."

Addressing a major concern

Laurier's new bird-friendly product responds to a serious issue that sees up to 1 billion birds killed annually in North America. Glass facades with reflective surfaces have rendered urban developments invisible for birds, primarily at heights extending from the ground up to approximately 16 meters. In response, a growing number of major North American cities have or will be introducing building code requirements for patterned or textured glass that birds can see and avoid.

After years of testing in multiple cities in the US and Canada, results using a variety of options have narrowed down the field to the most efficient patterns. However, existing requirements have legislated the use of such patterns on the internal surface 3 layer of standard four-layer glass. New legislation will make it mandatory to apply markers on the external surface 1, presenting numerous additional manufacturing challenges for companies like Laurier.

Innovation at work

In the case of Toronto, new regulations requiring markers on surfaces 1 took effect on May 1, 2022, although projects that broke ground before that date were exempted. By developing *BirdCare*, however, Laurier Architectural is introducing innovation in multiple ways and has entered the race with a leg up on competitors in terms of its ability to immediately offer surface 1 options. Beyond succeeding in meeting the standards of mandatory surface 1 marker applications, Laurier's BirdCare production method allows for it to be done without disrupting the effectiveness of Low-E (low emissivity) glass, which refers to glass standardly treated with a thin coating to minimize ultraviolet and infrared light penetration. Laurier is able to offer its customers a variety of Low-E glass options to choose from.

Innovation also abounds with Laurier's ability to apply its product to both tempered and non-tempered glass surfaces. Existing solutions on the market limit pattern printing to tempered glass, rendering BirdCare a more cost-efficient solution to a complex issue. Additionally, pattern alignment has long been an evasive issue for architects and builders, but Laurier's process enables BirdCare patterns to be applied to cut sections of finished sealed units, thus allowing for a perfect horizontal and vertical alignment for greater aesthetic quality.

“By positioning the markers after the glass is cut, Laurier has developed a process that allows us to easily and efficiently align all of the dots, both vertically and horizontally,” explains Caroline Mercier, Expert Project Manager of Laurier Architectural, a Novatech Group company. “We didn’t invent the patterns, but we have invented a unique and innovative way to apply them after the glass is cut, enabling us to consistently position the markers in the same place in order to produce beautifully aligned sheets.”

New and existing markets

With extensive expertise in a wide variety of glass products, including sealed units, heat-treated glass, spandrels, decorative glass, and laminated glass, Laurier Architectural has developed a broad portfolio of loyal customers. Many existing customers repeatedly build along the migratory paths of birds, particularly in downtown Toronto, and Laurier is preparing to address their needs with the provision of bird-friendly glass solutions that respond to new regulations.

“This issue strikes at the heart of our business, so it was essential for us to develop a solution that rises to the standards of pending regulations and preserves our market position,” explains Caroline Mercier. “Existing options can still be used on projects that broke ground prior to May 1, 2022, but we are now better-positioned and are able to approach the market by being ahead of the game in offering *BirdCare* to anyone who wishes to immediately adjust to the new regulation.”

BirdCare will be of particular interest to glaziers associated with general contractors and owners of commercial building projects, as well as architects who specialize in commercial building design, offices, retail spaces, and more. It will also have great appeal for urban designs for large-scale production, such as industrial and institutional projects. Additionally, from a planning perspective, *BirdCare* will join the conversations of civil engineers and elected city officials who increasingly embrace responsible, species-friendly options.

BirdCare also has the potential to open new markets for Laurier Architectural. Adding to bird-friendly requirements established by the Canadian Standards Association, guidelines introduced by cities including Toronto, Vancouver and Calgary will only serve to advance the conversation. Additionally, the United States Green Building Council's LEED rating system now includes credits for bird-friendly design strategies.

“*BirdCare* is a solution to an important environmental issue that is both cost-efficient and aesthetically pleasing,” summarizes Mélanie Mercier. “It is a solution in harmony with emerging design trends, which is the kind of achievement that Laurier Architectural prides itself on.” For more information on Laurier Architectural division offering, visit <https://laurier.net/en>

About Novatech Group

Founded in 1982, Novatech Group employs more than 1,500 employees and is the Canadian leader in the manufacturing of components for the windows and doors industry. Its state-of-the-art plants manufacture residential steel door panels, door glass, patio doors, glass products for residential, commercial, institutional, and high-rise buildings as well as for the manufacturing industry. Its North American and international customers are served from its 16 manufacturing facilities and distribution centers located in Quebec, Ontario, Alberta and the United States. Novatech Group is ranked among the best managed companies in Canada. For more information, visit novatechgroup.com.

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