

What is Spandrel?

To opacify the glass, one of several products can or have been used; ceramic enamel, silicone elastomers, urethanes, films, etc. Around 15 years ago, due to many performance and cost issues, polyester films suddenly ceased being used. The hole left from that was filled by the two next most popular coatings, ceramic enamel and silicone (or more specifically OPACI-COAT-300). Ceramic enamel is a very viable way to opacify glass and has had a very long history in doing so. The product is a coating that used to be sprayed on glass (and still can be in some areas). Today it is usually roller coated or screen printed and run through a drying oven (flashing off volatiles). Then, it is run through a tempering oven where the coating is fused to the glass and the glass is heat treated at the same time. To do this, the components of the coating have to withstand very high temperatures such as heavy metals, organic pigments that have carbon in them will burn up and those temperatures). Great advancements have been made in the last few years to help make enamel greener but it still suffers due to having to use temperature resistant components.

Fast forward to today and we have ceramic enamel, silicone and, to a smaller extent, urethanes, acrylics and panel systems. There are some big differences between the two most used products: enamel and silicone.

To sum up **what “spandrel” is to a building**: it is the **opaque and colored section of glass between the office floors in an all glass-clad building**, often hiding the mechanical components of the building.

Due to the increases in high transmittance and high reflectance glasses today, architects can now use the spandrel cavity as either color accent or pick colors for the glass to harmonize with the vision glass.