**Wingårdh wins the 2018 Glass Prize for Umestan**

**Wingårdh Architects and the Umestan 12 office park have won the award for Sweden’s best glass building.**

“I am of course both honored and happy to win the Glass Prize,” says Gert Wingårdh, the firm’s principal architect. “When we designed Umestan, we wanted the material to reflect and challenge its surroundings. But we also wanted it to provide an effective climate envelop, contribute to good lighting conditions inside, and advance characteristic architecture to its logical extreme.”

In awarding its Glass Prize, the Swedish Federation of Glazing Contractors favors projects that focus on innovation and combine technology and craftsmanship. Umestan has been certified Gold by the Sweden Green Building Council. Surrounded by old barracks, the shimmering red glass building relates to its context while at the same time clearly marking its presence. It is three stories high with a tower standing at attention on top. The building below is a rectangular box clad in a double-layer façade with an outer shell of glass.

“Glass often needs to be manipulated if it’s going to be more than just a technical layer,” says Wingårdh. “We think the color of the building in Umestan captures the low Norrland light and allows it to show different faces at different times of day and in different seasons.”

The building plays with light and shadow—inside as well as out. From inside, the glass is overlaid with a semi-opaque pattern that forms millions of small windows onto the surrounding landscape. The pattern is barely detectable to the eye, and from a distance we see the world outside as though through a subtle light filter. At the center of the building is a large atrium courtyard with a glass roof that serves as a natural gathering place and a manifestation of the vision of a transparent workplace where people from different sides can come together.

The jury’s comments: “As part of Umeå’s ambitious investment in architecture and urban development, a new office building of shimmering glass has been constructed in the office park on the old military base. Office spaces surround a top-lit atrium with fine views over downtown Umeå. The gold-certified environmental building has a double glass façade with the outer layer hung from meter-long brackets to avoid heat bridging. The glass has a black screen-printed pattern on the inside and an orange-brown one on the outside. This provides sun screening, privacy, and an unimpeded view out. The look of the two-layer façade varies over the course of the day. In daylight the minimalistic and precise glass volume reflects its surroundings, and when darkness falls the building radiates a warm, diffuse, and dreamlike light.”

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