GLASS BOX ARCHITECTURE IN WASHINGTON, D.C.

1099 New York Avenue
ARCHITECT: Thomas Phifer and Partners
CONSTRUCTED: 2008
LOOK FOR:
- overlapping glass panes that delineate each floor, adding a three-dimensionality to the façade
- inconspicuous stainless steel clips that support the bottoms of the glass panes
- vertically cantilevered glass panes above the roofline, forming a transparent parapet that blurs the line between the building and the sky
NOTES:
- Thanks to the overlapping glass panes, this has been nicknamed the Fishscale Building
- The architects had to resolve complex geometries in the curtain wall at the angles and corners of the façade

1225 Connecticut Avenue (Renovation)
ARCHITECT: RTKL Associates
CONSTRUCTED: 2008
LOOK FOR:
- the rectangular bays along the N Street façade, which allude to the pattern of row houses elsewhere on that block, while also creating an interplay of transparency and reflectivity that enlivens the building
- The greenish color of the glass makes the building stand out amidst its predominantly beige and gray neighbors
- subtle variations in the rhythm of mullions, lending visual emphasis to the corner tower and adding variety to the façades
NOTES:
- Use of green glass offers distinguishes the building, without resorting to paint, appliques, or other artificial surface treatments

1999 K Street
ARCHITECT: Murphy/Jahn
CONSTRUCTED: 2009
LOOK FOR:
- the angled, glass screen wall on the K Street side, anchored at the sidewalk, extending above the roofline, and continuing around to the eastern end of the upper floors
- the array of smaller glass fins set into the curtain wall, which add visual interest, especially as light conditions change throughout the day and night
- the luminous lobby, whose backlit panels dematerialize the space and constitute a room-size piece of minimalist art, can be appreciated from the street through the transparent exterior walls.
NOTES:
- The large “fin” serves no functional purpose, but lends a sense of depth to the façade while helping to solve the compositional challenge posed by the set-back of the top few floors from the building next door.
- The large “fin” draws the eyes of passersby upward, encouraging them to notice the smaller fins.