



# Optometrist office takes new approach to 'doc-in-a-box' design

Eschewing commodity design, independent business  
makes its home a showcase

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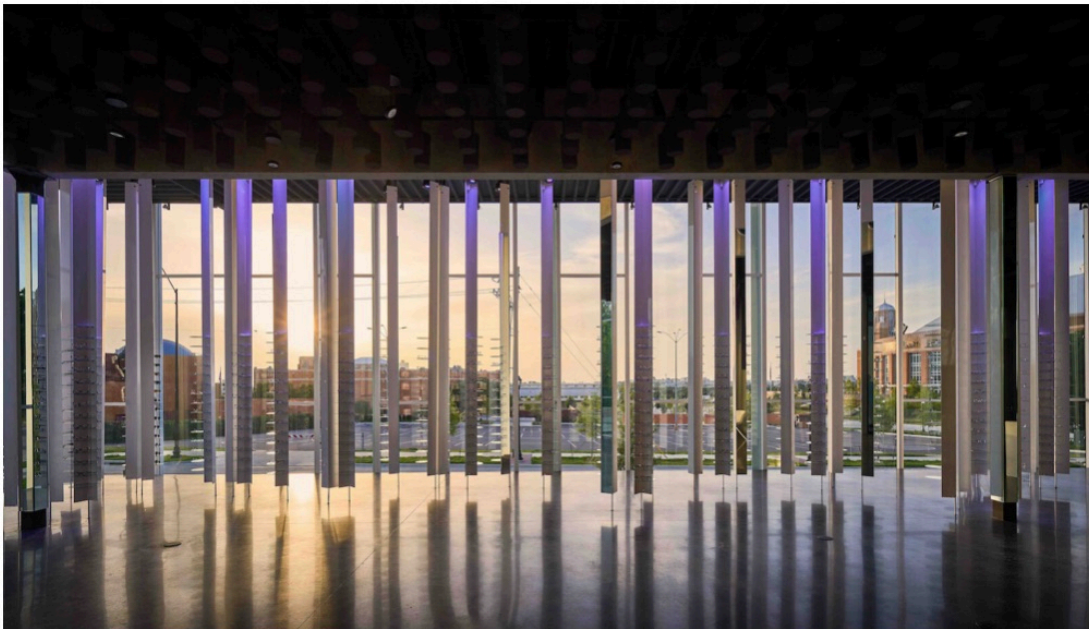
BY PETER FABRIS, CONTRIBUTING EDITOR | MARCH 10, 2022



The design of the office takes advantage of the location.

In recent decades, franchises have taken over the optometry services and optical sales market. This trend has spawned a commodity-type approach to design of office and retail sales space.

Dr. Matthew Barber bucked this trend when he dropped his affiliation with an optical franchise and struck out on his own. Barber coupled this independent streak with an innovative design by Ibañez Shaw Architecture for his new office and retail business, Chroma, in Fort Worth, Texas.



The office is uniquely designed.

The most striking differentiator contradicts a common design approach that uses stock design millwork display fixtures with backs to the storefront. This scheme often blocks daylight with posters and ad displays in windows.

Chroma, instead, inverted the conventional doc-in-the-box form to display a stylish collection of frames to the exterior. The design features a glass box extending from the mass of the building that holds displays of eyeglass frames. Daylight floods this space, illuminating a flowing display of fixtures, and penetrates the interior. A Chroma-branded line of frames are presented in backlit cubes embedded in a concrete wall. At night, these displays are lit with distinctive brand colors. From the outside, the illuminated structure resembles a sculpture protected by a glass case.

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Dox-in-the-box displays frames to the exterior.

The design's visual impact draws in patrons from the new "Dickies Arena," a 14,000-seat multipurpose venue, across the street. The experience of the space and its bold image viewed from the exterior has become a core element of the brand. People often enter Chroma to get a better look at the space and end up purchasing new glasses. The design appears to be yielding bottom-line dividends —Chroma opened in March 2020 as the pandemic set in, and sales are up 30% from the pre-pandemic franchise practice despite the COVID-19 headwind.

Owner: Dr. Matthew Barber

Design architect: [Ibanez Shaw Architecture](#)

Architect of record: [Ibanez Shaw Architecture](#)

MEP engineer: [BHB Engineers](#)

Structural engineer: [HnH Engineering](#)

General contractor/construction manager:  
[Steele Freeman](#)

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