

# Only Ellison Doors Fit the Bill for Houston Center Retrofit

HOUSTON CENTER – HOUSTON, TX

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Dustin Price,  
Texas Glazing Solutions, Inc.



Located in the heart of downtown Houston, the reimagined Houston Center is a multi-functional corporate and retail complex occupying five blocks along McKinney Street. Within the complex is a reimagined central plaza that serves as a street-level connection to nearby attractions and the four buildings that make up the Houston Center. The renovations were designed to reshape the experience for workers and guests with regard to retail, wellness, and greenspace productivity in and around the four towers.

The Houston Center transformation also included a complete replacement of the building envelope on the first four floors of two adjacent skyscrapers within the complex: LyondellBasell Tower, and 2 Houston Center. The products used for the retrofit needed to be complementary of one another, and the architects in charge of the project had a specific requirement when it came to choosing a door manufacturer for the updated entryways.



The Houston office for the architect on the job, Gensler, is located in 2 Houston Center. The building, along with the neighboring LyondellBasell Tower, was equipped with balanced doors prior to the renovations, and Gensler loved their durability and sustained performance more than 40 years after the structures were initially constructed.

“Architects at Gensler chose Ellison balanced doors because they delivered on the aesthetic vision of the project and hit the mark for longevity,” said Dustin Price, independent manufacturer’s representative at Texas Glazing Solutions, Inc. “There isn’t another door out there that can compete with Ellison Bronze when it comes to the management of high-traffic entryways and can continue to perform flawlessly for the life of the building.”

For the renovated portions of the two skyscrapers, architects specified 24 stainless steel narrow stile custom balanced doors by Ellison Bronze with panic exit devices and PowerNow® Stanley® power operators. The balanced doors – featuring thin vertical stiles – help to provide transparency for the entryways. The Ellison doors deliver a consistent appearance with the curtainwall system, which is constructed primarily of glass with silver-painted framing components.

The building’s original window and curtainwall framing materials had a dark bronze anodized finish. With the newly-renovated exterior curtainwall being painted silver, the new balanced doors were manufactured in a stainless satin finish to adhere to the aesthetic of their surrounding materials.

In terms of performance, balanced doors pivot at two-thirds width to distribute their weight more evenly. This effectively reduces opening force and door leaf projection. It also relieves air pressure at both sides of the door, which leads to near-effortless operation.

In addition to the main street-level entrances, Ellison balanced doors are installed to swing in to provide egress from some of the terrace areas, while others were installed leading to the skyways. The skyways are walkways over the streets, covered pedestrian bridges leading from building to building.

Gensler's design intent was to redesign the entryways with longevity, long-term performance, and durability in mind.

"Gensler knew that the first floor design would not be complete without new Ellison Bronze balanced doors," added Price.

Price elaborated, "Gensler understood that these buildings would be here for a long time. Shouldn't the doors hold up like the rest of the structure? The last thing you want when welcoming guests to your prestigious office is sagging hinges, peeling cladding, or leaking door closers. Ellison balanced doors give owners and occupants peace of mind in that regard."

For Houston Center, Ellison balanced doors help uphold the standard expected of 21st-century commercial structures as well as those of the architects on the job, the same architects that occupy office space within the building. By choosing custom-crafted, high-performance balanced doors, future owners and occupants can enjoy the same beauty and functionality that Ellison doors impart for decades to come.

The project was completed in December 2020. In addition to Ellison Bronze, the project team included architect Gensler; manufacturer's representative Texas Glazing Solutions, Inc.; glazing contractor Crown Corr; and door installer Lonestar Facility Services.



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