

Regenerate and Restore: Natural Walnut Makes an Entrance at Springdale Green

SPRINGDALE GREEN – AUSTIN, TEXAS

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President, Elite Entrances



As Austin, Texas, cements its place as a hub for innovation, culture, and upscale living, its transformation reflects growing demand for spaces that pair architectural ambition with genuine livability.

New to the city, Springdale Green is a landmark regenerative office campus that transformed a 30-acre former petrochemical tank farm and brownfield site into a vibrant destination for work, wellness, and connection. Once flood-prone and contaminated, the site was reimagined through a combination of contemporary architecture, elevated amenities, and ecological restoration, including native meadows, woodlands, and restored urban creek tributaries.

The two main office buildings feature expansive structural glass walls and black steel framing that create a sleek, contemporary facade. At the entrances, the design called for a contrasting material that could introduce warmth, craftsmanship, and a stronger connection to the surrounding landscape.

To help realize this vision, the project team selected Ellison Bronze custom balanced doors. But rather than specifying a conventional door material, the architects made a distinctive choice: authentic walnut.

Balancing Wood, Weight, and Design

Ellison Bronze balanced doors were chosen early in the design process as a cornerstone of the project.

With openings measuring 8 feet wide by 10 feet tall, the entrance systems needed to balance scale, aesthetics, and functionality while standing up to the demands of a high-use, mixed-use development.

The project architects at Gensler selected plain-sawn walnut for the doors to capture the warmth and visual impact of natural wood while complementing the building's wood canopies. While exterior-facing wood doors bring unique performance considerations, the design team was committed to making the material work within the larger entrance system.

Each opening creates a striking transition between the interior and exterior, bringing a natural, biophilic character to an otherwise contemporary palette of glass and steel.

“These entrances were such a prominent feature that the architects and owner were very intentional about selecting the right wood characteristics, finish, and overall appearance,” said Dustin Price, manufacturer’s sales representative at Texas Glazing Solutions. “The natural walnut doors from Ellison took the craftsmanship of the project to another level. Working closely with the design team helped ensure the doors delivered the exact aesthetic that was desired.”

The project spans two main buildings, each featuring multiple Ellison entrances. Three primary pairs of doors in each building open to the shared lobbies, while an additional pair serves as the spa entrance. Installed within structural glass walls framed by black steel portals, the doors needed to complement their surroundings while holding up to the rigors of an exterior, high-use application.

Supporting the scale and weight of a door specification of this magnitude was one of the project’s biggest challenges, one that Ellison’s balanced door system was engineered to address.

Each door is constructed from 2½-inch-thick natural wood, resulting in a substantial, large-format system with its own installation challenges. With the structural glass already in place and unable to be removed, every door had to be carefully maneuvered into the completed facade, then precisely positioned and fine-tuned for proper alignment. The process required specialized lifting equipment and multiple installers working in tandem.

“The doors were massive, but the way Ellison’s balanced door system goes together is actually very straightforward,” said Chris Knight, president of Elite Entrances. “With the right planning and coordination, the installation went smoothly, and the finished entrances delivered exactly the look and functionality the project team envisioned.”





Ellison balanced doors also allow air to pass on both sides of the door leaf, which significantly reduces the force necessary to operate the door. This is particularly valuable for the large, heavy walnut doors installed at Springdale Green. This technology is designed to address challenges posed by wind pressure, ensuring smooth and nearly effortless operation even in extreme conditions. Traditional doors, like swing doors, can be difficult to open against wind because of the force applied against the entire face of the entry. This puts a strain on the hardware and requires more physical effort for the user operating it.

The balanced door hardware inherent in all Ellison custom balanced doors helps extend the lifespan of the entire system by eliminating the stress normally placed on hinges and frames, making it an ideal solution for buildings subject to wind, building stack effect, and HVAC pressure.

A Lasting First Impression

Every aspect of Springdale Green was designed with both the built and natural environments in mind. Framed by expansive structural glass and natural walnut, the custom Ellison Bronze balanced doors create a striking first impression while establishing a visual connection to the 30-acre site, where restored land and woodland habitats have transformed a former industrial property.

More than an entryway, the doors serve as a defining architectural feature of the campus. Their combination of warmth, natural elements, and performance reflects the project's broader goal of creating thoughtfully designed workspaces that remain closely connected to the outdoors. Throughout the development, an elevated boardwalk and jogging loop weave through the restored landscape, encouraging occupants and visitors to experience the site's ecological transformation firsthand.

That commitment to sustainable and regenerative design has earned Springdale Green recognition through several leading building and wellness programs:

- LEED v4 CS: Gold
- Fitwel: 2-Star
- Sustainable Sites Initiative: Gold
- Austin Energy Green Building: 3-Star
- Designed to Earn Energy Star

Together, these achievements reflect Springdale Green's commitment to thoughtful, regenerative design. At the entry points, Ellison Bronze helped create a memorable arrival with custom balanced doors that pair the warmth of natural walnut with the precision and performance demanded by a landmark project.

