

The Smartest Building in Texas Gets Ellison Balanced Doors

RIVERSOUTH – AUSTIN, TX

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Pete Pankey,
Senior Project Manager,
Harmon Inc.



RiverSouth at 401 S 1st Street in Austin, TX, is a new Class A office building just south of the city’s downtown district. It is being billed as the “smartest and safest” building in Austin (if not all of Texas), and since its construction, has achieved LEED Gold certification. The 15-story building encompasses more than 350,000 square feet and includes 8 floors of office space with modern amenities, including a sky lounge, deck, fitness studio, ground-floor retail and restaurant spaces, and five levels of underground parking.

During the design phase, the LEED Gold target underscored the importance for specifiers to choose the very best building products for RiverSouth’s construction. This necessity

cascaded to the selection of an entrance system that would exhibit longevity, durability, and meet the aesthetic vision of the structure.

For project managers at Harmon Inc., any alternative to Ellison Bronze was not an option.

An Intentional Selection

The RiverSouth architects originally specified a competitor balanced door system for the project, but Harmon had experienced challenges with that manufacturer’s product in the recent past. Ongoing maintenance was an issue with those doors. Therefore, Harmon advocated for the installation of Ellison custom balanced doors on the job.

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Ellison balanced doors are designed to last for the life of a structure and are completely warranted for 10 years. Therefore, in the unlikely event of service being needed, parts are free for the first decade of use. In addition, Ellison maintains all records, drawings, and casting molds for every door it has ever made, ensuring easy access to replacement parts if necessary.

Going with Glass

Another key reason for selecting Ellison balanced doors was for the ability to achieve narrow sightlines. RiverSouth features floor-to-ceiling vision glass throughout the curtainwall, allowing for plenty of natural daylight to enter work and recreation spaces throughout the building. This was a deliberate choice consistent with the project’s LEED Gold target, aimed at significantly reducing reliance on artificial lighting systems and harnessing as much natural Texas sunlight as possible.

The project team specified satin stainless steel Ellison balanced doors in a narrow stile with tempered glass to match the glass curtainwall. The doors allow natural light into the lobby space and give RiverSouth’s main entrance a cohesive look and feel with the rest of the structure.





Size, Strength, and System Design

Ellison balanced doors are ideal for the RiverSouth main entrance as it experiences a consistent flow of foot traffic throughout the day. The height and width of the doors are perfect for a commercial entryway and can permit access of large items if needed. In addition, the sturdy materials used in the door's construction will minimize the chance of scuffs, dings, and dents from ongoing pedestrian use.

From a functional perspective, a balanced door's unique elliptical opening path reduces the distance that the door leaf projects out into walking space, ideal for the early morning bustle or five o'clock departure at RiverSouth. Balanced doors also allow for airflow on both sides of the door (the hinge side, and the opening side). This requires less force needed from the user to open the door and eliminates fluttering upon closing. This has proven to be an important characteristic of Ellison doors installed at tall commercial buildings that inevitably face both external winds and internal building stack pressure.

Authentically Austin

RiverSouth epitomizes what the city of Austin has become: an eclectic mix of business, culture, food, and tech. The smart, sustainable, high-performance building joins the ranks of other brand-new Austin staples such as Google's Block 185, also equipped with Ellison Bronze custom balanced doors.

In addition to Harmon Inc., the project team included architects The Beck Group and developers Stream Realty Partners and QuadReal.

The building opened at the end of 2021. Following its official opening, the structure earned LEED Gold certification and the first SmartScore Platinum certification for any building in Texas.

Ellison
CUSTOM CRAFTED BALANCED DOORS

