



Lightweight Innovation for High-Rise Facade Access at The Travis, Austin

Solving High-Rise Facade Access Challenges in Austin's 51-Storey Tower

The Travis, a 51-storey residential tower in Austin, Texas, presented a unique facade access challenge during mid-construction. With the structure already underway, the project required a safe and code-compliant solution that could be integrated without altering the building's existing design. The original contractor was unable to complete the system design, prompting the general contractor to appoint Tractel to take over the project.

The key constraint was structural. The building could not support the loads required for a traditional Building Maintenance Unit system. This limitation called for an alternative approach that would meet OSHA regulations and relevant ANSI standards while maintaining operational efficiency and safety.

Custom Lightweight Facade Access System Designed for Structural Constraints

Tractel developed a tailored facade access strategy centered on reducing system weight without compromising performance to be able to address these constraints. A standalone tieback system was installed along the catwalk, providing secure anchorage for maintenance operations.

The core innovation involved custom-designed davit arms capable of supporting hoist boxes directly on the mast. The suspended platform weight was significantly reduced by relocating the hoists from the platform to the davit arms. This allowed the system to operate within the building's structural limits while maintaining full functionality.

In addition, a custom platform without integrated hoists was engineered, along with specialized carts and wheel assemblies to enable smooth davit movement across the roof. This design ensured safe and efficient facade access across all elevations of the tower.

Optimizing Safety and Performance Through Advanced Facade Access Engineering

The most critical phase of this project was the development of a workable concept that could overcome structural limitations without compromising safety. Tractel approached this challenge with a focus on precision engineering and practical design. By shifting the load away from the platform and redistributing it through the davit system, the team created a solution that met OSHA regulations and relevant ANSI standards while remaining efficient in daily use.

The result is a system that supports safe facade maintenance across all elevations of the tower. It also allows operators to work with confidence in a controlled and stable environment. This project demonstrates how technical expertise and innovative thinking can deliver reliable facade access solutions even in constrained conditions, ensuring long-term value for building owners and maintenance teams.

Facts & Figures

Completion	May 2026
No. of Floors	51 Floors
BMU Type	Tieback system, custom davits with custom platforms
Building Features	51 storey + catwalk building
Building Type	Residential

