

# Gensler Re-Creates Iconic Texas A&M Tree Using Aluminum Wall Sheets

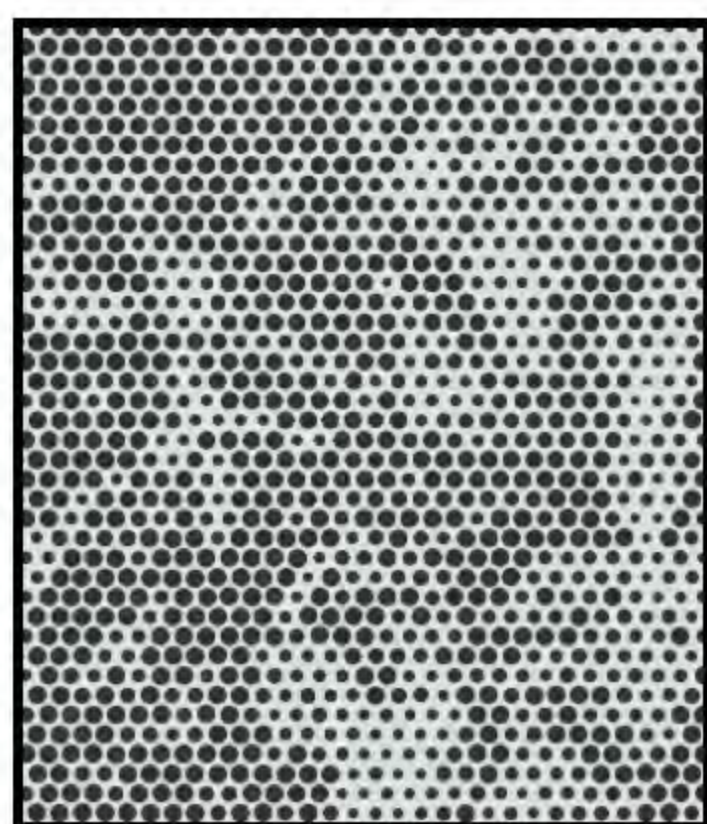
07/15/2019 | By Valerie Dennis Craven

Student housing has changed significantly in the past few decades. Gone are the days of sharing a tiny space with one or more people and walking down the hall to a shared bathroom.

Now it's all about individuality, with everyone having his or her own bedroom and bathroom, sharing common spaces with a few people.

That theme of individuality often continues throughout an entire student housing space. When creating Aspire College Station Luxury Student Housing for Texas A&M students, the [Gensler](#) design team wanted to make a statement. *(Photo credit: Gensler / Ryan Gobuty)*

"This is not your dad's dorm," states Benjamin Nanson, project architect in the Houston office of Gensler. "In new student housing projects, students are signing up for a lifestyle. It's like a mini resort with pools, fitness facilities and dog parks."



This is a new model overall and for College Station, where Texas A&M is located.

## Reinterpreting the Century Tree Indoors

Taking the individuality of the space and the student, Gensler looked at its design objectives of a specific, authentic design and space to make this student housing project unique and identifiable.



*(Photo credit: Gensler / Ryan Gobuty)*

"We knew from the outset that we wanted to bring school spirit and iconography into the space" through the use of graphics, Nanson explains.

One way they did that was through the spirit and look of the [Century Tree](#), an oak tree beloved by Texas A&M students and alumni.

Located on campus near the Academic Building, the tree's over 100 years old and has many unique branches, some of which touch the ground.

The Gensler team brought their interpretation of the feeling, look and scale of the tree into the student housing lobby space using [Moz Designs](#) Digital Perforated Aluminum Wall Sheets.

The design was created using 21 flat panels of aluminum—about 480 square feet of custom perforated metal.

It's a noticeable piece right when people walk into Aspire College Station, with panels about 18 feet high. "It's a huge statement," Nanson notes. "Everyone who walks in sees that first."

We talked with people working in the lobby, and they were impressed they were working in such a cool space."

## Wall Sheets a Unique Product

Nanson says that the Digital Perforated Aluminum Wall Sheets were chosen because it is unique and could offer the look and feeling they were going for with the project.

The custom design features aluminum wall sheets in a powder coat nickel colorway. Different hole sizes throughout the 1/8-inch aluminum panels were used to create the image of the tree.

A benefit of the Moz wall sheets in a student housing setting is the material's durability, notes Linda Gutierrez, director of marketing at Moz Designs.

For other projects, perforated metal sheets are available in various sizes holes and sheets, along with different colors, grains and finishes. The sheets can be bent, curved and molded as needed to fit a look or space. *(Photo credit: Gensler / Ryan Gobuty)*

On top of that, imagery (including pattern, gradient color or typography) can be printed or embedded into the metal. Together, this creates a one-of-a-kind look for an interior or exterior space.

Gutierrez has seen the product used to create visual interest and texture on ceilings, as column covers or—in the case of Aspire College Station—as a piece of art.

However, it's often used as a way to divide space without closing it in. Because the sheets have holes in them, they can provide separation while still letting air and light through.



"The look changes from day to night," Gutierrez notes. "In the day you can appreciate the metal, and at night you would see the backlit glow, which would take on a different look, and appreciate it in a different way."

## Pushing Design Forward

Making what Gutierrez describes as a "common perforated metal into something designer" is what Moz does. Most of its new products come from the inquiries and demand of the design community.

"We're always inspired by the design community. They are always pushing the limits. Along the way, people have wanted to put something on a wall, so we will think of three or four different ways to do that," Gutierrez says. "The designers are always thinking outside the box and we are trying to be there."

Moz works with people looking to incorporate its wall sheets and other products into a space in a unique, individual way. Because it's a different look, Gutierrez says people often do a double take when seeing the designs.

That's why the Aspire Student Housing project, which needed to have the same impact, was a fit for the design.

"We're very happy with how it turned out," Nanson says. "It's just a completely different type of project, and a new wave in student housing."

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Valerie is an experienced journalist with an emphasis in the B2B market. As the director of editorial services and editor-in-chief of interiors+sources, she leads the editorial staff in producing the monthly print magazine, coordinates topics for the newsletter and online, and contributes relevant content.