

**Product**

Planar TWA Series

Planar QE Series

Planar Simplicity Series

**Location**

New York, NY

**Industry**

Tourism

**Application**

Digital Signage

Way Finding

**Partners**

Thinc Design, Diversified,

Beneville Studios, Ideo,

Squint / Opera, JLL, Intersection,

Skanska, Kubik Maltbie, Thornton

Tomasetti, The Lighting Practice,

Corgan, Syska Hennessy Group

**Video Display Technologies Enhance Empire State Building's  
New Observatory Entrance and Lobby Design**

# Empire State Building Observatory

New York City is defined by its monolithic high-rises, and the iconic achievement of the city's skyline is the Empire State Building (ESB)—one of the most renowned buildings ever constructed. People flood to ESB by the millions each year to visit the building's world-famous observatory and take in the views of the city's horizon.

As part of a larger effort to create a fully reimagined new Observatory, ESB has completed a brand-new, ground-floor entrance and lobby—the first phase of a \$150 million Observatory redevelopment.

The project repositions the point of entry from Fifth Avenue to 20 West 34th Street, introducing a larger and modernized entrance that provides Observatory guests with a more seamless, organized flow.



The entrance redesign was made possible by a best-in-class team from the arts, architecture, technology and entertainment industries, creating an immersive visitor experience featuring spectacular photography, a two-story ESB architectural model and cutting-edge video display technology from Planar.

“The entrance upgrade reinvents the visitor journey by creating sharable and inspirational moments,” said Jean-Yves Ghazi, Senior Vice President of the Observatory, Empire State Realty Trust. “Every detail of the new design was highly influenced by consumer feedback. We gathered insights based on visitor research, partnering with leading polling experts who worked closely with our lead designers to help craft the new guest experience.”

## Large Planar LED video wall augments ESB’s lighting ceremonies

Since 1976, ESB has maintained a tradition of changing its tower lights to acknowledge various holidays, occasions and events throughout the year. In 2012, ownership installed a new LED light system—allowing for ESB to also stage spectacular light shows. ESB regularly holds lighting ceremonies to recognize the tower light changes. The addition of a 12-foot-long, 8-foot high Planar® TWA Series LED video wall in a 5x4 configuration with a 1.2mm pixel pitch (TWA1.2) now allows ESB to augment the lighting ceremonies with striking visuals and dynamic, animated content.

*“The displays provide dynamic imagery and allow us to show graphic animations, which guests absolutely love.”*

**— Jean-Yves Ghazi,  
Senior Vice President,  
Empire State Realty Trust**



The Planar TWA Series is a line of fine pitch LED video walls that are designed to support the highest pixel density and include the highest quality black LEDs for delivering a crisp, high contrast image.

Featuring excellent off-axis uniformity and maximum full color and brightness, the Planar TWA Series provides ESB with high contrast imagery and a seamless video wall solution.

“The lighting ceremonies are a crucial component of our global PR strategy. The LED video wall is used as a backdrop during ceremonies to show content that specifically ties in with the event taking place in synchronized harmony,” Ghazi said.

Outside of the ceremonies, the Planar TWA Series LED video wall transforms into a tribute to showcase past events and high-profile celebrities that have been to the ESB. “The video wall helps connect visitors to celebrities that have been to the building,” according to Ghazi. “The association of being at the same place where celebrities have been is an important aspect.”

Travis Heitchew, enterprise program manager with technology solutions provider Diversified, which performed the display and video wall integrations, said the Planar TWA Series was selected to accommodate the heavy amount of photography and camera use that would take place around the video wall. “The 1.2mm pixel pitch allows visitors to take pictures and video without the moiré effect,” he said. “Overall, the Planar TWA Series video wall is a perfect solution. Visitors can walk right up to the display and won’t see any pixilation when standing three to five feet away.”

*“Visitors can walk right up to the screen and won’t see any pixilation when standing three to five feet away.”*

*— Travis Heitchew,  
Enterprise Program Manager,  
Diversified*



## Clear iconography enhances wayfinding

As part of the new Observatory entrance design, ESB mounted numerous Planar TVH Series LED video wall banners (TVH1.6) to the building's ceiling, in addition to installing Planar® QE Series and Planar® Simplicity Series 4K LCD displays to provide a wayfinding solution that would improve navigation for visitors.

“From our polling, we learned that the biggest challenge facing visitors was a language barrier,” Ghazi said. “To overcome that, we are using iconography with the displays to more easily communicate directional information. Because of our international draw, it is very important for us to connect with audiences in a universal way, which iconography provides.”

The Planar® TVH Series is a line of fine pitch LED video walls that deliver industry-leading image quality and feature an advanced design for a range of demanding indoor applications.





Planar QE Series Ultra HD resolution (3840 x 2160) LCD displays support native 4K resolution for providing a dynamic digital signage solution.

Planar Simplicity Series LCD displays feature a slim profile, reduced complexity and cutting-edge 4K at 60Hz streaming, offering an elegant design for digital signage.

“Before being installed, each product choice was closely evaluated to confirm that clarity would surpass expectations and that we would be providing the best possible visual experience to our visitors,” Ghazi said. “The displays provide dynamic imagery and allow us to show graphic animations, which our guests absolutely love. We want to entertain and delight our visitors throughout their journey and that’s exactly what we’re doing here, in every respect.”