DEAL FLOW SWINGS OPEN:
PRIVATE EQUITY TARGETS GATES, DOORS, AND ACCESS CONTROL SERVICES

By Eliott Musick, Patrick Gillin, and David Silver

Editor's note:
There's no denying that the security and access control industry continues to attract heightened interest from investors, especially private equity. The following article from Brown Gibbons Lang & Company provides timely insights for companies both exploring the market and fielding inquiries.

As investor focus continues to emphasize economically resilient, essential service sectors, one area drawing increasing attention from private equity is the security and access control industry, which includes the installation, upgrading, replacing, and maintenance of perimeter security and security systems infrastructure — including doors, gates, fencing, access control systems, and electronic surveillance and monitoring systems.

From residential garage doors to commercial gate systems and integrated electronic access solutions, these businesses offer a mix of mission-critical service, technical installation, and long-term maintenance — attributes that are attractive to private equity firms. At the same time, rising demands from facility owners, property managers, and homeowners regarding safety, technological advancements in smart building infrastructure, and an aging install base are creating tailwinds for growth.

With a significant portion of the market still made up of smaller, founder-led businesses across fragmented local and regional markets, the sector presents an attractive opportunity for both strategic consolidators and private equity firms to build scaled platforms. Our article explores the market forces driving investment interest, the role of integrators in the value chain, and notable transactions that are shaping the industry's evolving landscape.

A fragmented but growing market

The access control and automated entry systems industry is highly fragmented, with over 7,000 businesses in access control installation and more than 10,000 regional firms in garage door and gate services. Most operators are founder-owned and generate under $10 million in revenue (with no single company holding more than 5% market share) according to Private Equity Professional magazine. Such fragmentation has positioned the industry to be a target-rich environment for private equity firms seeking consolidation opportunities.

While many sectors tied to manufacturing and global supply chains have felt the impact of tariffs and macroeconomic headwinds, commercial and residential

continued on page 38

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continued from page 37

services have been somewhat insulated, drawing renewed focus from investors looking for stability and predictable returns. Among those, security and access control, including installation and maintenance of gates, doors, and access and security systems, are seen as early in their consolidation lifecycle with favorable characteristics that mirror more mature categories, such as fire and life safety or HVAC services.

Demand drivers: Security and smart systems and housing trends

As global security threats evolve, customers, businesses, and governments are investing heavily into fencing and perimeter security to protect assets, data, and infrastructure. Companies specializing in perimeter security solutions — fencing, gates, automated doors, and security detection systems — have benefited from these strong secular tailwinds.

At the same time, several high-profile incidents in recent years across the U.S., such as a deadly shooting at a New York City office tower and a data security breach at a Nashville hospital, have underscored the importance of maintaining reliable security systems in both public and private spaces. This focus has made it increasingly difficult for businesses to defer spending on security upgrades and maintenance.

Technological advancements are also fueling recurring demand. As security systems become more sophisticated with integration of electronic-, mechanical-, and software-based components, businesses and homeowners alike face ongoing upgrade cycles. The frequency with which these technological upgrades need to be made is driving demand for recurring and reoccurring services in the sector.

On the residential services side, garage doors represent a high-value, high-visibility service that can improve quality of life and home resale value. Demographic and housing trends are expanding the market base as operators are capturing homeowner spend across the lifecycle of a door, including during installation, ongoing regular maintenance, and break/fix instances wherein homeowners require rapid DIFM ("do it for me") service.

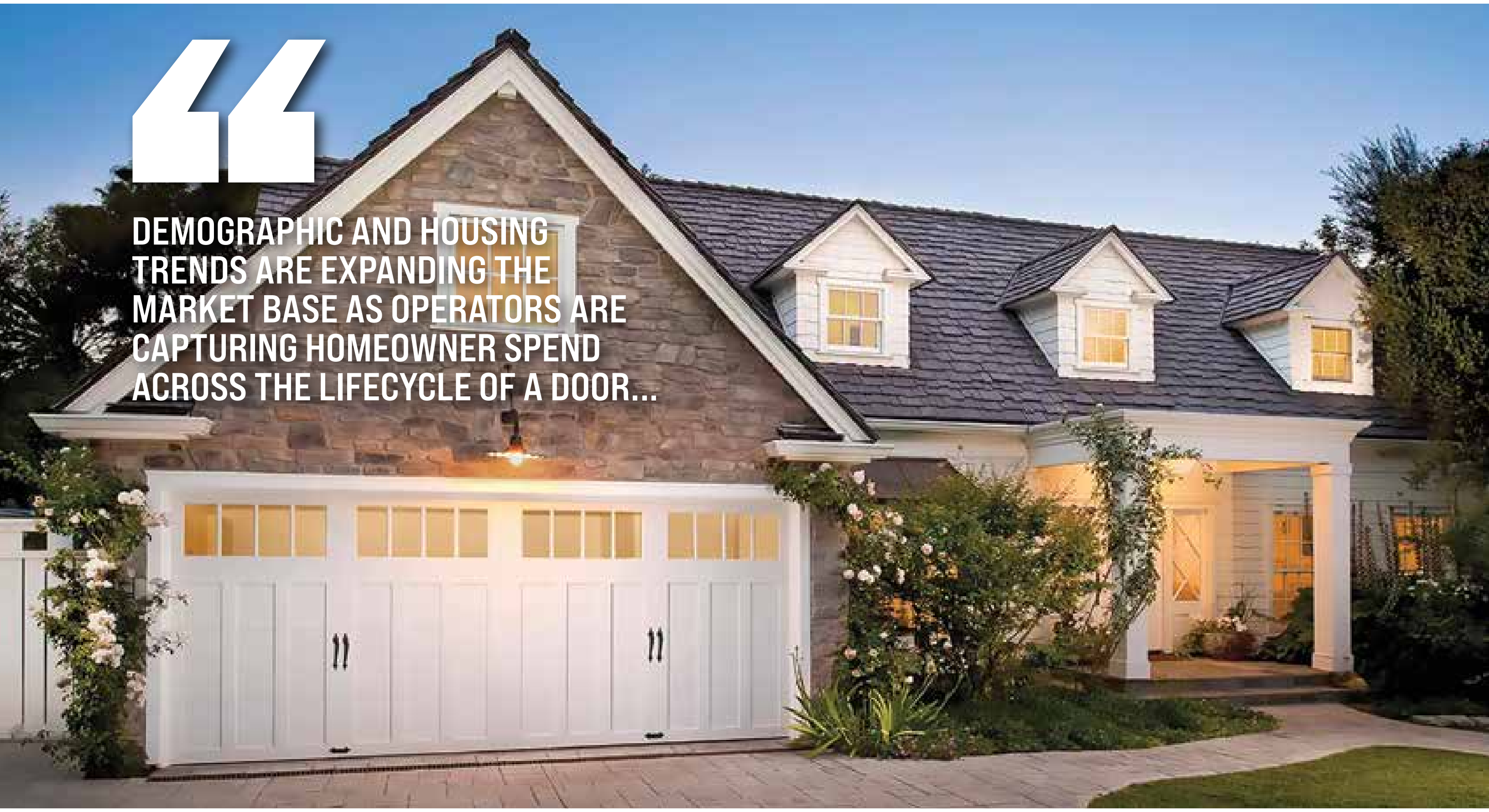
The evolution of the installed base of homes has been a powerful tailwind for growth in vehicle ownership as well as increases in both number and size of garages. Homes built with garages have increased significantly over the decades, pointing to a growing install base that creates recurring opportunities for repair, replacement, and service. In an analysis of the 2022 Census Bureau Survey of Construction Data by the National Association of Home Builders, a majority of new homes that completed construction in 2022 include two-car garages (66%).

Consolidation in early innings

The sector overall is characterized as being in the early stages of consolidation, with only a handful of scaled platforms and thousands of small, regionally focused providers still operating independently, which is creating a long runway for platform formation and add-on activity.

The appeal for buyers goes beyond scale. By integrating smaller regional players into larger platforms, investors can help these businesses enhance service capabilities, optimize pricing, streamline administrative functions, and enhance sales and marketing capabilities. Becoming part of a larger platform allows operators to leverage shared resources — from HR and back-office support to sales infrastructure — and often provides the opportunity to roll equity into the

continued on page 40



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continued from page 38

parent company for a future upside that can potentially be more lucrative than the first liquidity event for founders.

Larger platforms can also broaden their service offerings, meeting customer demand for a "one-stop shop." Many small providers specialize in a single service — whether doors, gates, fencing, or security systems — but consolidation enables cross-selling across a wider range of solutions. Companies that can bring a full suite of capabilities to customers increase their total addressable market opportunity and drive stronger, "stickier" client relationships.

Important considerations for small businesses

For small, independent service providers, private equity's growing presence in the security and access control market presents both opportunities and challenges. Acquisition by or partnership with a larger platform can provide access to capital, advanced technology, and sales and operational support that might otherwise be out of reach.

Smaller businesses are strong operators with deep community relationships. Joining a larger platform often gives them tools to grow faster, modernize operations, and pursue larger accounts. In many cases, sellers also retain partial ownership in the new entity, allowing them to participate in future growth through a second liquidity event.

However, consolidation is not without important considerations. Some small-business owners worry that being absorbed into a larger platform could lead to a loss of local identity. Larger consolidators and private equity firms have started to recognize this, and many now work with business owners to determine whether a company's operations would benefit most from maintaining the local brand names or transitioning to a larger platform brand over time.

Many owner operators may also worry about what mergers and acquisitions may mean for the leadership and people within their organization. In service-based businesses, leadership and people are critical to ongoing operations; many acquirers take that a step further by providing equity ownership opportunities to leadership and employees across the organization in order to ensure alignment of incentives and promote future growth.

As M&A in the sector continues to increase, smaller providers may find it difficult to remain competitive against better-capitalized, PE-backed players that bring more sales and marketing firepower, enhanced geographic reach, and potentially broader service offerings and capabilities. M&A could help smaller players remain competitive whether they choose to join a platform or continue to operate independently and pursue acquisitions of their own.

Notable transactions reflect broader trends

Recent notable transactions highlight growing participation by private equity in scaled businesses. In one example, Aurora Capital Partners, a California-based private equity firm, acquired Westcoast Gate (subsequently renamed to IronSite), a provider of commercial and residential gate installation and maintenance.

Another deal that signals increasing interest in the sector is the acquisition of Guardian Access Solutions, a Tennessee-based provider of maintenance and installation of commercial gates, doors, and access control systems, by CenterOak Partners, a Texas-based private equity firm. Guardian operates across the Southeast and serves commercial, multifamily, government, education, and sports and entertainment

continued on page 42

continued from page 40

markets, among others. CenterOak cited the company's strong regional presence and mission-critical services as key attractions.

There has also been significant recent new platform formation by private equity across the perimeter security sector. Recent activity spans multiple segments, including commercial gates (the formation of Citadel Access Solutions by West Edge Partners), dock and doors (Leonard Green's acquisition of DuraServ, The Sterling Group's purchase of OGD in Fort Worth, and Soundcore Capital's creation of US Dock & Door), and commercial fencing (Bertram Capital acquiring Perimeter Solutions Group, Saw Mill Capital purchasing Pro Max, and Harkness Capital investing in Premier Fence), among many others.

On the residential services side, private equity has shown interest in garage door service platforms. Last year, Gridiron Capital formed GarageCo, a residential and commercial garage door services platform, which acquired three companies in the space: P.D.Q. Door Company, Apple Door systems, and Cunningham Window & Door. Additionally, Rotunda Capital invested in Door Pros America in late 2023 and has built scale both organically and through M&A having acquired Liberty Door & Awning of New Jersey and American Garage Door Systems of North Carolina in 2025.

In June, Guild Garage Group announced a partnership with Garage Door Medics, a family-owned and operated residential garage door service company. Other companies, such as Precision Garage Door (part of the Neighborly Brands franchise network) and other regional operators, have attracted investor backing. These businesses benefit from recurring repair and maintenance demand, a consistent replacement cycle, and increasing adoption of smart-home technology.

Outlook: Long runway for growth

As investors continue to seek stable, service-oriented platforms, the security and access control industry offers an appealing blend of mission-critical demand, attractive margins and steady cash flows, and recurring maintenance within a highly fragmented market. Heightened focus on safety, ongoing construction and infrastructure spending, and the need for modernization across both residential and commercial properties suggest a long runway for expansion. The sector remains in the early innings, and mergers and acquisitions activity will continue to increase as new platforms emerge and platforms continue to grow and build scale through acquisitions. ■

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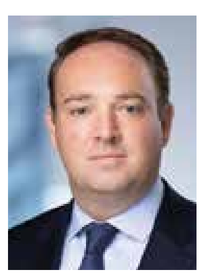
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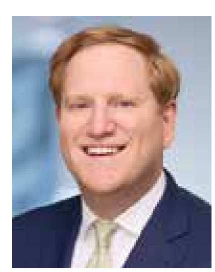
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