...we are architects

...we are interior designers

...we are hotel consultants

...we are

ICA
We are a 30 strong architecture and interior design studio, dedicated to hotel project design and delivery. With our head office in Glasgow and an additional base in London we work throughout the UK and internationally. We are the foremost hotel focused architecture and interior design studio within the UK.

Our work is design led. Our team produce innovative, high quality solutions within budget and on time.

The ethos of the practice is derived from the three Directors that founded our studio, combining their individual strengths to create a strong well rounded team that focuses on design, technical expertise and business acumen.

These character traits are evident in every project that Ica design and deliver and we believe that the care, attention to detail and passion of our teams sets us apart in the industry.

Our architectural and interior design teams often work independently on projects with other designers of both disciplines. However, we have developed a collaborative approach, which has evolved and transferred across the studio and that sees our Architects and Interior Designers working in close contact, influencing the work of both disciplines and enhancing the work of our studio as a whole.

// We are ica

// People
Intercontinental Hotel Group, Next generation
global brand prototype
Marriott International, designers for EMEA
Courtyard brand prototype
HGI/Hostel brand standards
DoubleTree by Hilton, Hyde Park
DoubleTree by Hilton, Edinburgh
DoubleTree by Hilton, Dundee
Hilton Garden Inn, Stirling
Hilton Garden Inn, Wembley Point
Hampton by Hilton Glasgow North
Hampton by Hilton Herne Bay
Hampton by Hilton Magor
Radisson Edwardian Guildford
QHotels, Weetonwood Hotel
Hotel Indigo Glasgow
Bravo Boutique Hotel, Shoreditch
London
Princess Street Suites, Edinburgh
Moorfield Hotel, Shetland
The Avenue Conference Centre
Bush Hall Country House Hotel
Park Inn, Edinburgh
Park Inn, Woolwich
Crowne Plaza, Edinburgh
Crowne Plaza, London Excel
Ramada Encore, London West
Ramada Encore, Milton Keynes
Ramada Encore, Crewe
Ramada Encore, Warrington
Ramada Encore, Glasgow Easf
Ramada Encore, Edinburgh
Ramada Encore, Birmingham
Ramada Encore, Derby
Holiday Inn Express, Dublin
Holiday Inn Express, Voronech Russia
Holiday Inn Express, Brussels
Holiday Inn Express, Wandsworth
Holiday Inn Express, London Wembley
Holiday Inn Express, Wembley
Holiday Inn Express, Manchester
Holiday Inn Express, Edinburgh
Holiday Inn Express, London Luton
Holiday Inn Express, Bedford
Holiday Inn Express, Harrow
Holiday Inn Express, London Swiss Cottage
Holiday Inn Express, Newcastle
Holiday Inn Express, Birmingham
Holiday Inn Express, Doncaster
Holiday Inn Express, London Golders Green North
Holiday Inn Express, Hamilton
Holiday Inn Express, consultancy on Holland roll out
Holiday Inn Express, Edinburgh Royal Mile
Holiday Inn Express, Worcester
Holiday Inn Express, Bury
Holiday Inn Express, Gateshead
Holiday Inn Express, Bradford
Holiday Inn Express, Cambridge South
Holiday Inn Express, Livingston
Holiday Inn Express, Greenock
Novotel, Ottawa
Ibis hotel, Croydon
Ibis Hotel, Edinburgh
Ibis Budget, Edinburgh
Ibis Styles, Edinburgh
Ibis Styles, Geneva
Ibis Styles, Eindhoven
Easy Hotel, Glasgow
Easy Hotel, London City
Tune Hotels, London Kings cross
Tune Hotels, Edinburgh
Tune Hotels, Newcastle
Smart City Hotel, Edinburgh
Hostel, Liverpool
La Bonne Auberge, Glasgow

// Experience
Ica was appointed to transform a former hotel on the fringes of leafy Ealing Common into a DoubleTree by Hilton hotel. The refurbishment included all 158 Bedrooms, Reception Area, Bar and Restaurant, Ballroom, Meeting Rooms, New Business Lounge, New Gym and New External Terrace.

The Client brief for the bedrooms was clear. They recognised the hotel was widely used by business travellers therefore creating a comfortable guest room experience with good working space was key.

The small footprint of the bedrooms presented a challenge. Our aim was to incorporate all of the brand requirements while creating a scheme which reflected the hotel’s natural setting. Using a warm palette of timber shades and splashes of burnt orange we transformed the rooms and created a contemporary look with an emphasis on comfort.

The Client wanted the Bar and Restaurant to have a ‘destination’ look and feel with the intention of attracting local clientele to dine and frequent the bar whilst maintaining its strong market position as a venue for corporate events and weddings. By creating zones within the existing open plan ground floor space, it allowed us to create areas which could cater for larger groups and smaller pockets of comfort for a more intimate experience. The use of dividing screens positioned strategically throughout the space, a mix of seating styles and bespoke feature pendant light fittings create a contemporary look. The use of leather and luxury fabrics in conjunction with natural honey oak flooring, dark timber shelving and accents of burnt orange add a layer of comfort.

The Reception, Business Lounge, Meeting Rooms and Ballroom all flow from the same design inspired by the natural surroundings of the hotel.

A radical approach by our Architects to the external scheme utilising bold blocks of contrasting colour, re-staining existing windows and fascia panels, new illuminated DoubleTree signage and the transformation was complete.
Above // DoubleTree by Hilton, Ealing, London - Typical bathroom and images of detailing and artwork
Opposite page above // DoubleTree by Hilton, Ealing, London - Lounge
Opposite page below // DoubleTree by Hilton, Ealing, London - Dining area
SoCo, Hotel and mixed use development
Edinburgh

The complex and sensitive ‘SoCo’ development site lies within the heart of the Edinburgh World Heritage Site and the Old Town Conservation Area. Following a devastating fire in 2002, which seriously damaged the existing buildings and resulted in the removal of those buildings having to be removed on safety grounds, the site lay derelict for ten years. In this important part of Edinburgh’s Old Town.

With an intricate and convoluted history involving the medieval Cowgate and the newer classical intervention of South Bridge, in which important figures such as John and Robert Adam played critical roles, the development of the site has attracted considerable attention from a large number of stakeholders. After the fire the City Council prepared a Development Planning Brief for the site with input from all of the relevant organisations. This set out key requirements that any new proposed development would have to consider.

It is within this context that we were approached to develop proposals for Jansons Property incorporating a 259 bed hotel, retail space on South Bridge, commercial uses on Cowgate, the re-establishment of the jazz club La Belle Angele that was located on the site prior to the fire and extensive new external public realm space.

Unguarded discourse and dialogue with all interested parties was always going to be key to the successful advancement of this project and throughout the design process we met regularly with City of Edinburgh Council and as many historical groups and involved organisations as possible. The architectural conceptual strategy and design resolution sought to unify the various disparate elements of the planning brief and the voices of the key consultation parties with a design approach that ‘repairs’ this important urban site. Fundamentally the design approach that the studio followed on this project was contextual, seeking neither a fashionable or iconic outcome but a building that has a truthful and timeless quality.

The internal and external public spaces will play a key role in the success of the completed development and the design of these areas has focused on contrasting textures, materials and lighting. The interior spaces have an intimate, relaxed feel. Contemporary furniture and fittings with appealing finishes make the hotel feel like a new generation of Ibis.

The bar area with its eclectic mix of lounge seating and intimate seating booths gives views out to the external public terrace areas. Finishes are natural and relaxed – textured brick with distressed timber, concrete pendant lights with leather and wool upholstery in refined muted colours. Externally Caithness stone throughout the terrace areas provides a similar natural and enduring quality.
Ica was asked by Westmont Hospitality Group to refurbish an existing hotel building located on Bayswater Road, overlooking Hyde Park and rebrand this to a Doubletree by Hilton.

All 228 existing bedrooms and en suite bathrooms have been completely refitted and complemented with a further twelve new guest rooms and a Fitness Suite formed on the first floor utilising space reclaimed by removing meeting rooms. The Reception, Restaurant and Bar spaces have undergone total remodelling to overcome the operational challenges associated with trying to cater for high occupancy rates in very compact public areas. Additionally the client was determined the footfall along Bayswater Road should be exploited.

The intuitive working relationship between Architects and Interior Designers within the studio allowed an innovative Bedroom scheme and a radical re-working of the Public Area to be developed and presented to both Client and Hotel brand within an extremely tight time frame. In addition our knowledge of the DoubleTree brand meant we could manage Hilton’s internal approval process in an efficient manner whilst maintaining our Client’s vision to create a ‘flagship’ property within the constraints of the branded framework.

The windows throughout the entire property were replaced enhancing the external appearance and improving the in-room acoustics. This involved careful negotiations with planners as the site is located within a prominent conservation area.

The interior design scheme is based on natural motifs directly linked to the Hotel’s location on the edge of Hyde Park. A striking large scale specially commissioned artwork by acclaimed artist Alan Rankine provides the focal point in the lobby. The piece captures the essence of Hyde Park and features glimpses of familiar details a guest might encounter as they stroll through the park grounding the perception that the hotel belongs.

Completion December 2013
Ice was appointed by West Register as Architects and Interior Designers on the rebranding of The Point Hotel in Edinburgh to a DoubleTree by Hilton hotel. Originally 3 separate constructions built between 1892 and 1937, the last element being the first building in Scotland to feature a glass curtain wall, were combined and converted to a boutique hotel in the late 90’s. Our Architects have worked hard to ensure the external character of this grade A listed building has been retained, whilst skilfully negotiating with Planners to get approval for DoubleTree branded signage. All 139 bedrooms and en suites are being completely refurbished. The Lobby, Restaurant, Bar and Conference Suite are all being re-configured and re-fitted. In addition a new gym is being created in the 4th floor lift lobby. The interior draws heavily on the building's history; 1930’s Art Deco motifs are woven throughout the scheme, in carpets, mirrors and decorative screens. The colour palette is warm with accent colours of vibrant Purple and Teal.

The bedrooms are warm and comfortable. Traditional tweed fabrics are mixed with luxurious velvets and dark timber. Zebra print inspired carpet and bespoke light fittings add a hint of glamour. En suites are fresh and contemporary with chrome accessories and large showers.
Set on the shore at Brae looking out over spectacular coastal scenery this hotel is now the largest hotel on Shetland. Using a contemporary vernacular style the design has used the colours and forms of local materials and topography as well as inspiration from tradition local features such as chimneys and gables. Built using prefabricated modules completion was achieved within 5 months of delivery of the bedroom modules to site. The hotel comprises 100 guest rooms, lounge, bar restaurant, meeting facilities and fitness suite. Private kitchen/dining rooms are also provided for long stay residents working in the gas industry.

A visual study of the existing built forms on the Shetland Islands and the examination of a number of precedents led to the design response. These include a predominance of gables, chimneys and roofs set within the landscape, a simple palette of materials – stone, render, slates with muted colours and half storey dormers.

The building is 3 storeys, but designed to have the appearance of a smaller building. The roof has been designed with a double pitch to reduce the scale of the building. The form is accretive and asymmetric to appear more vernacular and apposite to its rural context albeit that the implementation and detailing of the building is undoubtedly contemporary. A fresh and light approach has been taken to the design of the guest rooms, incorporating innovative storage solutions suitable for long stay guests. Materials are robust, however retain a level of comfort and warmth ensuring guests feel at home. The public spaces of the hotel are warm and welcoming. The reception area sets the tone with the use of natural materials and artwork evocative of the local landscape. The restaurant layout caters for large numbers of guests to be seated while the Bar/Lounge Area has a more intimate feel with small pockets of comfort to help guests relax, or hold small informal meetings. The public areas within the ground floor are expressed in the form of a jagged stone wall with large glazed openings – these afford framed and choreographed views and ground the building into the landscape.

The building colours are monochromatic and natural. External walls of locally sourced Shetland stone are used with white render to the walls and gables. Small areas of treated timber cladding also add warmth and mark the entrance. The roof is expressive and the use of lead dormers again reduce the impact of the development. The hotel was constructed off-site in Northern Ireland to allow the Contractor to work efficiently over the dark winter months. The hotel was formed using 150 individual modules that were fully furnished prior to dispatch. The modules were then shipped to site in March 2013 where they were installed prior to the installation of external finishes. The hotel was fully completed in July 2013.

THE MOORFIELD HOTEL
Brae, Shetland

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Indigo combines the individuality of boutique hotel design, and the quality assurance of a major brand (IHG). The project was one of the first Hotel INDIGO’s to appear in the UK and has become one of the most popular hotel destinations in Glasgow.

Originally constructed in 1892, the former Italian Palazzo style building on the corner of Waterloo Street and Blythswood Street was home to the city’s first electric lighting station. The huge demand in the basement were switched on within a decade after the American inventor Thomas Edison patented the electric light bulb so the building is extremely important in the context of the revolution that Edison created. The building then underwent substantial changes in 1930 giving the building its modern grid-iron city centre appearance, which it retains to the present day.

One of the main interventions we made to the fabric of the existing building was to remove the central staircase. This immediately allowed us to open up the ground floor plan, maximising street activation. This principle move together with a proposed set-back rooftop extension provided an additional 25% of bedroom accommodation and was instrumental in the viability of the project, allowing it to be funded and constructed.

Our team worked closely with Glasgow City Council Heritage staff and Historic Scotland to exploit some of the existing features of this important building. The existing ornate plasterwork of the ceilings and bulkheads on the former ground floor showroom dating back to the 1930’s were retained and we also successfully preserved and maintained the existing Art Deco black granite shop front openings at street level. These decisions have helped the completed building to retain its strong identity and carry this into its new life as a hotel.

Opposite // Hotel INDIGO, Glasgow - Exterior View on Waterloo Street, Glasgow
Above // Hotel INDIGO, Glasgow - View of restaurant
Bounded by a railway, an elevated bypass road and a number of historic listed buildings, this development presented design challenges from the outset. The client was the owner of the adjacent oak framed Red Lion Pub and hotel, historically an important coaching inn dating back to the 13th Century which had become economically unviable and in much need of repair in recent years.

To raise the necessary revenue to fund refurbishment and extension of the existing inn, the owner embarked on a plan to develop a standalone hotel in the grounds.

The studio worked closely with the Client to develop proposals entering into detailed discussions with the local planning authority and conservation team. In spite of initial resistance to the principle of development in this location, planning consent for a 73 bed hotel was secured in September 2009.

The design of the building aims to reduce its scale and mass so that the building sits harmoniously within its surrounding context. The asymmetric approach reflects the nature of the existing buildings on site. The use of ‘mature’ materials such as timber and lead have an ageless quality which helps reduce the impact of this contemporary building within the site.

The fenestration pattern deviates from the regular grid generated by the plan to reflect that of the existing Red Lion which is asymmetric and accretive.

Extending the precedent set by the architecture, the design concept for the interior was also influenced by the rich history of the site and the nearby Duxford Chapel, within walking distance of the hotel. This site has close links with the RAF at nearby Duxford, which played an important role in aviation history during both World Wars and as a result ex-servicemen regularly meet at this site to reminisce.

Inspiration for the Public area design was drawn from both of these themes, reflecting the rich timber interiors of the Red Lion Hotel and using fabric and colours reflecting the Royal Air Force Uniforms. Artwork also reinforces the aviation theme including digital wallpaper showing blueprints of original war planes which would have flown from nearby Duxford Airfield.

The guest rooms on the upper floors are representative of the prototype Holiday Inn Express scheme designed by Ica in conjunction with Intercontinental Hotels Group in 2009. The design maintains its freshness and has a comfortable contemporary feel which fits perfectly with the building design.
Our brief was to take Marriott’s hugely successful Courtyard brand, thoroughly disassemble, analyse and redesign it to cater for the European Guest and marketplace.

In addition to this we also had an objective to ensure the new product was a more economically viable and efficient model for potential owners to build and operate. The archetypal building was developed by our architects based on 170 rooms over six levels with flexibility to scale the design up or down to meet market or site conditions.

Our interior designers created an original, simple and bright contemporary guest room design. Multi-functional furniture was introduced to give the guest maximum flexibility and control over their own room layout. The bathroom is light and has a spa ‘feel’. Collaboration within our team is best demonstrated by the Public Area designs where it was imperative that the balance between the operational requirements and high design quality were maintained. The team worked hard to create a ‘flexible all day bistro restaurant’ concept and pockets of casual comfortable space for business travellers to hold informal meetings or simply relax, with technology at hand.

Ica have now completed the first built example of the prototype design, the 194 bed hotel at Aberdeen Airport. The second is currently on site, a 230 bed hotel in Cologne. In addition Marriott have announced a further three new hotels using Ica’s Courtyard prototype design:
- 120 room Courtyard Le Bourget, France (2013)
- 175 room Courtyard Gdynia, Poland (2014)
Hoax Hostel, Liverpool is the first of this new and exciting hostel brand, which seeks to provide 5 star hostel accommodation in the heart of Liverpool. The quirky design which promotes the ethos of ‘up-cycling’, found and reclaimed objects and furniture, sets it apart from the competitors in this growing sector. Ica has had a leading role in both the design and development of the prototype concept, and the development of the Liverpool hostel.

The existing 6 storey vacant building, sits within the famous Cavern area of the Met Quarter, which really comes to life in the evening with people flowing into the bars and restaurants along Matthew Street. The existing building is historically two conjoined buildings, with the north end being a red brick Victorian building, which is highly detailed with brick and stone coursing and internally exposed cast iron columns. Behind this sits the contrasting 1960’s modern building, with oversized steel windows and concrete frame structure. This fusion of construction is reflected in the interior design of the public areas.

The redevelopment was a full refurbishment of the existing 6 storey, and addition of a 7th storey, to provide 274 bed spaces over 50 dorms offering en-suite shower and W/C facilities, hostel reception, and guest facilities including kitchen, dining, and laundry. Due to its prime location it also accommodates ‘Hopskotch’ Street bar and Kitchen and the ‘Hatch’ which is an exclusive underground club, which will accommodate live gigs, stand-up comedy and cinema viewings.

It is planned that Liverpool will be the first of a group of Hoax Hostels located in key tourist cities throughout the UK and Europe. Each hostel will have an individual style suited to its city and be located in a converted or vacant building.
Opposite page // Hoax Hostel, Liverpool - Bar area, Hopskotch restaurant, graffiti graphics. Typical dorm with feature bespoke graphics.

Above // Hoax Hostel, Liverpool - View of double room; view of typical 4 bed dorm.
Ica were appointed to develop designs for the first Residence Inn by Marriott in the UK. The building, originally designed by Sir Norman Foster is located in the prominent Quaterme development in the heart of Edinburgh. The hotel’s 107 studios and one bedroom suites have been reconfigured and refurbished to create a fresh modern feel with a residential edge targeted at the long stay business traveller. Each suite offers a kitchen and spacious living, dining and working zones. The rooms include familiar elements guests would be likely to have in their own home, e.g., an abundance of oversized cushions, standard lamps and large wall mounted TVs.

Our remit also included the extension and refurbishment of the public spaces. Within the tight footprint of the existing ground floor a new fitness suite and new meeting room were created. Ica managed to deliver the project from inception to completion in less than 8 months. We worked closely with Marriott International to deliver this bespoke product. By using warm tones and natural materials a stark and contemporary commercial building was given a warm residential feel staying true to the brand identity.
Ica was appointed directly by Accor in this case to complete the interior design of a new Ibis Styles hotel in Edinburgh’s New Town. The building, formally the office of Scottish Life Assurance office is situated on the corner of St Andrews Square directly opposite Harvey Nichols. The building will be completely transformed, with 192 new guestrooms being formed over six floors. The ground floor will be reconfigured to accommodate a reception, bar, restaurant and back of house areas.

Ibis Styles, St Andrews Square follows the theme of Scottish literary hero’s and poets, reflecting a different iconic literary mind such as Robert Burns or Walter Scott. This will be achieved through subtle detailing on the casegoods and the use of large digital wallcoverings. Contemporary tartan inspired carpets and vibrant colours which vary throughout the hotel will provide the guest with a unique hotel experience.
Above // Ibis Styles, St Andrews Square, Edinburgh - Scottish Thistle in watercolour; Typical Bathroom; Image of typical themed bedroom
Opposite // Ibis Styles, St Andrews Square, Edinburgh - Images of public areas