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#25 DECORATIVE LIGHTING
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LIGHT + BUILDING PREVIEW

DARC'S WOMEN OF LIGHT

LINDSEY ADELMAN

An Exotic Blend

Interior designers **Goddard Littlefair** worked with **Susan Lake Lighting Design** to create the perfect mix of vintage travel references and modern-day amenities at the new **Principal Hotel**, Charlotte Square, Edinburgh.

Image: Gareth Gardner





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Interior design studio Goddard Littlefair has just completed a £25m, top-to-toe transformation of the Principal Edinburgh Charlotte Square, formerly The Roxburgh Hotel. The new hotel joins the Principal family of standout, city-centre hotels, each with its own unique treatment and personality, entirely appropriate to its historic building envelope and location. As the second Principal hotel to be established in Edinburgh, following the opening of Principal Edinburgh, George Street, the remit for the Grade-II listed Charlotte Square covered a complete revamp of all the hotel's public spaces, including the reception, lounge areas, ballroom and meeting rooms, plus the stunning central 'Garden' all-day dining area. All of the hotel's 181 rooms and 18 suites, plus linking lobbies and corridors, were also completely redesigned.

The scheme also included the creation of a new bar and restaurant offer - BABA, a

new destination hotspot for Edinburgh, masterminded by the culinary team behind Glasgow restaurant Ox and Finch, featuring a Levantine-inspired design feel and menu. Jo Littlefair, Goddard Littlefair Director and Co-founder, commented on the overall design approach: "Like a cosmopolitan clubhouse, the scheme for Charlotte Square is eclectic, intriguing and full of references to travel - from set-dressing with vintage suitcases, hats and canes to The Map Room, where walls are lined with historic maps from around the world. The interior feel is plush and elegant, with interesting and varied furniture and tactile, high-quality fabrics, such as richly coloured velvets and leathers, all set within a series of stand out individual spaces." "Charlotte Square had to differentiate from the newly-opened and already successful sister hotel at George Street, while at the same time, adhering to the key brand principals," adds Goddard Littlefair's Creative Director, Richard McCree-Hughes.

"The new Charlotte Square project was therefore given its own aesthetic language to appeal to a slightly different market. We adopted a slightly 'hipper' more masculine 'town house' vibe and even developed a fictional owner - a well travelled, slightly eccentric Scottish gentleman with a taste for the finer things in life - who informed many design decisions along the way. He became a much-loved mascot for the design, construction and project management teams by the end of the project. It was a fun way of working!"

Guests enter the hotel via a classic original arched entranceway, refurbished with a smart, black-painted door set into a white-painted glazed arch. The sense of being welcomed into a grand old Georgian townhouse prevails. Once inside, a spacious, glazed vestibule provides an area to wait or lounge in. Over to the left, an original fireplace, floor lamps, small tables and Ercol chairs upholstered in rich mustard velvet,

along with a sisal carpet runner, provide a sense of warmth.

The vestibule space is freshened and contemporised by white marble, herringbone mosaic flooring, which cedes to an ebony timber parquet floor, as guests move into the reception area through a second set of glazed timber and bronze doors. Immediately beyond, hangs an opulent 1.1m-diameter, bespoke pendant light, designed by Goddard Littlefair and produced by A Shade Above in pale, coffee-coloured silk with elaborate black trimming.

The walls here are painted a soft milk-chocolate colour, creating an immediate feeling of warmth and intimacy. The space is further softened via the use of full-length deep green velvet curtains, which cleverly subdivide the space and provide a sense of privacy and exclusivity.

"The hotel is made up of several Georgian townhouses that have been knocked together," continues McCree-Hughes.

"As such, there was a wealth of existing architectural features and eccentricities, which provided us with a very characterful canvas on which to work. The decorative lighting has been used to highlight and in some cases, contrast with the building's character and reinforces the sense of elements acquired organically over a period of time. We hope they also appear to be a manifestation of someone's personal style and taste, rather than being part of a uniform and ultra co-ordinated approach so often found in hotels.

"In the public areas the decorative pieces remain eclectic and have been used for more dramatic effect. For example, the bespoke silk pendant fitting already mentioned manages to reflect and be entirely in keeping with the Georgian architecture, but hints at the well-travelled, experienced and exotic." The brief for the lighting was to create a considered scheme that was subtle yet emphasised the richness and vibrancy of the

interior finishes, allowing the decorative lighting to take centre stage. For lighting designer Susan Lake (SLLD), working within a Grade II listed building, in a UNESCO world heritage site, gave her team a lot to think about when it came to the internal lighting, using the constraints of the building to their advantage.

"As with the interior design, we designed a scheme that complemented and emphasised the existing historical architecture," she tells darc. "The Georgian architecture was a wonderful base to work with; it's both dramatic and elegant when lit well. The building has sensational Georgian ceiling plaster moldings in the Salon, Map Room and Library and wonderfully tall windows looking onto leafy Charlotte Square from the front of the Library.

"The decorative lighting works harder than it seems to at first. We wanted it to look like curated items, as if the furniture had been collected by someone over time."



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Moving over to 'The Garden', the hotel's courtyard, a canopy of assorted light fittings, hang beneath the glazed ceiling and provide a sense of warmth and magic, not unlike candle light. The new garden space is immediately visible from the moment you enter the hotel. Located in a space previously used for pre-function drinks or as a breakout area, The Garden serves as a destination all-day food and beverage space, creating an oasis for local Edinburgh residents, as well as hosting breakfast service for hotel guests. Originally open to the elements, the central courtyard space has now been reclaimed as part of the hotel's interior space with the addition of a new glazed roof. With open views of the sky, the space provides the hotel with a much-needed heart and allows comfortable all-year round use. The design for The Garden was inspired by the great hothouses, orangeries and nurseries of grand historic country estates and the

space has been sub-divided to provide guests with a sense of privacy and intimacy, using reclaimed glazed doors, fretwork screens and metal gates sourced from architectural salvage yards.

In the evening, the space takes on a magical feel, thanks to the ambient lighting scheme, which includes periphery wall lights with an intimate candle-lit feel, while the extensive use of wicker shades reinforces the sense of being in an indoor-outdoor space and casts playful patterns across the walls and floor. Pretty glass-jar lights with metal floral fittings, multiple-string 'festoon' lighting and antiqued metal chandeliers all add to a garden-party vibe. A particularly notable element are the eight, over-scaled drum lampshades around the edges of the space, dressed in a black and white palm tree fabric from Tissues d'Helene.

"We cast the net wide when it came to searching for the right accessories to dress the space with and add personality," says

Opening spread The Map Room features a stunning lighting display from Janie's Knitted Textiles.

Previous page 1. Once inside, a spacious glazed vestibule provides an area to wait or lounge in, where a 1.1-metre diameter bespoke pendant light designed by Goddard Littlefair and produced by A Shade Above hangs. Image: Gareth Gardner. 2. An original fireplace, floor lamps and small table lamps complement Ercol chairs upholstered in rich mustard velvet. Image: Gareth Gardner. 3. Guests enter the hotel via a classic original arched entranceway, refurbished with a smart, black-painted door set into a white-painted glazed arch. Image: Gavriil Papadiotis 4. The brief for the lighting was to create a considered scheme that was subtle yet emphasised the richness and vibrancy of the interior finishes. Image: Gareth Gardner.

This page 1. The Garden has an array of seating options and features various oversized pendant and floor lamps. Image: Gareth Gardner. 2&3. A deliberately eclectic and varied approach has been taken with all the furnishings in The Garden to give the impression of pieces acquired by the owner of the 'house' over a period of many years. Images: Gavriil Papadiotis. 4. In the evening the space takes on a magical feel thanks to the ambient lighting scheme, which includes periphery wall lights, with an intimate candle-lit feel, while the extensive use of wicker shades reinforces the sense of being in an indoor-outdoor space, casting playful patterns across the walls and floor. Image: Gareth Gardner.



McCready-Hughes. “Extensive trips to antiques markets and dealer fairs provided one-off planters, jardinières, benches, cabinets and garden tools, all of which add to the fashionably eclectic feel of the space. “Hanging the lighting beneath the glazed roof of The Garden was quite challenging because often there wasn’t a structural support available where we wanted it. It’s an informal space intended to evoke the sense of conservatory and potting shed and so we managed to get around this by hanging ladders transversely between the cross beams and wrapping flexes and chains around these. This enabled us to get the decorative fittings exactly where they are needed to be for maximum effect.” Lake adds to this telling darc: “We worked around the challenges of the glazed ceiling in The Garden by incorporating mini downlights into the pendants designed by Goddard Littlefair, this compensated for the lack of light in the centre of the room.” Directly behind the bar area of The Garden, is the pre-function space, which shares

some of the same glazed roof and benefits from a soft glow of light, created by mid-century-inspired table lamps, sitting on the bar counter, while glass and metal lanterns continue the outdoor feel.

This space can be sealed off for functions as it leads directly into The Gallery, where grey-toned woodwork acts as a backdrop for gallery-feel art displays featuring local artists.

Moving on to the new restaurant and cocktail bar - BABA, Goddard Littlefair was asked to provide a step change in terms of the look and feel of the space and this change in approach is immediately apparent. With its own street entrance, signalling the unique identity of the space within, a specially-commissioned mural of the ‘host’ Mr Baba, based on a vintage photograph, provides the backdrop to the bar counter.

The bar itself has been refurbished with a re-finished, dark-stained, timber bar front and re-used zinc bar top, replete with the signs of aging character from its previous life. The bar ceiling is painted in a rich teal tone, with

multiple antique framed mirrors attached to it, reflecting the activity beneath. In terms of lighting, four wall lights with timber-panelled shades from Graypants add further interest by casting shadows and playing with the light; two further examples are also used in the restaurant.

Guests move from the bar to the restaurant via a glazed platform, which allows views over the space before stepping down into it. At the base of the steps is the restaurant’s show kitchen and dining counter, which is the first in a series of dining spaces that also includes The Map Room, The Salon and The Library, each with a different emphasis. In the main restaurant space, striking feature lighting includes five sets of bespoke, hand-forged lights with metal chandelier casings from Made by the Forge, along with 20 pendant lights made up of fret strings along the inner and window sides of the restaurant - these continue into the bar area. All designed by Danish designer Alexandra Raben, there are three more of her designs along the restaurant’s back section and one



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super-sized light in burnt orange over the 'snug' seating area.

The Map dining room is characterised by an artwork collection of framed map and vintage travel posters. This is a colourful room, building on the peacock blue anchor colour with oranges and a burst of dark red. A lighting feature by Janie Knitted Textiles features in the space and is made up of a cluster of twelve lights in three different shapes, with dip-dyed wool shades in blue, orange and grey. The room is 'clubby' in feel, but the dining tables are at proper dining height so that the room is also very appropriate for dining.

Moving upstairs to the guest rooms and suites - no two rooms are the same, with bedrooms spread across three locations, the old block, new wing and the 'wee hoose'. The design treatment for all, centres on comfort, colour and character, with fun and eclectic 'salon hang' artwork in each room.

"Our primary concerns in lighting the guest rooms was to ensure the lighting was both practical and restful and that this could

be simply and intuitively controlled," says McCready-Hughes. "We had quite a varied style of rooms to deal with and many had very high ceilings, so decorative pieces were specifically developed to provide scale and interest - particularly in the older parts of the building."

The old block guestrooms make the most of period details, such as refurbished listed detailing and cornicing. The overall design treatment is a balance between tradition and a more youthful, contemporary feel. The new wing guestrooms are more uniform in layout and considerable effort was made by Goddard Littlefair to ensure they had the same sense of character and uniqueness present in the more historic areas of the building.

The 'wee hoose' is like a mini hotel-within-a-hotel and is spread over four storeys. It has bedrooms with a similar feel, but with a unique bathroom treatment featuring roll-top baths, marble washstands and tiles. There are two central staircases in this section of the hotel, which both feature a

Previous page 1. The new Baba Restaurant and Bar has a vibrant colour scheme and an industrial, distressed design treatment. Lighting in the space comes from Made By The Forge. Image: Julian Franklin of Franklin + Franklin. 2. The bar has been refurbished with a re-finished, dark-stained, timber bar front and re-used zinc bar top, replete with signs of aging and character from its previous life. Image: Gavriil Papadiotis. *This page 1.* Lighting brings to life a rich teal ceiling with multiple antique-framed mirrors, reflecting activity beneath. Image: Julian Franklin of Franklin + Franklin. 2&3. In the centre of the restaurant space, a row of banquettes have moveable divider screens, so the seating can be set up in variables of groups of ten. The restaurant's window and back wall features free standing tables with seats upholstered in either a turquoise or aubergine-coloured leather. Huge, shop-front style windows face out from the restaurant onto George St. Lighting again, comes from Made By The Forge. Images: Gavriil Papadiotis.

Next page No two bedrooms are the same at The Principal Edinburgh Charlotte Square. The design treatment for all, centres on comfort, colour and character. All of the guestroom lighting was designed in-house by Goddard Littlefair and produced by Heathfield Lighting. All images: Gareth Gardner.



bold wall covering by Timorous Beasties, with a light well at the top. Looking back at the redesign of Charlotte Square, for McCready-Hughes the decorative lighting elements, “add to the sense of character and individuality of the property. We also hope that some of the them are memorable and create a talking point among guests,” he says. “There was huge pressure to demonstrate the financial viability of this project initially and that meant working in a very collaborative manner with our client to maximise the value of the design as a whole, without compromising the guest experience in any way. “We’ve always embraced individualism and a sense of eclecticism in our work, but with this project we also had the opportunity to inject some quirkiness and humour too. We love the end result and I feel it perfectly demonstrates our ability as a practice to interpret our client’s brief on an individual basis and deliver a range of aesthetic styles in a fresh and unique manner.” Lake adds to this, saying: “The decorative lighting is integral to the atmosphere we created throughout. Different layers of light add to the opulence and richness of the interior finishes and furniture; overall, we’ve achieved a subtle, considered scheme

that delicately balances the decorative and architectural lighting aspects. “The architectural lighting adds soft washes of light in places, bringing the vibrant finishes to life as well as focused and dramatic lighting to architectural features in others. The decorative lighting adds warmth and striking focal points in the spaces, adding charm and personality to the interior.” Marcello Ventisei, General Manager at the Principal Edinburgh Charlotte Square, commented on the process: “It’s been an incredible journey for the entire team here at the hotel, but we’re incredibly proud to be able to reveal the results of our refurbishment. The new space focuses on bringing one of the city’s most impressive buildings back to life, offering guests the perfect blend of heritage and modernity. The refurbishment allows us to continue to push for excellence in the design and service we provide in one of Edinburgh’s most desirable locations.” www.goddardlittelfair.com www.slld.lighting

design details

PRINCIPAL HOTEL CHARLOTTE SQUARE, EDINBURGH, UK
 CLIENT: STARWOOD CAPITAL
 ARCHITECTS: 3DREID
 INTERIOR DESIGN: GODDARD LITTLEFAIR
 LIGHTING DESIGN: SUSAN LAKE LIGHTING DESIGN

lighting specified

VARIOUS BESPOKE PIECES - DESIGNED BY GODDARD LITTLEFAIR - PRODUCED BY HEATHFIELD LIGHTING / A SHADE ABOVE
 ANTHROPOLOGIE PENDANT LIGHTS
 BROUGHTONS G-SHAPE DESK LAMP
 CHEHOMA PENDANT LIGHTS
 GRAYPANTS RITA WALL LIGHTS
 GERVASONI RATTAN PENDANTS
 JANIE KNITTED TEXTILES BESPOKE LIGHTING FEATURE
 JIM LAWRENCE CHELTENHAM WALL LIGHTS / LYMINGTON WALL LIGHTS
 MADE BY THE FORGE BESPOKE CHANDELIERS
 OBJET INSOLITE PLUME & OSCAR FLOOR LAMPS
 OKA CHAUCER FLOOR LAMP / ARABESQUE FLOOR LAMP
 RESTORATION HARDWARE LANTERN PENDANTS
 R&S ROBERTSON LTD CHANDELIER PENDANT LIGHTS / ANTLER METAL TABLE LAMP
 TINEK HOME RATTAN FLOOR LAMPS & PENDANTS
 VAUGHAN DESIGNS COMPIEGNE CHANDELIER

