

INGRAM CENTRE KILMARNOCK

RIAS AWARDS CONSERVATION AND CLIMATE CHANGE 2019



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The Ingram Centre

Adapting a vacant key town centre building into a innovative business centre.

John Finnie Street in Kilmarnock started life in the 1860s. It was to be a grand Victorian thoroughfare for the town, with the railway station located at northern end.

30-38 John Finnie Street was built in 1895. It has been home to businesses as diverse as the Bright Hosiery Manufacturer and the Department of Health for Scotland. The upper floors originally contained tenements and rooming apartments. The list of former residents tells an interesting tale, and by the 1930s it included motor drivers, a pedlar, a carter, a boot and shoe operator and an engineer and machinery agent.

When the [Kilmarnock Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme/ Townscape Heritage Initiative \(CARS/THI\)](#) was initiated in 2007, the building was completely vacant. East Ayrshire Council owned a number of the residential units and one of the ground floor units, but without owning the entire building, they were very unlikely to be able to redevelop it, or attract an investor. The Council agreed to try to purchase the remaining properties within the building. The process took several years, and at one point they thought about using compulsory purchase powers – but in the end it wasn't necessary.



A meeting room of the Ingram Centre
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They explored options for reusing the building as a hotel, and then artist studios. This was in the aftermath of the economic downturn in 2008, and ultimately both failed. Finally, they hit upon the concept of a business incubation centre.

The [Ingram Enterprise Centre](#) was the latest in a series of 25 buildings in Kilmarnock's town centre to undergo a comprehensive programme of restoration and refurbishment through the Kilmarnock CARS & THI.



View of the Ingram Centre
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Above left : View of 30-38 John Finnie Street in 1975,
Gunsmiths on the Ground Floor © SC 1650152



Above right: View of 30-38 John Finnie Street in 2009,
Blue Triangle Café on the Ground Floor

Below: Opening ceremony of the Ingram Centre © East Ayrshire Council



A key part of the brief to [Wylie Shanks Architects](#) was to retain as many of the building's original features as possible. This meant that the external fabric was repaired and upgraded. Decorative features of the interior were kept where possible – including cornicing, panelling around the windows, and the staircase to the front of the building.

After years of damage caused by a leaking roof, other features couldn't be fixed. This made it possible to design a modern, functional, better performing, more sustainable interior. The decision was also made to provide an extension on the side of this building. This allows for additional office space, and will see the refurbishment of one of the oldest buildings in Kilmarnock – [1-3 Dunlop Street](#). Dunlop Street has lain vacant for over twenty years and is on the [Buildings at Risk Register](#).

Conceived and run by [East Ayrshire Council's Economic Development Team](#), the Ingram Enterprise Centre offers serviced accommodation, meeting rooms, breakout spaces, and training facilities with a reception facility during core office hours.

Opened in 2018, this new office space for start-up and expanding businesses has proven very popular with local businesses. The renovation of this building on such an important street, two minutes from Kilmarnock Station, continues East Ayrshire Council's adoption of the Town Centre First principle, bringing new people and business into the town centre.

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Stair restored at the
Ingram Centre
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