



Company: EDI International
 Contact: Andre Landon, AIA
 Address: 10550 Richmond Avenue, Suite
 160, Houston, Texas 77042
 Email: Andre.Landon@EDI-International.com
 Telephone: 713-375-1400
 Website: www.EDI-International.com

Dedicated to Design

EDI is an architecture, interior design and planning firm dedicated to offering the very highest standards of service. We caught up with Design Director and Principal, Andre Landon to find out more about the firm and how it works to ensure that every project is completed to the very highest possible standard.

Established in 1976, EDI International is a global architecture, planning and interior design firm specializing in hospitality, commercial, luxury condominiums, multi-family residential and high end single family and production housing projects. EDI's commitment to forward thinking design, technology and quality is recognized by more than 150 industry awards for excellence in design over the years. Andre, who leads the design process on a variety of luxury hotels, prototype hotels, boutique style hotels, restaurants, historical renovations, high-rise condominiums and country club projects, is eager to outline the process he and his team use whenever they undertake a new project and how this sets them apart from their competitors.

"At EDI we pride ourselves on principal involvement from a project's inception all the way through completion. We understand the realities of internal politics, discerning client expectations and the need to balance many levels of input throughout a project's process. Therefore, we strive to bring together input from all team members in a sensitive and flexible manner while meeting the project goals. We understand organizational goals, industry issues and trends.

"One of our greatest strengths is our ability to bring this knowledge together in a manner that anticipates our clients' specialized needs. To achieve this, we create a core team of professionals who consistently work with our clients to learn their goals and needs. We spend a great deal of time on the front end understanding their program and who the end users really are. Principal involvement from a project's inception through completion truly is one of our strong points. We pay attention to even the smallest details constantly measuring how closely the results meet the project needs and the end user's expectations. Throughout the life of a project, it's necessary to re-evaluate and realign in order to meet critical aesthetic, schedule and budget goals. Therefore, we have to remain very nimble throughout the process. We keep focused on creating an aesthetically pleasing, functional and profitable building or space for our clients and the end users."

Among the firm's projects is The ACME Hotel in Chicago. The 130 room boutique hotel was converted from a bland branded product to an independent hotel experience. It serves up and coming millennials and

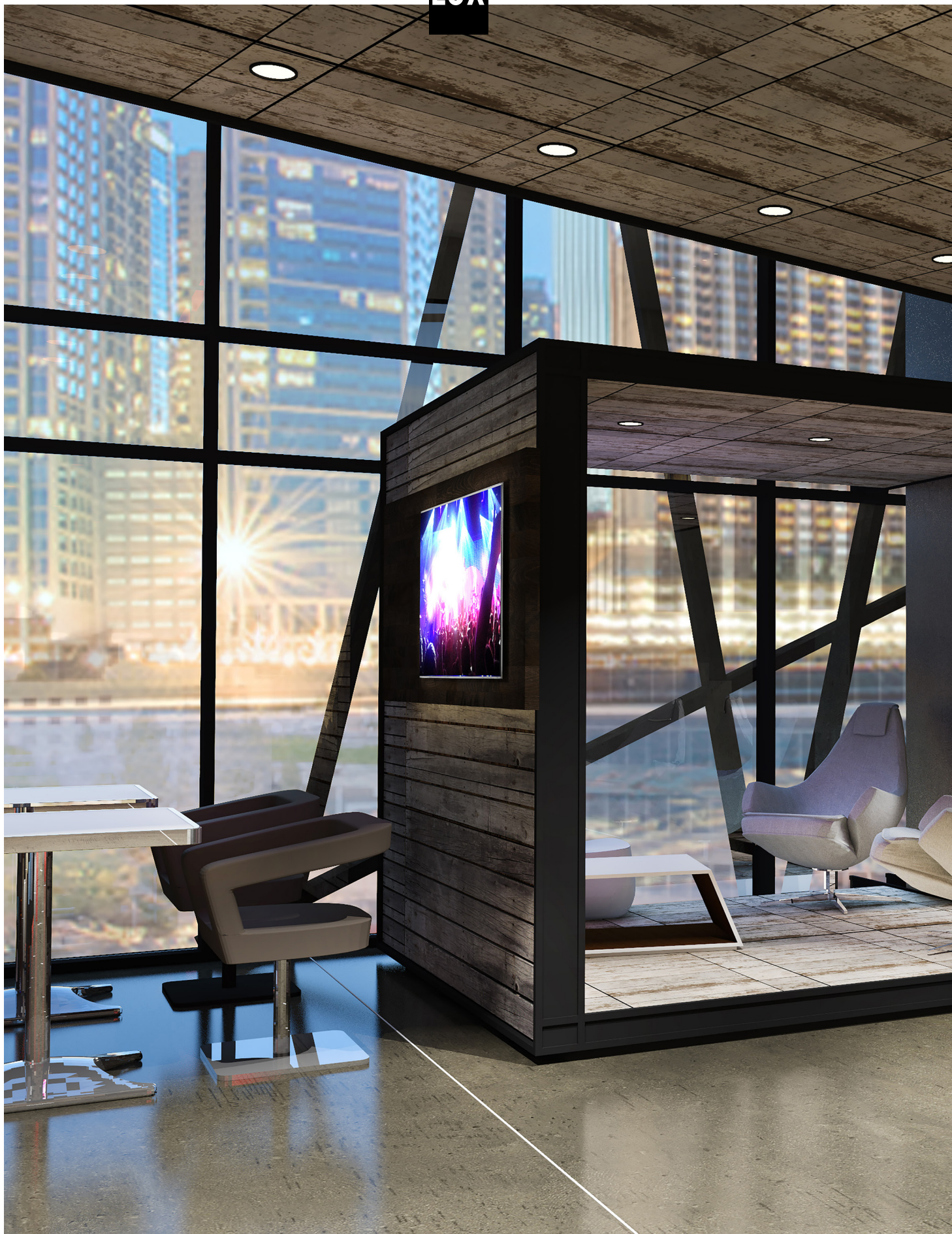
genX'ers with a style and personality that speaks to their own self-image. At ACME, guests are surrounded by an eclectic environment that celebrates and inspires individuality. It has a touch of retro and forward thinking all at the same time. Air wireless systems juxtaposed with low tech chalkboards on doors allow guests to self-express their desire for housekeeping or whatever else is on their mind. Style is pared back with open wardrobes that make guests' clothes part of the style statement.

Currently EDI is working on the renovation of The River Oaks. Originally built in the 1960's as River Oaks Luxury Apartments, this is Houston's premier redevelopment project consisting of 79 luxury multi-family condominium units. The aging and deteriorating mid-century high-rise deserved so much more than a demolition. During its heyday, the exclusive address was known for its expansive grounds and Miesian-style architecture with steel frames, curtain walls, prominent use of glass and open interiors. The developer, Arel Capital, wanted to breathe new life into the project, rather than tear it down and rebuild for optimum density. Adaptive reuse was a better option, simply because of the project's historic address along with its heritage. Redevelopment not only preserves some of the upscale neighborhood's heritage, but it also lowers the density, decreasing the impact on traffic flow and congestion.

After acquiring the property, Arel Capital assembled the "Dream Team" consisting of designers; EDI International to provide architecture services, Rottet Studio, the Interior Designer and McDugald-Steele, the Landscape Architect. Working hand in hand, the design team reinvented The River Oaks, transforming the mid-century gem into a luxury condominium tower. This has definitely been a collaborative effort between the entire team.

As an iconic example of Houston Mid-century modern architecture, the building in its original form gave strong direction for The River Oaks. Its location on the site allows for tailored gardens, pools and fountains strongly influenced by mid-century modern planning principles of axial alignment, focal points along the axis, horizontal and vertical planes defining space and integration of inside-out.

While preserving the existing structure, opportunities presented themselves to add Garden Residences





with their own private exterior lawn and patio spaces. Unique to the high-rise environment, they provide an outdoor experience usually found in single family homes. The town home-like Garden Residences are located on the tower's lower floors and boast two-story plans. Such projects can be tough, but, as Andre explains, EDI has a quality focused approach which ensures that they always rise to the challenge.

"Renovation and adaptive reuse projects are always challenging due to their unpredictable nature. You never really know what you might find behind the wall or underneath the floor. You're treading in the zone of the unknown. These types of projects can require as much effort in the design phase as in the project execution itself. Therefore, we like to arm ourselves with as much knowledge as possible up front. If we want to preserve various elements, that needs to be decided early on in the project.

"Often, it is harder to adhere to the project schedule and budget, simply because you just don't know what you might find. You need to be flexible and ready to face the unforeseen. We overcome these difficulties by having more regularly scheduled team meetings so obstacles can be dealt with before they become problems. Renovations and adaptive reuse projects are also great opportunities to discover better design options when facing the unknown. Critical thinking is essential to the success of each project."

Looking to the future, Andre is keen to highlight the exciting developments, both for his firm and the industry as a whole, that will shape the future of our built environment.

"As architects and designers we need to push the boundaries as much as possible. Therefore, moving forward we will continue to think outside of the box to create new and innovative concepts, buildings and spaces. I believe this year we will see more and more sustainable products being introduced in the marketplace, and I expect to see a healthy continued growth in the hospitality and multi-family markets. The notion of branding projects will be an ever increasing expectation of most project types.

"With regards to EDI, we have several hospitality projects underway for Best Western, Wyndham, Sheraton and Prime Group, just to name a few. All of these projects are due to be completed this year and we are looking forward to showing them to the world."

