

Urban Alchemy: The Transforming Power of Art and Architecture

Tuesday 26th September 2006

Belfast Waterfront Hall

Conference presented by the Arts Council of Northern Ireland, Belfast City Council and the Royal Society of Ulster Architects in association with media partner Perspective Magazine

(short film commissioned from Northern Vision Television playing on entrance)

Tim Husbands, Managing Director, Waterfront Hall

Lord Mayor, Permanent Secretary, Ladies and Gentlemen it's my pleasure to warmly welcome you to the Belfast Waterfront Hall. With my Managing Director of the Waterfront Hall 'hat' on, I have to say that I'm absolutely thrilled that the Urban Alchemy Conference is taking place here. And it's entirely appropriate that a conference to discuss the transforming power of art and architecture is hosted within what is now recognised as such an iconic building for the City of Belfast.

Unbelievably, this coming January, the Hall will have been part of the Belfast skyline for over ten years; acting as a huge social, cultural and economic catalyst for this particular area of the city and providing a model from which many positive lessons have been learned - not only by ourselves, but by the many other city designers who have trod a path to our door.

So welcome to our part of the city's history and to what I'm sure will be an enjoyable and full day's discussion.

I'd like now to introduce you to your first speaker and your Chairman for the day's proceedings. Frank McDonald is Environment Editor of the Irish Times, having been the newspaper's environment correspondent since 1986; he's also the author of the 'Destruction of Dublin' 1985 and 'Saving the City' 1989 – two books that helped to change public policy on urban renewal. His third book on Dublin 'The Construction of Dublin' in 2000 became a non-fiction bestseller. Along with James Nix, he is also the author of 'Chaos at the Crossroads', a book about the environmental destruction of Ireland published last November. He won the award for outstanding work in Irish journalism in 1979 for a series of articles entitled 'Dublin – What Went Wrong?', a Lord Mayor's Millennium Medal in 1988 and two ESB National Media Awards – one for campaigning journalism in 1999 and the other, jointly with Cathy Sheridan, for a feature series on Dublin's sprawl in 2003. He's a regular contributor to radio and television programmes and has given numerous illustrated lectures on environmental issues in Dublin and throughout Ireland

both North and South. Certainly that was just a snapshot of Frank's CV, but he has a wealth of experience and knowledge that I'm sure we can all learn from today - therefore Ladies and Gentlemen, your Chairman for today's absorbing conference – Mr Frank McDonald.

(Applause)

Frank McDonald

Good morning Ladies and Gentlemen. After hearing all of that I'm beginning to feel like I've been around for a long time! You're to be congratulated for turning up so promptly - because it is a very packed programme and I'm as anxious as some of you might be to involve as many people in the audience as possible throughout the proceedings. But in the first instance, I want to welcome the distinguished guests that we have here this morning, the Lord Mayor of Belfast Councillor Pat McCarthy; the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure Permanent Secretary, Paul Sweeney, who I've met before; the Chair of the Northern Ireland Arts Council, Rosemary Kelly and Trevor Leaker who's the President of The Royal Society of Ulster Architects. So I'd invite the Lord Mayor to come to the microphone – thank you very much Lord Mayor.

The Right Honourable, The Lord Mayor of Belfast, Councillor Pat McCarthy

Councillors, Permanent Secretary, Ladies and Gentlemen – on behalf of Belfast City Council, I would like to extend a very warm welcome to all of you to the Waterfront Hall for the Urban Alchemy Conference.

This is an important event for Belfast City Council and I would emphasise the word 'City'. This conference is being delivered as part of the Development Department's ongoing Belfast 'State of the City Initiative' which was set up in 2004 to find better ways for organisations to work together on the major development issues facing the City. We've built on that spirit for partnership with the Arts Council of Northern Ireland, the Royal Society of Ulster Architects, our media partner, Perspective Magazine and sponsor 'Third Source Media' to realise today's event.

Central to the work of the 'State of the City' is channelling our experience, our research and the 'know-how' of other cities around the world, so that we can put in place the necessary elements that will grow Belfast as a competitive and successful City. As part of this work, we have established a 'to do list' of twenty practical actions that we need to undertake over the next few years if we're going to take on the difficult challenges that lie ahead. The actions cover many familiar issues including reducing unemployment, developing a skilled workforce, encouraging

local entrepreneurs, supporting knowledge based industries: but 'State of the City' also recognises the 'softer' factors that are just as important for long term success. It's these quality of life issues which encourage more people to come to our city to live, to work, to raise their families and to build communities. Art and architecture are two fundamental and very powerful agents in the mix, helping to create more distinctive, exciting, attractive and fulfilling places to live. Art and architecture are also hugely important in creating a city worth visiting. We've experienced huge growth in tourism recently attracting 6.4 million visitors and £285 million pound spend in this city in 2005. We want to build on that and our city's architecture, public realm and rich cultural experience can bring much to the table.

Urban Alchemy is also an important part of the city's 'Celebrate Belfast' programme of cultural events – a programme which has at its core a desire to celebrate our cultural assets; to encourage community participation and to develop a greater sense of pride in our city. The 'Celebrate Belfast' Programme coincides with the centenary of the City Hall and it has prompted me to wonder which of our modern buildings will be celebrated with such pride and enthusiasm one hundred years from now?

All of us here today – artists, architects, planners, developers, community leaders, students and policy makers - have a responsibility, an interest in shaping our built environment and public space – or at least an ambition to do so. We're holding today's conference to allow us to learn together, to explore the synergies that exist and to build on the momentum that has been created by the launch of the Government's architecture policy. So I would encourage you to contribute your own experience and thoughts and to enter into some challenging debate today. I wish you every success, an enjoyable conference and I look forward to seeing the results of today's discussions helping to shape and influence future plans for Belfast's regeneration. Thank you.

(Applause)

Frank McDonald

Our next speaker is Rosemary Kelly, Chairman of the Arts Council of Northern Ireland.

Rosemary Kelly

Thank y

ou Frank. Lord Mayor, Permanent Secretary, Distinguished Guests, Friends and Colleagues – I just want to say how pleased the Arts Council is to be collaborating with Belfast City Council and with the Royal Society of Ulster Architects on this conference.

It provides us all with a vitally important opportunity to positively link the arts and architecture agenda with those of social and economic regeneration.

Collaborative working is already a key part of how we work in the Arts Council and we will continue to engage with a wide range of other agencies in health, in education, in architecture, in tourism – in order to turn the negativity of the past years into a positive future for everyone. And the transforming power of art and architecture has been an important theme for us for some time. We all know that arts led urban renewal has transformed the image of many of the world's great cities – you think of Bilbao, of Newcastle-Gateshead, of Glasgow. And these initiatives not only changed how the world perceived the individual cities but, just as importantly, how the people felt about themselves. With urban regeneration comes a re-born civic pride. And understanding of this is increasingly being demonstrated by social thinkers, designers, architects and artists - and thankfully some Governments across the world. There is growing recognition of the inherent contribution that arts and architecture and a well planned urban environment can make to society in enriching lives and indeed also as a source of renewal and growth. And the Arts Council is totally committed to this and has already made an investment of £35 million over the last ten years. We've strengthened the arts infrastructure in towns and cities such as Armagh and Cookstown, the City of Derry, Omagh, Strabane and now Belfast with the soon to be opened Grand Opera House Act Two, the planning of the new Lyric Theatre and of course the Cathedral Quarter Arts Centre among a number of projects.

And three years ago Paul Harron, our Architecture and Public Art Officer, devised the annual Northern Ireland Public Realm Award which recognises excellence in design in the Public Realm in the UK wide context and which is administered as part of the Civic Trust Awards. I'm pleased to note that this year the Custom House Square and Cathedral Quarter Streetscape designed by the Paul Hogarth Company won that award.

Now it is rare to be able to bring together a group such as you – artists, architects, planners, developers, community leaders and policy makers – all of whom may influence the future shape of Northern Ireland's urban landscape. So I'm really looking forward not only to hearing our very distinguished speakers, but also to the discussions later in the day. Thank you.

(Applause)

Frank McDonald

Well there can be – thank you very much Rosemary – there can be no architecture without architects and I'm pleased to welcome our next speaker Trevor Leaker who's the President of the Royal Society of Ulster Architects – Trevor.

Trevor Leaker

Lord Mayor, Permanent Secretary, Guests, Colleagues and Friends – alas time doesn't permit me this morning to share with you the full text of the Royal Society of Ulster Architects Constitution – much to your disappointment I'm sure, but let me offer you at least our first two objectives, which are the advancement of architecture and the promotion of its associated arts and sciences and the promotion and pursuit of design excellence in all aspects of the built environment. And we don't usually include alchemy as one of those arts and sciences, but as you all know, alchemy is about turning base material into something precious and lasting and surely as artists and architects at our very essence, this is what we're about when we're at our best.

Was it Louis Kahn who said “even a brick wants to be something”? What we build in our cities, what will become our cities, should be imbued with the creative quality which has the power to transform its environment and the lives of the people who live in, work in and visit it. And maybe for Belfast and Northern Ireland, this idea of alchemy or transformation is a particularly appropriate one carrying with it, I think, a spirit of optimism. Government's recently launched architecture policy is surely a further catalyst in this process and one which will really have an impact as soon as all government departments and the Central Procurement Directorate embrace the policy's central aim of achieving design excellence by promoting design led procurement processes rather than those that satisfy the accountants and the box tickers. It is no longer acceptable that public money should be spent on bad or even mediocre design in Northern Ireland. The RSUA, like its conference partners today, is actively engaged in promoting design excellence in our arts, in our architecture and in the collaboration between the two.

I can announce this morning that the RSUA has recently formed a Design Promotion Group and separately we're launching an initiative called 'Two Minds' which, with the support of Arts and Business and hopefully the Arts Council, will aim to bring together architects and artists to collaborate on a series of artistic joint ventures and produce new works of art.

As for today, I can't remember an event such as this in Northern Ireland. It surely is another foundation on which we collectively can build better art and architecture. Any of you who have built a sizeable building on Belfast's alluvium clays, Belfast's 'sleech' as it's known locally, or as we call it in our office "re-enforced water" – will know that very often you have to go down before you can go up. I think we've been down long enough – if I can quote Oscar Wilde, or paraphrase him at least, 'We would all be in the sleech, but some of us are looking at the stars'.

Welcome to our conference this morning, I hope you enjoy star gazing today and are challenged by Urban Alchemy. Thank you.

(Applause)

Frank McDonald

Thanks very much for that Trevor. Our next speaker is Paul Sweeney, who is as I said, Permanent Secretary at the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure and I suppose his presence here today is an indication that there is some commitment on the part of central government to advancing this programme – Paul.

Mr Paul Sweeney

Lord Mayor, Distinguished Speakers, Ladies and Gentlemen – thank you for the privilege and honour to address you this morning. My first speaking engagement on taking up this new post was on the occasion of the opening of the Frank Gehry exhibition in the Millennium Court Arts Centre in Portadown – I think Megan Johnston the Director of that Centre may be here today – this was of course the first major exhibition of Gehry's work in Europe. One of the foremost and truly inspiring architects of our time – in 'Portydown'. And some say why Portadown? And the inspired said 'why not Portadown?' Urban Alchemy – the transforming power of art and architecture - in Belfast? And why not? The number of people attending here today proves that we're tapping into something important here.

Well done to the Arts Council, to Belfast City Council, to the Royal Society of Ulster Architecture in convening this important conference and in particular well done to the organising committee who have worked so hard and together, over the past year, in securing the input from a impressive array of keynote speakers, workshop leaders and of course our conference Chair, Frank McDonald. Frank on Saturday I saw this photograph in the Irish Times and I thought of

you. I also thought of my good friend Eamon Dean and my mentor when I began community work away back in the late 70s -and I was having serious doubts about the transforming power of community development in effecting change. And Eamon used the metaphor in terms of the impact of community development – he said – very often it's like dropping a small pebble into a pond and the ripples they radiate outwards. And he said 'never underestimate the task, but believe that small actions can have wider repercussions'.

So, if like me, you are enthused by the potential of today's conference, consider ourselves surfing on the crest of a ripple with the self belief that our deliberations today could have potentially wider repercussions and there are, in my opinion, a number of solid grounds for being modestly enthusiastic and optimistic. Arguably as a community we are striving to move on from the bitter divisions and trauma of the past and to contemplate the vibrancy of possibility as we embark upon this transition to a potentially new beginning. Despite the underlying weaknesses in our regional economy, we have the potential to benefit from the economic dynamism of the UK economy as a whole and the Republic of Ireland – two of the best performing economies in the world. And it may well be that this is as good as it gets - so we've got to seize the moment.

Government has embarked upon a programme of up to £16 billion capital investment over the next 10 years to tackle the infrastructure deficit throughout the region - potentially unprecedented levels of investment in schools, hospitals, museums, libraries, the arts and the public estate generally. Produced by the Strategic Investment Board, the Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland provides a blueprint for transforming Northern Ireland into a successful, competitive regional economy with high quality public services. The publication in June this year of Government's policy framework in respect of architecture and the built environment; a policy initiated by the Arts Council, sets out the Government's approach to the appreciation and enhancement of the architectural, natural and cultural heritage of Northern Ireland. The objectives include the raising of awareness of good design and creating a demand for it, the encouragement of creativity and innovation and integration of art into public places.

Throughout the island of Ireland we have inspiring architects and practices who have made headline news for achieving high quality in the design of buildings, public spaces, urban planning and landscapes. The public sector is increasingly conscious of their obligations in terms of commissioning new public buildings where design and art should be factored in from inception. The leadership of the Health Estates Agency in Northern Ireland is but one excellent example of this. And despite the downsides of consumerism and too many examples of aesthetically bereft developments, there is a growing realisation that the tension between common good and private profit can be addressed by enlightened clients, architects and an informed public demonstrating

that commercial returns and investment, innovative design and enriched public realm can go hand in hand. Ultimately architecture, even when privately funded, functions in the public domain and therefore has serious public responsibilities. And perhaps, most important of all in terms of this enthusiasm and optimism, is the growing number of people involved in the creative industries – many of whom are represented here today - in the fields of arts, culture, architecture and design, business and education. People who recognise that creativity is essential to the way that we live and work in response to the stresses and challenges of a post-modern life. Ultimately one could argue that the economic prosperity of this region will depend largely on our ability to seek out those cultural creatives and to develop and strengthen their influence in our new economy.

We also have a growing awareness and justifiable demand on the part of the general public that buildings and public spaces, the protection of our built heritage should uplift our spirits and enhance the quality of life. A range of popular television programmes and the tireless efforts of people like Frank McDonald have done much to empower people to participate in this discourse about common good, civic worth and public realm. For too long this agenda was marginalised by elitism. We are now witnessing an increasingly popular demand for the raising of cultural standards and long may it continue. So I contend there are solid reasons for being enthused and optimistic. I hope this conference will not spend too much time reflecting on the mistakes of the past, of which there have been many, and the lost opportunities - that would be like a scene out of the 'Life of Brian' – 'What did the Romans ever do for us?'

Citizenship confers responsibility as well as rights and for those of us involved in the arts and architecture, the built environment and urban planning process; we have to take responsibility for our work in the world as we find it rather than wait for Utopia. We all live in an imperfect world, we may not change it, but we can nudge it in the right direction and that's why I think this morning is so important. In Northern Ireland we have come through the trauma of the past three decades and more – public space was but one of the casualties – the bits of cities and neighbourhoods that were left behind when buildings were being demolished, replaced and being redeveloped – by default. Instead of public space functioning as civic space; that is shared space belonging to citizens, we got empty spaces that demarcated territoriality and in places it was brutal. We now have a chance of a new beginning. Declan McGonagle, Chair of Art and Design at the University of Ulster, in setting out an argument for strategic cultural processes, cites the example of Derry and I quote "we're all familiar with the articulations of the division within this community, it is expressed in the very fabric of the urban space and represented in the surrounding landscape, but Derry is not only a site of division in my view. There is such a weave between the problem, the place and the people that Derry can also share a site where uniquely a new vision and a new reality can be generated around the idea of a civil culture. A culture belonging to citizens, around

citizenship and shared rather than contested space. If we flip the cultural coin, as defined above, then what is a negative can actually become a positive” and Declan argues that the construction of a new inclusive identity and the re-negotiation of old exclusive identities is at its root a cultural process defined as what we inherit and we do with this and what we do to add value to the quality of lives.

So this conference could not be more timely and relevant to the challenge – in bringing people together with ambition, expertise and influence, this event has the potential to encourage even greater collaboration in the building of a more inclusive, attractive, distinctive and engaging environment. Thank you.

(Applause)

Frank McDonald

Thanks very much for that Paul – I think it shows what side you’re on anyway.

Today’s conference, as we all know, is focused on the whole idea of art and architecture’s power to transform the reality of life in the city and throughout the various presentations and workshops. We’re going to be touching on topics including the relationship between people and place that Paul referred to earlier on and also the notion that well designed public spaces can really lift people’s spirits and also the other important and related issue of how cities can benefit economically and socially from investing in high quality architecture, art and public space. We are also going to be looking at the key issues associated with flagship cultural buildings, the value that high quality design brings to the city and also the need for meaningful and public participation and engagement on issues surrounding the built environment which is something that is often not sought and really does need to be.

Urban Alchemy as a title, it is as if somebody can wave a magic wand and change things for the better, but I think it has to be done perhaps with a little bit more determination and a little bit less faith in magic. Magic itself is not going to transform things, I don’t think anybody has that power. But it has been done in other places, Bilbao has been mentioned by Rosemary, but I suppose Barcelona is the classic example of how art and public space can actually transform a city as it did during the 1980s under the leadership of its Mayor. And it was the reason why Barcelona was subsequently awarded the Olympic Games in 1992 – the Bilbao example is so well known that it hardly needs to be dwelt on. But one of the things that I did point out in an article that I wrote for the current issue of Perspective Magazine, was that it has also happened in Belfast and

we should not forget that there was the extraordinary restoration of the Grand Opera House in 1980 which was during a very, very bleak time in Belfast during the troubles and a tremendous act of faith in the future of the City and the City Centre in particular. And it did lead to a spin off of the 'Golden Mile' and so on. And we've also had, and we're sitting in it, the Waterfront Hall, which really did become and is the icon of the new Belfast – opened in January 1997 – and this hall and this whole complex was not the product of some private finance initiative or public/private partnership or anything else. This was done by Belfast City Council and our hats must be tipped in the direction of the Lord Mayor in relation to the provision of this hall, because this hall was made in Belfast by Belfast and that is something that must give confidence for the future.

On my way here this morning - I walked by the way - negotiated my way past all the terrible traffic on the Dunbar Link and so on, but Custom House Square is inspiring I have to say I was stunned by it, because I remember the Albert Clock in its desolate surroundings in the past and look at it today, you know, surrounded by a lovely line of trees, street lights, of benches and a wonderful performing French style fountain. So that is something that shows what can be done and I think what really needs to be done in Belfast more than anything else, and I also made this point in Perspective Magazine. The City has plenty of roads, but what it needs is more street life in its heart and the heart of the City really does need to be reclaimed.

I'm very happy now to pass on the 'baton' as it were to Sunand Prasad who is the President Elect of the Royal Institute of British Architects and a founder partner of Penoyre Prasad, an architectural practice which is known for its output particularly in the public sector including several award winning buildings. He was also one of the founding commissioners of the Government's Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment which everybody I suppose knows as 'CABE'. After Sunand's address we'll have approximately 15 minutes to allow for questions and answers and we'll break for coffee – thank you very much.

Sunand Prasad

Thank you very much Frank.

I was intrigued immediately when I heard this title 'Urban Alchemy' and of course it's absolutely ingenious the title because, although Frank is right - we need to understand the science of it and how it works - in the end of course art wouldn't be art if there wasn't something slightly mysterious about what actually happens when physical surroundings, people and their economic urges and social urges all combine in different ways. So alchemy's an incredibly appropriate title and when we talk about this we're always sort of groping for a language. It's not the language of science

and I think that we should go with that and accept that there are inevitable difficulties in capturing things, but we have to capture them – we live in an age of accountability where we have to persuade others who may not see things our way.

I was also struck by the word ‘alchemy’ because it has an Arabic origin, as do many words beginning with ‘al’ so it sort of reminded me that a sort of multiculturalism and our mixed heritage, world heritage, is actually all round us all the time, even when we’re not conscious of it and the prefix ‘al’ often gives it away, like allopathy and aluminium and even holidaying in the Algarve which means the western country. I was going to make a cheap shot; I was going to say well I don’t suppose alcohol could have Arabic or Muslim origin could it, but guess what, yes alcohol too comes from an Arabic word which proves, of course, that there are certain things - and that substance being one of them - is truly multicultural through and through and universal as a substance.

(Comment re: presentation and picture of Belfast Hills)

Colin Ward used to say - because these arguments about whether civics comes first or economics comes first had been around for a long time - and Colin Ward, who was a great urban writer and thinker, used to argue very passionately that actually it’s just as likely that it is civics that promotes economic growth rather simply being the result of it and of course we are, as Frank has said, in a building here which is a living demonstration of that. It was the existence of this hall, courageously undertaken - at the time standing completely alone in surroundings – it was quite a startlingly ambitious thing. I remember when it was published in the mainland and suddenly there was this extraordinary building in Belfast, a city with which architecture then wasn’t really very strongly associated, and suddenly it was an extraordinary building and surely it must be true that it was the presence of this building has had an incredible impact ultimately in the economic life of the city.

So, my practice has been involved in Belfast for a few years, building some community treatment and care centres, which is a new generation of health centres, and I’m going to talk a little bit about them, but I want to say first a little bit about my own take on the city.

One thing I’m always struck by and what I’m going to really talk about is, is the physical surroundings; I want to make clear that although urban regeneration, urban alchemy has these ingredients – the social, the economic and also the architecture and the art – I want to really concentrate on the architecture and the art and the physical surroundings and the kind of magic that they exert. The magic for me of Belfast – one magic of Belfast, apart from the fact that

everybody's incredibly nice when you're lost in the street, is that wherever you are in the City you're conscious of the hills and that's because, of course, the way Belfast sits in a bowl of hills and because it has a grid which is very strong. It is actually an intensely urban place, it really is fundamentally a modern European city – a city which has absolutely the basic ingredients of being a wonderful urban place and that sort of fundamental condition it has. And wherever you are, at the end of the street there are the hills, always there and it's the grid there which makes that possible. And of course it's the grid that also made the Waterfront Hall so important because it's on the axis from the City Hall and these sort of bigger connections in cities are quite fascinating. When we were designing our health centres, which we still are designing with Todd Architects of Belfast, there are now 3 more in North and West Belfast, the first one of which, Lincoln Avenue, is nearing completion. But we've been conscious of making these bigger links across the city as well as the immediacy of place.

So we are very familiar with places that we visit on holidays and in study tours and so on and the places we envy where all these ingredients seem to come together magically – people, economics and architecture – you can sit in squares like this in Barcelona which seem to just work naturally; nobody seems to have tried, nobody had to, if you like, commission public art to make these happen. And they're very familiar, everyone can imagine them. Occasionally of course they rise from the ordinary into absolutely the sublime and it's really when an artist is also at work in the city; especially an artist of the scale of Parc Guell here where the most extraordinary condition has been created where people are there for a reason, people are there to meet each other. But when in Parc Guell up on those terraces, you are also in communion with the city as a whole and you feel a sense of centeredness and belonging which is truly urban.

I'm particularly struck when places that might otherwise be ordinary, or indeed ugly or hostile are converted into these sorts of magical urban places. This is a courtyard in L'Hopital St Paul, also in Barcelona. Now you wouldn't believe that this is a hospital, this is a public place that the citizens actually walk through and relax in; it's a hospital, but within the curtilage of the hospital. Inside the hospital is the presence of the city and I think that's something that our health buildings could learn from because most of our health buildings are - pretty much have been for a while now – designed to make people ill rather than make them better and actually a building that not only makes you feel better and cures you, but in your everyday life is, I would say, a sparkling example of health is extremely inspirational.

The power of the surroundings is a wondrous thing. This is Great George Street in Newcastle which was voted in a CABI poll a few years ago the best street in the United Kingdom and this is on a rainy day - and it could even bear the Prêt à Manger nearby – but, you know, without

question this is a place where you would like to be – there's something extraordinary and attractive about it and even if you imagine it as a ruin, if you imagine it devoid of people and economics you would still be interested, but of course the real magic happens because it is the heart of the city.

And in particularly natural forms as well as art, because art so often looks to nature for its nourishment; natural forms, especially things like pollard trees in French car parks completely transform the place. Now this is extraordinary – one day I'll do a Photoshop version of this image and remove the trees and see what would be a really terrible, ugly derelict looking car park – but the presence of the trees completely transforms this place and this is something the French are absolutely brilliant at, you know, the pollarded plains that you find in provincial towns completely transforming the place. So these are some of the images, some of the ways in which very, very powerful transformation happens because of physical things – whether they're natural or manmade or human made.

So we've been involved, for a few years as I say, firstly with South East Belfast Trust and now with the North West Belfast Trust under the overall management of Northern Ireland Health Estate and John Cole, the Director, who had devised a way of procuring buildings into the public realm and for the public sector which is entirely directed towards quality. So in a nutshell, without going in to it in too much detail, health estates set the money, set the boundaries and then the competition between the people who want to do the work is entirely on the basis of what they would bring to the job. It's completely a reversal of what happens normally in the public sector, or has been happening, which is that you are given a specification, you're asked to produce the lowest price, there is some lip service paid to quality in the sense that in the words of the European Union tender methodology – it's supposed to be the economically most advantageous that wins, but of course quality can be taken into account. Well, in Northern Ireland, with the Health Estates, it was completely non-negotiable – quality was what mattered, the price was set and the winner was the one who produced the best quality and not the one who produced the lowest price to a given quality.

(Ref to presentation: North and West buildings and the 3 of the South and East estate buildings – South and East Belfast Trust buildings. The bottom one there is actually called the Castlereagh Health Centre – it's near Foster Green – and then there's Lisburn Road near Shaftesbury Square and Hollywood Arches. I'm just going to show you a little bit of a couple of those).

This is how the health centre at Hollywood Arches looked and this is what I was meaning by another generation of health buildings which were highly functional, they were built by people who

really were trying their best with what was available then, but when you went into the building this is what you found. Because of security fears there were separate louvered hatches through which you conducted your negotiations with the receptionist into separate Doctors. And when you looked through one of those hatches this is what you saw – this was the patient's first encounter with the health service which, well I think it leaves something to be desired and – but it is amazing that this is our normal experience and of course this is something to do with how we have regarded the public sector – not as something to be proud of, something that we pay for through our taxes, but something which is to be despised in some sort of a way. I think there is an underlying need and that's in spite of the most fantastic care that the people actually give, the doctors, the nurses, the carers are wonderful, but the buildings just didn't live up to that. And you wait in places like this. Now everyone is familiar with these kind of windowless rooms. So very, very briefly the block at the top is the original building and we wrapped another building in front of it and made a place in between which was really very like an urban place and you know you can make the insides of buildings learn a lot from the city. Urban Alchemy is as much about taking the city into the heart of the building to make a place as it is about just design of highways, public spaces and so on. And on the ground floor, that's the plan, the key point I want to make here is literally the pavement flows into the inside of the building and the interior is as far as possible like a street. So this is how it was in 2001 and this is how it is now. There is a building in front which a large glass work by Martin Donnelly at the front there which was integrated into the design of the building as a key part of the experience of it.

Health buildings do have a large number of repetitive rooms inside and I think there's nothing wrong with that and nothing wrong with showing that, but we've tried to, if you like, create a large art work out of that elevation of that façade. The rooms are all slightly slipped one above the other, just the window shifts slightly on the façade and there's a pattern of colours studiously avoiding the colours orange and green and trying to find alternatives which were more like the colours of wild flowers, a theme that Martin then picked up and made his mural from.

And very recently in the car park is this 'yoga lesson' by Michael Jewesbury, which has just gone in and, you know, this is a car park, there's a big sculpture in the car park and in some way I see a parallel there between how you might transform a car park with trees and how you might transform a car park with sculpture.

So you go into the place, you go into the building itself and there's a large atrium like space with a tree in it and when you go to the receptionist you don't see any paperwork; the receptionist – and this is of course part of managing the building as well – if you can ask the receptionist 'where's my appointment', he or she can actually point you in the right direction, just like you do in a city,

you don't have to necessarily say, you know, follow this sign and that sign and go down the corridor and turn left, you can actually go directly and you wait in these pods – like this – in these overhanging pods overlooking the atrium. The whole place is conditioned, is acoustically sophisticated and calculated.

And there are other pieces of art which were thought about before the building was finished – this is a piece by Toni Stoddard called 'Gene Shuffle' – on the left there – these colours change and make a very intriguing pattern and this is the back of Martin Donnelly's piece. There are a number of other works in Holywood Arches, in the Arches Centre, by various artists which I won't go into in great detail now and name, but I hope that they will forgive me for that.

So there's the Arches Centre at night with that front making a clear signal. But there is something missing at this building which is that the car park in front and the relationship to the city still could be better and here's a little plea to Belfast City Council that this is something we have been talking about in the past and I wonder how it's possible to make this happen, which is to do something about the big square space in front of the Arches Centre – to leave it as a car park because that seems to be needed, but to make it into much more of a public and civic space. So maybe in 2008!

Just going to finish with just one more project which is following on from that, and by the way part of the procurement methodology of Northern Ireland Health Estates is what they call performance related partnering which means that provided you do well, you perform well on one contract you negotiate the next one in batches of three. So the design team and the contracting team were judged to have done reasonably well and went on then to design and build the next one which was the Bradbury Centre. The site here couldn't be more different, it's a long thin site next to a railway line and I won't go into the details in view of the time, but basically it's quite a complex piece of planning which nevertheless obeys many of the same principles of ease of way finding inside, genuinely civic presence on the outside.

And again there is a glass piece over the entrance because the South East decided after seeing what happened in Holywood Arches that they would want this thing to recur and South East Belfast Community Treatment and Care Centre would be known by the presence of this beautiful stained glass piece at the entrance always.

Inside the building is very much smaller, very much tighter and our contribution if you like sculpturally to the interior of the space is this big basket like sort of polymorphous amoeba like space in plan which takes care of all the large spaces like the staff meeting spaces, the Citizens

Advice Bureau and all those sorts of elements which are the very special thing about these buildings. These are not buildings just for getting treatment and care, but you can get advice, people's needs are genuinely joined up – it's recognised that if you have a health problem it may well be because it's related to a housing problem that you have and you can get advice here for all those and that's why these buildings are so innovative.

And once again a number of artists have worked to make these buildings possible. We have here the 'Chequer Board', the primary coloured chequer board is by Justin Knowls and the late Justin Knowls, who died recently, this beautiful work. There are some dinosaurs on the terrace which you can't see by Kevin Killen, the mosaic is by Gary Drossall. And local community have also been involved in various aspects of it.

And then if you go to the top of these buildings, we've tried very hard to make sure that the hills are always visible from key points in the buildings where you're working or there's a staff club – especially the staff rest places - in particular at the tops of the buildings we orientate views towards the hills.

And finally this is a progress shot, a side shot of Lincoln Avenue which is now being built and from here you can just about see Samson and Goliath the two cranes, which are the other great icon of Belfast, but also the hills in the distance and the axis here is fortunately, mostly I have to say I can't claim credit for this because that's the way the city worked out, happens to be on those, on that very nice axis, but we exploit that and carefully place windows to make that possible.

So I think my message is that looking round Belfast and what's happening artists and architects do know how to create beauty and create the special conditions that will make places real. Places that won't just be for commerce and inter-change, they'll be places to be in for almost, you might say, for its own sake – just because they are so beautiful and it's a word that we need to bring back in – urban beauty – there's no shortage of talent, but we do live in an age of accountability and we have to learn languages to translate this to make sense to agents like the Treasury and the Strategic Investment Board of Northern Ireland. But I know that there is enormous political will behind doing bold things here. The Mayor was saying earlier that when in the planning committee he used to argue for things to be bold and not just be in keeping and that's the kind of spirit that I hugely welcome and champion. Thank you.

(Applause)

Frank McDonald

Well I think that Sunand has shown that he's a bit of an alchemist himself. Has anybody got any questions from the floor that immediately occur on the presentation? Yes?

Question - My name is **Andrea Montgomery and I'm from the Riverside Theatre** up in the North Coast, but I work with young visual artists who are looking at how they can make more commercial decisions about their careers and what avenues are opening to them. So the commissioning process would be very interesting.

Frank McDonald – I'm sure they can, yes.

Vivinne Burnside, Artists Arts Co-ordinator South and East Belfast Trust – What I can tell you is the process that I've been involved in and that we've used pretty successfully with South and East Belfast Trust and with the Mater Hospital, where we worked previously, and what we did in both cases was to advertise the opportunities for artists to become involved in the art and architecture process and we advertised this through a number of magazines and also through the mailing list of the Arts Council, through regional arts officers and a number of other places – artists studios and those kind of places. We had a number of opportunities identified and invited artists to respond to those and in the case of South and East we had, I think, nearly 200 artists came back to us and said listen we're interested in this; then we asked them to put in a statement of interest – nothing too specific at this stage – but to give examples of past work, to say why they felt that art was a genuinely an important thing to have within the health care situation and then from the responses and the images that we got we short listed we interviewed and ended up with a team of artists with whom we've worked for the last 3 years.

Frank McDonald – has anyone else got any comment? Particularly in relation to for example the point that Sunand was making about the need for places like hospitals and day care centres being warm, welcoming places and what architects can do to help achieve that, I mean, surely it stands to reason that – I mean, it's an open and shut case I would imagine, but does any architect have any question to ask of Sunand? Or a comment? Feel free to comment as well.

I'm **Angela Lavin from Heritage Lottery Fund** and it's just a comment I would make on the Arches Health Care Centre. I travel up and down the Newtownards Road every day to work and have noticed the, I suppose, economic growth along that arterial route and the manager of the Café Espresso which is just opposite the Arches Centres has commented on an increase in business in terms of people from the Health Centre coming across and there just is a better feel, I

think, about the Newtownards Road and I've no doubt that architecture such as what has just been shown to us has contributed enormously to that feel good feeling and to the feeling of economic and social interaction and long may it continue. Thanks.

Frank McDonald – Anybody else?

Thank you very much. **Joe Drew from Belfast City Centre Management** – I was very, very impressed by Sunand's presentation particularly the examples he showed ... from Europe and from Britain and very restful places and very beautiful. I was also very impressed by the interior of the Holywood Arches centre – absolutely wonderful. One of the things I noticed in the pictures from Europe is that almost every place had arches in the background which is a very restful, settled feeling. Now in Belfast we seem to have got away from the concept of building new buildings with arches and almost every new building is very blocky, very rectangular and I would love to see some departure from a rectangular building, some departure from rectangular windows and in particular a departure from windows which are longer they are high. So it seems to me that we're addressing the interior very nicely, but the exterior of the buildings need to be addressed as well to give this kind of a restful feeling. I'm a civil engineer by the way so may be you don't have to take what I say too

Frank McDonald – Nothing wrong with that! I think what you're talking about is something like the arcade of the Royal Hospital in Kilmainham in Dublin where you have a whole courtyard surrounded by an arcade.

Hello – **Noirin McKinney from the Arts Council** and maybe it's more a policy question Sunand, but I'm just wondering if you could give us some perspective on how we can roll out the wonderful example of John Cole's approach to procurement in Health Estates across the public sector in Northern Ireland, because we do all struggle with the difficulties of procurement through design and build and other sectors don't use that innovative approach.

Sunand Prasad – The message is not to tamper with the format that John Cole has developed.

Frank McDonald – I think the other answer to it is to cite the Government's new policy on Architecture and ask the different departments what are they doing to ensure that the best quality result is being produced, as opposed to just the cheapest. I think that's one of the key things.

We'll take a break now. Thank you very much.

(Piano Music Playing)

Frank McDonald – Welcome back everybody. I hope you've all had a good infusion of coffee or tea. I've been asked to tell you that all of the conference packs include the Public Art handbook which covers the issue that was raised earlier on about the commissioning of art for new buildings and public spaces, so you might refer to that later on.

We're now dealing with the whole issue of **Art in the Public Realm** which is a very important one which obviously relates to that question. And we'll have 2 speakers initially – Maggie Bolt who is the Director of Public Art South West which is a strategic development agency funded by the Arts Council of England. And also Dr Eleanor Wheeler who is currently employed as Artist in Residence with Belfast City Council implementing arts projects within the Development Department's 'Renewing the Routes', urban regeneration programme. Each of them have 20 minutes so I want to welcome first Maggie Bolt and after that by the way we'll have Angus Farquhar Creative Director of nva and then there'll be a time for questions and comments from the floor.

Maggie Bolt -

Good Morning, I'm very pleased to be here and delighted to have been asked to make a presentation to such an auspicious gathering. It's a fantastic opportunity to learn first hand about other innovative projects and I hope that my presentation about the work we've been doing makes a positive contribution to this debate.

By bringing artists into the mix of people already considering the creation or development of an area, you're opening up a channel that encourages and allows local people to feed creative ideas and thoughts as to how they want those spaces to develop. This way of involving the community is far more effective as consultation is always a key component of any public art project. If the artist is engaged in the master planning process they can contribute to the considerations of issues of transportation, navigation, spatial layout and hard and soft landscaping for example. Rather than being seen as someone who works on individual components within an already designed public realm.

The national scheme we ran called 'Project Engaging Artists in the Built Environment' personified this approach and I'm going to talk briefly about 2 schemes which received support – what the aims were and what the outcomes have been to date and also touch on the evaluation that was undertaken of the overall scheme. In 2003 the Commission for Architecture and the Built

Environment and Arts and Business invited 10 organisations across the UK to tender for a new scheme which would engage artists, public agencies and the private sector in a range of projects that would have a positive impact on the places in which we live. The scheme we proposed was to support individual artists to comment on or work within the design planning and construction sectors. The purpose being to influence and create a shared vision for architecture, public space, planning and high quality urban design. Thirty schemes were supported in total across the UK and artists were, and in many cases still are, involved in a variety of exciting and ground breaking projects which range from working with design teams on new schools, the regeneration of town centres, new arterial road routes and environmental housing and community regeneration projects.

I have selected 2 case studies which broaden the discussion out from kind of art and architecture into how artists integrate with high quality urban design. The first case study – Blackburn with Darwen in Lancashire, northwest England – is an example of an artist engaging with a major housing regeneration scheme. The partners listed reflect the private of the public sector interests and the artist, Jenna Jones, was appointed via an open selection process and started work on the project in May 2005 and completed her official work in November of that year. Her brief was to engage with the master plans being produced for neighbourhoods within Blackburn with Darwen's contribution to the 'Elevate East Lancashire Housing Market Re-structuring Pathfinder' – once she'd got her head round that that was okay! And to be a key and integral member of the master plan team and work with engineers, architects, housing professionals, town planners and the community in order to produce new visions for some of the most deprived and declining neighbourhoods in the borough. Her focus was to be on Darwen and New East Blackburn. As neither project was ready to start immediately Jenna's first task was to work with the planning department on an area known as Griffin which was just completing its master planning process. As it was a conservation area, no demolition was involved and the artist was invited to work on some consultation events and get a feel from the community about the plan proposals. This proved to be good grounding for her in relation to working with a team and becoming familiar with a borough.

As would be expected the planned involvement of an artist often differs from reality on the ground once they're there and although her focus was meant to be Queen's Park Blackburn and Darwen town centre the increasingly critical media attention on the then ODPM and Housing Market Renewal areas impacted negatively on the local process which in turn delayed the creation of a master plan team. The Darwen Housing Market Renewal Area included the town centre and although the regeneration dynamics were less fragile than in the Queen's Park area specific involvement was no less difficult – mainly due to the urban design consultancy appointed to

undertake the master planning who did not fully understand the role the artist could have on conceptual rather than a decorative level. So whilst Jenna had some impact on the town centre master plan, which is on going, the main outcome to date has been her work in St. Peter's conservation area which she viewed as unique in that it has very distinct boundaries and does feel almost like an island afloat within a larger town. She worked with a much smaller concentrated team and very closely with the community association and planning teams developed the street scene and position of the area which is a small residential area of Victorian listed terraced housing that centres around a large church and is bordered by a train track and the town centre.

The artist looked at the use of the public space and homed in on 2 areas for development which were the open space around the church and the back streets. The church grounds provided many possibilities for wider public use and Jenna's plan was simply to lower the surrounding wall in order to make it more accessible and inviting for local people to use with flat stones on the top for sitting on and the remaining stone that was to be removed, to be used elsewhere. However, as these were retaining walls it was not possible so more intensive plans were drawn up which included the re-landscaping of the grounds and opening up of a new access route to the town centre.

Unfortunately this story does not have a happy ending, which is why I haven't shown you any images of her ideas. Because although the council had control of the land around the church and wanted the designs to be implemented, as did the Vicar and the community – and the council also had the money – it didn't go ahead because once the designs were approved and £30,000 earmarked to move ahead from an English Heritage grant, the Vicar then had to get approval from the Diocese. This process proved to be extremely lengthy, so much so that by the time they had decided yes the cut off date for spending the money had passed resulting in the loss of the scheme and as the artist said, minus a few expletives, "a perfect example of bureaucracy needlessly losing money that was there for community involvement".

So her main focus, as the set of images I'm going to show demonstrate, was on the communal living areas – the alleyways. Jenna arrived at these proposals through year long discussions with the community and her desire to reveal the idiosyncrasies of the place and allow for personalisation which was hard to achieve due to the fact that the houses were grade 2 listed. She also picked up on the fact that many disliked the unusually wide back alley system which was felt to be insecure and unsafe. There also existed an erratic numbering system which ran up numerically on one side and then down on the other of the area which made it difficult for both residents and the visitors to identify entrances. But despite both these factors, residents still

chose to enter their houses from the back. Jenna saw the potential to turn the alleyways into more than simply routes to a destination, but into living spaces in their own right which addressed issues of community safety, as well making them more attractive areas to use. She also focused on lighting in order to provide soft security; pavement treatments; colour and even the redesign of the recycling bins – a far cry from the raised walls and the CCTV cameras the residents had originally envisaged. I'm going to run through some of her proposals in order to give you a flavour.

(Ref presentation)

This shows the context of the alleyways.

And some of her ideas for landscaping.

And also the current state of repair.

These are some of her proposals for wall treatments and she also proposed a colour palette which is unique to Darwen and which would be used for the back wall treatments and the streetscape. She devised a bespoke numbering system and also how the community would be involved in that.

Her lighting proposals, which also proposed lights in the paving, would be LED lights – low cost, low maintenance and low light pollution – in fact a highly sustainable solution all round.

Her proposals are now going to be implemented and the reaction from the community to all of this has been very positive. Due to Jenna's focus on meeting and talking to residents, she picked up on the minutiae of that communities' life and they in turn were grateful for her sensitivity and her interest. They could see that she had seen the potential of that community and was approaching their concerns with fresh eyes and solutions and she was congratulated for spelling the name of the community right as it is spelt Darwen with an 'e' and not an 'i' which is what most people inadvertently changed it to.

The outcomes for artists have also been highly positive. She remains involved in various aspects of the programme I've described, but has also been approached to work on other major regeneration schemes as a direct result of her involvement in this project. The client's view is that, despite the problems and issues raised by the scheme, they have created a small scale model of an artist working within a housing master planning process that in the main worked and which, with modifications, can be used again in other areas. They do feel however that the

issues of how exactly an artist can fit into the process of master planning, contractual issues and workable timescales needs further consideration. As they found themselves in a position at the outset of having contracted the artist for a set time allocation which when the master planning dates inevitably changed was impossible to realign. In addition whilst many of the problems encountered were out with the control of the project there was an issue about the integration and role of the artist and in retrospect more work should have been done with the design team with a view to clarifying this. Undeniably some other team members felt threatened by the presence of the artist which comes back to the need to understand that the artist can contribute conceptually and is not just a bringer of objects.

My next case study is Barnstaple Regeneration Schemes in North Devon and is a good example of how an artist can engage with a design and highways team and make viable recommendations for the public realm rather than for more formal artworks. It was also a first for the partners – North Devon District Council and Devon County Council – who in some senses took a real leap of faith having no track record in this area by appointing an artist to work conceptually in this way. And as such they created a first for a small rural town in the southwest.

The North Devon Local Plan had identified a number of sites as redevelopment areas, including the former cattle market and Queen's Street and these were included in a document called 'Urban Design Advice for Regeneration Sites in Barnstaple' which was commissioned from Aaron Evans Architects in 2002. The aspiration on behalf of the district working with the county council was to realise a vision in partnership with private sector developers which resulted in the highest quality design that enhanced the environmental quality of the town, creating new public spaces, improving physical and visual connections between areas and enhancing and vitality and viability of the town. With early support from Public Arts Southwest and then lastly through receiving a project award they appointed the artist, again through open application, Simon Watkinson in June 2005. His personal starting point is that he is more concerned with a crowd narrative than an individual's since public spaces are occupied by differing sectors of the community in different ways and I quote him "it is about similarities as opposed to differences and trying to make manifest this visual density through every day objects and images that refer to aspects of the location". His role was to work with the design team established for the Strand and Square. And the methodology is to undertake a period of research and development which very much focuses on an intense series of consultation with interested parties spanning the design field through to local history, commerce and the community. And he quickly picked up on the fact that this was a critical moment in the town's development.

As ever the issue of traffic was at the forefront of discussions and the impact of redirecting the traffic through and around the town was addressed through public meetings and consultation. In examining the proposals for the town square he addressed the layout of the space and how it related to the desire lines and surrounding spaces and also the conceptual means of interpreting the site that could be manifest in the detailed design stage. The point of arrival and departure associated with the bridge crossing was studied and this linked Barnstaple's history in a broader sense as a port was felt by the artist to be a suitable concept to help interpret the space. He therefore suggested an intense concentration on a band that acted as a threshold for the square. The manufacture of baize and coarse woollen cloth was formally the staple trade of the town and the artist suggested a woven pattern that referred to this through its banded qualities which would emphasise the continuity from the Albert Clock Tower across the square and the length of the strand itself. Thus also providing a visual manifestation of the desire lines and people's movements. Integrated into the dominant band would be tree grids, lighting, a strand of bold colour and any vertical elements required. This outline plan has now been approved subject to further detailed design.

(comment on slides)

Just some of his early proposals.

Late in 2005 a proposal was put forward for Queen Street and the artist met with interested parties. However timing didn't permit him to become involved as part of the design time as it was to be imminently advertised to attract developers but it did provide an opportunity for the artist to consider introducing a new pedestrianised boulevard that would animate the sites core. At the same time the Queen's Theatre Development Plans for the envisaged cultural quarter were also taking shape and whilst again he saw many opportunities for further integration, it was agreed because of the stage this scheme was at it would not be possible to include it within the artists remit. However because of these developments Simon realised that there was no over lapping design body that had a visual investment in relating schemes to one another so he proposed that a design code be evolved which could clarify the paletted materials and approaches to be used in order to provide consistency across the schemes. He was also very interested in articulating the nightscape through the addition of simple lighting as walking the streets at night he saw how little attention had been paid to night time impact and that much of the townscape was shrouded in darkness. He therefore proposed that this be addressed in order to make the town more attractive to visitors and creating a more continental feel.

This slide shows the town square at present and how the new town square could look.

He wanted to create a linkage between all the low density space via a local code of hard surfacing, sculptural lighting, signage and furniture. His concept was to create a bracelet of spaces held together by a more fragile chain of high quality small items. He was particularly concerned that well designed drainage would complement the ground lights. He also proposed a lighting strategy for the landmark buildings that adjoin the developed spaces which would animate the space at night and provide better night time orientation.

This slide shows the clock tower as it currently is at present and a possible concept for it.

And as one of the few illuminated buildings in the town the theatre stands out and sends a positive visual message as to the benefits of creative lighting and this has been the precedent Heaney did in order to achieve more integrated thought from the clients.

The reception to Simon's highly detailed understanding of the issues and creative response to what could be achieved has been extremely positive from both authorities and the community. The artist quickly realised that the fundamental change that Barnstaple was about to undergo would affect the way it was perceived and used for decades to come, therefore he stressed it was imperative to create interventions that worked to help knit the buildings and the square into the townscape as a whole as part of a public realm strategy which would also revitalise the spaces in between as well as those directly under consideration.

Both these case studies demonstrate the considerable benefit of involving an artist at the earliest stages possible in rethinking major redevelopment areas. The sensitivity and awareness that the artist brought, coupled with a real engagement on a physical and also a social level meant that the day to day issues and the local issues were treated with the same level of thought and priority as the larger scale issues and needs. They changed, shaped and broadened what would have taken place and lifted the schemes out of the ordinary.

Our aims for Project were to raise the level of debate, to change working practices, to unlock partnership funding and to analyse the benefits of working with artists and in order to achieve the latter we commissioned an independent evaluation process which would assess the projects in receipt of awards and evaluate the outcomes. The goal being to produce research with a robust evidential base that would inform future policy and practice. Comedia were appointed to undertake this work and the final report is available on the Project website and you have a card in your pack which will give you the details of that site.

And the findings show that there was a widely shared enthusiasm for the scheme and high expectations of its success. It was viewed as a welcome challenge to conventional ways of thinking, altering other's perceptions of what an artist can do and what an artist is and seen as a way of creating meaning and expression in a building or place not just functionality.

The evaluation of the scheme asked 4 main questions – did the people involved change their mindsets and or working practices? And the answer was yes, the majority of participants experienced a change in both mindset and working practice. Artists somewhat less so than other professionals and I can go into that further at question time if you want to know why that was. All those professionals whose normal practice before Project's intervention did not include working with artists subsequently experienced a fairly fundamental change in their mindset and working practice as a result in their involvement.

The second question was had there been any impact on the project players' long term practice. The majority of those who underwent a change in their working practice described it as fairly long term and already in some cases those involved are taking forward further projects in which artists are engaged at an early stage building on their experience with Project's scheme.

Had the involvement of artists made a demonstrable difference to projects? Again, Yes. There was a wide appreciation among the other professions that the engagement of artists had raised the quality and value in the project and it's belief in the built environment that ultimately ensues. The range of discourse between the developers, architects, planners and clients has been beneficially extended by artists' intervention and the engagement of community and residents and potential users has been facilitated by artist's presence and work. Interestingly the most enthusiastic of the professionals involved were the developers who felt that the involvement of the artist had helped to clarify the aims of the development, engaged the community far more effectively and meaningfully than would have been and smoothed the whole process along.

And lastly, we asked under what conditions does artist input have a positive affect and when does it not? And the findings were that to achieve a good experience and a successful outcome some conditions have to be met. There has to be clarity – it works best when the artist and the other professionals involved are clear about what the artist's role is and what they're expected to do. And I know that sounds very simple and straight forward but in practice it's anything but. A timely appointment is essential - if the artist is to contribute effectively to planning and developing a project they have to be in place early. Management – there has to be the capacity to be made available in a project to ensure that the artist's involvement is managed and supported and this is something that we are very particular to build into the scheme from the outset. And then support

– a facilitated peer group network of artists working in such situations would be beneficial to the success of projects. And organisations receiving the input of artists also need support, particularly with this is breaking new ground.

I would urge you to read the full report, which is on the website, and there will be a publication which is going to be edited by Charles Landry of Camedia which contextualises this scheme in relation to other European and international practice.

And as for the legacy, well, CABE and Arts and Business are still considering this at present so when we have news it will be on the website. But I am confident that Project has presented the evidence to support what most of us instinctively knew anyway, namely the more creative the team the better the outcome. Providing opportunities for artists to sit round the table and contribute their considerable lateral thinking and conceptual skills brings significant benefits. In fact recent research by Richard Layard in his book 'Happiness, Lessons from a New Science' demonstrates that the cultural symbolism embedded within design and architecture which reflects our identity and social values contributes to people's quality of life and that visual quality enhances life satisfaction.

So let's not be guilty of numbing the spirit through bad design to paraphrase Joan Jacobs and let's make people happy instead. Thank you.

(Applause)