• The MAG is a non-statutory body established in 2007 to advise the Minister and Department of Culture Arts and Leisure (DCAL) on matters of architecture and the built environment.
• The MAG operates “to champion the provision and maintenance of the highest standards of design quality in architecture and the built environment in Northern Ireland.” (MAG mid term report 2009)
The MAG’s 3 Guiding Principles

... to improve the achievement of valued environments through design
Belfast: prehistory settlers on high ground above the valley, self sufficiency; middle history settlement within the valley of resources, industry, connections, trade
(Belfast, 1600-1900, The making of the modern city, Raymond Gillespie & Stephen Royle 2007)

**Place.**
Belfast: today: suburban settlement, central dereliction, services, cultural quarter
(Belfast Cultural Quarter. Waring Street, Cotton Court photo: The Paul Hogarth Company, 2000)
(Belfast Cultural Quarter. Waring Street, Cotton Court. DSD / Laganside photo: The Paul Hogarth Company, 2005)
If people believe in a place, value and care for it, invest time and resources and management into it... it will endure, always evolving with the priorities of the people.
Place is integral with existence. Events / acts / occurrences ‘take place’ – meaningless to imagine any happening without reference to locality.

Place is meaningful space. To gain an existential foothold, man has to be able to orientate himself, know where he is, identify himself within the environment, know how he is in a certain place.

Our life-world = concrete phenomena + intangible phenomena

All places have character.

Christian Norberg-Schulz ‘Genius Loci’ 1980
‘Place-making is a dynamic human function; an act of liberation, of staking claim and of beautification – it is true human empowerment.’

(Place diagram, Project for Public Spaces website 2010).
Place key attributes (inner ring), intangible qualities (middle ring), measurable data (outer ring)
Landscape is the resultant of interaction between people and the environment (Landscape Character Assessment Guidance, SNH & Countryside Agency 2002)

Landscape (a condition, a process of interaction) = people + environment = lifestyle = identity

Rigorous process of landscape assessment (EIA Directive 2000) – combined evaluation of character, natural / geodiversity / biodiversity, HLC (historic landscape characterisation), ecological / habitat survey
European Landscape Convention
(Council of Europe 2000) arose from concern regarding lack of distinction between landscapes. States required to:

- **Recognise** landscapes
- **Evaluate** change
- **Define** objectives
- **Implement** these

Measures apply to the whole territory: **all landscapes matter.**

‘it concerns landscapes that might be considered outstanding, as well as everyday or degraded landscapes’

**European Landscape Award**: to exemplify the integration between landscape / identity / place + community.

The **ELC** is a unique treaty with a powerful vision – to put landscape at the centre of place-making across Europe. (Val Kirby, Natural England 2010)
Map showing the 130 Landscape Character Areas in Northern Ireland assessed by ERM for NIEA and Planning Service in 2000, each area is weblinked to its landscape, geodiversity and biodiversity profile. (NIEA website 2010)

Northern Ireland was the first UK country to effect **Landscape Character Assessment** for whole region.

The NI LCA comprises: description, evaluation of condition, value, sensitivity, & change, principles for management.

Very useful planning resource, but not necessarily encompassing local commitment to quality objectives and vision.
159 LCA in England
30 LCA in Scotland

Each LCA uniquely distinguishable

Landscape Character Assessment spatial hierarchy – example of the relationship between the levels from national to local.

Local assessment of LCAs are carried out in England by local county authorities and continually updated.

(Landscape Character Assessment Guidance, SNH & Countryside Agency 2002)
The 24 places which shape Tower Hamlets

(Planning for Places, CABE 2009)

**Ordinary Places** are where 80% of the people lives (where our future citizens are being formed). (CABE 2010)

Council planning teams are encouraged to **identify and describe places**, and establish visions and quality objectives for them.

(Planning for Places CABE 2009)
Northern Ireland’s regionally special landscapes – 8 Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty
(NIEA website 2010)

Core strategies operating for the achievement of valued environments:

1965 designation of AONBs, no special planning restrictions (although concurrent pre-PPS21 with special planning control)

1985 enablement of management capacity, trusts established in Mourne and Causeway Coast and Glens

No ‘place-vision with management’ outside these areas
Northern Ireland’s regionally special areas of built heritage – 60 Conservation Areas
(Planning Service website 2010)

Within planning policy:

Conservation Areas established to protect built heritage (within which PPS6 applies)

Generally accompanied by a design guide published by Planning Service.

No ‘protection’ outside these areas
Antrim Coast and Glens AONB
(Causeway Coast and Glens Heritage Trust, 2009)

Place description:
• Rolling plateau
• Deeply incised glens
• Rugged coastline
• Remote Rathlin
• Stone field patterns
• Traditional farming
• Archeology
• Distinct culture + music +
  folklore + sports
• Diverse economy / tourism

Management framework issues:
• land coast and sea
• historic environment
• sustainable communities
  economy, tourism

Specifically addresses: use,
management, benefit, change
Larne Glens Landscape Character Area
(NIEA website 2010)

**Place description:**
- incised glens to moorland summits
- stonewalled pastures
- ancient broadleaf steep slopes
- blocks coniferous forest
- scattered white farm buildings
- clustered villages
- old quarries
- views

**Management issues:**
- visitor numbers
- high visibility
- afforestation
- housing

Specifically addresses: use, management, benefit, change
Place description:
- 2 storey tightly packed domestic buildings
- narrow streets, collective character, compact grouping
- some individual features

Design guidelines:
- scale
- vertical treatment elevation
- building line
- roof pitch, material, detail, chimney, eaves, gutters
- windows, sills
- materials
- doors
- extensions
- colour
- shopfronts, signs

All aesthetic or material issues. No mention of usability, or change.
Management and design vision, objectives and framework for community places which embody community usability necessary to sustain vital places.

the **place-communities** of Belfast City
“The key challenge for the future is to identify how our landscapes can provide all the things we need, such as food, timber, clean water, space for housing, sites for commercial and business development and renewable energy, places for wildlife, places to escape, places that are distinctive and links to our cultural heritage.

The ELC provides a way of translating these challenges into opportunities. By encouraging a people-focused, integrated way of engaging with landscapes everywhere, the convention increases the likelihood that local people and community groups can shape the best possible future for themselves and their landscapes.”
Locally initiated planning
place-community ... community-place

No place like home… (no home like a real place) (DCfW 2010)

Homes and Communities Agency: ‘Place Spotlight – for improving and integrating communities’. The components of great places = the components of sustainable community development

Local LCAs in England are encouraged by local authorities to set up community groups, which are encouraged to establish Parish Councils and formulate a parish plan, or Village Design Statement, for their local LCA.

- the vision for how your local community wants to develop, and identifies the actions needed to achieve it
- includes everything that is relevant to you
- up to your local community to decide what is important
- not about whether development should take place (which is the purpose of the local plan) but about how development should be undertaken.

(Maldon District Council, 2010)
Value through Design

- Green infrastructure
- Ecosystem services

CABE priorities for Sustainable Places
- manage energy demand
- manage waste
- manage water
- manage transport
- + built environment (housing, schools, hospitals etc)

Integral in green infrastructure + public space

Connswater Greenway, The Paul Hogarth Company
Dalmarnock, Glasgow, Whitelaw Turkington
The MAG wishes to engage with local councils throughout Northern Ireland, and proposes to coordinate workshops with each council area to assist in investigation and evaluation of:

- place and place-community
- gaps and opportunities in core strategies
- quality place vision and objectives

to work collaboratively for the achievement of valued places (for people) through design.

A community derives its identity and lifestyle from its interaction with its place. If that interaction is beneficial to both, both will prosper and evolve. If their interaction causes detriment to one in order to favour the other, that interaction is not sustainable, and both will ultimately suffer. To plan for community or place in separation is non-sustainable of either.
MINISTERIAL ADVISORY GROUP
FOR ARCHITECTURE AND THE BUILT
ENVIRONMENT FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

Architecture and the
Built Environment
for Northern Ireland