

# Promoting better places in the North East





Everybody can take part in the early stages of making places  
© xsite architecture



## Our role

Northern Architecture's role is to promote high quality architecture and design of public space in the North East of England.

## Our values

At Northern Architecture we believe that making towns, villages, homes, schools, and work places will be more successful if care is taken to create solutions that meet our needs well, last well, are economic of resources and enhance our pleasure of places. We believe that the first step to making good places is aspiring to good places and that this process is not just a job for developers or architects, planners or builders but one that concerns everybody.

**Front cover:** Byker, Ralph Erskine Architects for Newcastle City Council 1969-1982.

**1:** The Apollo Pavilion and housing, Peterlee. Built in 1963-70 as part of the new town for which Victor Pasmore, then Professor of Fine Art at Newcastle University was the overall designer. The pavilion and lake were designed to emphasise the town's natural landscape.  
© Durham County Council Archive

**2:** Pottergate, Alnwick, Jane Darbyshire David Kendall Architects 2004. This Rivergreen development won an Alnwick Civic Society award in 2004 for the sensitive use of materials and the subtle relationship of the new building to its older neighbours.  
© Northern Architecture



**1:** Cummins Engine Factory, Darlington, Kevin Roche, John Dinkeloo & Associates, 1966. Designed by American architects for an American company brought to the North East by a Government Programme. The building was very influential for its use of glass and CorTen steel. © Elaine Harwood

**2:** Traffic was removed from the heart of Newcastle as part of a £120m project that has brought new life and new jobs to the area. In 2002 a poll of BBC listeners voted John Dobson's 1837 Grey Street as 'Britain's best street'. © Graham Bell, North East Civic Trust

**3:** High quality improvements to the retail centre of Middlesbrough restored the heart of the town to pedestrians and created a meeting place and informal performance area.  
© James Smith, Middlesbrough Town Centre Company

## Our history

Northern Architecture is a non profit-making company based in Newcastle upon Tyne. It was set up in 1995 by a group of architects, educationalists, environmentalists and promoters of architecture and is managed by a Board of voluntary Directors. Our principal funding comes from CABE, the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment, and the Arts Council of England, North East.



Exploring new buildings still under construction is both exciting and gives a unique angle on how they work.

© Northern Architecture

Terrace Houses on Sundew Road, Beacon Lough East, Gateshead. This Gateshead Council development of 1965-67 mixes high-rise, 'gunnel' and terrace houses and won a Government 'Good Design in Housing' award.  
Used by kind permission of English Heritage ©



Young people can tackle big projects – a bridge for Hartlepool.  
© Northern Architecture

## Our aims

To work with everyone involved in providing buildings and public spaces to achieve higher standards of development and design.

To raise public expectations about architecture and design, stimulate public debate and provide opportunities for the public to become involved in the process of making architecture and public space.

## Why is good design important?

**“Good design is not just about the aesthetic improvement of our environment, it is as much about improved quality of life, equality of opportunity and economic growth.”**

‘The Value of Good Design’, Stuart Lipton (former Chairman CABE) 2002.

St Michael's R.C. Primary School, Houghton-Le-Spring, Darbyshire Architects. Giving it a Hadrian Award in 2003 the judges praised this light and airy school for achieving a lot of pleasure on a tight budget.  
© Mark Fuller





1



2



3

**1:** Jesmond Branch Library, Newcastle upon Tyne, Williamson, Faulkner Brown and Partners 1963. Cleverly fitted into a corner site in Victorian Jesmond, this is one of the 8 post-war buildings in the North East officially 'listed' as of architectural interest. © Elaine Harwood

**2:** Part of the master plan inspiring a future for Middlehaven, Middlesbrough produced in 2004 by Alsop Architects for Tees Valley Regeneration.

**3:** This conversion by the Jenkins Partnership of the former public toilets, reading room and bus shelter at the southern end of the Tyne Bridge won a Hadrian Award in 1999. © Sally Ann Norman



4



5

**“The best buildings arise from a creative dialogue between the planning authority, the client, the architect and other key professionals involved.”**

## What is a good place?



### We should aspire to make:

- Places of distinctive character, which recognise locally distinctive patterns of development and landscape.
- Public spaces that make us feel safe, are easy to move through, and work well for everybody.
- Places where it is easy to find your way around, and which have well organised transport.
- Places where a mixture of uses that works well together make places that meet a variety local needs.

**4:** Sunderland Winter Garden, Napper Architects 2001. The architects were chosen from a competition to create a winter garden for the 21st century, as the last phase of restoration of Mowbray Park and the Museum and Art Gallery. © Sally Ann Norman

**5:** Imagining and designing the future of a place should involve residents, planners and designers working together, as here at Fish Quay, North Shields. © Northern Architecture

## What is good architecture?

### Good buildings should:

- Work well and do the job they were designed to do.
- Be built efficiently and to a high standard.
- Be able to be operated and maintained without wasteful use of resources.
- Fit into their context.
- Look good.

## How do we make good places?

### Making good places involves:

- Assessing what is good about the place already.
- Agreeing what your aspirations are, promoting them and making sure that you achieve them in a clear and transparent manner.
- Ensuring that the many skills and interests involved can work together to achieve the objectives.



Byker, Ralph Erskine Architects for Newcastle City Council 1969-1982. In planning, landscape and design Byker set new standards and is still one of the most important places in the North East. Currently the subject of a large-scale study and design competition to improve parts of the estate.  
© Mike McHugh for Northern Architecture

**“The views, light and greenery make living here really enjoyable.”**

Resident, Dunn Terrace, Byker, July 2002



Officers and members from the 25 local authorities in the North East are taking up the role of Design Champions to promote good design across all council roles and functions.  
© Northern Architecture



## What we do

At Northern Architecture a Director, Projects Officer and Education Officer direct a programme of work based around our two aims. One part is focused on advocating and demonstrating good design through talks, visits, exhibitions, award schemes, support for design champions and other events. The second part is focused on creating opportunities for people to enjoy and be excited about the best of what is being built in the North East today and become more involved in what's happening. It includes a programme designed to enable young people to discuss, analyse and voice ideas in order to participate in informed debate about how to shape environments.

See [www.northernarchitecture.com](http://www.northernarchitecture.com) for details of our current programme. This site also has up to date news and opinions about architecture and design in the North East and links to further information about the North East and about architecture nationally and internationally. Visitors can vote on issues and submit news and events.

Exploring shapes, forms and textures, building an imaginary city: a family workshop in Architecture Week  
© Dan Brady for Northern Architecture



## What you can do

Whether you are an organisation or an individual, register your interest in our work by telling us about your self. We will add you to our mailing list and keep you up to date about relevant events and activities.

Name

Organisation name (if relevant)

Address

Email address

Telephone

Northern Architecture is registered as a Data Controller under the Data Protection Act 1998 (in the name of The Northern Architecture Centre Ltd.) Please confirm that we can keep the information you have given us above for the purposes of contacting you about our work. We will not disclose your data to other organisations.

I consent to Northern Architecture keeping my personal details for the above purposes.

Please tear off this form and send to :  
**Northern Architecture**  
**Blackfriars**  
**Monk Street**  
**Newcastle upon Tyne**  
**NE1 4XN**



## What do you think?

Please summarise your interest in architecture and design and make any suggestions about how you could be involved in our work.

Is there something in particular that you would like to suggest as a Northern Architecture event or activity?

We are very interested in working with other organisations or individuals on joint projects. Please contact us if you would like to discuss any possibility.

The Transporter Bridge was built in 1911 to carry cars and pedestrians 173m over the River Tees without interrupting the shipping. It is one of only 5 such bridges in the world still operating.  
© Jean Sauvary



**Architecture and design in the North East of England is rooted in the culture of the North East of England.** The railway buildings of John Dobson, the miners' housing of the Northumberland and Durham coalfields and the dramatic bridges over the Wear, the Tees and the Tyne, are distinctive design solutions created to make places and meet social needs.

In the 20th century new developments in technology and economic changes led to larger scale developments and buildings that could be much bigger and made of cheaper materials. Increase in motor traffic damaged familiar places. The social and economic pressures caused by the collapse of the North East's traditional industries lowered aspirations that good design was both possible and worthwhile.

Northern Architecture believes that good design which is sensitive to people, scale, materials and places should play a key part in shaping the future North East to the benefit of everybody. We also believe that we should re-connect building and design to culture, and to the culture of the North East. This means re-connecting the people who live in, visit and use the North East with the process of shaping those places.

## How to contact us

Northern Architecture  
Blackfriars  
Monk Street  
Newcastle upon Tyne  
NE1 4XN

T 0191 260 2191

F 0191 222 1003

E [info@northernarchitecture.com](mailto:info@northernarchitecture.com)

[www.northernarchitecture.com](http://www.northernarchitecture.com)

Northern Architecture is supported by CABE, the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment and Arts Council England, North East.

Northern Architecture is a member of the Architecture Centre Network.



### Back cover:

**1:** The Devonshire Building, University of Newcastle upon Tyne, Dewjoc Architects, 2004. The building houses the Research Institute for the Environment and Sustainability and was the RICS North East Building of the Year in 2004.  
© White Young Green

**2:** Gateshead Millennium Bridge, Wilkinson Eyre, 2002. Tilting to allow ships up the Tyne this pedestrian bridge won the RIBA Stirling Prize in 2002 and has played a major role in the regeneration of the quaysides of both Gateshead and Newcastle. Used by kind permission of English Heritage ©



Models are a good way to present and understand change.

© Dan Brady for Northern Architecture

**3:** The National Glass Centre, Sunderland Gollifer Langston Architects 1998. One of several new cultural facilities created with the help of the National Lottery, the Centre's glass roof is a spectacular place in its own right. © Peter Benn for Creative Partnerships Durham – Sunderland with Dance City and Random Dance.

**4:** Design and construction can be fun!  
© Dan Brady for Northern Architecture

**5:** Central Station, Newcastle upon Tyne, designed in 1845 for the York, Newcastle and Berwick Railway Company by John Dobson. Dobson felt that new buildings, especially for new uses like railways, were important opportunities to inspire the public about architecture.  
© Northern Architecture

Please contact us if you would like a larger print version of this brochure.



**Northern  
Architecture**

Promoting better places  
in the North East