

THE BUILDING IN CONTEXT TOOLKIT

foreword

Good buildings in attractive places improve the quality of life for all, enhancing the setting of our daily activities, creating safer and stronger communities and reducing our carbon footprint. English Heritage, CABE and local Architecture & Built Environment Centres in the regions are working in partnership with local authorities, using the *Building in Context toolkit* to help raise the standards of new development in historic areas.

Planning and the built environment has never had a higher profile. The planning and heritage protection systems are undergoing a radical transformation, as is the structure and function of local government. Pressures on local planning authorities have never been greater. Developers are operating with rising land, property and rental values, and local people expect greater transparency and involvement in decision making. This can create a charged atmosphere where predictable action and consistent decisions are essential.


Like their counterparts in other areas of complex activity, built environment professionals use technical language and concepts as shortcuts in debate and argument. At best these can promote understanding and speed up the process, at worst they can obscure, confuse and mislead. The *Building in Context toolkit* training events clarify the meaning of the most important and frequently-used terms and concepts to promote and ensure common understanding.

English Heritage and CABE are committed to helping elected Members in local planning authorities, faced with complex planning decisions, to understand the context, their responsibilities and the implications of their decisions. Our jointly funded programme for Design Champions and Historic Environment Champions builds on the success of tried-and-tested training events that have been piloted in the south-east region.

Following its success in the south-east, the *Building in Context toolkit* is now available around the country. Already, hundreds of participants have gained greater confidence in making decisions about new development in historic settings. With the better understanding the *Building in Context toolkit* brings, you will be better placed to help introduce new buildings and spaces that will enrich your historic places for the benefit of present and future generations.



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