About the TOOLKIT
The Building in Context toolkit has been developed by EH, CABE and the Kent Architecture Centre. It grew out of the publication ‘Building in Context’ published by EH and CABE in 2001. The purpose of the publication was to stimulate a high standard of design when development takes place in historically sensitive contexts. The founding principle is that all successful design solutions depend on allowing time for a thorough site analysis and character appraisal of context. Building in Context TOOLKIT training aims to help those making decisions to reach effective and balanced design decisions.

It is proven to be useful in communicating issues of development in complex situations; helping convey the depth of expertise required in adopting a holistic approach to site development and reduced ‘silo mentality’. Through the analysis of a case study, wider design issues than ‘how it looks’ are explored.

Each workshop consists of a presentation looking at the key issues covered in Building in Context, followed by local and regional case studies, a practical, hands-on drawing activity, and an opportunity to discuss the complex issues associated with successfully incorporating contemporary design in sensitive locations.

The Building in Context Toolkit Programme aims to:

• Enable wider understanding of the principles of developing appropriate contemporary design in historic areas to a range of professional and community groups
• Enable those involved in making decisions affecting historic areas in their attainment of a more effective, balanced and efficient service resulting in improvement of those decisions affecting the quality of the historic environment for future generations.
• Promote sustainable new and re-used development that doesn’t sacrifice what future generations will value for the sake of short-term and often illusory gains so that we use already developed areas in the most efficient way, while making them more attractive places in which to live and work and conserving our cultural heritage.

Urban Vision’s BiC Toolkit Event
The event held on the 19th February 2008 at the Guildhall, Lichfield, Staffordshire was very successful. A variety of Design and Historic Environment Champions and local authority officers from the West Midlands participated in the event.

Using the BiC Toolkit Urban Vision worked closely with English Heritage and Lichfield District Council to create a programme that incorporated examples from a wide variety of developments that replicated experiences that delegates may encounter when considering development in a historical context or setting. The four sites selected included the former Arts Centre site, a modern mixed use development, Bird Street car park, as a potential site for redevelopment, Stone Yard, a mixed residential scheme using new and existing buildings and Market Square, identifying issues in the public realm relating to the historic context.

Mick Downs, Manager Urban Vision said “The event was an excellent opportunity for Design & Historic Environment Champions to experience a wide variety of developments in an important historic environment”.

Guest Speaker Dave Chetwyn provided an interactive presentation concentrating on the techniques and methods used in assessing development proposals in relation to a historic context. The presentation included interesting visual comparisons of best and worst practice, raising awareness of common mistakes.

Guest Speaker Dave Chetwyn
Head of Planning Aid England with the Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) and Chairman of the Institute of Historic Building Conservation (IHBC).

Before joining the RTPI, Dave spent 17 years working in planning and urban regeneration in local Government, specialising in design and heritage-led regeneration. He has also helped to develop and deliver training programmes and adult education for CABE, the Civic Trust and Keele University. Dave has been involved with various national steering groups, sounding-boards, stakeholder groups, panels and parliamentary select committees concerned with regeneration, planning, heritage protection, and State Aid. He has MAs in Town Planning and Architectural History.

Urban Vision wishes to thank the following for all their support:
Matthew Dobson, English Heritage
Dan Roberts, Lichfield District Council
Julie Morgan, MADE
To Design and Historic Environment champions:

Organising Your Building in Context TOOLKIT training event

We hope you enjoyed this event that showcased for Design and Historic Environment Champions the Building in Context TOOLKIT and a leading designer.

The TOOLKIT is a travelling training package that is available to authorities across England that can be tailored to meet specific local requirements. As Champion for your authority you may wish to organise one in your own workplace.

For more information on holding a BiC TOOLKIT training event in the West Midlands please contact Hannah Barter at Urban Vision on 01782 575 321 or alternatively at hbarter@uvns.org

The Table below shows how the BiC Toolkit team can put together an event tailored for your particular requirements:

The Building in Context TOOLKIT

1. Event build-up
   - Establish topical site, issue and audience

2. Event
   - Develop event, background, establish no-go areas
   - Designer’s case study matched to site, issues, audience and availability
   - Invite other speakers where required, audience, pre-event questionnaire, venue and catering

3. Post-event
   - Post event feedback questionnaire and report
   - Post event response
   - Typical materials provided in facilitator pack to tailor to suit the event

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www.building-in-context.org