

About the Toolkit

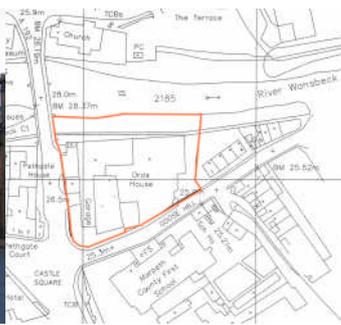
The Building in Context toolkit has been developed by EH, CABE and the Kent Architecture Centre. It grew out of the publication 'Building in Context' published by EH and CABE in 2001. The purpose of the publication was to stimulate a high standard of design when development takes place in historically 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 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, wide 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 a local and regional case study, 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 for our cultural heritage



This was the first of two events for local authority design champions in the North East; this one in the North of the region and one in the South of the region in Yarm.

The study site is in an extremely prominent position within the historic market town of Morpeth and in close proximity to some of the region's most important historic structures. On the edge of a Conservation Area, adjacent to the grade II* listed Telford Bridge, grade I listed Chantry, within the setting of the grade II* listed Court House and scheduled Castle and Old Bridge, it is a key riverside site on the main route through town and has the potential to provide high quality sustainable residential units.

The case study presented by Kevin is a completed mixed development scheme (including some flats) incorporating new and original listed buildings in the heart of the market town of Hexham, Northumberland. Kevin described the setting as it has developed from mediaeval times and how key pedestrian routes through the site have been lost but now reinstated. He talked about slightly different approaches from two clients, the scheme as built being smaller than original intentions – and much better for it. The play of new materials against original stone is one key to the success of the project.



About the Speakers

Dr. Nigel Barker

English Heritage Officer who has been instrumental nationally in forming this Toolkit. He started this event by explaining the history and intent of the Toolkit.

Kevin Doonan

Kevin runs his own small rural practice and has many years experience in producing high quality architecture, mainly in sensitive rural locations. Kevin also acted as a workshop facilitator at this event.

Tina Gough (main facilitator)

Tina is a partner in a small practice, Spence and Dower, which mainly works with historic buildings but also designs contemporary and sustainable projects in historic areas. She also has wide experience of running workshops for communities and was asked by **Andrew Guest of Northern Architecture** to run these events in collaboration with him. Andrew joined in one of the workshops.

Our other facilitators

Thank you to our facilitators on the day who encouraged, cajoled and generally kept the workshops focused:

Catherine Dewar

English Heritage NE

David Farrington

English Heritage NE

David Carruthers

Conservation Officer, Middlesbrough

Ten councils were represented, four from the South of the region. There were senior planning/conservation officers, councillors and two others: 16 in total. A few more councillors would have been valued.