## Topic 1: Architecture for social purpose

**Delivering new homes**:Navigating community concerns and enhancing public engagement

This course will provide strategies for engaging with communities, addressing concerns effectively, and fostering collaborative relationships to ensure successful project outcomes, creating meaningful engagement that builds community for the long-term, and how to foster ownership within the community. Attendees will learn how to balance development goals with community interests, and how to incorporate feedback in a way that enhances both the design process and the long-term sustainability of new housing projects. The CPD focuses on the challenges architects and developers face when delivering new homes, particularly in relation to community opposition. It will examine the factors that contribute to public resistance, including concerns about local character, environmental impact, and social infrastructure.

**You are encouraged to:**

* Share case studies with clearly defined outcomes
* Introduce tools and frameworks attendees can realistically apply
* Emphasise measurable impacts of engagement and design strategies
* Use inclusive language and ensure relevance to both urban and rural contexts

**Lesson 1: Building trust through engagement**

**Session objective:**  
Equip attendees with practical strategies for initiating trust-based, inclusive engagement from the earliest stages of design.

**Key speaker tasks:**

* Introduce the principles of effective community engagement
* Demonstrate tools (e.g. workshops, surveys, digital platforms) using examples
* Explain how to manage expectations and communicate transparently
* Highlight approaches for involving underrepresented groups

**Desired outcome for attendees:**  
By session end, attendees should be able to outline a simple engagement plan, identifying at least two consultation tools and key inclusivity measures.

**Lesson 2: Understanding community perspectives on new housing**

**Session objective:**  
Deepen attendees’ understanding of the underlying reasons for resistance to new housing and how to respond constructively.

**Key speaker tasks:**

* Present common objections (e.g. loss of character, infrastructure concerns)
* Explore emotional, psychological, and cultural dimensions of opposition
* Use project case studies that reflect different types of resistance
* Discuss the importance of acknowledging local identity and memory

**Desired outcome for attendees:**  
Attendees should be able to identify four categories of concern and describe two social or emotional drivers that shape community resistance.

**Lesson 3: Balancing development goals with community needs**

**Session objective:**  
Support attendees in navigating tensions between design/commercial objectives and local expectations.

**Key speaker tasks:**

* Demonstrate how feedback can be systematically integrated into design
* Provide methods for value engineering without compromising social quality
* Offer examples of successful compromises or negotiated outcomes
* Discuss practical constraints (planning, cost, density) with realistic responses

**Desired outcome for attendees:**  
Attendees should be able to describe three strategies for incorporating community feedback into design and provide a hypothetical example of a balanced solution.

**Lesson 4: Designing for long-term social impact**

**Session objective:**  
Encourage attendees to lead with a mindset of social responsibility, designing housing that supports long-term wellbeing and ownership.

**Key speaker tasks:**

* Define what “social sustainability” means in practice
* Share methods for co-curating design with residents (not just consultation)
* Introduce metrics or tools for assessing social value (e.g. POE, impact frameworks)
* Highlight how adaptability, inclusivity, and pride can be designed in

**Desired outcome for attendees:**  
Attendees should be able to articulate three ways to embed social value in housing design and identify one method for evaluating long-term impact.

**General notes for speakers:**

* Avoid overly technical jargon. Keep concepts accessible to both experienced architects and early-career professionals.
* Encourage reflection. Allow space for reflection by providing supporting learning activities to be accessed via the RIBA Academy after the course.
* Use UK-based examples where possible, but international case studies are welcome if relevant and relatable.
* Focus on practical application. Attendees should leave with ideas they can apply immediately in their work.

## Topic 2: Health, safety, and wellbeing

**Designing with risk in mind:** Understanding site hazards and their impact

Site conditions and hazards can have a significant influence on architectural design, specification choices and project delivery. Understanding how to recognise and respond to these risks is essential for architects, the Principal Designer (under CDM 2015), and the wider design team.

This course explores how site-specific hazards - from contamination and ground conditions to access and adjacent structures - should inform design decisions from the earliest stages. It will also cover the architect’s role in coordinating health and safety information, knowing when to seek specialist advice, and ensuring legal and professional responsibilities are met.

Through practical examples and guidance, this course will equip you with the awareness and tools to integrate health and safety considerations more effectively into the design process, helping ensure safer, more successful outcomes for all project stakeholders.

**Lesson 1: Recognising risk - Identifying site hazards early**

**Session objective:**  
Enable attendees to identify common site-specific hazards and understand how early detection informs better design outcomes.

**Key speaker tasks:**

* Define some common site hazards with real examples (e.g. contamination, access issues)
* Explain how to carry out early-stage risk assessments (e.g. surveys, desktop studies)
* Discuss the cost and safety benefits of early risk recognition
* Share a case where late hazard discovery impacted a project

**Desired outcome for attendees:**  
By session end, attendees should be able to identify at least three types of site hazard and describe two methods for preliminary risk identification.

**Lesson 2: Designing with risk in mind**

**Session objective:**  
Demonstrate how architects can design proactively around known risks, turning challenges into creative opportunities.

**Key speaker tasks:**

* Provide examples of how hazards shape layout, materials, and methodology
* Discuss balancing innovation with safety requirements
* Reinforce that safety-conscious design supports long-term value
* Use at least one case study showing hazard-driven design innovation

**Desired outcome for attendees:**  
Attendees should be able to articulate how one site hazard influenced a design decision and list two design strategies that mitigate risk without compromising quality.

**Lesson 3: The role of the architect and Principal Designer (CDM 2015)**

**Session objective:**  
Clarify the responsibilities of architects and Principal Designers under **CDM 2015**, including collaboration, documentation, and specialist input.

**Key speaker tasks:**

* Provide a plain-language summary of CDM 2015 duties
* Explain the role of the Principal Designer in risk management
* Clarify when and how to engage with safety specialists
* Outline expected outputs (risk registers, H&S file contributions, etc.)

**Desired outcome for attendees:**  
Attendees should be able to summarise the three core responsibilities of a Principal Designer and describe one situation where consulting a specialist is appropriate.

**Lesson 4: Embedding health and wellbeing in design**

**Session objective:**  
Encourage a shift from risk mitigation to wellbeing enhancement through architectural design, especially in high-risk or sensitive environments.

**Key speaker tasks:**

* Illustrate how design can actively support physical and mental wellbeing
* Introduce concepts such as daylighting, acoustic control, access, and layout for wellbeing
* Highlight examples where wellbeing was central to the project’s success
* Show how wellbeing goals align with building safety and resilience

**Desired outcome for attendees:**  
By the end, attendees should be able to identify three design strategies that enhance occupant wellbeing and explain one way that wellbeing can be measured post-occupancy.

**General notes for speakers:**

* Avoid in accessible language. Use easy to understand language to explain duties.
* Encourage reflection. Prompt attendees to consider hazards on their current or past projects.
* Use UK regulations and context. All examples should align with UK health & safety law.
* Promote confidence and competence. Aim to equip attendees with tools they feel ready to use, not just theoretical knowledge.

## Topic 3: Business, clients, and services

**Laying the foundations:** Navigating feasibility studies for project success

Feasibility studies are often the first crucial step in an architectural commission, laying the groundwork at RIBA Stages 0 and 1. Done well, they help avoid costly abortive work and establish the project’s viability, setting the tone for a successful outcome. Architects have the opportunity to add significant value during these early stages, but with demanding clients and mission creep, the risks can outweigh the rewards.

This course will explore how to manage feasibility studies effectively and turn the project into profitable, long-term commissions. Participants will learn how to engage clients and stakeholders meaningfully, define the scope of work, and identify key project drivers. The course will also cover practical tools such as frameworks, checklists and resource monitoring, helping you manage expectations and ensure profitability.

With case studies and interactive discussion, this seminar will give you the confidence to lead feasibility commissions with clarity, purpose and commercial awareness - ultimately improving your practice’s success rate at turning studies into full architectural projects.

**Lesson 1: The value of feasibility - Setting the project up for success**

**Session objective:**  
Help attendees understand the strategic role of feasibility studies in securing successful outcomes for both clients and practices.

**Key speaker tasks:**

* Define the purpose and typical outputs of feasibility at RIBA Stages 0–1
* Explain how feasibility clarifies viability and avoids wasted effort
* Identify key project drivers (e.g. site constraints, planning risk, budget)
* Reinforce the value architects add through structured early-stage input

**Desired outcome for attendees:**

Attendees should be able to describe at least three core benefits of a well-run feasibility study and identify two project drivers to explore with a client at project inception.

**Lesson 2: Defining scope and managing risk**

**Session objective:**  
Equip attendees to clearly define the scope of a feasibility study and manage associated risks, particularly around fees, time, and client expectations.

**Key speaker tasks:**

* Present examples of scope documents or deliverable templates
* Explain how to structure fees appropriately for early-stage services
* Offer methods for preventing scope creep (e.g. stage caps, written agreements)
* Emphasise the importance of protecting practice resources and IP

**Desired outcome for attendees:**  
Attendees should be able to draft a clear scope summary with defined deliverables and outline one risk mitigation strategy to protect profitability.

**Lesson 3: Stakeholder engagement and communication**

**Session objective:**  
Demonstrate how strategic communication during the feasibility stage can improve outcomes, build trust, and align stakeholder priorities.

**Key speaker tasks:**

* Introduce tools for mapping stakeholders and identifying decision-makers
* Share techniques for running productive early-stage conversations
* Discuss how to manage divergent priorities and establish shared goals
* Reinforce that communication is a design tool, not just an admin task

**Desired outcome for attendees:**  
Attendees should be able to name at least two stakeholder mapping techniques and describe one method to align client aspirations with site or planning realities.

**Lesson 4: Turning feasibility into commission**

**Session objective:**  
Guide attendees on how to use feasibility work as a stepping stone to full project appointment while safeguarding intellectual property and building lasting client relationships.

**Key speaker tasks:**

* Discuss follow-up strategies post-feasibility (e.g. review meetings, tailored proposals)
* Show how to align feasibility outputs with Stage 2 requirements
* Explain IP risks (e.g. partial design reuse) and how to protect against them
* Share a real example where strong feasibility work led to full commission

**Desired outcome for attendees:**  
Attendees should be able to outline two follow-up actions that increase conversion to full commission and describe one way to protect their intellectual property during feasibility.

**General notes for speakers:**

* Avoid generic advice. Focus on realistic, practice tested approaches that can be actioned straightaway.
* Highlight commercial acumen. This session is as much about business as it is design.
* Use UK-based case studies. Especially helpful if aligned to planning systems, client types, or public sector contexts.
* Encourage reflection. Allow space for reflection by providing supporting learning activities to be accessed via the RIBA Academy after the course.

## Topic 4: Legal, regulatory, and statutory

**Design handover:** Managing risk when taking over projects mid-stream

Taking over a project part-way through the design or construction process can present complex challenges, both legally and professionally. Without proper due diligence, architects risk inheriting design flaws, unclear liabilities, and contractual complications.

This course will provide practical guidance on how to approach taking over design work initiated by others. You’ll learn how to carry out thorough due diligence, assess the quality and completeness of inherited information, and manage client expectations while protecting your professional position.

Using real-world scenarios, the course will cover professional obligations, documentation, regulatory compliance, and common risks, giving you the knowledge and tools to take over projects with clarity, confidence and legal awareness.

**Lesson 1: Understanding the risks of mid-stream project takeover**

**Session objective:**  
Introduce the key risks involved when taking over a project during the design or construction phase, with a focus on liability, documentation gaps and unclear authorship.

**Key speaker tasks:**

* Explain why and how projects may change hands mid-stream
* Highlight legal and professional risks such as latent design issues or unverified approvals
* Use case studies to illustrate liability pitfalls and unresolved errors
* Reinforce the value of pre-engagement caution and formal review

**Desired outcome for attendees:**  
Attendees should be able to identify at least three common risks of mid-stream takeover and describe one scenario in which engagement without due diligence could lead to liability.

**Lesson 2: Conducting due diligence and information review**

**Session objective:**  
Equip attendees with a structured approach to auditing and assessing inherited project information before accepting responsibility for the design.

**Key speaker tasks:**

* Share a checklist or process for reviewing drawings, approvals and consultant input
* Explain how to identify missing, contradictory, or poor-quality documentation
* Highlight the risks of assuming approvals or design validity without verification
* Discuss when to recommend rework or specialist review

**Desired outcome for attendees:**  
Attendees should be able to list at least four components of an effective due diligence process and demonstrate awareness of when inherited information may require validation or amendment.

**Lesson 3: Managing client expectations and professional boundaries**

**Session objective:**  
Help attendees navigate client relationships during a mid-stream takeover — particularly how to manage risk without damaging trust or communication.

**Key speaker tasks:**

* Explain how to clearly define the limits of responsibility in appointment documents
* Discuss how to respond to client assumptions about inherited work
* Provide sample clauses or approaches to appointment scoping
* Share communication techniques for setting boundaries without conflict

**Desired outcome for attendees:**  
Attendees should be able to articulate one strategy for clarifying responsibility in a takeover scenario and describe two ways to manage client expectations around legacy design work.

**Lesson 4: Compliance, contracts, and professional obligations**

**Session objective:**  
Ensure attendees understand their legal, regulatory, and professional duties when accepting a mid-stream project — including copyright, novation, and ARB/RIBA codes.

**Key speaker tasks:**

* Summarise key ARB/RIBA obligations relevant to inherited work
* Explain how copyright, authorship and design rights apply in takeovers
* Discuss contract structures, including novation and scope limitations
* Use examples to show best practice in documenting professional decisions

**Desired outcome for attendees:**  
By the end of this session, attendees should be able to identify three legal or regulatory obligations relevant to project handover and describe one method to mitigate risk through contract terms or professional conduct.

**General notes for speakers:**

* Be practical and specific. Provide tools or real-life examples - this is a course for navigating risk, not a theoretical exercise.
* Link back to compliance. Each point should relate to either a legal, regulatory or professional duty.
* Encourage reflection. Prompt attendees to assess one current or past project that involved unclear responsibility or takeover risk.
* Use UK standards. Ground all guidance in the context of UK law, CDM 2015, ARB, and RIBA Codes.

## Topic 5: Procurement and contracts

**Managing architectural projects**

This course focuses on effective project management strategies for ensuring the delivery of high-quality architectural outcomes. It will explore key principles of project management, including planning, budgeting, scheduling, and risk management, with an emphasis on maintaining design integrity and meeting client expectations. The course will provide practical tools for managing teams, collaborating with stakeholders, and navigating challenges to achieve superior results. Attendees will learn how to balance creativity with project constraints, ensuring that quality remains at the forefront throughout the project's lifecycle, from conception to completion.

**Lesson 1: Project planning and setting up for success**

**Session objective:**  
Establish the importance of robust planning in setting a project up for success, focusing on scope, roles, budget and programme alignment from the outset.

**Key speaker tasks:**

* Define what success looks like across RIBA stages (especially 0–2)
* Discuss early-stage planning tools and how to set realistic expectations
* Share strategies to align scope with time and cost parameters
* Highlight the importance of well-defined roles and project structure

**Desired outcome for attendees:**  
Attendees should be able to outline at least three critical planning actions that reduce delivery risk and identify one method for aligning scope and budget at project inception.

**Lesson 2: Managing resources, teams, and collaboration**

**Session objective:**  
Provide attendees with practical strategies for managing internal resources and coordinating with external consultants, while maintaining effective team communication.

**Key speaker tasks:**

* Explain techniques for team resourcing, capacity planning and workload tracking
* Share tips for consultant coordination across disciplines
* Explore decision-making frameworks and communication channels
* Offer guidance on leadership and conflict management in project teams

**Desired outcome for attendees:**  
By the end of this session, attendees should be able to describe one effective resource planning method and list two communication practices that improve consultant collaboration.

**Lesson 3: Balancing design integrity with project constraints**

**Session objective:**  
Demonstrate how to maintain high design standards while working within constraints such as cost, time, procurement models and regulatory frameworks.

**Key speaker tasks:**

* Discuss the challenge of protecting design quality under commercial pressure
* Provide examples of value engineering that preserved architectural intent
* Introduce tools for monitoring design quality through specification and detailing
* Address how to handle changes (e.g. VE requests or shifting client needs) without undermining design

**Desired outcome for attendees:**  
Attendees should be able to describe two strategies for maintaining design quality during procurement or construction and explain one method for managing value engineering collaboratively.

**Lesson 4: Risk management, handover, and post-completion**

**Session objective:**  
Explore how to manage risk at every stage and ensure smooth project handover, client communication, and post-completion evaluation.

**Key speaker tasks:**

* Identify key risks at concept, technical, and delivery stages
* Explain how to maintain oversight during construction and minimise disputes
* Provide a structure for effective handover planning and client briefing
* Share tools for collecting post-completion feedback and embedding lessons learned

**Desired outcome for attendees:**  
Attendees should be able to list at least three types of project risk and describe one post-completion review technique to improve future project delivery.

**Speaker guidance:**

* Focus on the practical. Attendees value tools and examples over theory. Provide real templates, methods, or checklists where possible.
* Use project stories. Case studies are especially valuable when demonstrating tension between design intent and delivery pressure.
* Link back to procurement. Help attendees see how contracts, appointments, and procurement models shape delivery.
* Tailor to UK practice. Use RIBA Plan of Work terminology and reference UK regulatory/procurement environments.

## Topic 6: Sustainable architecture

**Land use and building density:** Sustainable approaches to urban development

This course explores the relationship between land use and building density, with a particular focus on sustainable development on smaller sites. It will examine how architects can approach higher-density housing—whether within large-scale schemes or compact, infill developments—while prioritising domestic quality, environmental responsibility, and liveability. Emphasis will be placed on design strategies that make efficient use of limited space, support a high standard of day-to-day living, and respond thoughtfully to context. The course will also address the planning frameworks and practical considerations involved in delivering dense, sustainable housing on a variety of scales, highlighting both the opportunities and constraints of working outside major regeneration zones**.**

**Lesson 1: Reframing density for domestic scale**

**Session objective:**  
Help attendees understand density as a contextual, design-driven concept, especially for small and medium sites, rather than a one-size-fits-all planning metric.

**Key speaker tasks:**

* Introduce density as both a measurable and experiential concept
* Explore how perceptions of density differ from planning definitions (e.g. units/ha vs lived experience)
* Highlight successful examples of well-integrated medium-density housing outside large urban schemes
* Debunk myths about density and poor quality

**Desired outcome for attendees:**  
Attendees should be able to define two measures of density and describe one way in which domestic-scale design can influence the perception of density in urban neighbourhoods.

**Lesson 2: Designing for liveability in high density housing**

**Session objective:**  
Explore spatial strategies that maintain high standards of privacy, comfort, and quality of life in dense settings, particularly on constrained sites.

**Key speaker tasks:**

* Discuss design responses to light, ventilation, privacy and acoustic comfort
* Explore the role of shared and private outdoor space in compact developments
* Introduce principles for flexibility and futureproofing in small-unit typologies
* Offer examples of mitigating negative impacts like overlooking or poor access

**Desired outcome for attendees:**  
Attendees should be able to describe at least two spatial design strategies for improving liveability in higher density housing and recognise key trade-offs in constrained plots.

**Lesson 3: Small sites, big impact – Compact mixed-use design**

**Session objective:**  
Highlight the value and challenges of integrating housing with other uses (e.g. commercial, cultural, community) at a compact scale to support local sustainability.

**Key speaker tasks:**

* Present examples of successful mixed-use schemes on small or infill sites
* Discuss how layering uses (housing, retail, workspace, community) can activate neighbourhoods
* Emphasise the benefits of adaptive reuse and fine-grain development
* Connect design choices to wider goals like walkability and reduced car dependence

**Desired outcome for attendees:**  
Attendees should be able to identify one example of compact mixed-use development and outline two benefits of mixed-use approaches on small sites.

**Lesson 4: Working within the system – Planning tools, opportunities, and engagement**

**Session objective:**  
Equip attendees with the tools to navigate the planning system when delivering dense housing on smaller plots, and build support through better communication with stakeholders.

**Key speaker tasks:**

* Outline typical planning pathways for infill and smaller sites
* Explain how local and national policy frameworks (e.g. design codes, density guidance) affect smaller-scale schemes
* Share tips for presenting density positively to planners and local communities
* Use examples of design-led advocacy and consultation to show how engagement can support approval

**Desired outcome for attendees:**  
By the end of this session, attendees should understand how to frame a dense housing scheme positively in planning terms and identify one planning tool or document useful for supporting design quality on small sites.

**Speaker guidance:**

* **Ground theory in practice.** Use UK case studies wherever possible, with site photos, plans and planning references.
* **Be prepared to talk about trade-offs** (e.g. car parking, neighbour objections, unit size constraints).
* **Promote density as a positive.** Focus on sustainability, housing delivery and placemaking - not just numbers.
* **Provide tools.** If possible, bring frameworks, checklists, or example briefs used in your own or other practices.

## Topic 7: Inclusive environments

**Designing with young people in mind:** Creating youth-friendly built environments

This course focuses on the often overlooked needs of young people within the built environment. As active users of public, educational, residential, and recreational spaces, young people, ranging from early childhood through to adolescence, have distinct physical, emotional, and developmental requirements that should meaningfully inform design decisions.

Participants will discover how the built environment can positively or negatively impact young people's wellbeing, autonomy, and ability to safely and confidently engage with their surroundings. The course will consider how the needs and behaviours of teenage boys and girls may differ particularly in relation to safety, privacy, spatial hierarchy, and social interaction and how thoughtful design can address these differences to ensure environments are inclusive and supportive for all.

The course will examine examples of good practice in youth-centred design, highlight the value of inclusive consultation with younger users, and explore the implications of safeguarding, accessibility, and play across urban and architectural contexts.

By placing the lived experience of young people at the heart of the design process, architects can help to create more inclusive, responsive, and socially sustainable environments that reflect the needs of all age groups.

**Lesson 1: Rethinking the built environment through youthful eyes**

**Session objective:**  
Challenge adult-centric assumptions in design and introduce the long-term benefits of child- and youth-inclusive environments in both architectural and urban contexts.

**Key speaker tasks:**

* Outline how children and teens experience public, domestic and educational spaces
* Explain why child/youth inclusion is critical to sustainable, liveable design
* Introduce the concept of “child-friendly cities” and global design movements focused on youth
* Explore social equity and intergenerational benefits of youth-focused design

**Desired outcome for attendees:**  
By the end of this session, attendees should be able to identify at least two ways in which young people interact with the built environment differently than adults and explain one societal benefit of youth-inclusive design.

**Lesson 2: Designing spaces that support play, safety, and independence**

**Session objective:**  
Equip attendees with design approaches that encourage freedom, social connection and safe exploration for children and adolescents in various spatial settings.

**Key speaker tasks:**

* Show how design can enable unstructured play and informal gathering
* Explore spatial hierarchies that promote safety without limiting autonomy
* Present design techniques that enhance legibility, navigation and comfort for young users
* Touch on safeguarding responsibilities and strategies for public and semi-public spaces

**Desired outcome for attendees:**  
Attendees should be able to describe at least two design interventions that support independence and safe interaction for children and teens in public or shared spaces.

**Lesson 3: Inclusive consultation – Listening to children and young people**

**Session objective:**  
Demonstrate how inclusive consultation with young people can lead to better, more relevant design outcomes—and share practical methods for doing so ethically and effectively.

**Key speaker tasks:**

* Highlight the benefits of youth consultation for user-centred design
* Present a range of age-appropriate, creative engagement techniques
* Share real-world examples where young people influenced design outcomes
* Discuss safeguarding, parental consent and data privacy when engaging minors

**Desired outcome for attendees:**  
Attendees should be able to name one ethical consideration and one practical technique for engaging children or young people meaningfully in the design process.

**Lesson 4: Good practice in youth-centred design - Case studies and principles**

**Session objective:**  
Provide attendees with real examples of successful youth-focused design and extract applicable principles that can be embedded in future projects of all scales.

**Key speaker tasks:**

* Present one or two case studies of built projects designed with or for young people
* Identify core design principles shared across successful schemes (e.g. ownership, flexibility, scale)
* Discuss design challenges encountered and how they were overcome
* Offer practical recommendations for applying youth-friendly design thinking in general practice

**Desired outcome for attendees:**

Attendees should be able to cite at least one successful youth-centred project and extract two key design principles applicable to their own work.

**Speaker guidance:**

* Use case studies to ground theory. Emphasise practical examples and show visual outcomes (e.g. sketches, before/after photos, youth-generated content).
* Be age specific. Highlight how needs vary between age groups (e.g. early years vs teenagers).
* Be candid about challenges. Discuss how consultation, safeguarding or risk management was navigated in real projects.
* Bring tools. Where possible, offer templates, frameworks, or child/youth engagement toolkits used in your work.

## Topic 8: Places, planning, and communities

**Planning in practice:** Engagement and negotiation for better outcomes

This session looks at the critical role of engagement, communication and negotiation within the planning process, focusing on how architects can effectively navigate relationships with clients, communities, local authorities and other stakeholders.

Attendees will examine how meaningful, early-stage engagement can help shape more responsive and contextually grounded proposals, reduce conflict, and increase the chances of planning success. The session will consider a range of communication techniques, from public consultations and design reviews to formal negotiations, and highlight best practice approaches for building trust, managing expectations, and advocating for design quality.

By strengthening these essential skills, architects can play a more confident and constructive role in shaping places that reflect local priorities, foster community support, and deliver long-term social value.

**Lesson 1: The value of early engagement - Building trust and shaping proposals**

**Session objective:**  
Demonstrate how meaningful, early-stage engagement can shape better proposals, reduce opposition, and foster local ownership of the design process.

**Key speaker tasks:**

* Outline when and how to initiate stakeholder engagement
* Explain how community input can inform design development meaningfully
* Share examples of trust-building strategies with clients, communities, and planners
* Define the architect’s role as a proactive facilitator in early-stage discussions

**Desired outcome for attendees:**  
Attendees should be able to identify at least two benefits of early engagement in the planning process and describe a method for initiating inclusive dialogue.

**Lesson 2: Communicating design - Tools and techniques for engagement**

**Session objective:**  
Equip attendees with visual and verbal communication methods that effectively convey design intent and invite constructive public and stakeholder response.

**Key speaker tasks:**

* Present tools such as consultation exhibitions, storyboards, diagrams, models, digital platforms, and annotated visuals
* Explain how to adapt technical content for different audiences (e.g., community members, councillors, planners)
* Share practical examples of using feedback loops in iterative design
* Emphasise clarity, accessibility, and transparency in communication

**Desired outcome for attendees:**  
Attendees should be able to select two engagement tools suitable for communicating with non-specialist audiences and explain how to incorporate feedback into their design process.

**Lesson 3: Navigating negotiation - Working with planning officers and stakeholders**

**Session objective:**  
Explore strategies for constructive negotiation and maintaining design quality under scrutiny or competing demands during the planning process.

**Key speaker tasks:**

* Discuss principles of respectful, professional negotiation with officers, clients and objectors
* Offer techniques for reconciling planning policy with client objectives
* Share tips on responding to planning objections, design revisions and viability arguments
* Emphasise the importance of staying solutions-focused while upholding design values

**Desired outcome for attendees:**  
Attendees should be able to outline one approach to resolving planning conflicts and one technique for presenting a design rationale during negotiations.

**Lesson 4: Advocating for place - Influencing long-term value through design**

**Session objective:**  
Encourage architects to see the planning process as a platform for leadership in sustainable, socially valuable, and place-responsive design.

**Key speaker tasks:**

* Highlight the architect’s civic responsibility in shaping resilient, inclusive places
* Share case studies where community support and effective negotiation led to better outcomes
* Discuss how to integrate long-term value (e.g., social, environmental, contextual) into planning submissions
* Explore different planning contexts (e.g. rural vs urban) and how to navigate their challenges

**Desired outcome for attendees:**  
Attendees should be able to cite at least one case where engagement influenced planning success and describe how advocacy for design quality contributed to social or environmental benefit.

**Speaker guidance:**

* Make it practical. Share lived experience and show real-world outcomes: what worked, what didn’t, and why.
* Be audience aware. Many attendees will be architects working across scales, balance planning theory with examples from housing, community buildings, or public realm.
* Use visuals strategically. Planning is a visual discipline - clear graphics, annotated plans, and simple diagrams help bridge communication gaps.
* Highlight transferable techniques. Whether in small infill or major masterplans, draw out common engagement and negotiation strategies.

## Topic 9: Building conservation and heritage

**Making heritage matter:** The politics of preserving the past

This course explores the political and cultural dimensions of physical heritage, examining how historical buildings are valued, preserved, and contested in modern society. Participants will gain insight into the factors influencing decisions about heritage conservation, including social, political, and economic considerations.

The course will also discuss the role of architects in navigating the complexities of heritage protection, balancing public interest, historical significance, and contemporary needs. Attendees will gain a deeper understanding of the broader context in which heritage decisions are made and how to advocate for the meaningful preservation of the built environment.

**Lesson 1: Understanding heritage - Who decides what matters?**

**Learning objective:**  
Attendees will be able to describe the social, political, and cultural forces that influence heritage decisions and identify whose voices are often excluded in heritage narratives.

**Key points to cover:**

* Define ‘heritage’ and explain who determines its significance.
* Discuss how politics, identity, and power shape heritage outcomes.
* Identify underrepresented groups and narratives in heritage conservation.
* Summarise the impact of listing and designation frameworks on preservation.

**Desired outcome for attendees:**  
Attendees will be able to critically reflect on how heritage value is defined and who has the power to shape heritage narratives. They will be able to recognise the influence of social, political, and cultural forces on heritage decisions, and identify whose voices and histories are often excluded from mainstream conservation efforts.

**Lesson 2: Heritage in practice - Balancing significance with change**

**Learning objective:**  
Attendees will be able to apply principles of heritage-led design to reconcile historic preservation with modern needs such as accessibility, sustainability, and adaptive reuse.

**Key points to cover:**

* Outline heritage-sensitive adaptation strategies compliant with listed building regulations.
* Evaluate how to improve building performance while respecting historic fabric.
* Present case studies demonstrating sustainable interventions in heritage contexts.
* Discuss working within conservation areas and relevant legal frameworks.

**Desired outcome for attendees:**  
Attendees will be able to integrate principles of heritage-led design into their professional practice, balancing the preservation of historic character with modern requirements such as accessibility, sustainability, and adaptive reuse. They will understand how to apply regulations effectively while proposing sensitive, future-facing design interventions.

**Lesson 3: Conflict, controversy, and community - When heritage gets political**

**Learning objective:**

Attendees will be able to analyse examples of heritage conflicts and formulate approaches to engage constructively with public opinion and local activism.

**Key points to cover:**

* Identify common sources of conflict in heritage projects (e.g., redevelopment, demolition).
* Explain the role of community activism and public consultation.
* Discuss strategies for ethical and culturally sensitive negotiations.
* Provide methods to balance heritage protection with development pressures.

**Desired outcome for attendees:**  
Attendees will be able to identify and evaluate the sources of conflict in heritage projects and formulate informed strategies to manage stakeholder tensions. They will be equipped to engage ethically and constructively with public opinion, activism, and competing values in politically sensitive heritage contexts.

**Lesson 4: Advocating for heritage - The architect’s civic role**

**Learning objective:**  
Attendees will be able to develop strategies for advocacy, partnership building, and policy influence to promote inclusive, forward-looking heritage conservation.

**Key points to cover:**

* Describe the architect’s role as advocate, mediator, and educator in heritage preservation.
* Identify ways to influence policy and heritage discourse effectively.
* Recommend approaches to building collaborative relationships with communities and heritage organisations.
* Propose methods to promote evolving, inclusive heritage values in practice.

**Desired outcome for attendees:**  
Attendees will be able to define their role as advocates for inclusive and meaningful heritage conservation. They will understand how to influence policy and public discourse, build collaborative relationships with communities and heritage bodies, and promote heritage values that reflect a broader, more inclusive civic vision.

**Additional speaker guidance:**

* Use case studies and examples to provide measurable learning outcomes.
* Encourage reflection. Allow space for reflection by providing supporting learning activities to be accessed via the RIBA Academy after the course.
* Provide practical tools for application.

## Topic 10: Design, construction, and technology

**Adapting material specifications:** To evolving product certification and regulatory standards

This course focuses on the challenges and best practices for specifying materials in the context of an evolving regulatory landscape, particularly with respect to product certification. Attendees will gain a thorough understanding of how new and updated regulations impact the selection, certification, and use of building materials.

The course will explore the importance of ensuring that materials meet the necessary regulatory standards, focusing on how product certifications play a key role in guaranteeing compliance. Attendees will learn about the various certification schemes, such as CE marking, BSI Kitemark, and others, and how these affect the specification process.

Through case studies and practical examples, the course will highlight how to navigate changes in product certification requirements and adapt material specifications to align with the latest regulations. The course will also cover how to assess and manage risk when specifying materials, ensuring that choices are not only compliant but also sustainable, safe, and fit for purpose in the long term.

**Lesson 1: Navigating the regulatory landscape for building materials**

**Learning objective:**  
Attendees will be able to summarise the key regulatory frameworks and compliance responsibilities that affect material specification in architectural projects.

**Key speaker tasks:**

* Give an overview of current and emerging regulations governing building materials.
* Outline the importance and role of product certification in compliance.
* Walk through common certification schemes: CE marking, BSI Kitemark, Environmental Product Declarations (EPDs).
* Definite architects’ responsibilities in ensuring compliance.

**Desired outcome for attendees:**  
Attendees will be able to clearly identify and explain the key regulatory frameworks governing the specification of building materials. They will understand their professional responsibilities in ensuring compliance and be familiar with major certification schemes relevant to architectural practice.

**Lesson 2: Understanding product certification schemes and their impact**

**Learning objective:**

Attendees will be able to interpret product certification documents and integrate certification requirements into their material specification processes.

**Key points to cover:**

* Discuss different types of certification schemes and their significance.
* Explore the influence of certification on material selection and procurement decisions.
* Offer guidance on how to read and verify certification claims, including EPDs and life cycle assessments.
* Explore the impact of certification on managing project risk.

**Desired outcome for attendees:**  
Attendees will be able to interpret and verify key information within product certification documents. They will understand how certification influences material selection, procurement, and risk, and will be able to integrate certification criteria into their specification process with confidence.

**Lesson 3: Adapting specifications to meet new standards**

**Learning objective:**

Attendees will be able to apply best practice strategies to monitor regulatory changes and adapt material specifications accordingly during project delivery.

**Key points to cover:**

* Explore methods for tracking and responding to regulatory updates.
* Collaborating effectively with suppliers and manufacturers.
* Balancing specification flexibility with certainty and project timelines.
* Provide case studies illustrating specification adaptation mid-project.

**Desired outcome for attendees:**  
Attendees will be able to respond proactively to regulatory changes by adapting material specifications during project delivery. They will be equipped with practical strategies for monitoring updates, collaborating with suppliers, and balancing flexibility with project certainty.

**Lesson 4: Managing risk and sustainability in material specification**

**Learning objective:**  
Attendees will be able to assess risks associated with material choices and apply sustainability and safety considerations to their specifications.

**Key points to cover:**

* Approaches to risk assessment in material selection.
* Incorporating sustainability and lifecycle thinking into specifications.
* Ensuring long-term safety, durability, and performance of materials.
* Practical tools for evaluation and documentation.

**Desired outcome for attendees:**  
Attendees will be able to evaluate material choices through the lenses of risk, sustainability, and long-term performance. They will understand how to incorporate lifecycle thinking and safety considerations into their specifications, and how to document these decisions effectively in line with industry best practice.

**Additional speaker guidance:**

* Clearly state learning objectives at the start of each lesson and summarise key takeaways.
* Share lived experience and show real-world examples and case studies to illustrate concepts and outcomes.