ARCHITECTURE OF CHALLENGES – NEW EUROPEAN BAUHAUS BUILDING COMMUNITY

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NEW EUROPEAN BAUHAUS - BUILDING COMMUNITY

Head of works, editor-in-chief:
Anna Maria Wierzbicka

Reviewer:
Marek Pabich
Bogusław Podhalański

Scientific Committee:
Anna Maria Wierzbicka
Renata Jóźwik
Paweł Trębacz
Kinga Zinowiec-Cieplik
Magdalena Duda

Graphic design and Typesetting:
Martyna Rowicka-Michałowska

Publication Layout Coordinator:
Małgorzata Neumann

Cover based on graphics by:
Konrad Kucza-Kuczynski

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NEW EUROPEAN BAUHAUS - BUILDING COMMUNITY

collective work
edited by Anna Maria Wierzbicka

Warsaw 2025

In the academic year 2025/2026, the Architecture of Challenges initiative turns its focus to the theme of the New European Bauhaus. The first phase of the project brought students together to design and build a pavilion—a powerful symbol of community in action. Its inauguration in the Royal Łazienki Park coincides with an international conference, which this publication accompanies. The book gathers reflections from scholars engaged in the rational transformation of the built environment—particularly during a time of crises that impact both human communities and the planet's resources.

The original Bauhaus movement emerged from the efforts of intellectuals, artists, and architects who sought to radically improve living conditions. Amidst the pressures of rapid urbanization, it became essential to develop solutions that would ensure a dignified life for the growing urban population. Yet, to define Bauhaus merely as a construction movement would be reductive. Significantly, its name derives from the school founded in 1919 by Walter Gropius and a group of visionary artists in Weimar. Their goal was to educate a new kind of professional grounded in craftsmanship, equipped with modern design tools, socially conscious, and capable of solving spatial challenges through innovation. Bauhaus was, above all, a groundbreaking educational project that first shaped a design elite, and through them, influenced society at large.

Today, Europeans are again confronted with profound challenges—war, climate change, a crisis of values, and migration—that disrupt long-established patterns of life, including housing and settlement. In response, we must develop strategies that uphold European values without resorting to isolationism, while also acknowledging and addressing the needs of new members of society.

Navigating these crises requires not only new ideas, but also a renewed sense of community. This, in turn, demands a robust educational process—one that, as it did a century ago, engages both societal elites and the broader public. The vision of the New European Bauhaus will remain unrealized without the active participation of educators, students, and researchers. The initiatives that accompany the Architecture of Challenges conference serve as a compelling example. By bringing together individuals from diverse professional and academic backgrounds to collaborate, exchange ideas, and learn from one another, we are collectively advancing the core principles of the New European Bauhaus.

I am honoured to support the team behind this conference. Through its multifaceted activities, it fosters inclusive dialogue and contributes to the development of sustainable, human-centred design concepts. This conference community exemplifies thoughtful, forward-looking action inspired by the ethos of the New European Bauhaus—generating ideas and openly sharing them with the world. My hope is that participants will emerge as ambassadors of rational, sustainable, and inclusive design—champions of a new vision for Europe and beyond in the 21st century.

Professor, DSc, PhD, Eng. Arch. Jan Słyk
Vice-Rector for Academic Affairs, Warsaw University of Technology

The theme of this year's edition of the Architecture of Challenges conference – Building Community – refers to architecture in two ways: metaphorically and literally. This duality, involving the physical process of construction as the act of erecting an object, but also the creation of a value such as community, reflects the complex nature of the issue. Every time we build something physically, we also reach into the immaterial, symbolic sphere. Architecture has always dealt with the coexistence of these two realms, and this, in the most concise terms, is what distinguishes it from other disciplines. This duality, and at the same time the necessary synergy, provides an excellent basis for discussion about the nature of architectural creativity, about the obligations and opportunities it entails.

The main theme of the conference also encourages reflection on the nature of community. It is not only a community of interests, which may fluctuate with changing circumstances, nor only a sense of material ownership – although the latter is very often placed at the forefront as an inalienable right. It is also a sense of responsibility for the common good – in our case, for space, and specifically for what we change and add to this space, how we arrange it, and what values guide us in this process. When we speak of values, reflections of an axiological nature become inevitable – what we consider valuable, what principles of evaluation we adopt, and what consequences these have for the physical building process. It goes without saying that the multitude of criteria architects must take into account does not make this task any easier.

The New European Bauhaus emphasizes aesthetic, ecological, and social values, rightly treating them as fundamental, though they by no means exhaust all aspects that should be considered. All of these create a highly complex network of interdependencies, at times difficult to grasp. Moreover, a specific feature of architectural activity is the fact that we cannot stop at even the most accurate descriptions of reality and diagnoses. We must make design decisions – here and now. These require a conscious setting of priorities and, as a result, are never neutral. The responsibility that comes with this highlights the importance of discussing what we consider essential, how we understand community, and how our work can contribute to its construction.

This makes the conference theme particularly relevant and inspiring for meaningful discussions, whose ultimate goal aligns with the essence of design itself – defined as the conceptual preparation of change that must fulfill one fundamental requirement: it must be a change for the better.

DSc, PhD, Eng. Arch. Krzysztof Koszewski
Dean of the Faculty of Architecture, Warsaw University of Technology

Faculty of Architecture
Warsaw University of Technology

In an era of dynamic changes and increasing environmental awareness, architecture and urban planning play a crucial role in shaping our surroundings. As the chief editor, I would like to emphasize that one of the primary goals of the proposed strategy is to integrate actions in these fields to support ecological transformation and create more sustainable, accessible living spaces. The III International Architecture Challenges Conference, New European Bauhaus – Building Community, arose from the need to initiate a multidisciplinary dialogue that deepens the understanding of the impact of architecture on community development in the face of 21st-century challenges.

The current global crises, including climate change, migration, and the need for social integration, highlight the necessity of taking actions that actively engage communities. Our conference responds to these needs, offering a platform for creative thinking about architecture and living space. The broadly defined themes of the conference and its accompanying publication focus on the specific needs of local communities, promoting design approaches that consider diversity, cultural identity, and collaboration among different groups.

The New European Bauhaus, in its conception, places particular emphasis on three fundamental values: beauty, renewability, and community. The beauty of architecture is not just an aesthetic experience; it is also a reflection of respect for the environment and local traditions. Building and adapting spaces according to these values enhances citizens' quality of life, creating places where they want to live, work, and pursue their passions.

Sustainability, another pillar of this movement, refers to utilizing resources sustainably and striving to minimize our ecological footprint. Architecture can no longer remain indifferent to climate change; it should actively participate in mitigating it. Solutions based on ecological materials, energy-efficient technologies, and renewable energy sources are key aspects that contribute to creating spaces that are friendly to both people and nature. Community is the third pillar, which relates to building bonds between people, strengthening their identity, and fostering shared responsibility for their surroundings. The III International Architecture Challenges Conference, New European Bauhaus – Building Community, serves as a vital forum for addressing the pressing challenges of our times through the lens of architecture and urban planning. By uniting diverse perspectives and experiences, we aim to create a collaboration in which innovative ideas can flourish. This will ultimately lead to the emergence of built environments that are not only functional but also culturally significant and environmentally sustainable.

As we embark on this multidisciplinary journey, let us remain committed to the principles of beauty, sustainability, and community. Together, we can reshape our urban landscapes in a manner that reflects our shared values and aspirations.

DSc PhD Eng. Arch. Anna Maria Wierzbicka
Chairwomen of Conference Committies, Warsaw University of Technology

Faculty of Architecture
Warsaw University of Technology

The next conference in the series “Architecture of Challenges” addresses urgent and important issues facing contemporary civilization, many of which relate to the built environment. We live in challenging times — the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, anxiety related to the international situation — primarily the war in Ukraine, extreme climate phenomena, migrations — all have triggered severe social crises and various individual health problems, both physical and mental. During such times, mutual support and building human connections are especially vital. Shaping environments that foster integration, trust, and safe use is also important for architects. This applies to every scale of design — from interiors and individual buildings through courtyards, yards, and squares to entire systems of public spaces. Creating so-called “third places” and building community is a significant challenge for our entire milieu. This is also the theme and the name of this year’s conference, which is aligned with the initiative of the New European Bauhaus promoted by the European Union.

Both on an architectural and urban scale, there are many challenges that architects must address today. However, the ability to properly shape the built environment is only part of the skills needed by those designing cities — their most minor and larger parts. They must also be able to understand the needs of residents — individual people and various larger and smaller social groups. In the past, it was also expected that architects could persuade others with their visions. But this is no more a situation — today, we need even more from designers: they must know how to involve users in the design process and be able to do so. This is a particular challenge for urban planners, who can only create good and functional places with various stakeholders.

This conference is, therefore, an important voice in a much-needed discussion involving practitioners and scientists. Every contribution adds value: There is a place for theory, practice, good examples, participatory tools and techniques, as well as reflections. All these perspectives are presented in this publication, which announces the III International Scientific Conference in the series: “Architecture of Challenges”, scheduled for 2025, titled: “New European Bauhaus — Building Community”. This is a significant event in the academic life of the Faculty of Architecture at Warsaw University of Technology, with a substantial social impact and tangible publication results. My sincere thanks go to everyone involved in organizing the conference and those who prepared the papers and presentations.

Congratulations on this excellent initiative! I wish all organizers and participants a fruitful time in our unique community focused on this event and this publication!

Professor, DSc, PhD, Eng. Arch. Krystyna Solarek
Chairwoman of the Scientific Council for Architecture and Urban Planning,
Warsaw University of Technology

Faculty of Architecture
Warsaw University of Technology

In March 2027, it will be 100 years since the visit of the great painter of Polish origin, artist, founder of Suprematism, and mystic of modern art, Kazimierz Malewicz, to the School of Fine Arts in Warsaw, the predecessor of today's Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw. Kazimierz Malewicz did not visit the forerunner of the current Academy by chance. The artist was on his way from Moscow to Berlin and planned to visit the Bauhaus afterward. He decided to stop in Warsaw for nearly a month to take a break from his journey.

He visited family and notable friends, among whom were Tadeusz Peiper, Helena Syrkus, a circle of individuals associated with the Polish Artistic Club, Praesens, and former friends and colleagues like Władysław Strzemiński. At the invitation of, among others, Wojciech Jastrzębowski, Kazimierz Malewicz also visited the Warsaw School of Fine Arts. An exhibition of Malevich's works was organized at the Polonia Hotel — the same works he was taking to the Bauhaus and Berlin for similar presentations.

The great artist and thinker found the place, time, and reasons to present his works in Warsaw and agreed to a celebration in honor of himself and his art, into which the opening of his exhibition transformed. Let us remember such, today seemingly insignificant, episodes from the recent past when we once again begin to talk about the significance of the Bauhaus and the relevance of its ideas today.

Currently, as various efforts are being made to create a platform for integration and dialogue between different scientific, practical, and artistic communities aiming to bring to life a New European Bauhaus — one that would create modern aesthetic, ecological, and socially inclusive spaces across various, often multicultural, multiethnic, and multifaceted areas of social life — let us remember that the most important element is the Human Being. So that these various attempts at assimilation do not restrict human actions.

It is not by accident that I described Kazimierz Malewicz's journey and his stay in Warsaw and at the Warsaw School of Fine Arts in the introduction. I wanted to recall certain associations that exist in the history of the Academy. I also wanted to remind us of the importance of the great exchange of ideas that comes with the Artistic Journey. It is a kind of transformation, transmission of message, and admonition.

We must care for the Human Being.

Professor, DSc, PhD Błażej Ostoja Lniski
Rector of the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw

It is with great pleasure that we once again like to cordially invite you to the Royal Łazienki Museum. For centuries, this place has served as a venue for discourse on significant issues about art and nature, and for reflection on community. As co-organizers of the third edition of the international academic conference Architecture of Challenges, we are delighted to be able to co-create an event that brings together the academic and artistic milieu, and experts, to address key contemporary issues.

This year's edition of the conference, entitled 'New European Bauhaus – Building Community", resonates closely with the mission of our museum. For many years, the Royal Łazienki Museum has been developing programmes and initiatives that serve to promote integration, education and the creation of an open and inclusive space. The concept of building a community through the use of space – characterized by aesthetic appeal, sustainability, and inclusivity – is validated by our day-to-day activities. Today's museum derives its inspiration from the legacy of King Stanisław August – the creator of the Royal Łazienki as a meeting place for ideas, people, and art. The enlightenment values advocated by the king are still alive and relevant today – they form the foundation of the museum's mission: to create a space where the rich heritage of history, art and nature coexist harmoniously, evoking wonder and inspiring openness towards others and to the world. The Royal Łazienki is a Museum of Marvels – a place that connects the past with the future and fosters mindful and responsible coexistence. In this spirit, we are co-organizing a conference that will provide a forum for the exchange of ideas and experiences between representatives of various fields, including architects, urban planners, researchers, artists, activists, and representatives of public institutions. The programme has been planned around eight thematic sessions that address issues such as cultural diversity, public space, responsible design, and social participation. It is in these areas that new models of community are emerging today. We are delighted that the Royal Łazienki Museum, a place where nature, heritage and modernity coexist, has been selected as the venue for this significant debate.

Together with the Faculty of Architecture of the Warsaw University of Technology, the National Institute of Architecture and Urban Planning and the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw, we would like to invite you to a discussion on the role of architecture in creating social cohesion in areas where novel concepts and models of communal life are currently emerging. I believe that the meeting of so many distinguished participants and experts, their embrace of diverse perspectives and the unique ambience of the Royal Łazienki will create an inspiring environment for the exchange of ideas. The event should be an opportunity not only for academic reflection, but also to deepen our collective responsibility for shaping the spaces in which we live – both as individuals and as a community.

I would like to extend my gratitude to the co-organizers, partners, participants and all those involved in the organization of the conference.

Dr Marianna Otmianowska
Director of the Royal Łazienki Museum in Warsaw

ROYAL
LAZIENKI
MUSEUM

In the face of a deepening geopolitical crisis, climate change, growing social inequalities, and ongoing technological transformations, Europe has been tasked with creating a new order. On the one hand, it must ensure security, and on the other, build a vision for development—more sustainable, more beautiful, and more inclusive. One response to this challenge is the New European Bauhaus (NEB)—an initiative that combines the values of ecology, aesthetics, and social participation, directing Europe's actions toward creating living spaces that meet the needs of the 21st century. The origins of NEB can be traced back to the legacy of the original Bauhaus, founded in 1919 in Weimar by Walter Gropius. It was a movement that revolutionized thinking about architecture, art, and design, advocating the need for harmony between functionality and aesthetics, between technology and humanism.

Today's New European Bauhaus—launched in 2020 at the initiative of European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen—draws from that tradition but expands it to include contemporary dimensions: technological, ecological, digital, and social. NEB is at once a cultural movement, a financial program, and a collaboration platform. Its aim is to promote innovative, yet accessible and aesthetic solutions in space design, construction, mobility, and urban planning. The initiative is based on three pillars:

- sustainability—meaning responsibility for the environment, energy efficiency, and a circular economy,
- beauty—understood as harmony between space, people, and nature,
- inclusion—considering social diversity and citizen engagement in decision-making processes.

It is impossible to understand the idea of NEB without the broader context of the European Green Deal—a strategy for the economic and social transformation of the European Union, aimed at achieving climate neutrality by 2050. NEB represents its cultural and humanistic dimension, restoring social significance to design and referencing shared European values. Importantly, the New European Bauhaus translates into concrete actions in EU countries—funded through programs such as Horizon Europe, LIFE, and Cohesion Funds. These include pilot projects, urban labs, architectural competitions, educational initiatives, and programs involving local communities in creating a new quality of public space. Examples include green schools, energy-efficient buildings made from local materials, community gardens in cities, and innovative design tools developed with citizen participation.

At the same time, NEB emphasizes the role of education and culture, reminding us that the space we live in shapes our identity and affects our quality of life. Designing in the spirit of NEB is not the domain of experts alone—it is a process of shared learning and co-creation, involving artists, architects, scientists, students, activists, and local governments. In conclusion, it is worth asking: can the New European Bauhaus become a new foundation for European prosperity? Can it enable us to design not only better buildings and cities but also better social relations, a more responsible economy, and a deeper community of values? We believe it can—because only by thinking and acting together can we create a space that responds to the challenges of our times.

Professor, DSc, PhD, Eng. Rafał Łukasik
Director of Research and Innovation Department Łukasiewicz Centre

Łukasiewicz
Centrum

I would like to thank you for the invitation to participate in the conference ARCHITECTURE OF CHALLENGES – NEW EUROPEAN BAUHAUS: BUILDING COMMUNITY, and begin by congratulating you on choosing such a timely and meaningful main theme.

Living at the crossroads of epochs and architectural challenges—between the pressures of consumerism and the need to respond to new demands placed on architects in shaping modern cities and living environments—we are increasingly compelled to ask ourselves fundamental questions about existence and co-creating a good and contemporary built environment.

The acceptance of the multicultural fabric of our society and the commitment to building community bring a creative dimension to architecture and urban planning. These efforts aim to create welcoming urban spaces, shaped with full awareness as places of dialogue—spaces for all, without exclusion. The city is a shared environment, and as such, it must be designed with every user in mind.

Thus, designing cities and accessible public spaces that respect multiculturalism and inclusivity naturally encourages interactions between residents and fosters the development of social bonds. It is in such environments that communities based on diverse cultural patterns emerge and thrive.

With this awareness and responsibility for multiculturalism, the spaces of our cities require great effort and care in the process of co-creation. An indispensable part of this process is public discussion and participation. Joint decision-making regarding the function and form of space, the management of green areas, or the design of meeting places strengthens ties between different social groups and becomes essential in shaping spaces that serve everyone. Moreover, it reduces the number of mistakes made in design and planning.

All these elements are aligned with the New European Bauhaus initiative adopted by the European Union, which promotes the idea of building community through the creation of aesthetically high-quality and sustainable spaces. This initiative supports values essential to community-building, such as equality, ecology, well-being, solidarity, cooperation, diversity, social justice, and a shared responsibility for the future of humanity. These key ideas will also form the foundation of the Polish Architecture Policy, which I hope will soon be adopted and implemented for the common good of our cities.

Arch. Marek Chrobak
President of the Association of Polish Architects (SARP)

STOWARZYSZENIE ARCHITEKTÓW POLSKICH

The fundamental values that the Association of Polish Architects (SARP) strives to implement through the activities of its members are the categories of truth and beauty belonging to the Platonic triad, but above all, the idea of a community comprising people professionally involved in the creation of space. Contributing to the creation of the modern face of the country, maintaining a high level of material culture and building a civil society, while at the same time preserving respect for our more than 1,000-year history, is the primary objective of the Association's activities.

Therefore, it is with great pleasure, for the third time, that the Warsaw Branch of SARP undertakes the patronage of the International Conference 'Architecture of Challenges New European Bauhaus – Building Community 2025' directly referring to the most important sphere of our activity - building a community of people working in the field of architecture and urban planning.

The focus of this year's conference will be on issues related to one of the ideas of the New European Bauhaus (NEB) - community building. NEB, as a cultural project, an extension of the ideas of the New Leipzig Charter, is deeply rooted in the concept of creating a high-quality building culture. The architects' design activity of creating a relationship between buildings and their surroundings, natural or man-made, regarding scale and materials, is an important factor that has a direct impact on the quality of life of the inhabitants. This, in turn, actively builds social cohesion and contributes to the health and well-being of the public. It is assumed that the basis of the key competences needed for the development of civilisation in the 21st century is art, including architecture. And it is architecture that can become an essential tool for solving social problems and using new spatial and material solutions to create a better living environment. NEB reflects the dream of beautiful, sustainable and socially inclusive places. Thus, it reminds us of the primary purpose of architecture, to be needed by all. Cited as one of the NEB's core values, 'building community' based on social inclusivity serves to ensure that all members of all social groups have access to the resources of civilisation. Proposals for transformational issues are based on seeing the city as the sum of collective and individual needs. They therefore recognise the key role of the designer in the processes of resolving potential conflicts of interest and creating a socially resilient community. These ideas are in line with the values that promote the activities of the Association of Polish Architects.

The Warsaw Branch of the Association of Polish Architects (OW SARP)

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ODDZIAŁ WARSZAWSKI
STOWARZYSZENIA ARCHITEKTÓW POLSKICH

In a rapidly changing world, architecture plays a pivotal role in shaping not only our cities but also the social fabric that binds communities together. The “Architecture of Challenges: New European Bauhaus – Building Community 2025” conference highlights this crucial role, exploring how design and urban development can foster stronger, more connected, and inclusive communities. This mission aligns closely with the vision and values of Flora Development.

As a real estate developer, we at Flora Development are proud to be a partner of this important initiative. We firmly believe that our responsibility extends beyond delivering high-quality buildings; it includes contributing to the creation of vibrant, resilient neighborhoods where people feel a sense of belonging and pride. Supporting this conference is a reflection of our ongoing commitment to initiatives that not only enhance the built environment but also enrich the social and cultural life of our cities.

For us, this collaboration offers a unique opportunity to engage with leading architects, planners, and thinkers who are redefining the role of architecture in today’s society. The exchange of ideas and best practices invigorates our own projects and helps us better understand the evolving needs and expectations of the communities we serve. We deeply value this dialogue, as it strengthens our ability to develop projects that are not only commercially successful but also socially meaningful.

The focus on community-building and social cohesion is especially close to our hearts. In our daily work, we see firsthand how thoughtful urban design can transform neighborhoods—encouraging interaction, fostering a sense of security, and creating spaces where diverse groups can come together. We are committed to integrating these principles into our developments, ensuring that every project we undertake contributes positively to the broader social landscape.

Moreover, initiatives like this conference play a vital role in shaping the real estate market itself. By bringing together academia, practitioners, and private sector partners, such events help set new benchmarks for quality and innovation. We are excited to be part of this dynamic process, which not only advances the architectural field but also stimulates market growth and inspires new directions for development.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to the organizers, contributors, and fellow participants. Flora Development is honored to support this initiative, and we look forward to seeing the insights and collaborations generated here translate into tangible, lasting benefits for communities and the real estate sector alike

MSc. in Business Dominik Różański
President of Flora Development

FLORA

The National Union of Architects of Ukraine welcomes the organizers and participants of the International Scientific Conference “New European Bauhaus - Building Communities” and expresses its respect to them.

The modern world offers us unprecedented challenges that require the search for new models of cooperation between people in creating their living environment. Architects, by the very essence of their profession, play a leading role in this search. That is why it is so important for architects from different countries to exchange experience and spread successful practices of building communities in the context of forming a human habitat. The historical experience of Ukraine can be very useful for architects and urban planners from other countries.

The search for ways of stable and successful development of territorial communities in Ukraine inevitably leads to a review and rethinking of spatial organization. The meaning of heritage in the most general sense is also being reviewed.

One example of this process can be the cooperation of the Bibrka village community with the National Union of Architects of Ukraine, as a user of the architectural monument of national significance of the 15th century castle, located in the village of Svirzh. Joint efforts are aimed at finding new forms of using the historical monument and the surrounding area, which will ensure a large flow of visitors to this tourist and recreational magnet and to the territory of the community as a whole.

The issue of building communities around the process of creating a living environment is leading in the international project UREHERIT, in which the Union of Architects of Ukraine is one of the main participants. During the implementation of the project, an opportunity arose to intensify scientific and practical work in 12 thematic areas related to spatial solutions of both individual monuments-buildings and urban planning solutions of large urban formations, such as Dnipro or Zaporizhzhia.x

We are confident that the cooperation of architects from different countries will help Ukraine overcome, or at least minimize, the consequences of the aggressive war and lay the foundation for the future reconstruction of the country.

PhD Eng. Arch. Chyzhevskyi Oleksandr
President of the National Union of Architects of Ukraine

PhD Eng. Arch. Baranovskyi Oleksandr
Project Coordinator of National Union of Architects of Ukraine

'Architecture can't force people to connect; it can only plan the crossing points, remove barriers and make the meeting places useful and attractive'.

Denise Scott Brown

Since the time of Aristotle, it has been emphasised that humans are social beings. The formation of bonds and the building of relationships influence various aspects of the human experience. It undeniably involves human interactions with the environment, manifested by participation in various architectural activities. As Scott notes, the foundation of this collaboration in shaping architecture is human relationships, which are born in a particular 'space and place', constituting the essence of social life. Depending on the cultural context, place can help support or undermine these relationships.

Launched in 2020 by the European Union, the New European Bauhaus initiative promotes the idea of community building by creating aesthetically pleasing spaces with sustainable development processes that are inclusive of diverse user groups. They, therefore, support the values relevant to community building, such as equality, ecology, well-being, solidarity, cooperation, diversity, social justice, and responsibility for the functioning of humanity - its present and future generations.

1. COMMUNITY OF CULTURE - DIVERSITY OF CULTURES

In a community of culture and diversity of cultures, cultural patterning plays a vital role as an element that simultaneously unites and differentiates communities. A community of culture refers to a collective space in which people share specific cultural patterns - norms, values, and traditions. They are the foundation underpinning the social identity of the community. Diversity of cultures should be characterised by the harmonious coexistence of multiple cultural patterns within an entire society. Each group brings unique values, traditions and norms that may differ but, at the same time, enrich the others. The respectful coexistence of diverse communities fosters an exchange of role models, allowing for inspiration and learning from each other. In a diverse society, group cultural patterns can intermingle and evolve, leading to a new quality that enriches the community. In this way, multicultural spaces are created in which different patterns coexist and complement each other. Shaped by these, architecture and its surroundings can provide a place for understanding the representation and promotion of distinct cultural values.

2. CITY AND ITS PUBLIC SPACE

The city, and first its public space, is a place for building communities in past and present modern societies. It creates an environment for daily interaction, shared experiences, building bonds and strengthening a sense of belonging and security. A safe, publicly accessible urban space is fundamental to creating strong, healthy and sustainable urban communities, enabling the free exchange of ideas, values and traditions. A welcoming surroundings and accessibility guaranteed to all users encourage cultural and social events that integrate the local community. The shaping of the location of these events and, above all, the broadly defined high quality of public space influences many aspects, such as the sense of identity and belonging, the cultivation of the memory of history and tradition, and ultimately, the joint creation of new local cultural patterns. City planning that considers accessible public spaces and respects cultural distinctiveness while including people excluded from social life promotes natural encounters between inhabitants, establishing and deepening social

bonds. Building communities based on diverse cultural patterns that draw on different cultures' experiences is more accessible in such an environment.

3. ARCHITECTURE OF COMMUNITY

The essence of "Community Architecture" is its accessibility, which enables the existence and intensification of social contacts and building ties between residents, enhancing the quality of life. The design of public buildings focuses on creating inclusive and engaging places for the local community. Such buildings are formed with diverse needs, offering spaces suited to social and individual activity. Shared spaces aim to foster the integration of their users. They become meeting places for residents, encouraging them to act together, play, discuss, learn and build relationships, translating into a sense of community and identity. 'Community Architecture' responds to contemporary social and demographic challenges (an ageing population, rising cost of living in cities, diverse and changing user needs) in the design of buildings. Architectural buildings and urban spaces created this way allow residents to enjoy them fully, foster a sense of belonging and enable real inclusion in community life. On the other hand, using ecological and communal solutions and providing contact with nature and other users allows residents to co-create and feel responsible for the shared space.

4. SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT

Space is an asset that belongs to everyone but is limited and non-renewable. Its appropriate management requires supervision and public participation. The active involvement of members of the territorial community in the space creation through workshops, public consultations and design meetings is often underestimated. However, such activities adapt the space to actual needs and foster a sense of belonging and co-responsibility. Community-engaged architecture contributes to the formation of local identity and the building of mutual trust between community members. Joint decision-making on issues such as the function and form of space, the use of ecological solutions, the development of green areas or the design of meeting places, etc., not only develops bonds between different social groups. Above all, it allows the position of various, sometimes overlooked, social groups to be considered in shaping the space, thus limiting the number of mistakes made. Therefore, an important aspect is to listen to the voices of the next generations, e.g., by continuously involving children and young people in architectural education, shaping spatial and aesthetic sensitivity in the young generations, and promoting cultural values. Social inclusion should create equal development opportunities regardless of gender, age, wealth or background. It is crucial to provide access to culture and education and create equal opportunities for women in the construction sector to help break down common stereotypes.

Anna Maria Wierzbicka
Renata Jóźwik
Paweł Trębacz
Kinga Zinowiec-Cieplik
Magdalena Duda

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TOM AVERMAETE

Tom Avermaete
Associate Professor, Ph.D.

Chair for the History and Theory of Urban Design

Institute for the History and Theory of Architecture
Department of Architecture
ETH Zürich

HIL D 75.1
Stefano-Franscini-Platz 5
CH 8093 Zürich, Switzerland

tom.avermaete@gta.arch.ethz.ch

Tom Avermaete is Full Professor for the History and Theory of Urban Design and Vice-Dean of the Department of Architecture (D-ARCH) at ETH Zürich, Switzerland. His research focuses on the architecture of the city and the changing roles, approaches and tools of architects and urban designers from a cross-cultural perspective. Recent book publications include Casablanca – Chandigarh (with Casciato, 2015), The New Urban Condition (with Medrano and Recaman, 2021), Urban Design in the 20th Century: A History (with Gosseye, 2021), Agadir. Building the Modern Afropolis (with Zaugg, 2022) and The Global Turn: Six Journeys of Architecture and the City, 1945 – 1989 (with Sabatino, 2025).

Reciprocal Urban Design: The Prospect of Another History

The field of urban design has long been dominated by an epistemic ignorance concerning the resources from which buildings and neighborhoods are composed. Historians have often been complicit in this "resource amnesia," portraying architecture and urbanism as matters of visions, ideas, and abstract concepts, while suggesting that essential resources effortlessly and abundantly accompany these conceptual frameworks.

Recently, scholars have made an effort to narrate what can be called "reciprocal histories," explicitly considering buildings and urban landscapes as the entanglement of various resources: some inherited, such as water and land; others material, such as brick and glass; and yet others immaterial, such as knowledge and craft.

These new historical narratives illustrate that designing a building or neighborhood implies engaging with, and intervening in, the flows of these resources, which are often precious or scarce. Conversely, they also illuminate that sites of resource extraction are intimately linked with the production of the built environment.

Such reciprocal historiographies not only change the ways we look upon the conception, development, and maintenance of buildings and urban landscapes, but also how we understand the role and responsibilities of architects and urban designers vis-à-vis resource geographies.

This lecture makes a plea for what can be called 'reciprocal urban design', an approach to thinking, designing and realizing urban projects that takes as its point of departure the intricate relation with existing resource geographies.

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ROBERTO CAVALLO

Roberto Cavallo
Associate Professor, Ph.D.

Chair Architectural Design Crossovers group
President European Association for Architectural Education
Head of the Theory Territories, Transitions section

Faculty of Architecture and the Built Environment
Department of Architecture
Delft University of Technology
Julianalaan 134, 2628 BL
Delft, The Netherlands

r.cavallo@tudelft.nl

Roberto Cavallo is an associate professor in the Department of Architecture at the Faculty of Architecture & the Built Environment, Delft University of Technology. Since 1996, he has been teaching and conducting research at Delft, where he served as Vice Dean of Education from 2014 to 2019. He currently chairs the section of Theory, Territory, Transitions, leads the Architectural Design Crossovers group, and is a member of the Department of Architecture Research Steering Team. He also coordinates the research line on Architectural Pedagogy.

An architect by profession, he was educated at the schools of architecture in Naples and Delft, where he completed his PhD in 2008. After earning his MSc in 1991, he worked at the offices of Cees Dam & Partners and Studio di Architettura (Amsterdam), becoming a partner at the latter in 1996. He collaborated with Aldo Rossi's office on Dutch projects including the Bonnefantenmuseum in Maastricht and the Slachthuisterrein in The Hague. In 1999, he co-founded Studio-Al in Amsterdam.

In 2013, he was a visiting professor at the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences, the Centre for Urban and Regional Studies, and the Faculty of Architecture at Hong Kong University. In 2014, he taught at the College of Architecture & Urban Planning at Beijing Technical University, and in 2020–2021 at the Faculty of Architecture, Urban Planning and Construction Engineering, Politecnico of Milan. He is a member of the Architectural Research Network ARENA, and an advisor for the Dutch Architects Register and various Dutch and European funding programs. On behalf of the Faculty/Department of Architecture, he leads several research initiatives in the Netherlands and abroad. His expertise involves an interdisciplinary and multiscale approach to architecture.

Empowering Communities of Professionals and the Role of the New European Bauhaus

Architecture today faces a multitude of complex and overlapping challenges that are constantly evolving. As the Charter of Architectural Research of the European Association for Architectural Education (EAAE, 2022) states, architecture is not simply the act of designing buildings or planning cities – it is a discipline rooted in interpreting and shaping the built environment while engaging with ethical, cultural, environmental and socio-economic realities. Contemporary conditions of dynamic change are broadening the scope of architectural practice, forcing the discipline to reconsider its founding principles and position in a wider, interconnected network that includes design, art, science, engineering, planning, management and construction. Both academic institutions and professional bodies are increasingly emphasizing the importance of interdisciplinary engagement as architects are called upon to perform a variety of roles that go beyond traditional design work.

A significant aspect of the current professional landscape is the fragmentation of practice. Across Europe, approximately 70% of architectural practices are run by a single individual (ACE, 2024). Additionally, despite the overall scale and economic value of the construction industry, architects control only about 1% of the market share (ACE, 2024). These figures are stark and raise pressing questions about the visibility, value, and influence of the architectural profession in shaping our built environments. More importantly, they signal the need for collective action—a call to unify efforts, reinforce the communities of professionals, and empower the next generation of architects to meet the demands of an increasingly complex world.

Education plays a central role in responding to these challenges. It must evolve to reflect the changing realities of the profession and prepare students to think critically and act creatively within this intricate framework. This means creating environments that foster interdisciplinary dialogue, encourage mutual learning, and promote the exchange of ideas between students with diverse educational and cultural backgrounds. Design-driven approaches remain fundamental to architectural education, not only as tools for innovation but also as catalysts for collaboration. By embracing the notion that creativity thrives through interaction and shared insight, architecture can unlock new potentials through collective intelligence.

The New European Bauhaus (NEB, 2021) initiative aligns with this vision. NEB promotes community-building and collaborative practices aimed at societal transformation, while also bridging the gap between cultural heritage and forward-thinking innovation. It encourages ecological responsibility, social justice, and aesthetic quality as inseparable dimensions of architectural work. By incorporating NEB principles into education, architecture students can be trained not only as competent designers but as proactive agents of change—individuals who contribute to more sustainable, equitable, and livable communities. Initiatives like the NEB Academy (n.d.) are working to provide essential pathways for this transformation, fostering reflective, context-sensitive practices. Ultimately, this evolution in education and practice will strengthen the profession and ensure that future architects are equipped to navigate the challenges of our time with confidence, creativity, and responsibility.

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KEES CHRISTIAANSE

Kees Christiaanse
Professor Emeritus, Ph.D.
Institute of Design and Architecture

Department of Architecture
ETH Zürich
HIL D 75.1
Stefano-Franscini-Platz 5
CH 8093 Zürich, Switzerland

christiaanse@ethz.ch

Kees Christiaanse focuses in his work on urban assignments in complex situations and on guiding of urban processes. He is a specialist in urban renewal of former industrial, railway and harbor areas, public transport hubs like railway stations and airports, university and research campuses, as well as in mixeduse urban neighborhoods. His most important projects include the masterplans for Hafen City in Hamburg, Olympic Legacy in London, Europa Allee in Zürich and Jurong Lake District in Singapore. He supervises several international urban developments.

Throughout his career Kees has always combined teaching and research with his professional work within KCAP (Architects & Planners, Rotterdam/Zürich), which has generated fruitful cross fertilizations. From 1996 until 2003 he held the chair for architecture and urban design at the TU Berlin. From 2003 until 2018, he headed the Architecture and Urban Design Institute of ETH Zurich. From 2010 till 2018, he was program leader of ETH's Future Cities Laboratory (FCL) in Singapore. In 2020 he was appointed Distinguished Affiliated Professor of the Technical University Munich (TUM). Since 2205 he is a guest-professor at the CTU Prague.

In 2009, Kees was curator of the 4th International Architecture Biennale Rotterdam (IABR) with the title "Open City! Designing Coexistence". He is author of a multitude of books and essays about architecture and urban design. Kees has received numerous awards, like the Berlage Flag in 1992, the '2016 RIBA International Fellow' award, the 'ARC17 Oeuvre Award', as well as the 'ULI Leadership Award 2018'. Since 2023, he is the founder of the Swiss Network with Ukraine, which coordinates reconstruction and repair projects for the Ukraine.

Integrated Urban Development and the Notion of Transformation

The philosophy of the French landscape architect Gilles Clément (Clément 2012), the 2025 Grand Berlin Art Award laureate, forms an interesting reference for sustainable urban transformation. Clément acknowledges that the earth's atmosphere is a limited space in which a fixed amount of mass and biomass constantly recycles. In this "planetary garden", the gardener tends the environment by "contrôle and laissez-faire", carefully stimulating desired and suppressing undesired vegetation, rejecting the distinction between invasive and indigenous species.

In his manifest "The Third Landscape" (Clément 2020), he observes that the highest biodiversity is found in urban wastelands, natural reservations and primeval landscapes, and that these surfaces should be tended and connected into a "Third Landscape"-network as an alternative to the general man-made depletion of the environment.

Integrated Urban Development, a term coined by former CEO of HafenCity Development Corporation in Hamburg, Jürgen Bruns-Berentelg (Bruns-Berentelg 2014, Cristiaanse 2018), is easy to understand as a concept, but a true challenge to implement. To aim at a holistic approach to develop urban areas, in which the widest thinkable palette of social, cultural, economic, sustainable, programmatic, technical and political forces is included into an integrated, balanced project, requires a strong vision, a clear analytical mind, excellent management skills and political negotiation talent. This also indicates that it is all about teamwork and leadership. In this sense HafenCitys can indeed be seen as a successful integrated urban development (Baum, Christiaanse 2016).

A key mindset for engaging in Integrated Urban Development is the notion of transformation (Rieniets, Sigler, Christiaanse 2009),. A transformative approach to urban design means that a development site is not considered as a static object to be provided with a fixed design-proposal (Wolhage, Sauerbruch 1999, Christiaanse, Gasco, Hanakata 2019). In contrast, the site and its surroundings are considered part of an ecosystem of forces, which dynamic balance is subject to change (Ursprung 2005). The task of an integrated urban development team is, like Clément's gardener, to engage and intervene in this process of transformation in order for the site to evolve towards a desired direction. New development, thus, should connect to, sprout from and be embedded in the context and in turn become a fertilizer for future qualitative transformation.

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MICHAEL J. CROSBIE

Michael J. Crosbie
Distinguished Professor, Ph.D.
Distinguished Professor,
Association of Collegiate Schools of Architecture

Professor, Ph.D.
Department of Architecture
College of Engineering, Technology, and Architecture
University of Hartford
200 Bloomfield Avenue
West Hartford, CT 06117, USA

crosbie@hartford.edu

Michael J. Crosbie, Ph.D., FAIA, DPACSA is Professor of Architecture at the University of Hartford. He studied architecture and received his Doctor of Philosophy degree from The Catholic University of America. Dr. Crosbie is the sole author, editor, or contributor to more than 75 books on architecture. The author of hundreds of articles on architecture, design, practice, and education, Dr. Crosbie is a frequent contributor to international print and online publications, and lectures on architecture throughout the United States and abroad. The former editor of Faith & Form: The Interfaith Journal on Religion, Art, and Architecture, he is a recipient of the Edward S. Frey Memorial Award, “in Recognition of the Contributions Made to Religion, Art, and Architecture,” bestowed by the American Institute of Architects’ Interfaith Forum on Religion, Art, and Architecture. Dr. Crosbie served as Chair of the University of Hartford Department of Architecture from 2007 to 2015, and as Associate Dean of Hartford’s College of Engineering, Technology, and Architecture from 2012 to 2015. He was elected to the AIA College of Fellows in 2012 and received the Distinguished Professor Award from the Association of Collegiate Schools of Architecture in 2022. A registered architect, Dr. Crosbie served as the Walton Visiting Critic at The Catholic University of America School of Architecture and Planning in 2015. www.linkedin.com/in/michaeljcrosbie

Spatial Justice in the Realm of Sacred Space

Sacred space affirms "spatial justice" through unrestricted access. Spatial justice is demonstrated in physical accessibility and mobility; gender equality; expression of sexual preference; and expression of cultural histories subordinate to a majority culture. These realms are examined across the three Abrahamic faiths, addressing questions such as: Can sacred space promote a just world? What ways of thinking about and creating sacred space can promote justice? Might sacred space inspire compassion and ethical understanding of social justice? How can sacred space challenge spatial inequalities, discrimination, and marginalization?

All sacred buildings struggle with the question of accessibility, especially in the US, where laws regarding accessibility, as codified in the Americans with Disabilities Act (1991) do not cover religious buildings. The question of accessibility often rests with the congregation, its position on inclusivity, and the designers involved. However, architect Robert Habiger, who works with congregations on issues of accessibility, notes that true inclusivity for people with disabilities needs to provide an "equivalent experience."

Exclusion from sacred space based on gender has a history in all three Abrahamic faiths. Today, gender exclusion is most pronounced in Orthodox Jewish and Islamic sacred space. According to sacred space researcher and scholar Tammy Gaber, "A gendered space is the clear demarcation of limitation of each gender who are prescribed allocated spaces through the use of architectural devices such as walls, balconies, separate rooms, separate doors, etc. and often accompanied with explicit signage directing where each gender is allowed access."

Sexual orientation is sometimes used as a reason to exclude people from sacred space. A synagogue in New York City took a proactive approach to provide spatial justice for LGBTQIA+ members of its congregation. In fact, it became its identity. The programming "made the synagogue's goals for the new space clear: to establish a true sanctuary from the city to emphasize their inclusivity.

Most sacred space (and sacred art) is derived from precedents in Western European culture. Sacred architecture and art that springs from marginalized or minority cultures is rare. However, architecture and art that incorporates the language of marginalized cultures is becoming more common. One of the most prevalent examples is the work of William Stanley and Ivenue Love-Stanley, Black architects based in Atlanta, which draws upon the marginalized histories of their sacred space clients and their own backgrounds for design inspiration. In the realm of sacred art, inclusivity in the portrayal of iconic images can send a powerful message. Such is seen in the art of Father John Guiliani, who painted as an act of inclusivity in the service of spatial justice. "Beauty brings us into communion with all that we call God," he notes, "the transcendent, the sacred, the holy."

Sacred space is often spatially unjust: discrimination and restriction of access based on physical mobility; gender; sexual orientation; and the suppression or marginalization of cultural histories in the shadow of the dominant cultural context. The lecture shows how spatial justice has been realized through the thoughtful design and construction of "spatially just" sacred space.

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JUAN JOSÉ GALÁN VIVAS

Juan José Galán Vivas
Associate Professor, Ph.D.

Department of Urbanism,
Higher Technical School of Architecture
Polytechnic University of Valencia
Camino de Vera, s/n
46022 Valencia, Spain

juagavi@urb.upv.es

Associate Professor in the Department of Urban Planning of the Universitat Politècnica de València (Spain). Betwen 2015 and 2020 he held a similar position at the Department of Architecture in Aalto University (Finland). Member of the Executive Board of ECLAS (European Council of Landscape Architecture Schools). His research focuses on Landscape Planning, Spatial Planning, Sustainable Development and, in a broader sense, on the intersection between social and ecological systems. Founder and first director of the Finnish Landscape Observatory between 2017 and 2020. Doctoral thesis published in 2011 on landscape planning tools linked to the application of the Council of Europe Landscape Convention. Director of the Strategic Territorial Plan of the Sierra Calderona and Principal Investigator of the AELCLIC project (Adaptation of European Landscapes to Climate Change). Author of several articles and scientific publications on sustainable landscapes and cities.

Building Communities through Shared Visions

The construction of a collective project usually implies the existence of a common challenge, a shared expectation and a joint vision that brings people together and that creates the social cement that has allowed us, human beings, to fly over our individual needs and limitations. Languages, myths, science and beliefs can be perceived as clear and immaterial examples of collective constructs, whereas anthropized landscapes, cities and architecture can be seen as collective evidence of material culture (Rapoport, 1992).

Therefore, a key question that we can ask ourselves is how we can build collective projects in an increasingly individualistic era, and how we can align these projects with urgent and pressing societal agendas. The hypothesis behind this presentation is that the co-design of visions and solutions can be an effective community builder at different scales (from regions to neighbourhoods) and a unique way to mobilize knowledge and resources. Moreover, if these shared visions and solutions are produced in a transparent, multisectoral, and inclusive way, they will be embodied with a high level of legitimacy and social support, which will facilitate their implementation and will help to overcome systemic barriers (Galan et al., 2023).

The AELCLIC project provides a good example of this. This project was aimed at the generation of Local Networks for Climate Change Adaptation and was implemented in fifteen rural, urban and peri-urban landscapes across Europe. In contrast to top-down policies, the central goal of the project was to engage local communities in the identification of the impacts that climate change could have in their ways of living and daily landscapes and, secondly, in the co-design of Landscape Adaptation Plans (LACAPs) fully tailored to the characteristics of their place and community. The results of the project were quite promising and were synthetised in a set of recommendations and guidelines for the replication of this experience in other local contexts (AELCLIC, 2019).

At a different scale and context, cities offer excellent examples of community building through the definition and implementation of shared endeavours for the reclamation, regeneration or transformation of critical or derelict areas. Thus, the City of Valencia (Spain), European Green Capital during the year 2024, developed the backbone of its green infrastructure after the mobilization of the civil society, which managed to stop the development of a transport corridor in the old river Turia bed and managed to promote the construction of an extensive linear park instead (Galan Vivas, 2011). Similarly, the well-known High Line of New York was possible thanks to the initiative of the Friends of the High Line, that in 1999 initiated their activities for the preservation and reuse of the old rail infrastructure and its transformation into an elevated greenway (Ascher & Uffer, 2015).

Overall, community-based activities reveal the transformative potential of putting the people at the centre and of fostering individual and social growth through collective projects, both in social structures (like the academia, a company or a public administration) or in a physical structure like a landscape, a city or a neighbourhood.

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MAŁGORZATA MADER

Małgorzata Mader
Assistance Professor, Ph.D.

Institute of Architecture and Urban Planning,
Faculty of Civil Engeeniring, Architecture,
and Environmental Engeeniring
Lodz University of Technology,
6 Politechniki Street
93-590 Lodz, Poland

malgorzata.mader@p.lodz.pl

Małgorzata Mader is an assistant professor and architect based at Lodz University of Technology, where she completed her PhD with distinction in 2024. Her work focuses on cooperative and participatory housing models, as well as co-design processes. She is particularly interested in sustainable development technologies and a human-centred approach to architecture. Dr Mader has professional experience in Poland, the Netherlands, and Portugal, and has co-authored several cooperative housing projects in Amsterdam, Utrecht, and Zaandam. She is the founder of Okno na Koop, an initiative promoting collaborative housing models in Poland. Her work has been recognised with multiple awards, including the Holcim Awards for Sustainable Construction – Next Generation Europe. As both academic and practitioner, she contributes to the discourse on housing accessibility, grassroots urbanism, and the community-led adaptation of existing buildings.

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Don’t Hate the Player: Resident-Led Housing in the Age of Developers

Contemporary dynamics of the European housing market reveal a dual trend: while housing prices continue to rise significantly each year, housing quality simultaneously declines. In many sectors, market offerings are regulated through systematic assessments of future users’ needs, directly involving them in setting requirements and production standards. In contrast, ethical principles appear largely absent in housing production.

Following the 1974 Housing Norm and subsequent technical regulations, Poland underwent a gradual deregulation of housing quality standards, including minimum room sizes and acceptable spatial proportions. At the same time, neighbourhood ties weakened. Developers who now deliver over 95% of new multifamily housing stock (Główny Urząd Statystyczny, 2024) cannot be solely blamed, even though these buildings are ostensibly designed to support urban living and foster community. Nevertheless, the architecture of late capitalism stands in stark contrast to community-oriented models, offering buyers little to no influence over the design and development of their homes.

To address these systemic challenges within the current framework, it is essential to identify applicable tools and leverage existing resources of social entrepreneurship. While increased communal or social investment through municipal programs, housing cooperatives, or initiatives like Social Housing Initiatives (Społeczne Inicjatywy Mieszkaniowe) is desirable, it remains unrealistic under current structural and economic constraints. Market-driven housing production inherently prioritizes profitability over quality.

This paper explores models that actively engage future residents in the development process—not only by enabling participatory decision-making but also through financial co-investment. The most promising approaches capitalize on existing human, economic, and social resources, rather than requiring the creation of entirely new institutions or systems. In Poland, strong social preference for homeownership over renting persists (Narodowy Bank Polski, 2024). Combined with the dominant role of developers in the multifamily sector, this makes their involvement in regulatory and quality-oriented discourse indispensable. Therefore, it is crucial to examine hybrid housing models that distribute responsibility between external investors—developers, who bring implementation efficiency and future residents acting as a collective commissioning body. This co-commissioning model supports higher standards of liveability.

Precedents exist. In Amsterdam, the MO (Mede-Opdrachtgeverschap) process prompted developers to work closely with future residents, leading to innovative housing solutions and the revival of the Dutch Open Building movement (Habraken & Kendall, 2023; Mader & Pabich, 2023). These models offer strategies for reconciling individualization with mass housing, while promoting community and sustainability.

Environmental sustainability, especially energy efficiency across the building life cycle, must also be economically viable. When residents are co-investors, they can challenge the short-termism of developer-driven projects. At the same time, developers can apply creativity to align affordability with long-term value.

Hybrid models that combine the strengths of cooperatives and private developers are particularly promising. Mandating resident involvement in development processes could help address three major challenges in urban multifamily housing:

1. The price–quality trade-off
2. Rational resource use across the building’s life cycle
3. Early community-building through inclusive planning that addresses diverse needs

Barriers include developers’ limited experience with participatory models and the absence of legal incentives. Yet, the projected housing market slowdown in 2025 may encourage more creative approaches, as developers’ previous dominance erodes.

APOLONIA BEGOÑA SERRANO LANZAROTE

Apolonia Begoña Serrano Lanzarote
Full Professor, Ph.D.
Director of the Timber Chair

Department of Continuum Mechanics and Structural Theory
Higher Technical School of Architecture
Polytechnic University of Valencia
Camino de Vera, s/n
46022 Valencia, Spain

apserlan@mes.upv.es

in collaboration with:

Alberto Rubio Garrido
Associate Professor, Ph.D
alrugar@upv.es

Joan Romero Clausell
PhD Eng. Arch.
jromero@five.es

Isaac Villanova Civera
Associate Professor, Ph.D.
isvilci@mes.upv.es

PhD in Architecture from the Polytechnic University of Valencia, where she also serves as a professor at the School of Architecture and Director of the Maderamen Chair. She is currently the Director of the Valencian Institute of Building (IVE), an entity under the Regional Department responsible for Housing in the Generalitat Valenciana.
Her work focuses on the assessment and rehabilitation of buildings, aiming to improve their conservation status, energy efficiency, circularity, and resilience to disasters. She promotes the use of innovative, industrialized, and environmentally low-impact solutions. She has published extensively on these topics—including books, technical papers, ...—and has delivered numerous lectures and presentations. Her research has been developed through various projects and contracts, contributing significantly to knowledge transfer to both the productive sector and public administrations.

Learning by Building with Wood: Prototyping for Emergency Housing in Universitat Politècnica de València and Universidad Nacional de Guinea Ecuatorial

In the context of the ecological transition, it has become essential not only to rethink design and construction methodologies but also the use of building materials. In this sense, wood stands out as a key solution for sustainability in architecture due to its ability to reduce the carbon footprint of the construction process. To promote its use in residential settings, the MADERAMEN Chair at the Universitat Politècnica de València (UPV) organizes the annual Design&Build workshop, aimed at designing and constructing a wooden structure prototype to address housing emergencies in various locations. The workshop involves multiple entities, including UPV schools, regional government, and NGOs such as Architecture Without Borders, fostering a collaborative and interdisciplinary learning experience.

The second edition of the workshop was carried out in four phases. In the first phase, from July 16 to 24, 2022, a group of 16 people from UPV traveled to Equatorial Guinea, specifically to Malabo and Bata, to work alongside the Universidad Nacional de Guinea Ecuatorial (UNGE). The goal was to analyze local architecture, construction materials, and adaptations to the climate, as well as explore cultural, socio-economic, and urban factors.

Based on the information collected, UPV students began designing the housing prototype in 2023-2024, with wood as the main material. The design aimed to be easy to self-build, dismountable, and replicable. During this phase, students developed six initial proposals, from which one was selected. Details and construction systems were then adjusted to create a feasible prototype for both Valencia and Equatorial Guinea.

The third phase involved the construction of the full-scale prototype at UPV, with active participation from students who worked on its execution under the supervision of professors. The “learning by building” methodology was central to this phase. Additionally, with the presence of professors from UNGE, the design and organization of the next phase in Bata were anticipated. The design was adapted to local customs and needs through debates, and the method was reinforced by the collaboration with Architecture Without Borders. The modular construction was also tested by dismantling, transporting, and rebuilding it in Alicante, where it was installed as a social facility.

Finally, the fourth phase focused on adapting the prototype to the local conditions of Equatorial Guinea. In an interdisciplinary and inter-university project, the housing prototype was constructed in Bata, near the Faculty of Architecture and Engineering at UNGE during 2024. This prototype will remain at the university facilities as a teaching tool for future students.

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ŠPELA VEROVŠEK

Špela Verovšek
Assistance Professor , Ph.D.

Faculty of Architecture
University of Ljubjana
Zoisova cesta 12
1000 Ljubljana, Slovenija

spela.verovsek@fa.uni-lj.si

Špela Verovšek is an assistant professor and researcher in the field of urbanism at the Faculty of Architecture, University of Ljubljana. With a background in Geography (Faculty of Arts) and a PhD in Architecture (University of Ljubljana), her work focuses on sustainable urban development and urban liveability aspects, emphasizing data-informed planning, integration of spatial and spatially related data, mobility impacts, public participation, and interdisciplinary collaboration in spatial decision-making. She is part of the editorial boards of several academic journals, including Discover Sustainability (Springer Nature), BMC Public Health (BioMed Central), Annales Series Historia et Sociologia, and AR Architecture Research, where she also acts as a handling editor. Additionally, she contributes to international research assessment as a member of the external evaluators group for COST (European Cooperation in Science and Technology). She has coordinated several international research collaborations with partners from the United States, Russia, and Latvia. She is actively involved in national and European research projects addressing sustainable living environments, spatial data integration, and creative approaches to urban space, including the recent projects A-PLACE – Linking places through networked artistic practices (EACEA, Creative Europe), and EDITUA – Innovative interactive incubator of socio-spatial change fostering green urban regeneration, employing AI in gain of the public democracy (HE DUT).

Inclusive Placemaking as a Catalyst for Social Engagement and Fair Communities: Reflections from A-Place

In the context of contemporary urban transformation, socially engaged placemaking has emerged as a powerful approach to creating inclusive, resilient, and fair communities (Courage et al., 2021).
This paper examines placemaking through the lens of social engagement and spatial justice, focusing on participatory approaches that foster co-responsibility, identity formation, and solidarity among diverse social groups. Drawing on the experience of the A-Place project, we explore how collaborative processes – rooted in creativity, dialogue, and inclusivity - can enhance both the physical and social fabric of urban environments.

Placemaking is not only about the design or function of space but also about its symbolic, experiential, and relational dimensions. As Jacobs (1961) or Whyte (1980) among many others emphasized decades ago, human-centred design needs to consider how places foster connection, belonging, and cultural vitality.

The work implemented in the frames of A-Place activities exemplifies how this tradition can be reimagined today in the context of transnational collaboration, sustainability goals, and inclusive urban innovation. A-Place is a creative placemaking platform and project that spans six European cities, operating through an interdisciplinary network of artists, architects, planners, educators, and community members. Its mission is to strengthen the bonds between people and their environments through socially engaged, participatory practices. The initiative draws inspiration from contemporary frameworks such as the Project for Public Spaces (PPS) and the New European Bauhaus (NEB) initiative aligning itself with broader aims including the European Urban Initiative and the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

A central tenet of A-Place is that socially engaged placemaking must be both context-sensitive and experiential. The initiative's approach is organized around eight cross-cutting thematic lines that articulate key dimensions of quality placemaking (Madrazo & Verovšek, 2025). These include the strive towards the vitality of places, which emphasizes vividness, playfulness, and a sense of safety; engaged communities, which foster commitment, solidarity, and intergenerational dialogue; and a strong sense of place and belonging, grounding design in memory, heritage, and local pride. Sustainability awareness plays a crucial role by promoting environmental responsibility, while evoking sensory engagement draws attention to the multisensory and often non-visible dimensions of place. Fostering collective creativity is encouraged through artistic expression and imaginative practices, and diversity and inclusivity are pursued through design justice, tolerance, and coexistence. Finally, creating learning spaces transforms urban environments into sites of shared experience and collective reflection.

At its heart, A-Place suggests that place creates community. This idea echoes Wenger's (Wenger, 2011) concept of communities of practice, where place provides the spatial and symbolic reference for knowledge-sharing, collective meaning-making, and shared rituals. For example, a square or street reimagined through community dialogue and multisensory design can become a stage for cultural expression, intergenerational exchange, and civic negotiation. Moreover, socially engaged placemaking makes visible those voices that are too often marginalized in traditional planning processes – children and youth. By embedding participation in education and cultural activities, it equips younger generations with the tools to critically engage with their environments and see themselves as agents of change.

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1. Arno Maria
2. Bardyn Yurii
3. Bibilashvili Ana
4. Bonenberg Agata
5. Bradecki Tomasz, Siudyka Paulina, Gałas Amelia, Fijał Magdalena
6. Chudzińska Agnieszka, Orchowska Anita
7. Chyzhevskyi Oleksandr, Baranovskyi Oleksandr, Biryuk Svitlana
8. Dąbrowska-Żółtak Karolina, Wojtowicz Jerzy, Wrona Stefan
9. Duda Magdalena, Jóźwik Renata, Trębacz Paweł
10. Duda Magdalena, Polkowska Diana
11. Dudzic-Gyurkovich Karolina
12. Dymitryszyn Izabela, Jojczyk Agata, Schwerk Axel
13. Gawlak Agata, Świt-Jankowska Barbara
14. Gawryszewska Agata, Zinowiec-Cieplik Kinga
15. Górska Agnieszka
16. Górska Julia
17. Gyurkovich Mateusz
18. Hnes Ihor, Hnes Liudmyla
19. Ilmurzyńska Krystyna
20. Jachimowicz Anna, Mirecka Małgorzata, Solarek Krystyna
21. Jasiak Adriana
22. Jóźwik Renata
23. Kashchenko Oleksandr, Tovbych Valerii
24. Kaufman Maciej
25. Kiciński Szymon
26. Korbel Wojciech
27. Koszewska Joanna
28. Koszewski Krzysztof, Drewiczewski Stefan, Kopczewski Jacek, Dąbrowska-Żółtak Karolina, Malik-Trocha Hanna, Żak Marta, Szumiński Konrad
29. Koznarska Halyna, Bilous Olena
30. Kręt-Grześkowiak Aleksandra
31. Kryvoruchko Yuriy, Kopacz-Gruźlewska Joanna
32. Kuszyk Rafał, Kuszyk Marta, Kuszyk Łucja
33. Lasocki Maciej
34. Lis-Meldner Paulina
35. Liubytskyi Roman

36. Łukasik Rafał, Skupna Kinga, Woźniak Katarzyna
37. Malik-Trocha Hanna
38. Mazur Rafał, Trębacz Piotr
39. Mędrzecka-Stefańska Joanna, Jaworski Andrzej, Wiktorko-Rakoczy Aleksandra, Wieczorek Anna, Waśniewska Marianna
40. Mielczarek Zuzanna
41. Minchberg Małgorzata
42. Nawrocka Ada Alexandra, Jabłońska Malwina
43. Neumann Małgorzata
44. Niziurska Małgorzata, Kasprzyk Szymon
45. Nowak-Pieńkowska Małgorzata, Orchowska Anita
46. Onufriv Yaryna, Idak Yuliya
47. Onufriv Yaryna, Lukashchuk Halyna, Tupis Stepan
48. Opałka Piotr, Chudzińska Agnieszka, Cieślak Julia
49. Orchowska Anita, Klimowicz Joanna, Kobylarczyk Justyna, Cenda Dominika
50. Pacholak Adam
51. Pagonis Athanosios
52. Pavliuk Nataliia, Kryvoruchko Yuriy, Pavliuk Yustyna
53. Pavliv Andriy, Kvasnytsya Roksolyana
54. Pekarchuk Oksana
55. Peterson Liberty
56. Piechowiak Maja
57. Pieńkowski Jakub, Strzelecki Filip
58. Płóciennik Maria, Tulkowska-Słyk Karolina
59. Pogwizd Monika, Gawell Ewelina
60. Poklewski-Koziełł Damian, Szczerek Eliza
61. Racoń-Leja Kinga, Szpakowska-Loranc Ernestyna, Suchoń Filip, Barnaś Krzysztof, Klus Krzysztof
62. Ratajczyk Dominika
63. Roggeveen Daan
64. Rutkowski Jarosław
65. Rybchynskyi Adrian, Remeshylo-Rybchynska Oresta
66. Skalimowski Andrzej
67. Skaza Maciej
68. Solarek Krystyna
69. Sosnova Nadiya, Linda Svitlana, Tupis Stepan

70. Stachura Ewa, Jagiełło-Kowalczyk Magdalena
71. Stańczyk Roland
72. Stępnik Łukasz, Adamska Aleksandra, Kochanowska Klaudia, Gancarczyk Zofia
73. Strzała Marcin
74. Sworczuk Urszula
75. Szumiński Konrad
76. Szymborski Lech
77. Tabak Jowita, Zdunek-Wielgołaska Justyna, Vigliocco Elena
78. Tognon Alisia, Komisarczyk Dominika
79. Trammer Hubert
80. Trębacz Paweł, Możaryn Jakub, Iwanowski Marcin, Paśko Sławomir, Sawicki Bartosz
81. Trębacz Paweł, Trębacz Piotr
82. Uherek-Bradecka Barbara
83. Wantuch-Matla Dorota
84. Waśniewska Marianna, Skibińska Maja, Wieczorek Anna, Jaworski Andrzej, Stefańska-Mędrzecka Joanna
85. Wesołowska Judyta, Gomółka Mikołaj
86. Wiecha Agnieszka
87. Wierzbicka Anna Maria
88. Wilk Kamila, Opałka Piotr, Opałka Paweł
89. Wiśniewski Leszek
90. Wolska Matylda, Ciężar Julia, Bakalarska Alicja
91. Wośko-Czerankowska Agnieszka
92. Wrona Mariusz
93. Wróbel Monika
94. Zino Mohamad, Lasocki Maciej

Arno Maria
PhD Eng. Arch.
Warsaw University of Technology,
Faculty of Architecture, Warsaw, Poland

maria.arno@pw.edu.pl

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Public Space as a Catalyst for Community: Designing Belonging in Contemporary European Cities

Public space has long played a vital role in shaping the identity, cohesion, and resilience of urban communities. From ancient forums to modern-day plazas, the public realm has always been more than just a stage for daily life—it is a dynamic arena where relationships are formed, cultural exchange thrives, and collective memory is preserved. Today, in the face of rapid urban transformation, growing inequality, and social fragmentation, rethinking the role of public space as a place of connection—rather than mere circulation—is more crucial than ever.

This paper explores how the design and accessibility of public spaces can actively contribute to building stronger, more inclusive communities. Grounded in the principles of the New European Bauhaus—sustainability, aesthetics, and inclusivity—the research examines how public spaces can be designed or transformed to foster belonging, reflect local identities, and support meaningful intercultural dialogue.

Through case studies from European cities such as Barcelona, Copenhagen, Rotterdam, and Ghent, the paper analyzes how thoughtful urban planning and architectural interventions have contributed to—or in some cases, failed to support—the development of social bonds, cultural expression, and shared civic life. These case studies serve as practical models for integrating marginalized communities, honoring historical narratives, and enabling spontaneous interaction in the urban fabric.

In particular, the paper highlights the following case studies:

- Barcelona, Spain – Superblocks (Superilles):

This bold initiative reimagines the structure of urban neighborhoods by restricting car traffic within designated "superblocks." These zones are reclaimed for pedestrians, cyclists, and public life—filled with playgrounds, green areas, and community spaces. The project not only reduces pollution but also promotes everyday social interaction, enhances the sense of neighborhood identity, and supports environmental sustainability.

- Copenhagen, Denmark – Superkilen Park:

Located in the diverse neighborhood of Nørrebro, Superkilen is an iconic example of participatory and inclusive design. Developed in close collaboration with local residents, the park features everyday objects and cultural symbols from over 50 countries, reflecting the area's multicultural population. It functions as a vibrant civic space that celebrates diversity and creates common ground through design.

- Rotterdam, Netherlands – Luchtsingel Pedestrian Bridge:

The Luchtsingel is a unique, crowd-funded infrastructure project that reconnects fragmented areas of the city. More than a bridge, it is a symbol of civic initiative and shared ownership. By revitalizing neglected urban zones and linking them through public walkways, the project demonstrates how bottom-up urbanism can catalyze social connection and regenerate underused space.

- Ghent, Belgium – Circulatieplan (Traffic Circulation Plan):

In Ghent, a transformative mobility plan redirected car traffic away from the city center to prioritize pedestrians and cyclists. This shift opened up streets and squares for social use, fostering a greater sense of public ownership and encouraging community activity. The project exemplifies how rethinking transportation can directly impact the vitality and inclusiveness of public space.

These examples reveal how urban design choices—when made thoughtfully and collaboratively—can play a key role in building inclusive, vibrant, and future-ready cities. They also show how planning can address cultural diversity, environmental resilience, and social well-being simultaneously. Ultimately, the paper argues that "designing belonging" must be recognized as a central goal in urban development. Inclusive, high-quality public space is not only an aesthetic or functional matter—it is a vital social infrastructure for building more connected, resilient, and democratic communities in contemporary Europe.

Bardyn Yurii
PhD
Lviv Polytechnic National University,
Department of Urban Planning, Lviv, Ukraine

yurii.v.bardyn@lpnu.ua

Bibliography:

1. Bardyn, Y. V. (2024). Spatial-functional development of Drohobych agglomeration. Lviv Polytechnic.

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Community-Oriented Spatial Planning

The paper presents a comprehensive spatial analysis of the Drohobych District in the Lviv Region of Ukraine, with a focus on quantitative and qualitative characteristics that shape community-oriented regional development. The aim of the study is to identify urbanization patterns in the context of declining industrial significance and emerging opportunities within a post-industrial and culturally diverse environment. The article addresses a broader research question: how can spatial planning serve as a tool for optimizing intermunicipal cooperation, enhancing the efficient use of resources, and fostering a polycentric development structure that acknowledges local identities, historical and cultural heritage, and the potential for sustainable growth. Accordingly, the study proposes a novel approach to spatial analysis that integrates socio-economic, cultural, and environmental factors in order to formulate a holistic strategy for regional planning.

Methodology: The analysis is based on the use of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) with QGIS software. Data from OpenStreetMap and national statistical sources were processed to assess population density within a 1 km² grid. The district was classified into urbanized, potentially urbanized, and rural zones in accordance with Eurostat typologies.

Results: In Drohobych District, population density is concentrated around Drohobych, Boryslav, and Truskavets. Despite active labour markets, nearby rural areas like Medenychi and Skhidnytsia remain weakly integrated due to poor infrastructure and transport isolation. Dense areas transition into sparsely populated, mountainous zones that form belts of socio-economic isolation. However, these peripheries have notable recreational and cultural potential that, with proper planning, could support economic diversification. The district's spatial fragmentation, influenced by history and geography, calls for integrated planning to link central and peripheral resources. The findings suggest shifting from industrial clusters to culturally and ecologically driven development for greater inclusivity and sustainability.

Discussion: The district's spatial structure offers potential for building resilient, interconnected communities. The existing axis between Drohobych, Boryslav, and Truskavets could become an "urban density corridor" supporting development through inter-community cooperation. This strategy favours participation, place memory, and equal access over industrial centralization. Former German colonies like Königsau (now Rivne) and Ugartsberg could help revitalize rural areas by merging historical heritage with sustainable development. Their cultural landscapes and architecture support local tourism, crafts, and educational projects. Integrating such settlements into the district's strategy would reduce isolation and foster a network of communities sharing resources. This would promote a polycentric model where all communities contribute to balanced and sustainable spatial development.

Conclusions: The study highlights the need for spatially differentiated community-focused planning. Urban centres should drive innovation and service economies, while rural areas need investment in mobility and soft infrastructure. Integrating GIS diagnostics, agglomerative logic, and balanced development principles enables a strategic vision that connects urban strengths with rural potential. This reduces spatial inequality and supports local initiatives through small growth centres. The findings can guide updated regional strategies that blend spatial analysis with interdisciplinary insights, turning planning into a tool for social equity, cohesion, and sustainable progress.

Bibilashvili Ana
MSc. Eng. Arch.
NNLE Urban Development Institute,
Tbilisi, Georgia

anabibilashvili@gmail.com

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Practice-Based Education and Community Engagement for Urban Regeneration in Tbilisi: Insights from the Implemented Project “Refresh Your District”

Refresh Your District is a social-urban campaign initiated in Tbilisi by the Urban Development Institute, aimed at rethinking neglected urban areas through practice-based education, participatory planning, and cross-sector collaboration. It responds to the pressing need for contemporary architectural education to evolve in the face of accelerating urban, environmental, and social challenges. By connecting young professionals, communities, and decision-makers, the campaign offers a replicable model of sustainable urban regeneration rooted in engagement, imagination, and collective responsibility.

At its core, the campaign advances practice-based learning as an essential strategy to address the improvement of traditional architectural education. By immersing emerging professionals in real-life contexts, the initiative fosters critical thinking, ethical awareness, and the capacity to co-create with communities. Over six months, 40 young architects and urbanists worked in interdisciplinary teams to reimagine four abandoned urban sites in Tbilisi, each rich in untapped potential. This process was developed in close collaboration with university institutions and academic professionals, ensuring that educational goals were aligned with real-world impact. Through this academic partnership, the participants received guidance grounded in contemporary urban theory, research methodologies, and ethical practice, enriching their hands-on experience with critical thinking and reflective learning.

The project’s pedagogical value was amplified through weekly workshops, public lectures, and feedback sessions, creating an active learning ecosystem where academic theory intersected with on-the-ground realities. This experience offered young professionals an early introduction to the complexities of urban practice, including policy, stakeholder negotiation, and long-term impact.

A key achievement of Refresh Your District lies in its ability to bring together a wide range of stakeholders—local residents, municipal authorities, planners, and academia—into a single collaborative framework. More than 500 residents were directly engaged through surveys, interviews, walks, and open discussions. Their knowledge, concerns, and aspirations shaped every design proposal, emphasizing that effective urban transformation begins with listening and inclusion.

This horizontal model of participation not only generated richer, more responsive design outcomes but also nurtured a civic culture of shared responsibility. The conceptual proposals were presented at public exhibitions, facilitating dialogue between citizens and city authorities and raising awareness of the potential hidden within overlooked spaces. These moments of visibility validated the campaign’s collaborative approach and reinforced public trust in participatory urbanism.

Beyond its local achievements, the campaign addresses broader global challenges. As cities confront the realities of climate change, social fragmentation, and spatial inequality, the role of architecture and planning must expand. Refresh Your District illustrates how practice-based education can equip the next generation of designers and policymakers with the tools to respond adaptively, creatively, and ethically.

Moreover, the campaign highlights the importance of intergenerational collaboration in the built environment. By engaging youth and empowering them to work alongside professionals and community members, it cultivates a new civic mindset—one that views urban regeneration not as a top-down intervention but as a continuous, inclusive dialogue.

In doing so, Refresh Your District contributes to the discourse on architectural education reform, arguing for a more engaged, socially embedded approach. It shows that when communities are treated as co-authors, and when education is rooted in real-world complexity, architecture becomes a catalyst for both spatial and cultural transformation.

Bonenberg Agata
Professor, DSc, PhD, Eng. Arch.
Poznan University of Technology,
Faculty of Architecture, Poznan, Poland

agata.bonenberg@put.poznan.pl

Bibliography:

1. Komisja Europejska, New European Bauhaus, https://new-european-bauhaus.europa.eu

The New European Bauhaus as a Catalyst for Sustainable Senior Cohousing: A Case Study of Building Revitalisation in Imperia

This paper presents a case study of the revitalisation of a historic building in Imperia, Italy, developed within the framework of the New European Bauhaus (NEB) and the Be Wooden project, in partnership with the Università di Genova. The project's objective is to create an environmentally friendly cohousing space tailored to the needs of elderly residents. Grounded in the principles of interdisciplinary coprogettazione (co-design), the initiative brings together professionals from architecture, engineering, design, urban planning, and social innovation. This article explores the project's context, its participatory design processes, the use of innovative sustainable materials, and the application of eye-tracking technology to evaluate user interaction with space. It highlights the potential of NEB principles to address the challenges posed by an ageing European society while promoting sustainable urban transformation.

NEB Principles in Practice

The New European Bauhaus (NEB) is an initiative by the European Commission that seeks to integrate sustainability, aesthetics, and inclusiveness into the transformation of living environments across Europe. The Be Wooden project exemplifies this mission by repurposing a culturally significant building in the coastal town of Imperia into a senior cohousing development. Its objective is to establish a socially vibrant and ecologically responsible model of living that promotes active ageing and strengthens community bonds. Imperia, located on the Ligurian Riviera, provides ideal conditions for such an initiative, offering a mild climate, established urban infrastructure, and reliable access to healthcare and social services.

The project commenced with an in-depth contextual analysis, including on-site visits (sopralluogo), interviews with key stakeholders, and engagement with local residents. Understanding the socio-urban dynamics of the neighbourhood was fundamental in tailoring the design to meet the community's specific needs and aspirations. Rooted in the core principles of the NEB—participation, interdisciplinarity, and sustainability—the project embraces a comprehensive and human-centred approach. Future residents were actively involved in the co-design process through workshops, focus groups, and collaborative planning sessions. Their insights and feedback directly informed decisions on spatial layouts, programmatic elements, and communal amenities, ensuring that the final design genuinely reflects their way of life. The multidisciplinary team, composed of architects, material scientists, urbanists, sociologists, and designers, worked in an integrated manner to generate innovative and inclusive solutions sensitive to the project's context. This collaborative spirit was further supported by the use of coprogettazione integrata (integrated co-design), enabling real-time cooperation and iterative prototyping in innovation labs. This process bridged user experience with technical expertise, fostering both creativity and feasibility. A notable innovation within the project is the application of Mycelium-Based Composites (MBC), a biodegradable and environmentally friendly material. Used for wall cladding and custom lighting features, MBC supports the project's sustainability goals while enhancing indoor environmental quality.

Conclusion

By translating the principles of the New European Bauhaus into tangible outcomes, the Be Wooden project presents a compelling, replicable model for senior cohousing. It demonstrates how architecture, when approached through participatory, interdisciplinary, and sustainable strategies, can significantly enhance quality of life while advancing both ecological responsibility and social resilience.

Bradecki Tomasz
DSc, PhD, Eng. Arch., Associate Professor
Silesian University of Technology,
Faculty of Architecture, Gliwice, Poland

tomasz.bradecki@polsl.pl

Siudyka Paulina
Msc. Student
Silesian University of Technology,
Faculty of Architecture, Gliwice, Poland

ps303634@student.polsl.pl

Gałas Amelia
Msc. Student
Silesian University of Technology,
Faculty of Architecture, Gliwice, Poland

ag316428@student.polsl.pl

Fijał Magdalena
Eng. Arch., Msc. Student
Silesian University of Technology,
Faculty of Architecture, Gliwice, Poland

mf290951@student.polsl.pl

Bibliography:

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Models of Public Spaces as a Representation of the Images of the Cities – the Case Study of Metropolis GZM Models and Game's Cards

Public spaces have always been considered as the salons that represent the city and form its image according to Kevin Lynch's theory [Lynch 1960]. They are defined by the structure of the built environment and the selected objects that are located in these spaces. The authors attempted a systematic presentation of representative spaces of the cities forming the GZM metropolis, in order to compare and test the advantages and disadvantages of this approach. The selected spaces along with the objects became card images in the author's Game of Metropolis (Bradecki et.al. 2024), which is an experimental teaching and popularisation tool.

To create the educational game "GZM Metropolis Game", innovative tools have been used to identify 41 communes of the GZM. The research methodology consisted of:

- indicating places of social, symbolic, urban significance in accordance with Kevin Lynch's idea
- obtaining data from open sources of information (Geoportal, GUS, MSIP) and strategic documents
- making illustrative 3D models of characteristic places in the GZM commune
- enriching spatial models with augmented reality , for experimental purposes in education (Kerr Lawson 2020).

When it comes to examples of places in the GZM Metropolis that fit well with Kevin Lynch's theories, we can point out:

- Paths - A1 and A4 motorways, S1 expressway and Median Road Route (DTŚ).
- Edges - overhead power lines of 220 kV and 400 kV voltage and characteristic rivers: Rawa, Bytomka, Przemsza, Kłodnica.
- Districts - low greenery, high greenery and residential and industrial areas.
- Junctions - A1-A4 junction and A4-S1 junction.
- Dominants - Gliwice Radio Tower, Szombierki Cogeneration Plant in Bytom, Spodek in Katowice.

The game itself is similar to the popular game "Monopoli" except that instead of countries, you buy important points on the map of the GZM metropolis. Each card shows one of them, for example: the Silesian Planetarium in Chorzów. In addition, there are QR codes on the reverse of the cards, after scanning which we will gain access to 3D models presenting a given area. The game pieces are printed on 3D printers and represent the dominants we have chosen. In addition, after buying strategically located cards, we can move between them using the A1 and A4 motorways. The game is designed to spread knowledge about the GZM metropolis and architecture. At the end of the game, players count points using previously selected indicators placed on the cards, which determines the number of points scored. So the winner is not obvious until the very end of the game.

Using modern technology and based on reliable sources, an outline of the urban structure of the Metropolis GZM was created. In this case, it can be described as the "image of the metropolis", referring to Kevin Lynch's idea. Virtual spatial models allow the selected locations to be experienced and explored, and through their form they are easily accessible for all users of electronic devices to view. The cards, on the other hand, are a kind of business card for specific municipalities, where graphics and figures create a "image" of the municipalities.

Chudzińska Agnieszka
PhD Eng. Arch.
Warsaw University of Technology,
Faculty of Architecture, Warsaw, Poland

agnieszka.chudzinska@pw.edu.pl

Orchowska Anita
PhD Eng. Arch.
Warsaw University of Technology,
Faculty of Architecture, Warsaw, Poland

anita.orchowska@pw.edu.pl

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The Shop Window as a Social Medium: On the Role of Display in Building Local Communities

Shop windows are among the most effective tools available to retailers—not only do they attract attention and spark the interest of passers-by, but they also significantly influence foot traffic. Research has long focused on identifying display formats and elements that can prompt consumer purchases, including the effect of mannequins' head presence on buying decisions (Lindström, Berg, Nordfält, Roggeveen, Grewal, 2016, s. 517-524). It has been proven that a well-crafted, creative window display can successfully convert a passer-by into a customer. Its design process involves considerations of concept, purpose, and emotion (Lange, Rosengren, Blom, 2016, s. 1014-1021). Yet, the question remains: can the same mechanisms be employed to engage people not only as consumers but as participants in the life of the local community? Can the shop window initiate communal experiences by opening a space for social interaction? Can it alone trigger a process that transforms a fragment of the street into a place of gathering and integration?

From 19th-century arcades to contemporary interactive displays, shop windows have evolved alongside cities, becoming micro-scales of interaction in transitional zones and pocket plazas. On commercial streets, the contrast between independent craftspeople and global chain stores reveals the shop window's potential to express and shape local identity. A well-designed window does not end at the glass - it extends the interior and the values it represents. Light, materials, transparency, and shelf layout all contribute to the narrative of place. The display design can enhance local character, communicate values, and reinforce identity. In conjunction with the adjacent public space, the shop window becomes not just a visual feature but a social activator - encouraging passers-by to pause, enter, or engage.

However, a fleeting stop in front of a display is not enough to build community. Community is formed through encounters - real, physical meetings in public space. Danish urbanist Jan Gehl emphasized that "a good space is one where people are," (Gehl, 2009) identifying specific parameters that encourage presence in cities. Conscious spatial design is essential to enable gathering and promote both everyday and occasional meetings. According to Gehl, the most significant attractors are places offering seating opportunities, particularly those connected to hospitality functions - cafés or beer gardens that allow outdoor sitting and consumption. Yet, seating in front of shops need not be exclusive to food service; it can just as effectively accompany other types of retail.

Though typically seen as a marketing tool, the shop window can play a much broader role - as an instrument for designing social relations in the urban environment. When thoughtfully designed and integrated with its surroundings, it becomes a site for interaction, exchange, and co-presence. In an era marked by the increasing commodification and fragmentation of public space, the shop window - situated at the intersection of the private and public - has the potential to spark local community-building. It does more than

Chyzhevskyi Oleksandr
PhD Eng. Arch.
National Union of Architects of Ukraine

alexch1956@gmail.com

Baranovskyi Oleksandr
PhD Eng. Arch.
National Union of Architects of Ukraine

alex.baranowski@ukr.net

Biryuk Svitlana

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2. Concept of the initiators of the new facility - President of the NSAU O. Chyzhevsky; - Vice-President of the NSAU (2011-2018) Chairman of the LOO of the NSAU (2008-2017) O. Yarema; - Director of the Department of Architecture and Urban Development of the LOVA O. Vasylko.

3. Author’s proposals - Chairman of the LOO of the NSAU (2017-2020) B. Goy; - O. Pyvovarova; - O. Khlyupina.

Building Communities Based on a Heritage Site - Svirzh Castle in the Lviv Region

We are facing unprecedented challenges that require the search for new models of people's cooperation in creating their living environment. Architects play a leading role in this search. Therefore, it is necessary to exchange experience and spread successful practices of building communities. Such communities can be formed both on a territorial basis and on a professional basis.

The search for ways to develop territorial communities in Ukraine inevitably leads to a rethinking of the spatial organization of their territories. The meaning of heritage in a general sense is also being reviewed.

One example of this process can be the cooperation of the community of the village of Bibrka with the National Union of Architects of Ukraine, as a user of the architectural monument of the 15th century castle, located in the village of Svirzh. Joint efforts are aimed at finding new forms of using the historical monument, which will allow creating a recreational magnet for the community as a whole.

At the same time, the creation of the International Center of Architecture has begun in Svirz Castle, which will serve the development of the community of architects, both in Ukraine and internationally. The international center will be intended for holding scientific conferences, workshops, presentations, exhibitions. The work of such a center will allow accumulating funds for the further restoration of Svirz Castle.

The issue of building communities is leading in the international project UREHERIT, in which the Union of Architects of Ukraine is one of the main participants. During the implementation of the project, an opportunity arose to intensify scientific and practical work in 12 thematic areas related to spatial solutions of both individual monuments-buildings and urban planning solutions of large urban formations, such as Dnipro or Zaporizhzhia.

We are confident that cooperation between architects from different countries will help Ukraine overcome the consequences of the aggressive war and lay the foundations for the future reconstruction of the country.

Dąbrowska-Żółtak Karolina
PhD Eng. arch.
Warsaw University of Technology,
Faculty of Architecture, Warsaw, Poland

karolina.dabrowska@pw.edu.pl

Wojtowicz Jerzy
Professor, PhD, Eng. Arch.
Warsaw University of Technology,
Faculty of Architecture, Warsaw, Poland

jerzy@post.harvard.edu

Wrona Stefan
Professor, DSc, PhD, Eng. Arch.
Warsaw University of Technology,
Faculty of Architecture, Warsaw, Poland

stefan.wrona@pw.edu.pl

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Towards Smart Neighbourhood Design

The Bauhaus movement redefined the relationship between craft, art, and industrial production, transforming design thinking in the early 20th century. Today, a similar paradigm shift is underway, driven by digital technologies, mechatronics, robotics, and artificial intelligence. Public space is no longer a static backdrop but is increasingly conceived as a dynamic, responsive environment capable of adapting to changing user needs and environmental conditions. This transformation aligns with the principles of kinetic and responsive architecture (Kolarevic & Parlac, 2015).

Design strategies emerging from this shift allow urban spaces—such as squares, promenades, and recreational zones—to evolve throughout the day, across seasons, or in response to specific social events. The integration of mechatronic systems with data-driven decision-making processes enhances not only safety and comfort but also allows real-time spatial and functional optimization.

Contemporary design practice already reflects these potentials. Mechanically controlled roofs and shading systems, like those implemented in Medina Haram Piazza (2010) or Msheireb Downtown Doha (2015), increase the usability of outdoor spaces in challenging climates. Mobile urban furniture is also gaining visibility—both as fixed interventions (e.g., Lentspace, NYC, 2009) and as modular, user-configurable systems.

A notable example is the modular benches in Vienna's MuseumsQuartier. While they are not automated and lack sensors or actuators, their moveable and stackable design allows users to manually adapt the space to evolving needs. These systems demonstrate the architectural potential of reconfigurable structures that are open to social co-creation. According to Fox and Kemp (2009), such manually adaptable systems may serve as foundational typologies for future automation-enhanced environments. The growing integration of artificial intelligence into architecture further redefines the nature of design and control (Schumacher, 2017). As AI becomes more embedded in the built environment, the concept of the Smart Neighborhood has emerged—public space as an intelligent, user-responsive system.

This vision is being explored in experimental research projects at ROBOstudio, a design-research initiative focused on the convergence of architecture and mechatronics, or "architectronics" (Wojtowicz & et al., 2010). Within this framework, the ROBOTOWN concept (Dąbrowska-Żółtak, Wojtowicz & Wrona, 2020) describes a modular urban fabric composed of responsive micro-environments. Projects such as ROBOneighborhood (2019/2020) and ROBOstreet (2021/2022) employ the method of research by design to test kinetic and adaptive urban elements—retractable canopies, mobile partitions, and reconfigurable street furniture. These systems are designed to respond in real time to environmental or user-driven changes, with the aim of extending the functionality and inclusiveness of urban public space.

Despite these innovations, several challenges remain, including implementation costs, maintenance, and ensuring accessibility for people with disabilities. Rapid spatial change, while flexible, may disorient users with cognitive or visual impairments. Therefore, inclusive design must remain a core principle of future developments.

As predictive technologies, sensors, and AI systems continue to evolve, urban spaces will not only be more adaptable but also more collaborative. The transition from Bauhaus to Smart Neighborhood marks a broader shift—from integrating craft and industry to co-creating technologically augmented, human-centered environments. As Leach (2021) notes, the AI revolution has arrived, prompting a fundamental rethinking of architecture. Intelligent control systems will reshape not only how buildings are designed, but also how they perform, adapt, and evolve within the fabric of the city.

Duda Magdalena
MSc. Eng. Arch.
Warsaw University of Technology,
Faculty of Architecture, Warsaw, Poland

magdalena.duda@pw.edu.pl

Jóźwik Renata
PhD Eng. Arch.
Warsaw University of Technology,
Faculty of Architecture, Warsaw, Poland

renata.jozwik@pw.edu.pl

Trębacz Paweł
PhD Eng. Arch.
Warsaw University of Technology,
Faculty of Architecture, Warsaw, Poland

pawel.trebacz@pw.edu.pl

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Campuses as Socially Integrated Urban Districts

The city and its constituents need to be understood as interdependent systemic elements while embracing a human-centric and ethical approach [1]. This strategy toward urban development involves embracing a regenerative perspective, where former industrial sites and wasteland or underutilized urban areas are transformed into multifunctional innovation districts, industrial clusters, interdependent neighbourhoods, or hybrid districts. Each of these concepts reflects an approach that integrates the diverse functions of districts as part of a broader urban system. Unlike "Smart Cities," which focus primarily on technology and efficiency, the idea of "Empathic Cities" [1] is based on human-environment interaction, fostering spaces for collaboration and community. The growing need to develop new urban areas and redevelop existing ones raises questions about the optimal transformation strategies for evolving cities. In creating sustainable and innovative urban environments, social diversity and inclusivity are just as crucial as ecological and economic aspects [2]. Florida identifies the city as a space for creativity, equality, and cooperation, where "diversity supports development, and cooperation eliminates exclusion." [3]. In this context, academic campuses serve as valuable models for spatial and functional solutions, bringing together diverse social groups and creative individuals to form spaces of equality and collaboration. A sense of equality, trust, and openness helps unlock urban knowledge, resources, and assets while addressing complex challenges and building capacity for improved citywide solutions [4]. Campuses function as inclusive districts, providing equal access to educational, technological, and social resources, reducing barriers, and strengthening social bonds. Shared spaces such as libraries, cafés, parks, recreational centres, and creative workspaces foster an open, integrated community. Advocating for a human-centred approach to urban design, Jan Gehl emphasizes comfort, social integration, accessibility, and the quality of public spaces as essential values for empathy-driven cities [5].

The research analyzed the integration of campuses with developing cities based on case studies, considering four key design categories shaping urban planning and social community:

1. PROGRAM: Cooperation Between Urban Funtions, Residential, Service, and Industrial

Academic campuses and innovation districts promote the integration of various functions within a single area. The proximity of workplaces, housing, education, and services helps reduce CO_2 emissions, decreases car traffic, and fosters social life.

2. STRUCTURE: Integration of Public Spaces to Encourage Social Interaction

Squares, small plazas, parks, and other gathering places create environments that facilitate social contact, engage different age groups, and promote local integration, building an open and inclusive community.

3. TRANSPORT AND GREEN SPACES: Shared and Sustainable Resource Use

Shared spaces like parking areas, city bikes, coworking spaces, and fab labs boost resource efficiency and accelerate knowledge exchange and innovation while promoting eco-friendly urban solutions. Green infrastructure and low-emission transport enhance the quality of life and climate resilience.

4. ECONOMY AND COLLABORATIVE CULTURE: Human Capital Driving Innovation

Campuses, R&D centres, and startups form collaborative ecosystems where universities, entrepreneurs, and research institutions advance technology. Acceleration programs, startup incubators, and fab labs drive innovation, strengthening the local economy and workforce while fostering entrepreneurship.

A development model based on collaboration and integration strengthens users' connection to the neighbourhood, fostering a sense of belonging. Such projects promote social engagement, supporting harmonious and sustainable development. Innovative districts that combine industrial, residential, and service functions serve as models for cohesive settlement systems. The transition from efficiency to sufficiency-oriented practices and a shift towards inclusive modes of participatory governance are proposed as fundamental principles for an empathic future of the built environment [1].

Duda Magdalena
MSc. Eng. Arch.
Warsaw University of Technology,
Faculty of Architecture, Warsaw, Poland

magdalena.duda@pw.edu.pl

Polkowska Diana
MSc. Eng. Arch.
dppdesign, Przemyśl, Poland

diana.polkowska@gmail.com.pl

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Public Participation in the Local Spatial Development Planning Process – The Area Around the PKP Railway Station in Piaseczno

In contemporary spatial planning, the role of local communities in decision-making is increasingly emphasized. The idea of the Participatory City has gained international recognition, becoming a key direction in urban policy and a central theme in local government and civic initiatives [1]. In Poland, pursuant to the amendment of July 7, 2023, to the Act of March 27, 2003, on Spatial Planning and Development, the public participation mechanisms have been simplified and expanded. The goal was to make citizen involvement in shaping public spaces a foundation not only for effective urban planning but also of building local communities. The new planning procedure includes a broader range of consultative actions, such as open meetings, workshops, study walks, interviews, surveys, and consultation points. Although their use is optional, these tools aim to increase citizen influence on the spaces they inhabit, reflecting the concept of meaningful public participation [2].

A valuable example of participatory action was the charrette-type workshop organized in Piaseczno in 2021/2022, aimed at identifying residents' needs and raising awareness about the spatial development around the railway station. Various methods were used, including surveys, design workshops, expert meetings, model consultations, exploratory walks, and public summary meetings. The initiative reflected the values of the New European Bauhaus, promoting aesthetics, sustainability, and co-creation.

According to Denise Scott Brown's concept, architects create the framework, while residents bring spaces to life. Cities should foster social interaction by creating "contact points": open, inclusive spaces tailored to community needs. The workshops in Piaseczno served as such a point. People need cities with space for creativity, equity, and cooperation. As an old legal saying goes, "justice must not only be done but must also be seen to be done" [3]—co-creating the city should be a practical approach to contemporary urban issues.

The research focused on an urban design for approx. 70 hectares of Piaseczno served as the basis for developing the local spatial development plan. The project aimed to reconnect the two parts of the city separated by railway tracks, revitalize degraded areas, and create public spaces around the PKP train station, following sustainable development and social integration principles. In response to residents' suggestions, the concept included a cultural park on the railway embankment, reflecting local narrow-gauge railway heritage. The plan also envisioned improved pedestrian and cycling infrastructure, local services, and public spaces supporting social interaction. Sustainable mobility and infrastructure supporting rail transport also played a key role, including bicycle parking, a public bike system, and coworking spaces.

The Piaseczno workshops showed that open consultation and intergenerational integration can successfully engage residents in planning processes. Involving diverse groups fosters a sense of responsibility for the space and enhances its quality. Participation also enriches urban planners' work by providing insights into real user needs.

Though participatory methods vary, they share the common goal: "to deepen how ordinary people can meaningfully participate in and influence policies that directly affect their lives" [4]. However, participation presents challenges—it requires fair representation of diverse voices, professional moderation, and safeguards against the dominance of single interest groups. Relying on only one consultation method, especially under the revised planning act, may prove insufficient and risk excluding parts of the community. The Piaseczno case confirms that moderated dialogue is key for effectively exchanging ideas and co-creating functional, inclusive spaces. Expanding similar initiatives in other cities can help build knowledgeable urban communities.

The draft plan is still being processed, as enhanced participation paves the way for broad dialogue, which depends on socio-political conditions and legislative changes and often requires a longer decision-making process.

Dudzic-Gyurkovich Karolina
PhD Eng. Arch.
Cracow University of Technology,
Chair of Housing Environment,
Cracow, Poland

karolina.dudzic-gyurkovich@pk.edu.pl

Bibliography:

1. Participatory City Foundation, Place to Practise. Building participatory practise in Barking & Dagenham through the Every One Every Day initiative, London 2017 -2024 https://issuu.com/participatorycity/docs/places_to_practise_y5_report

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What Makes a Place Central? Urban Typologies and the Social Recognition of Local Centres

Contemporary urban planning increasingly questions what determines the presence and functioning of local urban centres, and how these spaces can respond to residents' needs. In theory, local centres are essential to urban life (Wallis, 1979). They provide access to services, social spaces, and everyday infrastructure within walkable distances—supporting local businesses, reducing car dependency, and fostering social capital. From a sustainability perspective, they allow for creating compact and energy-efficient urban neighbourhoods.

Yet form and function of local centres remain contested. While research links the distribution of local services to street and pedestrian network centrality (Chih-Lin et al., 2024; Porta et al., 2012), spatial metrics alone do not fully explain how centres are perceived or experienced. In Polish cities under socialism, local centres were planned through top-down frameworks that emphasized equal access and spatial equity. Urban normatives defined their size, location, and role within standardized urban forms. With the post-socialist transition, planning became fragmented and developer-driven, leading to a decline in standardization. Contemporary centres now emerge under new social expectations and market conditions, requiring a different analytical approach (Dymnicka, 2011).

This study explores how urban structure influences the spatial and social recognition of local centres, using three Kraków districts as case studies: the inner-city areas, 1970's housing estate and new low-rise development. The methodology combined spatial analysis with a resident survey.

Centrality measures and areas of service concentration were analysed across selected urban typologies to determine if the services tend to concentrate in the best-connected areas. Results showed weak correlation between spatial centrality and service locations. In the new development, services were clustered at the edges (e.g., a shopping mall), bypassing internal areas. The 1970s housing estate showed stronger alignment between paths centrality and service distribution, while the central urban area showed no clear relationship—despite high spatial centrality, service presence was uniformly distributed, diluting any correlation. This suggests that especially in highly urbanised areas, the centrality metrics alone do not predict service placement, and its social dimension must be taken into account.

Therefore, for additional insight into perceptions of local centres, results of the first stage of resident survey ($n = 118$; 104 lived in study areas) were considered. While 89% recognised a centre in the nearby area, 36 respondents denied the existence of one, and 5 were undecided. Satisfaction from the centre was the highest for the areas where service concentration was dense—e.g., pharmacies, grocery shops, post offices—alongside green spaces with recreational infrastructure, underscoring the role of everyday accessibility.

A weak but statistically significant negative correlation was found between urban typology and centre recognition ($\rho = -0.206$, $p = 0.030$). Residents in low-rise, single-family housing were less likely to identify a local centre than those in denser developments. The social meanings of centrality also varied: single-family areas valued public meeting spaces, dense districts prioritised commercial amenities, and developer-led housing showed balanced views emphasising both connectivity and sociability.

In conclusion, the study shows that urban structure affects both the presence and perception of local centres. Centrality is not only a spatial metric, but a social phenomenon shaped by service access, public space quality, and social interaction.

Dymitryszyn Izabela
PhD Eng.
Warsaw University of Life Sciences,
Department of Landscape Architecture,
Warsaw, Poland

izabela_dymitryszyn@sggw.edu.pl

Jojczyk Agata
MSc Eng.
Warsaw University of Life Sciences,
Department of Landscape Architecture,
Warsaw, Poland

agata_jojczyk@sggw.edu.pl

Schwerk Axel
Professor, PhD
Warsaw University of Life Sciences,
Centre for Climatic Research, Warsaw,
Poland

axel_schwerk@sggw.edu.pl

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Ecological Initiatives on Academic Campuses as a Community-Building Factor on the Example of a BioBlitz – Biodiversity Challenge for ICA Members

1. Introduction

Higher education institutions increasingly engage in activities to benefit the environment, going beyond their statutory goals, such as teaching and research. University campuses have a social and cultural role and thus are spaces where communities involved in various initiatives, including environmental activities, can be developed.

One example of pro-environmental activities that universities engage in is the organisation of a BioBlitz, which aims at nature inventories, broadly informal civic education (Heidi et al., 2017), and the integration of both the broader academic community and the local community of residents living around campuses around biodiversity concerns.

2. Ecology and Community: Social ecology on campuses

The greening of university spaces is done not only by promoting recycling and energy conservation, but also by changing mindsets. Spatial layouts of campuses tend to have natural potential as a refuge for urban biodiversity, which is particularly important in the face of climate change.

As micro-communities, university campuses can act as incubators of environmental attitudes (Gass et al., 2021). Events as a BioBlitz enable informal nature education and the exchange of experiences between generations, professionals, and amateurs interested in nature. The creation of new social relationships around the inventory work carried out has the effect of strengthening the identity of the campus. The campus becomes a place not only for work and study, but also for active participation in the local environment.

3. Example: the BioBlitz challenge at the ICA

The BioBlitz organised by the ICA (https://www.ica-europe.info/ica-biodiversity-challenge-2024) is an example how environmental activities are becoming an impetus for building strong, committed communities in a dozen European countries. ICA is the Association for European life science universities. In 2022, the ICA Rector and Deans Forum, adopting the protection of biodiversity as an important objective of the ICA's activities, initiated the BioBlitz event, which was held for the first time in 2023 on the campuses of ICA-affiliated universities, including Warsaw University of Life Sciences – SGGW, followed by a next BioBlitz in 2024. In Warsaw, students from various faculties, academics, administration staff, residents' representatives, and high school students have been involved. The prolonged event duration of a month and a half provided opportunities to involve more participants.

A summary of the two years of observations (Table 1) shows an increase in interest in the event. Most importantly, it is apparent that a community of around 2,000 people who care about biodiversity is forming and growing around the Bioblitz initiative.

Table 1. Results of the ICA BioBlitz initiative
[1] *Bioblitz*, [2] *Number of participating ICA member universities,* [3] *Number of participants,* [4] *Number of observations,* [5] *Number of species recorded*

[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]
all universities				
Year 2023	16	1680	47373	11054
Year 2024	17	1861	48030	11446
Warsaw University of Life Sciences				
Year 2023	1	51	859	476
Year 2024	1	23	751	387

4. Conclusions

Environmental initiatives such as the BioBlitz have a broader significance than just scientific or educational (Ruch et al., 2010; Gass et al., 2021). They are also a tool for building strong, integrated communities. In addition, the Bioblitz initiative provides scientific data on biodiversity, creating opportunities to use it in the transformation and design of multifunctional campus spaces and in creating biodiversity hotspots, which are necessary at the urban scale. Therefore, the series of Bioblitz-type events should be continued and expanded. In the long term, the data collected during can be used for green infrastructure planning, species protection, and further ecological activities.

Gawlak Agata
DSc, PhD, Eng. Arch., Associate Professor
Poznan University of Technology,
Faculty of Architecture, Poznan, Poland

agata.gawlak@put.poznan.pl

Świt-Jankowska Barbara
PhD Eng. Arch.
Poznan University of Technology,
Faculty of Architecture, Poznan, Poland

barbara.swit-jankowska@put.poznan.pl

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Community as a Climate Protection Strategy

Community and a commitment to coordinated action to address climate change challenges can have a significant impact in the local context. A community focused on the integration of design, art, sustainability and modern technology can take effective and systematic action to shape a new, ecological, aesthetic, functional and sustainable environment.

The participation of local community members is usually linked to their deep conviction in the rightness of the actions taken. This is important because pro-environmental actions often require the acceptance of certain constraints and sacrifices for the common good. Leaders (personalities, NGOs, politicians, local authorities, entrepreneurs, etc.) play an important role. Faith communities, centred on religious centres, have played a key role in social life for centuries. Irrespective of the type of religion, they give meaning and purpose to people's existence and attachment to society, strengthen unity and are an important element of social control. In the context of the climate and identity crises, the role of such established communities can be invaluable. They have not only moral (spiritual) authority, but also real resources - financial, organisational and logistical - that can be used effectively to promote sustainable environmental action. They can be a catalyst for local change - most such organisations operate at a local level, building on people-to-people and neighbourhood links, which means that their impact on specific environmental actions, such as initiating environmental programmes, supporting agriculture or protecting and creating new green spaces, can be relatively large. This can range from small changes - in terms of changing the individual habits of residents - to larger changes - such as pressure on neighbouring businesses or waste management in the community.

Churches and faith communities often own significant land, buildings and infrastructure, often in city centres - a good example from the authorities can influence a change in the behaviour of individual community members. Symbolic and mobilising influence should not be forgotten. One example is Pope Francis' encyclical Laudato Si', which emphasises the moral obligation to protect the environment as an expression of care for our common home - the earth. Such statements, at both high and low levels, can have a huge impact on shaping concrete attitudes and encouraging action to improve the climate - even if only by changing the attitude of the faithful towards environmental violations. In the United States, Christian organisations, particularly evangelical communities, have long played an activist role, with activities covering both social and environmental issues. One example is the work of the Center for Environmental Leadership, a Christian organisation with over 25 years of experience in 'creation care' activities. CEL's activities include addressing environmental issues and linking them to the Christian concept of 'shalom'. The Creation Care Study Programme is CEL's oldest and best known programme - it is an environmental study abroad programme that serves over 30 Christian colleges and universities in New Zealand - combining faith principles with environmental care.

In Poland and Europe, the involvement of church institutions in ecology can also be observed, although this potential is not yet fully exploited. To be more effective, it would be necessary to convince congregations of the necessity and congruence of pro-environmental goals with the principles of a particular faith, but if this could be achieved, it would undoubtedly be to the benefit of global action.

Gawryszewska Beata
DSc PhD Eng. in Landscape Architecture
Warsaw University of Life Sciences,
Department of Landscape Architecture,
Warsaw, Poland

beata_gawryszewska@sggw.edu.pl

Zinowiec-Cieplik Kinga
PhD Eng. in Landscape Architecture
Warsaw University of Technology,
Faculty of Architecture, Warsaw, Poland

kinga.cieplik@pw.edu.pl

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A Radiant City - the Marseille Housing Unit as an Incubator of Social Space after 70 Years

In times of health and socio-economic crises, followed by increasing mental health problems, doctors and sociologists raise the importance of community life (Kato Nabirye 2024; Kawachi & Berkman, 2001; Kirkbride et al., 2024). It is clear, however, that creating a living environment that ensures health and well-being will not build a social space itself. It is only possible to create conditions for the process of its creation and cultivation by the collective (Jałowiecki, 2018).

This study aimed to verify the validity of building a space conducive to forming a community in the object that has had perhaps the most significant impact on modern urbanism - the Marseilles Unit (MU).

The data collection methods used included an analysis of scientific and grey literature and participant observation with elements of behavioural mapping, carried out in Marseille 15-18.08.2024. The data collected on the site was compared with the social assumptions of Le Corbusier himself and data on the functioning of the MU space in the first years after its settlement in 1952. Signs of social participation, the functioning of services in shared spaces, and the presence of bottom-up arranged greenery as an indicator of residents' creative attitudes were analysed.

Although MU is a vibrant inhabited space (over 1,000 people live in the 'vertical village'), functions in the common spaces have not resisted gentrification. Art galleries and exclusive boutiques rent out the commercial premises, and the grocery ceased functioning after the COVID-19 pandemic. The hotel operates on a commercial basis. A crèche is no longer in operation (but the Ministry of Education website still offers a public kindergarten in the MU).

The issue of social activity is much better. A residents' association has been operating continuously since January 1953. Initially, members dealt with contacts with Le Corbusier, the Marseille town hall and the Ministry of Housing and Reconstruction, solving problems related to finalising the finishing work. At the same time, committees were set up to organise the day-to-day social life of the collective: a committee for the library, theatre, choir, cinema, sports and social activities. The association functions using common spaces on the mezzanine floors. It runs a library, a hiking club, a film club, organises events for children, Christmas events and garage sales (l'Association des Habitants de l'Unité d'Habitation Le Corbusier 2025). A community garden has been created, offering opportunities for growing herbs and vegetables, composting waste, and gardening education classes. Herb boxes are also located on the roof. Residents can use the compost to fertilise plants grown on private loggias.

The results of the participatory observation show that residents have communal picnics on the roof in the evenings. Finding space for another blanket or even a chair at the concrete tables and benches, and on the pavement by the pool, is difficult.

According to the principles of the revised Athens Charter (1933; 2003), of which Le Corbusier was one of the initiators and creators, the quality of inhabited spaces is based on the offer of the environment of the building itself and the opportunities offered by the body of the building to use this environment.

The research, therefore, allows us to conclude that the housing conditions he created continue to provide a suitable environment for animating and sustaining a community of residents.

Górska Agnieszka
MSc. Eng. Arch.
Wrocław University of Science and Technology, Faculty of Architecture, Wrocław, Poland

agnieszka.gorska@pwr.edu.pl

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Urban Sports and the Right to the City: Reclaiming Public Space through Movement

Urban sports, such as skateboarding, parkour, urban climbing or cycling represent a form of creative resistance and community-building in contemporary cities. While often perceived as disruptive, these activities highlight the public space's potential to foster inclusivity, expression, and social interaction. This paper investigates how urban sports transform public spaces into arenas of democratic engagement, aligned with Henri Lefebvre's concept of the "Right to the City."

In modern cities, public space is increasingly regulated, commercialized, or privatized. Spontaneous, non-commercial uses of urban environments are restricted, often excluding marginalized groups. Urban sports challenge this reality by creatively repurposing city infrastructure for physical and social expression. These activities transcend mere recreation; they are collective practices that reflect the needs of diverse urban communities.

Henri Lefebvre's "Right to the City" argues for citizens' collective power to shape their environment. This includes not just access to urban space but the right to participate in its transformation. Urban sports reflect this principle by encouraging bottom-up interactions with the built environment, subverting traditional hierarchies and allowing individuals to co-author urban life. David Harvey expands on this by framing the city as a political construct that must remain open to collective redefinition and experimentation.

Case studies from cities like Barcelona, Bern, and Wrocław illustrate how urban sports reclaim space for inclusive uses. The MACBA Square in Barcelona, initially designed as part of an art museum complex, was reimagined by skateboarders as a world-renowned skate spot. Despite early conflicts with authorities, the skaters' persistent use and informal community management eventually gained recognition, turning MACBA into a global symbol of urban sport culture and a catalyst for local identity.

In Bern, urban climbing emerged in response to limited facilities and strict regulations. The "Let It Bärn" movement used climbing as a form of protest and playful reappropriation of architecture, emphasizing non-damaging, respectful interaction with public space. This reframing of vertical surfaces as opportunities for movement redefines the city as a flexible and shared landscape.

Wrocław's cycling activism demonstrates how grassroots initiatives can reshape urban policy. After decades of advocacy, cyclists transformed Wrocław into one of Poland's most bike-friendly cities. Their efforts highlight the long-term impact of sustained civic engagement and physical presence in public space, proving that urban sports can serve as tools for infrastructural and cultural change.

Parkour, too, embodies the reclaiming of space for non-commodified experiences. Practitioners reinterpret the urban environment as a medium for self-expression, connection, and freedom. These interactions turn static architecture into dynamic, lived space—encouraging community and creativity outside of profit-driven frameworks.

In conclusion, urban sports are not just activities but social practices that promote inclusion, creativity, and community agency in public spaces. They reveal the city's potential as a shared resource shaped by its inhabitants, not merely its administrators or developers. Recognizing and integrating these practices into urban design can help foster more vibrant, democratic, and resilient communities.

Górska Julia
MSc. Eng. Arch.
University of Zielona Góra,
Institute of Architecture and Urban Planning,
Zielona Góra, Poland

j.gorska@aiu.uz.zgora.pl

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Reflections on the Reconstruction of Polish Cities after World War II in the Light of the Assumptions of the New European Bauhaus

The issue of the reconstruction of polish cities after World War II, remains topical. According to Lubocka-Hoffmann, (2004) only time perspective has highlighted the shortcomings of this phenomenon and allowed for a more rational outlook. Some of the smaller towns, e.g. Kostrzyn Oder or Kisielice, despite the passage of time, have still not received appropriate additions to the urban structure (Gałązka, 2023). In contemporary considerations of urban reconstruction, it is important to take into account both the modern approach to space design and the lessons learned from past realisations. The confrontation of these perspectives, despite the obvious differences and limitations of the past era, can contribute to practical improvements in the future. The research on this issue was conducted using the desk research method.

The New European Bauhaus as an EU-initiative, launched in 2020, focuses on three inseparable values to help create high quality living spaces. These are: aesthetics and quality of space, sustainability and inclusiveness as tools to support community building (European Commission, 2021). In consideration of this, the process of urban reconstruction can be analysed in the three categories mentioned.

Reconstructions have influenced aesthetics, the quality of space and the improvement of living conditions – including bio-urban ones in the reconstructed parts of cities. The reconstruction of historic buildings with the original number of tracts was often abandoned, basements and extensions were not restored, resulting in lower population densities in individual urban blocks (Kierschke and Kierschke, 2017). During socialist modernism, there was a move away from the quarter development and a dilution of the urban structure. Green, microclimate-friendly areas were introduced. However, this phase in urban reconstruction was negatively assessed in terms of aesthetics (Gałązka, 2023).

Green spaces performed an important role in destroyed cities. They were nodes, providing places of crystallisation for communities. They were located on tidied up areas of ruins and gave residents a sense of belonging. In in Sulechów ruined parts of Old Town functioned as a park until 1957 and an amphitheatre was set up in there. In Mrągowo and Mikołajki, the loss of buildings made it possible to admire the panorama of the surrounding lakes, to which the recipients of the landscape reacted positively (Lubocka-Hoffmann, 2004). It is worth emphasising the role of voluntary public participation in de-grouting campaigns and the documentation or design work (Racoń-Leja, 2018).

In the post-war reality, many buildings, due to economy, were demolished and the bricks was used to rebuild Warsaw. In terms of creating a new identity, this procedure was beneficial. However, it took away opportunities for aesthetic regeneration from smaller towns. The reuse of materials seems to fit in with the contemporary assumptions of sustainability, while the disposal of rubble was not always „ecological". It was collected in parks, forests or ground depressions – Szprotawa. The rubble from Gdansk was dumped in the Baltic Sea (Lubocka-Hoffmann, 2004).

The reconstruction of historic cities is a complex process that goes beyond restoring material heritage. A reconstruction that respects the past while considering the needs of the present and future can create strong, integrated, and sustainable communities. Considering aspects such as preserving cultural diversity, creating accessible and aesthetic spaces, and following sustainable development guidelines is crucial. Exploring the assumptions of the New European Bauhaus offers the opportunity to analyze the events of the past and their impact on the present.

Gyurkovich Mateusz
Professor, DSc, PhD, Eng. Arch.
Cracow University of Technology, Chair of Urbanism & City Structure Architecture, Faculty of Architecture, Cracow, Poland

mateusz.gyurkovich@pk.edu.pl

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The Evolution of Public Spaces in Barcelona - the Superblocks as an Element Building the Community

The public space is the theatre of everyday urban life. It exists alongside semi-public/semi-private and private space. Without them, it cannot exist. The modernist fascination with the machine and the functionalist approach to urban planning, also promoted by CIAM, which appeared in the first decades of the 20th century as a remedy for many problems, from logistical to social and health problems, led to its near disappearance. The invention and widespread use of the automobile almost eliminated pedestrians from urban public spaces, often turning them into dangerous and unwelcoming places.

Urbanisation, as shown by large housing estates built after World War II following the principles of the Athens Charter, has made this worse. Amorphous spaces surrounding more or less loosely scaled prefabricated houses. The public space of the modern city is no longer what it used to be. It lacks continuity, integrity and a clear spatial framework to facilitate orientation.

Against this background, the postmodern return to the compact city and traditional spatial divisions modelled on the shape of historic urban fabric was a long-awaited change. The ideas of New Urbanism have not only contributed to the creation of new neighbourhoods of a human scale, appropriate for the realisation of social needs and identity building. Among other factors, they have also helped to improve the perception of historic, traditional districts as desirable places to live. Where traditional public spaces ensure the proper and safe functioning of diverse, healthy and balanced urban communities. Revitalization projects and programs, which have been implemented in many European cities for more than half a century, contribute to making these spaces friendly again.

This is also the case in Barcelona, where various programs for the rehabilitation and revitalization of significant parts of the urban fabric are constantly being implemented. The orthogonal urban grid introduced by Ildefonso Cerdá's Ensanche project in 1859 best reflects the image of this multicultural metropolis. It is in this part of the city that an interesting renewal project has been carried out in recent decades. It is based on the idea of creating Superblocks. In practice, these are urban areas of 9 typical blocks, in which transit car traffic is directed along the outer contour of the unit and internal traffic is gradually pacified thanks to a hierarchical transport system or access control zones. Public transport stops are eliminated from the interior of the Superblock, so that they are usually located on either side of the perimeter of the unit. The number of street parking spaces for cars was reduced. The first two pilot Superblocks, implemented about a decade ago in the districts of El Poblenou and Sant Antoni, were well received and led to further changes.

The project contributed significantly to the social activation of public spaces, which are filled with greenery and street furniture and have a high-quality finish. The transformation has had both expected and unexpected and undesired effects. The former includes the constant, shared use of urban spaces, deeply rooted in Mediterranean culture, the organisation of fairs, games and other local celebrations. In the case of the latter, the fact that these spaces are used intensively by all urban users, including the undesirable ones - homeless people and drug addicts - who occupy fragments of them constantly or at certain times of the day or year.

Hnes Ihor
Professor, DSc, PhD, Eng. Arch.
National University "Lviv Polytechnic",
Department of Arch. Design and Engineering,
Lviv, Ukraine

ihor.hnes@gmail.com

Hnes Liudmyla
DSc, PhD, Eng. Arch., Associate Professor
National University "Lviv Polytechnic" Urban
Planning & Design Department, Lviv, Ukraine

liudmyla.b.hnes@lpnu.ua

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Formation of Modern Multi-Apartment Housing in Lviv Favorable to Social Contacts (on the Example of the Author's Implemented Projects)

According to sociological studies, the vast majority of residents of apartment buildings are positive about communicating with their neighbors, but not in their own apartments.

Such communication can be ensured on the basis of specific solutions for non-apartment common spaces in and outside the building. The gallery type of building has the greatest potential for communication. Galleries are leaders in the number of meetings and acquaintances between residents. In addition to utilitarian communication functions, galleries often also serve as outdoor recreation, which further encourages people to meet and establish neighborly contacts.

In Lviv in 2005, the first step in this direction was taken by the «JULIUS» design bureau, which proposed a project for a new type of gallery building on Bortnyanskoho Street. This building was the first to be constructed between the early twentieth and twenty-first centuries. It differed from the traditional gallery buildings of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in Lviv in a number of ways that were not present in the buildings of the historical period. Namely:

- the galleries are 80 cm away from the façade wall, which made it possible to improve the lighting of the rooms oriented towards the gallery, eliminate the view of the apartment's premises from the gallery, and make it more difficult for thieves to enter the apartment through the window;
- only the entrance vestibules and the kitchen-dining room are oriented towards the gallery, which ensures privacy for the apartments;
- the system of galleries and stairs is covered with a solid translucent roof, which allows them to be used for recreation even in the rain.

The next object where the introduction of gallery housing into the design practice was continued was a residential complex on Roksoliana Street. Here, the technique of combining gallery schemes with sectional schemes, which dominate new residential construction in Ukraine, was applied. The staircase and elevator hub of the sections also serves the galleries, which increased the comfort of the housing and made all floors accessible to people with disabilities in wheelchairs. Together with the two sections, the two gallery wings formed a cozy, south-facing courtyard for all residents.

At the ground floor level, the courtyard is adjacent to the children's playroom and physical education rooms. In addition, the galleries were moved away from the façade wall by 1.2 m, which made it possible to form a small semi-private avenue in front of the apartment entrance and provided insolation for the rooms facing the gallery. When building a house in the existing historical environment, when there is practically no land near the house, it is possible to create a space for children and adult communication under the undeveloped part of the house raised on supports. This technique was used in the houses on the corner of Yunakiv-Shevchenko Street and Stryiska Street. It is also desirable to arrange a rain-protected communication area directly at the entrance to the building. Such solutions are especially appreciated by older residents.

An effective way to create neighborhood communities is to build medium-rise buildings with a closed or semi-closed courtyard that would unite no more than 100 families. For example, we have designed the Villa Magnolia residential neighborhood on Pasichna Street in cooperation with the Belyaevs' design bureau. In addition to the courtyard, additional social magnets include a playground, a kindergarten for 20 children, and a physical education room. The complex has managed to harmoniously combine apartments for people with different incomes: townhouses, penthouses, apartments with private patios on the ground floor and economy class apartments on the 2nd-4th floors.

In the next projects, which were suspended by the Russian invasion, it is planned to combine all of the above methods of ensuring social and psychological comfort.

Ilmurzyńska Krystyna
PhD Eng. Arch.
Warsaw University of Technology,
Faculty of Architecture, Warsaw, Poland

krystyna.ilmurzynska@pw.edu.pl

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Incorporating the Polycentric City Model in Modernist Housing Estates: Conflicts and Policy. Reflections from Warsaw

Implementing the polycentric city model within the fabric of modernist large-scale housing estates inevitably raises the issue of the contradiction between traditional and modernist concepts of public space and local centres. Central to New Urbanism, the traditional urban form promotes walkable neighbourhoods, street networks, and mixed-use spaces, contrasting with modernist layouts criticized for spatial uniformity and social alienation (Andersen et al., 2013). Contemporary urbanists argue that modernist estates lack a sense of community and identity, while traditional public spaces foster interaction and urban vitality. Consequently, creating new local centres and introducing traditional urban form in infill developments has become common in Northern and Western European cities (Cysek-Pawlak, 2020).

However, social and political sciences offer a critical perspective on such doctrines. They downplay the influence of spatial design on social life—once a core assumption of modernist planning and its critiques. Instead, they view spatial transformations as driven by political and economic forces. Some scholars interpret conflicts between traditional and modernist urban forms as neoliberal interventions challenging welfare state legacies. They also emphasize the inadequacy of conventional public-private categories for interpreting modernist estates, where nearly all interstitial land serves everyday urban functions. Planners are accused of simplifying or ignoring how residents use and value these spaces by forcing them into outdated spatial categories (Grundström and Lelevrier, 2023).

How does Warsaw's spatial policy compare in this context? Warsaw's most recent planning draft document (Projekt Studium, 2023) confirms the typical character of post-socialist housing estates but does not explicitly call for their transformation. These estates are appreciated for greenery and access to public services yet are criticized for underdeveloped amenities and functional segregation, seen as causes of "low urban quality." A tension exists between criticism of uniformity and appreciation of architectural cohesion. While undefined public spaces are seen as problematic, urban planners recommend preserving estate layouts and building heights. Although functional shortcomings are acknowledged, the original modernist form is viewed positively. At the same time, post-1989 infill development is criticized for disrupting urban coherence due to its higher intensity. Regulations designate local centres in most estates without requiring traditional urban interiors. The public space system includes streets originally designed for vehicle traffic (without altering their spatial form), whereas estate grounds are excluded. The traditional urban form appears in the regulations for district centres, where post-1989 development already reflects it.

Infill development is allowed mainly in areas designated for "rehabilitation," though criteria are not defined. Modernization must preserve architectural forms in most estate areas, and new construction is limited to services and parking. This approach resembles "pro-social" rehabilitation practices in Scandinavia, though implementation is left to cooperatives or private investors.

The primary developmental threats to post-socialist housing estates, including those in Warsaw, are the concentration of an aging population and the separation of residential and employment locations. Yet these concerns are not directly addressed by estate-level planning regulations. Plans continue to support the estates' residential and neighbourhood-serving uses, focusing on green infrastructure, resident engagement, and preservation of modernist heritage.

While this approach aligns with resident preferences and heritage concerns, it may also reflect avoidance of necessary change. Retaining vehicular streets and local centres in their current form fails to address future demographic, economic, and environmental challenges—including the shift toward a circular economy and reduced car dependence. Meeting these demands requires a broader vision for estate transformation toward functional diversity and self-sufficiency, where traditional urban forms may serve as practical tools.

Jachimowicz Anna
PhD Eng.
Warsaw University of Technology,
Faculty of Architecture, Warsaw, Poland

anna.jachimowicz@pw.edu.pl

Mirecka Małgorzata
DSc PhD Eng. Arch.
Warsaw University of Technology,
Faculty of Architecture, Warsaw, Poland

malgorzata.mirecka@pw.edu.pl

Solarek Krystyna
Professor, DSc, PhD, Eng. Arch.
Warsaw University of Technology,
Faculty of Architecture, Warsaw, Poland

krystyna.solarek@pw.edu.pl

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Designing with Communities: Lessons from Student Charrette Workshops in Tykocin

One of the key challenges faced by architects and urban planners in fostering civic engagement in urban development is the education of future professionals capable of assuming leadership roles. These individuals must be equipped with the skills necessary to navigate participatory design processes and negotiate design compromises, for instance through the application of charrette workshop methodologies. Workshop-based courses help transform theoretical knowledge gained during studies into practical, real-world experience. However, to make this transition possible, students need opportunities and platforms to gain such hands-on experience.

In response, as part of the urban design studio course in the summer semester within the WAPW AiU2 specialization – a student-led charrette workshop was organized for the town of Tykocin, a small locality in the Podlaskie Voivodeship. For clarity and consistency, these were named Student Charrette Workshops (SCW). The workshops served a dual purpose: for external participants, they functioned as a participatory urban design process; for the students, they represented also an educational process.

Charrette workshops are an intensive participatory planning forms - a methodology developed in the 1980s by Duany Plater-Zyberk. They engage multidisciplinary experts (architects, urban planners, sociologists) with local stakeholders, including residents, authorities, and investors (Kelsey, 2007). The aim is to quickly and jointly develop solutions to specific spatial problems and create a vision for their development (Clayton, 1998). Widely adopted in the US and Europe by both municipalities and developers, the method has also been implemented in Poland – e.g. Siewierz Jezirna neighborhood, Revitalization Programme of Ruda-Śląska, redesign of riverfront spaces in Piaseczno.

The charrette process comprises three phases: pre-Charrette, Charrette, and post-Charrette (Lennertz, 2006). The pre-Charrette phase involves preparatory work, including the selection of the team, the definition of the main topic, and outlining the thematic scope. The Charrette phase (1–14 days) is open to the public and includes site visits, group work, thematic sessions, and three key public presentations: the opening (context and objectives), interim (design proposals), and final (comprehensive concept and implementation strategies). The post-Charrette phase focuses on producing actionable documentation summarizing the process and outcomes.

A distinctive feature of charrettes is their openness and intensity: design teams work on-site daily, engaging directly with participants and adapting proposals in real time (Mycielski, 2016).

The SCW followed this classical structure: three defined phases lasting approximately 1.5 months – 5 days – 1.5 months. A multidisciplinary team composed of students assumed the role of professionals, conducting design sessions and presenting outcomes during public meetings. However, adjustments had to be made during the Charrette phase. Hosting the workshops in the town hall proved counterproductive, as it discouraged participation from residents. This required not only adapting engagement methods but also finding alternative ways to involve the local community. Due to the specificity of a given town - personalized invitations, announcements during religious events, and conversations with school youth who showed greater openness to the workshop format – turned out to be crucial.

The SCW thus became a valuable educational experiment. Students gained first-hand experience in managing complex participatory processes before graduation. A key lesson they identified was that their workshop model, while rooted in knowledge and case studies from larger cities, required significant adaptation to the realities of a small town. Furthermore, they observed that without institutional support from local authorities, the burden of engagement and outreach fell disproportionately on the workshop organizers themselves.

Jasiak Adriana
MSc. Eng. Arch.
University of Zielona Góra,
Institute of Architecture and Urban Planning,
Zielona Góra, Poland

a.jasiak@aiu.uz.zgora.pl

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How Does Public Space Shape the Identity of Local Communities? The Influence of Wine Culture in Perception of Zielona Góra

Zielona Góra is famous for wine-growing traditions dating back to the 12th century. Although the Second World War nearly collapsed Polish winemaking, it became entrenched in the local culture. Winemaking events survived the socialist period, and after 1989 cultivation and wine production was resurgenced [1]. Zielona Góra is rich in this culture. It has preserved numerous buildings whose history is linked to production. As the city is located in a Recovered Territories, the historical buildings associated with Zielona Góra winemaking are post-German. Regional winemaking, is a tradition of the place being an effect of inheritance of land use, as Pawłowska wrote [2].

The New European Bauhaus sheds light on community, including culture, promoting the slogans beautiful-sustainable-together [3]. According to Leszkowicz-Baczyński [4], there is a need to develop a spatial planning attributed to the Zielona Góra's cultural revitalisation. Following the desk research review, a research gap was identified on how the inhabitants of Zielona Góra perceive the relationship between enoculture and public spaces. Are the inhabitants of Zielona Góra aware of the spatial artefacts of enoculture? Do references to it in public spaces influence the creation of the residents' identity? Referring to Skiba's research [5] on the attractiveness of different city parts, a study was conducted using the mental maps to identify and interpret the relationship between wine culture and the perception of public spaces by the inhabitants of Zielona Góra.

A pilot study was conducted on a group of 78 residents of Zielona Góra - 62 women, 16 men. The survey involved 74 people aged 18-35 and 4 people aged 36-65, with a higher or secondary education. The survey participation was voluntary and instructed: 'Draw a map / diagram of Zielona Góra presenting associations related to wine culture in public spaces'.

Majority of the respondents (80%) drew the Palmiarnia (former Grempler House) and the Wine Park (44%), often referring the term Palmiarnia to both the building and the Wine Park. Further respondents identified the Bacchus statue - 62% and trail - 44%, the promenade and the old market - 35%. Many link the space to the annual grape harvest festival - 41%. Respondents recognise the presence and identify particular wine cellars (37%). Cellars were not frequently linked with the Open Vineyards and Wine Cellars event. 26% of people included surrounding vineyards. The most frequently mentioned was the Julia vineyard combined with a miniature park of wine buildings. 28% of people included the Lubuska Land Museum. Individually, the Braniborska Tower, the Chapel on the vineyard, Zamkowa Street, Sowińskiego Park, or elements such as murals referring to wine traditions were noted.

The results indicate that respondents rarely connect wine culture with architectural details and historical sites, attributing it holistically to particular urban spaces, through, for example, events. Mental maps are an emotionally charged source of knowledge about space. They reflect the respondents' way of thinking, allowing them to interpret the relationships of individual spatial elements. Respondents use lines, street names or event locations for this purpose. The surveys showed the sensitivity of the Zielona Góra residents to spaces, buildings and features associated with the enoculture, which are often landmarks in the city. The majority of respondents link the wine tradition to the public spaces of Zielona Góra, which may indicate their importance in building the identity of the city and its inhabitants.

Jóźwik Renata
PhD Eng. Arch.
Warsaw University of Technology,
Faculty of Architecture, Warsaw, Poland

renata.jozwik@pw.edu.pl

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The Communal Nature of Urban Space Created by Identity and Time – Design and Implementation Context of the Bicocca District Redevelopment in Milan

One of the first large-scale regeneration projects of a post-industrial area—the redevelopment of Milan's Bicocca district—demonstrates the nature of transformations within established identities and the process of creating new, vibrant urban areas (Jóźwik, 2025). The architect Vittorio Gregotti (1927–2020), who won the urban and architectural design competition in 1985, consciously envisioned a slow, enduring emergence of architecture, which he related to the historical theory of Fernand Braudel (Irace, 2010). Braudel's concept of la longue durée (the long duration) emphasises the shaping of deep structures that are resistant to change and can only be assessed from a historical perspective—in this case, forming the essential fabric of urban life (Braudel).

The proposed layout, replicating the historical grid of building blocks, aligns with the classical Cartesian perception of space, characterised by order, clarity, and transparency in urban structure (Akkerman, 2001). The network of public spaces retains a hierarchy of connections at the citywide, district, and local levels (internal links). Newly created places—mainly squares, plazas, and courtyards—often emerged in locations of former key nodes, such as factory entrances or industrial squares. In this way, these spaces preserve the memory of place and serve as arenas for social interaction.

From a proxemic perspective, we can identify different places and human relationships based on spatial scale. These may include zones defined by interpersonal distances that determine contact: intimate, personal, social, or public (Hall, 1966). Such factors influence the way urban spaces are shaped, where social and public spaces especially fulfil a communal role.

However, as the Bicocca redevelopment shows, spatial parameters and form alone do not guarantee a sense of community. An equally important unifying factor is collective identification or place identity. In cases of disrupted identity continuity, such as the complete restructuring of a large area, it is crucial to incorporate elements of the past into the new configuration while simultaneously establishing a new identity capable of building a genius loci from the perspective of the "long duration."

The establishment of the campus in 1998 was one such action that enhanced the area's social vitality. The newly founded Università degli Studi di Milano-Bicocca became a centre for education, research, and innovation. Many former industrial buildings were preserved and adapted for university use, following the principle of the local palimpsest. Building new opportunities upon existing structures fosters stronger spatial identification and a deeper sense of belonging.

Thus, Bicocca became a model of the urban university—an institution that not only educates but also participates in processes of regeneration and redefinition of urban identity. Public and commercial spaces have been modernised in recent years to meet climate-related standards and social needs. In 2023, transformation efforts began at Piazza della Scienza as part of a living urban lab. These initiatives were driven by research into biodiversity, technology, and public participation. As a result, approximately 40% of the paved surface was depaved, and new plant and tree species were introduced. The new layout of the square responds to evolving social needs, while post-transformational actions have also targeted commercial buildings.

This shift in approach aligns with critical urban theory, which is increasingly sensitive and reflective toward social expectations and trends, moving toward a just, inclusive, and sustainable future.

Kashchenko Oleksandr
Professor, DSc, PhD, Eng. Arch.
Kyiv National University of Construction and Architecture, Kyiv, Ukraine

kashchenko.ov@knuba.edu.ua

Tovbych Valerii
Professor, DsC, PhD. Arch.
Kyiv National University of Construction and Architecture, Kyiv, Ukraine

tovbych@gmail.com

Bibliography:

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Educational architectural space in emergency conditions: adaptability and safety

The full-scale aggression of Russia on the territory of Ukraine led to the destruction of educational institutions, disrupted the stability of the educational system, influenced the change in the contingent of students, teachers, and prompted the need to create a safe educational environment. For the functioning of kindergartens, schools, colleges, and universities, it became necessary to adapt existing premises for shelter or create new protected places. During the period of hostilities, experience was accumulated in equipping educational institutions with a safe space. A new regulatory framework is being formed, typical shelter schemes are being developed, and unique solutions are being offered for the implementation of the educational process in emergency conditions.

All this stabilizes architectural education during the period of aggression as an important area for the future reconstruction of the country.

The experience formed at the faculty in the previous period contributes to solving new problems. The Faculty of Architecture of the KNUCA with graduate and general education departments is a modern center of higher architectural education, which trains specialists in the field of architecture, urban planning, design and art according to scientific programs and methods using progressive information tools.

The goal of the development of architectural and art education, which is implemented at the faculty, is to form an education system that meets the conditions for the formation of a highly educated creative personality; meets the social needs of Ukraine in terms of specialists - architects, designers, artists of various fields and levels of training; bringing Ukraine to the level of highly developed architectural and art education; preserving the principles and traditions of national education in the context of globalization of socio-economic processes.

The focus on the restoration of damaged, destroyed objects of architecture and urban planning primarily involves the use of established architectural theories and practices to create relevant concepts and programs for reconstruction at various levels - this is conservation, restoration, regeneration, renovation, revalorization, sanation, etc. in combination with the renewal of buildings.

It is advisable to transform the subject matter of architectural projects by introducing such topics as:

- reconstruction / restoration of architectural objects;
- design of objects of defense, protective function;
- design of rehabilitation, health centers;
- design of mobile housing, housing for temporary residence;
- creation of memorable structures.

In this case, it is advisable to supplement the accumulated domestic experience of architectural education with international heritage, create a atmosphere of teamwork among students and teachers, and develop volunteer activities.

The social activity of teachers and students is implemented in project and competitive activities commissioned by the public, territorial communities, and state institutions on the following topics: memorials; designs of buildings, complexes; protective objects in the cities of Ukraine.

Charitable, volunteer activities of teachers and students are associated with the development of project proposals: housing for internally displaced persons; artistic decoration of hospital interiors, defensive structures, libraries, schools; design of urban spaces according to the principles of universal design; administrative service centers; veteran spaces; rehabilitation centers.

The gained experience makes it possible to adapt the existing education system to the challenges of wartime.

Kaufman Maciej
MSc. Eng. Arch
Warsaw University of Technology,
Faculty of Architecture, Warsaw, Poland

maciej.kaufman@pw.edu.pl

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Infrastructures of Wildness: The Making of Warsaw's Fourth Nature Parks as Hybrid Commons

The Operation 'Tempest' Park and Żerański Park in Warsaw are examples of a new approach to the design of public spaces. The paper shows them as examples of urban 'fourth nature' (in Ingo Kowarik's terms), which serve not only to regenerate nature but also to build local communities and urban identity.

Both parks were established in response to residents' grassroots initiatives. Operation 'Tempest' Park, which opened in 2023, was founded due to the efforts of a community of veterans wishing to commemorate the Warsaw Uprising, while the Żerań Park (scheduled to open in 2025) was initiated by a neighbourhood community demanding compensatory tree planting in the gas pipeline strip. Both groups consolidated around heavily transformed and degraded areas, spontaneously used as green recreational spots. Due to their marginal location and years of neglect, these spaces underwent rapid natural succession, forming so-called novel ecosystems.

Preserving this ruderal vegetation, along with traces of urban technical infrastructure and social memory, has led to the creation of hybrid spaces. In the spirit of Donna Haraway, one can speak of their 'cyborgian' character—an inextricable intertwining of biology and technology, based not on nostalgia for the Garden of Eden but on regeneration processes—contaminated and fragmented.

The design of such spaces must be in dialogue between the community's needs and nature. Designated zones of abandonment and 'wilderness' are conducive to the protection of ecosystem services but simultaneously challenge the current paradigm of the aestheticisation of urban nature—they may be perceived as 'ugly' or even dangerous by some users. It, therefore, becomes crucial to implement the postulates of environmental psychology, which, in addition to ensuring accessibility, emphasises the subjective perception of space as friendly and inclusive. This helps to build social acceptance of the ecological function of wastelands.

Various forms of organised activity have been essential for strengthening the residents' sense of agency and identification with the place: the BioBlitz nature inventory with naturalists and volunteers, community plantings using Professor Miyawaki's method, and numerous educational walks. In the case of Operation 'Tempest' Park, an additional element of local pride was the achievement of prestigious accolades, including the European Award for Urban Public Space, awarded in 2024 by the Centre for Contemporary Culture in Barcelona (CCCB).

The multi-layered identity of the two parks is also constructed of existing and projected industrial and municipal infrastructure, such as disused landfill sites, harbour wharves, transmission lines and retention basins. Their colonisation by nature is not limited to the spontaneous growth of pioneer species. Infrastructure unintentionally creates new habitat opportunities actively exploited by organisms—e.g. amphibian refugia between abandoned precast concrete slabs, heat pipelines extending vegetation period, or the adaptive use of anthropogenic water bodies by beavers (Castor fibre). Technical systems not only constrain but also support ecological processes in the city—understood as a community of its human and non-human inhabitants.

The systems that sustain the city's functioning are mostly removed from public view and repressed by the inhabitants. The closing section of the paper is devoted to strategies for restoring them to public consciousness.

Kiciński Szymon
MSc. Eng. Arch.
Wrocław University of Science and Technology, Faculty of Architecture, Wrocław, Poland

szymon.kicinski@pwr.edu.pl

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Rethinking the Concept of "Right to the City" as a Universal Guideline for Improving the Quality of City and its Public Space

Many invaluable thoughts regarding the idea of city and its public space have been embraced in a concept of "Right to the City", proposed by French philosopher Henri Lefebvre in 1968. The main assumption of this article is to put a new light on Lefebvre's views on urban society, which may be a profound contribution to the discussion on fair, diverse and responsible city. The analysis must be performed by an introduction of some keywords: exchange value and use value, as well as ideological and moral differentiation between capitalism and non-capitalism. Capitalism is attached to a negative concept of exchange value, which are objects and activities dependent only on economical calculation and aimed for financial profit. In opposition, use value, a positive one, refers to whole human activity concerning higher needs and senses: symbolism, leisure and community. What Lefebvre says is that capitalism provides supremacy of exchange value over use value: "city and urban reality are related to use value. Exchange value and the generalization of commodities by industrialization tend to destroy it by subordinating the city and urban reality" (Lefebvre, 1996, p. 67). Lefebvre clearly acknowledges the priority of use value. According to historical examples of urban communities, there had always been a strong tendency towards use value among competing classes of urban society. It consequently resulted in a powerful, vivid social life, which members recognized themselves as its hosts and guardians. But in certain moment of history that structure crumbled: "there then comes a decisive critical point, where importance of agriculture retreats before the importance of craft and industrial production, of the market, exchange value and rising capitalism. This critical point is located in Western Europe around the sixteenth century" (Lefebvre, 1996, p. 122). Due to processes of industrialization and urbanization, the hitherto city has changed its shape. On the one hand, the population radically increased and on the other, a sense of community has vanished. The city centre, the old core of integration, has turned into a centre of consumption, a district of offices, headquarters and some touristic attractions. A traditional place where citizens used to express their will on public affairs has decayed. For Lefebvre, the only possible solution is exactly "right to the city", which means a totally different, modern approach to urban life, that would enable people to break the constraints of capitalism, humiliation and hopelessness. It must be a revolution aiming not only to change social relations, but also to transform the space, to make it more welcoming for average people. In this utopian concept use value strikes back the priority: a new city is not dedicated exclusively to capitalists, but rather to all citizens, capable of taking charge of their neighbourhood. Lefebvre calls it "appropriation of space", giving it back to people on their own. Furthermore, Lefebvre explains that whole space rightfully belongs to the inhabitants, so the idea of private property should be rejected. Next step is "participation", that means giving people an opportunity to create and manage the space, according to their needs and desires. As a result, the city shall become not only a friendly house for the inhabitants, but much more: a true home with family of members sharing common rights, privileges, work and leisure. Lefebvre calls this ideal harmony the authentic urban life.

Korbel Wojciech
DSc, PhD, Eng. Arch., Associate Professor
Cracow University of Technology,
Faculty of Architecture, Cracow, Poland

wojciech.korbel@pk.edu.pl

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Social Participation in the Costs of Public Infrastructure Construction in Poland - Theoretical Basis for Necessary Reform Measures

The construction and modernization of public infrastructure, understood as both technical and social infrastructure, affects the attractiveness of public spaces, the living conditions, and the material value of private properties. It also influences the investment activities of private entities and even migration processes. Ensuring the development of infrastructure is mainly the responsibility of municipalities. However, since the political transformation in Poland in 1989, there has been an ongoing debate about the sources of financing and the scope of necessary infrastructure measures. The dominant role of private property is emphasized (Włodarczyk, 2013), resulting in liberal and chaotic solutions in spatial planning and building law.

A review of the literature reveals the weaknesses of the main participatory tool in Poland, which is the betterment levy (Ziniewicz, 2012). Its imposition is time-consuming, costly, and difficult to implement. The amount of the fee is also detached from the actual costs of infrastructure implementation (Czaja-Hliniak, 2007). Published research also indicates that other participation tools (Bernaciak and Springer, 2022) play a very limited role. Even the commonly levied property tax, which does not constitute a dedicated tax for infrastructure development, in its current form, does not favor municipal investment opportunities. For social and political reasons, changing the form of this taxation is viewed critically and successively postponed. (Kopyściańska, 2017).

The author identified types of instruments for direct participation in public infrastructure costs available in Polish legislation in 2025. These include:

- potential participation of private investors implemented under the urban planning agreement concluded with local authorities,
- participation of investors under the Public Roads Act, enabling the construction of a road at the investor's expense,
- social participation under the private-public partnership,
- participatory activities of a voluntary self-taxation nature,
- a betterment levy imposed by the local government after the construction of a new road or technical infrastructure network, and proof by the authorities of an increase in the value of private property due to the infrastructure development.

These solutions, however, have a very limited impact, and the involvement of society, including private investors who benefit most from the newly created infrastructure, is usually negligible. As a result, the responsibility for public space and its facilities rests almost entirely with local governments. The lack of systemic co-financing for the development of public infrastructure is therefore one of the key issues in the contemporary development of municipalities in Poland.

The study aimed to identify research areas for further exploration that should serve to create a catalog of necessary reform measures. The analysis of literature and the Supreme Chamber of Control audit documents points to four key areas where new knowledge is urgently needed. These are:

- the area concerning theoretical and empirical mechanisms of modern social participation in financing the construction and modernization of public infrastructure in highly developed countries,
- the area concerning the actual degree of effectiveness and transparency of mechanisms currently operating in Poland, and their social perception,
- the area concerning the range of possible changes needed in the participation system in Poland,
- the area concerning the degree of social acceptance of possible changes.

Exploration of these areas is essential for further discussion on the necessary directions for systemic changes in Poland and other countries facing similar problems.

Koszewska Joanna
PhD Eng. Arch.
Sorbonne, Institute of Civil Engineering,
Paris, France

joanna.koszewska@insead.edu

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Urban Aspects of Common Good in a Community Space

Within urban planning, engineering design practice of shaping urban spaces of the XXI century there can be observed the quest for paradigms. Questions turn around ideas: “what is a good space”, how to evaluate its quality and functioning “? Digital tools are used to describe and quantify spatial qualities and inconveniences.

The objective of the presentation is to introduce the role of the concept of common good in the urban studies’ pool of knowledge. The applied method corresponds with the complexity of this notion. This idea is examined within the text review completed with focus interviews, visits and observation. The interpretation of this term is explored through different angles. Can the common good concept be understood as the lecture grid of cities?

The literature review, scientific discussion survey was backed with the studies of the interventions in urban space in European geographical context, with the special emphasis on central Europe (with its’ post-socialist spatial background). Numerous approaches meet limitations addressing the complexity of urban spaces. Apart from descriptive methods or quantitative data, there remain fluid social aspects. Analysed concept evolves across different cultures and geographical regions, being updated through diverse disciplines. The lens of the study in the times of XXI century wars, climate change and the dissolution of basic societal communities, leads through the analysis of the urban environment. It encompasses the set of instituted laws and rules, city use habits, architectural construction design practices, symbolic and semantic choices of public space narratives (both in public-led programmes and grassroot collective or individual expressions).

The common space, as well as commoning practices are tools to question and analyse the condition of nowadays’ communities. The ideas are incorporated in tangible spaces or citizen movements. The deposit of answers can be mobilised to address crisis situations of lack of space, commodities or services, that can be provided in the inherent local circles. As urban commons gained a significant role in both scientific and public interests, they prove to be translatable into public city policies and implementation of urban governance.

The common good in the urban setting applied in territorial practices as commons, became popular within empirical approaches. The academic findings reveal a link between the discourse on urban commons and the blossoming of debates, revealing varied model results in social and cultural contexts. In conclusion to the study of theories, definitions provision is bridging the world of engaged practitioners with researchers of sustainable governance toolboxes. The future directions are set as methological elaboration on an urban commoning framework. This reflection allows organising perceptions on communal sharing resources and spaces. This framework enables the description, analysis of spaces in the light of legal regulations, habits as well as physical features and use types. Proposed approach operationalizes debates, led in the search of adaptive solutions for changing social and climate circumstances. The value-oriented view on cities through the lens of common good emphasizing the role of the wider community and might be adapted to the, even opposing, philosophical and political opinions. Its’ flexibility proves the rooted origin and timelessness, despite changing personal convictions and societal circumstances.

The interdisciplinary studies on urban spaces works with a complex material, requiring cultural knowledge. Results remain controversial, which is an added value to the research work utility, encouraging critical self-reflection, asking questions about future models of adaptive urban development. It might contribute to the preservation of spatial justice in an age of cultural, economic, war migration and climate crisis.

Koszewski Krzysztof, Drewiczewski Stefan, Kopczewski Jacek, Dąbrowska-Żółtak Karolina, Malik-Trocha Hanna, Żak Marta, Szumiński Konrad

Koszewski Krzysztof
DSc PhD Eng. Arch.
Warsaw University of Technology,
Faculty of Architecture, Warsaw, Poland

krzysztof.koszewski@pw.edu.pl

Drewiczewski Stefan
MSc. Eng. Arch.
Communication and Promotion Office

Kopczewski Jacek
MSc. Eng. Arch.
Faculty of Architecture

Dąbrowska-Żółtak Karolina
PhD Eng. Arch.
Faculty of Architecture

Malik-Trocha Hanna
PhD Eng. Arch.
Faculty of Architecture

Żak Marta
MSc. Eng. Arch.
Faculty of Architecture

Szumiński Konrad
MSc. Eng. Arch.
Faculty of Architecture

Warsaw University of Technology,
Warsaw, Poland

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Wayfinding as Community Building: The Case of the Warsaw University of Technology Central Campus

One of the fundamental criteria for evaluating the built environment is its positive perception by users, which is significantly influenced by the legibility of space. Ease of orientation is a critical objective in architectural and urban design, particularly in line with the principles of universal design. Urban environments—and frequently the interiors of buildings—are often shaped by complex, layered developments over time. Visual navigation systems, or wayfinding, play a vital role in supporting users' innate spatial orientation abilities.

A coherent and legible wayfinding system is particularly important for users with special needs, as it can greatly facilitate, or even enable, their independent use of the space (Mackett, 2021). University campuses, especially those of historical significance situated in dense urban centers, frequently present navigational challenges (Iftikhar et al., 2020). The Main Campus of the Warsaw University of Technology (WUT) exemplifies such complexity. A pilot wayfinding project, conceived and implemented by the authors, addressed these challenges in an environment characterized by architectural heritage and diverse user groups.

The WUT campus is used by a wide array of users: students, academic and administrative staff, prospective applicants, event participants, local residents, delivery personnel, and public service providers. This diversity necessitated a wayfinding system grounded in universal design principles (Fogli et al., 2020), which included the following features:

1. Fair Design: Signage was developed with carefully selected typography (size, contrast) and placements ensuring readability for all, including visually impaired and wheelchair users.
2. System Adaptability: The modular design permits the replacement of individual components, thus enhancing flexibility and lowering maintenance costs.
3. Operational Intuitiveness: Visual consistency and the use of universally recognizable icons and pictograms facilitate intuitive use.
4. Legibility and Information Accessibility: Simple graphic language, low-glare finishes, and independence from digital infrastructure support immediate comprehension.
5. Minimal Cognitive Load: Key system components are placed at strategic nodal points and use simplified, high-visibility graphics.
6. Ergonomic Design: All elements were designed to align with natural user behaviors and spatial ergonomics.

Beyond usability, the system was also designed to reinforce a sense of academic community. One strategy was to promote identification with the institution's historical context. The signage integrates discreetly with the protected architectural fabric of the campus, utilizing restrained forms and materials that reflect both modern design sensibilities and the historic character of the site. A key material element was Corten steel, chosen for its contemporary feel as well as symbolic connection to the passage of time.

To foster a sense of belonging among various sub-groups within the university, faculty-specific identifiers were designed. These take inspiration from the periodic table, with each faculty represented by a symbolic lettermark within a square frame—a reference to the university's technical profile. These graphic elements complement the university emblem, which features prominently on information pylons.

Crucially, the development of the wayfinding system was informed by social research. A mixed-methods study conducted between June and October 2021 gathered input from 454 respondents. One key finding was that users preferred to navigate first by faculty, then by building—a nontrivial insight given that faculties at WUT are distributed across multiple buildings, and some buildings house several faculties.

The wayfinding system implemented at the Warsaw University of Technology is thus more than a tool for spatial orientation. It serves as a medium for improving the spatial experience, while also fostering identification with the university as a cohesive and inclusive academic community.

Koznarska Halyna
DSc, PhD, Eng. Arch., Associate Professor
Lviv Polytechnic National University,
Department of Urban Planning and Design,
Lviv, Ukraine

halyna.y.koznarska@lpnu.ua

Bilous Olena
Eng. Arch
Lviv Polytechnic National University,
Department of Urban Planning and Design
Lviv, Ukraine

olena.y.bilous@lpnu.ua

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Underground Space as a Direction of Modern Urban Development

Modern cities continually face a range of problems that arise throughout their existence. The issue of resident safety has always been a priority and has been addressed based on existing technical capabilities and current threats. One of the threats that cities have faced since ancient times has been wars. The history of architecture reveals the appearance of defensive fortifications that were constantly improved. However, underground communications, which played an equally important role in protecting the population, have been less explored. Today, this topic has gained new relevance. In addition to military conflicts, we have another threat related to climate change. Global warming has prompted the emergence of ""climate migrants."" According to scientists' predictions, some densely populated areas will become uninhabitable by the end of this century (Emily Elhacham, Pinhas Alpert, 2021).

The use of underground space as a means of protection against threats has a millennia-old history. However, the construction of underground cities for human habitation, divided into separate functional areas, saw its greatest development during the early Christian period. During this time, entire multi-level cities were known to exist, capable of functioning for extended periods. For instance, the catacombs of Rome were discovered, with a total length of 150-170 kilometres. Additionally, in the region of Cappadocia (modern-day Turkey), over 200 underground cities have been found. The largest underground city in Cappadocia is Derinkuyu, which has been explored and opened to visitors with 8 levels, reaching a depth of 50 meters (Kapadokya Derinkuyu, 2024).

During the Middle Ages in Europe, defensive structures included an extensive system of underground passages for communication between different parts of the city and for exiting the city. Such tunnels are an integral part of nearly all historical cities. Currently, some of these communications are used in the tourism business.

In addition to historical underground cities, which were predominantly built for defence and protection from persecution, we have modern analogues constructed to protect against excessively hot climates. For example, the city of Coober Pedy in Australia was built as summer temperatures can exceed +50°C, leading 60% of residents to relocate underground (Coober Pedy, 2023). The need to develop underground space in modern conditions is also driven by excessive urban density. In large megacities, there is a lack of space for infrastructure development, and to avoid excessive congestion on the surface streets, alternatives are sought in new ideas below ground (Design Ideas Competition, 2019).

The exploration and development of underground spaces today can help cities address a number of pressing issues. First and foremost, it is about protecting the population from external threats provoked by climate change and armed conflicts. A well-developed system of underground communications will provide access to key parts of the city in conditions of excessively hot weather to meet the basic needs of residents. A multi-level system will enable communication between different functional zones. Engaging in commercial activities that do not require daylight for the development of underground spaces will allow for the organization of an extensive network of civil protection facilities, all of which will be continuously maintained in proper condition. It should also be emphasized that the advantage of locating grocery supermarkets in underground spaces is the stable temperature that ensures good food preservation, which is particularly relevant in hot climates. Naturally, another significant factor will be alleviating the burden on the surface part of the city to organize facilities that require daylight and to accommodate recreational areas.

Kręt-Grześkowiak Aleksandra
PhD Eng. Arch.
Wrocław University of Science and Technology, Faculty of Architecture, Wrocław, Poland

aleksandra.kret-grzeskowiak@pwr.edu.p

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From Process Complexity to NEB Potential: Rethinking Construction for Community and Circularity

Considering the New European Bauhaus as an initiative promoting community through the creation of high-quality spaces, we should not limit our focus to the final stage of the project- the 'space' itself- but take the entire construction process equally seriously. In transdisciplinary processes such as sustainability transformations, the involvement of both academic and diverse non-academic actors is essential to ensure the relevance and credibility of the solutions developed (Jacobi et al., 2022). Further, to preserve the community and shared space formed during the process, the project should be seen not as the final goal, but as a reflection of values and dynamics nurtured throughout its development (Cárdenas Merino, Arias Jiménez, & Burdiles Allende, 2024). This implies that, to implement sustainable strategies within the construction sector, the involvement of key actors- and an understanding of their attitudes, values, and shared priorities related to sustainability - is crucial. Tailoring, rather than imposing, circular strategies could support implementation and foster collective sensemaking, extending their impact beyond the technical dimension into the realm of shared values.

However, while the proposed solutions should bring value to investors, designers, manufacturers, and contractors, they must also remain environmentally responsible and aesthetically appealing. This presents a range of challenges, including:

1. Divergent values across actors within the supply chain;
2. Stage-specific cooperation rarely sustained throughout the entire process;
3. Trade-offs between achieving high performance in specific dimensions- sustainability, inclusion, or aesthetics- which are often mutually exclusive;
4. Varying levels of familiarity with circular strategies among stakeholders;
5. Difficulties in upscaling due to the need for tailored, context-specific solutions that resist standardization;
6. The obstruction of grassroots initiatives by complex regulations and protracted legislative procedures.

To illustrate these challenges, we showcase the application of reclaimed building materials (RBMs) in the Polish single-family housing sector. While some familiarity, expertise, and willingness to use RBMs exists among structural engineers and demolition contractors, designers lack experience, and prefabricated house manufacturers express concerns over increased responsibility. This uneven knowledge (4) and limited trust hinder the synchronization of learning cycles, reducing opportunities for collective sensemaking via feedback from innovation (Morland, Breslin, & Stevenson, 2019). Moreover, although the delivery of high-quality RBMs aligns with the values of demolition contractors, it proves impractical for designers- due to extended design iterations- and unattractive to manufacturers, and investors, who cite low economic viability and uncertain technical performance (1). While RBMs offer environmental benefits, their visual appeal is often undermined by their heterogeneous characteristics (3). Additionally, stage-specific stakeholder involvement limits the RBM use during the construction phase, despite investors' flexibility for ad-hoc changes. These decisions are mainly shaped by subcontractors, with minimal designer input (2). Although demolition, contractors express readiness for direct reuse, they face regulatory complexity, insufficient institutional support, and unclear legal pathways as major barriers to scaling up (6). Nevertheless, the individual reuse, especially for outbuildings, does occur. The multifaceted and interdependent nature of described processes makes generalization into scalable tools and guidelines highly challenging (5).

Despite the presence of promising grassroots initiatives in the Polish construction sector, their potential remains limited without synchronized efforts and legislative support. Raising awareness and aligning strategies are essential for fostering a truly sustainable circular transition.

Kryvoruchko Yuriy
Professor, DSc, PhD, Eng. Arch.
Bialystok University of Technology
Lviv Polytechnic National University,
Lviv, Ukraine

yurikryv@gmail.com

Kopacz-Gruźlewska Joanna
MSc. Eng. Arch.
Silesian University of Technology,
Faculty of Architecture, Gliwice,
Poland

joanna.kopaczgruzlewska@gmail.com

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Methodological Principles of Revitalisation of Space and Functional Environment to Build and Activate Local Community

Recurring natural and man-made disasters are resulting in an increasing number of displaced people who need to be provided with urgent accommodation. Due to insufficient legal regulations and effective construction methods, refugees are often located in conditions located as “temporary”, offering low quality of living conditions, degrading social environment and destructive impact on the city landscape.

Attracting people’s attendance is one of the main objectives of the urban strategies aiming at converting abandoned or degraded places into vibrant city spots, capable of integrating local communities. The process of managing a large group of internally displaced people can be seen as a huge resource in the revitalization of obsolete parts of the city.

Despite the relocation of people, the situation of a large number of displaced people in Ukrainian cities and the implementation of appropriate solutions of social participation and integration with the local community can be used as a catalyst for introducing long-term changes to improve the living conditions of current residents. Integration of the local community with the displaced population is possible with the use of tactical urban planning tools, quick and inexpensive interventions to improve urban spaces. The strategy of short-term actions creates the potential for making long-term decisions, which, combined with active social participation in the process of “”place-making””, have the potential to result in the creation and strengthening of a local community. The strategy is experimental in nature - it can serve as a method of examining the potential of a given space, its reception by users, as well as testing the needs and initiatives of both residents and people settling in.

The analysis covered the surroundings of a multi-family, multi-storey housing complex built of large-format reinforced concrete prefabricated elements, built in the years 1970-1990 in the city of Zaporizhzhia in Ukraine. A methodology for the revitalization of open spaces and the regeneration of the functional content of the environment was proposed, the aim of which is to activate the local community and involve residents in the process of creating their own environment.

An important aspect is the strengthening of social activity and participation and the design of activities that will enable such participation. The adopted revitalization method consists in the introduction of modular solutions, based on a high degree of standardization determined by economic factors. The method offers a wide range of possibilities for customization and adaptation to specific local needs. The principle of modularity has been used in the proposed system of spatial re-arrangement of degraded spaces.

The modular structure enables functional flexibility. Modular urban solutions allow for the arrangement of common spaces adapted to individual needs and at the same time enabling the introduction of quick changes. The use of compatible systems of coherent elements enables the introduction of configurations of elements leading to short-term solutions serving social purposes. The strategy consists in proposing a chain of choices of ready-made solutions in the form of multiple-choice surveys, allowing for public decision-making, and limiting the possibilities of choice to a pre-defined range of solutions. The proposed solutions constitute a tool for using human potential and provide an opportunity for the development of local entrepreneurship and maintain craft traditions, local cultural heritage.

Kuszyk Rafał
PhD, Eng.
Warsaw University of Technology,
Faculty of Civil Engineering, Warsaw, Poland

rafal.kuszyk@pw.edu.pl

Kuszyk Marta
MSc. Eng. Arch.
BAS Consulting, Warsaw, Poland

m.kuszyk@hgs.org.pl

Kuszyk Łucja
Msc. Student
Warsaw University, Faculty of Geology,
Warsaw, Poland

kuszyklucja@gmail.com

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Controlled Tunnelling Process as an Element of the City Space Protection

The rapidly growing requirements for the underground infrastructure of cities make it necessary to build tunnels with ever larger diameters, located more and more shallow in relation to ground surface. Tunnels, by creating an underground road network, become a catalyst for transforming the structure of strategic flows within communities — in areas such as work, education, business activities, healthcare, and culture. They offer a unique opportunity to change the perception of urban space by enabling movement that bypasses selected city blocks. Currently, advanced work is underway in Poland on the project of a high-speed rail network to create modern and fast communication system. As part of this investment, several tunnel projects are already being carried out, one of them being, the most advanced railway project for an agglomeration in central Poland. A shield with a large diameter of approx. 13 m is to drill tunnels leading the railway line under the city connecting the new underground railway station with existing rail network. The tunnels are largely located under city historic buildings and the thickness of the overburden above the tunnel top is about one tunnel diameter (D) – as much as 0.8 ÷ 1.1 D. With such drilling conditions, there is a high risk of instability in the building structure. An accurate prediction of tunnelling - induced displacement field is hence a key element of design studies of any urban tunnel or deep excavation of metro station. The main problem of tunnelling with the use of TBM (Tunnel Boring Machine) is to assess the range of settlement trough and the impact of tunnelling works on existing buildings and underground infrastructure. With extensive development, the engineers have to cope with a problem of optimizing the substrate or structure strengthening and correct determination of the expected size of settlement and their surface distribution, including rheological processes.

Extensive monitoring system of ground surface settlements, the expansion of settlement trough and displacements of subsoil over the TBM should be implemented for big diameter TBM Projects. Intensive monitoring of the surface along the tunnel axis should be meant to enable subsidence control during TBM passing and create a guideline for TBM EPB machine operator regarding drilling parameters and its control. The initial tunnel section is the greenfield area, so it could be also used as a test section for further prediction for tunnelling under buildings. Therefore, the location of the surface benchmarks along the entire length should be carefully planned. The ground benchmark points should be placed along the axis of the tunnel, with a spacing of about 5 m, which corresponds to the length of three rings of segmental lining.

When analysing the distribution of the settlement trough along the tunnel axis, it was found that the maximum settlements value is not observed immediately after TBM (cutter head and tail) passed over the monitoring sections, but after several days from the first measurement in the section. This coincides with data from several authors who stated that in the case of tunnel works performed by mechanized shields, 70 ÷ 80% surface subsidence is the result of deformations on the head of the excavation. In the case of excavations made with the use of TBM, this value drops below 70%, depending on the used equipment. Depending on the ground disturbance, the percentage of the surface settlements, is on average: in the front of the machine 10 ÷ 20%; along the shield length 40 ÷ 50%; in the tail void 30 ÷ 50%. In most type of soil, the amount of subsidence on ground surface is approximately equal to the loss of ground volume in the face.

Lasocki Maciej
DSc PhD Eng. Arch.
Warsaw University of Technology,
Faculty of Architecture, Warsaw, Poland

maciej.lasocki@pw.edu.pl

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Rooted in Culture - Architecture Students and their Competence in Community Building

When designing a space for a community, we need to refer to its needs - including higher cultural aspirations [1]. An excellent foundation for the study of needs in organising space can be the concept of organisational culture of society proposed by Geert Hofstede [2, 3], who described the relationship between the individual and the community using six indicators: power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism/collectivism, masculinity/femininity, restraint/indulgence, and long-/short-term orientation. The author's research has shown that young Poles studying architecture are deeply rooted in their nation's culture. This is often despite their beliefs and youthful rebellion against reality. Certain attitudes, which are created and reinforced by popularised stereotypes, make young people ascribe to a different view of reality and social relations. Architects, in particular, are accused of extreme individualism and the creator's oversized ego. However, as in the case of whole society surveyed by sociologists, the ratio of supporters of individual to collective attitudes is 1:2. Of course, this does not mean two extreme attitudes but rather a whole range of more or less defined opinions. However, the result, which is repeated with inexorable regularity in the responses of successive year groups, confirms the thesis.

The research shows a dissonance between the declarative views and the attitudes presented when making decisions. Contrary to expectations, young people mainly prioritise the preservation of their equal status in relation to society over unfettered freedom of creative activity. They relate the evaluation of their creativity more often to the community's opinions than to their own beliefs. Nevertheless, the declarative layer is dominated by the belief in their individualism and the pursuit of personal freedom. Similarly, there is a declared aversion to society's "oppressive" culture. However, when a solution to any problem has to be found during the discussion, students often give solutions involving legal or economic restrictions. Polish society is characterised by extreme uncertainty avoidance, a precautionary approach to security, which is perhaps most clearly reflected in urban space in the popularity of gated neighbourhoods. Students see this as a problem, perhaps noticed during their education, but everyday observations of academic life do not indicate that they are less preventive than the rest of society. Also, within the phenomenon of power distance, an inconsistency between declarations and attitudes can be observed. On the one hand, there is a belief that partnership in social relations is a positive thing. On the other hand, the typical "mini-social orientation" of our society can be observed when students take action. It is a tendency to create divisions, a tendency to compete rather than to cooperate.

Individuals who have not recognised themselves their real preferences cannot successfully advocate solutions incompatible with society's cultural code. Too often, radical activists work against societal needs by preaching the need to educate the "new citizen" [4]. However, the cultural "software of the mind" will inevitably reject such attempts, as has already happened in our history. This is because this "software" that constitutes our identity is the heritage of hundreds of years of social experience and does not lend itself to rapid modifications. The research concludes that cultural conditions must be taken into account when attempting to create spaces for communities [5]. The education of architecture students should reorient itself from postulating radical slogans to acting for society in harmony with its culture and identity.

Lis-Meldner Paulina
PhD Eng. Arch.
Warsaw, Poland

paulinalis@outlook.com

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“Make the Meeting Places Usefull” – Regenerative Architecture

The mythical beginning of architecture is associated with a symbolic event: the first gathering of people around a randomly lit fire. Hereby a place radiating warmth, which gathers the first human community, becomes the origin of dwelling and future culture of building. It reveals the very essence of architecture. Though, the built place itself can only afford actions and activities reinforcing the community, as a physical expression of it’s liveliness.

Rustic architectural forms of inland mountain areas for a long time were an expression of local communities culture of living, but over time have turned into silent witnesses of its decay caused, in first place, by depopulation and change in the way of inhabiting those mountain territories. At the same time many of those shrinking communities have been since then confronted with the affluence of mass tourism followed by the spread of holiday houses built upon the city-villa patterns and scary empty out of season.

Paradoxically, those mountain villages may however become “an ideal laboratory for giving meaning to the pursuit of true sustainability” and “precious microcosms of regeneration” [Azzoni, 2025]. As an example of the territorial regeneration journey and a source of inspiration may serve initiatives undertaken by mountain communities of Italian Valle Camonica like the international architectural prize Minimal architecture in the Alps, architectural Festival all’insù, conferences and permanent workshop in a village perched high on the slope: VIONELab – community based laboratory, which altogether constitute significant crossroads and an exchange place for most sensitive and motivated experiences, for the debate over the importance of contemporary architecture and the role of an architect, valid not only in the relation to the mountain areas.

The architectural realizations from the Alpine area presented within these initiatives, may not shine as architectural icons designed by star architects under the label of “regenerative design” like Milan’s Vertical Forest towers by Boeri Studio. They are instead pragmatic, simply appropriate, modest, respectful – naturally and truly regenerative: aimed to engage and involve the community by providing useful and attractive meeting places, to build upon an existing paradigm, capable to evolve, renew and adapt, create positive social and minimal environmental impact. Among these projects are examples of reuse, rehabilitation and conservation not only of the old rustics: former barns and shep-herd’s huts or other heritage buildings like e.g. Maison Gaudin in Suisse Valais (Savioz Fabrizzi architects, 2014) or repurposing of former religious building for the holiday house in Cuneo (arch. Dario Castellino, 2024) but also of more contemporary, ordinary buildings not representing any special value, like redevelopment of the Moncenisio barracks into The Multipurpose centre and residence for artists (arch. Antonio De Rossi with the Politecnico di Torino design team, 2023) or the conservation project for the changing rooms of the Verzegnis sports field (arch. Federico Mentil, Fabio di Qual, 2023) where the external walls equipped as climbing wall brought additional, recreational function for the community.

In the opinion of Giorgio Azzoni – Italian architect and curator of the Festival all’insù, those realizations from mountain inland areas have the potential to spark a creative impact in much wider area, providing designers with the thoughtful in-sight applicable in various contexts [Azzoni, 2025]. Responsible paradigm of minimal and regenerative architecture is surely something we can learn from looking up toward those alpine examples. By turning our eyes towards them, we – the architects from the planes – may expand our horizon as well.

Liubytskyi Roman
PhD Eng. Arch.
Lviv Polytechnic National University,
Department of Urban Planning and Design,
Lviv, Ukraine

roman.i.liubytskyi@lpnu.ua

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Community Through Mobility: How Transport Accessibility Shapes Lviv's Urban Agglomeration

In contemporary urban conditions, the spatial contours of a city increasingly diverge from its administrative boundaries (Idak & Lysenko, 2024). Instead, the city's extent is determined by functional relationships—daily commuting flows, access to urban services and infrastructure, and the intensity of core-periphery interactions. While the EU's Functional Urban Area (FUA) methodology defines the boundary of a "commuting zone" as encompassing all local administrative units (LAUs) from which at least 15% of employed residents commute to the urban centre (OECD, 2021), travel time remains the primary and decisive factor influencing the peripheral population's access to employment and other social ties. According to the concept of the ""anthropological invariant"" in travel behaviour, the average daily commuting time remains close to one hour, regardless of cultural, economic, or geographic context (Marchetti, 1995).

Integrating residents of surrounding towns and villages into the daily life of Lviv's urban agglomeration is essential for building a cohesive community. Genuine access to services allows peripheral populations to feel part of a shared social space, fostering common identity and belonging. This study aims to empirically delineate the functional boundaries of this community based on actual automobile travel times during peak hours from nearby settlements to Lviv's historic core. In this context, mobility underpins social integration, spatial equity, and urban cohesion.

The analysis employs geospatial tools in QGIS, supported by a custom Python script that automates data extraction from the Google Distance Matrix API (Google, 2025). It returns historical average travel times based on real collected GPS data, offering a more realistic approximation of journey durations compared to network-based estimates that ignore actual traffic conditions.

The analysis of automobile travel times from settlements within a 50 km radius of Lviv's historic core revealed commute durations ranging from 29 to 98 minutes. Isochrones were generated at 10-minute intervals. The "convenient" travel time zone (≤40 minutes) includes 36 settlements with a combined population of approximately 84,000 people, most of which are located near the city's outer ring road. Notably, this category includes four suburban towns with significant populations: Vynnyky (29 min; ~18,000), Bryukhovychi (30 min; ~6,000), Sokilnyky (34 min; ~11,000), and Dublyany (39 min; ~10,000). The 60-minute isochrone encompasses 227 settlements with an estimated total population of around 288,000, compared to Lviv's own population of approximately 725,000 (OpenStreetMap data).

The geometric form of isochrones around Lviv predictably exhibits a star-shaped pattern, extending further along major highways. Most of the 60-minute zone lies within a 25–30 km radius. The 40-minute isochrone closely follows Lviv's ring road, which lies approximately 10 km from the city's historic core. This implies that travelling just 10 km by car may require up to 40 minutes—an average speed of 15 km/h, comparable to cycling—highlighting significant mobility inefficiencies. This travel time barrier may impede the formation of an effectively integrated urban community. As of 2025, Lviv lacks key transport solutions such as park-and-ride systems. Developing such infrastructure and improving public transit could enhance real accessibility and support agglomeration-wide cohesion.

Further comparative research using a similar methodological approach—particularly in cities with comparable spatial and demographic characteristics, such as Krakow, which shares Lviv's population size, radial-ring structure, and ring road distance from the historic centre (Liubytskyi, 2023)—could refine these findings and inform practical recommendations for mobility improvement and regional integration.

Łukasik Rafał
Prof. PhD. Eng.
Lukasiewicz Center, Research and Innovation Department, Warsaw, Poland

rafal.lukasik@lukasiewicz.gov.pl

Skupna Kinga
MSc
Lukasiewicz Center, Research and Innovation Department, Warsaw, Poland

kinga.skupna@lukasiewicz.gov.pl

Woźniak Katrzyna
MSc
Lukasiewicz Center, Research and Innovation Department, Warsaw, Poland

katarzyna.wozniak@lukasiewicz.gov.pl

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New European Bauhaus – A Vision for the Future Rooted in History

Facing deepening geopolitical crisis, climate change, growing social inequalities, and constant technological transformation, Europe is confronted with the task of creating a new order. On the one hand, it must ensure security, and on the other, build a vision for development that is more sustainable, more beautiful, and more inclusive. One response to this challenge is the New European Bauhaus (NEB). This initiative merges the values of ecology, aesthetics, and social participation, directing Europe's efforts towards creating living spaces that meet the needs of the 21st century.

The origins of NEB can be traced back to the legacy of the original Bauhaus, founded in 1919 in Weimar by Walter Gropius. It was a movement that revolutionised thinking about architecture, art, and design, advocating harmony between functionality and aesthetics, and between technology and humanism (Rosado-García et al., 2021).

Today's New European Bauhaus – launched in 2020 at the initiative of the President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen – draws on this tradition, but expands it to include contemporary dimensions: technological, ecological, digital, and social.

NEB is simultaneously a cultural movement, a financial programme, and a collaboration platform. It aims to promote innovative, but also accessible and aesthetically pleasing solutions in space design, construction, mobility, and urban planning.

The initiative is built on three pillars:

- Sustainability – meaning environmental responsibility, energy efficiency, and a circular economy,
- Beauty – understood as the harmony of space with people and nature,
- Together – embracing social diversity and citizen engagement in decision-making processes (Hu et al., 2023).

It is impossible to fully understand the idea of the NEB without placing it within the broader context of the European Green Deal – the European Union's economic and social transformation strategy aimed at achieving climate neutrality by 2050. The New European Bauhaus represents the cultural and humanistic dimension of this strategy, restoring the social significance of design and drawing on shared European values (Pianta & Lucchese, 2020)

Importantly, the New European Bauhaus translates into tangible actions across EU member states, funded through programmes such as Horizon Europe, LIFE, and the Cohesion Funds. These include pilot projects, urban labs, architectural competitions, educational initiatives, and schemes that engage local communities in creating a new quality of public space. Examples include green schools, energy-efficient buildings made from local materials, urban community gardens, and innovative design tools developed with citizen participation.

At the same time, NEB strongly emphasises the role of education and culture, reminding us that the spaces we inhabit shape our identity and affect our quality of life. Designing in the spirit of the NEB is not the exclusive domain of experts – it is a collective learning and co-creation process involving artists, architects, scientists, students, activists, and local governments.

To conclude, it is worth asking: Can the New European Bauhaus become a new foundation for European prosperity? Can it help us design better buildings and cities, stronger social bonds, a more responsible economy, and a deeper community of values?

We believe it can – because only by thinking and acting together can we create spaces that rise to the challenges of our time.

Malik-Trocha Hanna
PhD Eng. Arch.
Warsaw University of Technology,
Faculty of Architecture, Warsaw, Poland

hanna.trocha@pw.edu.pl

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Between Preservation and Accessibility: Inclusive Public Space in Cultural Heritage Sites

Introduction

Inclusive and sustainable societies are built on the principle that all individuals, regardless of ability, can participate in social, economic, and cultural life. Cultural heritage sites and historic buildings are key assets, reflecting our collective identity and rich cultural narratives. However, many people still face barriers accessing these spaces due to physical, sensory, or informational limitations. Balancing heritage preservation with improved accessibility is a complex challenge. Historical sites must retain their authenticity, yet access for all—especially people with disabilities—is a fundamental human right. This paper explores minimally invasive strategies that enhance accessibility without compromising historical value, focusing on the Museum of Warsaw's "Muzeum OdNowa" project. The research combines quantitative and qualitative methods, centered on a case analysis of the museum's modernization. Descriptive data—archival materials, reports, audits, strategic documents, field observations, and interviews with key stakeholders—provide insight into planning and implementation. A functional–spatial analysis assesses compliance with Warsaw's Architectural Accessibility Standards (Tota, 2022), using two evaluation models: a simplified Model Description of Accessibility (2017) and the HUMBLES method (Aragall & Montana, 2016).

Case Study: Museum of Warsaw

Launched in 2014, the "Muzeum OdNowa" project revitalized 11 historic townhouses under architect Joanna Dudelewicz, aiming to modernize infrastructure and enhance accessibility while preserving historical integrity. Supported by the "Accessible Culture" grant, the Museum developed accessibility guidelines and commissioned audits by the FADO cooperative, achieving about 90% of planned improvements. An Accessibility Coordinator played a key role in adapting exhibitions and educational programs, focusing on neurodiverse audiences and individuals with visual impairments. Tools like pictogram-based schedules received positive feedback from caregivers and educators. The Museum regularly updates its Accessibility Improvement Plan, reports annually, and collaborates with NGOs, schools, and disability communities. Despite limited funding, its strategic and inclusive approach has led to meaningful progress. Top scores were in signage (1.8), entrance hall (1.6), and toilets (1.5). Overall, the spatial–functional assessment scored 12.1 out of 36 (33.6%), and the organizational evaluation reached 6 out of 10.5 points (57.1%), with strengths in engagement, planning, and outreach.

Discussion

The key findings highlight the importance of integrating accessibility audits with conservation guidelines, ensuring accessible services throughout the entire visitor experience—from planning visits to gathering feedback—addressing the built environment, information access, and user needs comprehensively, engaging both visitors and staff from the planning stage to incorporate diverse perspectives, and recognizing the cultural and social diversity of users at individual, community, and societal levels. Accessibility extends beyond the built environment to include ensuring that information is available and accessible to all users. Involving both visitors and staff in the planning process guarantees that diverse perspectives are considered, and that design decisions reflect real-world experiences.

Conclusion

The Museum of Warsaw's "OdNowa" project, which includes physical renovations, international collaborations, and documentation efforts, exemplifies the importance of transparency and inclusivity. This project has demonstrated the potential for cultural heritage sites to balance preservation with accessibility, providing a model for other institutions seeking to make their spaces more inclusive. Ultimately, heritage sites and places of memory are valuable not only for their historical knowledge but also for their ability to represent and express the diversity and richness of society. For many, however, accessing or even engaging with these sites remains difficult or impossible. By making thoughtful, inclusive changes, cultural heritage institutions can ensure that their sites are accessible to all, offering a richer and more inclusive experience of our shared history and cultural identity.

Mazur Rafał
PhD Eng. Arch.
Pracownia Architektury i Urbanistyki
Rafał Mazur

rafalmazur@rafalmazur.pl

Trębacz Piotr
PhD Eng. Arch.
Warsaw University of Technology,
Faculty of Architecture, Warsaw, Poland

piotr.trebacz@pw.edu.pl

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Micro-Apartment in the More than 100-Year History of Polish Multi-Family Housing Architecture

In the last decade, housing developments based on micro-apartments began to be built in Polish large cities. This is the result of ever higher housing prices that have become unaffordable for generation Z and, in the absence of an adequate housing policy, micro-apartments are becoming the only alternative for young people. Dwellings of a dozen or so sqm have sparked controversy and are often referred to by the new term "patodeweloperka" [1]. Minimal flats are also part of a trend associated with a new form of living called co-living. Whether micro-apartments fit into this model depends on the functional infrastructure provided in the building. These are usually places for common relaxation, entertainment and space for working. Unfortunately, in many cases the service offer is very limited.

From 1918 the Polish society was accompanied by a housing crisis. During the interwar period, there were up to 4 people per room [2]. The construction of new flats by the TOR (Workers' Housing Association) was based on of 28 to 34 sqm [3] one-room flats with a kitchen. The modernist idea of green areas, communal laundries, bathrooms and common rooms was to compensate for the small living space. These flats were for the few, the working-class community often lived in makeshift shelters on the outskirts of cities, reminiscent of modern slums [4]. The massive war damage compounded the housing crisis faced by the new communist government. Life in post-war Poland consisted of subdividing larger flats and squatting strangers in individual rooms. The norms for new single-occupancy dwellings in 1954 stipulated an area of between 14 and 18 sqm, and in 1959 between 16 and 20 sqm [5]. An area close to the TOR assumptions was not officially introduced until 1974 and was between 25 and 28 sqm. It is worth mentioning that the amount of housing built using prefabrication in the 1970s and 1980s was so high that housing became a common good. Among the biggest downsides of this period were the poor quality of construction and the destruction of the urban structure of cities. After 1989, during the period of political transformation, the number of dwellings built fell drastically and the newly built apartments were intended for the wealthier part of society. With the economic growth at the dawn of the 21st century, the development was made possible by mortgages offered by banks. The first decade of the 21st century became the only opportunity for Generation Y to buy a flat. These were flats, which often exceeded 35 sqm. The biggest disadvantage of this period was the layout of the flats themselves, in which the sold square meter became the most important earnings parameter for the developers, resulting in poor design quality in terms of space ergonomics.

The drastic housing price increase has led to a situation where housing construction needs to be systemically rectified by the state authorities. Attempts to date have failed to meet public expectations, and state-subsidised loans have led to an even greater increase in housing prices. Flats that resemble more a hotel room than the living space that Poles have known since the 1970s. It is worth noting that their emergence is symptomatic of a major social problem that appears to be one of the greatest challenges of the coming years.

Mędrzecka-Stefańska Joanna
MSc.
ThinkTankMiasto Foundation,
Warsaw, Poland

JLStefanska@gmail.com

Jaworski Andrzej
Eng. Arch.
JAZ+Architekci sp. z o.o.,
Warsaw, Poland

a.jaworski@jazplus.com

Wiktorko-Rakoczy Aleksandra
MSc. Eng.
Szelest, Warsaw, Poland

aleksandra_wiktorko@wp.pl

Wieczorek Anna
MSc
ThinkTankMiasto Foundation,
Warsaw, Poland

anna.d.wieczorek@gmail.com

Waśniewska Marianna
MSc. Eng. Arch.
JAZ+Architekci sp. z o.o.,
Warsaw, Poland

m.wasniewska@jazplus.pl

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An Interdisciplinary and Process-Oriented Approach to Diagnosing Urban Public Spaces with Community Involvement

INTRODUCTION

Decisions regarding changes or investments in public spaces or facilities aimed at meeting users' social needs should be preceded by a diagnosis that considers the perspective of the affected community. An interdisciplinary social diagnosis helps identify community needs, patterns of space use, stakeholders, and the boundaries of meaningful participatory dialogue. The diagnostic method should be adapted to the project and based on approaches resilient to political, activist, or narrowly expert-driven influences (Miessen, 2012). The process should be designed by a team capable of integrating expert and user perspectives and synthesizing findings.

CASE STUDY 1: POLE MOKOTOWSKIE

METHODS

One way to adopt the user's perspective without participatory activities is through real-time observation of behaviours. During the 2015 diagnostic process of Pole Mokotowskie Park in Warsaw (Stefańska & Wieczorek, 2015), field data were collected using systematic behavioural observations, evaluative mapping, trace analysis, expert walks, and brief on-site interviews on activities and space use.

RESULTS

The analysis synthesized data from various methods, providing a comprehensive description of the park's behavioral settings (Barker, 1968) and revealing relationships between spatial conditions, activities, and user characteristics. Some settings centred around designed elements (e.g., the pond basin), natural features (e.g., a large meadow), and social dynamics (e.g., student groups).

Self-regulation and adaptability resulted from the absence of formal regulations or dedicated infrastructure. The park's flexible layout supported diverse uses while maintaining its spatial, social, and ecological character. It functioned as an internally interdependent, socially resilient complex system.

The diagnosis informed a design concept leveraging the park's social and ecological potential by promoting exploration and biodiversity. Zoning by usage intensity, maintenance, and nature-dedicated areas balanced user needs with ecological goals. Managing change as a dynamic process was prioritised over fixing a spatial form.

CASE STUDY 2: REMBERTÓW

METHODS

Diagnosis may also involve data from selected informants. A 2023 study in the Rembertów district (Konsorcjum JAZ+Architekci & Fundacja Think Tank Miasto, 2023) included in-depth interviews (IDIs) (Seidman, 2019) and expert workshops. By combining residents' perspectives with insights from municipal agencies and experts, investment priorities were identified, and risks discussed across financial, administrative, and social dimensions.

RESULTS

The diagnosis led to development scenarios for three areas, differing in programme and investment scale, and addressing community needs. More conservative scenarios were introduced into planning, featuring reduced investment, less extensive transformation, and flexible, modular programming. The proposed solutions emphasised supporting the district's social and communal potential, including informal groups and local associations. The diagnosis enabled excluding from the scheduled public consultations subjects that necessitated further analysis or fell outside the community's sphere of influence.

DISCUSSION

Social diagnosis enables conclusions based on systematically collected data, providing an objective view of the spatial and social context. It is also more inclusive, reflecting the needs of the "silent" community members. It supports informed decision-making and designs participatory processes focused on meaningful issues where participants can have real impact. Diagnosis cannot be replaced by participatory activities (consultations or participatory design). Participation often reflects the voices of users who may not represent primary groups, lack full knowledge, or act on personal agendas. Observational methods, field data, and interdisciplinary teams that include the user perspective are more resilient to bias and misinformation than participatory approaches

Mielczarek Zuzanna
MSc. Eng. Arch.
Faculty of Architecture, Warsaw University of Technology, Warsaw, Poland
Faculty of Architecture, Brno University of Technology, Brno, Czech Republic
National Institute of Architecture and Urban Planning, Warsaw, Poland

zuzannamiel@gmail.com

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Networks of Support

Public spaces and infrastructural networks are designed to meet the everyday needs of communities. Gathering places, transport hubs, border crossings, logistics centres, and warehouses are typically built as utilitarian architecture. Yet, in the face of hostile aggression by another state, access to basic needs — electricity, freedom of movement, or the ability to assemble — can be severely restricted. Communities affected by such crises must find new solutions and expand the original purpose of these spaces.

The migration crisis triggered by Russia's 2022 invasion against Ukraine revealed that places typically used for logistics can rapidly transform to function on a much larger and unpredictable scale. In times of crisis, such spaces adapt to support the mass movement of people and goods, demonstrating unexpected flexibility and capacity.

As part of the international project "Networks of Support," the National Institute of Architecture and Urban Planning sought to examine how social processes are reflected in changes to infrastructure — specifically in the realms of transportation, logistics, and energy — in countries across our region: Poland, Ukraine, the Czech Republic, and Germany. How do we prepare public spaces to withstand crises — from war-driven migration to floods and pandemics? And how can shared experiences help us build cities that are more resilient in the face of future challenges?

Transformations have also taken place in spaces with traditionally less utilitarian roles — museums, galleries, and cultural institutions. At the height of the Ukrainian refugee influx, cultural programming was often set aside, and these institutions opened their doors to serve as community centres, temporary shelters, language schools, or informal gathering places. In many cases, these emergency roles became permanent, making such spaces more open and inclusive than ever before. This cross-border cultural exchange, reactivated through necessity and solidarity, is a phenomenon we continue to explore in collaboration with our international project partners.
The exhibition "Critical Infrastructures" at VI PER Gallery in Prague addressed not only the definition and fragility of critical infrastructure but also examined how these structures shape our physical landscapes, architecture, and public spaces. It also reflected on the collective memory and shared geopolitical history of our region through the theme of the Friendship (Druzhba) pipeline, launched in 1964 to link Russia with Ukraine, Poland, Belarus, Hungary, Slovakia, the Czech Republic, Austria, and Germany.

Vitsche, a Ukrainian association based in Berlin, prepared a research-based artistic seminar and performance in public space. The piece, titled "Bus That Never Arrived" , used the soundscape of Berlin's bus route 100 to explore the obstacles Ukrainians face in cultivating and promoting their culture and identity in a new migratory context.

As a result of collaboration with researchers from the Centre for Urban History in Lviv and other authors, a collection of texts was published in the quarterly journal Autoportret, as part of the "Networks of Support" project in 2024. The issue was co-published with the Małopolska Institute of Culture.

- Organizer: National Institute of Architecture and Urban Planning
- Partners: VI PER Galerie (Prague), Center for Urban History (Lviv), VITSCHE (Berlin), Małopolski Instytut Kultury (Cracow)
- Curators and coordinators of the international project: Zuzanna Mielczarek, Kacper Kępiński

Project financed within the Inspiring Culture Program of the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage

Minchberg Małgorzata
PhD
The Maria Grzegorzewska University,
Warsaw, Poland

mminchberg@aps.edu.pl

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Space as a Didactic Tool in the Practice of Education through Art and Creativity (Presentation of Research and a Didactic Proposal)

From personal artistic and pedagogical practice emerged the idea of implementing creativity into teaching processes and the desire to explore the role of art in educational environments. The undertaken research is an attempt to answer the question: what role does creativity and the surrounding space play in educational and upbringing processes. The innovative aspect of this concept lies in the conscious shaping of educational spaces by teaching staff.

Today, art plays an interventionist role, and creativity, regardless of discipline or field, is one of the most effective ways to develop future competencies. The development of creativity and sensitivity to the surrounding world is most effectively supported by early exposure to art and creative activities. This solid foundation later becomes fertile ground for cultivating creative and cultural competencies, as well as the ability to consciously shape the built environment. For this reason, research has been undertaken to determine the optimal conditions for a child's development, with special emphasis on the fundamental role of the surrounding space. In this article, I aim to present a proposal for analogue educational and upbringing work with young children in a specially designed environment.

Treating the arts as a tool for social change in the realities of the 21st century, research was undertaken to look at the role of creativity in educational processes and in the construction of an educational environment. The research is therefore an attempt to grasp the optimum conditions of upbringing, which in later life will not only be manifested in the quality of aesthetic choices, but will also be noticeable in the way of life and in the values professed. The outputs of material culture are less often taken into account by researchers of educational processes in this research, the emphasis is on the material image of the educational environment, which is shaped in early childhood education institutions out of concern for the aesthetics of the child's environment as well as its well-being. Assuming that the space we shape forms us, every effort should be made to ensure that it is consciously treated.

The phenomenon of upbringing consists of a space in which human development and the process of socialisation take place, and an activity in which a learning process built on facts and sensory experiences takes place. The great achievement of embodied learning is making sense, because our senses help to make sense of abstract symbols. The source of human knowledge is the somatic and aesthetic experience of reality, first mentioned by John Dewey in his psychological and pedagogical work, and developed by Richard Shusterman in his theory of somaesthetics and Margaret Wilson in the idea of embodied cognition.

Following Maria Gołaszewska (1979), the child's innate aesthetic sensitivity (calotropism), which manifests itself spontaneously up to the age of 5, and the so-called aesthetic naivety were recognised as initial features in the development of every human being, on which later sensitivity and taste are built. A suitably arranged space, which appears as an environment inspiring exploration and creative play, becomes an environment for creative upbringing.

From a broad approach in conceptual considerations of the determinants of aesthetic upbringing, the research moved on to the experimental phase, which narrowed down to the problem of the creation of an education environment by care and educational staff at the Nursery Complex of the Capital City of Warsaw. The main object of observation was the educational space created by the caregivers introducing interdisciplinary artistic and educational activities in the nurseries.

Nawrocka Ada Alexandra
PhD Eng. Arch.
Bydgoszcz University of Science and Technology, Faculty of Civil and Environmental Engineering and Architecture, Bydgoszcz, Poland

ada.nawrocka@pbs.edu.pl

Jabłońska Malwina
Eng. Arch, Msc. Student
Bydgoszcz University of Science and Technology, Faculty of Civil and Environmental Engineering and Architecture, Bydgoszcz, Poland

maljab001@pbs.edu.pl

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CAMPUS and the city | urban +

The article presents the open-studio scientific project "zróbMY MIEJSCE" – MOBILE URBAN FURNITURE - THE CHANGING ROLE OF THE ACADEMIC CAMPUS. This initiative is a fusion of two components: the idea of stimulating the development of Bydgoszcz towards a polycentric city and the idea of mobile urban furniture as a tool for urban transformation.

The urban structure of Bydgoszcz is, in a nutshell, the historic city centre surrounded by modernist residential estates. Only two districts in Bydgoszcz - Stare Miasto and Stary Fordon - have what no other district has, a market, or a local centre. There is one more special district that has something that others don't - Nowy Fordon has an academic campus. Although its outer space is open, it is rather empty and used mainly by academic community. The "zróbMY MIEJSCE" project - sees additional potential in the campus as a possible centre of local identity.

"Space becomes a place when we give it meaning, identity..." (Chmielewski, 2001). The tool that could help build this identity would be the aforementioned mobile urban furniture sensu largo. As an installation built by everyone and for everyone in a joint project, should be treated as an inclusive creative transformational tool and a catalyst for interaction on many levels - scientific, social, and cultural.

"Neighbourhood means being part of a certain relationship. The environment of life is based primarily on relationships: between people and the planet, between people and place, and between people themselves." (Sim, 2020). In this context, the campus as an "urban living lab" could become a place of social and intergenerational integration and an inclusive space for co-design and experimentation on the scale of the neighbourhood. This type of transformation is greatly supported by the academic and innovative character of the campus itself - in the sense the interdisciplinary synthesis: academy + science + community + business + NGOs could create a synergistic effect.

The project bases on a scientific analysis in the form of statistical and quantitative research conducted on the campus and in the district. Two surveys were conducted, with a total of 400 people surveyed. The results have shown that the community is strongly interested in transformational actions upgrading the campus to the role of a public/semi-public space of the neighbourhood and mobile urban furniture is definitely seen as a tool that can change the campus space into a centre of local identity and as a catalyst for social interaction.

Initial research also used a heuristic method, which involved brainstorming techniques during research workshops organized on the university campus as part of the "zróbMY MIEJSCE" project. Their goal was to articulate a vision for the future of this place. The campus would become a testing ground – an "urban living lab" co-created by residents and the academic community. Its built-in scientific and educational function could be enhanced with a cultural and outdoor offer, functions that activate the local community to engage in joint activities. These workshops were meant to be an example of how we create a place together because „Cities have the capability of providing something for everybody, only because, and only when, they are created by everybody." (Jacobs, 1961).

The preliminary research results already indicate the potential of the campus as a scientific and cultural social life activator. The study remains open – the project is being developed, and participatory and design processes are still ongoing.

Neumann Małgorzata
PhD Candidate
Warsaw University of Technology,
Faculty of Architecture, Warsaw, Poland

malgorzata.neumann.dokt@pw.edu.pl

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Semi-Private Kindergarten Surroundings as a Community-Forming Space

The physical environment of early childhood education settings plays a critical role not only in children's development but also in shaping social dynamics and fostering a sense of community. This paper explores how the semi-private surroundings of kindergartens may contribute to community formation, drawing on an observational comparison of two preschools in Gdańsk, Poland.

Situated within 200 meters of each other, both preschools operate out of century-old villas. Despite their proximity and architectural similarities, they exhibit a notable difference in social behavior: children and parents at one preschool tend to remain in the surrounding garden for 30–40 minutes after school, while such behavior is absent in the other. This discrepancy prompts the question of whether the spatial characteristics and design of the outdoor environment influence the use and perception of these spaces as communal arenas.

Empirical evidence from environmental psychology and pedagogy supports the idea that surroundings significantly affect human behavior and mood. Children, in particular, are acutely sensitive to their environments, often learning from them directly (Knauf, 2019). Some characteristics of the surroundings have more beneficial impact on children's behaviour than others. Studies have shown that varied terrain and changes in elevation in outdoor play spaces enhance the intensity and diversity of children's physical activity. These environments offer challenges that stimulate focus, persistence, and engagement (Anne-Marie Morrissey et al., 2015). Moreover, the presence of diverse spatial elements—including opportunities for semi-seclusion, vehicle use, and sensory exploration—encourages social, linguistic, and motor development regardless of whether the playground infrastructure is new or old (Brown & Burger, 1984).

Owing to its form and character—perhaps also by coincidence—the first of the aforementioned preschools effectively fosters post-school socialization. Its garden is characterized by slopes, scattered bushes, stone steps and areas that strike a balance between openness and enclosure. These elements invite prolonged use and exploratory play. Importantly, the availability of space for bicycles and other child-propelled vehicles further enhances the attractiveness and functionality of the setting. These physical attributes not only stimulate children's active play but also provide a natural context for parents to linger, engage in conversation, and form informal social bonds.

In contrast, the second preschool lacks these community-encouraging features. While its architecture is similar, the space in front of the building is limited and crowded. It is separated from the preschool's playground by a fenced parking lot, which restricts its potential for extended use. This suggests that it is not merely the presence of a playground, but it's location as well as structure and semi-private nature of preschool's surroundings that enables or inhibits community formation.

From a broader perspective, such findings underscore the importance of incorporating community-forming principles into the design of educational and childcare facilities. Semi-private outdoor spaces serve as liminal zones where spontaneous social interactions can occur, routines can be extended, and relationships can flourish. These everyday interactions lay the groundwork for stronger community ties and greater parental involvement in the child's educational environment.

In conclusion, the case of the two Gdańsk preschools illustrates how design decisions at the micro-scale can have macro-level social consequences. Thoughtfully designed semi-private outdoor environments are not merely recreational spaces—they are catalysts for social interaction and community formation. As such, they warrant greater attention in urban planning and early childhood education policy.

Niziurska Małgorzata
PhD Eng.
Łukasiewicz Research Network -
Institute of Ceramics and Building Materials,
Cracow, Poland

malgorzata.niziurska@
icimb.lukasiewicz.gov.pl

Kasprzyk Szymon
MSc. Eng.
Łukasiewicz Research Network -
Institute of Ceramics and Building Materials,
Cracow, Poland

szymon.kasprzyk@icimb.lukasiewicz.gov.p

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Green Facades in the Context of Endurance of External Insulation Systems

Green facades, i.e. covering the walls of buildings with vegetation, are gaining popularity in Polish architecture. They combine aesthetic qualities with ecological benefits, but their application also poses challenges, especially in the context of insulation systems such as ETICS (External Thermal Insulation Composite Systems).

Benefits of the green facades:

1. Air quality improvement: Plants on facades absorb carbon dioxide and filter pollutants, which contributes to better air quality in cities.
2. Thermal and acoustic insulation: Green walls act as an additional layer of insulation, reducing heat loss in winter and protecting against overheating in summer. In addition, they dampen external noise, which is important in densely built-up urban areas.
3. Aesthetics and property value: Green facades give buildings a unique appearance, enhancing their attractiveness and potentially increasing their market value.
4. Increasing biodiversity: The introduction of vegetation on facades encourages the creation of habitats for insects and birds, supporting local ecosystems.

Disadvantages and challenges of the green facades:

1. Integration with ETICS: The installation of green façades on insulated walls requires special attention. Incorrectly chosen fixings can damage the insulation layer, leading to thermal bridges and a reduction in the energy efficiency of the building.
2. Fixing method: Fixing systems must be adapted to the type of façade and the load carried by the vegetation. Solutions should be used that distribute the load evenly and minimise the risk of damage to the building structure.
3. Impact on the durability of the insulation system: Improperly designed green facades can lead to dampness in the insulation layer, which reduces its effectiveness over time and can cause materials to degrade. Ensuring adequate ventilation and using moisture-resistant materials is key.
4. Plant selection: It is important to choose plant species adapted to the local climatic conditions and the specific characteristics of the façade. Popular choices include five-leaf grapevine, common ivy or wisteria, which are characterised by their endurance and aesthetic appearance.
5. Maintenance and care: Green facades require regular maintenance, including pruning, fertilisation and monitoring of plant health. Neglecting these activities can lead to uncontrolled vegetation growth and potential damage to the façade.

Important aspects to consider when designing green facades:

Aspect 1: Fixing green facades to ETICS insulation requires specialised solutions to protect the insulation layer from damage and ensure the stability of the vegetation. There are several main methods of fixing green facades, which take into account the specific characteristics of the insulated walls and the type of vegetation used.

Aspect 2: Green facades, while offering numerous aesthetic and environmental benefits, can negatively impact the durability of ETICS insulation systems. A key threat is the corrosion of the materials used in this system, especially in the context of exposure to moisture, pollutants and micro-organisms that thrive in conditions of increased humidity.

Aspect 3: Vegetation on a façade requires constant care, and the extent of this care depends on the type of system used (climbing plants, modular vertical systems, plant pots).

Aspect 4: Green facades, i.e. walls of buildings covered with vegetation, are gaining popularity for their aesthetic and ecological qualities and their ability to improve the urban microclimate. However, their use requires an analysis of the impact on the fire safety of buildings and compliance with current legislation.

Nowak-Pieńkowska Małgorzata
MSc. Eng. Arch.
Warsaw University of Technology,
Faculty of Architecture, Warsaw, Poland

malgorzata.pienkowska@pw.edu.pl

Orchowska Anita
PhD Eng. Arch.
Warsaw University of Technology,
Faculty of Architecture, Warsaw, Poland

anita.orchowska@pw.edu.pl

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WAPW-TAB pilot project as a new initiative to integrate school and academic education

Cooperation between schools plays a key role in creating an integrated education system that fosters the exchange of knowledge and experience. This involvement includes various forms of cooperation, such as joint projects, student exchanges, the organization of educational events, but also the creation of spaces to share these experiences. The purpose of such activities is not only to enrich the curriculum but also to develop students' interpersonal skills and promote values such as tolerance and openness to diversity. Another purpose of cooperation is the transfer of knowledge between students and high school students, which leads to the formation and building of a community. Participation in tasks between members of communities of different teaching institutions strengthens the sense of belonging and shared responsibility for the solutions applied.

The current state of research is more concerned with cooperation between universities and businesses or research institutions (Poznańska 2012), (Christowa 2015). Cooperation between universities and high school's functions more often in the forms of patronage of selected classes, which occasionally participate as listeners to lectures. Universities create conditions for the participation of students in the final grades of high schools in thematic presentations. An example of an interesting approach to education is presented by the Faculty of Engineering Sciences at the Academy of Applied Sciences in Nowy Sącz, which organized for 150 high school students from Nowy Sącz to participate in classes and lectures prepared by research and teaching staff under the idea of "Become a student for a day." The main goal of higher education should be the development of everyone's talents and skills, i.e. discovering, stimulating and enhancing their creative potential (Ławicka 2016). The value of education is beginning to be seen as an "investment good" rather than a "consumption good" (Drapińska 2012).

The Faculty of Architecture at the Warsaw University of Technology recognized the need to create a model of partnership between a technical high school and a technical college in both the exchange of knowledge, experience and community building among young people. The previous traditional visits of high school students to exhibitions and thematic lectures were supplemented by a Pilot Didactic Project between the Faculty of Architecture of the Warsaw University of Technology and the Architecture and Construction Technical College (TAB) based on the agreement being created between the schools. Within the framework of this activity, students of the 6th semester (WAPW), together with students of the 5th grade (TAB), collaborate on the concept of the "Centre for Youth Activities" (CAM). The students perform an assignment during the semester project, "Architectural design for the community," and the 5th-grade class is doing this activity as part of their subject 'Specialization' and "Specialization - Studio" Both groups of young people work under the supervision of the Instructor, M.Sc. arch. Małgorzata Nowak-Pieńkowska. Also leading the group of students is M.Sc. arch. Tomasz Kosma Kwiecinski.

The Pilot Didactic Project introduces a new initiative to build the integration of young people of different educational backgrounds in three areas:

- design
- organizational
- methodological

This kind of cooperation is an example of a successful initiative, and the experience gained shows the benefits of involving schools in local projects that will help better prepare students for the challenges of the modern world.

Onufriv Yaryna
DSc, PhD, Eng. Arch., Associate Professor
Urban Planning and Design Department, Lviv Polytechnic National University, Lviv, Ukraine

yaryna.o.onufriv@lpnu.ua

Idak Yuliya
Professor, DSc, PhD, Eng. Arch.
Urban Planning & Design Department, Lviv Polytechnic National University, Lviv, Ukraine

yuliya.v.idak@lpnu.ua

Bibliography:

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Participation in Designing Memorials to Military Soldiers in Ukraine

Public participation in the post-Soviet space is a new practice that is only developing. Although there have been several notable surges in civic activism in Ukraine since the collapse of the USSR, the practice of public participation is developing very slowly in some places [1]. Today, Ukraine needs radical changes in the practices of public participation in the formation of power decisions by local government bodies, and, in particular, in the design of such important and symbolic architectural objects for the nation as memorials to soldiers who died in the Russian-Ukrainian war.

Since 2023, Ukraine has been engaged in an active public debate on how to commemorate the fallen soldiers. In particular, researcher Anton Lyagusha believes that it is important to create opportunities for dialogue and community involvement in commemorative practices. Taking into account different opinions, research, and interpretations can enrich the understanding of military events and contribute to a fair commemoration of the victims [2]. On the other hand, researcher Oksana Dovgopolova emphasizes the particular complexity of working with the memory of tragic events that are happening to Ukrainians today, and not decades ago, to which we would have distanced ourselves [2]. Over the past year and to this day, competitions for the creation of military memorials have been announced in many Ukrainian cities. Some of these competitions are also accompanied by an active public debate involving relatives of the fallen, military personnel, and external experts. Such discussions, such as those in Lviv [3], where about 30 meetings and conferences of the city authorities with the winning architects of the competition and all interested parties have already taken place, have a significant positive impact on the formation of the image of the memorial that will be perceived positively by society.

In the context of the nationwide discussion on the problem of honoring the memory of the military in Ukraine, students and teachers of the Urban Planning Department of the National University ""Lviv Polytechnic"" developed design proposals for a memorial to the fallen soldiers in the Russian-Ukrainian war, located in Bibrka town, Lviv region, Ukraine. The design proposals were developed as part of the academic discipline for Msc. Students ""Urban Conflictology and Participation"" during the spring semester of 2025. The process of developing the projects was accompanied by public discussions with the Bibrka community at two participatory workshops. During the first workshop on the topic: "Choosing a place to locate a memorial to fallen soldiers", which took place on April 2, 2025, in the Bibrka Town Council, about 30 invited people were present, namely residents of the Bibrka community, relatives of fallen soldiers, employees of the Bibrka Town Council, invited experts, architects, public activists, and other interested persons. During the seminar, students of Urban Planning Department presented arguments to the participants in support of possible locations of the future memorial. After the presentation, based on the results of discussions with invited participants and specialists, the most suitable location for the location of the memorial was selected. The second seminar within the framework of the project on the topic: "Memorial to fallen soldiers in the city of Bibrka"" took place a month after the first one, and was dedicated to discussing the spatial and 3D solution of the memorial, the functional and planning characteristics of the territory around the memorial, and the choice of symbols and materials for the designed memorial. The developed design concepts of the memorial were transferred to the Bibrka Town Council for potential implementation in the future.

Such educational projects with community involvement are of great importance for educational activities, as they form in students - future architects who will rebuild Ukraine after the war.

Onufriv Yaryna
DSc, PhD, Eng. Arch., Associate Professor
Department of Urban Planning and Design
Lviv Polytechnic National University,
Lviv, Ukraine

yaryna.o.onufriv@lpnu.ua

Lukashchuk Halyna
DSc, PhD, Eng., Associate Professor
Department of Urban Planning and Design
Lviv Polytechnic National University,
Lviv, Ukraine

halyna.b.lukashchuk@lpnu.ua

Tupis Stepan
DSc, PhD, Eng. Arch., Associate Professor
Urban Planning & Design Department, Lviv Polytechnic National University, Lviv, Ukraine

stepan.p.tupis@lpnu.ua

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Community Participation in the Design of City Parks: Advantages and Challenges

Developing a high-quality urban environment involves convenient access for all to green spaces and places of recreation. At the same time, greenery is a strategic element in preserving biodiversity and reducing negative climate impacts [1].

Designing city parks as public spaces is a complex process that requires community involvement. So before embarking on the reconstruction or creation of parks, it is worth thinking and deciding, firstly, what space you already interact with, or what kind of space is desirable for you, and secondly, for what groups of people, you want to make or improve the space that already exists [2].

Using the example of the "Project for the Maintenance and Reconstruction of "Snopkivskyi" Garden and Park Art Monument in Lviv (Ukraine), which was implemented by the author's team during 2023-2025, one can trace the process of involving residents and other stakeholders in the design of the park territory, during which the authors of the project sought to take into account the interests of all social groups.

During the work on the project, the Department of Ecology and Natural Resources of the Lviv City Council, which was the customer of the project, organized several meetings with the community and stakeholders, during which the authors presented the project to residents for discussion. Residents of Lviv, who live around the park, expressed their vision of the Snopkivskyi Park territory at meetings. During discussions with members of the local community, the positive and negative sides of such meetings were noted. In particular, at the first meeting, the community's opinion on a partial change in functional zoning turned out to be valuable. The community suggested adding an element of identity (the historical agrarian tradition of the Crimean Tatars) and cultural memory from the side of Krymska Street - to form a fragment of the "Crimean Garden", which was called "chairs" [3]. The importance of ensuring an ecological component in the development of anti-erosion measures on trails and slopes was also mentioned. During subsequent meetings, the issues of the location of children's and sports grounds, dog walking areas, transport accessibility, legal rights of third parties to use the park territory, and others were considered. The combination of two formats of discussions (in a room with a projector and directly on the territory of the park) had a positive impact on the quality of communication between designers and stakeholders.

The process of involving residents in discussing the project contained, from the point of view of the project implementers, certain organizational shortcomings that complicated the process of designing the park. In particular, the process of involving residents was chaotic, began at the final stage of design and dragged on more than a year after the completion of the project.

As a result, we can form the following recommendations for involving stakeholders in the design of a city park:

- it is worth forming a permanent working group of experts, active residents, the customer, and other important stakeholders at the beginning of the park design;
- it is important to arrange the first public discussion at the initial stage of the project when conceptual solutions are already available, but there are no details yet;
- public discussion and public consultations should be held at different stages of the design according to a plan agreed in advance with the designer;
- further return to the design stage and adjustment of the vision of the initial project cannot be endless.

Any public space, and even more so a city park, is a dynamic object that is constantly changing. The needs of community residents also change over time. After the project is completed, the customer is recommended to periodically conduct a balanced and tolerant reassessment of the implemented decisions regarding the park and, if necessary, order project adjustments.

Opałka Piotr
PhD Eng. Arch.
University of Applied Sciences in Nysa,
Faculty of Technical Sciences – Architecture
Nysa, Poland

piotr.opalka@pans.nysa.pl

Chudzińska Agnieszka
PhD Eng. Arch.
Warsaw University of Technology,
Faculty of Architecture, Warsaw, Poland

agnieszka.chudzinska@pw.edu.pl

Cieślak Julia
M.Sc. Eng. Arch.
Warsaw University of Technology,
Faculty of Architecture, Warsaw, Poland

julia.cieslak@pw.edu.pl

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Subterranean Mobility – Surface-Level Integration

One way to make urban spaces more liveable is to hide the burdensome transport infrastructure underground. Placing busy roads and railways in tunnels reduces noise, pollution and urban barriers. The space reclaimed on the surface can be used for parks, squares or promenades for residents. This approach is in line with the ideas of the New European Bauhaus, combining the pursuit of sustainable development, high quality of life, social integration and aesthetics in the city. This is demonstrated by the Stuttgart 21 project, co-created by architect Werner Sobek, among others. As part of it, the main railway station in Stuttgart was transformed into an underground transit station, which allowed for the liquidation of extensive surface tracks dividing the city centre. Thanks to this, around 100 hectares of land were reclaimed. Two new city blocks are being created there - with residential and service buildings and extensive green areas and public squares. Stuttgart 21 shows that moving transport infrastructure underground translates into the creation of new public spaces that support community building and improve the quality of life in the city.

Similar assumptions guided the Groene Loper ("Green Carpet") project in Maastricht by West 8. In this project, the A2 motorway running through the city centre was routed in a two-level tunnel, approximately 2.6 km long. On the surface, a five-kilometre park avenue was created, planted with trees and pedestrian and cycle paths. Transit traffic was moved underground, and only quiet local traffic remained on the green avenue. The removal of this barrier integrated two previously cut-off parts of the city. Housing estates with around a thousand apartments and local services are also being built along the new park, which is revitalising the area socially and economically. The project transformed a polluted, noisy area into a healthy, green urban environment, where residents gained space for recreation and outdoor meetings.

In the Berlin district of Spandau, the Axthelm Rolvien studio has proposed a similar transformation of the Altstädter Ring ring road surrounding the city's old town. The six-lane artery that generates noise and divides the city is planned to be largely submerged or covered, creating a linear urban park on top. Such a "green bridge" would connect areas previously separated by a road - residents would be able to move freely on foot or by bike between the old town and the neighbouring estates. Residential and service development is also planned along the new park, which would revitalise the neglected area. As a result, the Altstädter Ring could be transformed from an unfriendly transit space into a coherent urban park, improving the quality of life in the area. All examples are united by the recovery of public space for residents by moving burdensome transport away from street level. Concealing or covering road arteries and railway lines eliminates barriers dividing local communities and frees up the area for integration and diverse activities. Newly created parks and squares become places for meetings, recreation and social life, accessible to all, helping to build a sense of community. At the same time, more greenery and fewer cars on the surface mean cleaner air, less noise and an incentive to use public transport, bicycles or pedestrian traffic. Transferring traffic nuisances to underground floors is therefore an effective strategy for shaping a city that is friendly to residents. In the spirit of the New European Bauhaus, it combines social, aesthetic and ecological aspects: it unlocks the potential of public space, improves the quality of life, and strengthens social ties, while modernising infrastructure in a sustainable way. Urban planning activities planned in this way show that urban public space can once again become a common good – the basis for building a community of residents.

Orchowska Anita
PhD Eng. Arch.
Warsaw University of Technology,
Faculty of Architecture, Warsaw, Poland

anita.orchowska@pw.edu.pl

Klimowicz Joanna
DSc PhD Eng. Arch.
Warsaw University of Technology,
Faculty of Architecture, Warsaw, Poland

joanna.klimowicz@pw.edu.pl

Kobylarczyk Justyna
Professor, DSc, PhD, Eng. Arch.
Cracow University of Technology,
Faculty of Architecture, Cracow, Poland

justyna.kobylarczyk@pk.edu.pl

Cenda Dominika
MSc. Eng. Arch.
Cracow University of Technology,
Faculty of Architecture, Cracow, Poland

dominika.cenda@doktorant.pk.edu.pl

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Assessing of the Accessibility and Use Comfort of Selected Spaces in Housing Estates Considering Contemporary Needs of Local Communities

The article addresses the issue of broadly understood accessibility in common and public spaces within housing estates, in relation to the needs of local communities. The ongoing social and generational changes are forcing a different perspective on the needs of users, including people with mobility problems and families with children. The approach to this issue is outlined in the resolutions of the European Parliament, which are driving spatial changes occurring in cities. For many European cities, demographic changes are a key issue for their development. Europe is becoming a continent of third age people - aging societies. (...). There is an increasing individualization of people's behaviour, needs and mobility, which are influencing a new approach to shaping the functional and spatial structures of cities and thinking about the future of European cities. (Lubus, 2014, p. 37).

Many Polish cities are conducting an information campaign about what a properly functioning public space is in relation to users including those with temporary or permanent disabilities (Benek, Labus p.25). The goal is to stimulate care and investment, encourage engagement in building identity, and foster a sense of integration within the local community. Public space should offer residents a variety of social functions and be aesthetic, well-connected, easily accessible, and well-organized (b.a. Poradnik, pp. 5, 6).

The aim of the article is to present the results of research on the standard of residential areas regarding the accessibility of public spaces in selected parts of housing estates. The authors of the paper conducted a study of the accessibility of selected objects and spaces in Krakow and Warsaw housing developments from the second half of the 20th century. Social spaces with an integrative function and public spaces connecting important service points like access roads to elements of the housing estate structure were analysed.

Comfort of use of selected areas located inside the Krowodrza Górka Housing Estate and Nowogrzegórzecka Housing Estate in Krakow was analysed. Their accessibility was assessed using two complementary research methods. A site visit, on the basis of which self-observations of the area were made and research routes were mapped, and an analysis of the accessibility of services and recreation areas made using an age simulation suit. Diagnosis was made regarding the quality of the equipment in common and publicly accessible spaces that reduce urban planning barriers. Conclusions were drawn regarding the viability and safety of the selected social spaces for the study.

In the Warsaw neighbourhoods of Chomiczówka and Sadyba, access between the service and recreation spaces to the surrounding buildings, bus stop, service facility and parking lots was analysed. The study took into account all needed infrastructure elements of system looking towards disability needs.

As a result of the analysis, it can be concluded that the common spaces selected for the study as well as publicly accessible spaces are often not adapted in the needs of the aging population and other vulnerable users. Many urban barriers limit the independence of the elderly in traversing the route of access to services and recreational spaces.

Today, residents are increasingly paying attention to the need for the proximity of shared spaces that foster the development of neighbourhood bonds. This is especially true for older people, who express the need for access to communal spaces, including those for recreation.

Pacholak Adam
MSc.
University of Wrocław,
Faculty of Historical and Pedagogical Sciences, Wrocław, Poland

adam.pacholak@uwr.edu.pl

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Building Together: Infill Housing and Church Construction in 1980s Wrocław as Forms of Community Architecture

The phenomenon of infill housing (so-called plomby) developed in Wrocław during the deep economic and political crisis of the 1980s offers a compelling example of community-driven architecture in a time of institutional breakdown. As the state withdrew from mass housing production, citizens—particularly young families—organized themselves into small cooperatives, often tied to workplaces. These groups undertook the planning and construction of their own homes, transforming urban voids into vibrant micro-communities. This grassroots movement resulted in hundreds of new buildings, often situated in historic tenement districts near the city centre, contributing to both architectural renewal and social resilience.

At the same time, a parallel form of bottom-up architectural activity emerged in the construction of Catholic churches in new housing estates. These churches, funded and physically built by parish communities, were often ambitious postmodern structures that stood in contrast to the monotony of state-built housing blocks. Beyond their religious function, they included libraries, lecture rooms, and screening halls—services that were otherwise absent from public infrastructure. In this way, parish churches became vital civic spaces, supporting both spiritual and cultural needs.

Both infill cooperatives and parish church communities represent decentralized, citizen-led responses to the failures of the late socialist state. They reflect two distinct but complementary forms of community architecture, grounded in collective effort, local agency, and shared spatial goals. Despite their different ideological underpinnings—religious versus civic—their architectural outcomes often overlapped in purpose: to provide not just shelter, but meaning, dignity, and community.

This paper tries to analyse two case studies: Parish of the Blessed Virgin Mary Queen of Peace and infill of Downton-Press Cooperative by Sienkiewicza Street in Wrocław, draws on oral history interviews with former cooperative members, architects, clergy, and residents, supplemented by press and archival research. In the absence of systematic documentation from state or architectural offices, these personal accounts become critical for understanding how such projects came into being, what obstacles were encountered, and how decisions—architectural and logistical—were made. Testimonies reveal how both religious and cooperative communities organized labour, negotiated access to land and materials, and shaped the final built form according to shared visions and practical constraints.

Key questions arise: What differentiated the religious from the cooperative communities in terms of their architectural aspirations and organization? How did each influence the architect's role? How were building materials sourced in an economy marked by scarcity? And finally, what can we learn from the realizations of the 1980s, built in perpetual crisis?

Ultimately, the paper argues that these architectural initiatives could be seen as grassroots, created not only alternative forms of spatial production but also models of social and economic engagement with the built environment. In today's context of housing precarity and social fragmentation, these examples from 1980s Wrocław offer a powerful precedent for thinking about architecture as a civic practice—one that responds directly to collective needs and fosters long-term community resilience.

Pagonis Athanosios
DSc, PhD, Eng., Associate Professor
National Technical University of Athens,
School of Architecture, Athens, Greece

tpagonis@arch.ntua.gr

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Research by Design as tool for building community: Lessons from Athens Lycabettus Hill

The NEB initiative comes in a critical moment to highlight a new role for Architecture. In the 1920s, at the time of the historical Bauhaus, the aspiration for Architecture was to respond to the challenges of the Age of Modernity in delivering a methodology for mass town-building and dwelling. Today, it is not so about designing buildings. It is more about using the creative and synthetic thinking of architecture to devise innovative solutions for addressing complex problems of our productive and regulatory system. Most notably this is exemplified by the climate crisis and the pursuit of sustainability in all of its evolving manifestations. And most importantly it is about building commitment between different actors and interests for working out these problems together. In this sense, the meaning of beautiful as one of the three pillars of NEB does not allude to aesthetics. It alludes to collaborative architectural action and its inclusive outcome which is the building of community. The ideas behind the NEB initiative are not all new. The concepts of 'urban innovation' and 'resilience' have long infiltrated the policy discussions about planning and management of cities highlighting the importance of transcending disciplinary boundaries, promoting collaboration and participation and utilizing existing resources in different ways. Perhaps the novelty of the NEB is that this is now actually called for the first time Architecture!

The paper discusses the capacity of Research by Design methodology as a tool for building community in the sense attributed to it by NEB. It brings forth an example of the management of an important green space of Athens, Lycabettus Hill. Lycabettus Hill is an important landmark of the centre of Athens whose identity has evolved in complementary way to the development of the city from the 19th century until today. The Program for the Regeneration and Activation of Lycabettus was launched by the Municipality of Athens in 2018 at the aftermath of urban austerity reaching out to different institutional stakeholders but also citizens to give their contribution for developing an open space framework for the Hill in a collaborative way. The School of Architecture of Athens was asked to provide a Research by Design methodology highlighting selected themes upon which debating and input from different stakeholders could be assembler, what we can call building a design community for the Hill. The program which was supported by the 100Resilient Cities Initiative focused on issues of mobility, integration of the Hill in the urban surroundings, sustainable environmental management and ecological design. Today, 7 years later, we will trace back the impact of this initiative and its outcomes. Some of them include delivering anti erosion works, launching of an international design competition for a new panoramic square at the Hill top, restoration of the open-air landmark modernist theatre and some improvements of urban governance but also several downfalls. Last but not least we will discuss how the approach of Research by Design has fed into educational processes by presenting past and ongoing studio work prepared by architectural students at the School of Architecture.

The experience of Lycabettus shows that the path of achieving beautiful -in the sense of inclusive- design outcomes through building community is not always easy and certainly requires more time and efforts. However, the reward upon solidifying and owning the city's public space is worth it.

Pavliuk Nataliia
MSc
Lviv Polytechnic National University,
Lviv, Ukraine

natalya.pavluk13@gmail.com

Kryvoruchko Yuriy
Professor, DSc, PhD, Eng. Arch.
Bialystok University of Technology
Lviv Polytechnic National University,
Lviv, Ukraine

yurikryv@gmail.com

Pavliuk Yustyna
Msc. Student
Lviv Polytechnic National University,
Lviv, Ukraine

jastinpavluyk@gmail.com

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Architectural Solutions for Community Space for the Rehabilitation of Veterans, People with Limited Mobility and Youth in a Football Academy

In modern architectural discourse, the creation of inclusive environments that not only meet the physical needs of users, but also form social connections, psycho-emotional balance and collective identity is increasingly relevant. For military personnel with amputations, visual impairments, combat participants with spinal cord injuries and Paralympians, it is extremely important to create a functional and ergonomic architectural environment with the possibilities of their rehabilitation. The designed football academy (where injuries, fractures, ligament ruptures are also possible) provides spaces and design focused on adaptive rehabilitation.

Such an environment creates a unique intersection of experiences: temporarily injured young athletes and veterans with permanent physical losses can simultaneously be part of a joint recovery process, forming new models of empathy. On the one hand, this is movement, collective actions and development, and on the other hand, therapeutic and social influence, the psychology of interaction, the tactility of materials and the symbolism of images. The principles of Universal Design are combined with the concept of a therapeutic environment (healing environment), which is based on the neuropsychological impact of spatial parameters on a person's emotional state. The spatial composition of the academy is focused on horizontal connections: instead of hierarchical axes, a "network" model is used here — clusters with different openness that stimulate movement, interaction and autonomous observation. Navigation is built on the principle of the phenomenology of place: space is read through a sequential change in materiality, light and acoustics. The transition from active to quiet areas includes not only a change in function, but also the rhythm of the surface, gradations of lighting and a variety of acoustic properties of materials.

The color palette is based on the affectivity of the impact: pale green, gray-blue shades activate the parasympathetic nervous system, contributing to calmness and recovery. Color is used not only as a decorative element, but also as a tool of orientation and semiotics – marking transitions, functional intersection areas, gathering places.

Interior solutions take into account somatic memory and corporeality: furniture with soft edges, variable seat heights, inclusive tactile surfaces (porous, warm-to-the-touch materials) work to reduce muscle tension, a sense of control over the body and trust in the environment. Adaptive simulators, specialized handrails and stabilizing platforms are important, allowing veterans with amputees to train muscle memory in a safe environment.

Acoustic comfort – critical for people with sensory hypersensitivity or PTSD – is achieved through a combination of soft finishes, sound-absorbing materials and variable acoustics in areas of group and individual activity. Social integration is embedded in the formation of spatial scenarios: zones of joint leisure and cross-group participation are provided – for example, mini-teams in which Paralympians, children, young athletes and veterans create a joint project or game. It is through joint activity in a controlled space that the most effective rehabilitation takes place, based on a sense of belonging, co-creation and mutual respect. Thus, the football academy acts not only as a sports facility, but also as a platform for social renewal and cohesion. Designing a space with the involvement of psychological, interior and material-environmental factors involves not only the presence of different users, but above all the transformation of their experience to create a community. This corresponds to the values of the New European Bauhaus – ecology, beauty and inclusion – and opens new horizons for architecture as a social tool for the rehabilitation of vulnerable groups of the population.

Pavliv Andriy
Professor, DSc, PhD, Eng. Arch.
Lviv Polytechnic National University,
Institute of Architecture and Design,
Lviv, Ukraine

andrii.p.pavliv@lpnu.ua

Kvasnytsya Roksolyana
DSc, PhD, Eng., Associate Professor
Department of Visual Design and Art
Lviv Polytechnic National University,
Lviv, Ukraine

roksoliana.b.kvasnytsia@lpnu.ua

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New Approaches to the Restoration of Industrial Cities of Ukraine Using the Example of Chornomorsk, Odessa Region

The war in Ukraine has led to numerous human and material losses, with the construction industry suffering significant damage, having partially lost its raw material base and production capacities (Serhiiuk, I. and Kalakoski, I. 2023). The reconstruction of Ukraine should not be about returning to the pre-war state, but rather about creating a new, modern, innovative, and environmentally friendly environment (Li, C. 2023).

Modern cities, especially industrial ones, are among the main sources of environmental pollution (Hatuka, Tali.2017). The creation of an environmental safety system is now a new component of national security.

Russia's war against Ukraine will have numerous negative consequences for the sustainable development of Ukrainian cities. As a result, the spatial development plans of industrial cities have been disrupted, along with plans for modernization, improving the quality of life, and green transformation (Horbliuk, S., Brovko, O., & Kudyn, S. 2022).

One striking example of an industrial city in southern Ukraine is Chornomorsk. It clearly illustrates the problems of Ukrainian cities that were formed during the Soviet modernist era to serve industrial monofunctions (Balan A.A. 2024). The city has distinct zoning: industrial areas are located along the estuary, residential areas — along the sea, with a wide green buffer zone between them. Although Chornomorsk is a young city, the territory it occupies has a centuries-old history.

The wide range of development problems in Chornomorsk is rooted in systemic issues related to urban planning approaches of the 20th and 21st centuries: modernist urban planning of the socialist era and neoliberal urban planning under the market economy of recent decades. The strict division into functional zones creates significant transport and social problems — segregation and hindrance to the formation of a cohesive urban territorial community.

The micro-district approach to the development of Chornomorsk's residential areas was based on positive ideas: autonomy from the rest of the city, with residential territorial units including their own hospitals, clinics, schools, and kindergartens. However, this planning method has a key flaw: the free or semi-free placement of individual buildings and structures throughout the area leads to a blurring of boundaries between public spaces such as streets and squares, and semi-private courtyard areas.

Another systemic issue in the development of industrial cities in Ukraine is the dominance of the neoliberal approach to urban planning in recent decades. As a result, social and environmental issues, as well as the needs of local residents, are often ignored. The core principle of neoliberal theory is maximum profit based on maximum possible growth. Under these conditions, Ukrainian cities have turned into arenas of chaotic, unregulated development of free plots — both in city centers and peripheral zones.

According to the ideology of restoring industrial cities in a post-carbon reality, we view urban space as a space for people, not for machines — a place where people live, work, and relax in one area, with important infrastructure located within walking distance.

The key principles of the proposed concept are aimed at creating a "livable" urban environment, meaning high-quality, comfortable, safe, and attractive urban development. These principles include:

1. Functional diversity
2. Variety of forms
3. Morphological and functional flexibility
4. Human scale of buildings and planning units
5. Formation of local communities and identities
6. Bringing people closer to nature
7. City resilience to climate change
8. Encouraging citizen communication
9. Promoting physical activity among residents

Pekarchuk Oksana
PhD Eng. Arch.
University of Zielona Góra,
Institute of Architecture and Urban Planning,
Zielona Góra, Poland

o.pekarchuk@aiu.uz.zgora.pl

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WAPW-TAB pilot project as a new initiative to integrate school and academic education

Underground transport facilities play an important role in shaping sustainable urban mobility and optimising the use of space in large cities. Lviv is a historic city with a large number of narrow streets and densely built-up areas, so its underground transport infrastructure is underdeveloped. The few existing underground facilities play an important role in urban mobility, and the question of the feasibility of their development becomes even more urgent as the population and traffic load grow. In general, underground passages and pedestrian tunnels, underground car parks and underground engineering infrastructure form the underground transport spaces in Lviv.

Underground solutions can help solve the problem of a significant shortage of parking spaces. The city authorities considered the possibility of building 11 underground car parks in the central part of Lviv. However, none of them have been built. It is advisable for Lviv to adopt the positive experience of other European cities in the multifunctional use of underground space. The underground parkings built in the last decade are located within the structure of multi-family residential buildings or public buildings (mainly shopping centres). Modern urbanism in the context of an armed conflict requires the construction and adaptation of underground car parks to perform the functions of civil protection structures, equipped on the basis of the current DBN B.2.2-5:2023. For the effective use of car parks, the following elements should be taken into account: ventilation system, sanitary facilities, fire safety, reinforced flooring and enclosing structures, evacuation, and barrier-free access. The combination of aesthetics, safety and functionality is fully in line with the New European Bauhaus concept and ensures the sustainability of the urban environment.

There are currently 14 pedestrian tunnels in Lviv, mostly on busy motorways. Two are closed due to emergency conditions. In addition, the majority of pedestrian tunnels are in poor condition: broken steps, signs of wetting of structures, dampness, poor ventilation, low lighting, no ramps or very steep slopes and bad aesthetics. As a result, some pedestrians ignore these crossings and cross the road in places not intended for this purpose, creating dangerous situations on the roads. The Lviv City Council is aware of this problem and is implementing a barrier-free environment strategy. As a result, the Executive Committee approved the duplication of 4 underground crossings with above-ground ones (Lviv City Council, 2024), and recently modernised the crossing at Mytna Square, including the installation of mechanical lifts. In addition, 7 underground pedestrian crossings are currently duplicated by regulated or unregulated overpasses (Lviv City Council, 2024). Some of Lviv's public buildings are connected by underground passages, allowing them to be used as shelters. For example, three buildings of the Lviv Polytechnic and the canteen are connected by a system of underground passages covering an area of approximately 1200 m2 and over 300 metres in length (R. Tyshchenko-Lamansky, 2022). Lviv has a unique opportunity to apply New European Bauhaus values to the transformation of underground passages and pedestrian tunnels into multifunctional, inclusive, comfortable and aesthetically pleasing public spaces. This requires an interdisciplinary approach (architectural, technical, environmental, socio-economic). It is possible to combine transit and safety functions with spaces for recreation, mini-exhibitions or libraries, street art and temporary events. This will help to solve the problem of the isolation of underground spaces and their perception as transit zones, and will stimulate the formation of social ties and promote integration into city life. It is advisable to involve city residents in the design of these spaces through open discussions and design hackathons.

Peterson Liberty
PhD candidate in Fine Arts
Athens School of Fine Arts, Athens, Greece

libertypeterson@yahoo.gr

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CITY LIGHTS - The Creation of a New Space Perception through Light

László Moholy-Nagy in his text “New Vision: Abstract of an Artist” presents the basic principles of light management (L. Moholy-Nagy, 1946, p.50). These principles had a great influence on artists of his time, as well as on later artists. The Russian Suprematists and Constructivists and the Bauhaus artists, with the intention of creating an art that would be an example of twentieth-century modernity, used new media, including electricity. In the 1930s, László Moholy-Nagy observed that he could no longer imagine the nightlife of a big city without the varied play of electric advertisements and that the flashing letters on the facades of shops and the rotating-colored electric lamps, all constitute elements of a new field of expression for new creative artists (Sandler, 1999, p.10).

László Moholy-Nagy’s prophecy was fulfilled in the 1960’s by a significant number of new artists worldwide, who began to experiment with unconventional materials, discovering among them the neon, which in that decade began to be widely used in advertising. With the growing recognition of Pop Art, attitude towards the use of advertising and commercial promotion techniques began to change. Two revolutions had taken place: one in production, with the introduction of computerized automation, and the second in mass communications. The result was a post-industrial or consumer economy, an affluent society defined by a plethora of commodities produced by the new technology of computers and fueled by the newly widespread mass media (Sandler, 1999, p.38). There were many artists who began to incorporate neon into their visual works, including Nam June Paik, Otto Piene, Martial Rayse, Dan Flavin, Chryssa and Stephen Antonakos. Neon enabled artists to define space, indicate volume and design on an architectural scale through interventions in interior and exterior space.

László Moholy-Nagy stated that “there is an unconscious creativeness in the way modern man has lighted up the night. How I’ve loved the city lights” (S. Moholy-Nagy, 1969, p.244). László Moholy-Nagy’s light experiments paved the way for other artists who worked with light, including Bruce Nauman, Robert Irwin, Olafur Eliasson, James Turell, Spencer Finch and Jennifer Steinkamp, Doug Aitken and James Welling. These artists demonstrated that it is possible to create a fluid architecture by expanding the concept of space. Same as László Moholy-Nagy was excited in painting directly with light in space, by projecting light and color on various surfaces and making color plastic, thus creating an excitement to the viewer, which is not aroused by two dimensional paintings (S. Moholy-Nagy, 1969, p.72), and was one of the first to introduce lamps into his work to create new spaces. This way of managing light is also prominent at the works of Doug Aitken, who creates a fluid architecture, and Olafur Eliasson, who uses projections that overwhelm the viewer and contain an element of plasticity.

The city with its lights, from simple lamps to neon advertising signs, was a basic material for many later artists and created a completely different environment that continues to exert a great artistic influence. Following the work of László Moholy-Nagy, the “city lights” from their simplest version as a material to their complex version through the element of plasticity, inherent in the light they produce, continue to offer a wide range of artistic experimentation.

Piechowiak Maja
MSc. Eng. Arch.
Warsaw University of Technology,
Faculty of Architecture, Warsaw, Poland

maja.piechowiak@pw.edu.pl

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1. Debord, G. (2006). Społeczeństwo spektaklu oraz Rozważania o społeczeństwie spektaklu. Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy

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Architecture as the Scenography of the Urban Spectacle: Urban Space in Relation to Social and Cultural Needs

The human being does not exist in isolation but is shaped through relationships with others within specific spatial and temporal contexts. In this regard, architecture acts not as a backdrop but as an active participant in human affairs. Architectural space becomes a stage where everyday life takes place: people form relationships, experience conflicts and live out their realities. The city serves as a dynamic scenography, offering a flexible structure that invites users to participate in and shape their narrative. In this way, the urban space becomes a theatre in which everyone can find their place, both as actors and spectators. An interesting example of this spatial conceptualization is the Parc de la Villette in Paris (Bernard Tschumi, 1987). Based on the notion of a cinematic script and montage, it integrates recreational, cultural and educational functions while maintaining formal flexibility. Tschumi approached architecture as a tool of narration—space is organized as a network of "events" composed of various urban activities, allowing each individual to create their own reality.

The understanding of the city as a stage and architecture as scenography finds theoretical roots in the philosophical thought of the twentieth century. Guy Debord, in The Society of the Spectacle (1967), argued that social life under late capitalism transforms into an endless spectacle where urban space becomes a site for consumption of images and social roles. Henri Lefebvre, in The Right to the City (1968) and The Production of Space (1974), asserted that space is not a life backdrop but a reality filled with power struggles and meanings. Similarly, Walter Benjamin, in his unfinished The Arcades Project explored the city as a labyrinth of experiences and a performative space where architecture and everyday life intertwine in the spectacle of urban existence.

Both film and theatre scenography enhance the storytelling process, create emotional engagement and emphasize the context of events. Analogously, architecture is to create spaces, strengthen social bonds and collaboration. A place, therefore, becomes more than just a point in space. It gains meaning, identity and depth. It becomes an "actor," supporting specific relationships and values. This idea is reflected in the conceptual project Cinematic Bridge (1988) by Diller + Scofidio, which envisioned a bridge serving both as transportation infrastructure and as a performative space. It expresses the concept of the city as a site of bodily and emotional experiences—one that not only connects points in space but also fosters relationships. Thus, the city as a stage of everyday life acquires a performative dimension—it becomes a space of experience, expression, and individual identification. Christian de Portzamparc developed this idea in the Cité de la Musique (Paris, 1995). The complex of buildings dedicated to music not only build social interaction through its spatial organization but also reflects the essence of cultural openness and accessibility. It invites users to engage in activities. In this context, the spectator is no longer a passive recipient but a co-creator. This concept is also well illustrated by the 8 House (Copenhagen, 2010) by BIG, where residential and commercial architecture intertwines within a spiralling structure that encourages neighbourly interactions. This design dissolves boundaries between private and communal spaces, reinforcing everyday social ties and fostering a sense of community.

Parks, squares, community centres, and libraries become the scenography of spaces where human relationships with the environment take centre stage. Like film or theatre scenography, architectural space frames everyday life, strengthening social bonds and shaping collective identity.

Pieńkowski Jakub
MSc Eng. Arch.
Warsaw University of Technology,
Faculty of Architecture, Warsaw, Poland

jakub.pienkowski@pw.edu.pl

Strzelecki Filip
MSc Eng. Arch.
Warsaw University of Technology,
Faculty of Architecture, Warsaw, Poland

filip.strzelecki@pw.edu.pl

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Assessing the Role of Common Spaces in Suburban Single-Family Housing: Insights from Student Design Proposals in Warsaw's Ursynów District

The phenomenon of ex-urbanisation, currently observed in the suburbs of many Polish cities - particularly in Warsaw - highlights the adverse impact this process has on the aesthetic quality of the landscape and the lack of functional diversity in suburban areas. The development of single-family housing estates, often located on former agricultural land, typically excludes the provision of shared public spaces for residents. This is due to various factors, including planning practices based on the administrative subdivision of land parcels. As a result, post-agricultural plots are filled with monotonous, low-density housing that rarely incorporates spaces intended to foster neighbourhood communities.

In response to this condition, we proposed a design studio assignment for our students, asking them to develop suburban layouts for single-family housing estates inspired by the principles of New Urbanism. These projects referenced traditional settlement typologies, drawing from the spatial and social characteristics of small towns and rural villages. The exercise aimed to explore the potential for integrating agricultural and social traditions within contemporary suburban development.

The projects were developed in two locations within Warsaw's Ursynów district—Kabaty and Jeziorki Północne. The envisioned suburban model emphasizes pedestrian-friendly environments (walkability) and ensures that small-scale services, meeting places, and recreational areas are accessible within a five-minute walking radius. Navigability is enhanced by the inclusion of visual and functional landmarks, while the layout of streets and pathways offers residents multiple route options and promotes permeability.

The growing movement toward improving the quality of life in mono-functional suburban zones is increasingly referred to as a process of retrofitting suburbs to embody a small-town character. In this context, retrofitting refers to spatial and functional interventions aimed at transforming fragmented, car-dependent developments into more cohesive, community-oriented environments.

The student projects in Ursynów proposed allocating portions of the estate to green public spaces, including playgrounds, sports fields, outdoor gyms, community gardens, and rain gardens. Such interventions allow suburban neighbourhoods to evolve into vibrant local centers, fostering community engagement and offering opportunities for social interaction through shared activities near one's place of residence.

Another strategy for enhancing functional diversity in suburban areas involves integrating new residential developments with existing agricultural lands and collaborating with local farmers. This approach also serves to limit urban sprawl and counteract processes of de-urbanization. At the metropolitan scale, such integration could contribute to the creation of a Continuous Productive Urban Landscape (CPUL)—a concept rooted in agricultural urbanism. In the case of Ursynów, this system would serve three core functions: productive (e.g., urban farms and private gardens), ecological (e.g., wildlife corridors and waterway restoration), and social (e.g., spaces with educational and community-building potential).

At the local scale, agricultural integration could be realized through community spaces dedicated to the exchange and processing of agricultural products—such as freestanding pavilions or farmers' markets. These structures could serve as important social nodes, strengthening local identity, shortening food supply chains, and enhancing ecological resilience. Additionally, they could function as urban attractors, drawing residents from other parts of the city to experience local traditions and purchase regionally produced goods.

An illustrative example of a suburban model informed by agricultural urbanism is the Oosterwold district near Amsterdam, designed by MVRDV, where low-density residential development is closely interwoven with agricultural production and shared community spaces, fostering a renewed sense of place and collective identity.

Płóciennik Maria
Eng. Arch.
Warsaw University of Technology,
Faculty of Architecture, Warsaw, Poland

01184511@pw.edu.pl

Tylkowska-Słyk Karolina
DSc, PhD, Eng. Arch., Associate Professor
Warsaw University of Technology,
Faculty of Architecture, Warsaw, Poland

karolina.tulkowska@arch.pw.edu.pl

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Shaping Social Living: Applying the NEB Compass to European Residential Design Trends

Residential architecture in Europe is undergoing significant transformation, shaped by the climate crisis, demographic shifts, and evolving lifestyles. Increasingly, the focus is on sustainable, inclusive, and aesthetically pleasing design—principles identified by the New European Bauhaus (NEB) as foundations for future construction. Within this framework, the NEB Compass serves as both a tool for evaluating existing developments and a guide for shaping new ones toward environmentally responsible, socially engaging, and beautiful living environments [1].

Today residents are becoming more environmentally conscious, showing interest in both sustainable construction methods and the design of shared spaces that foster community and cooperation [2].

Based on an analysis of the European residential market, multifamily housing investments can be broadly divided into three segments: economy, premium, and luxury, each reflecting different approaches to communal space design.

In economy developments, shared areas are functional and minimal, often limited to corridors, small green patches, and basic play areas. While some responses to climate concerns appear – like water retention features or patches of greenery – these spaces rarely foster meaningful social interaction [3].

Premium segment mark a shift. Communal areas become integrated into daily life, with coworking spaces, internal courtyards, and lobbies with reception desks becoming common. Attention is paid to lighting, acoustics, and comfort. Outdoor areas are more structured and support a stronger social dimension [4].

Luxury projects go further by using shared spaces to craft identity and exclusivity. Amenities like wellness zones, rooftop gardens, cinemas, and libraries are not only functional but also expressive of lifestyle and mood. Materials and design details are carefully curated to evoke atmosphere. These spaces often create enclosed, private “micro-worlds” that intentionally contrast with the surrounding urban environment [5].

Across all segments, there is a clear movement toward designing shared spaces that build community and contribute to well-being. Increasingly, these areas are flexible, multi-sensory, and inclusive, with a focus on natural materials, greenery, acoustic comfort, and places for rest. This reflects the holistic values promoted by the NEB Compass:

- Inclusivity, by making spaces accessible to different age, cultural, and economic groups;
- Sustainability, by encouraging resource-sharing, nature integration, and intelligent management;
- Aesthetics, by fostering environments that are visually, emotionally, and sensorially harmonious [6].

The NEB Compass offers a universal framework to guide this shift, but realizing its full potential demands more than strong design. It calls for shared commitment from all stakeholders—developers, architects, policymakers, and residents. Only through cross-disciplinary collaboration and a unified understanding of the importance of community- focused design can we ensure that new residential environments improve quality of life rather than becoming exercises in surface-level innovation. Transforming the built environment requires both imaginative design and a collective dedication to a more just, beautiful, and sustainable future [7].

Pogwizd Monika
Eng. Arch.
Warsaw University of Technology,
Faculty of Architecture, Warsaw, Poland

monika.pogwizd.stud@pw.edu.pl

Gawell Ewelina
PhD Eng. Arch.
Warsaw University of Technology,
Faculty of Architecture, Warsaw, Poland

ewelina.gawell@pw.edu.pl

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Architectural Innovations in Europe: The Interplay of National Regulations and Technology for 3DCP

Introducing new technologies to diverse and non-homogeneous markets is associated with the need to meet equally differentiated legal conditions. Among these markets is the European Union, a community of 27 countries from the European continent with an inherent multifaceted regulatory landscape. The harmonization of law, gradually implemented within the EU - despite the scope of the Union's possible legal interference in the legislation of its members being a constant subject of discussion - is regarded as contributing positively to aspects such as economic growth and product safety [1]. Thus, an attempt was made to compare standards that have already been unified to those that still vary across the countries. These countries, after all, differ in their geographic location, their history, and their culture. Hence, a variety of factors need to be considered during the design process, as well as the associated variety of legal conditions that enable the introduction of new technologies and products, including those dealing with concrete, such as 3D concrete printing (3DCP).

Concrete itself is produced in a way that emits relatively high levels of CO_2 into the atmosphere, and due to its structural properties, it is rather challenging to find a substitute in many applications. Therefore, it seems all the more important to look for a sustainable production technology. To develop a new universal product that - manufactured using an innovative process that 3DCP is - could be introduced into EU Member States, it is necessary to carry out research into possible components that could be produced this way. However, as Charles Eames suggested, "design depends largely on constraints" — "the sum of all constraints", so surprisingly, a starting point for this research could emerge during the study of regional restrictions and legal conditions.

For instance, these ideas may arise from climate-specific regulations such as recommendations for shading devices, typical for Southern European countries [2], or from regionally distinctive U-value limits, which may differ even within the same country between specific regions [3]. Also, some of the recommendations related to specific weather or seismic conditions may suggest employing specific structural systems [4]. Moreover, even aspects such as average salinity and temperature of seawater, varying between regions in the Baltic and Mediterranean areas, could have different impacts on concrete [5] and could demand the usage of specialized mixtures or protections. Analysing this complexity of variables influencing material performance can reveal key interdependencies and yield interesting conclusions. The possibilities are almost limitless.

Based on these diverse conditions, it is possible to reflect not only on solutions for countries where specific issues are regulated by law but also in those where the problem may exist to a lesser degree or in a different guise. Attempts to make such comparisons are particularly crucial in the face of rapid and dynamic climate change. By adapting insights from other regions to local conditions, it becomes possible to discover surprising and well-balanced solutions, as it is widely acknowledged that learning from each other presents a valuable opportunity. Thus, the legal and practice-related recommendations in different regions, while presenting an obstacle to a purely uniform approach, can also be a significant source of inspiration in the design process.

Poklewski-Koziełł Damian
PhD Eng. Arch.
Cracow University of Technology,
Faculty of Architecture, Cracow, Poland

damian.poklewski-koziell@pk.edu.pl

Szczerek Eliza
PhD Eng. Arch.
Cracow University of Technology,
Faculty of Architecture, Cracow, Poland

eszczerek@pk.edu.pl

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1. Becker, S., Naumann, M., & Moss, T. (2017). Between coproduction and commons: Understanding initiatives to reclaim urban energy provision in Berlin and Hamburg. Urban Research & Practice, 10(1), 63–85. https://doi.org/10.1080/17535069.2017.1276150

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Cartographies of Care: Community Knowledge and Environmental Agency in Post-War Housing Estates

This article presents the framework and partial findings of the WECARE, CREA-CULT-2023-COOP research project, funded by the European Commission. The aim of the project is to develop a replicable methodology for collaboration with local communities in the field of environmental protection. The initiative is being carried out in three partner cities—Barcelona, Bucharest, and Kraków—within post-war housing estates. These areas, often marginalized in public discourse, have been treated as laboratories of contemporary community-based and environmental practices, where social engagement and ecological awareness intersect in particularly meaningful ways. They are also representative of broader urban challenges across Europe, including aging infrastructure, social fragmentation, and uneven access to environmental benefits.

The starting point of the project is the recognition of environmental resources (Gandy, 2019)—such as residential greenery, air quality, water, and access to public space—as commons that require collective care and responsibility. Drawing on commons theory and the practices of commoning, the project focuses not only on diagnosing local problems but also on initiating processes of self-organization, co-decision-making, and strengthening local agency (Becker et al., 2017; Heinrich Böll Foundation, 2016). Commoning is understood here as a dynamic process of creating and sustaining communities through cooperation, negotiation, sharing of resources, and mutual care for the common good. These practices are particularly valuable in urban areas where top-down policies have often failed to address community-specific needs or to foster long-term resilience.

As part of the project, two-day workshops were conducted with local residents in each housing estate. These meetings provided a space for open expression, exchange of experiences, and reflection on everyday practices of environmental care. In addition to generating rich qualitative data, the workshops also served as a platform for informal learning, knowledge co-creation, and empowerment through collective action. The collected statements were transcribed and subjected to qualitative analysis, which enabled the identification of key themes and challenges present in the daily lives of the studied communities.

The outcome of these activities is a participatory environmental resource map, which functions as both a cognitive and communicative tool. This map, grounded in the principles of critical cartography (Harley, 1989; Kim, 2015), is not merely a representation of physical space, but a reflection of the residents' subjective experiences, emotions, and needs. Critical cartography reveals previously invisible aspects of urban life, challenges dominant narratives, and suggests alternative ways of understanding space. A classical urban planning analysis was conducted beforehand, serving as a complementary, not dominant, element of the research. The integration of both mapping approaches reinforces the potential of collaborative tools in shaping more inclusive and context-sensitive urban strategies. It also opens up new pathways for urban research that centre care, local expertise, and shared responsibility as foundational principles.

The WECARE CREA project aligns with broader efforts to seek new forms of civic participation in urban spatial governance, especially in the context of the climate crisis. It highlights the need to democratize decision-making processes and to recognize local knowledge as an equally valid source of insight and action. In this approach, commoning practices, supported by tools of critical cartography, become not only a means of diagnosis but also a stimulus for lasting social change, building more sustainable, just, and participatory urban futures.

Racoń-Leja Kinga
DSc, PhD, Eng. Arch., Associate Professor
Cracow University of Technology,
Faculty of Architecture, Cracow, Poland

kinga.racon-leja@pk.edu.pl

Szpakowska-Loranc Ernestyna
PhD Eng. Arch.
Cracow University of Technology,
Faculty of Architecture, Cracow, Poland

ernestyna.szpakowska-loranc@pk.edu.pl

Suchoń Filip
PhD Eng. Arch.
Cracow University of Technology,
Faculty of Architecture, Cracow, Poland

filip.suchon@pk.edu.pl

Barnaś Krzysztof
PhD Eng. Arch.
Cracow University of Technology,
Faculty of Architecture, Cracow, Poland

krzysztof.barnas@pk.edu.pl

Klus Krzysztof
MSc. Eng. Arch.
Cracow University of Technology,
Faculty of Architecture, Cracow, Poland

krzysztof.klus@pk.edu.pl

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Kraków Tenement as a Typology of Central European Cities Leading to Tailored Solutions in the FuturHist Research Project

Europe's cultural diversity, which constitutes its richness, has been built up over generations. The identity of the European historical city is an expression of this diversity, but also of togetherness. A centre based on the archetype of diverse public spaces and formed around compact developments, formerly embedded in fortification systems [1]. European cities, despite their differences, share many characteristics. Their common structural element, shaped over the centuries, has been the tenement. The similarity of type was shaped while maintaining a regional or local building tradition using local materials. Differences were shaped by the tenants introducing their own decorative features.

The paper presents the findings of the first phase of the FuturHist research project, carried out by an international consortium and slated for conclusion in the years 2024 and 2027 under the direction of the Accademia Europea di Bolzano, with the participation of the Cracow University of Technology, including, among others, ICOMOS and INTBAU. The project features demonstration sites in four cities - Córdoba, Edinburgh, Linköping and Krakow. The basic type of building selected became a basis for further analyses [2]. At this stage, urban aspects have been a key focus - the architectural and material repetitiveness of buildings - to define a typology. Scalability was intended to support the feasibility of passive and active solutions for retrofitting historic buildings, suitable for their respective climatic areas. The demonstration buildings test a range of innovative, integrated solutions. The final outcome will be the development of an integrated planning toolkit.

In Krakow, a number of aspects concerning the typology of the urban tenement building were studied, going beyond previous research in this area [Bogdanowski [3], Frysztak [4], Makowska [5]]. A number of common features of the archetype were identified - including its morphology, layout and location in the frontage, functional patterns, width of facades, and building elements. The research was extended to analyse accessibility to utilities (for the purposes of site retrofit measures). The similarities were related to the time frame of 1772-1918. Due to these similarities, it was decided to extend the analysis up to 1945. The research made use of GIS-acquired data, conducting a comparative investigation of historical and contemporary maps, including a comparison - in situ within Krakow - of the town house, tenement row house archetypes. Finally, the results were supplemented with census data analyses to determine scalability in Poland. The research showed that the number of such buildings was almost 5%, and, when extended to 1945, up to 16% of Poland's housing stock. The results indicated the need to seek solutions for these extremely valuable building structures, the improvement of whose energy efficiency requires a careful but, in view of such a significance, also a systematic approach.

Ratajczyk Dominika
MSc. Arch.
ATI Architektura Technika Inwestycje,
Warszawa, Poland

dominika.ratajczyk.d@gmail.com

Agnieszka Chudzińska
PhD Eng. Arch
Warsaw University of Technology,
Faculty of Architecture, Warsaw, Poland

agnieszka.chudzinska@pw.edu.pl

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1. Becker, S., Naumann, M., & Moss, T. (2017). Between coproduction and commons: Understanding initiatives to reclaim urban energy provision in Berlin and Hamburg. Urban Research & Practice, 10(1), 63–85. https://doi.org/10.1080/17535069.2017.1276150

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The New European Bauhaus in Practice: Kindergartens as Models of Participatory Architecture, a Manifesto of Inclusivity, Aesthetics and Sustainability

Facing the multifaceted challenges of 'community architecture' requires adaptation to contemporary environmental, social and cultural challenges. The principles of the New European Bauhaus as a participatory initiative, reflected in the described kindergarten buildings, are evident in the sustainable ecological solutions used, which respond to the real needs of local communities and promote a vision of inclusiveness and equal opportunities. The architecture aims not only to educate, but also to support active participation in community life and respect for the natural environment and future generations.

The 'Żółty Słonik' kindergarten in Suwałki, designed by the xystudio studio, is located on the outskirts of the city and neighbours a vast meadow. The building was designed with natural lighting in mind. Large windows, skylights and a garden with edible plants in the patio allow for optimal use of light and ensure contact with nature. The building was constructed with energy efficiency in mind, teaching children respect for nature and responsibility. The building is adapted to the needs of children of different ages and developmental needs, emphasising the importance of integration and accessibility. The heart of the building is a large multifunctional hall lit by glazing from the patio and skylights, conducive to joint activities. Sliding windows allow tables to be placed on the terraces, so that the educational space does not end at the boundaries of the room, but extends towards nature. Lowered roofs ensure that the building does not feel overwhelming and that children feel comfortable.

The designers of the nursery in Ribnica, designed by ARHI-TURA d.o.o., are convinced that a sense of security is a prerequisite for a child's successful development. The kindergarten consists of a simple administrative building surrounded by a more complex structure with rooms for children, each of which is designed with acoustic protection and optimal use of light in mind. This layout, with its playgrounds, promotes community building, perfectly implementing the principle of planning meeting places, as proposed by Denise Scott Brown. The architectural elements in the plan, façade and roof dynamically follow each other, and the glazing faces nature. The inspiration for the zigzag-shaped children's rooms was found in the local urban context, where the houses in the centre of Ribnica follow the road, creating a long spatial sequence with irregular shapes.

The kindergarten building in Meszna, designed by Archikunszt in collaboration with plus8.pl, fits into the undulating mountain landscape, taking advantage of the natural slope of the plot. The irregular shape and roof refer to the surrounding landscape, and the division of space into zones facilitates organisation according to the needs of users, also through the use of different heights for sanitary facilities and barrier-free access to the building. Colourful visual identification allows children to easily distinguish between rooms and functional zones. In addition, the nursery has rooms for remedial and educational activities and sensory integration. The nursery rooms, facing the courtyard, provide a safe environment, separated from the street.

The kindergarten designs perfectly illustrate how architecture can support social processes by creating spaces that are meaningful to the community. Ecological building methods are becoming a glue that combines functionality with the experience of a place that builds bonds, supporting pride in the architectural language of the region. This approach creates spaces for intercultural and intergenerational dialogue, shaping future generations. In the spirit of the New European Bauhaus, the essence of architectural activity is to develop an attitude that evolves in dialogue with the environment, which, in the face of demographic and climate change, requires new solutions, as proposed in the examples cited.

Roggeveen Daan
MSc. Eng. Arch.
MORE Architecture,
Amsterdam, Netherlands

daan@more-architecture.com

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Growing Our Cities from Within: A Collaborative Approach to Urban Densification

Cities around the world are facing an urgent need for more housing. Rather than expanding outward, we must look inward and prioritise inner-city densification. Building new housing within existing urban areas allows us to leverage current infrastructure, amenities, and social structures—ultimately enriching and strengthening the fabric of our cities.(1)

However, developing within city centres is rarely straightforward. The presence of a diverse range of stakeholders—local entrepreneurs, landowners, residents, and investors—often complicates the process. Differing interests, conflicting agendas, and fragmented ownership can slow progress and lead to frustration. Plans outlined in policy documents often collide with the financial realities presented in spreadsheets. As trust deteriorates, projects can stall entirely, creating tension and inertia in already stressed neighbourhoods.

In response to these challenges, MORE Architecture has developed an inclusive design method that brings all stakeholders together to co-create dynamic urban development plans. These plans are designed to evolve over time and adapt to changing needs and insights. At the heart of this method is a collaborative process in workshops around physical models, allowing diverse parties to engage meaningfully in shaping the future of their cities.

Participants in these workshops may include groups of residents with their own vision for public space, landowners with potentially competing interests, and various departments of a local government that do not traditionally work in close coordination. The use of a tangible model as a shared focal point encourages open discussion, collaboration, and consensus building.

The outcomes of this process are distilled into a set of “rules of thumb”: guiding principles that define the spatial quality and intent of the development, without prescribing exact details. These flexible guidelines have already proven successful in several complex urban projects. For example, the City of Amsterdam recently approved an urban plan for the densification of a shopping centre that includes an additional 1,900 housing units - based on these guidelines. (2)

This plan is organised around three key themes: enriching, greening, and connecting the area with its context. Based on extensive spatial exploration, eleven rules of thumb were developed to guide the project. These address elements such as the quality of ground-level spaces, principles for introducing high-rise buildings, integration of green roofs, and the balance of residential and public amenities.

Each rule of thumb includes an overarching ambition, a visual representation of the future vision, and a set of specific spatial guidelines, often illustrated with diagrams. While the plan allows for high-density development, it maintains a focus on liveable streetscapes and a healthy mix of affordable housing and community facilities that enhance the everyday life of residents.

In addition to the rules of thumb, a design guide for architectural quality and a public space framework further define the ambitions for the area. This collaborative and flexible approach to urban planning is increasingly being used by MORE Architecture and is gaining traction in cities across the Netherlands and beyond. (3)

As urban areas confront rising housing demands, complex land ownership, and diverse stakeholder interests, this inclusive and adaptable strategy offers a promising way forward. By shaping our cities from within—together—we can meet the challenges of urban growth with resilience, creativity, and shared purpose.

Rutkowski Jarosław
MSc
Doctoral School of Social Sciences
University of Warsaw, Warsaw, Poland

jd.rutkowski@uw.edu.pl

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The Local Activity Centre in a World of Anxiety. Toward an Architecture of Care

The local activity centre as a place of intergenerational activity focused on the issues of the common world focuses residents around public things. At the same time, it is a form open to multidisciplinary activities, shaping the conditions for good living in the local community, including a community centre, a neighbourhood house, an intergenerational centre. The local activity centre is oriented towards caring for social, natural, and cultural issues. When "care is concern and care" (Heidegger, 2013), the potential for practicing mindfulness and sensitivity is brought out. Then, opening up to the issues of our local world - intertwined globally - requires understanding and caring design of actions with a sense of responsibility and within the framework of sensitivity. Sensitivity "expanding, growing in many directions, along the paths of entanglement in the fabric of the world" (Ingold, 2018) is shaped by the path of movement (thought, concept, implementation), which reveals responsibility, solidarity, relationships in the field of shared actions for the common good. At the same time, the intertwining of the local community, place and person constitutes a triad that supports local experience (Kunce, 2016).

Therefore, in the conditions of the haunting shadow of the Anthropocene, increasing planetary destruction, mental stagnation of politicians, growing social unrest, the local activity centre concerned about the burning problems of the present day animates co-thinking about public affairs and shapes a post-critical attitude (Hodgson, VIIIleghe, Zamojski, 2017). This is an attitude engaged in local and global matters, which is an expression of concern for the common - shared - world. The post-critical attitude is associated with "curiosity, inquisitiveness, the desire to join in and the closeness associated with the joint production of performative knowledge" (Marzec, 2021). It is an affirmative turn toward the world, tenderly embracing it with thinking and acting in the area of concern. Then the local scope of community experiences for public affairs is expanded within education focused on the world (Biesta, 2022).

In this approach, the importance of education is revealed. Education can be seen as "the totality of practices that aim to keep the affairs of this world outside the cycles of consumption and outside the reach of interests based on the use and exchange of values" (Masschelein, Simons, 2015). It is the local activity centre as a learning organization located locally, listening and reading the needs of the wounded world that practices care.

Building such a public organization in a world of anxiety stems from the architecture of care. This architecture serves to "articulate our experience of being in the world and strengthen the sense of reality and subjectivity" (Pallasmaa, 2022). Within this architecture, it is about designing relationships that link the physical environment with human actions and experiences. In this dimension, the aesthetics and architecture of the care environment have enormous potential to create well-being, improve the quality of life of residents. One of the basic assumptions of such architecture is the belief that the constitutive feature of a place is "being between". Therefore, the proposed architecture designs an inter-space, where being-in and being-between are important, where it is important to open up to a space that is both physical and mental.

The aim of the paper is to provide theoretical reflection in the post-critical perspective (Hodgson, Vlieghe, Zamojski, 2017) and place pedagogy (Mendel, 2006) on the local activity centre. At the same time, the proposed presentation is an invitation to think together about building a public organization oriented towards the world and able to stay in touch with this world in the face of pressing contemporary problems.

Rybchynskyi Adrian
MSc. Eng. Arch.
Lviv Polytechnic National University,
Department of Architecture and Design,
Lviv, Ukraine

adrian.o.rybchynskyi@lpnu.ua

Remeshylo-Rybchynska Oresta
Professor, DSc, PhD, Eng. Arch.
Lviv Polytechnic National University,
Department of Architecture and Design,
Lviv, Ukraine

oresta.l.remeshylo-rybchynska@lpnu.ua

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Contemporary Methods of Designing Residential Courtyard Spaces of the 19th–20th Centuries in Lviv in the Context of Social Philosophy

The design of residential courtyard spaces of the 19th–20th centuries in Lviv holds significant importance not only for urban studies but also for social philosophy, as these spaces reflect the social processes occurring within the city. As Auguste Comte noted, the development of humanity progresses through three stages: theological, metaphysical, and positive. The transition to the positive stage requires scientific approaches to solving social issues (Comte, 2001). In the context of designing courtyard spaces in Lviv, this implies the need for methods that take into account social integration and interaction among residents.

Lviv was an international city, home to various ethnic groups including Ukrainians, Poles, Jews, Germans, Armenians, and others. This diversity influenced social ties and shaped the needs of urban spaces—especially courtyards—which had to be inclusive and promote intercultural interaction. The design of such spaces must reflect these characteristics and foster conditions conducive to social integration.

Contemporary methods of designing residential courtyard spaces in Lviv should incorporate principles of social philosophy, promoting equal access for all population groups. In this context, the works of Jan Gehl and Richard Sennett play a crucial role, as they emphasize the importance of creating urban spaces that encourage interaction and reduce social isolation (Gehl, 2010; Sennett, 2012). Urban spaces must be designed in ways that promote integration across social groups and support their engagement.

Historically, courtyard spaces in Lviv evolved from private to public domains. Since the late 20th century, many of these spaces have been paved over, losing their function as zones of socialization. Today, it is essential to restore their social role by creating environments for active recreation, communal engagement, and the support of a healthy community. Contemporary design approaches should include the creation of accessible and comfortable spaces for all age groups, while preserving green areas that promote the harmonious development of residents.

In the process of restoring residential courtyard spaces in Lviv, contemporary design methods aim to balance the preservation of historical features with functionality and social orientation. This involves adapting historical courtyards to modern conditions and incorporating new materials and technologies that do not compromise their architectural integrity. The restoration process should maintain the cultural heritage of the spaces while ensuring comfortable living conditions for residents.

Design strategies include the creation of multifunctional spaces that support both recreational use and social interaction, along with inclusive solutions that ensure accessibility for people with disabilities. These methods also involve using eco-friendly materials to restore green zones and implementing energy-efficient technologies to conserve resources.

Skalimowski Andrzej
PhD
L.&A. Birkenmajer Institute
for the History of Science of the Polish
Academy of Sciences, Warsaw, Poland

a.skalimowski@niaiu.pl

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Civic Participation in the Postwar Rebuilding of Warsaw

The reconstruction of Warsaw was an unprecedented architectural, conservation, and political undertaking. However, it also had a distinctly social dimension, involving citizens from across the country in the effort to revive the Polish capital. This civic mobilization was, on the one hand, a centrally inspired and directed process; on the other, it represented a genuine grassroots movement, motivated by both the pragmatic necessity of rebuilding the city and a desire to participate in a once-in-a-generation national endeavour.

Following the suppression of the Warsaw Uprising and the subsequent systematic destruction of the remaining urban fabric by German forces , nearly 85% of left-bank Warsaw lay in ruins by early 1945. In many districts, such as Śródmieście and Wola, the scale of devastation reached up to 90% of pre-war structures. The symbolic ruins of the city came to represent both a national tragedy and a call to action—necessitating not only the physical reconstruction of urban space but also the restoration of national identity.

In 1945, the Bureau for the Reconstruction of the Capital (Biuro Odbudowy Stolicy, BOS) was established – an institution unique on a global scale, tasked with coordinating not only the technical aspects of reconstruction but also shaping the social and symbolic space of the city . BOS engaged hundreds of architects, urban planners, and engineers, as well as drew on significant public support.

One of the most visible expressions of this support was the phenomenon of social deeds (czyny społeczne) – voluntary, unpaid labour performed by citizens for the public good. Thousands of Warsaw residents and volunteers from other regions participated in clearing rubble, cleaning ruins, transporting materials, and constructing the first provisional buildings. These actions were both practical and symbolic: a gesture of solidarity and collective effort toward rebuilding a “new Warsaw,” a heroic city deliberately destroyed by the German occupier.

Civic engagement, however, was not limited to physical labour. Artists, architects, teachers, and civil servants also contributed to the creation of new cultural institutions, schools, orphanages, and libraries. Many of them – often ideologically distant from communism – saw this as an opportunity to build a modern, egalitarian society. Of particular importance was the reconstruction of the Old Town, seen as an artistic, educational, and national project.

In 1946, the Social Fund for the Reconstruction of the Capital (Społeczny Fundusz Odbudowy Stolicy, SFOS) was created under the slogan “The Whole Nation Builds Its Capital” . This nationwide initiative raised funds for Warsaw’s reconstruction through citizen contributions (not always voluntary), as well as donations from workplaces, institutions, and civic organizations. This mobilization was strongly supported by the state apparatus, which over time led to fatigue and disillusionment among residents of other Polish regions.

Although the People’s Republic of Poland distanced itself from many traditions of the Second Polish Republic, the reconstruction of Warsaw was deeply embedded in national symbolism. It was conceived as the reconstitution of the historical heritage of the national community – an undertaking with a strong integrative function. The social character of the SFOS served to legitimize the new regime by presenting it as based on broad civic support. The Fund also allowed the government to symbolically appropriate the ideological initiative from the pre-war elites and the political émigré community. While the reconstruction process itself was centrally managed – through BOS and the state-party apparatus – the SFOS employed a language of civic participation. Public discourse featured honour rolls of donors, posters, and press and radio announcements designed to foster a sense of community and collective responsibility for the city’s future. In reality, however, decisions were made within a narrow political and expert circle.

In conclusion, social engagement in the reconstruction of Warsaw was a genuine grassroots movement rooted in patriotism, community spirit, and a moral imperative to restore a heroic city. Although it was swiftly co-opted by communist propaganda mechanisms, the immense sacrifice, labour, and solidarity of thousands of ordinary citizens who raised the symbolic city from its ruins cannot be overlooked.

Skaza Maciej
DSc PhD Eng. Arch.
Cracow University of Technology,
Faculty of Architecture, Cracow, Poland

maciej.skaza@pk.edu.pl

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1. Hall, E. T. (1997), Ukryty wymiar, Muza.

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Perception, Space, Community: Architectural Inspirations at the Intersection of Europe and Japan

Contemporary architecture faces the task of creating spaces that are not only functional and aesthetically pleasing but also support the formation of communities by shaping an environment conducive to their existence (and emergence). In the context of the New European Bauhaus initiative—promoting sustainability, aesthetics, and social integration—the reflection on intercultural exchange of spatial paradigms takes on particular significance. Space, understood as a setting for social relationships rather than a neutral backdrop for human activity, plays a crucial role today in processes of integration, identity formation, and the reinforcement of social cohesion. This essay explores the perception of communal space, analysing how inspirations drawn from Japanese culture have influenced European thinking about architecture and the design of meeting places.

The point of departure are the reflections of Edward T. Hall on hidden cultural codes that shape the perception of space (proxemics), and Maria Gołaszewska's concepts concerning multisensory perception of the architectural environment. The experience of space is not limited to visual perception—it also includes auditory, tactile, and kinaesthetic sensations, which together create a complete, emotional experience of place. Within this framework, key concepts from Japanese spatial tradition emerge, such as ma (interval, rhythmic emptiness) and en (intermediary, mediating space), which form the basis for a specific way of shaping the relationship between people and their surroundings. Their significance goes beyond technical spatial solutions, as they subtly operate on the perception of distance and tension between users. Space, thus conceived, does not separate but enables encounters, negotiations, and mutual presence. These fundamental principles of the relationship between the user and the surrounding world also underpin architectural design. The phenomenon of ma points to the value of emptiness as a conscious frame within which interaction can occur, while en highlights the fluid transitions between private and shared space. Both concepts teach that space is not merely architectural matter but a socio-spatial experience shaping human behaviours and relationships.

Bruno Taut played a significant role in fostering sensitivity to the spatial values of Japanese architecture in Europe. His reflections on the Katsura Imperial Villa in Kyoto revealed to Western architects that simplicity of form, harmony with nature, and conscious use of emptiness could offer a valid alternative to European notions of monumentality and ornamentation. In his descriptions, Taut emphasized that Japanese architecture, though seemingly modest, in fact embodied deep social values: flexibility, egalitarianism, intimacy of human relations, and the conscious limitation of individual expression in favour of communal rituals of everyday life. He pointed out that Japanese architecture does not impose itself on the user but discreetly accompanies their actions, supporting the fluid organization of social life. Taut's reflections had a significant influence on the development of minimalist approaches in European architecture, as well as on the formation of modern public spaces open to diverse forms of social activity.

Referring to contemporary analyses of Japan's image in Western culture and studies on the perception of architecture in the context of culturally conditioned reception, this essay shows how intercultural exchange has contributed to the expansion of the European understanding of shared space. The blending of ideas and aesthetics has enabled the development of spatial models that combine functionality with openness to the cultural diversity of users. Incorporating elements from various spatial traditions facilitates the creation of more flexible, multifunctional, and accessible places that foster inclusion of traditionally marginalized groups. Public spaces, thus conceived, become not only arenas of value exchange but also laboratories for contemporary forms of community.

By analysing the relationship between perception and design, this contribution joins a broader discourse on the role of architecture in building community through space. It emphasizes that in times of global challenges—such as aging populations, migration, changing urban lifestyles, and rising expectations for the quality of public space—drawing consciously from intercultural heritage becomes not only a source of aesthetic inspiration but a necessary design tool. In this sense, the dialogue between Europe and Japan serves as an example of how architecture can actively support the values of solidarity, diversity, and social responsibility promoted by the New European Bauhaus initiative. At the same time, this approach enables the creative development of new models of shared space that respond to the dynamically evolving needs of contemporary societies.

Solarek Krystyna
Professor, DSc, PhD, Eng. Arch.
Warsaw University of Technology,
Faculty of Architecture, Warsaw, Poland

krystyna.solarek@pw.edu.pl

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Social responsibility of universities in shaping public spaces. Warsaw University of Technology case study

The history of universities is directly linked to the history of academic cities. Universities constitute an extraordinary place in the city structure; they influence growth and potential and can define and implement innovative solutions that affect individual users and the state of the entire city. In the face of contemporary civilizational challenges, universities can play an important role in undertaking scientific research to respond to these challenges and initiate and stimulate specific actions to improve social security and the fair distribution of goods and services. It can even be called a third mission of a university – a social contribution in cooperation with public institutions and the public-private sector (Wakkee et al., 2019).

The connections between the campus and the city have often been discussed in the literature. However, the focus has usually been on knowledge and technology transfer, the impact of research and development on the city's innovation and economic competitiveness, or functional and social relations in the context of academic life (Mazutti et al., 2020). The advantages of the campus as a place and its role in shaping the public spaces of cities are less well recognised. The internal and external relations of the academic community have changed, and the crises of recent years have revealed new needs, expectations and limitations of city residents. For this reason, the space of the city and campus must also change, and universities have a significant role to play in this process (Sikorski et al., 2020). Due to their assigned social mission, material and human potential, and key location in the city structure, they can become drivers of change, improving the academic community's and residents' quality of life, increasing their safety, and enabling access to necessary areas and services.

Many campuses coherently intertwine with the public spaces of cities, increase their quality, and ensure continuity, complementarity and coherence. The best examples are worldwide, many in the United States, Europe, and some in Poland. It is worth noting that campuses play a special role in city centres and their downtown areas. They are then important elements in building the identity of cities, belonging to their historical heritage. On the other hand, they are then adjacent to areas characterised by many social and functional conflicts. One of these is the Central Campus of the Warsaw University of Technology, located in the historical part of Warsaw, at the junction of the Śródmieście and Mokotów districts. This part of the city has the potential to co-create the so-called "New Centre of Warsaw". This will only happen if the campus is opened to the city, connected to streets and pedestrian routes, green and blue infrastructure is introduced, and traffic is reorganised to prioritise pedestrian and bicycle traffic. A good urban design can help reconcile the needs of the local academic community and the residents of Warsaw. The Spatial Development Concept of the WUT Campus, carried out since 2023 under the author's direction, aims to lead to the creation of such a project. Its initial versions generate intense discussion and show that not everyone is ready to open up to the city and follow contemporary urban concepts.

Sosnova Nadiya
DSc, PhD, Eng. Arch., Associate Professor
Department of Architecture and Design, Lviv Polytechnic National University, Lviv, Ukraine

nadiia.s.sosnova@lpnu.ua

Linda Svitlana
Prof. D.Sc. Ph.D. Eng. Arch.
Lviv Polytechnic National University, Department of Architecture and Design, Lviv, Ukraine
Faculty of Civil Engineering and Architecture, Opole University of Technology, Opole, Poland

svitlana.m.linda@lpnu.ua

Tupis Stepan
DSc, PhD, Eng. Arch., Associate Professor
Lviv Polytechnic National University, Urban Planning & Design Department, Lviv, Ukraine

stepan.p.tupis@lpnu.ua

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Problems and Challenges in Shaping Inclusive Urban Space in Ukraine: a Case Study of Petofi Square in Uzhhorod

This study aims to analyze the possibilities for improving architectural, socio-cultural, and environmental standards of urban space, using the case of the reconstruction of Shandor Petofi Square in the city of Uzhhorod. The area under consideration is a vital transit and social location in the city, and exemplifies a widespread issue: the incompatibility of urban infrastructure with contemporary standards of inclusivity.

Historically, Petofi Square functioned as a triangular-shaped market area until the first third of the 20th century, partially bounded by the Uzh River. Later, it served as a street of general urban significance, accommodating two-lane vehicular traffic. Over the past 12 years, despite its role in transit circulation, the area had increasingly been used for unregulated car parking.

According to the official classification of urban transportation networks, the square holds the status of a transit route. However, field research revealed that its actual use is dominated by car parking and pedestrian transit. A pedestrian flow study conducted in September 2015 showed volumes of up to 115 people/hour on weekdays and up to 195 people/hour on weekends (within the 18:00–19:00 timeframe). These figures underscore the square's urban function as a key pedestrian corridor connecting parts of the city divided by the river.

The main challenges identified in the square's functionality prior to its reconstruction included non-compliance with barrier-free design standards, poor conditions for pedestrian movement, and lack of accessibility for individuals with limited mobility. Most of the area was occupied by vehicles. The sidewalks, only 1.5 meters wide, failed to accommodate bi-directional pedestrian movement or individuals using wheelchairs.

Another evident problem was the lack of greenery, which contradicts modern ecological requirements for public spaces, including transit-oriented zones.

Additionally, the architectural and cultural context of the square was partially lost due to the prioritization of vehicular traffic. Based on the above criteria, the space failed to meet standards of inclusivity and accessibility.

The principal objective of the 2018 reconstruction of Petofi Square was to transform its function from a transport-dominated zone to a pedestrian-oriented public space with limited access for specialized vehicles. Key design interventions included:

- Widening sidewalks to 4 meters with a level surface and differentiated paving materials;
- Marking bicycle lanes with distinctively colored paving;
- Eliminating on-site parking and relocating it to the square's perimeter;
- Introducing greenery through tree planting and installation of plant containers.

The historical character of the square was partially restored: building facades were renovated, original cobblestone was uncovered from beneath asphalt layers, and historic circulation patterns were marked using paving textures and color emphasis. These measures helped re-establish the square as a cultural hub of the city, boosting its tourist appeal and economic capitalization. The formation of a space reflecting local identity had both social and economic impacts.

The inclusive characteristics of the renovated square include:

1. A shift in dominance from vehicular to pedestrian use;
2. Enhanced accessibility for individuals with limited mobility, achieved through thoughtful pedestrian routing and tactile, durable surface materials;
3. Integrated greenery contributing to ecological balance.

The reconstruction of Petofi Square in Uzhhorod serves as a model of a holistic approach to creating inclusive urban spaces. It emphasizes human-centered design, historical preservation, and sustainable development.

Stachura Ewa
Professor, DSc, PhD, Eng. Arch.
Cracow University of Technology
Poland, Faculty of Architecture, Cracow, Poland

ewa.stachura@pk.edu.pl
e.stachura1@gmail.com

Jagiełło-Kowalczyk Magdalena
Professor, DSc, PhD, Eng. Arch.
Cracow University of Technology
Poland, Faculty of Architecture, Cracow, Poland

m.jagiello@pk.edu.pl
magdajagiellok@interia.pl

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Anchors of Collective Memory and Identity. Creating Sustainable Public Spaces in Heritage Areas in Cities

Areas of rich multi-layered heritage challenge architects, urban planners, and city authorities to find optimal scenarios for sustainable revitalisation and spatial change. Heritage areas are valuable assets for attractive public spaces, where contemporary development may bring spatial or (and) social synergies/conflicts.

Identity and image strongly influence attractiveness and, in effect, a city or its selected areas' success. Therefore, they are essential in shaping urban intervention strategies, especially in tourist sites, to create meaningful places that are satisfactory for the users. The process of placemaking enables the reshaping of space to make it more appealing and usable, linking community members to where they perform life activities (Edensor et al., 2020). If successful, it strengthens a positive sense of place and, if necessary, overcomes its existing negative perceptions, improving place identity and image. Place identity, based on tangible and nontangible components, consists of memories, values, thoughts, ideas, settings and links to other places like home, neighborhood, work, etc. (Qazimi, 2014). Creating a place or changing its multidimensional characteristics to improve quality means intervening both at spatial and social levels, providing opportunities to meet the users' needs and aspirations.

Creating a place and providing its strong positive image requires effectively identifying the users' preferences and choosing an appropriate narrative, including communication through visual signs and symbols that can anchor elements of collective consciousness related to the place and its meaning. Universally understood visual signs (in a specific cultural circle or globally) may support creating public spaces with high meaning and a strong identity that the public will identify with. In the urban environment, such signs can be elements of buildings or structures, landscape views or works of art (sculptures), effectively identifying a place and anchoring it in a system of meanings. This system can vary in complexity: signs encoding meanings relating to different strands of history and collective identity can coexist in space. A conscious use of the potential of visual signs - symbols can significantly support the creation of meaning of spaces - places (place-making).

As a case study illustrating a potential of visual signs in regenerating public spaces was Eleusina (Douvlou, Stachura, 2024), a Greek city located 25 kilometres from Athens, full of unique traces of antiquity, contemporary histories of internal migration, industrial development, and labour flows, deindustrialisation, economic collapse and unemployment, and finally, gradual revival. A strong environmental context is present in Eleusina: outstanding scenic qualities, but also an ambiguous relationship between the city and the sea, which is expressed through the degradation of the waterfront, the difficult-to-materialise traces of the important ancient Sacred Road, and the overlapping two grids of urban development.

The study of Eleusina's history and contemporaneity made it possible to 1) delineate the most important areas for spatial interventions that could result in the creation of a network of public spaces that constitute Eleusina's narrative, telling its history and anchoring it in the present 2) identify the symbols crucial to the identity and image of the selected areas. During the student design workshops, revitalisation actions were proposed in selected public spaces. The study revealed the hidden potential of visual communication tools to strengthen the system of meanings and emotions defining the city's identity and image. The visual signs identified include a post-industrial chimney, a sunken ship, ancient ruins, and excavations.

Stańczyk Roland
MSc. Eng. Arch.
RS STUDIO PROJEKTOWE,
Konstancin-Jeziorna, Poland

roland.stanczyk@rsstudio.pl

Bibliography:

1. ECIA – European Council of Interior Architects. (n.d.). Charter of Interior Architecture Training. https://ecia.net/education/charter

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Building Community of Interior Architects: Origins, Goals, Actions

One of the key challenges facing interior architects in Poland today is the lack of legal frameworks that define or regulate the profession. The role of the interior architect is not formally recognized within Polish construction law, allowing individuals without relevant education to practice. As a result, competence and responsibility are verified by the market and shaped by practices developed over 30 years of promoting the profession. Polish interior architects have created and continue to develop strategies for professionalization and trust-building—both within their community and in relations with clients.

In contrast, architectural design for buildings faces a different set of issues, notably the lack of real knowledge about end users. As Kuryłowicz (2018) notes, “Design is becoming increasingly complex, not least because we are designing less for specific people, and more for abstract groups or standardized models of use” (p. 27). This fosters generic spaces and distances architecture from social needs.

Interior architects work under entirely different conditions. Their practice is based on close collaboration with specific clients - often private individuals. This direct relationship allows for highly personalized design but introduces another challenge: an overly active client. Interior architects must design while also negotiating the meaning of space and defending their concepts. As Piotrowski and Rogers (2007) observe, “Interior designers must balance client desires with professional integrity” (p. 45).

In response, Polish interior architects launched a civic initiative in 2018 - the establishment of the Association of Interior Architects (SAW), which, as stated on its website, “brings together professionals who meet high standards in education, practice, methods, and quality of work” (SAW, 2025). Its goal is to strengthen the standing of interior architects in society and build a shared professional identity.

SAW undertakes various actions. One focus is the standardization of the design process - defining the profession, clarifying project stages, and developing model contracts. Another is education and integration. SAW members lecture at universities, create training programs, and organize conferences to share knowledge and diagnose problems. The association also engages in industry events and reflects the values of the New European Bauhaus in its member declarations.

A landmark initiative is the annual SAW. Interior of the Year competition, which promotes the highest standards in Polish interior design. Launched in 2019, it is considered the country’s most prestigious, pro bono, and free-to-enter competition (ELLE.pl, 2019). In 2024, SAW launched its publishing activity with the book SAW. People and Interiors, presenting profiles of nearly 70 designers and their work. The book gained recognition and was presented at the 2023 Łódź Design Festival

Another major step was international cooperation with the European Council of Interior Architects (ECIA), which works toward harmonized educational and ethical standards. In its Charter, ECIA defines the interior architect as “a responsible interpreter between the user’s needs and the built environment” (ECIA, n.d.). This role highlights the profession’s essence: connecting individual needs with spatial form.

Looking ahead, SAW aims to secure legal recognition for the interior architect profession. This ambition - together with educating clients and collaborators - supports the New European Bauhaus vision. The 2025 conference theme Building Community. Architecture of Challenge underscores community, responsibility, and respect as the foundations of SAW’s mission.

Stępnik Łukasz, Adamska Aleksandra, Kochanowska Klaudia, Gancarczyk Zofia

Stępnik Łukasz
MSc. Eng. Arch.
Warsaw University of Technology,
Faculty of Architecture, Warsaw, Poland

lukasz.stepnik@pw.edu.pl

Adamska Aleksandra
Msc. Student
Warsaw University of Technology,
Faculty of Architecture, Warsaw, Poland

ola.adamska2001@gmail.com

Kochanowska Klaudia
Msc. Student
Warsaw University of Technology,
Faculty of Architecture, Warsaw, Poland

klaudia.kochanowska.01@gmail.com

Gancarczyk Zofia
Msc. Student
Warsaw University of Technology,
Faculty of Architecture, Warsaw, Poland

zofia.gancarczyk.stud@pw.edu.pl

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1. Brukalska, B. (1948). Zasady społeczne projektowania osiedli mieszkaniowych. Warszawa: Trzaska, Evert i Michalski.

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The Zatrasie Housing Estate as a Case Study of 1950s Warsaw Social Housing: Observing its Evolution and Contemporary Role in Community Building

In contemporary architectural discourse, concepts such as collective living, shared spaces, and inclusive design - particularly the calibrated transition between private, semi-private, and public realms - have gained renewed attention. These ideas often form the foundation of contemporary architectural narratives, especially in student and competition projects that promise socially engaged, community-driven spaces. However, one must question whether these are genuinely novel practices or repackaged principles from the past. This article addresses this question by revisiting a remarkable Polish example where these concepts were materially and ideologically implemented decades ago: the housing estate of WSM Zatrasie in Warsaw.

The application of the collective living concept has a significant history within the Polish context. In the 1920s, numerous grassroots housing cooperatives rose in Poland in response to the severe housing crisis, as the prevailing authorities at the time showed complete indifference to the problem. One of the most significant was the Warsaw Housing Association (WSM), founded by working-class activists who saw architecture and urban planning as tools to address social injustices. After World War II, housing demand surged, prompting the construction of pre-designed residential estates to allow quick settlement. One such estate was WSM Zatrasie, designed by Jacek Nowicki in the late 50s and represents a model example of the neighbourhood unit. It is a compelling case of a thriving local community, even nowadays. The estate is receiving growing attention, with efforts to have Zatrasie included in the National Heritage Register since 2023.

Nowicki's concept is systematically applied in the Zatrasie estate, where architecture is a key instrument for fostering community engagement. The strategic distribution of social infrastructure aims at transforming passive residents into active citizens. The neighbourhood unit concept is closely aligned with the broader idea of the social estate, as articulated in the 1946 Warsaw Master Plan (an urban strategy prioritizing the development of self-sufficient residential components). It was supposed to be the basic unit of the city's structure, divided into smaller area complexes called colonies. A housing zone was separated from the high-speed routes by isolation strips with commercial pavilions and blocks for single people. The key aspect is the proximity of the dwellings to centres of collective co-existence, such as schools and social facilities, not exceeding 500 metres - a distance suited to the comfort of a school-age child. Organized into eight “”colonies”” of 200–250 apartments, each centred around a playground, the estate was structured to support 10,000 residents with walkable access to schools, services, and green spaces. The central axis, linking a primary school with a (never-built) community centre, was conceived as a civic spine - where residents would cross paths on their daily routes. As noted by Barbara Brukalska, a key figure in early Polish modernism, even the “”child's step”” was considered in the estate's scale - a poetic and political measure of accessibility and care. The size of the whole estate was linked to the recruitment area of the school, which was to have around 1200 children.

Today, as architects revisit collective ideals under the guise of novelty, Zatrasie is a powerful reminder that such principles have already been tested - often with rigour, depth, and impressive foresight. Rather than reinventing the language of community, we might instead return to these historical precedents, learning how spatial design, social infrastructure, and political commitment once came together to imagine a better city.

Strzała Marcin
PhD Eng. Arch.
Warsaw University of Technology,
Faculty of Architecture, Warsaw, Poland

marcin.strzala@pw.edu.pl

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System for Parametric Retainers - Overgrowable Urban Tissue (SPROUT). Experimental Aparatus for Bioreceptive Architecture

Lundholm's (2004) urban cliff hypothesis suggests that the inherent geometric and material characteristics of urban environments and their resultant environmental and biological conditions significantly resemble natural lithic cliffs and rock outcrops – the ancestral habitats of humans. He proposes that integrating these natural forms and ecological processes can lead to sustainable architectural solutions for the 21st century. Architect Barry Wark explores this concept by creating complex structures that encourage natural growth, as exemplified by his redesign concept for the fire-damaged Glasgow School of Art (Wark, 2020). Marcos Cruz's (2023) Poikilohydric Living Walls offers another, more granular, exploration into the design of architecture that fosters biological colonization.

The SPROUT project was an interdisciplinary design studio conducted in the 2024/2025 academic year by the School of Form (SWPS University) and Architecture for Society of Knowledge (WUT). It engaged bachelor students in design (communication and industrial) and master students in architecture. Participants were introduced to the aforementioned theoretical framework and relevant precedents before being tasked with developing architectural interventions within the courtyard spaces of both institutions. These interventions were to positively impact the spatial quality while serving as an experimental apparatus for the empirical investigation of the urban cliff hypothesis through the design and subsequent monitoring of objects exhibiting a tertiary level of bioreceptivity (Guillitte, 1995). The pedagogical and design activities were conducted concurrently at both universities during the winter semester of 2024, with the fabrication and assembly of prototypes during the summer semester of 2025. Students from both disciplines engaged in iterative individual and group work, encompassing focused research on specific sub-tasks and collaborative workshop sessions. Individual work for design students emphasized socio-spatial considerations, material properties, and the interplay between 3D terracotta printing and traditional craft techniques. Architecture students concentrated on formulating overarching design strategies, employing parametric methodologies for articulating discrete details, and translating digital-to-physical models. Fortnightly workshop meetings facilitated the organic transfer of knowledge and insights between the two groups. The diverse perspectives and specific expertise fostered the development of comprehensive solutions. The students, divided into four workgroups, presented preliminary concepts, with one selected through a popular vote for subsequent design development, production, and implementation.

This process resulted in the creation of twin objects – SPROUTs – constructed by the students in the courtyards of both academic institutions. These objects, each composed of 54 unique modules, adopted the form of 2-meter-high columns featuring an arboreally expanding base. The freeform fabrication afforded by 3D printing in conjunction with parametric modelling enabled the application of a differential growth pattern with variable amplitude and intensity across the entire surface. Bryophytes will be introduced into these fabricated structures, and their growth patterns will be systematically documented. The varying environmental conditions of the two courtyard locations, coupled with the surface pattern and its orientation, will allow us to determine forms fostering bioreceptivity empirically. This observation will inform the development of design guidelines for future integrative pro-ecological solutions.

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Sworczuk Urszula
PhD Eng. Arch.
Warszawa, Polska

usworczuk@gmail.com

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A Symbol of the Centuries-Old Coexistence of Three Cultures - the Mosque in Kruszyniany

Kruszyniany is a village near the Poland–Belarus border, in Podlaskie province. Before World War II, it was part of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. For centuries, three cultures coexisted there: Catholic, Orthodox, and Tatar (Muslim), the last settled by John III Sobieski in the late 17th century. Selim Chazbijewicz wrote: "Kruszyniany is living proof that different cultures can coexist peacefully for centuries." (Chazbijewicz, 2001). An interesting insight into this coexistence can be gained by analysing the architecture of the mosque in Kruszyniany.Analysis of the past will help gain perspectives on the future.

The Tatar mosque is a one-storey wooden building with a rectangular floor plan, covered by a triple-pitched roof. At the front, a low porch with an arched roof and a triangular pediment is flanked by two towers topped with cusped domes and crescents. The structure, clad with vertical planks, resembles the layout of typical wooden churches with an apse. It echoes the now-vanished cemetery church of the Assumption of Saint Anne in Kruszyniany. (Płocka A. 2007) While the mosque's interior reflects Islamic traditions, the exterior fits into the Podlasie regional style. Most old Polish mosques had a different form, as seen in the second historic mosque in Bohoniki.

The Kruszyniany mosque was built by local carpenters, reflecting a strong tradition of neighbourly cooperation. Building houses together was common, but their cooperation extended beyond architecture: communities helped each other with harvests and shared food, respecting different dietary customs, which made mutton popular. The Tatars of Kruszyniany lived much like their Catholic and Orthodox neighbours. Their dress and everyday life were similar, with religious holidays being the main exception, often celebrated together. Being a "good neighbour" was the core value. (Cebula, 2015)

The mosque's arched porch is noteworthy. Similar porches are found on many local houses, suggesting possible influence. Kruszyniany houses lack the ornate, carved decorations typical of Orthodox villages. It is impossible to tell a Catholic house from a Tatar house, or a Tatar house from an Orthodox house from the outside.

The local language, known as "simple language," developed from a mix of Yazdy-Slavic influences and was widely used in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. It became the Tatars' adopted language in the 17th century. "Simple" referred to the fact that it was spoken by ordinary people. It was in this language that the Tatars were assimilated into the local population in the 17th century. The simple language was a common language of three cultures, a link across the divide, and at the same time distinguished the people of Kruszyniany from the newcomers. (Cebula, 2015)

Could the Kruszyniany mosque be seen as such a bridge? Its modest, simple façade mirrors that of other village houses; its form resembles wooden Catholic churches; its colour matches that of Pentecostal Orthodox churches. Islamic elements, such as crescents, appear discreetly on the outside, while religious identity is expressed mainly within.

Perhaps this is why the mosque is perceived as an organic, harmonious part of Kruszyniany — a cultural treasure not just for the Tatars, but for the entire village.

Szumiński Konrad
MSc. Eng. Arch.
Warsaw University of Technology,
Faculty of Architecture, Warsaw, Poland

konrad.szuminski@pw.edu.pl

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The Historical Centre of Warsaw. Created Monuments as Forms of Protecting Collective Identity

The charm of the city, its urban planning and architecture depends on us, we create it." – stated Józef Sigalin in his memoirs about the history of the reconstruction of Warsaw, emphasizing the contribution of Varsovians in the process of shaping the metropolis emerging from the ruins (1963, p. 105). The reconstruction of Warsaw, so severely destroyed by warfare, teaches us that buildings in the city do not only create material spatial frameworks for the lives of its inhabitants. They are something much more valuable – living carriers of collective identity. Saving and preserving the landscape of Warsaw, including historical districts, became a priority for architects of the time, who, in the name of the idea of faithful reconstruction of the image of the pre-war city, abandoned all the binding conservation doctrines. Of all the fragments of old Warsaw that shaped the collective sense of identity of its inhabitants, the most characteristic section was considered to be the one of Nowy Świat Street: "There is no other street like that in the world. Anyone who has seen it even once, when recalling Warsaw, will always bring it out from the depths of their memory and associate it with this city. In the ‹‹personal identity card›› of Warsaw - it is that ‹‹special, recognizable mark›››" (Sigalin, 1963, p. 106). Zygmunt Stępiński, the author of the projects for the reconstruction of tenement houses on Nowy Świat, indicated its coherent, harmonious architectural appearance as the "historical" value of the street (1947, p. 59). The views on the protection of monuments were reassessed. The restoration of historical forms was justified by the concern for restoring the remnants of the nation's cultural heritage in the face of the cataclysm of the last war (Zachwatowicz, 1946). The newly created monuments were to become cultural monuments, affect the emotions of residents, but most importantly, constitute a source of knowledge about the aesthetic distinctiveness of the city for future generations. Buildings reproducing the physiognomy of the old town districts, stylized as historical, determined the external expression of the public spaces of the modern city. However, the common concern for the aesthetics of the Capital's landscape is still alive. This is evidenced by the establishment in 2023 of the Historical Centre of Warsaw - a cultural park, which is a form of legal protection of the value of architectural heritage. The formula of the cultural park as an act of local law defined, among others, the principles of conducting construction works and service activities, improving the visual quality of public space. The document includes provisions directly related to the issue of preserving the aesthetics of the facades of existing buildings, such as "the use of solutions that will give the facades the form of a coherent whole" or "maintaining architectural coherence with the facade." (Uchwała w sprawie utworzenia parku kulturowego, 2023). The recently completed public consultations, which are one of the stages of implementing the regulations, confirmed the need to protect the aesthetic values of pseudo-historical facades created after 1945. The most frequently reported comments by residents included, among others, demands to restore historical models of urban furniture, lighting fixtures and to organize the regulations regarding the forms of visual information carriers on facades.

Szymborski Lech
MSc Eng. Arch
Warsaw University of Technology,
Faculty of Architecture, Warsaw, Poland

szymborskilech@gmail.com

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How Post-Conciliar Sacred Architecture Affects Space and Understanding of Community

Contemporary post-conciliar documents open up a new perspective on the community space of sacred buildings. Challenges remain because, despite secularisation new churches are being built and new communities created.

'Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy', recommends that the faithful 'should not participate in the mystery of the Eucharist as strangers or silent spectators, but should understand it well through rites and prayers and should consciously, devoutly and actively take part in the sacred action'. 'The General Introduction to the Roman Missal' develops this idea by emphasising that the Mass belongs to the whole church and that the faithful at Mass form a 'sacred community'. As we address a common Father, a community of sisters and brothers is formed.

The document recommends that the design should express the image of the gathered people, despite the hierarchical structure related to roles in the celebration. The spatial arrangement through this should strive for the inner and organic unity of the congregation, hence the many designs of central floor plan.

A new perspective in the creation of churches today is marked by ahistorical architecture rooted in the modernist trend open to contemporary communal spatial solutions and the church's prescribed respect for regional cultures and traditions in the context of architecture and art . Nowadays the community as a congregation of believers begins to play an increasingly important role in creating the programme and being the host of the place. One example of this is the John Paul II church in Hungary Budapest's Paty district. The whole process of building the church was organised by the parish community. Consequently, the functional programme corresponds to the real needs of the people. The layout consists of the main nave of the church, the side chapel, the hall that leads to the various functions such as: education room, multipurpose room, guest room, service room. A large partially covered courtyard garden designed for meetings, concerts and recreation. The building and its surroundings form a high-quality architecture of the community. A prominent example of community action is the new church in the town of Pegognaga, Italy, from 2022. The parishioners decided to build a new church on the ruins of the old one after the earthquake of 2012. . The main interior of the church is a square-shaped block covered by a roof referring to the symbolic ''Tent of Meeting''. The wall behind the altar forms a mosaic made from the stones of the old church - symbolising the Resurrection - linking the old with the new .The architects additionally designed the social spaces that form, together with the courtyard, a space for multifunctional meetings and community functioning. Another example demonstrating that without community there is no church is the chapel on the ground floor of an apartment building in the Łacina district of Poznań Poland. The principle adopted there is the opposite - first the community is created and then, once it is formed, a church will be built expressing truly the 'image of the gathered people'.

Tabak Jowita
MSc. Eng. Arch.
Polytechnic University of Turin, Department of Architecture and Design, Turin, Italy

jowita.tabak@polito.it

Zdunek-Wielgołaska Justyna
PhD Eng. Arch.
Warsaw University of Technology
Faculty of Architecture, Warsaw, Poland

justyna.wielgolaska@pw.edu.pl

Vigliocco Elena
PhD Eng. Arch., Associate Professor
Polytechnic University of Turin, Department of Architecture and Design, Turin, Italy

elena.vigliocco@polito.it

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New Public Space in Cities Beyond Growth: Insights from Shrinking Cities

Despite the ongoing trend of planetary urbanization, numerous cities worldwide are not experiencing growth but face demographic and economic shrinkage (Savini, 2021). The phenomenon of shrinking cities constitutes a global condition, as a result of transformative processes, including deindustrialization, suburbanization, and demographic ageing, extending beyond the traditional domains of architecture and urban planning (Oswalt, 2006).

The key manifestation of the shrinkage phenomenon is the emergence of urban voids—abandoned and vacant spaces that lack functional use and offer no meaningful contribution to their surroundings or users, which create both literal and conceptual "room" to explore alternative forms and practices of urban space (Hermans et al., 2024). As a result, shrinking cities—alongside their inhabitants, architects, and urbanists—recognize the potential embedded in the urban voids and actively engage in efforts to regenerate them. The initiatives are often not driven by traditional growth-oriented goals or attempts to reverse ongoing decline. Instead, they are guided by post-growth principles that seek to reimagine and reconstruct urban environments for modern, future societies, promoting more sustainable, inclusive, and equitable forms of urban life.

In analysing shrinking cities, we observe a consistent trend of transforming their abandoned environments—often once private or industrial spaces, such as former factories, infrastructural zones, or disused facilities—into public spaces that facilitate everyday interaction, social bonding, and shared experiences through natural and cultural uses. Such interventions, observed within the shrinking cities, differ in form and intent. They can be categorized into two overarching types: those that prioritize the return of nature to the urban fabric and those that emphasize the cultural dimension of urban life.

The trend of transforming urban voids into natural spaces—such as parks and gardens—can be observed in two scales. Large-scale examples include Parco Dora in Turin (Italy), the Navy Yard's Central Green in Philadelphia (USA), and Parque de Ribera Galindo in Barakaldo (Spain), which offer loisir space for the city's inhabitants. On a smaller, more localized level, there are acupunctural interventions such as the network of pocket gardens in Łódź (Poland), which provide accessible, everyday spaces for neighbourhood interaction.

A similar dual trend is evident in the cultural sphere. Many abandoned buildings and underutilized spaces in shrinking cities have been repurposed in recent years into vibrant hubs of urban life, offering opportunities for exchanging ideas, values, and traditions. On a small scale, these initiatives are often led by residents and supported by municipal programs or strategic frameworks. For example, the Freiraumgalerie project in Halle (Germany) integrates community art into the urban landscape. On a larger scale, numerous projects have transformed former industrial buildings into significant public venues. Examples include the Zuzeum in Riga (Latvia), a multifunctional art centre with outdoor space and a social piazza designed to strengthen local community ties, and Landschaftspark in Duisburg (Germany), which provides space for cultural events.

Based on the analysis of shrinking cities worldwide, challenged by the ongoing process of depopulation, numerous interventions have been observed that foster the emergence of a new urban essence. These interventions support community building, ecological sustainability, well-being, and a sense of responsibility toward future generations. Their core lies in creating space for alternatives to traditional growth-based solutions. The focus is on fostering community, promoting ecological values, ensuring accessibility, and providing opportunities for residents to engage with and shape their environments.

Tognon Alisia
Professor, DSc, PhD, Eng. Arch.
Politecnico di Milano, Department of Architecture and Urban Studies, Milano, Italy

alisia.tognon@polimi.it

Komisarczyk Dominika
MSc. Eng. Arch.
Zurich, Switzerland

dominika.komisarczyk@outlook.com

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Reinhabiting Abandonment. Architectural reuse for enhancement Alpine communities in Trentino

Alpine periphery and Community Fragility
In mountainous terrains, human settlements often are exposed to various challenges; they confront with harsh climate conditions, constraints in infrastructure, agricultural development, land abandonment, which is three times at higher risk than in non-mountain areas (Dax et al., 2021). Additionally, the Alps are a place of migration: both economically to the cities and recreational to the mountains, which influences the process of abandonment and disappearance of community services in the marginalised areas.

In that context social contacts and bonds between residents are especially valuable and can serve for resilience of the territories. Although a growing number of villages in the upper lateral valleys are currently exhibiting characteristics typical of lowland suburbanization (Diem et al., 2024), which affects the access to community infrastructure and services in marginalized settlements, contributing to the social exclusion of their inhabitants.

Case Study: Comune di Malè (TN-Italy)
Those mechanisms could be observed on the example of Malè, a municipality located in the Alpine context of northern Italy. The landscape was shaped by a collaboration between humans and nature, while settlements featured a richness of public space creating an architectural and natural valuable heritage. Additionally, the alpine scenery led to the development of winter sports tourism, which is currently at risk due to the ongoing global warming (at 2011 it was documented that 186 of Italian ski resorts were abandoned - Clavarino, 2019).

The territory is considered fragile experiencing an ongoing process of abandonment both of agricultural activities and historical centres. Despite recent slight population growth, in 2023 Malè counts 793 (equivalent 44,1% of all the dwellings) of abandoned buildings or second homes (Depentori, 2023). Moreover, the citizens usually move into the suburban wide-spread areas, leaving the main nucleus underused and neglected, as well services concentrate only in the main town while disappearing from the hamlets.

Resilience through community architecture.
The municipal authorities understood the necessity of starting a regeneration process with a bottom-up approach. Through a community round table, it was recognized the value of a planning future together, developing territorial and architectural strategy. The community engagement allowed for better understanding the context and inhabitants' needs as well as re-evaluation of decisions.

Through considering municipality in comparison with the surrounding valley, implementing new community services could impact resilience of the whole area by focus on offer related to the inhabitants, not only visitors. It could be achieved by understanding potential places for intervention, which despite being neglected are centrally located and represent architectural heritage. They could be evaluated by their level of abandonment and location. This analysis could become a basis for deciding re-adaptation strategies and architectural methods.

The design solutions work at the scale of the building and interprets the characters of vernacular architecture. Moreover, the functions reconnect to a community sense of identity: Community House, a Bar Alimentari (a café with a small grocery store supporting local needs), co-working space for new digital nomads, and a public Maso (farm) to facilitate the community in the agricultural activities.

In such small context, the participatory approach is a crucial tool, which help to reconnect the community itself, revitalizing a new sense of belonging. Furthermore, by proposing community functions in the abandoned buildings, they could be returned to the inhabitants and showcase the valuable heritage.

Trammer Hubert
PhD Eng. Arch.
Member of the Roundtable of
New European Bauhaus (2021-2024)

huberttrammer@interia.pl

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1. Ban S. & Bria F. & Dávida E. & Eliasson O. & Gylver G. & Heilbron T. & Ingels B. & Magas M. & Schriever P. M. & Mitsotaki A. & Murphy O. & Patel S. & Quenum L. & Beňačková Rišková M. & (2021), New European Bauhaus Concept Paper, https://new-european-bauhaus.europa.eu/system/files/2021-07/2021-06-30_New_European_Bauhaus_Concept_Paper_HLRT_FINAL.pdf - access May 12th, 2025

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New European Bauhaus – Four Years of Building Community

New European Bauhaus has been launched in 2021 under motto Beautiful – Sustainable – Together. During the development of the initiative the aesthetics represented by the word beautiful has been replaced by the quality of experience. The word sustainable is limited to the environmental aspects of the sustainable development and does not covers the whole range of the field covered by the 17 Sustainable Development Goals adopted by the United Nations. It is mainly addressed on the adaptation to the new needs, circular economy and regaining the resources and also reinforcing the relations with nature. Together represents including different social groups in the way that nobody should be left behind.

I find the name New European Bauhaus problematic because it directs the reflection on the questions which should not be subject of it. The New European Bauhaus is oriented not only on architecture, design, art and craft as the original one. New European Bauhaus bases on the existing solutions. The strongest example of it are the NEB Prizes which reinforce the existing solutions many of which have been implemented before the launch of the New European Bauhaus.

New European Bauhaus is the initiative of the President of the European Commission and run by the part of its administration Joint Research Centre which coordinates projects and actions connected with it. In spite of that New European Bauhaus is presented as the bottom-up movement. The solution which is oriented on making it real is the net of the official partners which is open for NGOs, foundations, associations and educational, social and cultural institutions. The analogical solution for the governmental and business entities is the net of friends of the New European Bauhaus.

Among the actions which are oriented on including into the New European Bauhaus its community are the NEB Labs (the task forces oriented on the projects oriented on the sets of tasks connected with the fields defined each very lab), New European Bauhaus Festivals (until now two editions has taken places 2022 and 2024) and also different kinds of workshops, meetings and conferences organized by the official partners, friends and other institutions and organizations.

Several dedicated programs are oriented on implementation of the ideas of New European Bauhaus. 2022 six lighthouse demonstrators has been chosen. Each has ben supported by 5 million EUR. Among the implemented projects are „ Support to New European Bauhaus Local Initiatives" (20 projects got up 75 hours of the support from experts), „Co-Creation of public space through citizen engagement" (7 projects got financial support up to 100% and 45 thousand EUR each) and „Citizen Engagement Activities" (11 projects financed up to 100% and 15 thousand EUR each).

New tool for the implementation of the New European Bauhaus is the NEB Facility which is to provide the financial support for „(…) the development and scaling up of innovative solutions for the transformation of neighbourhoods to become not only sustainable, but also inclusive and beautiful (…)" (European Commission 2025).

There is also a lot of informal situations which follow the contacts born on the base of the New European Bauhaus. One of the examples is the implementation of the Paper Partition System initiated by Shigeru Ban.

Trębacz Paweł
PhD Eng. Arch.
Faculty of Architecture

pawel.trebacz@pw.edu.pl

Możaryn Jakub
PhD Eng.
Faculty of Mechatronics

jakub.mozaryn@pw.edu.pl

Iwanowski Marcin
DSc, PhD, Eng., Associate Professor
Faculty Of Electrical Engineering

marcin.iwanowski@pw.edu.pl

Paśko Sławomir
DSc PhD Eng.
Faculty of Mechatronics

slawomir.pasko@pw.edu.pl

Sawicki Bartosz
DSc, PhD, Eng., Associate Professor
Faculty Of Electrical Engineering

bartosz.sawicki@pw.edu.pl

Warsaw University of Technology,
Warsaw, Poland

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MyPW: Intelligent Campus Solutions for Academic Community Building at Warsaw University of Technology

A university campus is a space functionally and spatially linked to research and teaching activities, including its physical facilities. Above all, however, a campus is created by the people who use its infrastructure - teachers, researchers, students, and administrative staff. Through their daily interactions with the campus, each group fulfils its needs, conducts its tasks and addresses the challenges that arise. Some of these challenges require collective action within the academic community. However, a campus is not just a physical space with facilities and people; it is also a virtual network that organises the work and life of the university. Developing an information system that enables all staff to participate constructively in optimising communication and information retrieval processes- while simultaneously building and strengthening interpersonal relationships - could serve as the basis for a new dimension of academic community building. Such a solution would create a universal virtual tool to help users navigate the maze of data, guiding them through complex procedures and processes transparently and intuitively. This approach would represent an innovative way of managing the university's infrastructure and facilitating interactions between the academic community and its environment, drawing on the accumulated experience of smart city implementations to date (Min-Allah, Alrashed, 2020) (Zhao Yang Dong et al.,2020). The proposed concept of the "MyPW" system, currently being developed for the Warsaw University of Technology, meets these expectations. It is designed to be accessible to all employees and students, offering new services while facilitating access to existing ones. When dealing with the groups of problems reported as analysable by the "MyPW" system, an initial division was proposed into categories of needs (Desmet, Fokkinga, 2020) related to a sense of security, pleasure in being in a well-designed spatial-functional environment, effective management, social inclusion, participation in decision-making processes and a sense of individual empowerment, involvement in the process of information diffusion, and the continuous acquisition of new competences. They address issues relevant to academic community members, and their resolution will promote greater cohesion within the university.

Most of the needs mentioned above have a spatial aspect - a specific location - which is a necessary component for collecting information. The identified needs groups form a matrix for categorising the incoming data into the system and assigning it an appropriate path, directing it to one or more subsystems with specialised functionalities. The MyPW system consists of two main components: a data collection and processing centre (the "Data Centre") and a communication platform (the "Platform"). The system integrates with existing sensor networks and will incorporate new ones, such as distributed video surveillance monitoring networks or other types of sensors (e.g. motion, energy, heat, etc.). Based on detected objects (people, means of transport), the system performs high-level processing using AI algorithms to detect crowds, dangerous actions, communication paths, etc. The data will be sent to the data centre, enabling new functionalities through integrating and analysing individual data streams. The second source of information for the data centre will be the campus users themselves. They will interact with the MyPW system through three communication channels: the dedicated MyPW mobile application, information kiosks in high-traffic campus areas, and the website. It is also envisaged that large language models will be used within the system, enabling dialogue-based communication with users via voice or text chat. By improving the user experience and efficiently identifying and resolving reported problems based on the knowledge gathered, the system will contribute significantly to building a cohesive academic community.

Trębacz Paweł
PhD Eng. Arch.
Warsaw University of Technology,
Faculty of Architecture, Warsaw, Poland

pawel.trebacz@pw.edu.pl

Trębacz Piotr
PhD Eng. Arch.
Warsaw University of Technology,
Faculty of Architecture, Warsaw, Poland

piotr.trebacz@pw.edu.pl

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Architecture to Support the Process of Creating a School Community

Education for children and young people from 7 to 15 years of age is compulsory in 39 European countries (Compulsory Education in Europe, 2023/24). This means that 100% of the European population has contact with the school space for at least 8 years. In this space, relationships between peers are formed, which are the basis for creating a school community and, in the future, civic attitudes.

The form and interior of the educational spaces are important in this process. It influences the well-being of the users as well as the relationships between them.

The basic elements of the structure of the school's space are classrooms, organised according to two basic systems: home multifunctional rooms, where most of the activities of one class take place, and subject rooms, which depend on the special subjects taught in them. They must meet a series of size, lighting, and ventilation standards. Classrooms are designed for groups of no more than 24 pupils. Equally important spaces inside the building are other spaces intended for mental and somatic regeneration (Włodarczyk, 1992). The entrance hall and corridors are usually communicative spaces (Well-designed school, 2020).

This makes it more important to have a space that allows the whole school community to gather, informally (during breaks) as well as formally (school celebrations) (Nair, Fielding, 2005). The functions of a school community forum can be performed by: (1) a specially designed space (in the case of larger school units), (2) a separate gymnasium, and (3) a multipurpose space that performs both previously mentioned functions. The types of such space can be analysed using the example of facilities designed by architects Tomasz Lechowski, Paweł Trębacz and Piotr Trębacz from ATI Architektura Technika Inwestycje Ltd. (formerly AT Architektura I Technika Ltd.).

An example of the first of the three forum types is the gymnasium added to a typical primary school from the 1980s in Brześce near Warsaw. Its dimensions allow for sports activities and its use as a recreational space during breaks and as a community gathering place. To gain more space, the recreational corridor was extended to include a gallery space overlooking the sports hall.

An example of the second type of forum is a space designed as a separate internal recreational courtyard. The hallway in the section for older children of the SP 22 school complex in the Podolszyce Południowe housing estate in Płock is surrounded by cloisters with balconies, allowing people to be in the community while maintaining the necessary autonomy.

The third type of forum, a combination of the two previous solutions, is represented by the space designed in the separate building for younger children in the same school complex in Płock. A covered multifunctional courtyard used as a recreation area during breaks becomes a gymnasium during physical education lessons.

Due to the constant use of the mentioned spaces, all three cases indicate the importance of this type of space in the life of the school community, where children and young people develop (Nair, Zimmer Doctori, Elmore, 2019).

Uherek-Bradecka Barbara
PhD Eng. Arch.
Academy of Silesia, Katowice, Poland

barbara.bradecka@wst.com.pl

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Toilets in Public Spaces

The issue of public toilets or public hygiene and sanitary facilities may seem like a trivial topic. Having free access to both public and private ones seem natural to us. However, according to the 2023 WHO report, two-thirds of the world's population has no access to toilets. 'This is one of the causes of environmental poisoning and epidemics, especially among children.' (Progress on household drinking water, sanitation and hygiene 2000-2022 (…), 2023).

Providing universal access to clean water could prevent the deaths of 842,000 people a year" (Progress on household drinking water, sanitation and hygiene 2000-2022(…), 2023). However, in order to ensure this access, it is also necessary to enable the widespread use of one of the simplest achievements of civilisation - the toilet. This is because their absence contributes to the increasing pollution of rivers and other sources of drinking water. Looking at the world globally between 2015 and 2022, the percentage of households with access to sanitation services increased from 49 to 57%. In 2015, the number of people without access to a toilet was 2.4 billion, in 2022 it is 1.7 billion, but the rate of increase in sanitation is too slow to reach the target set in the SDGs (TRANSFORMING OUR WORLD (…), 2023) by 2030.

Citing data from the above report, in less developed countries, especially in Africa and South America, access to toilets in public and private spaces is quite a problem. However, even in Europe (Albania, Montenegro), access to toilets ranks between 51-75% of the population. The lack of sanitation in single-family buildings is attempted to be solved by toilets in public spaces. Since their appearance in public spaces in Paris in the 19th century (Korpalska, Ślusarczyk, 2013), their number in cities has increased rapidly in virtually all European cities. The current state of affairs, however, deviates from the standards of the late 19th century. There is no doubt that there has been a regression in this respect. It is as if we have forgotten that their presence in the public space and their accessibility for all its users contribute to the quality of public space, which cannot be judged only by the ease of movement or aesthetics. Of course, it must be taken into account that the majority of residents have access to private toilets, but not designing public toilets certainly does not improve the accessibility and inclusiveness of our urban spaces.

It is interesting to note that one of the cities with the smallest number of public toilets is New York, where 1,100 public toilets are in operation, which equates to one toilet per 7820 people! (Khanolkar, 2022). In Warsaw, there are currently about 400 public toilets, which equates to one toilet per 4300 inhabitants. It is therefore encouraging that architectural competitions for public toilets are taking place. However, what in developed countries is sometimes the subject of architectural competitions in less developed countries still poses a serious problem. In many countries, there are still households where the use of public toilets is a necessity as they do not have access to private ones. 'Among households with shared toilets, women and girls are more likely than men and boys to not feel safe walking alone at night and to be exposed to sexual harassment and other safety risks' (TRANSFORMING OUR WORLD (…), 2023). It can therefore be concluded without doubt that the lack of hygiene and sanitation facilities exacerbates social inequalities, including those related to gender (Kostecka, 2017). It is difficult to demand today that toilets modelled on those in ancient Rome should be places of social integration, but their adequate quantity and quality will certainly contribute to the quality of life in cities.

Wantuch-Matla Dorota
PhD Eng. Arch.
Cracow University of Technology,
Faculty of Architecture, Cracow, Poland

dorota.wantuch-matla@pk.edu.pl

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Interdisciplinary Formation of “NextGenerationEU” in the Context of Civic Education on the Built Environment and Shaping “Archiculture” in Poland

References to Built Environment Education (BEE) can be found already in many documents published by the European Union, the United Nations or the United Nations Children’s Fund in the last decades of the 20th century. This type of education, also referred to as “general” or ”civic” architectural education has been gradually but unevenly evolving at the international and Polish level since at least the 1970s (Wantuch-Matla et al., 2021). The Davos Declaration of 2018, provided a strong impetus for its development. The New European Bauhaus (NEB) initiative, announced in 2020, clearly indicated the need to shape the so-called “NextGenerationEU” (Leyen, 2020). With this in mind, the NEB has become a platform for transdisciplinary research and numerous implementation activities (NEB Report, 2023). The increased activity of professionals should be followed by a parallel process of involving communities through the transfer of knowledge about NEB ideas, including BEE – in the context of the multilayered challenges of today. A societal, even generational understanding of sustainability measures, restoring relationships with nature, creating spaces for people taking into account the diversity of their needs – will only contribute to improving implementation processes (Million et al., 2017).

In Poland, a particular intensification of activities aimed at the general education about the built environment took place in the first decades of the 21st century, although significant efforts in this area were also carried out in earlier decades. Nowadays, the role of architectural universities and research on the civic BEE is also consistently increasing in this process. Original Polish initiative (innovative, even on an international scale) which is supported by academia, are the postgraduate studies “Archi:culture – architectural educator”, which trains so-called “architectural educators”, and was born out of cooperation between architects, educators, people of culture and BEE practitioners. Openness to inter-institutional cooperation and forms of inclusivity offer the greatest opportunities of achieving the key objective of BEE: wide dissemination of their content.

The initiative grew out of the discussions of The General Architectural Education Team at the National Institute of Architecture and Urban Planning (NIAiU). The three editions so far have been realised thanks to the cooperation of the NIAiU, the University of the National Education Commission in Krakow and the Faculties of Architecture from Krakow and Gdansk. The essential goal of these studies is a joint exploration of methods and tools for the communication of knowledge about space and the phenomena and processes associated with it. So far, the studies have been attended by more than 80 people from all over Poland - graduates of architecture, spatial management, but also of teaching and pedagogical faculties, art, art historians, sociologists, etc. The majority of them are now successfully pursuing the mission of educators. The study formula is constantly evolving. This kind of “continuous evolution and adaptation” approach should also characterise all other BEE activities in Poland and beyond. Given the dynamics of change in contemporary reality, the rapid development of knowledge and technology – simply imparting the basic knowledge of architecture is no longer sufficient today. The forms, content and methodology of BEE should be constantly updated, keeping up with modern audiences, their needs, opening up to new social and age groups. It is therefore worthwhile reflecting on the postulate that contemporary BEE can only develop and be implemented through interdisciplinary and inter-institutional collaboration between research and practice paths, openness to innovation, experimentation, and dialogue with different space shapers.

Waśniewska Marianna
MSc. Eng. Arch.
JAZ+Architekci sp. z o.o., Warsaw, Poland

m.wasniewska@jazplus.pl

Skibińska Maja
Phd. Eng. in Landscape Architecture
University of Technology and Arts in Applied Sciences in Warsaw, Poland
Szelest Warsaw, Poland

maja@szelestpracownia.pl

Wieczorek Anna
MSc.
ThinkTankMiasto Foundation,
Warsaw, Poland

anna.d.wieczorek@gmail.com

Jaworski Andrzej
Eng. Arch.
JAZ+Architekci sp. z o.o., Warsaw, Poland

a.jaworski@jazplus.pl

Stefańska-Mędrzecka Joanna
MSc.
ThinkTankMiasto Foundation,
Warsaw, Poland

JLStefanska@gmail.com

Bibliography:

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Evidence-Based Public Space Design: Assessment of Users' Needs in the Redevelopment of Gorzechowski Square with the Garden of the Righteous, Warsaw

Introduction

Public space design relies on the analysis of spatial and social aspects of a given context. These analyses serve as the foundation for creating attractive public spaces. We argue that the fulfilment of users' needs drives public life and enables public spaces to support the development of relationships, identity, and community. The importance of addressing users' needs in the living environment has been studied as an important factor in achieving social sustainability (Peters, 2016). Following this approach, we developed a methodology for analysing users' needs, which we applied to the case of Gorzechowski Square in Warsaw (Jaworski et al., 2024). The study provided a comprehensive understanding of the square's functioning. This paper presents how these findings contributed to a more socially sustainable square redevelopment process.

Methodology

In the case of Gorzechowski Square, the public space was analysed using our original interdisciplinary tool designed to systematically assess users' needs. The tool is based on a set of eleven needs identified through a literature review in urban studies and environmental psychology: contact, privacy, experience, sense of fulfilment, play, orientation, identification, aesthetics, comfort, safety, and nature. A range of qualitative methods was employed to explore how these needs manifest in Gorzechowski Square. A transect walk (Low, 2011), spatial inventory, and behavioural and movement mapping (Gehl, 2021) were used to capture the spatial context and patterns of use. Short interviews with users, combined with evaluative mapping, helped to reveal the social functions of the space (Bell et al., 2001). The results were subsequently visualised on maps.

Results

The cross-analysis of how different needs are fulfilled enabled the identification of conflict causes and the formulation of targeted recommendations. For example, the analysis of the need for contact revealed that the square maximizes its spatial capacity to inclusively accommodate various user groups. Therefore, increasing usage intensity in future designs is not advised. Regarding the need for privacy, although the space lacks secluded or sheltered areas, users satisfy this need by choosing specific times of day for their activities. However, socially unacceptable behaviours observed suggest the balance between the square's communal and private character requires careful attention, as enhancing privacy may lead to space appropriation. In terms of ownership and identification, the analysis revealed a conflict between residents using the square for recreation and the Foundation Garden of the Righteous using it as a site for memorial. This tension stems from an emotional, symbolic and functional mismatch in the nature of these activities. With this understanding, it is possible to propose minimal yet impactful interventions to resolve the issues.

Concluding discussion

The users' needs assessment enabled a deeper understanding and forecasting of the social consequences of the design proposal and its impact on users' everyday practices. As a result, such evidence-based design supports decision-making processes and ensures spatial solutions are grounded in data and research. The square's redevelopment can thus be optimised for the best resource-to-impact ratio, with targeted measures addressing the root causes of identified issues. The insight into the social connections built around the square allows for their preservation and enhancement within the design proposal. Consequently, the risk of disrupting existing social structures is minimised, and the community can be both preserved and strengthened. In this way, users' needs assessment becomes a tool for achieving socially, environmentally, and economically sustainable public space design.

(i) The tool was developed by a multidisciplinary team as part of the company's R&D activities. It has been in use since 2023 and was presented during Forum Praktyków Partycypacji in 2024. More information at: jazplus.pl/ias

(ii) The Garden of the Righteous Foundation is a non-governmental organization inspired by the GARIWO foundation. It manages the Garden of the Righteous in Warsaw, a memorial dedicated to individuals who, during totalitarian regimes and genocides, defended human dignity and freedom. More information at: ogrodsprawiedliwych.pl/en/

Wesołowska Judyta
PhD Eng.
Warsaw University of Technology,
Faculty of Architecture, Warsaw, Poland

judyta.wesolowska@pw.edu.pl

Gomółka Mikołaj
MSc. Eng. Arch.
Warsaw University of Technology,
Faculty of Architecture, Warsaw, Poland

mikolaj.gomolka@pw.edu.pl

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Community-building through Urban Food Production Systems. An Example of Sustainable Urban Design in the Praga Północ District in Warsaw

Historically, cities have evolved through three phases in their relationship with food. In the pre-industrial era, food production and processing were closely integrated into urban life, with products arriving from nearby farms. With industrialisation, food systems were separated from urban centres, driven by concerns over hygiene and efficiency, while urban consumers became geographically disconnected from food production. Today, most city dwellers rely on globalised supply chains and supermarkets, rarely considering their food's origin or environmental impact (Thornton, 2018). Food production accounts for up to 24% of global greenhouse gas emissions, and its transportation contributes another 6% (Li et al., 2022), with animal products generating a significantly higher footprint than plant-based foods. In the face of climate change and population growth, there is an urgent need for sustainable, localised food systems that reduce environmental costs and build resilience. Shorter supply chains offer one possible solution.

We are now entering a third phase: the reintegration of food into urban life. Cities are adopting new policies and structures, such as food councils and community gardens, that reflect collective values and promote local self-sufficiency and reflect collective values (Mercina, 2018). For example, Detroit has created dedicated municipal offices to coordinate urban farming and food retail (detroitmi.gov, 2023).

A recent urban design studio at the Warsaw University of Technology explored these ideas through a project in Warsaw's Praga Północ District. The studio, involving international students, developed a systematic approach to food-oriented urban design. The district, diverse yet economically challenged, offered a suitable context to test how food can foster community and counteract gentrification. Students from varied backgrounds collaborated to integrate local food production into public space design, focusing on inclusivity, education, and environmental awareness.

The studio results implemented solutions showed in various studies that food can be grown almost anywhere in the city—on windowsills, balconies, rooftops, or community gardens (Langemeyer et al., 2021). These spaces improve neighbourhood aesthetics and promote social cohesion and well-being. Community gardens and local markets become hubs of interaction, education, and shared responsibility. The project also envisioned semi-industrial food processing, such as making preserves or juices, within the city, near where the ingredients are grown. Markets placed near homes and transport hubs ensure equitable access to fresh, pesticide-free food.

Education was central to the proposals. Initiatives included school programs teaching children how to grow vegetables and understand nutrition, as well as promoting environmental stewardship. Social justice was also a core concern, with food-sharing programs and support for food-insecure populations proposed as essential elements.

The project emphasised the importance of blue and green infrastructure (BGI) in building sustainable food systems. Designs included rainwater harvesting, composting, and converting food waste into biogas. Public spaces featured fruit trees and edible landscaping to enhance biodiversity and foster community pride.

While urban agriculture cannot entirely replace traditional farming, especially for large-scale production, it can significantly enhance cities' resilience and sustainability, including the social aspects important in community-building. The Praga Północ studio offered a vision of healthier urban food systems and a practical, scalable model ready for implementation.

Wiecha Agnieszka
Eng. Arch.
Polytechnic University of Milan,
Milan, Italy

agnieszkawiecha1@gmail.com

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The Clash Between Minimalism and Local Cultural Expression: Architecture in the Context of Cultural Community and Diversity

Amid digital globalization, postcolonial practices, and enhanced mobility, contemporary Western societies face the challenge of reshaping their cities to reflect the increasingly diverse populations. International migration accounts for about one-third of urban growth in developed countries and is transforming urban areas into heterogenous, multi-ethnic, multicultural and multilingual spaces (United Nations Human Settlements Programme, 2020, p. 25). In response, contemporary architecture confronts rising tensions between minimalist global design and the symbolic expression of local cultural identities.

Cultural communities are rooted in shared norms, values and traditions that shape a group's identity. As a British cultural theorist, Stuart Hall (1983) explains, "the basis for a (cultural) community lies in the sharedness of those definitions of historical experiences. People locate themselves as belonging to a community because within it, some experiences are common and some of the ways in which they have been defined and understood are shared" (p.32). Cultural diversity, meanwhile, is based on the respectful coexistence of distinct traditions within a shared space.

Architecture, situated between specificity and universality, is forced to accommodate the needs of different users and at the same time enable peaceful coexistence between them. In the globalized architectural landscape, the friction between minimalist design principles and the desire to reflect local cultural identity is increasingly noticeable.

Minimalist architecture, of authors such as Mies van der Rohe and Tadao Ando, proclaims the formal clarity and purity of function. Its neutral aesthetic is often seen as inclusive - a blank canvas that adapts to various users. However, in culturally diverse contexts, such neutrality may appear detached or even erasing. In contrast, critical regionalism draws upon vernacular materials, forms, and narratives to root buildings in local context and meaning (Frampton, 1983). When emblematic cultural elements are excluded in favor of universal aesthetics, architecture can be perceived as disconnected from community identity.

This tension is especially visible in multicultural cities, where architecture becomes a stage for negotiation between global design trends and local identity politics. Rem Koolhaas (1995) critiques the "Generic City" as emblematic of placelessness and homogeneity, warning that standardized development strips cities of their unique character. The minimalist ethos, central to this model, may flatten the differences rather than celebrating them.

While the inclusion of local patterns can enrich architectural meaning, it does not automatically ensure social integration. A more effective approach requires contextual sensitivity and community participation. Architecture that reflects collective memory cultivates a sense of belonging and pride among residents. As Juhani Pallasmaa (2005) observes, "The elements of architecture are not visual units or gestalt; they are encounters, confrontations that interact with memory," (p.63) highlighting the emotional and experiential dimension of built space.

Hybrid approaches that merge minimalist design with local symbolism are not only possible but very much needed. Lina Bo Bardi's work in Brazil exemplifies how minimalist architectural language can dialogue with deep cultural references. Her projects integrate modernist clarity with local materials, crafts, and social practices, offering a scheme for reconciling global and local imperatives.

In conclusion, the dichotomy between minimalism and local symbolism reflects broader questions about how architecture mediates identity in diverse societies. Rather than privileging one over the other, architects should critically engage with context, allowing design to bridge universality and particularity. In doing so, architecture becomes not only aesthetically refined but also socially resonant.

Wierzbicka Anna Maria

Wierzbicka Anna Maria
DSc, PhD, Eng. Arch.
Warsaw University of Technology,
Faculty of Architecture, Warsaw, Poland

anna.wierzbicka@pw.edu.pl

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Embracing Beauty, Sustainability, and Community: The New European Bauhaus Initiative

The initiative that led to the creation and relocation of the Future Pavilion began in July 2022 with the awarding of a grant under the New European Bauhaus (NEB) program. The "Modular Refugee Settlement Project" (EIT/2022/WA/1), conducted at the Warsaw University of Technology (WUT), aimed to develop sustainable, modular housing for refugees and individuals experiencing homelessness. Led by Professor Anna Maria Wierzbicka, with architects Paweł Trębacz, Renata Jóźwik, Magdalena Duda, and Jurki Kryworuczko from Lviv Polytechnic, the project concluded in November 2022 and laid the groundwork for future socially driven architectural work.

Building on this foundation, the "stawiamy_" initiative arose as a continuation of NEB values—beauty, sustainability, and togetherness—combining education with civic engagement. Under Professor Wierzbicka's direction, the Faculty of Architecture at WUT launched a multi-year design-build project, resulting in three architectural pavilions: Freedom (2023), Future (2024), and Community (2025). Each involved collaboration between students, academics, architects, and local communities.

The Freedom Pavilion, opened on July 1, 2023, in Royal Łazienki Park, was a response to the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Circular and open, filled with sunflowers and topped with a sail-like canopy, it symbolized unity and peace. It also functioned as a space for rest and reflection.

The Future Pavilion, inaugurated on June 16, 2024, featured a square plan and a delicately interwoven wooden roof. Surrounded by calming vegetation in shades of blue and violet, it offered a serene environment for conversations, informal gatherings, and workshops on sustainable urban living.

In spring 2025, this pavilion was relocated to the garden of the House of Our Lady of Mercy, a facility run by the Bread of Life Community Homes Foundation, led by Sister Małgorzata Chmielewska. Adapted with support from XYstudio and Unibep, the structure became a space for therapy, education, crafts, and inclusion—tailored to the needs of the elderly, homeless, and people with disabilities. The final Community Pavilion opened on June 29, 2025, again in Łazienki Park. Its inauguration preceded the Third International Scientific Conference "Architecture of Challenges – New European Bauhaus – Building Community." Its open, modular design embodied community spirit and served as a venue for dialogue and exchange.

Together, these three pavilions demonstrate how architecture can transcend aesthetics and function to become a tool for empowerment, learning, and healing. The "stawiamy_" initiative showcases the impact of architecture rooted in inclusivity, empathy, and sustainability—realizing the New European Bauhaus vision in urban and social contexts.

Wilk Kamila
MSc. Eng. Arch.
Faculty of Civil Engineering and Architecture, Opole University of Technology, Opole, Poland

k.wilk@po.edu.pl

Opałka Piotr
PhD Eng. Arch.
Faculty of Technical Sciences, Architecture, University of Applied Sciences in Nysa, Ph. D. Arch., Nysa, Poland

piotr.opalka@pans.nysa.pl

Opałka Paweł
MSc. Eng.
Planbud Biuro Projektowe, Nysa, Poland

planbud.opalka@gmail.com

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Shared Space, Shared Responsibility: Community Participation in Designing the Integrated Transport System – A Case Study from Nysa Partnership 2020

Space, although by definition available to everyone, in reality is often a difficult good to obtain. It is a resource that cannot be reproduced, and the way it is managed affects people's lives and the state of the environment for a long time. Therefore, it is extremely important to have a responsible approach to space design, in which not only aesthetics or functionality counts, but also the social dimension of these decisions. The opinion of local communities is still too rarely taken into account in planning processes. Consultations, workshops or joint design with residents are often seen as an addition rather than a key element. Meanwhile, it is these forms of involvement that give a chance for the space to meet the real needs of people. What's more, joint activities build a sense of responsibility and attachment to the place – and this translates into care for the common environment. A good design experience, using social involvement, was the development of the Concept of the Integrated Public Transport System as part of the Nysa Partnership 2020 project.

The Nysa Partnership 2020 was an initiative of several municipalities in the Opole Voivodeship, The Partnership consisted of 3 counties – Głubczyce, Nysa and Prudnicki, and 14 municipalities – Nysa, which was the Leader of the Partnership, and Biała, Branice, Głubczyce, Głuchołazy, Grodków, Kietrz, Korfantów, Lubrza, Łambinowice, Otmuchów, Paczków, Prudnik, Skoroszyce. As part of the project, four strategies for the Nysa Partnership 2020 Functional Area and three sectoral strategies were developed. An important element of the Partnership was the development of a conceptual document, which was the Concept of the Integrated Public Transport System for the PN 2020 Operational Programme. The agreement between the Partners was signed on 23 March 2013. The concept of the Integrated Public Transport System is the basis for projects that are also currently being developed, covering not only transport infrastructure. Its proper design and spatial connection on a regional scale was to be a driving force for social development. The plan includes interchanges in Nysa, Głuchołazy, and Prudnik, hubs in Głubczyce and Branice, and upgrades to bus stops and bays across the region. These investments were aimed at improving the quality of transport and increasing its accessibility, especially in the context of commuting to schools, work or public services.

As part of the Nysa Partnership 2020, extensive public consultations were conducted, including meetings with residents and representatives of municipalities, expert workshops, online surveys and conversations with key stakeholders. The aim was to take into account local needs and opinions in the development of the transport strategy. The strategy was based on analysis, expert knowledge and consultation results. Only those criteria that allowed for the evaluation and prioritisation of projects were taken into account. Analysis at a high level of aggregation was used, with criteria scored on a scale of 0–4. The criteria were divided into five groups: demand, economic, social, economic, and formal and legal. The indicators were multiplied by appropriate weights, which allowed the projects to be organized according to their strategic importance.

A well-designed space is not created in isolation from people. On the contrary – the more voices are heard, the greater the chance that the final effect will be functional, friendly and durable. Many of the assumptions of the concept created less than ten years ago have been implemented. In a world where space is increasingly becoming a commodity rather than a common good, it is worth returning to the idea of community decision-making. It is not only a matter of the quality of the environment, but also of interpersonal relationships, which gain strength thanks to joint action. The use of social engagement is in line with the ideas of the New European Bauhaus.

Wiśniewski Leszek
MSc. Eng. Arch.
Warsaw University of Technology,
Faculty of Architecture, Warsaw, Poland

leszek.wisniewski@pw.edu.pl

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Typologies of 20th-Century Multifunctional and Monofunctional Streets on the Example of the Warsaw Districts of Żoliborz and Ursynów Północny

Historically, streets were linear spaces of communication surrounded by buildings facing them. Their space was shared by different users – pedestrians and vehicles, without strict separation. They were also development axes and cities were concentrated around them, rather than being divided by them. This model lasted until the beginning of the 20th century, when the car began to gain importance in transport. The greater speed difference between motor vehicles and pedestrians than between pedestrians and horse-drawn vehicles posed a threat to safety and forced the separation of space for different street users. Initially, this was a horizontal separation within the street space, but over time ideas of vertical separation appeared or even a complete separation of "automobile roads" and "pedestrian roads" (Patricios, 2002). The result was the creation of very "technical" and devoid of social functions "transport spaces" instead of multifunctional streets. These spaces are the opposite of a traditional street. Instead of uniting the city and attracting residents, they divide the fabric of the city into "islands" of housing estates separated by these "technical" arteries, which often have a significant width of both the roadway and between buildings. Additionally, this space is often filled with other technical functions - service roads and parkings that deepen the division of the city space.

The shape of such spaces is important because it significantly affects the functioning of the city. Two Warsaw districts, Żoliborz and Ursynów Północny, are good examples. The first one was created at the beginning of the 20th century according to the principles of classical urban planning and the theories the garden city and the neighbourhood unit (Kiełsznia, 2008), which are very similar to the contemporary theory of the 15-minute city. In Żoliborz, the streets are multifunctional spaces - they serve individual and public transport as well as pedestrian and bicycle traffic. They are also a place where public and commercial services are concentrated. Ursynów Północy was built in last decades of 20th century and its dimensions are similar to Żoliborz and it partially implements similar principles - it is also a "group of neighbourhood units", but designed as "islands" separated by monofunctional spaces of main streets. The functions of the streets have been separated with mechanized transport on main streets and pedestrians on the internal streets, which were supposed to be social spaces (Ilmurzyńska, 2018). Today, this original idea, in which services located in pavilions are accessible from pedestrian streets, and serviced from main streets, does not work. Pavilions are increasingly being remodelled so that they are accessible from main streets, and from the pedestrian streets are becoming back alleys. Additionally, small service pavilions started to appear on main streets, which de facto replace the functions originally located on the pedestrian streets. They are usually located where people appear - at intersections, public transport stops and metro entrances. At the end of the 20th and beginning of the 21st century, the approach to shaping the development of main streets changed. Perimeter development with services on the ground floors began to emerge. However, the corridors of these streets are still overscaled and filled with car infrastructure (roadways, parkings).

In retrospect, it is visible that the classic model of a multifunctional street from Żoliborz has stood the test of time better than separation of different functions of streets in Ursynów Północny. The commonness of the typology represented by this district throughout Poland makes the issue of transforming monofunctional street corridors one of the most important challenges for urban planning today.

Wolska Matylda
Eng. Arch, Msc. Student
Warsaw University of Technology,
Faculty of Architecture, Warsaw, Poland

matylda.wolska.stud@pw.edu.pl

Ciężar Julia
Eng. Arch, Msc. Student
Accademia di Architettura, Mendrisio,
Switzerland

juliaciezar2000@gmail.com

Bakalarska Alicja
Eng. Arch, Msc. Student
Warsaw University of Technology,
Faculty of Architecture, Warsaw, Poland

alicja.bakalarska20@gmail.com

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Reuse as a Tool For Community Building: Narratives of Material in Architecture

Reuse is a tool both for creating a circular economy and for forming social bonds. Material is not just a raw product with technical parameters. Through material we enter into an indirect relationship with another human being.

The aim of this paper is to analyse how reuse builds community through material narratives on three levels: individual, social and institutional. The study was based on the method of narrative analysis (Riessman, 2008). The perspective adopted relates to the object, not as a static form, but as the sum of the relationships formed (Latour, 2010). The research matrix consists of three levels, where the material narrative, the form of the community and the reuse strategy were compared.

The type of narrative of the material is the link between the material form and the stories, meanings and relationships between people. The material is not just a collection of atoms, but also a story that can only be read by specific communities. A found brick can tell the story of a building that no longer exists, the heritage of a neighbourhood or the work of a brickmaker.

How we tell the story of the material depends on the scale of the relationship. The closer we get, the more personal the relationship with the material becomes. At the level of the individual, it is based on use, repair, personal involvement. Behind things there are specific people and moments from their lives. In establishing a personal relationship with leather shoes, we enter a warm familiarity with the cobbler who cares for their longevity.

On a community scale, the presence of material history becomes a bond-building tool. It is a record of local history, participation and grassroots action. The revitalisation of the public space in Monte, carried out through StudioSer, is an example of how a community can shape its surroundings. In addition to its aesthetic and functional layer, the project is a record of the everyday life of the place. It strengthens neighbourly ties and local identity. A real, tangible factor emerges, in which the identity of the group is located.

The scale of the institution takes the form of structured material policies. These consist of management, registers of raw materials, certificates, passports or material banks. The Brussels-based organisation ROTOR illustrates a form of caring for material history in its most structured form. Activities focusing on the recovery of demolition materials bring the narrative of the material to an official, defined level. This is made possible by several specialised departments operating in parallel. Ensuring the presence of regulations that govern the permanence of matter cements the work of people, the value of the processes they go through and the places of origin.

The research focuses on moving away from the traditional view of materials as a resource with a limited life cycle, ending at the disposal stage. Reuse, as a narrative practice, reveals a perspective of existing materials as finite matter, constantly transforming in time and space. The continuous recovery of materials is seen not only as a pragmatic tool for sustainable construction, but above all as a vehicle for storytelling - the stories of places, people and their interactions. Architecture ceases to be merely the result of a technical process and becomes a living record of community experience, building bridges between past, present and future.

Wośko-Czerankowska Agnieszka
PhD Eng. Arch.
Warsaw University of Technology,
Faculty of Architecture, Warsaw, Poland

agnieszka.czeranowska@pw.edu.pl

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Transformation of the Eastern Part of the Center of Falenica in Warsaw

Contemporary urban transformation theories emphasize the promotion of environmentally friendly solutions that are adaptable to the changing needs of communities and aimed at improving residents' quality of life. These approaches foster spaces conducive to social interaction, offering diverse and welcoming public areas that encourage shared experiences (Sim, 2019). Public spaces are considered essential to social life; therefore, streets, squares, and plazas should be designed primarily with pedestrians and cyclists in mind. The design of central, community-shaping areas should likewise focus on residents — their needs and the relationships between people. Urban spaces with a human-scaled built environment and thoughtful design should support both optional and social activities (Gehl, 2011).

The proposed concept of accessing places of work, education, recreation, commerce, healthcare, and leisure within a 15-minute walk or by using sustainable modes of transport (such as cycling or public transportation) aims to reduce the need for long-distance travel, minimize the number of cars, and contribute to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions (Moreno, 2024). Within a 1,000-meter radius of the Warszawa Falenica railway station (on the eastern side of the railway line), amidst single- and multi-family residential developments, there are numerous facilities and spaces, including heritage-listed buildings, memorial sites (both public and private), primary schools, kindergartens, health clinics, a church, pharmacies, a branch of PKO BP bank, retail and service establishments of various sizes, the Mazowiecki Landscape Park, green squares, playgrounds, a cinema-café, dining venues, and construction material depots.

According to the 2021 Study of Conditions and Directions of Spatial Development for Warsaw, the area surrounding the Warszawa Falenica railway station is designated as a local centre, featuring multifunctional zones, key representative public spaces, and service areas. The current Local Spatial Development Plans for Falenica East and Falenica West do not cover the areas along Walcownicza and Młoda Streets, where the construction of a grade-separated railway crossing is planned (Wośko-Czeranowska, 2017). The Warsaw Local Centers program, implemented in 2015 by the City of Warsaw in collaboration with the Warsaw Branch of the Association of Polish Architects (SARP), proposed the establishment of a Local Center in Falenica in the area surrounding Walcownicza Street and the Warszawa Falenica station as part of the pilot phase.

The availability of land reserved for future transport infrastructure transformation made it possible to propose coherent functional and spatial changes (4). The participatory planning process included numerous meetings, discussions, and workshops involving residents, designers, future users, representatives of the Warsaw City Hall, the Wawer district, and contractors. Final design documents were developed for the municipal marketplace and the KULTUROTEKA, followed by the modernization of the park on Zabawna Street. These projects took into account functional and spatial conditions, legal and planning guidelines, and feedback from residents and community organizations gathered during the participatory process.

The transformation of the eastern part of the Falenica district centre in Warsaw began in the late 20th century. The resulting public spaces were carefully composed, featuring greenery and upgraded pedestrian routes. While residents' opinions about the implementation vary widely, the project may serve as an example of applying contemporary urban theories focused on community-centred design and residents' needs. It is hoped that the implemented investments can be used or adapted flexibly to meet community expectations and ensure the highest possible quality of life for local residents.

Wrona Mariusz
MSc. Eng.
Warsaw University of Technology,
Faculty of Architecture, Warsaw, Poland

mariusz.wrona@pw.edu.pl

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Structural Detail in Timber Architecture as a Result of Collaboration Between Architect and Structural Engineer. Based on Historical and Contemporary Examples

In recent years, there has been a growing interest in timber architecture and wooden construction. Wood, as an ecological material, a renewable resource, and one capable of biodegradation, has once again been appreciated for its high technical performance, excellent thermal insulation, and significant aesthetic qualities. Throughout history, architects and engineers often relied on intuition and experience. Solid or glued laminated wood is an anisotropic material, with properties dependent on its origin and the technological processes involved in its production, making it a unique and demanding material that requires expertise throughout its processing.

Knowledge about wood continues to grow, accompanied by the development of design and manufacturing tools for building components. The work environment of architects and structural engineers is now highly computerized, requiring appropriate qualifications from designers. Standalone design approaches using FEM or CAD software are being replaced by integrated collaboration using BIM models, aiming at fabrication-oriented construction processes. As a result, the architect–engineer collaboration yields a product that is more thoroughly analysed in terms of structural performance and therefore optimized in terms of material usage.

An inseparable part of every architectural form is its structure, which consists of bar or shell elements as well as the joints that connect these structural components. In timber construction, depending on regional traditions, various types of carpentry joints have been used, taking into account the internal force systems present at the connection points. Sometimes these joints include metal fasteners such as nails or screws, while at other times they are connector-free wood-to-wood joints, showcasing the high craftsmanship of traditional builders. Today, the construction market offers standardized timber joints, including a wide range of metal plates and connectors. Companies that produce accessories for structural joints provide products that facilitate the efficient assembly of structural elements and entire prefabricated units. Thanks to these accessories, the joint detail can be discreet and nearly invisible, shifting the viewer's focus to the configuration of the primary structural elements, and allowing the entire structure to appear as a solid monolith.

Exposed structural elements, such as visible load-bearing frames and bracings — often of considerable size — significantly affect the visual perception of both the building and its interior. A prime example is the multi-storey TREET building constructed in Bergen, Norway, where the visible structural framework on the facade emphasizes the building's port-side character. Similarly, exposed frames and bracing serve as key compositional elements in interior design.

Structural joints occur where wooden elements meet or where wood connects with elements made of other construction materials such as steel or concrete. These joints typically employ steel plates or profiles as the main structural nodes, with bolts, screws, or dowels serving as fasteners. The shape of these steel plates strongly influences the user's perception and reveals the nature of the forces at work in the element. Furthermore, the hybrid nature of these timber connections is often visually striking and engaging.

This paper focuses on the structural detail, shaped logically in accordance with the laws of physics and the internal force distribution. Highlighted within the architectural design, the structural detail — a result of collaboration between the engineer and the architect — gives the designed object clarity and expression. Through the deliberate placement and form of the structural element, it reveals the principle of operation of the given load-bearing system. Based on selected examples of architectural works from around the world, the paper presents a static interpretation of the detail's function and discusses its impact on the perception of the architectural work.

Wróbel Monika
PhD Eng. Arch.
Urban Sports Square Foundation

monika.wrobel@skwer.eu

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Strategies for Integrating Urban Sports into Public Spaces

Physical activity, alongside craft, architecture, and art, was important in the Bauhaus educational model, seen as essential to human development. Today, under the New European Bauhaus initiative, which promotes sustainable living environments, the role of physical activity should once again be recognised.

Why is integrating activity into public spaces essential? Lifestyle diseases, rising healthcare costs, ageing populations, and declining mental well-being demand systemic responses in urban policy. Expanding recreational infrastructure is increasingly seen as key to improving urban quality of life, especially in cities like Warsaw, where service-based economies and sedentary lifestyles heighten health risks.

While professional sports matter, large, expensive facilities often serve elite events, neglecting daily activity for residents. This makes creating accessible, everyday spaces vital — close to where people live and move. Public spaces foster cooperation over competition, making shared activity part of daily life. Thoughtful design addresses more than public health: it counters loneliness, digital isolation, and urban fragmentation.

At Urban Sport Square Foundation, we define urban sports broadly — not only as disciplines like skateboarding or parkour, but as diverse, everyday activities in open, shared city spaces. Free of tickets or reservations, woven into daily routines, and strengthening community life, urban sports can connect people and enhance the quality of public spaces.

Strategies
Warsaw's experience, developed with the support of the Foundation, illustrates effective strategies for this approach. Projects such as Skwer Aktywności Ratusz Arsenał (WWJA), the space beneath the Świętokrzyski Bridge (RS Architektura Krajobrazu), and the Aleja Sportów Miejskich (M. Wądołowski) show how diverse solutions can respond to the evolving needs of city residents. These examples help define key principles for designing spaces that foster physical activity.

ntegrating active spaces into residents' daily routes means placing them along well-used public corridors, near transport hubs or along river boulevards. This increases accessibility and supports sustainable mobility by connecting activity spaces with public transport.

Multifunctionality combines various activities in one location — such as a calisthenics gym adjacent to a skatepark or a natural play garden near roller paths. It attracts users with different needs, encouraging families by allowing everyone to enjoy their preferred activity. Green sports infrastructure means not only facilities in parks but also integrating blue-green solutions in other urban spaces. Adding greenery even to concrete areas like skateparks improves microclimate and visual appeal. Aesthetic design enhances safety and inclusivity. Thoughtful composition, materials, and colours elevate spatial quality and attract groups often underrepresented in sports spaces - girls, older adults, and families. Sheltered facilities, even small, strengthen resilience, allowing activity in rain or heat. Existing urban ""free roofs,"" like spaces beneath overpasses, are practical shelters that reduce costs and extend usability. Comfortable seating areas at a safe distance allow non-participants to feel part of the community. They encourage interaction between different skill levels and provide inspiration from experienced athletes. Such spaces enhance safety by separating spectators without isolating them from the action.

Ensuring Long-Term Impact
To keep spaces vibrant over time, it is essential to engage future users in the design process through participatory approaches. Equally important is enabling ongoing activity — regular trainings and workshops strengthen local ties and attract new users. Practical features like equipment storage and rental points support daily use and easy management. This way, public spaces become not only accessible but also lively, adaptable, and responsive to community needs.

Zino Mohamad
Msc. Eng. Arch.
Warsaw University of Technology,
Faculty of Architecture, Warsaw, Poland

mohamad.zino.dokt@pw.edu.pl

Lasocki Maciej
DSc PhD Eng. Arch.
Warsaw University of Technology,
Faculty of Architecture, Warsaw, Poland

maciej.lasocki@pw.edu.pl

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Strategic Methods and Emerging Tools for Post-War Urban Reconstruction

Post-war urban reconstruction is one of the complex planning challenges in contemporary architecture and urbanism. Political instability, economic weakness, and an overall lack of information make most recovery efforts incredibly difficult. Planners and policymakers need to combine several methods, from spatial issues and financing frameworks to data-driven technologies and design adaptation frameworks, to respond effectively.

Literature review on the topic shows the need for planning that is inclusive and sensitive to context while expanding the approach to include memory, identity, and environmental resilience (Azzouz, 2022). Policy systems, active stakeholder participation, and master planning are still crucial and must be adapted by modern approaches. The ability to visualize destruction and simulate alternative futures has made post-conflict spatial analysis reliant on high-resolution satellite imagery, drone surveys, and geographic information systems.

AI is one of the most promising emerging technologies. Although AI is not a complete answer to any problem, it has been applied to interpreting aerial data, enhancing map readability, and identifying reconstruction patterns as varying urban forms would alternately need (Magee, Dean, & Johnson, 2021). Historically, AI has performed support capabilities for traffic stream efficiency, predictive urban metabolism, and even rubble classification for disassembly and reassembly loops. These examples revolve around enabling human planning by performing analysis at a scale beyond human capacity and decision making in uncertain environments, underlining the certainty factor (Shulajkovska, Smerkol, Noveski, & Gams, 2021).

In addition to AI applications, a few digital and spatial technologies have been applied in post-disaster and post-conflict urban contexts to show recovery strategies. For example, high-resolution satellite imagery has been used to assess damage extent, identify building conditions, and prioritize zones. Photogrammetry and LiDAR scanning have supported the reconstruction of heritage districts by recreating lost architectural details in 3D. Drone-based image acquisition has enabled planners to monitor change over time and detect informal rebuilding. Meanwhile, GIS platforms have been used to overlay demographic data with physical infrastructure layers, helping to align resource allocation with population needs. These methods do not work alone but are often integrated into multi-layered workflows, allowing planners to develop evidence-based reconstruction roadmaps that are scalable, adaptable, and locally grounded (Moussa, Chen, & Chen, 2023).

Rebuilding is often constrained by financial donor fatigue, which outlines the other important dimension. The socio-political contexts of post-conflict return and displacement have to be taken into account as well. The recovery phase can either reinforce existing patterns of exclusion or serve as an opportunity to promote restorative justice and social healing, depending on how it is designed and carried out (Abdulrahim, 2020). To be effective, urban frameworks must be resilient and aligned with spatial planning priorities.

In particular, this integrates a diverse range of reconstruction approaches by incorporating traditional planning with spatial and contemporary technologies, proposing a flexible and holistic structure for urban recovery in post-war settings. The goal is not to offer rigid frameworks but to enable forward-looking, data-driven, embedded socially practices sensitive to the myriad conditions present in post-conflict settings.

A-PLACE

Inclusive placemaking as a catalyst for social engagement and fair communities: reflections from A-Place

Špela Verovšek
Assistance Professor , Ph.D.
University of Ljubljana,
Faculty of Architecture

spela.v@fa.uni-lj.si

In the context of contemporary urban transformation, socially engaged placemaking has emerged as a powerful approach to creating inclusive, resilient, and fair communities (Courage et al., 2021). Urban public places, as a shared and non-renewable resource, are central to community life and wellbeing but only when actively shaped through democratic and participatory means can they reflect the collective values, needs, and aspirations of those who inhabit them (Palich & Edmonds, 2013; Vikström et al., 2025)

This paper examines placemaking through the lens of social engagement and spatial justice, focusing on participatory approaches that foster co-responsibility, identity formation, and solidarity among diverse social groups. Drawing on the experience of the A-Place project, we explore how collaborative processes – rooted in creativity, dialogue, and inclusivity - can enhance both the physical and social fabric of urban environments.

Placemaking is fundamentally about turning spaces into places – infusing them with meaning through aesthetic, physical, and social transformation (Thomas, 2016). As such, placemaking is not only about the design or function of space but also about its symbolic, experiential, and relational dimensions. Meaningful placemaking practices attend to these layers by involving the community in decision-making processes, thereby ensuring that spaces are shaped by, and for, those who use them. As Jacobs (1961) or Whyte (1980) among many others emphasized decades ago, human-centred design needs to consider how places foster connection, belonging, and cultural vitality.

The work implemented in the frames of A-Place activities exemplifies how this tradition can be reimagined today in the context of transnational collaboration, sustainability goals, and inclusive urban innovation. A-Place is a creative placemaking platform and project that spans six European cities, operating through an interdisciplinary network of artists, architects, planners, educators, and community members. Its mission is to strengthen the bonds

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between people and their environments through socially engaged, participatory practices. The initiative draws inspiration from contemporary frameworks such as the Project for Public Spaces (PPS) and the New European Bauhaus (NEB) initiative aligning itself with broader aims including the European Urban Initiative and the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

A central tenet of A-Place is that socially engaged placemaking must be both context-sensitive and experiential. The project facilitates public interventions, exhibitions, workshops, and contests, using these as vehicles to promote awareness, knowledge exchange, and active participation. These events provide moments of collective creativity and serve as mechanisms for long-term engagement within particular engaged communities. The initiative's approach is organized around eight cross-cutting thematic lines that articulate key dimensions of quality placemaking (Madrazo & Verovšek, 2025). These include the strive towards the vitality of places, which emphasizes vividness, playfulness, and a sense of safety; engaged communities, which foster commitment, solidarity, and intergenerational dialogue; and a strong sense of place and belonging, grounding design in memory, heritage, and local pride. Sustainability awareness plays a crucial role by promoting environmental responsibility, while evoking sensory engagement draws attention to the multisensory and often non-visible dimensions of place. Fostering collective creativity is encouraged through artistic expression and imaginative practices, and diversity and inclusivity are pursued through design justice, tolerance, and coexistence. Finally, creating learning spaces transforms urban environments into sites of shared experience and collective reflection. These dimensions are not merely conceptual – they are activated through lived encounters, collaborative making, and ongoing dialogue. As such, they serve as a framework for evaluating placemaking outcomes (Rapanta et al., 2021), ensuring transparency in process and adaptability across contexts.

A compelling demonstration of sensory-based placemaking was carried out in the Bairro do Rego neighbourhood in Lisbon. This initiative focused on evoking sensory awareness as a means to strengthen spatial identity and collective memory. Drawing on the concept of sensory urbanism (Adams et al., 2008) the project emphasized the role of non-visual stimuli – particularly sound – in shaping people's lived experience of urban space. While sound is often overlooked in traditional planning, it carries deep emotional and symbolic weight. It can evoke memories, signal familiarity, create ambiance, and provide a sense of orientation. In the constellation demonstrated through the process of preparing and implementing the soundwalk in the Bairro Rego neighbourhood, it specifically targeted the fragile sense of community among younger residents. The Lisbon initiative centered on recording everyday urban sounds and collaboratively designing a soundwalk itinerary with local youth. This practice served as both an educational and experiential tool, enhancing participants' awareness of their environment while generating a shared narrative rooted in the auditory landscape of their neighbourhood. Through the curation of a multisensory experience, residents and visitors were invited to re-engage with their surroundings, reflect on the emotional dimensions of space, and contribute to a new, collectively constructed place identity.

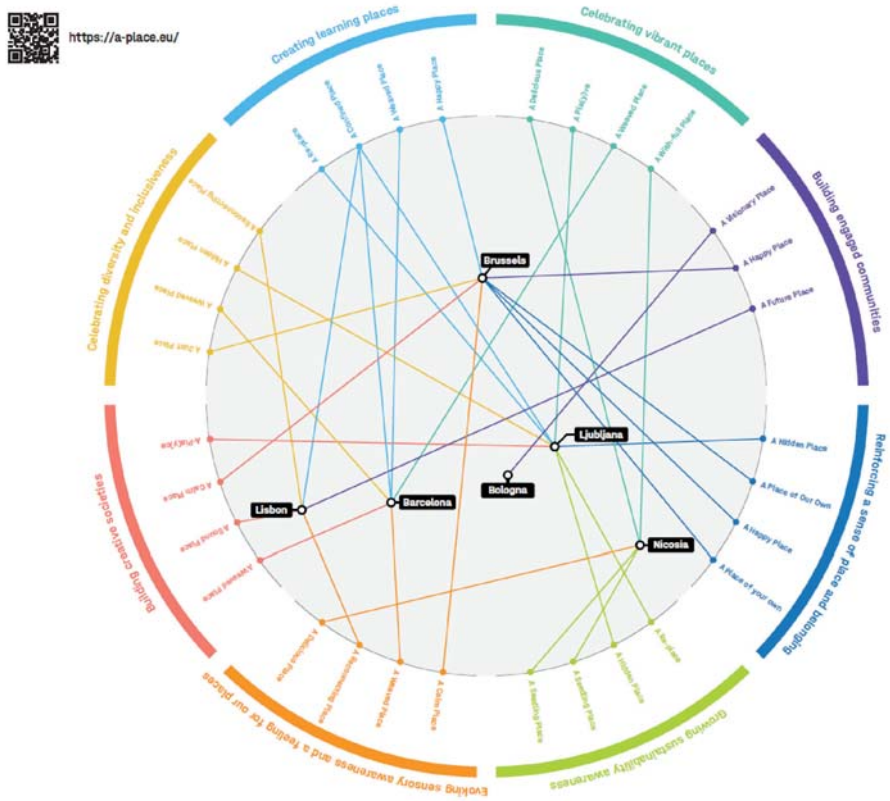
At its heart, A-Place suggests that place creates community. This idea echoes Wenger's (Wenger, 2011) concept of communities of practice, where place provides the spatial and symbolic reference for knowledge-sharing, collective meaning-making, and shared rituals. For example, a square or street reimagined through community dialogue and multisensory design can become a stage for cultural expression, intergenerational exchange, and civic negotiation. Moreover, socially engaged placemaking makes visible those voices that are too often marginalized in traditional planning processes – children and youth. By embedding participation in education and cultural activities, it equips younger generations with the tools to critically engage with their environments and see themselves as agents of change.

A-PLACE

Linking places through networked artistic practices

A-Place is a project co-financed by the Creative Europe programme from 2019 to 2023. Its aim is to enhance the bonds between people and the places they inhabit in six European cities: Barcelona, Bologna, Brussels, Lisbon, Ljubljana, and Nicosia.

A-Place aims to encourage creation, experimentation and debate on the sense of place and belonging in our interconnected and multicultural societies. This project brings together artists, creators, architects, teachers, students from various educational levels and cultural agents who collaborate with communities to create a network of places — tangible and intangible — that promotes exchange between people and cultures, overcoming geographical and disciplinary boundaries.



A-Place partnership includes nine organizations:

Schools of architecture and urban planning
School of Architecture La Salle, Barcelona (Spain)
Faculty of Architecture, University of Ljubljana (Slovenia)
KU Leuven, Department of Architecture (Belgium)

Faculty of social and human sciences
Universidade Nova de Lisboa and Nova FCSH (Portugal)

Multidisciplinary groups focusing on arts and urban interventions
Alive Architecture (Belgium)
Prostorož (Slovenia)
Urban Gorillas (Cyprus)

Cultural agencies specialised in film and video art
Screen Projects (Spain)
City Space Architecture (Italy)

Co-funded by the Creative Europe Programme of the European Union
CREATIVE EUROPE Cooperation Project Agreement number 607457-CREA-1-2019-1-ES-CULT-COOP2

Fig. 1. The A-Place initiative and its placemaking efforts were presented on the New European Bauhaus Festival which took place in Brussels in June 2022 (A-Place, 2022).

Building creative societies

cultural diversity, **collective creativity**: art and creativity help to create aesthetically compelling, culturally relevant, and socially engaging places, shared spaces, urban art

Public spaces provide an open platform for artistic expression, where artists and communities can bring their visions to life, explore new ideas and connect with others through shared experiences. By promoting the use of public spaces as territories for artistic creation, cities can encourage cultural diversity, foster creativity, promote social cohesion and contribute to energising urban life.

A Weaved Place

collective creativity

collective creativity

Partners: School of Architecture La Salle
Location: Bellvitge neighbourhood, L'Hospitalet de Llobregat (Barcelona)
Date: April-November 2021

Personal memories and experiences related to places often go unnoticed in the public sphere. In order to highlight the importance of certain places in the Bellvitge neighbourhood, secondary school students were encouraged to identify places that had a special value for them. The architecture students then proposed interventions to share the significance of these places. Finally, they all collaborated in setting up the installations in the public space.

A Sound Place

Partners: Universidade Nova de Lisboa
Location: Mouraria neighbourhood, Lisbon
Date: March - April 2020

Inspired by the real and imaginary sounds of Mouraria and the experiences of Martim Moniz Square, young composers created musical pieces in the style of contemporary classical music. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the concert could not be held in the square as originally planned. Instead, the pieces were performed and streamed live from the Mouraria Innovation Centre. As originally planned, the concert played in the public space would inspire people to re-imagine the surroundings through the music pieces crafted from the very places they were in.

A Calm Place

> "Imagine society without the influence of the arts and you'll have to strip out what is most pleasurable in life, and much that is educationally vital."
>
> Peter Bazalgette

Partners: Alive Architecture and KU Leuven Department of Architecture
Location: Schaerbeek district, Brussels
Date: October 2020

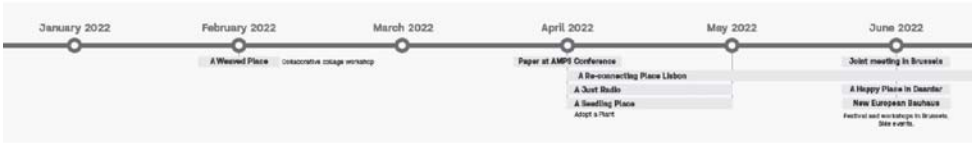
Master's students from KU Leuven's "Alt-Shift" course led a community workshop aimed at introducing the public to recycling materials through a hands-on, do-it-yourself approach. The activity focused on experimenting with design techniques to create foldable furniture using leftover cardboard boxes. Prior to the workshop, the same techniques were explored by students during the spring semester's design course. This inclusive activity was open to people of all ages who were interested in participating.

A Confined Place

collective creativity

Partners: La Salle-URL, Universidade Nova de Lisboa, University of Ljubljana, Urban Gorillas and City Space Architecture
Location: Online
Date: March - December 2020

In response to the 2020 lockdown, students from higher education institutions in A-Place collaborated to share their experiences with lived spaces by means of photographs and texts. Creators from around the world participated in an open call for artistic interventions in public spaces in time of confinement. Filmmakers from different countries submitted their short films about public space during the lockdown to the "A Confined Urban Vision" call.



A GROWING CITY AS A COMMUNITY OF CITIZENS

Student projects: Urban design housing estate and Urban design for the centre

TUTORS
Pawel Trebacz, PhD, Eng. Arch.
Renata Jóźwik, PhD, Eng. Arch.
Magdalena Duda, Msc, Eng. Arch.

Urban Design Housing Estates
Long - cycle Master's degree sem. 5/11 WUT
Academic year 2024/25

STUDENTS | Concept BONDS
Marcin Gadomski, MSc Student
Antoni Jakubiec, MSc Student
Stanisław Kotłowski, MSc Student

STUDENTS | Concept COMMON PATHS
Julian Mularuk, MSc Student
Emilia Romowicz, MSc Student
Melania Woźniak, MSc Student
Tomasz Wróblewski, MSc Student

Urban Design for the Centre
Master's degree (second-cycle studies)
sem.1/4 WUT
Academic year 2024/25

STUDENTS | Concept NATURAL DIRECTION
Martyna Kotulek, Eng. Arch.,
Hanna Lechowska, Eng. Arch.,
Aleksandra Przastek, Eng. Arch.,
Maja Przygodzka, Eng. Arch.,
Alicja Zioło, Eng. Arch.,

STUDENTS | Concept INNOVATION AXIS
Matylda Dubaniowska, Eng. Arch.,
Marta Jagielska, Eng. Arch.,
Aleksandra Markowska, Eng. Arch.,
Aleksandra Sułecka, Eng. Arch.
Natalia Szewczyk, Eng. Arch.

Warsaw University of Technology
Faculty of Architecture, Poland
Department of Architectural and Urban Design
Studio of Applied Urban Design

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A city is a dynamic space, constantly shaped by the changing needs of its inhabitants and the ideas and visions of those who design it. A contemporary approach to urban planning assumes that building a sense of community and local identity is achieved by consciously and responsibly shaping residential areas and the public spaces that serve them (Domaradzki, 2012; Trębacz 2024; Trębacz et al., 2025; Jóźwik 2024). Students, working under the guidance of didacticians from the Applied Urbanism Studio, Department of Architectural and Urban Design of the Faculty of Architecture at the Warsaw University of Technology, faced two design tasks in the academic year 2024/2025, the aim of which was to creatively transform parts of the city of Radom in the spirit of contemporary urban planning trends.

The first was to work on a concept for a multifunctional residential area, with particular emphasis on integrating the new urban structure into the existing spatial context and creating valuable common spaces. The work was carried out in teams and involved the development of an urban structure on a scale of 1:2000 over an area of approximately 80 ha, with subsequent detailing of selected sections.

The second task was an attempt to design a functional, composed neighbourhood centre, responding to the contemporary needs of its users.

The second task was an attempt to design a functional, composed neighbourhood centre, responding to the contemporary needs of its users. This project involved the creation of a coherent concept for developing a section of the city through introducing new buildings to improve the quality of life and attractiveness of the urban space. The study area covered an area of 40-60 ha, functionally and spatially diverse.

Both projects are an interesting attempt to redefine Radom's urban identity and show how young designers can contribute to shaping the city as a community of citizens. This place not only develops but also builds social and spatial cohesion.

In conducting the study project, at the core of the design process, the tutors used the method of shaping the development of the city adopted at the Applied Urbanism Studio of the Faculty of Architecture of the Warsaw University of Technology, founded by Professor Krzysztof Domaradzki. This method consists of the following decision-making steps (Trębacz, Duda, 2021):

1. delimiting, based on the conditions of the existing state and development trends, as well as the analysis of the broader urban context, a clear division of the larger unit into smaller areas, more homologous in terms of the existing or envisaged form and function of the development.

2. identifying, within the units thus defined, the most important 'generators' of resident traffic and linking them with a network of connections.

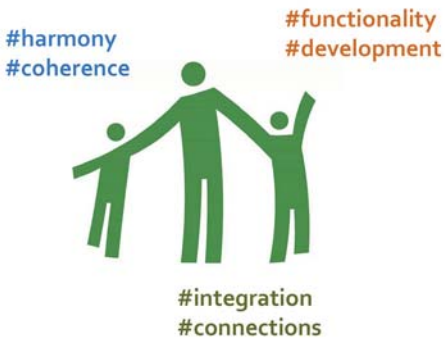
3. hierarchising the network of links.

4. giving spatial form to the defined connections, emphasising the most important element, crystallising the system and the nodal points - squares.

The projects the students realise constitute a multi-faceted response to the challenges of contemporary shaping of the city as a community of citizens. The works show a variety of urban development strategies that combine social, environmental and spatial needs. Particular attention was paid to proposals for an alternative or additional railway line stop, which, as a potential traffic generator, can become an impulse for revitalisation and activation of the areas in question.

A GROWING CITY AS A COMMUNITY OF CITIZENS

Urban Design Housing Estate | Concept BONDS

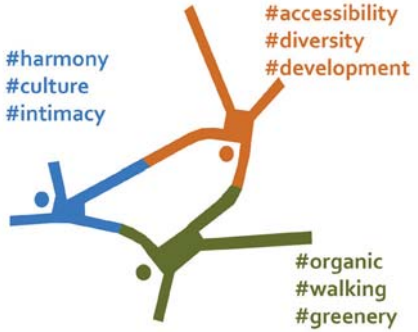


public spaces layout

transportation layout

greenery layout

Urban Design Housing Estate | Concept COMMON PATHS



public spaces layout

transportation layout

greenery layout

A GROWING CITY AS A COMMUNITY OF CITIZENS

Urban Design for the Centre | Concept NATURAL DIRECTION

public spaces layout

transportation layout

greenery layout

function layer

public spaces

transportation

greenery

INTERGENERATIONAL ACTIVITY CENTER

TUTORS
Piotr Bujnowski, Msc, Eng. Arch.
Małgorzata Benedek, Msc, Eng. Arch.

CONSULTATIONS
Józef Hila, Msc, Eng. -
Construction

MASTER'S STUDENTS
Magdalena Grabarczyk
Agata Kiliszek
Joanna Sołyga

Warsaw University of Technology
Faculty of Architecture, Poland
Department of Architectural and Urban Design
Course: Architectural Design –
A Project For The Local Community
Master's degree sem. 7/11 WUT
Academic year 2024/25

The idea of the Intergenerational Activity Center (IAC) embodies the core values underpinning the New European Bauhaus (NEB), a project announced in 2020 by the President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, as a quasi-political initiative. The NEB proposes a holistic approach to architecture, which increasingly serves as a meeting point of diverse cultures, communities, local interests and needs, art, technology, and ecological as well as democratic values. This broad and inclusive paradigm has long guided architects and urban planners in the design of public spaces, and the NEB initiative now provides it with strong institutional foundations.

The IAC is an initiative of the City of Warsaw, developed in response to grassroots activities by local NGOs and the needs of senior residents who seek to spend time actively in the presence of younger generations. The fourth such center is currently under development in the Polish capital. These centers aim to foster local integration, intergenerational connection, and community-building by providing supportive, inclusive architectural frameworks for shared activities. They also serve to care for the elderly, children, and people with disabilities.

At the Faculty of Architecture, Warsaw University of Technology, during the 2024/2025 academic year, seventh-semester students undertook the design of an Intergenerational Activity Center in the Ursynów district of Warsaw, at the intersection of Indira Gandhi and Jana Rosoła streets, nearby the Inventors' Park. The program, developed by the tutors and inspired by existing centers in Warsaw, included a six-unit kindergarten for 150 children, an activity center with a day-care facility for 30 senior citizens, and a support center for 30 individuals with disabilities. Additionally, the IAC was to include shared spaces that encourage spontaneous integration, such as a multifunctional hall for 220 people, exhibition space, a café, outdoor terraces, playgrounds, and recreational areas.

Students approached the project individually, integrating the assumed functions with the greenery of the adjacent park to achieve high-quality, health-promoting environments in close proximity to nature. The priority of the projects was to use the landscape potential of the plot, its topography, and existing vegetation. A significant emphasis was placed on creating socially integrative spaces that harmonize with nature while addressing broader societal goals such as intergenerational dialogue, community bonding, and mutual respect. The aim was to create inclusive, open environments that foster comfort and a sense of security. Much emphasis was also placed on the use of ecological and sustainable building materials.

INTERGENERATIONAL ACTIVITY CENTER

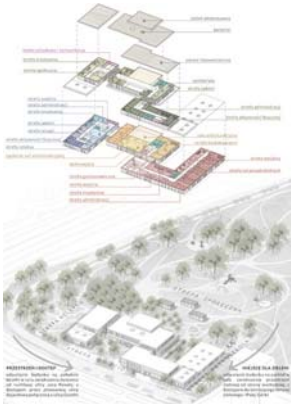
TUTORS
Piotr Bujnowski, Msc, Eng. Arch.
Małgorzata Benedek, Msc, Eng. Arch.

CONSULTATIONS
Józef Hila, Msc, Eng.
Construction

MASTER'S STUDENT
Magdalena Grabarczyk

Warsaw University of Technology
Faculty of Architecture, Poland
Department of Architectural and Urban Design
Course: Architectural Design –
A Project For The Local Community
Master's degree sem. 7/11 WUT
Academic year 2024/25

In the design by student Magdalena Grabarczyk, inclusivity was expressed through open spaces such as entrance plazas and areas around buildings that encourage interaction among various social groups. The proposed greenhouses also enhance the integration of this public institution with the broader community, beyond its immediate users. The main courtyard features a subtly separated kindergarten entrance to ensure comfort for specific user groups - children with parents, the elderly, and individuals with disabilities, while still allowing for natural and unforced communal use of shared spaces. Most functions are well-lit and oriented toward the park, ensuring a pleasant atmosphere through abundant daylight and direct contact with nature.




Tarasy spotkań
PRZESTRZEŃ CODZIENNYCH SPOTKAŃ
Ogrody zimowe
Ogrody społecznościowe
Ogrody sensoryczne

INTERGENERATIONAL ACTIVITY CENTER

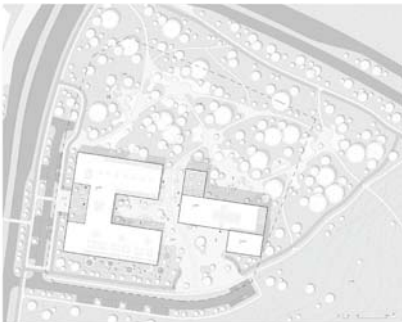
TUTORS
Piotr Bujnowski, Msc, Eng. Arch.
Małgorzata Benedek, Msc, Eng. Arch.

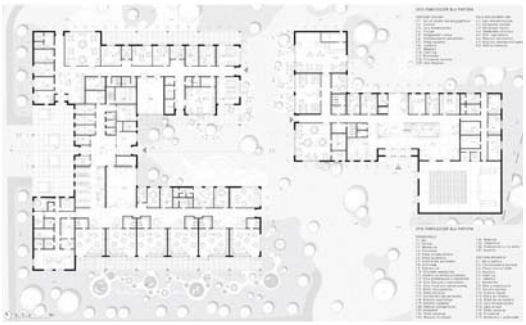
CONSULTATIONS
Józef Hila, Msc, Eng.
Construction

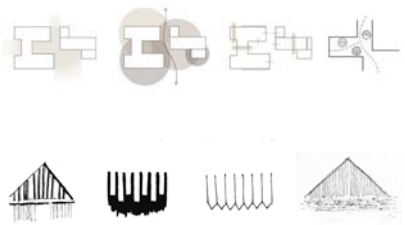
MASTER'S STUDENT
Agata Kiliszek

Warsaw University of Technology
Faculty of Architecture, Poland
Department of Architectural and Urban Design
Course: Architectural Design –
A Project For The Local Community
Master's degree sem. 7/11 WUT
Academic year 2024/25

The design by Agata Kiliszek centers on preserving the memory of Ursynów's historic wooden rural architecture by interpreting its characteristic details in the building façades. This is an example of architecture seeking identity through historical and local values. The detailed wooden elements lend the building a warm, inviting atmosphere while serving ecological purposes. A main green square, located deeper within the site and adjacent to the multipurpose hall, creates a valuable public urban space in a park. The buildings are arranged in a cascading layout that rises toward a natural hill. A recurring motif of timber lattice structures, used in the courtyard roofs of the kindergarten and support center, as well as above the seniors' terrace and the multifunctional hall foyer, enhances spatial legibility and helps users navigate the shared spaces.







INTERGENERATIONAL ACTIVITY CENTER

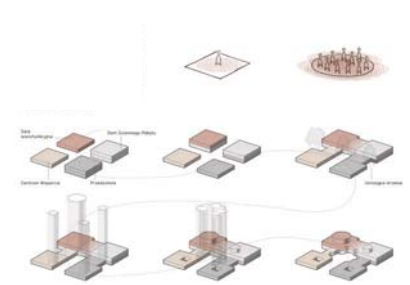
TUTORS
Piotr Bujnowski, Msc, Eng. Arch.
Małgorzata Benedek, Msc, Eng. Arch.

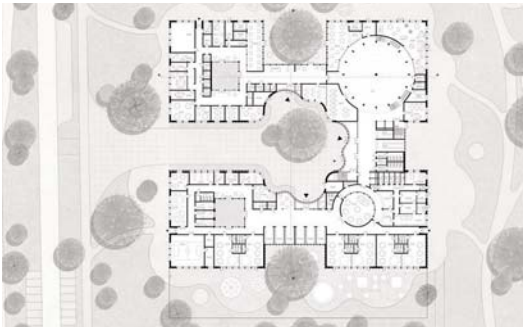
CONSULTATIONS
Józef Hila, Msc, Eng.
Construction

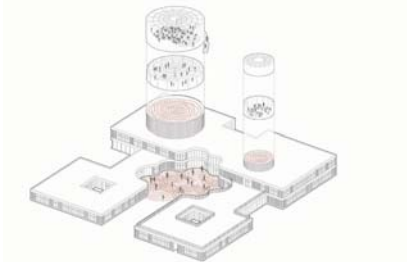
MASTER'S STUDENT
Joanna Sołyga

Warsaw University of Technology
Faculty of Architecture, Poland
Department of Architectural and Urban Design
Course: Architectural Design –
A Project For The Local Community
Master's degree sem. 7/11 WUT
Academic year 2024/25

The NEB's emphasis on multifunctionality and inclusivity is also evident in the design by Joanna Sołyga, which includes open plazas and shared spaces conducive to artistic and recreational activities as well as intergenerational exchange. This integrative spirit is reinforced by clear and expressive spatial forms that support free movement and ease of orientation. The distinctive building composition, combining oval and rectangular volumes, clearly expresses the project's integrative purpose. The entrance courtyard ensures comfortable use by various user groups and simultaneously offers opportunities for spontaneous and safe interaction. The building's exterior is composed with discipline, while internal courtyards wrap around existing trees, allowing ample daylight and visual access to greenery. These intimate courtyards ensure constant visual and physical contact with the surrounding park. All programmatic functions are well-connected, promoting integration. Uniform façade divisions lend calmness to the building's dynamic form, making it approachable and non-intrusive - harmoniously integrated into its context.







ARCHITECTURAL WORKSHOP AT CYBERNETYKI

Architectural concept for the adaptive reuse of an office building on Cybernetyki Street in Warsaw for residential and community-oriented functions

TUTORS
Anna Maria Wierzbicka, PhD, Eng. Arch.
Prof. WUT
Jakub Pienkowski, Msc, Eng. Arch.
Filip Strzelecki, Msc, Eng. Arch.

CONSULTATIONS
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Warsaw University of Technology
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sem. 3/4 WUT

THE ORGANIZERS OF THE WORKSHOP
Flora Opex Sp. z o.o
Warsaw University of Technology,
Faculty of Architecture

PATRONAGE
New European Bauhaus

MASTER'S STUDENTS
Alicja Bakalarska - Eng. Arch.
Paulina Cieśla - Eng. Arch.
Stanisław Dawidziuk - Eng. Arch.
Zofia Jemioło - Eng. Arch.
Anita Karczmarczyk - Eng. Arch.
Konrad Kmiecik - Eng. Arch.
Michał Komorowski - Eng. Arch.
Patrycja Kuczyńska - Eng. Arch.
Maria Kuryłowicz - Eng. Arch.
Natalia Małolepsza - Eng. Arch.
Zofia Pabiańczyk - Eng. Arch.
Szymon Panek - Eng. Arch.
Przemysław Sasin - Eng. Arch.
Grzegorz Staroń - Eng. Arch.
Julia Stepanow - Eng. Arch.
Mikołaj Szafrański - Eng. Arch.
Michał Szczepanek - Eng. Arch.
Grzegorz Środa - Eng. Arch.
Bartłomiej Urbanowski - Eng. Arch.
Natalia Wnukowska - Eng. Arch.
Katarzyna Wroczek - Eng. Arch.
Marta Zawadka - Eng. Arch.

The aim of the workshop was to explore the current challenges associated with the transformation and adaptive reuse of existing buildings. The workshop focused on the case study of the Helion and Luminar office buildings located on Cybernetyki Street in Warsaw, which are intended for conversion into residential use. The projects also addressed community-building aspects as well as the core values promoted by the European Commission's New European Bauhaus initiative.

The final stage of the workshop involved a design competition, through which the most architecturally and functionally compelling concept for converting an office building into residential use was selected. Students worked in teams of two. As part of the architectural specialization module, 11 design proposals were developed, each envisioning the adaptation of office buildings on Cybernetyki Street into vibrant, community-oriented residential environments.

The submissions were evaluated by a competition jury composed of representatives from the organizing institutions and leading Warsaw-based architecture studios.

Jury members:

- Chair – Maciej Miłobędzki (JEMS Architekci, Vice-Dean for Development, Faculty of Architecture, Warsaw University of Technology)

- Rapporteur – Ewa Stankiewicz-Świniarska (Faculty of Architecture, WUT)

- Przemo Łukasik (Medusa Group)

- Piotr Bujnowski (Bujnowski Architekci)

- Karolina Tulkowska-Słyk (Vice-Dean for Academic Affairs, Professor at the Faculty of Architecture, WUT)

- Maciej Sobieski (Flora Development)

- Leszek Gołąbiecki (Unibep Group)

- Marcin Gołębiewski (Unihouse S.A.)

The workshop was organized through a collaboration between the Faculty of Architecture at the Warsaw University of Technology and the company Flora Opex.

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Warsaw University of Technology, Faculty of Architecture

PATRONAGE
New European Bauhaus

1st place

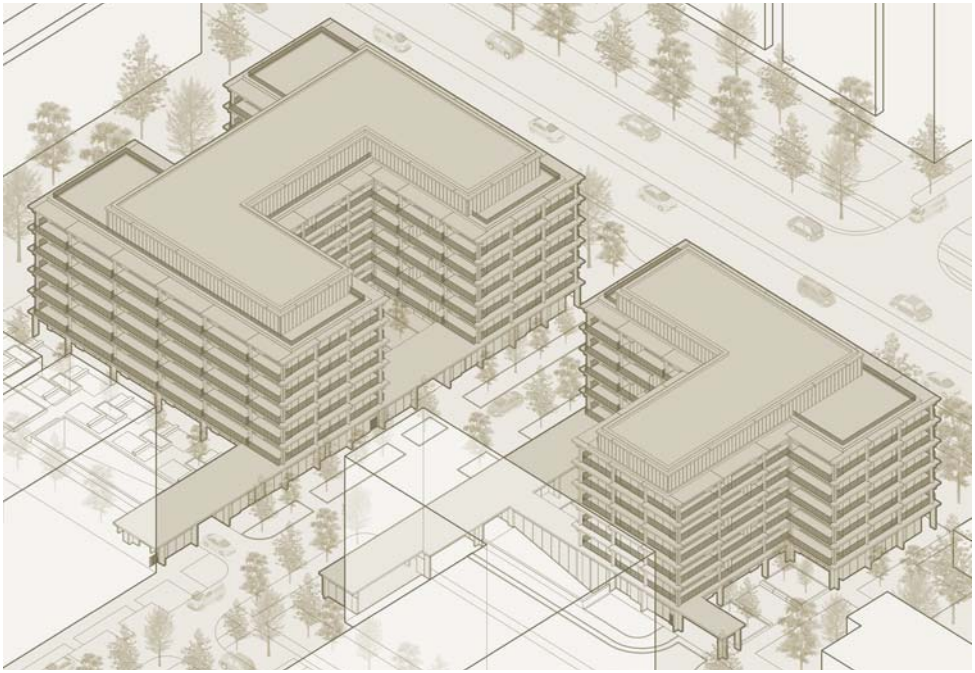
MINIMAL-MAXIMAL

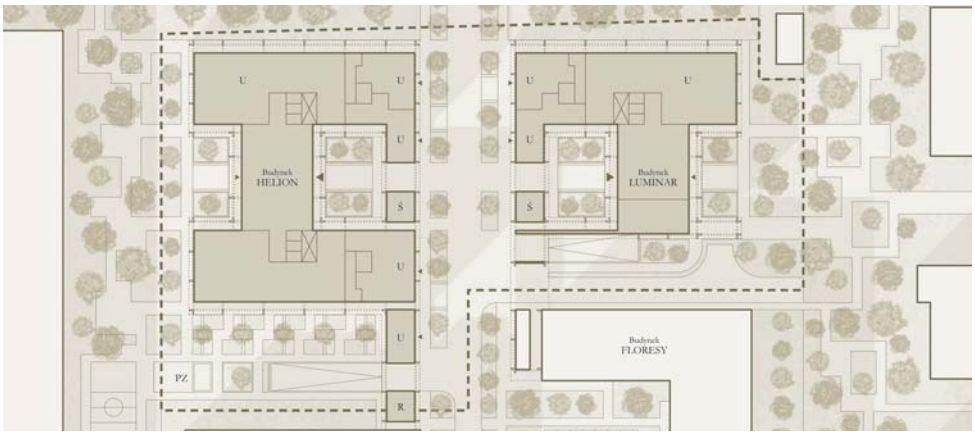
The "Minimally-Maximal" project is founded on the principle of minimal intervention in the existing structure of the Helion and Luminar office buildings, while simultaneously maximizing their spatial potential. A key premise is the preservation of as many structural elements as possible and the reduction of demolitions to an absolute minimum. This approach allows for resource savings and a significant reduction in CO_2 emissions, while also controlling costs by employing proven solutions in the form of simple, repeatable prefabricated components.

A pragmatic consistency in the use of multiplied modular elements enables structural optimization and elevates these components to become the protagonists in the architectural expression of the façade. A significant design move involves relocating the vertical circulation to the exterior of the buildings, introducing open-access galleries that establish a clear architectural rhythm and generate a new visual identity for the structures. These external circulation spaces foster informal social interactions among residents, creating a dynamic and socially integrative environment.

The community-building aspects of the project are emphasized through spatial strategies such as the introduction of a woonerf and a system of safe, accessible circulation routes designed to function as extensions of the public realm. On both sides of the internal street, service pavilions have been placed to define a human-scaled environment that invites interaction and everyday social life. Pocket parks that extend into the building lobbies, as well as gallery corridors serving as elevated terraces, provide informal settings for spontaneous neighborly encounters.

At the micro scale, the apartments themselves are designed to foster a sense of community. A semi-public, pass-through dining space functions as a shared area for co-working, playing games, and communal meals, actively supporting close social bonds among residents.

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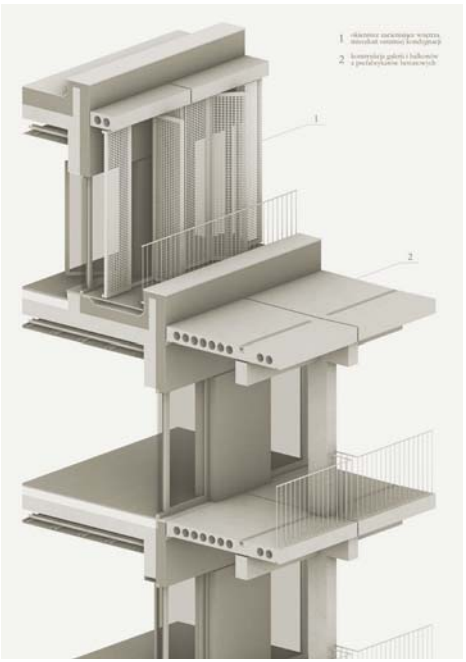

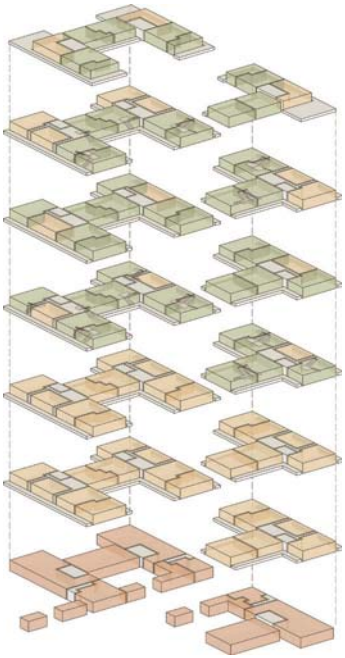

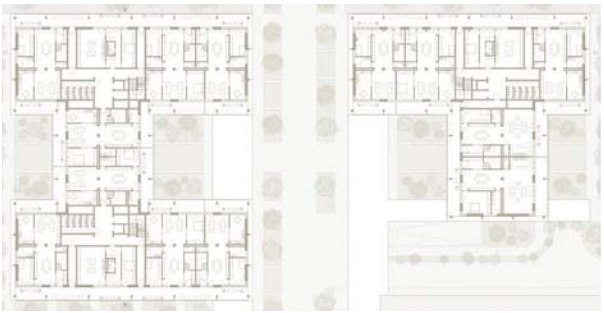

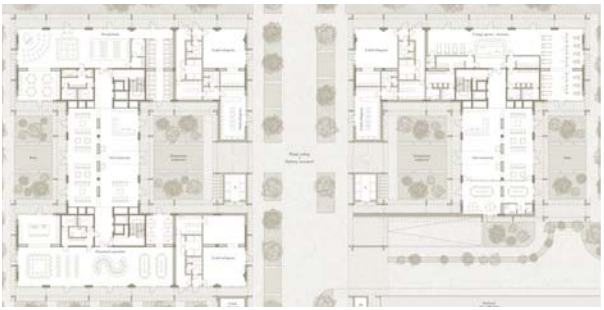

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Warsaw University of Technology, Faculty of Architecture

PATRONAGE
New European Bauhaus

2nd place

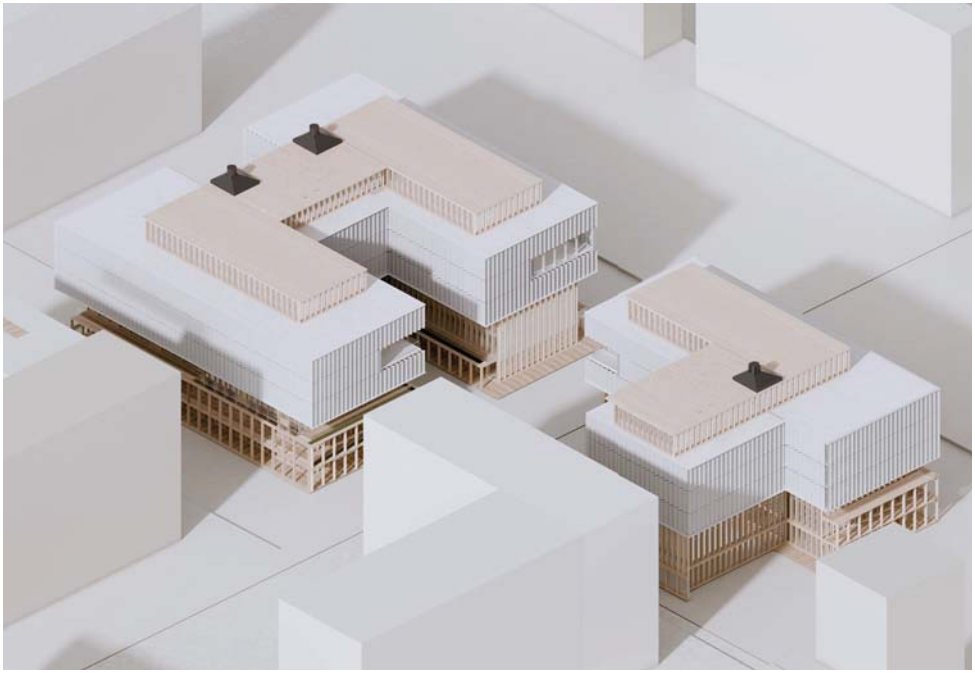
AURA

The AURA project is a contemporary adaptation of an existing office building into a residential complex, combining an innovative architectural approach with respect for the urban context and principles of sustainable development. The core design strategy centers on integrating the new form harmoniously into the existing urban fabric, drawing upon the genius loci of neighboring blocks, and creating a welcoming, vibrant living environment.

The building volumes are shaped to reference the character of the surrounding architecture while expressing a distinctly contemporary identity. Revitalization of the neighborhood is supported by the introduction of commercial functions at ground level, activating the street front and generating a lively urban space accessible to both residents and visitors. The project also envisions the connection of two adjacent linear parks, enhancing the quality and attractiveness of the public realm while reinforcing the ecological character of the development.

The concept for shaping public spaces in the AURA project is grounded in the synergy between architecture and greenery, resulting in a welcoming, multifunctional environment that fosters social integration among residents. New plantings not only enhance the aesthetic quality of the surroundings but also contribute to improved microclimatic conditions, thereby increasing user comfort. The central plaza between the buildings, enriched with elements of small-scale urban furniture, is envisioned as a natural gathering space for rest, leisure, and informal socialization.

Additional recreational functions such as running tracks and a basketball court introduce new layers of activity into the adjacent linear park, reinforcing its role as a vibrant public amenity. Beneath the arcades, in the shade of carefully integrated greenery, cafés and local services will animate the ground level, generating lively social spaces that support everyday interactions and strengthen neighborhood ties.



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PATRONAGE
New European Bauhaus

3rd place

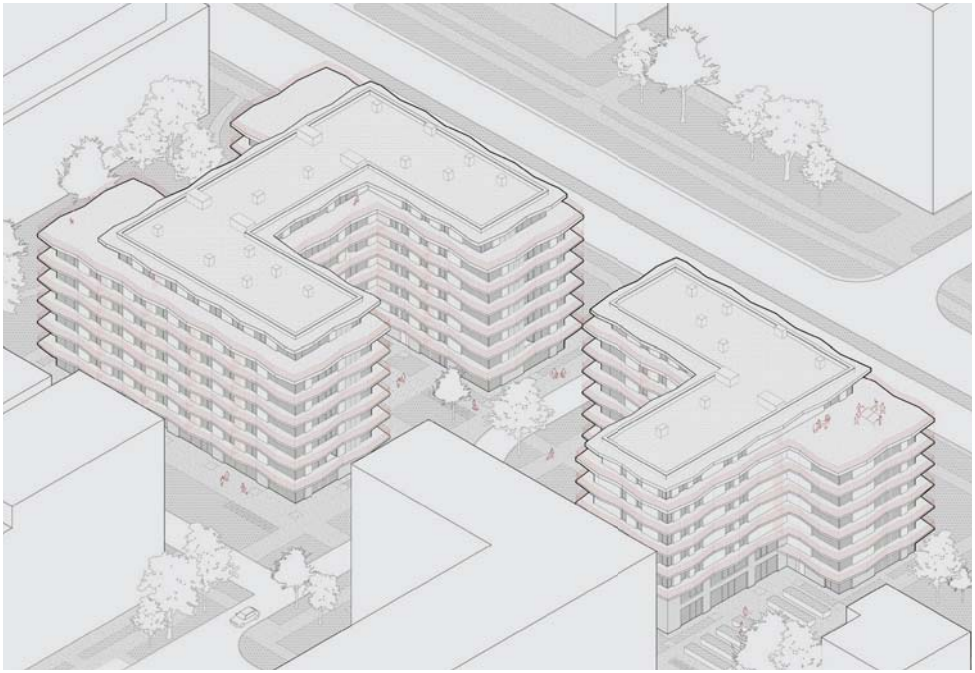
OBLIQUES

The project's architectural expression draws upon the industrial past of Warsaw's Służewiec district. Exposed steel beams supporting the newly added balconies and the inclusion of spacious residential units emphasize the loft-like character of the development. The distinctively shaped, angular balconies create a dynamic, folded rhythm along the façade, giving the building a new architectural identity. Through its horizontal articulation, the façade subtly communicates the transformation of the building's function from office to residential use. The project title, Slopes, also nods to the adjacent development, Esy Floresy.

The design proposes a reconfiguration of the existing site layout. The internal road, originally dividing the entrances to the buildings, is reimagined with a soft, meandering curve and an elevated surface. This intervention calms vehicular traffic and transforms the former thoroughfare into a unified, urban plaza. The plaza is designed to break down into smaller spatial units with varied surfaces, interspersed with perennial plantings and tall grasses. Outside the footprint of the underground garage, new tree plantings enhance the ecological quality of the site.

The building aligns with the principles of the New European Bauhaus, notably through the reduction of carbon footprint via adaptive reuse and renovation of the existing structure. The project includes accessible design for individuals with disabilities, shared spaces that support social interaction, and integrated ground-floor services that ensure proximity to everyday amenities. Each of these elements contributes to a more sustainable, socially inclusive environment and improves the overall quality of life for its residents.

The project envisions a layered network of shared spaces both semi-private areas dedicated to residents and publicly accessible ground-floor commercial zones. On the upper floors, common-use rooms are introduced to encourage interaction and community building, while open-access rooftop terraces crown both buildings, providing generous outdoor spaces for collective use.



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PATRONAGE
New European Bauhaus

1st Honorable Mention

VERTICAL GARDENS

The core concept of the project is based on the prominent integration of greenery, extensively accessible to residents. This approach gave rise to the idea of "Vertical Gardens" – a space that is not only symbolic but also functionally enriched with significant social value, emphasizing the essential role of nature in urban living. A network of interconnected pocket parks within internal courtyards, green communal rooftop spaces, and the visually striking façade covered in climbing vines together form a cohesive and compelling proposal for merging the dense urban fabric with the calming atmosphere of garden-like environments.

In addition to the lushly planted courtyards, the project envisions a new level of rooftop connectivity between buildings. External vertical circulation comprising a staircase and elevator provides direct access to a publicly accessible rooftop bar and spa. The shared spaces located on the top floors play a key role in unifying public areas across the complex, creating a flexible and resident-oriented communication system.

The design blends aesthetics, sustainability, and inclusivity. The architectural form integrates harmoniously with its surroundings, employing eco-friendly materials, energy-efficient technologies, and solutions that foster social interaction. Varied public spaces enhance comfort and usability, while expansive glazing maximizes natural daylight. Green roofs, community gardens, and shared spaces support biodiversity and promote a healthy lifestyle. The project prioritizes pedestrian and bicycle mobility, minimizing environmental impact and contributing to a friendly, functional living environment.

At its core, the project reflects a strong commitment to community-building through the intensive implementation of urban greenery. It seeks to blur the boundaries between the built and the natural, resulting in a space designed to foster human connection through everyday interaction with the natural environment.

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2nd Honorable Mention

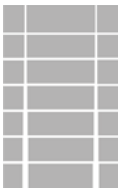
MODUS

The project envisions the transformation of an existing office building on Cybernetyki Street in Warsaw into a residential and communal space. A key design principle is modularity, which ensures spatial flexibility and repetition. The building's original form remains intact, while its functionality is enhanced by balconies encircling the façade. The rhythmic tapering of columns on successive floors lends the elevation a dynamic and elegant character.

The design integrates the building into its surroundings through carefully curated green areas and recreational spaces. Communal zones are intended to foster neighborly interaction and activate social life. Service and coworking functions located on the ground floor create an open, multifunctional urban environment. The entire proposal constitutes a cohesive element of the urban fabric, addressing the needs of the local community.

The project aligns with the values of the New European Bauhaus, merging aesthetics, sustainability, and a sense of community. A harmonious composition of modules, along with subtle variations in proportions, gives the building a distinctive identity. Adaptation rather than demolition minimizes environmental impact and supports a circular economy approach. The openness of shared spaces and ground-floor functions encourages integration and the cultivation of social ties.

The design emphasizes the creation of spaces that support social interaction and resident integration. Thoughtful landscaping around the building provides areas for rest and gatherings. Complementary functions such as coworking spaces and local services foster community activation. Through a variety of apartment types and flexible layouts, the project promotes inclusivity and supports an intergenerational community structure.



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Audience Awards

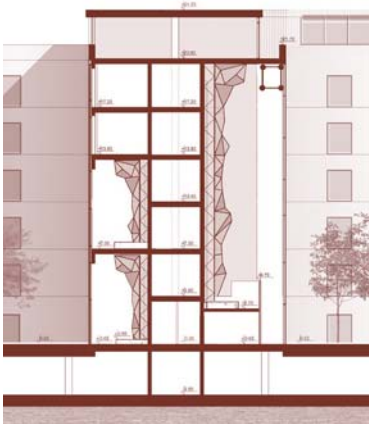
AIM HIGH

The adaptation project aims to transform traditionally commercial spaces into multifunctional environments that integrate residential living with opportunities for social engagement. The central concept involves repurposing the core of the building into a communal recreational area, with a climbing wall at its heart a symbolic element uniting diverse social groups through physical activity.

The public space is shared across the courtyards of two buildings, emphasizing a visual connection with the climbing wall located on one of the façades. A unified paving design and intersecting pathways draw attention to the central element the tall climbing wall, which becomes the visual and functional focal point of the entire composition. Greenery and rest zones create intimate gathering areas, seamlessly integrating indoor and outdoor spaces into a cohesive whole.

The project combines residential and recreational functions while maintaining a strong emphasis on quality of life and aesthetic refinement. The exclusivity and high standard of the residential units highlight the role of beauty and comfort in everyday living. The central recreational zone, including the climbing wall, introduces a sense of community and active leisure, fostering interaction among residents and the local neighborhood.

The design promotes social integration through the central recreational space, where the climbing wall serves as a gathering point for residents and the broader community. The inclusive nature of the space ensures accessibility for people of all ages and abilities. The resulting environment supports the formation of an open, diverse, and connected community.



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Audience Awards

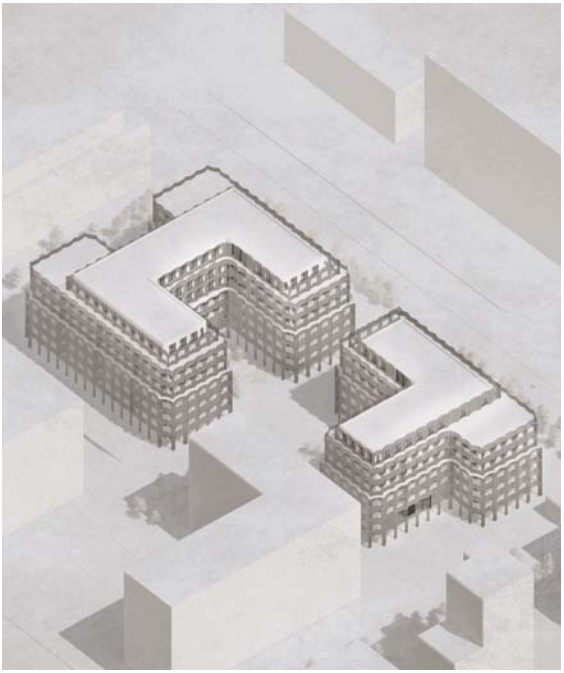
EQUIVALENCE

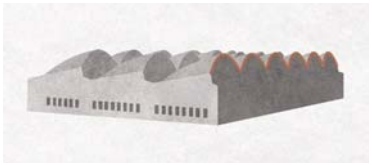
"Equivalence" is a project that places balance at its core between residents, nature, visitors, and technology. The redevelopment concept seeks to create a residential environment that is both high-quality and user-friendly, fostering inclusive spaces for a diverse community. The development is defined by its high standard of execution and the use of premium materials, consistently applied across private apartments and shared areas alike. Each building is designed to ensure equal access to amenities, regardless of apartment size. Ground floors incorporate both commercial functions and facilities available exclusively to residents. All buildings are accessible via a central green plaza, leading to spacious, welcoming entrance foyers. An additional architectural layer referred to as the "external skin" has been introduced to the structural core. Its soft, cascading form enhances the user experience by rendering the massing more approachable and human-scaled. The façade incorporates a steel mesh, referencing the industrial heritage of Służewiec. This mesh encloses generous, light-filled balconies for each apartment, providing a degree of visual privacy while maintaining openness.

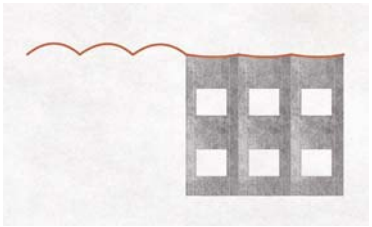
The principle of equivalence also informs the surrounding landscape, shaping an environment that balances the needs of residents, visitors, and nature. The green plaza between buildings functions as a communal space that promotes social interaction, relaxation, and well-being. Designed as an inclusive public realm, it offers barrier-free access for users of all ages and abilities, with seating areas, recreational zones, and integrated landscape features blending seamlessly with natural plantings

.

"Equivalence" integrates community-building elements both within the architectural framework and the external environment, resulting in a cohesive setting that encourages social bonds and shared experiences. A key component of the concept is the equilibrium between private and communal realmsspaces that invite interaction while respecting the need for comfort and personal retreat.







ARCHITECTURAL WORKSHOP AT CYBERNETYKI

Architectural concept for the adaptive reuse of an office building on Cybernetyki Street in Warsaw for residential and community-oriented functions

TUTORS
Anna Maria Wierzbicka, PhD, Eng. Arch. Prof. WUT
Jakub Pienkowski, Msc, Eng. Arch.
Filip Strzelecki, Msc, Eng. Arch.

CONSULTATIONS
Kinga Zinowiec-Cieplik - PhD. Eng - Landscape Design
Renata Jóźwik, PhD, Eng. Arch.- Urban Design
Pawel Trebacz, PhD, Eng. Arch. - Urban Design
Magdalena Duda, Msc, Eng. Arch.- Urban Design
Mariusz Wrona - Msc, Eng. Arch.- Structural Design

MASTER'S STUDENTS
Zofia Jemioło - Eng. Arch.
Natalia Małolepsza - Eng. Arch.

Warsaw University of Technology
Faculty of Architecture
Specialisation - A3 Architecture of Technology and Structures- Context and Meaning
Master's degree (second-cycle studies) sem. 3/4 WUT

THE ORGANIZERS OF THE WORKSHOP
Flora Opex Sp. z o.o
Warsaw University of Technology, Faculty of Architecture

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New European Bauhaus

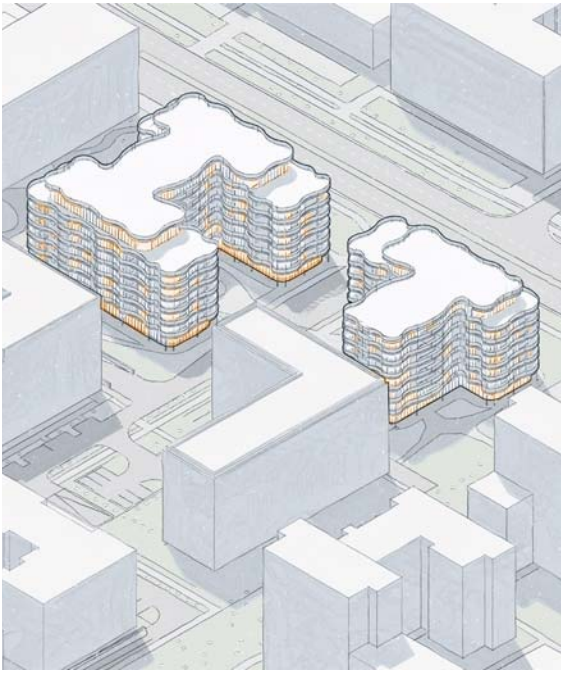
HUB-A

The concept behind the project is to breathe new life into an existing office building. Its original structure is enveloped by undulating terraces, which expand the available space for recreation, provide additional shading, and offer surfaces for vegetation, contributing to the vertical greening of the surrounding environment.

The design of the green belts reflects the flowing geometry of the terraces emerging from the building. Their organic form enables the creation of natural pathways, intimate nooks, and larger open areas suitable for children's play or communal gatherings.

The office-to-residential conversion aligns with the values of the New European Bauhaus, integrating aesthetics, sustainability, and innovative material use. The wavy balconies and fungal-inspired organic form give the building a distinctive visual identity, emphasizing the importance of beauty in spatial design. The use of hempcrete and mycelium-based materials exemplifies a commitment to environmentally responsible architectural solutions. The project demonstrates the potential of adapting existing structures while responding to contemporary environmental and technological challenges.

The green zone adjacent to the Helion building is enclosed on the east and west by residential façades, while to the north, it is naturally separated from the street by a change in terrain elevation. This configuration creates a secluded, intimate space with the potential to serve as a quiet retreat for local residents.



WE STAND FOR THE COMMUNITY PAVILION 2025

TUTORS
Anna Maria Wierzbicka, PhD, Eng. Arch. Prof. WUT
Maciej Kaufman, Msc, Eng. Arch.
Szymon Kalata, Msc, Eng. Arch.
Kinga-Zinowiec-Cieplik, PhD, Eng. Landscape Arch.

CONSULTATIONS
Mariusz Wrona - Msc, Eng. Arch.- Construction
Paweł Trębacz - PhD, Eng. Arch.
Renata Jóźwik, PhD, Eng. Arch.
Magdalena Duda, Msc, Eng. Arch.- Urban planning

Warsaw University of Technology
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Specialisation - A3 Architecture of Technology and Structures- Context and Meaning
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New European Bauhaus
Polish Presidency of the Council of the EU in 2025

MASTER'S STUDENTS
Bielan Anastasiia - Eng. Arch.
Zofia Całka - Eng. Arch.
Danilczuk Łukasz
Fedorchuk Kseniia - Eng. Arch.
Gancarczyk Zofia
Janowski Aleksander
Kassowski Szymon - Eng. Arch.
Kochanowska Klaudia
Koperska Julia - Eng. Arch.
Kordalska Maja - Eng. Arch.
Krawiecka Barbara - Eng. Arch.
Kucharczyk Szymon
Lechowska Hanna - Eng. Arch.
Maniak Ewa
Marczak Piotr
Oberzig Maciej
Olko Maria
Robak Mateusz - Eng. Arch.
Rorat Karolina
Szewczak Gabriela - Eng. Arch.
Szewczyk Natalia - Eng. Arch.
Sikora Katarzyna
Smolińska Magdalena - Eng. Arch.
Sułecka Aleksandra - Eng. Arch.
Świstuniuk Julia
Wiązowski Jakub
Wolska Maria
Zagajewski Dominik
Zioło Alicja - Eng. Arch.
Zwierzchowski Jan - Eng. Arch.
Zwijacz Zofia

In 2025, as part of the “We Stand For” initiative, within the A3 Architecture of Technologies and Structures specialization led by Professor Anna Maria Wierzbicka, the third pavilion was created. Like its predecessors, this structure was associated with an international conference held at the Royal Łazienki Museum in Warsaw, where the pavilion was also located. The third edition of the conference had a particularly unique character—it focused on the theme of community and was titled “Architecture of Challenges: The New European Bauhaus – Building Community.”

At the beginning of the edition, students and instructors asked themselves a fundamental question: What does community mean, and how can it be translated into architectural form? The discussions centered on warmth, connection, integration, harmony, synergy, belonging, diversity, celebration, and closeness. After intense debates and a democratic vote, the theme “symbiosis” was chosen—an idea that best captured the mutual coexistence of people, space, and nature.

In designing the pavilion, the team emphasized the relationship between humans and the natural world. The main goal was to create a space that encouraged reflection, social interaction, and a respectful connection with the living environment. Key components of the structure included wooden modules and planters inspired by the work of Alina Scholtz—a renowned Polish landscape architect. These planters, which fill with water in summer, turn into micro-ecosystems that support aquatic life, providing a visual experience and a lesson in the fragility and beauty of natural cycles.

The final architectural form referenced a circus realis—a circular, egalitarian space where all are equal. At the structure’s core stood three large planters symbolizing balance and interdependence. A twelfth vertical support represented the idea of completion and unity. The self-supporting wooden construction rose into the sky with a vertical form that acted as a symbolic axis between the earth and the heavens—a gesture connecting human existence to natural and spiritual forces.

Crucially, the pavilion also functioned as an educational tool. Its design invited visitors to contemplate the rhythms of the natural world—the cycle of growth, decay, and regeneration—and to understand the temporality of architecture itself. The project encouraged respect for nature’s hierarchy, reminding viewers that human creations are always secondary to the ancient, complex systems of life that predate us.

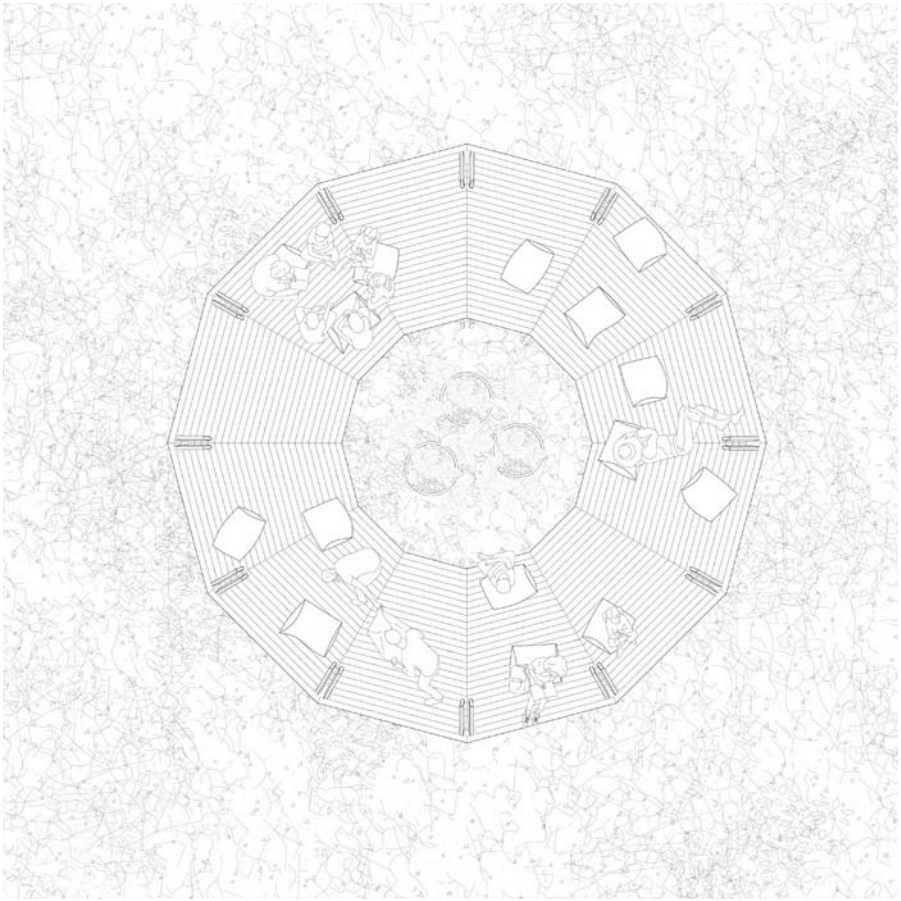
The pavilion’s Royal Bath Garden setting further emphasized this lesson. Situated among centuries-old trees and classical architecture, the contemporary structure stood not in opposition but in respectful dialogue with the past. It became a spatial metaphor for continuity: a bridge between generations, epochs, and knowledge systems. The subtle yet intentional architectural gesture taught that progress must grow out of understanding—of history and nature.

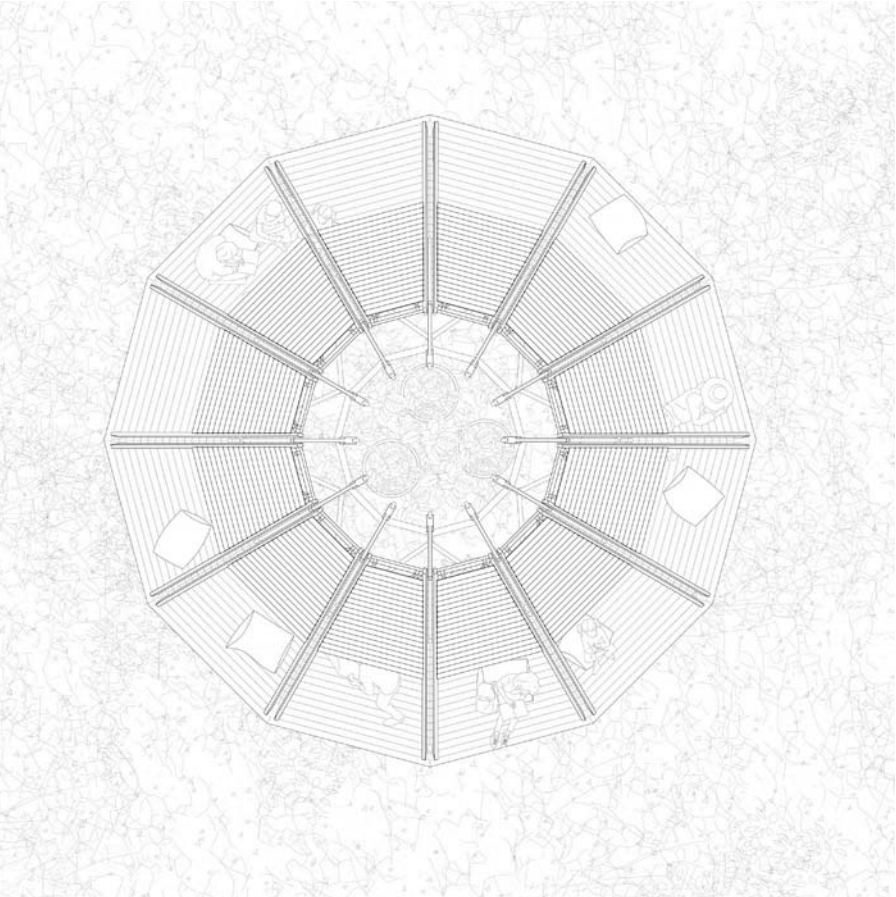
The construction was made possible thanks to the support of investors and donors who believed that investing in the education of young architects was an investment in a more sustainable and thoughtful future. Their contributions allowed students to bring to life a bold and responsible vision that is ambitious yet humble in its approach to place-making.

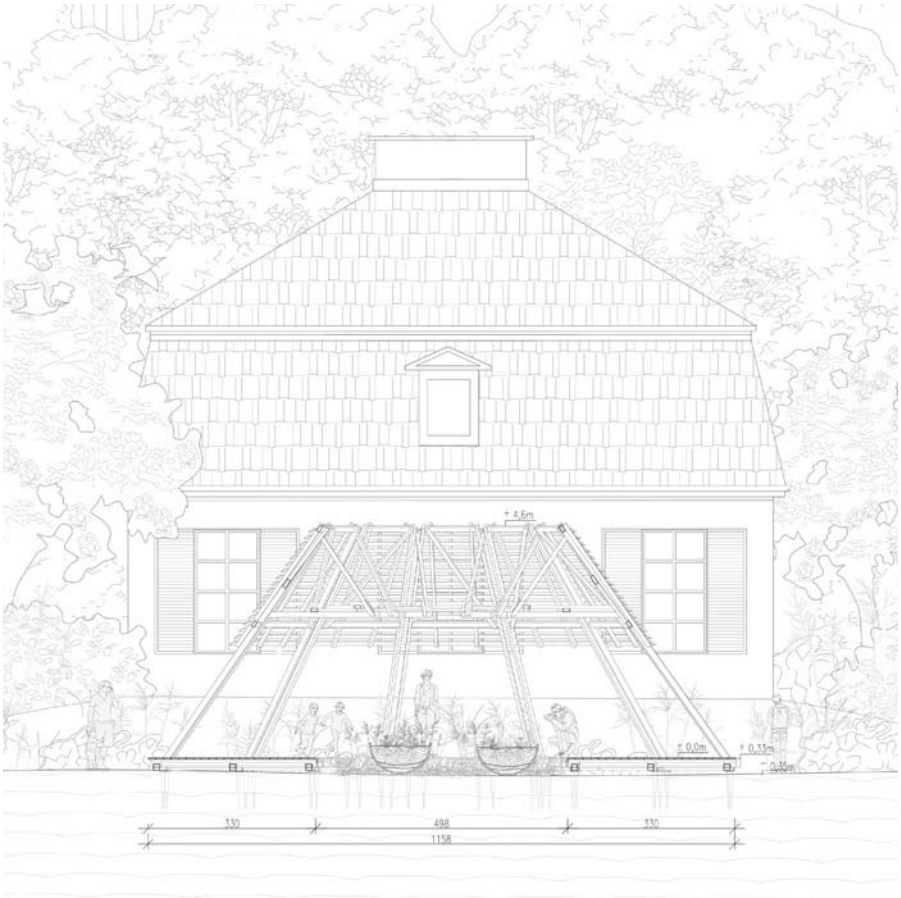
In parallel, a workshop edition of the project, also titled “We Stand For,” offered students the chance to experiment with form and material through a deeply conceptual lens. Divided into 15 teams, students developed distinct pavilion designs that explored organic structures, environmental harmony, and contemporary challenges.

Today, both the main and workshop pavilions remain tangible legacies of the 2025 edition. They serve as powerful reminders that architecture is not merely the art of building but a reflection of values—an expression of how we choose to live with each other, with history, and with the Earth. Their presence in the park is an invitation to pause, observe, and listen—to nature, to time, and to one another.

AMW



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WE STAND FOR THE FUTURE PAVILION 2024

TUTORS
Anna Maria Wierzbicka, PhD, Eng. Arch. Prof. WUT
Maciej Kaufman, Msc, Eng. Arch.
Szymon Kalata, Msc, Eng. Arch.
Kinga-Zinowiec-Cieplik, PhD, Eng. Landscape Arch.

CONSULTATIONS
Ewelina Gawell - PhD, Eng. Arch.- Construction
Mariusz Wrona - Msc, Eng. Arch.- Construction
Paweł Trębacz - PhD, Eng. Arch.- Urban planning

Warsaw University of Technology
Faculty of Architecture
Specialisation -A3 Architecture of Technology and Structures- Context and Meaning
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PATRONAGE
Faculty of Architecture WUT
Faculty of Geodesy and Cartography WUT
University of Warsaw
Łukasiewicz Institute
New European Bauhaus

MASTER'S STUDENTS
Alicja Bakalarska - Eng. Arch.
Paulina Cieśla - Eng. Arch.
Stanisław Dawidziuk - Eng. Arch.
Maria Hofman - Eng. Arch.
Zofia Jemioło - Eng. Arch.
Anita Karczmarczyk - Eng. Arch.
Konrad Kmiecik - Eng. Arch.
Michał Komorowski - Eng. Arch.
Patrycja Kuczyńska - Eng. Arch.
Maria Kuryłowicz - Eng. Arch.
Natalia Małolepsza - Eng. Arch.
Zofia Pabiańczyk - Eng. Arch.
Szymon Panek - Eng. Arch.
Przemysław Sasin - Eng. Arch.
Grzegorz Staroń - Eng. Arch.
Julia Stepanow - Eng. Arch.
Mikołaj Szafrański - Eng. Arch.
Michał Szczepanek - Eng. Arch.
Grzegorz Środa - Eng. Arch.
Bartłomiej Urbanowski - Eng. Arch.
Natalia Wnukowska - Eng. Arch.
Katarzyna Wroczek - Eng. Arch.
Marta Zawadka - Eng. Arch.

For students of the A3 Architecture Technology and Structure specialization at the Faculty of Architecture, Warsaw University of Technology, the summer semester 2023/2024 was held under the slogan “materials of the future”. The pavilion they built in the Royal Łazienki Park is an expression of the possibilities behind the use of modern technology in architecture. The facility will remain open to the public until the end of December 2024.

The idea for the Pavilion was born as part of an initiative called we put_, implemented by prof. Anna Maria Wierzbicka. During the summer semester, students of the Specialization have the opportunity to go through the entire construction process - from the first sketches, through self-construction - to the ceremonial ribbon cutting. The main theme of this year’s edition was to present the topic of innovative use of building materials, both traditional ones - such as wood, and new ones - such as mycelium. The technology for producing building elements from mycelium, which is still at an experimental stage, is becoming more and more popular among manufacturers and architects around the world. Its wide application in industry includes, among others: furniture design, packaging production, also have insulating properties. Mycelium, grown on dead organic matter (e.g. construction wood), can be a link that completes the life cycle of a building. It also has a zero carbon footprint. This year’s edition of we place_ was an opportunity to experiment with this new material.

The students were divided into 10 teams, each of which developed its own, original concept of the pavilion. Each team had the same goal, namely to present as clearly as possible the wide range of possibilities offered to designers by organically shaped forms, and how to reconcile contemporary issues of sustainable development with the implementation of buildings. The wooden elements used in the design refer to the tradition of using natural materials in design.

Continuing the success of the first edition of the initiative, we put_, the most interesting concept, was implemented by students in the beautiful scenery of the Royal Łazienki Park in Warsaw. The idea of shaping resulted in a form with a characteristic, openwork structure. The pavilion enriches the park landscape with its organic structure, and thus does not dominate over the facilities located in its immediate vicinity.

Based on four identical, openwork modules, the pavilion, both in the ground and roof parts, constitutes a coherent whole in terms of form shaping. Its geometric shape refers to the structure of the mycelium fruiting bodies. Its functionality and the complexity of its integrated form constitute a place of rest and contemplation for walkers and visitors to the Royal Łazienki Park.

Today, the Pavilion is the embodiment of a modern vision of architecture, harmoniously co-functioning with the historical fabric of the city. Bathed in a carefully designed complex of greenery, it complements the park space with a modern vision of shaping space for people. Thanks to the variety of functions as well as the boldly shaped form, the students proved that in the design process we are only limited by our own imagination.

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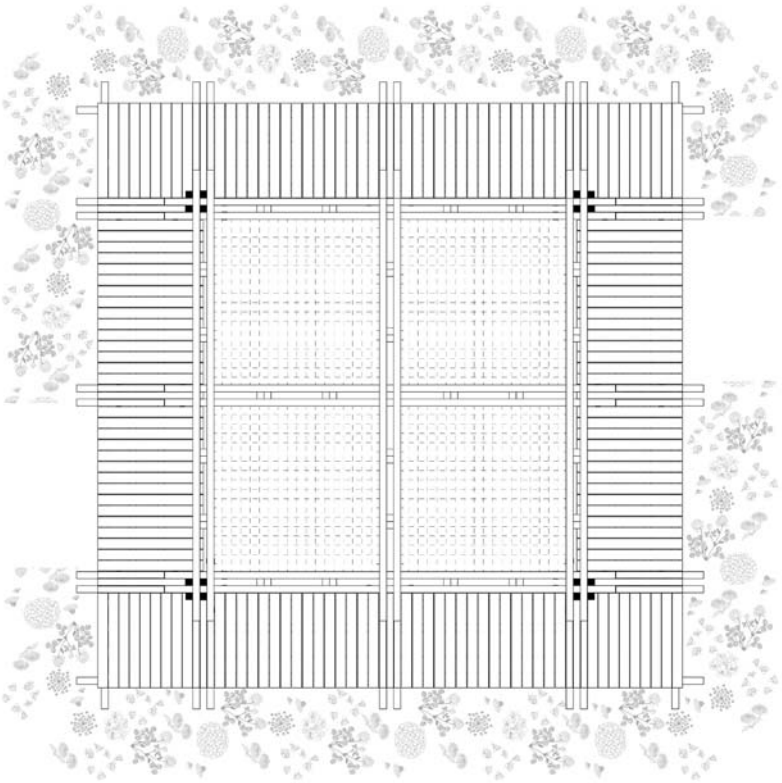

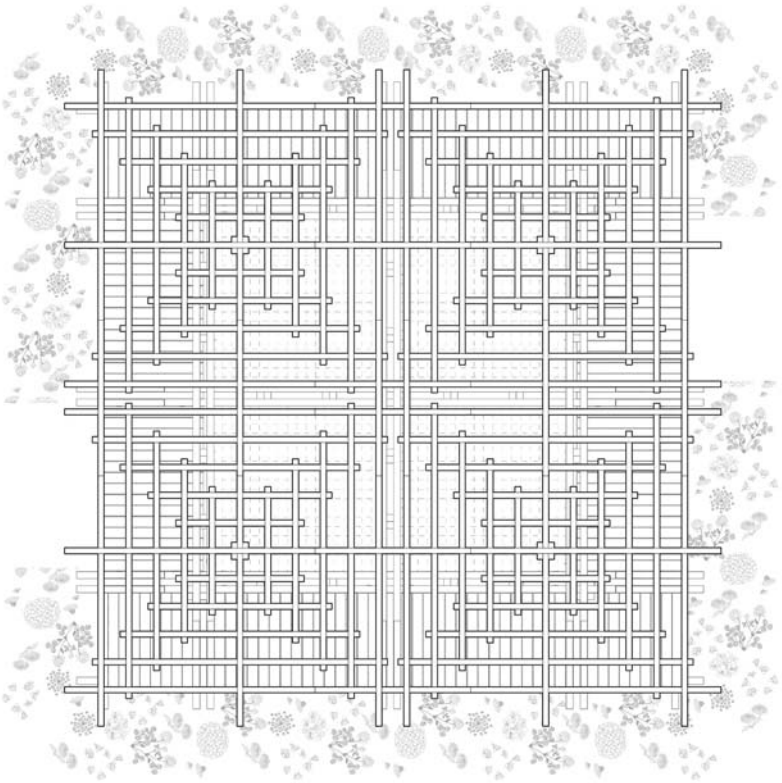

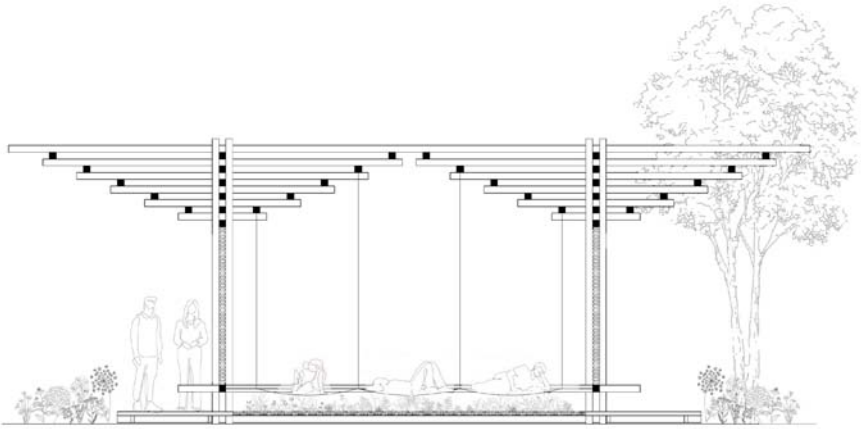

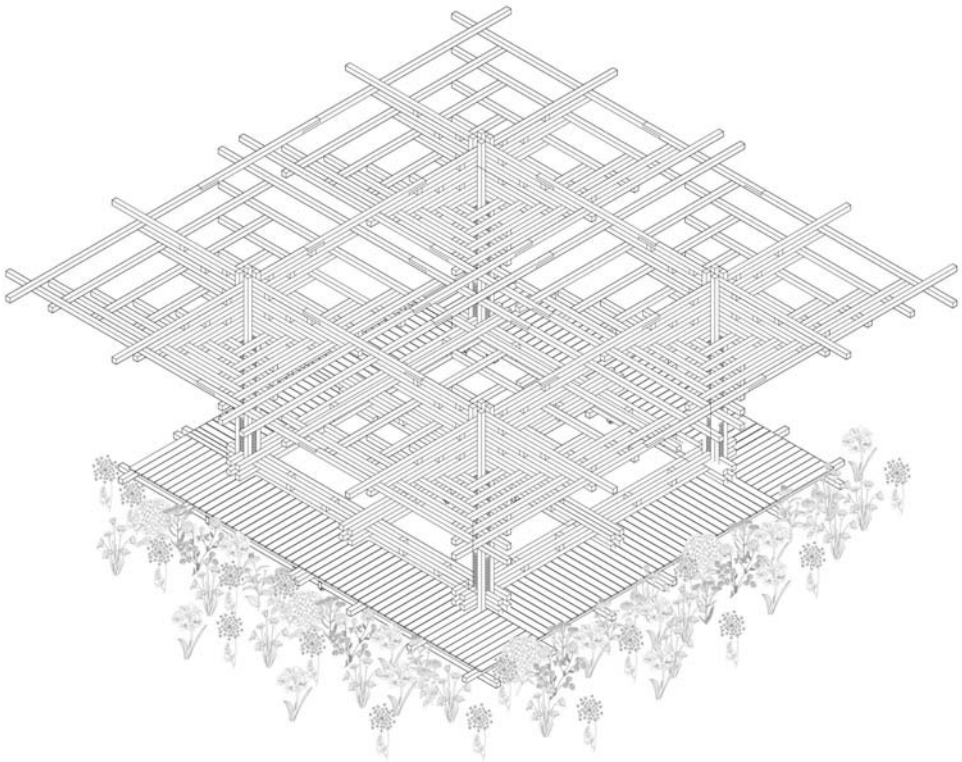

Photography by: Artur Brozowski

Photography by: Artur Brozowski

Photography by: Artur Brozowski

Photography by: Artur Brozowski

THE FREEDOM PAVILION 2023

TUTORS
Anna Maria Wierzbicka, PhD, Eng. Arch. Prof. WUT
Kinga-Zinowiec-Cieplik, PhD, Eng. Landscape Arch.
Maciej Kaufman, Msc, Eng. Arch.
Szymon Kalata, Msc, Eng. Arch.

CONSULTATIONS
Ewelina Gawell - PhD, Eng. Arch.- Construction
Mariusz Wrona - Msc, Eng. Arch.- Construction
Paweł Trębacz - PhD, Eng. Arch.- Urban planning

Warsaw University of Technology
Faculty of Architecture
Specialisation - A3 Architecture of Technology and Structures- Context and Meaning
Master's degree (second-cycle studies) sem. 3/4 WUT

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Fundacja Deloitte

PATRONAGE
University of Warsaw
New European Bauhaus

MASTER'S STUDENTS
Jasmina Aboulker - Eng. Arch.
Weronika Adach - Eng. Arch.
Natalia Andrzejak - Eng. Arch.
Małgorzata Bonowicz - Eng. Arch.
Kamila Chodoła - Eng. Arch.
Roxana Dziurowic - Eng. Arch.
Julia Jędrys - Eng. Arch.
Joanna Kasica - Eng. Arch.
Anna Kieloch - Eng. Arch.
Bartosz Ligwiński - Eng. Arch.
Julia Lipińska - Eng. Arch.
Maciej Makuszewski - Eng. Arch.
Nelli Markhai - Eng. Arch.
Marta Miszczak - Eng. Arch.
Maria Mitrzak - Eng. Arch.
Natalia Okruszek - Eng. Arch.
Karolina Padło - Eng. Arch.
Szymon Pawelczuk - Eng. Arch.
Aleksandra Snopkowska - Eng. Arch.
Natalia Trzaskowska - Eng. Arch.
Maria Wito - Eng. Arch.

In 2023, the Freedom Pavilion emerged from the creative minds of both male and female students and lecturers from the Faculty of Architecture at the Warsaw University of Technology. This circular wooden structure, a symbol of peace and solidarity with Ukraine, was a result of the A3 specialization - Architecture of Technology and Structure, Context, and Meaning. Open to the public until the end of December 2023, the Pavilion stood tall in the Royal Łazienki Park.

The genesis of the Freedom Pavilion was woven into the annual event “stawiamy_”, spearheaded by Prof. Anna Maria Wierzbicka. The focus of this year’s project was to echo the freedom of Ukraine and advocate for global peace through an innovative architectural design. This endeavor was also deeply intertwined with the International Scientific Conference “Architecture Challenges - Rebuilding Ukraine”, showcasing solidarity with the nation. Positioned in the Royal Łazienki Park, the Pavilion encapsulated hope and unity.

Throughout the academic year of 2022/2023, students were grouped into ten teams, dedicating weeks to brainstorming, designing, and prototyping. Each team of specialists, comprising ten individuals, crafted their own unique vision for the pavilion, aiming to encapsulate the essence of freedom through their architectural prowess.

Implementing a narrative methodology, the creators delved into various facets of the project, including place, time, narrative, ideas, and references, to ensure a cohesive story. This marked the debut of this methodology in the project’s execution phase, bridging theoretical work from the university to tangible reality. Notably, the authors themselves erected the Pavilion in the Royal Łazienki Park, a testament to their dedication.

Today, the Pavilion stand nów in 2024, along the Vistula River Boulevards, with the creators envisioning its impact stretching across continents. Honored with an award for the best architectural project in the landscape category in the USA, the Pavilion continues to inspire and captivate viewers worldwide.

Comprising twelve identical trusses forming a roof resembling a funnel, the Pavilion’s interior features white strips of material serving as seating or swings. Sunflowers and millet adorn the space, mirroring the colors of the Ukrainian flag. The Pavilion’s architecture aims to foster a sense of equality, with sunlight casting a spotlight on the symbolic garden of hope within. The interplay of light and materials creates a reflective ambiance, inviting users to contemplate. Through its circular structure and thoughtful design, the Pavilion serves as a poignant reminder that unity can triumph over adversity, as explained by its creators. landscape category in the USA, the Pavilion continues to inspire and captivate viewers worldwide.

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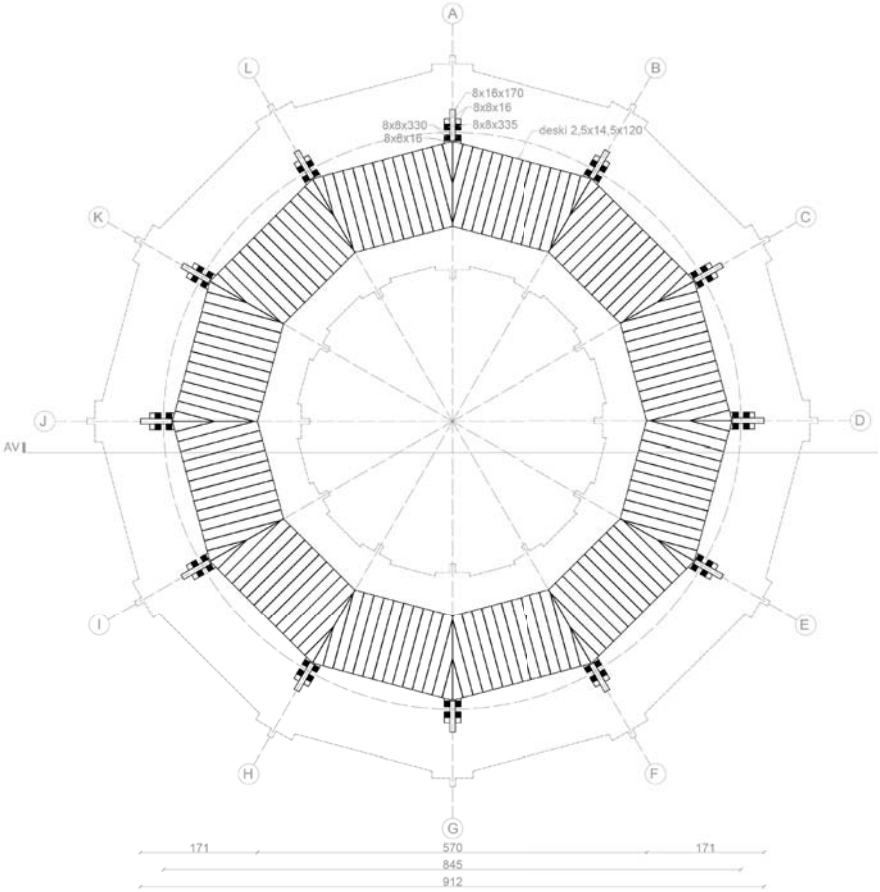
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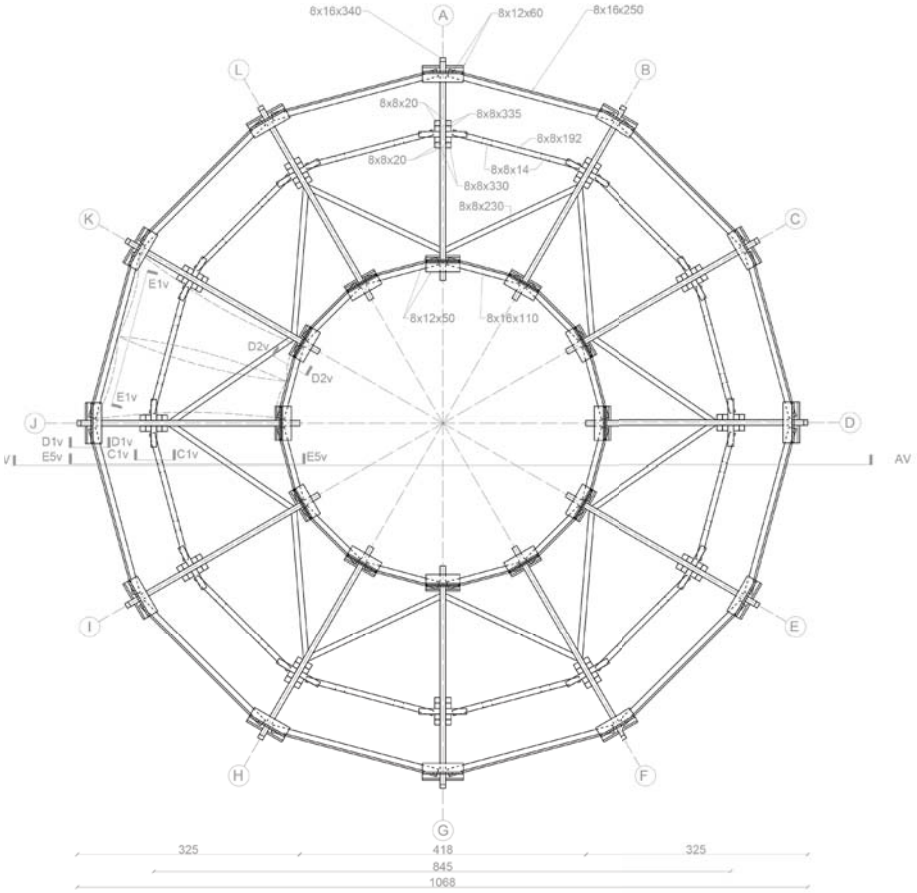
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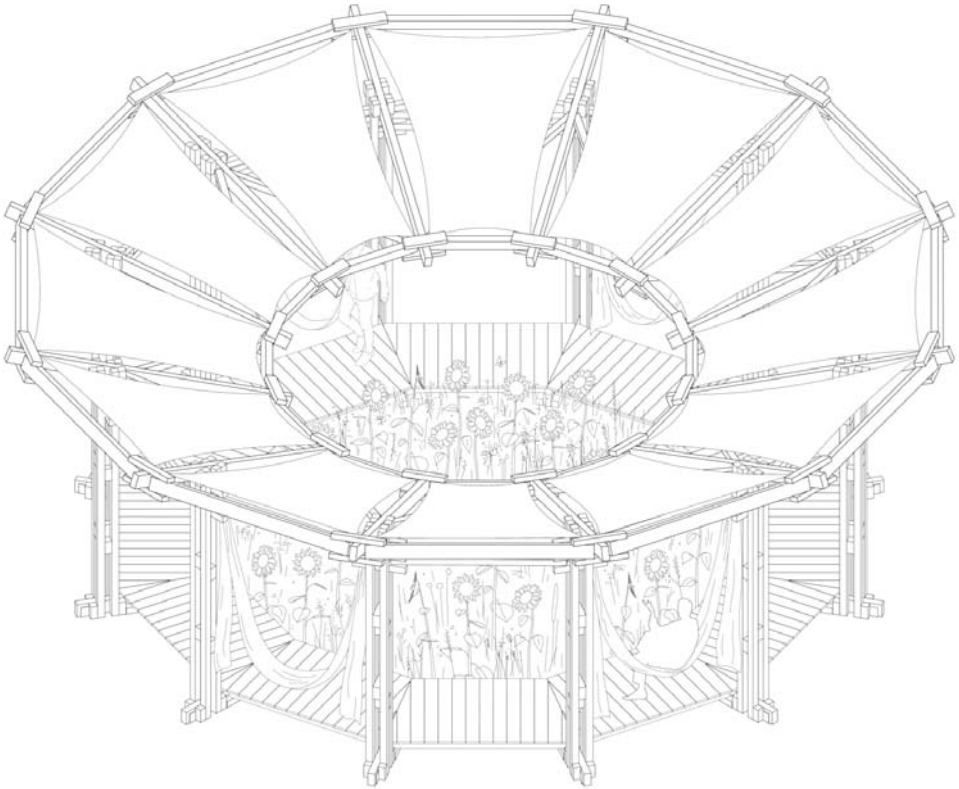

Photography by: Krzysztof Koszewski

Photography by: Krzysztof Koszewski

Photography by: Bartosz Kucharski

Photography by: Bartosz Kucharski

WORKSHOP HOSTED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF WOOD ARCHITECTURE, VALENCIA 2025

TUTORS
Anna Maria Wierzbicka, PhD, Eng. Arch. Prof. WUT
Renata Jóźwik, PhD, Eng. Arch.

Warsaw University of Technology
Faculty of Architecture
Specialisation -A3 Architecture of Technology and Structures- Context and Meaning
Master's degree (second-cycle studies) sem. 3/4 WUT

ORGANIZER
Department of Wood at the Technical University of Valencia

MASTER'S STUDENTS
Stanisław Dawidziuk - Eng. Arch.
Julia Stepanow - Eng. Arch.
Mikołaj Szafrański - Eng. Arch.
Michał Szczepanek - Eng. Arch.

On February 18, 2025, a group of students from the Faculty of Architecture at the Warsaw University of Technology (WUT) began their participation in an international architectural workshop hosted by the Department of Wood Architecture at the Universitat Politècnica de València in Spain. The workshop was led by Prof. Begoña Serrano Lanzarote, a recognized expert in sustainable architecture and timber construction. The initiative was organized in collaboration with Prof. Anna Maria Wierzbicka, head of the A3 Department – Architecture, Technology, and Structures – at the Faculty of Architecture, WUT.

The workshop was also a continuation of the broader educational and research program "Stawiamy_", launched in 2023. This initiative focuses on experimental and socially engaged architecture, with an emphasis on sustainability, tradition, and innovation in materials and spatial forms. The integration of "Stawiamy_" into the Valencian workshop added an important international dimension to the students' ongoing learning experience.

The WUT delegation included students Stanisław Dawidziuk, Michał Szczepanek, Mikołaj Szafrański, and Julia Stefanowa, accompanied by academic staff Prof. Anna Maria Wierzbicka and Dr. Renata Jóźwik, both of whom supported the group throughout the design and construction process.
The main objective of the workshop was to collaboratively design and build a wooden structure using local materials and techniques, working alongside students from Spain, Poland, Japan, and Equatorial Guinea. This multicultural environment created a rich context for the exchange of architectural ideas and craftsmanship traditions. The experience encouraged students to broaden their perspectives on architectural practice by actively engaging with new climatic, cultural, and technical contexts.

The structure itself was inspired by traditional wooden sheds historically used in the Valencian region for storing fruits and vegetables.

These simple, yet functional buildings are known for their natural ventilation, modular design, and responsiveness to the local climate. The workshop prototype paid homage to this heritage by utilizing a lightweight timber frame and perforated wood cladding, which allowed for passive airflow and structural simplicity. The choice of
materials reflected the realities of limited resources and aimed to promote sustainable construction principles. Despite the modest scale of the building, the process emphasized precise planning, detailed analysis, and teamwork. Under the guidance of Valencian faculty members, students explored not only physical construction but also the symbolic and social role of small-scale architecture in public space. The design reflected values such as community, resilience, and ecological awareness.

The final pavilion was built on the campus of the Universitat Politècnica de València, where it now serves as a space for informal gatherings, outdoor classes, and exhibitions. The City of Valencia generously supported the initiative as the main sponsor, highlighting the city's commitment to promoting international academic exchange and sustainable design education.

This workshop was more than a learning opportunity—it also marked the beginning of a formal academic and research partnership between the Warsaw University of Technology and the Universitat Politècnica de València. The collaboration is expected to continue in future semesters through joint studios, research projects, student exchanges, and conference initiatives.

By engaging in hands-on, interdisciplinary learning experiences beyond national borders, the students of WUT demonstrated that architecture is not only about construction, but also about building relationships, cultural understanding, and shared visions for a better built environment.

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Coke


ESCUELA DE
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WE STAND FOR THE FUTURE PAVILION 2024 NEW LOCATION
“Homes of the Bread of Life Community” Foundation, led by Sister Małgorzata Chmielewska

TUTORS
Anna Maria Wierzbicka, PhD, Eng. Arch. Prof. WUT
Maciej Kaufman, Msc, Eng. Arch.
Szymon Kalata, Msc, Eng. Arch.
Kinga-Zinowiec-Cieplik, PhD, Eng.
Paweł Trębacz - PhD, Eng. Arch.
Magdalena Duda, Msc, Eng. Arch.
Renata Jóźwik, PhD, Eng. Arch.
Małgorzata Neumann, Msc, Eng. Arch.
Magdalena Podczaska, PhD, Eng. Arch.
Dorota Sipińska, Msc, Eng. Arch.
Tomasz Domaszczyński, Msc, Eng. Arch.

Warsaw University of Technology
Faculty of Architecture
Specialisation -A3 Architecture of Technology and Structures-
Context and Meaning
Master’s degree (second-cycle studies)
sem. 3/4 WUT

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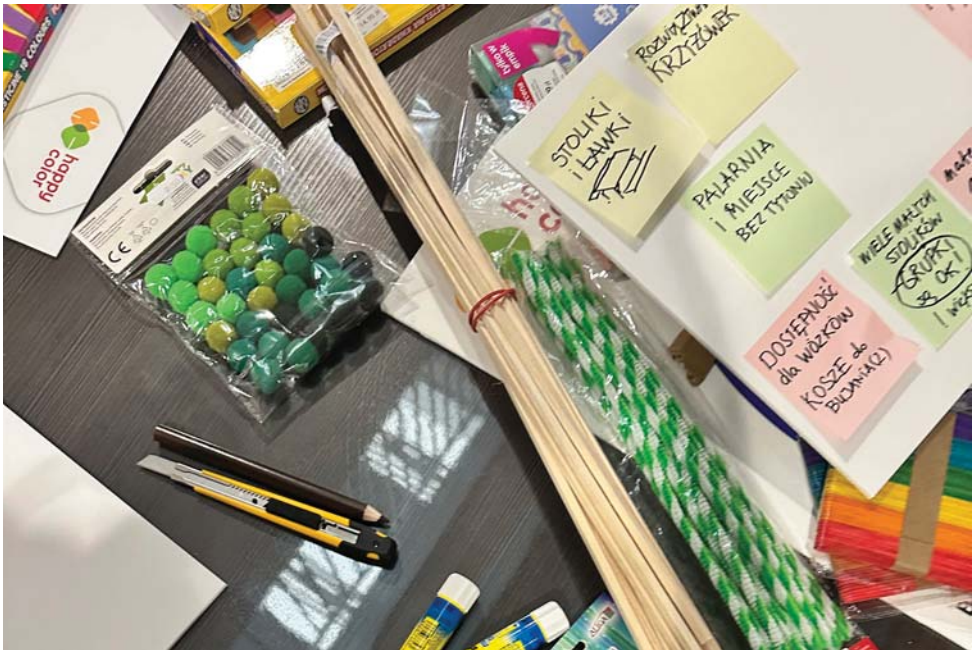
200th Anniversary of the Warsaw University of Technology
New European Bauhaus

MASTER’S STUDENTS
Zofia Jemioło-Curpiak - Eng. Arch.
Konrad Kmiecik - Eng. Arch.
Patrycja Kuczyńska - Eng. Arch.
Natalia Małolepsza - Eng. Arch.
Szymon Panek - Eng. Arch.
Grzegorz Staroń - Eng. Arch.
Julia Stepanow - Eng. Arch.
Grzegorz Środa - Eng. Arch.
Bartłomiej Urbanowski - Eng. Arch.

In 2024, an exceptional social and architectural initiative was undertaken through the collaboration of XYstudio Architectural Practice and Professor Anna Maria Wierzbicka from the Faculty of Architecture at the Warsaw University of Technology. This project involved relocating the "Pavilion of the Future" from the grounds of the Royal Łazienki Museum to the garden of the newly opened House of Our Lady of the Heart, a facility operated by the "Homes of the Bread of Life Community" Foundation, led by Sister Małgorzata Chmielewska, located at 10 Foliałowa Street in Warsaw. The new location was chosen to meet the real needs of the center's residents—elderly individuals, people experiencing homelessness, and often people with disabilities—who, during the spring and summer seasons, require a friendly, accessible, and safe outdoor space. Before the relocation, the area lacked recreational infrastructure and greenery. Thanks to the support of Unibep S.A., led by President Leszek Marek Gołąbiecki, trees requiring minimal maintenance were planted. The transportation and installation of the pavilion were carried out by Unihouse, a company known for its social engagement, under the leadership of President Marcin Gołębiewski, whose organizational support and personal involvement were crucial to the project's success. A key component of the project was participatory workshops organized under the guidance of Professor Anna Maria Wierzbicka. Participants included not only residents of the House of Our Lady of the Heart but also architects Dorota Sibińska, Filip Domaszczyński, Paweł Trębacz, Renata Jóźwik, Magdalena Duda, Małgorzata Naumann, and students from the A3 specialization at the Faculty of Architecture of the WUT: Natalia Małolepsza, Zofia Jemioło-Cupriak, Patrycja Kuczyńska, Szymon Panek, Grzegorz Staroń, Bartłomiej Urbanowski, Grzegorz Środa, Julia Stepanow, and Konrad Kmiecik. During the workshops, participants collaboratively analyzed, designed, and reconstructed the pavilion space to meet the daily needs of its users. A 1:20 scale model was created to visualize proposals and address issues related to accessibility, shading, relaxation zones, small architecture, and smoke-free areas. The pavilion was adapted to the needs of people with limited mobility—entrances were lowered, barriers removed, and surfaces modified to accommodate wheelchair users. This endeavor was a practical architectural intervention and held deep symbolic significance—it expressed care for individuals marginalized by society. It demonstrated that space can be a tool for building community, safety, and dignity. XYstudio, led by Dorota Sibińska, Filip Domaszczyński, and Marta Nowosielska, has focused on creating architecture for excluded and vulnerable populations. Their projects, such as kindergartens, care homes, and a shelter for people experiencing homelessness in Jankowice, have garnered numerous awards and brought about real change. These architects view space as a medium that shapes daily behaviors and interpersonal relationships—thus, the building's surroundings, functionality, and usage are as vital to it as its structure. Professor Anna Maria Wierzbicka has consistently emphasized the educational role of architecture and the importance of social participation in the design process. Her academic and teaching activities highlight that architectural design cannot be separated from real social issues. Engaging users—especially those who typically lack a voice in shaping their environment—is an act of social justice and a means to create better, more responsible, and inclusive architecture. Relating the Pavilion of the Future to the House of Our Lady of the Heart is an inspiring example of how architecture, education, and social action can collectively build a more open and empathetic world. This initiative aligns with the ideals of the New European Bauhaus—a European Union initiative promoting sustainable development, inclusivity, and beauty in space design. The project demonstrates that architecture can be aesthetically pleasing, socially beneficial, and just. In the spirit of the NEB, participants and organizers created a space that fosters interpersonal relationships, considers the needs of people with limited mobility, and exemplifies responsibility for the shared environment. The Pavilion of the Future, relocated from the prestigious grounds of royal gardens to the garden of individuals invisible in public spaces, has acquired a new identity—it has become a symbol of care, solidarity, and tangible action.


GYM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STOLIKI i ŁAWKI
PALARNIA i MIEJSCE BEZ TYTONIU
DOSTĘPNOŚĆ dla WÓZKÓW
KOSZE do BIEGANIA(Z)

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In our globalized, complex, and multicultural world, we are increasingly confronted with cultural, religious, social, and ideological differences. Diversity is no longer merely the backdrop of our lives; it becomes a lens through which we perceive the world. This lens reveals various ways of thinking, values, experiences, and narratives. Although differences can lead to misunderstandings, divisions, or tensions, they constitute an inexhaustible source of inspiration, creativity, and development.

In such a reality, building understanding and community takes on special significance. We can only create spaces where everyone feels seen, heard, and accepted through conscious efforts toward mutual understanding, empathy, and openness to otherness. Building a community does not mean relinquishing one's identity; rather, it acknowledges that the strength of a society lies in its ability to integrate diverse voices and experiences.

Only in an atmosphere of mutual respect and cooperation is it possible to scale initiatives—from local actions to global projects. Environments conducive to peace, development, and the common good emerge in such conditions. Moreover, community becomes the foundation of individual well-being—providing safety, belonging, and purpose.

That is why Building Community, the focus of the third edition of our Architecture of Challenges conference, is both a necessity and a response to the challenges of our times. It is also one of the priorities of the New European Bauhaus initiative. I would like to thank the academic community of the Faculty of Architecture at the Warsaw University of Technology, notably the Dean, DSc. Eng. Arch. Krzysztof Koszewski, for their organizational support.

The third year of organizing this significant undertaking is a time of forging bonds. I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to the co-organizers: Dr Marianna Otmianowska, Director of the Royal Łazienki Museum in Warsaw, who once again kindly agreed to host the conference participants at the Palace on the Isle and to support the realization of the "Community Pavilion" designed within the specialization A3 Technology and Structure – Context and Meaning, under my guidance at the Department of Architectural and Urban Design.

I thank Professor Błażej Ostoja Lniski, Rector of the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw, for welcoming the conference on the second day and making the university premises available. I also thank Professor Bolesław Stelmach, Director of the National Institute of Architecture and Urban Planning, for his organizational support.

I sincerely thank the conference partners: Kyiv National University of Construction and Architecture (KNUBA), Zaporizhzhia Polytechnic National University, Lviv Polytechnic National University, the National Academy of Fine Arts of Ukraine, the National Union of Architects of Ukraine, the Association of Polish Architects (SARP), and its Warsaw Branch. Special thanks go to our Scientific Partner, the Łukasiewicz Centre, which serves as the National Contact Point for the New European Bauhaus. I thank Dr. Hubert Cichocki, President of the Centre, for continuing this collaboration. I look forward to future joint initiatives—scientific, architectural, and others- that will strengthen our friendly relations.

This year, we have the honour of forming a new partnership and international cooperation with the European Association for Architectural Education (EAAE) under the leadership of Professor Roberto Cavallo. I am looking forward to continued collaboration in the field of architectural education.

The conference was held under the Honorary Patronage of the Warsaw University of Technology Rector, Professor Krzysztof Zaremba, which is a great honour and support

for the event. I also express my deep gratitude for the ongoing Honorary Patronage of the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage and the Ministry of Science and Higher Education. Thank you.

I extend my sincere thanks to all Members of the Scientific Committee, who once again this year have generously overseen the substantive aspects of the conference—dedicating their time and sharing their knowledge and valuable experience.

The preparation of this conference and its accompanying publication involves a tremendous amount of work from many individuals. Its organization would not have been possible without the invaluable contributions of the Organizing Committee. I would like to especially thank MSc Eng. Arch. Magdalena Duda, who served as Secretary this year—I hope for continued cooperation. Thanks again to Professor Konrad Kucza-Kuczyński for the original design of another wonderful conference poster. I thank all those involved in the organizational work.

I would also like to thank my fellow co-leaders of the A3 specialization project Architecture of Technology and Structure – Context and Meaning: Architects Maciej Kaufman, Szymon Kalata, as well as consultants, especially Dr. Kinga Zinowiec-Cieplik, and the Students of the Faculty of Architecture, who participated in the design and construction of the "Community Pavilion." I also wish to thank the company Flora Development, Mr. Dominik Różański and Mr. Maciej Sobieski for their trust in realizing the project, sponsorship, and overall support. Many thanks to Hilti for providing tools, Ramirent for providing equipment, Maple for donating educational blocks, and Urban Jungle for supporting the promotion of the project.

The organization of this undertaking was financially supported by Flora Development (main sponsor), Warsaw University of Technology and the Łukasiewicz Centre. Thanks to our Donors, the conference could take place in its current format, and we were able to host numerous international delegations. I am deeply grateful for this support.

Likewise, I thank our Media Patrons, which this year include Architektura & Biznes, Architektura-Murator, thanks to whom the conference gained professional and wide-reaching publicity. Special thanks go to Professor Magdalena Jagiełło-Kowalczyk, Editor-in-Chief of the Housing Environment journal, for providing Publishing Patronage for the conference.

I thank the Students who contributed to the construction of the Pavilion and the Volunteers who assisted in running the conference. The specialization group included:

Anastasiia Bielan, Zofia Całka, Łukasz Danilczuk, Kseniia Fedorchuk, Zofia Gancarczyk, Aleksander Janowski, Szymon Kassowski, Klaudia Kochanowska, Julia Koperska, Maja Kordalska, Barbara Krawiecka, Szymon Kucharczyk, Hanna Lechowska, Ewa Maniak, Piotr Marczak, Maciej Oberzig, Maria Olko, Mateusz Robak, Karolina Rorat, Gabriela Szewczak, Natalia Szewczyk, Katarzyna Sikora, Magdalena Smolińska, Aleksandra Sułecka, Julia Świstuniuk, Jakub Wiązowski, Maria Wolska, Dominik Zagajewski, Alicja Zioło, Jan Zwierzchowski, Zofia Zwijacz.

Finally, I extend my warmest thanks to all Participants of this year's conference who care deeply about architecture and its sense of community. Thank you for your presence, your engagement, and all efforts contributing to Building Community.

DSc. Eng. Arch. Anna Maria Wierzbicka,
Professor at the Warsaw University of Technology

Anna Maria Wierzbicka

Professor at the Faculty of Architecture, Warsaw University of Technology.

Head of the Department of Architectural and Urban Design.

Supervisor of PhD students with dissertations distinguished by the scientific council of the Faculty of Architecture at Warsaw University of Technology.

Recipient of the NEB - ProModSe grant for the project “Standardization of settlements for refugees in Lviv”.

Initiator and leader of the project to construct the “Stawiamy…” pavilion at the Royal Łazienki Museum, planned for 2023.

Author of three books and 40 publications in the field of architecture and semantics.

Specialist in prefabrication, design of housing for displaced persons, sacred and monumental architecture, and spatial semantics.

Collaborator with the Polish Academy of Sciences and National Institute of Architecture and Urban Planning.

Recipient of numerous awards and distinctions in the field of architecture.

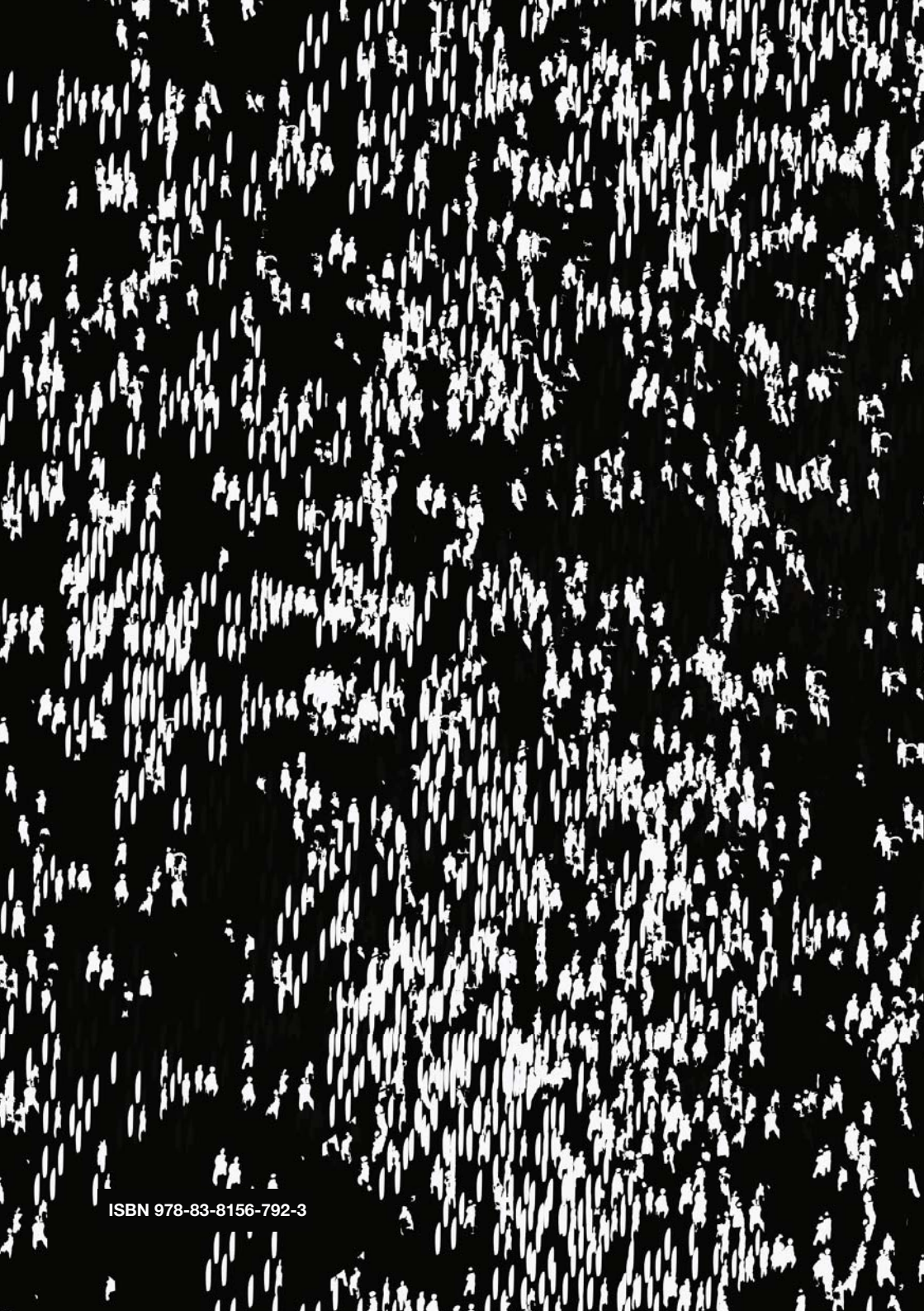
Leader of Specialty A3 (Architecture of Technology and Structure - Context and Significance) at the Faculty of Architecture, Warsaw University of Technology.

Supervisor of many distinguished master’s and engineering diplomas.

Active advocate for gender equality in the scientific community, especially in engineering professions.

The power of place lies in the fact that places matter to people in a deep personal way, shaping identity and community.

Dolores Hayden



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