

Can architectural education prepare future architects not only to design spaces, but also to understand the consequences of their decisions? This research uses the New European Bauhaus as a value-based evaluative framework to examine how architectural education shapes future professionals' understanding of sustainability, inclusion, and responsibility, providing evidence for more responsive and socially engaged approaches to architectural education.

BEYOND FORM:
EDUCATING ARCHITECTS
TO TAKE RESPONSIBILITY

01 PROBLEM

Architectural education has traditionally prioritised formal expression, technical proficiency, and individual authorship. While these foundations remain essential for developing architectural thinking, contemporary practice increasingly requires professionals capable of addressing complex social, environmental, and ethical challenges.

However, educational models often continue to operate through simplified simulations of professional practice, where contextual, social, and environmental aspects remain secondary to formal and technical considerations. As a result, architectural knowledge is frequently fragmented rather than developed through holistic, interdisciplinary, and socially engaged processes.

Despite growing recognition of this gap, there is still limited empirical understanding of how architectural education prepares students to respond to contemporary challenges. The values, perceptions, and design approaches developed through education remain insufficiently examined, making transformation difficult to ground in evidence rather than assumptions.

WHY THE
NEW
EUROPEAN
BAUHAUS

02

The New European Bauhaus (NEB) provides a relevant value-based framework for examining this relationship between architectural education and contemporary societal challenges. Rather than functioning as a pedagogical method, NEB expands the understanding of design quality beyond aesthetic and technical performance, emphasising social relevance, environmental responsibility, and connection to lived experience.

In this research, NEB was not treated as a predefined model of good design, but as an evaluative framework for investigating how these values are already reflected within architectural education and where further development is needed. The NEB values provide a lens through which spatial quality, environmental responsibility, inclusion, participation, and contextual awareness can be critically examined within existing educational practices.

03

RESEARCH
APPROACH
AND PROCESS

The research employed a comparative analysis of 28 student design proposals developed within undergraduate housing studios at two architectural schools within the same national education system: the Faculty of Architecture, University of Belgrade (AFUB), and the Faculty of Civil Engineering Subotica, University of Novi Sad (GFSUNS). Produced outside the constraints of professional practice, these projects provide insight into the underlying values and assumptions embedded within architectural education itself. The analysed projects were developed within undergraduate housing design studios.

Their design briefs and teaching frameworks were not based on NEB principles; instead, NEB was introduced retrospectively as an evaluative framework. This allowed the research to examine how sustainability, inclusion, and quality of experience are implicitly embedded within existing educational processes, rather than measuring students' compliance with predefined criteria.

The three NEB values – Beautiful, Sustainable, and Together – were translated into a structured analytical framework combining spatial, environmental, and social indicators. Through qualitative interpretation and quantitative comparison, the research identified recurring patterns, differences between educational contexts, and areas where architectural education demonstrates strengths or requires further development.

04

KEY
FINDINGS

The findings revealed an imbalance in how the examined educational contexts integrate different dimensions of responsibility. Student projects demonstrated strong engagement with spatial quality, experience, and community-oriented aspects, while environmental responsibility was less consistently embedded as a fundamental design principle.

The central finding is that sustainability is acknowledged within the analysed projects, but is not yet consistently translated into a design-generating principle. The challenge therefore lies in embedding environmental strategies, climate responsiveness, and circular thinking into early conceptual decisions rather than treating them as additional criteria introduced later in the design process. The comparison between institutions showed that different educational contexts cultivate different forms of awareness. While one context demonstrated stronger tendencies towards social inclusion, another revealed a stronger connection between architecture and local community vitality. These differences highlight the importance of place, culture, and everyday experience in shaping future architects' values.

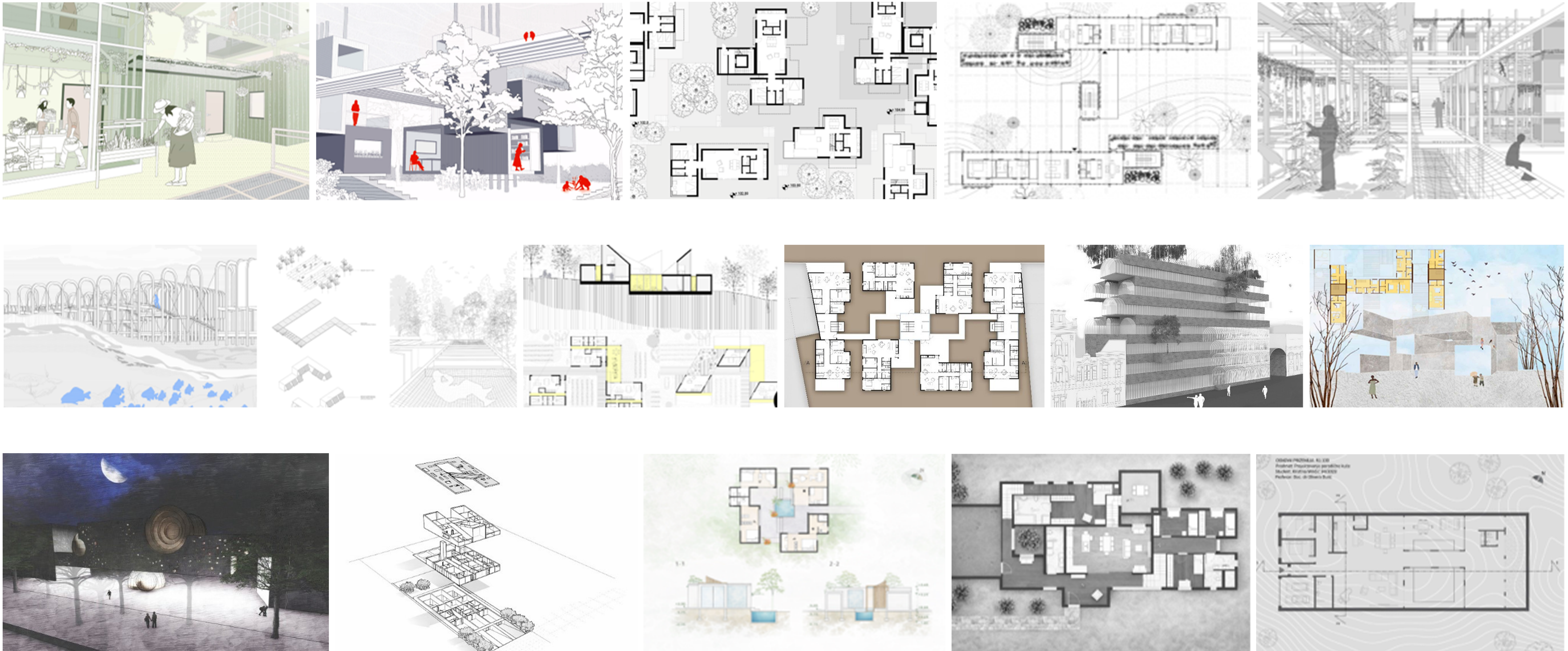
CONTRIBUTION
AND
IMPLICATIONS

By applying NEB as an evaluative framework, this research makes visible the relationship between educational processes and the values that shape future architectural practice. It transforms NEB from a conceptual framework into a tool for understanding how responsibility, inclusion, and sustainability are embedded within architectural learning.

The findings suggest that, within the two examined educational contexts, the central challenge may lie less in the recognition of contemporary issues than in their inconsistent translation into the logic of design thinking. Sustainability and social responsibility need to become generative principles of architectural concepts rather than additional criteria applied after design decisions are made.

The research offers an evidence-based foundation for rethinking architectural education by making visible the gap between knowing about responsibility and designing through responsibility. Rather than questioning the autonomy of architecture, it suggests a broader understanding of the discipline – one that preserves creativity and critical thinking while enabling architects to act responsibly within complex contemporary conditions.

The proposed framework could be adapted and further validated in different educational contexts, enabling further reflection on how architectural values are formed and translated into design practice.



Selected student design outcomes from the two analysed educational contexts

ENDEAVOURS
ROCăuțări HUKereséseket SRBPretrage

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PROJECT TITLE
*Titlul proiectului în limba engleză *A projekt címe *S Naslov projekta

Beyond form: Educating architects to take responsibility

PROJECT COMPLETION DATE
*Data finalizare proiect *Az építkezés befejezésének dátuma *Datum završetka izgradnje

June 2026

PHOTO CREDITS
*Credite foto *Fényképek hitelei *Foto krediti

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PROJECT DESCRIPTION IN MOTHER TONGUE
*Descrierea proiectului în limba maternă *A projekt leírása a pályázó anyanyelvén *Opis projekta na maternem jeziku

Projekat „Nadilaženje forme: Obrazovanje arhitekata za preuzimanje odgovornosti” polazi od pitanja da li arhitektonsko obrazovanje priprema buduće arhitekte ne samo da oblikuju prostor već i da razumeju društvene, ekološke i etičke posledice svojih odluka. Iako se u obrazovanju tradicionalno naglašavaju formalni izraz, tehnička znanja i individualno autorstvo, savremena praksa zahteva odgovor na složene probleme održivosti, inkluzije i odnosa prema lokalnoj zajednici. Ipak, nedostaju empirijski uvidi u to kako se ove vrednosti zaista prenose u studentske projekte. Istraživanje zato koristi vrednosti okvir Novog evropskog Bauhauusa: lepo, održivo i zajedno, ne kao unapred zadat model „dobrog projektovanja”, već kao analitički instrument za ispitivanje vrednosti već prisutnih u arhitektonskom obrazovanju i onih koje je potrebno dalje razvijati. Analizirano je 28 studentskih projekata nastalih od 2019. do 2024. godine u okviru projektantskih studija stanovanja na osnovnim studijama Arhitektonskog fakulteta Univerziteta u Beogradu i Građevinskog fakulteta Subotica Univerziteta u Novom Sadu. Pošto projektni zadaci nisu prvobitno bili zasnovani na NEB principima, okvir je primenjen retrospektivno, kombinovanjem prostorne, ekološke i društvene procene, kvalitativnog

tumačenja i kvantitativnog poređenja. Rezultati ukazuju na neravnotežu između različitih dimenzija odgovornosti. Studentski projekti pokazuju razvijeno razumevanje prostornog kvaliteta, iskustva, identiteta mesta i odnosa sa zajednicom, dok je ekološka odgovornost ređe ugrađena kao princip koji neposredno generiše projektantske odluke. Održivost je, dakle, prepoznata u analiziranim projektima, ali još nije dosledno prevedena u logiku projektantskog mišljenja. Poređenje dva obrazovna konteksta pokazuje i da različiti nastavni pristupi razvijaju različite oblike osetljivosti – od društvene inkluzije do povezivanja arhitekture sa lokalnom zajednicom i svakodnevnim životom. Projekat čini vidljivim jaz između znanja o odgovornosti i projektovanja kroz odgovornost. Njegov doprinos je u tome što održivost i društvenu odgovornost ne posmatra kao dodatne kriterijume koji se proveravaju na kraju procesa, već kao generativne principe arhitektonskog koncepta. Predloženi okvir pruža osnovu za preispitivanje nastavnih modela i može se prilagođavati različitim obrazovnim sredinama, omogućavajući dalja istraživanja načina na koje arhitektonske vrednosti nastaju, prenose se i pretvaraju u prostornu praksu.

The project “Beyond Form: Educating Architects to Take Responsibility” asks whether architectural education prepares future architects not only to design spaces, but to understand the social, environmental, and ethical consequences of their decisions. Although education has traditionally emphasised formal expression, technical knowledge, and individual authorship, contemporary practice demands responses to issues of sustainability, inclusion, and local communities. Yet empirical insight into how these values are translated into student projects remains limited. The research uses the New European Bauhaus value framework – Beautiful, Sustainable, Together – not as a predefined model of “good design”, but as an analytical instrument for examining values present in architectural education and those requiring further development. It analyses 28 student projects produced between 2019 and 2024 in undergraduate housing design studios at the University of Belgrade – Faculty of Architecture and the University of Novi Sad – Faculty of Civil Engineering in Subotica. Since the design briefs were not based on NEB principles, the framework was applied retrospectively, combining spatial, environmental, and social assessment with qualitative interpretation and quantitative

comparison. The findings reveal an imbalance between different dimensions of responsibility. The projects demonstrate an understanding of spatial quality, experience, place identity, and engagement with communities, while environmental responsibility is less often embedded as a principle that generates design decisions. Sustainability is acknowledged in the analysed projects, but not yet consistently translated into the logic of design thinking. Comparing the two educational contexts shows that different teaching approaches cultivate different forms of awareness – from social inclusion to connecting architecture with local communities and everyday life. The project makes visible the gap between knowing about responsibility and designing through responsibility. Its contribution lies in treating sustainability and social responsibility not as additional criteria checked at the end of the process, but as generative principles of architectural concepts. The proposed framework offers a basis for rethinking teaching models and can be adapted to different educational contexts, enabling further investigation into how architectural values emerge, are transmitted, and become spatial practice.