



AI briefs an architect

## Description

Inspired by the game design scenario of my last post ([Share your expertise](#)) I asked NotebookLM how the ideas outlined in the collection of sources (e.g. my own published writing) could inform the creation of a physical architectural work. Hereâ??s what it said:

## Informing Architectural Design

The sources provide a wealth of concepts and frameworks that could inspire and inform the creation of a physical architectural work.

### Intertextuality, Metaphor, and Juxtaposition:

The sources stress the importance of **intertextuality** in both design and philosophical thinking. Architectural design, like Derridaâ??s deconstruction, can be seen as a process of connecting and disassembling, drawing inspiration from a constellation of references. This suggests that an architectural work can be designed as a **network of interconnected spaces and elements that reference different historical periods, architectural styles, or cultural contexts**. For instance, a building could incorporate elements of Gothic architecture alongside modernist principles, creating a dialogue between different design languages.

The sources emphasize the role of **metaphors** in the design process. Metaphors offer different ways of understanding a design in progress, opening up possibilities for shaping spaces and manipulating materials. An architect could use the metaphor of a â??flowing riverâ?• to design a building with a dynamic and fluid circulation system, or the metaphor of a â??treeâ?• to create a structure with a central core and branching spaces.

**Juxtaposition** emerges as a potent design strategy, stimulating design ideas by bringing together disparate elements. An architectural work could juxtapose contrasting materials,

textures, or forms to create a sense of tension and intrigue. For example, a rough, textured concrete wall could be placed next to a smooth, reflective glass surface, highlighting the inherent qualities of each material.

### ***Engaging with the Senses and Embodiment:***

The sources explore the **sensual and embodied nature of architectural experience**, moving beyond the visual confines of design. This suggests that architects should consider how a building engages all the senses – sight, sound, touch, smell, and even taste. For instance, the selection of materials could consider not only their visual appearance but also their texture, temperature, and acoustic properties.

The sources discuss the concept of **tuning** as a way of understanding design interventions. This metaphor suggests that architecture can be designed to subtly influence human behavior and emotions, creating spaces that encourage certain moods or activities. For example, a public space could be designed with a calming and contemplative atmosphere, incorporating natural elements like water features or soft landscaping.

### ***Integrating Technology and Data:***

The sources acknowledge the growing **relevance of technology and data in architectural design**, particularly AI and digital fabrication. These technologies offer new possibilities for generating complex forms, optimizing structural performance, and creating responsive environments that adapt to changing conditions. A building could be designed with parametric modelling software, allowing for the exploration of a multitude of design options based on data inputs such as site conditions, environmental factors, or user preferences.

The sources discuss the concept of the **context window in LLMs** as a way of understanding how AI processes and responds to information. This concept can be applied to architectural design by considering how a building interacts with its surrounding context. For example, an architect could use AI tools to analyse data about the surrounding urban fabric, including pedestrian flow, traffic patterns, and existing built forms, to inform the design of a building's facade or public spaces.

### ***Rethinking Architectural History and Authorship:***

The sources encourage a **rethinking of architectural history and its relevance to contemporary design**. Rather than relying on historical precedents as direct models, architects can engage with history as a source of inspiration and critique, reinterpreting and translating past design principles for contemporary contexts. For example, a building could reference the spatial qualities of a Gothic cathedral while adapting its structural principles using modern materials and construction techniques.

The sources discuss the **challenges to traditional notions of authorship** in the age of digital media and collaborative design practices. This suggests that architects should consider how to design buildings that allow for user participation, adaptation, and even co-creation. For instance, a building could be designed with modular components that can be

reconfigured or expanded over time, allowing users to shape the building's evolution.

### ***Embracing Uncertainty and Complexity:***

The sources emphasize the **complex and dynamic nature of urban environments**. The meaning of spaces is constantly evolving, shaped by a multitude of social, cultural, and technological factors. Architects should design buildings that embrace this complexity, creating flexible spaces that can adapt to changing needs and interpretations.

The sources discuss the concept of **wicked problems**, which are complex challenges that defy easy solutions. Architectural design can be seen as a process of grappling with such wicked problems, seeking to balance competing demands and navigate uncertainties. A building could be designed as a series of interconnected systems that respond to different environmental, social, and technological challenges, allowing for a degree of adaptability and resilience over time.

These are just some of the ways the ideas outlined in the sources could inform the creation of a physical architectural work. Ultimately, the specific application of these ideas will depend on the individual architect's vision, the context of the project, and the particular challenges and opportunities presented.

This wordy description sounds consistent with my own views on design, and seems to fit what I wrote in the uploaded publications. I asked for more detail: "Please imagine that such a building has been completed on an urban site. Describe the building and how I experience it as a habitual user. What do I see and experience when I enter the building and interact with others in its spaces?" The AI generated the idea of an architectural multiverse, proposing the following description.

## **Experiencing a Multiverse-Inspired Building**

Imagine a building that embodies the concepts of intertextuality, juxtaposed realities, and sensory engagement, much like a game navigating the multiverse. This structure stands on an urban site, its design a confluence of diverse architectural languages and material expressions.

**Entering the Building:** As a habitual user, you approach the building, its façade already familiar yet constantly shifting in your perception. The exterior blends elements of historical and contemporary styles, perhaps echoing Gothic arches alongside sleek, modern glass panels. The interplay of contrasting materials, like rough-hewn stone against polished metal, creates a dynamic visual tension, prompting a sense of curiosity and anticipation.

**Sensory Thresholds:** Stepping through the entrance, you are greeted by a carefully orchestrated sensory experience. Natural light filters through strategically placed openings, casting dynamic patterns on the floor as the sun moves throughout the day. Sounds of water trickling from a hidden fountain blend with the ambient hum of the city, creating a soothing soundscape that contrasts with the exterior bustle. The texture of the surfaces you touch, from smooth, cool stone to warm, textured wood, further enhances your tactile engagement

with the space.

**Navigating Juxtaposed Realities:** Moving through the building, you encounter spaces that seem to fold into one another, blurring the boundaries between different architectural styles and historical periods. A grand, vaulted hall reminiscent of a medieval cathedral might lead to a minimalist, light-filled atrium, creating a sense of disorientation and wonder as you transition between these contrasting realities. The building's layout might even incorporate elements of a labyrinth, with winding corridors and unexpected turns, prompting a sense of exploration and discovery.

**Social Encounters in Fluid Spaces:** The building's design encourages social interaction and chance encounters. Open, flexible spaces accommodate a variety of activities, from casual gatherings to formal meetings, reflecting the dynamic nature of urban life. Seating areas are strategically placed to facilitate conversation and contemplation, fostering a sense of community among the building's users.

**Evolving Meanings:** As a habitual user, you witness how the building's meaning evolves over time, shaped by the activities and interactions of its occupants. Graffiti art might appear on an exterior wall, adding a new layer of expression to the building's palimpsest of references. Temporary installations or performances might transform a previously underutilized space, demonstrating the building's capacity for adaptation and reinvention.

This multiverse-inspired building is not merely a structure, but a living, breathing entity, constantly responding to and shaping the urban environment around it. Its design encourages you to question your assumptions about space, time, and reality, creating a unique and unforgettable architectural experience.(End of description.)

That's a suitably imaginative set of propositions. Such a description could provide the starting point for a design brief. On request, NotebookLM obliged with a more specific brief, including references to the uploaded source documents, as follows.

## Community Centre Design Brief

This design brief translates the abstract concepts discussed in the sources and conversation history into a tangible architectural proposal for a single-storey community centre.

### *Schedule of Spaces*

The community centre should include spaces that foster social interaction, cater to diverse needs, and adapt to a variety of activities. Consider incorporating:

**Multi-Purpose Hall:** A large, flexible space reminiscent of a medieval hall, suitable for gatherings, performances, and markets. The high-ceilinged hall can be divided into smaller areas with movable partitions.

**Learning Centre:** A series of interconnected rooms and open areas for workshops, classes, and individual study. This area can be inspired by the concept of *“madori,”* embracing the *“between-ness”* of spaces and encouraging a dynamic flow of movement and interaction.

**Digital Media Lab:** A dedicated space equipped with computers, software, and fabrication tools, allowing users to engage with digital technologies and explore the intersection of architecture and the digital realm.

**Cafe and Social Hub:** A welcoming and informal space inspired by the concept of *“softening the edge,”* offering refreshments and providing a comfortable setting for socialising and casual encounters.

**Outdoor Courtyard:** A sheltered outdoor space that connects the building with the surrounding urban environment, incorporating elements of nature like trees, plants, and water features to create a calming and restorative atmosphere.

### **Materials**

The choice of materials should consider not only aesthetics but also their textural, acoustic, and even emotional qualities.

**Contrasting Textures:** Juxtapose rough and smooth materials, such as exposed brickwork against polished concrete or timber cladding, to create visual interest and tactile engagement.

**Natural Elements:** Incorporate natural materials like stone, wood, and bamboo to evoke a sense of warmth and connection with nature.

**Recycled and Sustainable Materials:** Embrace the principles of sustainability by utilizing recycled materials, such as reclaimed timber or salvaged architectural elements.

**Sound-Absorbing Materials:** Use materials like acoustic panels or soft furnishings in areas intended for quiet activities to minimize noise and create a peaceful ambiance.

**Transparent and Translucent Materials:** Employ glass or translucent panels to filter natural light, creating a dynamic interplay of light and shadow throughout the day.

### **Construction Method**

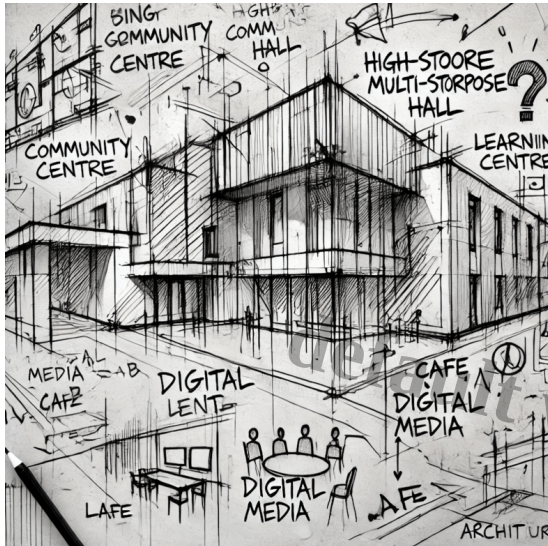
The construction method should be cost-effective, sustainable, and adaptable.

**Modular Construction:** Consider a modular construction system, allowing for flexibility in spatial configuration and potential for future expansion or adaptation.

**Prefabricated Elements:** Utilize prefabricated components, such as wall panels or structural elements, to expedite construction and minimize on-site waste.

**Passive Design Strategies:** Incorporate passive design strategies to optimize natural light, ventilation, and thermal comfort, reducing energy consumption.

This design brief offers a starting point for the design process. A drawing based on the brief and generated by ChatGPT was less successful. I'm glad of that considering that architecture is not the same as lines and words on a digital screen, and the training and expertise required to give spatial form to social needs, desires, aspirations and contexts.



## Category

1. Uncategorized

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