

To build or not to build?

Context and Objective: The purpose of this assignment is to challenge you to critically analyze the necessity and impact of architectural interventions on existing buildings. The case study for this exercise is the villa Noël, located at Emile Zola Street no. 6 in Bucharest, a structure that remains in good condition but could benefit from certain interventions. Through this assignment, students will explore the fundamental question: *to build or not to build?*



Rather than being provided with predetermined evaluation criteria, you are expected to develop your own framework for analysis. This will require a comprehensive understanding of architectural, functional, economic, social, and historical aspects that inform the decision-making process regarding intervention on existing structures.

Assignment Guidelines:

1. Research and Site Analysis:

- Conduct a detailed study of the existing villa at Emile Zola Street no. 6, including its architectural style, historical significance, structural integrity, and spatial configuration.
- Identify potential needs for intervention, such as restoration, adaptation, or extension, and analyze the factors contributing to these needs.
- Investigate zoning regulations, heritage conservation laws, and other legal constraints that may impact potential interventions.

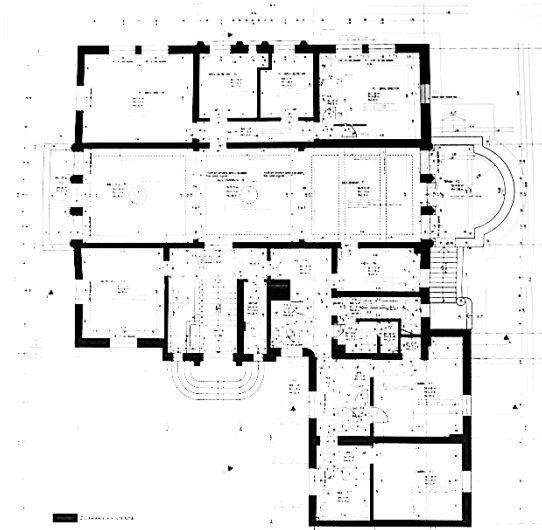
2. Defining the Criteria for Intervention:

- Develop a set of criteria that will guide your decision on whether to build or not to build.
- Consider aspects such as aesthetic coherence, sustainability, cultural value, functionality, and cost-effectiveness.
- Justify your criteria based on relevant architectural theories, case studies, or practical examples.

3. Proposal and Argumentation:

- Based on your analysis, present a well-structured argument supporting your decision.
- If you advocate for intervention, clearly describe the type and scope of the intervention, along with its intended impact on the building and its surroundings.

- If you argue against intervention, provide a rationale for preserving the villa in its current state and discuss the implications of non-intervention.
 - Use diagrams, sketches, or reference images to illustrate your argument where necessary.
4. **Critical Reflection:**
- Reflect on the broader implications of your decision-making process.
 - Discuss how your approach to this exercise might apply to other real-world architectural challenges.
 - Consider ethical, environmental, and societal factors that shape contemporary attitudes toward construction and conservation.



Deliverables:

- A written report (approximately 2000-2500 words) structured into sections: introduction, site analysis, criteria definition, proposal, and critical reflection.
- Supporting visual materials such as site plans, diagrams, or conceptual sketches.
- A short presentation summarizing key findings and arguments.

Assessment Criteria:

- Depth of research and quality of site analysis.
- Clarity and coherence in defining criteria for intervention.
- Strength and originality of argumentation.
- Integration of theoretical and practical perspectives.
- Quality of visual materials and overall presentation.

This assignment aims to cultivate a nuanced understanding of the responsibilities architects bear when intervening in the built environment. The challenge is not merely to design, but to decide whether designing is necessary in the first place.

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