

Project Reference: CTE_BFCRC_Elisavet_001_25_26

About the Project

This is an exciting PhD opportunity within the College of Technology and Environment (CTE) at London South Bank University (LSBU). The successful candidate will receive a tuition fee waiver beginning in September 2025 for 4 years, including the write-up year.

Project Title

Designing for Wellbeing: Architecture's Role in Collective Agency

Project Overview

The School of Architecture & Planning invites proposals for a PhD project investigating the role of architecture in the building process as a means of fostering collective wellbeing and enabling community agency in times of crisis and transformation.

Cities are increasingly impacted by socio-political, economic, and environmental challenges—such as housing insecurity, climate disruption, and systemic inequality. These conditions reshape communities and their spatial environments, raising urgent questions about the role of architecture not just in response, but as a tool for care, justice, and collective empowerment.

This research opportunity explores the intersections of architecture, crisis, and spatial transformation, with a focus on how communities reappropriate, adapt, and co-create space through both grassroots and institutional means. Key themes include participatory design, mutual aid, inclusive spatial practices, and the social and material dynamics of making.

Prospective candidates are encouraged to propose projects that:

- Investigate how architecture can enable collective agency and wellbeing;
- Research case studies of community-led spatial interventions;
- Interrogate institutional responses and policy-driven strategies to such interventions;
- Explore alternative architectural practices of making and research that challenge dominant models of labour and production;
- Engage in comparative research across local and international contexts;
- Incorporate participatory and practice-led research methods, including collaboration with grassroots collectives, community organisations, live projects, designers, and policymakers.

The proposed research should align with the mission of the Building Future Communities Research Centre at LSBU, which is to develop equitable, sustainable, people-centred, and healthy environments. Through critical inquiry and practice, this PhD will contribute to reimagining the role of architecture in supporting social transformation and enriching the lived experience of space.

Who Are We Looking For?

- Open to any UK or international candidates. Starting in September 2025.
- The candidate must meet the minimum entry requirements for our PhD programme by clicking the ['Apply'](#) link.
- Applicants should have an academic or professional background in architecture, urban design, spatial planning, or a related field.
- Previous research experience—academic or practice-based—in participatory design, spatial justice, critical urbanism, or community-led projects is highly desirable.

- A keen interest in the historical and theoretical contexts of architecture's social role will be beneficial.
- Candidates should be motivated to explore interdisciplinary and socially engaged research approaches, drawing on design, ethnography, critical theory, and spatial practices.
- Candidates with experience in qualitative or practice-led methods, including co-design processes, oral histories, live-build projects, collective modes of making or spatial analysis, are encouraged to apply.
- An interdisciplinary mindset and openness to ethnographic, auto-ethnographic, or reflective practice methods will strengthen your application.
- We welcome applicants who are interested in rethinking architectural production through the lenses of care, maintenance, reciprocity, and craft.

Selection Criteria:

- Academic Qualifications - You should normally have at least a 2.1 honours degree from a UK University or an equivalent qualification in architecture, urban design, planning etc.
- Research and Analytical Skills – Ability to research subjects using libraries, the internet, and other information resources, ability to conduct comprehensive literature reviews, experience in qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis, strong research design and methodology skills, ability to independently collaborate with stakeholders, and excellent academic writing and communication skills.
- Professional Skills - Project management and organisational skills, ability to work independently and as part of a team, problem-solving and critical thinking skills, and adaptability and willingness to learn new skills.
- Software and Modelling Experience - Experience developing and utilising spreadsheet-based models (e.g., Microsoft Excel) to an advanced level. Experience with other software packages relevant to the discipline would be an advantage.
- Communication Skills - The candidate should be highly motivated, able to collaborate, have good visual, oral, and written communication skills, and communicate the work's outcomes to commercial, industrial, and scientific audiences.
- Teamwork and Collaboration - Ability to work with industrial and academic supervisors.
- Language Proficiency - Overseas applicants must have a minimum English language IELTS score of 6.5, with at least 5.5 in any of the components.
- Understanding of Equality and Diversity - Able to demonstrate an understanding of equality and diversity and their practical applications.
- Visa and Legal Requirements - Non-EU/EEA nationals may need to apply to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) for clearance from the Academic Technology Approval Scheme (ATAS).

Training & Development Opportunities

Doctoral students at London South Bank University ([LSBU](#)), through the London Doctoral College ([LDC](#)), benefit from a rich and structured training environment designed to support academic excellence and professional development. All PhD candidates are offered a comprehensive programme of workshops and seminars covering essential research skills, including research design, data analysis, academic writing, ethics, and project management. These sessions aim to support students through every stage of their doctoral journey—from literature review and methodology to thesis completion and viva preparation. Postgraduate researchers can access advanced, discipline-specific training aligned with their research focus. LSBU's doctoral training environment is designed to build deep expertise in a chosen research area and the broader skills necessary for successful careers in research, industry, and beyond.

About the College

The College of Technology and Environment (CTE) at London South Bank University (LSBU) is a newly formed academic college, launched in January following the university's recent reorganisation. Led by Executive Dean Professor Chris Harty, CTE brings together four schools: Architecture & Planning, Construction, Property & Surveying, Engineering & Design, and Computer Science & Digital

Technologies. The college fosters a collaborative and interdisciplinary environment, addressing the complex challenges of the built and digital environments. CTE strongly emphasises research, with doctoral students playing a key role in shaping and contributing to the college's research agenda. CTE prepares students to become future leaders through innovation, industry partnerships, and a commitment to sustainability. With a focus on real-world impact and academic excellence, the college is set to drive forward LSBU's vision of delivering applied knowledge that transforms lives and communities locally and globally. The university has five centres, and any academic staff and students in the college can join. These research centres are described below.

About the Building Future Communities (BFC) Research Centre

The [Building Future Communities Research Centre](#) supports inclusive, participatory research on real-world transformation and social justice. We work collaboratively with diverse stakeholders—charities, community groups, local authorities, and more—to co-create research with impact. Using an intersectional approach, our work spans funded research, enterprise, consultancy, and researcher development. BFC is a creative and unifying umbrella for projects prioritising community voice and engagement. Our goal is to drive positive change through research that reflects and responds to the needs and experiences of communities, with a clear commitment to inclusion, equity, and collaborative practice.

For Enquiry

Contact Person

Before applying, please contact the main supervisor, **Dr Elisavet Hasa**, a lecturer in Architectural Design, or the co-supervisor **Prof. Igea Troiani**, College of Technology and Environment.

E-mail: hasae2@lsbu.ac.uk & igea.troiani@lsbu.ac.uk

In your email, include:

- Details of your current level of study and academic background.
- A summary of any relevant experience.
- A brief paragraph about your motivation for pursuing this PhD project.

Fee Waiver

The fee waiver is available for 4 years (48 months), including the writing-up year, examination period, and submission of the corrected thesis.

How to apply

Applications should be submitted via the programme page using the link below:

<https://www.lsbu.ac.uk/study/course-finder/architecture-phd>

You should upload the project statement (proposal), qualifications, CV, and other relevant documentation to the application portal. Remember to state the correct reference number and the appropriate supervisor.