

The Future Architect's Tool Kit

Barbara Beck

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“Design is problem solving and creativity mixed together,” Barbara Beck observes, a unique combination of art and science that will appeal to any kid who is often to be found with a pencil in hand. As a sequel to *The Future Architect's Handbook*, *The Future Architect's Tool Kit* is not just a book but a complete hands-on course in architecture. It opens by explaining the different drawings that are essential when designing a house: the site plan and elevation show the external view, while the floor plan (one per story) and section view give the internal perspective. Aaron, the fictional protagonist of the previous work, returns as the creator of these sample drawings.

Beck encourages her protégés to consider the physical setting of their proposed property—things like trees and hills—and to keep in mind local building codes and the required setback from the property line. She also points out how individual families' needs will determine the qualities of a house, like its number of rooms and any space set aside for specialist hobbies.

The first half of the book provides the theoretical groundwork for every budding “master builder” (the literal meaning of the Greek *architektón*) to follow, while the remainder gives clear, step-by-step guidance to creating first a two-dimensional set of architectural drawings and then a three-dimensional cardboard model using the pencil, eraser, graph paper, and scale included in the tool kit.

Before leaving eager designers to it, Beck offers a list of potential clients. It's a shame these scenarios are silly—a sorcerer, dolphin, and so on—and thus at odds with the rational approach and assumed skills of the rest of the book. Still, with its detailed sketches and bonus goodies, this is an impressive set of supplies to gift to the young artist in your life.

REBECCA FOSTER (Children's 2017)

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