Vernacular of Adaptation

Undercurrent of Carpatho-Rusyn Perseverance

by

Aleksandar Kolbas

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AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis. This is a true copy of the thesis, including any required final revisions, as accepted by my examiners.

I understand that my thesis may be electronically made available to the public.

ABSTRACT

In the nineteen nineties, former Yugoslavia*, went through a series of interstitial disputes, both religious and political, which evolved into hatred amongst its own people and ultimately into an unforgiving civil war. Rising demonstrations of the groups with different religious and cultural views within the country's boundaries amalgamated into a war which divided the state into separate countries and left many cities and villages in despair, economic desolation and poverty. Although some have been directly affected by the physical casualties of war, others have suffered indirectly. One of the villages affected is Ruski Kerestur, found in the Republic of Serbia where more than ninety percent of the residents are non-Serbian. Many of its people fled the country due to political and economic uncertainties. This minority group is of the Carpatho-Rusyn decent which are the heart and soul of the village.

Inspired by personal motive and desire to heal communities in distress, this thesis presents an opportunity to reconcile Carpatho-Rusyn people from the social diaspora in attempt to reclaim their national identity and give them the courage to persist on and continue the cultural legacy that has been nurtured for generations. Leaning on the speculation that 'a spirit in people and belief in the future comes from the very foundation of a building'; it utilizes an architectural intervention as basis to conceive a quintessential communal space that redefines social and practical functions necessary for cultivating Rusyn traditions, ethics and domestic values. To develop an understanding of their public realm, the thesis dips into the crevices of time searching for Carpatho-Rusyn progress of development and migratory movement from their homeland in the Carpathian Mountains to the present day conditions. It tends to explore the idea of 'adaptation', the ideology that defines an architectural type through the process of transformation and negotiation of a community and its direct effect on public space, urban system and architectonic form. These theories will become a kernel for producing a useful and meaningful civic landmark that will strengthen the spirit of people giving hope and new life to the wounded village.

The new 'living monument', Carpatho-Rusyn Art Gallery and Reconciliation Centre, presents a new gateway for Ruski Kerestur and its people into the healthy future shedding light on their moral values which were tamed for centuries by wars, ethnic cleansing and inexorable conviction of their non existence. The design proposal reintroduces a Rusyn way to the world and echoes the emotion of pride which permeates every Rusyn soul.

Yugoslavia
Former Yugoslavia was a federation that comprised six republics. Rusyns live in what was the Vojvodina Autonomous Region (historic Bačka, Banat and Srem) of the Serbia Socialist republic where they numbered about 20,000 (1980). A smaller group of about 2,500 (1980) live in western Srem, located in the Croatian Socialist Republic. It was this latter region that was the scene of fierce fighting between Croats and Serbs in 1991-1992, so that the Rusyn communities in Croatia – around and including the city of Vukovar – have virtually ceased to exist.
(Magocsi, The Persistence of Regional Cultures, 139)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

DEDICATION

...to my forefathers...   *   *...to my children...*

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' I AM FROM NOWHERE '

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0.2 **PREFACE**

WHO AM I ?

As I grow older, I am more interested to find out who I really am, and where does my family come from? Where are my origins and who were my ancestors? It wasn't really explained to me as a child, and now when my friends ask of my nationality, I did not know the true answer. I refrained from saying Carpatho-Rusyn, whatever that was, sparing myself a lengthy explanation that even I did not fully understand. Fuelled by the desire to find out, I begun searching for the answers. I must, first of all, consider the roots and genealogical background of my forefathers before I can ground my position in this world and make my existence within it more sensible. I now call myself a Canadian, but a good understanding of yourself and where you come from is important for living a meaningful and respectful life. This thesis is a story of a self-rediscovery, an educational journey that links us back to the beginning of their existence, through the lineage of countless generations to their present day conditions. This will hopefully uncover the secret for their perseverance and dedication to live on. I believe the legacy must be understood before I can successfully carry on a genealogical torch onto my children.

       Once when American pop-artist Andy Warhol, was asked where he came from, he answered: 'I come from nowhere'. In one sense, he was right, for his name was Ondrej Varchola, the son of Carpatho-Russian immigrants to Pittsburgh in the US in 1918.[1] But who are Carpatho-Russians and how can I map a country called Carpatho-Russia? Well, you won't. It exists, and yet it has never existed, it is 'nowhere'![2] I ask myself how this is possible. What was it that wiped the country completely off the map and never to be referred to again, like the giant 'black hole' in space whose matter still persists but is now invisible? What happened to these people and where are they now? Upon the in-depth research into Carpatho-Rusyns (for which they were commonly named), from the traces of their beginnings to the present-day conditions, I have found much ambivalence in attempting to understand who they really were and where they came from. Much of the debate stems from the efforts of the European historiographers to establish a historical continuity which would ostensibly prove their true origins and ancestral background. Such efforts are still being disputed today, as attempts to resolve their ethno-linguistic, political and religious life was rendered particularly difficult and often with controversial result. There aren't many historical biographies written about them, and yet, those that are available, mostly in the form of archaeology and linguistic data, uncover an array of invaluable information pertaining to the existence of this fascinating minority group.

OPPOSITE: *Excerpt from 'People from Nowhere', by Paul R. Magocsi*

" Andy Warhol is an American, but both of his parents were Carpatho-Rusyn from the village Mikova in the Prešov Region, present-day Slovakia. He coined the slogan 'I am from nowhere' as a rebellion against belonging to human kind. He often thought of himself as a 'machine', a paradigm of being contorted away from a human form, disengaging from its natural state, a kind of a dispassion of a human condition."
Only after his death in 1987 did the public slowly become aware that he was not ' from nowhere', that he indeed came ' from somewhere', and that he did have parents and older siblings who had imbued within him an awareness and even love for his ancestral culture. (Magocsi, The People from Nowhere, 5)

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1. Orthodox Europe, *Orthodox Carpatho-Russia: The People From Nowhere,* adopted from http://orthodoxengland.org.uk/oecarrus.htm
2. Ibid.

They began to appear on the slopes of the Carpathian Mountains approximately fifteen hundred years ago, and were associated with many different names including Carpatho-Russians, Rusyn, Rusnak, Uhro-Rusin, Ruthenian, Carpatho-Ukranian, Lemko, Slavish, or even Byzantine. To avoid confusion and misrepresentation of their ethno-culture, they were referred to as 'Kurds of Europe' or 'Eastern Slavic Peoples', and amongst themselves, simply 'our people'. The term 'Rusyn' was also adopted as an ethnonym during the 19th c. national awakening by the nationalist intelligentsia which claimed to speak on behalf of East Slavs throughout all of Carpathian Rus'.[3] In some countries, the term Rusyn has been subsequently accepted as the official designation for the group, and in some even an official status. For the sake of consistency, I will refer to them as Carpatho-Rusyns, for this term speaks of all that are of this particular group. However, this generalization of their name created confusion in determining their true ethnic background and heritage. This was, perhaps, a strategic attempt to disguise their identity from many oppressors during the creation of Europe, like Austria-Hungarian Empire for example, which prosecuted and uniatized all which did not admit to their kind, or was it because when Stalin took over a part of Slovakia, some 600 000 Carpatho-Rusyns found themselves all of a sudden living in Ukraine, which was of a different religious faith. Being of nomadic nature, their instincts lead them to explore and continually move on in search for better circumstances, so called '*promise land*'. Often, this land they were hoping for never arrived, so their fate solely depended on the physical and emotional strength and will to persist on. What was it that nurtured their ambition to fight for the rights to coexist amongst so many that were against them and what was the motive to stay together and never give up? There are many reasons for their mysterious and uncanny way of life, but their ability to adjust to the new environments and survive under most difficult of circumstances is extraordinary. They live on, wherever they are.

We begin with a story on a personal note of a place that is deeply rooted in my heart. This is a journey of love and care of my ancestors and hope for the future of my children. It begins with a revisit of my childhood place: my '*grandmother's house*'.

OPPOSITE: *Fig. 0.2 Photograph of a mature Linden Tree, in winter*

3. Magocsi and Pop, *Encyclopedia of Rusyn History and Culture*, 433

ATOP A SOLITARY LINDEN TREE

During summers, my grandmother often looked after me while my parents were hard at work in the city. The village of Ruski Kerestur in current country of Serbia was her beloved home and my mother's place of birth. I loved spending my summers here, as there was a certain peace and solitude. This was unlike the noisy and vibrant streets of the city, which could at times prove uncomfortable and depressing. I was a small child then, caring only about few things: playing in the open fields, climbing trees, running through dusty streets and enjoying fresh warm milk that arrived from the next door neighbour's cow. Oh yes, the milk doesn't come any tastier than that, let me tell you. Everything seemed to be better there.

My grandmother was often busy working the land in her enormous backyard while I was out wandering free. I was often alone, walking the streets and experiencing the place in the absence of a mature voice reminding you to stop, look left and right before crossing the street. As dangerous as this seems, the comfort level, safety and confidence I felt can be scarcely compared to the one I have now, at twenty nine. Although I was there without my parents to look after me, the village, and all of its safety strategies seemed to do that successfully. There is a certain integration of parts that worked together in unison that provided the utmost feeling of security. For example, if you got lost, an elder would notice you and ask who you belong to, and chances are they would know them and point you in the right direction home. Everybody knows everybody there, so there is little chance of feeling lost and unwelcomed. I was introduced to a lot of villagers by my grandmother, and by the end of the summer, everybody seemed to know me and who I belonged to. This natural social mechanism for providing security without actual policing units present was evident here, and this is the secret of the village, acting as a single unit, a single community with common interests and goals that protects one another.

One morning, I was woken up early by the sound of the large engines, something I have never heard before. Everything in the village is always quiet, so this was quite unusual. The sound was approaching closer and closer so I quickly got up and went outside on the street to see what was going on. I opened up the tall entrance gates of my grandmother's house and reached the edge of the street. I saw these massive red machines with rotating blades in front of them coming towards me, and there were more than thirty of them lined up one behind each other. Scared, but equally intrigued, my curiosity has made me climb up the old linden tree in front of the house to take a better look. Sheltered by the lush green leaves at the top of the tree, I caught a glimpse of these monsters snaking through the streets in the distance, one after the other. When they reached me, the emanating noise was vibrating the soles of my shoes, and I temporarily plugged my ears to minimize the piercing sound. They eventually disappeared around the corner and drove on towards the open fields. The loud noise was slowly overwhelmed by the silence of the air and occasional crackling of the branches I was standing on. As I was moving higher up the tree, the beauty around me was truly magnificent and inspirational. I felt safer than ever before. Protected by the lush linden leaves at the very top of the tree, and the fact that there was a perfect spot for me to sit and relax, it became my

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favourite secret hideaway. I sat there for a while, admiring all of its views out to as far as eye can see, even the church steeple was visible from there. I felt like I was on top of the world. I was happy. This single moment in time was imprinted in me forever, as it stands as one of the most memorable in my life as a child. Later that day, I learned that the red monsters I referred to were cornhusker combines getting out on the field for a hard days job.

The village is, first from all other, a place where I began to find out my inner self, where I began building my character, a place where I grew up and received many great memories, a place which has taught me a lot and made me who I am today, a place that will stay number one in my heart. I owe it everything. I am twenty-nine now and far away from my grandmother's house. I often dream of it, the kind of dreams in which I don't relive my childhood memories, but in which I create my future. It is a place that has transgressed into my conscious-ness and empowers me with its lessons on living a simple and beautiful life. This connection early on has invited me to go back and visit the 'house' in hopes to re-experience its splendour and warmth it once had. Upon my arrival, the 'spirit of a place' was very much present in the house, and in the village itself, but there was one thing missing: the spirit of its people.

The residue of the civil war that has reigned in this region for over ten years was evident here, particularly in its residents, slightly taming their belief in a '*beautiful life*'. A closer inspection revealed a number of vacant homes and abandoned farms alienating the village and threatening its persistence to exist. This was a major concern, as the *genius locus* of the place is beginning to show a dramatic shift into the 'unknown', thus posing an unstable future for its sustainability. Where there are no people, there is no spirit, and if the '*spirit of a place*' plays a quintessential role in creating healthy communities and signifies their very identity, then there is some major work to be done here to bring it back to its original state, and perhaps even strengthen its foundations.

The last re-visit to my Grandmother's House reveals:

'*The people had a different look on their faces, they were not the same. There is an odd smile here and there, disinterested in one another. The social realm is beginning to fade and the streets grew emptier. My grandmother's house is deteriorating, she is gone….and there is linden tree no more, just an empty space, waiting for a new seed to arrive!* '

1.0 " In Search

of a Soul "

INTRODUCING RUSKI KERESTUR

OPPOSITE: *Fig. 1.1 Village of Ruski Kerestur - beginning of nineteenth century*

Lord, Thou hast been our refuge from generation to generation!

The Great Doxology
from *'Orthodox Europe - Orthodox Carpatho-Russia: The People From Nowhere'*
source: http://orthodoxengland.org.uk/oecarrus.htm

1.0   **INTRODUCING RUSKI KERESTUR**

THE VILLAGE, PEOPLE & DIASPORA

The Birth

Ruski Kerestur, a satellite village of the Carpatho-Rusyns, has been of existence for more than two hundred and fifty years. During its legacy, it has belonged to many different States and Empires and has had many different names. It was initially named Keresztur, which translated to 'cross', and later, Bacs Keresztur (Bački Kerestur). It was not until the end of World War I that it received the name it still has today, Ruski Kerestur. A settling under its most associative name has been mentioned since 1751, at which time it belonged to the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Prior to 1751, the area was uninhabited due to the poor climatic conditions which made the often flooded land undesirable. Known as Pannonian Plane, at the time of its Carpatho-Rusyn colonization, the flat plateau was part of southern Hungary. Today, it is part of Autonomous Region of Vojvodina, in present day Serbia.

During the Ottoman wars, the treasury of the Austro-Hungarian Empire was severely depleted. To make up for the loss, the plan was to populate these uninhabited areas in hopes to generate revenue. The ancestors of Carpatho-Rusyns were amongst the first to arrive. The Carpatho-Rusyns or Ruthenians, as otherwise called, were settled in these regions in an organized way, covered by a letter of guarantee which the state administration provided in order to legally allow first Carpatho-Rusyn settlers to occupy the deserted land.[1] Here, they were given the status of a 'serf', a commoner who had an obligation to work and provide for the state. Initially, there were eleven families given the official right to establish themselves here, and soon after many others followed, creating a small community and laying the early foundations of the Carpatho-Rusyn village outside of homeland.

Although the first Carpatho-Rusyns were free to occupy these plains, their survival very much depended on the landowners, the Hungarian elite. Before arriving in Ruski Kerestur and claiming the right to remain there, they had to prevail over many obstacles that threatened their progress. After the Pozsony Convention in 1687, the Hapsburgs acquired the right of succession over Hungary. The southern parts of Hungary, uninhabited and rich in arable soil, called both for farm labourers and frontiersmen to fortify the southern borders in the Hapsburg monarchy. In order for good farmers and their landowners to settle in southern Hungary, somebody had to prepare homesteads, build houses and outbuildings for an intensive growing of grains and livestock. As forerunners, the Carpatho-Rusyns came in mid-18th century

1. http://members.tripod.com/~rdsa/Baczkeres.html
Quoting Dr. Julian Tamaš from '*Ruski Krstur – Chronicle & History (1745-1991)*', 1992, p/u

Oh God, give me the strength to live through this day and help me to survive in this foreign land where they have brought me and my children...Oh Lord, give my children the wisdom to find their way back to the native land of their grandfathers and great-grandfathers to honour their graves, their churches and their faith.

Kateryna Rusyn
from *'Orthodox Europe - Orthodox Carpatho-Russia: The People From Nowhere'*
source: http://orthodoxengland.org.uk/oecarrus.htm

to work on a contractual basis, irrespective of various forms of written guarantees.[2] The early Carpatho-Rusyns had lived from one contract to another, staying at one place while the local resources lasted or until the privileges of the most recent contract were extended to them. This provided jobs for the Carpatho-Rusyns, but because they were temporary work terms, the stable income was not guaranteed. When the work terms ended, they were either asked to leave or pay property taxes. Most of them could not afford taxes and were forced to flee the region and move on, while relatively few agreed to pay and become 'serfs' or the subjects of the Hungarian State in order to remain in the area. This process often meant changing their nationality and language for the purpose of survival and coexistence with the locals. The influx of Carpatho-Rusyn families depended on the attitude of the estate administration at Kula, Serbia: when they were needed, the conditions of their settling improved, thus strengthening the wave of immigrants, and vice versa.[3] It was not until the first few years of the declaration of the village that Carpatho-Rusyns got an ownership of this land. Initially, it was under the rent by the State, which applied heavy taxes for its use. Satisfied with their hard work and generation of steady capital income, the State administration issued a memorandum stating that other 'stranded' Carpatho-Rusyns were welcome to come to Ruski Kerestur and claim the right to live here. However, only pure Carpatho-Rusyns could arrive, which meant those without a status of 'identity' (free of nationality) and of Uniate religious faith (which was produced when Carpatho-Rusyn bishops and priests united their Eastern Christian customs with Catholic Church based in Rome with the promise

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2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.

Fig. 1.3 Depiction of Carpatho-Rusyn resettlement

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they could continue to practice their accustomed eastern traditions, but were required to accept the authority of the Pope in Rome instead of the Orthodox Ecumenical Patriarch in Constantinople)[4]. Although they are Greek-Catholic Christians (also known as Byzantine Rite Catholics), this name was used with care as the relationship between Greek-Catholic and Orthodox population from the very beginning of the settlement until the First World War in these regions was unstable, making the Orthodox Christians, being in much higher numbers, prevail over any other. Regardless of this misfortune, Carpatho-Rusyns were determined to stay and work hard for their right to remain here. This devaluation of their identity has followed these nomad-descendant people for centuries to come, regardless where they were, it became a form of an acceptance of their way of life and daily struggles it faced. It is a devotion to their survival and perseverance that characterizes the Carpatho-Rusyn name and acts as a catalyst for their resilience.

In only less than fifteen years since the establishment of the village in 1751, there were 278 Carpatho-Rusyn families residing in the village of Ruski Kerestur, and growing.

BELOW: *Fig. 1.4 Village of Ruski Kerestur - beginning of nineteenth century, a jubilee painting which marks its 250 years of existence*

OPPOSITE ABOVE: *Fig. 1.5 Carpatho-Rusyn monograph*

OPPOSITE BELOW: *Fig. 1.6 Early Carpatho-Rusyn life has been defined by primitive struggle and hard work: a single family (left) or collective (right)*

4. http://www.everyculture.com/multi/Bu-Dr/Carpatho-Rusyn-Americans.html Quoting Religion of the Carpatho-Rusyns in their homeland

Ruski Kerestur

1750 - 2000

I WAS, I AM, AND WILL **ALWAYS** REMAIN A **RUSYN,** I WAS BORN A **RUSYN** MY I SHALL *NEVER* **FORGET** HONORABLE HERITAGE, I SHALL **REMAIN** ITS **SON** !

INTRODUCING *Ruski Kerestur* *arescabilitascollection*

Cultural Orientation

During the creation of the village, the most important factors that contributed to the success of its development were, and still are, religion and education. Instilled in every Carpatho-Rusyn soul, they were immediately utilized in creation of the first church and school which were built in 1753. Reminiscent to the architecture in their homeland, they were built entirely out of wood. It was not until 1773, when the Uniate Cathedral of St. Nicolas received its more durable foundations and clad in traditional materials such as stone and metal. It became an epicenter of the village and a home for bishops and priests of Byzantine Carpatho-Rusyn Catholic Church which brought Byzantine Rite or later known as Greek-Catholic religion to this region from Eastern Slovakia and Ukraine. Aside from the influx of religious nourishment, they also formed a union which granted all Carpatho-Rusyn residents a full cultural and ethnical support and protection of the religious customs and its practice. From very early on, the traditions such as egg painting during Easter, First Communion, the celebration of Christmas according to the Old Testament and procession services 'The Sacrament Day' at Vodica[5] were performed regularly. The Carpatho-Rusyns inherited, by birth, the practice of Catholic tradition which stabilized the values which had literally been unchanged from their settlement until World War I. In this system, every individual knew what was expected of him, before birth and after death; he could choose among the life of a farmer, craftsman, teacher or a priest. The choice was limited not only by individual capacity but also by the family's social status. Irrelevant of what he chooses to become, being educated and able to read and write in his mother language was of utmost importance. However, living amongst Serbs who spoke Serbian, and being far from homeland which couldn't nourish them with the original Carpatho-Rusyn speech, the language barrier grew larger making it more challenging to communicate with the original Carpatho-Rusyn dialect. For this reason, the schools of both elementary and high-school levels were organized and built to support the education for the youth, given exclusively in Carpatho-Rusyn language.

       In the social life, the Carpatho-Rusyns in Vojvodina consolidated the issue of their language, and reaffirmed their national and religious identity. In addition to the economic independence, culture was the most powerful preserver of one's identity. To strengthen this belief, the first national cultural organization was founded in 1919, called Carpatho-Rusyn National Society of Education, which offered many literary works concerning history and progress of Carpatho-Rusyns in Vojvodina. In essence, it contributed to the development of the cultural and national identity by 1) raising the consciousness about the potential of the Carpatho-Rusyns to self-organize, i.e. to become a historical subject in this part of Europe, 2) insisting on a historical, cultural and national entity within an overall Ukrainian cultural and national integration, 3) asserting that the Carpatho-Rusyn cultural tradi-

OPPOSITE ABOVE: *Fig. 1.7 Uniate cathedral of St. Nicolas, exterior night view(left) and interior iconostas (right)*

OPPOSITE BELOW LEFT: *Fig. 1.8 Chapel 'Vodica', just outside of Ruski Kerestur*

OPPOSITE BELOW RIGHT: *Fig. 1.9 Elementary school 'Petro Kuzmjak', aka 'The Castle', built in 1913*

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5. http://www.vodica.org/index_files/english_files/english.htm

tion belongs to the East-Slavic cultural tradition and needed integration in the South-Slavic cultural space, 4) claiming that they should not turn their back to the language Carpatho-Rusyns spoke from birth. [6] In further attempt to support the organization and its agenda, the public library, The Centre for the Cultures 'Dom Kulturi' and Ruski Kerestur press 'Ruske Slovo' were established. Since 1945, the residents of the village were receiving weekly newspaper which was amongst other things concerned with the fundamental achievements and progress of an agricultural organization 'Perši Maj', which was created to administer political and economic affluence of the craftsmen guild and farm labourers. The major organization working to protect and promote Carpatho-Rusyn culture is 'Rusinska Matka', established in Ruski Kerestur in 1941. The organization works closely with other Carpatho-Rusyn groups throughout the world to conduct educational exchange program and extend cultural interest. To further enrich their culture, Carpatho-Rusyns were involved with theatre, music, art and folklore. One of the most successful and annually prepared was the organization 'Červena Ruža', which displayed the music and folk dance talent from local and international Carpatho-Rusyn villages. Religion, music, folk dance and artistic expression are important Carpatho-Rusyn cultural identifiers. In essence, these are constituent parts of their national identity and serve as a base for producing material and spiritual achievements. In addition, they represent a positive reinforcement of Carpatho-Rusyn psyche from which solidarity is formed. Culture, therefore, is a prerequisite for the growth of both the individual and the society as a whole.[7]

BELOW LEFT TO RIGHT: *Fig. 1.10 Traditional Carpatho-Rusyn Easter ceremony: Easter food is being blessed by a priest in front of the Uniate cathedral of St. Nicolas*
Fig. 1.11 Traditional Carpatho-Rusyn embroidered pattern, similar patterns are found on table cloths, bed spreads, wedding scarves or festive folk dressing
Fig. 1.12 Carpatho-Rusyn decorated Easter eggs, 'pisanki'

OPPOSITE ABOVE: *Fig. 1.13 Carpatho-Rusyn artifacts from the gallery in the 'castle' (left to right): traditional furniture, spinning wheel, loggia*

OPPOSITE BELOW LEFT: *Fig. 1.14 Baskets of food (decorated pisanki, cheese, home-style bread and ham) are waiting to be blessed by a priest early Easter morning.*

OPPOSITE BELOW RIGHT: *Fig. 1.15 Traditional Carpatho-Rusyn folk dancers perform at the annual cultural festival 'Red Rose' in Ruski Kerestur*

6. http://members.tripod.com/~rdsa/Baczkeres.html
7. Magocsi, *The Persistence of Regional Cultures*, 147

Transformation and Adaptation

Fig. 1.16 Ruski Kerestur street panorama photo-montage

It is important to understand that Carpatho-Rusyns, from their origins to the present day concentrations, never had their own state and hence had a hard time being recognized as a distinct national minority group. At various times in the twentieth century, they have tried to achieve autonomy and a self-rule, but being in considerable small numbers and scattered throughout Eastern Europe, this was almost impossible. These efforts, however, have met with varying degrees of success but the progress often depended on the general political situation in the countries where they have lived which was often unstable and not conducive to minorities. The problem of numbers also contributed to their status of a minority group. Since they are not recognized in Ukraine and have not been officially recorded in Poland, which are considered two of the most densely populated countries with Carpatho-Rusyns, it is impossible to know with certainty how many of them there are in the European homeland today.

Refusing to tolerate a national and religious self-awareness on the part of Carpatho-Rusyns, the Hungarians endeavoured to deprive them of their history and deny their national individuality.

"*The Ruthenian (Carpatho-Rusyn) people of Hungary have no distinct history, no historical basis, because they lack national consciousness*"![8]

For many of them, the process of 'Magyarization' during the rule of the Hungarian Empire forced the change of their last name to that of Hungarian from their native Carpatho-Rusyn, in attempt to disguise

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8.   Pekar, *The History of the Church in Carpathian Rus*, 5

and avoid exile. Apart from the factors of voluntary assimilation and constant emigration, they suffer from low birth rate and declining population statistics. According to an unofficial document, as an estimate, places their number between 800,000 to a million in their native homeland, and worldwide, just over 1.6 million. Minority status has also contributed indirectly to the confusion regarding the very name used to describe them. Traditionally, they have called themselves Rusyns or Rusnaks, but the states who have ruled them have used many other names, including Carpatho-Russian, Carpatho-Ukrainian, and Uhro-Russian. In 1952, the Communist regime lead by Soviet Union introduced a policy of forced Ukrainianization, whereby all Carpatho-Rusyns, whether they wanted or not, were declared in official documents as Ukrainians.[9] Ukrainian was introduced as the language of instruction in schools and for use in publications, the media and cultural life which has ostensibly contributed to the original Carpatho-Rusyn cultural upheaval. These are some of the political factors that fractured Carpatho-Rusyn history and fabricated constant rejection of their existence by their European rivals.

Of all the Carpatho-Rusyns in Europe, it was those living in former Yugoslavia, particularly in Ruski Kerestur, who in the second half of the twentieth century enjoyed the best conditions for national and cultural development. When Yugoslavia was reconstituted after World War II, its new communist government led by war hero, Marshal Josif Broz Tito, tried to resolve inter-ethnic conflict by dividing the country into six different republics and by providing liberal support and legal protection for all national minorities.[10] In 1974, the autonomous region of Vojvodina, in the Republic of Serbia, was given considerable political autonomy and a status equal to that of federal government. Five of the Vojvodina's peoples were given the status of official nationalities – Serbs, Hungarians, Romanians, Slovaks and Rusyns (Carpatho-Rusyns), and the rest were classified as national minorities. For the first time in centuries, the Pannonian Carpatho-Rusyns were given the right to practice their culture, educate in their own language and reclaim their religious faith. There were other villages which were inhabited by Carpatho-Rusyns including Kocur, Djurdjevo and Verbas, but Ruski Kerestur was most desirable since it was almost exclusively populated with Carpatho-Rusyns, at 99.54%. In 1971 with a total of 5,928 residents, the village had the largest Carpatho-Rusyn population since their initial move into these regions, and Vojvodina, at the same time had 20,109 Carpatho-Rusyns occupying the province, comprising of 0.9% of its entire population.

Кереотур Руски Керестур

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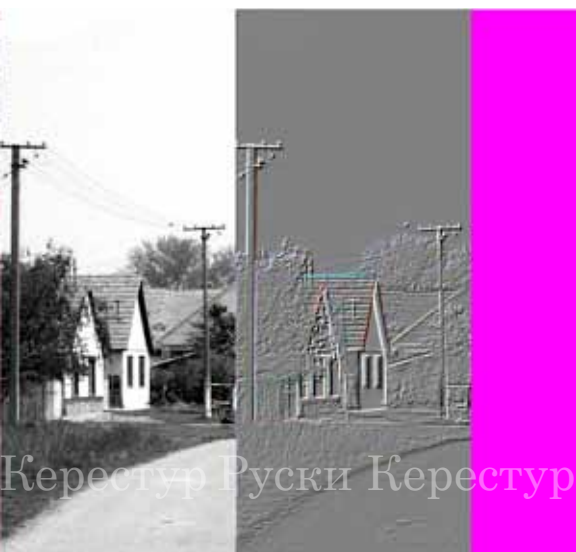
9. Magocsi, *The People From Nowhere*, 99

10.   www.carpatho-rusyn.org/vojv

The Effect of the Civil War

The Pannonian Carpatho-Rusyns have enjoyed a substantial cultural autonomy and recognition since their inception as an official nationality of Yugoslavia. An organization 'Carpatho-Rusyn Economical and Social Rights Committee' was formed in Ruski Kerestur to administer and educate the public about the significance of Ruski Kerestur gaining the status of municipality and self-governance. This was sought to generate a few things amongst which were: faster economic growth which would create more jobs, slow down the emigration rate and keep the youth within the village, better industrial standards which would improve roads, water and sewer system, improve educational standards and cultural practice, and preserve their national identity.

The disintegration of Yugoslavia which started in 1989 brought these efforts to a grinding halt. The Civil War, which was caused by the religious and sociopolitical conflicts in this ethnically-complex environment, ripped the country apart. The Carpatho-Rusyn community was particularly hard hit during this war. The fact that Carpatho-Rusyns from Serbia were drafted into the Yugoslav army, while those from Croatia were drafted into the Croatian army, meant that Carpatho-Rusyns were fighting Carpatho-Rusyns in a war that was against their national interests. The Croatian region of Eastern Slavonia was home to a community of several thousand Carpatho-Rusyns, centered in the cities of Vukovar and Osijek. It was also the scene of some of the worst fighting of the war. Before the war, official statistics showed over 3000 Carpatho-Rusyns living in Vukovar. Death, deportations and escape left the community severely depleted.[11] Although Ruski Kerestur was not directly hit by the war, there was a certain public unrest and doubt about what the future holds. Carpatho-Rusyns are again attempting to preserve their culture.

In 1999, NATO bombing has provided yet another uneasy situation for the Carpatho-Rusyns in Ruski Kerestur.

OPPOSITE ABOVE: *Fig. 1.17 Carpatho-Rusyns in the village square, gathered to support the annual 'Štafeta' event, 1972-73*

OPPOSITE BELOW: *Fig. 1.18 Annual celebration of 'Dan Mladosti' in the village (1970's). The photograph of J. B. Tito is prominently displayed in the background, a Yugoslav war hero which brought Carpatho-Rusyns the status of official nationality*

ABOVE: *Fig. 1.19 A destroyed house in Croatia, with the messages written on the walls referring to the fact that the terrified Croat inhabitants of the home fled away*

BELOW: *Fig. 1.20 The water tower in Vukovar, 2005, heavily damaged in the battle. The tower has been preserved as a symbol of the town's suffering. Before the outburst of civil war, official statistics showed 3000 Carpatho-Rusyns living in Vukovar*

11. http://www.ce-review.org/00/25/pozun25.html

21

The Problem of Population

The process of '*alienation*' has always been the problem amongst Carpatho-Rusyns, wherever they were and whatever they called home. Their keen ability to assimilate themselves with other cultures has notoriously tainted their own, even under constant effort to preserve it. Many of the Carpatho-Rusyn inhabitants fled or simply wondered off, detaching themselves from their roots in hopes to find better living conditions. This scattering effect has significantly contributed to the loss of population in Carpatho-Rusyn villages of Vojvodina and especially in the smaller or 'peripheral' villages, where the numbers dangerously fell to the critical level. In some villages, Carpatho-Rusyns have disappeared altogether. Other factors that contributed to this were mixed marriages, the change of religion or joining of a sect and the division and alienation of Carpatho-Rusyn Intelligentsia.[12] In the nineties, however, the largest contributor to the sudden loss of population was the Yugoslav Civil War. To avoid becoming victims of war and being drafted into the military, many Carpatho-Rusyns moved out of the country. Although some have returned to their motherland, as the situation there has drastically improved since their initial move, a great number emigrated to Canada and United States in search for a better life.

Ruski Kerestur has also experienced a decline in Carpatho-Rusyn population. The current economic and political situation in Serbia is not helping Carpatho-Rusyns in getting the municipal status in Ruski Kerestur. Realizing the implications of the situation, many Carpatho-Rusyns begun moving to larger communities or emigrating to other countries. As a result, many Carpatho-Rusyn homes were abandoned. Over time, these evacuated Carpatho-Rusyn homes were slowly being occupied by the Serbs who have flooded these regions after escaping their war-stricken environments. The economic situation and the Civil War prompted many individuals to flee the country and leave their loved ones behind.

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12.   http://rdsa.tripod.com/history.html
Quoting Miron Žiroš from chapter two: 'Wandering and Alienation' of the book titled '*Ruthenians of Bačka and Srem in their Homeland and in the World (1745-1991)*', p/u

Statistics indicate that during 30-year period from 1961 to 1991, number of Carpatho-Rusyn community decreased by approximately one third (27.14%). From 1981 to 1991, the population decrease was 1,653 persons.[13] In 2002 census, the percentage of Carpatho-Rusyns in Ruski Kerestur dropped to 80.67%, or 4,483 of 5,557 inhabitants recorded.[14] Carpatho-Rusyns are slowly disappearing from their beloved villages in Bačka, and as a result, their language, customs and traditions may soon follow. This demographic fluctuation is contributing to a diaspora that is leaving this country free from key national minorities which are so important for enriching its cultural diversity. To avoid this littoral, the political and economic situation in Serbia must be stabilized. So far, this is unknown, and the future for Carpatho-Rusyns in Vojvodina is once again uncertain.

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13. http://rdsa.tripod.com/ruthenians.html
14. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Demographic_history_of_Vojvodina#1880_census

COUNTRY	OFFICIAL DATA	ESTIMATE
UKRAINE	10,000	740,000
Transcarpathia (650,000)		
Lemko Rusyns resettled (90,000)		
SLOVAKIA	55,000	130,000
POLAND	5,900	60,000
SERBIA	16,000	25,000
ROMANIA	200	20,000
CZECH REPUBLIC	1,100	12,000
CROATIA	2,300	5,000
HUNGARY	1,100	3,000
UNITED STATES	12,500	620,000
CANADA	-	20,000
AUSTRALIA	-	2,500
TOTAL		1,637,000

Fig. 1.21 Global Carpatho-Rusyn population chart

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CARPATHO-RUSYN POPULATION CHART

Census	1752*	1787*	1880	1900
Carpatho-Rusyns of Ruski Kerestur	240	2,191	4,526	5,098
Carpatho-Rusyns of A P Vojvodina	-	-	9,299	12,663

1953	1971	1991	2002

6,115	5,960 Rusyns: 5,928 (99.54%)	5,632	5,557 Rusyns: 4,483 (80.67%)

23,038	20,109	17,889	15,626

NOTE *

Censa for Carpatho-Rusyn settlement in Vojvodina prior to year 1880 is unavailable due to amalgamation of various ethnic groups into a general population of Hungarians during the rule of Austrian Empire. Although the last census conducted was in 2002, some of the most recent sources show the Carpatho-Rusyn population both in Ruski Kerestur and in the province is continually declining.

Fig. 1.22 Carpatho-Rusyn population chart:
Carpatho-Rusyns of Vojvodina and Ruski Kerestur respectively

Fig. 1.23 Visions of Ruski Kerestur:
History & People image vignette

history & people
VISIONS OF RUSKI KERESTUR - IMAGE VIGNETTE

Fig. 1.24 Visions of Ruski Kerestur:
Views & Icons image vignette

views & icons
VISIONS OF RUSKI KERESTUR - IMAGE VIGNETTE

Fig. 1.25 Visions of Ruski Kerestur: Craft & Culture image vignette

craft & culture
VISIONS OF RUSKI KERESTUR - IMAGE VIGNETTE

Fig. 1.26 Visions of Ruski Kerestur: Art
& Architecture image vignette

art & architecture
VISIONS OF RUSKI KERESTUR - IMAGE VIGNETTE
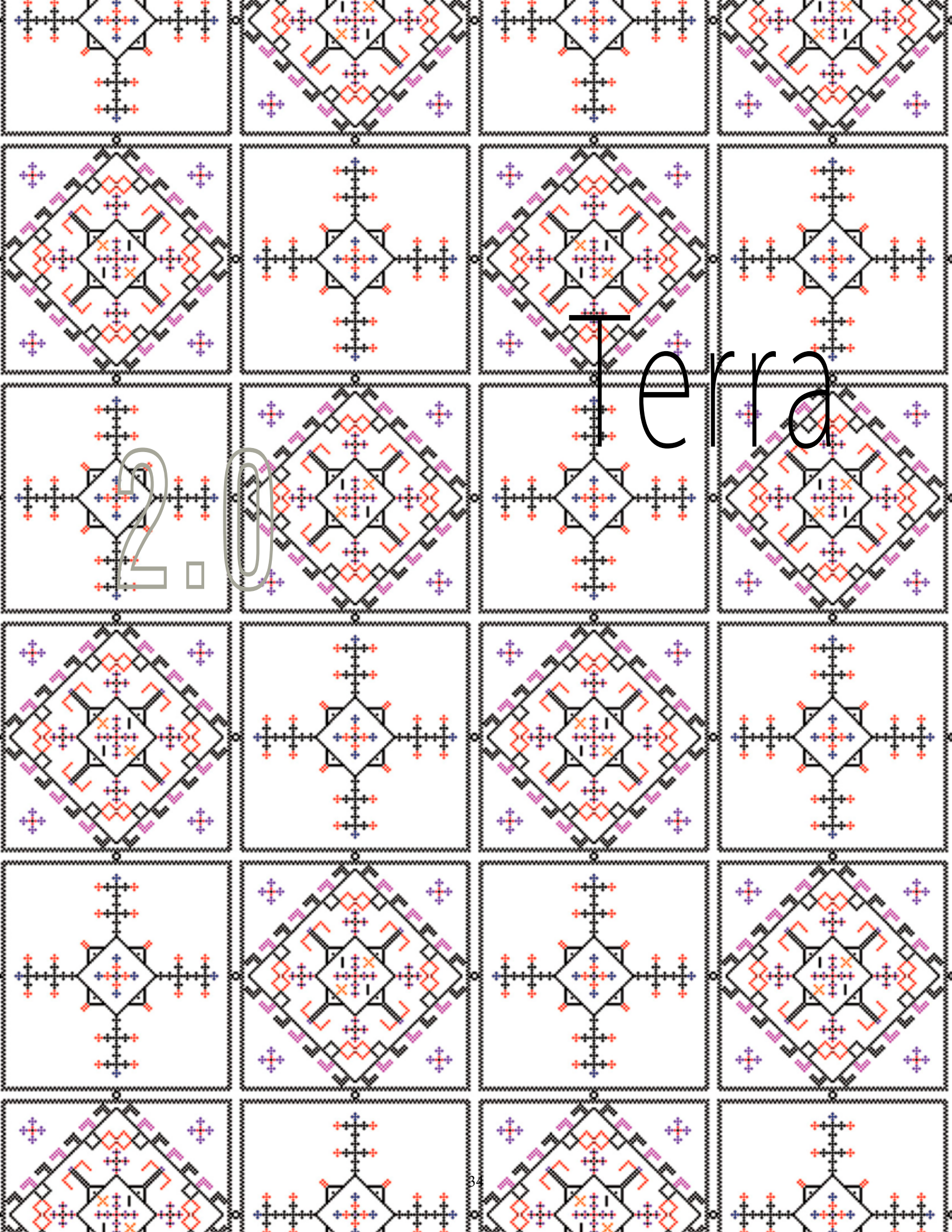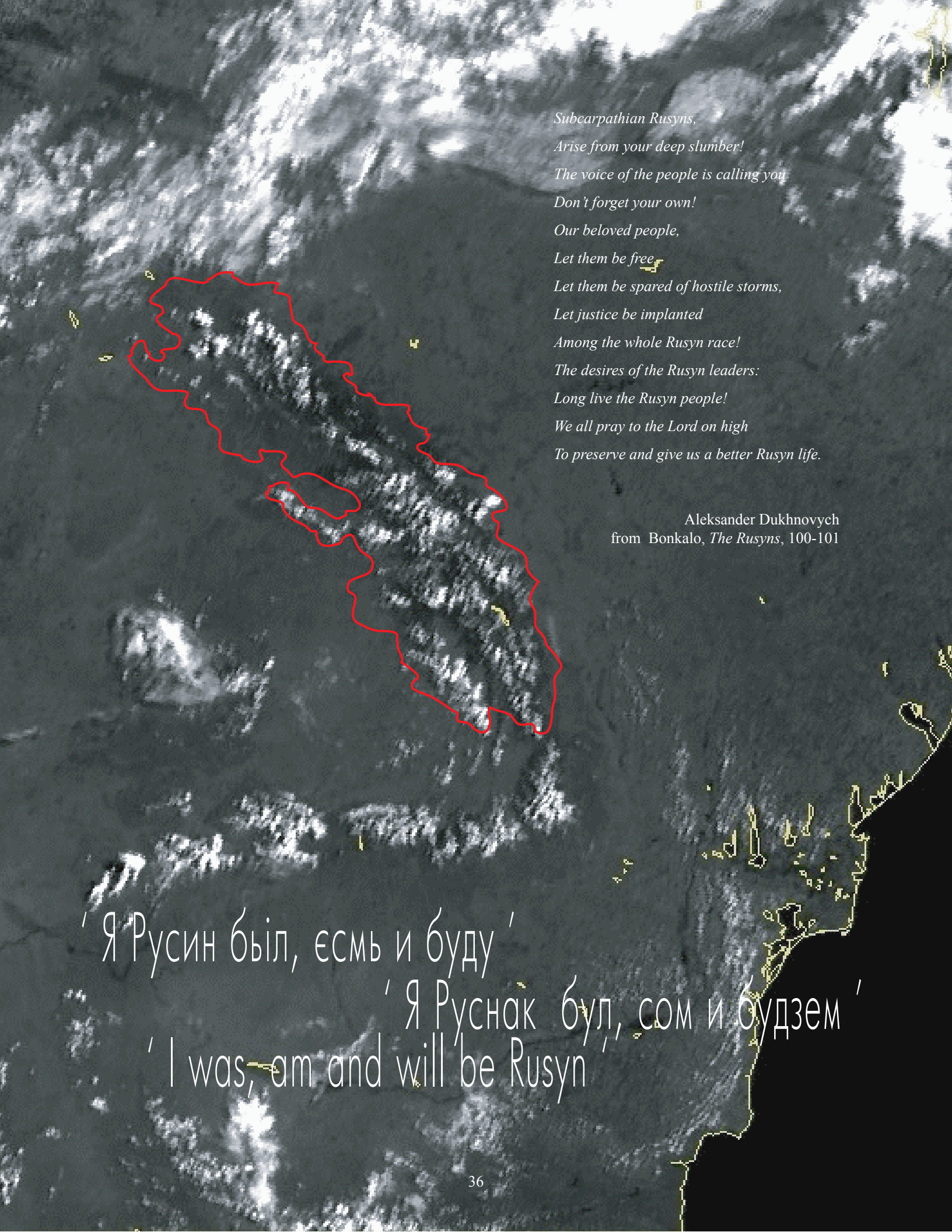
Indagines

' The Land Between '

ADDRESSING THE VERNACULAR

OPPOSITE: *Fig. 2.1 Traditional Carpatho-Rusyn embroidered cloth pattern*

Subcarpathian Rusyns,
Arise from your deep slumber!
The voice of the people is calling you
Don't forget your own!
Our beloved people,
Let them be free,
Let them be spared of hostile storms,
Let justice be implanted
Among the whole Rusyn race!
The desires of the Rusyn leaders:
Long live the Rusyn people!
We all pray to the Lord on high
To preserve and give us a better Rusyn life.

Aleksander Dukhnovych
from Bonkalo, *The Rusyns*, 100-101

' Я Русин был, єсмь и буду '
' Я Руснак був, сом и будзем '
' I was, am and will be Rusyn '

2.0   **ADDRESSING THE VERNACULAR**

HOMELAND: HISTORY AND CULTURE

Quest For Survival

The Carpatho-Rusyn homeland is at the centre of the European conti-
nent.[1] For the very reason, it was exposed to the centuries of warfare
and served as a battleground for colliding forces that have met here
in attempt to gain succession over it, and one another. The ancestors
of the Carpatho-Rusyns can be traced to Slavic people who begun to
appear in the valleys of the Carpathian Mountains in the latter part of
the 9th century. Their presence is related to the original homeland of
the Slavs who were forced into this 'no man's land' by invasion of the
Asian nomadic people from the east and the Vikings from the west.
Over time, there have been many other incursions alike in these regions
which have significantly influenced the life of early Carpatho-Rusyns.
Constant fear of being exterminated by the oppressors became a subject
of their 'secretive' life, a life that has tamed their identity and national
consciousness. Threats of discrimination and devaluation of their
existence has provoked their social well being and as a result, many
fled or gave into their opposition, but many more, however, unwilling
to accept this fate, remained here, despite these societal rejections. In
spite of this, the Carpatho-Rusyns preserved their national and religious
identity and retained their distinctiveness. Indeed, the centuries-long
struggle only served to temper the spirit of the people and enable them
to survive harsh persecutions and numerous attempts at denational-
ization.[2] This paradigm had impacted their communal life, where its
survival almost exclusively relied on the positive relationship with
one another and the individual devotion to the church inherent in their
roots. Therefore, mother tongue, religion and cultural practices are the
fundamental elements which nourished their perseverance and dedica-
tion to live on. Rich in culture, traditions and customs, this ethnic group
persisted to exist and successfully carried on their unique genealogical
torch for generations.
        Today, Carpatho-Rusyns live along the northern and southern
borders of the Carpathian Mountains. Until the outset of the twentieth
century, the majority of their population was found in the territory
known as Carpathian Rus'. According to present-day international
boundaries, Carpathian Rus' is found within the borders of Poland,
Slovakia, Ukraine and Romania. Three quarters of the Carpatho-Rusyns
in Europe occupied Ukraine, specifically the country's Transcarpath-
ian oblast or historic Subcarpathian Rus'. In Slovakia, they live in the
north-eastern part of the country, in the area known as Prešov Region.
On the southern slopes of the Carpathians, they had traditionally lived

OPPOSITE: *Fig. 2.2 Swath of*
Carpathian Mountains

1. Magocsi, *Our People*, 7
2. Pekar, *The History of the Church in the Carpathian Rus'*, 5

in south-eastern Poland, in the area known as the Lemko Region. After World War II, as political boundaries shifted, Lemko Rusyns were deported to Ukraine and other parts of Poland. Beyond the Carpathian homeland, Carpatho-Rusyns live as immigrants in the neighbouring countries such as Hungary, Czech Republic and eastern Croatia. The oldest and most successful immigrations in the mid-eighteenth century occurred in Vojvodina, in the country of Serbia.

Carpathian Rus' endured thousand years under Hungarian rule. The Hungarian tribes who created Hungary had crossed the Carpathians by the end of the ninth century. In so doing, they brought new Slavic peoples and subjugated other Slavs, including the Christian Carpatho-Rusyns whom they found living in the Carpathian Mountains and the Pannonian Basin around the Ung River.[3] Between 12th an 13th century, Hungarian Empire grew stronger by tightening its northern frontier along the crest of the Carpathians. As a result, many Carpatho-Rusyns were 'magyarized' or assimilated with Hungarians by its government in attempt to increase Hungarian population, which was now dominant in these regions. The land they were given to inhabit was mostly forested and poor for growing agricultural goods. This made the Carpatho-Rusyn settlers poor with status of a peasant, herdsmen or lumbermen. As Hungarian government was conquered by the Ottoman Empire in 1526, Carpatho-Rusyn homesteads south of the Carpathians fell under Hapsburg control until 1918. North of the mountains, the Carpatho-Rusyn-inhabited Lemko Region was in the mid-14th century incorporated into the kingdom of Poland. Polish rule lasted until 1772, when Galicia was annexed by the Hapsburg Empire and made into one of the provinces of Austria. As a result, all Carpatho-Rusyns found themselves under Hapsburg rule.[4] Here, Carpatho-Rusyns had limited minority rights and after years of Hungarian assimilation, their language and national identity was sought to completely disappear. Living in isolated groups, they did not even recognize one another, which ostensibly fractured the ability to establish any form of solidarity.

It wasn't until 1849 that a Carpatho-Rusyn presence was felt in imperial Vienna.[5] This brought a crucial political and religious change that enabled first Carpatho-Rusyn cultural revival to occur. The Union of Uzhorod in 1646 resulted in the Orthodox Church switching jurisdictional allegiance from the patriarch in Constantinople to the pope in Rome and becoming known as the Uniate or Greek Catholic Church. It was officially made equivalent to the Roman Rite. The presence of the church and the early permission by the government to maintain the Old Slavonic language in the church liturgy helped for a time to preserve the ethnicity of the people.[6] One of the leading individuals who have initiated Rusyn revival was Aleksander Dukhnovych, a poet and a founder of the Carpatho-Rusyn Cultural Society in the Carpath-

OPPOSITE ABOVE: *Fig. 2.3 Map of Europe - showing the extent of Carpathian Peninsula (Carpathian Rus')*

OPPOSITE BELOW: *Fig. 2.4 Carpathian Mountains panorama showing vast open space of the Kakaraza mountain, photograph by Olga Stepanets*

3. Slivka, *The History of the Greek Rite Catholics in Pannonia, Hungary, Czechoslovakia and Podkarpatska Rus 863-1949, 1974,*30
4. Magocsi, '*The Carpatho-Rusyns: Part 3.*' Carpatho-Rusyn American. Volume XVIII #4. Winter 1995.
5. http://rdsa.tripod.com/peoplewithout.html
6. Ibid.

ian homeland. He had an ambition to reunite all Carpatho-Rusyns into one nation of Subcarpathia in attempt to uplift and give back what was taken away, their freedom and national recognition. He coined the word 'Rusyn', which was a derivative of all the names by which Carpatho-Rusyns have called themselves or were called by others. Due to all of his efforts, he was proclaimed a 'national awakener' by his fellow Carpatho-Rusyns. An imperial decree from Vienna in 1848-49 introduced the principle of the equality of the nationalities. Carpatho-Rusyn was introduced as an official language besides German and Hungarian in the five counties where they were the predominant minority.[7] These changes were short-lived, however when the Hungarians initiated to form a single Hungarian nation, free of Austrian laws. In 1860, a dual monarchy was created known as Austro-Hungarian Empire. This enabled Hungarian leaders to dictate relationships with minorities as they pleased, without disruption from Austria. As a result, the Carpatho-Rusyns were losing not only their language but their livelihood as well. The newly formed Hungarian regime did not support minorities to flourish and acquire more land. The only land parcels Carpatho-Rusyns owned was passed on to each child who in turn passed it on to their children. This resulted in smaller and smaller plots of land, which eventually were too small to sustain the family. The lack of land, low productivity, and poor methods of cultivation resulted in poverty and semi starvation of the population.[8]

Despite being ruled by several different states throughout their history, Carpatho-Rusyns have struggled to achieve at least a modicum of self-rule. In 1848, however, there was an attempt to unite all Carpatho-Rusyns into one autonomous province in Austria-Hungary, or at least in the Hungarian region, but these demands were not met with success. At the fall of Austro-Hungarian Empire in 1918, the Hungarian government formed an autonomous territory in Subcarpathian Rus' while at the same time Lemko Rusyns created a self-governing republic. These too were temporary, as the provisions of the Treaty of Trianon in 1920, reduced the size of Hungarian Kingdom by two-thirds and ratified the new boundaries that saw all Carpatho-Rusyns placed within the new republic of Czechoslovakia.[9] The Czechoslovak government did create a province called Subcarpathian Rus', which functioned from 1919 to 1938 with its own Carpatho-Rusyn governor but with the limited degree of autonomy. During the invasion of Hitler and right through the outburst of the World War II, there was yet another border shift which left Czechoslovakia desolated. This presented a chance for Hungary to invade Subcarpathian Rus' and take ownership. After successfully doing so, all Carpatho-Rusyns were yet again found under Hungarian rule. Another attempt of self rule begun at the end of WWII when Subcarpathian Rus', renamed this time Transcarpathian Ukraine, called for unification with Soviet Ukraine. Although they did unite with Ukraine in 1945, after Transcarpathia lost its self governing status, it became just another region of Soviet Union which proclaimed

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7. Ibid.
8. Ibid.
9. Bonkalo, *The Rusyns*, xiii

ABOVE: *Fig. 2.5 In the 1970s the communist government in Czechoslovakia decided to create water reservoirs in the Carpathian region with the result that several Carpatho-Rusyn villages were destroyed. Pictured here are the remnants of the village of Ruskè in the upper valley of the Cirocha River before its complete inundation by water*

MIDDLE: *Fig. 2.6 The eastern front in World War I also reached Carpathian Rus'. In 1915 the Basilian Monastery at Krasny Brod in the Prešov region (today Slovakia) was destroyed. The monastery with its archive, invaluable documents, and library was one of the most important cultural centers for Carpatho-Rusyns.*

BELOW: *Fig. 2.7 During World War I the Austro-Hungarian government looked with suspicion on Carpatho-Rusyns, who they suspected of being potential spies for Russia. For this reason, thousands of Lemko-Rusyns, regardless of their social status as teachers, priests, or peasants, were sent to internment camps*

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HUNGARY: 11TH CENTURY
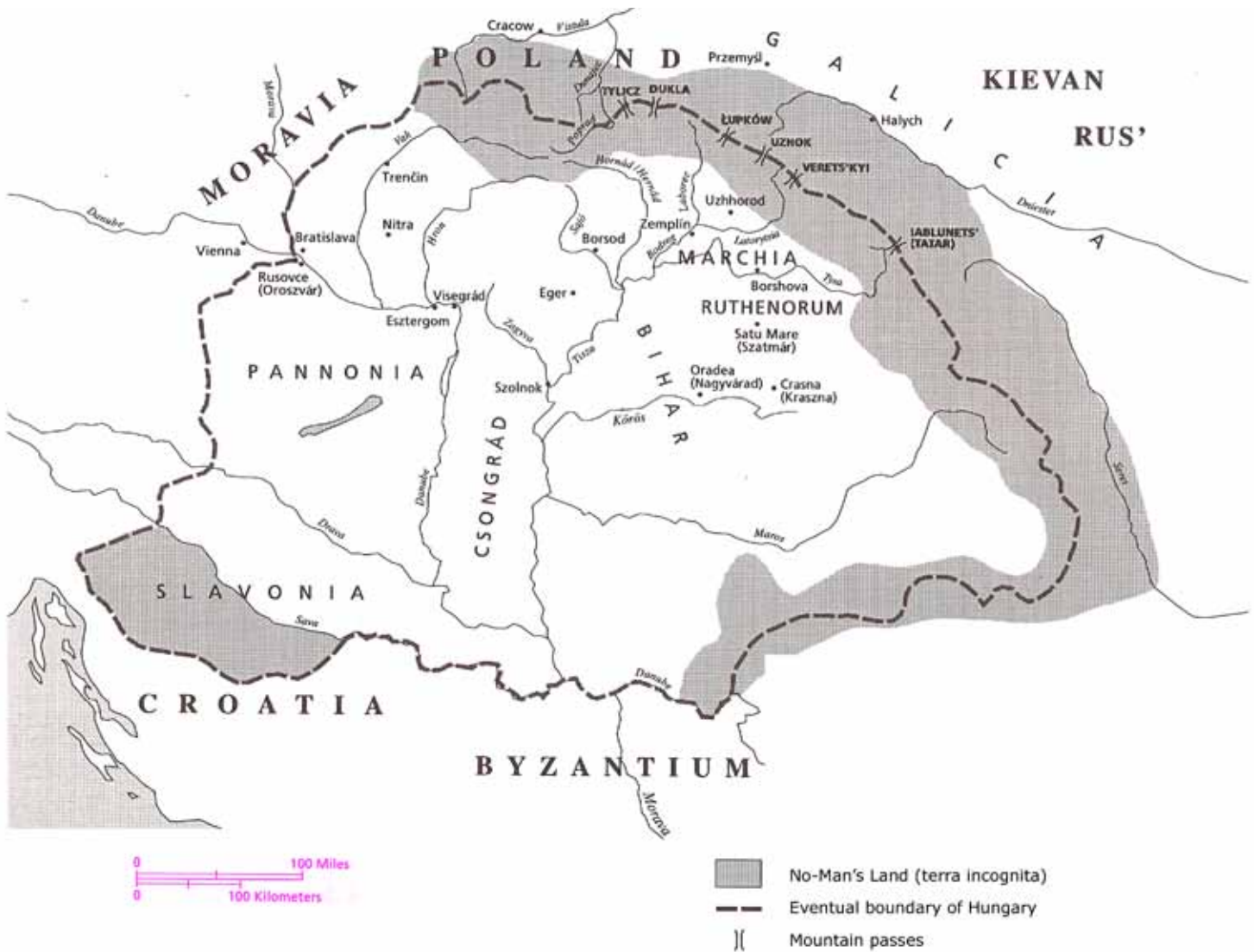
Fig. 2.8 Map of Hungary, 11th century
When speaking of this period,
Hungarian and other medieval writers
referred to the Marchia Ruthenorum,
or Rus' March, which later Carpatho-
Rusyn historians and patriotic writers
considered to be the first Rus' "state"
in the Carpathians. It is most likely,
however, that the Marchia Ruthenorum
was not located in the mountainous
region or even foothills of Carpathian
Rus', but rather somewhat further
south in the lowlands between the
lower Latorytsia and Koros rivers.
(Magocsi, Encyclopedia of Rusyn
History and Culture, 177)

CARPATHIAN RUS': 13TH -14TH CENTURIES
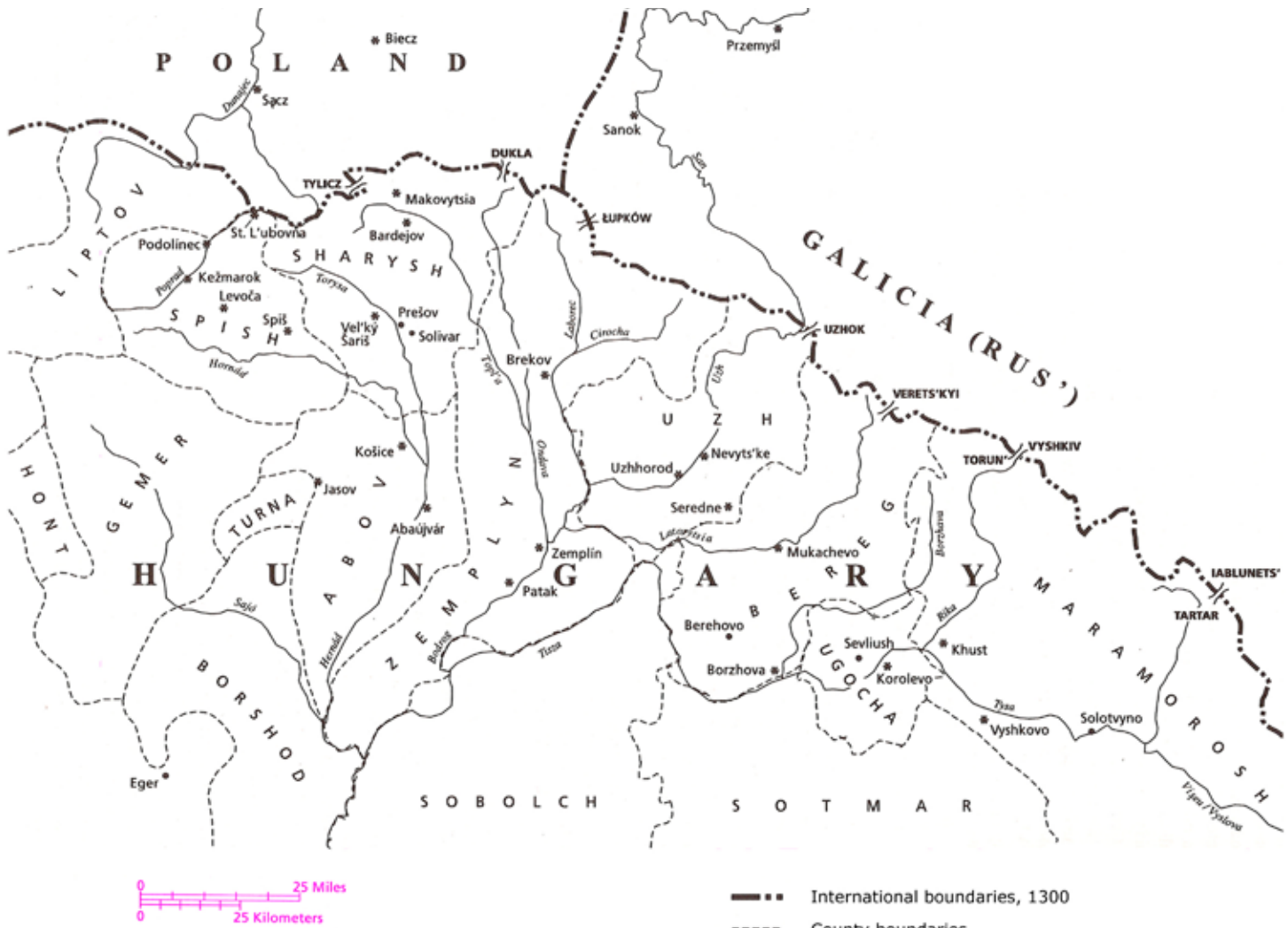
Fig. 2.9 Map of Carpathian Rus', 13th-14th centuries
By the second half of the 11th c. Rusyn-inhabited lands on the southern slopes of the Carpathians came under control and were incorporated into the county administrative structure of the Kingdom of Hungary. Hungarian rule remained until 1526, after which most of the Kingdom was conquered by the Ottoman Turks. The Ottoman presence lasted until the outset of the 18th c., when the Hapsburgs finally gained control over Hungary. Hapsburg Hungary was to rule Carpatho-Rusyn lands south of the Carpathians until 1918.
(Magocsi, Encyclopedia of Rusyn History and Culture, 179)

CARPATHIAN RUS': 19TH CENTURY
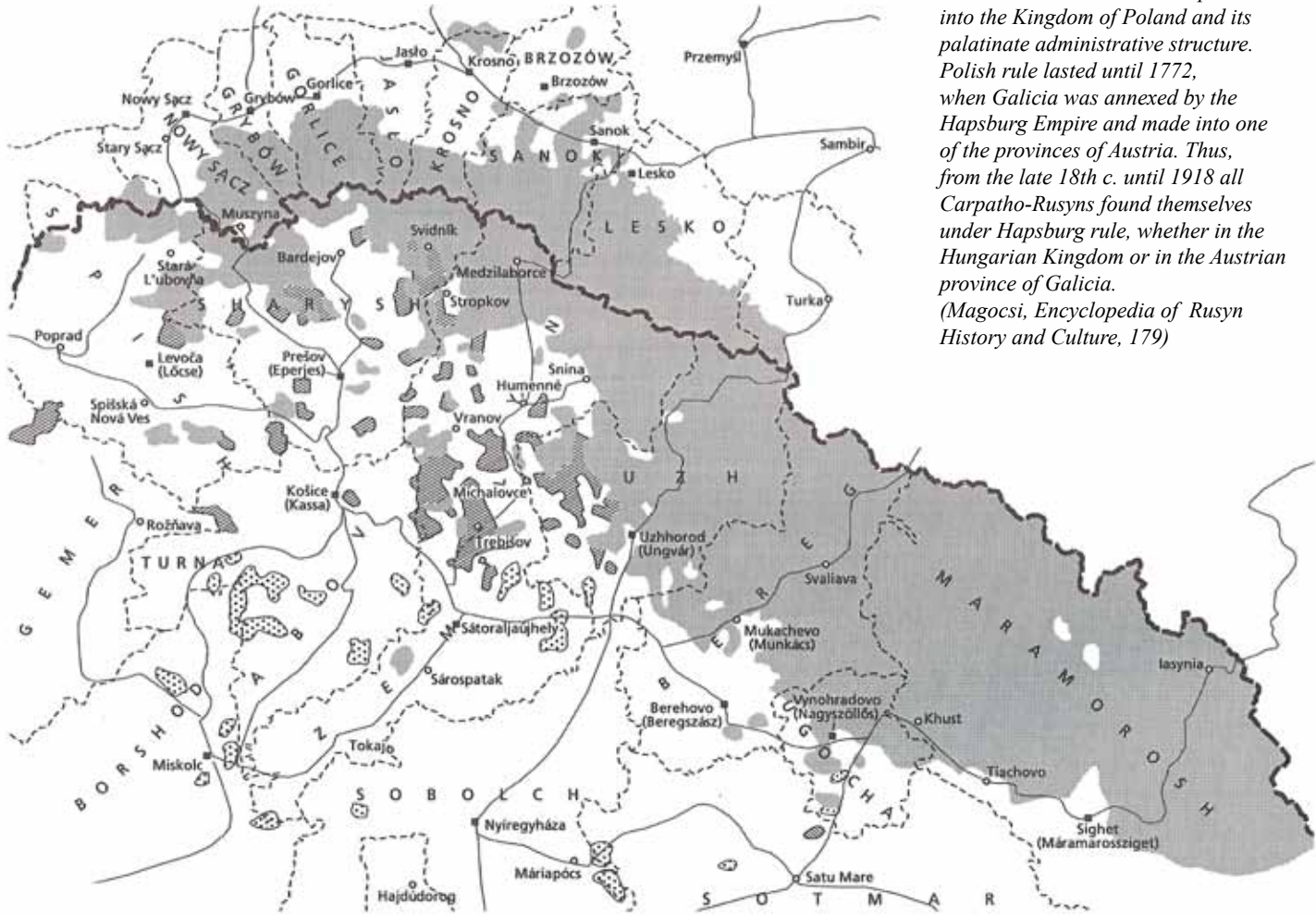
Fig. 2.10 Map of Carpathian Rus', 19th century

North of mountains, the Rusyn-inhabited Lemko Region that had been within the nominal sphere of the medieval Rus' principality of Galicia was, in the mid-14th c., incorporated into the Kingdom of Poland and its palatinate administrative structure. Polish rule lasted until 1772, when Galicia was annexed by the Hapsburg Empire and made into one of the provinces of Austria. Thus, from the late 18th c. until 1918 all Carpatho-Rusyns found themselves under Hapsburg rule, whether in the Hungarian Kingdom or in the Austrian province of Galicia.
(Magocsi, Encyclopedia of Rusyn History and Culture, 179)

— —	Boundary between the Austrian province of Galicia and the Hungarian Kingdom
-----	County/District boundaries
■	County/District administrative seat
○	Other cities/towns
	Majority Rusyn population, 1910
	Former Rusyn settlements slovakized in the 19th century
	Former Rusyn settlements magyarized in the 19th century
	Former Rusyn settlements romanianized in the 19th century
—	Railroad lines before 1914

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CARPATHIAN RUS: 2000

*Fig. 2.11 Map of Carpathian Rus',
2000*
*The Carpatho-Rusyn homeland is at
the center of the European continent. In
fact, if one looks at the map of Europe
as it stretches from the tip of Norway
in the north to the isle of Crete in the
south, and from the coast of Ireland in
the west to the Ural Mountains in the
east, the exact geographic midpoint,
which was carefully calculated in
the late 19th century and marked
by a monument, is just outside the
Carpatho-Rusyn town of Rakhiv.
(Magocsi, Our People, 7)*

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all Carpatho-Rusyns as Ukrainians. Despite the constant failures, the idea of autonomy did persist in Carpatho-Rusyn psyche. When the Soviet Union disintegrated and Ukraine became an independent country in 1991, Carpatho-Rusyns in Transcarpathia called for a return to their 'historic status' as an autonomous land for which they partially succeeded. A full status of a governing body was not granted, but they were allowed to form local Carpatho-Rusyn organizations whose primary aim was to codify Carpatho-Rusyn language and have Carpatho-Rusyns recognized as a distinct nationality.

Since the Revolution of 1989 that saw the fall of communism in Slovakia, Poland and Hungary, the demands of Carpatho-Rusyns were no longer political but rather cultural in nature. In the 90's, Carpatho-Rusyn third cultural revival was initiated when many new cultural organizations were established in each of the countries where Carpatho-Rusyns live as a minority. One of the most effective was 'Ruska Krajina' (translated 'Rusyn Frontier') in the Prešov Region in today's Slovakia, under the name 'Rusyn Renaissance Society, which fought for the right to govern administrative, judicial, educational and religious affairs in their territory. Today, these organizations maintain the interest and formulate common goals for preservation of Carpatho-Rusyn identity and as a result, distribute the knowledge in cultural, scholarly and economic endeavours among all Carpatho-Rusyns, regardless of the country in which they live. In 1991, the First World Congress of Rusyns was held to raise awareness in all Carpatho-Rusyns of their identity and uplift their self-esteem which was tamed for so long. It issued a proclamation which "announced that Carpatho-Rusyns are not part of the Ukrainian nationality but rather that they form an independent and distinct nationality".[10] Today, the government of Slovakia, Poland, the Czech Republic, Hungary and Serbia recognize Carpatho-Rusyns as a national minority. Carpatho-Rusyn organizations in each country are concerned primarily with preserving the group's existence as a distinct nationality through a cultural activity, such as publications and the work of scholarly institutions, schools and theatres.[11]

Perhaps to a direct retaliation to an epithet 'forgotten brother', which the Carpatho-Rusyns received in their homeland, the purpose of the revival considers an awakening of a Carpatho-Rusyn soul which pays tribute to his ancestor and paves new road for the existence of his future. Carpatho-Rusyns in Carpathian homeland continue to fight for the right to self-rule.

10. Magocsi, *The Rusyns of Slovakia*, 125
11. Magocsi and Pop, *Encyclopedia of Rusyn History and Culture*, 187

OPPOSITE: *Fig. 2.12 The resettlement of Lemko Rusyns from Poland to the Soviet Union, 1945-1946*

Decoding Carpatho-Rusyn Vernacular

Carpatho-Rusyns in their homeland predominantly occupied lower parts of the Carpathian Mountains. Still quite steep and uneven, the land was rugged and almost entirely covered in forests. Arable soil was scarce and the land for cultivation was less than ideal. These geographic conditions did not provide them with fertile land and hence the sustainable provisions necessary for survival were hard to accumulate. They were forced to struggle in order to eke out a subsistence level of farming goods from their tiny patches of land and small herds of goats and sheep. Constrained within the 'no mans land', (which was created by two virtual borders within the Hungarian Empire, the military frontier along the crest of the Carpathians, and the ethnographic along the foothills) Carpatho-Rusyns were unable to gain more valuable land and advance their social status within nearby towns which were predominantly inhabited with Hungarians, Slovaks, Poles, Jews and Germans. Carpatho-Rusyns generally experienced a small-town life only as visitors to the markets and shops or as domestic help and urban labourers.[12] Otherwise, they were isolated in the small mountainous villages in which cultural and religious identity as outlined by the Greek Catholic Church, the lack of any distinct political involvement at any level and deprivation of national recognition were the characteristics of Carpatho-Rusyn society. Most of them remained in their native or neighbouring villages, where the life cycle was dominated by the demands of agricultural seasons and the church doctrine by which they strictly abided. However, seasonal migration did occur in search of more work, but the return was necessary to maintain life within their isolated plots of land.

The basis of Carpatho-Rusyn society throughout its entire existence has been the village. Therefore, what can be considered original Carpatho-Rusyn architectural monuments are to be found in the villages.[13] Next to farming and growing livestock, Carpatho-Rusyns were good carpenters and skilled builders. They are most noted for an outstanding form of native traditional architecture – the wooden church. Perched on the top of the hills, these wooden treasures have existed since the eighteenth century and some still exist today as part of the open-air exhibitions. Good quality wood, whose versatility in these regions was abundant, was a main building material and was utilized not only on churches, but their households as well. In domestic architecture the functionally rational approach determined style. Hence, the most important elements for house were strong walls and roofs, in order to protect dwellers from severity of the changing mountain climate, to preserve internal heat, and to guarantee the long term storage of provisions.[14] The basic model for most Carpatho-Rusyn homes was a tripartite structure, consisting of an entry vestibule, the living quarters and the pantry. Along the entire gamut of the dwelling and facing

OPPOSITE LEFT: *Fig. 2.13 Examples of the traditional Carpatho-Rusyn domestic architecture*

OPPOSITE RIGHT: *Fig. 2.14 Images of tripartite style domestic dwelling in the Prešov region (above) and long house in the Carpathian mountains (below)*

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12. Magocsi, *Our people*, 12
13. Magocsi and Pop, *Encyclopedia of Rusyn History and Culture*, 11
14. Ibid.
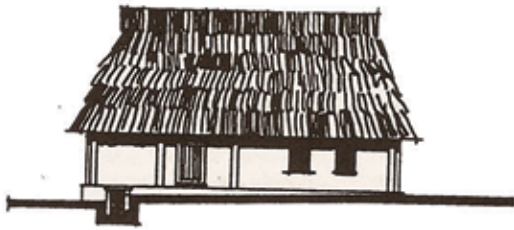
Typical tripartite domestic dwelling, south façade
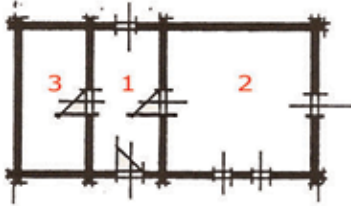
Tripartite ground plan: 1. entry vestibule 2. living space 3. pantry

Typical long house, south façade
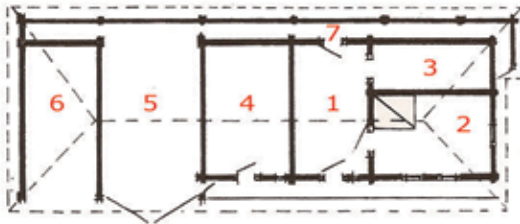
Long house ground plan: 1. entry vestibule 2. living space 3. pantry 4. stable 5. thrashing floor 6. shed 7. hay and grain storage (loggia)

Hotsul homestead

49
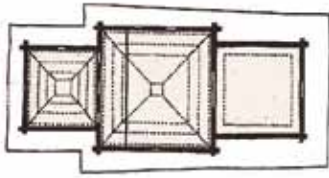
1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

1.
Wooden church, tripartite ground plan, Sukhyi
2.
Wooden church, Greek-cross ground plan, Iasynia
3.
Wooden church, Lemko style, Mirol'a, 1770
4.
Wooden church, Gothic style, Danylovo, 1779
5.
Wooden church, Boiko style, Sukhyi, 1769
6.
Wooden church, Hutsul style, Iasynia, 1824

south was a wide porch supported by carved posts, known as loggia. Aside from interconnecting all spaces, loggia served as a temporary storage of provisions and general resting space for the dwellers. The living quarters consisted of an earthen stove, the table in the center, and a large bed to one side usually bellow the window. Although the form of the traditional style remained the same, some variations with regard to the relative size and the layouts of the three parts of the structure depended on the size of the family which occupied it. In some instances, more than one family lived in one dwelling which resulted in a bigger house plan, known as 'long house'. Among the elements added, usually beyond the entrance vestibule, were: the stable, threshing floor which housed farm machinery, a shed and along the one side of the entire length of the structure a narrow storage area for housing hay, straw and grain.[15] In far eastern and far western parts of Carpathian Rus', a Hutsul style of homestead evolved. This architectural complex was composed of a high wooden wall which by linking all parts of the house dwelling created an enclosed courtyard. The result was an internal space, usually in the form of a square, with a single large gate providing the only entry way into the complex. The house was on the northern side of the complex with its windows facing into the courtyard. The farm buildings were located along the other three walls of the courtyard. A few of the Hutsul style homesteads had a covered courtyard, of which one part near the house was well maintained while the other part was left for work and connected with the adjacent farm buildings.[16] These indigenous styles of households dominated Carpatho-Rusyn settlements and well reflected the pattern of the livestock-raising economy and the need for social and environmental security. The strategies of adaptation according to environmental, economic and social conditions embody the paradigm of Carpatho-Rusyn vernacular.

Domestic architecture was limited in its aesthetic development to the primitive needs of the Carpatho-Rusyn peasant. Hence, it was in wooden church architecture that Carpatho-Rusyn artistic and creative talent found an outlet.[17] Church architecture is divided into Boiko, Lemko and Hutsul styles which resemble the traditional Gothic and Baroque style churches. Based on the ground plans, all wooden churches can be categorized according to two basic types: the tripartite type, in which the anteroom, nave and altar are in the single west-east axis; and Greek-cross type, which is characteristic of Hutsul churches.[18] The tripartite style is further divided into singe-log, double-log and triple-log frames that create a tent-like steeple that diminishes gradually towards the top to form a pyramid-like structure. Boiko and Lemko styles are characterized by the unique and dynamic composition of their steeples, which grow higher and higher, from a miniature one over the altar to the several storey central tower and finally, to the high western bell tower in the Baroque style. The monumental beauty of these structures were nationally recognized so that in the first half of the twentieth cen-

OPPOSITE ABOVE: *Fig. 2.15*
Examples of the traditional Carpatho-Rusyn wooden church architecture

OPPOSITE BELOW: *Fig. 2.16*
Image vignette of wood architecture throughout Carpatho-Rusyn homeland

15. Ibid., 15
16. Ibid.
17. Ibid.
18. Ibid.

tury several were moved from their original location to either enhance the beauty of the parks or enrich the displays in outdoor ethnographic museums throughout Carpatho-Rusyn homeland.

From extensive archaeological and historical data, it is evident that wood was a preferred building material for almost every type of structure. Carpatho-Rusyns were fully aware of the strengths of the wood, which they exploited to remarkable effect for churches, dwellings and fortifications.[19] They perfected the use of wood to make its structures more malleable and last for centuries – provided rotting logs were promptly replaced and roofs properly maintained.[20] This early principle of building is what distinguishes Carpatho-Rusyn architecture, most notably through its success in construction of the traditional wooden churches.

An 'In-Between' Culture: Struggle of Self

The cultural and artistic evolution of Carpatho-Rusyns living on both sides of Carpathian Mountains has been largely influenced by their geographical location at the meeting place of central, eastern and south-eastern Europe. The fact that their homeland has been located on the periphery of every state in which they have lived has also had a significant impact on the spiritual sphere of Carpatho-Rusyn society.[21] The frequent annexation of their homeland throughout history contributed to the cultural upheaval and identity negligence which they still struggle with today. To escape exacerbation by their oppressors, Carpatho-Rusyn settlements were always on the move which has deprived them of the ability to establish a specific place from which the positive definitions of 'self' can be attained. This displacement of its people has produced a 'longing' effect, a cultural diaspora, which has profoundly affected their social well being and cultural behaviour.

As the subject people for practically their entire existence, the Rusyns of the Carpathian region had various 'histories' imposed upon them by the dominant power or by competing nationalisms.[22] Their inability to project their own historical presence has diluted their cultural self-assertion to the level where one has been appointed to them. Hence the slogan:

"*They smeared over our history with mud, and wrote a new one of their own intervention*".[23]

The issues with Carpatho-Rusyn cultural predisposition placed a burden on their national identity and consequently on the historical and

19. Brumfield, *A History of Russian Architecture*, 501
20. Kent, *Domestic Architecture and the Use of Space*, 127
21. Magocsi and Pop, *Encyclopedia of Rusyn History and Culture*, 17
22. Rusinko, *Straddling Borders: Literature and Identity in Subcarpathian Rus'*, 22
23. Ibid.

geopolitical uncertainties that beset their existence. The constant mutation of their culture with other regional cultures had a dramatic impact on the quest to revalidate their authentic cultural identity. While they may have maintained contact with native Carpatho-Rusyn homeland, their literature has always been in essence obscured by the influence of the more dominant one. As a result, Carpatho-Rusyn history fostered a restorative myth that reinterpreted historical fact in a search for self and wholeness.[24] The attainment of 'self' was, however, rendered impossible as more hierarchically superior groups disdained and despised the idea of Carpatho-Rusyn self independence. Carpatho-Rusyn identified themselves as Russians, Rusyns, or Ukrainians, and their choice of nationality determined their cultural, linguistic, and political allegiances. As the Ukrainian orientation became dominant in the Soviet period, those who self-identified as Carpatho-Rusyns were marginalized and silenced.[25] In addition, they were denied distinctive identity and became merely as inferior version of a more dominant Ukrainian 'self'.

For this and other reasons, Carpatho-Rusyn culture and its practice then, can loosely be defined as an attempt to achieve self and wholeness and communicate it successfully amongst themselves, and ultimately to the world. It is through culture that the identity and the value of 'self' are produced.

Continuity of a culture and aspirations for its development grow out of ongoing interactions of individual and group actions, in particular in regard to their use of the same language and residence in a given territory, as well as their efforts for survival and progress.[26] Carpatho-Rusyn culture has been expressed most naturally through the family unit, sometimes through fraternal organizations but most especially through church. Besides basic customs and habit, including language, learned from the family, it is really the religious context that is the most important cultural identifier.[27] A basket full of painted eggs covered with the embroidered ritual cloth are laid out to be blessed by a priest, is a traditional Easter morning practice and it's the most important religious event in church calendar. Art and Folk ensembles are considered of no lesser value of religion, they are perceived as necessary for healthy nurturing of people's spirit. For Carpatho-Rusyns, music and folk dance was a way of life, a special link with the expressions of religious sentiment. Tightly bound with culture, folklore was a part of social well being that articulated many aspects of tradition. In part with the music and dance, the use of costume was a way of disguising themselves from other Slavic communities. This was deliberate, as with folk songs which are the prototype of folk poetry, together with unique style of dressing told a lot about the people's lives and people themselves. What we find in the poetry are the true facts. If it refers to history, it is history. If it refers to morals, it is morality. If it refers to taste, it is taste. Here, all syllables are data, and all data of the past is the root of

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24. Ibid.
25. Ibid., 12
26. Magocsi, *The Persistence of Regional Cultures*, 141
27. Magocsi, *Our People*, 65

the future.[28] Their songs, just like their poetry, refer to the struggle for Carpatho-Rusyn survival and describe the hard life illuminated with emotion and sense of longing. Next to the language and literature, art is perceived as an important vehicle for transmitting and preserving Carpatho-Rusyn culture. Like songs, art has a distinct voice of sentiment and sadness. It too describes the poignancy of a hard and fragile life of a Carpatho-Rusyn peasant. The following words are from the chronicles of Carpatho-Rusyn poetry and have been, to the best ability, translated from Carpatho-Rusyn language by the author of this thesis.

Hey my blood, my virtue, my loving son
Your home is now elsewhere
May God protect you, honour you with fruitful land
Take care of your children,
Don't forget your roots and loving forefathers

In the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit
Nurture your mother's tongue, faith and father's strength
Rusyn road is long ahead,
Waiting to welcome him and gift him with good life

It is hard for Rusyn to take a leap into the unknown
His farm fields will cry for him
His rivers will weep for him
His linden tree will bow before him
His dust drenched roads will long for him

There is no shame in this, my dear son
Such is fate written for a Rusyn man
Such fate is God's will

It is from the perspectives of music, poetry, folk and art that we can mostly learn about Carpatho-Rusyn history and its development. The traditions they embody are preserved in memory and transmitted to new generations, thus giving to a group the continuity of existence and leaving a mark on the development of the civilization. Through the realm of Carpatho-Rusyn culture and the struggle to freely practice it, one can begin to understand the motive for their perseverance and unrelenting will to persist on. It is essential to study Carpatho-Rusyns in their homeland and the formation of 'self and wholeness' in their psyche, before anywhere else, in order to fully identify with the ardent for their reasoning.

OPPOSITE ABOVE: *Fig. 2.17 Examples of the Carpatho-Rusyn art which often depicts the struggle, hard work and primitive life*

OPPOSITE BELOW LEFT: *Fig. 2.18 Alongside the road entering every Carpatho-Rusyn village is a wayside cross, which is considered a symbol of protection for humanity. It is often the last sight of the native village seen by departing immigrants in search of a better life. This one is before the village of Zahorb in Subcarpathian Rus' (Ukraine)*

OPPOSITE BELOW RIGHT: *Fig. 2.19 "A Girl from Kolochava" (1952) by Andrii Kotska, whose oeuvre was marked by an effort to achieve the ideal depiction of a Carpatho-Rusyn female*

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28. Bonkalo, *The Rusyns*, 114
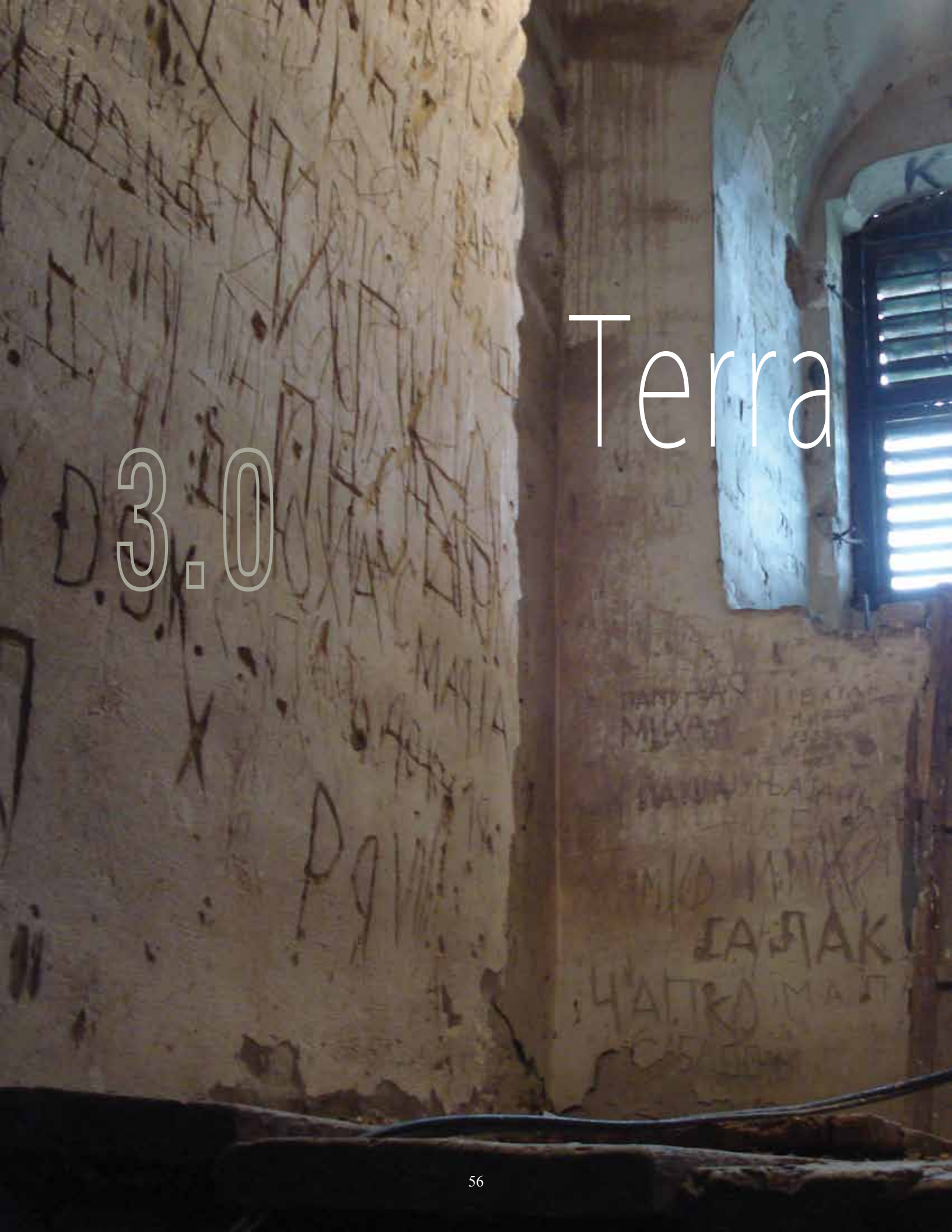
3.0 Terra

Incognita

' The Land Unknown '

EVALUATING RUSKI KERESTUR

OPPOSITE: *Fig. 3.1 Wall engravings of the St. Nicolas church bell tower*

The Carpatho-Rusyns have managed during centuries of oppressions and suffering to preserve their Rus' soul, Rus' customs, Rus' language, and Rus' name right down to the twentieth century. A truly just reward for these heroes should not only be an ardent and enthusiastic concern for them and their welfare, but also an effort to study these heroes past and to proclaim it to the whole world.

Aleksej L. Petrov
from '*Medieval Carpathian Rus'*', 9

OPPOSITE: *Fig. 3.2 Map of Ruski Kerestur, 1783*

MAPPA
Terreni Praedialis Regio-Cameralis
KERESZTUR
cum eidem incorporatis Praediis ~
MEGYES *a* BRESZTOVTSIT

3.0   **EVALUATING RUSKI KERESTUR**

LOCATING GENIUS LOCI

Carpatho-Rusyns have arrived in their new land. Far away from their home, a decision to venture off into the unknown was not easy. This unknown land was sure to bring yet more ordeals and hard-hitting living circumstances. How did Carpatho-Rusyns survive these ordeals? What was this place like during Austro-Hungarian Empire? How did it impact the survival of the first Carpatho-Rusyn peasants? What was a suitable balance between their homes and surrounding places or between their own region and larger ecological context that contributed to the adaptation strategies?

It is in relation to questions like these that a phenomenology of genius loci becomes significant, for a major question is how the physical environment contributes to a sense of region and place. According to ancient Romans, all natural places possessed genius loci, a spirit of a place. This spirit, it was believed, gave life to people and places and determined their character or essence.[1] The notion of genius loci asks how the qualities of natural environment in response to the landscape create a unique character of a place. Before there is a village, there is a certain quality of the natural environment that will tend to influence the shape of its fabric. Norberg-Schulz attempts to categorize the typology of natural places as specific 'environments' which are grounded in such qualities as spatial character, light, and daily and seasonal rhythms.[2] These are the constituents of natural environment that implicitly affect all life, both natural and physical.

But why speak of genius loci? According to Aldo Rossi, the locus is a component of an individual artefact which is determined not just by space but also by time, by topography and form and by succession of both ancient and more recent events.[3] It can be said then, that the genius loci is a collection of individual artefacts bound within the compound of the natural environment on which the series of events occur. A building, as a sign of event that occurs on a specific site becomes a characteristic of urban artifacts. Hence, the locus may be said to be the place on which architecture or form can be imprinted.[4] This relationship between the urban artifacts and the natural condition of the landscape on which the urban artifacts persist is the very essence of that particular place. Thus, as architecture gives form to the singularity of a place, it also contributes to the specificity of its urban fabric.

The attempt to locate genius loci within the realm of the village of Ruski Kerestur will provide for a vital documentation of its very being, character and cultural capacity. To understand the connection be-

1. http://www.phenomenologyonline.com/articles/seamon.html
2. Norberg-Schulz, *Genius loci: Toward a Phenomenology of Architecture*, 23-49
3. Rossi, *The Architecture of the City*, 7
4. Ibid.

tween the made and natural, between the 'spirit of the place' and 'spirit in people', between form and function, the morphological context of the village through mapping and urban fabric analysis is particularly observed.
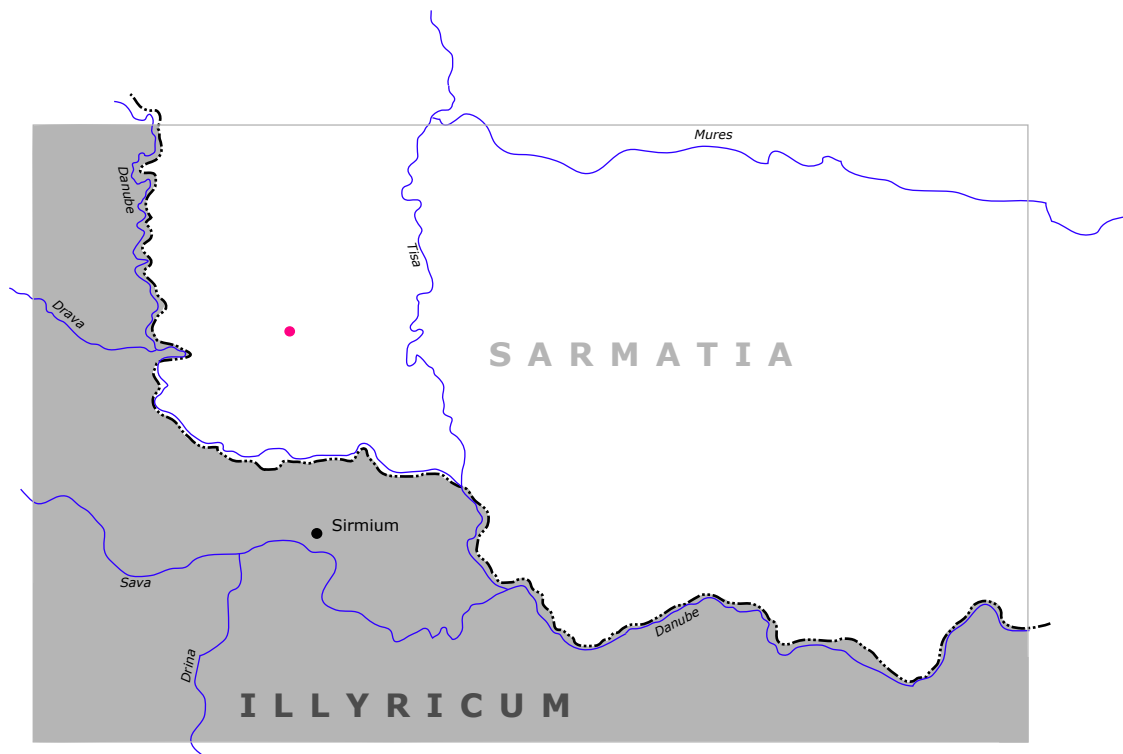
Praetorian Prefecture of
Illyricum 318-379 ad

—·—··—··— International boundaries

● Ruski Kerestur - present location

● Capital city of Sirmium

Praetorian Prefecture of Illyricum
Late Roman Empire, 4th century

* The following sequence of maps (Fig. 3.3 - Fig. 3.9) show the continual geographical and political shift around Ruski Kerestur as the area belonged to various Empires and Kingdoms of Europe from around 4th century to 1921

OPPOSITE: *Fig. 3.3 Map of Praetorian Prefecture of Illyricum, Late Roman Empire, 4th century*

Fig. 3.4 Map of Bulgarian Empire under the rule of duke Salan, 9th century

MAPPING AND URBAN FABRIC ANALYSIS

Demographic History: The Effects of Border Shifting

The village of Ruski Kerestur underwent various demographic and geopolitical transformations as the territory borders of Europe constantly shifted. This shift played an important role in the evolution of the village in terms of its preservation of identity and culture. Ruled upon by different states throughout its history had an ostensible impact on the conception of Carpatho-Rusyn character. Being constantly devalued by their oppressor, Carpatho-Rusyns were unable to flourish and proclaim its specificity to the world. Due to the initial preconceived notion of their nonexistence, the Carpatho-Rusyns of Ruski Kerestur endured years of societal rejections which have influenced the life they continue to have to this day. Therefore, it is imperative to evaluate this shift from the earliest to the most recent modifications in order to foster a better understanding of Carpatho-Rusyn cultural paradigm.

9th century

- ------- International boundaries
- ● Ruski Kerestur - present location
- ● Other places
- Voivodship (duchy) of Bulgarian voivod (duke) Salan
- Voivodship (duchy) of Bulgarian voivod (duke) Glad

63

Ruski Kerestur was established on the plateau of the south-ern part of the Pannonian Plain. Stretching across most of Hungary, western part of Romania, eastern part of Croatia and northern part of Serbia, this flat and moist region was once a part of the ancient Plio-cene Pannonian Sea which dried out and became a geomorphologic subsystem of Alps-Himalaya system. Intersected by the river Danube and Tisa, its soil was dark, loamy and extremely rich in nutrients. Colo-nization of the drier parts was occurring as early as in 1st century by a northern Illyrian tribe. In the 3rd century, the region was succeeded by Romans which established a city of Sirmium, one of four capital cities of the Roman Empire. At the fall of the Roman Empire, the region was occupied by the original Slavic people in 6th and 7th centuries. In the 9th century, the territory of Bačka (a province established by the Slavs), was taken and adopted by the Bulgarian Empire under the rule of duke Salan, who was in 10th century conquered by the newly formed Hungarian Kingdom. Most of Pannonian Plain was under Hungarian rule for the next thousand years, until 1918, with the exception of the

11th century

- - - ·- ·- International boundaries
● Ruski Kerestur - present location
● Other places
Voivodship (duchy) of Bulgarian voivod (duke) Sermon
Voivodship (duchy) of Bulgarian voivod (duke) Ahtum

OPPOSITE: *Fig. 3.5 Map of newly formed Hungarian Kingdom, 11th century*

Fig. 3.6 Map of Hapsburg Military Frontier, which was in 1849 known as Voivodship of Serbia and Banat of Temeschwar

Ottomans, which ruled from 1527 to 1716. The first half of the 18th century, the whole region fell under the government of the Hapsburg Monarchy. In the 1848-1849 uprising, Vienna successfully mobilized Serbian militants from the south and created a military zone against the Hungarian government and kept control over the Hungarian population. At the beginning of Hapsburg rule, this region was integrated into the Hapsburg Military Frontier, which was later declared as a Serbian Voivodship, a Serbian Autonomous region within Austrian Empire. In 1849, the region was known as the Voivodship of Serbia and Banat of Temeschwar. It was at this time when the region was named Vojvodina, a part of its name which still has today, except from 1929-1941, when it was named Danube Banovina. The province was abolished in 1860 with the rise of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and from 1867 it once again belonged to the Hungarian Kingdom. The Bačka region was at this time renamed to Bács-Bodrog, a southern province of the Hungarian Autonomous region of the Empire. At the fall of Austro-Hungarian Empire in 1918, the original territory of Bačka was divided amongst

KINGDOM OF HUNGARY

Subotica

Velika Kikinda

Temeschwar

Sombor

BAČKA

KINGDOM OF SLAVONIA

BANAT

Veliki Bečkerek

Novi Sad

SYRMIA

Slavonian Military Frontier

Banatian Military Frontier

Vršac

Mitrovica

PASHALUK OF BOSNIA

Pančevo

PRINCIPALITY OF SERBIA

1849-1860

––·––·–– International boundaries

• Ruski Kerestur - present location

• Other places

⬛ Military Frontier sections

⬜ Voivodship of Serbia and Banat of Temeschwar (1849-1860)

independent Hungary and newly formed Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes which was later renamed the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. Yugoslav Bačka was in 1941 occupied by the Axis powers and during this interwar period, the region was once again regained by Hungary. During the invasion, Hungarian militants performed war atrocities against the Serbs and various ethnic groups which included Carpatho-Rusyns. Following the end of World War II in 1944, Bačka was regained by Yugoslav army and became a part of newly formed Democratic Federal Yugoslavia which later became Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Together with Banat and Srem, Bačka is part of the Autonomous province of Vojvodina since 1945. Following the civil war in 1992, it has been a part of Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, and from 2006 it is a part of the independent country of Serbia. Vojvodinian Bačka is divided into three districts, one of which is West Bačka, where the Carpatho-Rusyn village of Ruski Kerestur is located.

Vojvodina's history reflects its demographic richness by the virtue of being at the confluence of various peoples and empires, making it a hotbed of invasion, colonization, and assimilation processes. Currently there are more than 25 ethnic groups living in Vojvodina and

ABOVE: *Fig. 3.7 Map of Austro-Hungarian Empire, circa 1867*

BELOW LEFT: *Fig. 3.8 Map of Bács Bodrog, Comitatus of the Kingdom of Hungary, 1886*
In this map, we see Ruski Kerestur in the south-central part of the province, then called Bácskeresztur, it was part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire all the way up to 1918, at which time it belonged to Kingdom of Yugoslavia. Today, most of the region is known as Bačka, a part that makes up the autonomous province of Vojvodina.

AUSTRO-HUNGARIAN
EMPIRE circa 1867

—·—·— Extent of the Austro-Hungarian Empire

——— Boundary between Austrian Empire and Hungarian Kingdom

Bács-Bodrog (part of Kingdom of Hungary comitatus, 1886)

Comitatus of the Kingdom of Hungary, 1886
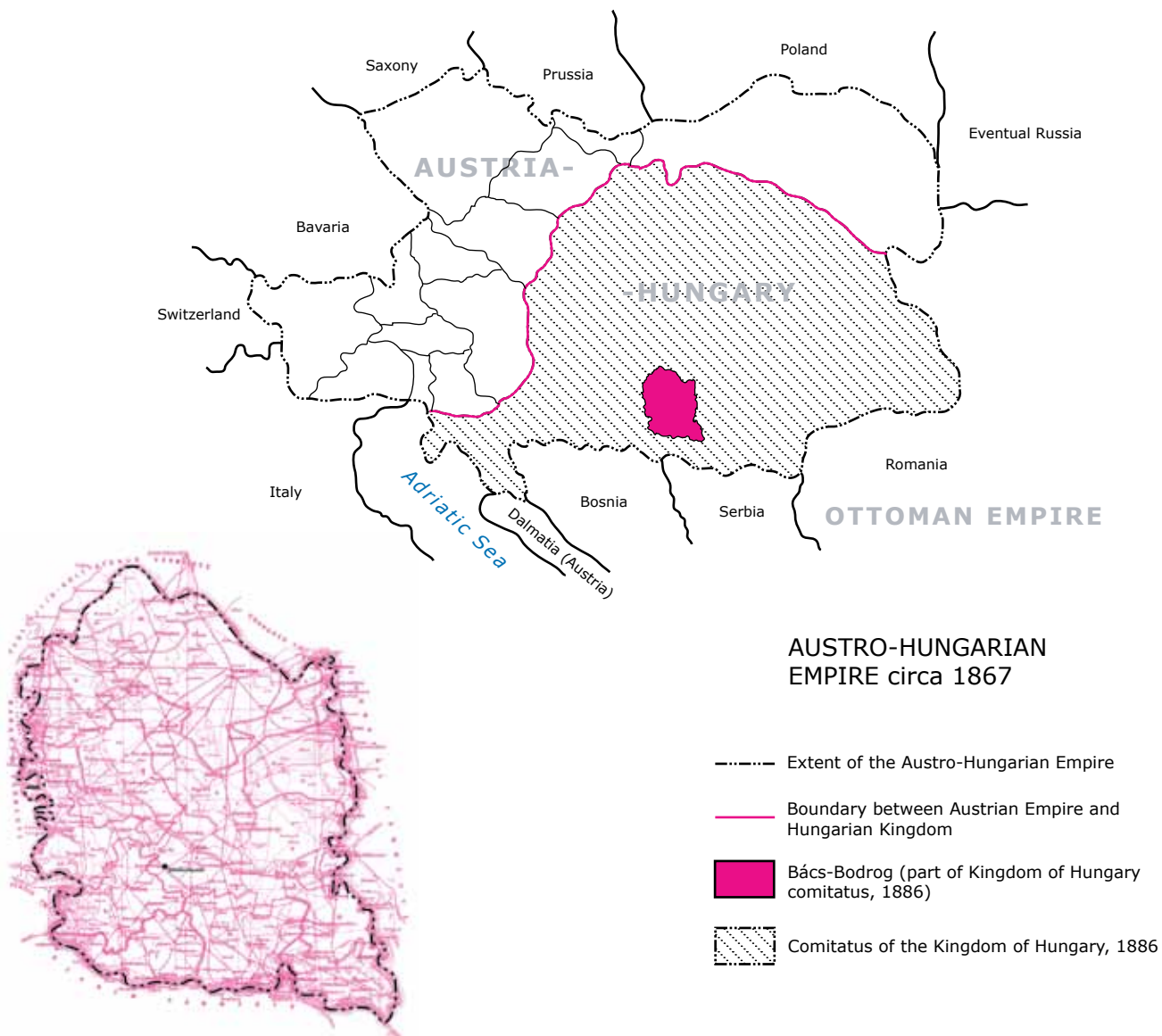
Fig. 3.9 Map of Hungary and surrounding countries between 1918 and 1921

six official languages.[5] Aside from its economic and culturally affluent presence, the Vojvodinian realm itself makes it a desirable region to have in a possession. The flat plain, rich in dark and fertile soil, is ideal for farming and agriculture; it is sometimes referred to as 'field of gold' by the locals. Therefore, it is not hard to find the reasons for its vulnerability of becoming a subject of political discord. Most recent attempts by Hungarian government to gain succession over Vojvodina could cause another public unrest as Serbian adversary would most certainly retaliate to prevent this event to occur. Pannonian Carpatho-Rusyns, being one of the ethnic minorities, are most susceptible to any political change that could with or without revolt, define their future in Vojvodina. Being in such volatile region, what does the future hold for the survival of Ruski Kerestur?

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5. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Demographic_history_of_Vojvodina

1918-1921

─── International boundaries

Banat, Bačka and Baranja Region (part of Kingdom of Serbia in 1918)

Bács-Bodrog (separate county of Hungary-later incorporated with Bács-Kiskun county)

South part of Bačka Region (1920 Treaty of Trianon-incorporated with Kingdom of Yugoslavia & eventual territory of Vojvodina)

Bács-Bodrog (part of Kingdom of Hungary comitatus, 1886, abolished in 1918)
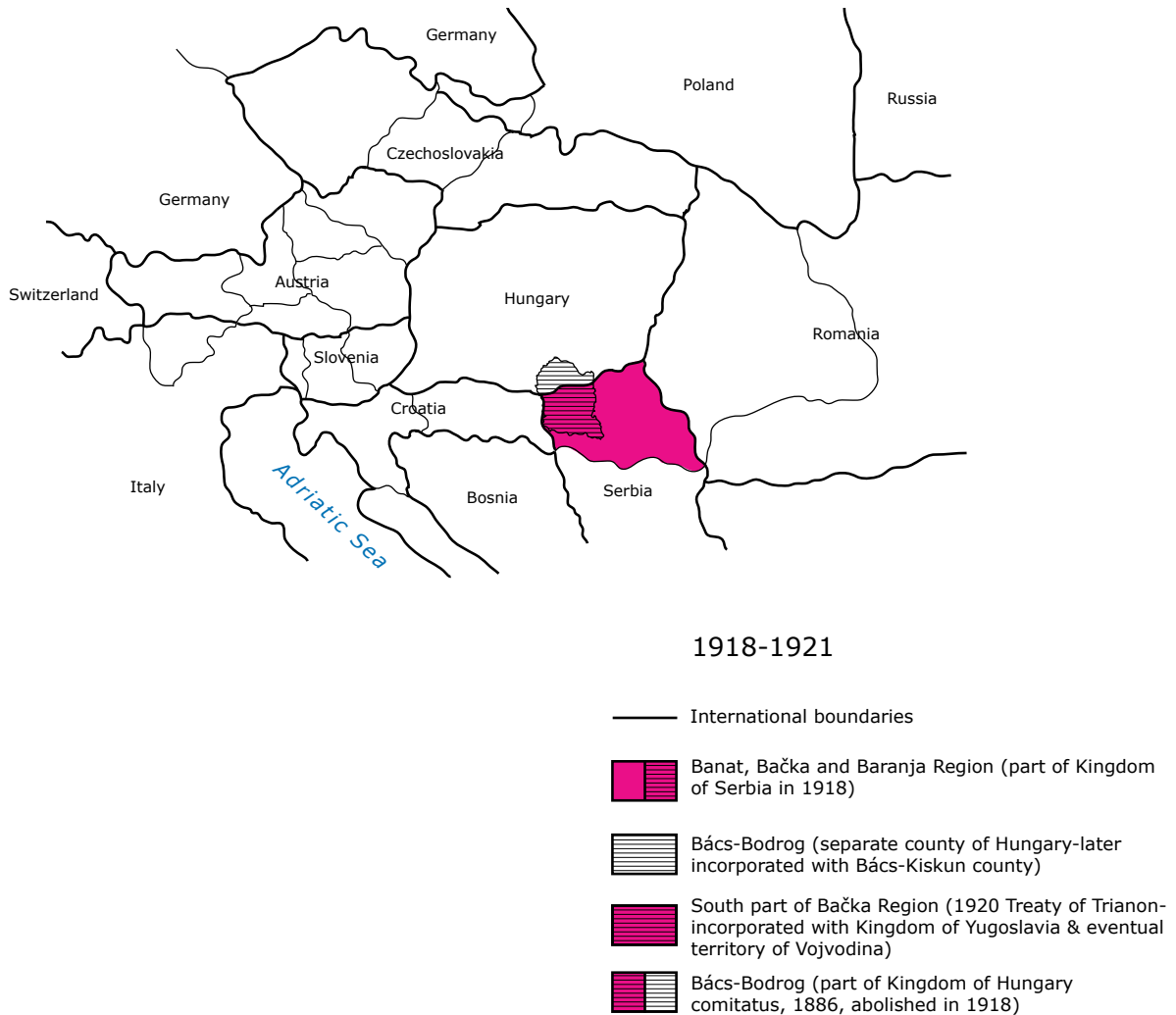
FROM CARPATHO-RUSYN HOMELAND TO THE VILLAGE OF
RUSKI KERESTUR

XL, L, M, S, XS Mapping Study

** The following sequence of maps (Fig.
3.10 - Fig. 3.13) show the geographical
location of Ruski Kerestur from
the scale of Europe to the scale of
Vojvodinian archipelago (provincial)*

*Fig. 3.10 Map of Europe, highlighting
Carpatho-Rusyn homeland and present
day Serbia, XL*

OPPOSITE: *Fig. 3.11 Map of partial
eastern Europe, L*

REFER TO Fig. 3.11

POLAND

CZECH REPUBLIC

UKRAINE

*REFER TO Fig. 2.8,
Fig 2.9 & Fig. 2.10*

SLOVAKIA

HUNGARY

ROMANIA

REFER TO Fig. 3.13

REFER TO Fig. 3.12

SERBIA

MONTE
NEGRO

Partial Eastern Europe Map
present day

Rusyn Homeland - Carpathian Mountains

● Ruski Kerestur - present location

Country of Serbia - present day

Countries with Rusyn minority

69
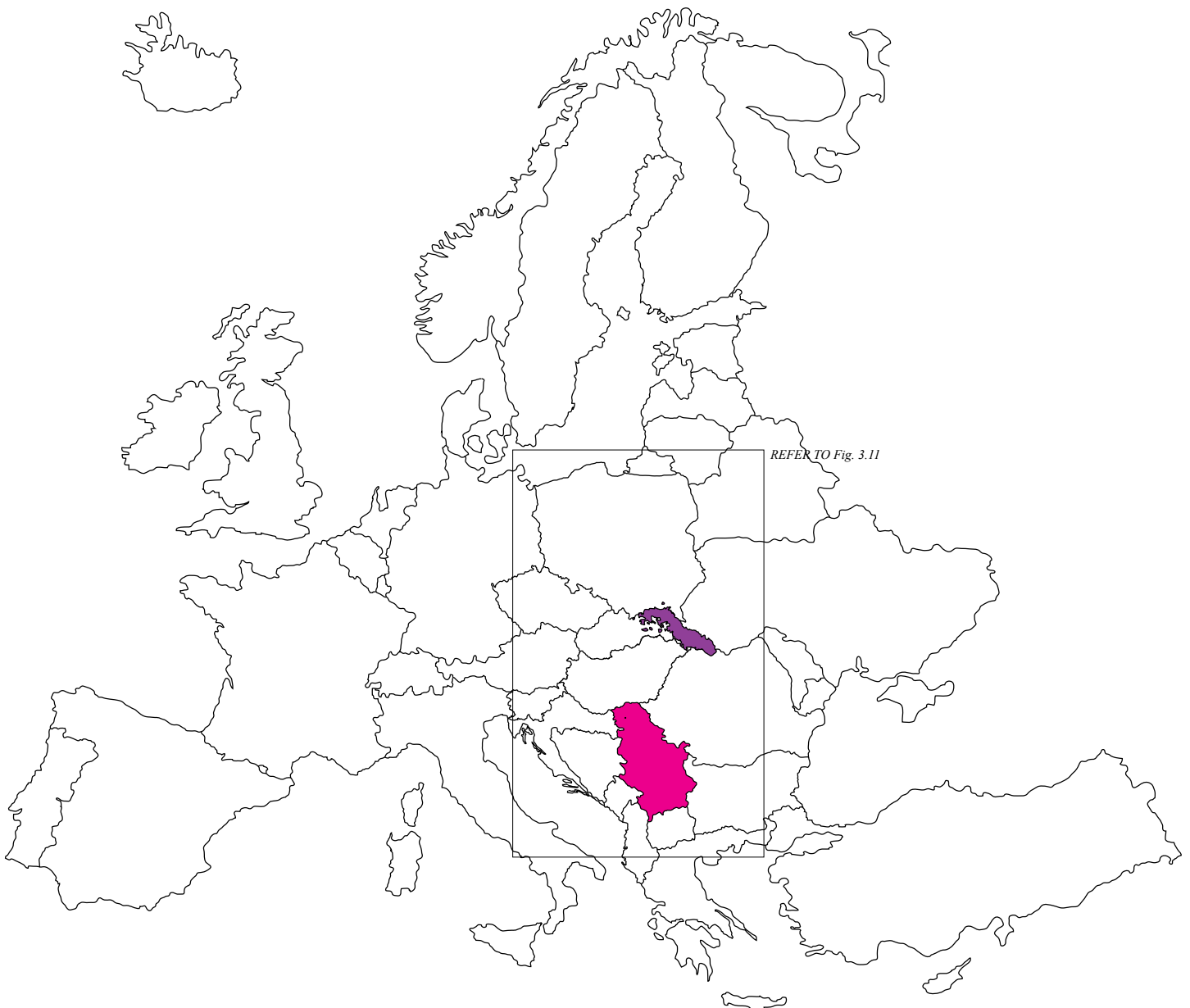
REFER TO Fig. 3.13
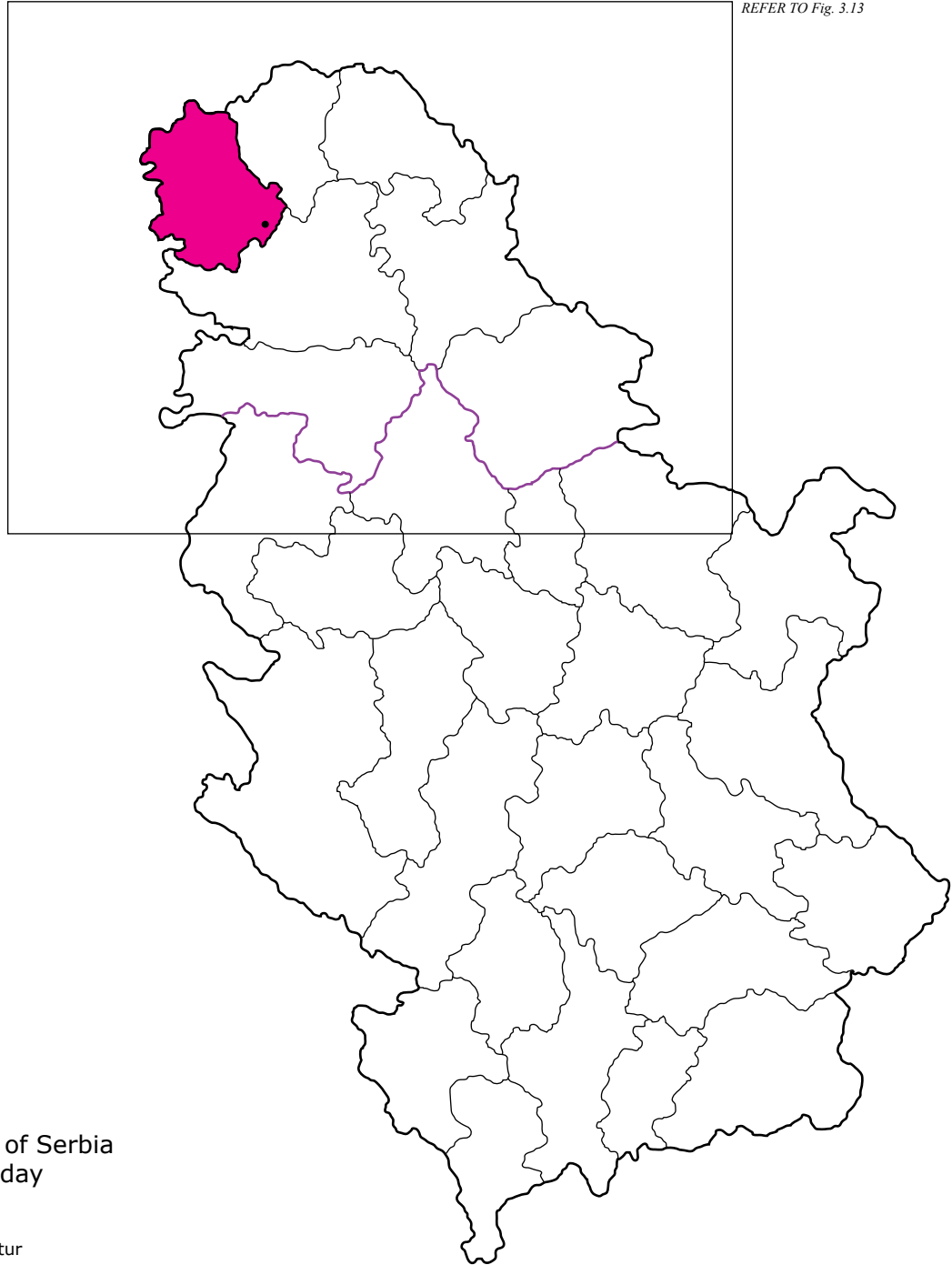
Country of Serbia
present day

- Ruski Kerestur

—— Boundary between AR Vojvodina and Central Serbia

West Bačka - region of AR Vojvodina

OPPOSITE: *Fig. 3.12 Map of Serbia, M*

Fig. 3.13 Map of Vojvodina, S

Autonomous Region of Vojvodina

- — ·· — International boundaries
- ············ Vojvodinian Autonomous Province
- ● Major concentration of Rusyns
- ● Other places
- ▨ Bačka Territory

Kiš Vlade sľš

Subadoš Janka sľš   Papajčik Istvana sľš   Simuhović-
                                              Vlade sľš

Dudar Jakima sľš

Krsturski Put

Čapuga Mihajlä sľš

Dumin Mihajla sľš

Nialev sľš

Sivčevi sľš

Beregov sľš

Duderov sľš

Čizmarov sľš

Makajev sľš

Hajdukov sľš

Malackov sľš

Lukačev sľš

Elančakov sľš

Ruski Krstur
(83)

Chamacov sľš

Mali kn

Kanjuhov sľš

Tirkajiov sľš

Plančakov sľš

Palkov sľš

Mudrančikov sľš

PG kosancić

Medešov sľš

PG kosancić

Somb

Ruski Kerestur: Morphological Study

Settlements, and the relationships and patterns they embody, provide a primary record and reading of human existence – they organize our social and productive activities in every kind of ecological setting and technical horizon.[6] We have a great need to recognize ourselves in our environment and find it important to convey this knowledge of our place to ourselves and to others.[7] It is through built environment, such as villages and cities, that we can truly exercise that knowledge. This instinct of grounding ourselves to one physical place was instilled in us by the need of belonging to a particular 'locale' that enables us to create boundaries and develop certain cultural root. Carpatho-Rusyns, from the very beginning of their existence, have struggled to create such 'locale' and distinguish themselves from the others. Without a state to call their own, they are 'subjects' to those in foreign countries where they live. The epitome of such settlement is Ruski Kerestur, which was conceived out of the need to escape such tribulations and preserve Carpatho-Rusyn identity outside the realm of their homeland. If the preservation of one's identity starts with the creation of a 'place', then it is only natural to evaluate its validity through the study of the physical urban forms embodied within its 'genius loci'.

It is important to emphasize, first of all, that the initial settlement of Ruski Kerestur occurred as a product when Hungarian government at the time of the Ottoman wars attempted to regain capital income by populating the region with Carpatho-Rusyn minorities. Regarded as work force for the Hungarian elite, they were given the right to self-organize and define boundaries within their limited establishment. This circumstance, alongside geomorphologic site conditions, had a tremendous impact on shaping the settlement pattern and spatial organization of Ruski Kerestur. The plan of the village informs not only the social structure, but it also yields important insights about the relations and capacity of Carpatho-Rusyn society, extending beyond its infrastructure or built fabric. Similarly, its artefacts, such as traditional homesteads or *salaši,* illustrate the evolution of the society as a whole and provide physical evidence on how they embodied the rituals and patterns of life. Understanding the principles of built form and its value or meaning, both in plan and section detail, will provide for a more elaborate knowledge on how they hold the key to the success of Carpatho-Rusyn perseverance.

OPPOSITE: *Fig. 3.14 Map of Ruski Kerestur, highlighting larger context and immediate villages, XS*

6. Rykwert & Atkin, 'Building and Knowing', *Structure & Meaning in Human Settlements*, 1
7. Ibid.

73
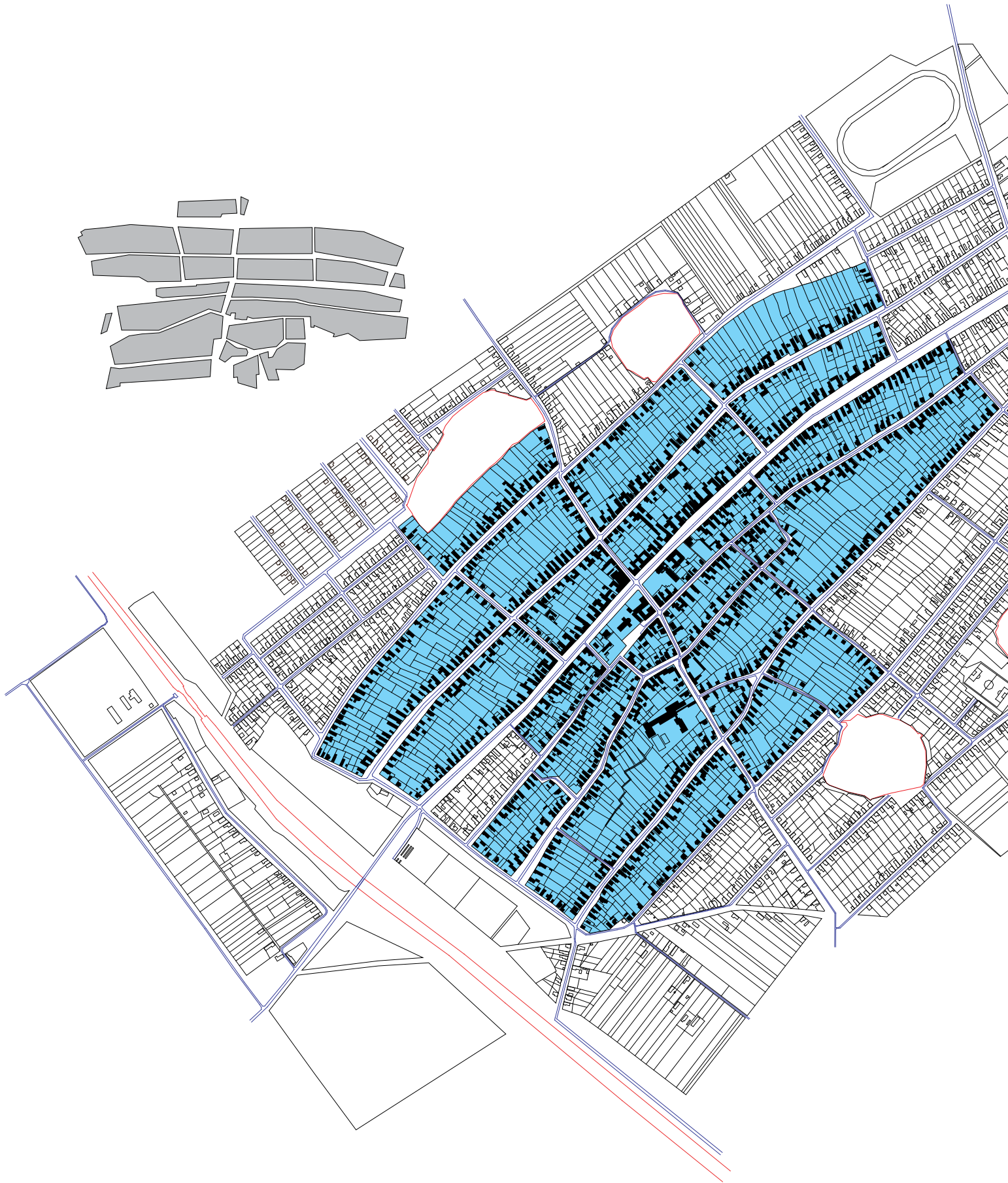
OPPOSITE: *Fig. 3.15 Map of Ruski Kerestur, highlighting the urban growth according to the historical map from 1783. Present map shows a continuation of 'ribbon'-like neighbourhoods*

Morphology Defines Urban Fabric

The settlement of Ruski Kerestur was built on the plateau of the lower Pannonian Plain. The first development occurred on the strips of land which were dry and suitable for sustaining life. Here, the first public buildings were erected such as the church and the school, as well as some of the early private dwellings. Due to the adjacent wetlands and water pools, the first development of the private residential street occurred in a different location, south of the already developing public sector. Other private developments followed as the new dry layers of land became available and suitable for construction. This created a buffer zone, an empty space between the neighbourhoods which was filled with 'rivers' of mud and dirt. This suggests the village was organized according to the land structure and it was directly guided by its bio-morphology. This connectedness of the built environment to the landform defines the early urban fabric and provides a first indication for the 'ribbon-like' configuration of the neighbourhoods. As more suitable land became available, more Carpatho-Rusyns arrived at Kerestur and continued to settle in a similar fashion into these elongated urban forms which were amongst themselves characterized as '*šori*'. By 1783 and over twenty years in making, the village had five official neighbourhoods as defined by '*šori*', each with a specific name and connection to motherland. Although there were no actual roads at this time, the voids between the ribbons acted as arterial passageways between communities and were inefficiently used for transportation. Often muddy and unfit for proper transport circulation, they were unsanitary and provided for a tough life for the early Carpatho-Rusyn settlers. Without proper sewer system, water drainage and sufficient street lighting, living conditions in the village were poor and have remained so for the next hundred years, until the 1870's, when the action was taken to redevelop its urban compound to proper standards.

actual_according to historical map from 1783

OPPOSITE: *Fig. 3.16 Map of Ruski Kerestur, urban and natural environment*

BELOW LEFT: *Fig. 3.17 Soaking hemp in one of the seven ponds*

BELOW RIGHT: *Fig. 3.18 Mud is set in the mold and left to bake in the sun to create earthen brick*

Canal DTD (Dunav-Tisa-Dunav)

Civic park

Children's park

Artificial lakes (Rusyn: 'Doljina')

Forested areas

Grassland areas

Urban and Natural Environment

The village sits 84 meters above sea level and is comparatively lower to the adjacent villages, which are up to three meters higher in altitude. Therefore, it is clear why it suffered frequent floods, especially during the rainy season when many homesteads and farmland were destroyed by excess water. Because this phenomenon was occurring every year, in 1872, excavation of the canal, which ran immediately adjacent to the village, was initiated by the villagers to alleviate water accumulation on their properties. Although subsoil water flows persisted to threaten with frequent floods, this problem was reduced with the excavation of the water retention system which ran on both and alongside main arterial roads. In 1950's, when the hydro-system canal Danube-Tisa-Danube (canal DTD) was built, the problem of floods in the village was completely eliminated. Some twenty years later, the underground water piping system was also introduced which connected many households with fresh water and proper canalization system. Many households, however, could not afford this (what was at the time considered luxury) and therefore retained the use of the underground water well as their only source of water. In the sphere of economy, the excavation of the canals had a major influence on the soil in terms of irrigation and water transport. Better water management affected the range of crops which were grown. In addition to the standard crops in the area (wheat, maize, barley, oats), some industrial plants were increasingly grown (hemp, reed, sugar-beet, rice, sunflower) as well as mulberry trees for the cultivation of silk worms. Reed was particularly useful for building purposes; it provided raw material for insulation and roof coverings. To receive its insulation capacity, reed was thoroughly soaked and washed in one of the seven artificial ponds which were dug out around the perimeter of the village for this purpose. In addition, the excavated soil from these 'puddles', or '*doljini*', was utilized to fabricate earthen brick, which was an essential building material for the construction of homesteads. Specific mixture of soil and water was set in the brick forms which under the heat of the sun received a desired structural integrity. Similarly alongside, hemp was dried, cleaned and prepared for stacking. Although this building technique, which utilized natural building materials, was replaced with more modern method of construction in the latter part of the twentieth century, it is still considered an important milestone that signifies the character of the village. A few of these structures still exist today and stand as a testament to building

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Maršala Tita Avenue

Rusinska Road

Fig. 3.19 Map of Ruski Kerestur, road web, highlighting two major urban streets which connect the village to other towns and villages, eventually to eastern Croatia, south-eastern Serbia and southern Hungary
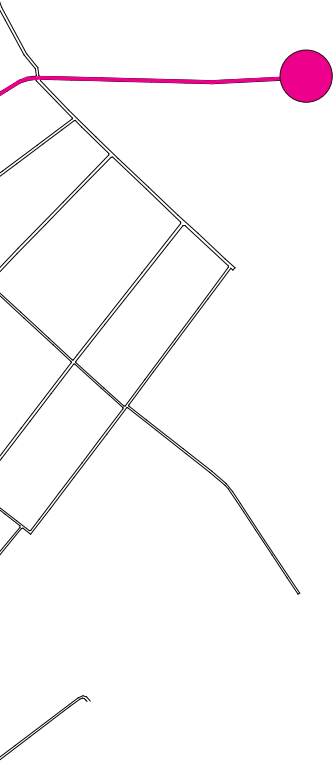
ingenuity of the time. Many, unfortunately, did not survive and have been replaced with the dwellings more contemporary in style and form. One that did survive in fact is the oldest and embodies most primitive principles of construction, has a particular significance for the villagers. Nourishing the sense of pride, it stands as an urban artifact that epitomizes the state of permanence of the village and continues to function as a record of time, a memory of the past and a potential memory of the future. Due to its inherent characteristics, both physical and spiritual, the house has been proclaimed as the quintessence of the Carpatho-Rusyn heritage and by the village council received a status of a national treasure.

Road Web Analysis

All the way up to and between the first and the second world wars, the village didn't have any paved roads and was disconnected from other places. Horse and buggy was only a means of transportation, aside from bicycle or on foot, therefore there was no need for the construction of the paved road system. The passageways, which inhabited the residual spaces between neighbourhoods, were unpleasant, hard to use and most of the time filled with dirt and mud. This all changed, however, with the introduction of businesses which demanded more economical source for transport communication.

The economy in Ruski Kerestur up to 1918 focused on family subsistence based on land cultivation.[8] The production from one household only developed into an intensive type, enough for self use and market oriented exchange. What changed the face of the economy was the extensive construction of '*salaši*', in and around the village, which concentrated on the large production of provisional goods restricted for export. Profit, however, was shared between the residents of the village and the state administration at Kula, which was about ten kilometers away. For the purpose of healthy economic exchange, the asphalt road was built to connect them, as well as other immediate villages. This resulted in the construction of the boulevard which ran along the gamut of the village linking downtown to other core areas. The immediate success of boulevards transpired into the construction of the residential roads. The passageways which run along the '*šori*' were laid out in concrete pads known as '*kalderma*', which constituted a suburban road. In addition, the long and narrow ribbons that outlined the neighbourhoods were traversed by the secondary roads which connected the arterial avenues vertically and in this way composed a systematic road web. Today, the essence of *kalderma* is still visible around the village, although they are slowly disappearing as the new and more modern road construction is utilized.

It was through the sphere of economy and the physical structure of the neighbourhoods outlined by '*šori*' that predicated the organic-like composition of the road system.
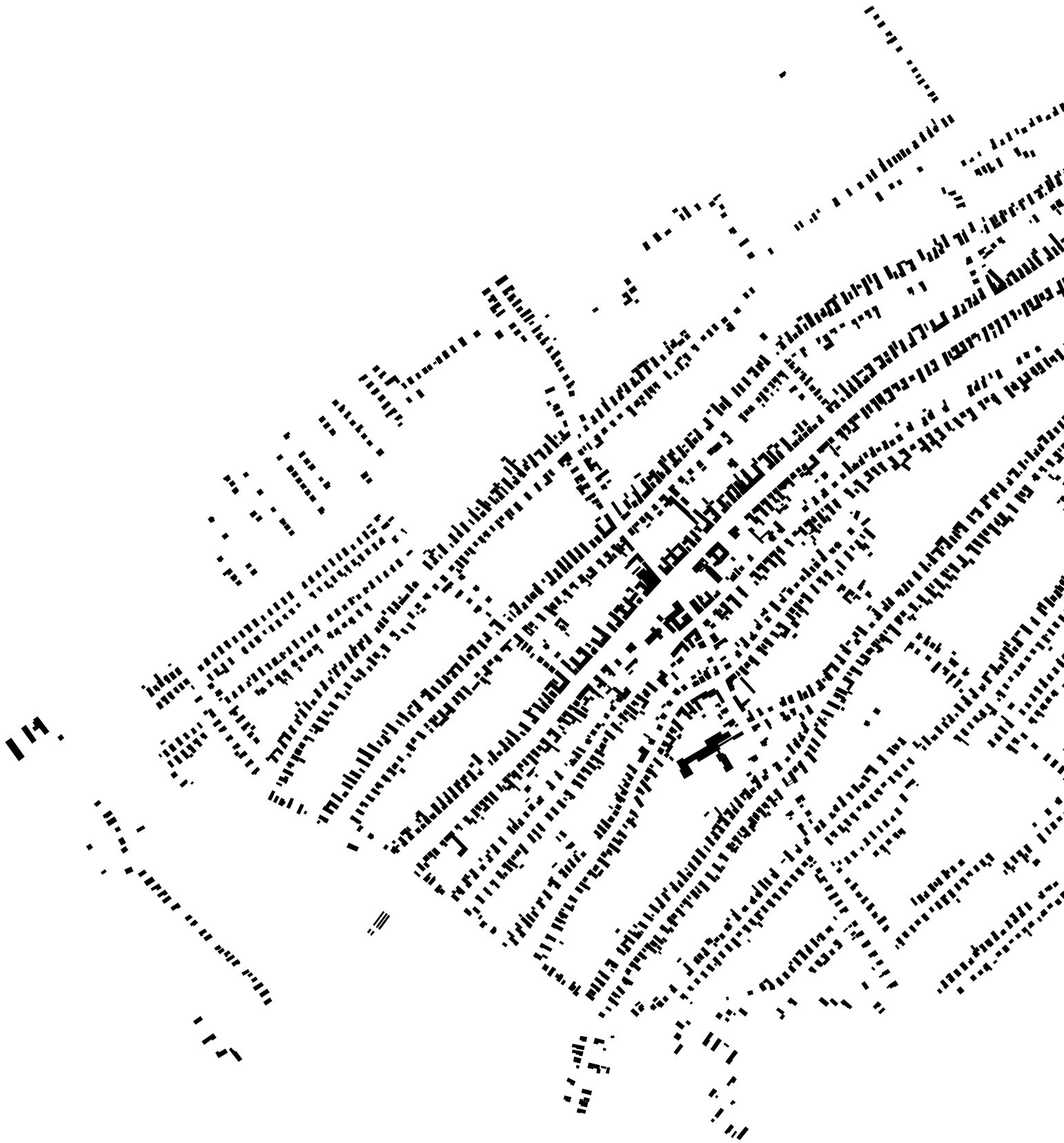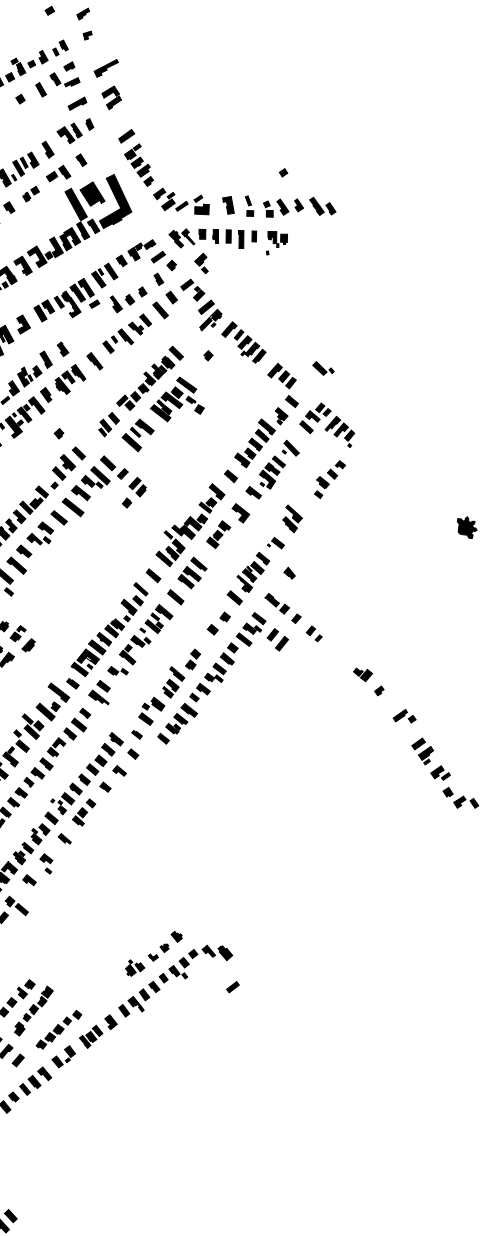
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8. http://members.tripod.com/~rdsa/Baczkeres.html

Fig. 3.20 Map of Ruski Kerestur, Figure/Ground plan

Figure Ground Analysis

To gain insight about the evolution of the village, both from ideological and functional perspective, a figure/ground diagram is analyzed. As tool of analysis, the figure ground drawing does involve us immediately with the urban structure of a given context. According to Schumacher, there are two concepts associated in reading a figure/ground drawing. First is the composition of buildings which are arranged in a way that emphasize spaces and de-emphasize building volumes and create an experience which can be thought of as resulting from a subtractive process in which spaces have been carved out of solid masses, or second, by contrast, the composition of buildings set in a park-like landscape that create an experience which emphasize the building volumes and not the spaces which the buildings define or imply.[9] If building volumes are indicated as solids (black) and spaces around them as voids (white), then from the observation of a figure ground drawing of Ruski Kerestur, an urban composition of solid and void is uniformly distributed, which suggests their relationship in terms of their appropriation and scale produce a specific context with which the fabric of the village is defined. Thus, the context is associated with the second aforementioned concept of reading figure ground drawing since the area of voids is greater than the area of solids. This is amply evident at the scale of the homestead, which consists of both the figure (solid) and the ground (void). Each homestead is predicated by the presence of a domestic dwelling (figure), which lies alongside the street and is small in comparison to an extensive farmland (ground), which is located in the 'backyard'. The combination of the two is what gives the village its particular structure. In regards to the scale and uniformity of the solids and voids across the site plan of the village, the contextual relationship respectively is idealized through programmatic requirements and application of social and cultural criteria of the inhabitants. To own a house and a substantial backyard which fully sustains the dwellers was essential. Therefore, a small and functional dwelling with support of an extensive farmland around it was a common scenario that in large part contributed to the overall urban context.

The figure ground analysis provides us with the vital information on how Carpatho-Rusyn settlements were organized and what meditated their particular grounding.

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9. Quoting Thomas L. Schumacher's 'Contextualism: Urban Ideals and Deformations*',* in Nesbitt, *Theorizing a New Agenda for Architecture: An Anthology of Architectural Theory*, 296

MORPHOLOGY:
EDGE DEFINITION & URBAN ENVIRONMENT

Fig. 3.21 Map of Ruski Kerestur, highlighting major urban development and edge definition

NEXT SPREAD: *Fig. 3.22 Visions of Ruski Kerestur: Panorama study image vignette*
Refer to this map and colour-coding for visual reference

Edge definition - most current
Public and High school 'Petro Kuzmjak'
Farmer's Guild 'Perši Maj'
Post office
Civic building
Craftsmen centre
Health clinic
Uniate cathedral of St. Nocolas
Newspaper office and print room 'Ruske Slovo'
Former Gentlemen's Inn hotel
Bus Terminal
Cultural centre 'Dom Kulturi'
Children's centre 'Bambi'
Civic building 'Menza'
Elementary school (castle 'Petro Kuzmjak')
City Hall
Market
Cemetery
Funeral home
Recreational areas
Dwelling protected by village council
Urban area (inner, historical)
Urban area (outer, present)

panorama study
VISIONS OF RUSKI KERESTUR - IMAGE VIGNETTE

Former Gentlemen's Inn hotel

Uniate cathedral of St. Nicolas - downtown Ruski Kerestur

Health clinic

Village newspaper 'Ruske Slovo' - print room

Recreational areas - Handball court

Uniate cathedral of St. Nicolas - from bell tower

Village newspaper 'Ruske Slovo'

Civic building 'Menza'

Village newspaper 'Ruske Slovo' - administration building

Path towards the chapel 'Vodica'

before & after

VISIONS OF RUSKI KERESTUR - IMAGE VIGNETTE

THE IDEOLOGY OF A VILLAGE

The ideology of a village is a pure characteristic of vernacular architecture. Although vernacular is often associated with crude and unrefined, its proponents hold a key in understanding the typology of a place and provide insight into strategies of development of its most current buildings. The village evolves over time and it tends to reflect the environmental, cultural and historical context in which it exists. It utilizes local and readily available building materials which are used to construct community dwellings by the people who inhabit them and as a result, reflect their most functional and basic living needs. A village speaks volumes on its communally-sanctioned qualities and intensity of social representation. Village is a homogeneous place. It is identical with 'everybody' and belongs to 'everybody'. Those who live outside of its boundaries do not belong to it. The village does not merely mean everybody who belongs to it and their combined observations and actions, all those who are closely tied by blood, and everything they do or avoid doing, but also means the totality of the collective consciousness, which is simultaneously owned by everyone. Outside of that knowledge of the village, there is no knowledge.[10] This knowledge is often transported by local traditions and handed down through the generations, thus rendering the idea of collective consciousness as vital contributor to the survival of the village. In addition, it retains the residual power to evoke sentiments of attachment and belonging to a specific place that acts as a root for familial and social order.

To further evaluate the complex of collective consciousness, a particular relationship between residents of the village is observed closely. Most Carpatho-Rusyns are farmers; therefore a form of physical connection with the land is imperative for generating farming goods. These goods are naturally consumed by the family who produce them, but greater portion is bound for healthy exchange between a neighbour and other members of the village. This inherent impulse of socioeconomic relationship is considered a welcoming behaviour and is practiced by all permanent members of the village. As is part of the tradition, the strategy of trade at its most primitive level of economy is effective in contributing to the overall growth of the local economy as well as providing nourishment for social well-being. For example, an exchange of wheat grown by one family for corn grown by another is an interdisciplinary act and serves as an essential component for the village as a whole to function as a single collective system. In the sphere of the economy on a higher level, similar is true. Next to farming, the members of the village who were involved in other trades such as engineering or carpentry were able to accumulate more capital with which they bought more land. The land would then either be used to generate provisions for export or more commonly rented out to the members of the village which did not have the land of their own. This strategy assures all residents have enough resources to provide for their families.

OPPOSITE: Fig. 3.23 Visions of Ruski Kerestur: before & after image vignette highlighting the village transformation from the beginning of 1900's to present

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10. Benson, *Central European Avant-gardes: Exchange and Transformation 1910-1930*, 25

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In the stage of accumulation of capital, the fact that Carpatho-Rusyns are a minority was an obstacle because the system in money turn-over and profit investment was reserved for the capital owned and wealthier agricultural corporations. For the Carpatho-Rusyn peasant, however, it was not essential to make money to move him up in the hierarchical chain, but rather to accumulate more land from which he can utilize full benefits of healthy exchange. Money did not merely buy things that were in need but rather things that were desired, which in the eye of a villager were unnecessary.

Beside the influences from the 'outside' of the realm of the village, it is the weather and the conditions of the natural environment that controls its economic growth. Village works in unison with nature, or more precisely, it is subsidiary to the natural behaviours of the weather. This phenomenon characterizes the village itself and does a lot to inform the behaviour of its residents. Rain, wind or sunshine often defines the day for the villagers, summoning their crucial life ordeal to a simple decision: Will there be enough food for me and my family this winter?

Settling on a self-sufficient family farm, harmonizing human construction with nature visually and functionally, and preserving the forms of past settlement as heritage are still considered significant elements of the functional village. The obligation for each member of the village to achieve them was important since they were believed to deliver proponents necessary for survival. Next to their obvious function of providing food and shelter, the ability to further utilize them for healthy economic exchange solidifies the idea of a collective system. These obligations have manifested within Carpatho-Rusyn psyche over hundreds of years. Understanding the idea behind collective consciousness and its knowledge within a compound of the village has rendered a Carpatho-Rusyn peasant with an ability to adapt to various social and environmental circumstances without major effect on his wellbeing. As a result of mature knowledge on how the village works, adaptation to the village of Ruski Kerestur, in contrast to a rugged and mountainous realm of his homeland, was a minor tribulation.

It is important to understand the ideology of the village and its reflection on Carpatho-Rusyn people before the interrelationships within its fabric, particularly at the scale of an urban dwelling, are examined.
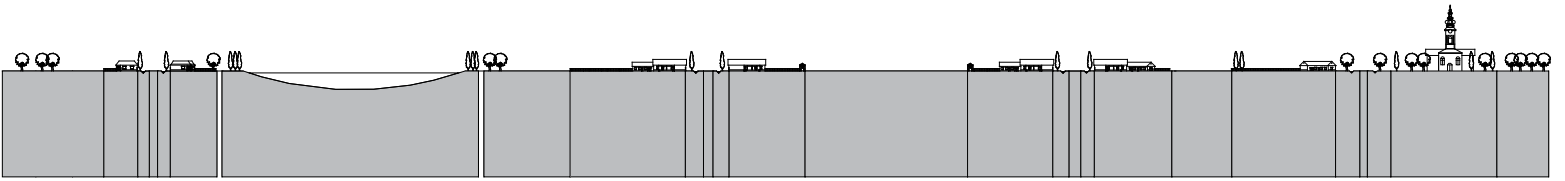
BELOW: *Fig. 3.24 Downtown square panorama along Maršala Tita avenue - an existing conditions prior to demolition and the execution of the future AGRC*

OPPOSITE: *Fig. 3.25 Village sections, partial longitudinal and transverse through downtown square*
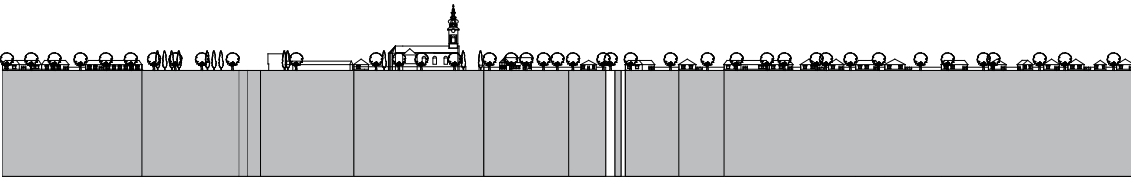
DEMOLISH THE VILLAGE PAPER ADMINISTRATION BUILDING

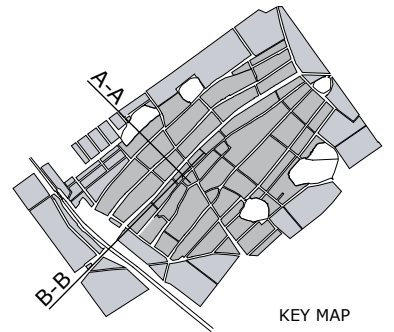OUTDOOR CAFE PATIO TO BE RELOCATED TO AGRC ROOFTOP

PARTIAL TRANSVERSE SECTION
A-A

PARTIAL LONGITUDINAL SECTION
B-B

A-A

B-B

KEY MAP

VILLAGE PAPER PRINT ROOM TO
REMAIN

EXISTING CULTURAL CENTRE'S
MULTIPURPOSE SPACE TO BE DEMOLISHED

EXISTING KIOSKS TO BE RELOCATED

WAYSIDE CROSS TO BE RELOCATED
TO THE ROUNDABOUT CIRCLE

The experience and memory of humankind are laid down in layers in the physical environment, concretely and graphically. Every new part exploits new forms, materials and ways of making. Building is, at base, a sign of hope, a sign of society's belief in future, a gesture forward in time.

Aldo Rossi
from Birksted, *Landscapes of Memory and Experience*, 51

ON ADAPTATION:
THE REQUISITE OF AN URBAN DWELLING

According to Magocsi, owning a house and piece of surrounding property became (and still remains) an important life goal, which if acclaimed was expected to provide both financial and psychological security.[11] Carpatho-Rusyns understood the concept of an urban dwelling and the importance behind it from the very beginning of the settlement at Ruski Kerestur. Guided by the notion of collective consciousness and knowledge of 'making', the first indigenous structures reflected the traditional vernacular architecture of their homeland. For example, they too reveal the tripartite division of dwelling spaces and the grand courtyard around them created by the high perimeter wall, typical of Hotsul style homestead. What prompted their designs was the instinctual predisposition of what is considered basic requirements for fundamental living needs. Out of the behaviour of mimicking their past house designs, and the fact that the natural conditions in which they are built is significantly different from their original homeland setting, a new hybrid versions of urban dwellings were created. Evolution of such dwellings and their connection to the urban fabric will give insight in determining the process of adaptation of Carpatho-Rusyn people into their new urban realm and success of persisting in it.

The development of a vernacular urban dwelling implicitly is concerned with human behaviour (cultural orientation and its practice), environment (climate in which the dwelling originates), and activities which are manifested within the compound of the dwelling. These assumptions concern, firstly, the nature of the relationship between culture and built form and secondly, that architecture encloses behaviour.[12] The evidence between culture and built form originates out of very necessity to ground oneself to a physical object, such as an urban dwelling, which is considered a requisite for providing financial security and a healthy practice of cultural traditions. Therefore, what formulates the fabric of the village is in fact the dominant presence of urban dwellings or homesteads. Observing the map of the village from an urban scale, two things are evident: uniform distribution of homesteads as determined by the ribbon-like neighbourhoods or 'šori', and the 'wall' around them, which serves as a transitional element between public (the street) and private (the interior courtyard). At the scale of the homestead, a few characteristics are observed: location and orientation of the dwelling and its connection to the perimeter wall, the use of loggia, presence of indoor courtyard (veranda), and spatial arrangement and its strategic position and use according to the seasonal weather.

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11. Magocsi, *Our People*, 13
12. Kent, *Domestic Architecture and the Use of Space*, 9

01
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PARTIAL PLAN

KEY MAP

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► 01

► 02

► 03

► 04
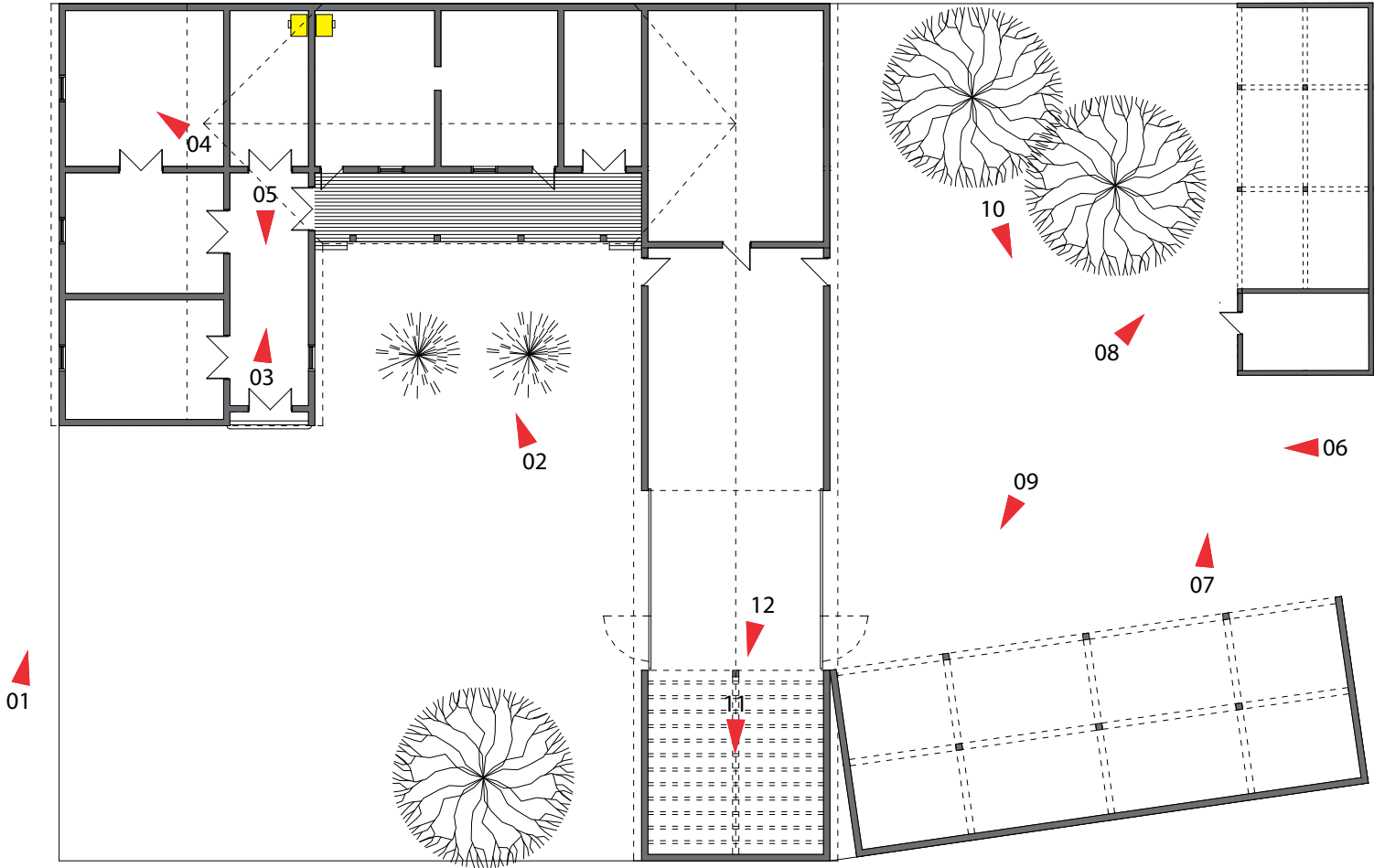
► 05

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► 12

The Fundamental Idea Behind the 'Wall'

It is important to stress the peculiarity of the wall located at the perimeter of urban dwellings. Reminiscent to the styles of dwellings in Carpatho-Rusyn homeland, the original function of the wall was assumed to provide security for the dwellers. The scattering effect of their homes, and the fact that they were located in the war stricken region, the utilization of the wall for the purposes of protection seemed appropriate. However, in the realm of their current setting, the replication of the wall derives not from the need for security (from outside intruders), but as visual barrier that divides private family functions from the vibrancy of the public street. It is not that the wall's former function disappeared, but in addition serves as an element of security which is only revealed at a social and cultural level. For example, during special occasions like the wedding ceremony or a funeral reception, the front gates within the wall open and expose the elements of the courtyard to the passerby, which are otherwise invisible. As the confluence between inside and outside occurs, it symbolizes the beginning of an event at which point all members of the community are welcome to join. Similarly, when the gates are closed, the functions within the homestead remain private. In essence, the presence of the wall informs the pedestrian of the characteristic of the dwelling and its social connection or disconnection with the street.

Furthermore, the utilization of the 'wall' or a tall fence around the homestead is simply considered a part of the adaptation strategy. As Carpatho-Rusyn adopted behaviour was to continually hide or conceal (from constant enemies), the idea of the wall provided shelter and immediate protection. Within the boundaries of the wall, one could feel at once secure and secluded. It is within this boundary that a Carpatho-Rusyn peasant achieves the notion of 'self', where he feels safe and free from the outside world.
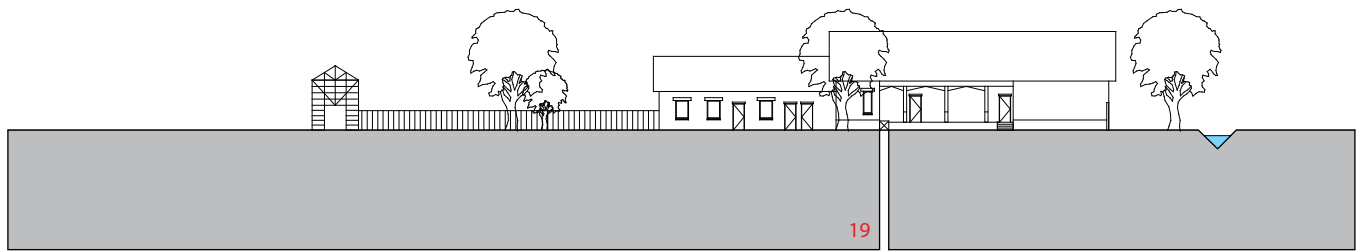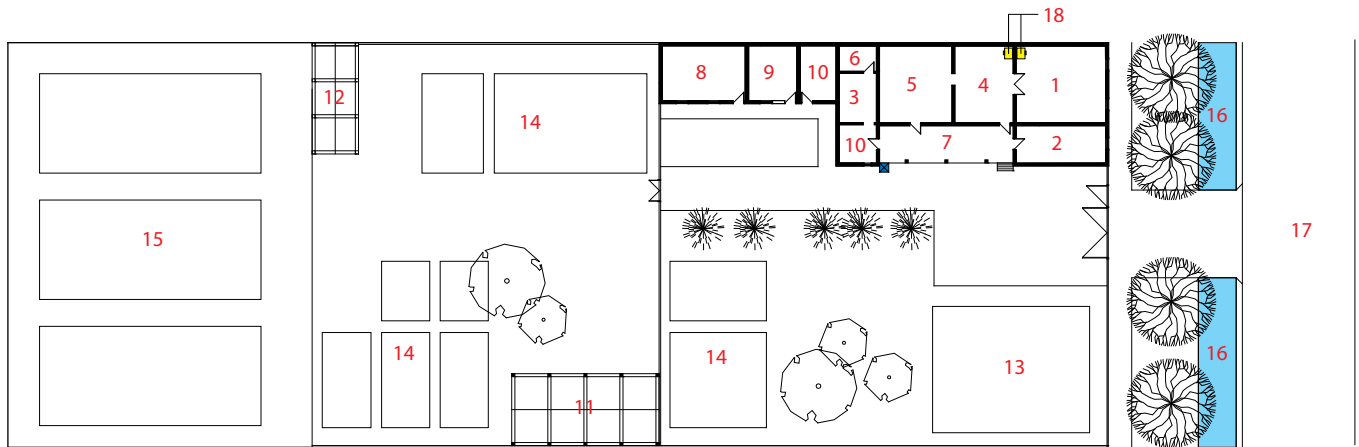
PREVIOUS SPREAD: *Fig. 3.26 Typical village homestead - image study*

OPPOSITE: *Fig. 3.27 Various village home fronts and the implementation of the 'wall'*

NEXT SPREAD: *Fig. 3.28 Typical village homesteads - plan and section study*

1   Front Room (Master Bedroom)
2   Front Room (Guest Room)
3   Pantry
4   Kitchen
5   Bedroom 2
6   Washroom
7   Porch (Loggia)
8   Guest Room 2
9   Summer Kitchen
10   Storage Room
11   Livestock Barn
12   Storage Barn
13   Garden (Flower)
14   Garden (Provision, Private)
15   Farmland (Provision, Exchange)
16   Stormwater Canal
17   Roadway
18   Heat Source
19   Water Well
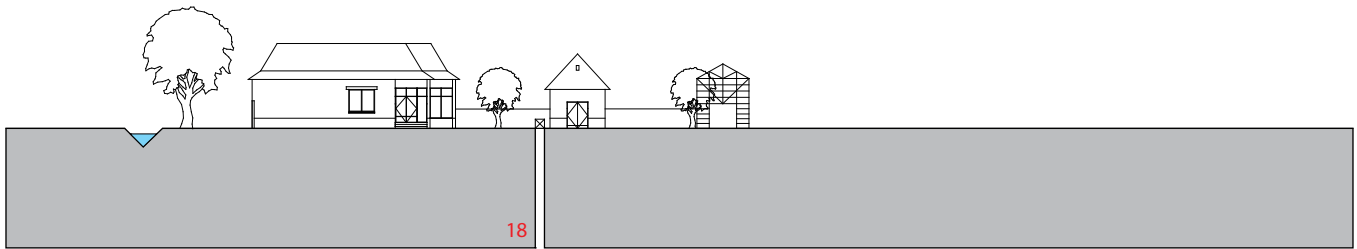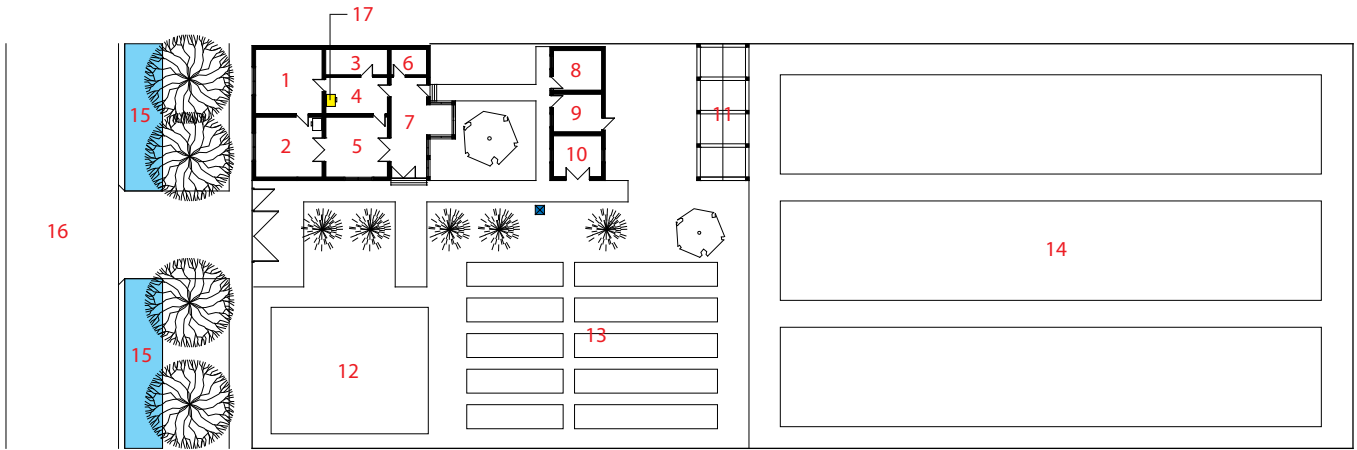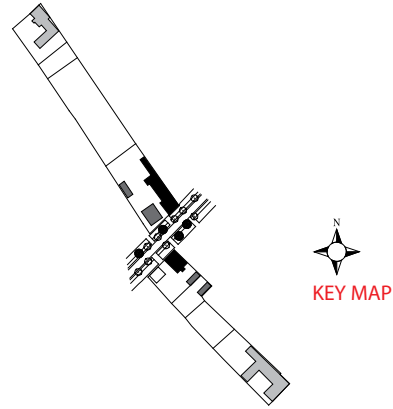
KEY MAP

1   Front Room (Master Bedroom)
2   Front Room (Guest Room)
3   Pantry
4   Kitchen
5   Bedroom 2
6   Washroom
7   Indoor Courtyard (Veranda)
8   Guest Room 2
9   Summer Kitchen
10   Storage Room
11   Storage Barn
12   Garden (Flower)
13   Garden (Provision, Private)
14   Farmland (Provision, Export & Trade)
15   Stormwater Canal
16   Roadway
17   Heat Source
18   Water Well

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VILLAGE ARTIFACT

► Oldest structure in the village of Ruski Kerestur

In 1981, this late 19th century vernacular dwelling, and the oldest domestic structure in the village, has been proclaimed by the village council as one of the examples of Carpatho-Rusyn heritage dwellings worthy of preservation and protection. As a part of the 250 year mark of the village existence, in 1995, it received a significant 'face-lift' from the foundation to the walls and a roof. Since then, it became one of the icons for the villagers who frequently visit it as part of the outdoor museum experience.
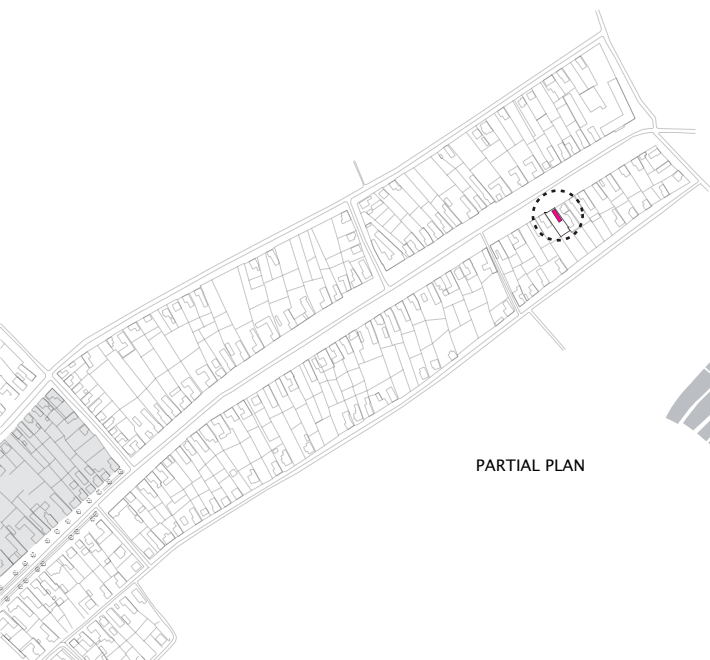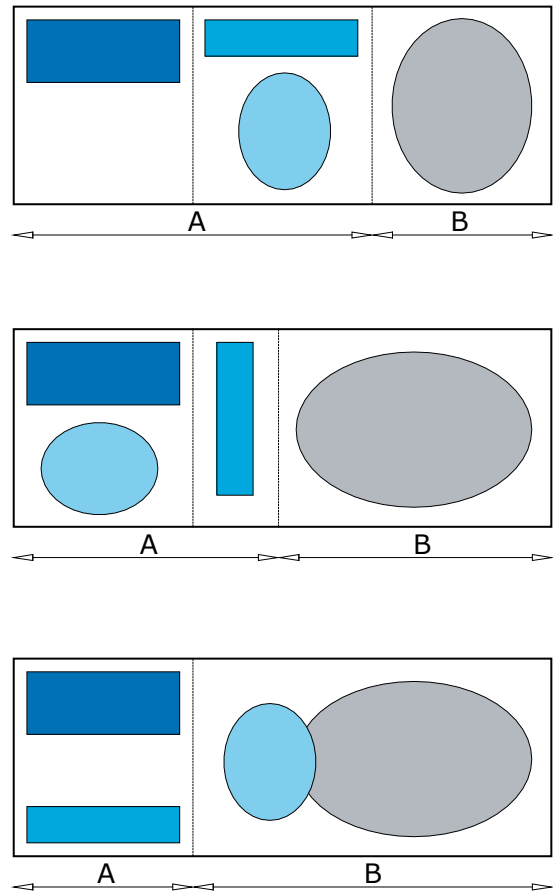

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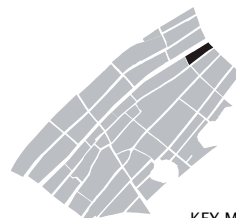
KEY MAP

OPPOSITE: *Fig. 3.29 Oldest structure in the village, late 19th century vernacular dwelling, protected by the village council since 1981*

Fig. 3.30 Village homestead and farmhouse prototypes showing various configurations of division between built and natural environment

A farmhouse - Prototypes

□	Lot enclosure
A	Private/Personal
B	Private/Shared
■	Living quarters
■	Barn (storage/livestock)
■	Garden (personal use)
■	Farmland (export, trade)

Strategic Orientation of Homesteads

One of the most significant influences on vernacular architecture is the macro climate of the area in which the building is constructed. Buildings for a continental climate must be able to cope with significant variations in temperature, and may even be altered by their occupants according to the seasons.[13] The Pannonian Plain offers a variety of different climates. The summers are hot and dry and winters can be extremely cold and windy. Due to inherent weather patterns of the region, the strategic location and orientation of the dwelling units became imperative. Most homes in the village were indigenous in nature and thus sensitive to local climate. Observing the figure/ground plan, it is evident that significant number of homesteads follow a similar pattern; firstly, they are located on the north-east to south-west axis (along the transverse section), and secondly, the dwelling, barn and stable within them abut to the north-east side of the perimeter wall. As both conditions share the same function of utilizing the movement of the sun, the former delegates the spatial organization within the compound of the homestead, whereas latter contributes to the layout of living spaces and their use within the dwelling units. Examining the site plan, organization of spaces is uniquely distributed according to the activities and needs of the dweller. As there are a few prototypes, most common consist of the farmland, provisional garden space (for personal use), side yard (for outdoor gathering), and the dwelling itself (located in the corner for minimum obstruction of land). All dwelling types abide by the rule where 'form follows function' and as such they are uniquely shaped by design and construction of the dweller as they pertain to specific requirements.

Intra-mural Migration Strategy

It is within the dwelling the effects of local weather play an important role. In permanent settlement people do not have a choice to move to more comfortable climates, but they can practice a different form of migration, as they move around their own homes. An important element of the way local populations could adapt to the extremely hot summer climate, and extremely cold climate, is to migrate, intra-murally, within the four walls of the dwelling.[14] Carpatho-Rusyns have adopted the tripartite style for the reasons that it allowed for efficient layout of the rooms that successfully contributed to intra-mural migration. The fact that the households were heated and cooled passively, this migration around it during the hot and cold months determined lifestyle and overall energy consumption of the residents. For example, during summer, the residents move to cooler spaces of the dwelling, such as rooms that faced north and allowed minimum amount of sunlight. Similarly, in

OPPOSITE ABOVE: *Fig. 3.31 Bird's eye views of the village - showing the unique 'ribboning' character of the neighbourhoods*

OPPOSITE BELOW: *Fig. 3.32 Adaptation and utilization of intra-mural migration strategy around a typical vernacular home - in winter and summer*

13. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vernacular_architecture
14. Roaf, *Adapting Buildings and Cities for Climate Change*, 39

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KEY MAP
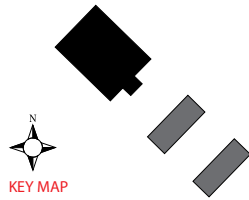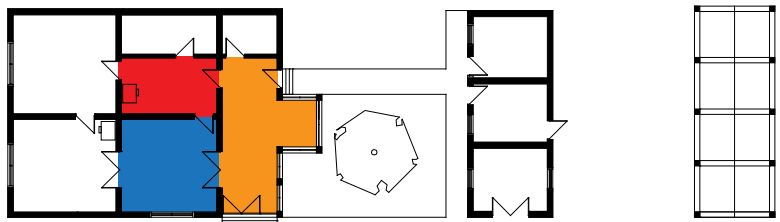
WINTER

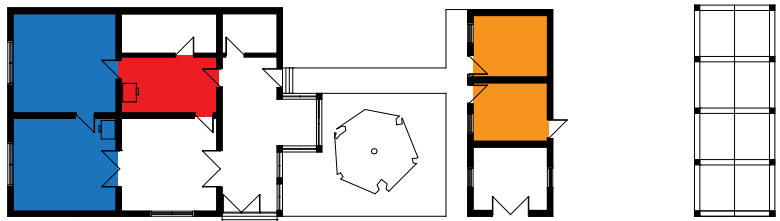|	Living		Sleeping		Living/Sleeping

SUMMER

	Living		Sleeping		Living/Sleeping

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the winter, the residents move to south-facing rooms, such as interior courtyards or verandas during the day when they are fully exposed to the warmth of the sun. During most of the season, however, the residents occupy the centre space of the tripartite layout where the kitchen and within it earthen stove is found. This space is most comfortable as it is buffered by the former two, the guest (front) rooms to the north and veranda to the south. Interior courtyard or veranda is an interesting component of the tripartite layout. Acting as a formal entrance vestibule from the side yard, this glassed-in space is separated by another door that enters the central living quarters. As this door is frequently opened and closed, in winter season, the radiant heat accumulated in the veranda limits cold air from entering living (heated) spaces.

What allowed intra-mural migration to work effectively was the construction methods and materials used on the structure itself. Roof in particular was made of layers of dry hemp or straw sheaves that served both as protective barrier and insulation. The use of this natural form of insulation was further extended to inner portion of the walls. The walls were thick in section and built either entirely out of mud or partially, where the outer portions received a layer of earthen brick and then white washed. If properly installed, the structural proponents of the dwelling were impermeable to weather conditions and thus successfully provided protection for the inhabitants.

The Use of Loggia

The loggia, an old fixture of vernacular architecture, runs the entire gamut from covered walkways through more or less protected balconies and galleries to columned halls.[15] In a tripartite style of a Carpatho-Rusyn traditional home, it appears as the backbone of the entire structure and is spatially interconnected with all of its three parts. It functions as the storage space for dry wood and as a place for collecting fresh provisions bound for further ripening in the sun. South-facing and roof covered, it is designed to act as a shelter from the predominant wind swirls which were common on the plain and provide for a comfortable space for resting and casual gathering of dwellers. Most of loggias were exclusively within the compound of the homestead, however, some of the older examples extended onto the street by means of a great opening that served as main entrance to the house. The entrance, now part of the front façade of the dwelling, was only used when guests arrived and rarely by the inhabitants themselves. The secondary doorway, which entered the grand space of the homestead, was more common mean of entry. The utilization of loggias was widespread across the community neighbourhoods. Its presence and form and particular placement within the dwelling plan largely contributed to the contextual fabric of the village and its overall layout.

OPPOSITE: *Fig. 3.33 Example of homestead loggia*

15. Rudofsky, *Architecture Without Architects*, plate 89

4.0 Terra

Renascibilitas

THE RIBBON EFFECT:
‘A LIVING MONUMENT’
A NEW LANDMARK MIMICS MORPHOLOGY
OF THE VILLAGE GIVING NEW LIFE FOR
THE COMMUNITY IN DISTRESS

OPPOSITE: *Fig. 4.1 Glimpse into
AGRC lobby through 'ribboning' of
shading device*

Remembering is like constructing and then travelling again through space. We are already talking about architecture…Memories are built as a city is built. It could be said that architecture, from its beginnings, has been one of the ways of fixing memories.

Umberto Eco
from Birksted, *Landscapes of Memory and Experience*, 53

4.0   **THE RIBBON EFFECT: 'A LIVING MONUMENT'**
A NEW LANDMARK MIMICS MORPHOLOGY OF THE
VILLAGE GIVING NEW LIFE FOR THE COMMUNITY IN
DISTRESS

MANIFESTO

A building of civic nature pertaining to a specific culture, like a museum or an exhibition centre, is a sign of highlighting the spirit and hope for such culture, a foundation for their coexistence and belief in the future. For Carpatho-Rusyn village of Ruski Kerestur, a new civic building is a departure point for the rehabilitation of a social diaspora that is currently threatening that belief in future. If Rossi was right when he phrased that the building at base is a sign of hope and a sign of society's belief in the future, then it makes sense to provide Carpatho-Rusyn people with exactly that: a civic landmark.

A building, as a layer of a physical environment, is experienced through impressions of memory that are reflected within and as such, empowers the visitor with a vivid sense of imagination that forever locks his connection to it. A 'Living Monument' is a fixed place that evokes the physical and spiritual emotions of collective empathy that embraces the notion of awakening, a celebration of the past and solidification of the future. Manifested within every Carpatho-Rusyn soul, it presents a gateway that encourages a society to continue to learn and preserve its unique cultural character. Embodying the paradigm of a civic landmark, a 'living monument' is a space within the downtown of the village that provides a setting for dwellers to engage their cultural traditions and participate in the vitality of the urban social realm.

Motivated by the objective to introduce core social areas to the urban fabric, a design project creates a new civic precinct which focuses on social regeneration, cultural spirit, education and identity preservation. The architectural language created will fuse together poetic ideas, inert materials and texture, physical location of the site and its connection to the social conditions to gage, provoke and inspire cultural capacity within the fabric of the village. While it may be too ambitious to expect a single design proposal for the downtown revitalization project can implicitly recover the current situation of the village – it may serve as a catalyst for new design interventions to follow and reverse the problem of diaspora. In turn, it will attempt to keep its inhabitants within the borders of the village and perhaps even return its lost ones back to their abandoned homes. Successful or not, the initial design concept proposed in this thesis will provide a setting that paves the way for an opportunity to regenerate a wounded Carpatho-Rusyn community.

0 100M
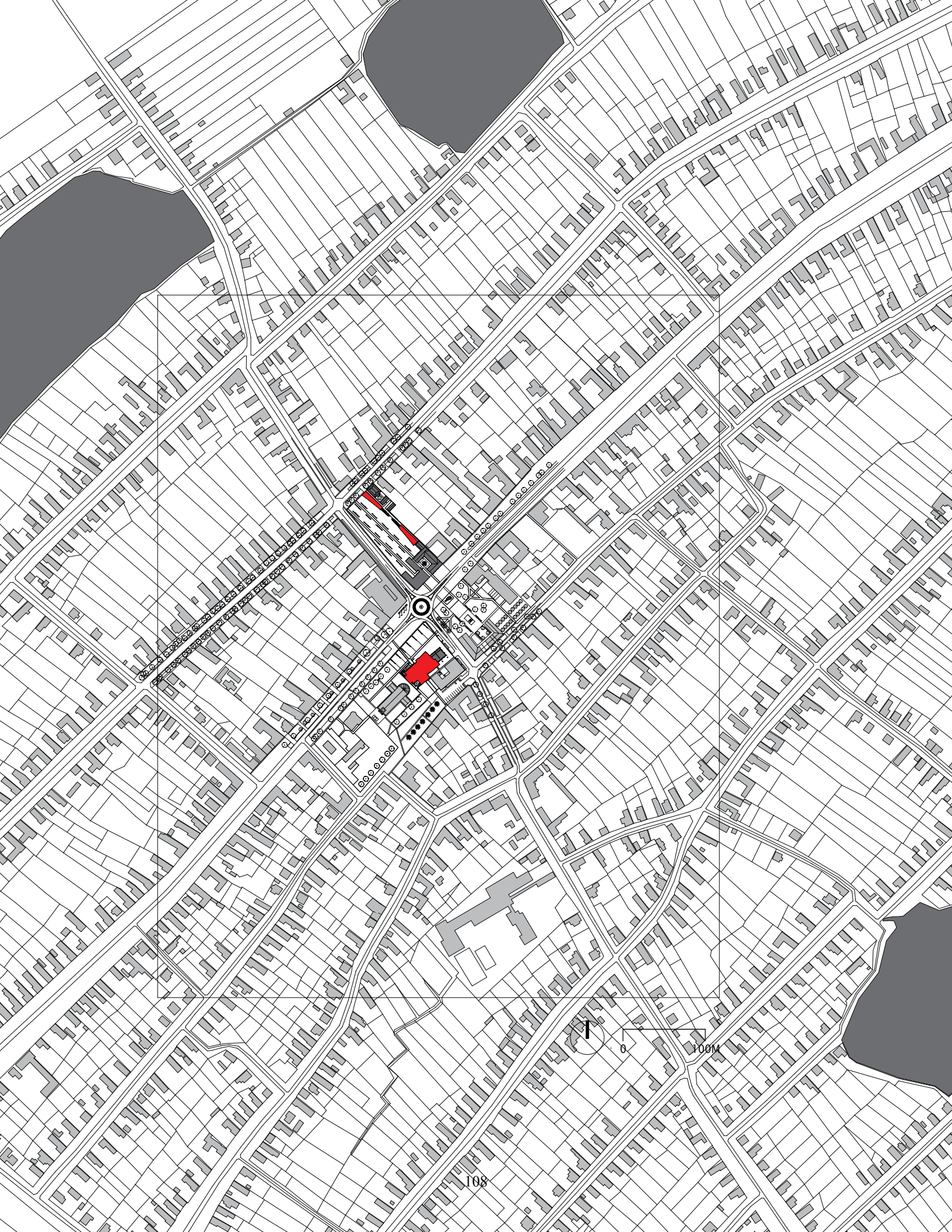
THE MEANING OF A MONUMENT

Is it Monument or is it Living?

Monument is something which stands, or remains, to keep in remembrance what is past.[1] The remembrance of the fallen person or an event which happened in history is often marked by the physical object such as the building, or a pillar, or even a stone to represent a monument. Therefore, a monument is addressed by the presence of a real place, a physical imprint of the built object that is conceived in a three-dimensional space. Aldo Rossi further describes the monument as an urban artifact which has a reality that can be subjected to analysis, moreover, that it can be designed.[2] However, to do so requires architecture, that is to say, a style. Only the existence of an architectural style permits fundamental choices, and from these choices the city develops.[3] The monument is before anything else an architectural phenomenon that stands as a permanent object within the context of the city.

But how do we conceive the concept of a 'living monument', as opposed to just a monument, as this design project so conspicuously attempts to create? While it is a monument, it does not commemorate an event that has passed, nor does it exist to represent a trace of a deceased. Its spatial strategy is multi-layering – the interweaving of formal expressions from different social contexts. By providing a territory for multiple histories and memories, a Living Monument acts as a hybrid platform that crosses cultural boundaries. Allowing for an interaction with the past, the Living Monument brings memory to life in the present to enact an ideal future.[4] While it is still conceived as a form of a representation, it propagates the idea of 'lived monumentality' through a continuous network of public spaces that act as mediators to engage public in continuous, open-ended learning processes. These contingencies are further exploited through historical education and contemporary art as programmatic opportunities within the living monument. As the former is stagnant and factual, the latter is subjective and ever-changing; together they produce a unique experience that dissolves the hierarchy of the present over the past, thus contributing to the idea that fosters individual experience of remembering and living. The monument does not even live in the material of a built environment, but is much more set in the memory of the user. The Living Monument is the person, and in a sense it can be every person's human embodiment of memory.

The main project of the thesis serves as a physical medium on which an individual embodiment of memory can be achieved and contemplated. Through site analysis and programmatic and spatial qualities of the Carpatho-Rusyn Art Gallery and Reconciliation Centre, this main

OPPOSITE: *Fig. 4.2 A 'Living Monument' site plan, showing greater downtown area and village context*

1. http://www.brainyquote.com/words/mo/monument191732.html
2. Rossi, *The Architecture of the City*, 126
3. Ibid.
4. http://www.provisionalfutures.net/?p=461#more-461

Fig. 4.3 A 'Living Monument' site plan

0   25M

ASSOCIATOR

MEDIATOR

PARK PAVILION

ARTS PAVILION

SUPPORTER

MARKET PAVILION
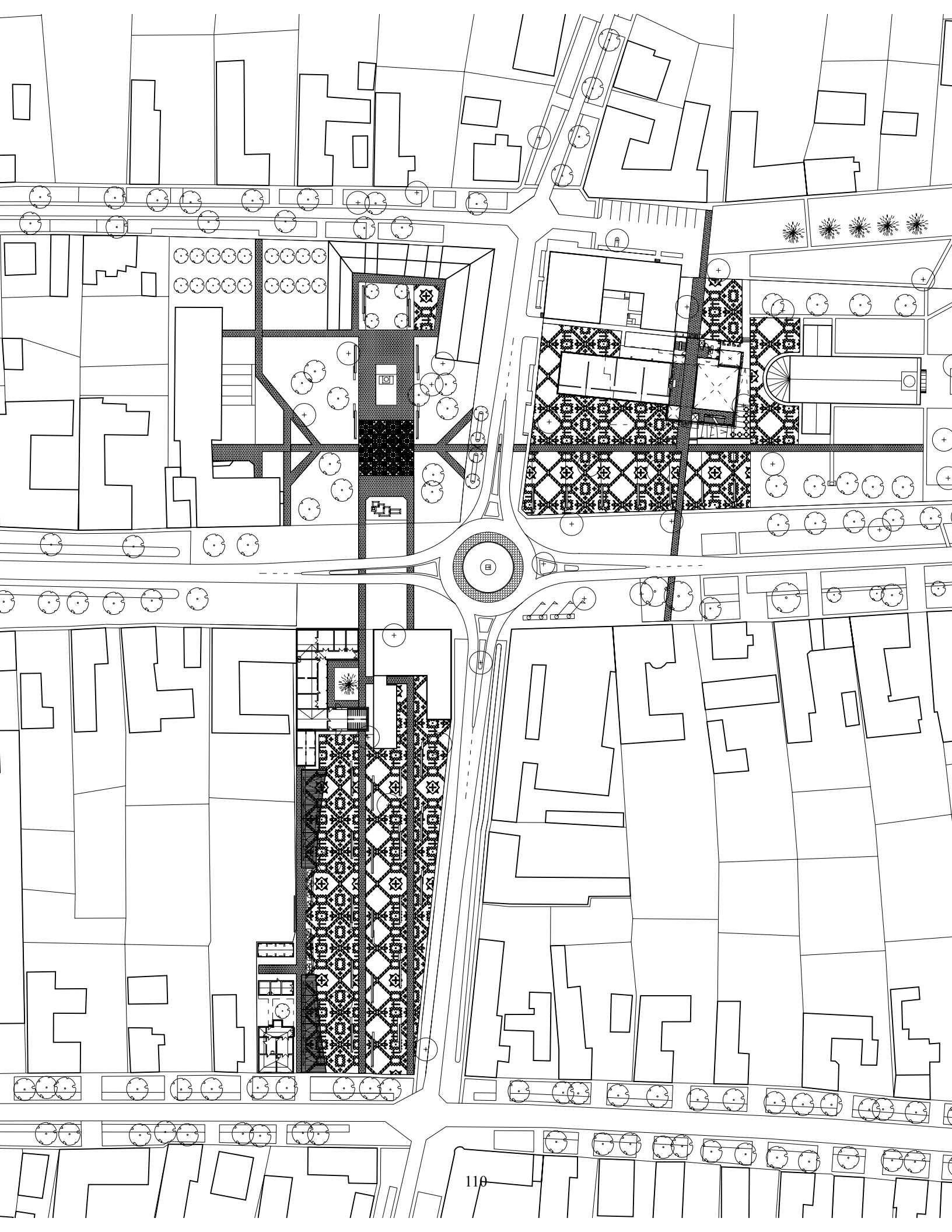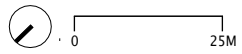
focus begins to take shape.

SITE ANALYSIS

To successfully use monument and memory in a single language of architecture it must be both universal and individual.[5] For a 'Living Monument' to both monumentalize and remain 'living', the design project develops architectural strategies to interweave the site with its larger context, thus creating the basis for programmatic opportunities that evoke both personal as well as collective memories, and yet remain as major public spaces. To achieve this with sufficient decree, certain programmatic elements are allocated to promote individual experiences, which are personal and hence more exposed to contemplation, whereas larger and more revealing spaces will tend to promote collective experiences and thus contribute to the vitality of the urban social core. As a host to multitude of programs and events, the site is rendered as a stage that advocates human experiences as a focal point. By proposing open-ended opportunities rather than one of finite arrangements, the site and its architectonic form become a catalyst for generating meaningful experiences. By promoting long-term sustainability of a community suffering in numbers, the site development focuses on regeneration process by assembling its parts not only to monumentalize the face of the village but also to connect and reintroduce the specificity of Carpatho-Rusyn people beyond its limits.

The extent of the project utilizes three individual sites located in the downtown of the village which are interlinked by public vistas to create a unified public square. Conceived as pavilions, each site is given a specific program and regarded as a separate public domain: Mediator, which is supported by Arts Pavilion and hosts Carpatho-Rusyn Art Gallery and Reconciliation Centre, Associator, which is supported by Park Pavilion and hosts an extension to an existing civic park, outdoor sunken courtyard and public seating area, and Supporter, which is supported by Market Pavilion and hosts new outdoor market, exhibition space and a real scale open-air museum. The main design project, however, focuses on 'The Ribbon Effect', which is a subordinate name for Carpatho-Rusyn Art Gallery and Reconciliation Centre and is the heart and soul of the living monument.

The treatment of the site together with its specific architectonic elements serves as a departure point that strengthens the quality of the overall design. Envisioned as an organic reconstruction of the former and less engaging, the new site generates an expanded public space by removing its deteriorating structural solids and inaccessible voids. By careful selection of what is demolished and what stays, the new

5. Quoting Peter Eisenman from his development of Berlin Holocaust Memorial.
Page, *Memory Field: In Berlin, Remembrance is open to Interpretation at Peter Eisenman's Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe,* Architecture magazine, June 2005, 38-45

OPPOSITE: *Fig. 4.4 A 'Living Monument' site plan parti diagram*

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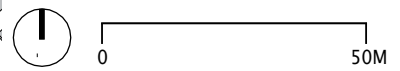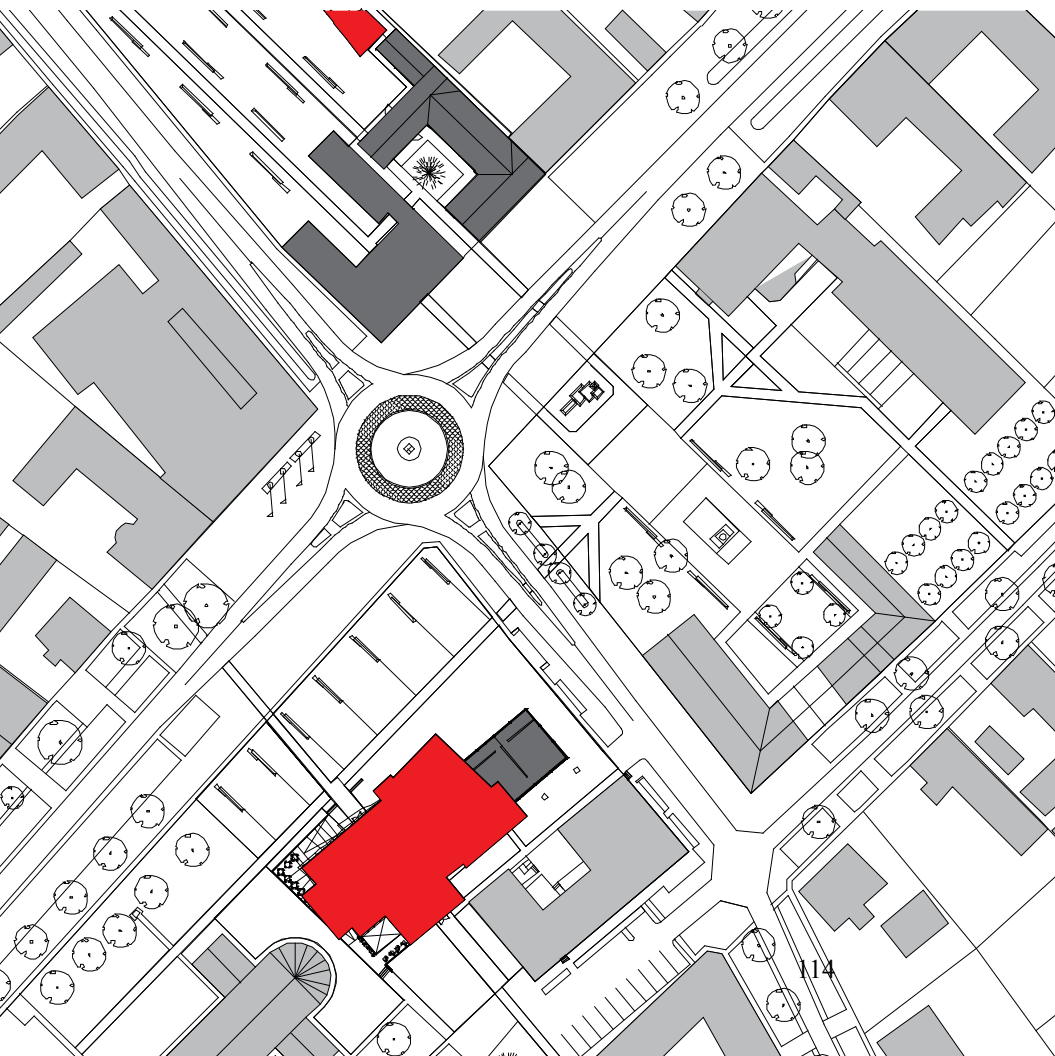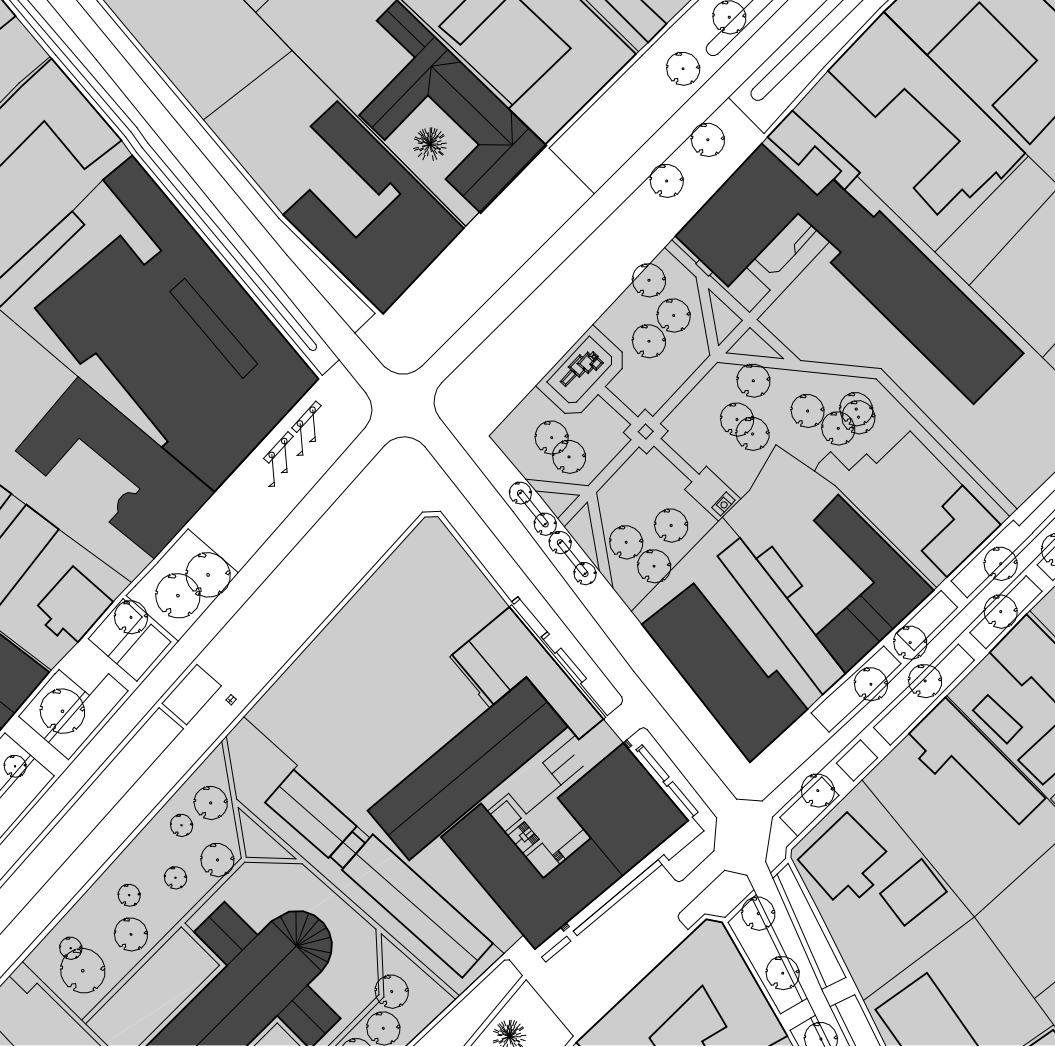
footprint provides a continuity of spaces that will seamlessly accept its new program. Its simple yet enticing features generate a radically new identity for the village's urban core.

The Roundabout

The site within the downtown occupies a major intersection between Rusinska Road and Maršala Tita Avenue, which are considered two busiest streets. As such, they generate considerable amount of pedestrian and mobile traffic in and out of the village. The site development process begins with alleviating heavy traffic from the downtown core by the implantation of a roundabout. By its inherent nature, the roundabout will tend to slow down the traffic and contribute to the safety of the pedestrians crossing from one pavilion to the other. In addition, this new feature will encourage slower transport vehicles such as horse and buggy, mopeds and bicycles to freely enter the traffic circulation. The new and improved road system will keep the traffic flow moving and thus eliminate congestion and need for traffic light signals that would otherwise obstruct desirable views across the village square.

The Site as Embroidery

The village square is treated as a homogeneous platform which is recognized by distinctive paving system. Reminiscent to Carpatho-Rusyn traditional embroidered cloth, the surface of the site utilizes interlocking stone to articulate two individual embroidered patterns. Acting as a base, their careful implementation and decorative essence allow for the immediate connection with the Carpatho-Rusyn customs which sets the tone for a unique cultural experience. One can sit on a bench in the market pavilion and observe the intricate patterning of the stone work and admire its beautiful arrangement. Accompanying the embroidery, is a series of rectilinear walkways or public 'vistas' outlined by the alternate stone layout that pierce through the site and strategically connect all the components of the project. In addition, they also connect all the pavilions together via the integrated roundabout. Regarded as informal outdoor 'corridors', they contribute to the pedestrian communication with all the attractions of the site and on some level propose a certain hierarchy of experience between them. For example, one could start to experience the 'living monument' by walking down the vista of the arts pavilion across the street to the park pavilion and sit on the bench across the monument of the fallen soldiers, and then continue down towards the market pavilion through the indoor market and converge at the open-air museum, all via a single continuous path of travel.

OPPOSITE: *Fig. 4.5 A partial 'Living Monument' site, showing the existing conditions (above) and the redesigned (below). The implementation of a roundabout prevents traffic congestion in downtown area*

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Pillars of Hope: 35 Village Layout Plan

The Reasoning

As the political, ethnographic and linguistic boundaries shifted continually with the change in geographical borders of the eastern European countries, in turn, so did Carpatho-Rusyn people. This effect, over time, caused a great deal of confusion in finding the true Carpatho-Rusyn identity and a place they called home. There are, however, many observable linguistic and ethnographic characteristics which differentiate Carpatho-Rusyn form other villages in the European homeland. These characteristics have been mapped in linguistic atlases and ethnographic maps more than once during the past century, thereby making it possible to define the ethno-linguistic make-up of these borderland villages at different points in time.[6] As a result of this undefined border and constant assimilation with the neighbouring countries, one simply calls himself 'Rusyn' and relates his omnipresence according to the village his parents and grandparents came from, not by the name of the country or state in which he lived. With such information, ethnic background can consequently be determined.[7]

Pillars of hope represent this shift in a physical sense, mapping a structure or a 'network' of Carpatho-Rusyn villages of the Carpathian Mountains over the entire site, each one identifying the village name and connection with the homeland. The strategic placement of the pillars, which serve both as a light source and way finding, create an illuminated mesh as means to guide a visitor through all the site attractions. Each light pillar presents an opportunity for a visitor to engage his thoughts that links him to his homeland, both intimately and spiritually. The idea of 'collective consciousness' and the acknowledgement of 'self' is embraced within the 'pillar of hope' and connects the visitor with symbolism of Carpatho-Rusyn pilgrimage. Poet Seamus Heaney once quoted: '…*of being in two places at the same time and being in two times at the same place*…' , perhaps it is here where one can experience such phenomenon. This juxtaposition between time and place is created when one walks on an embroidered walkway en route to the library departing from under the glass-swooping curved roof of the market canopy, following the maze of pillars of hope. As a recreated pilgrimage on a smaller scale, this journey pays tribute to Carpatho-Rusyn ancestors for separating form their families and beloved villages in search for a better life. The experience of the site serves as a remainder for the villagers that the creation of their realm very much depended on the perseverance and bravery of their peers. Walking on the site feels like walking from one village of the Carpatho-Rusyn homeland to another, which is sought to evoke the sense of belonging and initiate the process of regeneration that rekindles human spirit, faith and courage.

OPPOSITE: *Fig. 4.6 The map showing 35 villages of Subcarpathian Rus' and the point which designates the location of the satellite village of Ruski Kerestur*

6. Magocsi, '*Our People*', 10
7. Ibid.

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1   Gorlice
2   Jasko
3   Krosno
4   Brzozow
5   Sanok
6   Bardejov
7   Svidnik
8   Medzilaborice
9   Stropkov
10   Sabinov
11   Prešov
12   Gelnica
13   Humenné
14   Snina
15   Velykyi Bereznyi
16   Roznava
17   Trebišov
18   Michalovce
19   Sobrance
20   Perechyn
21   Uzhhorod
22   Mucsony
23   Komloska
24   Sarospatak
25   Miskolc
26   Tokai
27   Nyiregyhaza
28   Mukachevo
29   Irshava
30   Berehovo
31   Vynohradovo
32   Khust
33   Tiachovo
34   Rakhiv
35   Iasynia

RUSKI KERESTUR

0   25KM
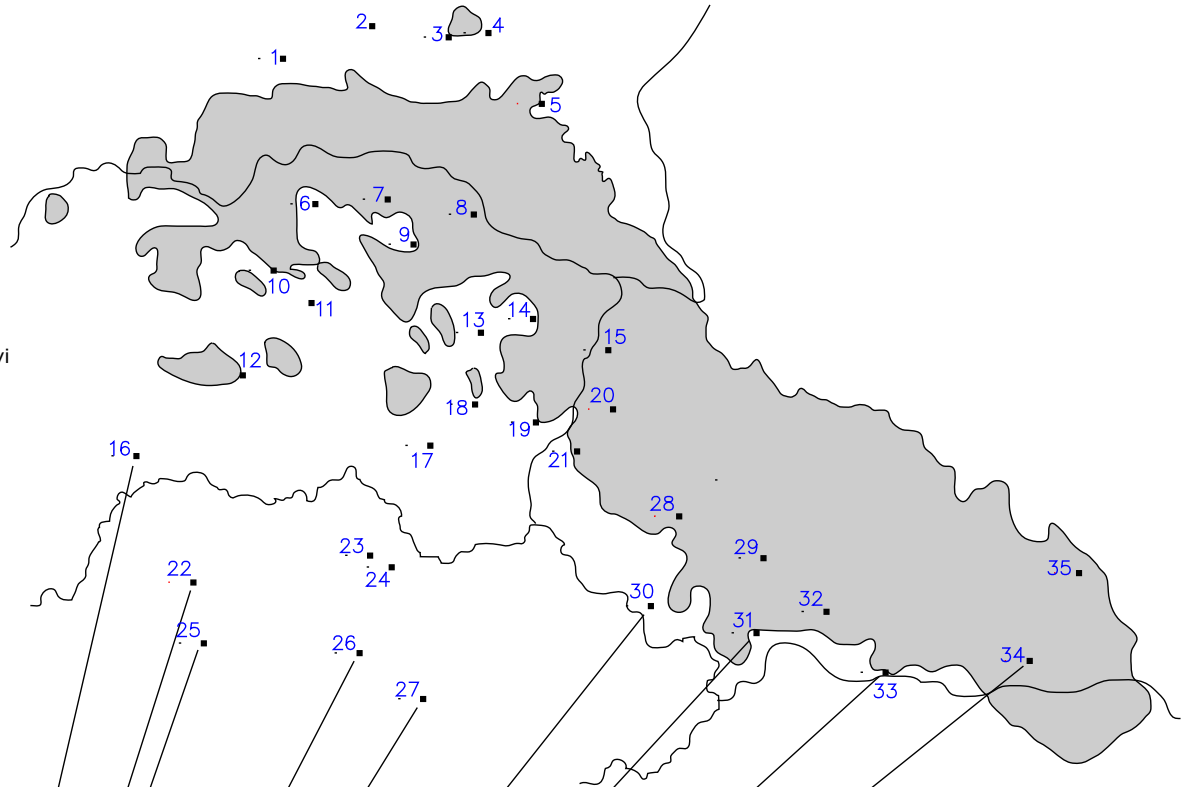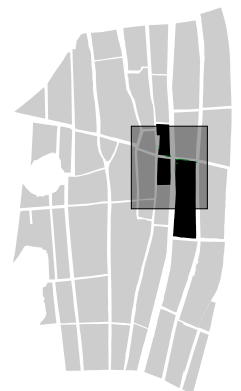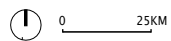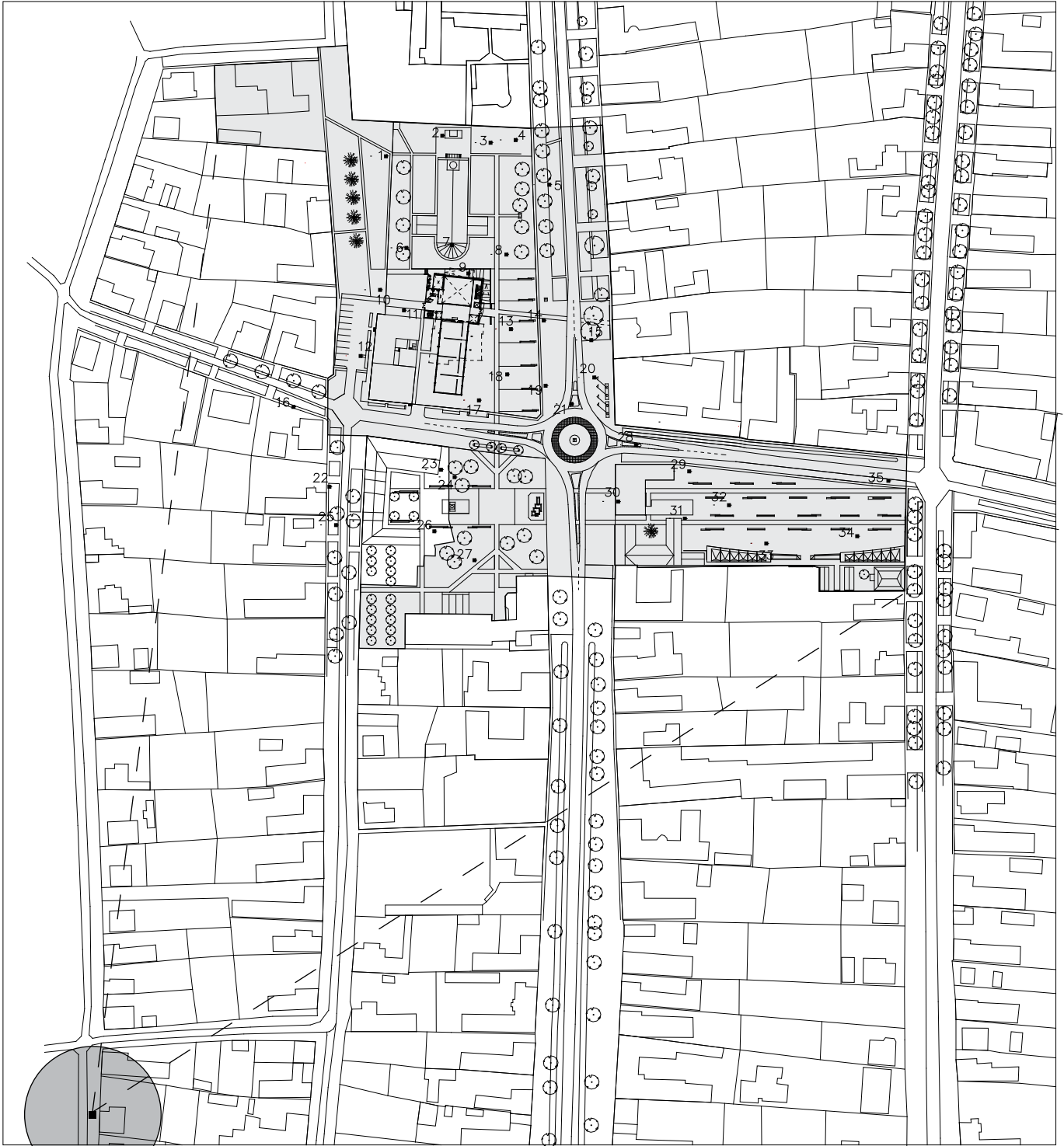
RUSKI KERESTUR (VIRTUAL ANCHOR)

The Strategy

Thirty-five villages of the Carpathian homeland have been selected according to their relevance to Carpatho-Rusyn cultural and societal presence. Scaled down and rotated to accommodate the layout of the site, the new origins are masked over the entire living monument to become the pillars of hope. The lighting program is organized in a cluster that functions as a system of light posts that highlight the focus areas of the site. The distance between the 35 villages and the 'satellite' village of Ruski Kerestur, in conjunction with the distances between the villages themselves have been scaled down and superimposed over the site. As a result, the node that represents the satellite village, which is by the nature of the 35 village arrangement outside of the designated living monument, signifies a virtual anchor. Conceived as a physical site situated north-east of the downtown, the anchor generates a focal space that justifies the position and an unorthodox placement of the pillars of hope. Superimposed over itself, this empty space within the anchor is experienced as a virtual Ruski Kerestur, a monument that expresses the spirit of a place and the spirit of remembrance. Occupying this space is like being in the void of the village, yet this void is a direct representation of it. Empty of contents, the anchor embodies the essence of longing and expresses the sentiments of profound attachment to Carpatho-Rusyn homeland which is considered an integral motivation for Carpatho-Rusyn perseverance. The radiance of the 35 village pillars of hope offer a sense of rejuvenation to the unrefined and dark appearance of the anchor space, thus contributing to the idea of community rehabilitation through built environment. Similarly, to propose a connection with the Carpatho-Rusyns and their ancestors on a spiritual level, the site development utilizes the virtual anchor and a living monument as two physical realms that present an opportunity to bring the village of Ruski Kerestur and Carpathian homeland closer together.

OPPOSITE: *Fig. 4.7 A site plan of the village showing the superimposition of 35 villages over the 'living monument'. Ruski Kerestur, as a virtual anchor, appears before a site dedicated to the spirit of a place and spirit of remembrance, on Borisa Kidriča road.*

Anchor, Angle of Incidence and Rebirth

The presence of the anchor and the orientation of the pillars of hope are further validated through the idea of physical versus spiritual transcendence between birth and rebirth. As the common goal of the living monument is to regenerate the spirit in people and spirit of a place, it begins with the seminal configuration of its integral parts which have the potential to evoke such spiritual sentiments. It is through the anchor, angle of incidence and rebirth that the project frames its spiritual connection between the residents of the village and their motherland.

The church, as the oldest structure of the village, retains the residual qualities of timelessness and spiritual aura. While the essence of the church has the power to express religious sentiments, it also strengthens the spirit manifested within its patrons. For the Carpatho-Rusyns, the devotion to the church is of a primary importance. The very existence of the village is believed to emerge from the foundations of the church and its fundamental ability to transcend the idea of 'self' and 'righteous' to its people. It is from this perspective that the ideology of 35 village plan originates. As one occupies the living monument, the organic manipulation of the site starts to generate the feeling of connectedness, a kind of a 'belonging' reaction when the interaction between the object and the subject takes place. The sentimental quality of the space is at once instilled within the visitor.

This scope of the project begins with an imaginary line that suggests the direction of the birth of Carpatho-Rusyn pilgrims, which is offset from the true north to produce an angle of incidence. From the site of the living monument, this line represents the physical path from which they would arrive. As the church is personified as an epicenter of the village and embodies the ideology of human sacrifice, the daily movement of the village residents from the church entrance towards the altar, proposes a new direction or a path from which the spiritual angle of incidence is offset. As the exact angle of incidence of the physical transcendence is superimposed over the site and offset from the new axis, it signifies the direction of village rebirth and spiritual transcendence. The creation of the 35 village plan and its position is crucial for allowing the anchor to pass through the line of rebirth. It is through the language of birth and rebirth that solidifies the relationship between the anchor (virtual) and the living monument (spiritual). The merge of both creates the language that pays homage to the ancestors of the Carpatho-Rusyns, yet fosters the notion of progress and evolution.
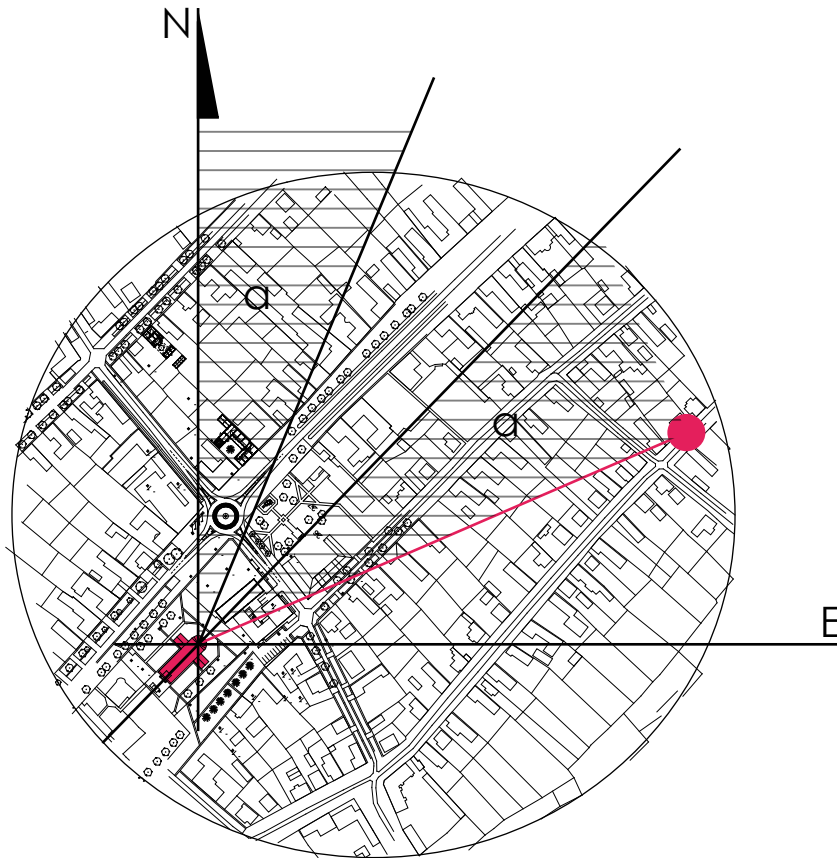
OPPOSITE ABOVE: *Fig. 4.8 Anchor, Angle of Incidence and Rebirth, diagram 1*
An angle of incidence is offset from true north to produce a 'line of sight' towards Carpathian homeland from downtown Ruski Kerestur

OPPOSITE BELOW: *Fig. 4.9 Anchor, Angle of Incidence and Rebirth, diagram 2*
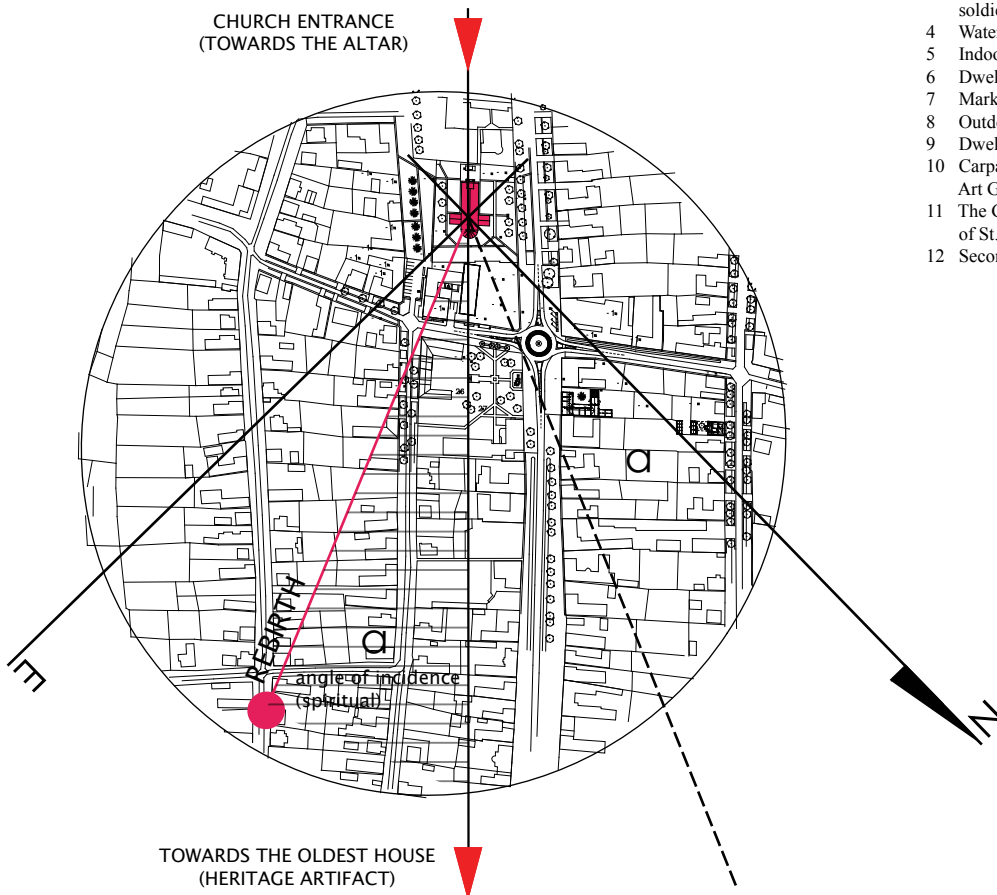*A 'line of sight' represents a physical direction towards the birth of Carpatho-Rusyns*

N

α

angle of incidence
(physical)

E

N

BIRTH

α

E

N

a

a

E
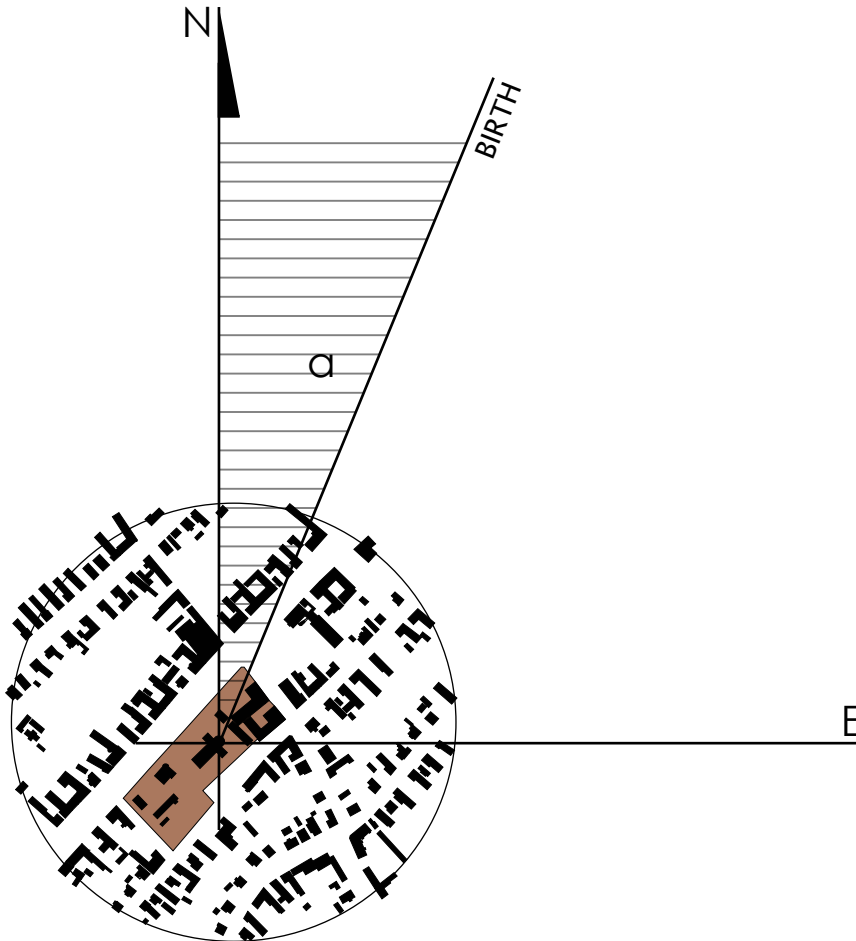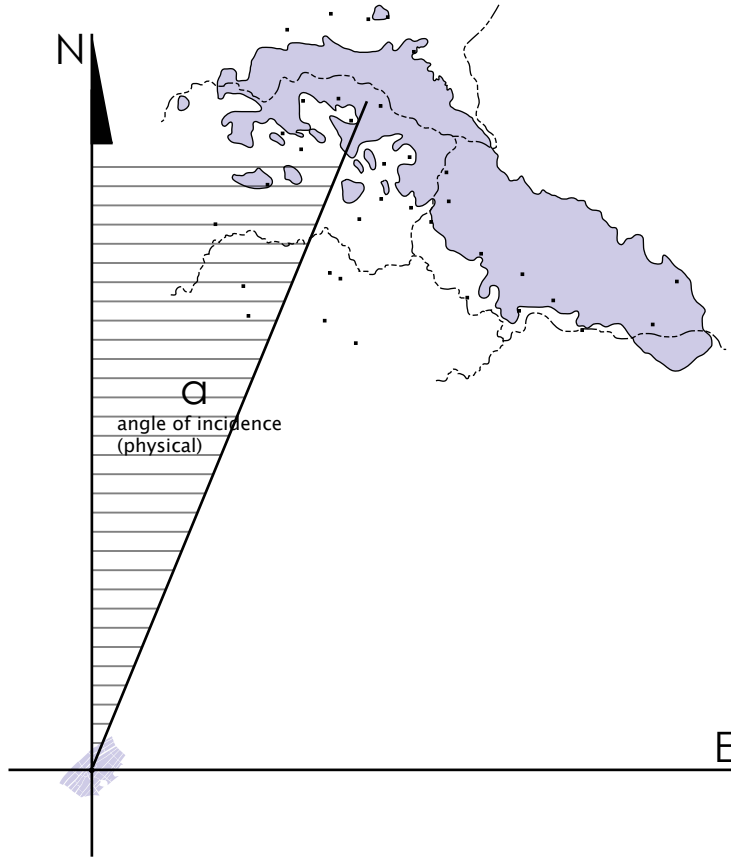
ABOVE: *Fig. 4.10 Anchor, Angle of Incidence and Rebirth, diagram 3 An angle of incidence is mapped and rotated onto the fabric of the village to accommodate a virtual anchor*
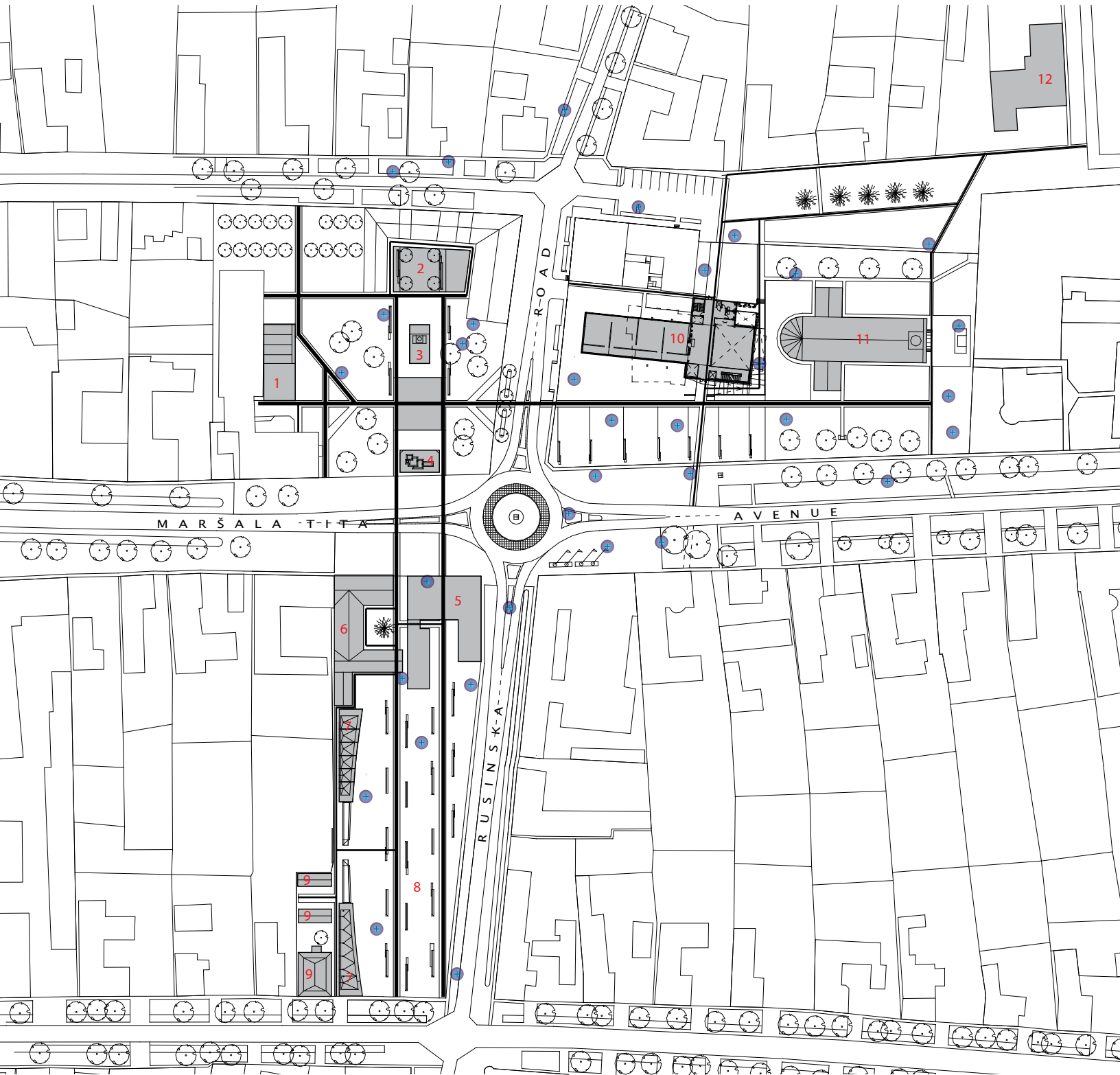
BELOW: *Fig. 4.11 Anchor, Angle of Incidence and Rebirth, diagram 4 35 villages of Carpathian Rus' is scaled onto the 'living monument' and creates a virtual anchor which represents a spiritual angle of incidence and Rusyn rebirth*

OPPOSITE: *Fig. 4.12 Site program and connectivity diagram showing public vistas and the layout of the 35 'pillars of hope' as site's lighting system*

SITE PROGRAM

1 Sunken Courtyard
2 Park Courtyard
3 War Monument (dedicated to the fallen soldiers of the village of Ruski Kerestur)
4 Water Fountain (existing)
5 Indoor Market (renovation)
6 Dwelling Unit Exhibit - Type 1
7 Market Canopy
8 Outdoor Market (exhibition area)
9 Dwelling Unit Exhibit - Type 2
10 Carpatho-Rusyn Reconceliation Centre & Art Gallery (The Living Monument)
11 The Greek-Catholic Church and Eparchy of St. Nicolas
12 Secondary School 'Petro Kuzmjak' (existing)

CHURCH ENTRANCE
(TOWARDS THE ALTAR)

REBIRTH

angle of incidence
(spiritual)

a

a

E

N

TOWARDS THE OLDEST HOUSE
(HERITAGE ARTIFACT)

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ABOVE: *Fig. 4.13 A typical market scene in the village*

BELOW: *Fig. 4.14 A panorama showing the iconic 'gentlemen's inn' hotel that will be redesigned to accommodate the indoor market. The fence that runs along Rusinska road will be demolished to expose the new platform that will serve as an outdoor market as well as an exhibition place*

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DESIGN GUIDELINES AND METHODOLOGY

Evaluating Supporter: Market Pavilion

Open-Air Museum

As part of the open-air museum, two distinct styles of vernacular houses have been fossilized and transformed into life-size artefacts that display number of features traditional to Carpatho-Rusyn culture. Concerned with preservation and education, these original architectonic forms alongside carefully decorated backyards are main attractions that inform the visitors about the unique Carpatho-Rusyn heritage. As one enters the museum compound through the virtual front entrance from the market, he immediately 'steps into the past' and confronts life as it was in the late 1800's. Taken from the indoor gallery exhibited in the attic of the 'castle', which is currently an elementary school, various artefacts, such as traditional spinning wheel and a dining table, have been placed in the exhibition houses in their original location, as they would be by their original dwellers. This enables the visitors to contemplate the life as it was idealized in the past which in turn gages their own as they are physically transported back in time and surrounded by artefacts, historical objects, customs and traditions of their ancestors. The objects inside the houses such as pottery, rugs, icons, embroidery and furniture point to the originality of the folk creation, the sensibility and care for the beauty of the rural people.

To give the exhibition a better understanding of Carpatho-Rusyn culture, the houses have not been structurally or decoratively altered. Unlike the village museum in Bucharest, Romania, which is conceived as a collection of 'exemplary' traditional structures and brought from various locations of the country, Carpatho-Rusyn open-air museum features the houses in their original setting and appearance. As part of the traditional open air museums, many of the buildings are

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presented or selected for their uniqueness or special qualities of scale, craftsmanship or decoration, by implication they low-rate the simpler and less singular buildings which nonetheless contribute to their environmental contexts.[8] In addition, this particular selection and placement strategy within the museum confines creates a picture that associates vernacular buildings with the past which in turn isolates them from the modern world. As such, they become only a representation of a real-scale art, and not as true examples of domestic dwellings in the right of their original character, function and setting. For this reason, the third and the oldest example of the traditional Carpatho-Rusyn architecture is displayed and open for visits at its original location and unaltered setting, which is outside the compound of a designated open-air museum.

By preserving domestic and functional buildings they are helping to generate an understanding of the regional architecture which will ensure respect for it in the future.[9] As part of the open-air museum, the original examples of vernacular dwellings are displayed to successfully represent the history and design of the original Carpatho-Rusyn rural architecture. In the scheme of the entire scope of the project, it serves as a departure point that empowers the visitor with the knowledge of Carpatho-Rusyn customs and traditions before he continues the journey through to the other attractions of the 'living monument'.

BELOW LEFT: *Fig. 4.15 An aerial photograph showing the extent of the existing village market and bus terminal. As the market is relocated to its new home, the bus terminal will be expanded to accommodate easier traffic flow and communication*

BELOW RIGHT: *Fig. 4.16 An aerial photograph of the elementary school 'Petro Kuzmjak' from which the existing artefacts will be relocated to their new home at AGRC*
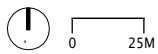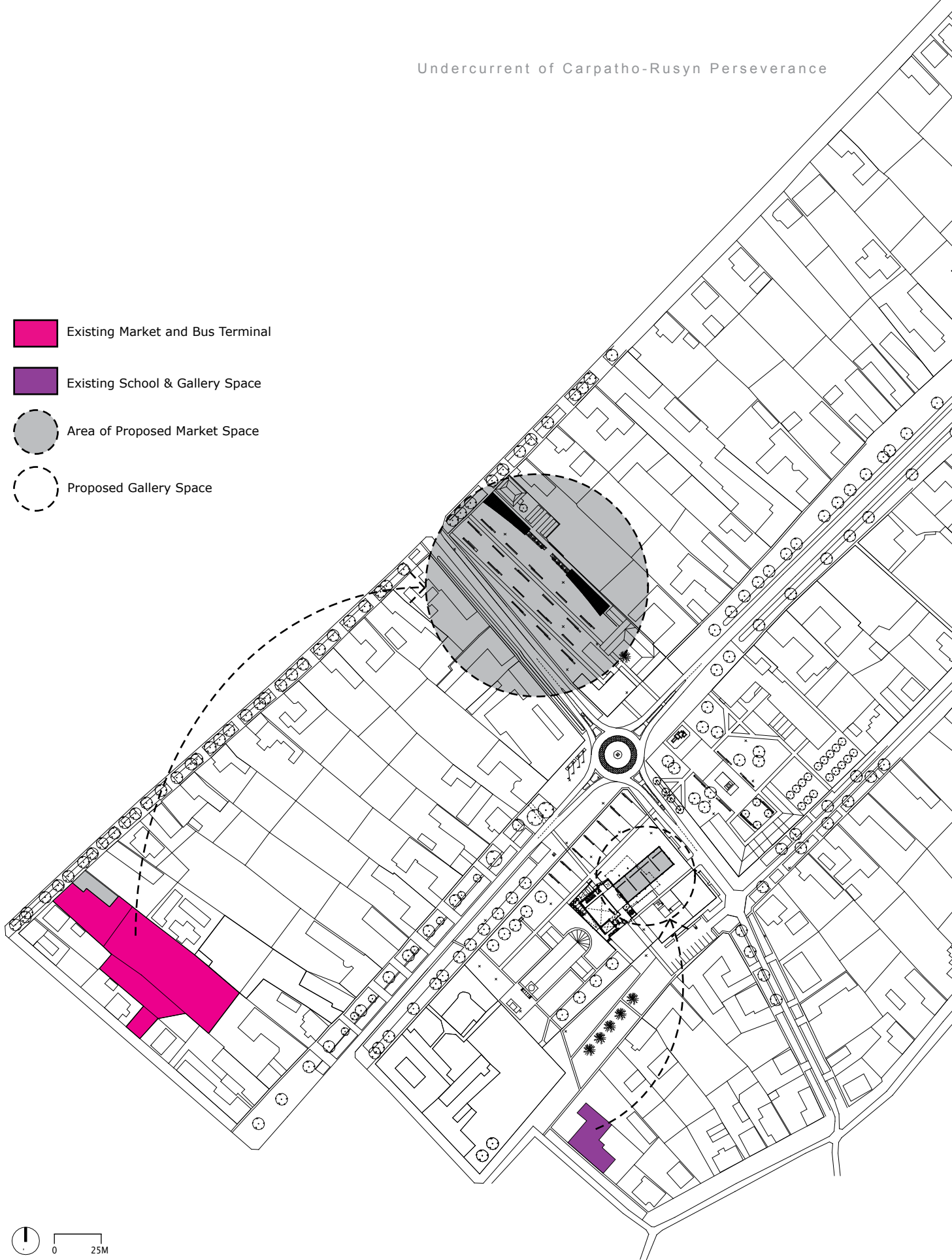
OPPOSITE: *Fig. 4.17 Program relocation diagram*

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8. Oliver, *Built to Meet Needs: Cultural Issues in Vernacular Architecture*, 312
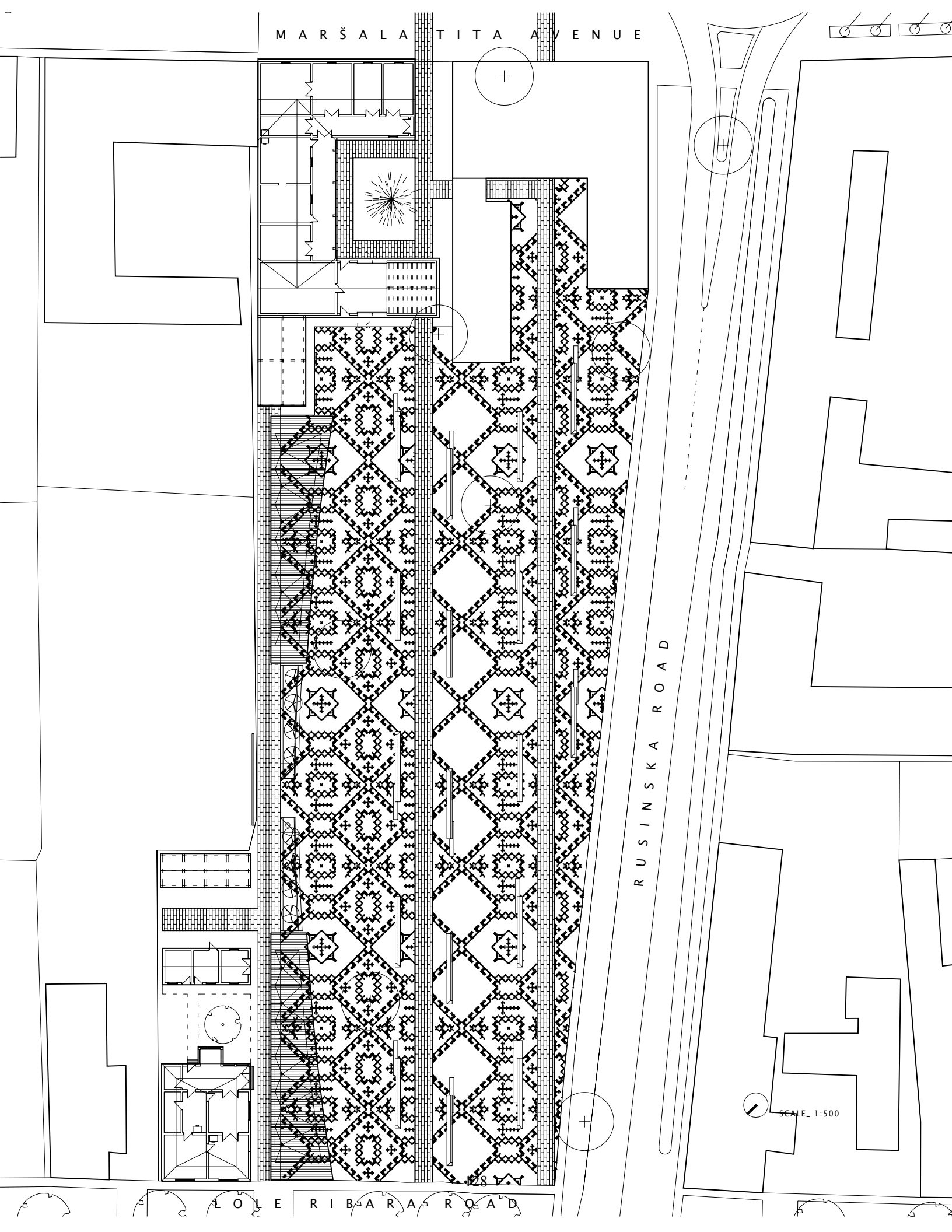9. Ibid.

Existing Market and Bus Terminal

Existing School & Gallery Space

Area of Proposed Market Space

Proposed Gallery Space

0   25M

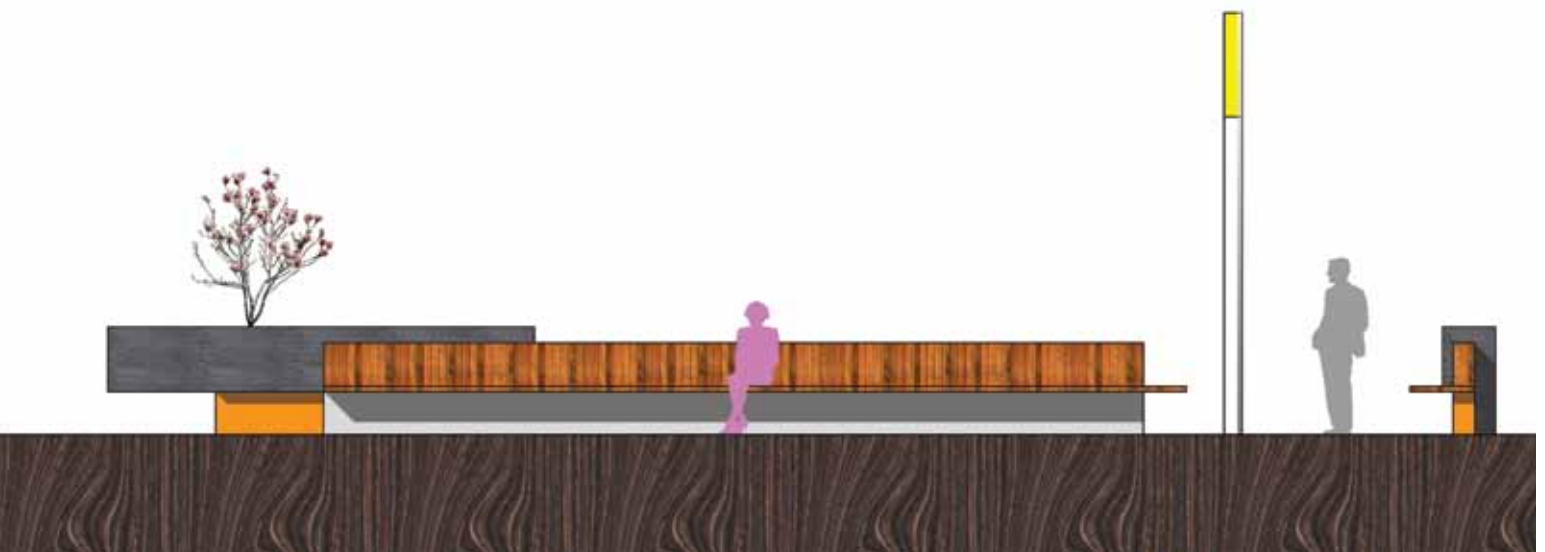R U S I N S K A   R O A D

SCALE_ 1:500

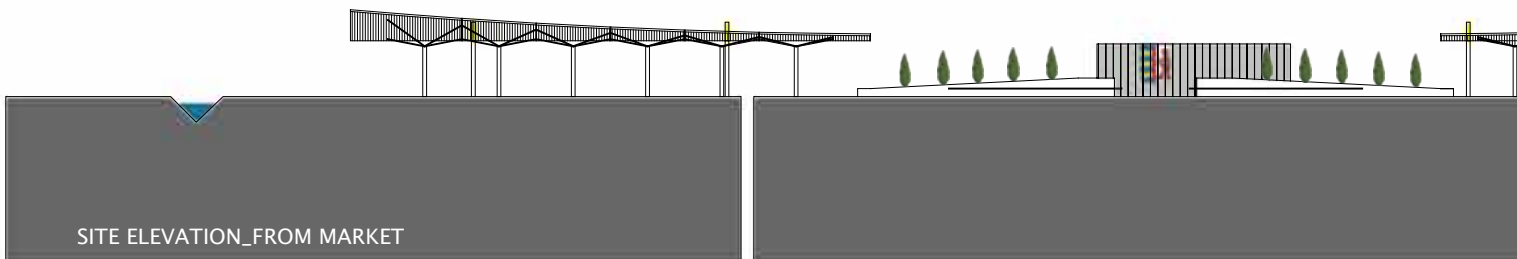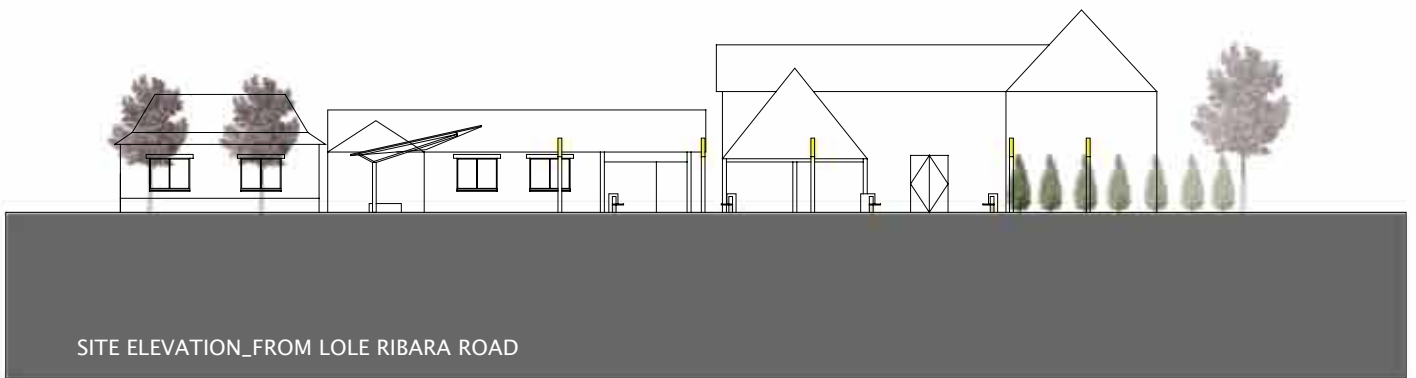OPPOSITE: *Fig. 4.18 Site plan of the Market Pavilion, 1:500*

BELOW: *Fig. 4.19 An elevation of the proposed bench and a light post*

NEXT SPREAD: *Fig. 4.20 Proposed Market Pavilion site elevations, 1:400*

The Market and Exhibition Space

The village market is a vital component of the living monument. Envisioned as an expansive forecourt to the open air museum and a potential exhibition space, this flat embroidered platform transforms to become a major market space. As a primary element of the supporter pavilion and a main theatre for the traditional Carpatho-Rusyn goods exchange, the market considers new spatial qualities that produce a unique experience for the visitors. The program is conceived as a multitude of various routes, such that different activities have a potential to enrich the experience of the site as a whole. The spatial arrangement of the site reflect materiality and detailing of its architectonic components to create a unified public space which enables a broad range of programmatic and spontaneous uses. The key elements include a permanent installment of benches accompanied by pillars of hope as lighting system, raised planters and two independent curved glass canopies that serve as shelters and unrestricted boundary between the market and the open air museum. The existing components include a remodelled Gentlemen's Inn that has been utilized to accommodate the indoor market and a storage area for tables and other equipment that support outdoor activities. Cumulatively they produce a potential to address both interior and exterior audiences, extending beyond to the public street and rest of the living monument. As the interplay between the visitors and the versatility of the program emerges, the voices begin to intensify and contribute to the vibrancy of the public square. When it is not a market, the site engages other programmatic opportunities such as an exhibition area or a space for special events and musical concerts. It could be simply regarded as an open space that is liberally used at the discretion of a visitor.

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SITE ELEVATION_FROM RUSINSKA ROAD
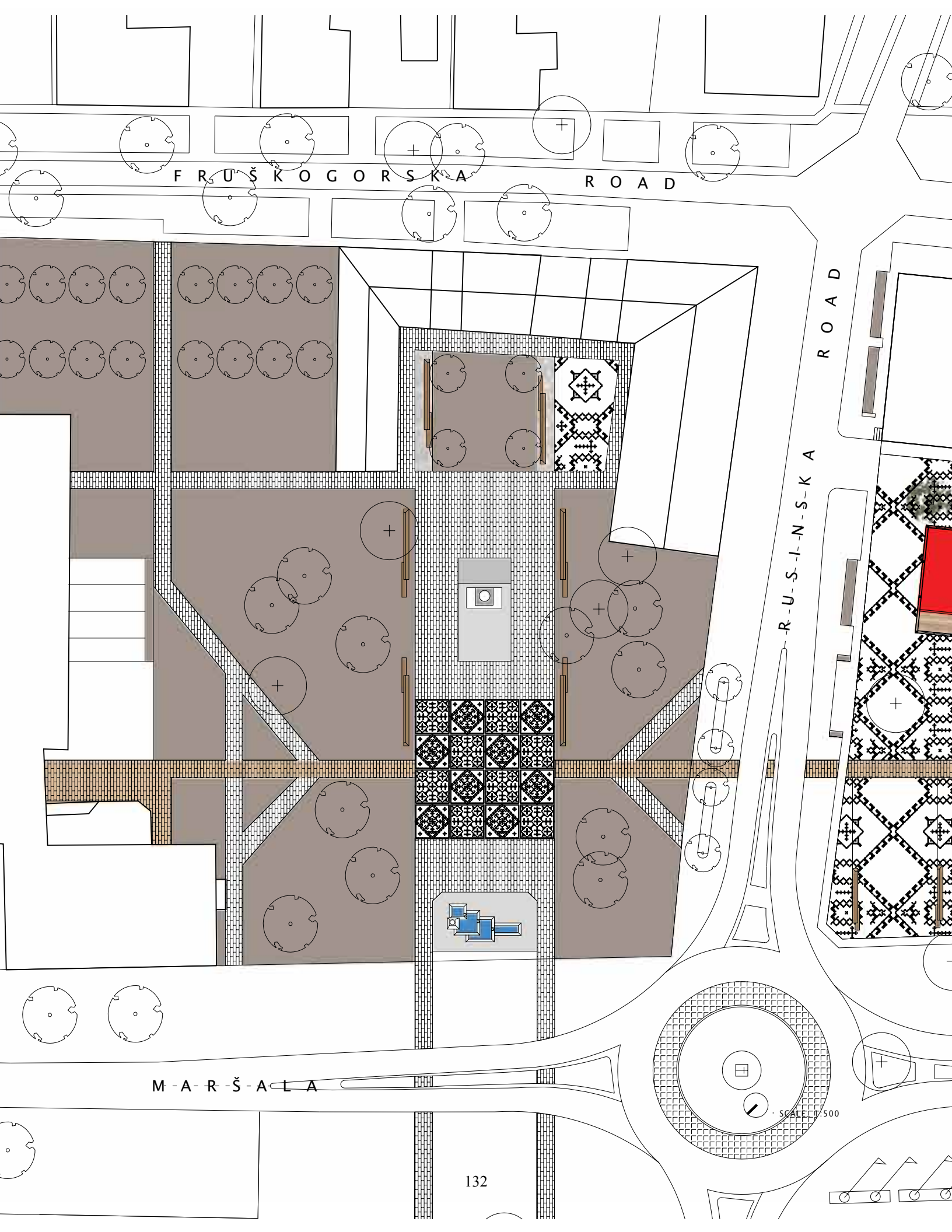

SITE ELEVATION_FROM LOLE RIBARA ROAD

SITE ELEVATION_FROM MARKET

SITE ELEVATION_FROM MARŠALA TITA AVENUE

131

F R U Š K O G O R S K A   R O A D

R O A D

R · U · S · I · N · S · K · A

M · A · R · Š · A · L · A

SCALE 1:500

132

Evaluating Associator: Park Pavilion

Civic Park and Sunken Courtyard

Programmed to associate with both Market and Arts pavilions, the extension to the civic park is poised to strengthen the existing green space by redefining its 'dead-end' corridors and inaccessible spaces. The existing park, which was redeveloped in the 1980's, pays tribute to the monument of the fallen soldiers and the 'Rusyn Lady' fountain by the implementation of public vistas that connect the monuments and extend toward the other attractions of the site. In the vicinity of the park, however, there are other significant buildings, like Carpenters Guild Building and a Community Hall, which by the use of the tall fence in their 'backyard' became disjointed and inaccessible from the park. The project within the Associator derives inspiration from the idea to reconnect the buildings with the community and reveal the compelling artefacts lodged in their backyards to the visitors of the park. The buildings are also a good example of the traditional Carpatho-Rusyn architecture, and as they become an extension of the park and exposed to the public, lend an opportunity to successfully communicate the richness of Carpatho-Rusyn history and culture. In addition, the new extension of the park addresses the significance of the monument of the fallen soldiers by revealing its views from all directions. Although the monument itself hasn't moved, the new footprint of the park and the isolation of the fences make it appear in the centre of the embroidered promenade giving it a special consideration. The public vista, which bisects the promenade diagonally, converges at its shorter side towards the sunken courtyard. Abutting the Youth Centre and directly behind the oldest and most respected restaurants of the village, the new courtyard is regarded as an outdoor gathering area and sometimes serves as an outdoor theatre for the performance of the traditional Carpatho-Rusyn folk dance.

Through the application of benches, an outdoor theatre and pillars of hope, along with the implementation of trees and flower beds native to this region, the new extension of the park rehabilitates the original civic precinct and generates meaningful experiences and relationship between nature, village and people.

OPPOSITE: *Fig. 4.21 Site plan of the Park Pavilion, 1:500*

Fig. 4.22 Photograph of the 'Rusyn Lady' fountain in the village park

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Evaluating Mediator: Arts Pavilion

The site of the arts pavilion serves as an *agora,* the ancient Athenian place of public and political exchange, but also claims the functions of a theatre, the place of planned and informal gathering, and a square. The new scheme employs the embroidered *agora* to act as a theatre for the village, an open space of pure potential for vast range of interactions and events. In addition, it becomes a forecourt to the new Carpatho-Rusyn Art Gallery and Reconciliation Centre (AGRC).

The programmatic opportunity emerges when the process of 'de-cluttering' begins to eliminate certain underutilized components of the site. Such are the administration building for the village paper 'Ruske Slovo' and a residential bungalow style housing units which have deteriorated beyond repair. The demolition procedure, however, will manage to salvage a single storey print room which was at its narrow end connected to the existing three-storey administration building. By the strategy of preservation and reconnection, the print room is further incorporated into a design to become a cultural artefact of the new AGRC and a new home for Carpatho-Rusyn traditional and modern art.

The site itself has been reshaped to support the system of embroidered pavers which are strategically placed to generate an extensive dynamic space of the arts pavilion. The intersecting public vistas which puncture the site and resemble more traditional paving system, will act as informal paths to connect other pavilions of the living monument – while the surface of the embroidered platform is animated by pillars of hope and public seating along the sidewalk of the Maršala Tita Avenue. The point at which the public vistas intersect marks the beginning of the courtyard that leads to the main entrance of the AGRC. The public vista or a 'walkway' which runs perpendicular to the 'print room' and is in line with the lobby of the AGRC has been positioned so it can successfully communicate with the new parking lot at one end and the existing Arts Theatre across the street on the other. Together, they create a unified whole and tie all the site's spatial qualities in a single language of architecture.

BELOW: *Fig. 4.23 A 'Living Monument' programmatic opportunity downtown panorama*

NEXT SPREAD: *Fig. 4.24 Existing conditions, site connectivity and site circulation plan diagrams*

VILLAGE PAPER ADMINISTRATION
BUILDING TO BE DEMOLISHED
PRINT ROOM TO REMAIN

REDESIGN THE CIVIC PARK TO ACCOMODATE
MORE GREEN SPACE AND PUBLIC VISTAS
CONNECT TO ARTS PAVILION

The design arrangement paid a particular attention to the other buildings present on the site, the iconic cathedral of St. Nicolas and the Health clinic. As mediators to the AGRC, it was important to incorporate them into the overall layout of the site. By the virtue of their qualities and particular program, the elegant embroidered surface of the *agora* extends into their 'backyards' to provide them with the essential frontage and easy access from the street. The implementation of new linear gardens and openings offer a rich texture and connectivity between the physical objects of the site, as well as the revitalized square. The created pockets of green space in the voids serve as the resting areas for the visitors.

The development of the arts pavilion is conceived on basis to become a founding element that drives the design of the Carpatho-Rusyn Art Gallery and Reconciliation Centre and embrace the programmatic qualities it attempts to foster. The new scheme pays tribute to the iconic buildings of the site, animating the landscape layer to define a space that emphasizes the monumentality of the new Carpatho-Rusyn civic precinct.

AGRC HEIGHT NOT TO EXCEED THE
ROOF LINE OF THE UNIATE CATHEDRAL

EXISTING CULTURAL CENTRE TO
REMAIN
CONNECT TO ARTS PAVILION

EXISTING GENTLEMEN'S INN
INTERIOR TO RECEIVE NEW
PROGRAM
(INDOOR MARKET SPACE)

OUTDOOR CAFE PATIO TO
BE RELOCATED TO AGRC
ROOFTOP

A NEW ROUNDABOUT TO PROVIDE
EASE OF TRAFFIC ACCESS AND
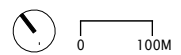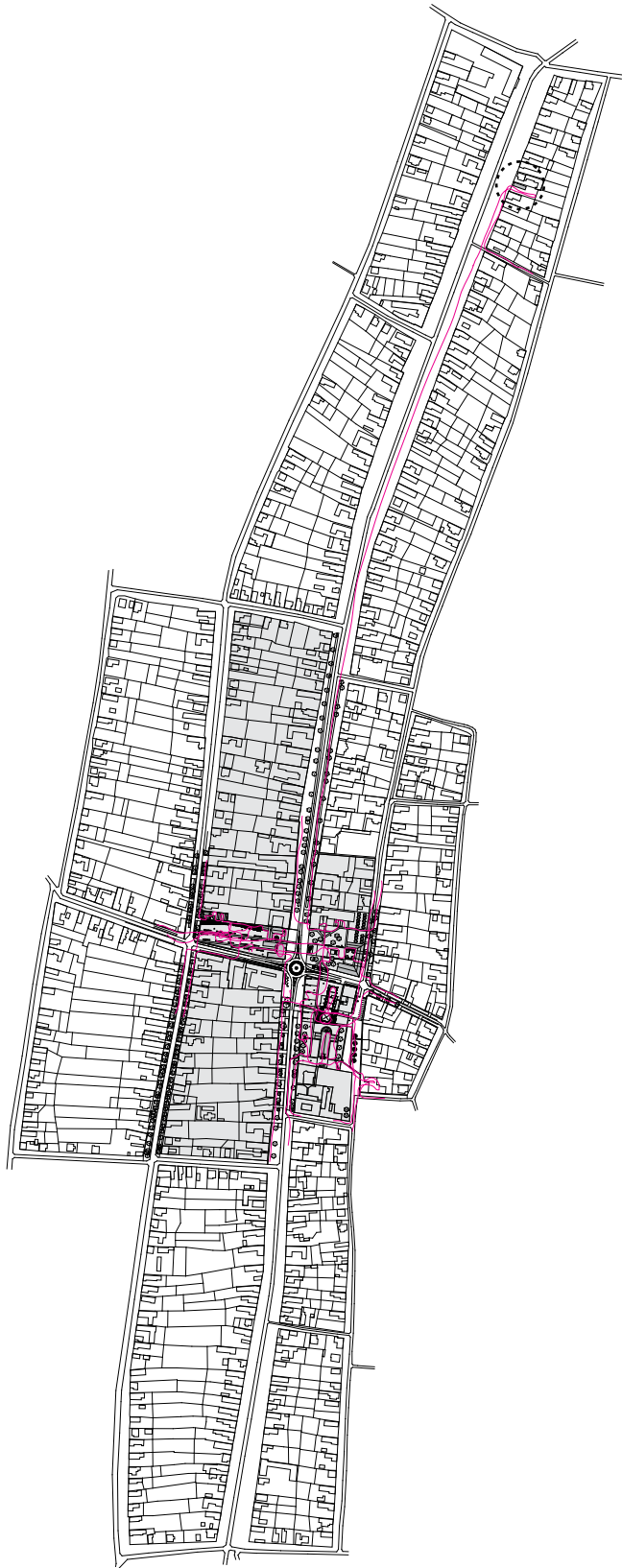CIRCULATION

1

2

0   100M

0   100M
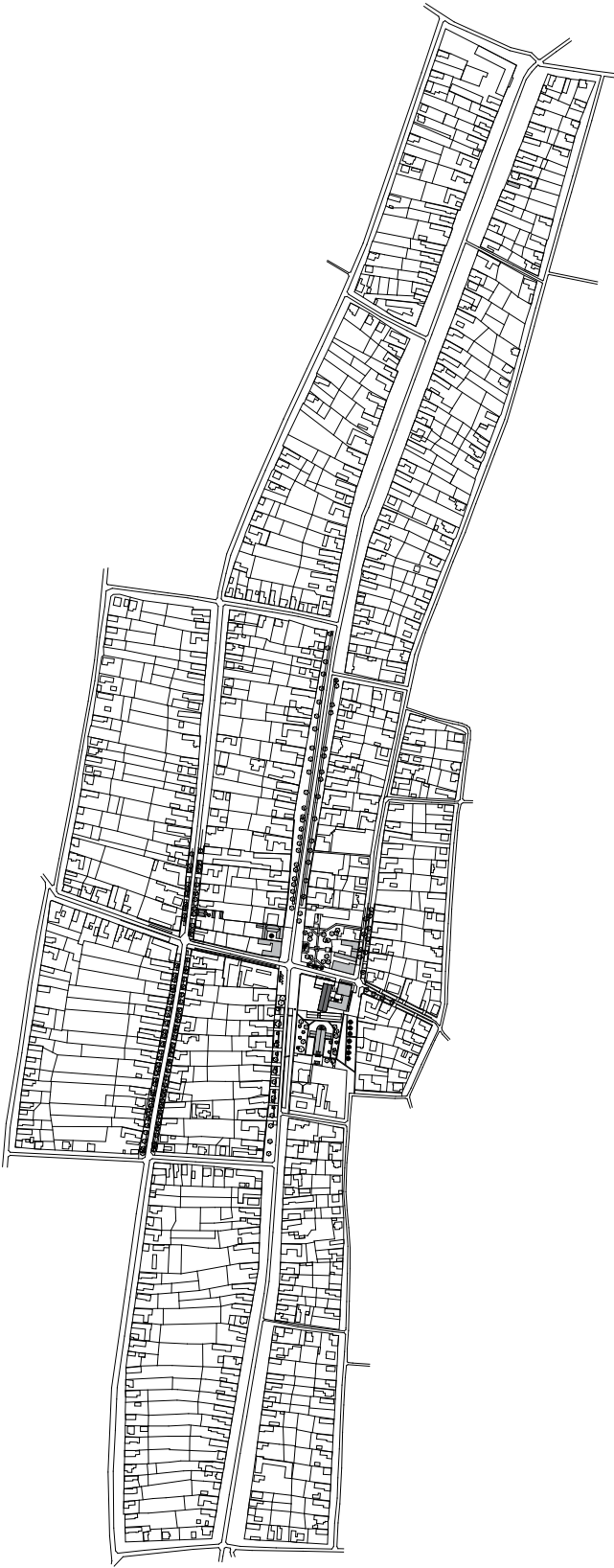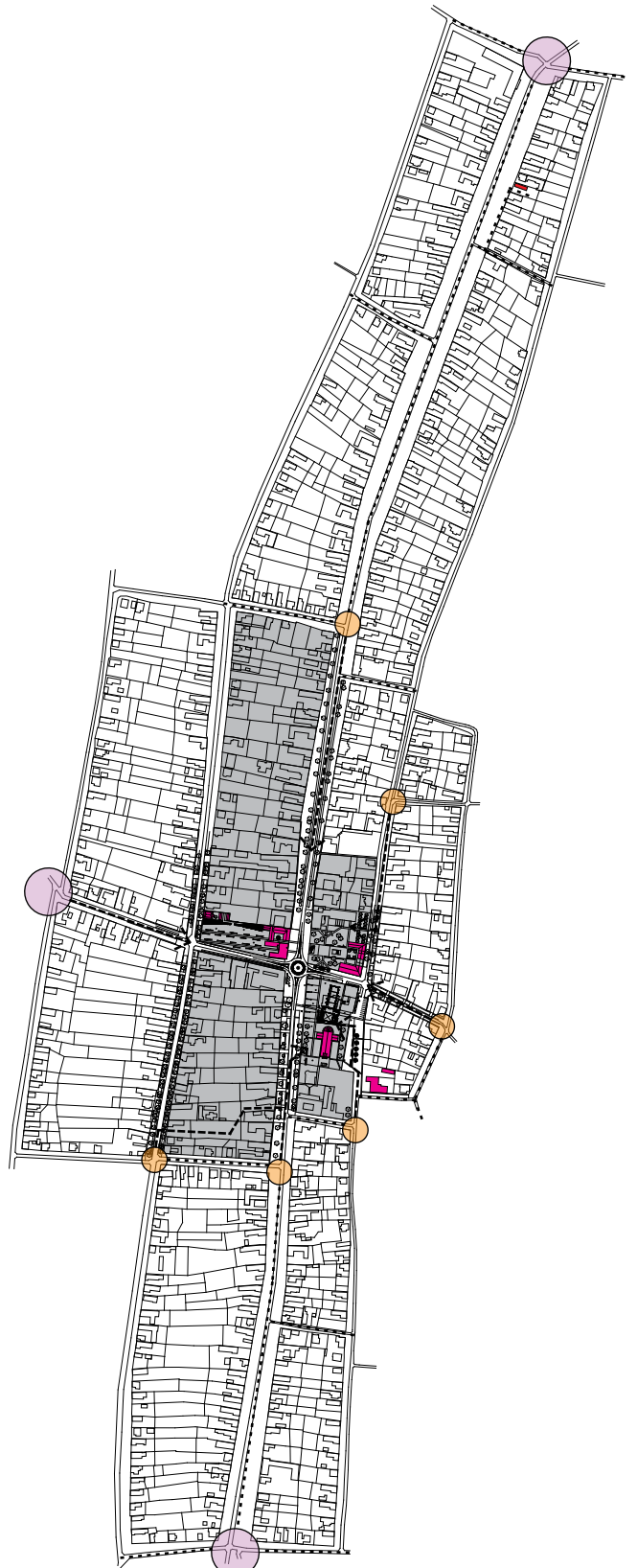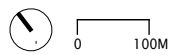
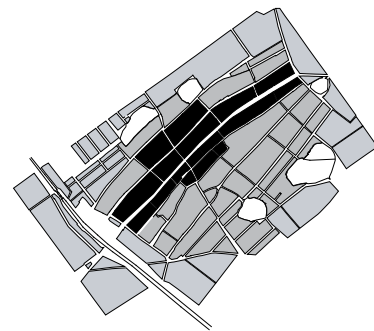1. EXISTING CONDITIONS

2. SITE CONNECTIVITY

PRIMARY POINTS OF ENTRY
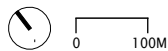(village)

SECONDARY POINTS OF ENTRY
(downtown core)

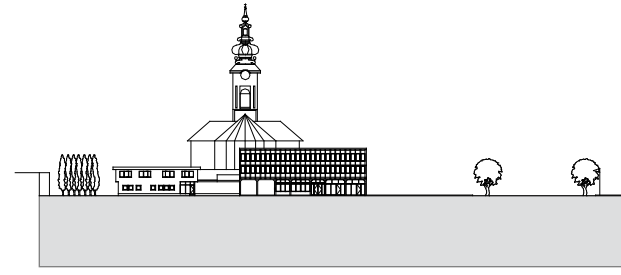3. SITE CIRCULATION

USE OF SPACE
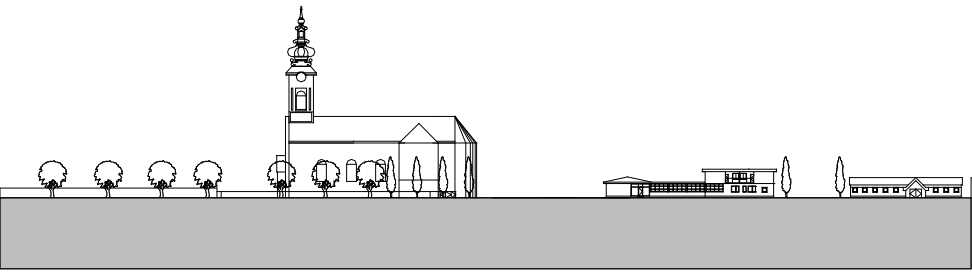(living monument)

3

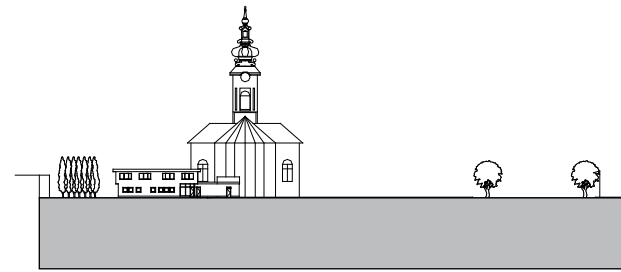0   100M

KEY MAP

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SOUTH-EAST ELEVATION

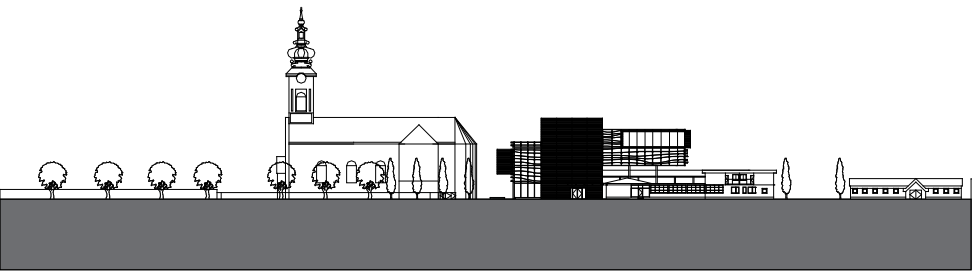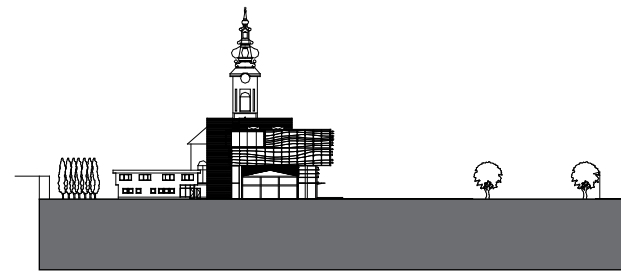NORTH-EAST ELEVATION

EXISTING ELEVATIONS

SOUTH-EAST ELEVATION

NORTH-EAST ELEVATION

POST-DEMOLITION ELEVATIONS

SOUTH-EAST ELEVATION

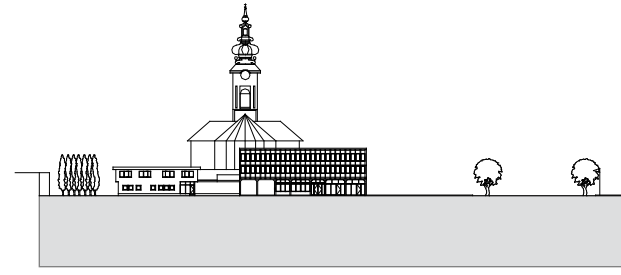NORTH-EAST ELEVATION

NEW ELEVATIONS

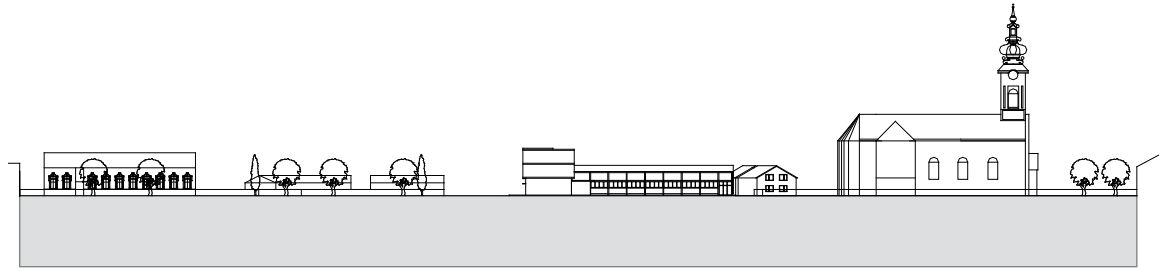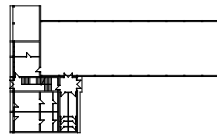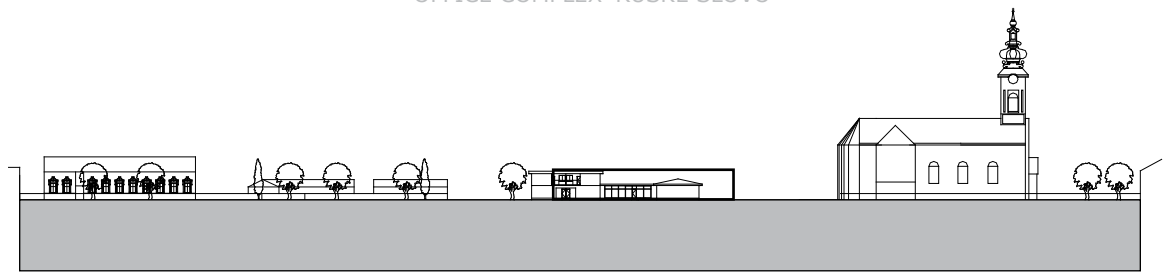*Fig. 4.25 Arts Pavilion elevation study*

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NORTH-WEST ELEVATION

EXISTING PLAN_GOUND FLOOR
OFFICE COMPLEX 'RUSKE SLOVO'

EXISTING SECTION
OFFICE COMPLEX 'RUSKE SLOVO'

NORTH-WEST ELEVATION
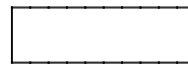
PARTIAL FLOOR PLAN_PRINT ROOM
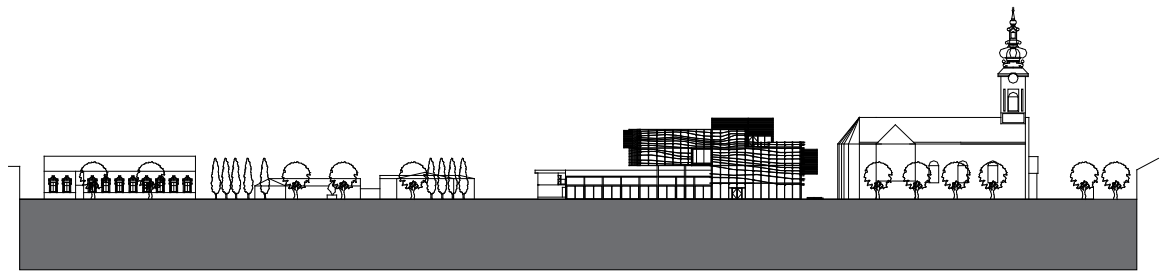
NORTH-WEST ELEVATION
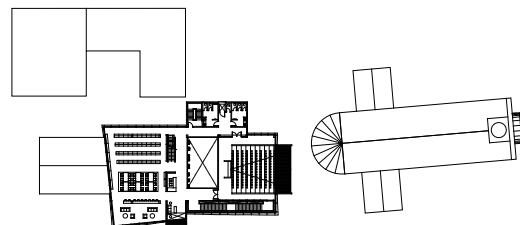
UPPER LEVEL PLAN
'THE RIBBON EFFECT' ART GALLERY AND RECONCILIATION CENTRE

One has the impression that memories most carefully built up with memory architecture, with architectural places reflected within. The art of memory is an invisible art; it reflects real places but is about, not the places themselves, but the reflection of these within the imagination.

Frances Yates
from Birksted, *Landscapes of Memory and Experience*, 48

artefact ←————————————————————————

DESIGN PROJECT

Evaluating 'Ribbon Effect':

Carpatho-Rusyn Art Gallery and Reconciliation Centre (AGRC)

Carpatho-Rusyn Art Gallery and Reconciliation Centre is the heart and soul of the living monument. It functions as a primary destination for the village dwellers and visitors of the broader community. It is here where one can learn about the fascinating culture and identity of the Carpatho-Rusyn people. The project embraces education, culture, art and community devoted to Carpatho-Rusyn perseverance with the intent to strengthen their contemporary identity within the satellite village of Ruski Kerestur, or precisely the Carpatho-Rusyn diaspora.

The new building takes a clear position regarding the study and dissemination of Carpatho-Rusyn identity in the global sphere, and not just for the benefit of the village redevelopment and its community. It strives to achieve the recognition beyond its borders, perhaps to touch souls of every Carpatho-Rusyn or non-Carpatho-Rusyn around the world, wherever they are. Most significant, however, is its purpose to propose a cultural framework of the unique Carpatho-Rusyn identity to the Serbian society and its government, which hold the ultimate fate for the Carpatho-Rusyns of Vojvodina. Therefore, the creation of the contemporary cultural and educational precinct in the downtown of Ruski Kerestur is challenging but also extremely vital, if both the Carpatho-Rusyns and general Serbian populations are to learn about themselves and each other. The project, together with the implementation of the living monument, serves as a departure point that initiates these relationships and underlying notion of human coexistence.
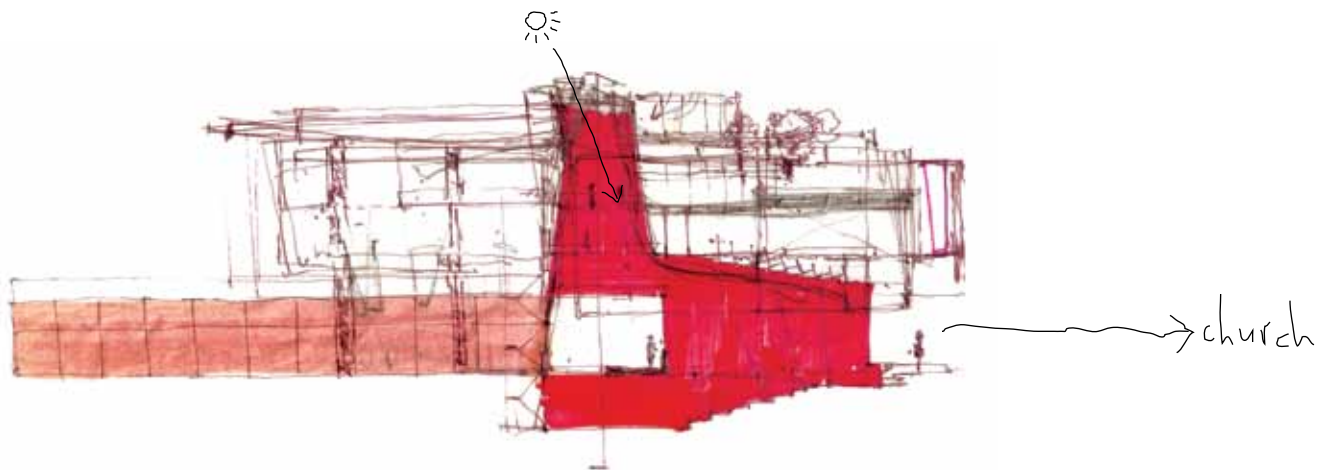
Fig. 4.26 Preliminary concept sketch showing the brightness of the 'negative space' which becomes the 'vault' of the atrium space

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Parti

The parti and various schematic drawings represent the initial construction of this main focus. Following an extensive model study, the concept parti begins to formulate an architectural language, addressing concerns for movement, light, experience, quality of space, and site. Conceived as an addition to an existing print room of the village paper 'Ruske Slovo', the new structure rises above to expose its rudimentary brick façade and give right to its iconic presence. While the Art Gallery is suitably located within an open space of the former print room, the program of the Reconciliation Centre is organized on multi levels to limit the area of the building footprint. Where the two intersect, the design introduces a physical common element in a shape of a vertical atrium that acts as a hinge or a 'vault' which binds new with the existing structure. It is in the atrium space where the distinction between programmatic elements is differentiated. As the visitors enter the common element at grade level, which is regarded as the entrance lobby, they are at once exposed to all the activities the AGRC has to offer, enticing them with the glimpses of human presence and behaviour both at 'cultural artefact' multipurpose space and galleries below and the library and reading room above.
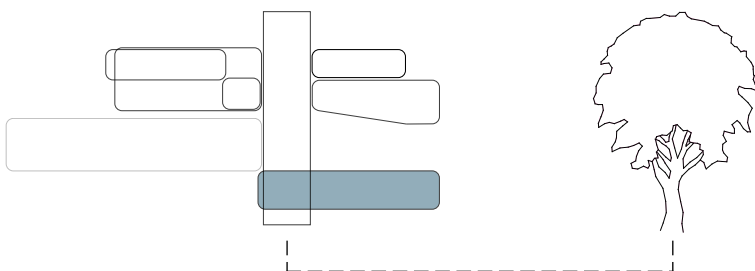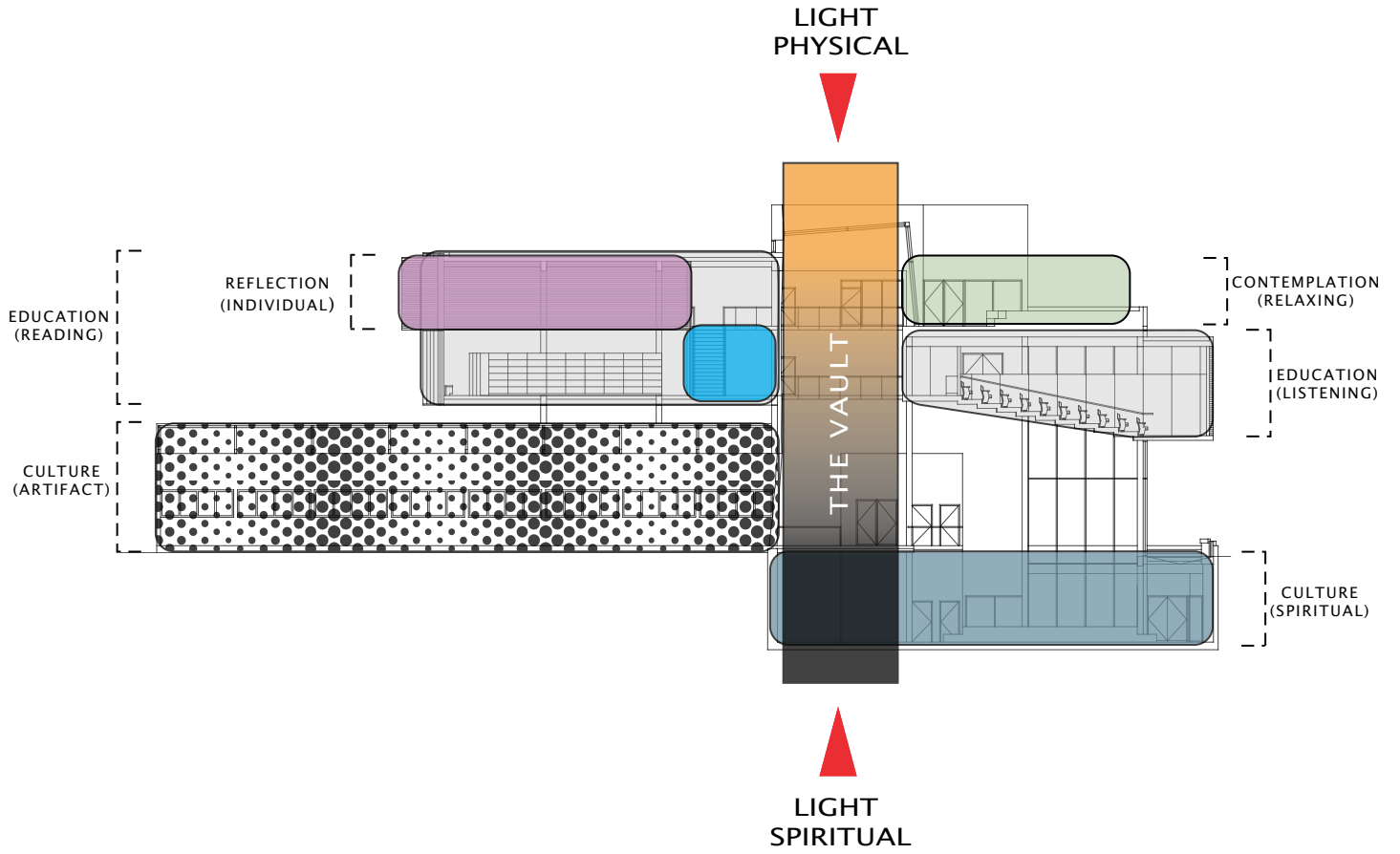
The defining characteristic of the project is best described by the sectional parti diagram. Building envelope and footprint restrictions result in a design of a considerable sectional ingenuity, both from the structural and aesthetic perspective. Juxtaposing the existing print room, the new addition is conceived as a 'translucent box' which is defined by the composition of vertical glass panels. As it sits on the anonymous cast in place concrete columns, which are arranged independently from the existing building and moment connected to provide structural integrity to the building, the new glowing box literally appears to be floating in the air.

The building is further divided into primary and secondary elements. Within the box are the programmatic volumes which are by the presence of a vertical atrium space divided into two distinct 'wings' or primary elements, and within them a series of secondary elements, such as the library lobby, reading room and suspended auditorium. From the south façade, these appear as solid volumes that puncture the glass box in different directions to frame site specific views. It is here where the division of space and the play of the opposites begin: the solid volumes appear to be carved out of the glass box and strategically placed to define a particular function, while the negative space created by the solids serves as circulation paths that connect them. This negative zone provides a setting for socializing and visual communication between the visitors as they pass one another and then disappear into the solids, or spaces designated for either learning or contemplation. At night, this interplay between appearing and disappearing animates the front façade, giving it a function to inform its vibrant character to the passerby or the occupants of the *agora*. The combination of these experiences produced by the interplay of spaces provides an opportunity for the villagers to visually reconnect and reconcile the knowledge of 'self' by entering and using the new building, which is as beautiful as it is informative. The polarity between the contained solids and open circulation patterns expresses the need for communication and knowledge of the individual

OPPOSITE: *Fig. 4.27 AGRC sectional parti diagram*

NEXT SPREAD: *Fig. 4.28 AGRC preliminary design model study image vignette*

within the realm of the building as well as of the collective within the realm of the living monument.

LIGHT PHYSICAL

REFLECTION (INDIVIDUAL)

EDUCATION (READING)

CONTEMPLATION (RELAXING)

EDUCATION (LISTENING)

CULTURE (ARTIFACT)

THE VAULT

CULTURE (SPIRITUAL)

LIGHT SPIRITUAL

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model study
PRELIMINARY DESIGN - IMAGE VIGNETTE

stage
one

PRELIMINARY

stage
two

PARTI DEVELOPMENT - VOLUMETRIC &

stage
three

'HOLLOW MODEL' - LIGHT & SHADOW DEVELOPMENT

stage
four

FINAL MODEL SCHEME - 'THE RIBBON EFFECT'

SKIN DEVELOPMENT, MORPHOLOGICAL CONTEXT & SHADING DEVICE
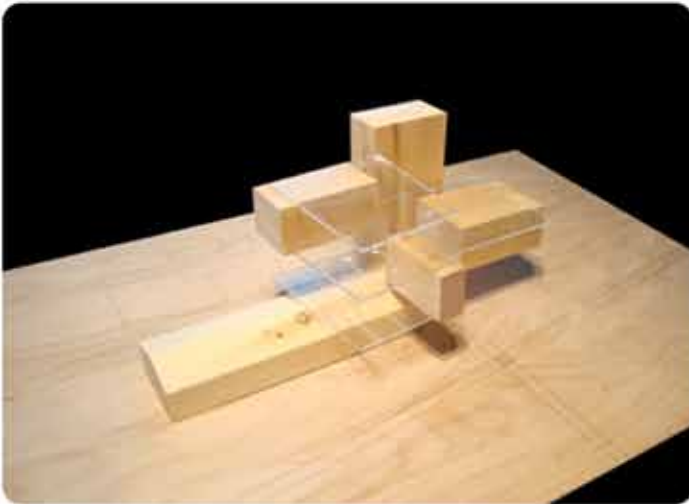

SPATIAL DESIGN MODEL

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model images
PRELIMINARY DESIGN - IMAGE VIGNETTE: SEQUENCE OF DEVELOPMENT

PARTI - PRIMARY & SECONDARY ELEMENTS

PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT - FROM LOBBY TOWARDS AUDITO-RIUM VIA GRAND STAIR

SKIN - RIBBONS AS A SHADING DEVICE: A LOOK AT THE MAIN COMMUNITY SPACE FROM ENTRANCE

SKIN - MAIN SKYLIGHT: A LOOK AT THE ROOFTOP TERRACE AND GARDEN SPACE
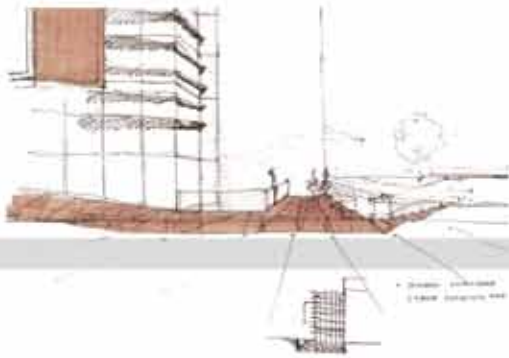
LIGHT & SHADOW - LOWER GALLERY SPACE: EVENING
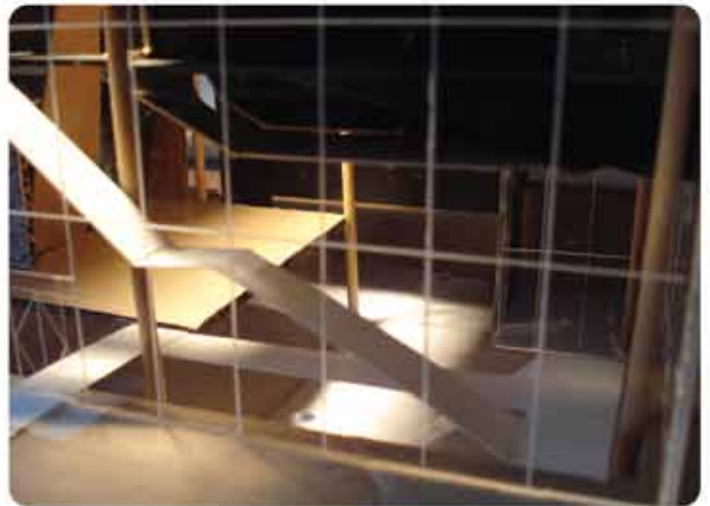
LIGHT & SHADOW - MAIN LOBBY: DAY
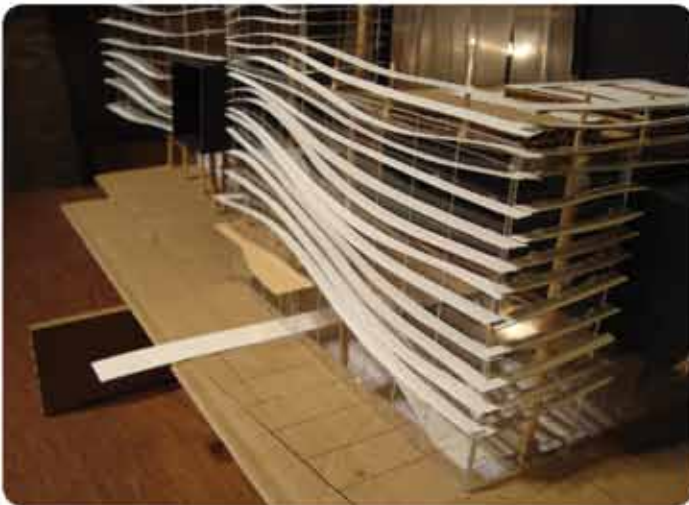
FINAL MODEL - A LOOK AT THE ELEGANT RIBBONING EFFECT OF THE SHADING DEVICE: DAY

FINAL MODEL - THE GLASS BOX APPEARS TO GLOW AT NIGHT: A VIEW OF THE LIBRARY AS PRIMARY (OPEN) AND LIBRARY LOBBY AS SECONDARY (SOLID) ELEMENT

147
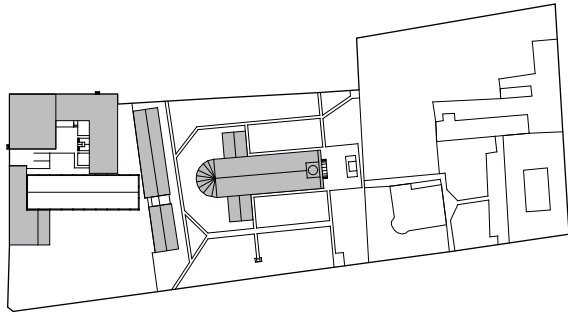
1. EXISTING CONDITIONS

☐ EXISTING OFFICE COMPLEX 'RUSKE SLOVO' PRINT ROOM
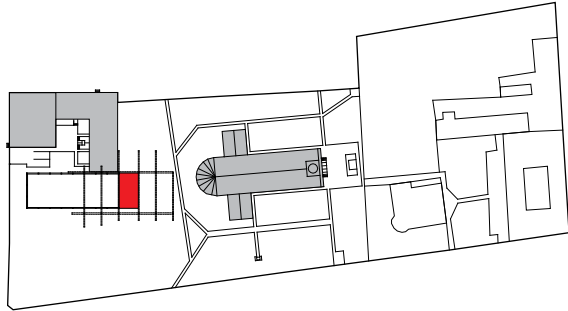
2. DEMOLITION + STRUCTURAL ELEMENTS

☐ CULTURE ARTIFACT (ART GALLERY)

■ THE VAULT
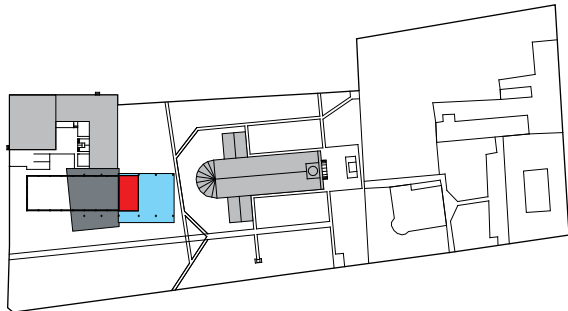
3. PRIMARY VOLUMETRIC ELEMENTS

■ READING WING (EDUCATION)

■ LISTENING WING (CONVERSATION)
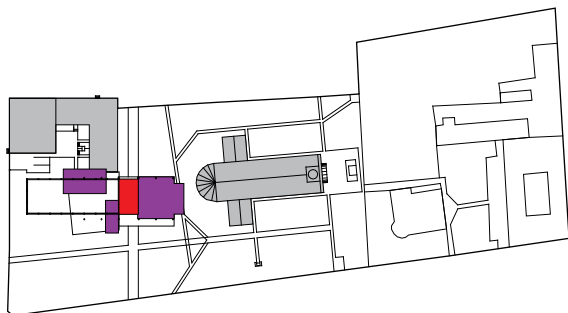
4. SECONDARY VOLUMETRIC ELEMENTS

■ LIBRARY LOBBY, READING ROOM, LECTURE ROOM
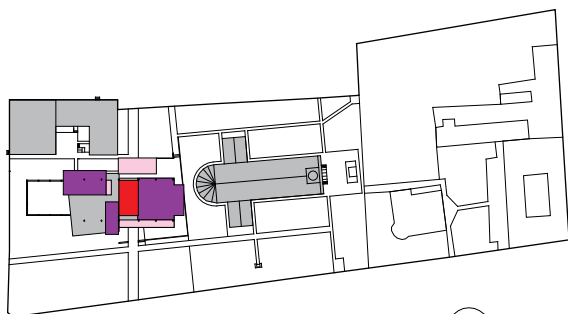
5. CONNECTED VOLUMETRIC ELEMENTS

■ VERTICAL CIRCULATION

0   20M

Programmatic Opportunities

To produce a tangible design that explores both human experiences and their interrelationships, and at the same time serves as an icon of Carpatho-Rusyn culture and identity, the significance of the program and its spatial arrangement is particularly observed. The sequence of spaces is arranged in a manner to evoke certain hierarchy of experiences and layering of information in a user. The interior of the 'box' is an exercise of controlling program and movement: the solid volumes within the primary elements of the building are visible from all directions due to the openness of the negative space, 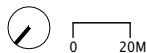and while they provide the user with the glimpse of their nature, they are only accessible from the planned routes that would ensure the strategic process of information. In addition, the routes connect the program functions in a way so they don't interfere with one another, as the noise of the multipurpose room in the lower level is sufficiently blocked from the intimacy of the private reading room located on the enclosed mezzanine of the library. There are number of planned routes around the building, from interior to exterior, from public to private, from collective to intimate. As visitors begin to utilize these routes, they create a circulatory pattern around the building. Within each visitor, however, there are different perceptions of space and points of interests, and as they continually seek different experiences, in turn, they recreate the routes. It is this process of renegotiation of experiences what gives life to the Reconciliation centre.

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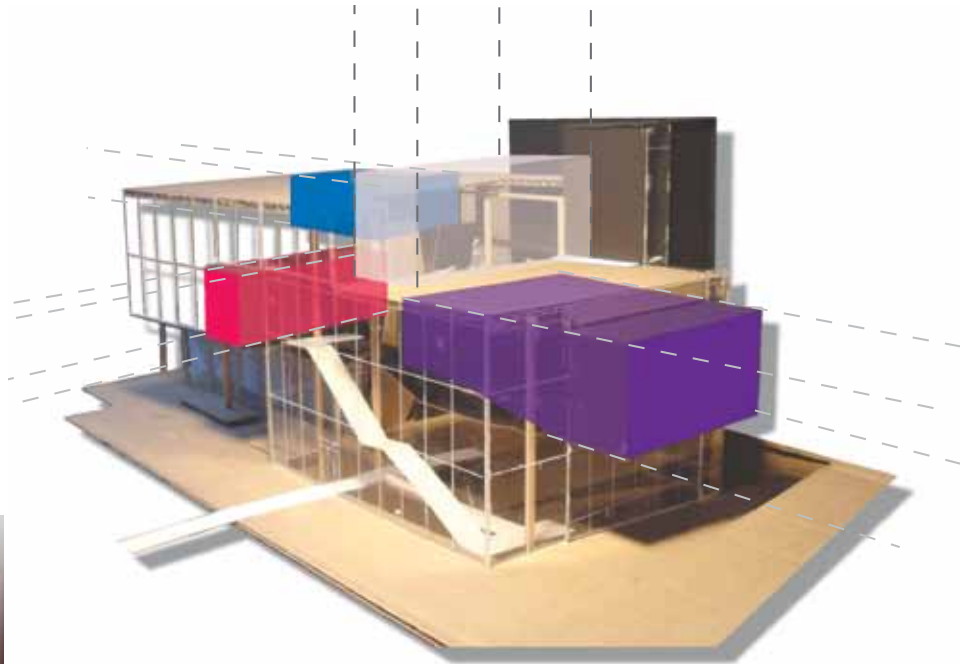
Experience of Spaces

The quality of spaces in the building is a driving element for producing meaningful experiences. As one enters the building through the narrow bridge and steps onto the floating lobby, he is immediately confronted with the power of the open space in the atrium. This is the centre of the stage, a threshold between the monumentality of the former and the novelty of the present. Here, the light from the skylight above and the diffused light from the glass box collide to produce a tranquil sanctuary, a place that embodies an essence of reconciliation and a sense of rediscovery. From the lobby, the suspended auditorium and the library appear to hover in mid air, as the elusive lower gallery and the multipurpose platform emerges from down below. In any which direction the visitor chooses to look, the visual path of travel is virtually unobstructed. From here, the visitors have a plethora of programmatic opportunity. The program is implemented within the solids of the primary elements, as outlined by the library and reading room of the 'reading sector' and the auditorium/lecture room, café and the rooftop terrace of the 'listening sector'. Art gallery and multipurpose space are perceived as components of the 'culture/artefact sector'. The administrative elements and building services are located in the common tower which is home to offices, library staff room, HVAC systems, storage space, fire exit, elevator and public washrooms. The main circulation pattern is generated by the series of walkways or 'bridges' which connect the primary and secondary elements in a cyclical motion around the vertical shaft of the atrium.

Loggia, Main and Lower Galleries

As a particular experience of spaces is encouraged, the most obvious begins with the visit of the loggia, a narrow corridor which is easily accessible from the lobby. The loggia extends through the entire gamut of the art gallery on the main level and is animated by the traditional Carpatho-Rusyn pottery and embroidered cloths. From this corridor, the series of openings in the wall lead to the main galleries which are home to various artefacts brought from the original location south of the site, from the attic of the 'Petro Kuzmjak' elementary school, commonly known as the 'castle'. From the art gallery, the visitors have a choice to either visit the lower galleries or continue up the grand stair toward the upper floors.

As opposed to the main gallery, the lower galleries exhibit temporary artwork which changes often to provide a more transient space. The art is mostly displayed on the perimeter wall and is experienced in a circular motion. As one begins this journey from underneath the lobby, he is allured by the story of art that leads him around the raised wood platform towards the intimate outdoor courtyard and the reflective pool, which acts as a place of contemplation. In the centre of the multipurpose space is a raised platform that predominantly serves as an informal seating area, but on special occasions it becomes a theatre on which various performances such as traditional folk dancing can take center stage. As the lights which illuminate the art temporarily dim

OPPOSITE: *Fig. 4.32 Site plan of the Arts Pavilion, 1:500*
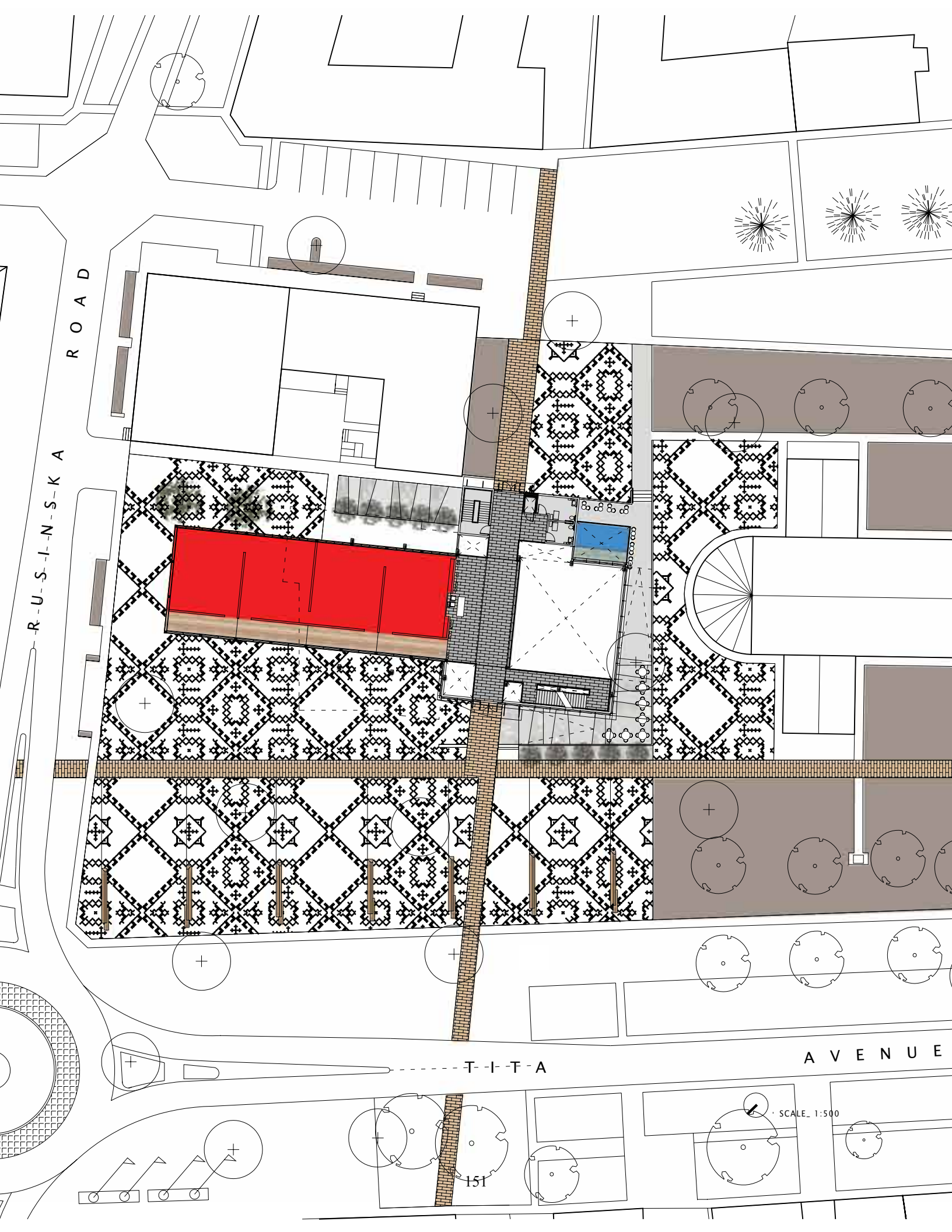
R
O
A
D

R-U-S-I-N-S-K-A

T-I-T-A   A V E N U E

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SCALE_ 1:500

and dancers become the object of viewing, the visitors gather around the perimeter wall to enjoy a live concert. The lobby and the exterior walkway, which gently descends from the entrance of the complex towards the sunken seating area which culminates above the reflecting pool and runs along the perimeter of the curtain wall above the stage, act as upper viewing galleries for the attractions below. Similarly, the patrons of the outdoor gathering area and a café can also participate in the action which is supported by the clarity of visual communication between the inside and outside. This unique combination of art and folklore within the common architectural context generates a healthy and communally vibrant space. The thoughtful refinement of elements that eloquently accompanies the variety of programs creates a supportive and inspiring environment to encourage creativity and cultural interaction. As the model for the harmonious coexistence of heritage and contemporary art, the design of the 'culture/artefact sector' offers a metaphorical resolution that uniquely fuses the idea of preservation and challenge of the contemporary Carpatho-Rusyn identity.

BELOW: *Fig. 4.33 Section A-A, 1:400*

OPPOSITE ABOVE: *Fig. 4.34 Lower level plan, 1:400*

OPPOSITE BELOW: *Fig. 4.35 Main level plan, 1:400*
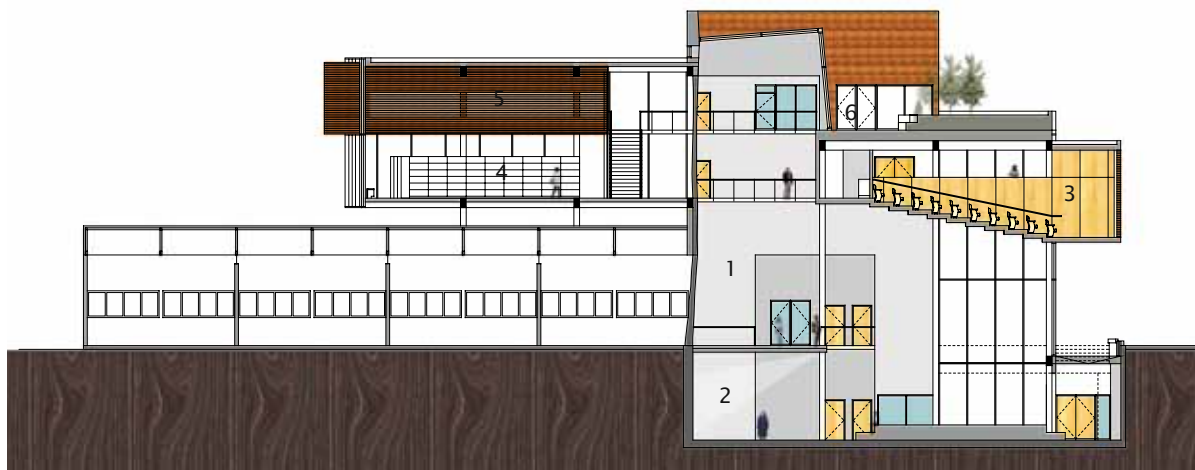
SECTION A–A

1. MAIN LOBBY 'VAULT'
2. LOWER GALLERY
3. AUDITORIUM/LECTURE ROOM
4. LIBRARY
5. READING ROOM
6. ROOFTOP TERRACE

A ⊢   ⊣ A
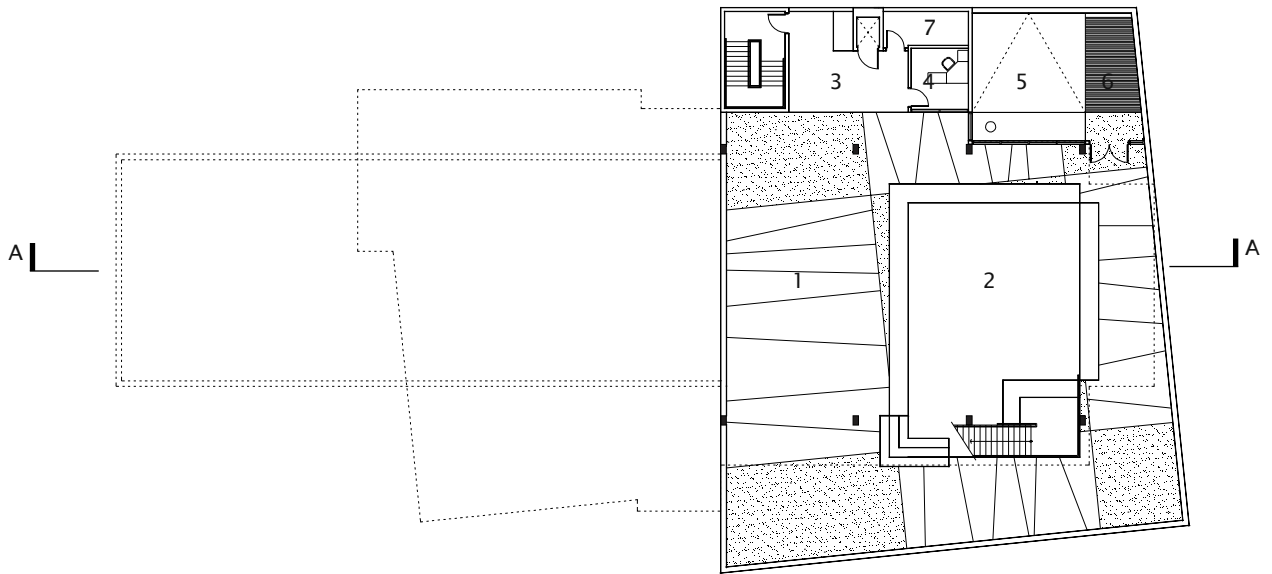
LOWER LEVEL

1. LOWER GALLERY
2. STAGE
3. ELEVATOR LOBBY
4. CURATOR'S OFFICE
5. REFLECTING POOL
6. SUNKEN COURTYARD
7. STORAGE

A ⊢   ⊣ A
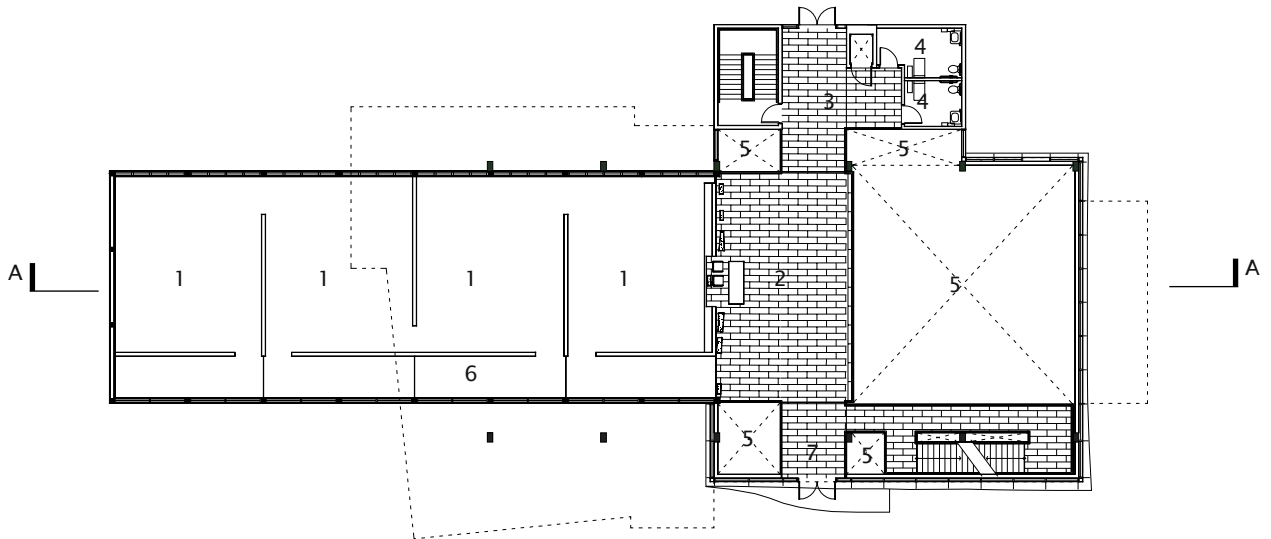
MAIN LEVEL

1. MAIN GALLERY
2. MAIN LOBBY
3. ELEVATOR LOBBY
4. B/F WASHROOM
5. OPEN TO BELOW
6. LOGGIA
7. MAIN ENTRY

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Library and Mezzanine

As the visitor ascends the grand stair along the curtain wall of the front façade, he has a choice to either visit the library or turn towards the entrance of the auditorium/lecture room. The library, which is a part of the 'reading sector', embraces knowledge as a fundamental element of the Reconciliation Centre. This open double height volume is entirely wrapped in glass and dampened by the horizontal articulation of the shading devices on the exterior to a produce a diffused light within the space. Book stacks, tables, computer area and a lounge are configured to allow for a clear circulation and ease of access. The lounge area is raised above the vast frontage of the *agora* which enables the visitor to observe the activities outside yet remain in the comfort of the lounge sofa. As one can sit, observe, read and communicate, the lounge makes it a desirable space to occupy. Similar but more on the intimate side is the library lobby which next to the circulation desk hosts a small gathering space.

      The mezzanine of the library appears as a solid object suspended above the book stacks. Conceived as a volumetric space defined by the third level, this less prominent and light-controlled area stimulates an intimate devotion to learning. The atmosphere here is set for an individual interaction with books as the furniture arrangement becomes the catalyst for learning. At break, one can glance over the library activity below through the narrow slits of the wood partition, or look out towards the village neighbourhoods which are framed by the protruding wood soffits out of the glass box.

Auditorium/Lecture Room and Rooftop Terrace

From the mezzanine, the visitor continues down through one flight of stairs towards the walkway which leads to the 'listening sector' and culminates at a 140 seat auditorium. Also acting as a lecture room, theatre, and general conference room, this splendid grand space provides the community with the essentials on Carpatho-Rusyn identity through lecturing and audio/visual learning. Analogous to the church doctrine, the stage appears to pull out of the glass box, which by the implementation of glass panels acts as a stage screen, framing the view of the church altar beyond. The visual connectivity between the church and the auditorium seating creates a strong bond that mediates the stage with both spiritual and monumental manifestations. In an instance, the visitor is empowered with the both visual and audible stimulation.

      The experience of spaces terminates at the outdoor terrace and rooftop patio above the lecture room. As a visitor becomes fully charged with knowledge, he is encouraged to visit this attractive green space which is dedicated to contemplation, social interaction and thought exchange. Regarded as a public space, the rooftop terrace implements a linear seating area safely tucked between the raised garden and the vertical glass wall, which acts as a skylight and illuminates the vertical vault of the atrium. The raised garden, which is accompanied by the natural shade provided by the miniature linden trees, features various plants and flower beds native to the region. One can sit on the

OPPOSITE ABOVE: *Fig. 4.36 Upper level plan, 1:400*

OPPOSITE BELOW: *Fig. 4.37 Mezzanine level plan, 1:400*

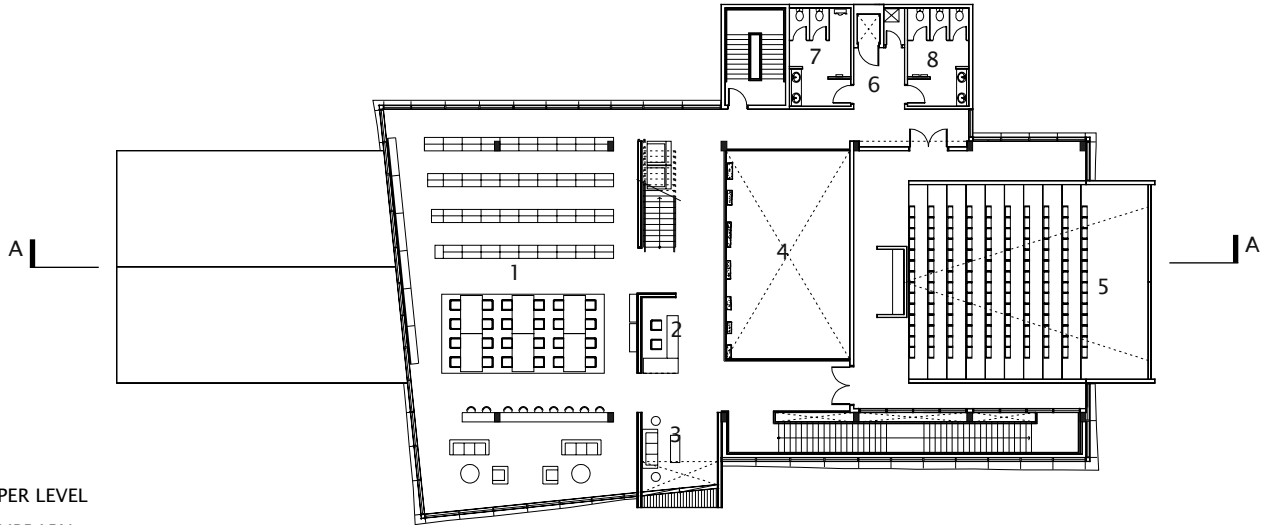elevated platform of the garden space and enjoy a cup of coffee from the café, or simply admire the inspirational views of the cathedral, the *agora* of the square and a park and a market of the living monument beyond.

A ⎸—   A ⎸

UPPER LEVEL

1. LIBRARY
2. CIRCULATION DESK
3. LIBRARY LOBBY
4. OPEN TO BELOW
5. AUDITORIUM/LECTURE ROOM
6. ELEVATOR LOBBY
7. MALE WASHROOMS
8. FEMALE WASHROOMS

A ⎸—   A ⎸
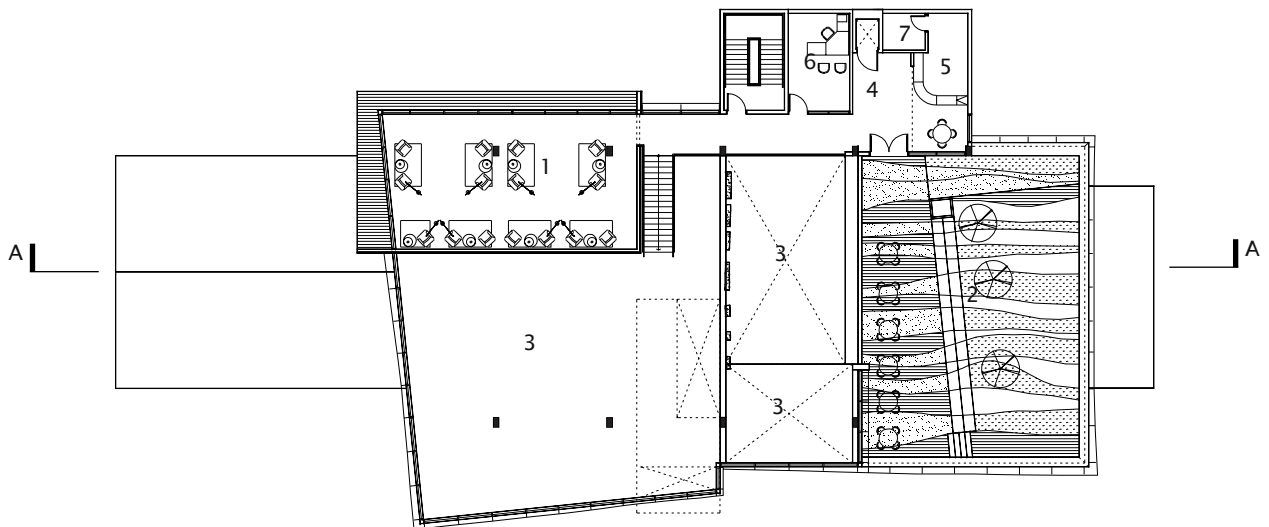
MEZZANINE LEVEL

1. READING ROOM
2. ROOFTOP TERRACE
3. OPEN TO BELOW
4. ELEVATOR LOBBY
5. CAFE
6. LIBRARY OFFICE
7. CAFE STORAGE

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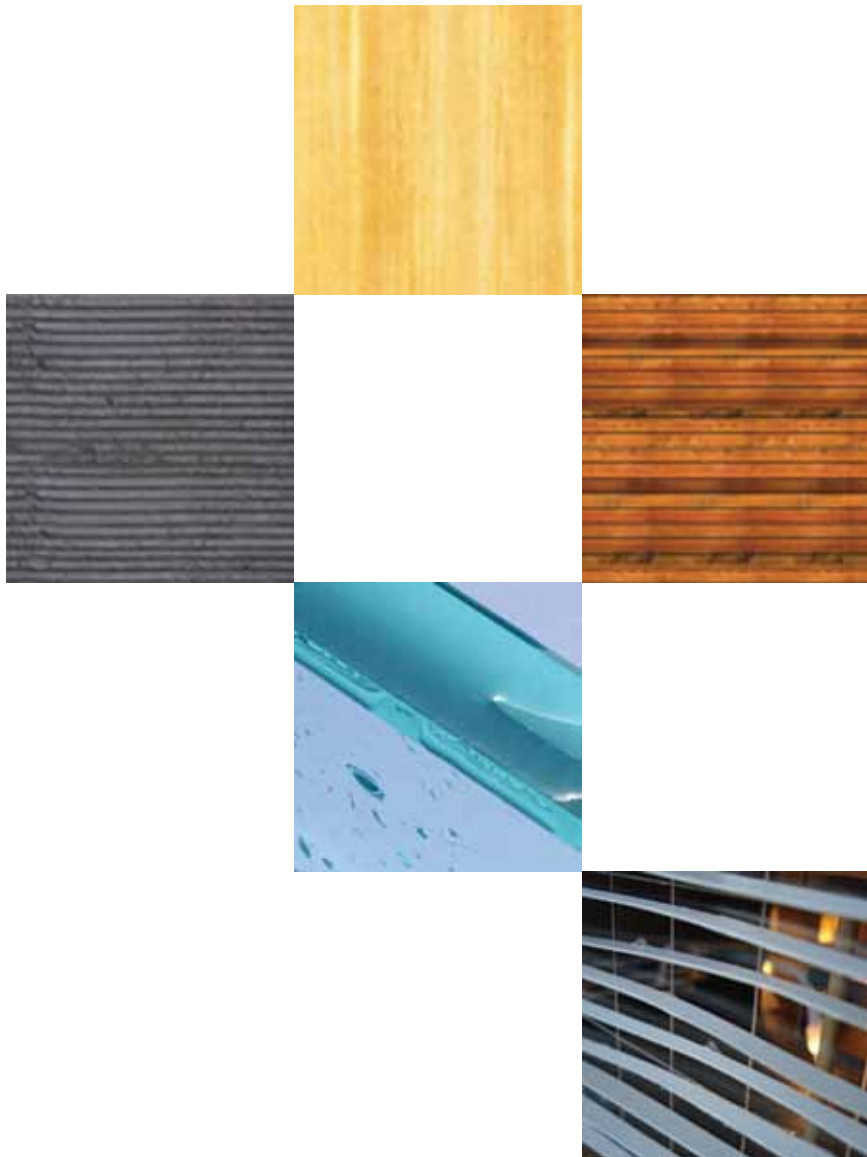
Building Skin and Materiality

As the program coherently justifies the hierarchy of experiences and layering of information, the building skin and materiality support the visual communication between program and space. Building materials, such as concrete, glass and wood dominate the interior space which by their careful orchestration determines the nature of programmatic elements and function. The materiality fuses light and texture as basis to create a contextualized space, yet through a series of gestures – its subtle historic references, regional specificity and morphological essence – it respects yet invigorates the historic fabric of the village. The use of recycled and locally sourced materials also contribute to the environmental issues as the project utilizes regionally milled linden recovered from the nearby site or donated by the village residents to appear as rich interior cladding, furniture and wall panels, including the elegant multi-wood auditorium interior.

Each programmatic volume in the building is signalled by its dominant cladding material. The primary elements of the building are characterized by the generous glass box which appears light and open as it hovers above the former print room. Within the glass box are protruding secondary elements as characterized by the monolithic solids, which are clad in horizontal linden wood strips to give them warm and natural look. The exterior of the suspended auditorium, library mezzanine, library lobby and central service tower are all wrapped in this material. The wooden boxes play off one another by their sense of enclosure and predominant presence as they strategically sit in the grand volumetric space of the glass box. They signify places of learning, whereas the negative space of the glass box denotes places for informal gathering and social interaction. Furthermore, the fluidity of the negative space created by the solid forms of the wood boxes generates a meaningful connection between them and along the way, presents an opportunity for the visitors to participate in the conversation or exchange of ideas as they go from one place of learning to another.

The central atrium is enriched by the spectrum of light emanating from the multi-coloured skylight above. Directly off the atrium walkway on the second level, a generous library takes advantage of floor-to-ceiling north-facing glazing while offering clear views out to the grandeur of the agora and downtown square beyond. As the movement of the sun penetrates the glass box at different angles, it generates an ever-changing light intensity in the library. To prevent the light from becoming too uncomfortable at peak times of the day, a series of shading devices have been implemented on the exterior glazing around the perimeter of the building. Mimicking the morphology of the village, the intricate ribbon-like effect of the meshing resembles the village neighbourhoods which are characterized by Carpatho-Rusyn residents as '*šori*'. The placement and irregular thickness of the shading devices give the glass box a sense of depth, a three dimensional feel as they attempt to recreate the plan of the village by superimposing it over the front façade. Their articulation and placement produce a dynamic interior space as interplay between shadow and light begins to form within the vastness of the glass box. This idea is further expressed in the interior of the atrium. As means to spatially divide an open library from other components, a vertical art piece runs from the base of the lobby to

OPPOSITE: *Fig. 4.38 AGRC cladding material, skin and component study image*

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the top of the atrium vault. Organic in nature, these curvilinear volumes represent an intricate urban realm of the village which appear to be growing out from the base towards the lightness of the upper atrium space. Serving as a center piece, they help define the experiential qualities which are conceived by the successful marriage of two opposites: traditional and contemporary.

As the articulation of the building skin layers and materiality fuse function and elegance in a single choreographed language, they also monumentalize the essence of village history, thus giving the building an iconic character. Although the appearance of the 'Ribbon Effect' is regarded as modern in nature, through the gestures of symbols and materiality that pertain to Carpatho-Rusyn cultural history and heritage, it knits itself a new kind of embroidery, a kind that not only represents the identity of Carpatho-Rusyns of Ruski Kerestur, but of all Carpatho-Rusyns in the world.

BELOW: *Fig. 4.39 Proposed exterior elevation from Maršala Tita avenue, 1:400*

OPPOSITE: *Fig. 4.40 Exterior perspective preliminary sketch*
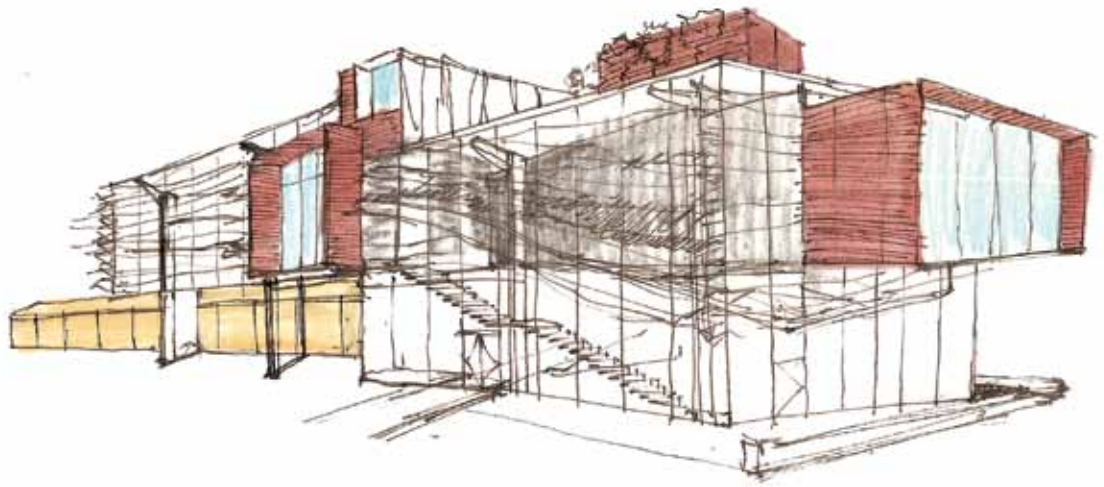
*Fig. 4.41 Exterior perspective of the
Art Pavilion, Carpatho-Rusyn Art
Gallery and Reconciliation Centre - at
the roundabout corner of Rusinska
Road and Maršala Tita Avenue*

Fig. 4.42 Exterior perspective of the Art Pavilion, Carpatho-Rusyn Art Gallery and Reconciliation Centre - a view of the floating auditorium/lecture room from one of many public vistas of the agora

Fig. 4.43 Interior perspective of the
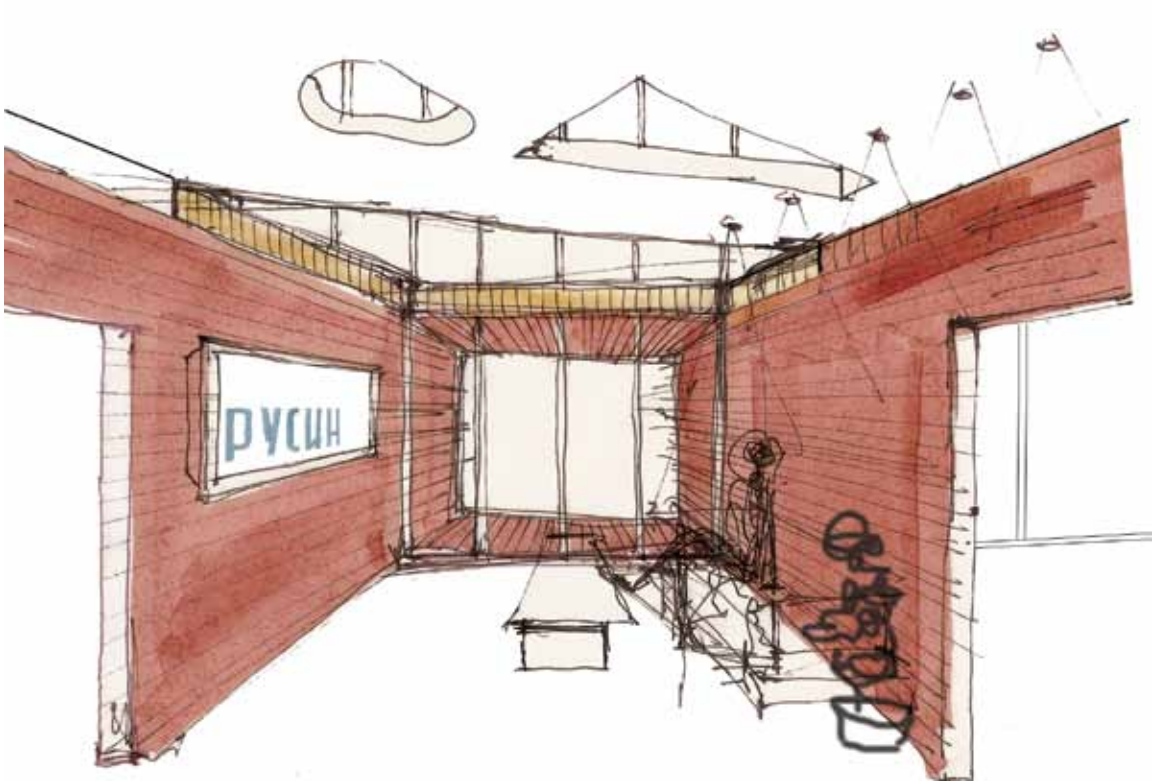AGRC - a view of the loggia and the
main gallery space

Fig. 4.44 Interior perspective of the AGRC - the library

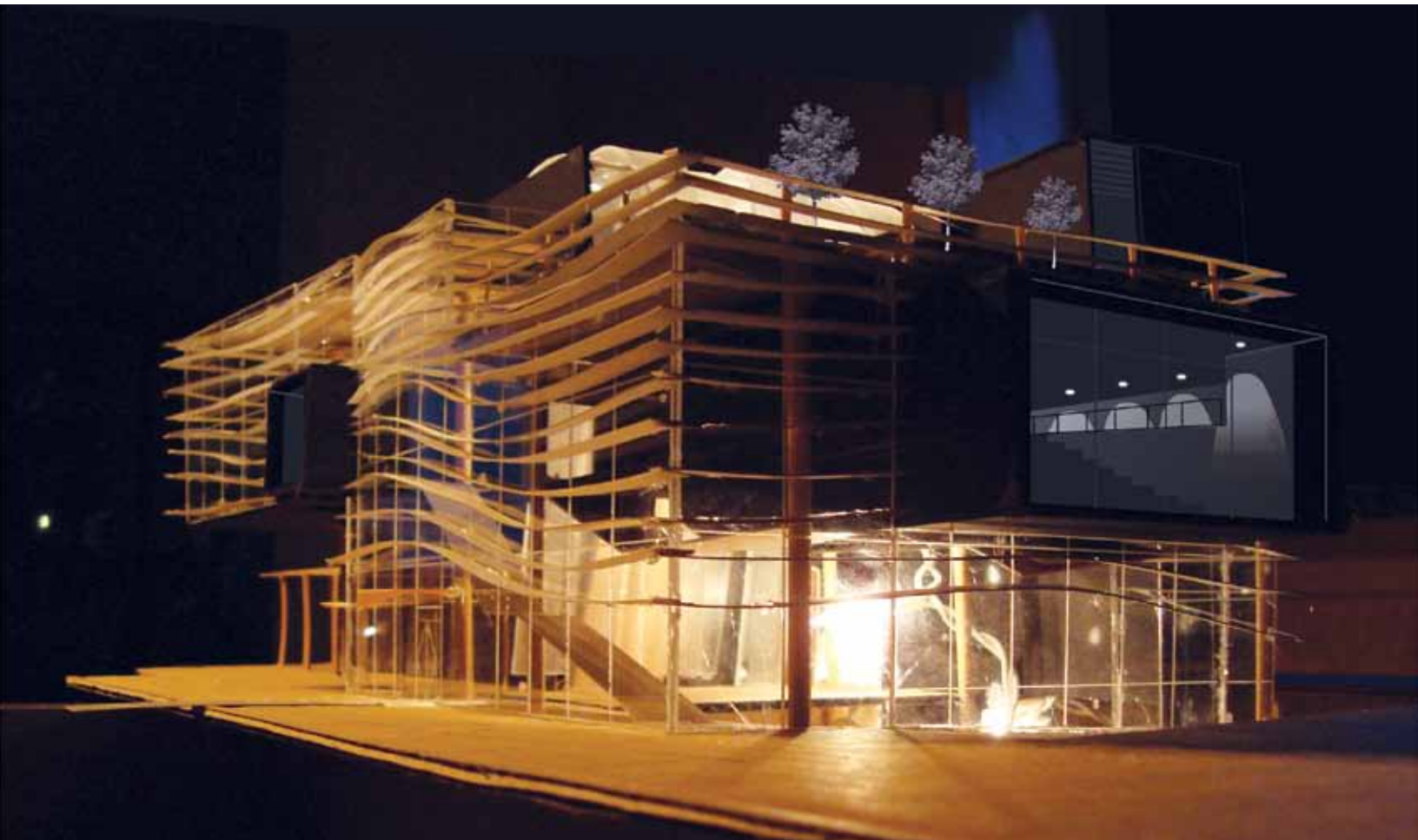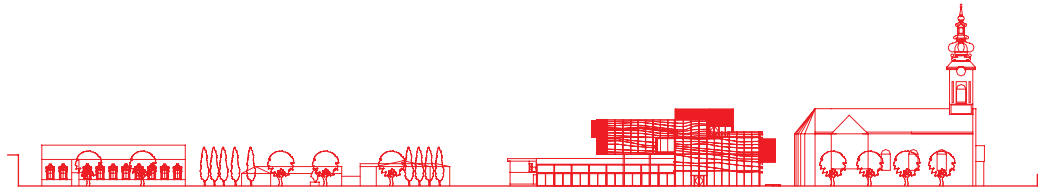OPPOSITE: *Fig. 4.45 Interior sketch of the AGRC - the library lobby*

Fig. 4.46 Interior perspective of the
AGRC - a view from the entrance
towards the open space of the main
lobby and lower gallery space

OPPOSITE: Fig. 4.47 Exterior
perspective of the AGRC - the image of
the model

5.0   **CONCLUSION**

During the in-depth research into Carpatho-Rusyn life and its successful survival strategies, there are certain conclusions to be drawn. Denied a country, a state, an identity or even a nationality, Carpatho-Rusyns are left with nothing but their unique cultural practice and ethnic background. However, in spite of these inconvenient circumstances and the fact that they have survived as a distinct ethnic group for hundreds of years, one begins to ask a question whether the ideology of fixing oneself to a particular soil, like a country or a state with rigid boundaries, is at all necessary? Can one be nationalistic and not have a nation? According to Carpatho-Rusyns, who only desire a freedom to preserve their heritage and be free of any political misfortunes, no, you don't need a country or a state to be worthy of an identity. As Paul Robert Magocsi eloquently stated: 'Each person has the right to claim whatever ethnic identity he or she wishes, regardless the claim has any relationship to objective…criteria, such as geographical origin, spoken language or customs'[1]. When people begin identifying their culture too strongly with their nation, inherently, the idea of identity is a problem, especially if they are against other nation's people who are too deeply rooted in their culture. Nowadays, as country borders are beginning to blur, like the amalgamation of certain European countries into the European Union for example, the question of identity becomes more international and decentralized, like the Carpatho-Rusyn. Perhaps this is their secret for persevering, as the pioneers of internalization, Carpatho-Rusyns stand strong as an independent global community. Vernacular of adaptation is a term that tends to investigate the potential to eliminate social diaspora by developing new strategies for living and coexisting with multi-ethnic groups of the future's 'borderless' world.

Ruski Kerestur's 'living monument' serves as a departure point for the promotion of this multi-ethnic coexistence. Although associated directly with Carpatho-Rusyn culture, it is not exclusively designed for a particular ethnic group. The openness of the pavilions suggests no rules for the use of their public space, and for this reason, they are open for individual interpretation. Will they become a place of gathering and reflection, as true public spaces, or will they become abstract sculptures that soon seem dated? The success or failure of the 'living monument' will only be known years from now as it gets initiated by the public community. One thing is for certain, the 'living monument' and the Carpatho-Rusyn Art Gallery and Reconciliation Centre is a prototype for a meaningful community space where cultural stimulation and the power of a monument are at the heart of bringing people together.

Aristotle summarized all rules of city planning in observing that a city must be so designed as to make its people at once secure and happy.[2] Isn't this, before all, a primary responsibility of an architect?

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1. As quoted in Potter, '*How the Rusyns Could Save Civilization*', Pittsburgh City Paper, September 25, 2008
2. Sitte, *City Planning According to Artistic Principles*, 3

F R U Š K O G O R S K A   R O A D

R O A D

R · U · S · I · N · S · K · A

SCALE_ 1:500   SITE PLAN

M - A - R - Š - A - L - A
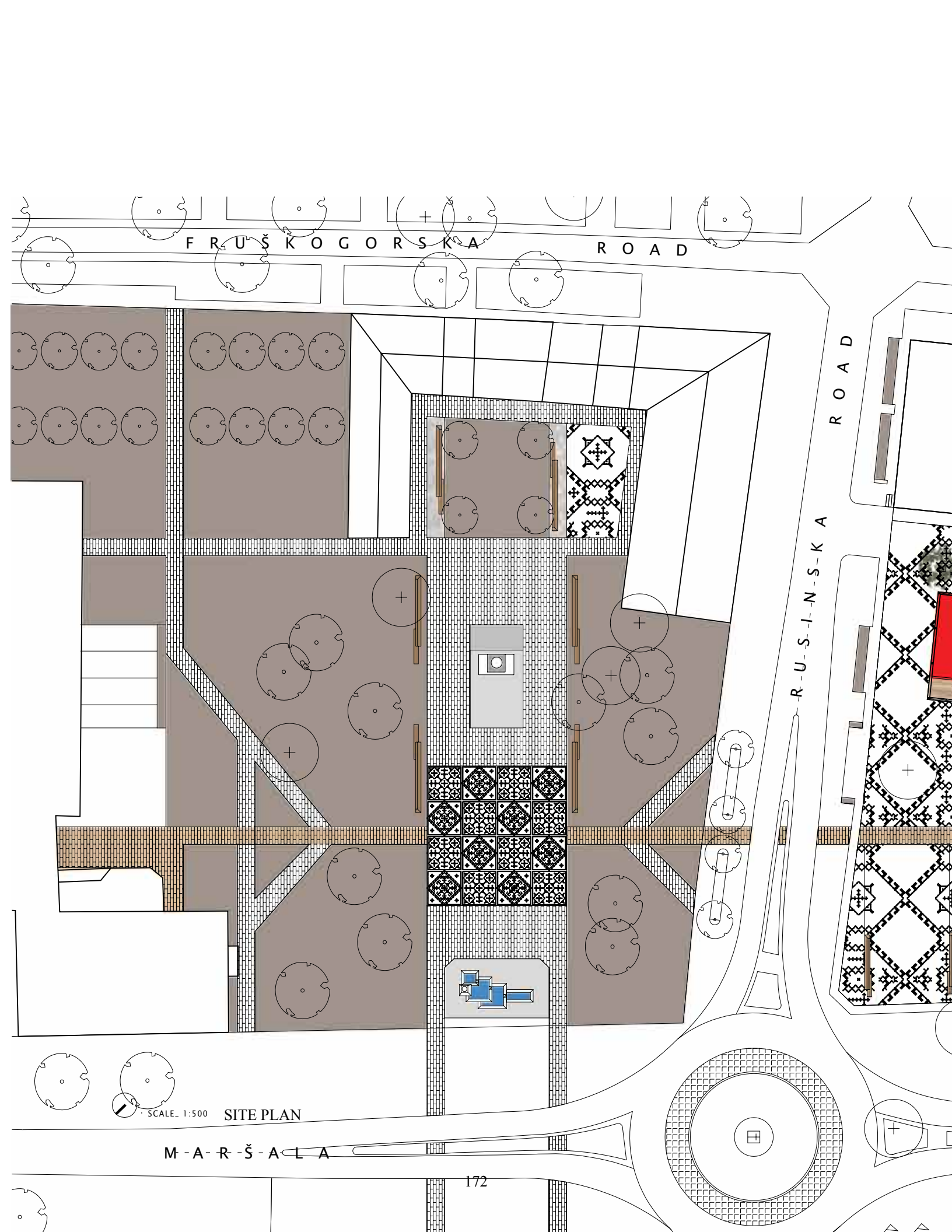
AGRC DESIGN DRAWINGS

T I T A   A V E N U E

B – 1

A – 2

A – 1

B – 1
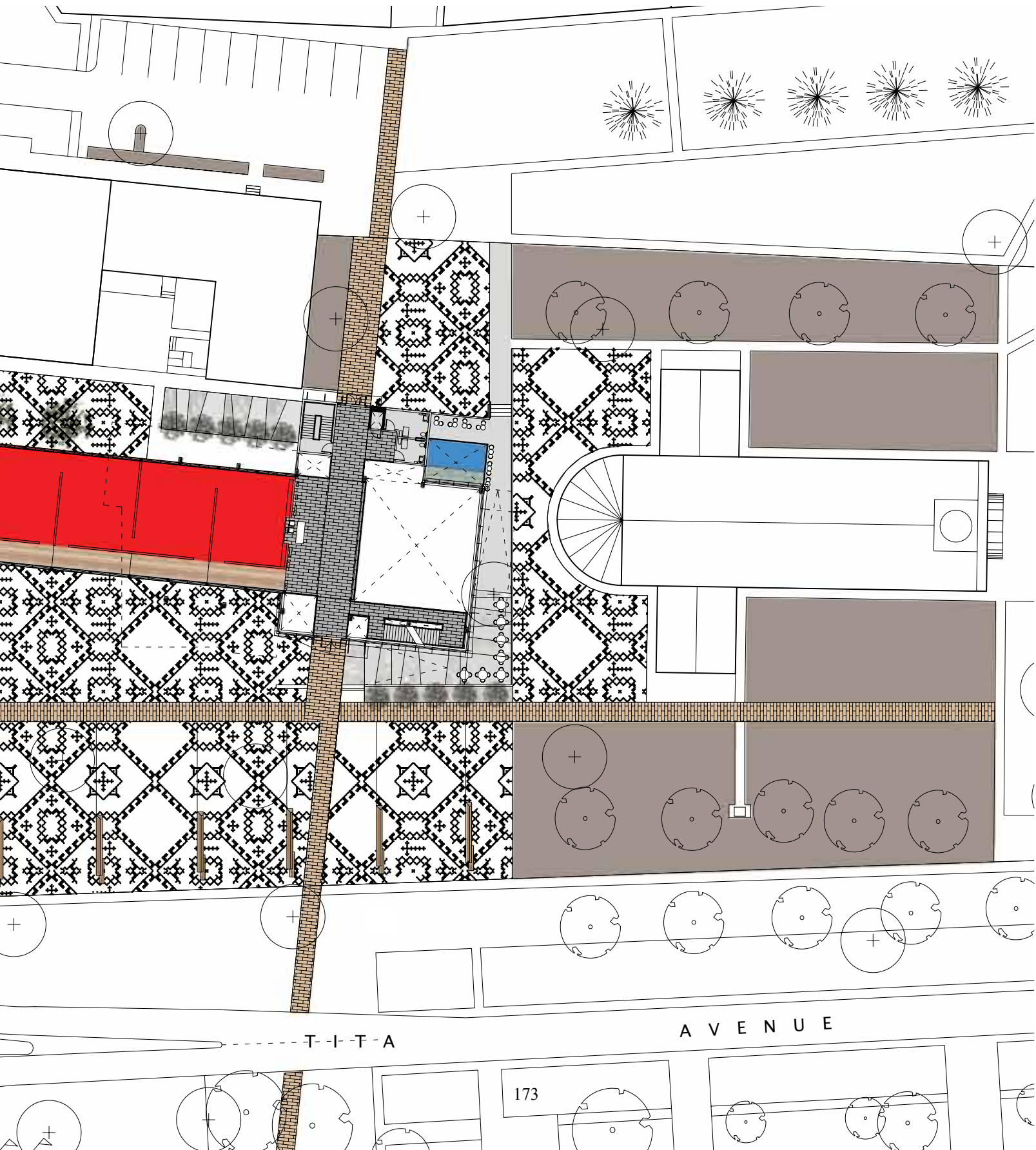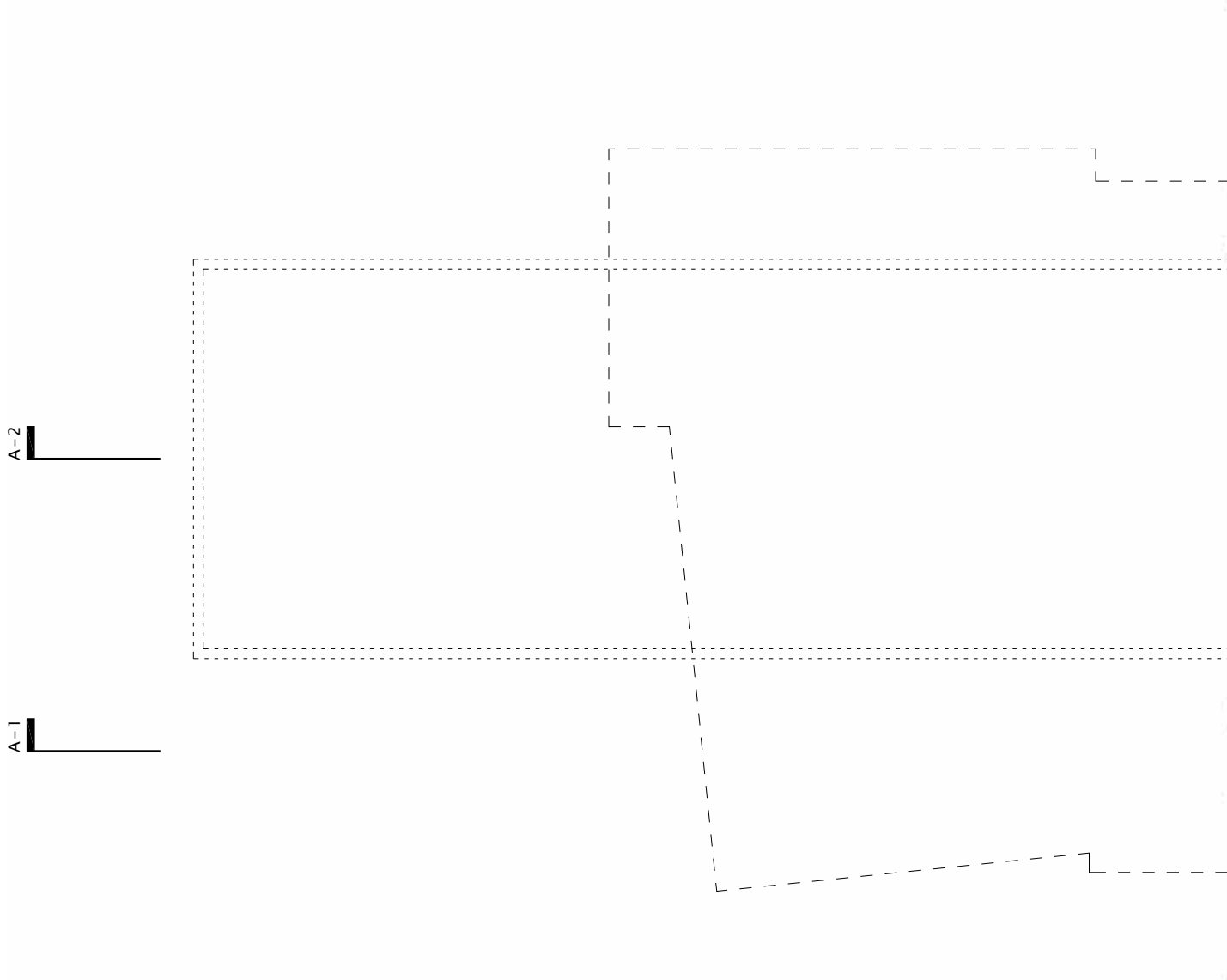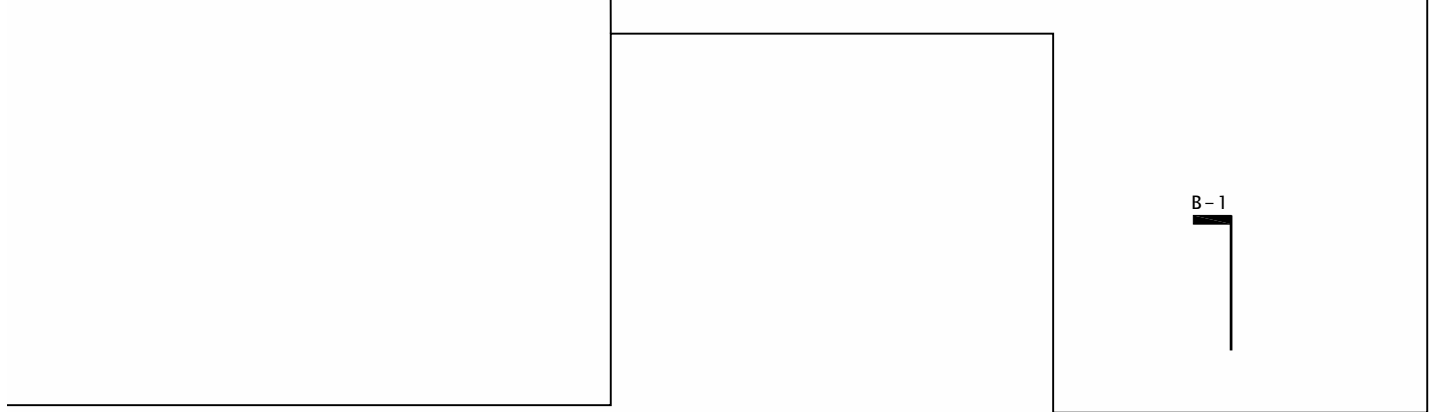
SCALE_ 1:200   LOWER LEVEL PLAN

STORAGE

ELEV.

ELEV.
LOBBY

CURATOR
OFFICE

REFLECTING
POOL

SUNKEN
COURTYARD

'LIGHT SPIRITUAL'
GALLERY ROOM

A–2

A–1

GALLERY 4

GALLERY 3

GALLERY 2

GALLERY 1

LOGGIE

A – 2

A – 1

B – 1
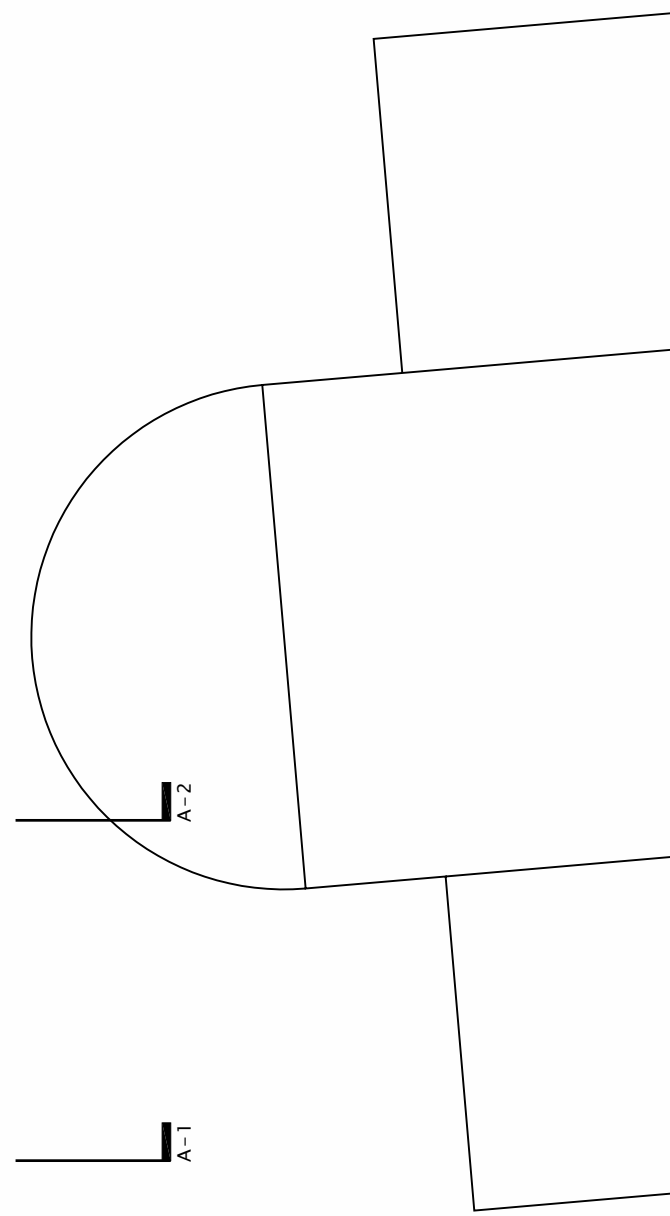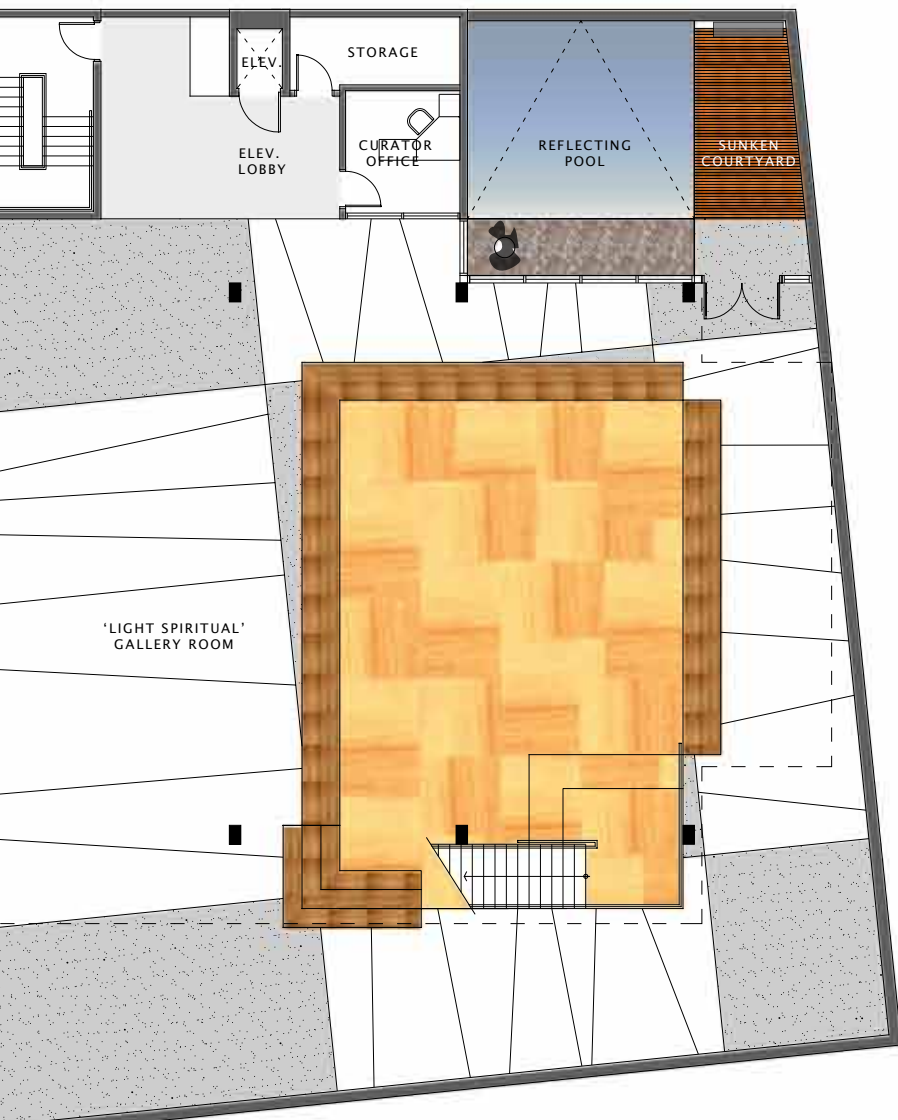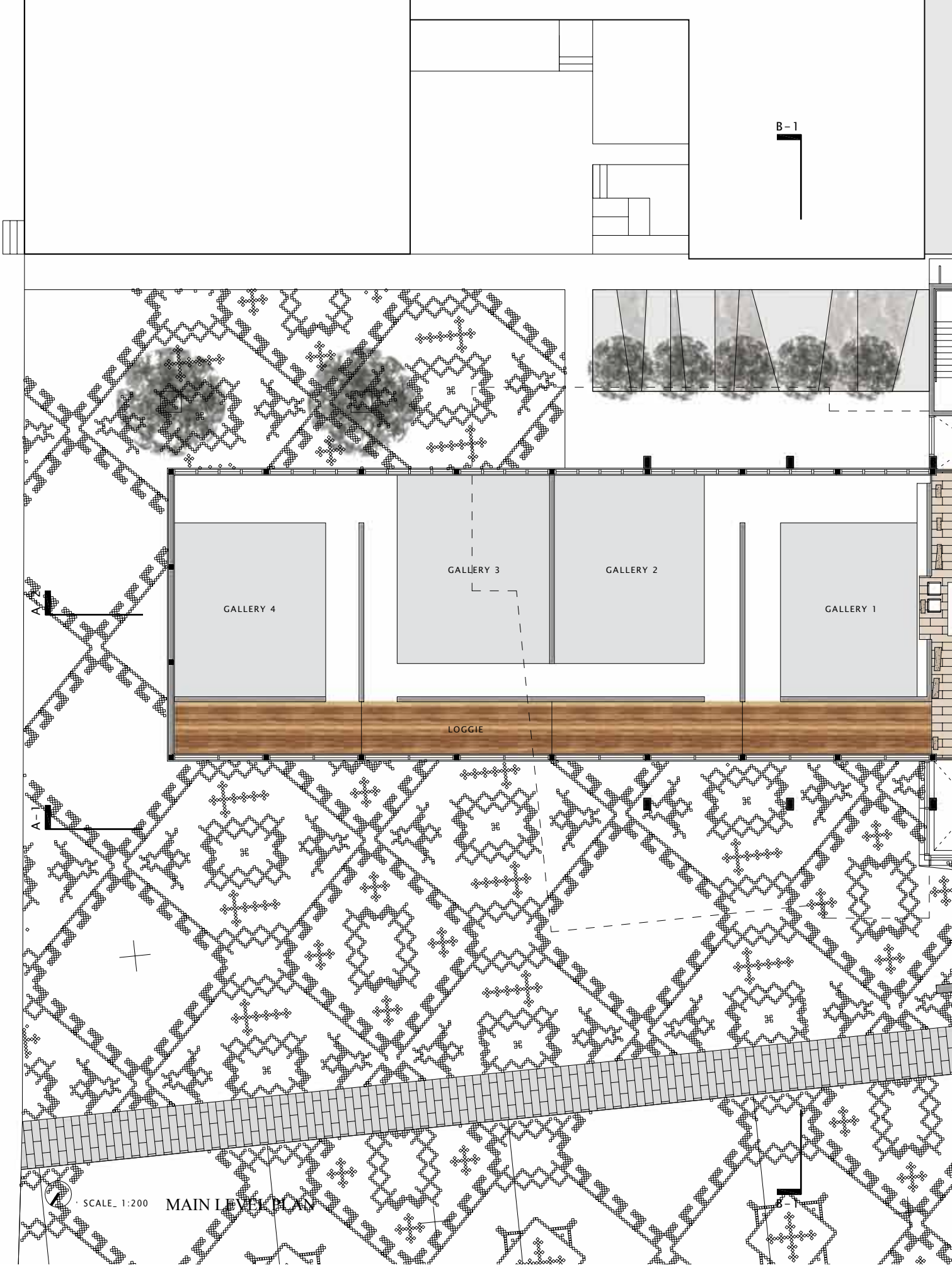
SCALE_ 1:200   MAIN LEVEL PLAN

B-3

ENTRY

ELEV.

M/F
WASH 1

SITTING AREA

ELEV.
LOBBY

M/F
WASH 2

REFLECTING POOL

MAIN LOBBY

OPEN TO BELOW

A-2

A-1

ENTRY

PATIO

GATHERING AREA

B-3

B – 1

A – 2

A – 1

BOOK STACKS

STUDY AREA

INTERNET

LOUNGE

CIRCULATION
DESK

LIBRARY
LOBBY

B – 1
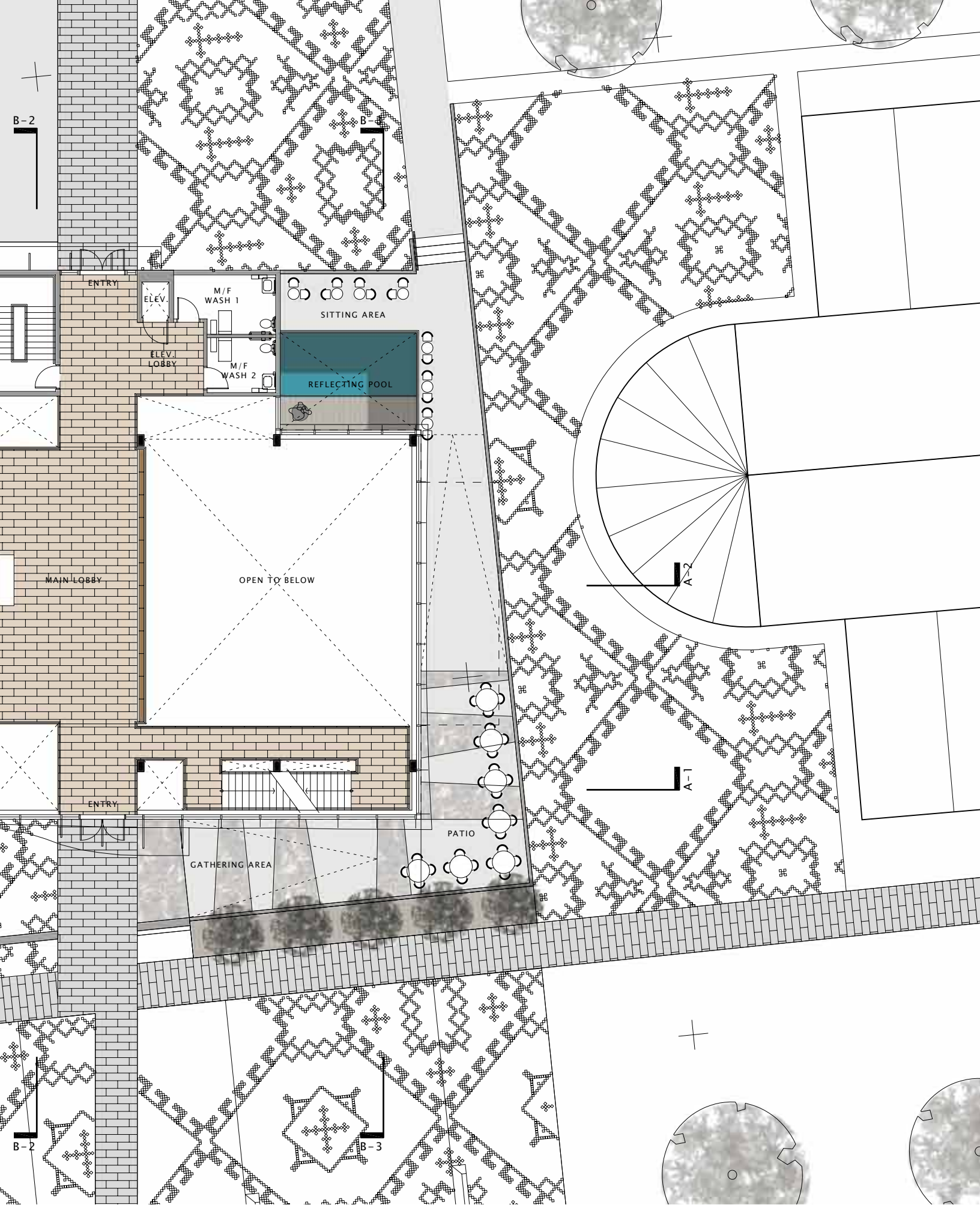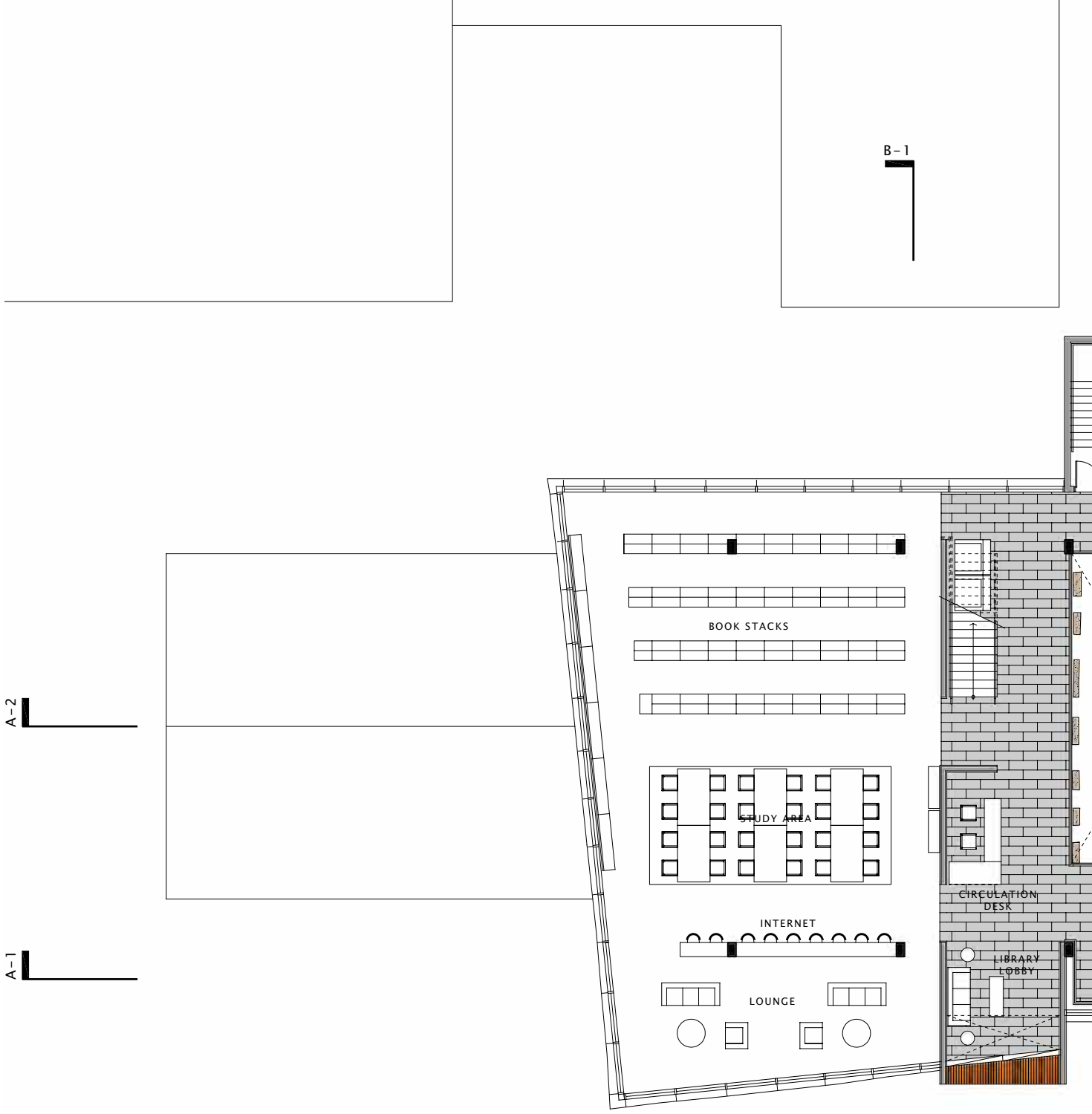
SCALE_ 1:200   UPPER LEVEL PLAN

MALE
WASHROOM

ELEV.

FEMALE
WASHROOM

ELEV.
LOBBY

OPEN TO BELOW

A/V
ROOM

AUDITORIUM

A – 2

A – 1

READING ROOM
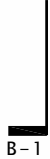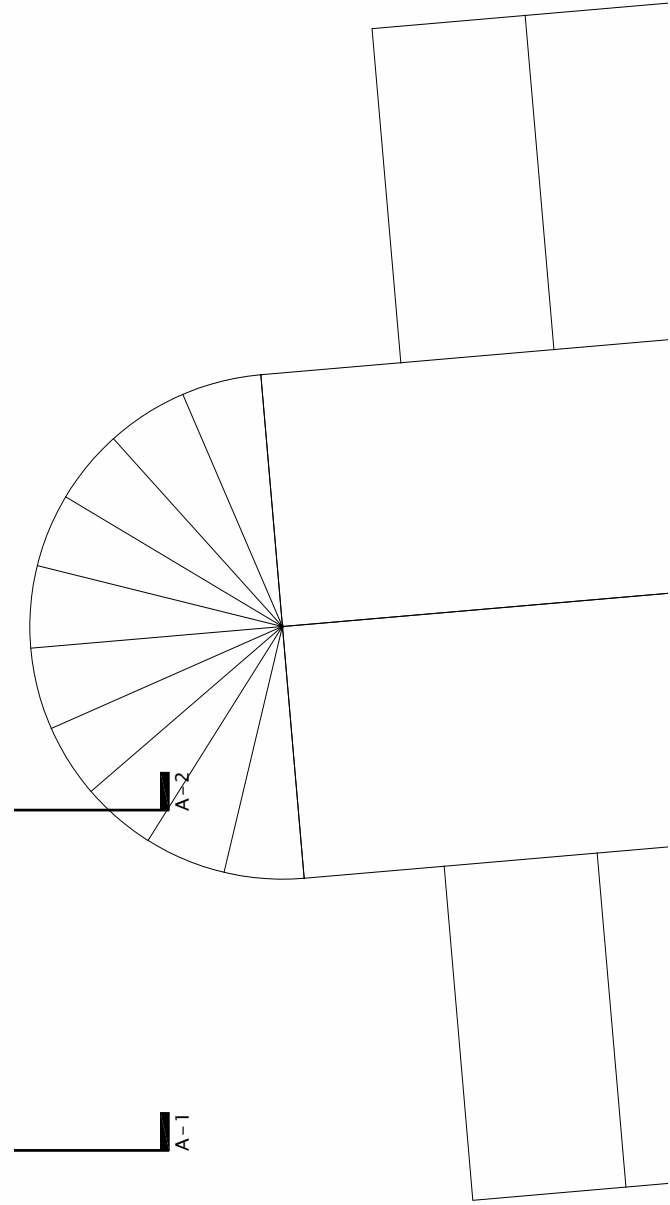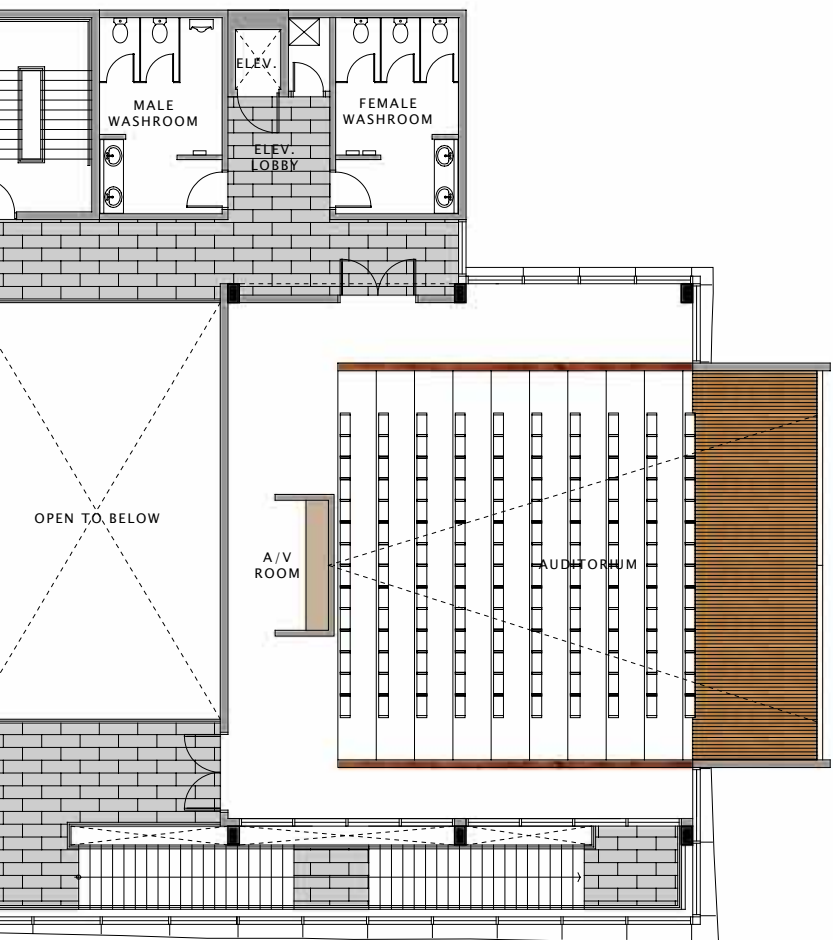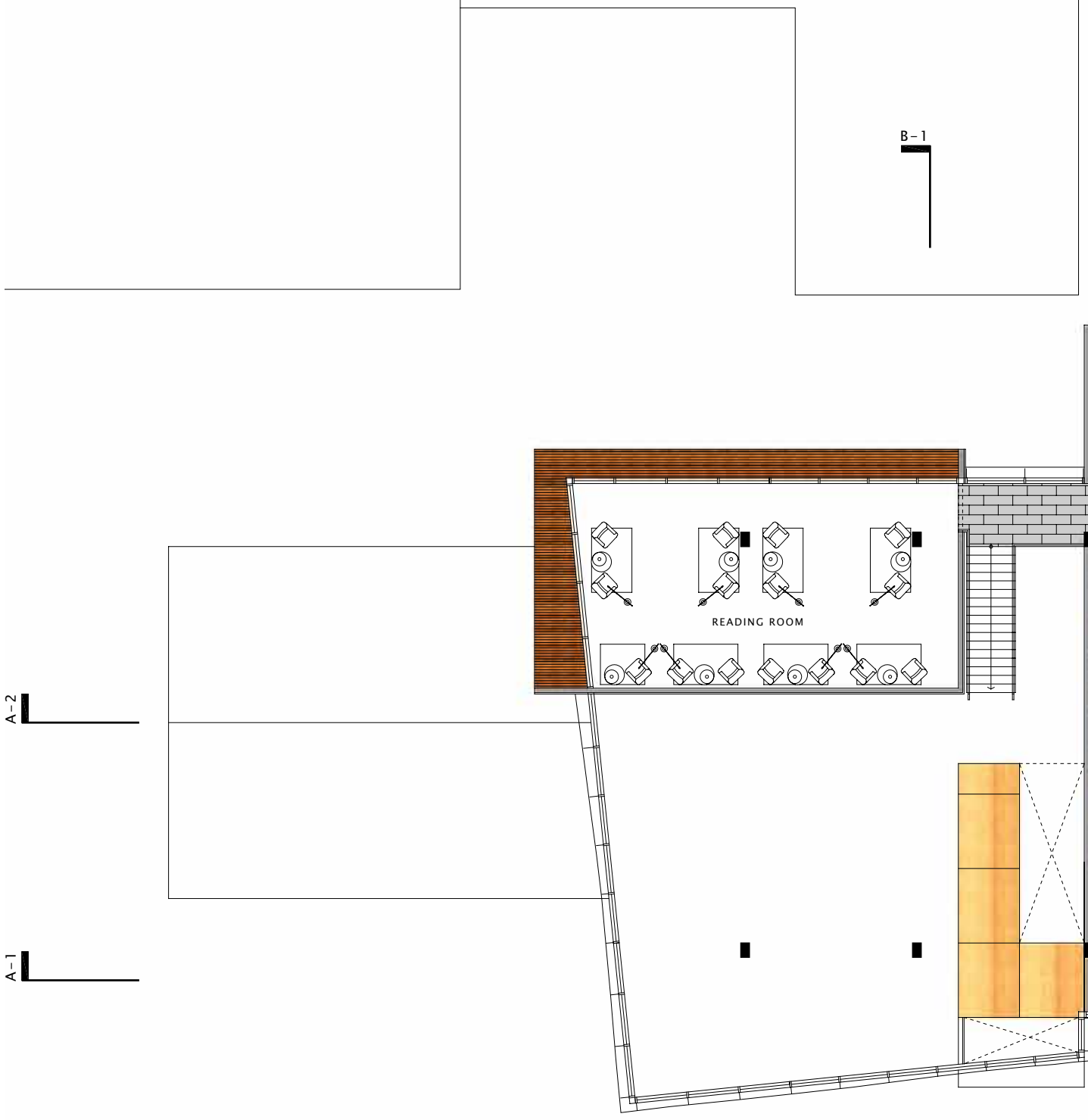
· SCALE_ 1:200   MEZZANINE LEVEL PLAN

ELEV. STORAGE

CAFE

LIBRARY
OFFICE

[ROOFTOP TERRACE]

OPEN TO BELOW

OUTDOOR GARDEN

CAFE PATIO

OPEN TO BELOW

A – 2

A – 1

B-1

A-2

A-1

B-1
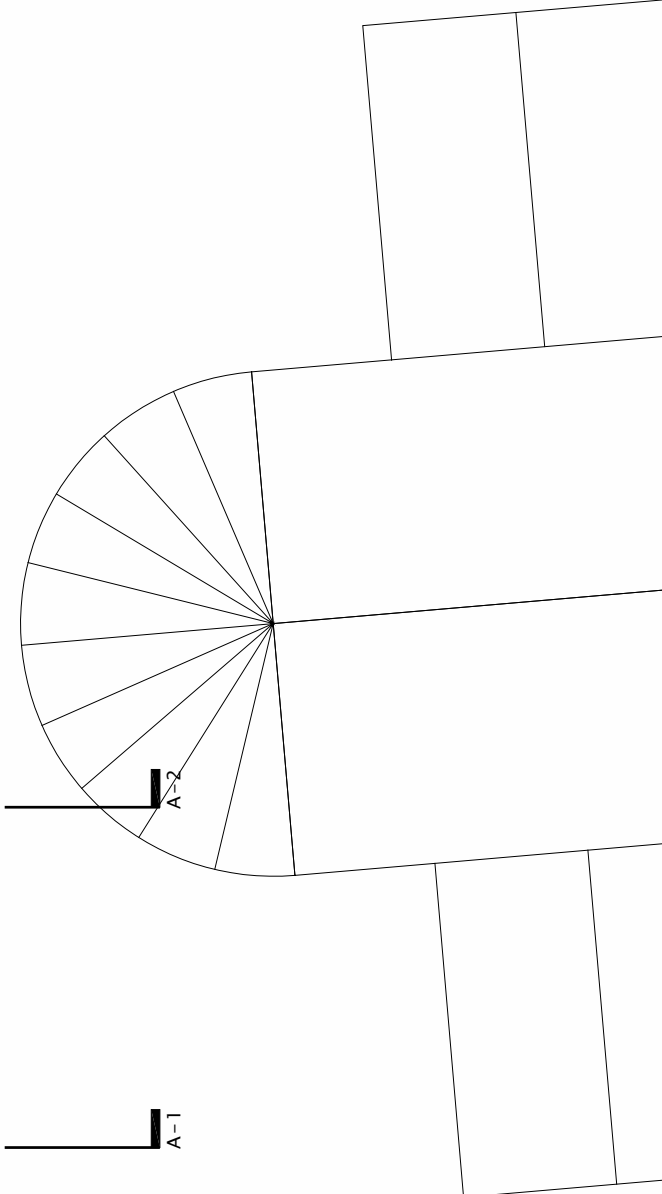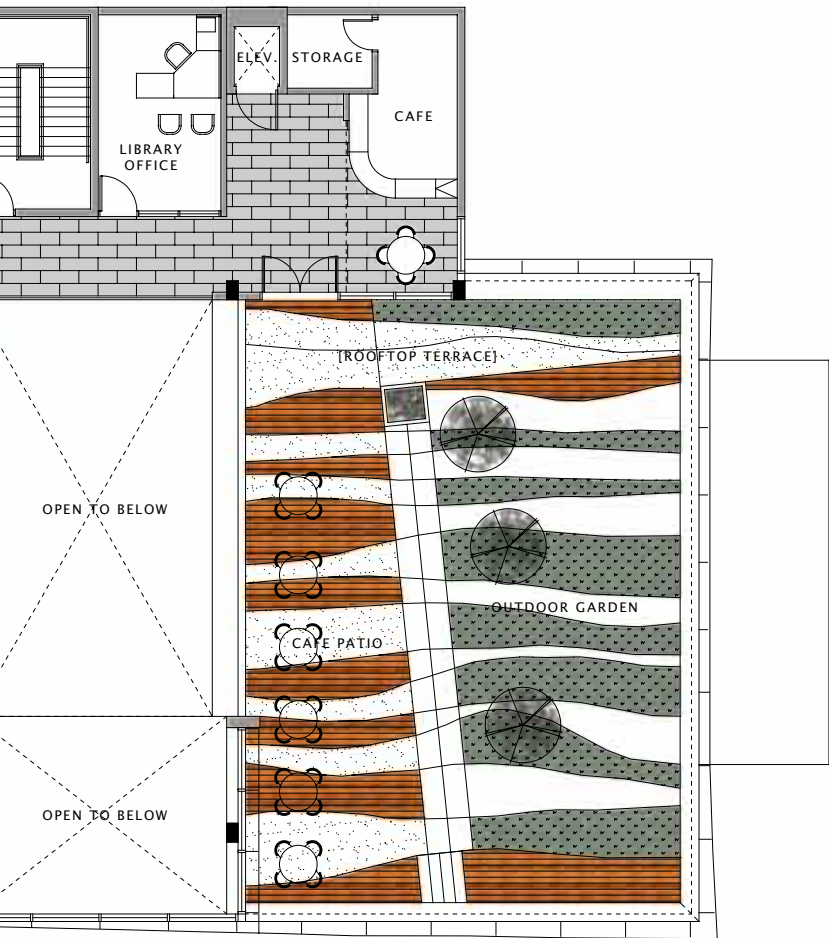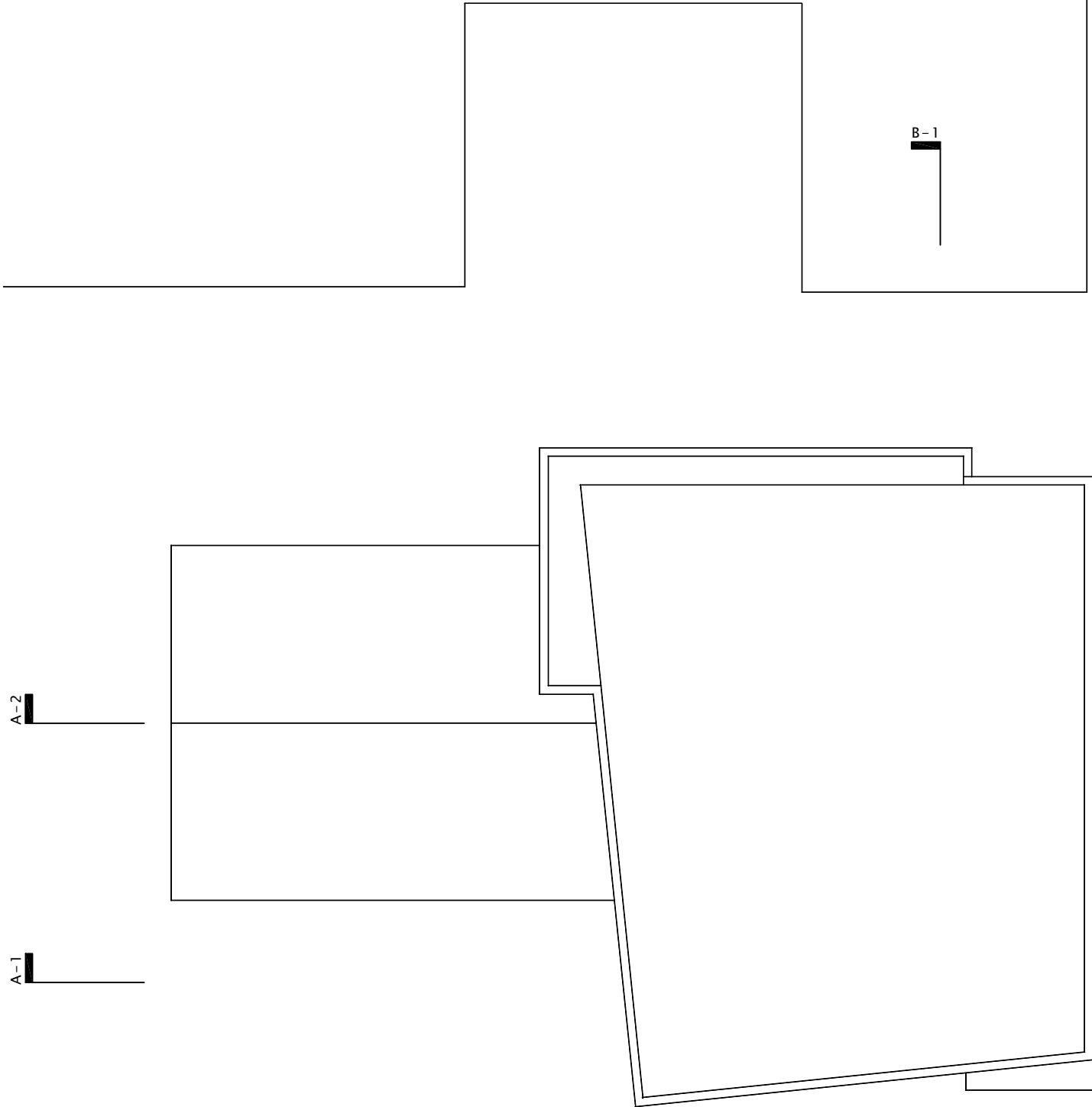
· SCALE_ 1:200   HVAC LEVEL PLAN

ELEV.

HVAC ROOM

OPEN TO BELOW

A-2

A-1

B – 1

A – 2

A – 1

B – 1

A-2

A-1
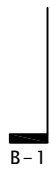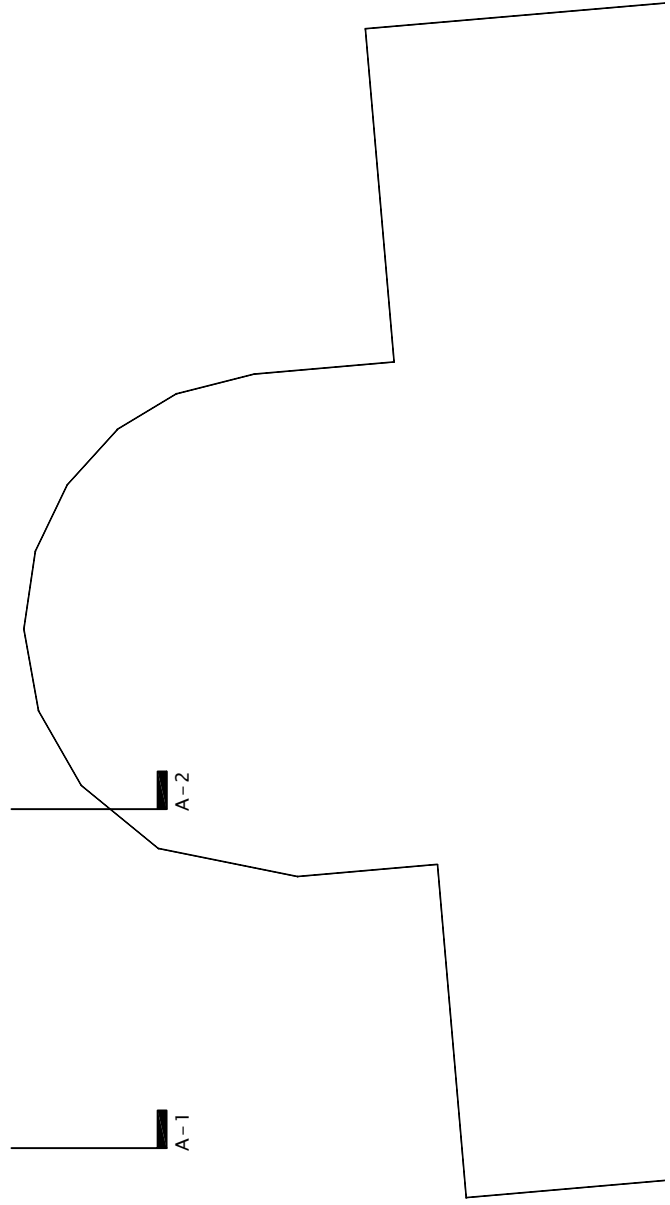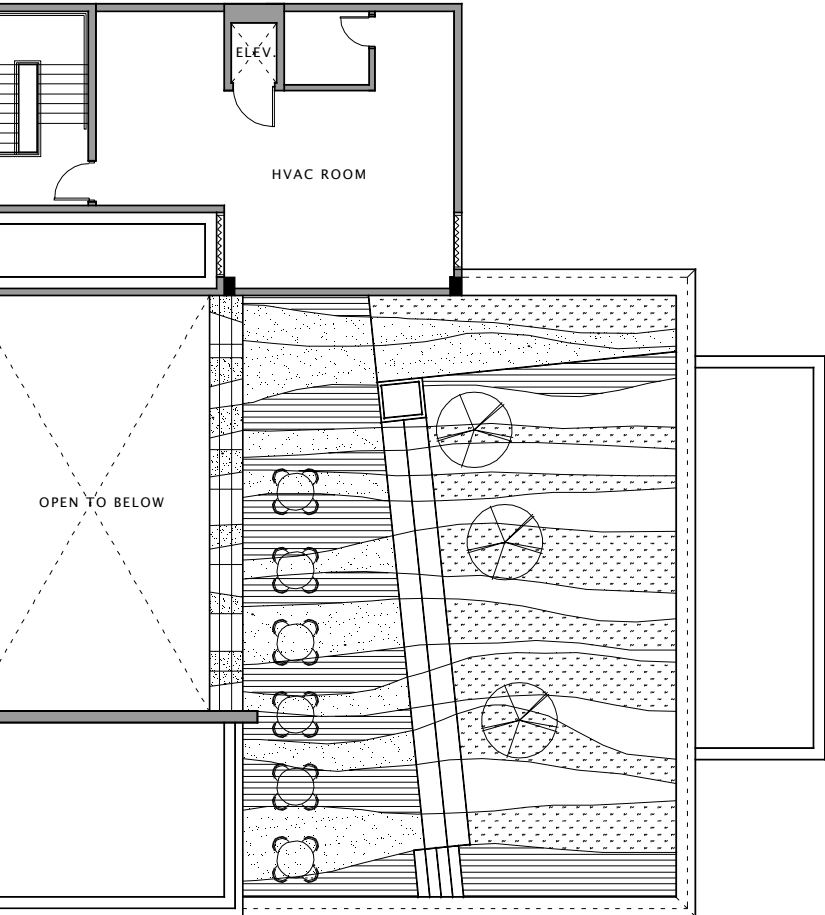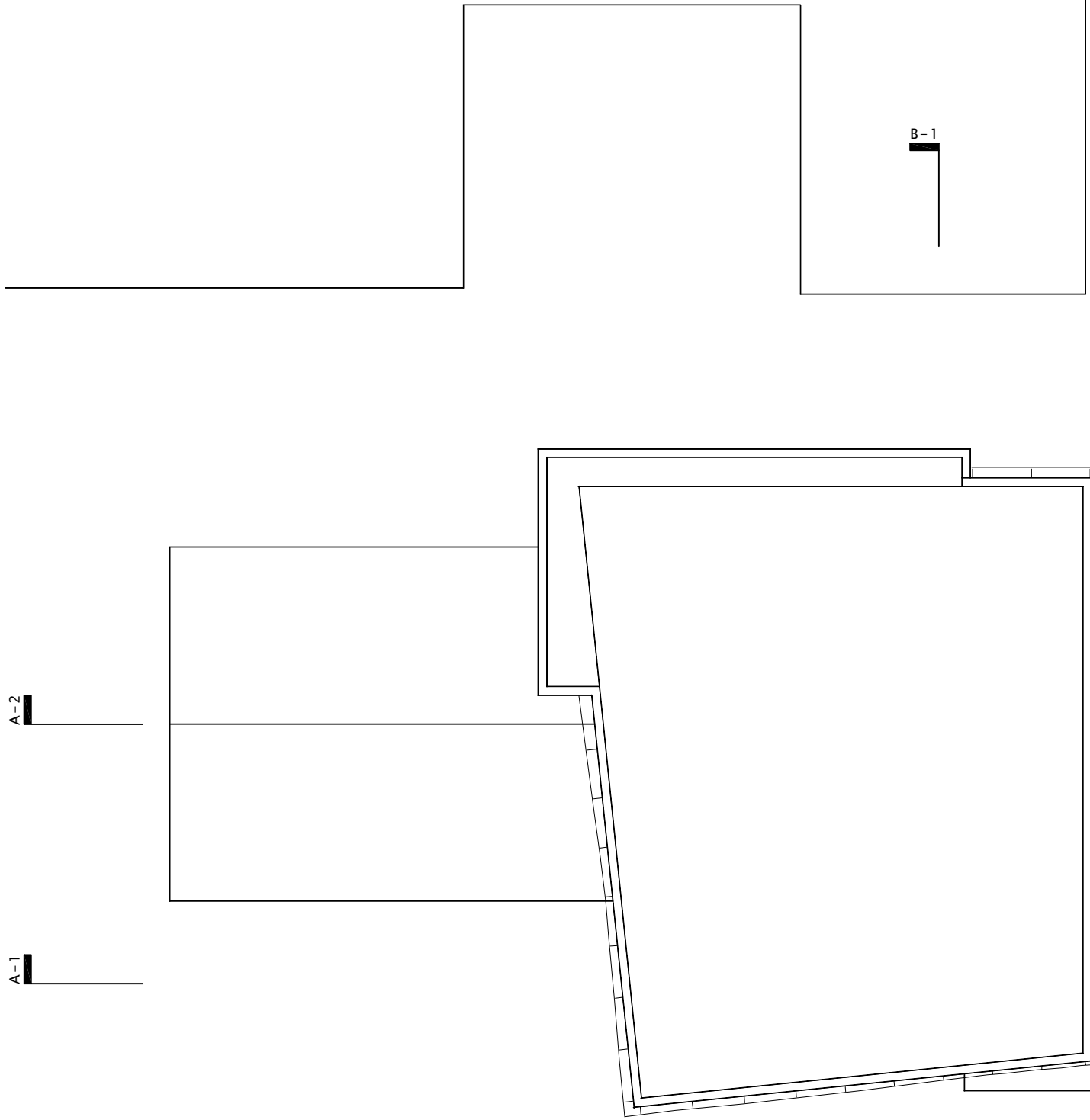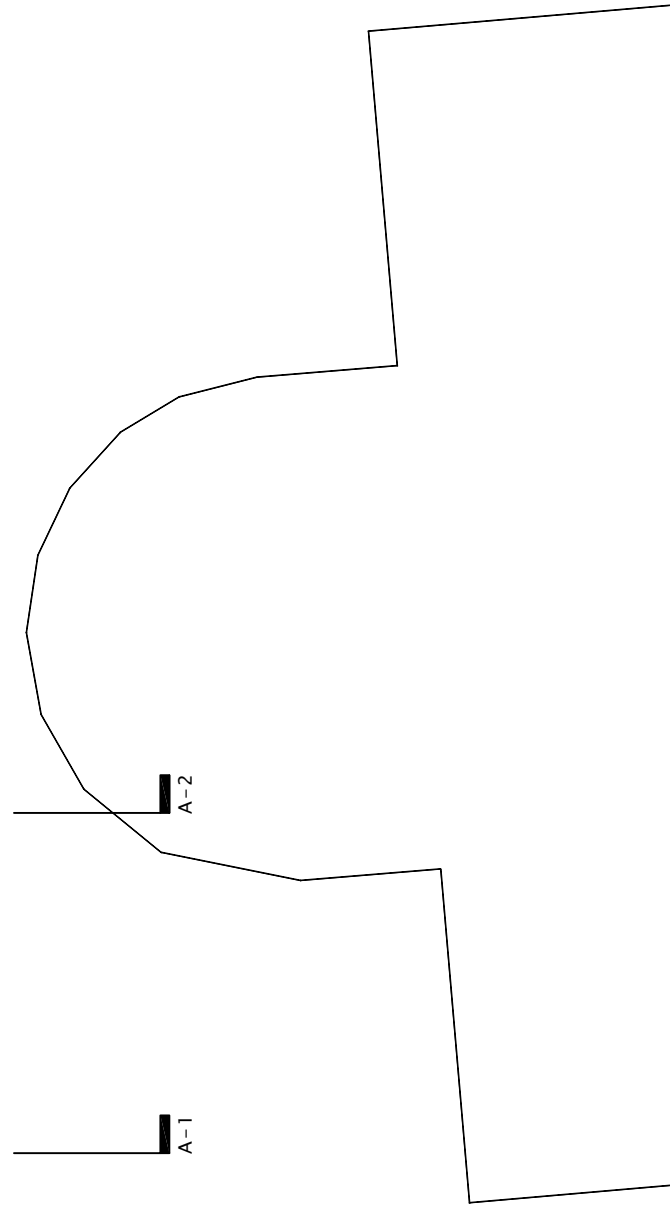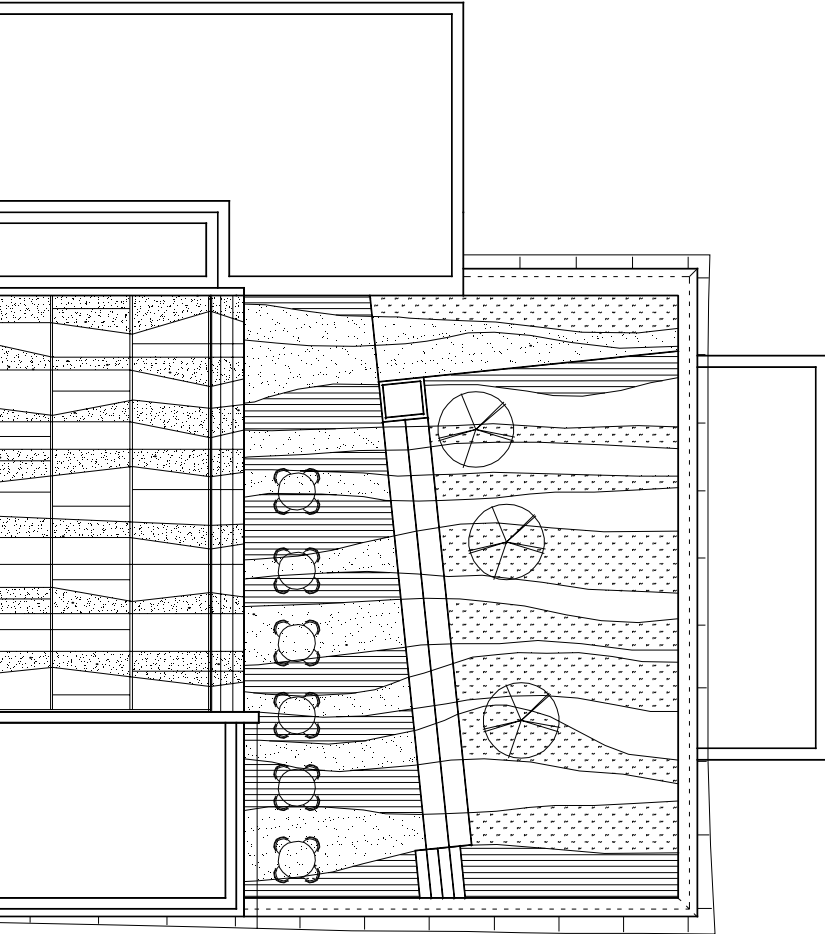
· SCALE_ 1:200   SECTION A-1
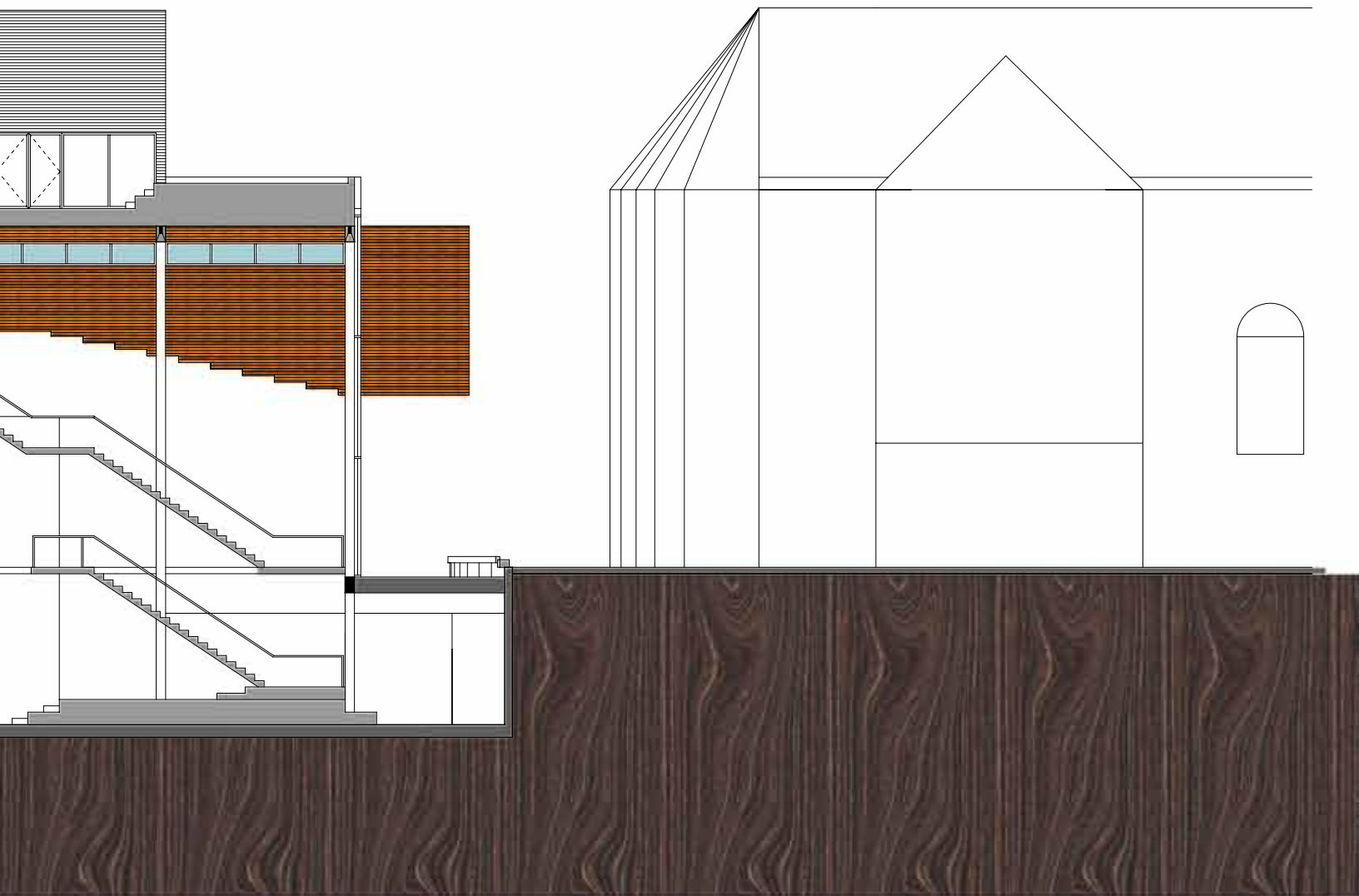
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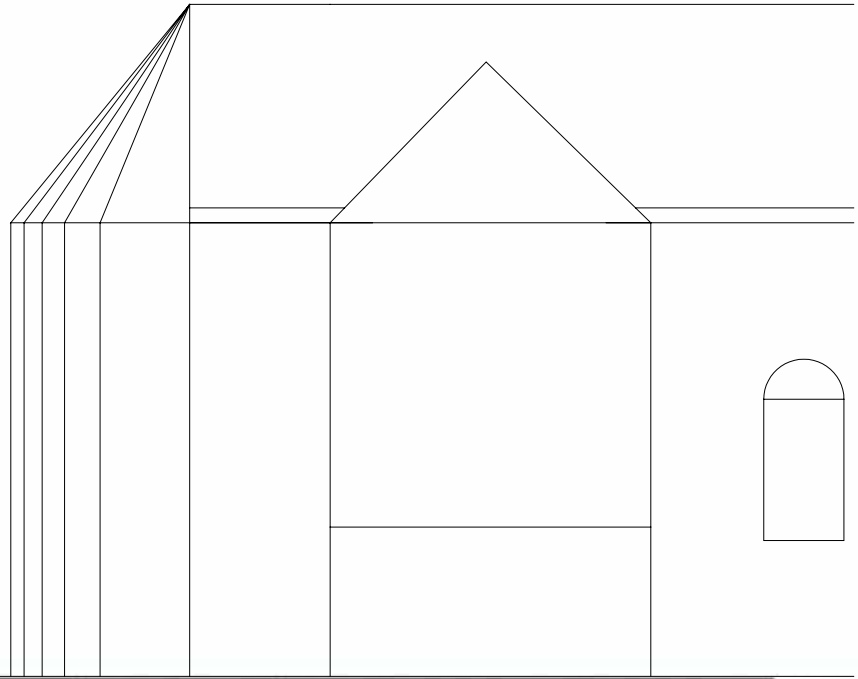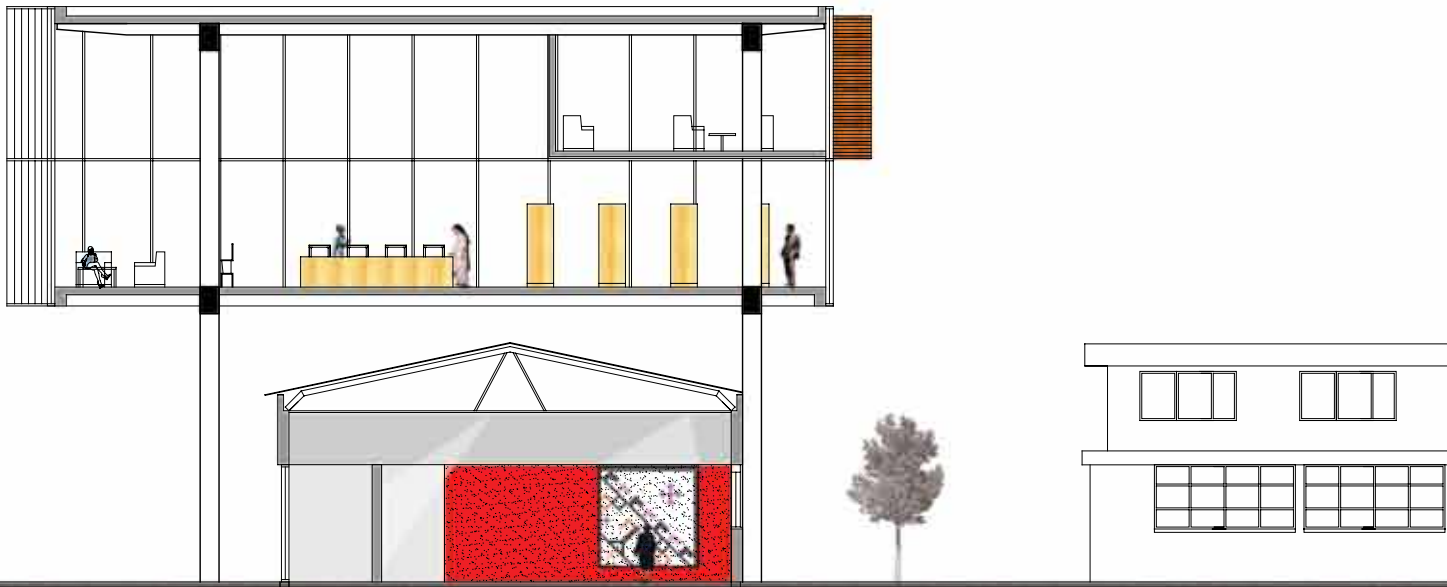
· SCALE_ 1:200   SECTION B-1

SCALE_ 1:200   SECTION B-2

SECTION B-3

NORTH-EAST ELEVATION

Of all of the ethnic groups that have settled in Pittsburgh, few are as mysterious as the Carpatho-Rusyns. So convoluted is their history, so mysterious their origins, that many Rusyns are mysteries even to themselves. No one even knows precisely how many Rusyns there are - though some estimate their numbers at 2 million - in part because Rusyn identity has been suppressed for centuries. It's not just possible to work alongside a Rusyn without knowing it; it's possible for the Rusyn not to know it, either.

What we can say is this: Carpatho-Rusyns - also known as Ruthenians, Rusins, Rusnaks and Ruthenes - hail from a region that includes portions of eastern Slovakia, southern Poland, and the foothills of the Carpathian Mountains in western Ukraine. If you were to look up a blurb about them in an encyclopedia (and a blurb is all you're likely to find), you'd learn they are largely rural people, speak a Slavic tongue, and write in the Cyrillic alphabet common to Russians and other Slavs.

And for decades, Western Pennsylvania has been a second homeland for this people without a home. Pittsburgh's own Andy Warhol is without question the world's most famous Rusyn-American. Former Pennsylvania governor Tom Ridge, a Munhall native, is Rusyn as well.

But the list of Rusyn celebrities quickly grows thin. Tom Selleck. Sandra Dee. The guy who created the Ren and Stimpy cartoon. And modest ambitions may be part of the Rusyn character. Consider a few verses from "I Am Rusyn," a famous hymn by 19th-century Rusyn patriot Aleksander Duchnovič:

> *My father and mother were Rusyn,*
> *As are all my relatives,*
> *My brothers and sisters are Rusyns,*
> *And my large group of friends.*

And it goes on like that. Rusyns are like the Pittsburghers of Europe: nice neighbors, hard workers ... but unaccustomed to making big claims for themselves.

So it falls to me, a non-Rusyn, to make a big claim for them. Which is this:

At a time when the world is seething with ethnic unrest, when American politics is seized with immigration fears, and even an obscure people like the South Ossetians can nearly touch off another cold war - at a time like that, if humanity hopes to survive, it may have to look to the Carpatho-Rusyns.

The first time I saw Rusyn identity politics firsthand, it was at the Pittsburgh Folk Festival. Amid the bustle of patrons looking for haluski in the David L. Lawrence Convention Center, I saw an intense-looking guy in Eastern European peasant dress and a goatee standing in front of a booth, having an obviously charged discussion with a festival visitor.

"Who gets into an argument at a folk festival?" I wondered.

The answer was Dean Poloka. But you can't blame him: He was arguing with somebody who insisted he didn't exist.

Poloka says people of Eastern European descent sometimes contend

that there are no such things as Rusyns - that "If you came from Slova-kia, you're Slovakian."

Rusyns "never had a country of our own," Poloka says. "So we try to tell people that nationality and ethnicity isn't the same thing. And that we just want to promote our heritage, speak our language, and be who we are, without being harassed."

Like the Basques of Spain, or Jews for much of their history, Rusyns are one of history's stepchildren: one of those countless - and usually uncounted - peoples whose role on the global stage has largely consist-ed of bit parts written by someone else. There are many such people: Ethnographers have compiled a list of several thousand ethnic groups across the world, but only 200 countries on the map.

Carpatho-Rusyn history is too convoluted to explore fully. (Plus, the harder I try, the more certain I am to touch off headache-inducing let-ters from one side or the other.) Suffice it to say that the Rusyn home-land is, as Poloka says, "a very strategic area, at the crossroads between east and west. So a lot of people started vying for it, trying to make it their own."

According to the Encyclopedia of Rusyn History and Culture, early maps described much of the Rusyn homeland as terra nullius ("no-man's land") or terra indagines ("the land in-between"). Which sums things up. Russyns first began settling in Eastern Europe around 500 or 600 AD, and since then, their territory has been claimed by groups including the Magyars of Hungary, the Poles, the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the Nazis, the Soviet Union, and Czechoslovakia.

For 1,500 years, national borders have extended and receded across the Rusyn homeland, like waves on the beach. But the Rusyns, a largely agricultural folk, have remained. A common joke among Rusyns is that their family has lived in five different countries - without moving once.

Unlike some other stateless people, Rusyns have never been victims of a genocide (perhaps partly because eradicating a people requires recognizing their existence). But large numbers have been displaced, and numerous efforts have been made to repress their ethnicity. The Hungarians tried to "Magyarize" them, for example, while the Soviets tried to convince them they were Ukrainian. Rusyns have had only fleeting shots at self-determination. One 1939 effort to create a stand-alone country lasted a single day: The Hungarians invaded (again), and the government was run by ethnic Ukrainians anyway.

Over time, some Rusyns forgot that they were Rusyn at all. Rusyn iden-tity was so muddled that originally, even the booth that local Rusyns used at folk-festivals described the people as "Caraptho-Russian." Russians are a different group entirely, notes Jack Poloka, Dean's father and a passionate Rusyn-American: "We just didn't know any better."

The once-and-future heart of the Rusyn-American community is St. John the Baptist, a yellow-brick Greek Catholic church not far from Homestead's Carnegie Library. It's been stripped of its stained glass, and Heaven is obscured by a distinctly uncelestial drop ceiling. But as Mary Ann Sivak says, St. John's "was the headquarters for the Rusyn people in America." And the hope is that it can be again, once it is renovated into a cultural center by the Carpatho-Rusyn Society, where Sivak serves as vice-president.

No one can say how many Rusyn immigrants came to America: Early records tracked immigration by country of origin rather than ethnicity. But in the new world as in the old, they were little more than pawns in someone else's game.

Histories suggest that as early as 1877, mining and steel companies were recruiting Rusyns to work as strike-breakers in America. Rusyns were soon drawn to the mills of Pittsburgh, and in 1903, St. John the Baptist became the first American church built expressly for the Rusyns and their faith, Greek Catholicism.

Also known as Byzantine Catholicism, Greek Catholicism is the kind of hodgepodge faith you'd expect the Rusyns to have. It looks like an orthodox faith: The services and religious calendars are similar - Christmas takes place in January - and churches sport a cross with three bars, and celebrate Easter with pisanki, intricately decorated eggs. But as their name implies, Greek Catholics are under the Vatican's jurisdiction. In exchange for pledging fealty to the pope in the 1600s, Greek Catholics were permitted to retain their own practices - including allowing priests to marry.

But they had a hard go of it in America. American workers already distrusted the ''scabs,'' and as the history Byzantine-Rite Rusins in Carpatho-Ruthenia and America says, to American Catholics the newcomers "had strange customs and were unable to speak the English language."

In 1929, the Pope issued an edict that, among other things, required all priests to be celibate. Many Rusyns denounced the edict as a papal power play, and Western Pennsylvania was a battleground for disputes over celibacy and church property. A Rankin priest was excommunicated, and in 1936 a court order was needed to oust a priest from St. John's itself. Some disgruntled Rusyns started their own churches; others joined the Russian Orthodox and other eastern faiths. The rituals were similar, and over time, some parishioners got the idea they'd been Russian all along.

Sivak, who grew up in Czechoslovakia, says her grandfather had a rueful summary of Rusyn history: "First they took our God, then they took our land, and then they took our identity." Many Rusyn immigrants surrendered each of those things on their own. "For immigrants, the goal was just to make a living, and not stick out your head," Sivak says. "The second generation is the melting pot - being Rusyn is the past, you're an American now. It's the third generation that really begins to take an interest."

Which means that Americans with Rusyn blood are only just learning the fact - sometimes by discovering a triple-barred cross in the attic.

It's for such people that the Carpatho-Rusyn Society was formed in 1994. It later acquired St. John's after the Greek Catholic church vacated it (not because of a schism, but to find better parking down the road). For now, the center is somewhat bare, sporting donated funerary and religious items along with other scattered artifacts. But the society has a $2.7 million plan to turn it into a cultural museum and genealogical center.

In the meantime, society cofounder John Righetti has led tours back to the Rusyn parts of Europe, journeys that allow Rusyns like Bettianne

Sekerak to connect with a heritage they didn't necessarily know they had lost.

Sekerak hails from suburban Youngstown, Ohio, but she and her husband, a retired electrician, come to Munhall to help with the center. "When I was a child, I knew I was Rusyn, but I would say I was Slovak, to make it easy," she says. But having visited Slovakia with 30 others earlier this year, "I will not deny my heritage now."

When she visited Slovakia, she says, she felt almost as if she had been born there. In a Rusyn village, she says, "The buildings are in buttery yellows, sherbets, blues and pinks. They are like what we see in fairytale books - and everyone has flowers.

"Everything is new for us, now that we're allowed to exist," she adds.

The fall of Communism, in fact, helps explain the growth of Rusyn awareness. Since its founding, the CRS has acquired 10 chapters across the country and nearly 2,000 active members, most of whom live in the Pittsburgh region.

But even getting this far wasn't easy, says Righetti, a spokesman for Butler Hospital who grew up in an Italian-Rusyn household and still wears a three-bar cross on a necklace. When the first CRS meeting was held at the University of Pittsburgh, he says, he told Pitt it should have security on hand, just in case. "To be Rusyn is political," Righetti says, "even though our only sin is our geography."

The Rusyns lack territory, or an army to defend it. What they do have is culture.

Located in a White Oak strip mall, WEDO 810 AM seems an unlikely outpost. But the "Station of Nations" has carried a weekly broadcast of Rusyn folk music for more than a decade. Jack and Dean Poloka do a half-hour broadcast every Sunday ... even though finding the music hasn't always been easy.

"Up until recently, it was hard to get materials," Jack Poloka says. With the Communists suppressing expressions of Rusyn culture, "We'd only get occasional cassettes." But now the Polokas' record collection numbers some 300 CDs.

And they need it, because the Rusyns are a fragmented people. There are Lemko Rusyns, who live in Poland, along with those living in Ukraine, Slovakia and elsewhere. And "The music is different from one region to the other," Poloka says. Sitting in the studio during a broadcast , Poloka demonstrates by tapping out rhythms in 3/4 time, 6/8 time, 13/16 - stopping intermittently to notify listeners of events like an upcoming pilgrimage in Uniontown. (Uniontown is home to Mount St. Macrina, a Byzantine Catholic convent.) "There will be many liturgies, prayer and spiritual enrichments ... and great food, including their famous medovniki," Poloka tells his audience.

WEDO's signal is not strong, but this broadcast will be posted online, so Jack Poloka's gentle voice will reach all the way to the Rusyn homeland itself, where Rusyns can download it and know they are not forgotten.

Jack Poloka is even better known as the cofounder of Slavjane (pronounced "slahv-YAWN-ee"). Founded in 1961, Slavjane performs Rusyn folk music and dance. It's not easy to distinguish Rusyn dances

from other Eastern European steps, but what separates Slavjane is expertise: Half an hour after I saw Poloka defending his own existence at the Pittsburgh Folk Festival, Slavjane took the stage and more or less blew everyone else off it, executing athletic jumps and synchronized movements few other groups seemed capable of.

Slavjane has become a sort of farm team for Duquesne University's famed Tamburitzans. At one time, Jack Poloka says, a quarter of the Tamburitzan's three dozen performers were Slavjane alumni. "And that's with the whole of North America to choose from!" he boasts.

So it's little wonder the Polokas sometimes bridle at slights to their heritage.

Take Out of this Furnace, the celebrated Thomas Bell novel of immigrants in Pittsburgh's steel industry. Everyone thinks it's about Slovaks, the Polokas say, but most of the book concerns the family of Mike Dobrejcak, who hails from a "Rusnak" village.

And the Russian Nationality Room at Pitt? The Polokas say it should be the Rusyn Nationality Room, since it uses Rusyn motifs.

The importance of such debates may be lost on outsiders. One trait Rusyns take pride in is their history of living peacefully with other cultures, so blurring of cultural boundaries is inevitable. (Pitt's nationality room, for example, uses folk-art motifs common in much of the region. Its designer, Andrey Avinoff, was born in the Ukraine.)

But local Rusyns have always had to fight to get their foot in the door. Jack Poloka recalls that in the early years, other nationalities tried to keep him out of folk festivals, claiming they represented the Rusyns.

And Rusyns themselves sometimes struggle to connect with their heritage. The Heinz History Center has long featured an exhibit of Rusyn burial traditions, but the center's director, Andy Masich, confesses to being cut off from his own Rusyn history.

The parents of Masich's father emigrated in 1903 from the Presov region, a Rusyn nexus in Slovakia. But while his father could speak the Rusyn language, "he called it 'Slavish,'" Masich recalls. "And I never heard anyone in my family talk about Rusyns."

Masich's father had been cast out of the family for marrying a Scots-Irish woman, who refused to raise her children Greek Catholic. Masich might never have known his father's ethnicity at all, except that his uncle, a Greek Catholic priest, came to his father's funeral - with his collar covered up.

Because of their history through the fall of Communism, says Masich, "I think Rusyns have been slow to recognize who they are." Even today, he says, while he has "an affinity for things Rusyn, there's enough separation that it's hard to regain some of those traditions."

Such stories are common, but Rusyn advocates like John Righetti have tried to make a virtue out of the Rusyns' rootlessness.

Democratic Presidential candidate Howard Dean may think he invented the "meet-up," but the Rusyns, Righetti says, got there first. Rusyn groups have tried to reestablish a cherished Rusyn tradition known as the vatra - a bonfire in which Rusyns gather around the fire to share food, music and each other's company. It's a bit like a medieval flash

mob. Similarly, Righetti says, Rusyn youth groups, and the WEDO Webcast, show the Rusyn diaspora reaching out. "How do you keep a community alive when it's not connected geographically?" Righetti asks. "You do it electronically."

In fact, Righetti says, the Rusyns are "probably the world's first virtual ethnic community."

Not surprisingly, Rusyns brag most of all about Andy Warhol. The Warholas originally hail from the village of Medzilaborce; one of the first Rusyn cultural organizations to arise after the fall of Communism was that town's Andy Warhol Society. And for a decade, The Andy Warhol Museum on the North Side celebrated "Rusyn Day," in which patrons witnessed Greek Catholic ceremonies and engaged in cultural activities like egg painting.

"You can see Rusyn culture all though Warhol's work," Righetti says. The artist's famous paintings of Marilyn Monroe, Righetti says, are merely 20th-century updates of Greek Catholic icons. Rusyns even interpret Warhol's famous assertion "I come from nowhere" in Rusyn terms: It reflects, they say, the lament of a people without a place on the map.

As with many of Warhol's gnomic utterances, though, others read the remark differently. Pittsburghers may see it as a dig at his hometown; art critics note Warhol revealed as little of himself as possible.

Warhol's ethnic background certainly helped shape his art, agrees Tom Sokolowski, the Warhol's director. For a working-class kid in Pittsburgh, going to a church service "with music and incense and priests wearing dazzling robes - it was like what rich people did." But, he adds, "Any great person is never represented by just one thing. He was influenced by his culture, sure. But also by being gay, and by growing up poor."

In any case, the Warhol has ceased holding Rusyn Day. Righetti says the event "lived out its life cycle." Sokolowski says it often caused some cognitive dissonance. "The first year we had 1,000 people," Sokolowski says, "but a lot of them didn't like the pictures in the galleries. And when you say, 'What about bringing in a [Rusyn] composer who is doing something really new?' people don't want to hear that."

It's a natural impulse - to want to preserve a ritual as if it were a family heirloom. But doing so is akin to embalming your own identity, burying it in native costume. "I'm not asking anyone to eschew traditional culture," Sokolowski says, but if that's all you focus on, "it becomes a 'you can't go home again' thing."

There is some truth to that. Jack Poloka ruefully notes that while "We're trying to keep alive our traditions," in the Rusyn homeland itself, "they're trying to be Western."

There are, in fact, concerns that increasing prosperity will do to the Rusyns what centuries of oppression could not: dilute their identity as a rural people. Younger Rusyns are leaving for the city, and on her own visit, Bettianne Sekerak noted a ritual previously unknown to Rusyns: the traffic jam.

Younger Rusyns especially try to take such changes in stride. Take Maria Silvestri, a Monroeville native who is an anomaly even among

an anomalous people. "I could count on one hand the number of Rusyn activists who are my age," says the 23-year-old, who pairs her interest with Rusyn culture with a passion for leftist politics. "Most people who are active are my mother's age - nostalgic for a village life they've never had."

Silvestri - a graduate student studying how groups like the Rusyns are represented in museums - helped create a Rusyn youth newsletter and Web site called "Rusyn Outpost" (http://rusynoutpost.ning.com), which billed itself as "Not your Baba's Rusyn Outpost." The newsletter, now defunct, wrestled with questions of how to make Rusyn identity cool, rather than something your parents force you to do.

Creating a pop culture is "crucial if Rusyns want to ensure that their young ... do not fall victim to the threat of assimilation," one 2003 article asserts. But the creator of Pop Art is a distinctly unlikely ethnic spokesman, notes the piece's author, Brian Pozun: "Warhol's legacy includes homosexuality and drugs [while the church-dominated] Rusyn culture is fantastically asexual. ... Warhol was obsessed with fame [while] the Rusyns are one of the least-known nations in Europe."

Silvestri and her circle have dabbled at creating a Rusyn pop culture of their own. They devised, for example, a Rusyn version of the oval-shaped destination bumper-sticker; like the "OBX" acronym sported by tourists who've visited the Outer Banks. The Rusyn version says simply "Nowhere" - a Warhol reference as well as a timely joke in an era of $4 gas and "staycations." Silvestri also designed a T-shirt answer to the Jewish American Princess - the Carpatho-Rusyn American Princess, whose acronym, of course, is CRAP.

Part of what makes such efforts unusual is that based on my interviews, there's no such a thing as a Rusyn joke, in the way that there are, say, Polish jokes. It's not that Rusyns are humorless. The problem, once again, is that hardly anyone knows who Rusyns are ... and nothing ruins a joke like having to explain it.

Silvestri credits older Rusyns with starting to provide that explanation. The Polokas "did Rusyn stuff before anyone else did: They fought the battles. And Slavjane is a really great introduction to Rusyn culture." Silvestri herself participated in the group, and says the Polokas gave it a sense of mission. "If you look bad, it's like, 'The Rusyns don't have their shit together.' So you work twice as hard, because we could have disappeared off the map entirely."

That seems less likely since the fall of Communism. The Slovak government now embraces and funds Rusyn cultural expressions. As this issue goes to press, Silvestri is in Slovakia, working with a Rusyn cultural museum. And she thinks its safe for Rusyns to being innovating.

"I don't want to chuck all that traditional stuff," she says. "But there's Rusyn punk music now. We still know the traditions - but that doesn't mean you can't adapt them."

But if the Rusyns, already denied a country, change their traditions, what do they have left? Righetti and Silvestri boast that their past has bequeathed a postmodern notion of identity, one in which there is no essential "national character."

"The Rusyn movement is international, and decentralized," Silvestri says. "It's anarchic, and that's what I like about it.

"You can be nationalistic without being a nation," she adds. "Is Steelers Nation a country?"

That, says Robert Hayden, "is a very healthy, refreshing attitude."

An expert on nationalism and director of the University of Pittsburgh's Center for Russian and East European Studies, Hayden says that, ordinarily, "nationalist issues are pretty intractable. When I first came to Pittsburgh in 1986, Serbs and Croats got along beautifully. There were people who were members of both Croatian and Serbian fraternal groups. Then you get the demands for independent republics, which led to a lot of unpleasant stuff."

When people begin identifying their culture too strongly with something fixed - as something that can be inherited, or planted in a particular soil - "the question of identity gets really nasty," Hayden says.

Hayden doubts any blood will be shed for a Rusyn state. They "are distributed too widely to effectively proclaim a homeland," he says. Which is just as well: "States tend to rigidify, and to promote a fixed identity. But identity is inherently fluid, changing constantly."

While nostalgia for 19th-century peasant life is understandable, says Hayden, "The Rusyn identity is whatever people who regard themselves as Rusyns do. And those things change all the time. Look at all the changes in American cultural practices: A lot of the things we take for granted didn't exist in the 1950s. Yogurt used to be exotic."

Then again, perhaps it's precisely because American culture seems so flimsy that many people - Rusyn and otherwise - take such an interest in genealogy. Maybe that helps explain why Bettianne Sekerak says she felt "homesick for a place where you weren't even born."

For Rusyns, who may be discovering their roots after decades of being told family histories that didn't add up, such feelings may be especially poignant. But thanks to trends like globalization, the Internet and the rise of stateless terrorism, we're all living in a world where borders are permeable. "Within 20 or 30 years, people's identification with the nation-state is going to disappear," Righetti predicts. And who better to usher in the new era than "a people without borders" like the Rusyns?

Rusyn historian Paul Robert Magosci has written that "each person has the right to claim whatever ethnic identity he or she wishes, regardless [of whether] the claim has any relationship to objective ... criteria, such as geographical origin, spoken language or customs." Even in the American melting-pot, that may be hard to swallow. Just look at all the efforts to make English the "national language." But it seems a particularly Rusyn sentiment (assuming such a thing can be said to exist). It may explain why Rusyns have "always lived peacefully in multicultural, multiethnic groups," as Silvestri says. Probably the world would be a quieter place if more people lived that way now.

Even the Rusyns' mix-and-match Greek Catholic faith could play a part. The very thing that made it an anomaly for centuries - its strange hybrid of east and west - could make it a model for religious tolerance in the future.

After all, the Roman Catholic Church and the Eastern Orthodox faiths split nearly 1,000 years ago, in a "Great Schism" that Pope Benedict called "a scandal to the world" in 2006. But Greek Catholics have

shown reconciliation is possible; as the history Byzantine Rite Rusins hopefully proclaims, Rusyns could "form a bridge between these two Christian religions, and ... be the mechanism for Christian re-unity."

Of course, none of this would be easy. Rusyns still aren't recognized as a distinct people in the Ukraine, and Righetti warns that "Ukraine could be creating trouble for themselves." There is a nascent nationalist movement in the Ukraine, and some Rusyns "are saying to Russia, 'Maybe you can help us.'" A similar dynamic helped trigger the trouble in South Ossetia, where Russia used a minority group's nationalist aspirations to advance its own agenda.

But when European Rusyns ask, "Should we have a Rusyn state?" Righetti says his response is, "Don't waste your time." Even Dean Poloka - who describes himself as a "hard-line Rusyn nationalist" - prefers not to have an actual nation: "We're better off not having a country. You don't have to worry about politics."

In other words, if the Rusyns were looking for a national anthem, they could do worse than a song like John Lennon's "Imagine," which invites us to "Imagine there's no countries ..."

But of course, the Rusyns aren't the sort of people to deny themselves an anthem, just because they don't have a country. For more than 100 years, they've celebrated their identity with the song "Podkarpatskije Rusiny, ostavte hlubokij son."

Or, loosely translated, "Rusyns, Arise From Your Deep Slumber."

Chris Potter

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Maps & Images

* Unless otherwise noted, maps and images have been exclusively produced by the author of this thesis.

Raw village plan (.tiff) files have been provided by Joakim Nađ, secretary of 'Месна Заєднїца', Ruski Kerestur. Redrawn with AutoCAD by the author of this thesis and used with permission.

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Special contributors:
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Original architectural plans of the print room have been provided by the appointed secretary of the village paper 'Ruske Slovo', Ruski Kerestur, and used with permission in this thesis.

Interviews

The information on cultural and societal relationships in Ruski Kerestur has been partially obtained by conduction of various informal interviews with the residents of the village. By request, the subjects are left anonymous, but the supportive information gathered during interviews was used with permission in this thesis.

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