

Re-inventing Vernacular Settlements for Tourists: Can the New Macedonian Village Represent True Vernacular Traditions?

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Abstract

As part of the current government policy, Macedonia has implemented a design project for the construction of a “Macedonian Village” near the capital city, and as part of the wider project called “Skopje 2014”. Sourced through a design competition, it seeks to use the Macedonian heritage and the values of the Macedonian vernacular architectural traditions to promote tourism. The aim of this paper is to offer a review of the so called “Macedonian Village” and to critique it in terms of its authenticity of representation of the vernacular traditions. It interrogates the meaningfulness of such re-inventions of traditions for the production and consumption of instant touristic experiences.

Keywords: Re-inventing Tradition, Macedonian Village, Tourism, Vernacular Settlements.

Introduction

Vernacular heritage includes both the physical remnants of the past, i.e. the historic environment in the form of archaeological and architectural sites, as well as the non-material aspects of our living past, i.e. the intangible heritage as manifested in music, handicraft, religion and other rituals and cultural practices. Cultural heritage is one of the defining and central aspects of human life and constitutes an important aspect of people’s identity and sense of place.

Implicit in the concept of heritage is the idea that there is a threat that something will be lost unless we make a conscious effort to preserve it. Scholars make a distinction between living culture and heritage and stress that preservation becomes necessary only when normal institutions and cultural practices can no longer guarantee the survival of a site or practice. The mere designation of something as heritage thus seems to indicate the end of it as a living culture/practice. According to Barbara Kirschenblatt-Gimblett, for example, heritage designation gives the endangered a second life as an exhibition of itself. This analysis however hides the fact that contestations often exist between local people who still see the sites as part of their living culture, and other actors, such as governments and experts, who designate them as heritage sites and thus to some extent museumify them. Some of the contestations surrounding heritage sites thus originate in differing views and uses of sites and buildings. In this context, one could also refer to the discourse and dichotomy between the tangible and intangible cultural heritage. Although different opinions and understandings exist, it is important not to draw a too strict a line between the two types of heritage. A living culture is not only often manifested through and in buildings (tangible heritage) but also the

best guarantee for the latter's preservation. Preservation movements and an interest in buildings as heritage sites arise as a result of a (perceived) threat to both traditional ways of life and to old buildings.

The interest in the West to preserve the rural heritage arose when industrialization and urbanization became a threat to traditional rural life. For example, the world's first open-air museum, Skansen, was created in Stockholm in the 1890s as an effort to save vernacular houses from different parts of Sweden. The growing appreciation of traditional architecture and villages in China is also due to an increasing awareness of the threat that economic development and modernization brings.

Tourism offers potential tourist-consumers; a rather unusual type of commodity. In most of its varieties, travel-for-leisure exists only as information at the point of sale. This information, usually a combination of linguistic and supporting visual elements, creates, codifies, and communicates certain mythical experiences. Whatever communication medium is used, the language of tourism is one of persuasion and seduction, merging macro-economic goals with attributed individual need satisfactions.

Globalization, the process of growing worldwide interconnectedness and interdependency, adds extra layers of complexity to the way touristic representations are created and circulated. Destinations everywhere are adapting themselves to the homogenizing corporate culture of tourism while trying to commodify their "local distinctiveness" (Clifford et. al., 1993). While they promote and sell the packaged experience of so-called "authentic" natural landscapes or "traditional" cultures, what counts as local heritage is increasingly defined on a global scale (such as UNESCO's World Heritage List). However, this global overhaul also stimulates the resurgence of local (and sometimes national) identities and competing counter discourses of natural and cultural heritage, a phenomenon that has been noticed worldwide. In a situation when globalism, consumption and markets are moving the world, we face different examples of implementing these elements and delivering them through a more valuable and higher medium; the vernacular, an aspect that holds anything but materialism and the global need for purchased instant experiences. It is not possible to recreate the intangible heritage, its values and experiences and deliver it on a plate. The instant experiences could satisfy just one aspect, buying something that is not even close to the real experiences vernacular offers.

Using vernacular architecture for entertainment, leisure and tourism is not something new and unfamiliar. One of the earliest examples of using vernacular architecture to prevent it from the modernization of the new era is the example of the village of Skansen in Sweden. Skansen was the first open-air museum and zoo in Sweden and is located on the island *Djurgården* in Stockholm, Sweden. It was founded in 1891 by Artur Hazelius (1833–1901) to show the way of life in different parts of Sweden before the industrial era. The purpose of *Skansen* was very clear. 19th century was a period of great change throughout Europe, and Sweden was no exception. Its rural way of life was rapidly giving way to an industrialized society and many feared that the country's many traditional customs and occupations might be lost to history. Skansen was built after *Hazelius* bought around 150 houses from all over the country (as well as one structure from *Telemark* in Norway) and had them shipped piece by piece to the museum, where they were rebuilt to provide a unique picture of traditional Sweden. Only three of the buildings in the museum are not original, and were painstakingly copied from examples he had found. All of the buildings are open to visitors and show the full range of Swedish life from the *Skogaholm* Manor house built in 1680, to the 16th century *Älvros* farmhouses.

Skansen was clearly concerned to collect and interpret houses that were a product from the past. It was intended, by its settings, to show how people lived in the past before the industrial era but the model later became adopted internationally as the paradigm for open-air museums. The Skansen model was followed in Central and Eastern Europe but also in the USA like Old World Wisconsin. Opened in 1976, it portrays housing and the daily life of European immigrants in the 19th century Wisconsin.

Examples of using vernacular architecture in designing villages that will attract tourists can also be found in Asia. The *Namsangol Hanok Village* in Korea, traditional Korean village, is one of the examples. It is located among tall buildings and has five restored traditional Korean houses and a pavilion. These houses were rebuilt after the traditional houses of Joseon Dynasty and belong to those of various social classes, ranking from peasants to the king. The *Tono Furusato Village* in Japan is a facility where a traditional farming village has been reconstructed, which is sure to arouse a sense of nostalgia in many a Japanese mind, and to offer a novel experience for visitors from around the world. Many of the buildings are designated as national tangible cultural properties.

It is argued that the vernacular house could be an important cultural resource for tourism development. It is suggested that vernacular house tourism helps to communicate local cultural identity to visitors, to reduce the negative impact of modernization upon local traditions and traditional styles of houses, and to satisfy tourists' demands for experiencing greater authenticity.

Numerous examples exist in the world where we see the vernacular being used in contemporary surroundings and the contemporary world of consumption. All of these “traditional villages” follow similar concepts; vernacular architectural scenery used for instant consumption of an atmosphere. The activities offered in the villages too are similar; they all offer a taste of the traditional cuisine, and the traditional arts and crafts, with the aim to get people closer to the intangible values of the vernacular. Almost all of these villages are constructed of already existing or reconstructed structures. In *Skansen* for example, old vernacular houses taken from various parts of the country were used, in the villages in Asia and also in USA where old existing vernacular houses were reconstructed. None of these examples offer completely newly built structures presenting the old traditional values.



Fig. 1: Macedonian Village
(Source: Authors archives, 2013)

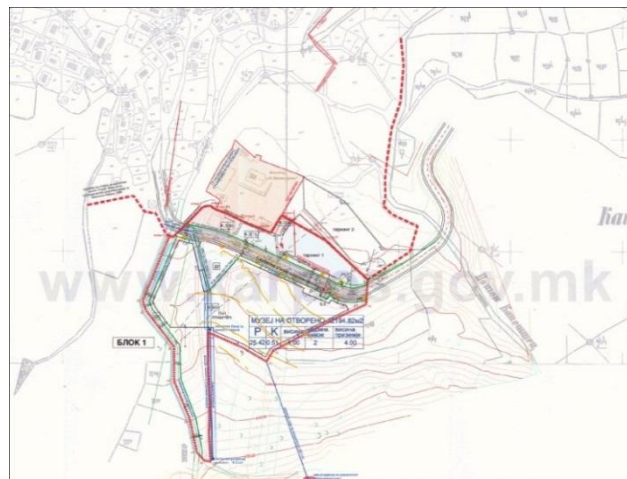


Fig. 2: Urban area of the village and the Byzantine monastery

The Macedonian Village – An Introduction

The project of the Macedonian Village contains urban and design proposal for building a village in the mountain of *Vodno* [Fig.1], overlooking the city of Skopje, situated right next to the village of *Nerezi*. The location itself is in a mountain slope facing the north to the city and across one of the oldest Byzantine monasteries and the church of St. Panteleymon dating year 1164 [Fig.2]. The new village is built in such a surrounding, according to the competition program. The village consists of new houses, each of them representing one typical vernacular traditional house of each of the several Macedonian regions. The goal of this project, already built and soon to be opened, is to put Macedonia's specific vernacular architectural types of houses in one, newly formed, urban area called "Macedonian Village" and use them as a piece of an open space exhibition [Fig.3]. In all of the "authentic" houses, a traditional craft, specific for the region will be presented. For example, in the Bitola house, pottery making craft will be presented. There will be a pottery man who will make clay products and the guests will have the privilege to try and take part in the production of the pottery products. They can either choose to make their own or buy one from the site. In the *Kratovo* house, there will be a cellar even though the most famous vine region today is the *Tikvesh* region, but as it was said, in those times *Kratovo* was famous for its wine. The upper floors of the houses are designed as apartments that the guests can use for an overnight stay. There will be a total number of 51 rooms in the complex. In the area of the site there will also be an Inn and a village *meana*, two smaller restaurants in the *Kumanovo* and *Struga* houses where traditional meals from the regions will be served. There will also be some shops for souvenirs and an Ethno Museum. With each of this specific use of the houses and the accompanying buildings, the government's goal is to promote the Macedonian Village Tourism.

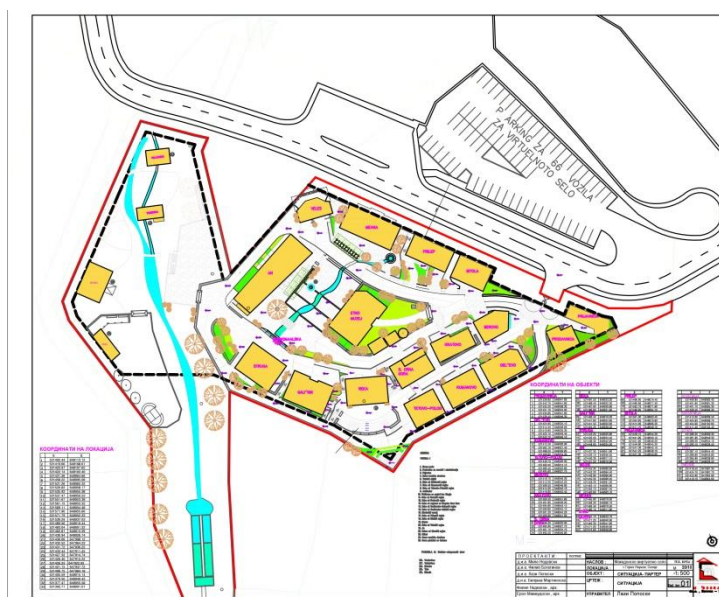


Fig. 3: The layout of the new village
(Source: Ministry of Economy of the Republic of Macedonia)

Specific Types of Vernacular Houses Presented In the "Macedonian Village" Locality

1. The house of the Reka region and the village of Galicnik

Macedonian vernacular houses located in the area of villages of the region of *Reka* and the village of *Galicnik* [Fig.4] spread in the Western part of Macedonia. *Galicnik* is a village that is also part of the *Reka* region. This region is divided into several smaller regions: *Gorna Reka*, *Dolna Reka*, *Golema Reka*, *Mala Reka* and *Mijachija*. This is a mountain region and

some of the villages are covered with snow mostly until early summer. The village of *Galicnik* presented here is taken as a single example even though there are several important (concerning the vernacular architecture heritage) villages too, like *Lazaropole*, [Fig.5] *Gari*, *Tresonche* and few others. Even though the houses differ from each other from village to village they still have their typical characteristics, by which we can easily determine to which region they belong. These are typical vernacular structures made in a very severe climate in a mountain region.



Fig. 4: Village of Galicnik (Left)

(Source: <http://www.redbubble.com/people/zdepe/works/6575861-galicnik>)

Fig. 5: Houses in village of Lazaropole (Right)

(Source: <https://www.flickr.com/>)

Above examples show the typical vernacular houses in the village of *Galicnik* and the neighboring village of *Lazaropole*. The two villages are located in different morphological terrains and the small differences between the houses can easily be noticed. However, there are also some general characteristics that typify the vernacular houses from the Reka region and the whole mountain region of mountain *Bistra* and town of Debar.[Fig.6] In the case study of the “Macedonian Village” the architects designed a house that should represent the typical house from the village of *Galichnik*. The presented example in the Macedonian Village is the presentation of one house that still exists in the village of *Galicnik* [Fig.7] but from the presented design project and the photos of the newly built houses the differences are more than obvious. Even though the sense of scale and proportion was not something that was taken into consideration while making the design project, the bigger issue is the situation of the so called *chardak*, the wooden part of the façade which is always closed in the houses of Galicnik [Fig.8] and all the houses in the nearby region known as the *Mijaks* region. The fact that these villages are built in a very harsh climate, having strong and cold winters, made the builders close this part of the house. This *chardak* is present generally in all Macedonian vernacular houses but its position in the floor plan, on the façade and its structure changes from region to region depending on the climate. That’s why in Macedonia we have several types of houses: with closed semi-open and open *chardaks*. What has happened in this project is that the *chardak* is completely open [Fig.10] which is something that can never be seen in any Macedonian house of this region. Contrary to these originals, they are always closed. Not only we see an artificial creation of a sloppy terrain, we also see inappropriate proportions of the floor plans size, also the internal distribution of the space is something diametrically opposite to the vernacular examples of this house [Fig.9]. We notice that when interpreting the vernacular “qualities” in this house, only the façade is treated as vernacular, as the skin only represents the vernacular assessments. In the case of the Galicka House in the Macedonian Village, we have a mixture that doesn’t really represent even what is a single typical house of the Galicnik region. The Galicnik House is a typical example of a mountain house. With elongated floor plan, the house with its longer axis lies orthogonally on izohips of the terrain. Depending on the terrain, the house can have two or more entrances on each level entering straight from the terrain.

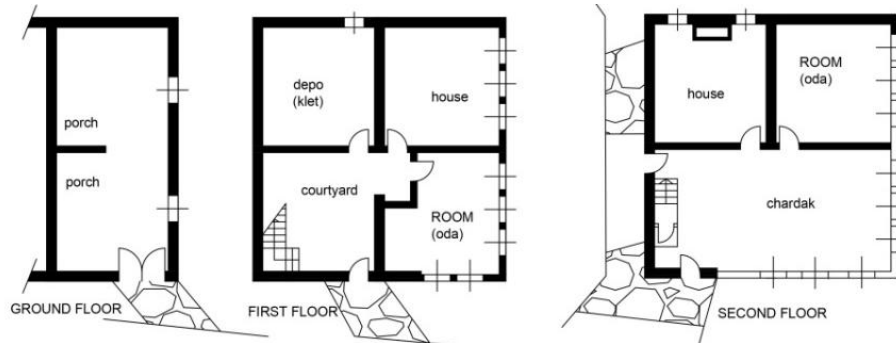


Fig. 6: Typical floor plan of the vernacular house from the village Galicnik (Source: Authors archives 1998)



Fig. 7: House in village of Galicnik (Source:

<http://www.skyscrapercity.com/showthread.php?t=1526452&page=3>)

Fig 8: Entrance in the house in village of Galicnik and the enclosed *chardak* (Source: http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Gali%C4%8Dnik_06.jpg)

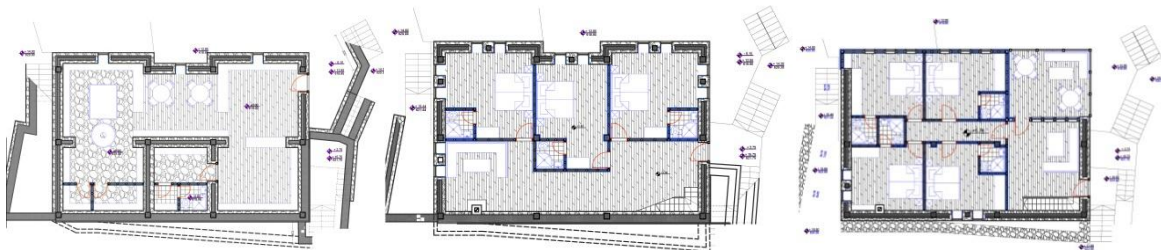


Fig. 9: Floor plans of the new "Galichka house" in the Macedonian Village (Source: Ministry of Economy of the Republic of Macedonia)

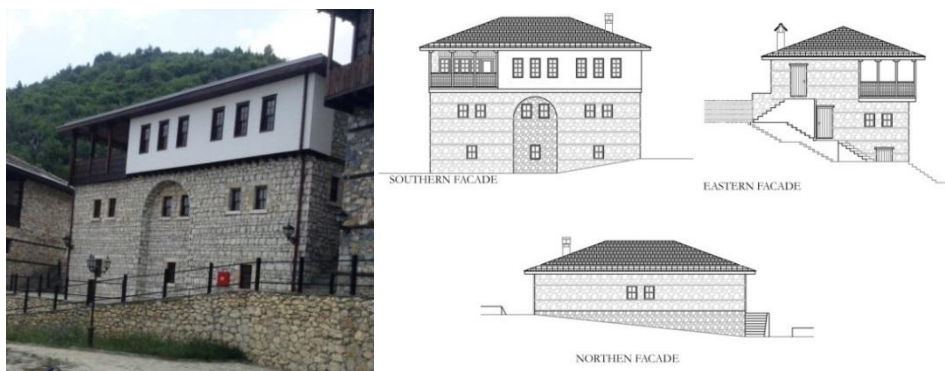


Fig. 10: South façade and the East and North facades from the design project of the house (Source: Authors archives, 2014)

The example of the house that is presented in the case study as the house form *Reka* region is also a combination of architectural elements of the houses but probably from the *Dolna reka* villages. The interior does not offer the original vernacular experience since this and all the other house's floor plans are adapted for tourists use. They are all designed as small inns offering only the accommodation while the gastronomical part is covered by the nearby inn and *meana* (restaurant) built in the complex.



Fig. 11: The Reka House in the Macedonian Village
(Source: Authors archives 2014)

Fig. 12: Houses from village of Janche, Reka region
(Source: <http://www.ajdenaodmor.mk/vest/33636/Selo-Janche--beleg-na-avtentichnata-staromakedonska-arhitektura>)

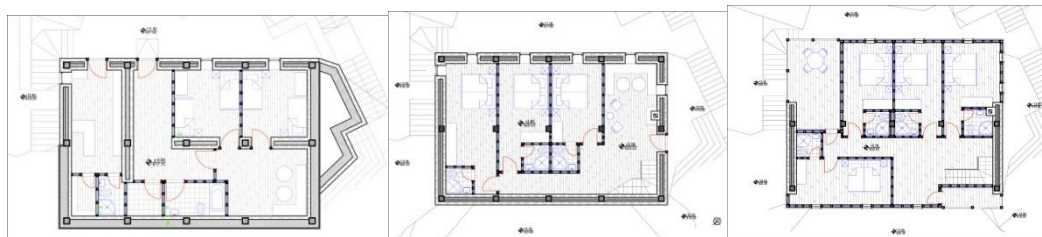


Fig. 13: Floor plans of the “Reka house” in the Macedonian Village
(Source: Ministry of Economy of the Republic of Macedonia)

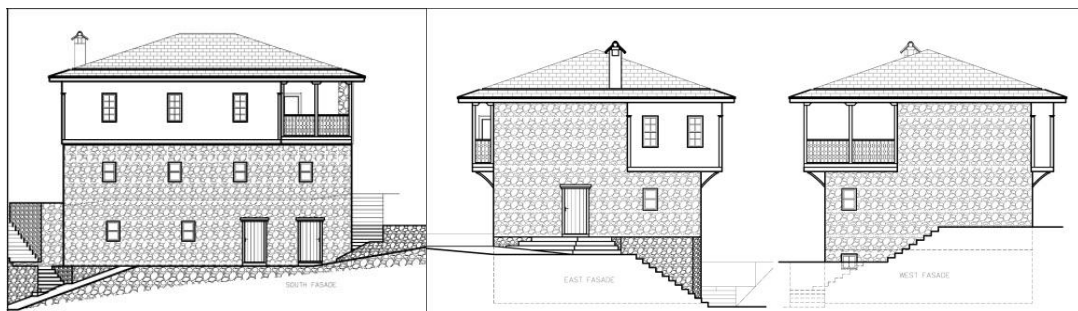


Fig. 14: Views of the new “Galichka house”
(Source: Ministry of Economy of the Republic of Macedonia)

From the given vernacular examples [Fig.11] [Fig.12] and the prototype of the *Reka* house in the Macedonian village [Fig.13] [Fig.14], it can be seen that the differences between the original vernacular examples of the *Reka* region and this example here does not represent

the typical house of the *Reka* region. The designers have attempted to replicate the “vernacular” characteristics of this region by working only on the skin (the façade) of the structure but, even here, we notice that the *chardak* is left open. The reason why this balcony was left open can be explained with the fact that the houses are used to welcome guests, so in order to provide them with a view, the authors probably decided that it is better to leave this part of the house open rather than close as it always is in the traditional houses of the regions of *Reka* and *Galicnik*. In this case, the authors didn’t design and build a replica but a totally different house that doesn’t represent the vernacular traditions of the region, but an adapted design for the need of the initial goal of the project which is touristification and the need of the consumers.

The houses of Veles, Prilep and Bitola regions

In the presented case study, we also have houses that represent the vernacular traditions of urban architecture. The above mentioned towns are rich with their traditional architecture. The town of Veles is a town located in the mid north Macedonia lying on the two sides of the bank of the river Vardar. This town has its own specific architecture. [Fig.15] The houses are also adapted to the morphology of the terrain since the town is located on high hills, so solid foundation walls of the houses were inevitable. [Fig.16]



Fig. 15: House of Kocho Racin, Veles

(Source: <http://star.utrinski.com.mk/?pBroj=2101&stID=70414&pR=5>)

Fig. 16: Kasapovi house in Veles

(Source: <http://static.panoramio.com/photos/large/3732796.jpg>)

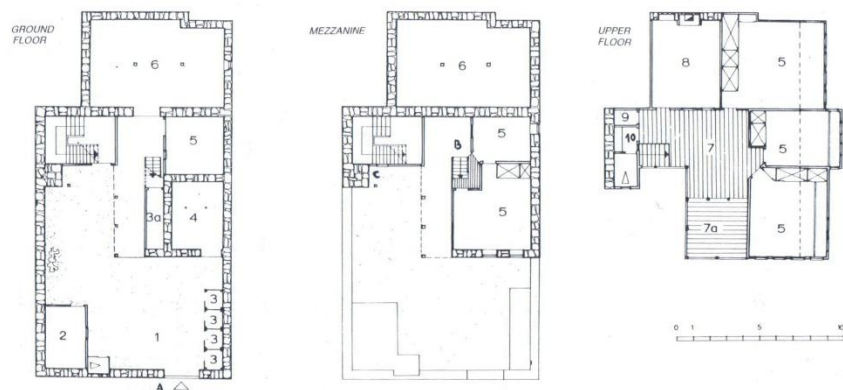


Fig. 17: Typical floor plan of a Veles house

(Source: D.Gabrijan, “Macedonian house or its Transition from Old Oriental to Modern European House” p.120)



Fig. 18: Floor plans of Veleshka house in the locality Macedonian Village
(Source: Ministry of Economy of the Republic of Macedonia)

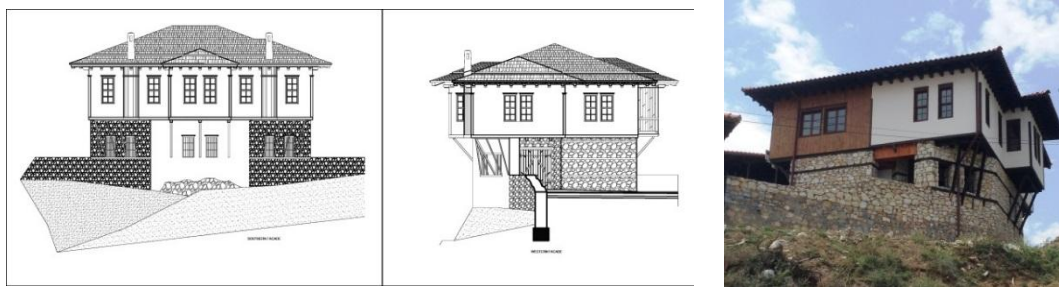


Fig. 19: Veleshka house in the locality Macedonian Village
(Source: Ministry of Economy of the Republic of Macedonia)

The example of the Veleshka House presented in the Macedonian Village [Fig.18] [Fig.19] is again a combination of the structural and the material elements sourced from the original examples. But there is one thing that is confusing in this Macedonian village. If the goal of the project is to present the vernacular houses of the village areas in Macedonia why in the case of the *Veleshka* House, we have an example of a town house? The result here is a house that pretty much resembles like the other surrounding houses in the village complex without any specifics that might make the distinction of the type of a house presenting the houses of the town of *Veles*. While analyzing the ground floor plan, despite the fact that the authors designed an artificial slope in order to recreate the natural terrain of the town of *Veles*, we see an example of a typical floor plan that has never been seen in any type of a vernacular structure in the territory of Republic of Macedonia. We can only assume that the adaptation of the floor plan was made in order to satisfy the needs of the house built for this village, which are again to accommodate the guests and only that, not thinking of presenting the typical interior of a traditional house from the town or even less than feeling of the life in such a structure.

The towns of Prilep and Bitola lie in the South of the country in the flat land of the *Pelagoniya* fields. The houses are typical valley houses characterized by two floors, mostly built in stone and the *chardak* sometimes occupies the one half of the upper floor or sometimes it is just a console front of the entrance door on the upper floor. [Fig.20] The most rich and characteristic area of the *Prilep* vernacular settlements is the *Mariovo* [Fig.21] region that is located in a very dry and rocky hills south of the town of *Prilep*.



Fig. 20: House in the village of Shtavica in Mariovo region
(Source: http://volanskopje.blogspot.com.tr/2008/07/blog-post_13.html)

Fig. 21: Village of Mariovo
(Source: <http://o-pictus.blogspot.com.tr/>)



Fig. 22: The entrance view of the house representing the Prilep region
(Source: Authors archives 2014)

Fig. 23: The back façade of the Prilep house
(Source: Authors archives, 2014)

Fig. 24: The National museum of Stip
(Source: <http://travel2macedonia.com.mk/tourist-attraction/national-museum-stip>)

From the images we can see how the presented house of the Prilep region in the Macedonian Village locality today looks like. [Fig.22] Even though attention has been paid to the structural materials, the proportions of the house and its overall appearance only suggest the presence of elements of traditional architecture. The adaptations are also very clear in the given example and compared to the already existing vernacular examples this house attempts to catch the spirit of the region of *Prilep*. The wooden decorations that can be seen on the rear façade of the newly built house are elements that are not typical for the vernacular houses in the *Prilep* region and this house can be easily mistaken to be a house from another region.¹ [Fig.23] Same can be noticed in the house of the *Bitola* region too; [Fig.26] a strange mixture of styles that do not resemble any specifics of the traditional vernacular houses of the *Bitola* region. [Fig.25]

¹ The top floor has much resemblance like the traditional town house from the region of *Shtip*, [Fig.24] a town located on the North-East of the county, with slight differences in the consoles, but it also has similarities with the Ohrid town architecture which are not at all presented in this locality.



Fig. 25: The entrance view of the house representing the Bitola region
(Source: Authors archives 2014)

Fig. 26: Houses in the Vlach village of Malovishte, Bitola
(Source:

http://www.trekearth.com/gallery/Europe/Macedonia_FYR/West/Bitola/Maloviste/photo596293.htm)

The houses of Berovo, Kratovo and Delchevo regions

Following the other group of houses that present the Far East regions of Macedonia is the group of the houses in the region called Maleseviija where among the other towns, three were selected to represent the typical vernacular “village” houses. The houses are from the villages around the towns of Berovo, Kratovo and Delchevo. Kratovo is a small picturesque town in one of the regions' living museums. Today's Kratovo has many characteristics of the past times. Its bridges are a characteristic of this town made by old masters. The vernacular houses in these areas are different from the houses located in the high mountain regions, hence the location and the presence of a more moderate climate that has influenced having more open houses on the second floor.[Fig.28] Here we can see examples of *cumba* and semi-open *chardak*'s. [Fig.27] [Fig.29]

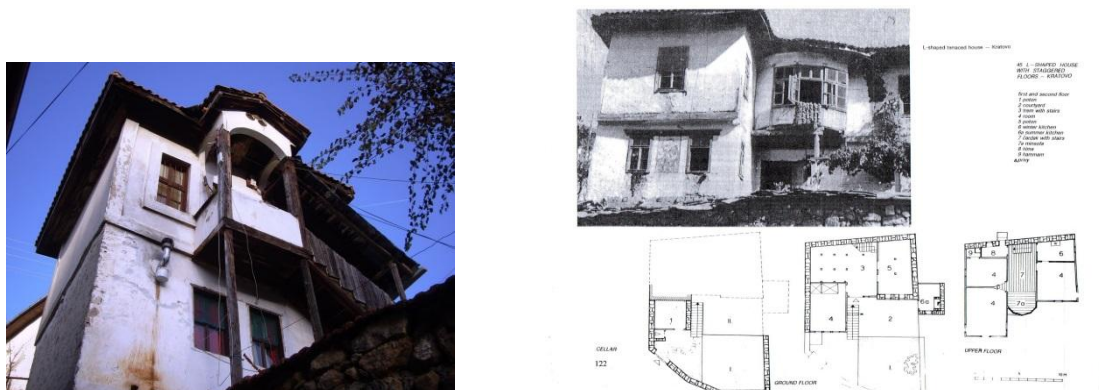


Fig. 27: Houses in the Kratovo area

(Source: <http://makedonija.name/municipalities/kratovo/kratovo/>)

Fig. 28: Floor plan of a house in Kratovo

(Source: D.Grabrijan, “Macedonian house or its Transition from Old Oriental to Modern European House” p.122)

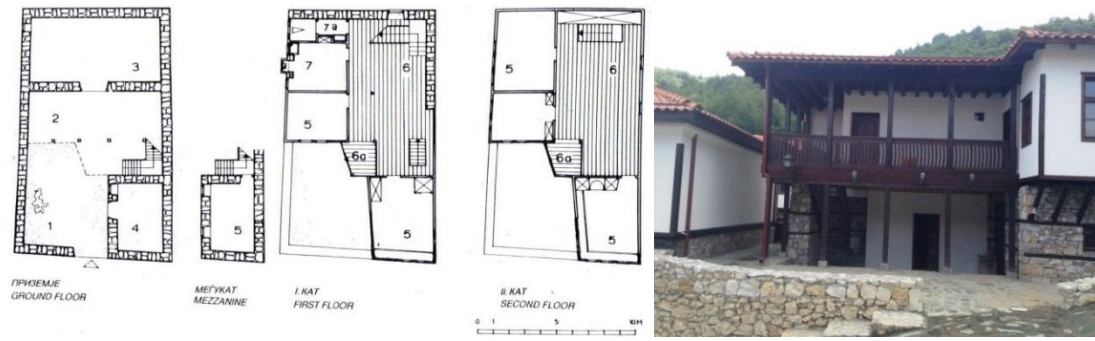


Fig. 29: “L” shaped house with chardaks in Kratovo
(Source: D.Grabrijan, “Macedonian house or its Transition from Old Oriental to Modern European House” p.157)

Fig. 30: Kratovo house in the Macedonian Village locality
(Source: Author’s archive 2014)

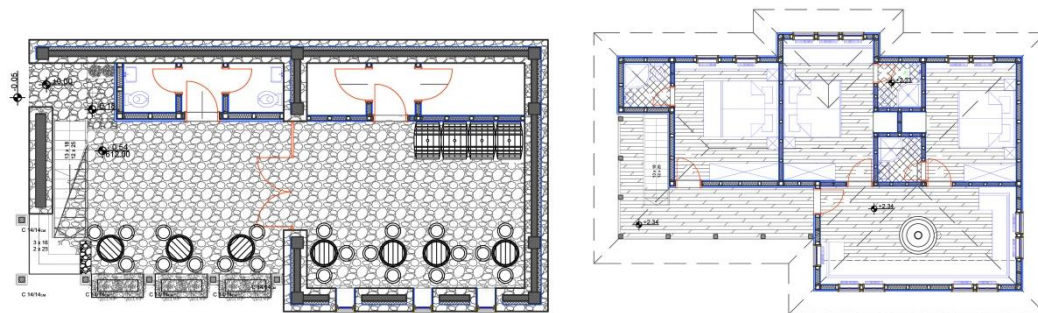


Fig. 31: Floor plans of Veleshka house in the locality Macedonian Village
(Source: Ministry of Economy of the Republic of Macedonia)



Fig. 32: Views of the Kratovo House in the Macedonian Village
(Source: Ministry of Economy of the Republic of Macedonia)

The final result of the Kratvo house [Fig.30], [Fig.31], [Fig.32] in the Macedonian Village is again something very confusing because it is different from what we still can see in the villages of the *Maleshevija* region. Most of the ground floors of the vernacular settlements in Macedonia follow the morphology of the terrain which is even more stressed in the hilly or mountain regions. The typical floor plan and the distribution of the space is completely modified following the initial use of the newly designed house, as an accommodation facility treating the “vernacular” values only through the façade. Accommodating the house on the terrain is what directs the development of the functions on the floor and the development of the house in height but in the case of this house we see a design of a floor plan that is born and raised from the house’s adaptation to its new function.

Houses of Struga regions

The town of Struga lies on the shore of the lake Ohrid and is located on the South-East of Macedonia. Its municipality spreads up to the north following up until the region of

Debar and the nearby *Reka* region. Even though the villages in this area are located in a hilly geography, their architecture differs broadly from the one of the *Reka* region. The houses are mostly built in stone and wood and they never exceed more than two stories. The following example shows a typical vernacular house from a village in the *Struga* region [Fig.33] and right next to it we can see the “prototype” that was designed and built for the Macedonian Village site that is going to represent the vernacular houses of the *Struga* region. [Fig.34] It is very clear that this house differs totally from what we have as examples in the *Struga* region so the only logical conclusion to the question why we have the present result is that probably, as in the case of the *Galicnik* house, one single existing house was used to represent the architecture of the villages in the area of *Struga*. The floor plans of the traditional examples of the *Struga* houses [Fig.35] and the new designed floor plans for the houses of this region in the Macedonian Village complex again hold the same issues about the way the vernacular traditions are treated in presenting the interior of the structures, designed and adapted to the new function of the house.[Fig.36]



Fig. 33: House in the Vevchani village, Struga

(Source: http://iskonmakedonija.blogspot.com.tr/2011_05_01_archive.html)

Fig. 34: The Struga house built in the Macedonian Village (Source: Author's archives)

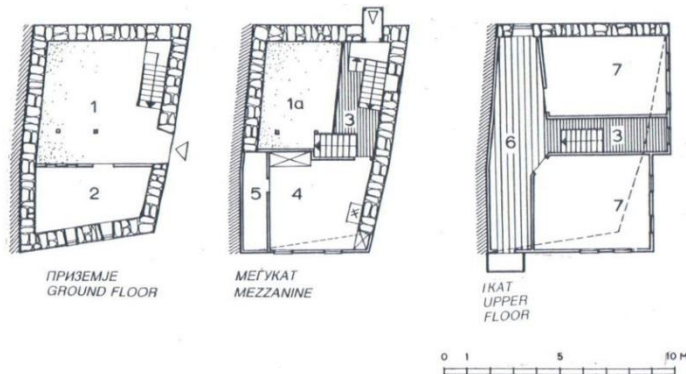


Fig. 35: Vernacular house floor plan from the region of Struga

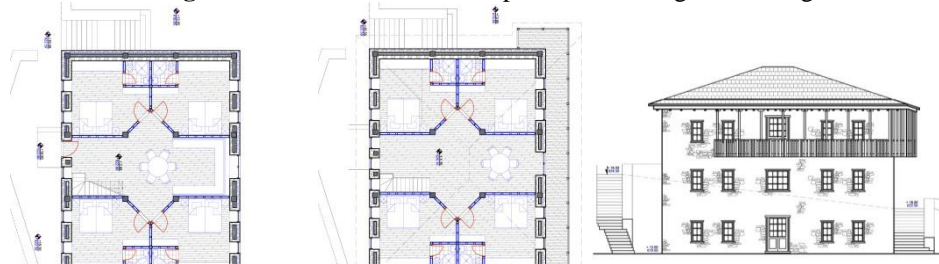


Fig. 36: The house of the Struga region in the Macedonian Village site
(Source: Ministry of Economy of the Republic of Macedonia)

The regions and their existing Macedonian vernacular houses

The territory of the Republic of Macedonia is divided to geographical regions in which different types of houses can be found. There are villages with their characteristic vernacular houses but also traditional architecture can be found in the bigger towns of those regions. The houses and regions presented through this project do not cover all the regions of Macedonia and also do not present one of the most significant traditional architecture of the town of Ohrid and Krushevo. This case presents houses from the following regions: Berovo, Kratovo, Skopska Crna Gora, Reka, Galichnik, Struga, Tetovo-Polog, Kumanovo, Delchevo regions and from the towns of Bitola, Veles and Prilep. All of the houses in each of the regions have their own individual characteristics and differences but also it is important to know that the vernacular settlements in Macedonia belong to two important subgroups: Mountain vernacular houses and traditional Macedonian houses of the Valleys which differ from each other broadly.

Characteristics of the Macedonian Vernacular Houses

The Macedonian vernacular house development started from a single space, a room with the stables under one roof and slowly started developing its ground floor. Further on, the houses continued to develop their floor plans but also started rising in height and reached to have two and sometimes even three floors. The ground floor is usually made of hard stones and the top floors of light wooden construction (*bondruk*). The spatial elements forming the ground floor consist of the stables and the cellars and sometimes a covered porch and those who had floors above contain rooms, the so called “house” or today’s living room with the kitchen and the balcony – *chardak*, as a multipurpose space. Through the stairs, a connection is provided to the other levels. [Fig.37] Due to the climate, the Macedonian vernacular house has a winter dwelling in the massive ground floor constructed of stone where the cellar is included and a summer dwelling on the upper floor made of wooden framework construction. The summer dwelling is organized around the “*chardak*”, an upper porch that opens at one side and sometimes extended into a *tronj* or an open terrace. In the mountain regions, the *chardak* is always glassed-in. The Macedonian vernacular house consists of a *poton* which is a compromise for the cellar, wood shed and a stable; a courtyard enclosing the summer kitchen; a ground floor or mezzanine with the winter kitchen and living room and an upper floor where summer life is organized with the sleeping rooms organized around the *chardak*.²

² D.Grabrijan, “Macedonian house or its Transition from Old Oriental to Modern European House”, Mislal, Skopje, 1986),p.37-62



Fig. 37: Development of floor plans of the houses in Macedonian villages
(Source: Authors archives 1998)

Depending on the position of the *chardak*, we can define several types of houses. [Fig.38] We meet houses with open *chardak* (terrace), houses with semi closed (semi open) *chardak* and houses with closed *chardak*. This last one is specific for the mountain villages.³ Another type of dwelling that was developing in these regions where there was a presence of Muslim population was the double house⁴ or so called *bratska kukja*. Fraternal houses were designed as double houses and have two or more identical functional units. Later on this concept of a house was accepted also by the Christian population but with interior adaptations according to their traditions. The houses in the mountain areas are almost always placed on steep terrain, the back wall always rests on the terrain, and the upper floors are built with stones or light wooden construction. The typological variety of architectural forms is also dependent upon the positioning of the buildings, and their horizontal and vertical development on the floor plan of the overall dimensions of the object.

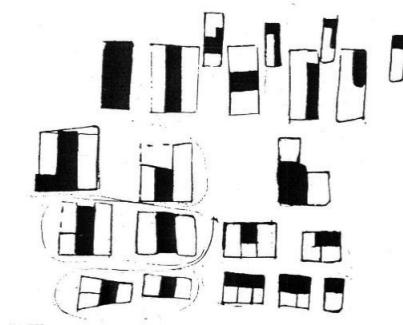


Fig. 38. Position of the *chardak* in Macedonian vernacular house
(Source: Dusan Grabrijan, Macedonian house or its Transition from Old Oriental to Modern European House)

³ Ibid, p.63-105

⁴ S. Ireland and W. Bechhoefer, "The Ottoman House, Papers from the Amasya Symposium", (The British Institute of Archaeology at Ankara and The University of Warwick, September 1996), p.10-11

Conclusion

The new Macedonian village is a host to all this “typical” Macedonian traditional houses in which a traditional craft, specific for the region will be presented. The houses will also serve as accommodation with the accompanying facilities like souvenir shops, restaurant and an ethnological museum where tourists can stay overnight or use the other facilities for relaxation. By providing these services, the village is expected to attract more tourists with the hope to put Macedonia in the world tourist destination map. This way the new settlement will offer the consumers instant experience of the Macedonian village, the traditions and culture of life. The question that remains open and concerns not only us as architectural historians, but everyone is “is it possible to create such unnatural fusion, place it in a natural surrounding and expect it to work”? Numerous are the examples from around the world where vernacular is used as a way of promoting the culture and the traditions of a region and its heritage. In most such world examples, traditional houses, already existing are used, whether relocated from its original habitat or restored in its original site. These houses not only kept the exterior, the façade, as a skin but also the interior showing the typical life of the people from the region they represent. In these sites both tangible and intangible values are presented but built in the today’s modern society.

The houses presented in this case study are all newly built structures that are primary designed for the needs of the guests. This means the interior of all of the structures are redesigned and adapted to the consumer’s needs instead of producing real feeling of life before industrialization happened in these territories. These houses are designed as a combination of variations of houses in each region of the territory of Macedonia and sometimes combine the design elements of the town houses as well as the vernacular village houses of the presented regions. The “vernacular” is treated only in the skin of the structures even though we see modifications and adaptations there too.

The Macedonian vernacular architecture has a strictly defined attitude toward Nature and respects its power. However, with this new project of “Macedonian Village”, we do not see it since we built a new locality in the middle of a mountain designing artificial terrains where needed in need to achieve the typical terrain of some of the natural habitats of the houses.

The Macedonian vernacular promotes the values of simplicity and spirit, clarity and richness. With the treatment of the *chardak*, this architecture exemplifies the wonder of light and the genius of the designer. On the other hand, this new “Macedonian Village” exemplifies the total opposite of these accepted values. In this site, we created a fusion, with a goal to attract tourists. We called it “Macedonian village” but it is not clear what values of the Macedonian village we are promoting. If the goal is to present the Macedonian traditional crafts, meals, and art, then maybe the architects designed it that way so those segments can be experienced through the activities that will be offered in the structures built in the site. But can we see the Macedonian village as a good example of promoting the Macedonian vernacular? For the average person, this village offers as much vernacular as the tourist needs but if a scholar or someone who is interested in the vernacular traditions of the Republic of Macedonia visit it, it can only use as a good start point to get the basic information about the territories and towns that can be visited in order to see the real vernacular in its natural habitat. The goal of the project probably was to promote the less known regions of Macedonia since some of the most important landmarks of the country were not presented in the site, the traditional architecture of the town of *Ohrid* and *Krushevo*. The town of Ohrid is already known as one of the well-known world tourist destinations. In 1979, the UNESCO Committee decided to inscribe the Ohrid Lake on the World Heritage List under natural criteria (iii). In 1980, this property was extended to include the cultural and historical area, and cultural criteria (i) (iii) (iv) were added.⁵ It is unclear why the town of Krushevo that has also a very

⁵http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/?search=ohrid&searchSites=&search_by_country=®ion=&search_yearinscribed=&themes=&criteria_restriction=&type=&media=&order=country&description=

rich and important vernacular heritage and is not that known hasn't been presented in this locality.

Macedonia is a very small country and yet has a very rich vernacular tradition.⁶ We as architects should work in the direction on respecting and preventing the inherited traditions. Designing and building a traditional, vernacular village from "scratch" takes a lot of courage. The one thing that we should be concerned about the concept of the new Macedonian Village is if this idea proves to be working. What will happen to all those exceptional traditional settlements if there is no longer need to visit them after one experiences what one needs in this site? This will not only mean that we are limiting the tourists the real experience of the vernacular architecture and the traditional life of the settlements but even worse, this way we will only go towards losing those traditional sites. On the other hand, the goal of this project is to intrigue the visitor and then make him show interest in visiting the traditional settlements presented in this exhibition site.

The rich vernacular traditions we inherited from our ancestors should be a source for inspiration for the architects in establishing the guiding principles for new building in Macedonia. The principles of respect towards Nature and its power, the human treatment of the space, the light, the equilibrium of order and disorder, and creating a human architecture is appealing for everyone. If Le Corbusier found inspiration in the vernacular architecture and established a whole new chapter in the History of the World Architecture, we should at least be able to follow this example and start working on determining and establishing the guiding principles for new building in Macedonia sourcing from its rich culture and vernacular traditions.

Only time will tell if this, one of the governments bigger investments will justify what is being built. At the moment however, the architectural scholars in Macedonia are divided on this particular case covering the whole "Skopje 2014" project and "Macedonian Village" being a part of it.

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⁶Macedonia has a total area of 25,713 km² (9,928 sq. mi)

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