



Project name: U Durcov Artist Residency, Poriadie

Design: 2021

Completion: 2022 – 2024

Construction site: Poriadie, Slovakia

Basic characteristics and the context of the creation of the work

The U Durcov Artist Residency Project aims to rescue and restore a historic homestead in the Myjava Hills, transforming it for a new artistic purpose. The design approach prioritizes sustainable renovation, preserving the physical integrity of the building while restoring its original character and adapting the spaces to meet the needs of a modern artistic residency.

Located in the picturesque Myjava Hills, the building forms part of a small cluster of homes known as "U Durcov," situated just beyond the village of Poriadie. This region is known for its scattered farmyards, typical of the area, offering stunning views, a varied landscape, orchards, and a strong connection to nature.

The homestead, which dates to the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, evolved through several construction phases as the family and estate grew. Built from a combination of unfired bricks, fired bricks, ceramics, stone, and wood, it is an exemplary model of vernacular architecture typical of the Kopanice region. In 2020, the new owner envisioned the site as an artist residency—a space for artists to stay, create, exhibit, and engage with art enthusiasts and collectors.

Condition Before Renovation

Before renovation, the building was in a state of significant disrepair, with structural instability posing a risk of collapse. The main priority was to salvage the core structural elements so they could form the foundation for the building's new function.

Concept of Preservation

Despite the damage, the existing substance of the building provided a strong foundation for future development. The original structure offered unique spatial qualities, including relationships between volumes, levels, and architectural elements. The preservation effort sought to maintain and enhance these qualities, improving functional parameters while respecting the traditional techniques used in the area. The design was informed by a thorough understanding of the building's history, the surrounding structures, and the use of local materials and colours.

Concept of Insertion

The new function of the artist residency is integrated into the building with the introduction of new elements, including a studio and sanitary facilities, which were previously absent from the homestead. These new functions have been sensitively inserted into spaces that originally served different purposes, such as the stable and the shed. Historically, these spaces had been repurposed several times, which allowed for flexibility in adapting them for modern use.

New Connections and Relationships

The design focused on preserving the original functions and spatial relationships, particularly in the residential areas of the homestead, while creating new connections and linkages. Minimal interventions were made to bridge the different height levels within the building, creating a fluid, cohesive space that accommodates both the new and original functions.

Materiality

The design honours the original materiality and colour scheme of the homestead, incorporating the same construction materials, plaster finishes, and textures. These are complemented by the raw expression of new concrete floors in areas dedicated to the new functions, providing a contemporary contrast while respecting the building's historic character.

Recycling and Reuse

Damaged, unstable, or irreparably deteriorated elements were removed during the restoration process. Wherever possible, salvaged materials—such as wood, stone, and interior components—were repurposed and integrated back into the building. These elements were restored, repositioned, and given new life within the context of the updated design. In cases where materials could not be directly salvaged, recycled elements from other buildings, particularly those of vernacular architecture, were used.

Spatial Organization

The central area of the layout consists of a hallway accessible from the north, leading to a large living room with a traditional stove and three smaller rooms on different levels. These rooms will be used as a small studio and two bedrooms. The large room is flexible in its use, able to function as a studio, a social space, or an exhibition area. To the west, the kitchen is located, with the sanitary facilities positioned at the far end of the west wing. These facilities will serve both the resident artists and the public attending artistic events. Access to the sanitary facilities is available from the interior through the kitchen or through independent entrances from the exterior covered corridor.

A dedicated studio space is located at a slightly lower level, within a separate section of the building. It is accessible via the original courtyard entrance to the former stable, as well as through a new, large opening connecting the studio to the exterior corridor. This semi-outdoor space will not only function as a communication passage but will also serve as a venue for art creation and exhibitions in a covered exterior setting.

Unique Architectural Features

One of the notable features of the homestead is the two-story section in the eastern wing. The basement level is accessible through an eastern archway and provides access to the lower part of the courtyard. From this archway, two original storage spaces in the basement are accessible. These spaces may serve their original purpose as storage or be adapted to house art exhibitions, further expanding the building's potential as an artistic hub.

Basic Summary Data

Plot area: 991m²

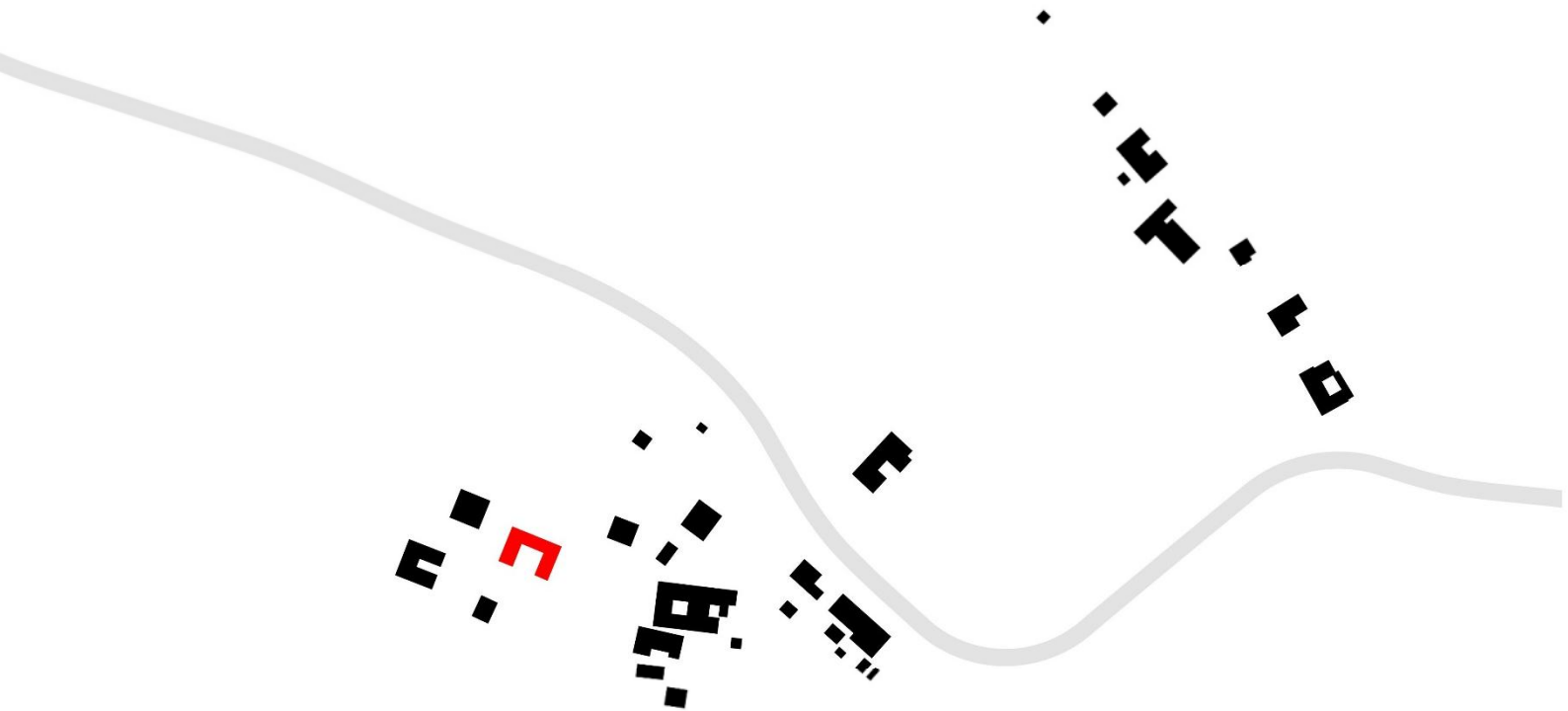
Built-up area: 247,77m²

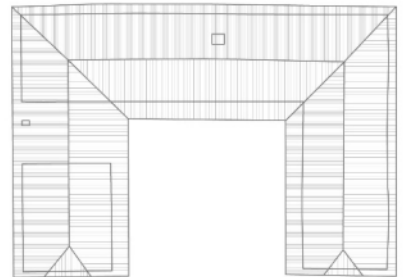
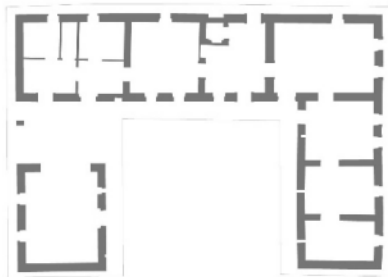
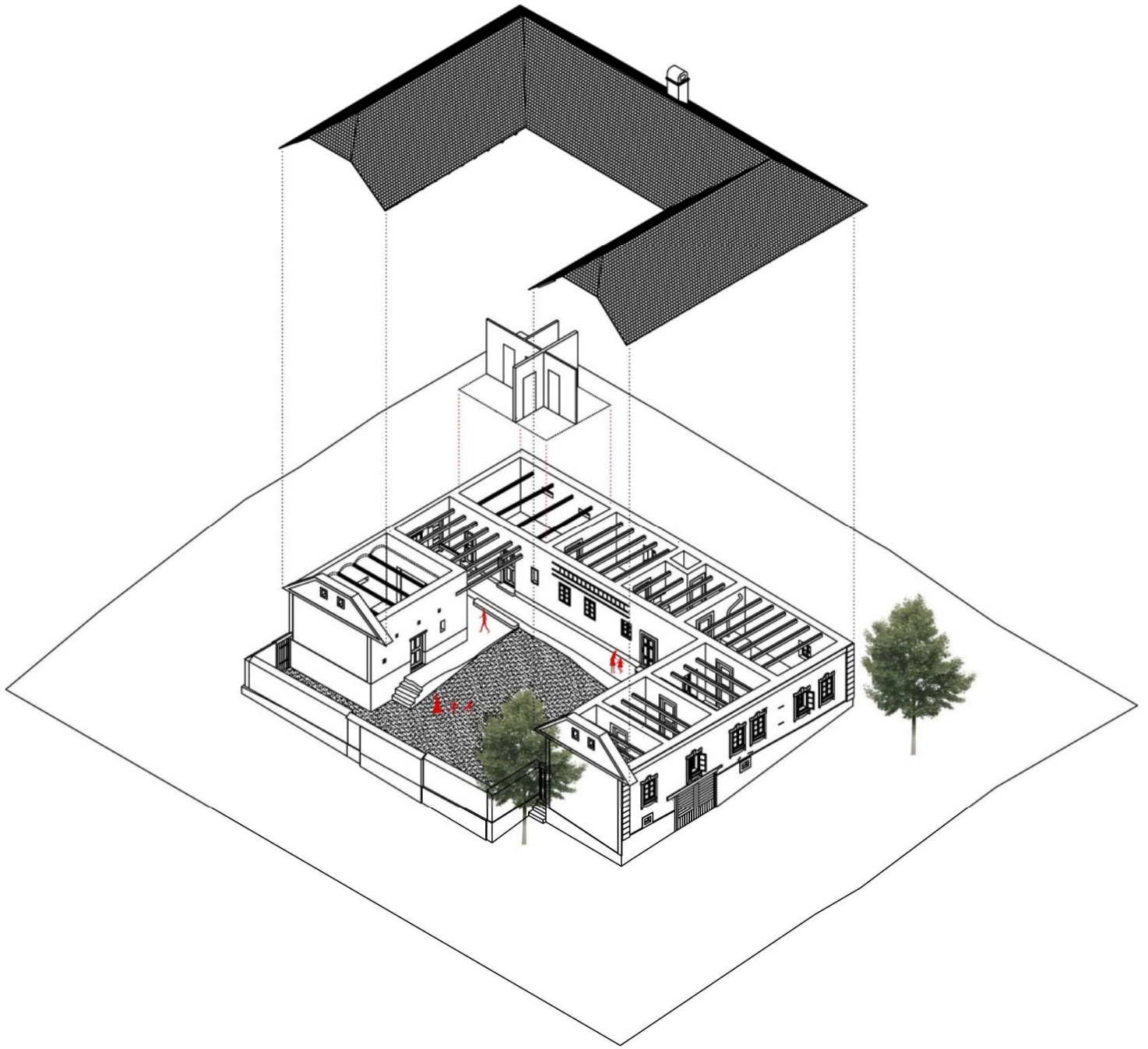
Net usable area: Basement: 25,83m² + 1st Floor: 161,51m² = 187,34m²

Capacity data: 4 rooms and a studio with the possibility of occasional use as exhibition spaces + kitchen a corresponding sanitary facilities and storage areas

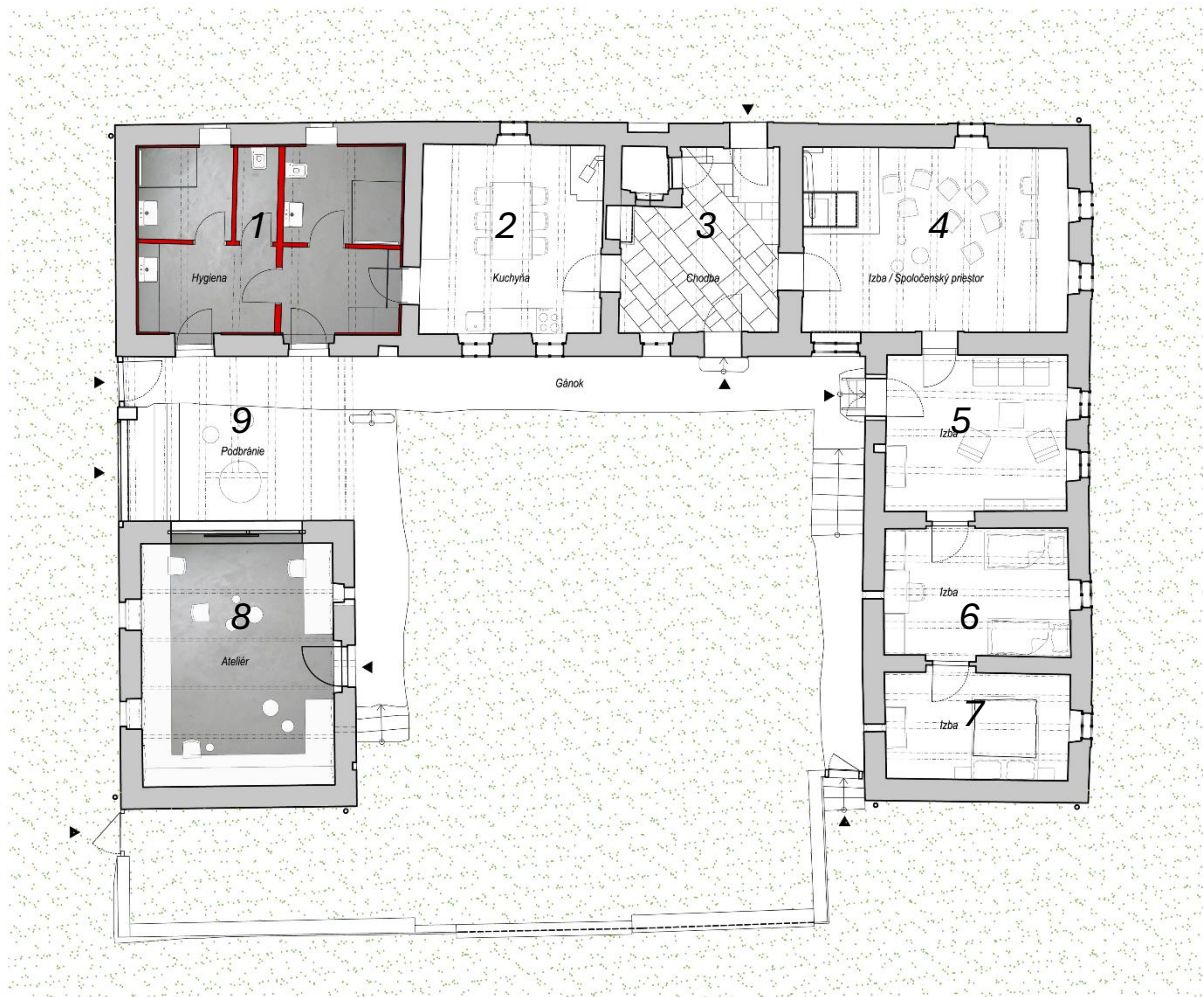
Construction costs: approximately 200 thousand Eur Excluding VAT

Typical drawings





Floor plan of the 1st floor



1 – sanitary facilities 2 – Kitchen 3 – Hall 4 – Room / Exhibition Spaces 5 – Room 6 – Room 7 – Room 8 – Studio 9 – Multifunctional exterior spaces

Elevations



Elevations

