

Holiday Homes in Moldovenști

Located in Moldovenști, a village in Cluj County, the project sits within the cultural and natural landscape of the *Hills of Transylvania*. The site is framed by nearby landmarks such as the dramatic Cheile Turzii gorge, the limestone peak of Piatra Secuiului, and the historic fabric of Rimetea. Within Moldovenști itself, the silhouette of the 16th-century Jósika Castle and the village's churches provide immediate reference points. Against this backdrop, the design positions itself as a contemporary continuation of the region's rural identity — rooted in tradition, yet responsive to the needs of contemporary living.

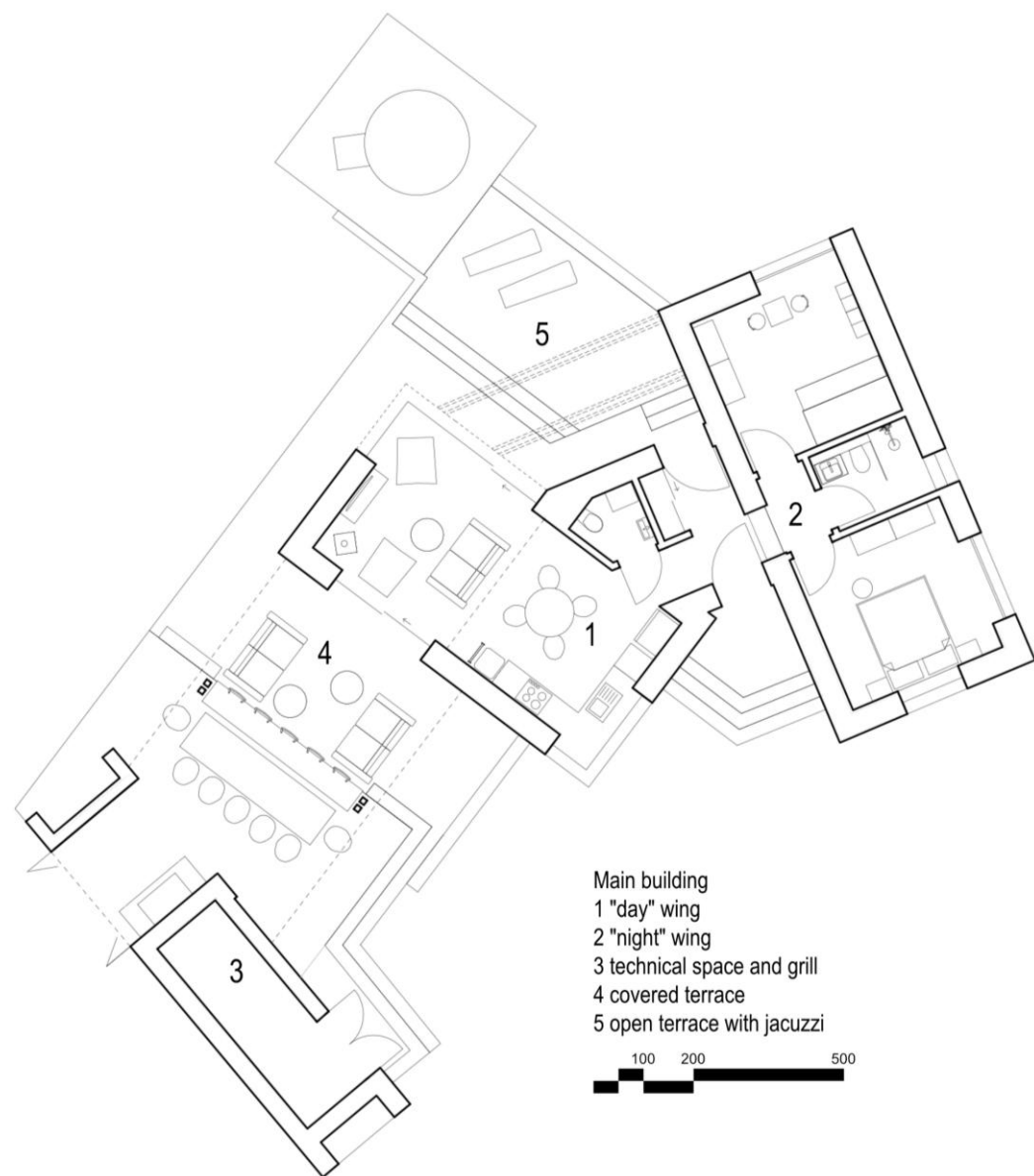
The project arose from the client's request for three interconnected components: a new holiday home, a smaller guest house for occasional visitors, and the restoration of an old barn to accommodate social activities and remote work. Rather than condensing these functions into a single volume, the design draws inspiration from the traditional household organization of the area, where multiple annexes are scattered around a courtyard. The new ensemble embraces this fragmented composition, integrating itself naturally into the orchard landscape.

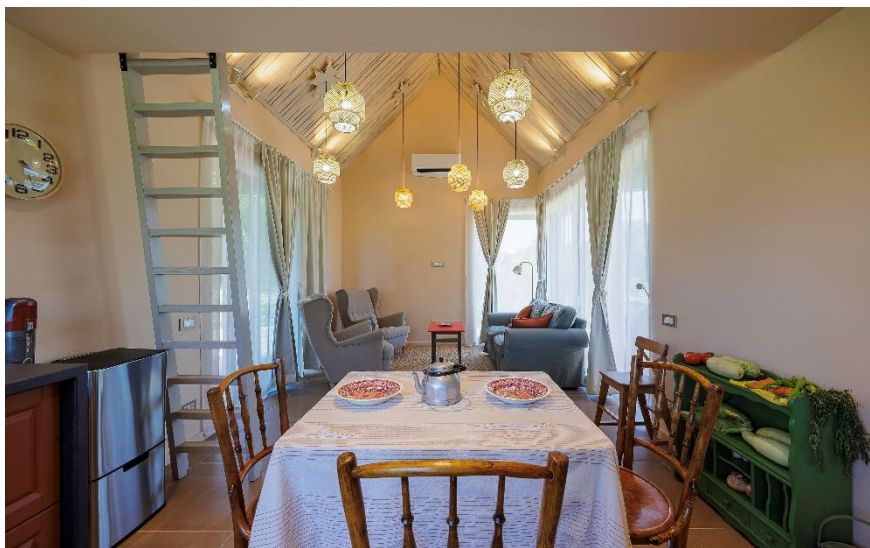


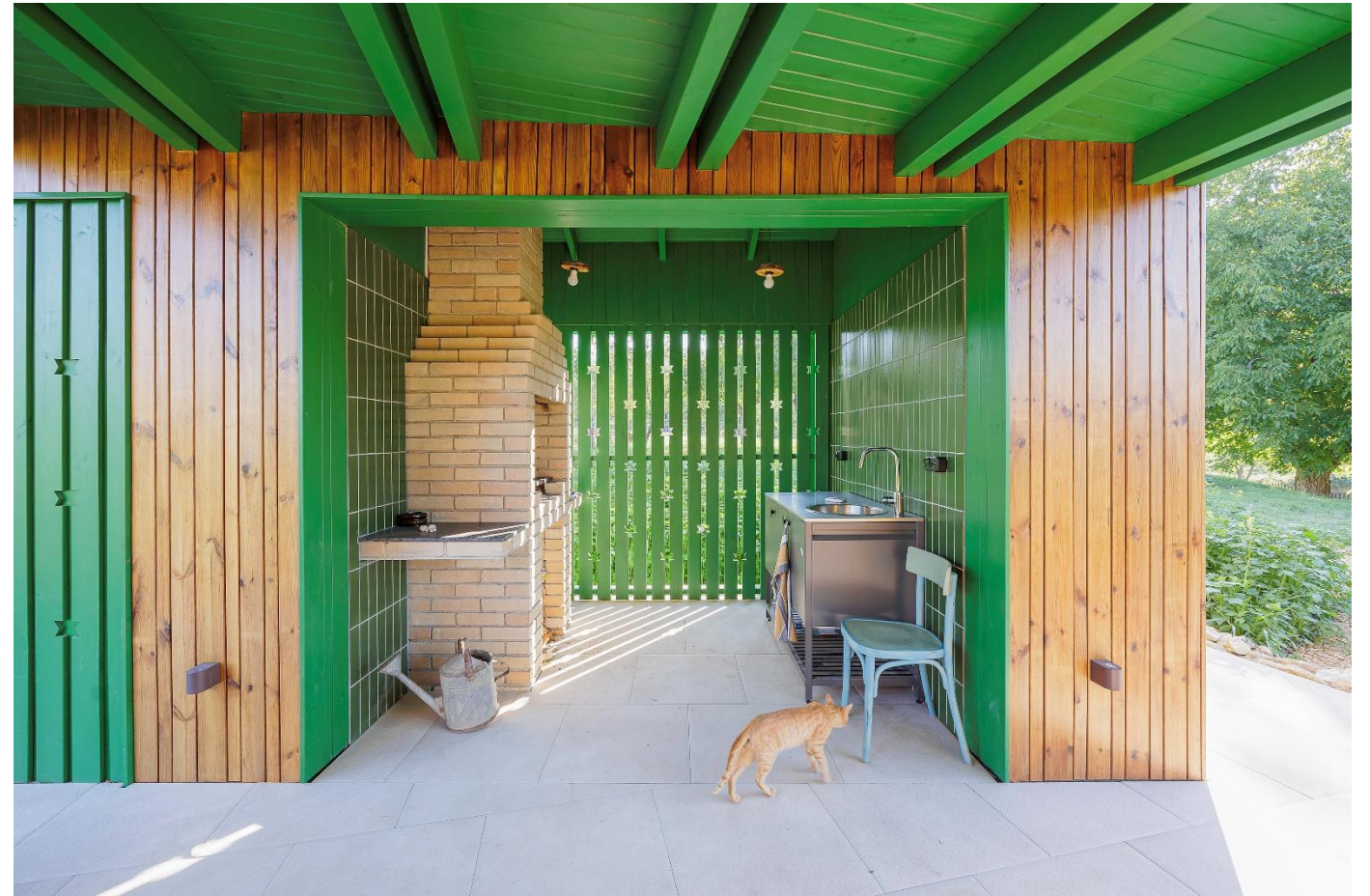


Placed at the highest point of the site, the main house enjoys open views toward the surrounding hills and establishes a visual axis with Jósika Castle. Modest in size, it is carefully divided into three volumes: a “day” wing with living and kitchen areas, a “night” wing with bedrooms and bathroom, and a technical corpus that includes technical spaces and a covered grill area. The living room rises in part to a double height, a gesture that compensates for the home’s compact footprint by offering a sense of spatial generosity and openness. Between the day and technical wings, a shaded terrace forms a cool, sheltered extension of the living room, overlooking the courtyard with its playground and shed. On the opposite side, facing the landscape and castle, a sunny open terrace with a jacuzzi provides a complementary space of openness and leisure. The placement of windows and openings was designed so that each interior space maintains a direct relationship either with the courtyard or with the panoramic views beyond.



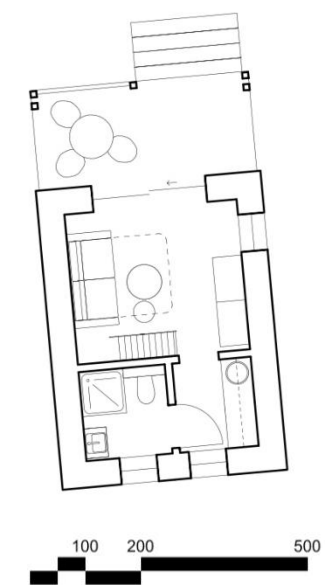








vThe smaller guest house is positioned apart from the main dwelling, acting as a fourth fragment within the ensemble. Together, these volumes recall not only the annexes of the traditional rural household but also the scattered wooden beehives once typical of the region, a subtle reference to local practices. Each volume is aligned with the natural contours of the terrain, rotated and staggered to follow the slope. This creates a rhythm of shifting orientations and levels, ensuring the buildings step lightly on the land. From the street, their modest size and distant placement render them almost invisible, preserving the integrity of the traditional village streetscape.



Guest house



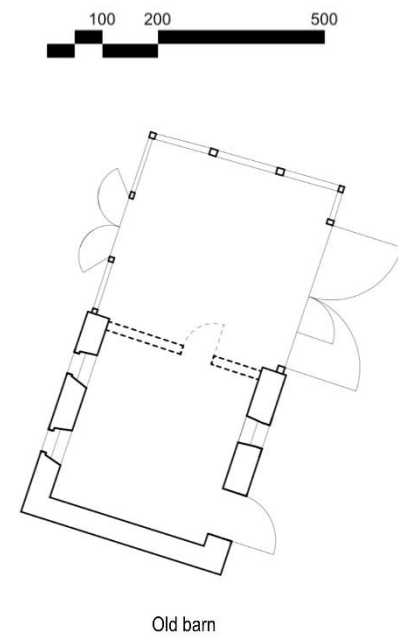
The relationship between main and guest house balances privacy and conviviality. The technical corpus of the main house and the perforated façade of the guest house filter direct views, allowing each to enjoy independence. Yet midway between them, where the orchard trees thin out, a fireplace marks the social heart of the yard — a place for shared gatherings. The layout was guided by respect for the existing orchard, preserving as many trees as possible while inserting the new functions with minimal disturbance. Car access is restricted to the southern edge, where

parking is discretely organized, ensuring that the backyard remains a pedestrian landscape of fruit trees and pathways.



Materially, the houses combine contemporary techniques with sustainable and locally resonant choices. A concrete foundation supports prefabricated modular wooden structures, insulated with compressed hay — a relatively new but promising technology in Romania, offering excellent thermal performance through renewable resources. The pedestal is covered with reused local limestone, grounding the buildings visually while recycling durable materials from the area. The façades are clad in thermo-treated pine, echoing the wooden annexes typical of rural households and maintaining the appearance of secondary structures in deference to the older houses aligned along the street. Roofs are covered with ceramic tiles in traditional scale-like patterns. For the restored barn, reclaimed tiles were used to preserve material continuity. Outdoor terraces alternate between timber decking and stone paving, chosen respectively for tactile warmth and practical durability. Inside, wood is present as well, particularly on the pitched ceilings of the living room and bedrooms. Here, it is treated in a lighter shade and applied more sparingly, giving interiors warmth without overwhelming the spaces.





Sustainability is also addressed through the integration of photovoltaic panels and a newly drilled water well, ensuring that the ensemble reduces reliance on external resources while supporting long-term resilience.

Chromatically, the architecture is dominated by the natural tones of wood, enriched with green accents on windows and doors. This green, common in Transylvanian villages, is not arbitrary: it resonates with the older buildings of the property — the barn and the original house — ensuring a strong visual continuity between past and present.





The perception of the houses is choreographed through a gradual approach. Visitors arriving by car are guided along a curving pathway that winds past the guest house and barn before revealing the main dwelling. Along the way, the volumes present themselves from shifting angles, allowing details to be discovered progressively — including cut-out wooden patterns inspired by motifs found in the old barn. At the entrance, glimpses of the jacuzzi terrace hint at the expansive views awaiting on the far side of the house.



The landscape design strengthens this sense of discovery. A network of circular paths connects the houses, fireplace, and playground, weaving between preserved fruit trees and areas reserved for new planting. Currently, most of the courtyard is planted with mustard flowers, to enrich and regenerate the soil for future plantings. Over time, the orchard will be complemented with zones of flowers, vegetables, and grains, ensuring that the property evolves as a living, productive landscape. The architecture thus extends beyond the buildings, embedding itself in a seasonal cycle of growth, harvest, and renewal.

Ultimately, the ensemble in Moldovenești proposes a contemporary re-reading of the Transylvanian courtyard household. It avoids nostalgia while embracing continuity, offering a modest but expressive architecture rooted in vernacular forms, natural materials, and the rhythms of the land. Respectful of its rural context yet attuned to present-day ways of living, it seeks to demonstrate how tradition can be transformed into a framework for sustainable and meaningful architecture.



