

ȘTIRBEI DOMAIN – GLASS PAVILIONS

How can contemporary architecture become part of a historic park without competing with it?



ȘTIRBEI DOMAIN GLASS PAVILIONS

General information

Address 36, Știrbei Vodă Street
Buftea, Romania

Total Site Area 212 216 sqm
Total Built Area 1 334 sqm

A Historic Cultural Landscape

The Știrbei Domain is one of Romania's most significant aristocratic estates, developed during the 19th century around the Știrbei Palace. The estate combines historic architecture, mature woodland, landscaped gardens, open meadows and a lake into a continuous cultural landscape that has hosted royal gatherings, cultural events and, more recently, film productions.

Rather than introducing new dominant buildings, the project sought to reinforce the existing character of the park by carefully inserting contemporary architecture into two locations already associated with public use.

One pavilion replaces the former event tent on the lakefront, while the second occupies the edge of an open meadow near Stirbey Palace, preserving the visual continuity of the landscape.



DESIGN PHILOSOPHY

Instead of creating monumental objects, both pavilions were conceived as transparent volumes that dissolve into their surroundings.

Their architecture is defined by:

- visual permeability
- minimal footprint
- horizontal proportions
- reflections rather than solid mass
- continuity between interior and exterior

The buildings are experienced almost as extensions of the landscape rather than independent architectural objects.

LAKE PAVILION



MEADOW PAVILION

TWO PAVILIONS – ONE ARCHITECTURAL LANGUAGE

Although positioned in different contexts, both buildings share the same architectural vocabulary.

Common principles

- steel structural frame
- full-height curtain wall glazing
- large roof overhangs
- restrained material palette
- neutral colours
- minimal detailing
- open interior spaces
- continuous relationship with the surrounding park

Each pavilion responds differently to its immediate setting while maintaining a coherent identity across the entire domain.



The pavilions transform two existing event locations into contemporary, transparent spaces that frame the park, the lake and the surrounding trees—creating architecture that is experienced through the landscape rather than against it.



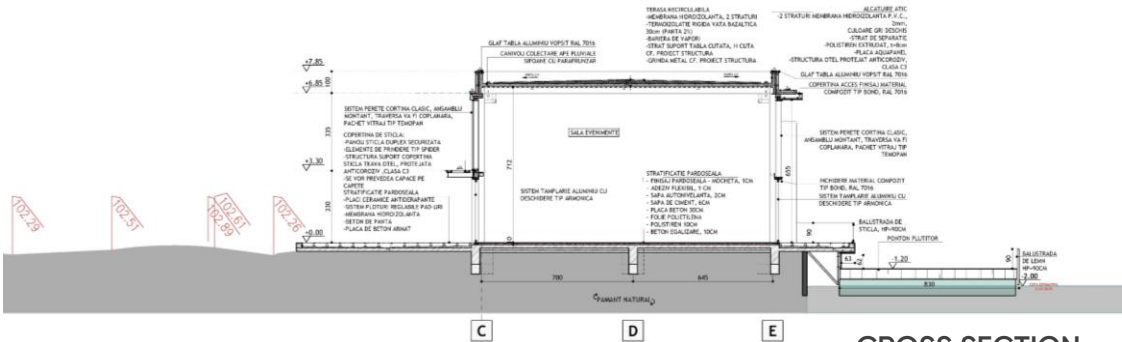
LAKE PAVILION

This pavilion (468 sqm) occupies the site of the former event tent, directly on the lake edge.

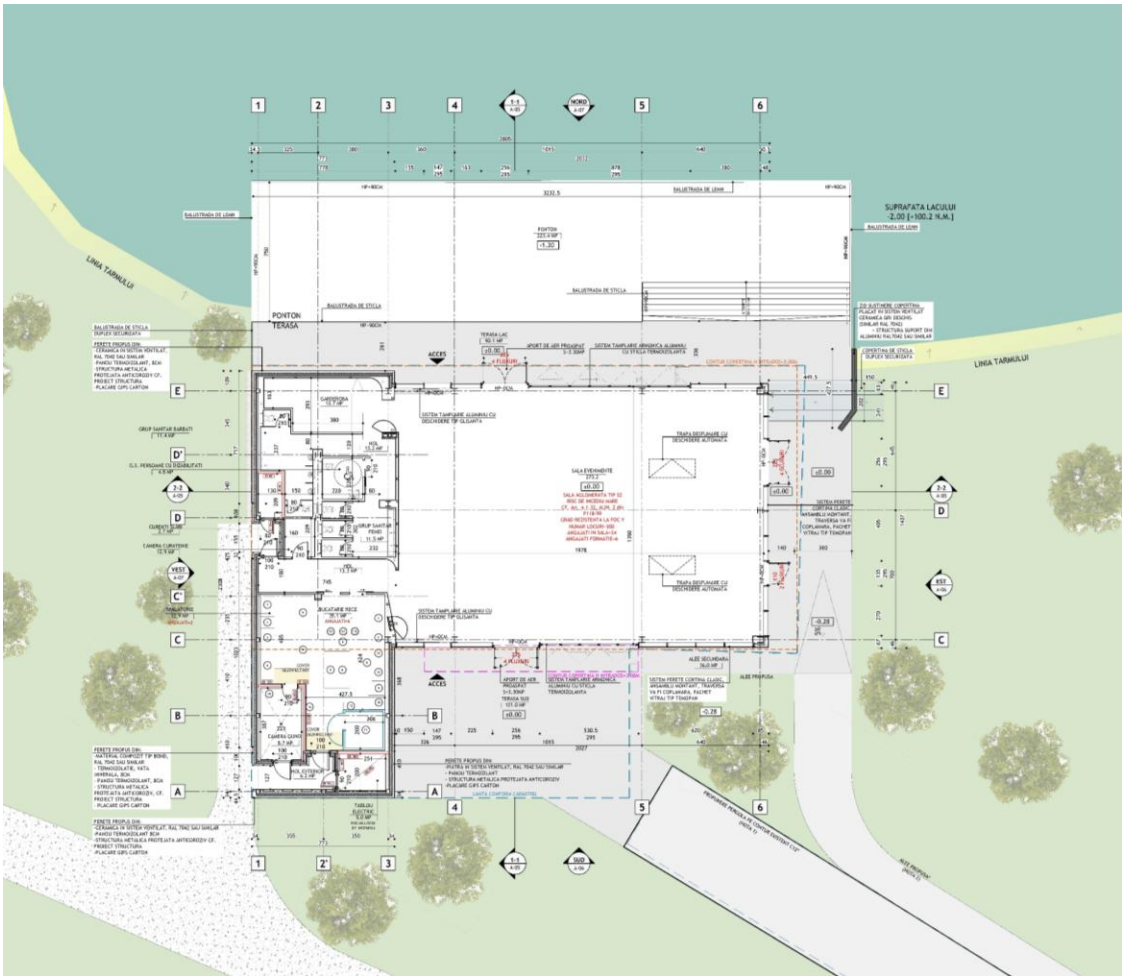
Instead of recreating the previous enclosed structure, the new building opens completely toward the water.

The main event hall becomes an extension of the landscape through continuous glazed façades and folding aluminium systems that allow the interior to open almost entirely during events.

The lake becomes part of the architectural experience rather than simply the view. According to the architectural plan, the pavilion accommodates a large event hall, service spaces, terraces and a pontoon connected directly to the waterfront.



CROSS SECTION



GROUND FLOOR







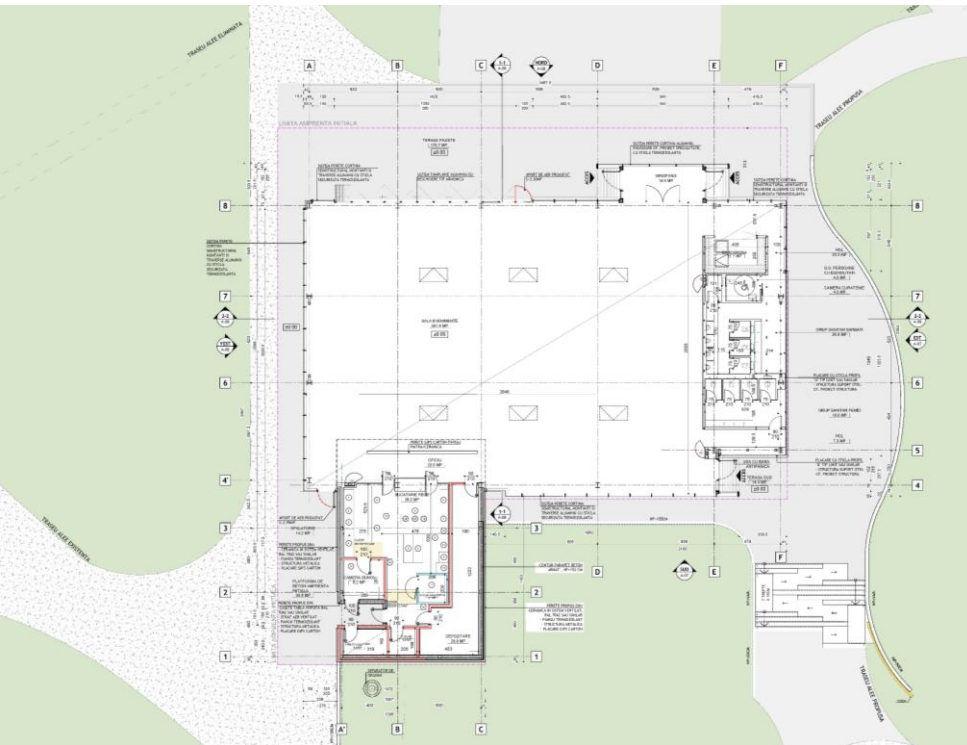


MEADOW PAVILION

Located beside the open meadow near Ştirbei Palace, the second pavilion responds to a completely different landscape condition.

Instead of framing water, it frames the open green landscape.

Its transparent corners, generous glazing and projecting roof create sheltered outdoor spaces while maintaining uninterrupted visual connections across the park. Here the building acts as a quiet pavilion within the trees rather than a destination object.



GROUND FLOOR







INTEGRATION INTO THE PARK

One of the project's strongest architectural qualities is the way it minimizes its visual impact.

Transparency

The extensive glazing reflects the surrounding trees, allowing the buildings to visually disappear within the vegetation.

Horizontal composition

Long roof lines echo the horizon of the landscape and reduce the perceived height of the buildings.

Existing vegetation

The mature trees remain the dominant vertical elements. The architecture deliberately occupies a secondary role.

Existing circulation

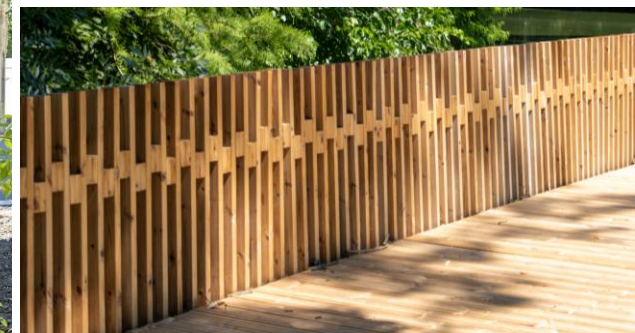
The new pavilions connect naturally to the existing pedestrian network without altering the historic park structure.

The project does not imitate the historic architecture of Ştirbei Palace. Instead, it establishes a dialogue through contrast.

Historic buildings remain solid, monumental and expressive.

The new pavilions are transparent, lightweight and deliberately understated.

By avoiding stylistic imitation, the intervention respects the authenticity of the historic domain while expressing its contemporary identity.





MATERIAL STRATEGY

The material palette was intentionally restrained to allow nature to remain the primary visual element.

Glass | Large curtain-wall façades maximize transparency, natural light and reflections.

Steel | Dark steel framing provides a precise and elegant structural rhythm while visually receding into the background.

Wood | Warm timber soffits soften the architecture and create continuity with the surrounding trees.

Stone / ventilated ceramic panels | The opaque service volumes are clad with large-format ventilated panels in neutral grey tones, providing durability while contrasting with the transparent façades.

Aluminium systems | Large sliding and folding aluminium glazing systems allow flexible use of the spaces and blur the boundary between inside and outside.

