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## INVENTORY MATERIALS OF WOODEN COUNTRY HOUSES IN SOCE VILLAGE, NAREW MUNICIPALITY

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DOI: 10.24427/aea-2022-vol14-no4-03

### DOKUMENTACJA INWENTARYZACYJNA DREWNIANYCH DOMÓW WIEJSKICH WE WSI SOCE W GMINIE NAREW

#### Abstract

The paper presents material collected during field research and inventory of old village houses from the village of Soce in the municipality of Narew. Its purpose was to collect architectural-ethnographic information about buildings important in terms of cultural values. They were described in the article in order to document the disappearing local heritage and to supplement the research and inventory of documentary resources. Drawings of plans, sections and facades of the buildings and their furnishings were prepared as well.

#### Streszczenie

W pracy zaprezentowano materiał zgromadzony podczas badań terenowych i inwentaryzacji starych domów wiejskich ze wsi Soce w gminie Narew. Celem było zebranie informacji architektoniczno-etnograficznych o budynkach cennych pod względem wartości kulturowych. Opisano je w artykule, aby udokumentować zanikające lokalne dziedzictwo oraz by uzupełnić badania i inwentaryzacyjne zasoby dokumentacyjne. Opracowano rysunki rzutów, przekrojów i elewacji budynków oraz ich wyposażenia.

Keywords: country houses; wooden architecture; architectural drawing; cultural values; Białystok region

Słowa kluczowe: podlaskie domy wiejskie; architektura drewniana; rysunek architektoniczny; wartości kulturowe; Białostoczczyzna

## INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the article is to present the results of the analysis of the prepared drawing and photographic documentation, supported by a commentary, concerning old village houses in the village of Soce in the municipality of Narew, as further elements to the increasingly rich resources documenting the forms of building decoration, as well as the arrangement and decoration of interiors in the Podlasie countryside, which have already passed away. The houses described here date from the 1930s. Documentary materials were acquired during a research expedition in November 2017, and supplemented during additional searches

in the fall of 2019. We present these materials on the rights of source documentation. They are intended to complement the ever-growing documentary resource on the folk architecture of Białystok, stored in the archives of various institutions and only partially made available in scientific publications.

### 1. STATE OF THE RESEARCH

Architectural-ethnographic, and even earlier regionalist, research began in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Although the Renaissance also looked to the past, but explored

the legacy of Antiquity, which was taken as a universalist inspiration for Renaissance art and architecture. Attention to the features of local landscapes, including those associated with settlements, was drawn to the 18<sup>th</sup> century with the movement to return to nature and a search for sources of forms compatible with local conditions. The most influential author here was the English landscape architect and gardener Lancelot Brown [C. Bielecki, 2021, pp. 36-37]. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, features of national styles and sources were sought to create collections or collections that were popular at the time, as well as to explore folklore. The pioneer of such collecting and regionalism was Zygmunt Gloger [T. Komorowska, 1985, p. 143], and the outstanding researcher-ethnographer of immaterial culture – his scientific protector Oskar Kolberg. This search gained greater scale and a more systematic character from the 1880s, when the search for the sources of national tradition and, in architecture, for a national style was intensified. This was already taking place earlier within the framework of the expanding movement known as 'national romanticism' in Europe, which was later overlaid by efforts to revive artistic craftsmanship, including in construction, within the Arts and Crafts movement.

At that time Stanisław Witkiewicz began his research in the direction of searching for a national style, which resulted in the formulation of the characteristics of the Zakopane style [Z. Moździerz, 2013, pp. 163-164].

Already after World War II, among the researchers of folk architecture Ignacy Felicjan Tłoczek [H. Zaniewska, 2002, p. 83] or Marian and Wojciech Pokropek [M. Pokropek and W. Pokropek, 1996] should be mentioned, and for the northern Podlasie area – Artur Gaweł [A. Gaweł, 2007] and Jarosław Szewczyk [J. Szewczyk, 2008]. The latter, as part of his long-standing activities in the Department of Rural and Industrial Architecture and later as part of the Urban and Spatial Planning Unit at the Faculty of Architecture at Białystok University of Technology, consistently conducts research, collects archival resources and publishes the results of inventories [J. Szewczyk, 2009, p. 84] and other forms of registering the forms and technologies of old folk construction, both wooden, earth and clay, as well as archaic or unusual building materials, such as firewood or unusual ceramic elements.

## 2. OUTLINE OF SOCE VILLAGE

Soce (Fig. 1) is a village located in Podlaskie Voivodeship, Hajnówka County, in the northeastern part of Narew municipality. As of 2011, it was inhabited by 99 residents (less than a third of the population of 1921).<sup>1</sup> It is a terraced-type village – *szeregówka*,<sup>2</sup> based on the layout created in the 16<sup>th</sup> century as a result of the reorganization of the royal estates (*pomiara włóczna*). The village's rural layout was entered in the register of historical monuments in 2013.

Today, the village is still dominated by wooden buildings from the interwar and early postwar period and the facades of residential houses are covered with laubzeg ornaments. The expression and abundance of ornamentation is greater than in neighbouring villages.

In November 2017 and October 2019, during the search and field survey, two dwelling wooden houses were selected and inventoried in detail in the village of Soce. Their photographic documentation and inventory drawings were made, including plans, sections and facade drawings. The article presents the acquired inventory material on the rights of source documentation, using the method of presentation described by Jarosław Szewczyk and Aleksandra Woszczenko [J. Szewczyk and A. Woszczenko, 2016, p. 144] and consisting in recording in drawings of the found, real state of buildings, the technical condition of external and internal walls, facade and interior finishing elements. Interior furnishings, including furniture, equipment and other accessories, were shown in the state of their daily use, without unnecessary embellishment. The described houses were chosen for the study because of their least altered and transformed exterior and interior structure, traditional interior design and the authentic furnishings collected there.

## 3. VILLAGE HOUSE NO. 14

House No. 14 is single-storey, wide-fronted,<sup>3</sup> asymmetrical, with timber frame construction,<sup>4</sup> laid out in a rectangular plan 8x12 m; it has a hallway, a porch, a kitchenette, two bedrooms and two utility rooms.

The house is decorated with rich wooden ornaments characteristic of the eastern Białystok region. They can be found on the facade: on the shutters, ve-

<sup>1</sup> Source: <https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ancuty> [access: 14.11.2019]

<sup>2</sup> *Homesteads* [...] *They are distributed along a straight street in the middle of the rural area*; source: <https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ancuty> [access: 14.11.2019]

<sup>3</sup> 'Cottages or former inns oriented to the street in a wide-fronted arrangement have a characteristic arcaded gallery running along the ridge.' Source: <http://isarchitects.eu/5582-2/> [access: 14.11.2019].

<sup>4</sup> 'A wooden building structure in which the wall consists of horizontally stacked rims of timber beams joined by locks.' Source: <https://pl.glosbe.com/pl/pl/konstrukcja%20wie%C5%84cowa> [access: 14.XI.2019].

<sup>5</sup> '[...] decorative motifs [...]' Source: <https://sjp.pl/ornamentyka> [access: 14.11.2019].



**Fig. 1.** Location of the inventoried houses no. 14 and 61 in the village of Soce; source: drawing by the authors based on the Open Street Map



**Fig. 2.** View of the south wall of house No. 14, Soce village; source: photo by the authors, 2017

stibules, corners and gables. This type of ornamentation<sup>5</sup> is not found in other regions of Poland.

The walls inside the rooms of the house are covered with patterned wallpaper, not renewed for deca-

des, representing the aesthetics of the 1960s. Against them hang, on almost every wall, photographs and icons. Each wall also has additional decorative elements, including a decorative clock, a calendar, etc. In





**Fig. 3.** The ornaments in the eastern wall of the house; source: photo by the authors, 2017



**Fig. 4.** The decorations in the corner of the house, Soce village, source: photo by the authors, 2017

the kitchen there is a massive, tiled cooker (Fig. 5). The oven also functions as a storage area: behind a patterned curtain, inside the baking chamber and on the board of the smoke hood, various items (not only kitchen items) are stored.

In the kitchen, in the corner there is an icon decorated with white openwork curtains, which is a relic of the old holy corner (pokuć) (Fig. 6). The windows are decorated with a triple layer of curtains and opaque drapes. The table is covered with a patterned oilcloth, on which colourful placemats lie. Wooden benches are set in the corner. By the table stands a wooden bed.

In the sleeping room, the corner is also a distinctive design element, with several icons under the ceiling; one of them is decorated with curtains. In this case, red flowers are also an additional decoration. In the same corner stands a table with chairs, set at a 45-degree angle to the walls. This table mainly serves the function of displaying pictures of holy figures and photos of the residents of the house and their immediate family, set in frames, on a patterned tablecloth. There are patterned carpets on the floors. The windows are decorated with long curtains, reaching beyond the windowsill. There are also photos and paintings on the patterned wallpaper of the walls.

In the hallway there is a staircase leading to the attic, which serves as a utility room. The load-bearing walls of the building are made of wood. The ceiling over the first floor is also made of wood. The gable roof with a timber-framed, tie-beam structure is covered with tile. The following drawings constitute architectural-



**Fig. 5.** The tiled stove in the interior of the house, Soce village; source: photo by the authors, 2017





**Fig. 6.** The corner of the house room, Soce village; source: photo by the authors, 2017



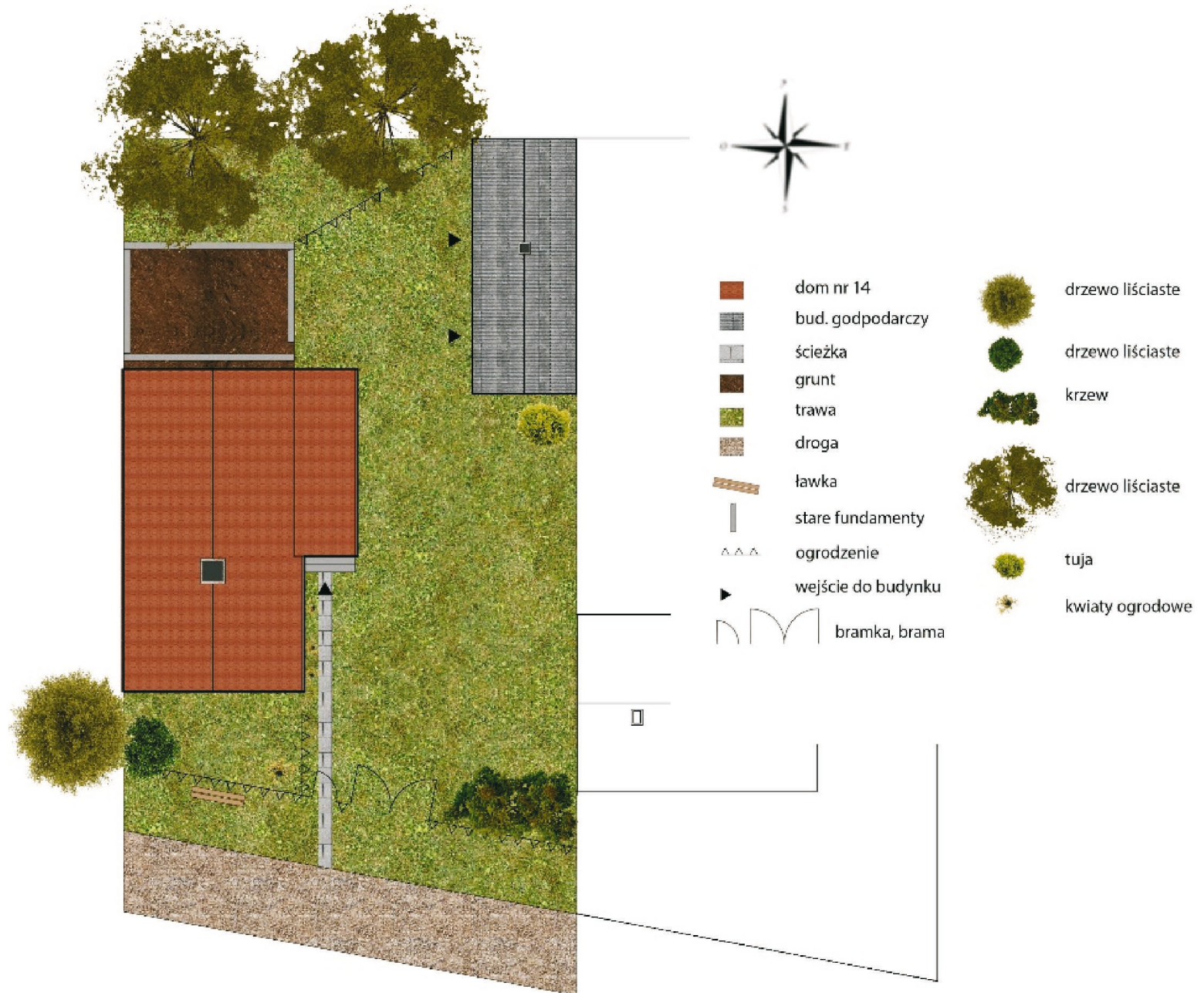
**Fig. 7.** View of the corner of the house room, Soce village; source: photo by the authors, 2017

ethnographic inventory documentation of the described house. The development of the drawings was aimed at documenting in a precise and adequate manner to the

existing state of both the facade and interior of the house. The furnishings as well as the textures and colours of the materials are shown in detail.



4. ARCHITECTURAL AND ETHNOGRAPHIC  
INVENTORY DRAWINGS OF HOUSE  
NO. 14 IN SOCE VILLAGE



**Fig. 8.** Diagram of the development of the habitat of house No. 14, Soce village; source: photo by the authors, 2017

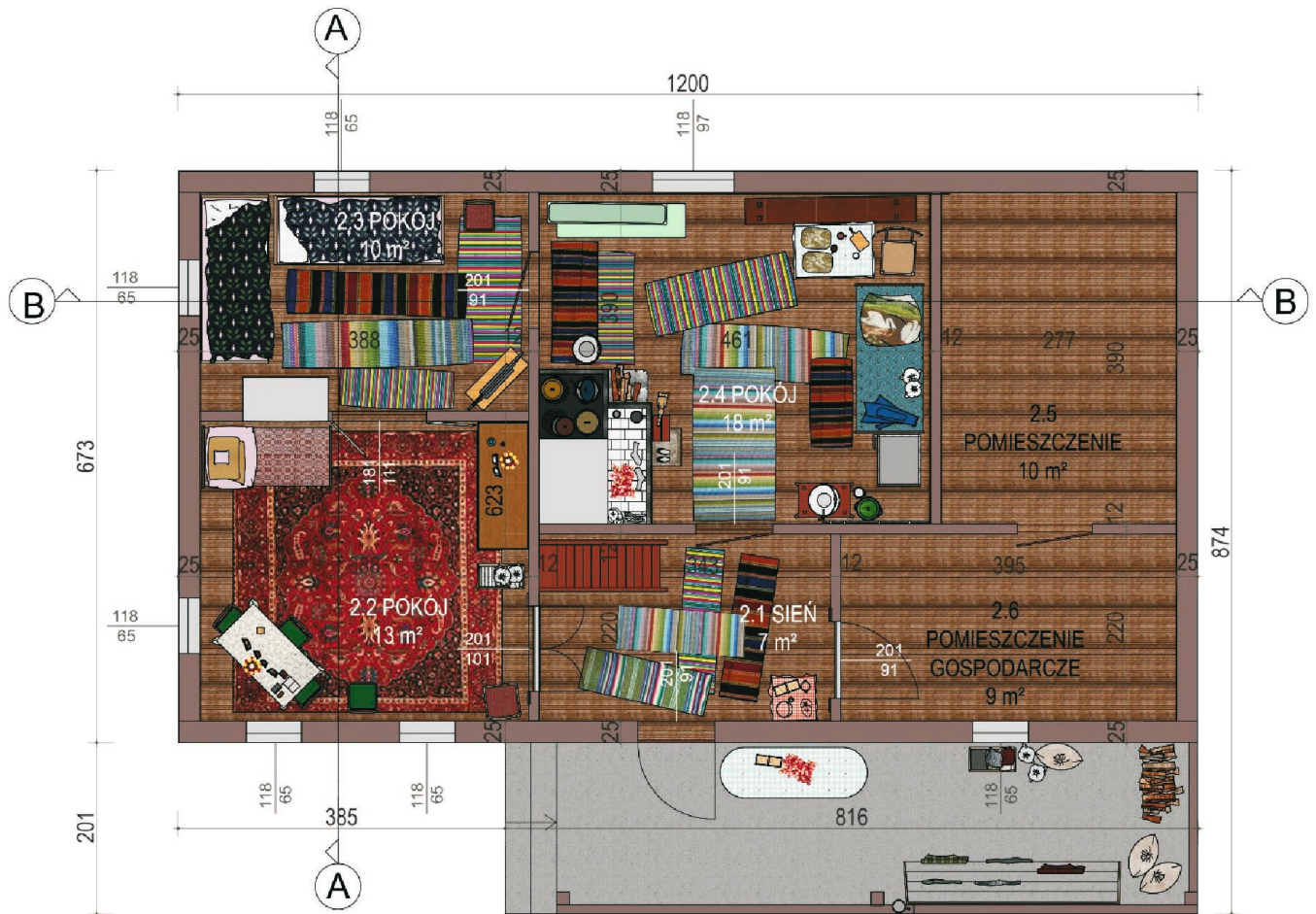


Fig. 9. 1st floor, house No. 14, Soce village; source: drawing by the authors, 2017

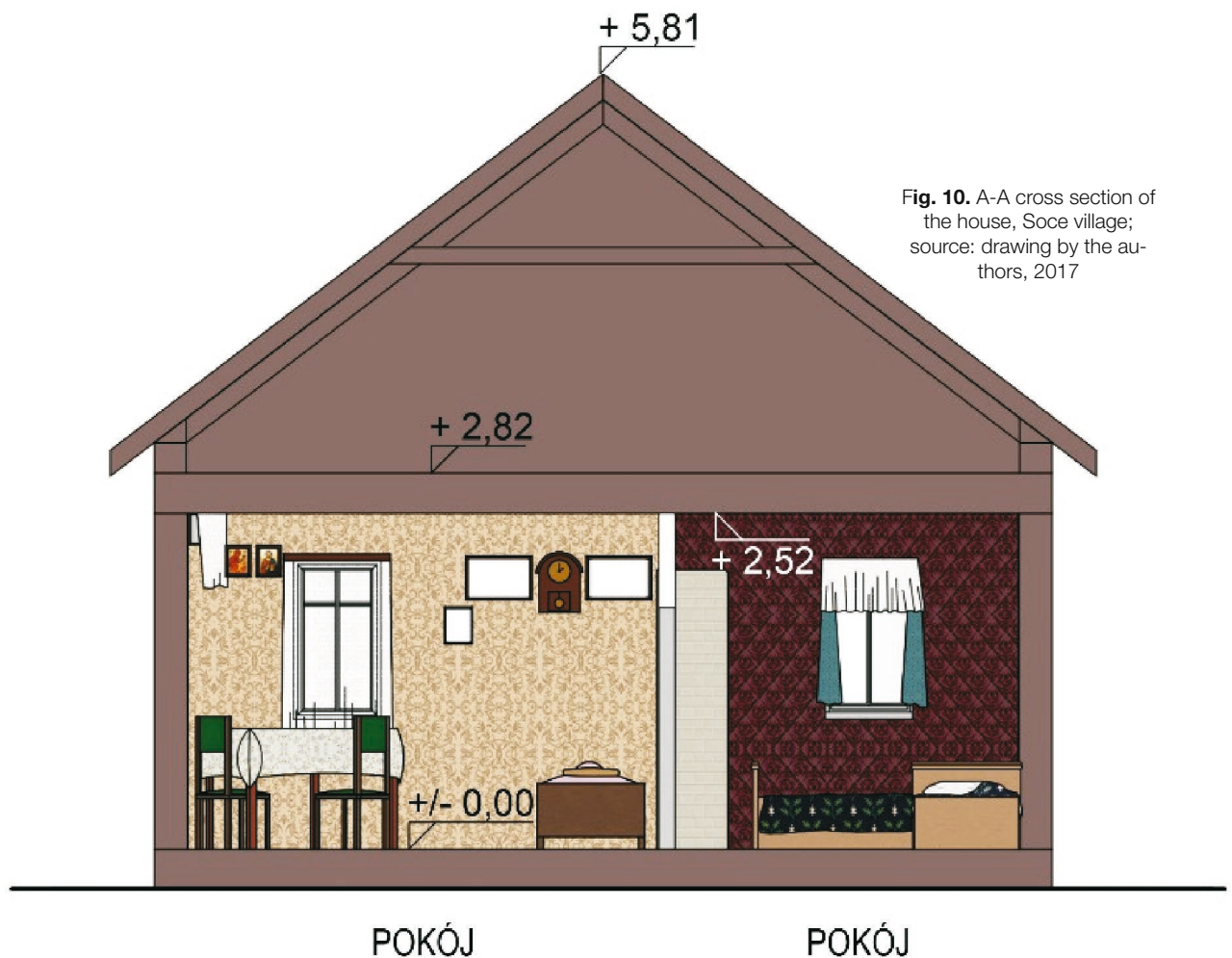


Fig. 10. A-A cross section of the house, Soce village; source: drawing by the authors, 2017



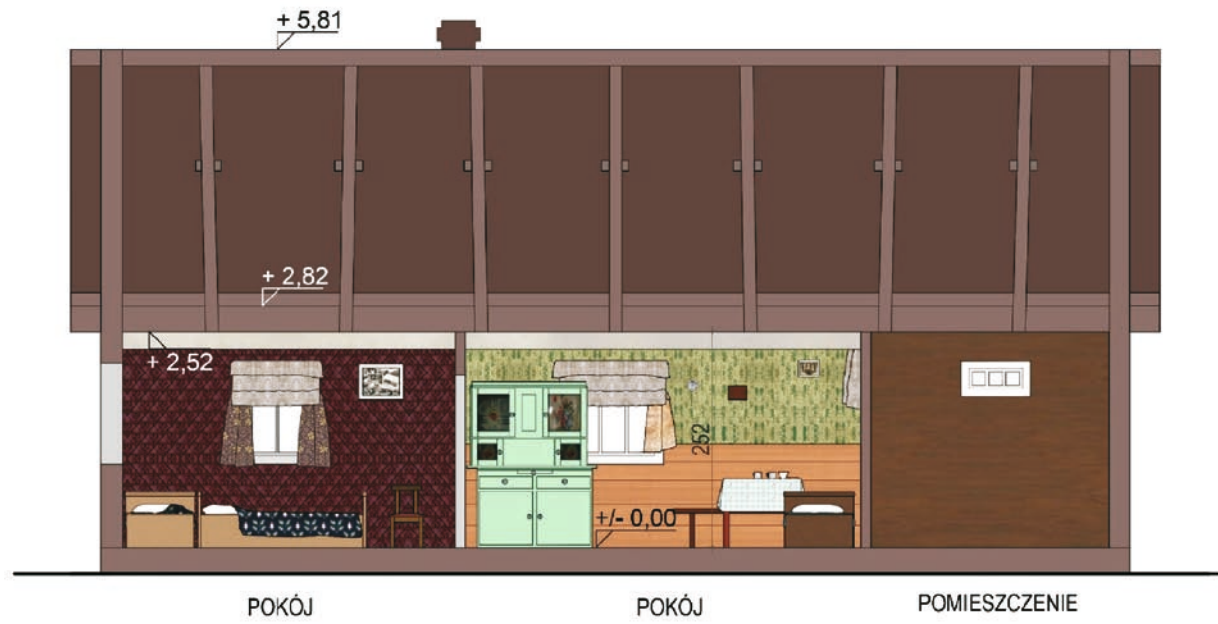


Fig. 11. B-B longitudinal section of the house, Soce village; source: drawing by the authors, 2017



Fig. 12. Facades, Soce village; source: drawings by the authors, 2017



## 5. DWELLING HOUSE NO. 61

House No. 61 was built in the 1880s. It is currently unoccupied and is a private museum of Tamara Leszczyńska, head of the village of Soce. The wide-fronted, asymmetrical house has a wooden tie beam structure,<sup>6</sup> it was laid out on a rectangular plan with sides of 8x16 m. The rooms are: on the north side a vestibule and a chamber-pantry, and on the south side a kitchen and a room. On the north side there is a small extension. The interior of the house has retained its rural character. The walls were made of wooden logs and painted white. There are colourful handmade carpets and rugs in all the rooms, the handmade rugs, so-called *szmaciaki*.<sup>7</sup> On the walls hang embroidered scarves and makatas.<sup>8</sup> Makatas were also hung above the stove and on the walls, as well as over the wash bowl. The embroideries were mainly floral motifs. Birds were also embroidered, as well as scenes from life (for example: a boy giving a flower to a girl) and inscriptions (for example: *Good Morning*). The rooms have wooden furniture and wicker baskets.

The floor of the hallway is covered with five *szmaciaki*. In the vestibule is a standing wooden cabinet on which there is a wooden trough for forming loaves of bread. A black hat hangs above the cabinet. Next to it stand two wooden chairs, on which there are two wicker baskets and a wooden bowl. Above them a sheepskin coat hangs on a nail. High up on the ceiling is a narrow shelf on which three round wicker baskets stand. The shelf is decorated with a lace shawl. There are a total of eight wicker baskets of various shapes in the room. In the hallway, there are two tall round-shaped baskets standing on the floor: a basket with a lid and a basket with a handle stand on wooden chairs. One basket hangs on a nail under a shelf on which lies a white makata with a floral motif embroidered with a single thread. On the wall, at the entrance to the kitchen, hangs a makata with a floral motif and two parrots. From the vestibule one can go to the pantry and the kitchen. In the pantry there are two wooden trunks, a wooden chair, five wicker baskets with a handle, designed for collecting potatoes, mushrooms or fruit.

The room also contains such items as a wooden laundry tare, called a tadpole, and a hoe for digging po-

tatoes. In the kitchen, on the left, stands a wooden table with two chairs and a wooden cabinet. The table is covered with a lace tablecloth, and on it stands a small basin, a wooden bowl and a flowerpot. The cabinet is painted white and the top is painted brown. It contains a makata and a glass bowl. There are dishes in the cabinet. Three cast iron pots stand on the cabinet. On the kitchen floor lie five rag rugs. On the other side of the room is a clay oven and a casserole.<sup>9</sup> Opposite the stove, against the wall, stands a stool with an enamel wash bowl, and next to it a wooden chair. Above the bowl hangs a mirror and a makata with the inscription: "Water soap the best whitewash." Also hanging on the wall is a wooden shelf and a rack of white shirts. On the stove stands a cast iron pot and a blue enameled kettle. In the room on the floor lie seven *szmaciaki*. There is a wooden bench, on it lies a blanket with embroidered flowers and the date: 1948 r. Under it, on the floor, stands a sewing machine. Above the bench hangs a cabinet filled with old documents, articles and books. On the cabinet stand three cast-iron pots. Next to the cabinet, by the window, stands a sewing machine with a sewing head, on which lies a white scarf with lace. In the corner of the room is a wooden fern pot stand, which is decorated with lace scarves. In the middle of the gable wall with two windows is a wooden table, covered with a white tablecloth. Symmetrically on the two sides of the table stand wooden chairs and large elliptical wicker baskets in succession. On the table lies an old book, a glass apple platter and an oil lamp with a ceramic base. Lace scarves decorate the wicker baskets. In the room stands a wooden bed. On it are three feather-filled cushions with white pillowcases and lace patterns. Above the bed hangs a makata with a painted picture, depicting a rural landscape and a boy and girl approaching a bridge. Behind them can be seen the figure of a guardian angel. Beside the bed stands a reel and a wooden box, on which newspapers lie. By the bed stands a tall, round wicker basket, and next to it a wooden cabinet with shelves, set diagonally in the corner of the room. Above it hangs an icon depicting the Last Supper, which is decorated with an embroidered shawl.

<sup>6</sup> "The wall consists of horizontally stacked rims of wooden beams joined at the corners (knots) by locks with or without extensions". Source: [https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Konstrukcja\\_wie%C5%84cowa](https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Konstrukcja_wie%C5%84cowa) [access: 14.11.2019]

<sup>7</sup> "Handmade rugs –'szmaciaki', in some areas called 'galganiarze', were the most widespread folk utility-decorative fabric in Poland. The names derive from rags or scoops, which are strips of old, worn clothes, tablecloths, linens or fabric offcuts that make up the weft of the rugs." Source: <https://etnomuzeum.eu/zbiorzy/chodnik-szmaciak> [access: 14.11.2019]

<sup>8</sup> "Small decorative fabric hung on walls or unfolded on furniture". Source: <https://sjp.pwn.pl/sjp/makata;2566726.html>, [access: 14.11.2019].

<sup>9</sup> "A place behind the stove or on the stove in an old country house." Source: <https://sjp.pwn.pl/slowniki/Zapiecek.html> [access: 14.11.2019]



**Fig. 13.** View of the south wall of the house No. 61, Soce village; photo by the authors, 2017



**Fig. 14.** The furniture in the hallway in the dwelling house No. 61, Soce village; source: photo by the authors, 2017





**Fig. 15 (a, b).** The furniture in the kitchen in house No. 61, Soce village; source: photo by the authors, 2017





**Fig. 16 (a,b,c).** The furniture in the room, in dwelling house No. 61, Soce village; source: photo by the authors, 2017







Fig. 18. A-A and B-B cross sections of the house, Soce village; source: by the authors, 2017

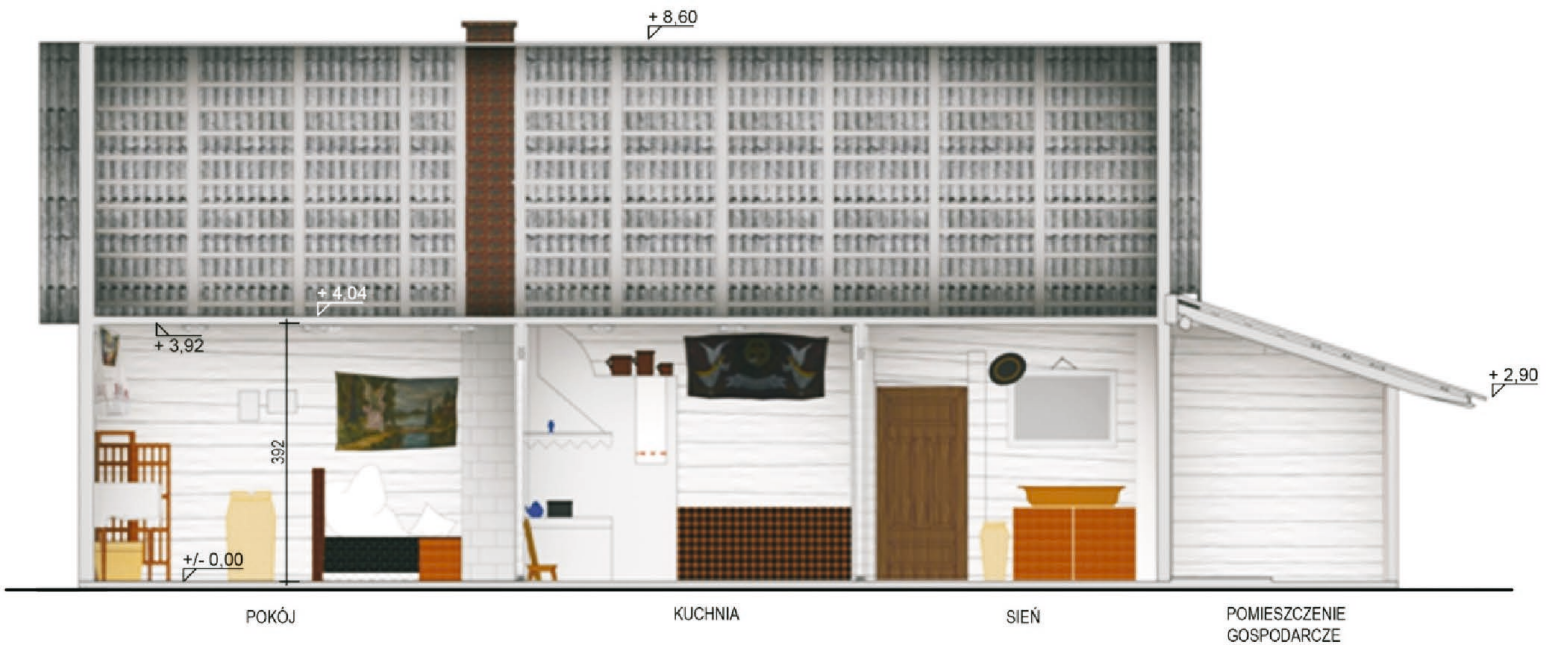


Fig. 19. C-C longitudinal section of the house, Soce, village; source: drawing by the authors, 2017



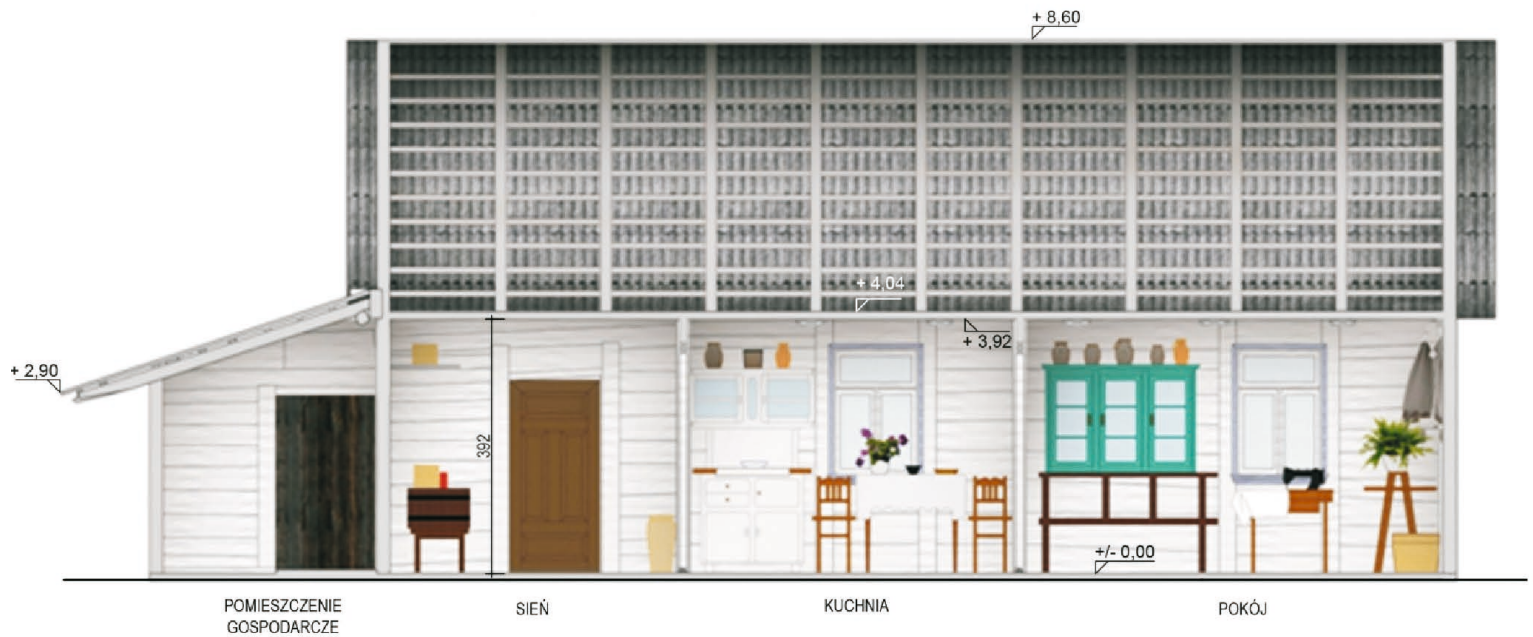


Fig. 20. D-D longitudinal section of the house, Soce village; source: drawing by the authors, 2017

## CONCLUSIONS

Architectural-ethnographic inventory documentation of village houses, including drawings of first floor plans, cross and longitudinal sections, and facades, with accompanying photographs, provides a form of documentation of existing old houses in Soce village. This form of development of drawings and description was intended to document in a precise manner the preserved existing condition of the buildings, the list of rooms and the interior furnishings of these houses. Furnishings as well as the texture and colours of materials were shown in detail. The comparative surveys of 2017 and 2019 showed the preservation of the unchanged fabric of both these buildings and their furnishings, the care taken by their owners to preserve, nurture and also constantly add new exhibits to the collection. The aim of such activities is to preserve the cultural heritage of the studied region and to show and highlight the cultural and ethnographic value of these objects, in order to support activities aimed at preserving such objects.

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