



Cák, a group of protection cellars  
*Cák, niz zaštićenih podruma*

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## **Responsibility for Our Historic Values (Village Architecture and Ways of Its Preservation)**

Does historic heritage – an up-to-date expression – mean more or something different from what architectural characteristic of a settlement, or else, local architectural value of a certain settlement has been called previously?

Evaluating my experiences collected in villages and small towns or settlements in Hungary, as well as considering my work uncompleted so far, I have realized that my attitude has been enlarged in the past few years. Examining the historic causes of the architecture and the types of settlements I have recognized the mental and cultural attitude of the constructors and owners and also that their building activity was highly determined by their way of life and, of course, some practical reasons. Thus, I turned towards the owners themselves whose memory concerning their architectural activity were left behind. I have shown little interest in the role of the owners as well as their commission resulting in houses so far. The ideological and interpreting role of owners and craftsmen has been excluded from my survey. Each settlement – either town or village – is generally studied in two ways: on the basis of statistical data and archival records as well as articles and essays or else by visits and observation. Both ways – as to our latest experiences – have led us to results of equal value.

By now the collected data clearly indicate to me that the extensive characteristics of all the buildings in my survey were significantly influenced by the possibilities of the prevailing society considering the financial situation of the population at a given period including road network and apportioned land and housing system.

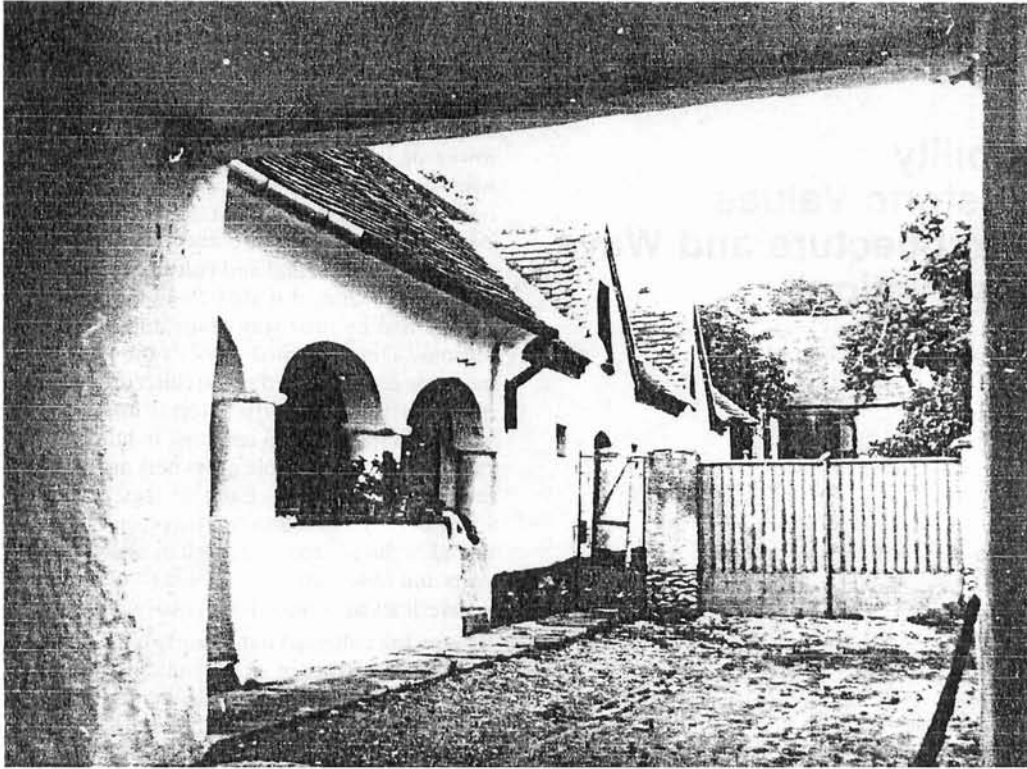
This could be first seen in the most underdeveloped areas in the west of Hungary. In little centers I observed architectural forms similar to the civic style generally used in smaller towns. Therefore I tried to search for the owners whose ideas were expressed by these houses. I wanted to find the reason why these buildings were in such bad state of repair. As I went on investigating I was revealing the one time tenants of the settlement – wealthy and poor ones – their family connections, their former public institutions, as well as all the stories and names relating to these people just before everything got fadded. Thus I realized that a settlement can represent its real character by its past and, of course, together with the building activity of its inhabitants. Hitherto, when studying a certain region or a group of settlements experts have usually understood historical past exclusively as historic event shown by archival records and data. Architectural past solely meant to them the way and form of housing pattern a settlement without finding any connection with the way of living and ideology of the social-ethnic groups of the given population. The divergence of the settlements can easily be noted when identifying the diverse characteristics relating to the specific living circumstances of the people in a certain area.

*Summary*

*The author discusses the relation between the historical heritage and the architectural values of a settlement; the importance of the spiritual and cultural attitude of the constructor and of the owner; the way in which the building trade is defined by the way of life, practical reasons, social and financial situation.*

*The conclusion that can be drawn from this research is that, in economically developed areas, there is strong desire for transformation, even destruction of buildings that are more than a hundred years old, while in mainly underdeveloped areas, the architectural heritage is still preserved. The question is: is modern architecture capable of reconciling the past with the future and should it endeavour to do so at all? The problem of selecting prior architectural monuments should also be stressed. The author uses the example of the town Cák, whose development she had closely followed over twenty years, to outline her ideas.*

As a result of my survey throughout my country – employed by (VÁTI) – during the period between 1980–1988 I am sorry to find that there is a strong wish to transform, moreover remodel (in many cases destroy) all the buildings dating back over hundred years, especially in the economically developing areas. Therefore the inhabitants' building activity does not waste any care to preserve the houses of poor outlook or of a more modern style. Unfortunately, in these transformed and modernized areas there are lonely buildings or groups of houses – even in good state still protecting their traditional architectural form – that are getting to lose their original value and disturb the transformed environment. In other places the lack of the original residents make these houses unreasonable to preserve.



Cák

There is a totally different situation, however, in the underdeveloped areas. Here, the general conditions cannot be proved. Unfavourable economic conditions often conserve the architectural features as well as the settlement structure. In these areas, the overall picture relating to the past architecture of a former period has been preserved independently of the change of the population. Thus, although slow building activity has kept the architectural styles on but, at the same time, the poor economic situation, the evergrowing pauperism increases the bad state of the houses. In these areas local interest is significantly different from what an outsider would expect concerning traditions in architecture. For all the values of a certain environment expressing integrity and beauty to a stranger, may be regarded as poverty by the locals.

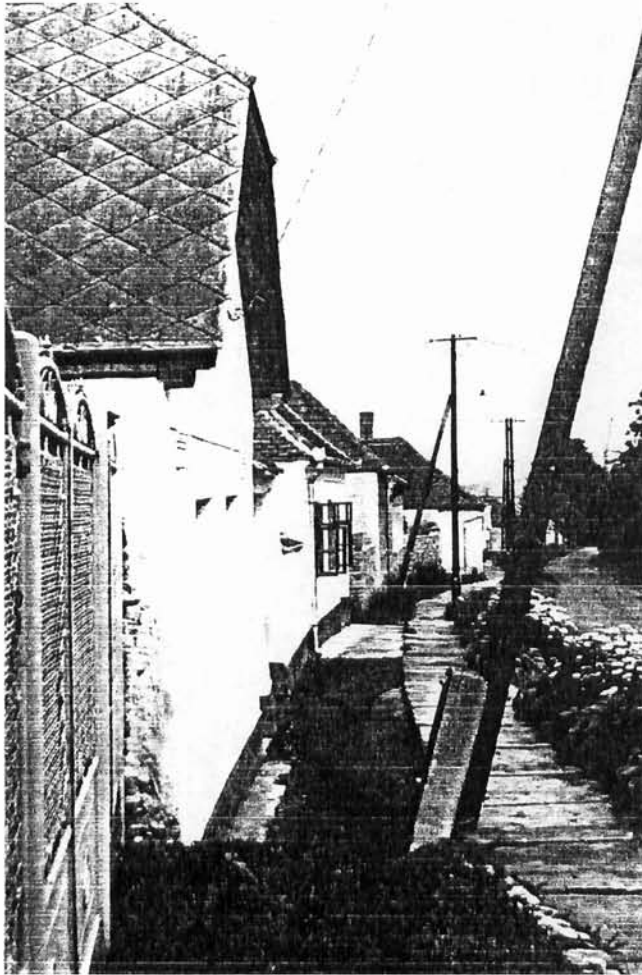
Our question is: who needs to know the settlement system, the architectural features of the Hungarian cities and villages? And what for? Is modern architecture able to accord with the past or does it have to at all?

To be able to determine the duties of an architect concerning the future life of a given area wishing to preserve its past, one needs to study the structure of the settlement as well as the social needs and reasons of the existing architectural styles. Thus, the way of selecting monuments may represent a totally different aspect. Conforming to this a building of a modest exterior may express a way of life rather than a certain symbol of poverty. Other houses of a more decorated facade, however, may represent bourgeois civilization or a way of life assimilating to the one in the cities. The one time buildings of religion or of public institutions are therefore symbols of the most important community buildings as well as the ones creating culture and ideology for the people living there. These symbols

create patterns no matter they are ideologically or artistically respected.

To prove my ideas I have selected CÁK, a little village to be introduced. During a two-decade period I had the opportunity to follow its development visiting it every 4 or 5 years. The village is situated right at the western border, near Kőszeg. Its life has strongly been influenced by the political and economic situation of the past four decades. The development of this village was almost paralyzed being a frontier area. The general outlook is rather typical having a unique street along a creek, with standardly apportioned lands and houses. The dwellings are found alongside the border of the buildingsite, with a typical exterior of the so-called scattered development method (verandas in some places). There are other dwellings, too, curved towards the street representing the developed type of the previous ones. These curves served as large entrance doors for chariots and carriages arriving at the farm yards. These large gateways are very characteristic for the neighbouring villages, as well. The outbuildings of the farm-yard are lined up alongside the border of the building-site under a separate roof. Behind them there is a vast barn and a coach-house under a common roof perpendicular to the outbuildings thus dividing the yard.

Rural economy in Hungary is still determined by agriculture and live-stock farming completed with fruit and wine cultivation. There are small cabins of stone or/and large logs on the wine-fields, the open attic of which can still serve for keeping hay. These cabins are really picturesque staying in the chestnut grove.



Cák

**Sažetak**  
**Anikó Gazda**  
**Odgovornost za povijesna vrednovanja**  
**(Seoska arhitektura i putovi njezina održavanja)**

*Autorica govori o odnosu povijesnog nasljeđa; o važnosti duhovnog i kulturnog stava graditelja i vlasnika; o određenosti građevinske djelatnosti načinom života, praktičnim razlozima, društvenom i financijskom situacijom.*

*Zaključak je ovog istraživanja da u ekonomski razvijenijim područjima postoji jaka želja za transformacijom, čak uništenjem objekata starijih od sto godina, dok se arhitektonsko nasljeđe sačuvalo u pretežno nerazvijenim područjima. Postavlja se i pitanje je li moderna arhitektura sposobna uskladiti prošlost i sadašnjost i treba li uopće na tome raditi, a naglašen je i problem odabira prioriternih arhitektonskih spomenika.*

*Svoje ideje autorica iznosi na primjeru naselja Cák, razvoj kojega je pratila dvadesetak godina.*