

Architectural Transformations of Residential Buildings in Rural Areas of the Lublin Region

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Abstract:

The goal of this paper is to identify the basic changes in the architecture of residential buildings in the post-war period in one of the rural voivodeships (regions) of Poland. The authors aim to point out the reasons underlying the formation of new architectural models in rural areas and attempt to evaluate their impact on the transformation of the traditional landscape of the country. The study encompassed 15 villages located in different parts of the Lublin Voivodeship. The oldest houses, erected before the Second World War, were defined by their simplicity and paucity of decorative detail. Buildings were usually small, planked with wood and with a gabled roof. The use of natural building materials gave these buildings the feel of aesthetically blending into the rural landscape. Following the Second World War, a major change in quality took place in rural construction. Wood was replaced by rock-based building material. One-storey houses with gable roofs were predominant. Building models and patterns remained mostly unchanged with respect to traditional historical archetypes. From the 1960s to the 1980s, country building fell under the influence of urban standards. The proliferation of these architectural forms was spurred and reinforced by increasingly strong connections between the country and the city, mainly due to the rural population taking up work in the city. The last decade of the 20th century saw a significant improvement in the quality of building materials and the aesthetic value of the buildings themselves.

Keywords: buildings, rural areas, Lublin region, Poland

1. Introduction

Until the mid-20th century, Poland's rural areas featured buildings whose architecture was regionally consistent and blended smoothly into the rural

landscape. The spatial structure of the country was dominated by the croft or landholding, comprising the dwelling and any adjacent structures within the enclosed area, serving the typical agricultural purposes of rural life. The end of the Second World War brought dynamic changes to rural areas – changes brought on by the advent of socialism, Poland's new post-war socio-political system. Land reform eliminated, among others, large agricultural estates, and the land was handed over to the owners of small agricultural holdings or integrated into state-owned farmland ([2]). The increase in the level of industrialization and urbanization in Poland, coupled with the development of technical and social infrastructure, resulted in certain economic and socio-cultural transformations in rural areas. These were accompanied by changes in rural architecture, largely based on rejecting traditional forms of construction, increasing the size of residential buildings and introducing new building materials ([3]). This is confirmed by the research of Gy Ruda ([12]) pertaining to other countries of East-Central Europe. Nevertheless, the country retained its rural nature.

Following the fall of communism in 1989, rural transformations picked up the pace. This was a consequence of the dynamic economic development the country was experiencing, spearheaded by the expansion of sectors alternative to agriculture (e.g. tourism and recreation, construction, services), the improvement of transport networks, the adoption of models from urban life and the dawn of the concept of the multifunctional nature of agriculture. Similar processes had been observed slightly earlier in Western Europe ([6], [9], [11], [13] [16]).

The socio-economic transformation process in rural areas was accompanied by parallel shifts in rural settlement, with new spatial structure models appearing in the country in conjunction with the development of residential construction. The most vigorous transformations were observed in suburban zones of large urban agglomerations, where the intensive construction work was connected to the

inflow of new citizens. The migrational movement towards rural areas that are attractive by virtue of their nature and landscape and are additionally well-connected to the city is a common occurrence (e.g. [1], [7], [8]). In Poland, this process entails clear transformations in the structure of building developments and architecture of the country, often introducing architectural forms that are foreign to the area. In territories where the pressure of investment is significant, the rural landscape is beginning to lose its traditional character.

Peripheral areas, in turn, which typically experience an outward flow of migration, are also witnessing an increasing number of abandoned properties, and only sporadically do building investors appear to reinvigorate development. Some of them take over old buildings and adapt them to new purposes, mostly turning them into so-called second houses. Such undertakings can have a positive effect on the conservation of the rural landscape and the elements of the area's cultural heritage ([14]). They also help establish the new structure of the rural economy and way of life ([5], [15]).

The spatial image of the country is determined to a great extent by the proportions and shapes of the buildings, the building materials used and the color schemes. Past rural construction had all its determining elements – the choice of location and placement, the plan of the dwelling and its surrounding infrastructure, building materials and construction systems as well as architectural elements – defined by tradition ([4]). From the mid-20th century on, the development of rural residential construction has exhibited changes in terms of architecture, construction and building materials ([10]).

The goal of this paper is to identify the basic changes in the architecture of residential buildings in the post-war period in one of the rural voivodeships (regions) of Poland. The authors aim to point out the reasons underlying the formation of new architectural models in rural areas and attempt to evaluate their impact on the transformation of the traditional landscape of the country.

2. Research Location and Methodology

The Lublin Voivodeship is a peripheral region located in Eastern Poland. Rural areas predominate throughout the region and are characterized by a highly developed agricultural capacity. Tourism and recreation play a minor, yet existing role in areas that are otherwise desirable and attractive for the lushness of their nature, while those located in the vicinity of

larger cities – mostly Lublin, the province's capital – attract some interest for the potential of their housing developments.

The study encompassed 15 villages located in different parts of the Lublin Voivodeship (Fig. 1). The primary factor that was taken into account in selecting these communities was that they represent different functional categories, namely: suburban villages (e.g. Jakubowice Konińskie, Kazimierzówka), typically agricultural villages (e.g. Kolonia Deputyczne Królewskie, Rankowskie), recreational villages (Nowy Staw, Krasne) and multifunctional villages (Jasków). A physical inventory was taken in these locations comprising information on the residential buildings that make up the villages in question. Several interviews were conducted with the owners of the properties. The interview questionnaire contained questions regarding the structure and physical aspect of the residential buildings, including year of construction; number of floors and rooms; material used for wall base, walls and roof; shape of house and roof; and state of basic sanitary facilities (water, sewage system, gas). The study included 2627 properties in total.

3. Results of study

3.1 Age of buildings and category of investors.

While the buildings in the villages included in the studied are very diverse in terms of age, their age structure is rather consistent save for the oldest and newest constructions. The bulk of the buildings was erected in the periods spanning from 1945 to 1960 and 1970 to 1980 (Fig. 2). The first period was focused on the reconstruction of rural estates that had been damaged or destroyed during the war, which saw two separate fronts sweeping through the Lublin region. Farmers constituted the most numerous group of investors (60%) in this stage (**Table 1**). A boom in the agricultural sector, farmers being exempted from compulsory delivery of agricultural products, improved access to agricultural machinery and equipment as well as synthetic fertilizers all coincided so that in the following decade, farmers were still the primary investors in construction in the Lublin province's countryside. However, the advancing urbanization and industrialization of the country implied a significant outflow of people from the village to the city and a rise in the number of employees holding down two jobs (so-called *farmers-workers*). These processes seriously undermined and compromised building activity.

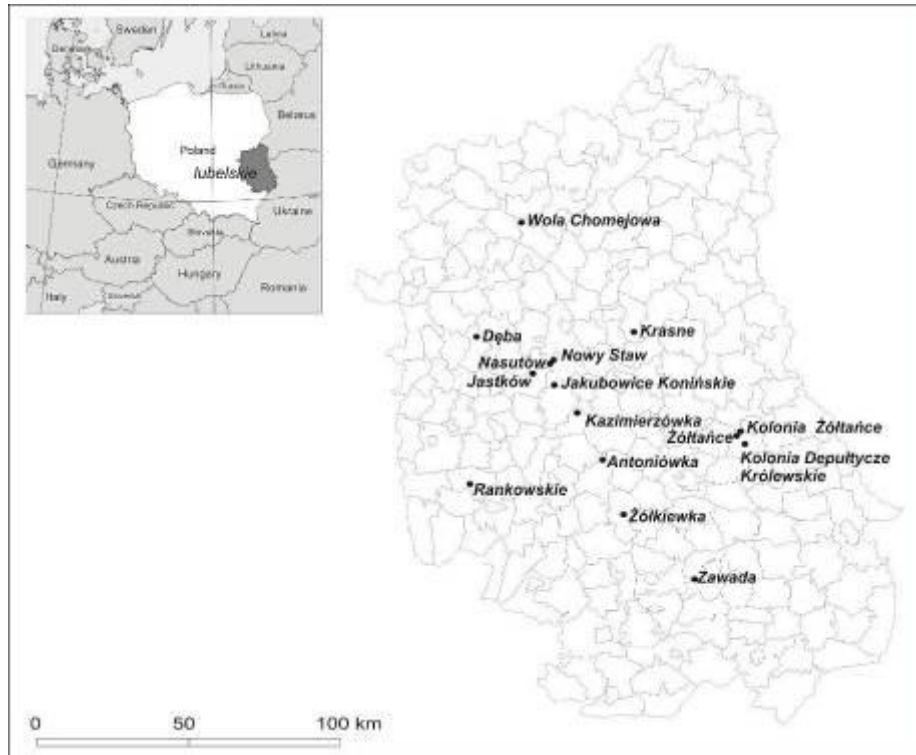


Fig. 1. Location of villages selected for field research (Source: own elaboration).

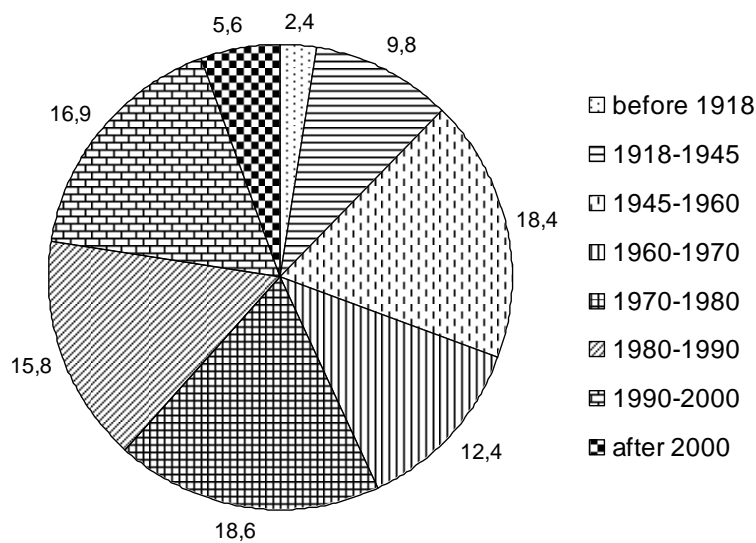


Fig. 2. Age structure of homes in the analyzed villages (Source: Own elaboration based on conducted field research).

For Poland's economy, the period from 1970 to 1980 brought numerous industrial investments and the expansion of medium-sized cities, which gained new administrative functions (an administrative reform broke up the 16 existing voivodeships into 49 new regions). The rural population found new prospects for employment, which translated into a gradual improvement of their financial situation. Income from work outside the individual agricultural holding often

surpassed the income derived from agricultural activity. Many of these properties were exclusively self-reliant in nature; this is why the period experienced an increase in the number of investors with two jobs and a parallel decrease in the participation of those focused purely on farming.

The following decade (1980-1990) was one of looming economic crisis, which damaged the thrust of building activity in the countryside. Among

contributing investors, the number of farmers continued to fall, as opposed to that of farmer-workers and pure industrial workers. In the final decade of the previous century, the number of buildings rose insignificantly, but the structure of the investing groups went through considerable changes. The fall of

socialism and the arrival of the free market economy after 1989 opened up new horizons in building investments. A sudden surge occurred in the number of city-dwelling white-collar workers. The liveliest construction efforts were being made in close proximity to large cities and main transport arteries.

Table 1. Breakdown of residential construction according to the socio-professional category of investors and period of construction (%).

Period of construction	Farmer	Farmer-worker	Worker	Artisan	White-collar
until 1918	65.1	9.3	18.6	2.3	4.7
1918-1945	66.7	16.7	8.6	1.9	6.2
1945-1960	64.5	16.4	11.0	2.7	5.4
1960-1970	62.2	17.3	15.4	1.9	3.2
1970-1980	49.4	30.4	11.7	2.5	6.0
1980-1990	36.9	34.7	16.2	5.9	6.3
1990-2000	18.2	22.9	22.4	5.7	30.7
after 2000	18.9	32.4	14.9	1.4	32.4

Source: own elaboration based on conducted field research

3.2 Building material. Building material has a decisive influence on the stability and strength of buildings, in addition to playing a crucial role in defining the appearance of buildings and the aesthetic profile of the country. The present study analyzed source materials that were used to build wall bases, the outside walls of buildings, and roofs.

The wall bases make up the foundation that supports the construction of the entire house. The analyzed villages do not offer difficulties in terms of terrain, as the area is flatland, by and large, and so does not warrant leveling. The material used for the

wall base and the height of the base itself changed throughout the years. In buildings dating from before 1945, rock fragments and rock-derived composites available in the vicinity were often used for the wall base (**Photo 1a, Table 2**). Clay mixed with water was the main aggregate. Subsequent periods gradually abandoned the use of rock-derived resources, substituting them for brick and cement blocks (CMUs). Modern wall bases focus on enhancing the aesthetic quality of buildings, which are frequently reinforced with plaster and painted or adorned with decorative stone (**Photo 1**).

Table 2. Proportions of use of wall base materials by period of construction (%).

Period of construction	CMU	Gravel	Stone	Brick	Others
until 1918	4.0	-	32.0	56.0	8.0
1918-1945	4.1	1.7	23.1	67.8	3.3
1945-1960	11.2	4.1	14.9	57.4	12.4
1960-1970	12.1	1.1	8.0	64.9	13.8
1970-1980	22.3	2.1	1.4	64.9	9.2
1980-1990	19.1	2.7	2.7	56.3	19.1
1990-2000	6.6	1.2	3.7	70.7	17.8
after 2000	9.2	-	3.1	66.2	21.5

Source: own elaboration based on conducted field research

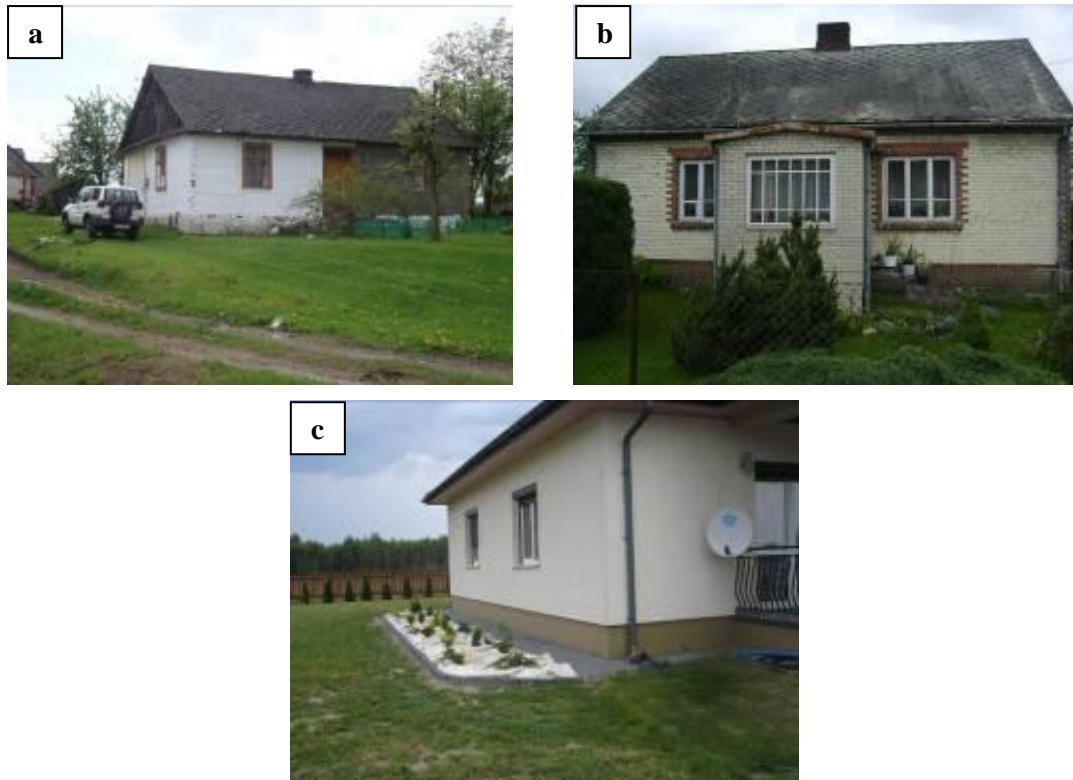


Photo 1. Building material for wall bases: a-stone, b-brick, c-decorative plaster (Source: author’s photographs).

The building material of the walls is one of the key physical features of all houses. The oldest residential buildings relied on wood as their main building material (Table 3). The wooden country house was first raised in the late Middle Ages and has not undergone any significant development since. On a local level, one preferred construction material used for walls was wood with a mix of stone or brick. Wooden houses typically took the form of log cabins with interlocked logs at the ends. The pine logs were locked together in the “swallow’s tail” style (Polish corners); alternatively, the round logs were interlocked in a saddle notch. Buildings had half-

hipped roofs, formerly covered with straw and currently with sheet metal.

A gradual change in preferred building materials took place after the Second World War. The use of wood diminished as brick and CMUs were on the rise. The coming and diffusion of fire-proof materials was both a signal and a harbinger of progress in the country. The 1960s in particular saw a confident move away from wood, replaced by brick and the CMU as the primary building material. Finally, the walls of contemporary, modern-day buildings are built with CMUs and assorted materials.

Table 3. Building material used for walls of residential buildings by period of construction (%).

Period of construction	Wood	Brick	CMU	Mixed
until 1918	78.3	4.3	-	17.4
1918-1945	77.4	7.0	1.6	14.0
1945-1960	53.4	16.3	6.9	23.4
1960-1970	16.9	20.7	37.1	25.3
1970-1980	4.9	9.8	59.8	25.4
1980-1990	3.4	5.7	50.3	40.6
1990-2000	4.6	11.2	63.2	21.1
after 2000	-	5.6	55.1	39.3

Source: own elaboration based on conducted field research



Photo 2. Building material for building walls: a-wood, b-brick, c-CMU, d-mixed (Source: author's photographs).

In the villages included in the study, cladding, or the covering of a structure with another material, is applied to a major part of the walls of houses and their adjoining infrastructure. Cladding or mortaring is done with the purpose of sealing and protecting walls from the elements, conserving them and elevating the aesthetic beauty of the building. In the oldest buildings, the cracks between the logs were filled with clay or straw. The most commonly encountered type of cladding is plasterwork and coating (**Photo 3**). Older houses are first paneled, then coated with paint. The paneling is layered and constitutes a kind of isolation against low temperatures, while the paint conserves the wood and increases the aesthetic qualities of the house. Until the 1960s, buildings were commonly topped with tar paper for waterproofing, and this was later blanché with lime.

In later years, plastering entered into common use, either applied smooth or textured and sprayed. The plaster used was characterized by a very limited selection of colors. Today, the outside walls of houses are covered with colored acrylic plaster. In turn, another new and novel kind of cladding mixes plaster with other building materials. Elements of ceramic tiling, natural architectural stone or glazed tiling are used to finish parts of the façades of buildings threatened by humidity (foundations, outside staircases, terraces). Recent years have also seen a rise in popularity of outside covering made of plastic and synthetics, or siding (**Photo 3d**). This comprises

insulated covering that most frequently imitates horizontal or vertical boards. In most cases, siding comes in shades of white and beige.

The roof of a building also plays a pivotal role in the country landscape. In broad terms, the post-war period is characterized by a drop in the number of houses topped with tar paper. Until recently, Eternit (fiber cement composed of cement and asbestos) roofs were very common throughout Poland due to their fireproof quality and high resistance to both changing atmospheric conditions and mechanical damage. Eternit reached the peak of its popularity in the 1970s, when it became a mainstay of the countryside landscape as a frequent first choice for covering houses and adjoining constructions. However, due to the toxic nature of asbestos and the health consequences of its use, it has been prohibited and the existing coverings are being systematically removed.

Fiber cement was soon replaced by sheet metal, which is the modern covering of most homes (**Table 5**). In the beginning of the 1990s, the metal was coated with zinc, but more recently producers have settled for sheets that are pre-painted in the factory, which shields them from corrosion. Roof tiles or shingles are also on the rise in recent times. The modern roof tile – the so-called eagle shingle – has properties in its composition and placement that are very different from a traditional shingle, in addition to being cheaper and easier to install.



Photo 3. Wall cladding in houses: a-coating, b-plasterwork, c-tar paper, d-siding (Source: author's photographs).

Table 4. Types of cladding of walls of residential buildings by date of construction (%).

Date of construction	Plasterwork	Paneling	Coating	Others	None
until 1918	28.9	44.4	6.7	17.8	2.2
1918-1945	37.7	34.4	10.4	13.7	3.8
1945-1960	38.5	21.8	24.9	14.2	0.6
1960-1970	53.0	7.3	23.1	11.1	5.6
1970-1980	59.1	3.8	17.9	13.5	5.6
1980-1990	42.4	3.4	34.9	13.6	5.8
1990-2000	49.1	2.8	13.2	11.4	23.5
after 2000	26.7	2.9	26.7	11.4	32.4

Source: own elaboration based on conducted field research

The studies conducted in the indicated villages allow us to point out the spatial similarities and differences of the materials used for the construction of residential buildings. In all four types of rural communities, brick was the material of choice for the wall base in most cases (approximately 70% of buildings), followed by CMUs (cement blocks). In suburban villages, most walls (approximately 70%) are made with CMUs, while in the other types of villages cement blocks play a prominent role (approximately 40%), but are closely trailed by wood (approximately 30%). This can be explained by the relatively high proportion of older buildings in traditional rural areas – buildings whose walls were constructed mostly from wood. Suburban rural areas, by contrast, are experiencing vigorous building

activity in recent times, where old wooden dwellings are giving way to modern developments and buildings made of stone or other mineral aggregates.

The cladding of the walls is spatially diversified. Plasterwork is mostly found in houses in villages where a large chunk of the population does not engage in agriculture. In mixed-function communities (tourism, agriculture, building, services), 73% of the buildings are plastered, while suburban villages register a slightly lower 62%. In purely agricultural villages, less than half the houses are properly covered with plaster, while paneling enjoys some popularity (around 20% of residential buildings).

With respect to roofs, most of the houses covered with Eternit are situated in agricultural villages (72%). Significantly fewer cases are recorded in suburban

areas (below 50%), which results from the more recent construction of the houses and a tendency, stronger than in other areas, to replace old roofs with new, the latter primarily made of sheet metal.

3.3 Architectural Profile of Houses. The buildings in the villages this study encompasses are, for the most part, one-storey houses (**Table 6**), with a distinct correlation between the number of floors and the professional category the owner belongs to. Farmers and farmer-workers comprise the largest group of homeowners.

The first two-storey houses were built in the country in the 1960s on the wave of the rise in household income, primarily among artisans and white-collar workers. Two-storey houses are considerably larger than traditional houses; oftentimes, they exceed the real needs and financial

capabilities of the investors, and consequently, many of these houses remain unfinished. According to Basista ([4]), in the country, two-storey houses became a way to gauge the prestige of the owner. Moreover, administrative barriers limited the practice of splitting the inheritance among one's children, which encouraged people to build sizable houses so as to guarantee comfort for the younger generation. At the same time, mass migration from the country to the city, which primarily affected the young rural population, left much of the space reserved in these two-storey "boxes" for the young generation unused.

Houses with separate lofts appeared in the 1970s, alongside the trend to revamp and modernize old buildings. In most cases the first storey was raised, taking into consideration as minimal a use of building materials as possible.

Table 5. Material used to cover roofs of residential buildings by date of construction (%)

Date of construction	Shingle	Eternit	Sheet metal	Tar paper and others
until 1918	8.7	43.5	21.7	26.1
1918-1945	8.1	40.5	38.4	13.0
1945-1960	5.4	53.0	32.8	8.8
1960-1970	10.1	66.5	18.9	4.4
1970-1980	5.2	68.9	19.3	6.6
1980-1990	2.3	54.5	38.1	5.0
1990-2000	13.3	31.8	46.9	8.0
after 2000	10.0	13.0	69.0	8.0

Source: own elaboration based on conducted field research

Table 6. Number of floors in building vs. socio-economic category of homeowners (%).

Category of owner	One-storey	One-storey + loft	Two-storey
Farmer	76.3	7.4	16.3
Farmer-worker	63.6	19.2	17.1
Worker	51.5	28.4	20.1
Artisan	59.7	20.8	19.4
White-collar	31.0	35.5	33.5

Source: own elaboration based on the conducted research



Photo 4. Examples of houses: a-one-storey, b-with functional loft, c-two-storey (Source: author's photographs).

Table 7. Shape of houses (floor plans) by date of construction (%).

Date of construction	Square	Rectangle	Long rectangle	Other shapes
until 1918	17.4	78.3	4.3	0.0
1918-1945	18.8	79.6	1.6	0.0
1945-1960	17.5	81.1	1.4	0.0
1960-1970	30.3	67.5	2.1	0.0
1970-1980	55.1	42.6	1.1	1.1
1980-1990	39.8	58.2	0.7	1.3
1990-2000	34.7	55.9	7.2	2.2
after 2000	33.0	60.4	1.9	4.7

Source: own elaboration based on conducted field research

Houses with rectangular floor plans were built until the end of the 1960s (**Photo 3**). The following decade brought a surge in square floor plans inspired by urban models that reached rural areas as well as by the standardization of projects. These new currents changed the face of rural Poland. Flat-roofed brick "boxes" peppered the Polish countryside, upsetting the traditional landscape that was the norm hitherto.

After 1980, investors returned to projects with rectangular floor plans; still, the difference between the size of the longer and the shorter side isn't very significant, generally not exceeding 1-2 m. Houses with this shape account for almost 60% of all buildings constructed between 1980 and 1990. In the present day, an increasing number of residential buildings begin to use alternative polygonal shapes in

their floor plans – a result of a change in building regulations that gives investors greater leeway in choosing the size and shape of a property.

An analysis of wall bases demonstrated that their height varied with successive periods. In houses erected before 1960 (**Table 8**), the wall bases did not exceed 0.5 m in height. In the two following decades the number of houses with a higher wall base (0.5-1 m) increased, which can be traced to increasing numbers of garages and basements being built into the foundations of buildings. The policy of the state at the time encouraged, if not required the space below the property to be utilized to the maximum, given limitations set on supplies of building materials. The living space reserved for one family could not surpass 110 m². Basements were up to 220 cm in height and

were considered as part of the landholding, but not as part of its residential area.

After 1990, projects with a high wall base began fell into favor and gained popularity (multi-tier nature of building construction). This opened the doors for additional uses of the available space, ranging from laundry rooms through boiler rooms, all the way to garages and extra rooms contributing to the property’s primary function. On the other hand, another increase was noted in the proportion of residential buildings with a low wall base or without one at all. Tentative interest also appeared in one-storey house projects with a polygonal floor plan.

The roof is the most conspicuous element in rural residential architecture. Traditional roofs are built on rafters (or purlins), which are set on horizontal beams that themselves are perpendicular to the girders. From the 1980s onward, these are often constructed so as to protrude and serve to protect the building. In the oldest category of buildings, the angle of the rafters is often greater than 90 degrees. By contrast, in newer buildings erected in the 1980s and 1990s, the roofs are more steep, which is connected to the utilization of available loft space.



Photo 5. Shapes of houses: a-rectangle, b-square, c-combined (Source: author’s photographs).

Table 8. Wall base by height and date of construction.

Date of construction	Under 0.5 m	0.5-1 m	1-2 m	over 2 m
until 1918	80.4	19.6	-	-
1918-1945	87.0	11.4	1.6	-
1945-1960	76.6	18.9	4.0	0.6
1960-1970	57.2	30.9	11.0	0.8
1970-1980	39.9	37.3	17.1	5.8
1980-1990	31.6	42.4	22.2	3.7
1990-2000	51.7	23.8	21.0	3.5
after 2000	38.3	26.7	33.3	1.7

Source: Own elaboration based on conducted field research

Table 9. Shape of roof according to date of construction (%).

Date of construction	Gable roof	Hip roof	Flat roof	Mixed roof
until 1918	95.7	4.3	0.0	0.0
1918-1945	97.3	1.6	0.0	1.1
1945-1960	87.1	8.3	0.0	4.6
1960-1970	63.7	30.2	1.6	4.5
1970-1980	44.1	49.3	2.6	4.0
1980-1990	49.0	38.9	2.0	10.1
1990-2000	70.0	11.1	0.3	18.5
after 2000	66.3	12.9	0.0	20.8

Source: own elaboration based on conducted field research

The most commonly encountered variety are simple gable roofs, a defining feature of most old buildings. The 1960s brought a proliferation of hip roofs, in which the slope of the girders is much more gentle than in their gabled counterparts. In the 1980s, many new properties were topped with “open” roofs as a result of an increase in the number of buildings that made use of loft space and included skylights built into the roof. Gable roofs returned in the 1990s, which can convincingly be linked to the appearance of new styles of houses that came in various shapes and featured a terrace. Gable roofs turned out to be ideal in shielding porches and terraces from the sun and the elements, therefore the girders protrude even more noticeably beyond the walls.

Our field research allowed us to identify certain architectural traits of houses depending on two types of village communities. The majority of buildings in suburban villages (around 40%) are one-storey, while those with a functional loft and two floors each comprise around 30%. Additionally, over 60% of all houses have a rectangular floor plan and gable roof, with another 25% featuring hip roofs. In purely agricultural villages, one-storey buildings clearly gain the upper hand (66%), often additionally featuring a square floor plan and a gabled roof (70% of buildings).

3.4 Surroundings of Residential Buildings. The use of the area immediately surrounding the residential building (e.g. stonework on sidewalks, driveways, gardens) is an essential component contributing to the general aesthetic allure of a home. Throughout the years, along with the transformation of the architecture of buildings and building materials, the way the area adjacent to the main building was used also changed, notably in the nature of the green areas close to the house. Decorative plant and tree species in particular became more diversified with the passage of time.

Fruit trees (cherry, apple, pear, plum) were among the most popular inhabitants of green spaces in the vicinity of the oldest residential buildings; they were a substitute for full orchards with several or several

dozen trees depending on the size of the property, in case where these orchards could not be created. Part of the area in front of the house – between the building and the street – was used for flowering plants, either annual or perennial (**Photo 6**). In older properties, trees were also planted in the vicinity of farm buildings.

The greatest changes in the composition of gardens took place in the last several decades. Annual plants were replaced by grass and low perennial plants, mostly bushes and coniferous trees. Fruit trees are rarely planted, and if they are, it is typically at the edge of the property. Water gardens, garden ponds and fountains have also become a distinctive feature.

Perimeter fencing is an important part of the surroundings of a farmhouse. A wide variety of materials are used to denote the perimeter of a property in the country: wood (pickets), stone, hedges, wire (chain-link) or ready-made cement barriers. Wooden fences are typical of houses built in the early post-war period; this type of fencing is also going through a renaissance among investors in the present day. In the 1970s and 1980s, chain-link fences were introduced on a large scale owing to the low cost of both purchasing and installation. The 1980s and 1990s were a period marked by prefabricated elements of fencing. For the most part, these were concrete markers or elements with animal motifs, having little to do with the rural landscape. Currently, many new homeowners choose to forgo fencing entirely, and instead mark the area of their property with a well-kept lawn.

The research results allow us to state that the surroundings of residential buildings is in a constant state of transformation. The garden, which in the past has had purely practical uses (as an orchard or a vegetable garden), plays an increasingly decorative role or is intended for rest. A similar change has been observed in the purpose of fencing. Fences were previously used primarily as a means of preventing farm animals from escaping outside the limits of the property. Today, fences are rather considered as a kind of barrier providing much-needed isolation from



Photo 6. Use of land surrounding residential buildings: a-old houses, b-new houses (Source: author's photographs).

one's neighbors. As a consequence, neighborly bonds are gradually unraveling among the inhabitants of the country.

4. Conclusion

Field research conducted in rural areas of the Lublin Region have demonstrated a tendency to change in the architecture of residential buildings, both in temporal and spatial terms. The oldest houses, erected before the Second World War, were defined by their simplicity and paucity of decorative detail. Buildings were usually small, planked with wood and with a gabled roof. The use of natural building materials gave these buildings the feel of aesthetically blending into the rural landscape.

Following the Second World War, a major change in quality took place in rural construction. Wood was replaced by rock-based building material. One-storey houses with gable roofs were predominant. Building models and patterns remained mostly unchanged with respect to traditional historical archetypes.

From the 1960s to the 1980s, country building fell under the influence of urban standards. The proliferation of these architectural forms was spurred and reinforced by increasingly strong connections between the country and the city, mainly due to the rural population taking up work in the city. One-storey and two-storey houses appeared, with flat or hipped roofs topped with fiber cement (Eternit). At the end of this period, beneficial financial tendencies in the country increased the average size of the house and diversified both the shape and the physical aspect of rural buildings. The last decade of the 20th century saw a significant improvement in the quality of building materials and the aesthetic value of the buildings themselves. Most new houses were dependent on the financial capabilities of the investors. 1.5-storey houses began to appear, with windows installed in the roof. Finally, courtyards

gained popularity and homeowners mostly chose gable or hipped roofs, dormers, porches and outside terraces.

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