



# Traditional Architecture with Contemporary Use. Methods of Preserving the National Architecture of Macedonia

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## ABSTRACT

The development of traditional architecture in Macedonia refers to the period of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, when constructions had great intensity. However, there is limited number of buildings that can be adapted for the purpose of modern tourism today. The adjustments to the legislation for cultural heritage preservation, as well as the private ownership of facilities are making the process of developing tourist accommodation facilities harder for implementation. Regions acknowledged for traditional values need to comply with certain social and economic conditions for their rehabilitation for tourism purposes. Thus, it is necessary to improve infrastructure, provide functional road networks, develop health facilities, and investments that will enable the preservation of the buildings, along with the values of the environment and the natural landscape. In terms of protection it is necessary to preserve the value of the buildings - architectural, structural, and cultural, implement the ecological concept and sustainability, through the creation of modern conditions and adapted facilities as part of tourist infrastructure.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Traditional architecture is a broad framework of complex of buildings in rural and urban environment. The items are usually associated with their use as residential buildings, with certain conditions that cannot fit into modern life [1, p. 29]. In case of typological analysis of the traditional architectural buildings, despite habitats, especially in rural areas, there are commercial buildings in a well preserved form, which can be adapted to the modern use [2]. That refers primarily to barns, porches, verandas, etc.

The existence of the traditional architecture buildings is associated with the period from the 19<sup>th</sup> century till the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Due to the

nature of the materials and the technical character of the construction system, the durability of these facilities was very limited, subsequently the oldest preserved buildings today dating from the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. The facilities that are built with solid construction in wooden skeleton system (*bondruk*) can still be consolidated using certain interventional systems of conservation. Although the time duration of the facilities is within 70 to 100 years, if facilities are preserved with certain methods of rehabilitation, they can be used over 100 years from their construction. Within this active period of their use, they need occasional rehabilitation, especially some adjustments for current contemporary needs [3].

In terms of construction materials (stone, wood and earth in processed form), despite their limited utility

in terms of durability, we can note the solid building procedure. It refers to the proper preparation of the materials (drying of the wood, stone processing, preparation of the soil in processed form) which extends their durability. The application of traditional constructive system, stone wall on the ground floor and the upper floor wooden skeleton system proved to be a very successful solution shown in today's buildings used for up to 200 years. When shaping the buildings there are applied ancient principles in the architecture, aesthetics, symmetry, rhythm, adaptability of measurement systems and other cultural and natural values [4].

Today's state of habitats can be classified according to the way they are used. According to the method of use by owners and their families, they are classified as follows:

- facilities for permanent residence for the family members, who go back to the old buildings, prompted by a sense of nostalgia. They adapt and

renovate them to some extent, according to their own beliefs and with local architectural skills. They have always been in good shape, maintained and adapted to their needs and modern standards of living.

- facilities for occasional /weekend use - tourist concept, in which case owners maintain facilities, but are not investing a lot for their rehabilitation or reconstruction.

- facilities used for tourist purposes require complete rehabilitation of the construction and the interior design for the modern requirements of the complexes with authentic traditional concepts as part of the tourist offer.

## 2. THEORY AND METHODOLOGY

Till now, the conservational methods for protection of cultural building heritage comply with the principle of preservation of authentic external and internal form.

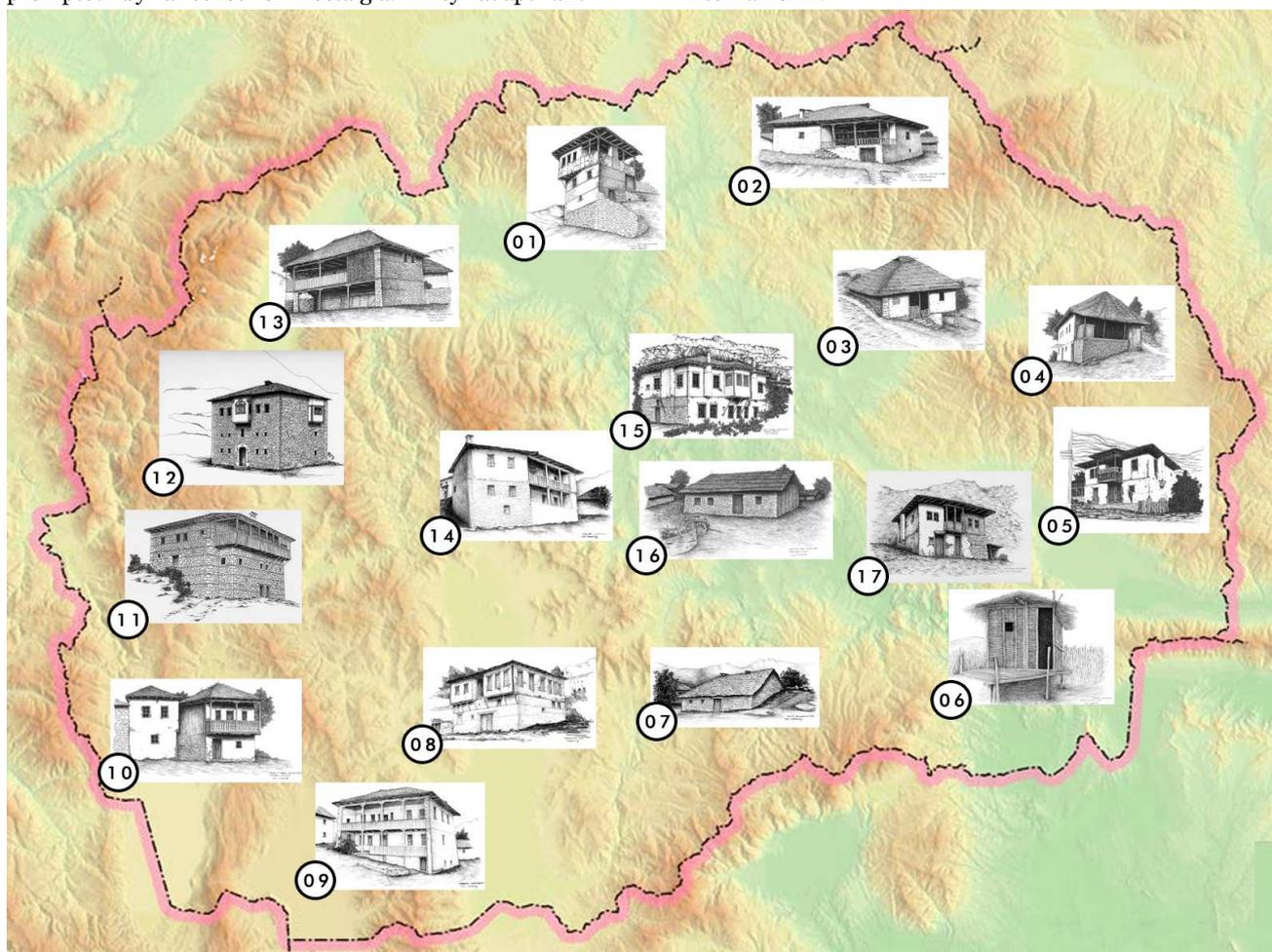


Fig. 1. Houses from regions of rural traditional architecture in Macedonia: 1). Skopska Crna Gora (Skopje area). 2). Kriva Palanka area. 3). Kratovo area. 4). Pijanec area. 5). Maleshevo area. 6). Dojran area. 7). Mariovo (Prilep area). 8). Malovishte (Bitola area). 9). Prespa area. 10). Strushki drimkol (Struga area). 11). Debarski Drimkol (Debar area). 12). Reka (Gostivar area). 13). Polog (Tetovo area). 14). Krushevo area. 15). Veles area. 16). Shtip area. 17). Radovish area. (drawings made by P. Namicev, paper on ink)

Depending on the state of each object, appropriate methods of rehabilitation, adaptation,

rehabilitation or reconstruction of certain parts or the whole building are applied [5].

Within the protection of the traditional architecture there should be included: its protection, targeted towards humanization of the space, improvement of the human life. The main objective of the building models, which are intended for the accommodation of visitors, is to preserve maximum authenticity of the exterior. It tends to keep the authentic form of the details. Besides the exterior, the authenticity is also preserved in the interior, wall details, fireplaces, ceilings, cupboards, doors; especially the use and preservation of the bathroom interior is limited, since it requires contemporary conditions of use (Fig. 4).

According to the traditional methods of construction, the basic materials: stone, wood and processed soil, are integrated in the basic structural system of the rural house, the ground floor of the stone wall and skeletal – wooden system of the floor. Rarely, only in certain regions, one of these systems are applied to the entire building, like the stone houses - towers (River Mariovo Struga etc.) where the stone is the main wall material along the entire height, usually in the mountainous regions (Fig. 2).

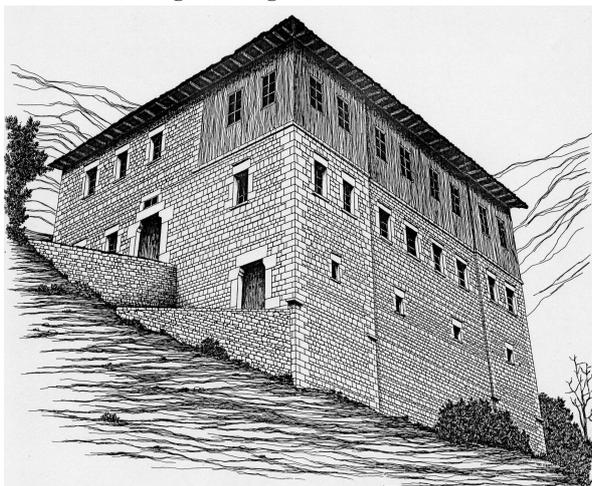


Fig. 2. View of rural house from Galicnik village, Reka area (drawing by P. Namicev, ink on paper).



Fig. 3. View of rural house from Vladimirovo village, Maleshevo area (drawing by P. Namicev, ink on paper).

The cases with wooden skeleton system (*bondruk*) are dominant at all levels, found in the houses in the lowland areas and under mountain regions (Maleshevo (Fig. 3), Kicevo Pijanec et seq.) [6]. In other regions the house contains a combined system. The covering of the house is usually with tiles or with straw (in lowland areas) and stone tiles (in mountainous areas).

Certain regions have their own characteristics of buildings, through which are recognizable as indigenous specimens of local builder expression, which is typical for the whole territory of the Balkans [7].

The division of space is usually for economic premises on the ground floor, while other levels are designed for residential use, sleeping, living room and cooking. The basic characteristic element of the spatial organization is the *chardak*, a balcony, as the central area around which stand, other premises as room, kitchen, etc.

According to modern methods and legislation for the protection of the historic environment and buildings of cultural heritage, it is necessary to respect certain principles. This is due to the good usability of the buildings, while the conservation of buildings means a reflection of the historical areas. Preservation and use of historic buildings means a continuity in displaying the traditional way of life, the methods of reconstruction and protection should be embodied in the way of building environmental (sustainable) – buildings [8]. *There is need of a better relationship between the environment and the important opening to a great diversion of professional specialties* [9].

The methodological approach in determining the contemporary purpose is based on the traditional framework in the field of observation and research, where the centers of interest are objects with an opportunity for a multifunctional use.

The data is collected based on their own research through long-term field studies, existing data from the literature and certain activities of the owners of the buildings.

The principles of protection of cultural building heritage, the values of traditional architecture are formulated in terms of: the original features of the characteristic type of buildings from a certain period, with certain cultural and historical values, as an object of rare values, technological and architectural values, general and traditional values, all the basic features in the field of art and esthetical values etc.

According to the level of preservation and authenticity of the building we can classify the application of a certain degree of protection or conservation methods applied:

- in the case of authentic buildings in good condition with preserved monumental values, the interventions are minimal for maintenance. The treatment of these facilities within the legislation is of

the highest degree of the monumental immovable cultural heritage and according to this is under first class facilities with exceptional monumental values.

- the buildings that have partial damage to the structure or parts of the decorative elements are under professional treatment and application of the method of restoration or adaptation. After this intervention the facilities receive a higher status in the legal classification of protected buildings.

- complete reconstruction of the buildings is used as a method, when the situation is quite bad. The approach is towards complete demolition of the remains of the old building and the new construction starts, according to previously prepared documentation, according to legal procedure.

- restoration of protected urban or rural cores, or complexes that have high monumental values of national interest.

The existence of objects of traditional architecture is related with the legislation, as protected objects placed under state protection as cultural heritage, are facing certain difficulties. Private ownership of buildings prevents it, due to lack of economic resources, in which the state due to the large number of facilities, can't invest in their recovery, which prevents the promotion of a certain number of monumental buildings with high values. There is a lack in strategy in terms of education and intervention of the objects in terms of methods in modern architecture.

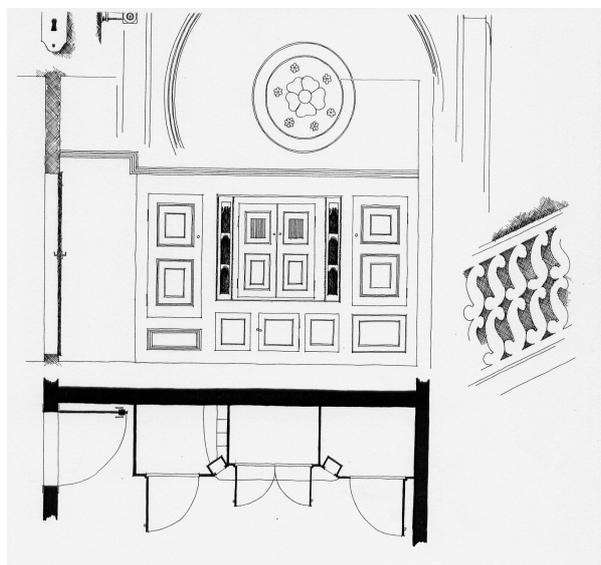


Fig. 4. Interior decoration of traditional village house, Reka area, West Macedonia (drawings by P. Namicev, ink on paper).

Some methods of protection, despite existing problems, is the organization of the open air museums [10], which are directly putting in active protection, presentation and conservation the facilities of traditional architecture, while preserving the authentic features of villages, natural environment, folk life,

embedded in a commercial-creative complex [11]. The presentation of local life and folklore, means maintaining national identity, representative of culture and confirmation of the cultural values of the people and the local administration. It applies a dislocation of the facilities provided for presentation (houses, barns, etc.), preserving the authentic interior of furniture and objects for everyday use, organizing craft workshops for authentic local production, presentation of machines or traditional tools, modern shops for authentic objects and so on.

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The main characteristics of the preservation state of a building are the most important element that can be defined as a factor that generates direction for tourist activities. It regards to the (interior and exterior) - favored factors and factors in the category of limited or less significant. The manner of their definition depends on the preserved existing infrastructure (housing, transportation opportunities, organization of tourist purpose et seq.) of the additional infrastructure (organization of festivals, exhibitions, fairs, etc.), as well as the specific offer of vital facilities (spa centers, water sources, ports, mountain facilities, archaeological and historical sites, etc.). The mentioned elements of the region and buildings are identifying the category of settlements in rural regions of Macedonia, according to significant geographic, social and economic characteristics. The basic and specialized factors represent a criterion for identification of the elements of the opportunities in tourism use (5). The typology of the objects depends on the way of the organization of the buildings in the complex, complete settlement or as individual objects. Besides the condition of buildings, organization for the accommodation capacities depends on socio-economic characteristics in the presentation by experts in the field of tourism and building heritage management. Of course that basic approach differs depending on the character of the neighborhoods, which means certain terms of the category natural-environmental and historical, social and economic, that characterize each settlement. Besides the diversity of the district, or region, it is necessary to determine a general typology of the construction values within the hospitality purpose. Landscape areas and other geographic characteristics can be categorized in terms of attractive conditions of the surrounding- nature, aimed at the development of the tourism purposes [12].

In the first category are the villages in the mountain areas, far from each other and from the road networks, are offering different opportunities for touristic purposes, hiking, cycling etc. Meanwhile they are satisfying certain group of users who are oriented towards the natural resources and the natural environment. The second category of settlements meets

the spa-oriented users, capacity, usually placed near the urban centers of the region, which contains the most important facilities (spa centers, etc.).

The main category of villages offers products that are part of the occupation of the local population, which creates a specific region, through the large number of local products (livestock, agriculture, etc.).

Next category of settlements and regions are offering winter sports or regions where the climatic conditions are suitable for it (Mavrovo area, Pelister area etc.)

Neighborhoods dominated by density of historic buildings of cultural heritage and art (monasteries, sacred buildings etc.)

A number of districts have a specific appearance, environment, ethnic expressed features that include part or as a set of features that are mentioned, that are forming conditions for solid tourist development of a region.

Among these forms of adaptation to the space of the buildings in the modern approach within the local tourism offer and rural tourism in the territory of Macedonia, are already developed certain individual objects that are usually private initiatives. The most intensive is their development around already developed tourist centers (Prespa, Ohrid, Mavrovo, Pelister mountain, et seq.). The most important examples of intensive and rapid development of individual buildings are buildings in Vevchani village, Јанче и др.

Although the data presented are not official, they create a picture of the type, content and status of contemporary adaptation of buildings with traditional value, rapidly put into operation, although most of them are demolished in the last 50 years. Yet survey data show to what extent and diversity of the form the traditional buildings participate in contemporary tourist offers, i.e. buildings with preserved monumental and cultural values [13].

Based on the literature that recognizes the use of authentic buildings as part of the modern tourism, the level of development is progressing, but not sufficiently, like in the developed social systems of Western Europe [14]. Restrictions as part of the slow development in this area are the result of economic development, with extensive transition period and slow legislation created a major problem and locking the development of rural tourism [15]. Thus was created a number of abandoned buildings and settlements, where the condition of the facilities is bad, because of their bad maintenance and abandonment, and migration to the cities.

Because of these reasons abandoned dwellings are used for secondary purposes like temporary storage of products, warehouses, garages and so on. This accelerates their destruction and loss of opportunity for their revitalization. This situation is explained by the

socio-economic conditions in the underdeveloped regions with large distance from the urban centers and roads in the second half of the 20th century that are abandoned, and represent an attractive preserved area with natural environment and preserved authentic landscape.

### **3.1. Macedonian traditional architecture with opportunities for revitalization**

Besides the authenticity in the analysis of the facilities, the scientific observations are also significant, like the educational function while visiting the buildings. That is accomplished through the museum approach to certain facilities or spaces, when museum objects are presented with greater value, which are transmitting directly (materials, shape, structure, preservation) certain messages for the material cultural heritage.

The preservation of traditional architecture in Macedonia is based on the already existing preserved buildings mostly in private ownership, can be protected within the legislation, respecting all the elements to preserve its authenticity. It may be mentioned a few saved units (Krusevo, Kratovo, Ohrid, etc.) to be included in the system of adaptation and active involvement in the tourist offer of the region.

Respect and implementation of regulations regarding the adjustment of revitalizing cores, represents a basic element for the activation of a region in modern tourist offer. Besides the good condition of the facilities its necessary their further presentation and promotion in the broader context of the national supply. According to European and international experience, it is necessary to consider the interdisciplinary possibilities to activate mechanisms for actively incorporating them into the offer.

The way of implementation of modern experiences will depend on the actual programs for International Cooperation (cross-border) and revitalization programs on national level (ministry of Culture, Government, etc.). An example of implementation of projects of the current government of Macedonia is the complex of Macedonian village in Nerezi, near Skopje, where is implemented a modern experience in the promotion of the building heritage. The complex contains models of rural buildings from certain regions of Macedonia.

In the internal space, as a specific to a particular region of the construction, are presented certain crafts or economic characteristics of the region. There are some facilities for presentation of the local architectural - construction specifics of residential buildings from a different regions. One part of the space is for accommodation facilities, which presents the construction of a concept for sustainability of the complex.

In the methods for adaptation of traditional buildings that have been preserved in good condition, are used for co-workshops, courses for traditional cooking etc. For successful implementation of this type

of project is required preservation of authentic construction and space of objects, with emphasis on the functionality and aesthetics of the space.

Table 1. Rural settlements that have already developed elements for preservation and tourism potential in Macedonia. (systematic data on certain areas by the authors)

District	Villages, locality	Preservation importance
Skopje area (Skopska Crna Gora)	Ljubanci, Brazda, Mirkovci, Gluvo, Banjani	***
Kriva Palanka area	Drenak, Stanci, Metezevo, Radibush, Psacha, Bs, Gabor, Osice	**
Kratovo area	Shopsko Rudare, Prikovci, Kavrak, Shlegovo, Tatimir	**
Maleshevo area	Ratevo, Vladimirovo, Mitrashinci, Smojmirovo, Budinarci	***
Pijanec area	Gabrovo, Sasa,	**
Dojran area	Dojran	*
Mariovo area	Beshishte, Bonce, Kalen, Krusheica, Veprcani, Vitolishta, Zovic, Vrbjani, Mazuciste	***
Prespa area	Konjsko, Krivenik, Bolno, Carev Dvor, LJubojno, Krushje	**
Ohrid area	Trpeica, Peshtani, LJubanishta	**
Bitola area	Bukovo, Lavci, Malovishte, Velushina, Zivojno, Orle	**
Struga area	Nerezi	*
Reka area	Volkovija, Kichinica, Galicnik, Jance, Bitushe, Brodec, Duf, Krakornica, Lazaropole, Tresonce, Vrben	***
Polog area	Blace, Volkovija, Chelopek, Stence, Radiovce, Miletino	**
Krushevo area	Zashle, Dolno I Gorno Divjaci,	*
Veles area	Bogomila, Gorno Vranovci, Sopot, Gabrovnik, Rlevci, Nezilovo, Omorani, Sogle	**
Radovish area	Gabrovci, Shipkovica, Smiljanci, Kozbunar	**
Shtip area	Argulica	*

Source: database from individual research for preservation and tourism activities in the areas.

### 3.2. The diversity of architectural values

Based on the typology of the architectural-construction context of the habitats, there is interest in visiting the different concepts of rural and urban areas and natural landscapes.

Because of the state of conservation of the buildings, the interest is increasing of tour groups and new users, because of their economic value and opportunity for its revitalization. There are neighborhoods and sections that are composed of several objects or spatial units (rural and urban), which can be treated as a whole.

These items are in addition to the rapid development of the regions and their protection as part of a contemporary tourist offer. Diversity can be defined through the use of a building material:

- dominance of the stone as a constructive and decorative element;
- application of the wood as a central construction element of design with specific decorative elements;
- domination of coatings of mud compounds that create structure and tonality and us successfully fitted into the surrounding landscape [16].

These fundamental concepts that are present in different regions of the territory of Macedonia, created a different dynamic architectural structure and image of the natural landscape. In the spatial area of the neighborhood there are a number of commercial and

public buildings that enhance the image of the buildings harmoniously integrated into the configuration of the landscape (rural or urban).

### 3.3. Future directions

Guidelines for the application of modern use of the districts and neighborhoods that have the capacity, can be directed to:

- providing support by providing modern systems (electricity, water plants, road infrastructure, telephone, internet, etc.);
- providing social and health care through the institutions of the state system;
- regulation of laws to adapt to the construction regulations of modern travel needs, which will provide the facilities with comfort and approach towards the modern tourist needs;
- existence of a future strategy planning of the region, in addition to the development of settlements, their status and transformation of temporary settlements in their permanent use;
- increasing the number of permanent residents who will permanently live in the settlements, which will give importance to the community and its rating;
- preserving the ecological approach to building, adaptation and rehabilitation of existing buildings, protection of water resources, and energy savings in their use and so on [17].

Much of contemporary architecture depends on references to traditional architecture in its development, and there are many examples of sustainable architecture found in different parts of the world to which architects can refer [18]. Vernacular architecture presents basic and simple solutions for the sustainable issues because it has significant environmentally features that respond to sustainability such as low-energy techniques to provide for human comfort, approaches that are integral to the form, orientation, and materials that are obtained from local resources.

The aforementioned factors are key to creating conditions for the revitalization of all types of settlements regardless of the region, economic and spatial conditions offered.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

According to previous research and insights, we can conclude the existence of certain forms of contemporary adapted authentic buildings:

- individual buildings that are repaired according to their own perceptions and attitudes of local buildings values, with irretrievably lost authentic features of the buildings;
- individual buildings with applied method of protection (adaptation and rehabilitation) within the legislation, by the official national institutions of the state;
- protection of residential buildings, with a method of rehabilitation of the facade treatment, which improves the visual image of the cityscape, and also temporarily protects the building from external influences. In recent years, a large multi-year project was implemented by the Ministry of Culture, which covers the most important buildings and social property, where on the basis of analysis and research was to be realized new appearance of the facades (Krusevo, Bitola, Kratovo, Veles, Ohrid etc.);
- newly built ethno complex, with newly built authentic objects. Adjacent to Skopje in the rural mountainous settlement of Nerezi was built a complex of Macedonian village, with many authentic rustic houses (from 12 regions) and public buildings (hotels, museum, cafeteria, etc.). In the function of this modern complex, besides catering services with hotel facilities are organized traditional crafts as a tourist attraction, from all regions of the country.

According to previous theories, rural and urban settlements in Macedonia contain buildings with cultural and historical values, which can be part of the tourism strategy in the country, through these values in the field of rural buildings, art, ethnology and folklore ,as part of the spirit of Macedonian village and town neighborhoods .The condition of the buildings still allows the formation of opportunities for realization of

certain concepts of implementation and promotion of the construction value of local buildings. The situation in which they are left, as passive buildings(11), their low economic value, underdevelopment of the region where are located, allows to fit into modern projects of local and national tourism, cultural offerings and other contemporary ways of their implementation within the frames of contemporary social trends on national level.

The variations in terms of the capabilities of certain local communities, their intentions and strategic goals, create different categories of areas, where conditions vary for starting certain activities. In certain regions there are projects where are implemented certain experiences, while in other regions passively are waiting certain activities of municipal or village communities to be involved in the national strategy for the development of the passive region.

According to contemporary social treatment and access to rural buildings, with the new regulation in the field of tourism, environmental protection and ecological principles of building, is creating certain direction towards the development of these regions as part of a contemporary tourist offer [19].

The interventions is necessary to comply with the global conventions for the protection of monuments and cultural heritage (The World Heritage Convention, ICOMOS) the flagship programme and other projects in the frame of the list for cultural heritage [20, 21] ICOMOS [22], UNESCO [23].

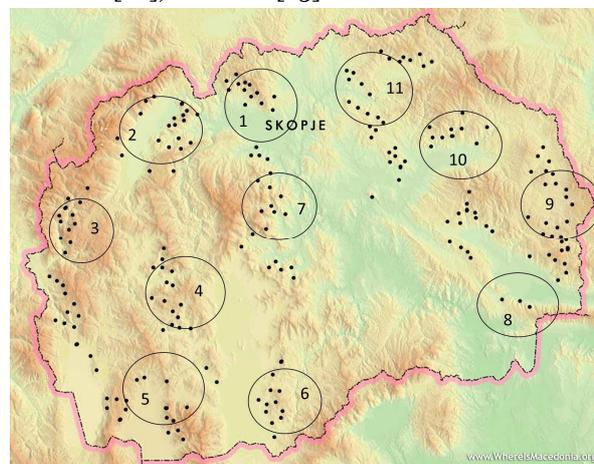


Fig. 5. Areas with special features of rural tourism in Macedonia: 1. Skopje area. 2. Polog (Tetovo) area. 3. Gostivar area. 4. Ohrid-Prespa area. 5. Krushevo area. 6. Veles area. 7. Mariosvo area. 8. Strumica area. 9. Maleshevo area. 10. Kratovo area. 11. Kumanovo-Kriva Palanka area (*systematic data on certain areas by the authors*).

It takes animation of professional organizations for protection of buildings of traditional architecture. The protection of traditional buildings needs to fit with the principles of sustainable development, which is necessary to define the protection and management methodology, for their implementation. It's important to pay attention to the

interior for preserving its authenticity, and the model of repair to keep the original form (floors, fireplaces, built and movable furniture, etc.). The overall concept, despite scientific setting in museological presentation, allows presentation of the cultural heritage of certain areas in educational way.

Buildings in the area of traditional architecture that mostly originate from the 19th century, are still in good condition, and are able to fit into the modern conservation strategy nationwide. Within the contemporary approach in their protection, is required to include priority ways rapid adaptation, in order to preserve vital structural and aesthetic characteristics of the local folklore, which is their most important value. It is particularly important the implementation of the facilities as traditional values in the surrounding landscape, the application of the system of self-sufficiency (sustainability) [24], preserving their identity [25], environmental adaptability [26], climate adaptability [27], and their economic viability [28].

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