



DOI: 10.17512/bozpe.2020.1.12

Construction of optimized energy potential  
Budownictwo o zoptymalizowanym potencjale energetycznym

ISSN 2299-8535 e-ISSN 2544-963X



## Analysis of local architecture as the basis for sustainable development of the cultural environment on the example of the towns of Biskupice and Zrębice – the municipality of Olsztyn near Częstochowa

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**Abstract:** In the era of where universal architectural forms dominate, there is growing demand for architecture, which, in addition to meeting contemporary functional and technological requirements, also show the identity of its region. It is of key importance in shaping the relationship between space and the community. The visible bond between the past and the present creates a continuity of the cultural environment ensuring its further sustainable development. Due to the exceptional landscape of the Kraków-Częstochowa Uplands, the author draws attention to the issue of cultural continuity in this area. On the one hand, it seems necessary to preserve the native spatial forms that are part of the regional landscape. On the other, to develop new forms that fit with the identity of local buildings and constitute a natural and consistent continuation of the changing panorama of the Jurassic countryside.

**Keywords:** architecture, cultural space, critical regionalism

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**Please, quote this article as follows:**

Kos A., Analysis of local architecture as the basis for sustainable development of the cultural environment on the example of the towns of Biskupice and Zrębice – the municipality of Olsztyn near Częstochowa, BoZPE, Vol. 9, No 1/2020, 97-104, DOI: 10.17512/bozpe.2020.1.12

### Introduction

This paper is concerned with the current processes observed in the field of rural architecture. Changes in the landscape largely relate to the scale and composition of buildings, which are no longer representative of their region. The attempt to restore spatial order in the landscape requires specific action based on knowledge

and social awareness as well as the ability to shape the landscape and its elements. (Bogdanowski, 1997; Myczkowski, 1997)

The author attempts to present the valuable features of regional architecture occurring in the community of Olsztyn (near Częstochowa). Due to the unique landscape qualities of the northern part of the Kraków-Częstochowa Uplands, it seems reasonable to take measures to protect local architecture that has a significant impact on the spirit of the area.

## **1. Analysis of existing architecture and urban spaces of the Olsztyn community**

An analysis of the existing architecture was carried out in the northern part of the Częstochowa Uplands. The materials necessary to perform the valorisation process were obtained through field research. Documentation provided the basis for an attempt to search for landscape and cultural motifs in terms of forms and elements characteristic of the area. Research material (maps, photos, sketches, field notes) was used to analyse the existing situation. The analyses were aimed at finding typical urban layouts, building forms and details characteristic to this part of the Kraków-Częstochowa Uplands (Kos, 2017).

### **1.1. Research and valorisation of existing architecture**

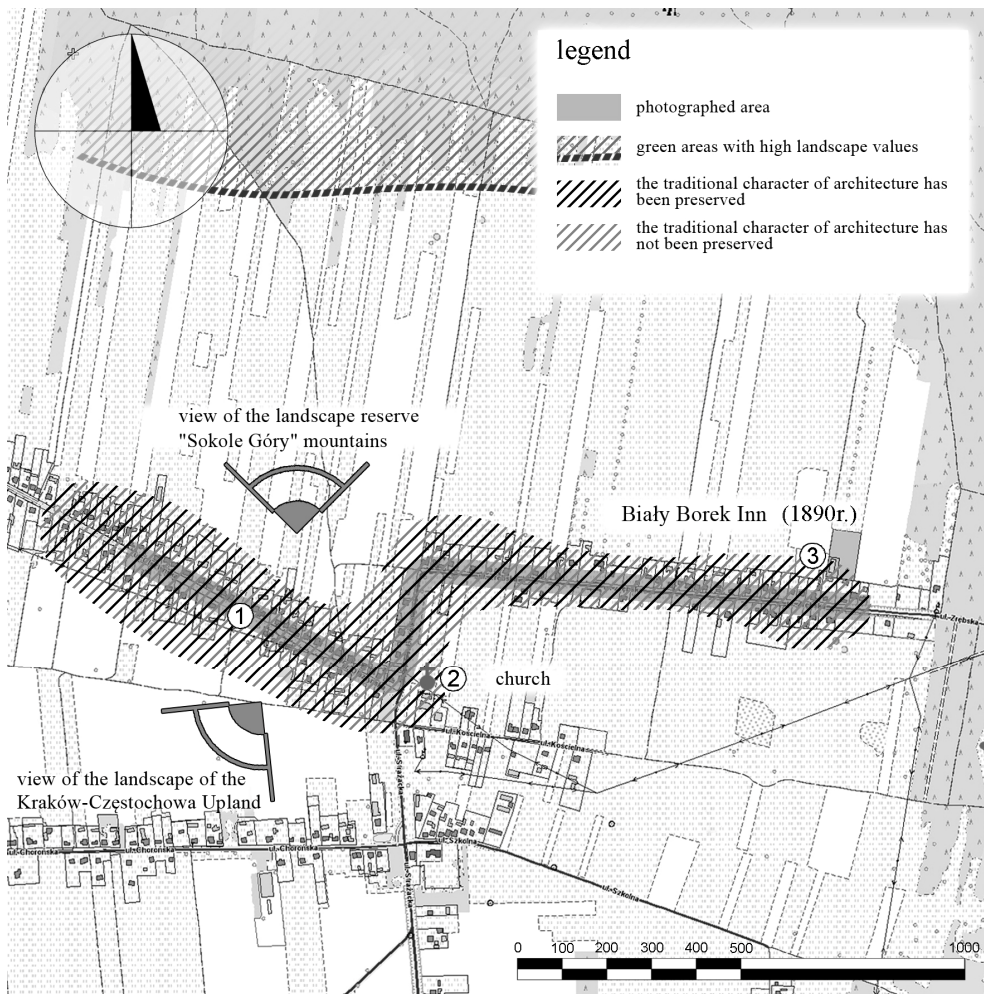
Field studies carried out in the Olsztyn Community include architectural valorisation of existing architecture in terms of its relation to the context of the area. The ‘resource’ determined with their help contains information on the form and scale of buildings, their relationship with the landscape and surrounding architecture, spatial and functional solutions and details. The article contains an analysis of two villages within the Olsztyn Community: Biskupice and Zrębnice.

### **1.2. Biskupice – village**

Biskupice village is located in the municipality of Olsztyn, near the “Sokole Góry” mountains. The hill, on which the town is located, is covered with buildings, meadows and arable land. The lack of high vegetation makes this place an excellent vantage point from which you can admire the panorama of the Kraków-Częstochowa Uplands.

A multitude of tourist routes and good transport links with larger centres, including Częstochowa, make Biskupice a place often visited by tourists.

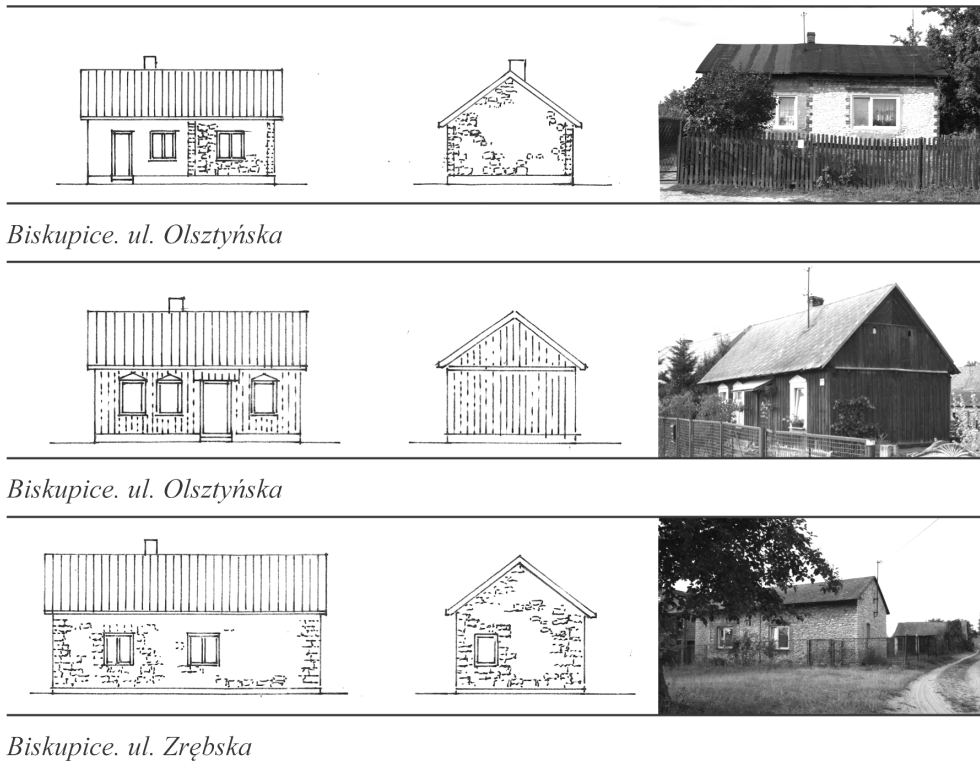
Buildings throughout the village have a mixed character. Numerous examples of both traditional stone and wooden architecture have survived. Many contemporary projects have also been created. Lack of consistency and respect for the context of the surrounding buildings meant that contemporary projects blur the character of the village (Fig. 1).



**Fig. 1.** Biskupice. Valorisation of architecture in the area of Biskupice: 1 – buildings on Olsztyńska Street, Krótka Street, Zrębska Street; 2 – church; 3 – White Borek Inn  
(source: *author's own elaboration*)

On Zrębska Street there is the “Biały Borek” inn (equestrian centre, hotel and restaurant). The building complex is an example of good contemporary implementation (Fig. 1 – point 3). New buildings are connected with old wooden buildings, however, their volume and materials do not disturb the character of the traditional buildings. The modern building has a gable roof covered with shingles. The walls were painted in neutral white, which means they do not compete with the elements of the original building.

In Biskupice, historical stone and wooden buildings dating back to the turn of the 19th and 20th century have been preserved in good condition (Fig. 2). Historic buildings run along the road on its north side. While the houses on the south side are mostly contemporary.



**Fig. 2.** Biskupice. Examples of traditional architecture (source: *author's own elaboration*)

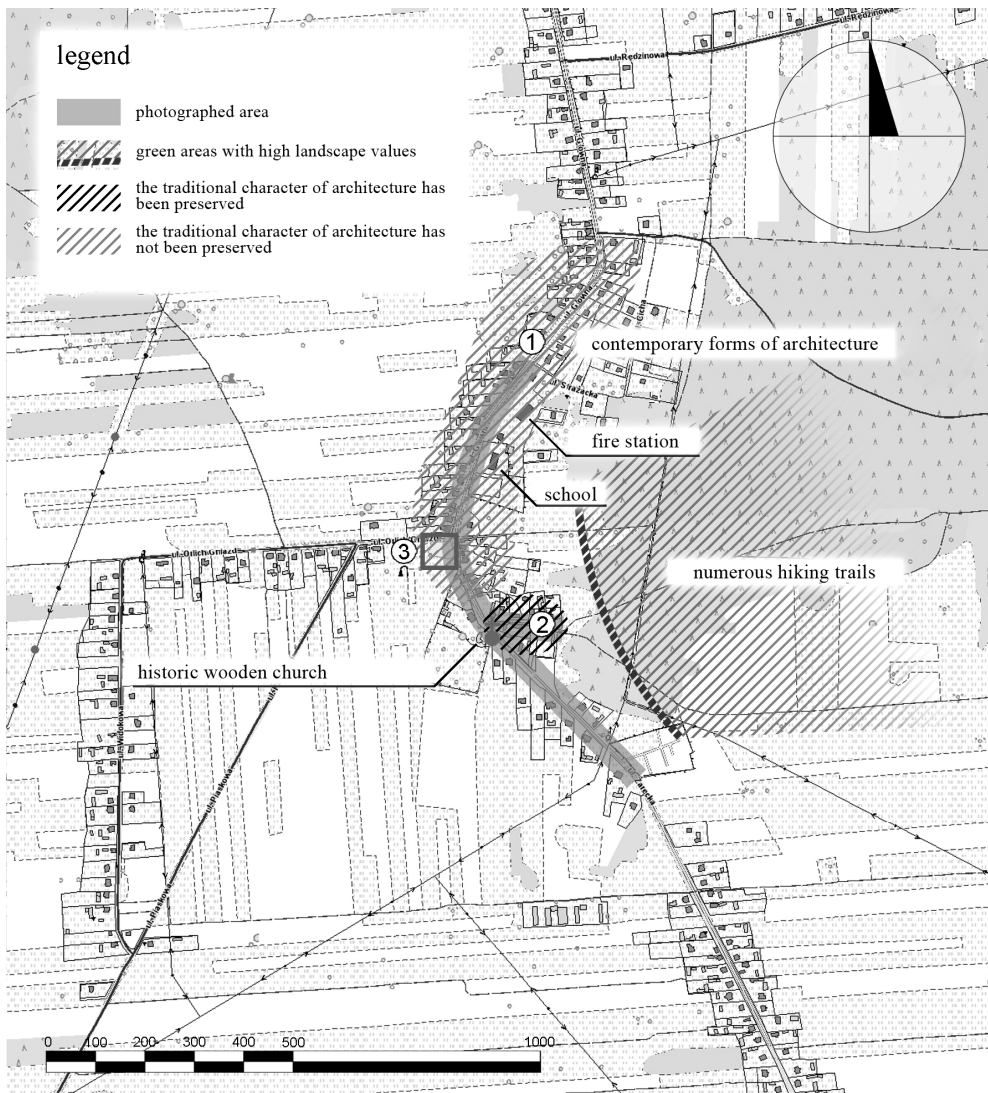
### 1.3. Zrębice – village

Zrębice is located in a valley, which makes its location less favourable in terms of landscape. In the area there are no viewpoints from which to view the surrounding panorama. A large number of walking and cycling routes passing through the village makes Zrębice popular with tourists.

The most important monument in Zrębice is the historic wooden church of St. Idzi, which is an important point on the tourist routes passing through Zrębice.

The town stretches along the north-south axis. In the central part a small fragment of organically located buildings with examples of traditional architecture are preserved. Heading north, housing development only occupies the west side of the road. On the eastern side there are only two objects. They are a large cubature school and fire station. Further to the north are plots and buildings located on both sides of the road. To the south, buildings are more spread out leaving large gaps between plots (Fig. 3).

In the village, at the intersection of Orlich Gniazd Street and Żarecka Street, there is a small recreational space (Fig. 3 – point 3). It includes a small, but well-kept fish pond, a wooden bridge and an orderly green area with benches. In summer, this space serves as a place of rest, recreation and for cultural events for the local community.

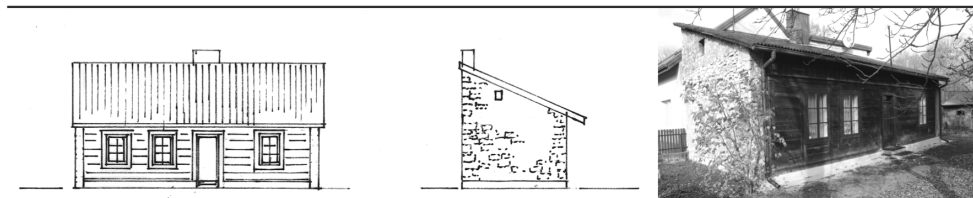


**Fig. 3.** Zrębice. Valorisation of architecture in the area of Zrębice: 1 – buildings on Główna Street and Żarecka Street; 2 – buildings on Kościelna Street; 3 – recreational space  
 (source: *author's own elaboration*)

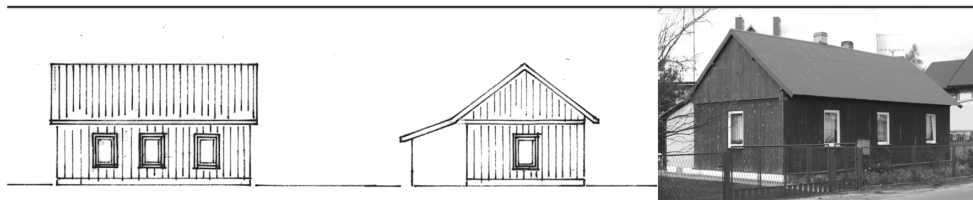
There are several well-preserved examples of regional architecture in the village, but there are not enough of them to give the village a traditional, regional character (Fig. 4). Most of the buildings along Główna Street and Żarecka Street are contemporary or modernizations and extensions of older buildings. Both the proportions of these buildings, as well as the materials and colours used in their implementation, due to the lack of consistency and respect for the landscape, negatively affect the aesthetics of the town (Fig. 3 – point 1).



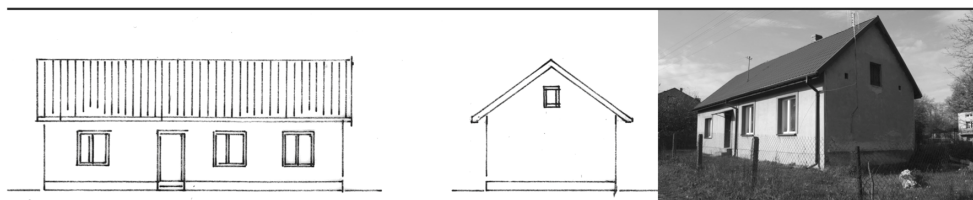
Renovations, adaptations, extensions with a lack of understanding of the value of tradition and regional forms contribute to the irreversible devastation of the nature of local architecture and the slow disappearance of the last valuable forms of development. Limiting this type of phenomena is the only chance to preserve the landscape of towns in the Kraków-Częstochowa Uplands.



*Zrębice. ul. Żarecka*



*Zrębice. ul. Żarecka*



*Zrębice. ul. Kościelna*

**Fig. 4.** Zrębice. Examples of traditional architecture (source: *author's own elaboration*)

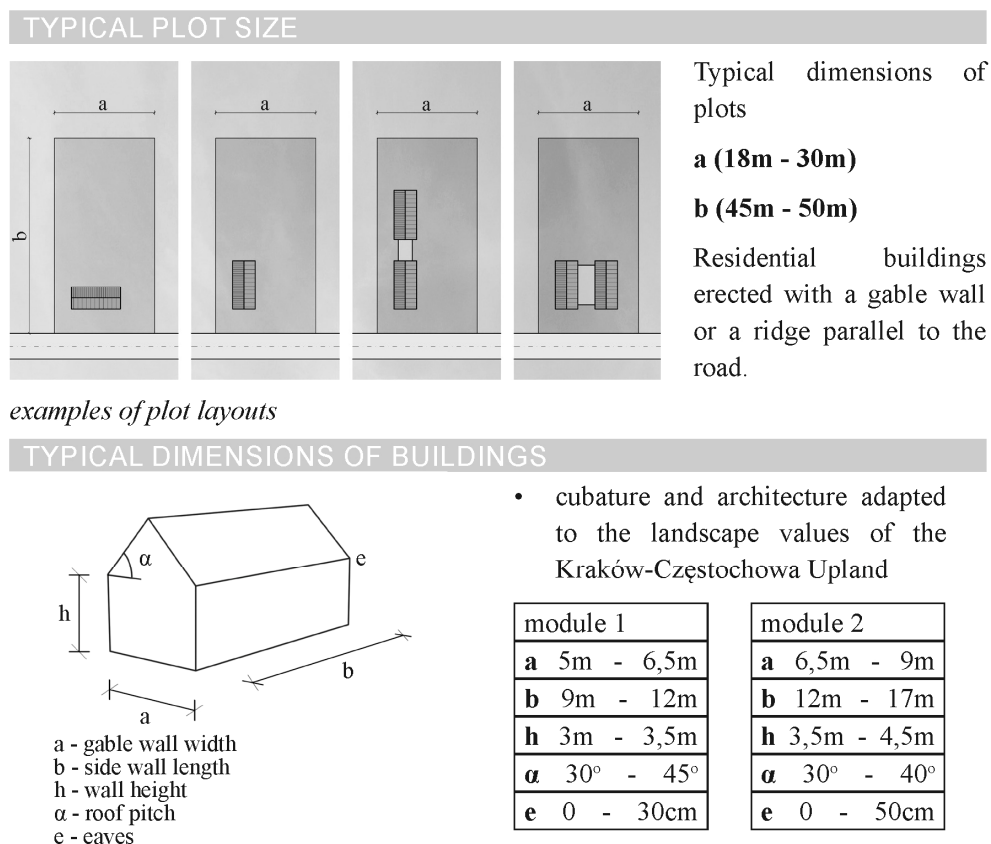
Public buildings are important issue in small towns. Their architecture usually ignores the context of neighbouring buildings and the surrounding landscape. The fire station located in Zrębice with its proportions and architecture is adapted to the scale and character of the village. The biggest problem is its neglect and unfinished look. The primary school in Zrębice is a classic example of the universal architecture of educational buildings, completely detached from the character of the place.

## 2. Design guidelines

Villages were usually built along one street. The layout was dependant on natural topographic factors. Architectural forms depended on local materials, as a result of which, wooden and masonry limestone houses dominated the area. Residential buildings were small with nice proportions and simple facades (Trawińska, 1966).

Red brick with white limestone is a common feature for buildings in the northern part of the Kraków-Częstochowa Uplands from the Middle Ages to the present. Wooden, stone and brick motifs make up the architectural detail of the examined architecture (Szymański, 1966). Despite their diversity and natural freedom of shape, the buildings maintain a uniform character.

The author attempts to find the most favourable forms of development in terms of a picturesque landscape, with particular emphasis on objects from the turn of the century. Each building is different, but the consistency developed by their shape makes the appearance of traditional settlements coherent (Fig. 5).



**Fig. 5.** Design guidelines (source: *author's own elaboration*)

## Conclusions

An attempt to refer to the architectural characteristic of a given region is associated with the need to analyse the local architecture and select those features that are valuable to and create the identity of the area. Their creative interpretation has a chance to create a harmony of place, material and architectural form.

The proposed architectural solutions regarding the architecture of communities in the Kraków-Częstochowa Uplands are to maintain the traditional scale and size of buildings. Consistency in the implementation of the design and simplicity of form force precision in the implementation and selection of technology. The proposed forms should blend into the landscape of the area dominated by modest houses. They also create the possibility of shaping various buildings. The architecture of designed formal solutions should draw on the heritage of vernacular architecture of municipalities located in the Kraków-Częstochowa Uplands and in their buffer zone.

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