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## The Tale of Two Houses

The northern part of the Mazovian Plain in Poland is predominantly flat terrain cut by the rivers Bug and Narew. Unlike other parts of the historic district of Mazovia, the lands around the system of rivers remained a primeval woodland well into the first half of the 20th century. Nowadays, the remains of two big forest complexes, the Green Wilderness and the White Wilderness, still constitute an important part of the local heritage. Once a protected dominion of kings and bishops, the forests became home to a specific group of people closely bound to the woodland. The Kurpie people, as they are widely known today, developed their own traditions and a recognizable, distinct style of wooden architecture.

The thesis project aims to investigate the rise and the history of the forest dwellers as a distinct regional group, and how it was paralleled with the development of their own treatment of timber house. The work looks also at how the architectural style that emerged together with Kurpie in their native Green Wilderness, was brought by new inhabitants migrating to the White Wilderness.

While the villages and towns of the Green and White Wilderness strive to reaffirm their identity in the modern context, the questions of architecture are at the forefront of this search. The design part of the project consists of a proposal for an extension of an existing house rooted in the architectural style of the White Wilderness. The project looks at how to compliment the given house with modern day functions, while drawing from the architectural expression developed by Kurpie. The forest location plays a crucial role on the plot and the balance of the project lies between the existing and the envisioned, as the two houses join as one dwelling at the entry to the woods.