

House in the Ruins, Drupas, Latvia. NRJA Architects

I like how this house uses an existing structure to hide, in both landscape and against the strong winds, creating a new habitable interior. This house by NRJA won the Grand Prix for the Latvian Architecture Prize (2005), the Best Technology Award at the Interior Digest Magazine (outstanding implementation of a project using contemporary construction, constructive and electronic technologies, 2006) and was nominated for the Mies van der Rohe Award (2007).



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The House of Ruins is located in Latvia on the coast of the Baltic Sea. Saka is rural area. Saka district is less populated in Latvia, only 2 people per sq/km, because of large forest reservation (Grinu reservation) and shore meadows nearby. And more and more the area is becoming a vacation/ second home area for people from the large cities looking for solitude, privacy and shelter from big city rush. It is a new family house built inside the 19th century ruins of a traditional Latvian barn. The architects here have used the idea of contrast where wind from the sea is opposed to the warmth of the family, and perfection of glass is set against rough surface of the old stone. The house provides both, modern life comfort and quietness of the nature. Organised in one level, it also contains a small courtyard and a spacious roof terrace for watching the sea and surrounding meadows. This was not a precious ruins. The owner and architects felt that it would be better to preserve the memory of previous time – ruins. The ruins are about 300m from the sea. The idea was to create a contrast:

- between the existing weighty walls and max glazed new building.**
- The correct forms (concrete walls) of the new building against existing crumble wall**
- Rural landscape meadow against lawn inside the ruins.**
- The existing ruins serves as a shelter against offshore wind.**



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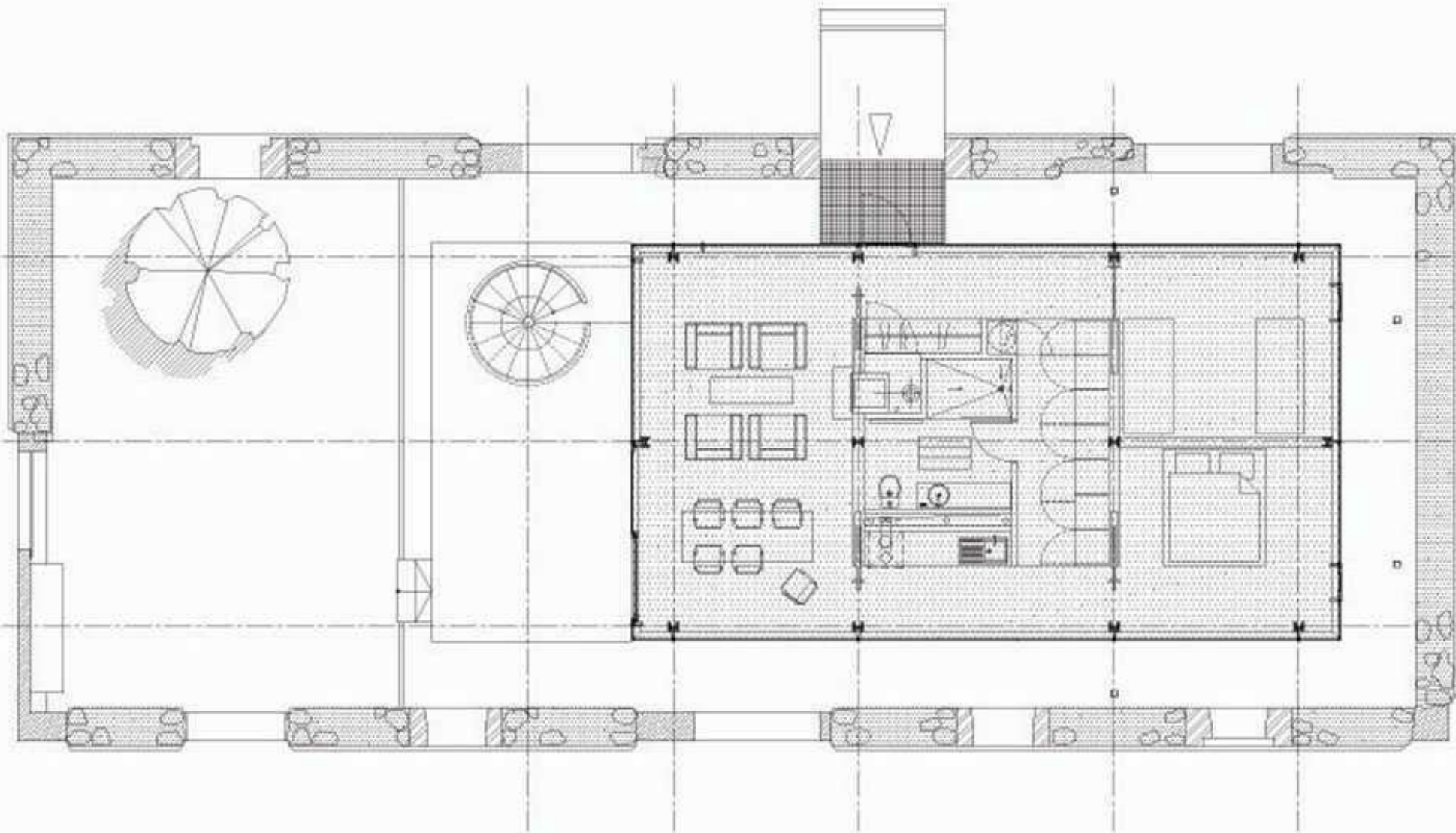
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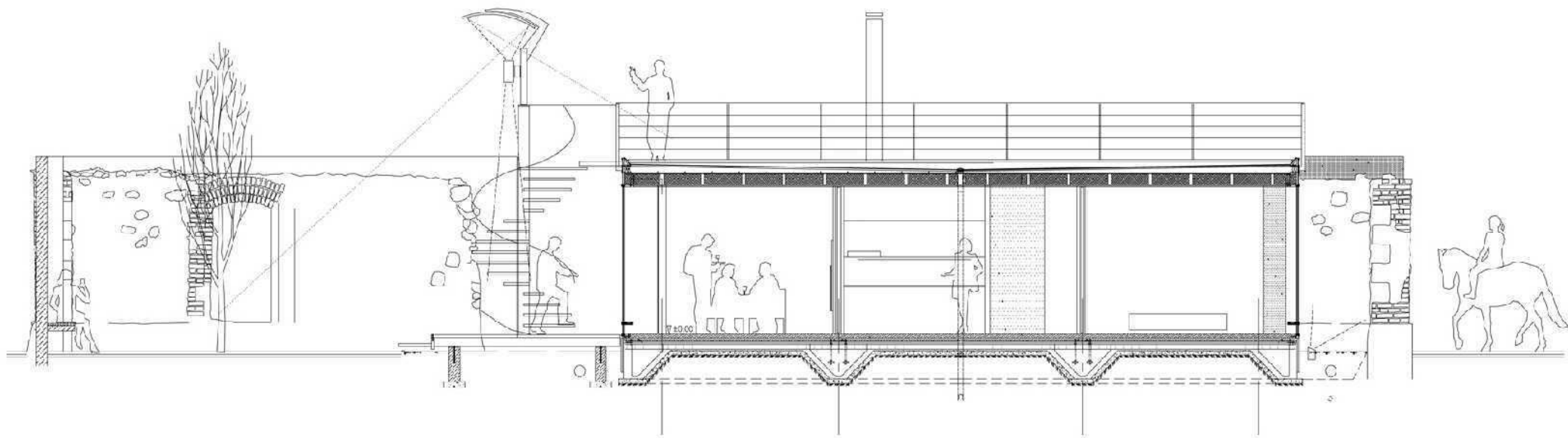
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