

Preiļi manor house **(Evaluation report, 2002)**

Architectonic and artistic evaluation

The architectonic and artistic evaluation of Preiļi Castle in this stage does not yet include the results of detailed stocktaking. The evaluation is done visually because the condition of the building gives a general impression without uncovering the building structure. It will be necessary to uncover the structure in the following stages of stocktaking. The graphic plans show the constructions during different periods of construction, this helps to understand the construction history of the building. Some parts of the building give clear evidence about the interior decoration (the Chapel). The process of reconstruction of these rooms or premise groups is projected methodologically and technically more complicated.

We have to bear in mind a fact that the initial architectonic - artistic evaluation could change after the investigation or during the restoration works as some unknown or at present invisible decoration parts and construction elements could appear.

Further follows a description of the present castle, its constructions, interiors and separate construction elements.

3.1. Amount, facades

Preiļi Castle is a composition of different mutually joined elements, the basic part consists of the base (the oldest part) and 2 side buildings (DA – south - eastern, DR - south - western) at the ends of the buildings are towers. The corner multisided pilasters with towers characterize its Gothic nature. The building seems frontally stretched its end facades have a subordinate role. This peculiarity is characteristic to most castles built during the Neogothic period. But the architect J.Zilgalvis considers the total stylistic impression to be unbroken and subdued to the ideas of Romanticism.

During the process of construction, the symmetric part was enlarged a bit lower transition section with a square tower and a bay was added. The central part was separate because it was built earlier. Its basic facades are symmetric but it did not have a Gothic decor originally. In fact, stylistically it was a different type of a building. During the process of investigation one has to find out what kind of a building it was. The side buildings in the southern part were added during the construction period before the 1860s. The architect J. Zilgalvis uses a term "rizalīts" to describe these side buildings. The term was originally used by R. Aftanazy to describe such kinds of buildings. But for these buildings this term seems to be too modest. The two - storied extension to the western tower (R) (1. Zilgalvis calls it a "bay") was added after the big square tower. If we look at a picture by N. Orda made in 1875, there is no balcony over the extension. The third floor with a wooden construction for a bell was built from 1891 to 1910.

Preiļi Castle differed from many other Latvian castles erected during the period of Neogothic with its steep tile roof, Neogothic attic windows and tall ornamental chimneys. This motive was borrowed from the English architecture; it gave the castle its unique character. The castle façade design has several stylistic inconsequences. The side buildings have a combination of pointed arc shapes and Tudor style windows... On the second floor, the windows are round with Romanic framing. The castle characterization is based on iconographic material, not on a real situation.

The architecture of Preiļi Castle facades has peculiarities of the so – called semi - arc style. It is not surprising for a building of a classical Neogothic style to have a semi ~ arc form straight arch. The first floor windows of the main building have classical cornices (ledges) retained from the old building. Evidently, we can say that the triangle cornices (ledges) also refer to the Gothic period. It is an interesting addition to the present view about the consequences of stylization.

Most of the relief façade formations (except several details) have remained up to the 21st century. 3 small one - storied constructions disappeared, we can see them only in historic paintings and photos. The newly - made roof construction imitates the size of the original roof.

3.2. Layout and premise description

There is no documentary news about the building functional use in the 19th century. Only the Orthodox Church on the third floor of the Western tower can be identified, it was built by K.Gulkevich (K. Gulkevics).

In the middle of the 19th cent., when the building was enlarged, a new wide entrance hall with the front staircase was built. The ball - room seems to be in its former place on the second floor (T204). It is known that there is a passage in the southern part (D). This is typical to the 19th century enfilade type of planning. There is no evidence if there was the same work carried out on the 2nd floor too. The eastern tower (A) has no significant function, the massive western tower (R) with the side buildings (rizalits) have several rooms. The staircase and toilets were located in the southern - east and southern - west blocks (DA, DR). There were rooms on the 3rd storey level in the eastern and western towers (A, R). In general, the layout has not been changed radically and its historic evolution could be followed during the research process.

3.3. Interior

The interior culture in Historism, different layout principles and regularities, ways of decoration are connected with the artistic image of a castle or mansion. Ignoring all these elements one could get an incomplete picture of a castle of the Historism period. During the period of Historism the Latvian castle interiors were made according to their own architecturally independent programmes. Most of the castles and mansions were built using different styles; even every separate room could have a different style. Latgale had a specific historic situation and many German - Polish knight families became the mansion owners (including the Borghs). This influenced the architecture and interior culture of the mansions located in Latgale area, there was felt a strong Polish orientation (influence).

The researcher of Historian castles D. Brugis remembers that before the last repair works in 1984 there were remnants of decorative plastering mouldings found. On the 2nd floor of the western tower (R), there have partly remained window side panels in plastering and a wall decoration. This information suggests that wooden panels and ornamental relief decor were used to retain the Neogothic style of Preili Castle interior. Most probably the interior of Preili Castle was very romantic like the outside of the castle, where even medieval figures were placed. In some rooms of Preili Castle are visible interior decoration signs characteristic to the interior decoration of the 2nd part of the 19th cent. and the 1st part of the 20th cent.

3.4 Building materials and technical condition of the constructions

The description of the constructions has been made after a visual inspection of the building and added as a general description. Visual construction and plastering damages, deformations, undesirable physical and chemical processes are marked.

This description is essential during the stage of pre - project planning in order to plan and take the necessary practical measures and calculate the costs. In the following stage of the project planning there has to be a conclusion made by a certified constructor, indicating special renovation hints.

Building materials

The new Preili Castle was built using baked red clay bricks laid with grout. As there were several stages in the process of construction, the wall plastering in some places has several

layers. The last plastering which was carried out in the 2nd part of the 20th century was done using cement mortar. Some parts of the building are not properly joined (bricklaying is not tied) due to gradual construction. The ceilings were made of wooden beams with crossbeam packing. The ceiling plastering was made on splinters. The walls were painted with glue paints but building joinery with oil paints. Most probably the roof was initially covered with tiles but the towers with dyed roofing iron. At the beginning of the 20th cent. the roof was covered with chips but after 1925 - with zinc coated tin. While renovating the building after a fire, a new roof construction was made, it was covered with a corrugated asbestos cement slab roofing. The construction made in the 1980s leaned on a cornice made of white silicate bricks. Some new longitudinal walls were made of yellow clay bricks with concrete straight arches for the doors.

Technical condition of the constructions

Foundation. The western tower (R) has a visible diagonal crack in the southern part (D). This makes the foundation inspection easier. A three - storied side building in the lower part is separated from the western tower because it was not properly tied during the construction. The link on the 3rd floor level is achieved with a metal hoop. In general, the condition of the foundation seems to be satisfactory and able to stand loads.

Upper base. The upper base is being destroyed by rainfalls, that is why most of it has no plastering, moisture and cold continue destroying the brick wall. In these places, the upper base condition is not satisfactory.

Walls on the earth. The old walls are eroded by moisture and cold. The situation is especially critical in the interstructure of the towers and small towers.

Interlevel ceiling. Almost all the ceilings were put a new in the 1980s. There are 2 types of ceilings: reinforced concrete panels and reinforced concrete blocks put between metal beams. The only exception is the western tower part (R) T116, there have remained wooden ceiling constructions. The Eastern tower (A) has no ceiling.

Door and window straight arches.

They were made as relieve arches with filling below or without filling if an arch is an aperture forming component (semicircle or pointed circle). No serious straight arch damages noticed.

Partition walls. Mostly the original partition walls do not exist or the new ones are made.

Stairs. The original wooden staircase constructions have not remained. There are concrete stairs on metal bearing beams leading from T102/1 03 to T206, built in the 1980s. On T118 there are remnants of such stairs left.

Floors. No floors remained.

Roof constructions. The building has a wooden construction roof with corrugate asbestos - cement slab roofing built in the 1980s. The construction is in good condition although the roofing is damaged in some places. The towers have no roof. The upper concrete ceiling of the western (R) tower serves as a roof and temporarily prevents the roof construction from damage.

Windows. Only separate window fragments or parts have remained. No glass panes. As a result, rain and snow get in the building.

Doors. Only separate door construction fragments or parts remained. No leaves.

Exterior decoration. The façade plastering has fallen off. Façade paint has gone off. The last plastering with cement mortar does not stick to the base wall.

Outside water drainage. Rainfall waters are not drained as there is no gutter and the land relief decline is not suitable, the former drainage systems do not operate any more.

Conclusions. The condition of the foundation should be inspected especially in the western (R) tower. In general, the condition seems to be satisfactory and the foundation can stand loads.

The upper base in some places is severely damaged. The outer brick walls are mostly severely damaged or even, in a critical condition. The condition of the brick walls is the main constructive problem. A specialist should evaluate the present technical condition of the interlevel ceiling as in many places it has been subdued to precipitations for more than 15 years. In general, the straight arches are in good condition with the exception of some cases. The existing partition walls have sufficient constructive stability.

IV. Preili Castle Renovation Concept

(Basic Data and Recommendations)

4.1. Cultural and historic evaluation, use options.

Cultural and historic evaluation

Preili Castle is an excellent architectural sample of the 19th century mansions in Latgale area. The architecture of the castle characterizes the period of Romanticism and the role of mansions in the artistic and social of Latvia. The castle size and form evolution give a lot of information about the 19th century mansion stylization processes and help to understand the formation principles of other monumental forms.

The castle value lies in its size and the historic façade and interior structural planning elements (plastering and colour).

Renovation objectives in connection with the castle complex development perspective

The existing documentary material gives insights into the historic model of the castle. The renovation and use of the whole castle complex make the castle economically profitable and full valued. The implementation of the castle complex saving programme is a long term process. As the primary measures deal with renovation of only one building of the complex - the castle, we have to secure its autonomous existence before a complete renovation of the whole complex. The primary objective is to stop the destruction of the building and its cultural and historic values.

The next renovation objective is the emphasis of the cultural and historic values of the castle, the castle return to the cultural life and effective use together with the whole complex.

Information about the construction periods

The beginning (1st part) of the 19th century.

- The oldest part of the castle as a rectangular two - storied building with walls built in stone which remained up to the 2nd floor straight arches
- - The south - eastern (DA) and south - western (DR) buildings. Probably they were one - storied.
- Façade plastering with the signs of colour.
- Inner wall plastering with the signs of interior decoration.

1860 - 1865

- The size of the building characterizes the Neogothic influence on the mansion architecture in Latvia. '
- Facades with Gothic elements: corner towers, decorative relief tiles, relief window edges.
- The entrance hall as a sample of plastered profile brick wall.
- Façade plastering with the signs of colour.
- Inner wall plastering with the signs of interior relief and polychrome plastering.
- Fragments of interior relief plastering (in the western (R) tower).
- Window and door construction elements.
- The beam and board straight arches on the 1st floor of the western(R) tower side building.
- The building layout made in the 1860s.

The 20s and 30s of the 20th cent.

- Façade plastering with the signs of colour.
- Inner wall plastering with the signs of interior relief and polychrome plastering.
- Decorative interior colour.

- Window and door construction elements.

The 1980s

- Interlevel reinforced concrete ceiling.
- The roof construction and corrugated asbestos cement slab roofing.
- Concrete staircase in the south - eastern (DA) building.

Authenticity 1

Preili Castle managed to retain its unique artistic style despite all the historic events. The use of Gothic forms, the remarkable size of the building and its historic context with the park and other historic constructions form the basic image of the castle. This has to be included in the renovation programme of the whole complex.

The architectural and landscape coexistence play a significant role for a visitor to get a special emotional culmination.

A. Visual view spots. They should be analyzed and planned during the process of the park renovation and choosing parking lots.

B. The link between the old and new castles. It should be emphasized improving the old castle site and planting greenery. This does not mean that we have to renovate the castle of the former size on the existing basements. It is not a priority although this option is disputable in the future after the mansion complex management plan is made.

C. If we evaluate the maximum castle authenticity sites, the primary ones are the rooms on the 2nd and 3rd floor of the western (R) tower. And the room on the 2nd floor of the eastern (A) tower, with a condition that a vault and a room on the 3rd floor are renovated too.

D. The entrance - hall staircase is very essential as it is an entrance to the castle.

Priorities (especially retainable and (or) renewable)

The castle is a monument of construction art. Its status determines that any management model has to respect the cultural and historic values of the master house. It is expected that these restrictions will not limit the profitable economic activities.

Especially retainable and (or) renewable

- The size of the castle with a tile roofing as it was at the end of the 19th cent. Façade relief details, including the profile brick walls of the entrance hall.

Possible gradual renovation:

Decorative façade bas - relief elements, sculptures, cast iron (?) decorations, balconies with railing balustrade, the main entrance door.

1) By the term "authenticity" in this case one has to understand the entire present situation in accordance with the historic plan of the rooms, size, façade, construction elements, constructions, decoration etc. The bigger the correspondence with the original historic situation, the higher the authenticity. Some authenticity loss is inevitable during the process of renovation.

2.3. Records about the construction history of the new Preili Castle

From 1376 (in some sources from 1382) to 1561 the castle was a fief property and from 1563 to 1866 a family property. Preili Castle belonged to one of the famous Livonian landlord and knight families - the Borghs. The family property was quite big, the Jesuit monks attended people from the villages of Varkava, Vidusmuiza, Barkava and Varaklani. This Preili spiritual mission was supported by the Borghs. At the beginning of the 20th century Atasiene railway station was, called the Borgh station.

Count Joseph Heinrich Borgh (1753 - 1835) started construction of the castle in 1817, a family chapel was built. (architect V. Macoti?). J. H. Borgh died in 1836, before that a new stone living house was built, later it was reconstructed and enlarged by Michael Borgh (1806 - 1881), Joseph's son.

The building, which was built at the beginning of the 19th century was last reconstructed from 1860 to 1865. It was reconstructed in the Gothic style. The data were given in the

book "Terra Mariana" written by G. von Manteuffel. R. Aftanazy in his research mentioned the architects G. Shaht and A. Belecky as the authors of this reconstruction. This supposition is supported by D. Brugis as there are records about G. Shaht's activities in Lithuania in the 50s and 60s of the 19th cent. The old park was transformed and enlarged at the same time. As a result, a romantic landscape park with regular planning elements and harmonic architectural emphasis was made.

In the 1860s Michael Borgh started to sell his possessions and moved over to Vitebsk. There he became the city governor until the first division of Poland in 1772.

On November 24, 1866 Michael Borgh entitled a council senator Ignaty Bortkevich to sell Preili Village. The total area of Preili and Sondori mansions was about 12500 ares. The mansions were sold to a British citizen, an English trader from Manchester Johan Heinrich Fredrick for 192549 silver roubles. In fact, the Borghs did not live in the Gothic building for a long time. Only the chapel was not sold.

From 1866 to 1872 Preili castle belonged to J.H. Fredrick. He did a lot to tend the castle ensemble and transform it according to the principles of Romanticism.

From 1872 to 1891 the castle owner was a German baron Johan Ungern-Sternberg. In fact, he authorized a Polish landlord Ian Mall to rule the castle. In the purchase and sale agreement issued in Berlin, in 1875, J. Ungern – Sternberg appeared as a buyer because after the revolt in 1863 the Russian government did not allow the Poles to buy realties. Most possibly the real owner was J. Mall.

From 1891 to 1910, the castle was owned by a Russian landlord, a chamberlain of the Tsarist court, Konstantin Gulkevich. Later he became a Russian envoy in Italy and Sweden. An orthodox church was erected on the 3rd floor of the western (R) tower, with a separate entrance staircase in the extension located in the southern part. There were Lutheran divine services taking place in the old castle.

From 1910 to 1920 the castle owner was an Estonian landlord, of a German origin Karl Gipiuss (Hipiuss?).

During World War One the new Preili Castle was adjusted to war hospital needs. On October 31, 1923 first boards were brought, later in December 2 stoves were built. Glass - cutters repaired the windows. It was decided to open a 2 – year school of agriculture in the castle building. Dec 1, 1924 became the first school, day, it was consecrated only in 1928. The wall whitewash was finished too.

In 1924/25 the castle roof was covered with zinc coated tin. The main repairing works were carried out in the summer of 1925. New windows (mostly leaves), doors, stoves, floors etc. were installed. The facade plastering repair works were continued in the autumn of 1926.

In 1927, the inner walls were painted with glue colours. In 1928, the school was electrified and the building consecrated. The same year Preili became a town.

Preili School of Agriculture and Housekeeping existed from 1939 to 1944. During this time the mansion ensemble buildings were repaired and kept in order, the park was tidied. After the school left the castle, many institutions moved in. In February of 1979, the castle burnt down. The first floor, ceilings partly remained but later they perished.

In 1984, new ceilings for the 1st and 2nd floors were made. The new roof construction was started in September and finished by the winter.

2.4. Evaluation of previous projects and renovation work

Reconstructions carried out in the 20s of the 20th century did not change the spatial structure of the building. Extensions in the southern part were tom down before the 1920s. The tin roof and the new windows with bigger panes changed the castle nature. More and more original details (such as sculptures, bas - reliefs, decorative cast iron (?) compositions etc.) disappeared gradually.

When the renovation was re-started in the 1980s, the situation was quite different. The building was partly destroyed by a fire and deserted for a long time. There had to be well -

considered concept based on a careful and many-sided research. While retaining and renovating the inherited cultural values, very often there was no correct and careful attitude to the original. It was characteristic to the existing practice of that time. So, during the restoration process of the interlevel ceiling, a part of the relief interior decoration, a lot of plastering with colour and many building joinery articles were destroyed. The attitude to the architectural monuments which were comparatively new was simplified. T 123/106 and the central longitudinal wall were shifted to secure the stability of the new concrete ceilings. They were adjusted to the concrete panels of a definite size. Such attitude is unacceptable nowadays. Historic structures cannot be subdued to the specification of modern materials. There is no documented information about the project of the 1980s, its implementation reasons and objectives. Being objective we have to admit that the existing roof protected the building up to the 21st century and the castle condition is suitable for renovation.