

The cultural environment and its identity: conservation issues

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Abstract. There are lots of sites in Latvia, where once, in the cultural environment events have taken place which with years running are destined to stay in memory and which have left their marks in our cultural life. They are personalities, their work, thoughts, feelings, and love as well. One of such sites is Puzenieki Manor in Kurzeme, not far from Ventspils.

Keywords: protection and preservation of architectural and cultural heritage, monument, landscape architecture, parks and gardens.

Introduction

Kurzeme is rich with many noteworthy monuments of manor architecture. The building consists of evidence of construction art of different periods and styles, and the cultural landscape cultured over years. One of such sites is Puzenieki Manor, for the study of which a broader work is not devoted, particularly in the context of the activities of specific historical personalities. The need for a broader study of the manor is also topical, as its building and the existence of the surrounding landscape environment are threatened by mismanagement, lack of funds, and indifference.

The owners of the manor and the cultural environment

In 1640, from Puze (Pussen) Manor about a third of the land area was separated and Puzenieki Manor, also Pusseneeken Manor, was built. During this time and until 1842, the manor was managed by the von Mirbach family, when its last owner Friedrich Karl von Mirbah (1767–1842) deceased. After short ownership changes, Puzenieki Manor was bought by Karl Ernst Oscar Wilhelm von Grotthuss from Spāre (Spahren) Manor, who deceased in 1920. But already from 1913, the manor was managed by his son Kuno [1]. In 1921, he was still living at Puzenieki, occasionally staying in Germany. During the time of E. O. V. von Grotthuss, the holding of the manor prospered - advanced management methods were introduced, appropriate for the age relationships formed between the parish landlords and the owner of the manor.

When the new master arrived at his estate, he found the old manor house – *kavalierhaus* [2] there, which was a single – storey building with a steeply pitched roof of roofing tiles and a small portico in the center. The corners of the building were rust-adorned and it was raised to the ground floor. The building center of the manor was also formed by a number of other dwelling houses and outbuildings. We can see all this in the allocation plan of the

manor lands, made in 1921 on the basis of the plan of the last quarter of the 19th century [3]. One of the outbuildings – the cattle-shed with the hen house attached to it, and the milk house were located near the manor house mentioned above (to the left of it), but opposite it, a beautiful granary stood (the end of the 18th century) with a porch arcade and the architecturally artistic solution of ornate facades made by plaster, near it – a masonry horse stable with semi-circular windows of the main facade (the end of the 18th century). A wider economic complex was located in the outermost end of the pond with the servants' houses, cattle-sheds, the granary, threshing barn, grain barn, cellar, etc.. The pond was split into two parts by a path which ended in the cattle-shed and opposite the old manor house – the smithy with a flat. Other outbuildings were located more distantly. Apparently, the existing housing did not satisfy the new owner and his family's desires and in 1868, as the year on the facade of the end of the building tells, the new manor house was completed, which resembled a palace. It was a large single – storey building on a high ground floor, covered with a steeply pitched roof of roofing tiles. It also had the so-called drempel storey, illuminated by small square-type windows. The centers of both longitudinal facades of the building were emphasized by a broad risalit with a triangular gable. Risalits also had a wide drempel storey, illuminated by small round windows. At the main entrance, there was a porch with a terrace at the top, on the other, park side – a terrace in the center, but in one of the end facades - a wide, co-called Swiss-style veranda. At the park side, there was an adjacent asymmetric extension of the house, probably a much older building, as it is apparent from the roof form with the upturned ends of the rafters and the different height of the foundations.



Fig. 1. The new manor house

[Source: State Inspection for Heritage Protection of the Republic of Latvia, Monument Documentation Center, 1949]



Fig. 2. The granary

[Source: State Inspection for Heritage Protection of the Republic of Latvia, Monument Documentation Center, 1949]



Fig. 3. The old manor house

[Source: State Inspection for Heritage Protection of the Republic of Latvia, Monument Protection Center, the 1920s]



Fig. 4. The interior view of the new manor house

[Source: State Inspection for Heritage Protection of the Republic of Latvia, Monument Documentation Center, 1920]

Little is known about the interior of the building. In 1949, information was provided by A. Gusars about it, “*The hallway divides the building into two parts, on the northern side, three halls with a lobby and the central entrance. These rooms are with a parquet floor and a wide ledge along the top of the walls. In the corners of the rooms – white glazed tile ovens. The window and door border of brown oak. Brass door fittings. On the southern side of the building, the rooms are simpler designed with colored wallpaper and style ovens. From the hallway, the wooden stairs curving lead to the second floor, where, in the projection of the middle part of the building, there are two wider rooms*” [4].

The manor building was surrounded by a park, designed in the second half of the 19th century, but some noble trees evidenced of its earlier origin. The linden alley led into a rectangular courtyard, where an oval path led to wide main entrance stairs. On the other side of the palace, there was a vast glade with symmetrically arranged plantings. The path network, as shown in the above plan of 1921, was also regular.

Outside the area of the park, on the other side of the cobbled stone Puze – Ugāle road, there were ponds. That was the architecturally spatial and scenic environment of the building of the manor center, where a number of people, among them K. E. O. V. von Grotthuss himself and his wife Carolina Louise von Fircks lived and worked. Without their son, there were two daughters in the family, one of them – Dorothea Louise Caroline von Grotthuss, called Cary, born in Cirole (*Zirohlen*) Manor, in December 1859. Thus, when the new manor house was ready, she was nine years old. It had to take another 27 years to associate this manor, Cary von Grotthuss and developments in it with the founder of our national oil painting Janis Rozentāls (1866–1916). At Puzenīki, the artist arrived in 1895 to paint the portraits of the owner of the manor and his wife. Parallel to this work, photos for composition searches were taken. A special photo session was devoted to Cary von Grotthuss – walking along the shaded alleys of the manor park, resting on the edge of the pond pergola, enjoying tea or coffee on the terrace together with other people of the manor.

In these photos, both the openness with which Cary engaged in the photo session and the romantic atmosphere that reigned in the relations of the artist and his model were felt [5]. Cary has a specific role in the artist's creative work, she is mentioned in almost all editions devoted to Janis Rozentāls, and not a few in number [6]. And each of the authors describes this friendship, which lasted long years, a bit differently. As the blessed rain over the art life of Janis Rozentāls rained down the concern of Cary.

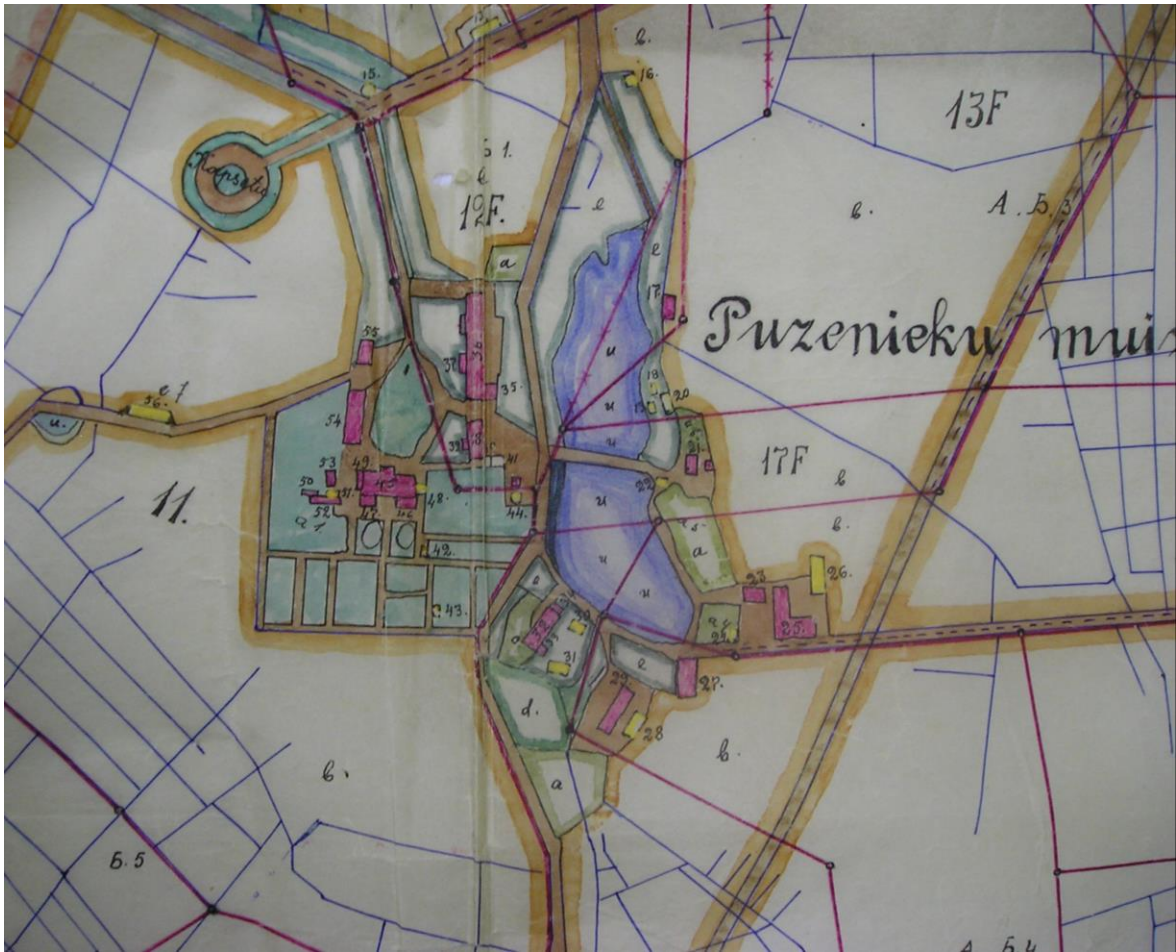


Fig. 5. The allocation plan of the lands of Puzenieki Manor. Fragment. 1921.
[Source: Latvia State Historical Archive, 1679.f., descr. 172, p. 2007]



Fig. 6. The park [Source: photo by author, 2016]



Fig. 7. A view with Cary von Grotthus at Puzenieki manor
[Source: Literature, Theater and Music Museum,
1895, photo by J. Rozentāls]

With a loving woman's charge, she took care that the German nobility recognized the new talented painter [7]. Elsewhere, it is said that Cary ... gave the blessing to Janis Rozentāls art and life for many years, provided many orders for Janis Rozentāls in the barons' circle of Kurzeme ... [8]. For many years, Cary von Grotthus followed the creative art of J. Rozentāls and up to World War I they exchanged with letters. They revealed the nature of their relationship, intimacy, and feelings. Here's one of them, written from Spāre Manor, "Dear old growler! Hearty thanks for Your dear letter in which I appear to get so much attention. Earlier you sometimes laughed about me that I am and remain the same, regardless of the years and circumstances. Well, now I no longer could say so about myself. A lot of that in me and in my neighborhood has changed, just my heart still has remained the same, and if someone at once has filled it, a small, warm place in my heart is always left for him "[9]. The summer of 1895, supposedly, gave many new initiatives. Around 1900, the portrait of Cary Grotthus was painted, and it was possible to see it at the exhibition – Janis Rozentāls (1866–1916), dedicated to the artist's 150 anniversary.



Fig. 8. The new manor house
[Source: photo by author, 2016]



Fig. 9. The granary [Source: photo by author, 2016]



Fig. 10. The horse stable [Source: photo by author, 2016]

The art and technique. 13.08.–30.10.2016. In the Latvian National Museum of Art. A youngish woman in a white robe holding a hat in one hand, in the second – a tiny bouquet of flowers, she stares sideways and her eyes seem quite the same that appear in the photos taken in the summer at Puzenieki.

After World War II, C. von Grotthuss lived in Germany, married and passed away in 1940. Puzenieki Manor was one of the sites that kept the memory of her and Janis Rozentāls. But it no longer was half its tidiness, romance and cozy air as earlier. Time and another political-economic situation introduced their adjustments and they were cruel to this environment.

Conservation issues of the manor's cultural environment and threats to the site's identity

In 1921, the buildings of the manor center for the most part of stone and brick – in a sufficiently good condition, but the servants' houses allotted – old ... [10]. Judging by the photos of the end of the 1940s, the building of the manor center before it had been little changed. The palace was not modified yet, also the main buildings of the courtyard – the granary and the horse stable.

In the second half of the 1940s, a trauma center and some flats were located in the manor house. The other rooms were empty. The further Soviet time was particularly destructive for the building of Puzenieki Manor. The manor house was in a miserable condition, the doors and windows were broken down, the rooms were full of litter and freely accessible to everyone. During the times of the group holding Blāzma, renovation works of the building were started, which by its collapsing finally stopped. The manor house was transformed to the point of absurdity. The small windows of the drempele storey were made larger, in some places also raising the height of the ledge, the roofing was replaced by tin instead of roofing tiles, a simplified architecturally decorative solution of the facade, on the side of the park – a single - storey boiler house was built (an extension of the building can be seen here already in the plan of land of 1921), the wooden veranda vanished and the porch lost its looks, without mentioning the destroyed builders' carpentry and joinery. The building, balanced in its volume, got a massive, primitive, and inexpressive appearance. During the period of awakening, several auctions were held, until the building became privately owned. Today, it is not used (except the park-side extension of the building that is inhabited) and puts off by its disfigured appearance.

At the end of the 1940s, the granary was in a satisfactory technical condition, it was used as a warehouse for collective farmers. By Decision No. 671 of the LSSR Council of Ministers taken on October 31, 1962, the building is in the list of the State Protected Architectural Monuments with No.179. 179. Over time, the condition of the granary increasingly worsened. Becoming a private property, the rescue works were launched, but they stopped. In 2007, the documentation was prepared anew to include the granary with the status of national importance in the list of the State Protected Cultural Monuments despite the fact that the building had no roof and the beautiful facades no longer were covered with plaster. Unfortunately, the inclusion process stopped, or as it is said– stayed in the air hanging ... The granary without the roof, plaster, windows and doors is still awaiting its rebirth... In 2005, the horse stable is still covered with a roof, but now only masonry is left from it. The roof

construction and coverage remains are right there in front of the building, already ingrown in the grass. In turn, in the 1920s, 30s the old manor house was rebuilt into a school – the second floor was built, the layout was changed, the portico – removed. Today, this building is abandoned – the wind is whistling in its opened doors and windows, the fucked up rooms give evidence of a long abandonment and hopelessness. All the above building *nicely fits* into the park's scenic surroundings. It is overgrown, unkempt and it is even difficult to perceive its plan. Today, being at Puzenieki Manor, even with difficulty it is not

possible to imagine the environment where Janis Rozentāls and Cary von Grotthuss met.

Conclusions

In the preservation of the cultural environment, the identity of the site plays an important role, which can consist of various factors and one of them – the link to specific historical events, or the activity of specific well-known persons. If the cultural environment is destroyed or changed, its identity is lost. That's why, preservation of the site is important as a whole, justifying its importance with scientific research.

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

In 1979 Jānis Zilgalvis graduated from the Faculty of Architecture of the Riga Technical University. In 1990, he defended his doctoral thesis on the subject of the manor architecture of the second half of the 19th century – the start of the 20th century. Since then, he is the Head of the Architecture Department of the State Inspection for Cultural Heritage. Since 2012 – a full member of the Latvian Academy of Sciences. Over 180 scientific and popular scientific publications and 18 books (some co-authored). The main lines of research – the manor architecture and cultural history, sacral architecture, protection of cultural heritage.

Kopsavilkums. 1640. gadā no Puzes (Pussen) muižas tika atdalīta aptuveni viena trešdaļa zemes platības un izveidota Puzenieku (Pusseneeken) muiža. 1842. gadā to nopirka K. E. O. V. fon Grotuss (von Grotthuss) no Spāres (Spahren) muižas. No 1913. gada muižā saimniekoja viņa dēls Kuno.

Muižas apbūves centru veidoja virkne dzīvojamās un saimniecības ēkas. To var redzēt muižas zemju sadalīšanas plānā (1921. g., uz 19. gs. pēd. cet. plāna pamata). 1868. gadā pabeigta jauna kungu māja - liela vienstāva ēka uz augsta cokolstāva, segta ar stāvu divslīpju kārniņu jumtu. Tai bija arī t. s. drempeļstāvs, izgaismots ar nelieliem kvadrātveida lodziņiem. Ēkas abu garenfasāžu centrus akcentēja plašs rīzālītis ar trīsstūrveida frontonu. Pie galvenās ieejas atradās lievenis ar terasi augšpusē, otrajā, parka pusē centrā bija terase, bet vienā no gala fasādēm – plaša t. s. Šveices stila veranda.

Muižas apbūvi ieskāva parks, kurš veidots 19. gs. otrajā pusē, taču atsevišķi dižkoki liecināja par tā senāku izcelsmi. Liepu aleja veda taisnstūrveida pagalmā, kur ovāls ceļš pieveda pie pašām pils galvenās ieejas kāpnēm. Otrā pusē pilij pletās liela lauce ar simetriski izvietotiem stādījumiem. Ārpus parka teritorijas, otrpus laukakmeņiem bruģētajam Puzes – Ugāles ceļam atradās dīķi. Tāda bija muižas centra apbūves arhitektoniski telpiskā un ainaviskā vide, kurā dzīvoja un strādāja K. E. O. V. fon Grotuss un viņa sieva K. L. fon Firksa (von Fircks). Ģimenē bez dēla auga divas meitas, viena no tām – Doroteja Luīze Karolīne (Dorothea Louise Caroline von Grotthuss), saukta par Keriju (1859–1940). K. fon Grotusi un norises Puzeniekos varam saistīt ar mūsu nacionālās glezniecības pamatlicēju Jani Rozentālu (1866–1916).

Puzeniekos mākslinieks ieradās 1895. gadā, lai gleznotu muižas īpašnieka un viņa kundzes portretus. Paralēli šim darbam tapa fotogrāfijas kompozīcijas meklējumiem. Īpaša fotosesija tika veltīta K. fon Grotusei. Viņai ir īpaša loma mākslinieka daiļradē, viņa pieminēta teju vai visos izdevumos, kuri veltīti J. Rozentālam. Un katrs no to autoriem mazliet citādāk raksturo šo draudzību ilgu gadu garumā. K. fon Grotuse ilgus gadus sekoja J. Rozentāla daiļradei un līdz pat 1. Pasaules karam apmainījās vēstulēm. Tajās atklājās viņu attiecību raksturs, intimitāte un jūtu pasaule. 1895. gada vasara Puzeniekos, domājams, deva daudz jaunu ierosmju. Ap 1900. gadu tapa Kerijas Grotuses portrets. K. fon Grotuse pēc 1. Pasaules kara apmetās uz dzīvi Vācijā. Puzenieku muiža bija viena no vietām, kas glabāja atmiņas par viņu un Jani Rozentālu. Taču tajā vairs ne tuvu nebija tās sakoptās, romantiskās un mājīgās gaisotnes, kas senāk. Laiks un cita politiski ekonomiskā situācija ieviesa savas korekcijas un tās šai videi bija nežēlīgas.

Spriežot pēc 1940. gadu beigu fotoattēliem muižas centra apbūve pirms tam bija maz mainījusies. Pils vēl nebija pārveidota, tāpat arī pagalma galvenās ēkas klēts un stallis. Īpaši postošs Puzenieku muižas centra apbūvei bija tālākais padomju laiks. Kungu māja atradās nožēlojamā stāvoklī, izgāztas bija durvis un logi, telpas piemēslotas un brīvi pieejamas ikvienam. Kopsaimniecības Blāzma laikā uzsākti ēkas atjaunošanas darbi, kas tai sabrūkot, apstājās. Kungu māja tika līdz nejēdzībai pārveidota. Apjomā līdzsvarotā ēka ieguva masīvu, primitīvu un neizteiksmīgu izskatu. Atmodas laikā notika vairākas izsoles, līdz ēka kļuva privātipašums. Šodien tā netiek izmantota.

1940. gadu beigās klēts bija apmierinošā tehniskā stāvoklī to izmantoja kā noliktavu. Kļūstot par privātipašumu, tika uzsākti glābšanas darbi, taču tie apstājās. Klēts bez jumta, apmetuma, logiem un durvīm joprojām gaida savu atdzimšanu. Stallis 2005. gadā vēl bija segts ar jumtu, taču tagad no tā vairs palikuši tikai mūri. Savukārt vecā kungu māja, kas 1920., 30. gados pārbūvēta, par skolu šodien ir pamesta. Parks ir aizaudzis, nekojots un tā plānojumu grūti pat uztvert. Šodien esot Puzenieku muižā pat ar grūtībām nav iespējams iztēloties to vidi, kad šeit satikās J. Rozentāls un K. fon Grotusa.

Kultūrvēsturiskās vides saglabāšanā liela nozīme ir vietas identitātei, kuru var veidot dažādi faktori un viens no tiem – saikne ar konkrētiem vēsturiskiem notikumiem vai konkrētu plaši pazīstamu personu darbību. Ja kultūrvēsturiskā vide tiek iznīcināta vai izmainīta, zūd arī tās identitāte. Tāpēc nozīmīga ir vietas saglabāšana kopumā, tās nozīmīgumu pamatojot ar zinātnisku izpēti.