The architecture of the Seimas Palace

Student: Žydrūnė Česonytė

Architecture, Integral study program, Faculty of Architecture,
Vilnius Gediminas Technical University, Vilnius, Lithuania
cesonytezydrune@gmail.com

Mentor: Liutauras Nekrošius

Faculty of Architecture, Vilnius Gediminas Technical University, Vilnius, Lithuania
iutauras.nekrosius@vilniustech.lt

Abstract. *This research paper examines the architecture of the Seimas Palace, which houses the Lithuanian Parliament, and the historical significance of the events of January 13th. The research objective is to create a 3D model of the Seimas Palace, using archival documents and digital tools to recreate the original form of the building. The research methodology includes the analysis of historical records and photographs, as well as measurements and consultations with a mentor. The paper presents the results of the study, including the creation of the 3D model and the identification of the main architectural features. The study's contribution to our understanding of the Seimas Palace and its place in Lithuanian cultural heritage is what makes it significant.*

Keywords. The Seimas Palace, architecture, multifunctionality, 3D model, analysis

1   Introduction

The architecture of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania is the project's principal goal. The objective of this study was, first and foremost, to collect data on the architectural values and historical context of the Seimas Palace in the 1980s and 1990s, as well as to research images, architectural projects, and artworks from various eras and analyse written materials. Based on the information acquired, it was decided to expand the project and create a 3D model of the Seimas buildings, identifying the elements and temporary roles of the fortifications from historical and archival material.

The project workflow can be described as a series of steps taken to achieve the project goals. Throughout the workflow, regular meetings with the mentor were conducted to discuss progress and challenges and to seek guidance and feedback. We worked together towards a common goal, and the mentor's experience and knowledge were valuable resources for the project.

It is worth mentioning that this project was implemented with the financial support of the ATHENA project. We are grateful for their contribution to our research.

2   Results of the research work

The work began with a process of collecting and analysing photographs and literary sources, which helped to reveal the multifunctionality of the Seimas Palace during the events of the 1990s. The information gathered shows that the building and its surroundings were not only a meeting place for people but also a defensive fortress that served a variety of purposes.

The analysis identified the following main functions of the building during the events of January 13th:

- The gathering spot for people to eat.
- Ambulance point.
- Construction of parliamentary fortifications and barricades.
- Chapels on the Parliament grounds.
- Drawings exhibition.
- Destruction of Soviet documents.
- The living barricade.

The gathering spot for people to eat

People were willing to spend extended periods of time outside the Parliament, often without going home or having regular meals, highlights the urgency and importance of the issues at stake.

People eating food supplied by their family [1, p. 25], friends, or complete strangers while sitting on stacked building blocks is a monument to the sense of camaraderie and community that developed during this period. Such events in Lithuania attracted the attention of the world's media [2], and foreign countries donated food and other necessities to Lithuania [3].

Figure 1. The spot for people to eat. Photo: Rolandas Ginaitis

Figure 2. Volunteers in the ambulance Photo: Alfredas Girdziušas

Ambulance point

The hard work, the construction of Parliament's fortifications and barricades, and the defense against the enemy were not without various injuries and wounds [4, p. 117, 3]. For this reason, the nearby Lithuanian National Martynas Mažvydas Library in the Lithuanian National Library, an ambulance station was set up in the Lithuanian National Library [1, p. 117], where people were people could donate blood to the injured and, throughout the Parliament's territory, there were always people on duty to help in the event of an accident or injury.

Construction of parliamentary fortifications and barricades

Seeing how everyone worked together to help build the walls and barriers around the Parliament was inspiring. People were preparing to fend off the enemy both outside and inside the Parliament [1, p. 117], underscoring the significance of being ready for any circumstance and taking precautions to ensure safety and security [3]. This level of readiness and adaptability can be beneficial not just in times of emergency but also in regular life, and it can assist both individuals and communities in overcoming obstacles and achieving their goals.

Figure 3. The barricade. Photo: Vilius Jasinevičius

Chapels on the Parliament grounds

It is heartening that even those who could not physically help have found other ways to support them. This kind of support and encouragement can be just as valuable as physical contributions and can help foster a sense of unity and common purpose. The presence of chapels [1, p. 118] and the celebration of Mass from the balcony of the Parliament [1, p. 36] further highlights the importance of faith and spirituality in times of crisis, and how they can provide a source of comfort, strength, and hope.

Figure 4. The celebration of Mass from the balcony of the Parliament. Photo: Vilius Jasinevičius.

Figure 5. Children's drawings. Photo: Seimas Palace photo archive.

Drawings exhibition

People created posters to display on the barricades, and kids in kindergarten and schools created artwork [1, p. 16] that was later brought by teachers and displayed in front of the Parliament. This was a means of demonstrating trust in and support for the Parliament-facing defenders who were on duty.

A book of 5772 children's artworks honoring the events of January 1991 was created from the children's drawings. All the pieces were produced in 1991 for various educational and competition projects [5].

Destruction of Soviet documents

The act of using Soviet documents on rebar rods near the barricades is a powerful symbol of defiance and resistance against the Soviet government [1, p. 33]. By using their Soviet documents in this way, they are also risking potential consequences from the authorities, which further underscores the bravery and determination of the protesters.

Figure 7. The Soviet documents on rebar. Photo: Rolandas Ginaitis.
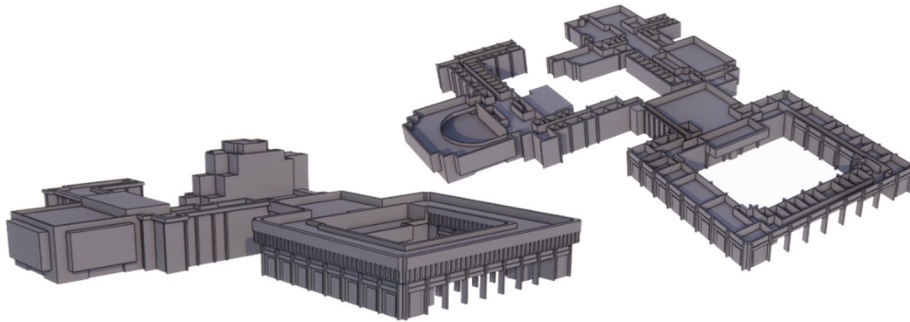
The living barricade

The fact that there is a large, living barricade in front of Parliament is a testament to the determination and courage of the protesters, as evidenced by the many photographs that have survived. It shows that they were willing to risk their lives to defend their homeland. Such collective action can be crucial for social and political change and underlines the importance of solidarity and mutual support in the face of oppression.

Figure 8. The living barricade. Photo: Seimas Palace photo archive.

Creating a 3D model of the Seimas building

Creating a 3D model of the building is an excellent way to preserve the architectural and historical value of the Seimas Palace. The research has shown that there are not many surviving drawings or models of the building [6], which makes this work even more difficult but also very important. By creating a 3D model, we want to provide a visual representation of the building and create a valuable educational resource for future generations. Such a project can also help raise awareness of the building's historical and cultural significance and inspire people to learn more about their heritage. In general, the creation of a 3D model of the Seimas Palace is a complex task and not always as quick as one would like.

Figure 9. 3D model of the Seimas building.

3   Societal importance

The 3D model of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania would be a useful educational and informative tool for the public. It would be great to create an exclusive 3D model of the blockades of time, showing how the entrances were blocked and the grounds protected.

The 3D model could be used by schoolchildren and educators to learn about the architectural style, ornamentation, and historical significance of the Palace. It could also be used by visitors to the palace to better understand the layout and features of the building. In addition, the 3D model could be made accessible to people who, for various reasons such as physical disability, distance, or lack of time, are unable to physically visit the Palace. Overall, the 3D model of the Parliament would be a valuable educational and cognitive resource for the public, enabling a better understanding and appreciation of Lithuania's cultural heritage.

4   Conclusions and further work

The dedication to completing the continuing 3D model of the Seimas Palace effort is notable. There is a lot of potential for improvement in the pursuit of greater precision. It is accepted that further investigation into the intricate architectural details within this outstanding structure is anticipated. Participating in projects of this kind offers a practical way to

challenge oneself and develop one's skills—an aim that is persistently pursued. This endeavor is seen as a promising opportunity for insightful experience and learning.

References

[1]   L. Kerosierius and S. Žilinskas. *"Parlamento barikados ",* vol. 1, 2014. DOI: ISBN 978-609-412-170-8.

[2]   J. Glinskis, D. Vildžiūnas and J. Bieliauskienė, *"1991 sausio 13 Pasaulis žvelgia į Lietuvą, Kronta "2004.*

[3]   Information Analysis Division of the Seimas Chancellery, "*1991 metų sausio mėnesio ir vėlesnių įvykių kronika* ", 2002.
        https://www.lrs.lt/pls/inter/w5_show?p_r=4111&p_d=202932&p_k=1
        (accessed August 27, 2023).

[4]   L. Kerosierius and S. Žilinskas. *"Parlamento barikados ",* vol. 1, 2014. DOI: ISBN 978-609-412-170-8.

[5]   National Museum of Lithuania, "*Buvai moksleivis 1991 metais? Ieškok savo piešinio!*",
        2019, http://sausio13.lnm.lt/ (accessed August 27, 2023).

[6]   Lietuvos Respublikos Seimas *"Seimo Rūmai",*
        https://www.lrs.lt/sip/portal.show?p_r=35418&p_k=1 (accessed August 27, 2023).