

## **Jelgava Palace after World War II**

All the town of Jelgava was nothing but ruins after the war. Latvian Academy of Agriculture was moved back to Riga. In July 1945, a resolution project on the palace reconstruction for the Latvian Academy of Agriculture was prepared, and then this idea was abandoned. It was decided to house the Jelgava District Executive Committee, Communist Party Committee, Young Communist League Committee as well as several schools and hostels there. In 1948, the reconstruction project of the palace was confirmed. Yet this idea was not realised but in 1951 the palace was assigned to the USSR Naval Ministry that intended to locate Riga Navy School in the building. In 1954, a new resolution was taken to assign the ruins to the newly founded technical school, but on 29 October 1956 it was decided to transfer the Latvian Academy of Agriculture back to Jelgava.

The general reconstruction project was designed by the Latvian State Institute of Town Planning and the Workshop of Scientific Restoration.

In 1955, the restoration of Jelgava Palace was started by the Jelgava Construction Board. It faced complex technical problems – corridor vaults were about to fall in, risalite walls of the main block had cracked and could come down any moment.

Restoration works were completed in 1961. IN 1964, all palace facades were painted in the initial tonal composition, and the building got back its 18th century colouring for the first time in the course of 150 years.

In 1968, the Faculty of Agricultural Economics was founded, followed by the Faculty of Agricultural Construction in 1984. In 1990 the Institute of Human Sciences (since 2001 the Faculty of Social Sciences) was founded, followed by the Institute of Informatics (since 2001 the Faculty of Information Technologies) in 1992. In 1991 the Latvian Academy of Agriculture was renamed the Latvian University of Agriculture.

Starting the academic year 2005/2006, Latvian University of Agriculture had seven faculties offering 64 study programmes and approximately 10 000 students.

The university manifests a deep insight into the building's historical and artistic significance. Each year greater or minor repairs and reconstruction take place, discovering the palace history as well. Cracked walls of the north-east corner caused by decay of the foundation piles led to reinforcement of palace foundations. 146 injection piles made of steel-titanium alloy were driven in, pumping inside several tons of concrete. Simultaneously with the reinforcement of foundations, an electroosmosis wall drying system was installed in the main walls.

In 1996-2001, the palace roof was changed completely; in 1997-1998 a system of drainage and keeping off the rain was added. In 2000, renovation of facades was started.

Major improvements have taken place inside as well, gradually doing away with the primitive Soviet-type interiors. Ground-floor kitchen is reconstructed according to its initial look; reconstruction of the library completed in 2000 returned the previous image to the column gallery of the north-east side. In 1999, the University Hall and its ante-room was reconstructed but the former Golden Hall in the Duke's apartments has got back its proportions, including the cornice that has been renovated after photographs. This gives a chance to continue the work in the future, reconstructing the initial look of the premise. Theoretically it would be possible to reconstruct the initial finish of several other interiors such as the bedroom, the Silver Hall and the Duke's cloakroom.

After 1996 reconstruction of the ground floor premises at the south-east corner was started, arranging the complex of instruction and public catering. Restoration of the 18th century doors, replica hinges and handles from authentic 18th century patterns, brought something of the initial atmosphere in the functionally cool premises. In 2003, the renovation of the ground floor premises of the western block was started.