

EKA

Path of Introspection

Intermediate Use of Kolga manor

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M. A. thesis / 2020



Overview

Stating the problem

There are numerous empty historical buildings in Estonia. Reasons for abandonment are different, for example the lack of suitable purpose or financial resources for conservation or renovation.

In Estonia one of the largest groups of abandoned buildings are manor ensembles commonly situated in rural areas. Many of them are used as homes, schools, hotels, care facilities or other service providers, however due to the abundance of similar offers and sparsity of population, not all manors classify as such.

Numerous abandoned manors serve as cafes, restaurants, venues for concerts, theatre plays and weddings. However, they are left empty again as soon as it gets cold.

Aim of the thesis

The aim of the thesis is to develop an intermediate use for abandoned historical structures that emphasizes the material and immaterial values inherent to the location and serves as an alternative to classical restorative and healing environments to relax and reflect.

Target group

The design is aimed at patients of creative therapy or people who are seeking for an alternative to nature trails and museums. It could be attractive to people interested in history, architecture and culture. It is most suitable to high school youth and adults of both genders.

Methodology

The research methodology was based on theoretical research and experiments. Getting acquainted with theory helped me to understand the properties of the environment and apply them during shaping my own concept.

Additionally to literature, a part of relevant information was collected during interviews.

Equally important to theory were the experiments carried out on the site. These helped me to understand the properties and possibilities of the space.

Topics of research

The main concepts I focus on during my research are two sub-themes of environmental psychology, that research healing and restorative environments.

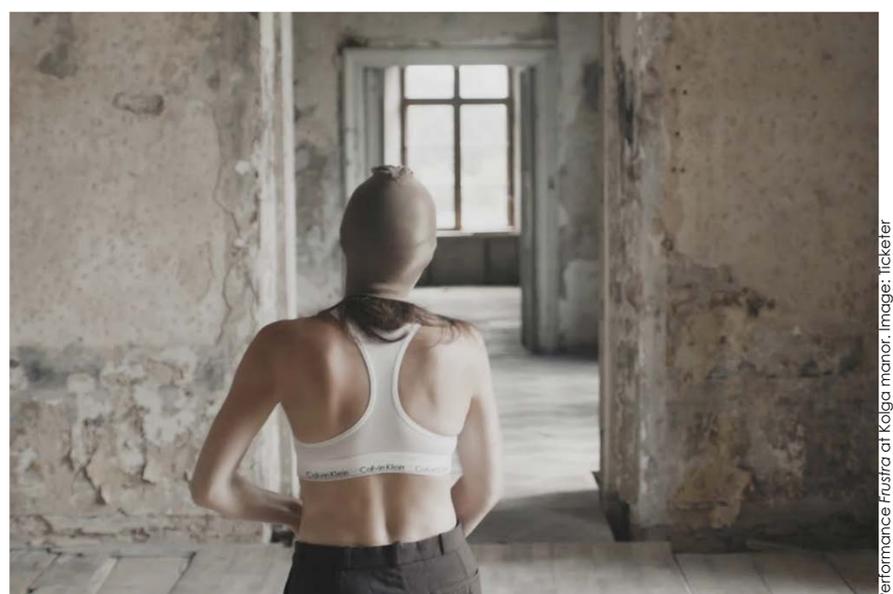
Besides that it is important to research the material and immaterial values of Kolga manor. The final bigger theme to look deeper into is intermediate use.



PHOTO: Kadri Kallaste



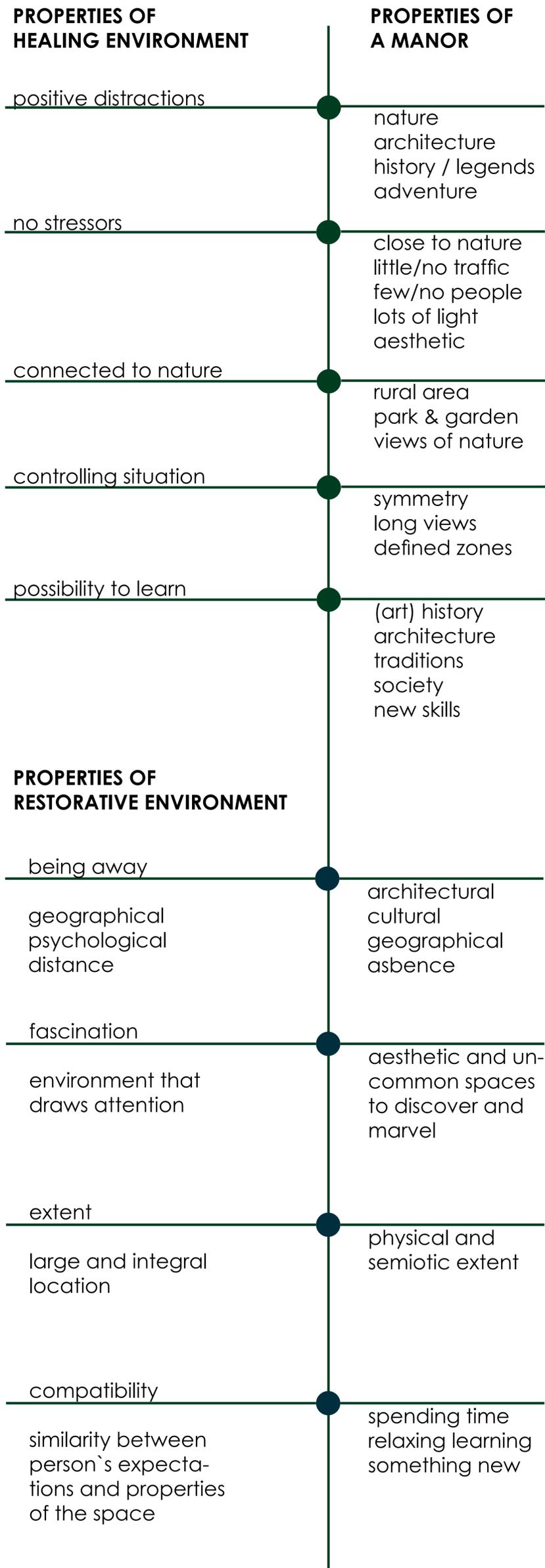
A wedding. Image: M&J Studios.



Performance Frustra at Kolga manor. Image: iCketer

Research

Manor through the prism of environmental psychology



For the development of my design proposal, I study the properties of two sub-themes of environmental psychology, that research the impact of healing and restorative environments on human mental well-being.

A healing environment is characterized by five properties, that are usually applied to designing rehabilitation centers and relaxation zones in office buildings. However a growing number of researchers have started to analyse the good psychological impact of aesthetic historical spaces and objects on human mental health. These properties are often supported by the inherent characteristics of built historical environment.

According the theory of attention restoration restorative environment are characterized by four properties. They apply usually on natural environments. However recent studies have shown that historical built environments can also convey the same properties.

The diagram to the left illustrates the compatibility of the healing, restorative and manorial environment.



Photo: Kolga Museum

Intermediate use

Buildings are abandoned for different reasons. A building that has been unused for a long span of time can start falling apart becoming dangerous. However, not all abandoned buildings are dangerous. The lack of supervision increases the hazard as the buildings become attractive meeting places of the homeless, idle youth and drug addicts.

Two biggest obstacles for taking abandoned buildings into use again are the scarcity of financial resources and the lack of suitable purpose. An intermediate use should be considered to keep a building in active use until a long-term purpose is found instead.

Owing to the cold and humid climate of Estonia, most of the intermediate uses are seasonal. During the warm seasons manor houses host various public events, but with the drop of temperatures they are left empty again. My thesis aims however to find an intermediate use that does not depend on the climate and seasons.

Object of Study

Kolga manor in the Lahemaa National Park



Kolga manor is situated in Lääne-Virumaa county on the territory of the Lahemaa National Park. One of the largest Estonian manor ensembles belonged from the 17th century until the beginning of the Second World War to a re-known Swedish noble family, von Stenbock. The current structure was erected in the early 19th century.

The main building of Kolga manor is currently being used by a local museum as a venue for excursions, however the building itself is a private property. The manor owner rents the premises out for various commercial events: such as photo- and movieshoots, weddings, performances etc.

According to the plans of the owner, the ensemble should be thoroughly restored and developed as a facility for rehabilitation treatments and cultural events.



Various spatial aspects, for example the location of separating walls built during the Soviet era were visualized with simple interventions using furniture found in the building.

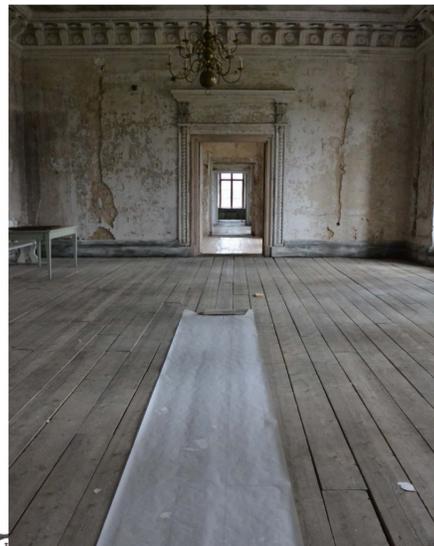


Possible walking trails within the building were visualized with rolls of paper and loose construction elements found on the site.

Material and immaterial layers

Spatial properties of the Kolga manor are researched through experiments carried out on the site. They are based on in situ observations of the material values of the spaces as well as on the information collected from the memoirs written about the life at the Kolga manor by a writer, Theophile von Bodisco (1873 - 1944), who spent some years of her childhood at the manor.

The experiments help me to understand and map various material and immaterial properties of the space. The information collected during the experiments help to develop installations that emphasize both, the material and immaterial properties of the spaces.



Photos: Kadri Kallaste



Photo: Kolga Museum

Design Concept 1/3

References

References for my thesis encourage one to experience space through various senses, spatial references, material and immaterial historical layers.

The works that inspired me are divided roughly into two sub-groups.

The first group of works - Tüüne-Kristin Vaikla's *CASE I - Spatial Snapshot / Pärnu Mud Baths* (2011), James Carey's *Domestic Occupation 1* (2012) and Zhanna Kadyrova's *Second Hand. The Kiev Film Copy Factory* (2017) - deals with the enhancement of different material and immaterial layers of abandoned spaces.

The second group of works - Horst H. Baumann's *Laserscape* in Kassel (1977/2007), Re_Search Lab's *SWEAT FEAR/FEAR SWEAT* (2015) and the new exposition of Anija manor made by KAOS and PULT (2020) - deals with guiding a person through a space with the help of various sensory sensations like light, smell and sound.



CASE I - Spatial Snapshot / Pärnu Mud Baths Image: Vaikla Studio



Photos: Kadri Kallaste

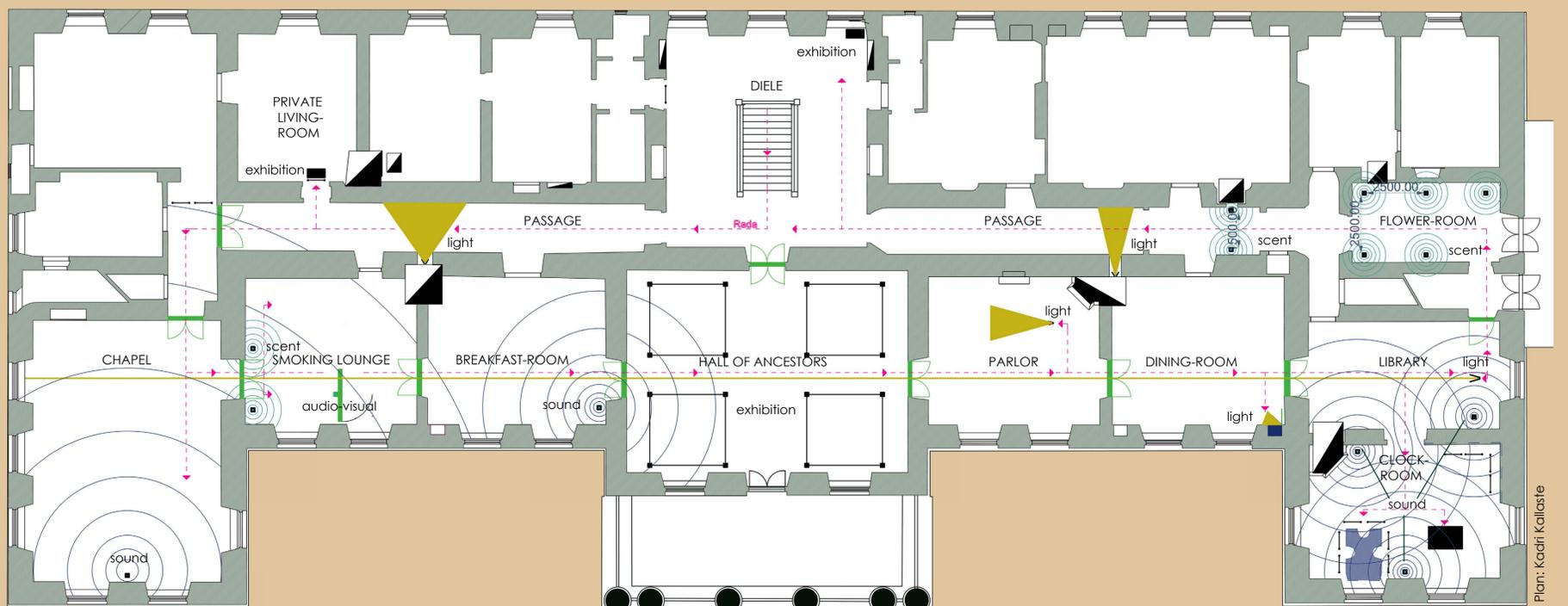
Light was used as one of the main mediums to work with. It is used in five rooms to emphasize or draw attention to certain spatial aspects. In the servicing passage running through the main building of the manor, light was used to draw attention to the openings of the stoves. For that electric torch was placed into the openings of the stoves which created large lit areas on walls. These areas can be used to exhibit texts or objects.

The design concept is based on theoretical research and practical experiments carried out in the main building of Kolga manor.

The concept is called the *Path of Introspection*, as it offers its author and could offer its visitors various introspections of the manor. To mention a few, the work process gives its author a deeper insight of the building, its history and spatial properties. Its visitors are exposed to raw, unaltered interiors of the manor and experience a selection of sensory sensations triggered by various installations. It encourages a dialogue with oneself based on spatial experience.

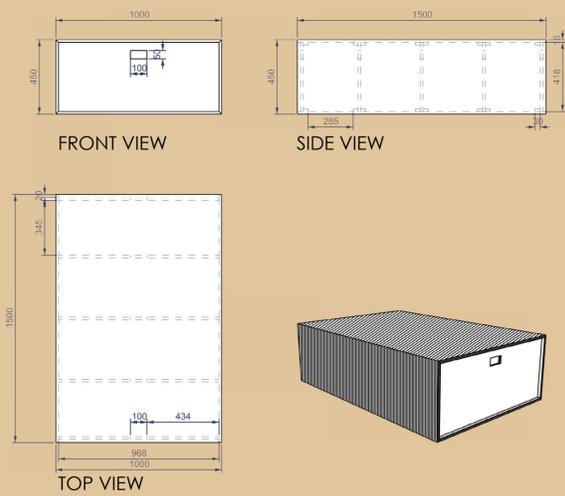
The plan below shows the location of various installations and the type of media I plan to use. The purpose of the installations is to guide a person through the space, refer to certain spatial details and phenomena.

The introspective trail is intended as an intermediate use of the main building of Kolga manor. This installation environment helps to make sense of the manor's architecture, memory layers and to map future visions. The path of introspection is a relaxing and didactic environment that offers an alternative to nature trails. In the future an audioguide program could be developed to give a visitor additional information about the history of the building and its owners.

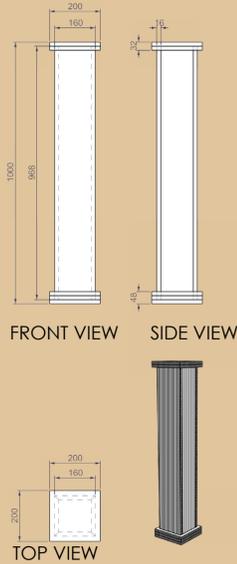


Plan: Kadri Kallaste

Design Concept 2/3

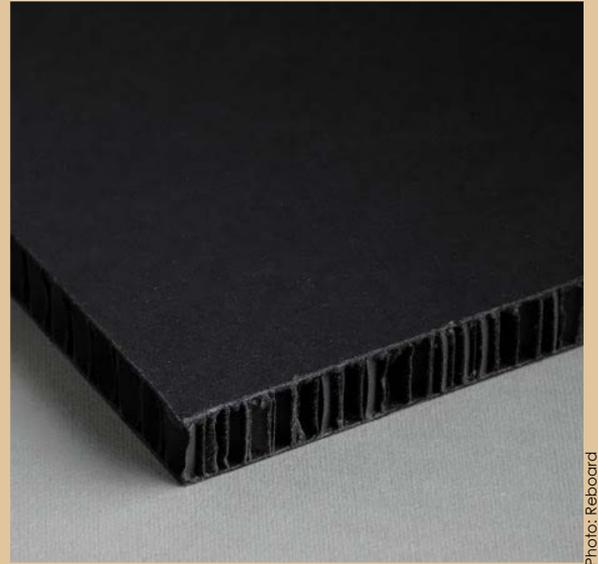


Drawings of a seat and a postament



Drawing: Kadri Kallaste

Drawing: Kadri Kallaste



Honeycomb cardboard / Re-Board

Photo: Reboard

The exhibition equipment of the path is light-weight and easily removable to make space for the commercial events organized at the manor. It is constructed of sturdy but light honeycomb boards. The tone of the equipment is black to make it stand out from the historical environment. These seats are placed in two rooms - chapel and the clock room - to listen to the sound installations and observe the room while seated. The postaments are meant for placing loudspeakers and aroma diffusers.



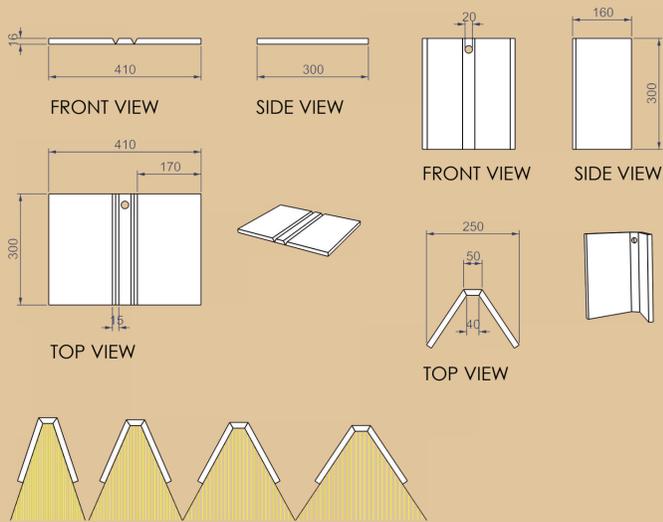
Illustration: Kadri Kallaste

The flower-room is equipped with five with aroma diffusers spreading the scent of the flowers - hyacinth, daffodil, lily of the valley, rose and jasmín - that were grown in the green-houses of the manor.



Illustration: Kadri Kallaste

Sound installation that plays the sound of turning pages and writing refers to the primary function of the room as the library.



Drawing: Kadri Kallaste

The simple object reminding of a bookcover is a stand for an electric-torch and used for light-installations. Its design enables one to control the angle and intensity of the light beam.



Illustration: Kadri Kallaste

Light is used to draw attention and emphasize a selection of architectural features. In the old parlor the light emphasizes the painted floor boards from the 18th century.



Illustration: Kadri Kallaste

Light helps to draw attention to a humble cupboard built into the wall of the dining-room. When closed and not lit, it can hardly be noticed.



Photo: Kadri Kallaste

The cup-board once used for storing necessities - textiles and dishes - for dinner-parties now shows two main ingredients and a list of seasonal delicacies that were eaten at the manor.

Design Concept 3/3



Illustration: Kadri Kallaste

The smoking lounge of the manor was split into two with an additional wall built during the Soviet era. A mobile screen used for a multimedia installation marks its previous location.



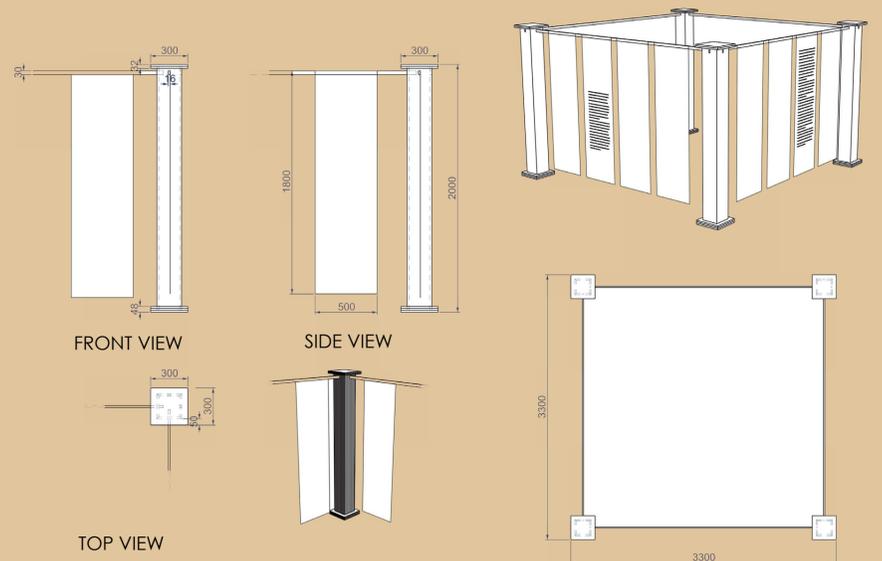
Photos: Kolga Museum

The multimedia file projected on the movable screen is showing locations bound to the Kolga manor - the Loksa brick manufactory and Tsitre summer-manor with its harbor.



Illustration: Kadri Kallaste

The hall of ancestors used to be the main location for family portraits. Therefore it could serve today as a gallery giving information about the vast pedigree of the von Stenbock family.



Drawing: Kadri Kallaste

Four gallery modules would be placed in the four corners of the hall of ancestors. It would create clear path for further movement in the space and guide a visitor to the next room.



Illustration: Kadri Kallaste

The old living-room of the previous manor owner has been turned into a storage of historical decorative stucco details found from the building. This room emphasizes the museal character of the building and exhibits the materiality of the historical space.



Photo: Kadri Kallaste