

Wooden Mezzanine House in Užupis, Vilnius: Gains and Losses of the Restoration Process

Giedrė Filipavičienė

Vilnius Academy of Arts, Restoration Department

Maironio g. 6, LT-01124 Vilnius, Lithuania

filipaviciene.g@gmail.com

——— The article presents an overview of the course of conservation work on the house at 52 Polocko Street – one of the most beautiful wooden houses in Vilnius – and its adaptation for the Museum of Urban Wooden Architecture. It describes the steps taken before the restoration of the building, including the strategic decision-making and fund-raising activity, as well as the search for the function to be served by the house. The article also reviews the applied research efforts, proposed solutions, and the analysis of issues faced and addressed in the process of the restoration and adaptation.

Keywords: wooden architecture, carpenter, woodwork, decor, architect, restoration.



1.
Turret of the house at
19 Pavasario Street,
Vilnius. Photo by Giedrė
Filipavičienė, 2004

Introduction

Wooden suburban buildings represent a unique yet vanishing field of cultural heritage. The presence of simple wooden suburban houses seems to fade away against the background of the unique architecture of the Vilnius Old Town, which has been the subject of research and conservation efforts since the early twentieth century. Many architects and investors consider wooden houses to be a nuisance and an obstacle to the development of the city. Meanwhile, wooden buildings are fragile and require great care on the part of their owners as well as meticulous treatment on the

part of researchers, restorers, and carpenters [fig. 1]. Every single detail in these buildings is of great importance, as the incorrect replacement of any of them could result in irreversible loss of authenticity. However, replacements are unavoidable, as adaptation for contemporary needs necessitates certain engineering and technical changes to ensure the comfortable and safe use of these buildings.

The principle aim of this article is to highlight the issues of restoration of the suburban wooden architecture as well as to encourage the conservation of wooden houses by preserving their authenticity and avoiding overmodernization.

Immersed in a sea of foliage, this mezzanine house¹ in the Vilnius district of Užupis has always caught the eye of passers-by with its distinctive façade decor [figs. 2 A, B]. My acquaintance with the house began in 2002 when I was involved drafting the outline of the Vilnius City Strategy for Preservation of Wooden Architectural Heritage and continued during my work in the Cultural Heritage division of Vilnius City Municipality Administration, where I was in charge of the implementation program of the strategy. In the summer of 2020, I supervised the internship of Emilija Daugėlaitė, a postgraduate student at the Restoration Department of the Vilnius Academy of Arts. She was placed at the municipal architecture and planning company Vilniaus Planas and given the task to get acquainted with the course of the intensive restoration work on the house at 52 Polocko Street, to analyze the body of research that had been carried out at that time, and to make proposals for the restoration and adaptation of the interior of the café room. Emilija presented the tasks and proposals drawn up during this internship at the remote international conference *Art and Architecture Conservation Training in Europe: Relevant Experiences and Mastering Conservation Methods in 2021*.² The conference paper became a source of inspiration for an article about the course of restoration work of the wooden house at 52 Polocko Street. The article is based on the documentation of the investigations carried out by the municipal company Vilniaus Planas, the project proposals and technical designs, and the documentation of the deliberations and decision-making discussions held in the course of work.

1 Mezzanine is an intermediate floor in a residential building above its central part.

2 The conference papers are available at: https://www.vda.lt/lt/studiju_programos/magistranturos-studiju-programos/dailes-ir-interjero-restauravimas-1/konferencijos-medziaga-2021-m.

A

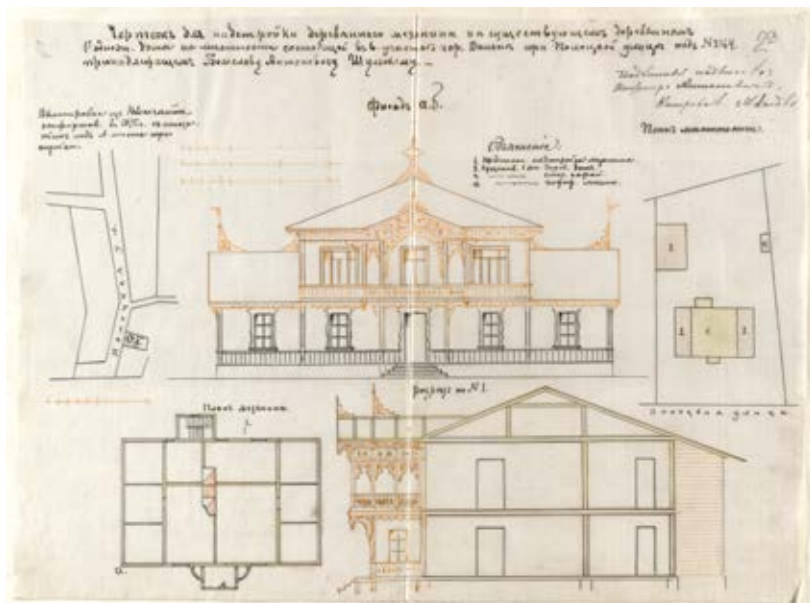


2 A.
Mezzanine of the house at
52 Polocko Street. Photo by
Giedrė Filipavičienė, 2007

B



2 B.
A fragment of the facade of
the house at 52 Polocko Street.
Photo by Vincas Brezgys, 2017



3.

Drawing from the reconstruction file of the house on Polocko Street, 1887. Office of the Chief Archivist of Lithuania, f. 938, ap. 4, b. 1461, l. 2a

Construction and Reconstructions of the House at 52 Polocko Street in the Late Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries

The residential building at 52 Polocko Street was built in 1876 on historic estate No. 614, which was rented from the Orthodox Monastery of the Holy Spirit. Later, the original estate was divided into smaller land plots and the area the house stands on was identified by the number 2164. The residential house was built by Marija Šulska, widow of the college advisor. It was a wooden one-storey house on a masonry foundation. An outbuilding was built at the further end of the plot.

The original design papers were not signed, but the archived copy of the construction file contains a note instructing to write the name of the engineer architect Ivan Levicki on the drawings. Following this design, a utilitarian, one-storey, “double-ended,” clad residential house with wooden window shutters was built...³

³ Aušrelė Racevičienė, “Šalysios statybos darbams nekilnojamojoje kultūros vertybėje, šios vertybės teritorijoje ar apsaugos zonoje (laikinasis reglamentas). Pastatas Polocko g. 52, Vilniuje” [Terms and Conditions for Construction Works on Heritage Real Estate, its Territory or Protected Zones (temporary regulation). A Building at 52 Polocko Street, Vilnius], (Vilnius, 2005), Personal Archive of Judita Olšauskienė.

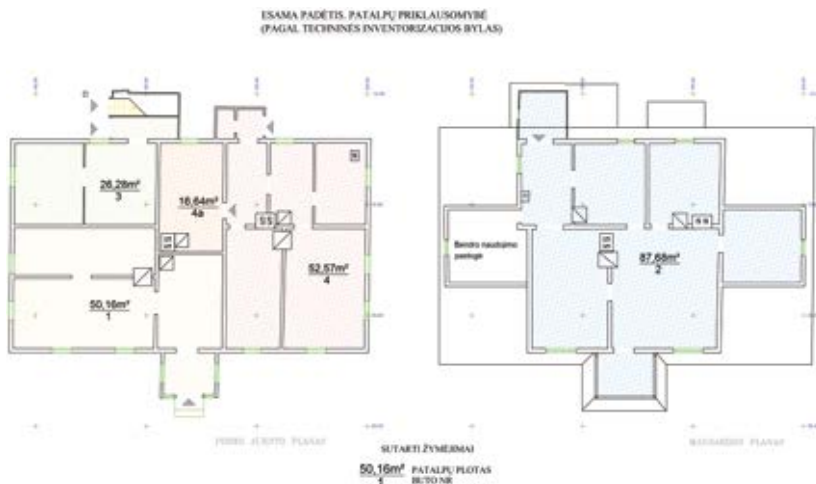
In 1887, the owner of the house, Boleslovas Šulskis, started a reconstruction of the one-storey house according to the design made by engineer A. Antonovičius. The reconstruction gave the house its current appearance with a hewn log mezzanine, a veranda on the south façade, and a balcony. The house was decorated with exquisite woodwork [fig. 3]. In the temporary regulation drawn up in 2005 in relation to the house at 52 Polocko Street, historian Aušrelė Racevičienė gives the following expressive architectural and artistic description of the object:

The building is distinguished by the exceptional beauty of the wood carvings that decorate the entire mezzanine. The current house is not a precise reflection of the designs drawn by A. Antonovičius. The architectural details designed by Antonovičius were given their current shape and form by the master who decorated the façade with exquisite and original carvings. Openwork carvings decorate the entire balcony which is finished with a small triangular pediment supported by graceful wooden consoles. The windows are trimmed with intricate frames, fine ornament carvings run along the cornice, and the interlocked logs at the corners are concealed and decorated in a very resourceful way. There is no other woodwork of this level in Vilnius. From an artistic point of view, the building is original and unique, preserving its authentic materials and shapes. It represents a testimony to the tastes, needs, capabilities and skills of the builders of the late 19th century. The unique decor distinguishes the building from other residential wooden buildings of the time, giving it the character of a suburban residence.

The building is a valuable monument of wooden architecture bearing historical, cultural and architectural significance ...

Further in the document Racevičienė refers to the interwar period, when the city municipality required the house to be renovated and the second-floor walls to be clad and painted. In 1939, the house was renovated: the heating stoves were repaired and the second floor and the roof were painted, but the mezzanine remained free of cladding.⁴

4 Ibid.



4.

Ground floor and attic plans. Current situation according to inventory data. Drawn by Judita Olšauskienė, 2006

After World War II, the house was divided into flats. The interior layout was altered a little, but the exterior looked almost the same as in the late nineteenth century.

In 2004, the house was shared by four or more families; some of the flats were privately owned. The house was run by the administrator, the private company Senamiesčio Ūkis. According to the explanatory note of the conservation concept for the house at 52 Polocko Street drawn up in 2006, one flat was owned by the Vilnius Municipality and the remaining ones by private individuals⁵ [fig. 4].

After the inspection of the building and assessment of the house construction in 2006, it was concluded that the house was in poor condition, and the flats were small and cramped. There was no water supply or sewage networks, and heating was provided by gas-fired stoves. According to the residents, gas burners had been installed thirty years ago.⁶ Chimneys had not been cleaned and had cracks. The heating devices were in need of emergency work. The electrical wiring did not meet fire safety requirements.⁷ According to Racevičienė, the poor condition of the building was obvious

⁵ Vincas Brezgyis, Judita Olšauskienė, “Namo Polocko g. 52 sutvarkymo koncepcija” [Conservation Concept for the House at 52 Polocko Street], (Vilnius, 2006), Personal Archive of Judita Olšauskienė.

⁶ Ibid., 3.

⁷ Ibid.



5.

The house at 52 Polocko Street before restoration. Photo by Giedrė Filipavičienė, 2004

without any further investigations. The building was not well maintained by the residents at the time.

The House at 52 Polocko Street as Important Heritage Object and Investigations in the Twenty-first Century

The first attempts to preserve the building were made in the 1970s.

In the 1980s, when the movement for independence began, architects initiated fundraising for the restoration of the house at one of the congresses of the Union of Architects. Apparently, the funds collected were not sufficient for the restoration; moreover, it was not clear how to proceed with the restoration when the residents were not involved and did not wish to be involved in the process.

In 2004, Vilnius City Municipality commissioned the drafting of an outline for the Strategy for Preservation of Wooden Architectural Heritage (hereinafter “the Strategy”). As part of the process, a shortlist of the unique wooden architecture objects for preservation was drawn up. The list included the house on Polocko Street [fig. 5].

The approval of the Strategy and its implementation program were followed by the first steps to preserve the house; photogrammetric measurements and detailed photographs of the house were taken. In 2005, Racevičienė collected historical data on the building and managed to find its building plans.

Although the uniqueness of the house was much talked about, it soon became apparent that the building was not protected. Steps were taken to enter the house into the Register of Cultural Heritage. On 13 June 2006 the Cultural Heritage Evaluation Board of the Department of Cultural Heritage adopted Resolution No. KPD-RM-15 granting heritage status to the main house and the backyard basement.

In 2006, a geological analysis was conducted, the condition of the house's construction was assessed, and a visual analysis of the architecture and building process was performed.⁸ The scope of these investigations was limited because it was difficult to uncover structural elements inside the house. The main purpose of the research efforts at the time was to identify the type and scope of restoration and conservation work to be carried out.

The house's construction was assessed by certified cultural heritage experts and structural engineers Marija Tomaševskaja and Jelena Parasonienė. They concluded that the building was in a state of emergency, as the condition of the foundation and the log walls was unsatisfactory, biological pests or decay had damaged a large proportion of the logs, and the floor frames were severely bent.⁹ In their assessment report, the experts also noted that the condition of the mezzanine was satisfactory, and only the roof above it was in a state of emergency.

Regretfully, the management work on the house was soon discontinued. An estimation of funds needed for reconstruction and adaptation was made, and the municipality decided that the project was too expensive. Thus, the building continued to deteriorate.

In 2012, an expert assessment report of the building was drawn up. In his conclusions, expert Arvydas Kuralavičius stated the following: "...the assessment of the damage and depreciation of the house constructions brings to the conclusion that the roof structure of the building and

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Jelena Parasonienė, Marija Tomaševskaja, "Pastato Polocko g. 52 konstrukcijų būklės įvertinimas" [Assessment of the Condition of Building Constructions at 52 Polocko Street], (Vilnius, 2006), Personal Archive of Judita Olšauskienė.

its annexes are inadequate to ensure mechanical resistance and stability of the building; therefore, any further use of the building is not safe. The building is in a state of emergency ... Exploitation of the building in the current condition is prohibited.” The expert recommended, “... to prepare a project for major renovation of the building at 52 Polocko Street and to remedy the defects identified by taking into account heritage protection requirements.”¹⁰

The expert’s strict conclusions encouraged resumption of the conservation work. In 2014, a conservation work project was put together.¹¹ Apparently, no additional investigations were carried out, as the residents still inhabited the house, and destructive analysis therefore was not possible. The explanatory note of the project file indicated that it was based on the findings from 2006. It stated that the building was physically dilapidated and must be rebuilt on the repaired foundation. The work was to be carried out by dismantling elements and constructions of décor with great care, making all possible effort not to damage their authenticity.¹²

In 2017, Vilnius City Municipality purchased the privately owned flats and had the residents move out, thus creating the opportunity to examine the building in more detail by conducting archaeological¹³ investigations, evaluating the construction, and performing an initial polychromy analysis.¹⁴

The exploratory archaeological investigation report states that an apron with the remains of the building walls was found at the site of the demolished outbuilding in the backyard. The foundation of the former outbuilding was 0.4 meters deep. Fragments of the stone apron were found along the main building and the backyard basement. No archaeologically valuable

10 Arvydas Kuralavičius, “Statinys-gyvenamasis namas Polocko g. 52, Vilnius. Statinio ekspertizės aktas Nr. Se 12/11” [A Residential Building at 52 Polocko Street, Vilnius. Expert Assessment Report No. Se 12/11], (Vilnius, 2012), Personal Archive of Judita Olšauskienė.

11 Vincas Brezgzys, Judita Olšauskienė, “Pastato Polocko g. 52 tvarkomųjų paveldosaugos darbų projektas” [Project of Heritage Conservation Works at 52 Polocko Street], (Vilnius, 2014), Personal Archive of Judita Olšauskienė.

12 Ibid; Explanatory note to the Chapter on the House Constructions; l. 1.

13 Tautvydas Bajorūnas, “Žvalgomųjų archeologinių tyrimų pažyma” [Report of Exploratory Archeological Investigation], Information of the municipal company *Vilniaus Planas* (Vilnius, 2017).

14 Neringa Šarkauskaitė-Šimkuvienė, “Administracinės paskirties pastato Polocko g. 52 rekonstravimo projektas. Pirminiai polichromijos tyrimai” [Reconstruction Project for the Administrative Building at 52 Polocko Street. Initial Analysis of Polichromy], Information of the municipal company *Vilniaus Planas* (Vilnius, 2017), l. 8.



6 A.
Rosette in the room on the attic during restoration works. Photo by Giedrė Filipavičienė, 2020



6 B.
Rosette in the room on the attic after restoration. Photo by Vilius Mateika, 2022

cultural layer, valuable objects, or structures were found.¹⁵ Judging from the descriptions of the objects discovered in the test pits, it can be assumed that before the end of the nineteenth century, the site was not developed.

The initial analysis of the polychromy of the interior and façade of the building were carried out in 2017. The analysis revealed the colour scheme and the layers of the interior polychromy in the rooms on the second floor. Four layers of paint preserved on the façades were identified. Initially, the house was painted reddish-brown and later gray, brownish ochre, and brownish green.¹⁶

The rooms on the second floor were painted in light brown, and the ceiling moulding was highlighted in warm, gray-brown tones. In the center of the room, individual elements of a papier-mâché rosette were painted to simulate gilding [figs. 6 A, B].

Further 2018 investigations into the house's construction suggested that the roof of the original single-storey building might have been covered in tiles (remains of tiles were found in the geological bore samples). Yet, judging from the spaces between furring strips, the roof was covered with tin during the reconstruction in the nineteenth century. A closer examination of the heating stoves revealed that the original stoves did not survive and were replaced during the Soviet era. The new stoves were placed in the same locations as the old ones, and the old chimneys were used. The experts concluded in their report that “with the exception of some fragments, the log walls are generally intact.” This conclusion changed the approach taken in the previous conservation projects, in which certain construction elements had to be dismantled and reassembled from the selected intact elements. Now the report stated that it was possible to “reuse the existing log walls by replacing decayed fragments only...”¹⁷

In 2020, after the restoration work had already begun, Nerina Šarkauskaitė-Šimkuvienė continued to analyze the polychromy of the

¹⁵ Tautvydas Bajorūnas, “Žvalgomųjų archeologinių tyrimų pažyma” [Report of Exploratory Archeological Investigation], Information of the municipal company *Vilniaus Planas* (Vilnius, 2017).

¹⁶ Nerina Šarkauskaitė-Šimkuvienė, “Administracinės paskirties pastato Polocko g. 52 rekonstravimo projektas. Pirminiai polichromijos tyrimai” [Reconstruction Project for the Administrative Building at 52 Polocko Street. Initial Analysis of Polichromy], Information of the municipal company *Vilniaus Planas* (Vilnius, 2017), l. 8.

¹⁷ Jakovas Mendelevičius, “Administracinės paskirties pastato Polocko g. 52, Vilniuje, konstrukcijų tyrimai” [Investigation of Constructions of the Administrative Building at 52 Polocko Street, Vilnius] Information of the municipal company *Vilniaus Planas* (Vilnius, 2018), 9.



7 A.
A fragment of rustic décor in the room on the ground floor before restoration. Photo by Giedrė Filipavičienė, 2020



7 B.
A fragment of rustic décor shortly before completion of restoration works. Photo by Rūta Astasevičiūtė, 2021

interior. As a result of her analysis, “... different periods of decoration were distinguished; the initial and subsequent layers of colour were identified.”¹⁸ It was found that the premises had been repainted several times.

Three main periods of decoration were identified. The earliest layer was presumed to be dated in the mid-nineteenth century and the later ones were dated to the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In the earliest layer of the ground floor rooms, a vivid design featuring strips of rich blue, burgundy, brown, and gray was discovered, while the ceiling was decorated with a ribbon of grey umber¹⁹ against the background of two stripes in darker tones.²⁰ In the lobby of the ground floor, a faux-rustic finish was uncovered, which was a typical décor pattern used in the buildings of the period [figs. 7 A, B].

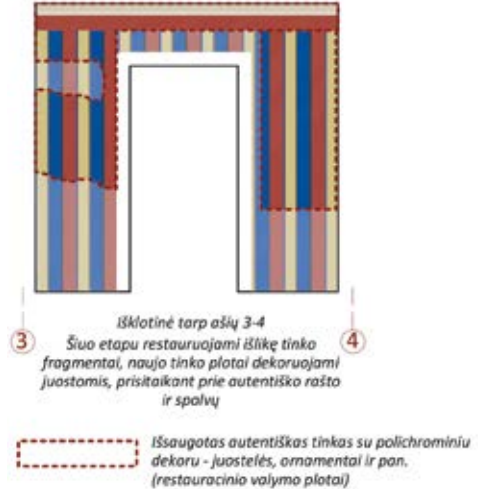
¹⁸ Neringa Šarkauskaitė-Šimkuviėnė, “Kultūros paskirties pastato Polocko g. 52, Vilniuje, rekonstravimo projektas. Interjero polichromijos tyrimų dalis (papildomi tyrimai)” [Reconstruction Project for the Cultural Building at 52 Polocko Street], Information of the municipal company *Vilniaus planas* (Vilnius, 2020), 6.

¹⁹ UMBER is non-organic reddish-grey pigment that contains iron oxides, manganese oxide and aluminosilicates.

²⁰ Neringa Šarkauskaitė-Šimkuviėnė, “Papildomi pastato Polocko g. 52 interjero polichromijos tyrimai” [Further Analysis of the Interior Polichromy at 52 Polocko Street], Information of the municipal company *Vilniaus planas* (Vilnius, 2020).

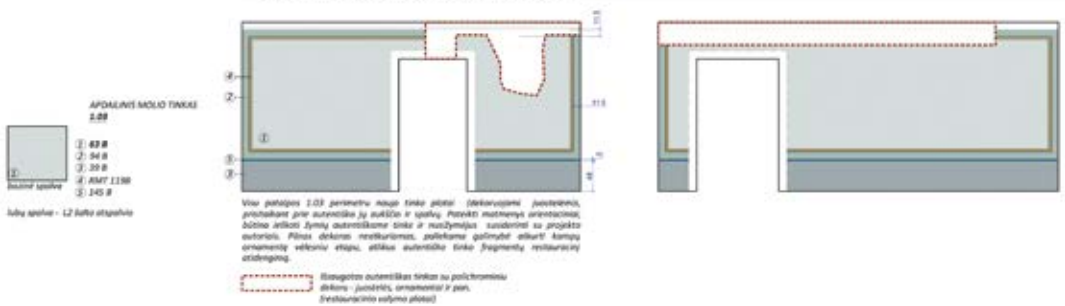


8 A. Polychrome decor of the lobby during restoration



8 B. Interior restoration drawing of the lobby

EKSPOZICIJŲ - RENGINIŲ SALĖ 1.03



8 C. Interior restoration drawing of exposition–event hall. Photo and drawings by Rūta Astasevičiūtė, 2021

A similar color palette was also found in the décor layer from the second period. At the beginning of the twentieth century, the interior of the house was decorated with Modernist and Art Deco elements, imitating a striped fabric in rather bright colors.²¹ In the subsequent period, the walls were mostly covered in a single color or decorated with a roller and a modest frieze decoration.

Although the décor fragments were poorly preserved, the retrospections presented in the research documents enabled us to get a picture

21 Ibid.

of the interior of this house at the beginning of the twentieth century [figs. 8 A–C].

These latest research efforts have once again confirmed that the mezzanine house on Polocko Street is truly one of the most unique wooden buildings in the Vilnius suburbs. At the same time, the bar for the quality of the restoration work had to be raised even higher.

From Concept to Project

The first restoration and adaptation proposals (“the concept”) were drawn up in 2006 following the assessment of the building elements and initial research findings. It was assumed that the building would remain in residential use. Three versions of the layout were prepared envisaging residential use with either two or three flats or public use as a youth hostel.²²

The restoration concept envisaged the preservation of the building’s volume, silhouette, façade architecture, and all surviving authentic elements, such as the walls, the way they were constructed, and the window and door openings as well as the doors, window frames, woodwork, and interior elements [figs. 9 A, B].

The adaptation of the house for residential use would have preserved the main structure of the floor plan. In all the proposals, the existing entrances were kept, and toilets were planned in the central part of the building to minimize damage to the authentic structure.

Unfortunately, the project stalled after the preliminary estimation of the proposal’s implementation costs²³ was made. The main obstacle was the emergency state of the building which meant that the work could only be carried out after the residents had moved out. In addition, some of the flats were owned by private individuals, so it was necessary to negotiate with the owners or to buy out their share of the building.

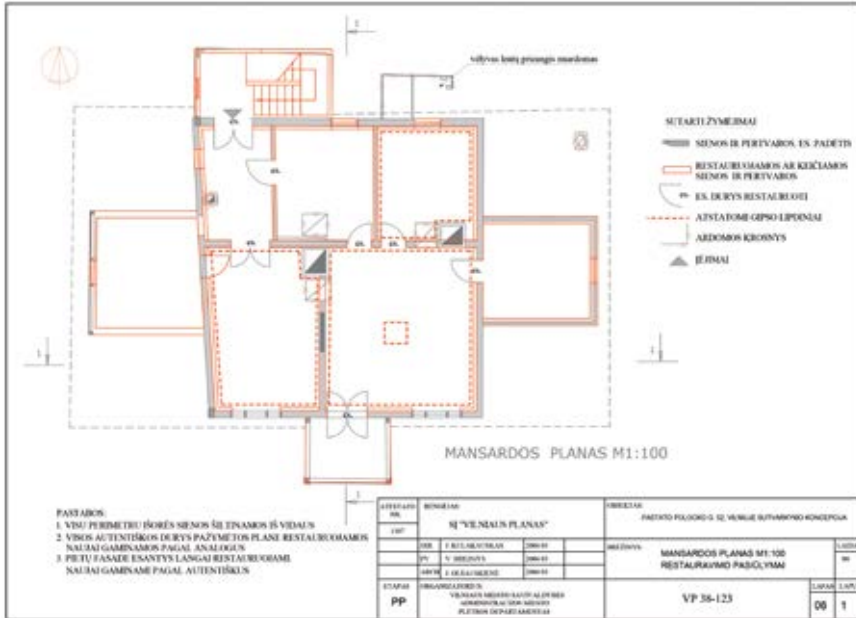
Still hoping that funding for the conservation work would be made available, a conservation work project was drawn up in 2014. It was agreed upon by all the relevant authorities, and a permit to start the work was obtained.²⁴ The project covered the most essential conservation work,

22 Vincas Brezgys, Judita Olšauskienė, “Namo Polocko g. 52 sutvarkymo koncepcija”, 2006.

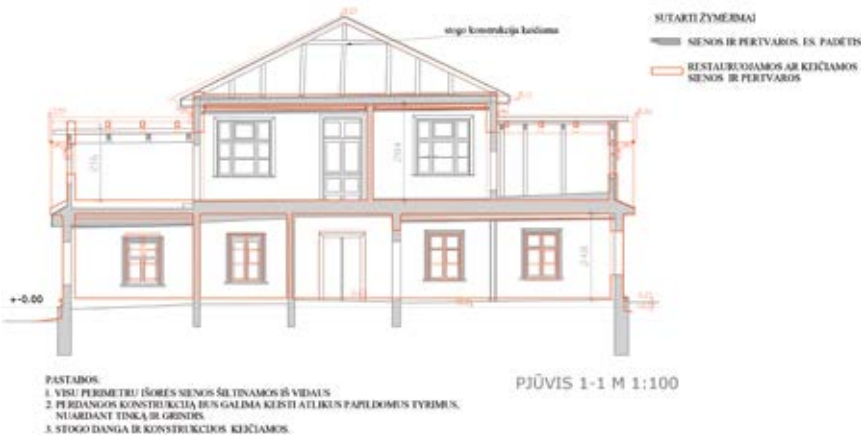
23 Preliminary estimation of the cost of works according to the project proposals at the prices of 2006 was LTL 1,366,274 Litas (almost EUR 400,000), a note by Giedrė Filipavičienė.

24 Vincas Brezgys, Judita Olšauskienė, “Gyvenamosios paskirties pastatas Polocko g. 52, Vilnius, Tvarkomųjų paveldosaugos darbų projektas” [Residential Building at 52 Polocko Street, Vilnius. Project of Heritage Conservation], Information of the municipal company *Vilniaus Planas* (Vilnius, 2014).

A



B



9 A, B.

Drawings from the Restoration project. A – Attic plan; B – Section 1-1. Drawn by Judita Olšauskienė, 2006

including repair of the foundation, restoration of the wall and floor constructions, replacement of the damaged elements with new ones, restoration of the carved elements, replacement of the roof construction according to the preserved original scheme, and installation of metal roofing. It also

envisaged the preservation of authentic windows and doors, all of which were to be restored or replaced by new ones made according to authentic samples. The adaptation options were further explored, and attempts were made to seek funding from the EU Structural Funds.

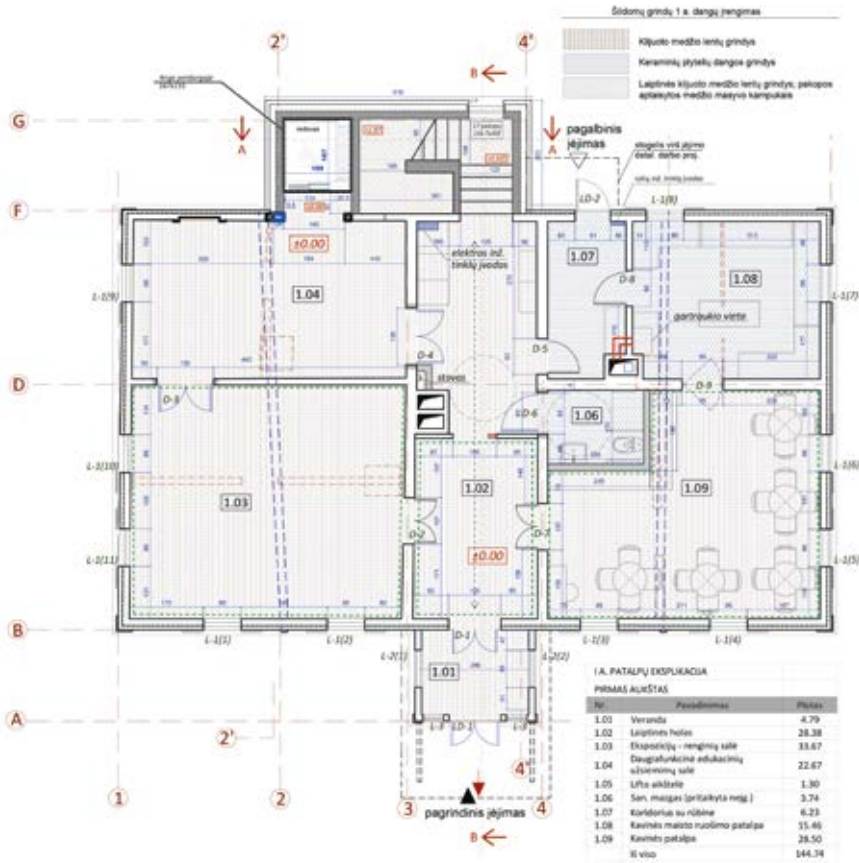
In 2017–2018, the municipal company Vilniaus Planas prepared design proposals in cooperation with the technical and conservation work project with the intent of adapting the building for the Gudai Cultural Centre.²⁵ It was expected to receive funding under the Lithuania-Belarus INTERREG Programme. All the renovation work foreseen in 2014 was transferred to the new project. The adaptation of the building for cultural use largely preserved the original layout; only some minor partitions had to be dismantled. Contrary to the adaptation of the building for residential use, where a large part of the floor space would be dedicated to the utilitarian needs of the flats, such as toilets and bathrooms, the use of the building for public purposes required fewer changes: the ground floor with a lobby and a veranda was intended for common use, exhibition and events rooms were located in the western portion, while the café and toilets for the disabled were to be in the eastern side of the building.²⁶

The project also envisaged conservation of the basement in the backyard, including restoration of the walls while trying to preserve as much of the original masonry as possible, and installation of a shed roof. On the site of the demolished building where archaeological investigations uncovered an apron with the remains of a wall, it was decided to rebuild the outbuilding and use it for housing the main building's and backyard cellar's heating and cooling equipment.

In the light of the findings of further investigations into the house's construction, a new methodological approach to the work was chosen: all construction was planned to be restored in place without dismantling the building. Facade decor elements had to be carefully dismantled, marked, and restored, with missing pieces recreated from authentic samples.

²⁵ *Gudai*, the plural of *Gudas*, is a historical name used by Lithuanians to refer to Ruthenians, Belarusians, Ukrainians and sometimes even Poles, a note by Giedrė Filipavičienė.

²⁶ Vincas Brezgys, Rūta Astasevičiūtė, "Kultūros paskirties pastato Polocko g. 52 Vilniuje rekonstravimo projekto projektiniai pasiūlymai" [Project Proposals for the Reconstruction of Cultural Building at 52 Polocko Street, Vilnius], Information of the municipal company *Vilniaus Planas* (Vilnius, 2017), l. 7.



10.

Ground floor plan. Drawing from the revised Reconstruction project. Drawn by Rūta Astasevičiūtė, 2019

In 2018, the idea for the Museum of Urban Wooden Architecture proposed in the Strategy resurfaced again. At the same time, inspection of the surviving wooden buildings in the central part of Vilnius revealed that wooden heritage, although very rich and distinctive, was neglected and poorly maintained. It was recognized with regret that it would be impossible to preserve all the historic wooden buildings in a rapidly developing twenty-first century capital city. Therefore, one of the protection methods proposed was the preservation of information about such buildings by the establishment of a scientific center and museum, where selected carpentry

objects, elements of décor and building construction, and iconographic and research materials would be stored. Several locations were suggested for the museum, yet it was felt that the idea of converting one of the most distinctive wooden houses in Vilnius to a museum was the most suitable for the purposes of implementing the Strategy.²⁷

On 17 October 2018, Vilnius City Council, by its decision No. 1-1762, approved the establishment of the Museum of Urban Wooden Architecture (Lithuanian abbreviation: MMAM) in the building at 52 Polocko Street in Vilnius. Funding from the EU European Regional Development Fund was allocated for the conservation work and the installation of the museum's exhibition. Activities towards the creation of MMAM started in 2019.²⁸

In order to adapt the building for the needs of the museum, a revised version of the project was developed [fig. 10]. The revised design kept the same essential conservation solutions as proposed in the previous projects. The adaptation proposals were partially modified, and restoration solutions in relation to the insulation and fire protection requirements were specified in more detail. The layout of the main building was altered only slightly. More attention was paid to the conservation of the basement in the backyard and its adaptation for a woodcarving workshop.

Restoration and Adaptation Challenges

The restoration work started in 2019. The conservation and reconstruction contract was awarded to a private company, Ekstra statyba. After the uncovering of the building's construction and performing further analysis of the polychromy, it turned out that the solutions of the approved project had to be revised again if the interior décor was to be preserved. More flexible engineering and technical solutions were necessary.

The geometry of the building caused much debate. As a result of the deformations in the foundation, the walls of the house had started tilting to the south; the height of opposite corners differed by 60 cm. Attempts to straighten the house risked losing the interior polychrome décor. The log walls and the window and door openings were temporarily braced and reinforced to prevent the building from "spreading" and to maximize the

²⁷ <https://vilnius.lt/lt/savivaldybe/miesto-pletra/specialieji-planai/medines-architekturos-paveldo-apsaugos-strategijos-igyvendinimo-programa/> - The Strategy implementation programme, accessed January 24, 2022.

²⁸ Information of the Museum of Urban Wooden Architecture.



11 A, B.

Restoration works: inserting new sections in the logs, conservation of the foundation. Photos by Rūta Astasevičiūtė and Giedrė Filipavičienė, 2020

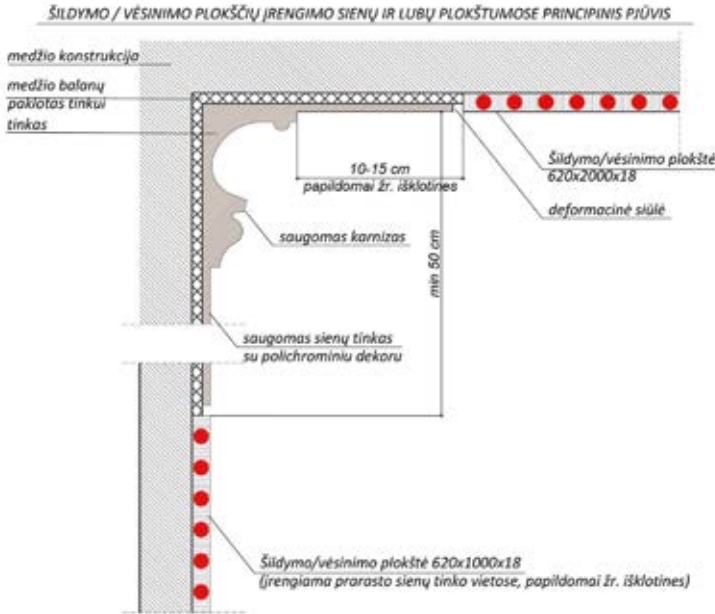


11 C.

Restoration works: inserting new sections in the logs, conservation of the foundation. Photos by Rūta Astasevičiūtė and Giedrė Filipavičienė, 2020

protection of the polychromy. Following this preparatory work, the walls were raised using hydraulic jacks. After replacing fragments of the base of the wall, inserting new sections in the logs, and reinforcing the foundations, the deviations in the walls of the ground floor became insignificant. However, the walls of the first floor (mezzanine), reconstructed at the end of the nineteenth century, remained visibly inclined with a difference of about 7 cm vertically over the entire height of the building [figs. 11 A–C].

There was the option of straightening the building by pulling the corners with cables. However, this process risked losing the authentic plaster with its stencil patterns. After discussions, it was decided that the walls would not be straightened and the geometry of the facades would be restored with the help of decorative elements: When installing corner boards and fretwork, an attempt would be made to create the appearance of a straightened facade.



12.

Installation drawings of the heating and cooling panels. Drawn by Rūta Astasevičiūtė, 2020

To preserve the authentic interior décor, some engineering solutions had to be revised, too.

When the ground-floor wood frame was uncovered, it revealed there was a reason for the construction being so high. Presumably, a new joisted floor had been built over the old one without dismantling it during the reconstruction of the building at the end of the nineteenth century. It was therefore not possible to reduce the height of the floor. The original floorboards of the first floor had survived very well, so it was decided to restore them rather than replace them with new ones. Having examined the layout of the joists, the idea of incorporating the heating and ventilation system into the floor constructions of the first floor was abandoned in favor of a new solution: Gypsum heating and cooling panels were to be fitted on the ceilings and the walls where the polychrome had not survived [fig. 12]. The heat and cold would be transferred by fluid circulating through the plastic polybutylene pipes inside the panels.²⁹

²⁹ Vincas Brezgyis, Pasitarimų, vykusių restauruojamame pastate Polocko g. 52, Vilniuje, 2020-09-23, 2021-06-21, 2021-07-05 protokolai (minutes of meetings that took place at 52 Polocko Street, Vilnius, on 23/9/2020, 21/6/2021, 5/7/2021), Personal Archive of Giedrė Filipavičienė.



13.
A fragment of the authentic doors during restoration.
Photo by Rūta Astasevičiūtė, 2021

During the restoration, special attention was paid to the treatment of authentic elements such as windows, doors, and metal fittings [fig. 13].

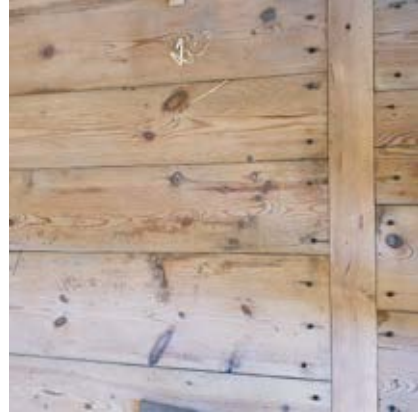
To reduce heat loss, the technical design project provided for the double-glazing of windows. However, after the authentic windows were examined and their restoration begun, it turned out that double glazing was not possible as the structure of the built-in opening vents was not strong enough to bear the weight of double glazing. It was decided to use single glazing, thus preserving the authenticity as much as possible.

Some of the original façade clapboards were retrieved and used for finishing the façade. The façade woodcarvings were carefully restored, and the missing segments were replaced with new ones. The floorboards on the first floor were dismantled and the paint residue was cleaned away. It was decided not to patch the cracks and nail holes. The boards were reassembled in the same order as they were dismantled, using floorboards from other rooms where necessary [figs. 14 A, B].

When adapting the building for public use as a museum, it was necessary to ensure compliance with fire safety requirements. Since, unfortunately, the authentic flooring in the escape routes, corridors, and staircases



14 A.
A fragment of the authentic flooring before restoration. Photo by Vincas Brezgys, 2017



14 B.
A fragment of the authentic flooring during restoration. Photo by Giedrė Filipavičienė, 2021

did not meet these requirements, it was decided to use Fire Class B glued laminated wood flooring in these areas. According to the fire safety rules, all nine doors in the escape routes from the first floor to the lobby on the ground floor had to be of smoke-sealing class materials, which was not possible if the authentic doors were to be preserved. As the preservation of the old doors was high priority and non-negotiable, the architects started looking for other options or possible compensatory solutions. One of the proposals was to provide smoke ventilation in case of a fire in the newly built staircase, that is, to install a one-meter-high unit above the staircase. However, a separate unit rising above the compact volume of the carefully restored house would have been visually prominent, dissonant, and deforming to the façade. After considering various options, it was decided that the best solution would be to install an anti-smoke roof window in the roof construction of the staircase annexed to the building, thus making only minimal changes to the façade facing the backyard.

There were quite a few problems in relation to the interior decoration, too. Strengthening of the authentic plaster and conservation and restoration of the painted décor utilizing specialist techniques was difficult to reconcile with the strict deadlines. The wall and ceiling décor of the café room was restored, exposing authentic fragments of décor from several periods. It is interesting to note that, seeking to ensure the best possible result, the architects who drew up the house renovation project ventured to test a new plastering technique using clay. As the official deadline for the completion of the work drew ever closer, the architects, with the help of their colleagues, restored the interior finishing themselves.

Instead of Conclusions: From the Past to the Future

Restoration and adaptation work was completed at the end of January 2022. The Museum of Urban Wooden Architecture is already planning its display of exhibits and future activities. The summer of 2022 will demonstrate how successful the effort to bring the building back to life has been.

There have been both losses and gains in the complex process of conservation. To some extent, the image of the romantic, abandoned suburban house that had been home to several generations and attracted tourists at the end of the twentieth century has been lost. The residential building was converted for public use by slightly altering the layout, and at the same time opening up its valuable elements to the eyes of the visitors to the museum. In terms of modern technology, the house cannot be compared to a new building, but the efforts of researchers, architects, interior decorators, and carpenters, who treated every authentic element with great care, have certainly given it new spiritual value [fig. 15].

It is important to note that the process of reviving the house at 52 Polocko Street has been yet another step towards implementing the Strategy for Preservation of Wooden Architectural Heritage of Vilnius. The outcomes of the process include:

- preservation and restoration of a house distinguished by professional woodworking, which testifies to the craftsmanship of carpenters and joiners at the end of the twentieth century;



15.

The House at 52 Polocko street after completion of restoration works. Photo by Giedrė Filipavičienė, 2022

- uncovered and restored interior décor revealing the uniqueness of the city's wooden heritage;

- the activities to be carried out in the building will be aimed at maintaining the tradition of wood construction in Lithuania.

Received ——— 26 01 2022

Giedrė Filipavičienė ——— *Wooden Mezzanine House in Užupis, Vilnius: Gains and Losses of the Restoration Process*

Bibliography

Sources

- Bajorūnas, Tautvydas. Žvalgomųjų archeologinių tyrimų pažyma. Information of the municipal company *Vilniaus Planas*, 2017.
- Brezgys, Vincas. Pasitarimų, vykusių restauruojamame pastate Polocko g. 52, Vilniuje, 2020-09-23, 2021-06-21, 2021-07-05 protokolai (minutes of meetings that took place at 52 Polocko Street, Vilnius, on 23/9/2020, 21/6/2021, 5/7/2021). Personal Archive of Giedrė Filipavičienė.
- Brezgys, Vincas, Judita Olšauskienė. Namų Polocko g. 52 sutvarkymo koncepcija. Vilnius, 2006. Personal Archive of Judita Olšauskienė.
- . Gyvenamosios paskirties pastatas Polocko g. 52, Vilnius, Tvarkomųjų paveldosaugos darbų projektas. Vilnius, 2014. Information of the municipal company *Vilniaus Planas*.
- . Pastato Polocko g. 52 tvarkomųjų paveldosaugos darbų projektas. Vilnius, 2014. Personal Archive of Judita Olšauskienė.
- Brezgys, Vincas, Rūta Astasevičiūtė. Kultūros paskirties pastato Polocko g. 52 Vilniuje rekonstravimo projekto projektiniai pasiūlymai. Information of the municipal company *Vilniaus Planas*. Vilnius, 2017.
- Kuralavičius, Arvydas. Statinys-gyvenamasis namas Polocko g. 52, Vilnius. Statinio ekspertizės aktas Nr. Se 12/11. Vilnius, 2012. Personal Archive of Judita Olšauskienė.
- Mendelevičius, Jakovas. Administracinės paskirties pastato Polocko g. 52, Vilniuje, konstrukcijų tyrimai. Information of the municipal company *Vilniaus Planas*. Vilnius, 2018.
- Parasonienė, Jelena and Marija Tomaševskaja. Pastato Polocko g. 52 konstrukcijų būklės įvertinimas. Vilnius, 2006. Personal Archive of Judita Olšauskienė.
- Racevičienė, Aušrelė. Sąlygos statybos darbams nekilnojamojoje kultūros vertybėje, šios vertybės teritorijoje ar apsaugos zonoje (laikinasis reglamentas). Pastatas Polocko g. 52, Vilniuje. Vilnius, 2005. Personal Archive of Judita Olšauskienė.
- Šarkauskaitė-Šimkuvienė, Neringa. Administracinės paskirties pastato Polocko g. 52 rekonstravimo projektas. Pirminiai polichromijos tyrimai. Information of the municipal company *Vilniaus Planas*. Vilnius, 2017.
- . Kultūros paskirties pastato Polocko g. 52, Vilniuje, rekonstravimo projektas. Interjero polichromijos tyrimų dalis (papildomi tyrimai). Information of the municipal company *Vilniaus Planas*. Vilnius, 2020, 6.
- . Papildomi pastato Polocko g. 52 interjero polichromijos tyrimai. Information of the municipal company *Vilniaus Planas*. Vilnius, 2020.

Santrauka

Medinis namas su mezoninu Vilniuje, Užupyje. Atradimai ir praradimai restauruojant

Giedrė Filipavičienė

Reikšminiai žodžiai: medinė architektūra, dailidė, drožyba, dekoras, architektas, restauravimas.

Mediniai priemiesčių namai – nykstantis, savitas kultūros paveldo laukas. Šalia unikalios senamiesčio architektūros, tyrinėjamos ir tvarkomos jau nuo XX a. pradžios, apleisti mediniai priemiesčių statiniai lyg ir nublinksta, daugeliui architektų ir investuotojų tai nereikšmingi, miesto plėtrą stabdantys objektai. Šio straipsnio tikslas – atkreipti dėmesį į medinės architektūros paveldo restauravimo problemas, paskatinti medinius namus tvarkyti išsaugant jų autentiškumą, nebandant jų perdėtai modernizuoti.

Gyvenamasis namas Polocko g. 52 pastatytas 1876 m. Dabartinį vaizdą pastatas įgijo po 1887 m. rekonstrukcijos, kai ant vienaaukščio namo buvo užstatytas puošniai dekoruotas mezoninas ir prie pagrindinio fasado įrengta veranda. XX amžiuje namas buvo kelis kartus remontuotas, tačiau fasado vaizdas išliko nepakitęs iki mūsų dienų.

Pastato apsauga susirūpinta XX amžiaus pabaigoje, tačiau realūs darbai pradėti tik 2006 m., statiniui jau esant priešavarinės būklės – buvo atlikti geologiniai tyrimai, konstrukcijų būklės vertinimas, vizualinė architektūros ir statybos raidos analizė. Kelis dešimtmečius tęsėsi diskusijos dėl būsimos pastato paskirties, buvo ieškoma finansavimo šaltinių restauravimo ir pritaikymo darbams. 2012 m. atliktoje statinio ekspertizėje konstatuota, kad namas yra avarinės būklės ir toliau jį eksploatuoti draudžiama. 2017 m. Vilniaus miesto savivaldybei išpirkus privačius butus ir iškėlus gyventojus, buvo atlikti archeologiniai, konstrukcijų ir polichromijos tyrimai. Tyrimų rezultatai suteikė papildomų duomenų apie namo interjerą – atidengtas spalvingas trafaretinis dekoras, nustatyti trys pagrindiniai dekoravimo etapai.

Papildomai įvertinus atidengtas konstrukcijas nuspręsta, kad pastatą galima restauruoti ne išrenkant sienojus, o tik keičiant pažeistus fragmentus.

2006 m. parengtuose projektuose išsaugota namo pirminė gyvenamoji paskirtis, tačiau ieškant finansavimo šaltinių buvo nagrinėjami pasiūlymai pritaikyti statinį kultūros paskirčiai. 2018 m. spalio 17 d. Vilniaus miesto tarybos sprendimu Nr. 1-1762 nutarta, kad pastate Vilniuje Polocko g. 52 bus įkurtas Medinės miesto architektūros muziejus.

Atsižvelgiant į tyrimų duomenis ir pritaikymo galimybes SI „Vilniaus planas“ architektams teko kelis kartus koreguoti restauravimo ir pritaikymo projektus. Restauravimo darbai buvo pradėti 2020 m., baigti 2021 m. pabaigoje. Daugiausia iššūkių kilo derinant pastangas maksimaliai išsaugoti autentiškas namo konstrukcijas, dekoru elementus ir griežtus visuomeniniams pastatams keliamus priešgaisrinės saugos, pritaikymo žmoniems su negalia reikalavimus.

Apžvelgus namo Polocko g. 52 tvarkybos eigą, svarbu pabrėžti, kad šis procesas – tai dar vienas žingsnis įgyvendinant Vilniaus miesto medinės architektūros apsaugos strategijos programą, nes:

- išsaugotas ir restauruotas profesionalia drožyba išsiskiriantis namas, liudijantis XIX a. pabaigos dailidžių ir stalių meistrystę;
- atliekant tyrimus atidengtas ir restauruotas interjero dekoras atskleidžia miesto medinio paveldo savitumą;
- pastate numatomos veiklos bus skirtos statybos iš medžio Lietuvoje tradicijai palaikyti.