

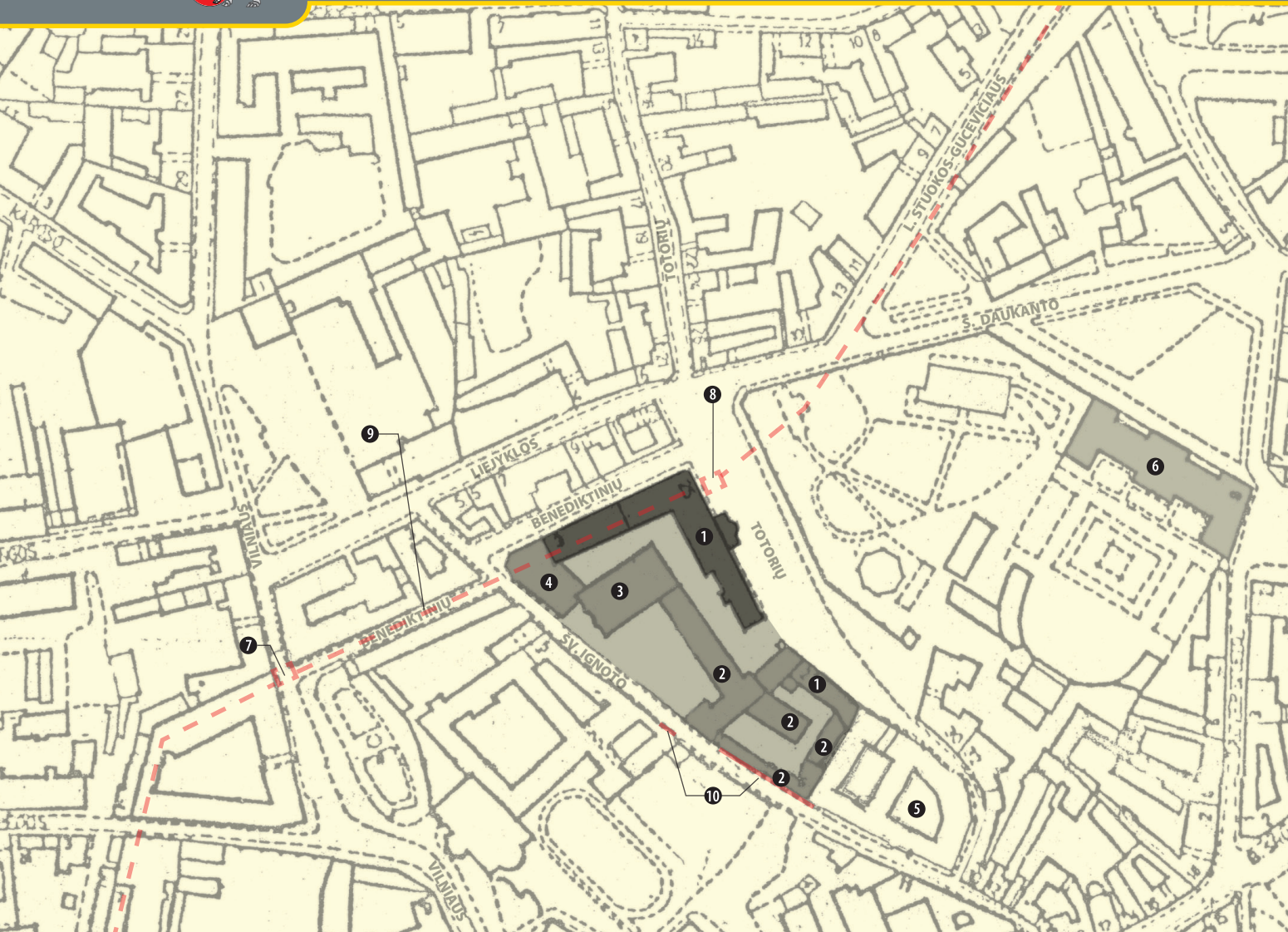


MINISTRY OF NATIONAL DEFENCE



TOTORIŲ STREET 25/3, VILNIUS: HISTORY AND ARCHITECTURE

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Section of the Old Town of Vilnius. The red dotted line indicates the route of the city's defensive wall, the location of the city gates and the known remaining defensive walls built by the citizens in their holdings near Šv. Ignoto Street inside the city. The grey-coloured area marks the territory of the Jesuit Novitiate in 1602-1773 (barracks during 1798-1950) together with the buildings inside it.

➊ The main buildings of the Ministry of National Defence (Totorių Street 25/3); ➋ Technical Library (Šv. Ignoto Street 6); ➌ St. Ignatius Church (Šv. Ignoto Street 6); ➍ private holding – a theatre and a cafe (Šv. Ignoto Street 4); ➎ new building of the Ministry of National Defence (Šv. Ignoto Street 8/29); ➏ Office of the President of the Republic of Lithuania (since 1995). From 1387 until 1795 this was Bishops' Palace, from 1795 until 1914 Palace of the Governor General; ➐ Vilnius (Vilija) Gate; ➑ Tartar Gate; ➒ the city's defensive wall (1503-1803); ➓ defensive walls safeguarding citizens' holdings at Šv. Ignoto Street before the establishment of the monastery (built in the second half of the 15th middle of the 16th centuries).

◀ (on the cover) Facade of the main block of the Ministry of National Defence (around 1895-1897). In front – monument to General Jonas Žemaitis (1999). Photo by Alfredas Piladis.

Totorių Street 25/3: Historical Origins of the Building

Historical Origins of the Building. The architectural ensemble which developed over a period of one and a half century, previously housed the Jesuit Novitiate (1602-1773), occupies almost the whole quarter of the city of Vilnius between Totorių, Šv. Ignoto, and Benediktinių Streets. During 1798-1914 Russian soldiers lived in the former monastery. During 1914-1945 various Polish and German military and administrative institutions had their headquarters there. In the autumn of 1939, after Lithuania recovered Vilnius, Totorių Street 25/3 became the office of the Vilnius Commandant of the Lithuanian Army; its infantry battalion was located close in the barracks which were set up in the former Novitiate. In January - May 1944, Totorių Street 25/3 served as the headquarters of the local self-defence unit.

During Soviet rule, this estate of three centuries was split up. At present it is used by the Ministry of National Defence (Totorių Street 25/3), Technical Library (Šv. Ignoto Street 6) and private holding – a theatre and a cafe (Šv. Ignoto Street 4). The Church of St. Ignatius is also part of this architectural ensemble. The place where the new building is situated (Šv. Ignoto Street 8/29) did not belong to the Jesuit Novitiate. 4 out of 11 blocks that belonged to the Jesuit Novitiate, including the Church of St. Ignatius, now belongs to the Ministry of National Defence.

The central building of the Ministry of National Defence is a three-storey building on the corner of Totorių and Benediktinių Streets, with the L-shaped layout representing the style of Historicism. The central facade is decorated with an elaborate portico with a luxurious driveway. The building boasts many authentic rooms in the monastery's block built at the end of the 17th and at the beginning of the 18th centuries, as well as architectural elements from various periods. The very beautiful vaulted halls are of the Baroque style from the Novitiate period of the second half of the 17th century. Totorių Street 25/3 is the seat of the Minister of National Defence, ministerial departments and other institutions of the National Defence System. This is where Lithuania's defence policy is developed, defence resources are planned, and the National Defence System is managed.

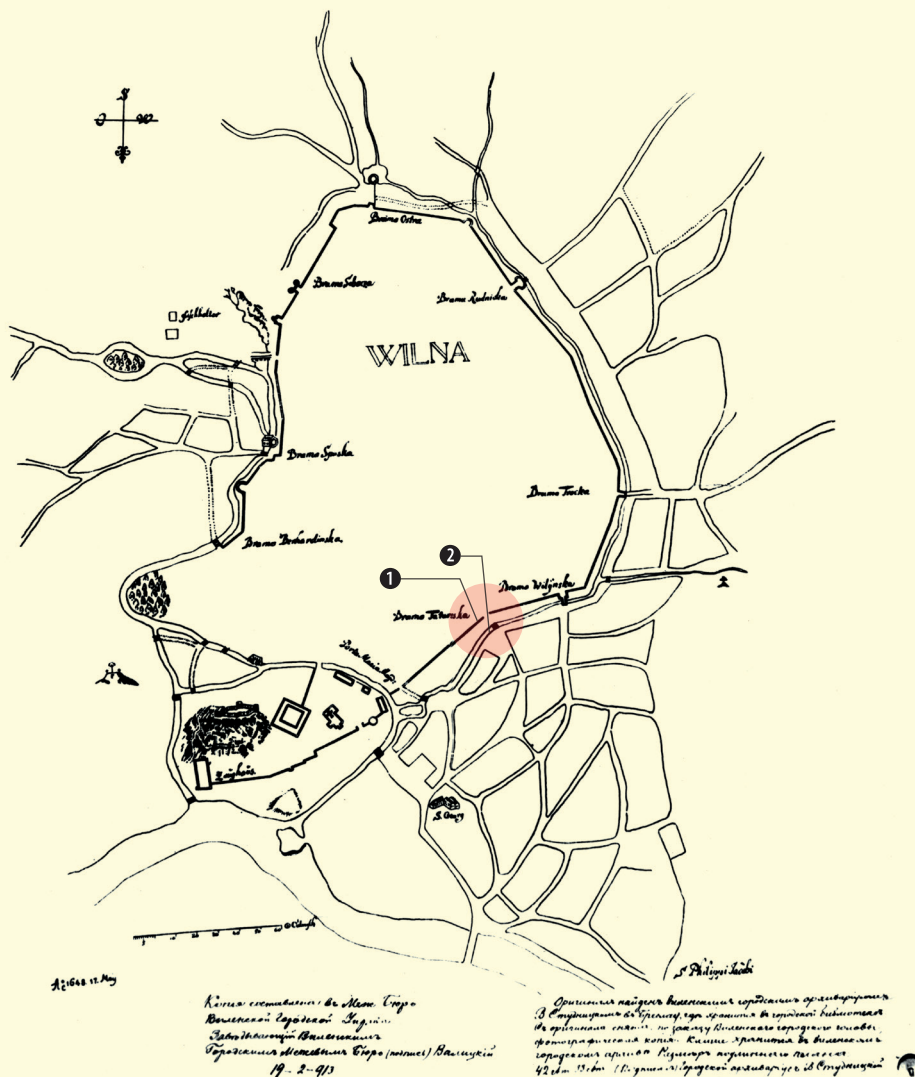
The buildings of the Ministry of National Defence, just like the ensemble of the Jesuit Novitiate as a whole, have been included in the Immovable Cultural Heritage Register of the Republic of Lithuania. Although the ensemble developed and blossomed as an ecclesiastical training and activity centre, its use for defence also stands out as an old and significant tradition in the ensemble's history dating back as early as the beginning of the 16th century. The efforts of previous generations to protect themselves from aggression, as well as continuous preparations for defence, can be seen in the remnants of the defensive wall and the well-preserved defensive wall in Šv. Ignoto Street erected by a citizen in his holding in the middle of the 16th century.



Žalgiris Meeting Room on the 3rd floor. Photo by A. Pliadis



Conference room on the ground floor in the ancient part of the building.
Photo by A. Pliadis



Friedrich Getkant (1614-1666). Plan of Vilnius fortifications (1648).

1 Tartar Gate; 2 Bridge across the Kačerga Brook.

Defensive Wall and Gates of the City.

In one of the rooms of the Ministry of National Defence there is a fragment of the authentic defensive masonry wall of Vilnius built during 1503-1522. The extension of this wall stretched from the site shown on the map, along the middle of Benediktinių Street towards the Vilnius (Vilija) Gate nearby. On the corner of Totorių and Benediktinių Streets, there used to be the Tartar Gate to the city, the remains of which have been buried under the pavement. The street, which used to be a road in earlier days, was named after Tartars because it ran across the suburb populated by Tartars in the 14-15th centuries. From the Tartar Gate, the wall continued towards the corner of the garden of the present Office of the President of Lithuania, and then further on to the castle's defensive walls. There was no square in front of the building; Totorių was a narrow street nestled against the facade of the building at Totorių Street 25/3. Likewise, there was no portico at the central entrance. The monks occasionally complained about the discomfort and clamour caused by the traffic.

After the raids of the Teutonic Order at the end of the 14th century and the Battle of Grünwald (Tannenberg) in 1410, Vilnius was not threatened by anyone for a long time. The city's defensive wall was built in fear of possible assaults by the Crimean Tartars who appeared not far from Vilnius, near Minsk and Ašmena at the end of the 15th century. The city and the country as a whole suffered its greatest losses in the middle of the 17th century. On 8 August 1655 the city was taken by the Russian Army. Back then, Vilnius was one of the largest and richest cities across Central Europe. Torn by internal turmoil and because of the recent outbreak of the war with Sweden and King Jan Casimir's indifference to the defence of the State, the Lithuanian Army was not able to

defend the city. Attempts made on 8 October 1658 and 8 May 1660 to retake the city failed. The Lithuanian Army finally marched into Vilnius on 11 July 1660, although the Russians continued fighting in the castle for 16 months.

The hope was that if it surrendered without resistance in 1655, Vilnius would suffer less. This was a false hope and the city was grievously ravaged and plundered. Historians believe this date to be one of the most tragic pages in the history of Vilnius. Some say that it burned for as long as 17 days and nights. In the opinion of some authors, 25,000 inhabitants died; whereas others believe the death toll to be 14,000. Among the items plundered were articles of gold and silver, furniture, pictures, tapestry, other works of art. Pieces of marble were dismantled and taken away. The archives were also stolen. Shops and markets in Moscow were swamped with jewelry and articles from Vilnius; the price of silver in Moscow plummeted. During the Great Northern War (1700-1721), Swedes entered the city, followed by the French in 1812. The city, the State and its inhabitants would threat each time foreign soldiers appeared.

More than once the city's defensive wall was reinforced both by citizens and foreign invaders. It was modernized even at the end of the 18th century during the uprising led by Tadas Kosciuszka. In the territory of the Jesuit Novitiate, the defensive masonry was built up from both sides or totally demolished in as early as the second half of the 17th century. This was after the 1655-1661 occupation of Vilnius, when the monastery itself was rebuilt. The reasons and circumstances surrounding the demolition remain unknown. It might have been thought that the function of the firing-slits in the former defensive wall could be performed by small windows that resembled firing-slits and were cut high above in the facade of the current Benediktinių Street. Also, the slope of the Kačerga Brook reinforced with logs and stones could help with the defence.

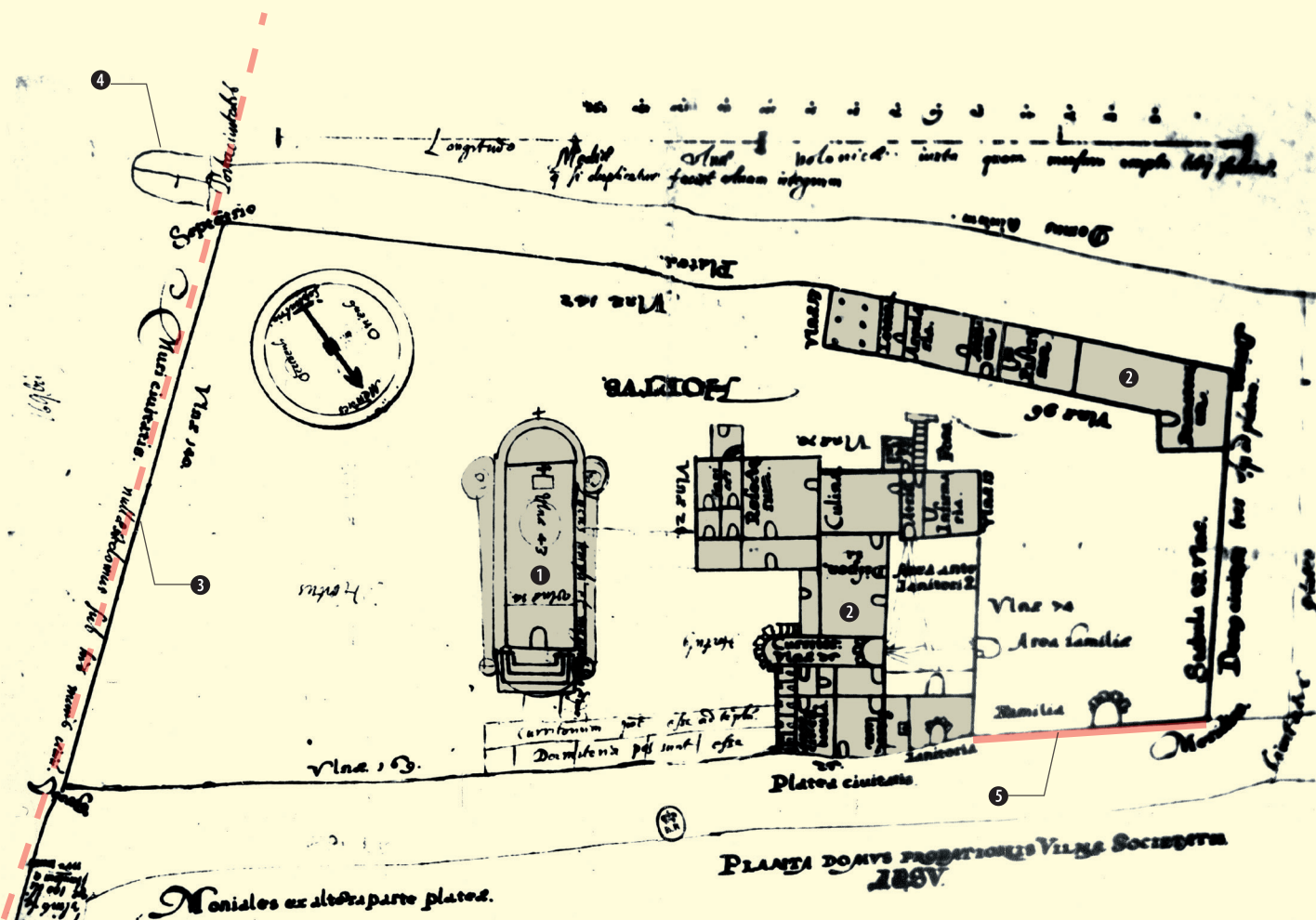
All the city gates apart from Medininkų (Aušros), together with the city's defensive wall, were demolished in 1799-1803 for the purposes of "hygiene and city area extension". In the southern part of the Old Town several segments of the defence wall are still remaining. The city gate architecture can be traced from the 18th century pictures, as, for example, the former gates at Totorių 25/3. Neither image of the Tartar Gate, nor any information on how it may have looked is available. Written sources allow us to assume that the Gate must have been a huge three-storey rectangular defensive tower construction, nestled against the north-eastern corner of the Jesuit monastery. The entry arch was wide but low, one heading towards Totorių Street. It could be accessed across a massive stone bridge over the watery Kačerga Brook. During the Kosciuszka's uprising in 1794, the first and the second floors of the Gate were occupied by eighty-six soldiers.



Fragment of the defensive wall built by a citizen in his holding at Šv. Ignoto Street. The firing-slits and the gate have been well preserved. The building standing at this wall was built in the 17th century. Photo by A. Pliadis.



Tartar Gate (1892). By Juozas Kamarauskas. The original architecture of the Gate was Gothic. The Gate was nestled against the corner of Totorių Street 25/3. This picture of the Tartar Gate was drawn 90 years after it had been demolished, when its exact location was no longer known. The picture therefore seems to use the nearby Vilija Gate as a reference. The shape of openings, the dimensions of the Gate and the construction design of the closing mechanisms of the Vilija and Medininkai (Aušros) gates, including the Tartar and other gates of the city, seem to have been identical. Beyond the Gate, the facades of Totorių Street 25/3 buildings can be seen. The facades changed after the reconstruction between 1895-1897.



Plan of the Jesuit Novitiate. The card files of the French National Library in Paris hold the original of this plan and 1604 is mentioned as the date of the drawing. The plan indicates buildings already present at the moment of establishing of the monastery and also shows the first new constructions. In the plan there are inscriptions in Latin naming the purpose of the monastery's buildings. There are also indications of the city gates, Totoriq and Sv. Ignoto Streets, the city's defensive wall, and the size of the land and buildings in cubits. At the beginning of the 17th century and until the middle of the 19th century, Totoriq Street was similar to St. Ignoto Street in terms of its width. In the area of the main buildings of the Ministry of National Defence, there are no buildings belonging to the monastery.

The territory shown on the plan was developed after the fire of 1610, during 1611-1614. The date of the plan indicated in the card file is unlikely to be accurate. If, at the time of the plan's drawing, the church was already under construction, it should belong to the period starting after 1622.

- 1 Church of St. Ignatius (plan from the beginning of the 17th century);
- 2 Gothic and Renaissance buildings stood prior to the establishment of the monastery;
- 3 The city's defensive wall;
- 4 Tartar Gate;
- 5 defensive wall built by a citizen in his holding from the middle of the 16th century that functioned until the establishment of the monastery.

Establishment of the Jesuit Novitiate. In 1568 Bishop Valerijonas Protasevičius invited Jesuits to Lithuania to help in the fight against the Reformation. Well-trained and motivated fighters were needed. Disputes and sermons were used to assert the truth. Jesuit novices and the ecclesiastical school for monks were moved from Pollock (now Belarus) to Vilnius together with their teachers and in 1602-1604 started to settle in two buildings on Šv. Ignoto Street. At that time, this was the quarter of citizens' land plots with many brick and wooden residential houses and auxiliary premises built at various times. The buildings were renovated and a temporary chapel was constructed. After the 1610 fire of Vilnius, the monastery acquired several adjacent land plots, thus forming the monastery's vast territory, which remained unchanged until the middle of the 20th century.

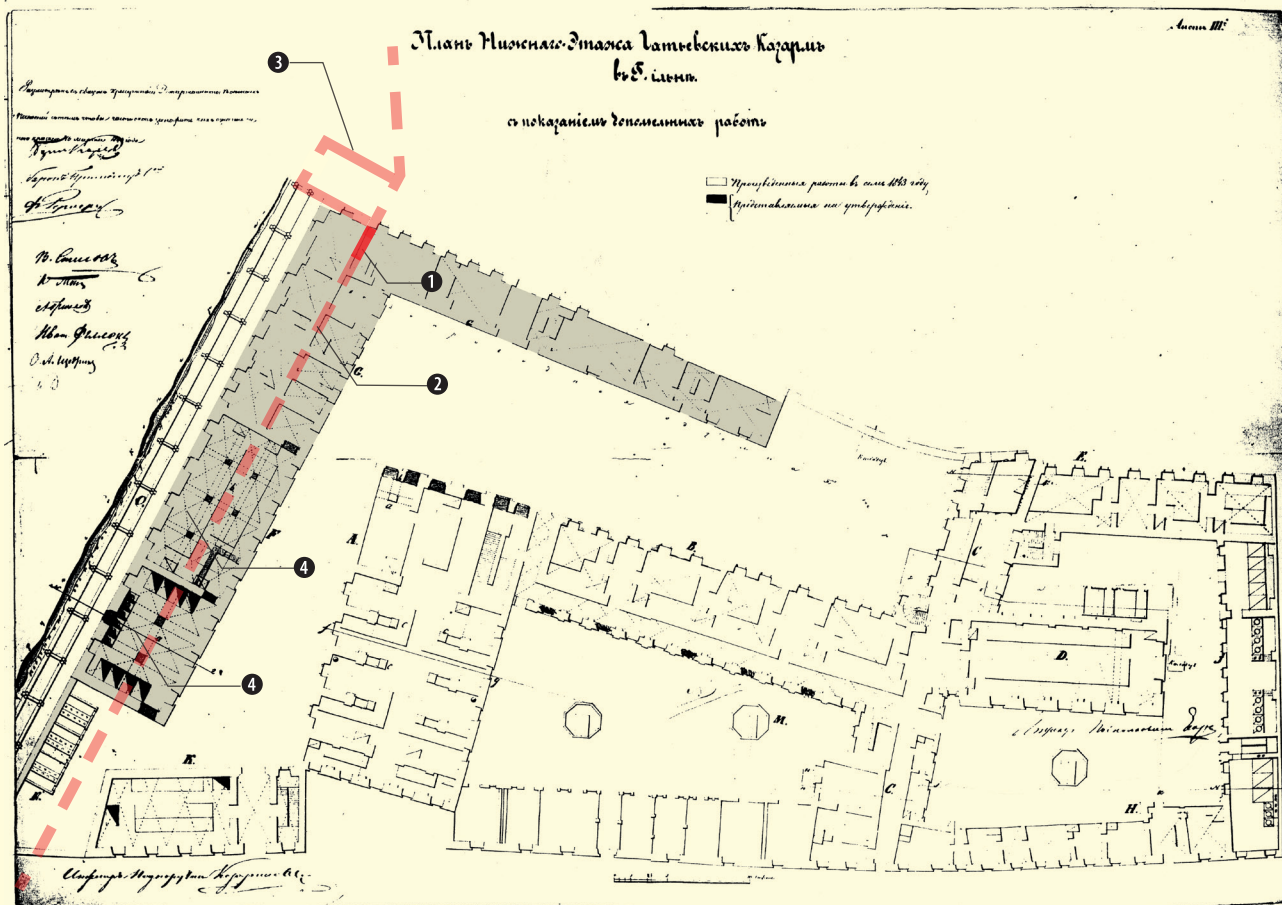
Despite the existing defensive wall around the city, many of the residential houses acquired by the monastery looked like strongholds. Windows were scarce along ground-level facades, entrances to the buildings and windows were from the courtyard. Above the gates from the street into the courtyards there were some kind of fortifications the style of which depended on the period of construction. At Šv. Ignoto Street 6, the largest private defensive wall still surviving in Lithuania was discovered and restored. This wall was used to defend the unusually large property of a citizen. High on top of the wall there were firing-slits and a fighting path from the courtyard's side. The firing-slits were very densely distributed particularly above the entrance gate into the courtyard. Later on, on the opposite side of the same street, the gate to a citizen's estate was discovered. It had been built before the city's defensive wall and featured firing-slits on the top. Several gates were also discovered in Aušros Vartų Street with an identical defensive system. In the 17th century firing-slits were circular and ornate, but still had firing galleries inside the courtyards. Between the 15th and 17th centuries people felt safe only behind well-reinforced walls prepared for defence.

Following the establishment of the Novitiate, the firing-slits in Šv. Ignoto Street were walled up. It seems that the monks felt protected by the high windowless walls facing the street, along with the fact that they belonged to a holy order. During the expansion of the monastery, fragments of the old Gothic and Renaissance buildings were incorporated into the newly built ensemble. Other parts were demolished. Most of the authentic Gothic and Renaissance buildings or fragments therein, have been preserved in the masonry of the Technical Library. Around 1620-1622 the keystones of the church and the new blocks of the monastery were laid. Continuous construction and reconstruction after fires and wars prompted a good deal of redesigning right up until the closure of the monastery in 1773. By this time the Baroque was already the prevalent architectural style.



◀ Western view to the ensemble of the Jesuit Novitiate.

In the centre – the main block of the Novitiate. The building at Totorių Street 25/3 is obstructed by the Church of St. Ignatius. The arcade was uncovered and restored during 1976-1985 by adjusting the ensemble's blocks at Šv. Ignoto Street to the needs of the Technical Library. Photo by Gintautas Trimakas (1998).



Plan of the barracks in accordance with reconstruction designs, 1848. From all the available plans of the 19th century, this plan, with the dotted line showing the elements to be redesigned, best reflects the outlines of rooms and buildings from the monastery period: the block of the Ministry of National Defence at Totorių Street is rather narrow with a wooden gallery; the main premises at Benediktinių Street still have undestroyed vaults and marked pillars. Black spots in the scheme mark works designed in 1848. No plans from the second half of the 17th century and to the 18th century are available.

In the place of the current Benediktinių Street, the bank of the brook is marked with the inscription 'Kačērga River'. From the plan it can be seen that the brook flowed very close by the walls of the building, and the banks were fortified with wooden constructions. At the beginning of the 19th century the brook had already been turned into a wastewater ditch.

① Fragment of the city's defensive wall now displayed in one of the offices; ② Path of the defensive wall in the block of the Ministry of National Defence from Benediktinių Street; preserved foundations or small fragments of the wall; ③ The outline of the Tartar Gate; ④ The former warehouses, stables and carts sheds of the monastery. The vaults that had been destroyed in about 1861 were reconstructed in 2002. The two grey-coloured blocks are the buildings of the Ministry of National Defence at Totorių Street 25/3.

Totorių Street 25/3: Monastery Period

The church and the monastery burned down during one of the most devastating fires in 1737. During 1738-1765 the Novitiate was rebuilt and expanded. Many of the wooden ceilings were replaced by vaults to provide future fire protection.

The Jesuits mostly focused on the church. Historical sources depict the church as one of the most beautiful churches in Vilnius. The reconstruction after the fire in 1748-1750 was directed by the Lithuanian astronomer, mathematician and architect, Jesuit Tomas Žebrauskas (1714-1758). Corner chapels were raised, new altars of artificial marble were erected, and the vaults were decorated with rococo stucco mouldings and paintings. The church acquired features of the Rococo style.

Architecture of the Building at Totorių Street 25/3 and its Use During the Monastery Period. The construction of the block at Totorių Street 25/3 began around the middle of the 17th century, and subsequently rebuilt and expanded after the war with Moscow. During the early monastery period, the building was constructed using masonry of two Baroque buildings of the 17th century. The building was renovated after the great city fire in 1737. For over one-and-a-half century, the building's architecture remained unchanged.

Until 1895-1897, Totorių Street 25/3 used to be a two-storey building linked with other constructions at Totorių Street and covered with a high-tiled gable roof. Part of the block at Benediktinių Street was one-storey. The ground floor facing the street was windowless, which was a typical feature of monastery architecture. The only windows were on the first floor high above the street. All entrances and windows were designed to face the courtyard. Almost all rooms on the ground and first floors had vaults, almost all of them with an entrance from the courtyard. Since the building was narrow and did not have a corridor, the first floor could be accessed from the wooden gallery built on the first floor. In those days, instead of the present main entrance into the building, there used to be a small secondary gate between Totorių Street 25/3 and the church. The main entrance into the same courtyard and the subsequent system of monastery courtyards was on the western facade of St. Ignacijus street. The redesign of the building started in order to turn the ensemble of the Jesuit Novitiate into barracks.



Cellars. In one such cellar, monastery beer was brewed. It seems that the low opening cut out in the niche was used to release water into the Kačerga Brook. In the cellar there are stairs leading down from the courtyard. There used to be a well in the nearby courtyard. Photo by A. Pliadis.



Fragment of the city's defensive wall in one of the offices. Uncovered in 1993. The niche was cut out at the end of the 19th century. Photo by A. Pliadis.

A photograph showing the interior of a large, vaulted brick hall. The structure is composed of numerous brick arches supported by thick brick pillars. The lighting is warm, highlighting the texture of the bricks. In the background, there is a dark, arched opening, possibly an entrance or a doorway, with some wooden scaffolding visible. The floor appears to be dirt or concrete, and there are some construction materials scattered around.

The hall in the block at Benediktinių Street – (now White Hall of the Ministry of National Defence). In this building there were two rooms of similar size and architecture, with an entrance gate from the courtyard. Historical sources claim that these were used as warehouses, cart sheds and stables. The building was plastered and had wooden floors. Picture was taken during the restoration in 2002. Photo by Evaldas Purlys.

Totorių Street 25/3: Monastery Period

Although the preserved architecture from the monastery period is indeed remarkable, the building at Totorių Street 25/3 originally had a range of uses. It housed workshops, auxiliary premises and warehouses. Parts of the first floor were residential. Documents from the end of the 18th century show that during the last years of the monastery's existence in the buildings at Benediktinių Street there used to be a Novitiate's gate, stables, cart sheds and carpenter shops. In the block at Totorių Street there were shoe and clothes storage areas, a malt kiln and brewery, distillery and a small mead distillery. A description of a malt fermentation room with a huge bath and grain-drying room close to the malt kiln has survived. Nearby was a brewery with two brick fireplaces that had brick hood chimneys. From here along the floor, pipes were laid to pour beer down into the cellar and into barrels. In the courtyard, near the brewery, there stood a water pump. The cellars, preserved to this date, have been unearthed and restored.

In 1705 during the Great Northern War, Vilnius was visited by the Russian Tsar Peter the Great and his entourage. The guests visited smith and blacksmith shops of the Jesuits Novitiate (now the Ministry of National Defence, Totorių Street 25/3). As attested by people of the time, Peter the Great seems to have been highly interested in wood-turning machines, shops, etc. These shops and their equipment must have been of outstanding quality, if they generated such interest amongst tsars and kings.

At the main entrance, under the floors of the present Black Hall, a unique hot-air floor-heating centre and furnace from the 17th century has been discovered and is on display. The heat coming from the furnace would warm the stones, while hot air and smoke would travel through the plastered flues, thus heating the floor. This furnace, installed in the monastery period, is a unique archaeological finding. There are few such heating systems in Lithuania which have survived to this day. The heating flues at Totorių Street 25/3 have not been preserved. However, in one of the central blocks of the monastery, many underground flues of various shapes have been found, one of them at Šv. Ignoto Street 6. The monastery might have had several systems which would heat the main rooms or groups of rooms of the Novitiate. The principal means of heating in the monastery would have been a furnace.



Furnace of the monastery's hypocaust underground heating system of the 17th century in the cellar near the present main entrance. The heating ducts of this cellar used to heat part of the buildings at Totorių Street. The furnace space was covered with a vault which was connected with the ducts. In the photo on the right the remnants of the vault may be seen. The stones lie on the furnace's vaults under which the fire was lit. The furnace was partly demolished and filled up in the second half of the 19th century and was unearthed in 2000. The vault on the left corner of the photo shows the wall foundation of the end of the 19th century. Photo by A. Pliadis.



The stairs were made into the first floor. Uncovered in 1999. The vault, steps and plaster on the walls are authentic, dating back to the end of the 17th and beginning of the 18th century. The purpose of the stairs remains unknown. They were cut out in the wall at the monastery's main staircase which has not been preserved. In the second half of the 19th century, most of the staircase was filled with scrap bricks. Photo by A. Pliadis.



The project for rising up the barracks at Totorių Street was made in 1848. On the right - the main building of the Ministry of National Defence (Totorių Street 25/3). In the background, the former church (since the middle of the 19th century a military officers' club) with little walls imitating towers at the back. In the symmetrical axis of the church, there is an entrance to the Totorių Street 25/3 building which was turned into the main entrance to the church after 1893 or 1897. It seems that the project of 1848 was not fully implemented because several upper floors were not built. The original of the design is deposited at Moscow's War History Archives.

Establishment of the Barracks. Architectural Variations. In 1773, the school of Jesuit monks was closed by the Pope's Bull banishing the Jesuit Order. For some time the ensemble belonged to the Educational Commission; later the former monastery housed a diocesan ecclesiastical seminary. In 1795 the bishop chapter's archives were moved in. Following the Third Partition of the Republic of Lithuania and Poland in 1795 when Lithuania was incorporated into the Russian Empire, the Russian army's Preobrazhensk Regiment settled in the former Jesuit Novitiate in 1798. The Jesuit Novitiate premises as well as the church were turned into barracks. At the beginning of the 19th century the church space was split into three quartering several hundred soldiers.

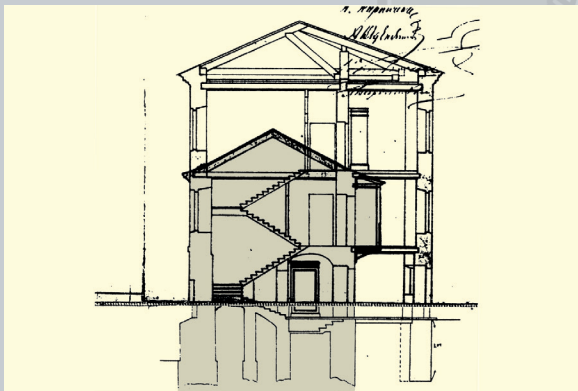
In 1819 at Totorių Street 25/3, apartments were made and fitted-out for high-ranking officers. The former block of auxiliary buildings was turned into one of the most beautiful buildings of the barracks. It is believed that the redesign was planned by the Italian architect Pietro de Rossi (1760-1814). The building's structure and size was not altered at that time.

The most detrimental reconstruction of the architectural ensemble was carried out around 1843-1848. The areas worst affected were the central buildings of the monastery, as the size, exterior, layout, height and roof shapes were altered. The arcades of the central block were also walled up. There was so much manual work done in order to restore the ensemble at Šv. Ignoto Street and adjust it to the needs of the Technical Library, a lot of research had to be undertaken. The block at Totorių Street which is now numbered as 25/3,

Totorių Street 25/3: Establishment of the Barracks

was reconstructed as follows: windows were cut out on both sides or were re-arranged, the vaults of the large halls in the single-storey block of the buildings at Benediktinių Street were demolished, many new openings were cut into the former defensive wall, and the roofs and their shapes were changed.

The present architecture resulted from the re-arrangement of the military officers' club at the Church of St. Ignatius around 1895-1897. It was planned to link the main hall of the officers' club with the buildings at Totorių Street 25/3, and to transfer the main entrance from Šv. Ignoto Street to the newly formed square nearby. Across the spacious yard, a grand staircase was constructed which was needed due to the different heights of the pavements of the church and the building at Totorių Street 25/3. A lobby was built with two entrances from the square. The entrance to the hall and building was accentuated by an open porch with columns supporting the balcony, and an imposing driveway to the doors. According to the art critic Nijolė Lukšionytė-Tolvaišienė, this building is characteristic of the architect Kiprijonas Maculevičius, a graduate of the St. Petersburg Academy of Fine Arts. In the description of this place, only two interior designers are mentioned: the author of stucco mouldings, Voznickij and painter Stšaleckij, who painted a fresco in the staircase depicting the goddess Minevra and a view from the Vilnius Castle Hill above the scene. The central stairs were made of marble; the hall was decorated in the Chinese style, and the Grand Hall (former church) in the French Renaissance style. When the military officers' club was being established and later redesigned, the work was so devastating that during the restoration of the church between 1926-1929, even after removing all of the layers of plaster, almost no architectural elements were found which could have helped to reproduce authentic shapes. As a result of two major reconstructions completed in the second half of the 19th century, no trace was left of the richest church of Vilnius. The present architecture of the church is of a pseudo baroque style, created at the moment of the church's restoration. Architects Julij Klos and later Pavel Vendziagolskij did not attempt to restore the original Baroque architecture of the Church of St. Ignatius. After the restoration, the stairs that used to link the church with Totorių Street 25/3 were demolished. After World War II the building housed the military commissariat of the soviet authorities.



One of the designs for the expansion and rising of the building at Totorių Street 25/3. The cross-section of the block at Totorių Street depicts the silhouette of the building with a wooden gallery in the courtyard, from the monastery period before reconstruction. The original design is kept at Moscow's War History Archives.



Stairs leading into the lobby from the main entrance. The portico at the central facade, the solemn architecture of the lobby, and the two entrances into the building were formed during 1895-1897 when an entrance to the military officers' club hall (now the Church of St. Ignatius) was created. Photo by A. Pliadis.



The Black Hall which was above the furnace of the hypocaust underground heating system. The glass floor reveals the remnants of the furnace. Patina from the 17th and 18th centuries can be seen on the walls and ceilings. Currently, the room is used for official ceremonies. Photo by A. Pliadis.

Ministry of National Defence. New Look at Cultural Heritage. In 1990, part of the architectural ensemble of the former Jesuit Novitiate was turned into the premises of the National Defence Department. The building was found in a state of serious disrepair. The renovation of the building carried out in several stages during 1992-2001, revealed cracked vaults and damaged walls. Apart from the reinforcement of the building and adjustments to its engineering system, the renovation aimed at exposing the ensemble's cultural value: uncovering unique spaces and layout structure and displaying the most precious elements of the old architecture. The remnants of the heating furnace have been unearthed and are now on display; fragments of the defensive wall have been uncovered, and the vaults of several premises restored. Significant effort was required to restore the authentic structure of the lobby of the main building and its fairly recent architecture (1895-1897). Attempts were made to preserve the authenticity of the old architecture and materials.

Considering the historic and cultural value of the ensemble, experts in immovable cultural properties nominated the building of the Ministry of National Defence, including the adjacent buildings of the Jesuit Novitiate, a cultural monument of the Republic of Lithuania. In 2002, for the maintenance of the building and disclosure of its cultural value, the Ministry of National Defence was awarded a diploma from the Department for the Protection of Cultural Heritage. This honour is given to the best-managed enterprises and institutions located in Lithuania's Old Towns and historical centres.

The compendium of historic and architectural development is based on the study of historical archives conducted by Julija Racevičienė in 1970 and Sigita Gasparavičienė in 1970-2001, as well as on the architectural research (stonework architecture) conducted by architect Evaldas Purlys.



Cracks in the vaults and walls uncovered during the last renovation. The building may have been damaged following the reconstruction at the end of the 19th century when the height of the building was increased. Photo by E. Purlys.



One of the offices in the old part of the building after renovation. Photo by A. Pliadis

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Diploma awarded by the Department
of Cultural Heritage under the Ministry of Culture
of the Republic of Lithuania for the best-managed
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Evaldas Purlys

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