

Nikolay Alexandrovich Lvov
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NIKOLAY LVOV'S ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE

NOTES FOR THE ESSAY:

“Exploring the ideology of Nikolay Lvov's Palladian church architecture and its influence on the identity formation of the Russian élite during the reign of Empress Catherine II.”

THIS ENGLISH TEXT
WAS TRANSLATED FROM RUSSIAN WIKIPEDIA
AND EDITED WITH THE ASSISTANCE
OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND OTHER
LANGUAGE GENERATING SOFTWARES

A COMPREHENSIVE LIST OF BUILDINGS CONSTRUCTED OR DESIGNED BY NIKOLAY LVOV

The images follow the sequence below:

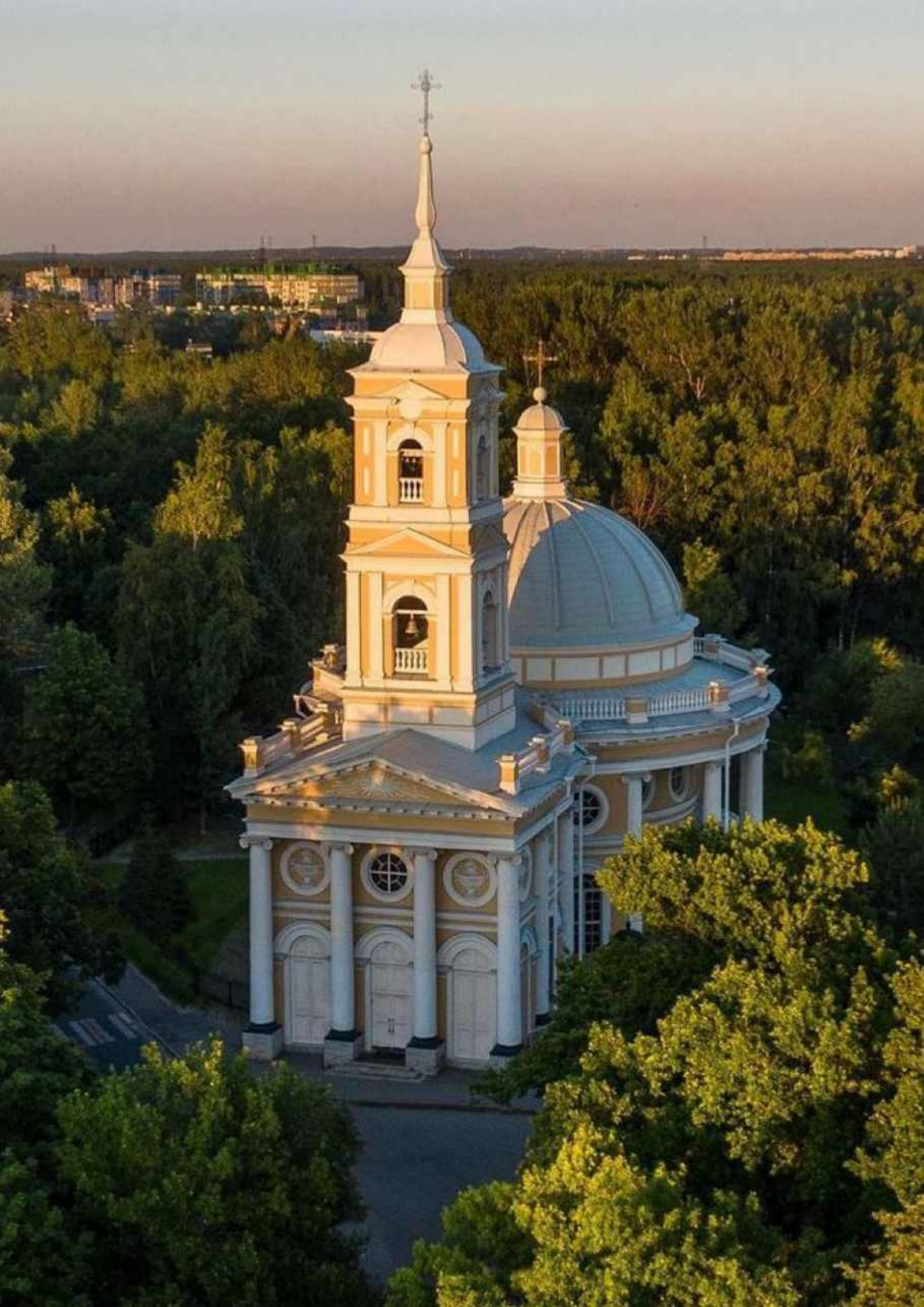
1. History of the building
2. Initial architectural plans or engravings from the time
3. Photos or drawings from the Russian Empire period
4. Photos taken during and after the Bolshevik Revolution
5. Photos of the building and its interiors in its current state
6. Aerial photographs of the site and the building
7. Restoration projects, if any



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ABSTRACT

The following appendix and documents is an extensive anthology of various works by Nikolay Alexandrovich Lvov (1753-1804), dubbed the "Russian Leonardo" for a reason. My first acquaintance with Nikolay Lvov dates back for quite a few years, probably around when I was 13 or 14, and I was completely taken by surprise, of a pleasant nature, by the fact that such an incredible person existed in the history of culture. He was, apart from being an architect, an engineer, poet, diarist, musician, statesman, ethnographer. A man of many talents in whom I see the very apex of what the Russian enlightenment produced. An "Homo Universalis" in the truest sense of the word. Many of his architectural works lie in ruins or have been destroyed during the Soviet Period. Hence in a sense the fact that I chose Nikolay Lvov may be attributed to my desire to making this relatively unknown architect in the West more known and raise awareness to the plight of such a rich architectural heritage. My relationship with Palladianism has dated back even longer, with English Palladianism having exerted an unparalleled influence on me, it still does, reflected in the fact that I even went as far as designing my own Palladian Rotunda. The anthology will hopefully provide readers a more holistic understanding, a spatial dimension of Nikolay Lvov's work and enable the reader to immerse themselves into the charming world of Nikolay Lvov.

Paul Ostroverhy



ST.PETERSBURG

CHURCH OF ELIJAH THE PROPHET IN POROHVYH.

Background

In 1715, far from the city, where this church now stands, the Okhtinsky gunpowder factories were founded. In 1717, a wooden chapel was built on their territory, consecrated in the name of St. Elijah the Prophet. In 1721, the chapel was dismantled and in its place, construction began on a wooden church of Elijah the Prophet, consecrated in 1722. In 1742-1743, the wooden church was replaced by a wider wooden one, but on a stone foundation, the Church of Elijah the Prophet. Its consecration took place on July 18, 1743. In 1760, a warm winter chapel was added to the church, consecrated in the name of Dmitry Rostovsky on December 27, 1760. A small cemetery was founded within the church fence.

The construction of the church that stands there now began in 1782. The church was built according to the design of the architect Nikolai Lvov, presumably with the participation of Ivan Starov. It was completed and consecrated in 1785.

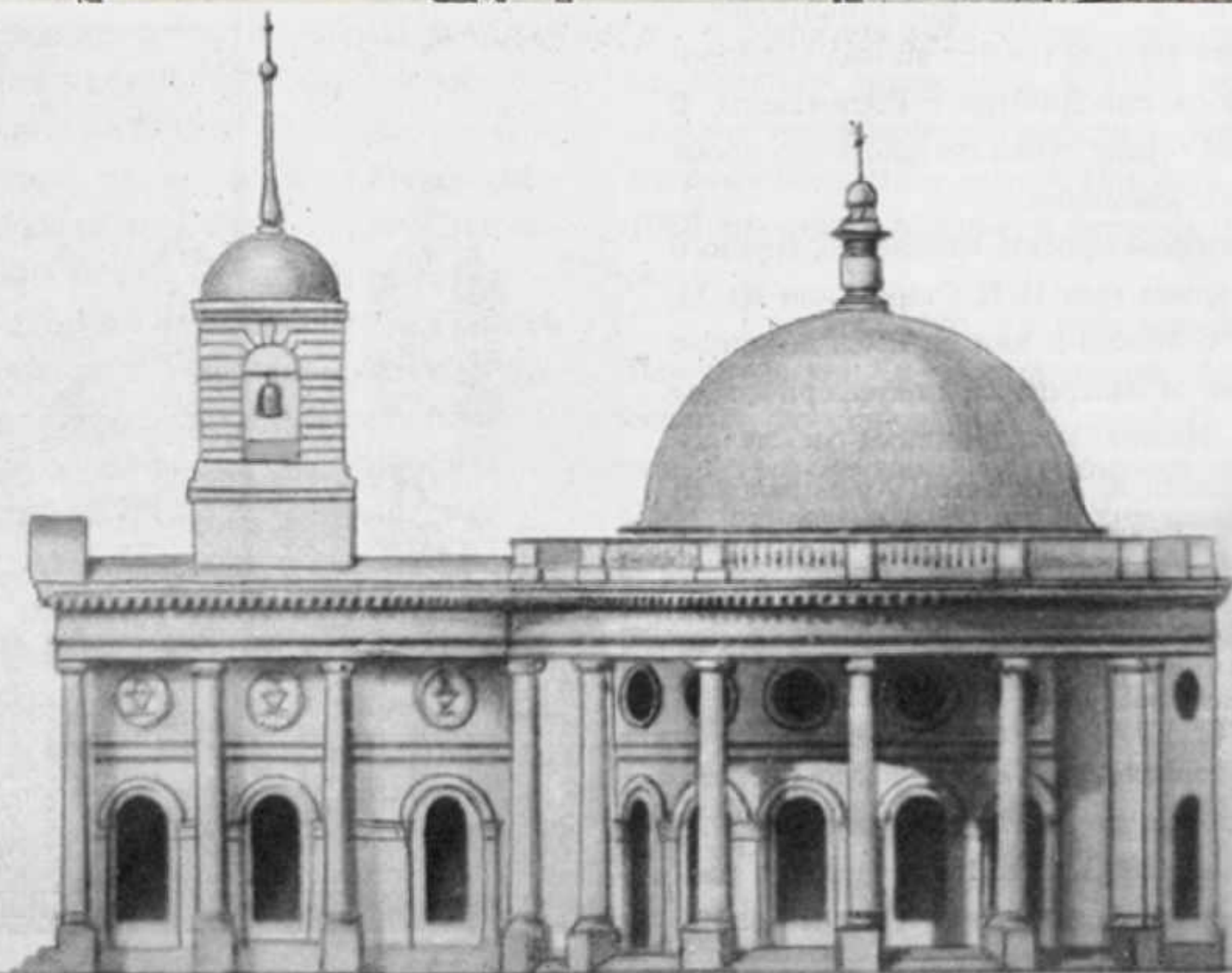
Architecture

The Ilyinskaya Church was built in the style of early Russian classicism and is a round rotunda surrounded by a colonnade of sixteen Ionic columns. The walls are painted yellow. Between the two columns there are windows: arched at the bottom and round at the top. A round balustrade runs along the edge of the roof. A little closer to the center of the roof there is a squat black dome on a low, almost absent drum. The dome is crowned with a lantern with a cross. Inside the church hall there are no pylons dividing the hall into naves. The entire hall is painted blue, imitating the sky. In the center of the ceiling there is a large image of Jesus Christ.

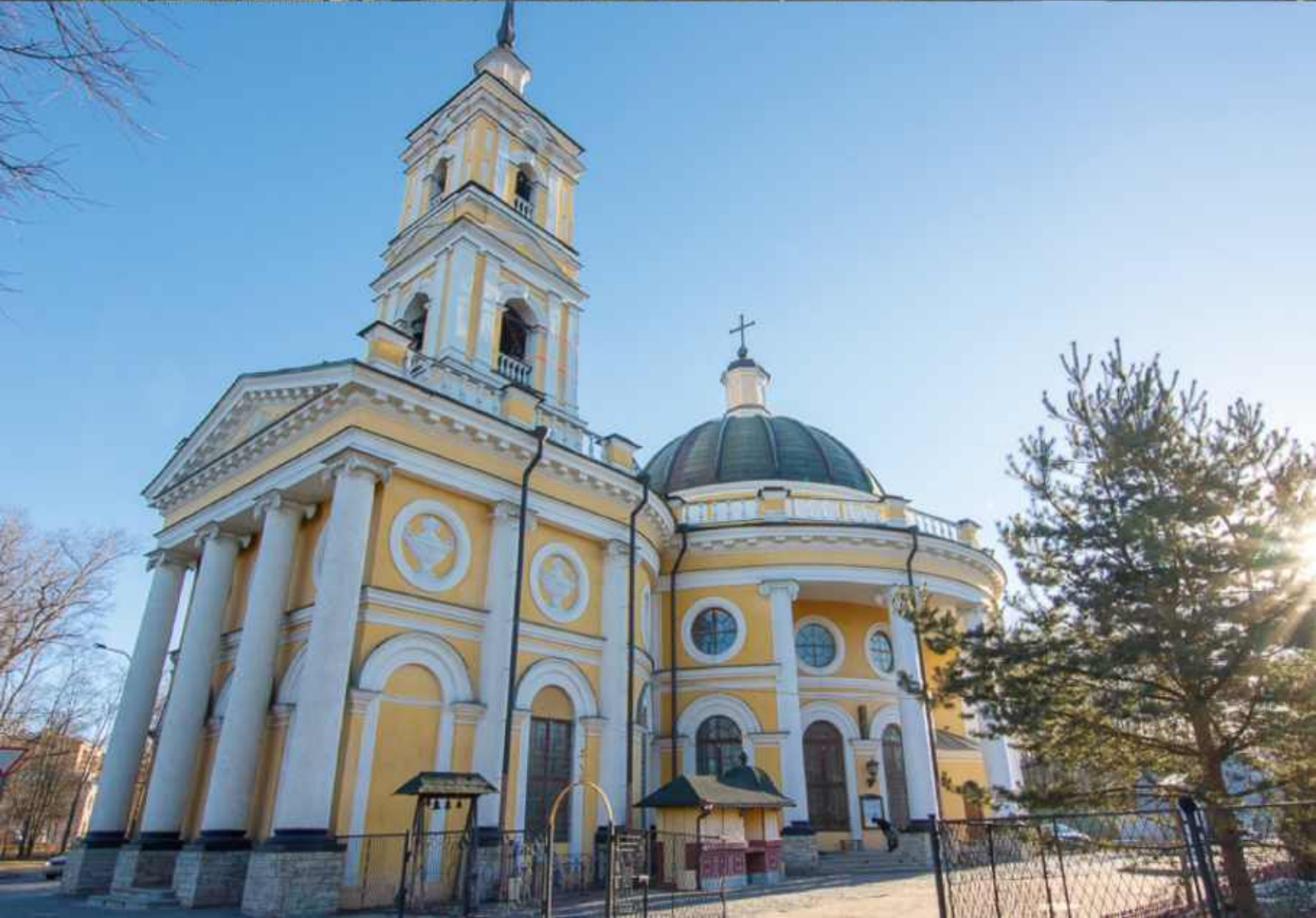
History

View of the church and bell tower from a drone, 2022

In 1805-1806, according to the design of the architect Fyodor Demertsov, a warm side chapel was added to the church, consecrated in the name of Alexander Nevsky. The front facade of the extension was decorated with a four-column Ionic portico with a triangular pediment. This side chapel and the main volume of the church were not combined into a single whole, but were located close to each other. The northern and southern facades of the extension are decorated with two Ionic columns. A single-tier bell tower with a spire rose above this extension. In 1875-1877, the Alexander Nevsky side chapel was united with the main building of the church by constructing an apse in the eastern part of the side chapel and a narthex in the western part of the church. In 1901-1902, another reconstruction of the church was carried out, during which the bell tower was built up by one tier and the shape of the dome was slightly changed. The minor consecration of the rebuilt church took place on July 8, 1911. The bell tower is decorated with pilasters, both tiers on each side are completed by a triangular pediment. The second tier is completed by a small dome. Its top, in turn, is a lantern crowned with a spire with a cross. On May 8, 1923, the church was given the status of a cathedral. From that moment until 1938, the church belonged to the Renovationists. On July 11, 1938, the Ilyinsky Cathedral was closed, its building was transferred to the Moscow Patriarchate. In 1974, a fire occurred in the church building. In 1983, after the fire, restoration of the church began, in 1988 it was returned to the diocese. The Royal Doors from the iconostasis of the Great Church of the Winter Palace (1762) were installed in the altar barrier of the main aisle [1]. On December 22, 1988, the Alexander Nevsky aisle, which was not damaged by the fire, was consecrated. In 1989, the main church was consecrated and is still in operation today.









CHURCH OF THE HOLY TRINITY, KNOWN UNDER THE NAME "KULICH AND PASKHA"

History

The Church of the Holy Trinity is known under the name "Kulich and Paskha", which was given to it by the architectural solution - the ensemble of the church is made in the form of Easter dishes - kulich and paskha. The idea to give the building the shape of kulich and paskha belongs to the customer of the construction, Prosecutor General Alexander Vyazemsky, the owner of the village of Aleksandrovskeye, the site of the construction of the church. From an architectural and compositional point of view, the unusual shape of the bell tower for Russian art reproduces the Pyramid of Cestius in Rome.

It was created, according to many architectural historians, under the impression of the architect Lvov's trip to Italy in 1781.

In the same way, the round church in plan is associated with the round temples of Vesta in Rome and Tivoli, which were studied and sketched by the architect Lvov. Italian prototypes were also known to Russian architects from the engravings of Giovanni Piranesi and A. Parboni.

Despite all its originality, the church, built as an estate church, turned out to be inconvenient for worship as a parish church. To increase the area of the church, in 1858 a narthex was added to the entrance, and a vestibule to the altar.

In 1874, the future Supreme Ruler of Russia, Admiral Alexander Kolchak, was baptized in this church. The document about his birth testifies:

...in the 1874 register of the Trinity Church in the village of Aleksandrovsky, St. Petersburg district, under No. 50, it is shown: Naval artillery of Staff Captain Vasily Ivanovich Kolchak and his legal wife Olga Ilyinichna Kolchak, both Orthodox and first-married, had a son, Alexander, born on November 4 and baptized on December 15, 1874. His godparents were: naval staff captain Alexander Ivanovich Kolchak and the widow of the collegiate secretary Darya Filippovna Ivanova.

During Soviet times

The church was one of the few churches in Leningrad that functioned for a long time during the Soviet era (before the Great Terror). On October 10, 1937, its rector, Archpriest Leonid Dyakonov, was arrested and executed on December 5[7]. In March 1938, the church was closed and began to be used as a club. At the same time, all of its furnishings were destroyed; including the icon of the Holy Trinity, which had been the main relic of the church for many years (this icon was donated by the peasants of the village of Aleksandrovskeye in 1824), which disappeared without a trace. Eight years later, on April 17, 1946, the church reopened for services. (Permission to open it was received in November 1945, the clergy were appointed on December 10, 1945). The solemn consecration of the church was performed on June 1 by Metropolitan Gregory of Leningrad and Novgorod. All the relics currently kept in the church were collected from other churches. Thus, the blue and gold iconostasis from the mid-18th century was transferred from the Annunciation Church on Vasilievsky Island, from the chapel in the name of the Conception of John the Baptist located in the choir of this church.

Photograph from the 1960s

Currently, the church houses a particularly revered icon of the Mother of God "Joy of All Who Sorrow" (with pennies), which was brought by private individuals who kept it after the closure of the church in 1932, created in honor of this icon near the former Glass Factory on the Neva, where it was located until the destruction of this church in 1934 [8].

The icon of St. Nicholas the Wonderworker (also especially revered) located on the left kliros, which was previously located in the Nikolskaya cemetery church in the city of Kolpino, was transferred to the church in December 1947 by the Piskarev sisters, residents of Kolpino, who kept it during the war. On December 13, 2013, this icon was transported to the Trinity Cathedral in Kolpino, where it has been located since then in a shrine, on the south side of the altar.













ST.PETERSBURG

THE NEVSKY GATES OF PETROVAVLOSK FORTERESS

History

The first wooden gates and a pier were built here in 1714–1716. In the early 1720s, the gates were rebuilt in stone by the architect Domenico Trezzini.

On August 30, 1723, a ceremony was held in front of the Nevsky Gates to bring Peter I's boat into the fortress for permanent storage: the boat approached under its own power, fired a welcoming volley, and was carried through the gates into the Tsar's bulwark by hand.

On March 13, 1731, an order was given to build "gates with architectural decorations on the water side of the fortress". Every few years, the boat was taken out and ceremoniously placed on the water, but the gates still looked too poor for these ceremonies.

In 1746-1747, another reconstruction of the gate was carried out and its cladding with Pudost stone, probably according to a modified design by Trezzini. This design has been preserved in the current appearance of the gate on the side facing the Peter and Paul Cathedral: a four-meter arch with a keystone is flanked by pilasters and crowned with a triangular pediment, which is decorated with a relief composition depicting a coat of arms, banners and military armor. In 1762-1767, the architect D. Smolyaninov and engineer N. Muravyov developed a design for a granite pier to replace the wooden one. The project was only realized in 1777 due to the facing of the fortress walls, when engineer R. T. Tomilov built a ceremonial three-arch granite pier with parapets, ice cutters and a platform with three staircases leading down to the water.

In 1780, architect Nikolai Lvov was asked to create a new project for the Neva Gates.

The new gates were built according to this project in 1784-1787, and in this form they have survived to this day (from the Neva side). The height of the new gates was 12 m, the width - 12.2 m. They rest on a plinth almost a meter high. To the right and left of the arch are twin columns of the Tuscan order with diamond rustication, supporting a triangular pediment. The plinth, columns and pediment are made of polished silvery-white Serdobol granite. The pediment is decorated with a relief image of an anchor with crossed palm branches and a fluttering ribbon (unknown sculptor based on a drawing by Lvov, alabaster). Two bombs with tongues of flame are installed on the edges of the pediment.

Under the vault of the arch there are marks about the floods of 1752, 1777, 1788, 1824, 1924 and 1975.

The gates were nicknamed the "gates of death" because they were used to take condemned prisoners to the Commandant's Wharf, from where they were taken to the place of execution.

The gates were restored in 1952-1953.



Ворота въ С.^н П.: Сырцова Крѣпости .
проектированны 1780 - год: копѣйка 1²⁰ .





SAINT CATHERINE CHURCH, MURINO

History

On January 17, 1786, the owner of the village of Murino, Count Alexander Romanovich Vorontsov, approached Metropolitan Gabriel with a request to build a church. The funds for the construction were allocated by the Count's father, who asked to name the church in the name of Saint Catherine, in memory of the deceased wife of his youngest son Semyon, Countess Catherine Alekseevna.

In May 1786, according to the design of N. A. Lvov, a single-altar parish church was founded next to the estate. On February 25, 1790, the church was consecrated.

There is an assumption that the icons for the iconostasis were painted by V. L. Borovikovsky.

The church kept the icon of the Mother of God "Joy of All Who Sorrow", which previously belonged to Princess Natalia Alekseevna.

In 1856, the bell tower was rebuilt; In 1914-1915, during repairs, the outer walls of the building were reinforced.

On the night of October 18, 1918, the watchman was killed and the church was robbed. On May 2, 1922, valuables were confiscated from the church, sealed and delivered to the district commission for the Murinskaya volost.

The wedding scenes from the film "Dubrovsky" were filmed in the church.

On May 3, 1938, on Radonitsa, the last service was held before the church was closed. In 1940, the building was transferred to a club.

In 1941, in connection with the advance of Finnish troops, a resolution was adopted to liquidate the church. During the war, the temple was not damaged. It served as an observation post and a temporary shelter for refugees.

In 1944, Orthodox residents of the village of Murina and nearby settlements filed a petition to register a religious community and transfer the church building to it. This petition was repeated in 1946, 1947 and 1948, but the believers did not receive a response to their appeal.

After the war, the church building was transferred for the "needs of the national economy". It was rented by the Pargolovo enterprise "Zagotpunkt" and the Murino village store, which converted the premises into a salt warehouse. Vegetables were stored in the altar. There was a glass container collection point.

In 1965, the Commissioner for Religious Affairs in Leningrad and the Leningrad Region N. M. Vasiliev, in the course of implementing the resolution of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR "On Certain Facts of Violation of Socialist Legality in Relation to Believers", made an unexpected decision - to give the Orthodox church to the Lutheran community. The Lutheran Finns repeatedly petitioned him to transfer any church that had been empty in the Leningrad Region since the 1930s, but received the following answer: "I consider it appropriate to transfer the building of the former Orthodox church in Murino to the Lutheran believers." On March 23, 1965, the chairman of the executive committee of the Vsevolozhsk city council, V. N. Leontyev, did not agree with the opinion of the authorized representative N. M. Vasilyev and categorically refused his request to transfer the church in the village of Murino to the Lutherans. Then Leontyev and the Orthodox gave the same categorical refusal.

In the 1960s, during preparations for the demolition of the Trinity-Lesnovskaya Church, its parishioners unsuccessfully petitioned to receive the Murinskaya Church for "free use." In response to this, in 1968, the Vsevolozhsk District Executive Committee adopted a resolution **"On the deregistration and demolition of an 18th-century architectural monument in the village of Murino."** Fortunately, it was not carried out.

A ten-meter plaster hockey player was being molded in the building. It was also proposed to use the premises as a museum or a concert hall.

In the summer of 1988, the church was finally returned to the Orthodox community. After this, intensive cosmetic restoration began. On December 6 of the same year, on the eve of the patronal feast, Metropolitan Alexy of Leningrad and Novgorod consecrated the restored church. At the same time, the metropolitan presented the church with an icon of the Holy Great Martyr Catherine with the inscription: "This holy image of the Great Martyr. "The Catherine Church was presented to Metropolitan Alexy of Tallinn and Estonia on November 25, 1980 by Metropolitan Barnabas of Cyprus in the city of Katarini, Greece, in memory of his service in the city that bears her name".

Architecture

The church was built in a rather rare architectural type "under the bells", in the classical style. Four vertical parts are combined in one building: the basement - the vaulted rooms of the tomb; the church, which occupies the main volume of the building; the bell tier (bell tower); belvedere (rotunda) with a Corinthian colonnade (12 columns). The last two tiers were made of wood.

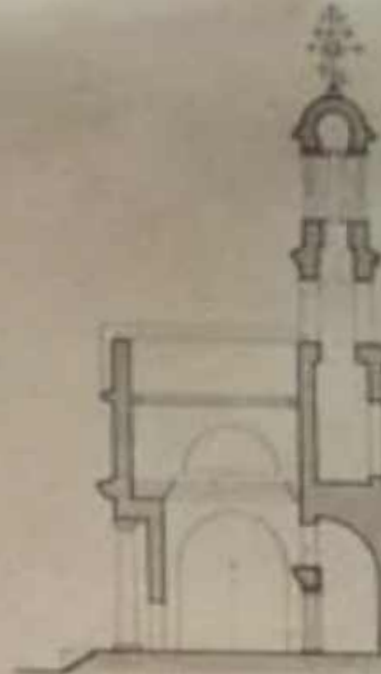
The interior is dominated by smooth semicircular lines. Light enters only through small windows in the apses. There are fluted Doric columns, coffered vaults and a dome. The semicircular iconostasis is decorated with white Corinthian columns with gilded capitals.



Saint Catherine church
Murino, St.Petersburg region, Russia



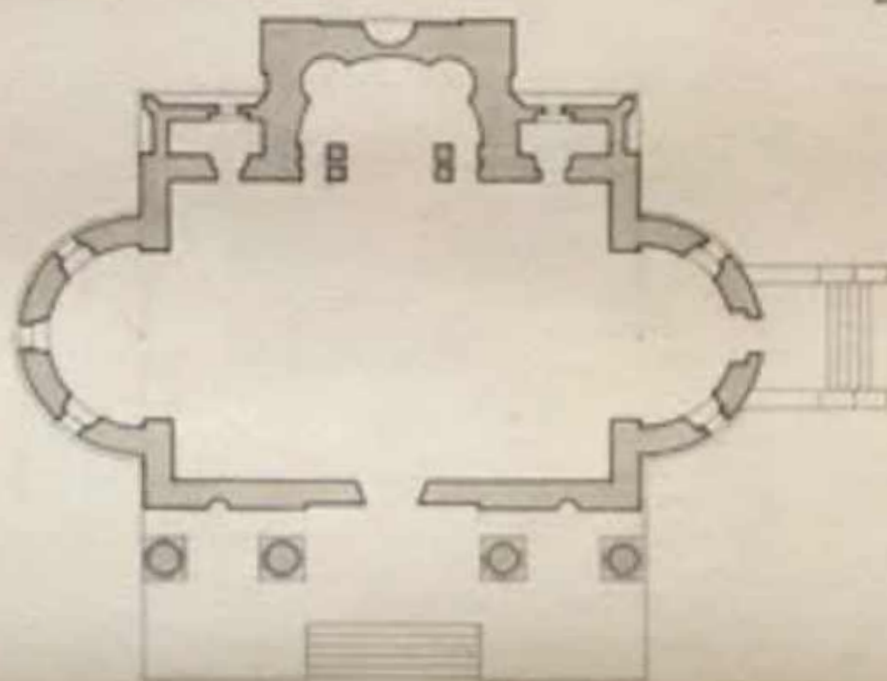
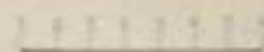
Светица гора



Светица гора



Светица гора











Features of the Palace

The Priory Palace is not as lavish as other suburban palaces near St. Petersburg. Its fame lies in its unusual construction technology, distinctive appearance, and the striking harmony between the palace and the surrounding landscape.

It is the only surviving architectural structure in Russia primarily built using *rammed earth* technology—compressed layers of loam bound with lime mortar. This technique was used not only for the palace walls but also for the fence and auxiliary buildings. The retaining wall is constructed of the renowned Pudost stone, a material commonly used in many Gatchina buildings. The palace tower was built using Paritsky stone.

The Priory is located on the southeastern shore of the Black Lake, within a park that was later renamed “Prioratsky” (formerly known as the “Small Menagerie”).

Constructed in the Russian pre-Romantic architectural style of the late 18th century, the Priory was designed as a stylized interpretation of a medieval Catholic monastery. The tower plays the role of a bell tower, and all the buildings are unified around an enclosed courtyard and blind fence. Like a monastery, the Priory is situated in a secluded location and emphasizes austerity in its interior decoration. At the same time, the structure also evokes the image of a medieval castle, while incorporating elements of Classical architecture—such as the horizontal articulation of façades and ornate ceilings as focal points of the interior.

Scholars have long noted the precision of the Priory's site placement and the originality of its composition, particularly its rejection of symmetry. No two viewpoints of the palace are alike: from the Black Lake, it appears as though the building stands on an island; the retaining wall gives it the look of a fortress; from the south, it resembles a Gothic chapel; from the north, it seems to rise out of the water; and from the main entrance, it takes on the appearance of a country estate. Even the kitchen is designed in the rustic style of a traditional Russian log hut.

History of Construction

The creation of the Priory is closely linked with European political events at the end of the 18th century. Following the French Revolution, the Order of Malta lost many of its properties. Seeking assistance, the Order appealed to Emperor Paul I of Russia, who had recently ascended the throne. In January 1797, Paul signed a convention that established the “Grand Priory” of the Order of Malta in Russia. The administration of the Priory was housed in the former Vorontsov Palace in St. Petersburg, which was transferred to the Order.

Soon thereafter, Paul I decided to build a summer residence for the Prior of the Order, Prince Condé. He selected Gatchina—his own country estate—as the site.

Before construction began, the architect Nikolai Lvov had already experimented with rammed earth structures, including a small “hut” built in 1797 for Paul's favorite, E. I. Nelidova. In the garden of the Gatchina Palace, a corner section with a foundation was built under Lvov's supervision using rammed earth. The durability of the structure was tested by ladies of the court, who attempted to pierce it with umbrellas, and by officers striking it with broadswords. Impressed by its strength, Paul I gave Lvov permission to select the site for the Priory and begin construction.



Preparatory work began in the autumn of 1797. The rammed earth walls of the palace and its auxiliary buildings were completed remarkably quickly—from June 15 to September 12, 1798. The cost of the walls was 2,000 rubles, a fraction of the estimated 25,000 rubles it would have taken to construct them in stone. The palace was accepted by the emperor on August 22, 1799, and officially granted to the Order of Malta the following day. By that time, Paul I had already become the de facto Grand Master of the Order, making him the Priory's true owner.

On October 12, 1799, within the Priory Palace, the Knights of the Order ceremonially transferred three sacred relics to their new Grand Master: a fragment of the True Cross, the Icon of the Mother of God of Philermos, and the right hand of St. John the Baptist. To commemorate this event, a church holiday was established in 1800—marking the transfer of these relics from Malta to Gatchina.

In 1800, the emperor and his sons, Alexander and Constantine, stayed at the palace during military maneuvers.

Later History of the Priory

Following the death of Paul I, Emperor Alexander I—protector of the Order—transferred ownership of the Priory to the state treasury. The palace was rarely used. Members of the imperial family occasionally visited for brief vacations. In the 1820s, with permission from Empress Maria Feodorovna, a Lutheran church temporarily occupied the building. During the 1840s, Nicholas I occasionally permitted generals to use the Priory during military exercises. Notably, it hosted the first meeting between Princess Maria of Hesse and Alexander Nikolaevich (the future Alexander II).

The Priory was depicted by artists such as Taras Shevchenko and M. V. Dobuzhinsky.

After Alexander III became emperor and moved the royal residence to Gatchina, the palace was converted to house singers from the court chapel. Between 1884 and 1887, major renovations were carried out by architect N. V. Dmitriev, who adapted the building for year-round residence for 50 people. Modern heating, plumbing, and reinforced ceilings were installed. Apartments were later provided for members of the court, including Lieutenant General N. I. Kutepov and his family.

In 1913 and 1914, the palace hosted a number of charitable exhibitions. During World War I, it served as a hospital. Following the 1917 October Revolution, the Priory came under the jurisdiction of the Gatchina Palace Museum, although it was not converted into a museum itself. Remaining historical furnishings were moved to the Grand Gatchina Palace.

In 1924, the Priory housed an excursion station, and between 1930 and 1940, it was used as a recreation center for workers from Leningrad factories.

The palace survived World War II, although parts of the fence, a guard booth, and the roof were destroyed. After the war, it was used by a military construction unit, later becoming a youth center (House of Pioneers and Schoolchildren), and finally, from 1968 until restoration began, the district's local history museum.

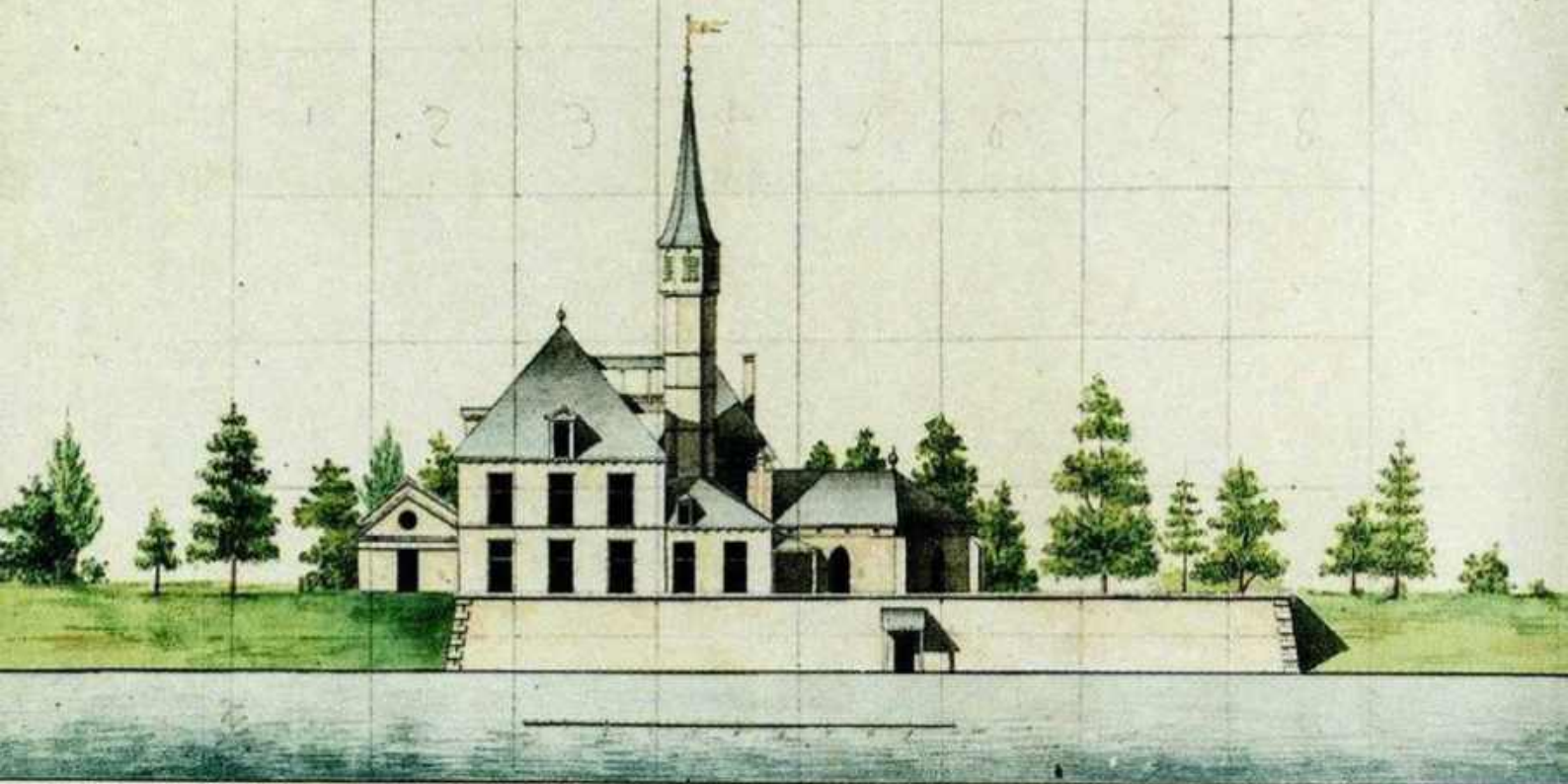
Restoration work began in the early 1980s and was largely completed by 2004, when the Priory Palace was opened to the public.

Legends of the Priory

As with many historic sites, the Priory Palace is surrounded by legends. The most famous tells of an underground passage connecting it to the Gatchina Imperial Palace. Remarkably, during foundation stabilization work, restorers discovered a real stone-lined tunnel. The passage begins at human height and gradually narrows. Though incomplete and of unknown purpose, some believe it to be part of a still-unexplored network of underground communications beneath Gatchina.

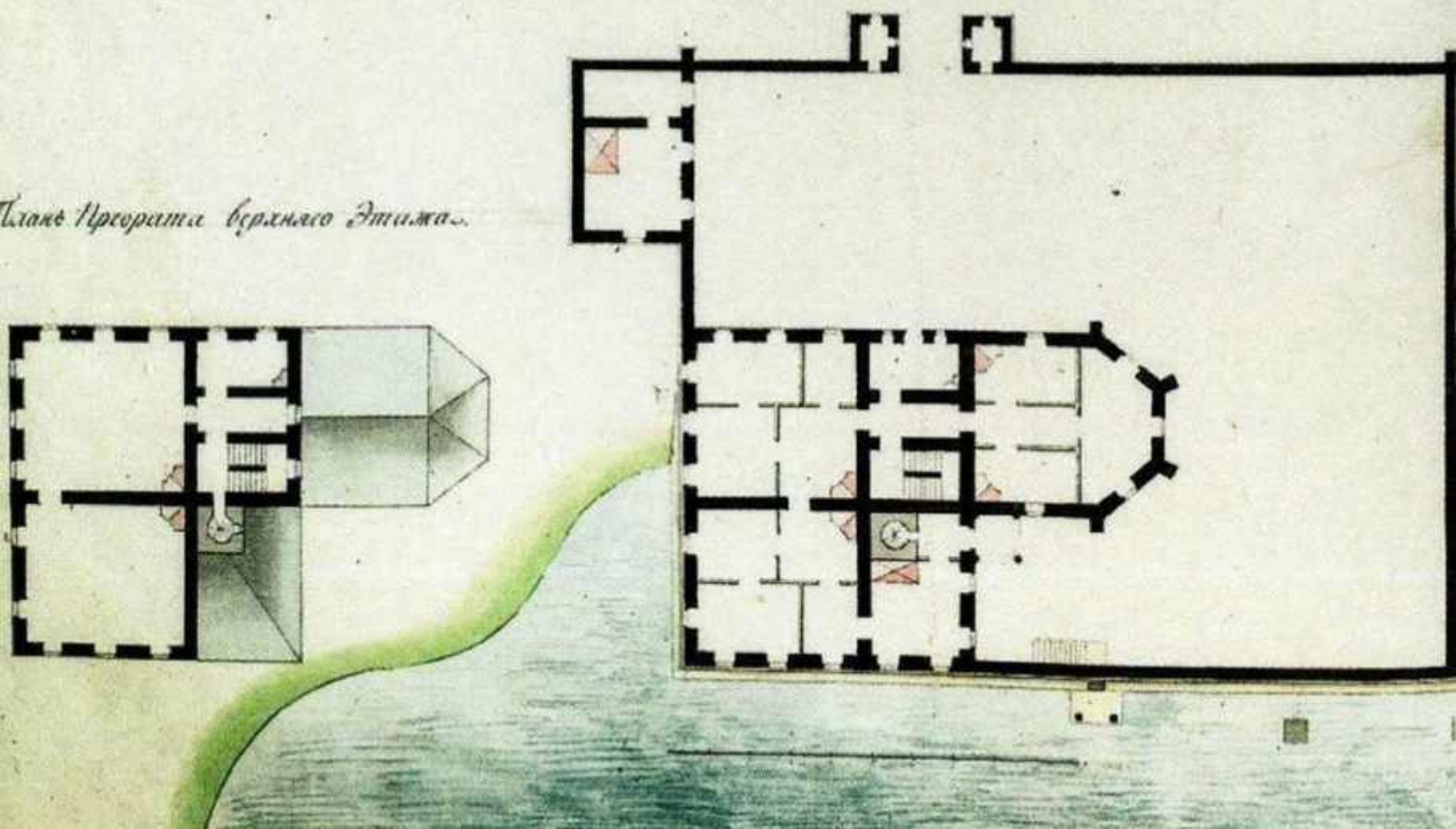


фасада Пріората со стороны Чернаго озера



Планъ Пріората Нижняго Этажа.

Планъ Пріората Верхняго Этажа.





о. Пріоратскій дворець. № 3.





TRANSFIGURATION CATHEDRAL, VYBORG

The Transfiguration Cathedral is an Orthodox church located on Cathedral Square in the city of Vyborg. It serves as the cathedral of the Vyborg Diocese of the Russian Orthodox Church and is regarded as the most significant architectural monument of the Classical period in Vyborg.

History

The cathedral was commissioned by Empress Catherine II, who issued a decree on December 18, 1786. It was designed by architect Nikolai Lvov, although modifications were later made by the provincial architect of Vyborg, I. Brockman, who reduced the overall size of the building but preserved Lvov's decorative design. Originally, the church featured a dome and a Tuscan-columned portico at the main entrance. Over the next century, the church's appearance evolved considerably. Its original bell tower was the adjacent Clock Tower, but a new, separate bell tower was later constructed. Eventually, the new tower was joined to the main church.

When the Vyborg Vicariate of the St. Petersburg Diocese was established on September 5, 1859, the church was elevated to cathedral status for the city of Vyborg.

Between 1863 and 1866, the refectory was rebuilt by architect Grigory Karpov. Later, from 1888 to 1898, the bell tower and altar underwent reconstruction under architect A. Isakson. The refectory included two chapels—one dedicated to Saint Nicholas and the other to Our Lady of Sorrows.

On October 24, 1892, the Vyborg Vicariate became the independent Vyborg and Finnish Diocese of the Russian Orthodox Church, and the Transfiguration Cathedral became its principal church. As more than a century had passed since its original construction, the cathedral was extensively renovated, resulting in the appearance it has today.

20th–21st Century Restoration

On February 11, 1921, the Vyborg and Finnish Diocese became part of the Finnish Autonomous Orthodox Church. After the Soviet-Finnish War, the cathedral returned to the jurisdiction of the Russian Orthodox Church in 1947. In 1962, the title "Bishop of Vyborg" was reintroduced for vicars of the Leningrad (now St. Petersburg) Diocese.

In 1990, Archpriest Lev Tserpitsky was appointed rector of the cathedral and immediately launched restoration efforts. The damaged roof was replaced, and the facades were reinforced. Thanks to his initiative, the interior was restored: the old murals were cleaned, a new iconostasis and icon cases were installed, and liturgical items and furnishings were acquired.

On March 12, 2013, the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church restored the independent Vyborg Diocese, and the cathedral once again became the seat of the Bishop of Vyborg and Priozersk. Until 2017, the church also housed the bishop's office, diocesan administration, and accounting departments, which have since been moved to a nearby building.

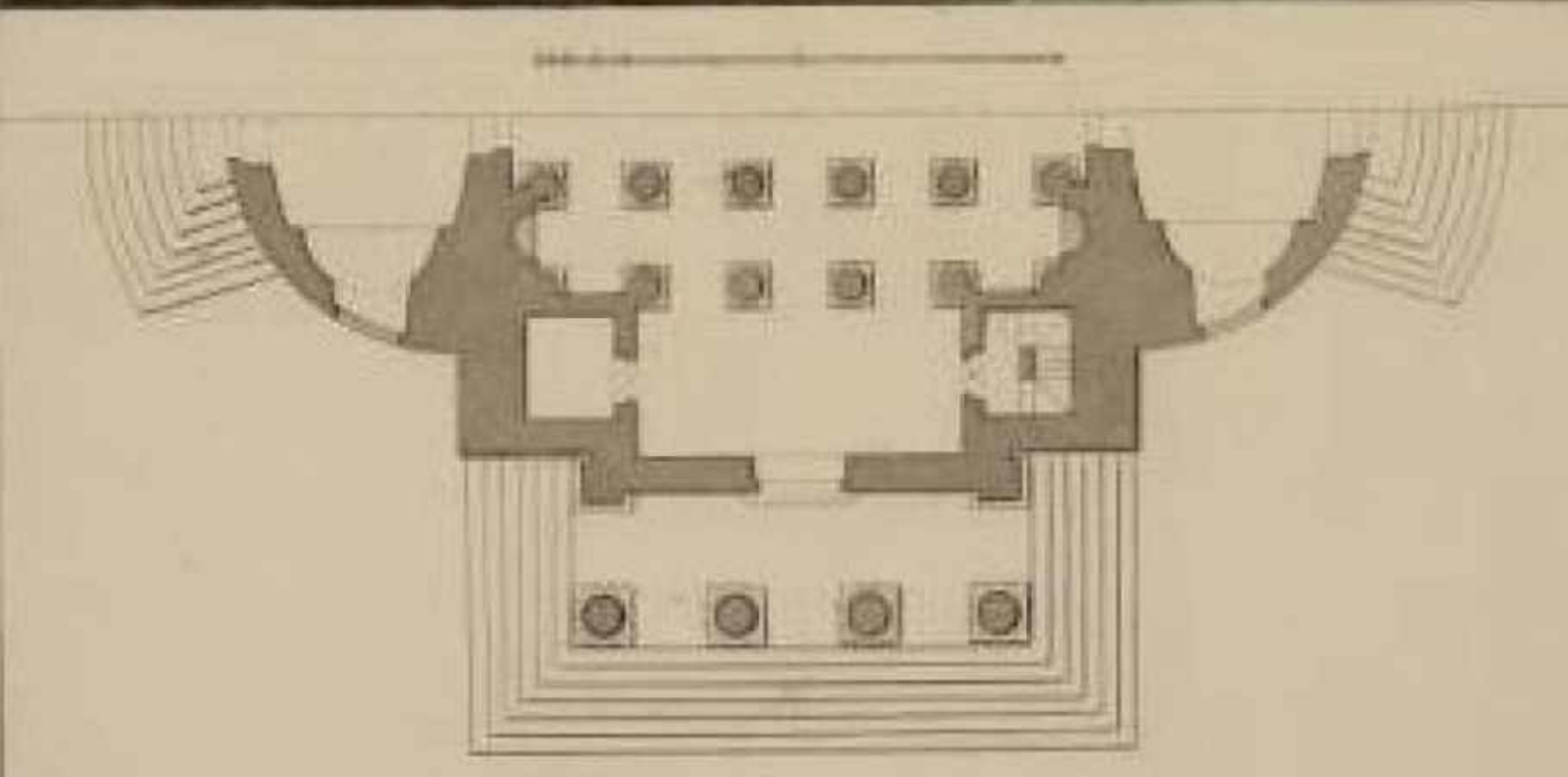
The Bell Tower Clock

In 1797, a tower clock was installed on the cathedral's bell tower. However, its chimes conflicted with those of the nearby city police department's tower clock. Due to this issue—and the deteriorated condition of the mechanism—the clock was removed in the 19th century. A new clock was finally installed on the bell tower in 2012.



*Edificio religioso monumental
construido en
honor de San J. Bautista
y San J. Pedro.*

El Encanto



— Соборъ.



Wiiipuri

Kyrkan







CHURCH OF THE GREAT MARTYR CATHERINE, VALDAI

History

The church is located between Truda Street and Komsomolsky Prospekt, standing on a hill in the center of the city garden. It was built in 1793 by order of Empress Catherine II, based on a design by the architect Nikolai Lvov. The church complemented the ensemble of the Government Offices and the Travel Palace.

This is a rotunda-style building with a classical Ionic colonnade that surrounds the church on three sides, leaving the eastern (altar) side open. The church has an external diameter of 21.8 meters; the central hall measures 10.7 meters in diameter, and the total height, including the cross, reaches approximately 30 meters. The walls are decorated with Ionic pilasters, equal in number to the columns of the colonnade. The altar section and gallery share a single sloping roof. The central cylindrical volume is topped with a hemispherical dome that features four lucarnes. Above the dome rises a drum, crowned with a smaller dome topped with an orb and a cross.

The spaces between the pilasters on the central volume are divided by two tiers of windows. The lower tier contains seven large windows with semicircular tops, decorated with platbands and keystones at the apex of each arch. Above these windows are recessed niches adorned with molded garlands. In the upper tier, each bay between the pilasters holds a round window — twelve in total — decorated on the exterior with flat moldings and expanding inward into rosettes. The two tiers are separated by decorative string courses and a band of meanders. Three entry portals on the north, west, and south sides mirror the design of the first-tier windows.

Inside, the temple's central hall is connected to the altar area through three arched openings. The only decorative element in the interior is a cornice encircling the base of the dome. The church also includes a basement, accessible from the southwest side.

Funding for the church's construction was provided by Empress Catherine II. It served as the palace church for her Travel Palace, though religious services were held there only infrequently. Only a few of the palace complex's original buildings have survived.

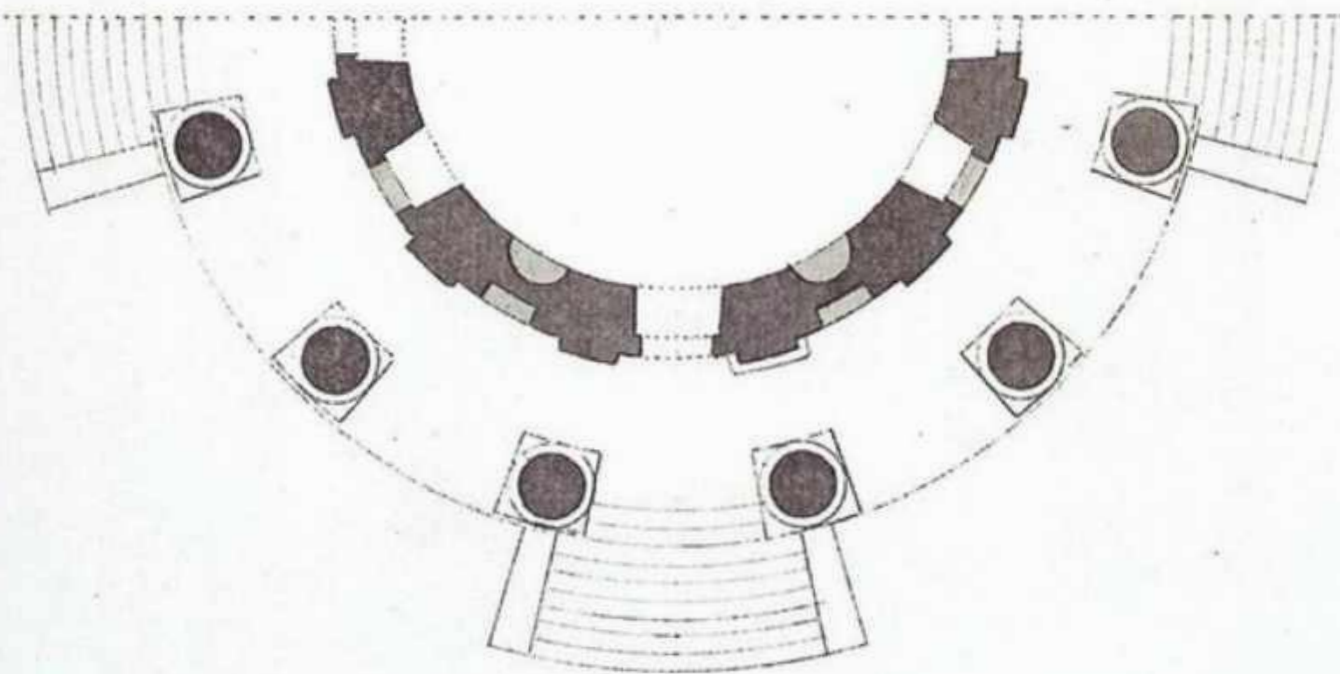
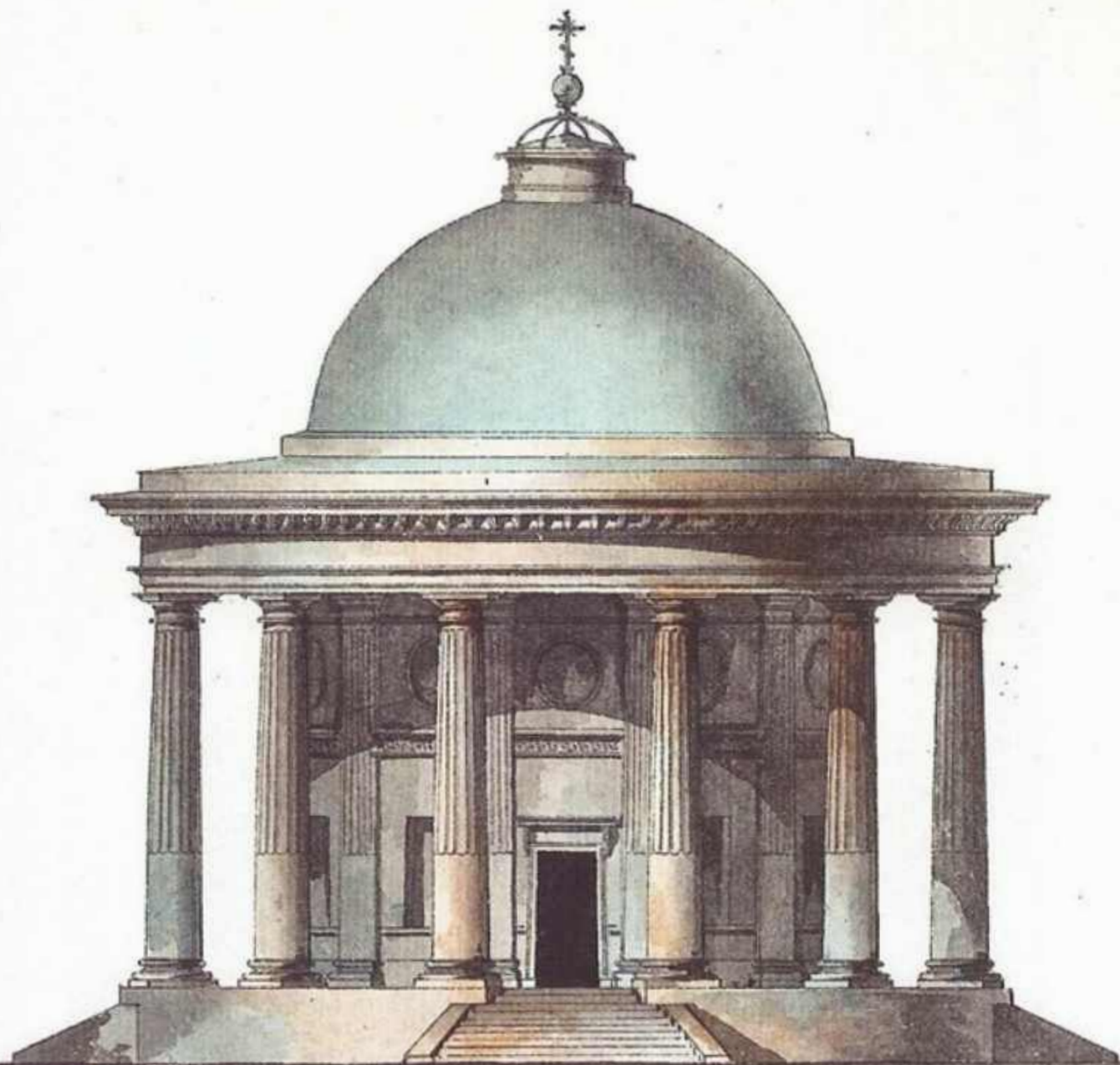
The Church of the Great Martyr Catherine (also known as the Lvov Rotunda) is an inactive Orthodox church in the city of Valdai in the Novgorod region. It is currently occupied by the Bell Museum.

Lvov's Project and Its Modifications

According to the 2013 collection *N. A. Lvov: Life and Work*, it was discovered shortly before the publication of that volume that the church was constructed under the supervision of the provincial architect I. Dmitriev, who made modifications to Lvov's original design. Drawings signed by Dmitriev, found in archival materials, confirm his involvement.

Lvov's design resembled that of his church in Yagotin, the Ukrainian estate of the Razumovsky family, built in the 1790s. Although the Yagotin church no longer exists, it is known from two surviving images: a drawing in von Gun's book *Journey through Little Russia* and a photograph dating from the 1910s. Differences between the drawing and the photo suggest either later reconstruction or inaccuracies in von Gun's depiction.

Researchers note that the Church of the Great Martyr Catherine became more similar to the Yagotin church after Dmitriev's alterations. He replaced the Roman Doric columns with more decorative Ionic ones and added a plinth beneath them, raising the overall height of the temple by 0.5 meters. To further enhance verticality, he eliminated the dome's skylight and instead topped it with a taller drum and a small cupola. He also added lucarnes at the dome's base — an element not present in Lvov's own designs. In addition, Dmitriev incorporated stucco garlands and window surrounds, decorative features that were uncharacteristic of Lvov's strict classical style.









TVER REGION

BORISO-GLEBSKY MONASTERY, TORZHOK

History

Founded by Ephraim of Novotorzhsk in 1038, the Borisoglebsky Monastery is one of the oldest monasteries in Russia, located in the city of Torzhok, Tver Oblast. It belongs to the Tver Diocese of the Russian Orthodox Church. Established even earlier than the Kiev-Pechersk Lavra, it is often called "one of the oldest, and perhaps the most ancient" monastic foundations in Russia, due to the absence of written records of any earlier monasteries.

Tradition

The monastery has no written history prior to the 16th century, and even the list of abbots begins only with those appointed during the reign of Ivan the Terrible. According to 17th-century hagiographic texts, the monastery was founded in 1038 by Ephraim, a boyar of Hungarian origin who had served as a groom to Prince Vladimir I of Kyiv. After the murder of Boris and Gleb by Svyatopolk, Ephraim chose to retire from secular life and established a monastery on the banks of the Tvertsa River in their memory.

Ephraim is said to have founded the monastery on a hill by the river, where a church dedicated to Saints Boris and Gleb was built in 1038. This church gave its name to the entire monastic complex.

History

The first documented mention of the monastery dates to 1534. In 1577, during the reign of Ivan the Terrible, two chapels were added to the original Borisoglebsky Cathedral.

When Torzhok was captured by Polish forces in 1607, the cathedral was severely damaged. The oldest surviving structure of the monastery is the Church of the Entry of the Virgin (Vvedenskaya Church), built in the 17th century on the site of a wooden church that had been burned during the attack, along with members of the monastic community and local residents.

In 1717, the Church of the Entry of the Lord into Jerusalem was constructed between the abbot's buildings. These structures were restored in the 1980s. A devastating fire in 1742 caused significant damage to the entire complex.

The monastery's revival began in the latter half of the 18th century. Before the 1764 ecclesiastical reform, the monastery held over 2,200 peasant households and administered three dependent monasteries: the Nativity Monastery, the Bogoslovsky Monastery in Udomlya, and the Semenovskaya Hermitage. After the reform, the monastery was classified as second class.

Between 1785 and 1796, a new cathedral was built on the site of the old Borisoglebsky Cathedral by order of Empress Catherine II, based on a design by the architect Nikolai Lvov. On June 9 (20), 1785, the Empress herself laid the foundation stone, funding the construction. To commemorate the occasion, she was presented with a silver trowel and a gold brick, which were kept in the monastery.

In 1804, the Spasskaya Gate Church and Bell Tower were laid. According to some researchers, Lvov also designed this structure, though the construction was overseen by architect Yakov Ananyin. Another notable feature is the Candle Tower, located in the corner of the monastery wall opposite the bell tower, which has an unusual silhouette. It was restored during the 1970s and 1980s.

Following the fall of the monarchy, the monastery was dissolved in 1925. A high-security prison was established on its grounds and remained there for about 50 years. Later, the buildings were used as a medical-labor facility for alcohol rehabilitation. Since the late 1980s, the site has housed the All-Russian Historical and Ethnographic Museum, whose management has worked extensively to restore the architectural ensemble, which had been severely damaged during its use as a prison.

Return of Monastic Life

In 1993, believers returned to the monastery, and a decision was made to share its use between the Orthodox Church and the museum. In 1995, the first five monks settled on the grounds. That same year, Patriarch Alexy II of Moscow and All Russia visited the monastery during celebrations marking the 400th anniversary of the Nilus Stolobensky Hermitage.

On June 24, 1998, the feast day of Saint Ephraim, liturgical life officially resumed at the monastery. Since 2008, it has been part of the "Culture of Russia" program and is gradually being restored. A pilgrimage center has been opened for visitors wishing to venerate the monastery.

On July 21, 2019, Patriarch Kirill visited the monastery. Later that year, on September 29, Metropolitan Savva consecrated a cross for the restored Gate Church. On December 26, 2020, Metropolitan Amvrosy (Yermakov) consecrated the Church of the Entry of the Virgin.

The monastery maintains several dependencies, including the Cathedral of the Transfiguration and the Church of Saint Clement, Pope of Rome.



Spassky Church, Borisoglebsky Monastery
Torzhok, Tver region, Russia

ARCHITECTURAL ENSEMBLE

BORISOGLEBSKY CATHEDRAL

The original stone church, built in 1038, had a single altar. The founder of the monastery and his disciple were later buried beneath its floor in the right-hand corner of the narthex. In 1577, a chapel was added on the right in honor of the founder, and in 1589, another on the left in honor of Saints Joachim and Anna. With the chapels, the church measured approximately 20 meters in length and 26 meters in width. Its three domes were topped with iron crosses, the central one featuring a footrest and gilded cherubim and seraphim.

In 1784, due to its dilapidated state, the cathedral was dismantled. On July 11 (22), the relics of the monastery's founder were transferred to the Church of the Entry of the Virgin during reconstruction. On August 16 (27), the central cross was removed, and by late November, the old structure was fully dismantled. During this process, sacred vessels and other church items used by Saint Ephraim were discovered within a column. The iconostasis was transferred to the Church of the Entry of the Lord into Jerusalem in 1786, and some icons were sent to the Church of the Entry of the Virgin; others were sold in 1789 for 400 rubles to the village of Yesenovichi.

Between 1785 and 1788, 22,750 rubles were allocated by the state for the construction of a new three-altar cathedral; with private donations, the total reached 50,000 rubles. The design was created by Nikolai Lvov, and construction was supervised by the local architect Fyodor Butsi. In 1795, Vladimir Borovikovsky painted 37 icons on cardboard for the new iconostasis, for a fee of 1,600 rubles. The iconostasis, crafted in 1789, was carved from wood and gilded with black gold around its perimeter.

The new cathedral measured roughly 31 meters in both length and width, with a height of about 30 meters to the tip of the central cross. The altars were consecrated on June 11 (22), 1785. The side chapel of Joachim and Anna was rededicated to Saint Catherine the Great Martyr, with vestments donated by Empress Catherine II herself.

In 1839–1840, the original cast-iron floor was replaced with wood, the iconostasis was renewed, and the walls and columns were plastered to imitate marble. Stone vaults were also added, and the total renovation cost reached 15,000 rubles. On June 11 (23), 1841, the altars of the side chapels were consecrated in honor of Saints Ephraim (right) and Arkady (left) of Torzhok.

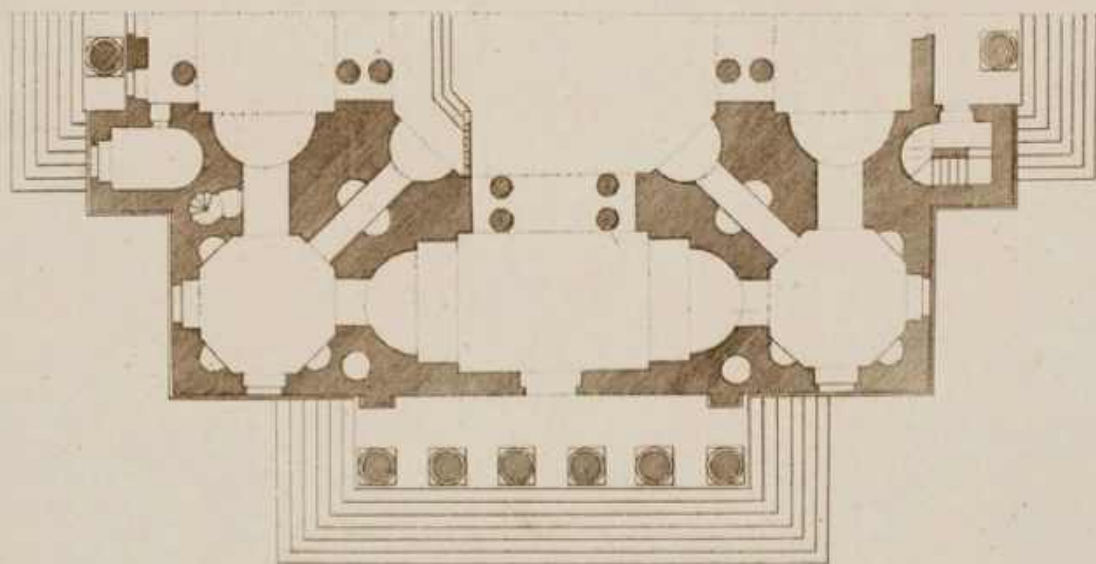
In 1876, a new altar was installed in the main chapel, crafted by S. F. Verkhovtsev. In 1892, with funding of 30,000 rubles, the interior was replastered and ornamented with stucco, new windows and doors were installed, and five chandeliers were hung. Frames were replaced and the entire cathedral was repainted. Oversight was provided by local architect V. I. Nazarin, and the cathedral was consecrated on October 2 (14), 1895.

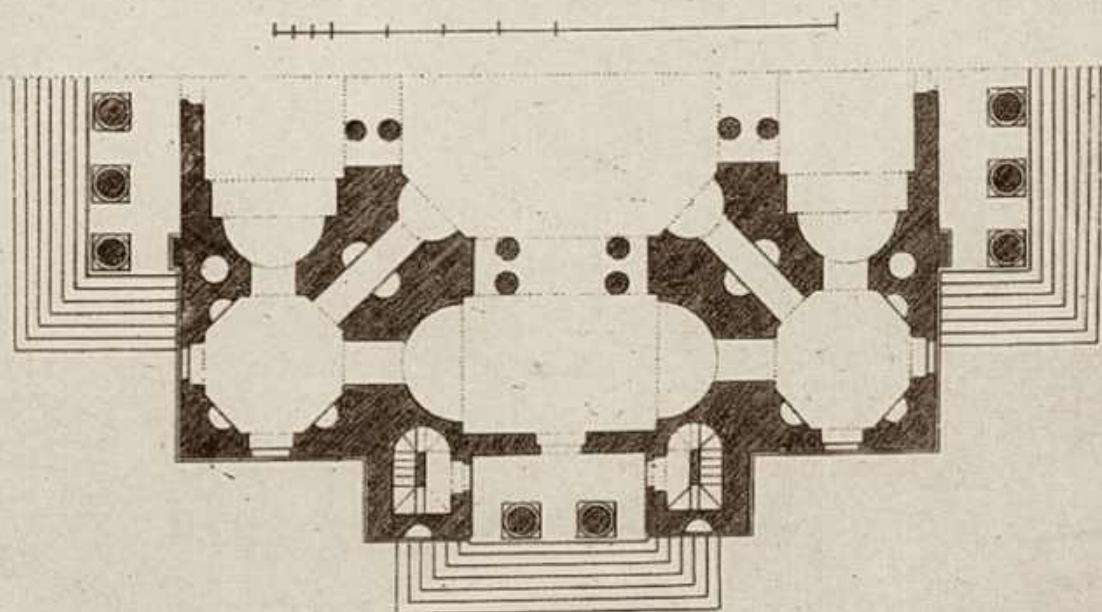
Church of the Entry of the Virgin This single-domed stone church was built in 1620 on the site of an earlier wooden structure that had been burned by Polish invaders. It was redesigned in 1833, and in 1879, a side chapel was added on the left in honor of Saints Joachim and Anna. A new stone stairway and porch were later added, and in 1887 the dome was gilded and a furnace for heating was installed.

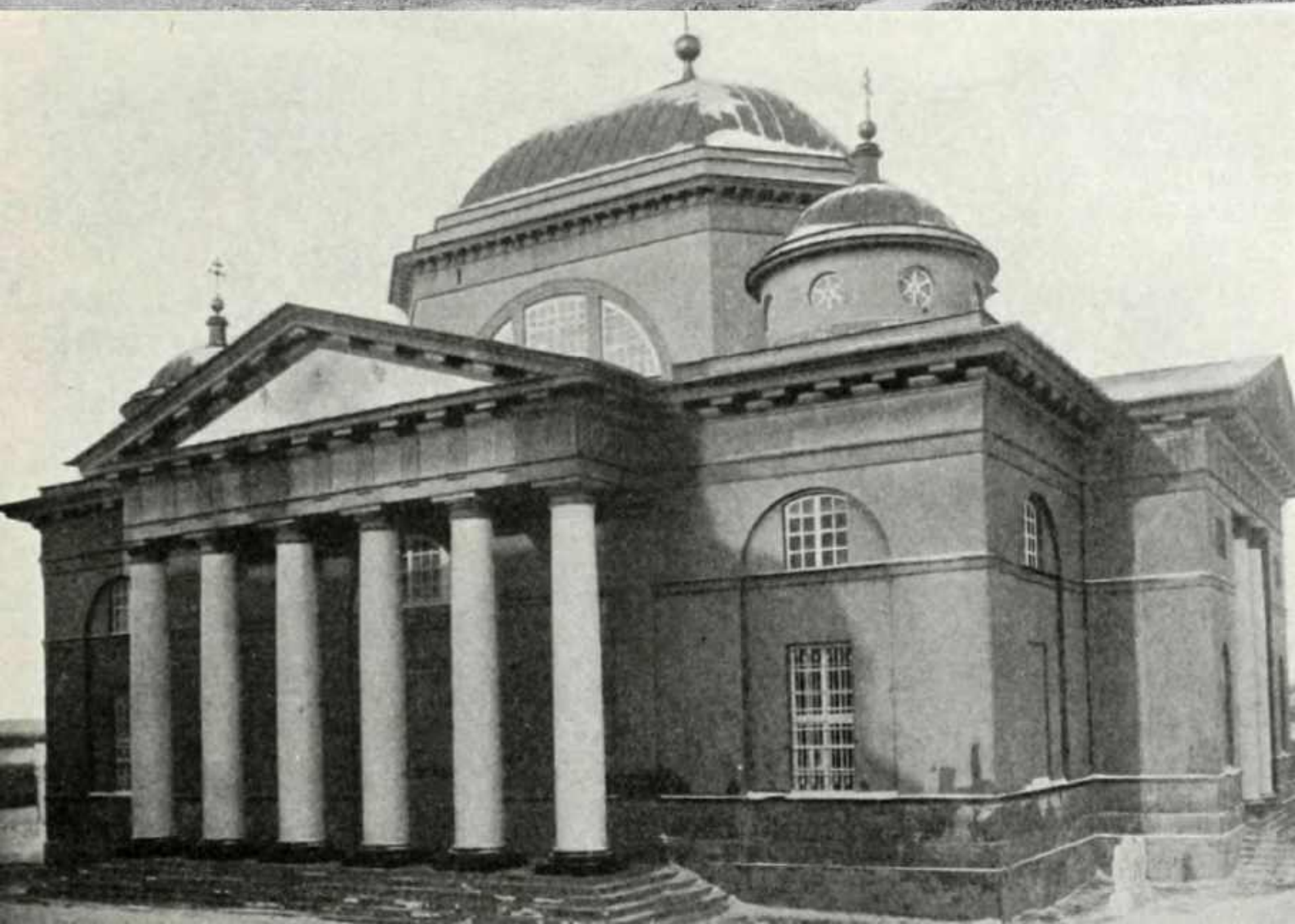
Church of the Entry of the Lord into Jerusalem Built of stone in 1717, this church originally had no iconostasis. In 1786, the iconostasis from the dismantled Borisoglebsky Cathedral was installed here.

CHURCH OF THE HOLY MANDYLION (SPASSKY CHURCH) WITH BELL TOWER

Built between 1804 and 1811 on the site of the former Church of the Exaltation of the Cross, this church was consecrated on August 27 (September 8), 1811. It features a three-tiered bell tower measuring approximately 51 meters in height, equipped with a working clock. The largest bell weighed around 8,200 kilograms.









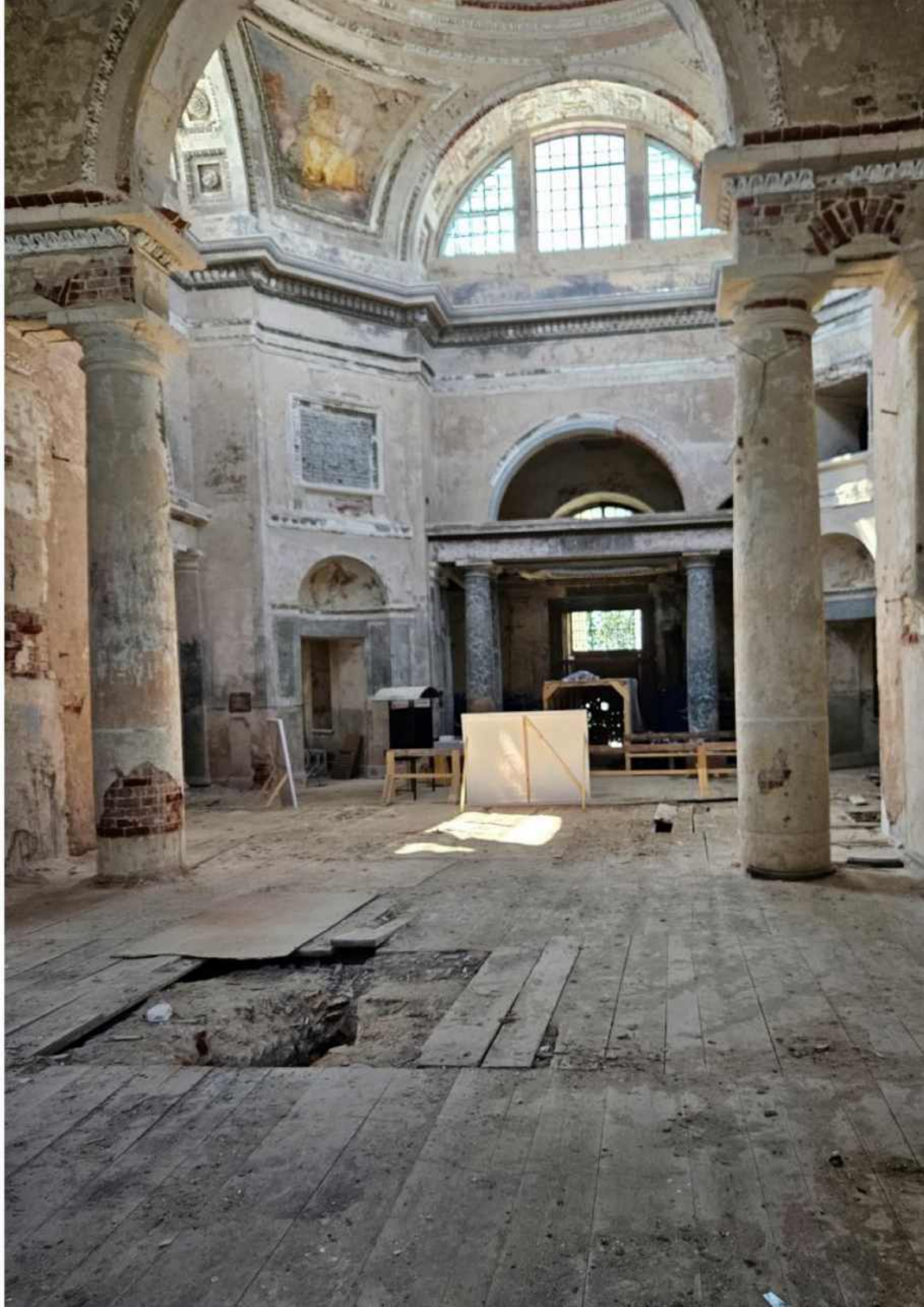










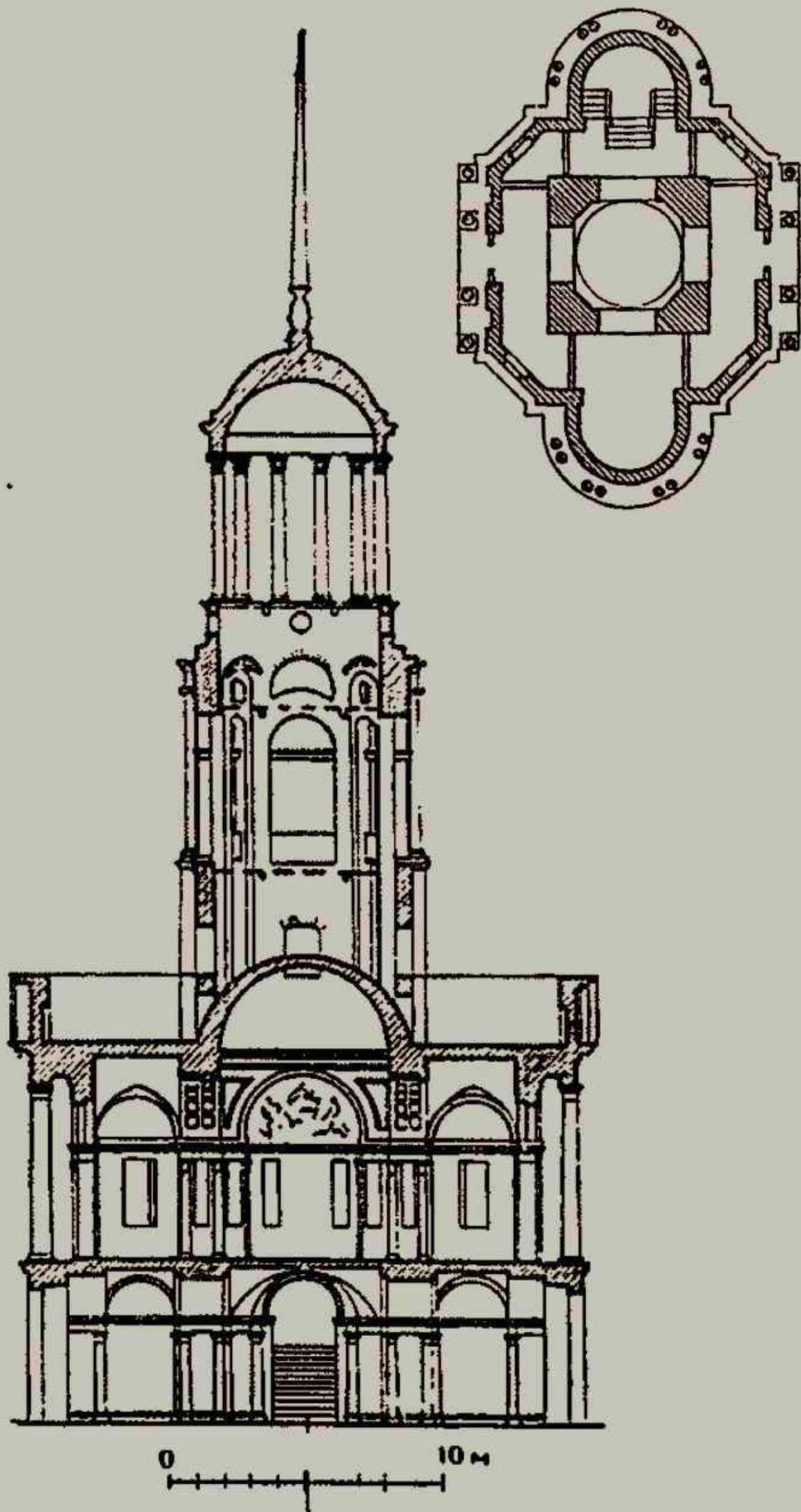








Church of the Holy Mandylion (Spassky Church) with Bell Tower
Borisoglebsky Monastery, Torzhok, Tver region, Russia















Znamenskoye-Rayok is a historic estate in the Tver Region (Maryinskoye rural settlement, Torzhok District), constructed in the second half of the 18th century by General-in-Chief Fyodor Glebov. It is a federally protected cultural heritage site.

Overview

Also known as the Streshnev Estate, the palace-and-park complex was built between 1743 and 1787. While no direct documentation survives, the estate is widely attributed to architect Nikolai Lvov. Other individuals believed to have been involved in its design and construction include K. Butsi, A. Trofimov, the Englishman W. Irwin, and the Italian architect F. Rusca.

The architectural ensemble features a central manor house connected to a circular colonnade (court of honor), which links the house to side wings (coach house and greenhouse) and an entrance gate. Many of the estate's original pavilions and gazebos were lost in the 1930s. A cascading series of ponds remains, including the upper and middle chamber ponds.

Restoration and Public Access

Today, the estate grounds are overseen by the All-Russian Historical and Ethnographic Museum in Torzhok. Public visits are limited due to the site's deteriorated condition and structural hazards. In February 2024, during a meeting with cultural professionals from the Tver Region, President Vladimir Putin expressed support for a comprehensive restoration project. The initiative aims to both preserve the monument and integrate it into the local economy. Tver Region Governor Igor Rudenya pledged local infrastructure support. Upon completion, the restored estate is expected to become a major cultural and tourist center, hosting exhibitions, guided tours, and events focused on Russian estate culture.

UNESCO waiting List

The Streshnev Estate at Znamenskoye-Rayok, along with nearby sites such as the Nikolskoye-Cherenchitsy estate and architectural monuments in Torzhok and the surrounding villages (Arpachevo, Vasilevo, Gornitsy, Zagorye/Pereslegino, and Pryamukhino), has been added to the UNESCO waiting List of World Heritage Sites.

Berezhki-Rayok Valley

Before the 1917 Revolution, the Berezhki-Rayok valley was owned by various noble and military families, including the Rozhnovs, Glebov-Streshnevs, and Dubasovs. Following the bankruptcy of a previous tenant (2002–2016), parts of the estate and 200 hectares of the historical territory were acquired in 2017 by Rai Development (RD). These lands span the Glebov family's former holdings, including the villages of Rayok, Vasilyeva Gora, Svischevo, and Seltso.

Church of the Sign of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Historical records from the first half of the 17th century mention the existence of the Church of the Sign and its adjacent church settlement in what was then the Rai churchyard. The estate's spiritual heart is the Church of the Sign of the Mother of God, built in 1766 by General-in-Chief Ivan Fyodorovich Glebov, father of F. I. Glebov. Before the 1917 Revolution, the church housed sacred family icons of the Glebovs, including Saint Nicholas the Wonderworker and the Sign of the Mother of God, as well as works by artist Vladimir Borovikovsky. Charitable restoration work at the church is currently being conducted by RD.

Residence Villa Rayok (Former Sanatorium Building)

Located between the Church of the Sign and the main manor house is the U-shaped Villa Rayok, a residential structure that frames a formal court of honor. This mansion, nestled in the 18th-century landscape park, once served as a school and later as part of a sanatorium.

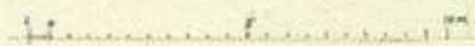
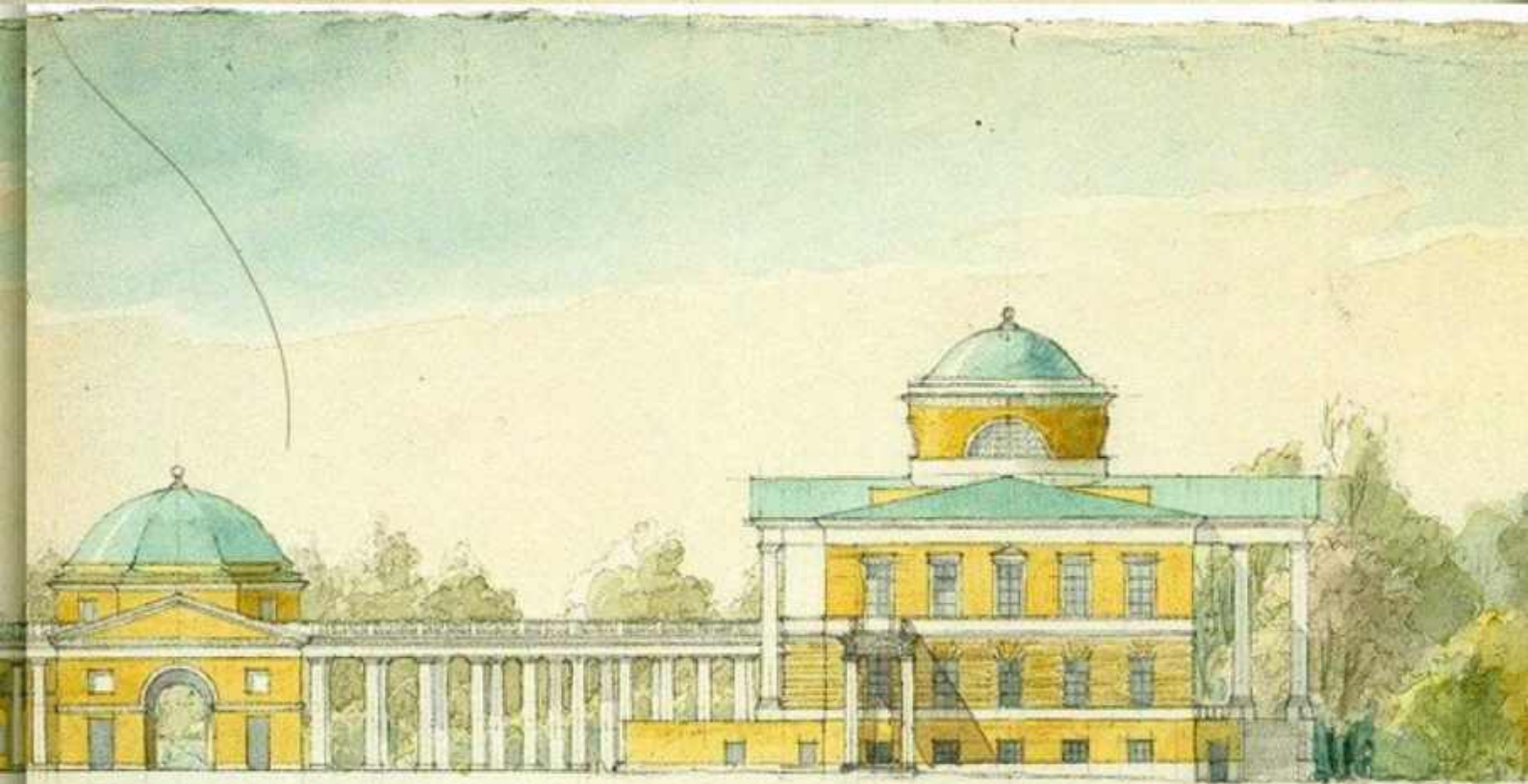
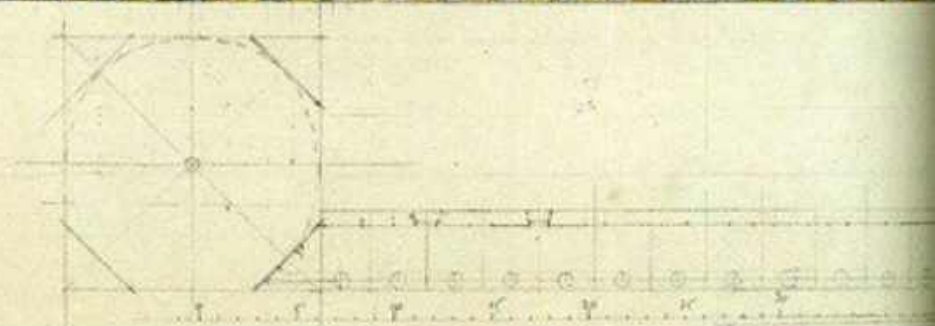
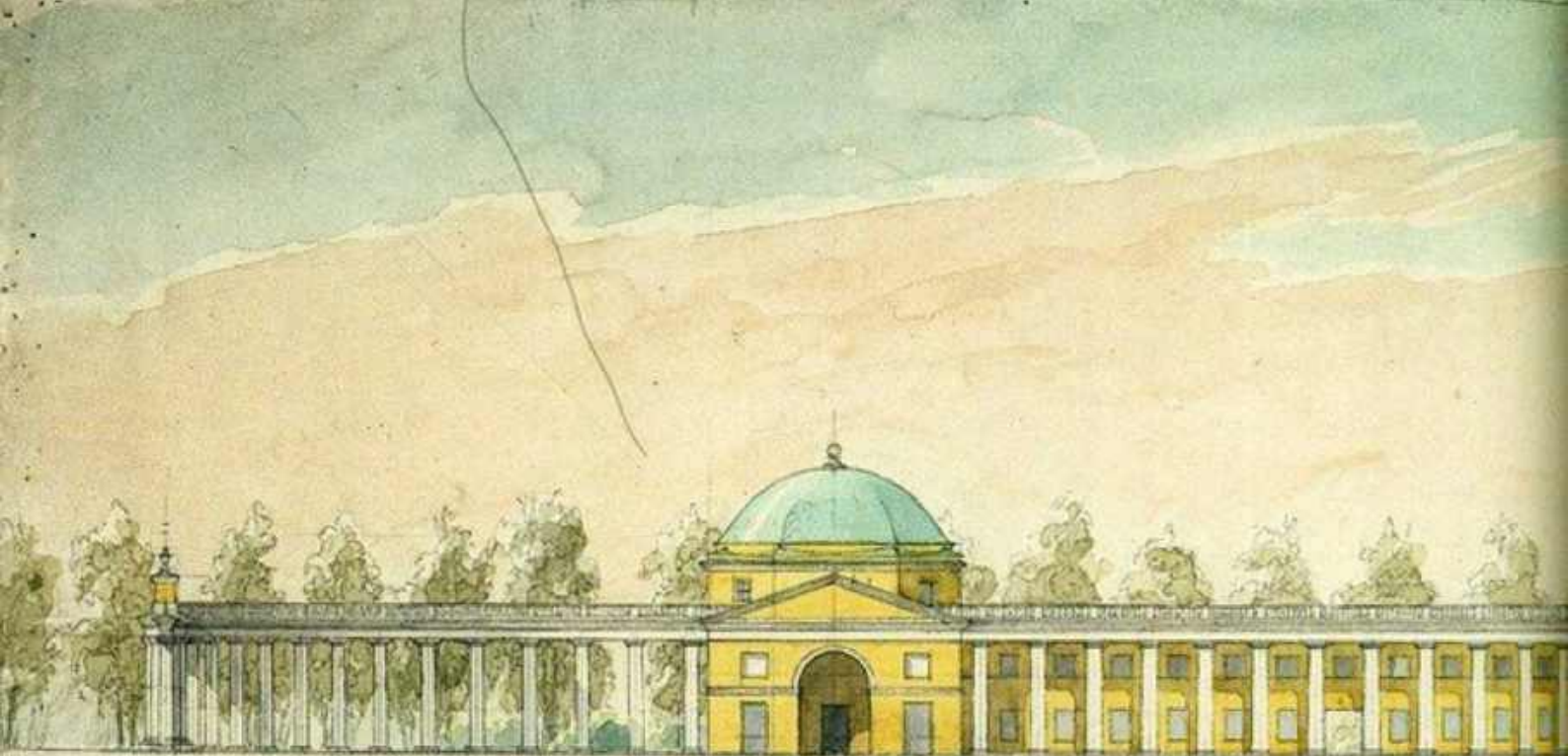
From 1967, the Kalininskaya Boarding School for 120 pupils operated here, alongside infrastructure including a boiler house, water tower, and staff cottages. In 1974, a second phase was added, including a food wing and administrative offices. In 1984, a sauna and indoor pool were built on the eastern side.

Today, this Soviet-era residence with vaulted ceilings, panoramic windows, and rooftop terraces is closed to the general public and opens only for private events.

Thermarium Hotel Villa Rayok (Parable House and Thermal Baths)

In 1861, a parable house stood in the eastern part of the church and garden grounds. After World War II, the building was expanded to serve as a thermal water and mud therapy clinic, operating until 1996. From that time, the only occupants were a family of storks who lived on the chimney for four generations, until 2022. The mansion is currently undergoing redevelopment and is scheduled to open in 2026 as an exclusive thermarium-style hotel with accommodations for 30 guests.

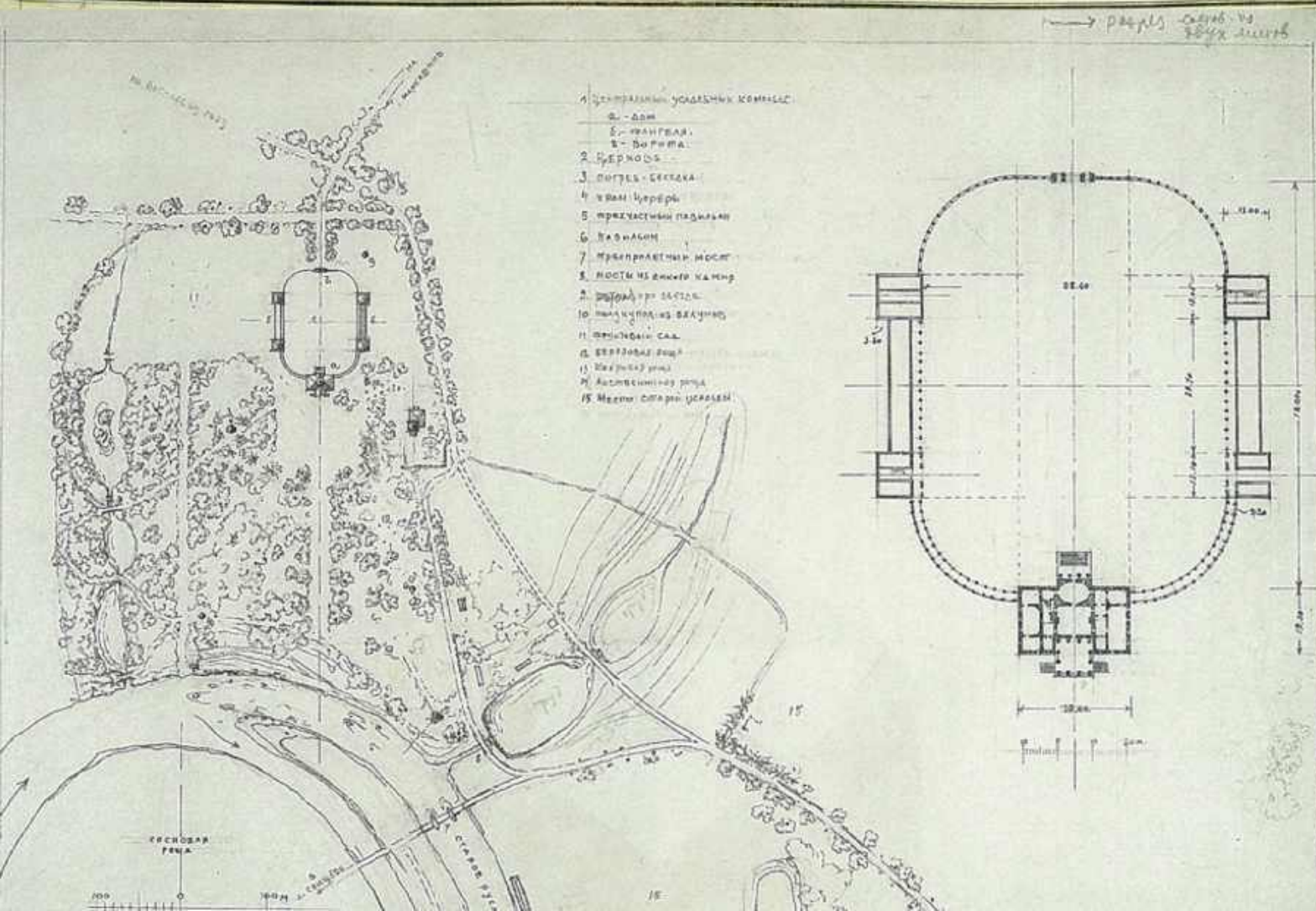
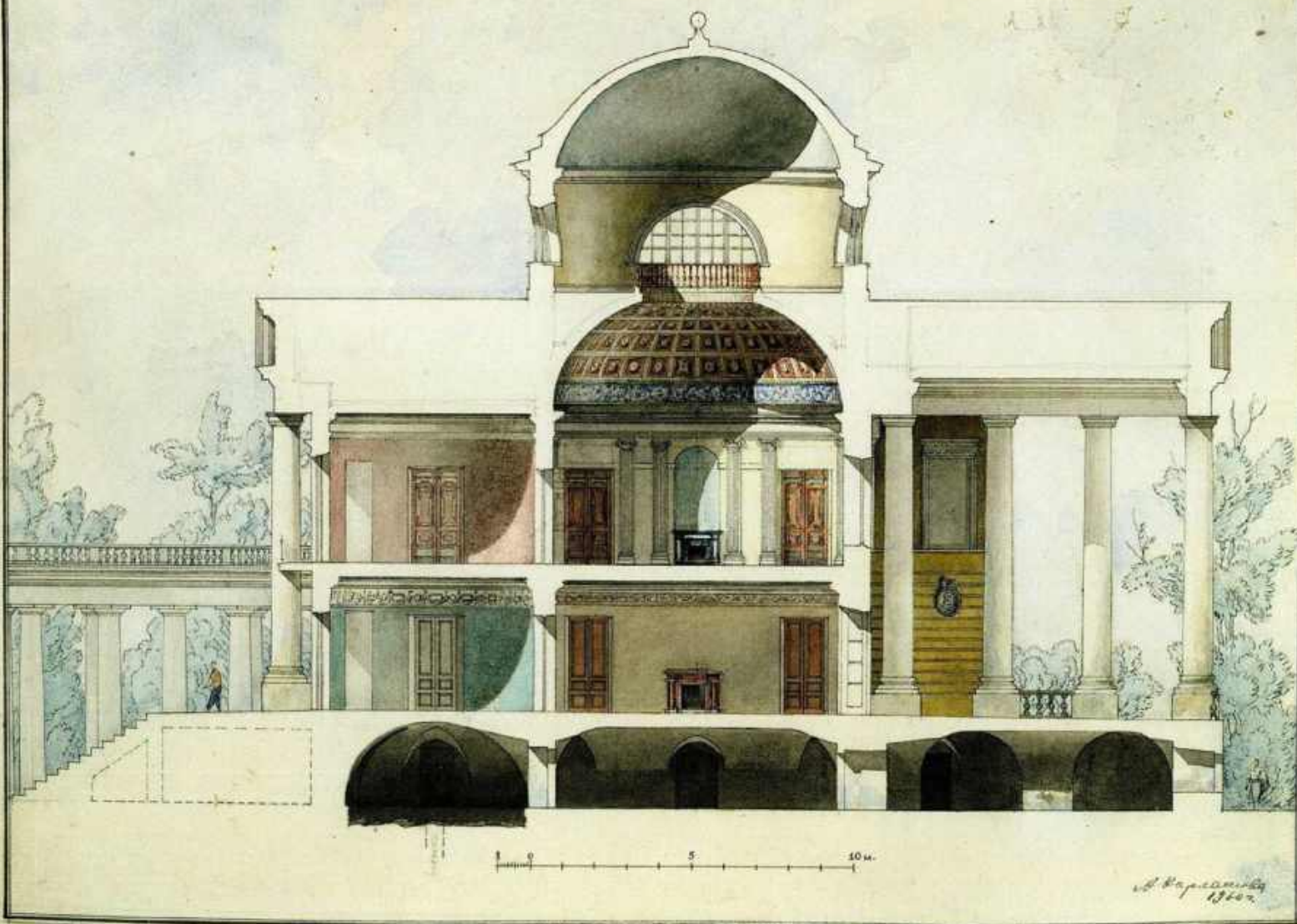




Ул. ЗНАМЕННАЯ (1924)
 ОБЩЕЕ ПОСТРОЕНИЕ
 Ш. П. КАМЕНКО
 1940

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 За реконструкцию существующего здания.

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ROTUNDA MAUSOLEUM, NIKOLSKOYE-CHERENCHITSY

The Rotunda Mausoleum of Nikolay Lvov: A Synthesis of Palladian Vision and Christian Symbolism.

The rotunda mausoleum designed by Nikolay Lvov on his estate at Nikolskoye-Cherenchitsy near Torzhok is one of the most emblematic works of Russian Enlightenment classicism, merging architectural erudition with profound spiritual symbolism. Constructed in the early 1780s, it served as Lvov's own burial place and exemplifies his unique interpretation of Palladianism, filtered through his travels in Italy and deep engagement with classical, Byzantine, and early Christian sources.

The structure's external appearance is dominated by a twelve-column rotunda placed atop a massive bell tower, which acts as both a symbolic and physical bridge between the upper and lower churches. The upper church is dedicated to the Resurrection and illuminated from above by a central oculus, reminiscent of the Pantheon in Rome and St. Costanza's rotunda. The lower church, accessed from beneath the bell tower, functions as a crypt and evokes early Christian catacombs. It includes a grotto-like chamber and two mysterious, narrow underground corridors, heightening the tomb's sacred atmosphere.

Architecturally, Lvov drew inspiration from Roman antiquity and Andrea Palladio's Tempietto Barbaro, while also referencing the Jerusalem Church of the Holy Sepulchre and the mausoleum of Galla Placidia in Ravenna. The rotunda's dome is coffered with rosettes and rests on a Corinthian entablature adorned with reliefs of grapevines and birds - symbols of resurrection and eternal life. The layout of the upper church suggests a centralized cross plan, with symmetrical exedras on the east and west. The entrance, reached by a cyclopean stone ramp, was designed to suggest ascension—both physical and metaphysical - from the earthly domain of the tomb below to the celestial realm symbolised by the upper dome.

The composition reveals a deliberate spiritual program. The number of steps leading to the crypt (seven) alludes to the cardinal virtues, and the southern orientation of the bell tower aligns the structure with the sun, invoking Christ as the "Sun of Righteousness." Even the inclusion of two carved rosettes - Sun and Moon - on the portico evokes a cosmological reading of the passage from life to death and resurrection.

Lvov's rotunda is not merely a funerary monument but a didactic work of architecture. It transforms Enlightenment rationalism and Palladian rigor into a vehicle for Christian moral teaching. The harmonious integration of architecture, symbolism, and landscape reflects Lvov's belief that sacred architecture should guide the viewer not only through space but toward spiritual understanding. Despite later misconceptions branding the monument as "Masonic" or "pagan," it is fundamentally Christian in both purpose and message, embodying the resurrection through form, light, and spatial progression.

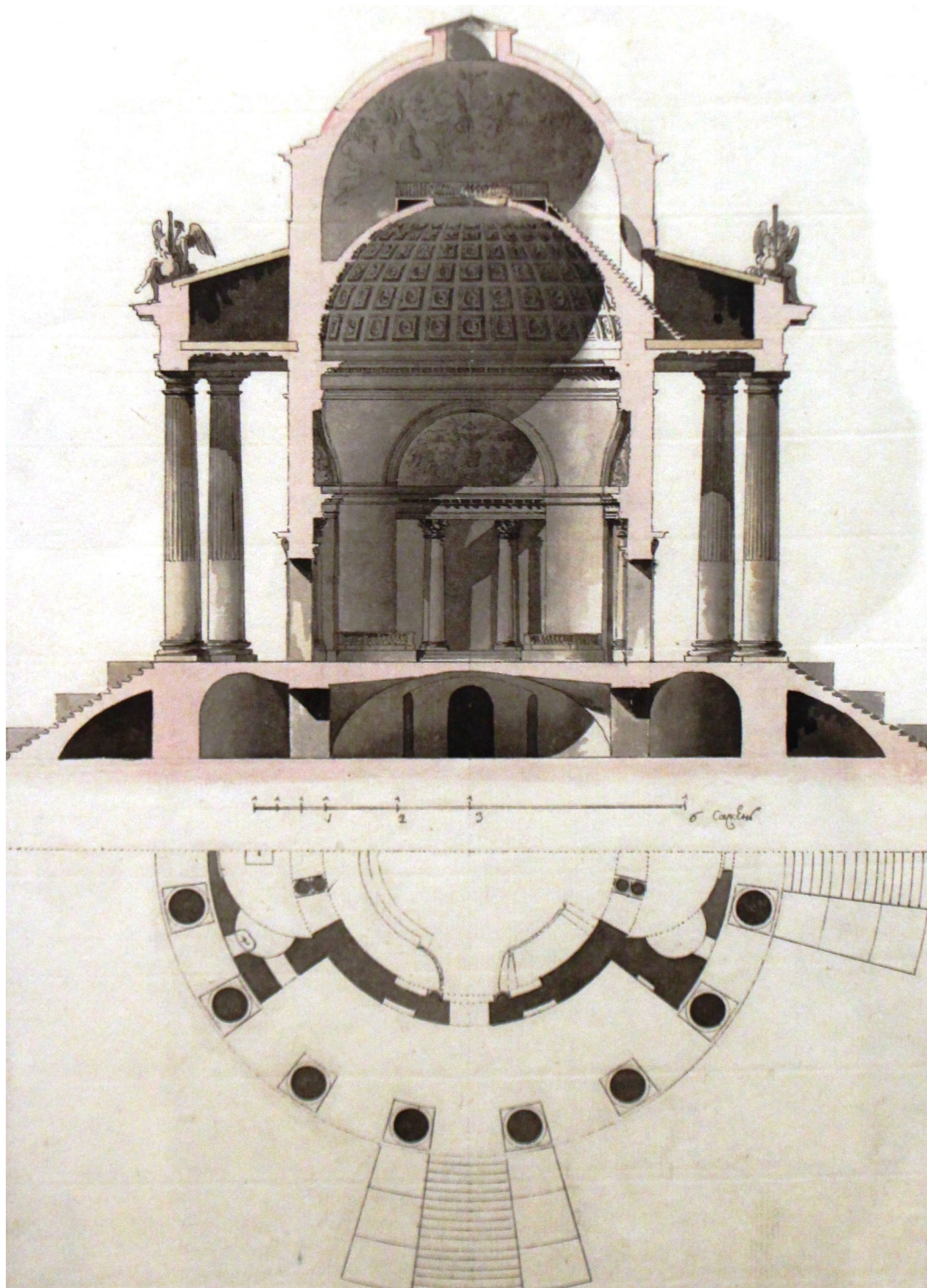
Today, the mausoleum stands in partial ruin, a fragile yet majestic relic of Lvov's visionary genius. Its architecture remains a testament to the intellectual ambition of Russian classicism and a uniquely personal synthesis of artistic, religious, and philosophical ideals.



Church-Mausoleum, at Nikolskoye-Cherenchitsy, 1790
Tver region, Russia



Church-Mausoleum at Nikolskoye-Cherenchitsy, 1790s
Nikolskoje-Cherenchitsy, Tver region, Russia



Church-Mausoleum, at Nikolskoye-Cherenchitsy, 1790
Tver region, Russia



Church-Mausoleum, at Nikolskoye-Cherenchitsy, 1790
Tver region, Russia



Church-Mausoleum, at Nikolskoye-Cherenchitsy, 1790
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Church-Mausoleum, at Nikolskoye-Cherenchitsy, 1790
Tver region, Russia



Church-Mausoleum, at Nikolskoye-Cherenchitsy, 1790
Tver region, Russia

FUNDRAISING PROJECT

For the restoration of the Church of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul

<https://nasledie-iris.org/projects/petropavlovskij-hram-razrabotka-proekta-restavraczii/>

Status: Historical and Cultural Monument of Regional Significance

Date of Construction: Late 18th century

Date of Consecration: 1803

Architect: N. A. Lvov

Location: 79 km from Tver by car, 40 km from Torzhok

Historical Background of the Village

Pereslegino is situated on the Rachaina River, 26 km south of the city of Torzhok. Since the late 18th century, the area belonged to the prominent noble family of Poltoratsky. By 1859, the village had 27 households and 257 residents. Pereslegino was known for its traditional fairs. The Church of Saints Peter and Paul has long been, and remains, the main architectural and spiritual landmark of the village.

History of the Church

The Church of Saints Peter and Paul is a gem of Russian architectural heritage and one of the finest works of the celebrated architect Nikolai Lvov—often referred to by his contemporaries as the “Russian Leonardo.”

The stone church was erected in the late 18th century on the site of an older wooden structure. Its construction was funded by parishioners and the local landowner, Mark Poltoratsky—Actual State Councillor and Director of the Imperial Court Chapel. The church was consecrated in 1803 by Archbishop Pavel of Tver and Kashin.

Designed in the Classical style, the church inspires awe even in its ruined state. Of particular note are the Ionic columns and the majestic double dome, through whose vertical openings the images of the twelve apostles are visible.

An early inventory describes it as:

“A stone church with two chapels, covered with an iron roof. The dome and crosses are made of gilded iron. It has two bell towers, also with iron roofs, domes, and gilded crosses, and six bells. The altar and royal doors are carved and gilded. The image of the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary is painted on the royal doors, with a radiant halo above, also carved and gilded. To the right of the royal doors, the icon of the Saviour in a marble-like iconostasis is partially gilded and painted...”

In the 1930s, the church was closed. Its liturgical objects were looted, and the building was repurposed for utilitarian needs.

In 2018, the Church of Saints Peter and Paul was officially included in the regional register of historical and cultural monuments. It is also under consideration for inclusion in the UNESCO World Heritage Tentative List as part of the serial nomination “*Historical Center of Torzhok and the Estate Architecture of Nikolai Lvov.*”

Церковь Загорье (Переслегино) 1908г.





The Church Today

For decades, the church has remained in a state of disrepair. The vaults of the side aisles have collapsed, parts of the roof are missing, and the central dome is at risk of collapse. The brickwork is rapidly deteriorating.

With the blessing of Metropolitan Ambrosius of Tver and Kashin, and at the request of the church's rector, Father Alexander Rabtsun, the **White Iris Charity Foundation** took responsibility for the site. In 2021, we completed the first phase of conservation work, made possible by the success of our project *"Let's Save the Churches of Novotorzhskaya Land and Stepurino"*, which was supported by a grant from the Presidential Fund.

As part of the conservation plan, the church was temporarily covered with a waterproof fabric roof. We reinforced the rafters, replaced the sheathing, and sealed openings in the domed structure. The windows were closed with ventilated wooden shutters. The north wall, which had shifted, was stabilized with steel channels. These emergency measures halted further decay caused by rain and snow and preserved the building from further structural collapse.

In 2024, we reinforced the structural and foundation systems of the church and improved the surrounding grounds.

This would not have been possible without the help of generous supporters who contributed financially and volunteers who participated in community clean-up efforts.

As art historian and Russian State University for the Humanities lecturer Arseny Petrov noted:

"The architectural design of the Church of Saints Peter and Paul is on par with churches in Moscow and St. Petersburg. It is not a provincial monument - it is of national significance for the history of Russian culture. Preserving it is a great achievement."

What's Next

Our goal is the full restoration of this sacred and cultural landmark. To achieve this, we are launching a fundraising campaign to support the research and development of a restoration project.

Your donations will help fund the following:

- Chemical and material analysis
- Historical, archival, bibliographic, and archaeological research
- Refinement of architectural measurements and drawings
- Structural engineering assessments
- Development of concept and preliminary designs
- Final restoration project documentation
- Essential administrative expenses

We thank everyone who contributes to saving this architectural masterpiece.



White Iris Charity Foundation
<https://nasledie-iris.org/>





RESTORATION PROJECT

of the Church of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul

Pereslegino Village, Torzhok District, Tver Region

2016 to 2023

Head of Project and Chief Architect:

Kirill Yakovlev

Architects: :

Yaroslav Sedoplatov, Tatyana Popova, Marina Karpova, Nikita Trofimov

Chief Engineer: :

Stanislav Slovitsky

Chief Designer: :

Anton Smirnov

Designers: :

Kira Besprozvannaya, Natalya Lyalinova

Project Initiators: :

Kirill Yakovlev and Anton Smirnov (concept design), :

White Iris Charity Foundation

<https://nasledie-iris.org/>

Project Stages:

1. Site Survey and Measurements
2. Conceptual Design
3. Architectural and Archaeological Documentation
4. Emergency Stabilization Work (construction documentation and scientific supervision)



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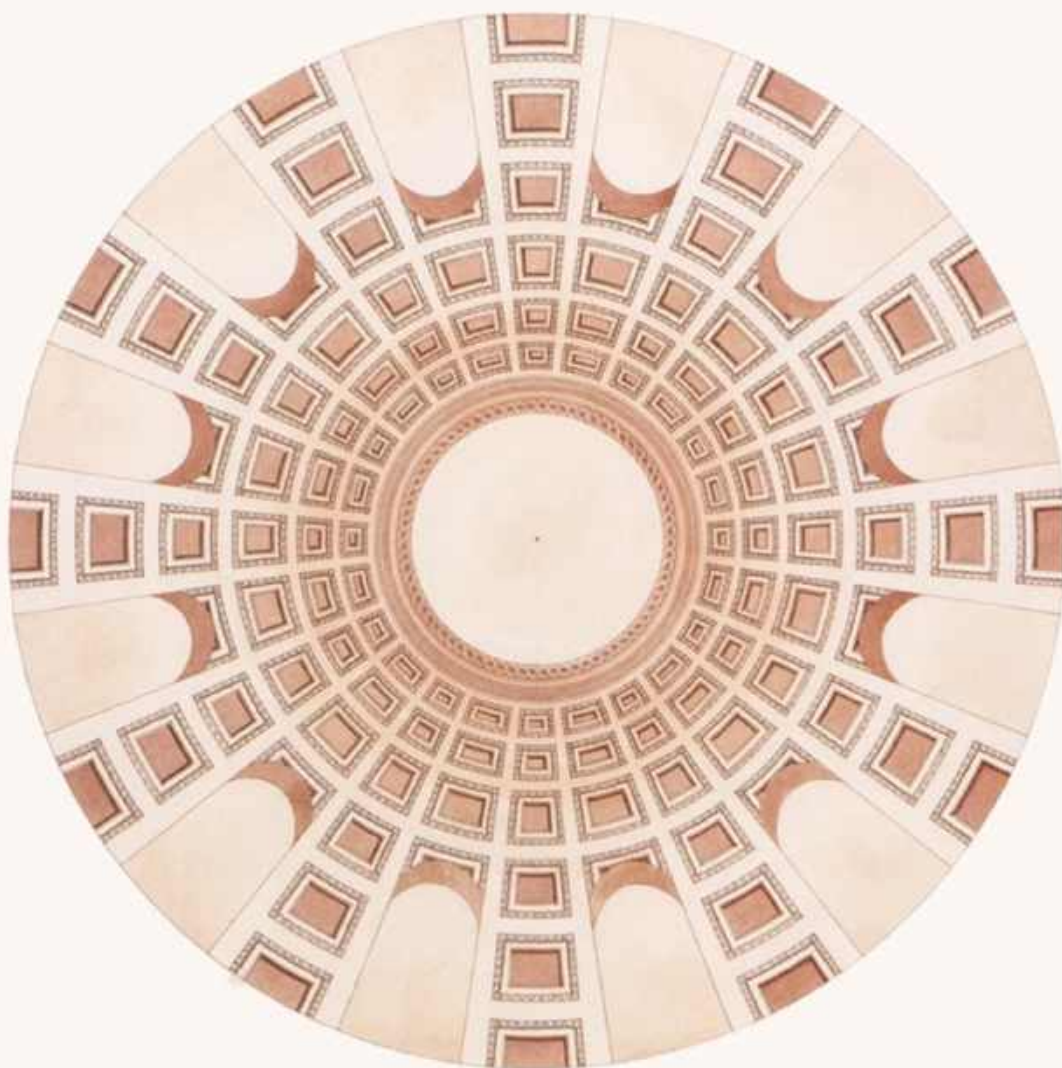
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ЗАПАДНЫЙ ФАСАД



Фасад в осях Н-А

