

FROM RUINS TO THE DECORATIVE AND APPLIED ARTS MUSEUM

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ABSTRACT

The paper “*From Ruins to the Decorative and Applied Arts Museum*” reflects the complicated path passed by the outstanding monument, a pseudo-gothic style - mezzanine - “New Cavalry House”-

designed by the architect of German origin - *Albert Zaltzmann*. Based on scientific research, the work presents content and functional loading possibilities for the new Decorative-Applied Arts Museum building and its outer space. One of the main goals is to replace the Russian narrative with European content.

The European-style architecture Museum, located in the centre of the popular Georgian Spa resort Borjomi, with displayed decorative and applied arts collections belonging to the royal family, will be interesting for all visitors. Accordingly, it will be in demand and profitable. It has been noted that the museum is of an extraordinary, unusual nature, and it stands out from the rest of the similar museum institutions in Georgia thanks to the peculiar architecture, content, and collections displayed here.

The paper describes the mission of the future museum, its content, and the vital role it has to play in the context of educational and economic development, promoting the region and the whole country.

Keywords: Borjomi, museum, New Cavalry House, exhibition

The Decorative-Applied Arts Museum building (“New Cavalry House”) is located in the city of Borjomi. Borjomi is an outstanding site among the Georgian Spa resorts; it is also the origin of the mineral water brand “*Borjomi*.” Borjomi Gorge has significant resources and great potential for the development of cultural tourism. In addition to its cultural assets and numerous monuments of cultural heritage, it has a unique beauty.

The highly favourable location of Borjomi town and the numerous places of interest (among which are: Likani complex, Borjomi-Kharagauli National Park, alpine ski resort Bakuriani, Vardzia, Akhaltsikhe Rabati and Historical Museum of Samtskhe-Javakheti, Abastumani resort) make this an important tourist destination. Borjomi has a significant advantage over other tourist proposals: it is located next to the National Borjomi-Kharagauli Park, the largest National Park in Georgia. The number of visitors to the town of Borjomi is rapidly increasing.

If there is appropriately planned and well-developed infrastructure, Borjomi has all the potential to become a beautiful, fascinating resort town of world significance. These were the prospects predicted for it back on the verge of the XIX-XX c.c.; Borjomi was considered a possible competitor of the best Spa Resorts in Switzerland and France (Figure 1).

The museum building is located in the center of Borjomi (Gofmeister str.) in the historic park named after Adolf Remmert.. It is one of the most crowded places in the city. The location of the building makes it perfectly suitable to be transformed into a museum (Kacharava, 2018, pp.239-240) (Figure 2).

There are many factors why and how the idea of a museum adaptation of the “New Cavalry House” was born. This is its historical and cultural value and architectural appearance, the fact that the cultural heritage monument has avoided destruction, its favorable location, and potential to obtain the appropriate museum function based on its historical context, the opportunity for the cultural, educational, and economic development of the Borjomi region.

The majority of museums existing in Georgia are archaeological-ethnographic or historical museums, a collection of decorative and applied arts displayed within the building of European-style architecture, such as “New Cavalry House,” is quite a rarity in Georgian reality; consequently, this museum will be rather visitable and in great demand. The new Decorative-Applied Arts Museum (“New Cavalry House”) will become the most attractive, exciting, and visited place in Borjomi city. (Figure 3).

Figure 1

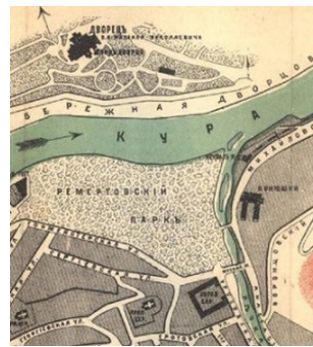
Old Borjomi views and Borjomi mineral water springs by S. M. Prokudin Gorski



Source: <https://en.m.wikibooks.org/wiki/File:Prokudin-Gorskii-49>.

Figure 2

Plan of Borjomi



Source: Gr. Moskvich illustrated a practical guide to the Caucasus, Odessa, 1902.

Figure 3

The Sketches by Albert Zaltzmann



Source: National Museum of Georgia Sh. Amiranashvili Museum

It is a stone building in a pseudo-gothic style – mezzanine, towers, and high fronts, designed by the architect of German origin - *Albert Zaltzmann*, probably between 1875 and 1883. Since then, the building has served as a summer residence for Grand Duke Nicholas Romanov prior to the construction of his Likani residence. Later, it served as a residence for royal family members, immediate nobility, and military aristocracy circles.

Figure 4

Likani Residence by S. M. Prokudin Gorski



Source: <https://en.m.wikibooks.org/wiki/File:Prokudin-Gorskii-49>.

In 2011, the palace of Mirza Reza Khan Arfa'Ad-Doule² - "Firouze" was rehabilitated in Borjomi under the leadership of the National Agency for the Preservation of Cultural Heritage of Georgia. During the business trip associated with this process, attention was attracted by a building, unusual for Georgian architecture, with preserved splendor despite its poor physical state. It became an unforgettable experience and a source of inspiration (Kacharava,2018, pp.239-240; Kacharava, 2020, pp. 20-29).

Soon, functional zoning works started at the Borjomi Local Lore Museum.³ It became clear that the process of museum adaptation of a non-museum building (building designated for the Chancellery of the Romanovs' estate), as well as a cultural heritage monument (which in itself excludes active interference with the fabric of the building) to meet modern requirements, was going to be rather challenging. The lack of space for the exposition of exhibits with a rich, utterly diverse chronology, typology, origin, and history was an additional problem, making the complete exposition impossible.

Considering all the above, in 2015, the "New Cavalry House" moved from Borjomi municipal subordination to the National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation of Georgia. The process of replacing the Borjomi Local Lore Museum and rehabilitating the "New Cavalry House" was followed by lengthy formal correspondence with the World Bank and the Municipal Development Fund⁴. Finally, the decision favoured the "New Cavalry House".

The decision about the replacement was based on the lack of feasibility for a complete exposition of collections preserved in the building and the fact that the "New Cavalry House" was facing severe danger – the cultural heritage site was under threat of physical destruction. (Figure 5).

The design process was started. Nine years of efforts came to a successful end. The renovation was completed in 2022.

Mission of the New Museum

The mission of the new decorative-applied arts museum is to:

- reflect European ideas and content of conversion-development of Borjomi Estate belonging to the Emperor's family on the verge of XIX-XX centuries into a spa resort.
- to familiarize visitors with a complex and intriguing history of art pieces, formerly belonging to Borjomi palaces, later becoming museum collections, and share the information on their producers and artisans. These collections

demonstrate the essential episodes of 20 years of thrilling history of the Royal Family descendants, Borjomi Lady of the House, and their family members associated with Borjomi.

- act as a regional cultural-educational hub.

Figure 5

New Cavalry Corps building before renovation



Source: Pictures by E. Kacharava

The Exhibition Area

The rehabilitation of the “New Cavalry House” and its adaptation for the museum of the Decorative-Applied Arts Museum, as well as determining its interior design, shall consider the specific aspects of its construction period (XIX-XX centuries.) and the characteristics of the collections. The new Decorative-Applied Arts Museum provided a realistic and the best opportunity for quantitative and thematic re-distribution of collections preserved at Borjomi Local Lore Museum. The collections stored in the Borjomi Local Lore Museum building accommodate collections

of different types, origin, and chronology: Georgian collections of archaeology and ethnology, numismatics - Georgian, Oriental, Russian collections, Natural History – Borjomi Gorge Flora and Fauna, Exhibits associated with Borjomi mineral water production, Rare book collection, Archive materials (historical documents, photo material, albums, maps, etc.). Therefore, it is not easy to adequately exhibit such a large and diversified collection in a single building.

The museum's decorative and applied arts exhibition area will comprise *One Temporary* (1st Floor - 44.12 m²) and *Three Permanent Exhibition Rooms* (2nd Floor -1-39.41 m², 2- 39.48 m² and 3- 69.15 m²). The Museum of Decorative and Applied Arts will exhibit porcelain, glass, ceramic, faience, leather, wood, and semi-precious stone pieces dating back to the 18th century, fine art pieces (graphic, oil paintings), and furniture owned by Borjomi Palaces.

Temporary Exhibition Room (1st Floor - 44.12 m²)

Various interesting exhibitions relating to Borjomi Resort will be arranged in the temporary exhibitions room of the Museum (Borjomi Resort, Borjomi architecture, European architects in Borjomi, Likani Palace and Park., etc.).

The first Exhibition after opening will be dedicated to the founder of the Decorative and Applied Art Department at the Borjomi Local Lore Museum in 1935 - Artem Gabunia, his wife, the painter Barbare Bebutova, to their creative family and their efforts (Kacharava, 2020, pp. 20-29).

Presently, there needs to be more awareness about Artem Gabunia's contribution to the history of the Borjomi Museum and the study of decorative-applied arts collections. However, he was the one to be credited for the creation of this department in the Museum. He is also the author of the catalogue of art pieces, which remains essential for research on the decorative-applied art collections of Borjomi Palaces. (Figure 6).

European content of Borjomi spa may be unfolded around the Lady of the house of Borjomi Estate - the Princess Cäcilie Auguste of Baden, her descendants, creativity, charity activities conducted in Georgia, decision-making functions in the family, the unique attitude of the spouse towards her. Based on all the above, we believe that the establishment/development of Borjomi as a European resort was related to descendants of the Princess of Baden, to the desire to create a comfortable setting for her in the place, far away from her motherland Baden-Borjomi. We also need to consider that the implementers of Borjomi's scientific, architectural, and industrial projects are mainly scientists, architects/engineers, and constructors of European origin.

Figure 6

The Princess Cäcilie Auguste of Baden (Olga Feodorovna)



Source: <https://www.gettyimages.com/photos/grand-duchess-olga-feodorovna>
<https://www.pinterest.com/pin/572379433866386718/>

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This was the period of extensive economic development of Borjomi. According to the assessment of contemporaries, large-scale industrial projects were implemented at an amazingly swift "American pace." Involvement of names like *G. Eiffel*, *W. Siemens*, *Fr. Moldenhauer*, *A. Saltzman*, *L. Bielfeld*, *L. Benois*, *V. Shengardt*, *E. Schreter*, *V. Schweyer*, *G. Zezeman*, *G. Struve*, *E. Andreyevsky*, *A. Remmert*, and others indicates the importance of the scientific, technical, construction and economic projects implemented in Borjomi.

One of the central *Exhibition Rooms* (39.41 m²) will be dedicated to the Lady of the house of the 19th century Borjomi Estate - the *Princess Cäcilie Auguste of Baden* (20.IX.1839–12. IV.1891), the youngest daughter of Grand Duke Leopold of Baden and Sophie Wilhelmine of Sweden*. This space will open up to the public the story of the muse and the inspirer of transformation and future development of the Spa Resort of Borjomi– the smart, widely educated Princess of Baden with liberal ideas, her royal origin and royal family members, her charity in Georgia, her modest and impeccable taste, clearly seen from her beautiful belongings, - items preserved at the Borjomi Local Lore Museum, at Likani Palace and the Tbilisi National Museum. Some of these items presented here are The Secretaire, preserved at Likani Palace; the Lady’s gun in a wooden burgundy velvet-covered case with her initials «O.Φ.»; the embroidery and jewelry cases; memorial icon, etc.

Figure 7

The bureau belonging to the princess Cäcilie preserved at Likani Palace



Source: Eka Kacharava’s collection

The samples of fine arts (paintings, graphics, sculptures), the rare library, and various pieces of antique furniture will also be placed here. In this way, it will be possible to recreate the domestic environment and suggest the unique atmosphere of that epoch. The exhibits that represent and reconstruct the epoch will be arranged attractively, creating an exciting and unforgettable exposure for the visitor.

The other two spaces will house the collections of decorative-applied and fine arts belonging to the estate palaces in Borjomi, to the history of their origin and manufactures. These applied, and fine arts collections and furniture are kept at Borjomi

Local Lore Museum and Sh. Amiranashvili Museum of the National Museum of Georgia has up to 400 pieces. Possible inclusion of the significant part of applied and fine arts collections and furniture (still under examination) kept in Sh. Amiranashvili Museum of the National Museum of Georgia into the new Museum's collection should also be considered. The best samples, compatible with the exposition concept, will be selected considering the space, value of exhibits, and visual side.

Figure 8

The items belonging to the princess Cäcilie

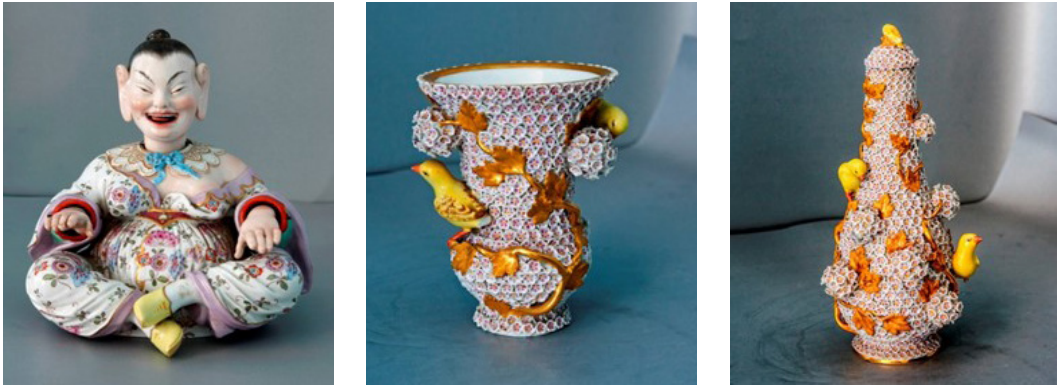


Source: Borjomi Local Lore Museum. Photos by Sh. Lejava and Z.Tsertsvadze

Most collections consist of porcelain items produced by the Russian Imperial Porcelain Manufacturer. We must mention the very high-quality glass items the Imperial Glass Manufacturer produced. The collection also comprises semiprecious stone items. There are also several pieces from famous European porcelain manufacturers such as Meissen, Sevres, and Kopenhagen Royal Factories, the Italian, French, and German figurines, etc.

Figure 9

Porcelain items belonging to the Romanov family

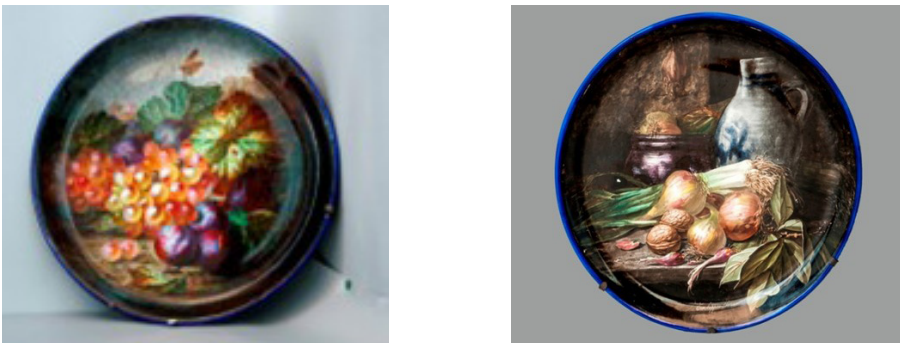


Note: Meissen Manufacture production

Source: Borjomi Local Lore Museum. Photos by Sh. Lejava

Figure 10

Faience items belonging to the Romanov family

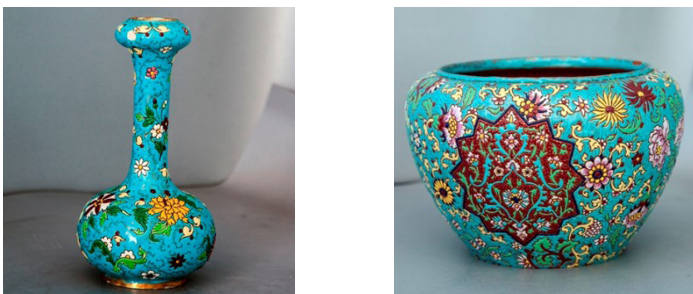


Note: French faience school - creil et monteraux

Source: Borjomi Local Lore Museum. Photos by Sh. Lejava

Figure 11

Faience items belonging to the Romanov family



Photos by
Sh. Lejava

Note: French faience school – CLEMENT MASSIER. *Source:* Borjomi Local Lore Museum.

Figure 12

Glass items belonging to the Romanov family

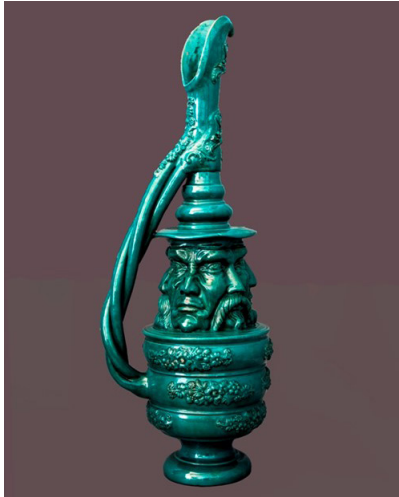


Note: Russian Imperial Glass Factory

Source: Borjomi Local Lore Museum. Photos by Sh. Lejava

Figure 13

Faience item belonging to the Romanov family



Note: Dateshidze faience manufacture (Kharagauli)

Source: Borjomi Local Lore Museum. Photos by Sh. Lejava

Multifunctional Cultural Hub

The Museum also aims to provide relevant information to visitors to promote the attractions of the region in general, including other museums, cultural heritage monuments, tourist infrastructure (hotels, spa services, mineral water “Borjomi,” catering services, ski resort Bakuriani, Abastumani, etc.). For this purpose, a multi-touch interface will present all this information, and a desk in the reception area

where a dedicated person will provide visitors with all the needed information. The Multi-Touch Interface will display advertisements and information regarding ongoing and upcoming educational activities and cultural events.

Figure 14
Multi-Touch Interface examples



The museum may offer extra services and provide local guides and transport for visiting other cultural heritage monuments in the area. This can be an additional source of income for the museum.

In addition to the primary mission, the museum will be the location of the space for Educational Activities - implementation of educational programs concerning art history (decorative-applied, fine, artistic, drawing, embroidery-weaving, herbarium making, ceramic-faience painting, etc.); Organization of workshops local crafts held by local masters; The youth will be able to use modern technologies for acquisition of more profound knowledge – most of them do not have such an opportunity at home.

Mediatheque (hybrid library) for Scientific Research Activities - scientific research of museum collections and archives, monitoring, study, and preservation of the tangible and the intangible heritage; organization of lectures, scientific conferences, workshops, etc.; The hybrid library shall provide researchers and students with a comfortable working space to access a wide range of materials in hard copies and electronic format.

Small movie theatre -This is a space for demonstrating the museum movies that will be thematically related to exhibitions and collections. The space will be designed for ten people. Various Cultural-Educational activities include retrospective museum and informative-educational movie reviews, interactive artistic meetings, memorial and literary evenings, lectures, and conferences of the relevant profile.

The educational and cultural components of the additional service offers will be associated with the heritage of the Borjomi district (the tangible and the intangible heritage, meaning local crafts, traditions, etc). The Museum is expected to positively impact the cultural-intellectual and local crafts development opportunities in the region and support future employment opportunities for the local population. The museum will serve as a modern multifunctional cultural hub and an interactive educational center at the service of the community, as well as national and international visitors.

Recreational Area

Museum café, shop, and bookstore

Given the highly favorable location of the “New Cavalry House” from a commercial point of view (center, historical park), it is desirable to open a Museum café similar to the so-called “literary café.” The interior, furniture, and accessories shall be consistent with the history and architectural style of the Museum (verge of the XIX-XX c.c.). It is desirable to arrange the most comfortable and relaxing setting (internet, service, climate control). This will create a sense of comfort and stimulate the visitors to spend more time at the Museum, thus increasing the possible revenues regarding catering services and spending money on book and souvenir purchases (Georgian wines, sweets, and food products by local craftsmen).

It should be considered that the café will be open not just to Museum visitors but to all other clients, as it has an independent entrance in terms of supply and service. The café inside the Museum will significantly attract visitors, thus promoting the Borjomi district cultural heritage monuments and landmarks. (Figure 15)

Outer space of the Museum (territory of A. Remmert Historical Park)

As already mentioned, this is the usually crowded central area. There should be an outdoor space with an outdoor café for many visitors, with a comfortable environment during all seasons, ready to accommodate and serve significant flows of guests. The outer space will also be rehabilitated and refurbished in such a manner to be compatible with the epoch and style of the adjacent building: Arranging-greening of a garden, garden benches, and outer lighting corresponding to the epoch.

For further clarity, we present the functional zoning of the museum, indicating floors and spaces:

1st floor

Figure 15

The same period café design example - The oldest Café Maiasmokk, Tallinn, Estonia



Source: Internet resources

- *Reception and administrative area*

This area includes:

- The entrance/reception room (57.38 m²) has an information desk, ticket desk, museum shop/corner for souvenirs, and multi-touch interface, where the information will be uploaded.
- Cloakroom (coat rack, space for storage of hand luggage and personal items – 18.84 m²)
- Restroom - old-fashioned design, accessible to people with disabilities (18.28 m²)
- Administration office (18.58 m²)
- Guide, curator, supervisor office (17.32 m²)
- Security room (11.70 m²)
- Elevator for people with disabilities.
- Museum cafe (55,88 m²)

2nd floor

The second floor will house a permanent exhibition area with three rooms and comprise the following spaces:

- Permanent exhibition space with three rooms (39.41 m² / 39.48 m² / 69.15 m²);

- Small movie theatre (22.01 m²) – the area with the relevant technical equipment, museum-related movies, retrospective review of photos and other visual materials;
- Office for museum personnel - (11.89 m²);
- Storage (30.48 m²); scientific materials (catalogues, drawings, plans, sketches, photos) will be placed there, together with the artifacts not displayed;
- Restrooms (4.80 m²);
- Open balcony;
- Elevator for PWDS.

3rd Floor - Mansard Floor

The following spaces will be located on the third mezzanine Floor of the “New Cavalry House”:

- Educational space (40.47 m²);
- Mediatheque (hybrid library) (84.41 m²);
- Room for staff (20.57 m²);
- Restroom (3.37 + 2.47 m²).

As a result of the rehabilitation of the building of the “New Cavalry House” and its adaptation as a museum, we will be able to preserve the cultural heritage monument, we will obtain esthetically attractive exposition spaces of exciting content, meeting the modern requirements, placed within the historic building with the status of cultural heritage monument; from the infrastructure point of view, it will be premised (educational-cultural activities and events, *depository, space for official receptions, mediatheque, space for retrospectives of museum films, literature cafe, souvenir shop, WC*), fully adapted to the requirements of people with special needs.

Besides, opening this space in the center of Borjomi will significantly contribute to the quality of education and culture, support the creation of new jobs, and promote local craftsmanship. Consequently, in addition to the museum function, it should accommodate the role of the cultural-educational hub and thus facilitate the cultural-economic development of the region.

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