

## **NEUHAUSEN CASTLE AS A POTENTIAL DESTINATION FOR THE TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY IN THE KALININGRAD REGION**

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The article considers the issue of preservation and renovation of archeological, architectural, historical, cultural sites on the territory of the Kaliningrad region. It is introduced a project concept for the reconstruction and utilization of Neuhausen Castle and its facilities as a tourism and hospitality destination.

Key words: tourism and hospitality industry, Kaliningrad region, Neuhausen castle, cultural heritage, the Teutonic Order.

## **ЗАМОК НОЙХАУЗЕН КАК ПОТЕНЦИАЛЬНЫЙ ОБЪЕКТ ИНДУСТРИИ ТУРИЗМА И ГОСТЕПРИИМСТВА КАЛИНИНГРАДСКОЙ ОБЛАСТИ**

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В статье рассматривается вопрос сохранения и обновления археологических, архитектурных, исторических, культурных объектов на территории Калининградской области. Представлена концепция реконструкции и использования замка Нойхаузен и его объектов в качестве объекта индустрии туризма и гостеприимства.

Ключевые слова: индустрия туризма и гостеприимства, Калининградская область, замок Нойхаузен, культурное наследие, Тевтонский орден.

The Kaliningrad Region is one of the most captivating travel destinations on the territory of the Russian Federation with a considerable capacity for the tourism development. There is so much to see and explore here where so many events in long history of the region have taken place. The presence of great number of unique sites, distinctive culture, local cuisine and ethnical diversity is one of the key factors determining the successful development of cultural and educational tourism in the province. The Kaliningrad region comprises a variety of archaeological and architectural landmarks, historic and art monuments of federal, regional and local significance, 673 cultural sites of which are on the National Heritage List [6]. It should be mentioned the majority of these objects are in rather poor condition and not suitable for operation as tourism and hospitality facilities and unsafe for visitors. Furthermore, the destinations are difficult to access, they lack the necessary tourism infrastructure (equipped parking spaces, turn-around areas for sightseeing buses, etc.). A significant part of the tourist sites is owned by the federal government, part of them is a property of the Russian Orthodox

Church, some objects are in private ownership or transferred for the operation to management organizations. This in turn makes the process of restoration complicated and creates obstacles for using them as a tourist destination.

One of such sites is Neuhausen Castle, located 12 km to the east from the regional center in the town of Guryevsk. The history of the castle is connected with the presence of the Teutonic Order in Prussia. The first wooden and earth fortification was raised in 1297, in the second half of the 14th century the castle was rebuilt in stone and well-burnt brick, and new constructions such as a windmill and a church appeared in the vicinity. Throughout the history the castle was expanded and reconstructed many times. Neuhausen castle retained its defensive function until the 17th century, and later it became a place for recreation. Under George Wilhelm, for example, the manor served as the Great Elector's summer "hunting residence".

In 1814, King of Prussia, Friedrich Wilhelm III donated Neuhausen Castle to the General Friedrich Wilhelm von Bulow, as a reward to an active participant in the war with Napoleon I. Then, in 1842 Count Lückner inherited the castle and redesigned it in the neo-Gothic style. The castle loopholes were laid with bricks, moats were filled up, stationary bridges were built, and the park area was expanded. At the end of the 19th century the chateau was a seat of the provincial agricultural administration. During the prewar period Neuhausen was owned by von Massow and after his departure a Gauleiter of East Prussia, Erich Koch. The building of the castle severely suffered in the course of East Prussian operation in 1945 *during the Great Patriotic War*. However, some parts of the manor were preserved in their original form. In the middle of the 1950<sup>th</sup>, the territory of the castle was occupied by Guryevsk construction company. Now, it is an object of cultural heritage of federal significance in the Kaliningrad region [1], with an operating company on its premises.

Several years ago, attempts were made to restore the castle, however there have been no significant changes - the castle and the surrounding area are rather a depressing sight. The restoration process of the castle can be started only when an

appropriate project is developed and the most important thing is that, the necessary resources to be available for its implementation [2].

Regional policymakers have increasingly acknowledged the role of cultural heritage as a source of knowledge, social well-being but also as an essential resource for economic growth of the area. This is reflected in adoption of local policy documents such as a program “Involvement of Cultural Heritage Objects, Historical Buildings and other Sites in Economic Activity of the Region” of 2021 [7]. The program offers preferential loans granted at a 0% rate for up to 15 years for projects aimed at restoring architectural constructions, their historical environment and creating an integrated system of territories with attractive tourist facilities.

It is considered Neuhausen Castle to be a promising target in the sphere of domestic tourism under this program. Firstly, it is situated in close proximity to Kaliningrad providing transport accessibility for visiting the destination and allows the site to be included in existing tour programs. Secondly, the castle has a rich history, and this can make it a point of attraction for locals and tourists alike. Neuhausen Castle retains its unique identity in relatively well-preserved cellars of the 13th century, as well as the Gothic ceilings with cross and star-shaped vaults on the ground and first floor of the building. Neuhausen manor is known as a property of Albrecht Hohenzollern of Brandenburg, the Grand Master of the Teutonic Order, who became the first Duke of Prussia in 1524. [4, p. 27]. Albrecht's wife Anna Maria of Brunswick was a founder of one of the biggest book collections in Europe - the “Silver Library”. By the end of Albrecht’s life the library housed more than nine thousand copies. The legends of Neuhausen gave fame to another resident of the castle, Paul Scalich, a European alchemist and conspirator. He exercised a great influence over the Duke Albrecht’s family at that time [5]. Moreover, Neuhausen Castle occupies an extensive surrounding area, thus being a location with a great opportunity to grow. The Guryevka river flows near the castle and connects it with the church, Neuhausen Kirche.

We have developed a project concept for the reconstruction and utilization of Neuhausen Castle and its facilities as a tourism and hospitality destination. The concept of the chateau is based on real-life history and associated with the castle legends. The complex comprises a group of buildings as a hotel, a restaurant, a museum, craft workshops and also a venue for hosting events, walking and bathing areas.

The castle-based hotel will boast comfortable rooms and suits that come in a variety of shapes, sizes and theme interior: the Knight's Room, the Master's Room, the Alchemist's Room and the Romantic Room. Each room will be specifically designed creating an immersive experience for every guest. Modern technologies will allow using animation, sound and light effects, holographic projection of ghost images to appear in the corridors of the castle which emphasize the compliance of the hotel with the concept of the planned complex. The chateau visitors can taste authentic medieval cuisine while enjoying an inviting cozy ambience of the local restaurant. A special feature of the restaurant will be a themed bar decorated in the style of an alchemist's laboratory. The castle museum will be dedicated to describing both the history of the castle as well as the legends associated with Neuhausen. The museum will feature interactive galleries and exhibits, implementing virtual and augmented reality technology and help visitors immerse themselves in the atmosphere of Medieval castle life.

The historical fact that the territory near the castle was divided between three craftsmen: a tailor, a shoemaker, and a blacksmith as the first settlers may give the rise to creation of ethnographic village with crafts workshops, souvenir shops and galleries. The guests of Neuhausen will be able to visit a bakery, pottery, metal processing, leather, carpentry, weaving shops and buy local hand-made products, and also participate in masterclasses and workshops themselves [3].

The spacious courtyard of the chateau makes it possible to set up an amphitheater inside, the venue of many festivals and cultural events. The events will take place depending on the season and include reconstructions of medieval

battles, knight tournaments, trade fairs and festivals hosted by the evening bar “Skalich”. It is also planned to arrange various daily and weekly activities. The castle visitors can view theatrical shows “The Medieval Town” or take guided tours around Neuhausen, enjoy live music concerts and themed performances, participate in the Craftsman's Day festival on weekends. The water resources available at the castle premises can be used for the creation of an open-air bathing area and a walking area along the river which will link Neuhausen Castle and the Neuhausen Kirche.

It is assumed that the target customers who may mostly be interested in visiting this site will not be only the residents of Kaliningrad region, but also tourists from other regions of the Russian Federation. The destination can be especially popular with families with children who will constitute the bulk of the visitors.

Thus, creation of a hotel and restaurant complex with craft village on the basis of Neuhausen Castle will contribute to the development of tourism and hospitality both in the town of Guryevsk and in the region as a whole.

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