



The Riigikogu building. Photo: Martin Siplane

## **A workshop for young architects to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the Riigikogu (Parliament) building**

The creative brief for the workshop was prepared by the youth body of the Estonian Association of Architects

## Centenary of the Estonian Parliament building

*The Riigikogu building can be considered the only expressionist parliament building in the world. The most compelling reason for designing the Expressionist Riigikogu building was the need to express something as unprecedented as the newly founded Estonian statehood and democracy in a similarly unprecedented architectural form. Just as all of Estonian culture experienced a great creative blossoming around the time of statehood, it also inspired the architects who designed the Riigikogu building – Herbert Johanson and Eugen Habermann. The newly founded state needed a fresh approach to its parliament's architecture, too, rather than just the relics of older culture.*

- Mart Kalm, *Toompea loss, Tallinn 2008*, 121-122

### Creative brief

Centenary of the Estonian Parliament building. The architecture workshop held to mark the anniversary will take place from 15 to 17 June 2022 at Toompea Castle in Tallinn. Young architects and architecture students from Estonia, Latvia and Ukraine can take part in the workshop.

The creative brief calls on workshop participants to come up with a future vision for the entire Toompea castle complex. The workshop is looking for an answer to the question: what is a well-functioning government building of the future like? We are looking for spatial reconceptualisations of one of the most important buildings in the Republic of Estonia. Among other things, it should be conceived as more engaged and public-facing, making more active use of the courtyards, the square in front of the castle and the Governor's Garden, as well as laying out possible ideas for additional wings.

Workshop participants will have free rein in terms of concepts and architecture. They are urged to come up with sweeping and ambitious ideas befitting the 100th anniversary of the Riigikogu building.

The final result is to be expressed in a professional format appropriate for display at an exhibition in the Riigikogu in September.

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## Area covered in the workshop

The area covered by the workshop is the entire Toompea Castle complex – the Riigikogu building with its courtyards, the square in front of the castle and the Governor's Garden.



Photo: Land Board aerial photo

## Workshop objectives

1. Look to the future and elicit bold ideas for a spatial reconceptualisation of the Riigikogu building of the Republic of Estonia and the entire castle complex.
2. Plan a more human-friendly and environmentally friendly mobility solution in and around the Toompea castle complex. Preference should be given to pedestrians, cyclists and other non-car road users in terms of accessibility.
3. Create additional incentives for Tallinners to visit Toompea Castle and the Riigikogu building, tapping into the potential of its multifaceted and valuable architecture.
4. Propose a holistic concept of the whole area, which allows for diverse and flexible use of the areas, involves different age groups, offers diverse activities and helps to integrate values.
5. Strengthen the Riigikogu building as an inviting landmark for people using the Old Town and the city centre.



Photo: The Riigikogu building. Kaupo Kalda

## Toompea castle

*Politically, Toompea Castle represents almost 800 years of power and government. Lords and political and economic formations may have changed, wars may have been fought for Estonia and governments may have been felled, but the position of power has remained unmoving, and this is the relevance that Toompea has. In that sense, Toompea Castle is unique. More so than a view of the sea from a prison cell...*

— Harry Liivrand, *Toompea Loss, Tallinn 2008, 8*

The history of Toompea is the history of the rulers of Estonia and their power. Times and rulers have changed with the change of powers and mentalities. Each ruler has built and fortified this place according to their needs and tastes. The best master builders and architects of their times have worked here. Time has been kind to Toompea Castle. The well-fortified castle has been unconquerable, it has not been damaged by great fires and what is the most important – the castle has always had someone to take care of it. And so the visitors can come and enjoy the mosaic of periods and styles that together form an amazing whole.

In the first decades of the Republic of Estonia, Toompea Castle was also the residence of the state elders, and for a long time the Government of the Republic of Estonia worked here together with the parliament – the Riigikogu. At present Toompea Castle is occupied by the Riigikogu. In the course of centuries, Toompea Castle has turned from a medieval fortress into a modern centre of government. Besides the 101 members of the Riigikogu, about 251 officials of the Chancellery of the Riigikogu work here.

Additional information: [riigikogu.ee](http://riigikogu.ee)

## Parts of Toompea castle

The palace complex of Toompea consists of parts that date from different periods. One of the most exciting of them is the medieval order castle with its powerful western wall and towers like the Tall Hermann, where the flag of our country flows every day.

The Baroque facade of the building of the administration of the Province of Estonia from the Russian times faces the Castle Square, the building of the Riigikogu that was erected during the Estonian times is hidden inside the castle walls.

All rulers of Estonia – Danes, Germans, Swedes, Russians and finally Estonians themselves – have since the 13th century made a significant contribution to the development of Toompea Castle, making it stronger and statelier in accordance with their growing needs.

Thanks to them, Toompea Castle that is built of the local limestone, is very rich from the point of view of art history. Different art styles, from Gothic to the eclectic architecture of the 1930s, are intertwined with each other, forming an amazingly organic whole. The medieval parts of the castle are magnificent examples of fortification architecture, but the Renaissance has given the castle several stonework details. In the 18th century, the Late Baroque building of the province government with its palace-like main facade was added to the Gothic castle, and the young Republic of Estonia gave us the only Expressionist style parliamentary building in the world.

Thus the different parts of the castle complex originate from all important periods of the history of Estonia, making Toompea a magnificent monument to the eventful history of the Estonian people. In the 1930s, thorough reconstruction works took place in the castle. In 2013, the White Hall and the facade were restored.

Additional information: [riigikogu.ee](http://riigikogu.ee)



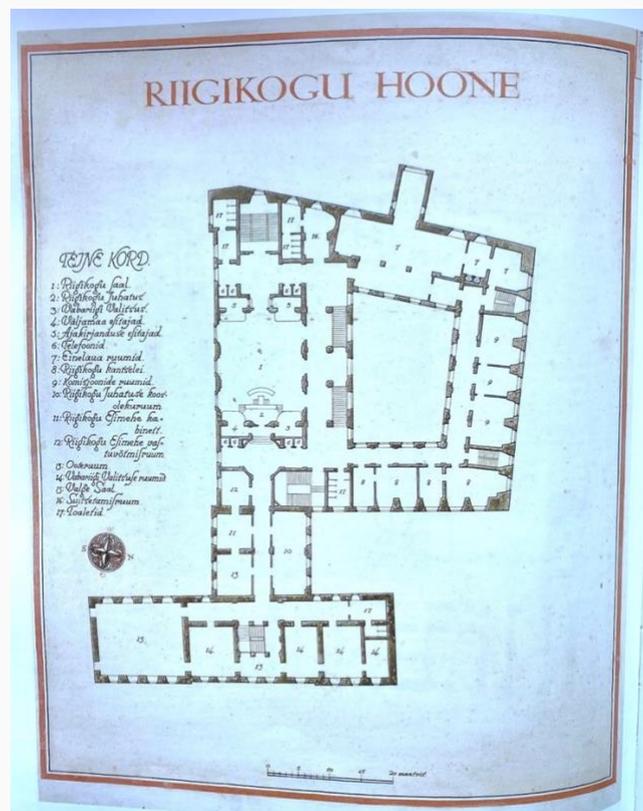
The Riigikogu building. Photo: Martin Siplane

## Riigikogu building

During the era between the two world wars, from 1918 to 1940, Toompea Castle underwent major changes, as a result of which its position as a centre of power, a political venue and a symbolic building of the Republic of Estonia was further strengthened. The newly founded Estonian state needed a seat of government functions, and on the basis of continuity, the former power centre Toompea Castle became the heart of the republic, housing both executive and legislative branches of government. Thus, the interwar-era Toompea Castle offers the most multifaceted and profound view of Estonia's national architecture – an area that the Estonian society at the time had only begun to shape.

Immediately after independence in 1918, a decisive step was made in short order – the vitally necessary Riigikogu building would be built in place of the core of the fortified castle. In the mid-1930s, the old castle was rebuilt into a modern seat of government. The Riigikogu building was designed by architects Herbert Johanson and Eugen Habermann in 1920-22 without protracted democratic procedures. Perhaps precisely because it was implemented as a decisive executive action, the Estonian Parliament building became quite distinctive, one of the most avant-garde buildings in Estonian architecture and among the world's parliamentary buildings.

— Mart Kalm, *Toompea loss*, Tallinn 2008, 83, 88



Plan of the second floor of the Riigikogu building.

- Mart Kalm, Juhan Maiste and Rein Zobel, *Toompea loss*, Tallinn 2008, 90

### Spatial design

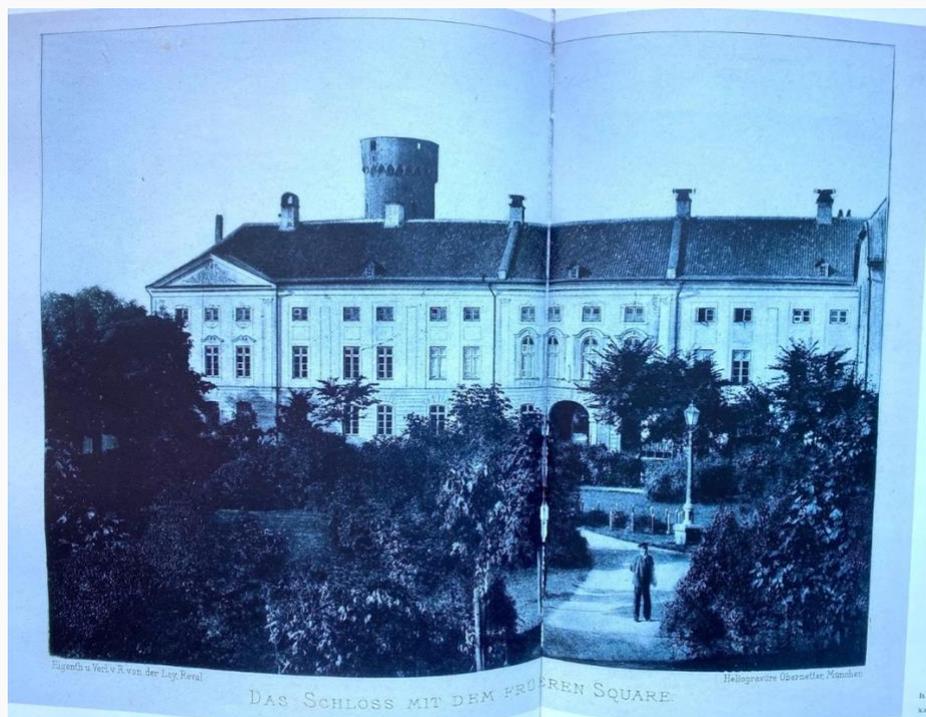
The three-storey building consists of four wings around an irregular courtyard, following the foundation of a convent building. Only the south wing is wider than the convent building, by the width of the antechambers of the main doors. The south wing, which dominates the castle courtyard, forms the facade of the Riigikogu building, which is marked by the three entrances and the main hall's windows above them. The entrances are followed by a spacious vestibule; along the same axis is a staircase for the members of parliament, which splits into two. Above the vestibule is the main hall, which extends

through two storeys. A sculptural quality is conferred to the hall by ceiling, balconies and loggia, which extend beyond the main outlines.

— Mart Kalm, *Toompea loss, Tallinn 2008*, 96

Between the stone walls, all of the interior ceilings - including those of the sculpturally designed vestibule and main hall - are made of reinforced concrete, and the use of this modern material extends even to the barriers enclosing the MPs' stairs. Since Estonia did not have a sufficient supply of high-quality roof tiles, some of them were imported from Finland. The floors were made of oak parquet; in the vestibule, of Vasalemma marble, and cement slabs in the corridor. The furniture was made by the Luther factory according to the architects' drawings. As Luther's representative did not manage to get curly birch from Finland, the furniture was finished using Estonian birch veneer.

— Mart Kalm, *Toompea loss, Tallinn 2008*, 104



*The complex before the construction of Alexander Nevsky Cathedral. Ca 1890.*

— Mart Kalm, *Juhan Maiste and Rein Zobel, Toompea loss, Tallinn 2008*, 80-81

## Historical information on the Riigikogu building

The Toompea castle complex has four parts and the Riigikogu building is located in the castle courtyard. In the eastern part are the White Hall, the quarters of the Speaker of the Riigikogu and committees and factions. In the southern and western part of the castle are the offices of the members of the Riigikogu. The main hall is located in the Riigikogu building. The office premises are located in the northern part. The castle complex, which fuses various styles, took on its current form over many centuries.

## Riigikogu building

After World War I, the Empires of Russia and Austria-Hungary collapsed and several new states were founded in Europe. Of these new states, the Republic of Estonia was the first who decided to build a new parliamentary building. The medieval convent building that had been burned down during the February Revolution in 1917 was chosen to be the site for the building. Thus, in 1920–1922 the Riigikogu building, designed by architects Eugen Habermann and Herbert Johanson, was erected right in the heart of the ancient Toompea stronghold. Three-storeyed building with four wings is built

on medieval foundations around the trapeze-shaped inner courtyard. The outer facade of the building is decorated by three entrances, and above them, large windows of the Chamber, which are surrounded by decoration consisting of black triangles made of Finnish granite. Originally the building was designed in Art Nouveau style, but in the course of construction it became Expressionist. As far as it is known, the Riigikogu building is the only expressionist parliamentary building in the world, and in the beginning its modernism was criticised both in Estonia and abroad. The Riigikogu building was the first public building in Estonia which was designed to have electric power and where the architects connected impressive lighting solutions with Expressionist architecture.

Additional information: [riigikogu.ee](http://riigikogu.ee)

## Photographs



Toompea castle. Photo: Paul Kuimet



Hall of the Riigikogu. Photo: Paul Kuimet



Hall of the Riigikogu. Photo: Paul Kuimet



Photo: Malev Toom



Tall Hermann (Pikk Hermann) Tower and Governor's Garden. Photo: Paul Kuimet



Courtyard of the Riigikogu building.  
Photo: Martin Siplane

## **Organisational aspects**

At the beginning of the workshop, all participants will be given a tour of the Toompea Castle building complex. The working language is English.

Mentors:

**Ralf Lõoke** (Salto Architects), Estonia

**Linda Krūmiņa and Miķelis Putrāms** (MADE architects), Latvia

**Volodymyr Ponomarenko and Yurii Parkhomenko** (Ponomarenko Bureau), Ukraine

## **TIME/SCHEDULE**

### **15.06.**

18.00 Tour of the building

### **16.06.**

9.00 Introduction to the workshop

9.20 The work begins

13.15 LUNCH

14.00 Work continues

16.45 - 17.00 Coffee break

17.00 - 18.00 Daily summary (each team for mentors) and feedback

### **17.06.**

9.00 Work continues

13.15 LUNCH

14.00 Work continues

16.45 - 17.00 Coffee break

17.00 - 18.15 Presentations

20.00 Dinner and announcement of winning entry

## **TEAMS**

The workshop is open to 5-6 teams of 4-5 young architects and architecture students from Estonia, Latvia and Ukraine.

## **REQUIRED FORMAT OF THE WORK**

The works must be professionally designed (in Estonian and English, in a max. two A1 format posters, other spatial exhibition media are allowed as well) appropriate for display at the Riigikogu centenary exhibition in September.

Date of submission of works in final format is August 22 2022.

## **PRIZES AND REMUNERATION**

A prize of 1000 euros\* will be awarded to the best group work (team). There is a participation fee/bonus of 100 euros\* for all the other participants.

\* Value added tax is added to the amount.

The prize fund will be transferred after the final files presented at the exhibition have been sent.

## **ADJUDICATION**

President of the Estonian Association of Architects: Andro Mänd  
Mentors: Ralf Lõoke, Linda Krūmiņa, Mikēlis Putrāms,  
Volodymyr Ponomarenko and Yurii  
Parkhomenko  
Representative of the Riigikogu

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