

Suggestions and recommendations for increasing the attractiveness of small municipalities by preserving cultural heritage and including it into modern life/ environment.

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INTRODUCTION:

The goal and the result of this workshop is to provide insights, suggestions and recommendations for increasing the attractiveness of small municipalities by preserving cultural heritage and including it into modern life/ environment.

The workshop was held for municipal specialists, architects, construction units, planners and politicians as well as include landscape architect students of Latvia University of Agriculture at Jelgava, Latvia 20.- 22. February 2017.

A selection from the student work that was carried out during the workshop - with guidance and feedback form the staff and external experts - is included in this report which used the village of Eilia in Jelgava Municipality as an example.

1.0 GOAL FOR THE LOCAL TOWN PLAN:

- A lot more people living, working and playing in the centre of our local communities
- A lot more people visiting these centres to shop, work and recreate there.
- Creating "Critical Mass" through synergy and higher quality of shops, services, entertainment, activity and housing.

2.0 IMPORTANT RECOMMENDATIONS FOR INCREASING ATTRACTIVITY IN MUNICIPALITIES:

1. Create opportunities for daily, regular contact between different age groups by placing many activities close together: "Village planning" – the "synergy effect"
2. Improve public health by encouraging people to walk and cycle and use busses.
3. Renew/transform buildings and parking areas to new activities for people.
4. Build and renovate many new houses for the old, single people and families within 100 - 500 metres of the local centre.
5. Create informal meeting places – indoors and outdoors - for people of all ages.
6. Place kindergartens, schools and activities related to these in the heart of the centre.
7. Retain, renovate and use local cultural heritage as an important part of identity.
8. Develop opportunities for seeing and using water as an attraction and resource.
9. Encourage dialogue between public offices and private investors and business.
10. Improve understanding of planning for people - and politicians - through information meetings, lectures, student projects and exhibitions.

THIS CAN BE SUMMERISED AS:

CREATE A COMMUNITY THAT HAS "MINIMUM WALKING DISTANCES TO MAXIMUM ACTIVITIES AND ACTIVITIES" BY BICYCLE AND WALKING TO:

- Housing – Work - Shops
- Activities – recreation e.g. parks, swimming pools, libraries, sports halls and fields
- Schools – kindergartens
- Hotels
- Hospitals and health facilities
- Public transport

2.1 CREATING VIBRANT AND COMPETITIVE VILLAGES AND TOWNS

Most communities have too few people using the public spaces and buildings on a daily basis. This is the direct result of planners and politicians choosing over many years to “spread functions” far from each other instead of trying to place them as close as possible.



2.2 THE “5 MINUTE WALK COMMUNITY”

It’s all about people being more important in planning – and the **concentration of many people of all age groups** - using and enjoying their village or town central area.



2.3 MEETING OTHER PEOPLE – REGULARLY WITHOUT MAKING APPOINTMENTS

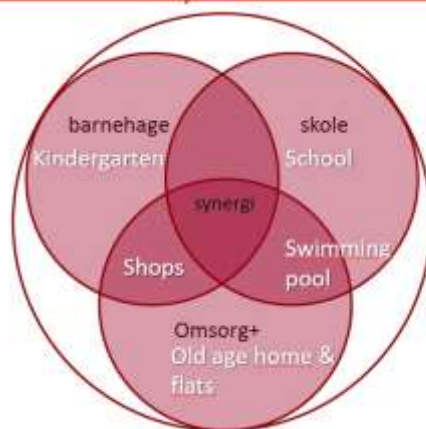
- The most important public meeting place is the library. It must have a cafe at its entrance



2.4 THE SYNERGY EFFECT – VILLAGE PLANNING:

Definition of Synergy: “An effect arising between two or more agents, entities OR factors that produces an effect greater than the sum of their individual effects”.

**SYNERGY BETWEEN BUILDINGS –
SCHOOL, SWIMMING POOL, LIBRARY, SHOPS,
OLD AGE HOMES AND HOUSING
IDEALLY “UNDER THE SAME ROOF”**





Communities need to have public facilities where old people, families and children can meet each other. These facilities can be e.g. swimming pools, libraries, schools and shops. This “combination building” will also be cheaper to build, maintain and create a LOT more happiness and health .

2.5 CHALLENGE OF HAVING MANY MORE OLD PEOPLE IN OUR COMMUNITIES:

-Enable more elderly to live at home and therefore be able to live a life independent of public health care or having to move to old people’s homes and institutions



2.6 PRESERVING CULTURAL HERITAGE AND INCLUDING IT INTO MODERN LIFE/ ENVIRONMENT: Buildings

Many old buildings need to be renewed and restored to be able to satisfy modern requirements and new functions. There are lots of good examples where this has been done very successfully at a cost lower or at the same cost as a complete demolition and new build. However, there needs to be a cost-benefit evaluation if the buildings are not of important historical value or have been altered during time resulting in the loss of their unique quality. In these cases, the new building replacing them should respect the architectural elements and volumes so that they fit into their surroundings and add value visually and functionally.



Above: A completely new building respecting the original. The old building was damaged and had little original quality and was allowed to be replaced. (Arendal, Norway)



Above: This old farm barn was able to be renovated to house 3 flats, all universally designed. (Vegarshei, Norway).

2.7 PRESERVING CULTURAL HERITAGE AND INCLUDING IT INTO MODERN LIFE/ ENVIRONMENT: Public Open Space

In some towns and villages public open spaces such as squares, market places and parks have been neglected or turned into car parking areas. As the focus changes from “down-prioritizing cars - to the prioritizing of people” we need to look back to old photographs and drawings that show what these spaces were originally. Inspiration and cultural heritage can therefore be incorporated into the new design and construction of these places e.g. from tree planting, light posts, old fountains or paving material.



Pollen Arendal anno 1900



Above: New trees have been planted where old photographs showed there had been trees. Granite cobbles paving was also reinstated to bring back the heritage aspect into Pollen.



Market Place anno 1880. (Arendal, Norway).

ARENDAL MARKET PLACE 1982- 1983



Huvestad & Fuller-Gee MNLA

Above: The old fountain, the 4 lamp posts and trees were included into the redesign of the market place as well as cobbles and gravel finish to the paving slabs.



Above: A new playground and modern benches have been introduced to the market place in recent years to create more activity.

EXTRACT FROM THE 4 STUDENT GROUPS WORK FOR ELEJA VILLAGE CENTRE:

I have selected some of the illustrations, plans and information from each of the 4 student groups. This selection is to reduce double information and to show the width in ideas and proposals.

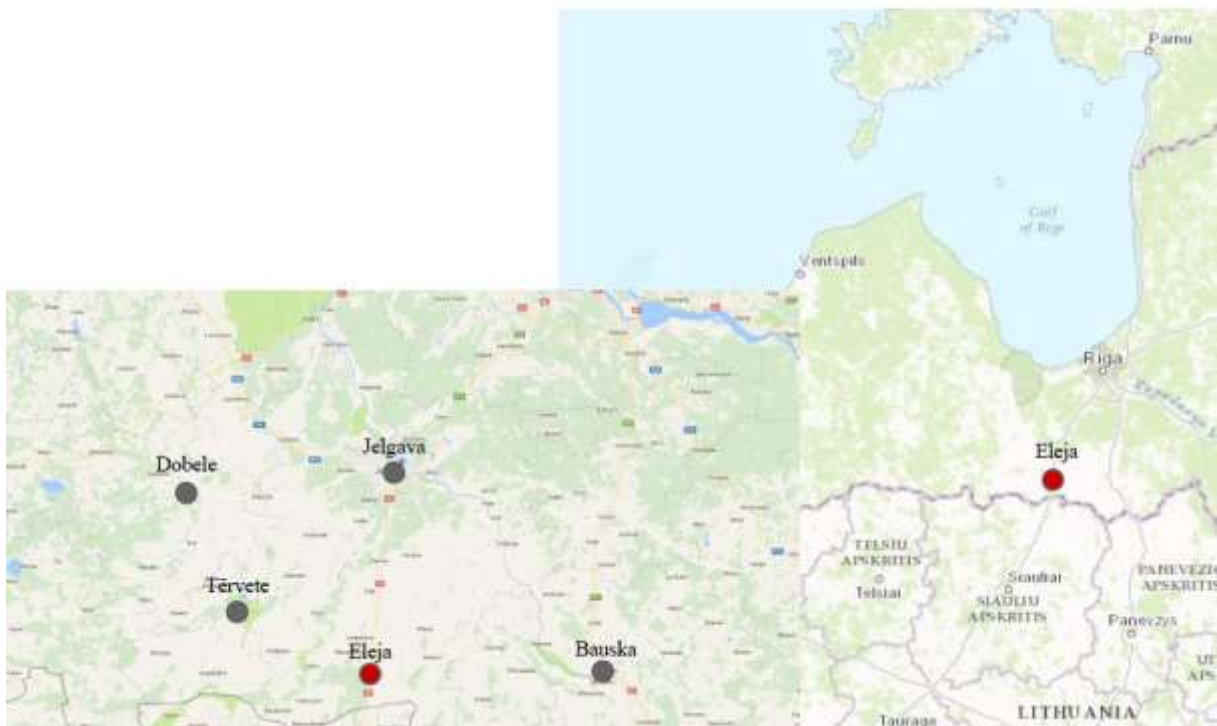
The introduction below is from one group who placed Eleja in it's geographic location and also the spatial values of the village. This is important background data for planning and communication.

ELEJA



MODERN DEVELOPMENT IN CONNECTION WITH CULTURAL HERITAGE

// REGIONAL ROLE



Elejas teritorijas vērtības / Spatial values



1. Kultūrvēsturiskais mantojums [Elejas pils drupas / Elejas muižas parks / Laukakmeņu žogs]



2. Ģeogrāfiskais novietojums [cauri Elejas ģeogrāfiskajam novietojumam iet autoceļš A8]



3. Dabas vērtības [lauksaimniecībā izmantojamās zemes]



4. Aktīvi un teritorijas attīstībā ieinteresēti iedzīvotāji

Attēli: <http://www.edic.lp.lv/?p=1442>; <http://www.zudusilatvija.lv/objects/object/14495/>; google.maps.com

Esošā situācija / fotofiksācija



1. neizmantota apbūve/ zaudēta ciemata teritorija



2. teritorija [auj nodrošināt papildus funkcijas]



3. skats uz ciemata centra ēkām



4. parka teritorijā saglabājusies koka aleja



5. potenciāla vieta dažādu funkciju nodrošināšanai

Foto: J.Klimanoviča/ I. Jaroša

Above: The photographs and map references make it easy to understand the local context.

Koncepts / Concept

Mērķi

- Daudzfunkcionāla, katrai vecuma grupai piemērota Elejas centra attīstība.
- Iedzīvotāju savstarpējās komunikācijas veicināšana.
- Sasaistīt Elejas muižas ansambli ar centru.
- Ieinteresēt garāmbraucējus apstāties ciematā



Above: This Concept has focus on the 3 important issues – “Nature – People – Historical heritage” are the foundations of this – and the other studies and planning of existing local communities.

Elejas attīstības priekšlikumi / Development proposal



Above: The Development proposal illustration is clear and informative with 3 issues:

- a) The Circle showing the “5 minute walk” concept.
- b) The “yellow path/route” linking the central area from the shop and Culture house to Eleja manor house.
- c) Inspiration photos showing the themes and design elements from other projects that they wish to introduce .

Orientieri

Apdzīvotas vietas atpazīstamības zīme

References



Elejas muižas parka mūra žogs - simbols, atpazīstamības zīme.

Above: “Gateways” to the village are one of the elements most of the groups wished to introduce. The illustration shows examples from other similar gateways. The photo of the wall at Eleja Manor house is the inspiration for the gateways for this village. An interesting idea as long as the new walls are not too dominant and are clearly “new” in construction.

Vīzija | Tirdzniecības komplekss

- Orientieris | akcents
- Sasauksies ar Elejas vēsturisko apbūvi
- Racionāla vietas izmantošana
 - Vairākas funkcijas vienkopus (pasts, veikals, frizētava uc.)
 - Papildus ārtelpa aktivitātēm
 - Funkcionāls autostāvvietu risinājums



Atjaunojama ēka



Nojaucama ēka



Vīzija tirdzniecības kompleksam

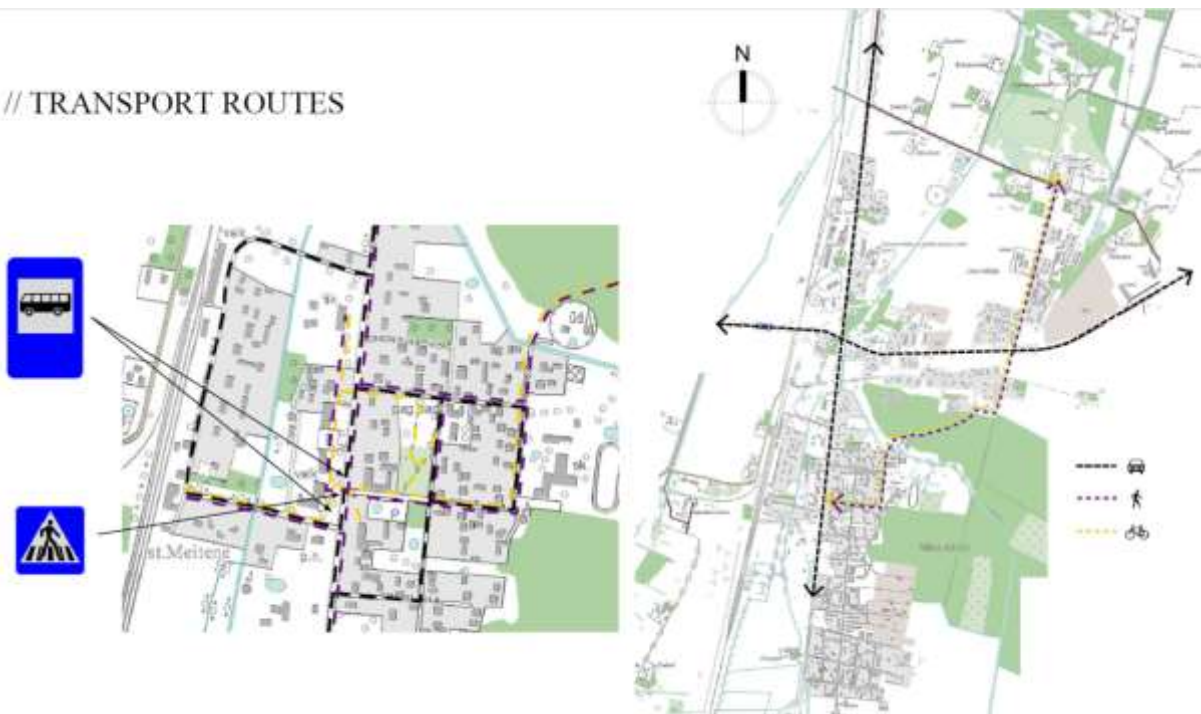
Above: The existing buildings in the village centre (red-dash oval area) could be revamped and renewed to follow the Eleja Manor House wall theme – and include an Information Centre. This would be an interesting building, attraction and focus along the main road and could make the village centre much more interesting,

Vēsturiskais skvērs / Tirdzniecības laukums



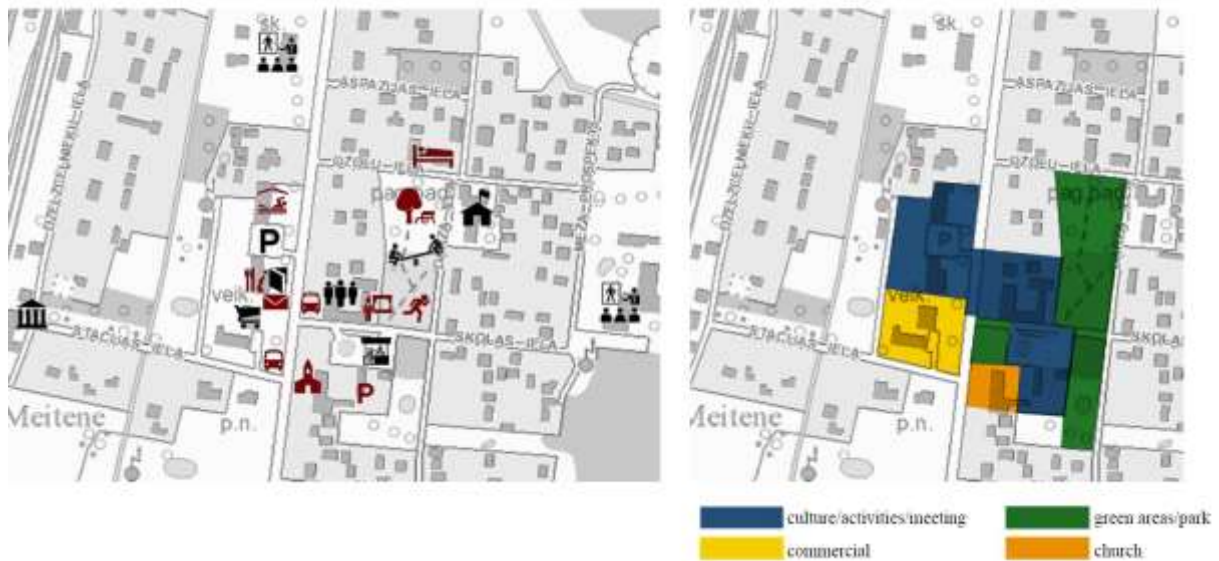
Above: The park area by the buss stop has a round water feature/dam. This is shown in this design as the central attraction of the new meeting place/park. The use of photographs from modern spaces is very successful here giving a clear picture of the design qualities this group proposes. The use of wooden structures and natural stone would work well in a rural community like Elje.

// TRANSPORT ROUTES



Above: These 2 illustrations show how the existing and new transport routes are. The illustration on the right side is very clear and informative as to how the village functions. However additional text on these plans would explain that these routes are proposed to be strengthened and a new traffic system could improve the centre.

// FUNCTIONS



Above: The next plans are from another group. They show in a simple and clear graphic presentation of how the central area of the village is zoned with different uses and a combination of existing (black) and new (red) functions.

// INCLUSION OF CULTURAL HERITAGE



Source: restaurators.lv



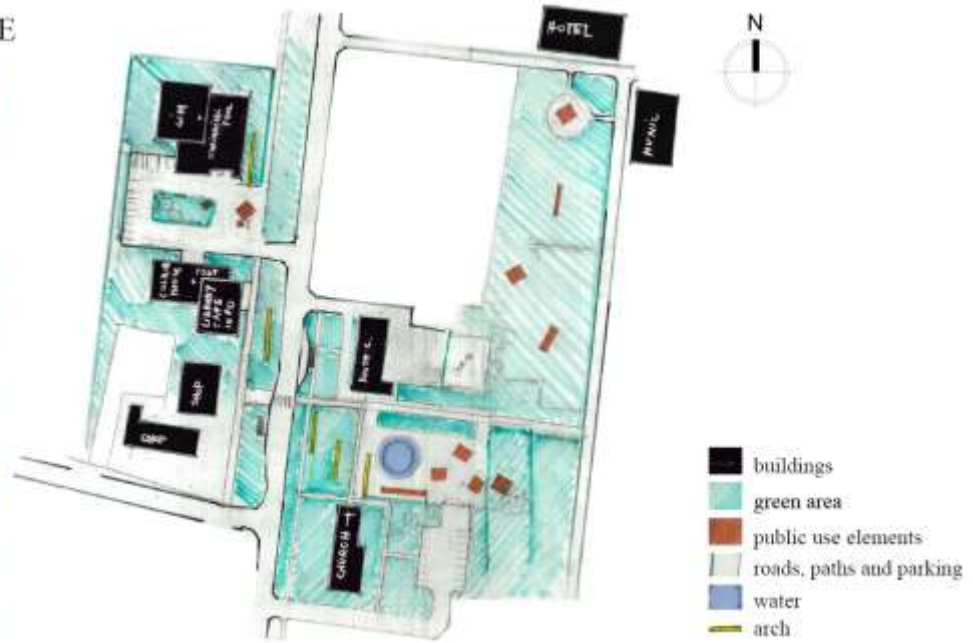
Source: <http://travelnews.lv>



Above: This plan shows in a very clear graphic presentation how the group propose that the proposed new church would function if it was moved to where the old cheese factory building is today. This church location would a) be visible from the main road through the village b) create an axis from the beautifully restored railway station building c) mark the entrance to the central core of the village (grey coloured square).

NB! If the church is not moved a new use for the old cheese building could nevertheless have a similar function (e.g. swimming pool here instead of by the school).

// ELEJA CENTRE



Above: This is the “new plan” for the village centre showing (in black) how new and existing buildings should be placed to create synergy between functions and generations.

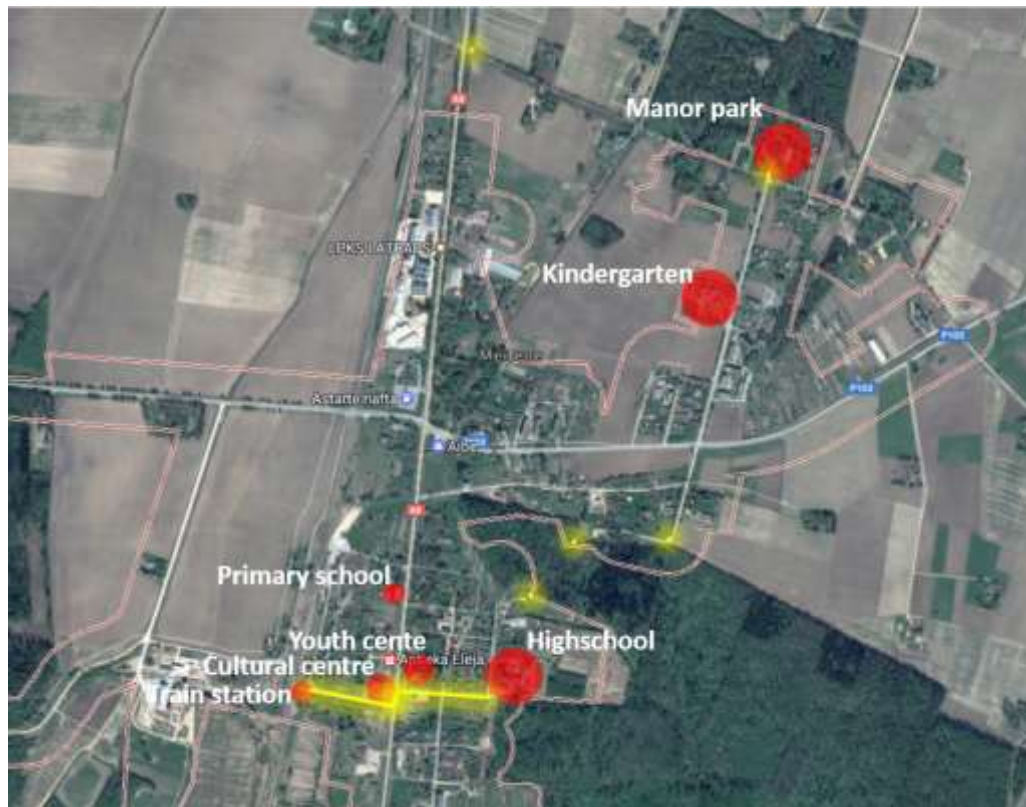
The green areas are public open spaces which tie the buildings together in an elegant and comprehensive public space.

A few additional words would make the plan even clearer to understand.



Above: This group was very concerned (in their verbal presentation) with the view of the village from the road system and the need for additional tree planting which would tie the visual centre together in an elegant way.

“Before and after” illustrations (as is today – and with tree planting) would be easier to everyone looking at these illustrations to understand.



Above and below: These are very good graphical plans showing where functions exist and also potential development. The clear use of symbols and colour make this concept easy for everyone to understand what the village has – and how these facilities can be strengthened.



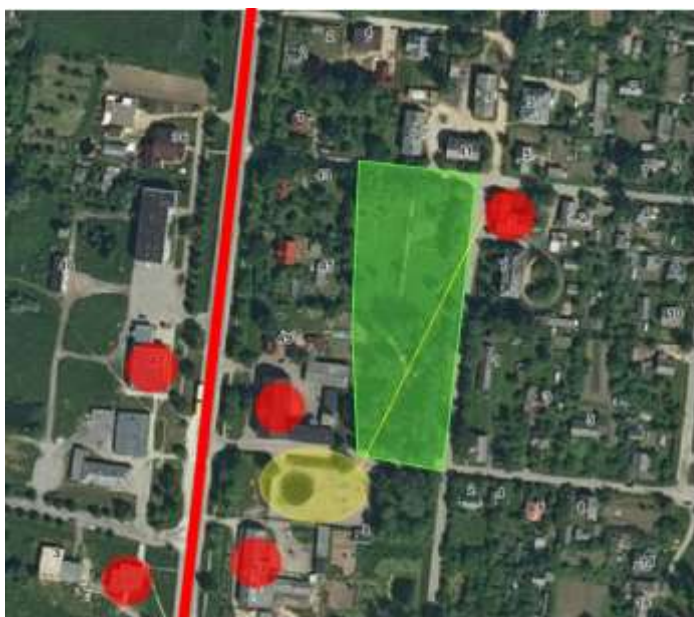


Above and below: This group has made full use of the plans they have available. These illustrations are very easy to understand as they have also written the most important information from their verbal presentations into “info boxes” on their presentation.

These proposals are open for input and show the potential that the village has for redevelopment in the future. The extensive use of the Eleja Manor House wall should however be restricted so it does not “over-kill” the original in scale and importance.



Use stone wall as town recognition/design element.



Active park

- Adult playground
- Children playground
- New technologies
- Active center



Above. Simple graphical illustration showing the opportunity to create more activity in the public areas in the centre. However they have too much focus here on training equipment!

ELEJA

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Above: These are the names 4 groups of students who's excellent work is shown in this report. The work shows many concrete ideas and concepts that should be used in future planning of Eleja and other rural villages and towns.