

Conservation of Extract of the Assessment, Division and Cadastre Plan of Vana-Põltsamaa Manor from November 18, 1933

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ERA.T-3.11.276, a large plan (length 2006 mm x width 1138 mm) drawn and hand coloured onto tracing paper had been folded into a small A4 format. It had been mended with various sorts of paper strips and animal glue, which had stuck together the folded layers and made it impossible to unfold the plan. The amendments and folding creases were inflexible. Despite the many repairs, the plan was still heavily damaged. (Photo 1) So-called simple preparation for digitisation had become a time-consuming preservation project. Using filter paper compresses steeped in distilled water on the old repairs, it was gradually possible to unfold the plan. (Photo 2)



Photo 1. ERA.T-3.11.276 before conservation

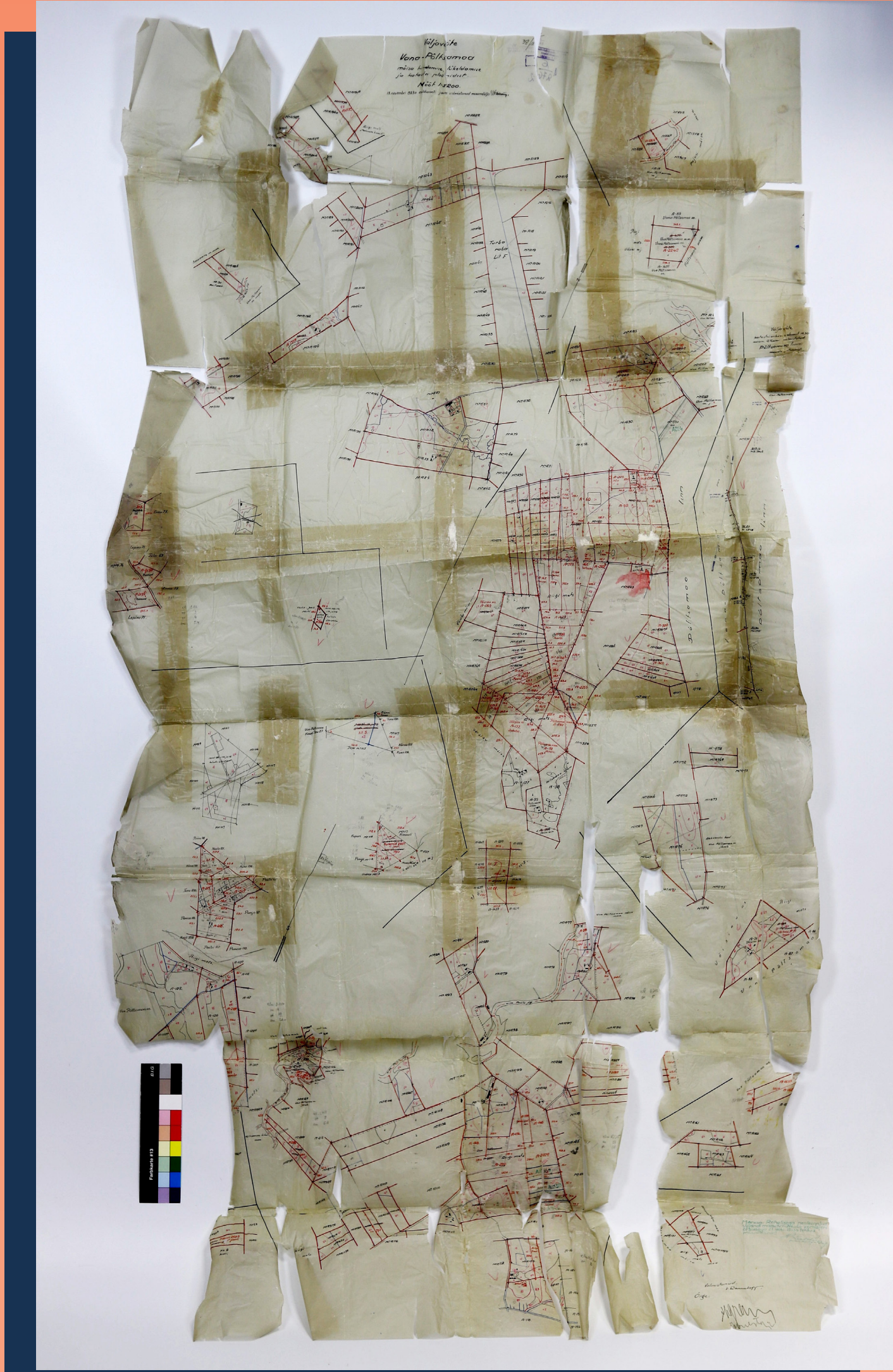


Photo 2. Unfolded plan

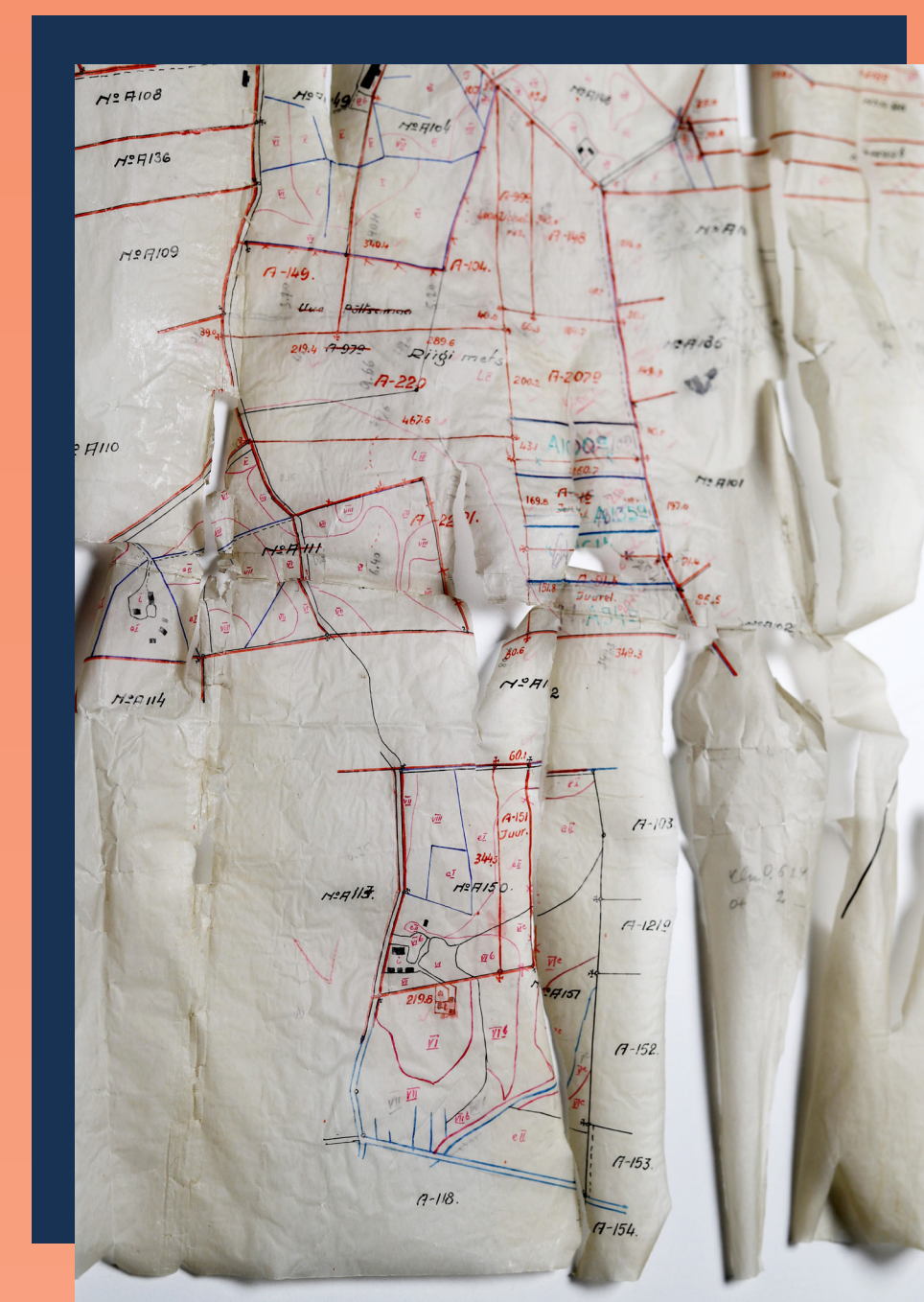


Photo 3. Previous mendings removed

The former repairs were robust and inflexible, also paper strips on semi-transparent tracing paper were visually distracting, so it was decided they were to be removed.

Once all repairs had been removed, the plan looked like a great puzzle. (Photo 3)

The pieces were decided to join to the background without any previous mending. For this, various adhesive tests were performed and the conservators decided in favour of wheat starch paste and Japanese Paper Classic Kitakata 35 g/m² (100% Philippine Gampi). Additionally all colourful mediums were confirmed with 0.5% gelatin – three times every other day – and the plan was left to dry for a month.

The puzzle pieces were moistened with distilled water and the drawing of the plan was put together so that the recto side was below. (Photo 4)



Photo 4. Joining the pieces together

While occasionally changing the felts, the plan was left to dry and stabilise for nearly two months.

The background of the two-ply Japanese Paper suited the semi-transparent tracing paper well, still remaining translucent and fighting against the tensile force of the tracing paper, leaving the whole drawing perfectly in place. (Photos 7-8)

Then, wheat starch paste as well as Japanese Paper horizontally in four pieces was carefully applied with a roller onto the back of the plan. After that, wheat starch paste was applied with a roller to the already-mounted Japanese Paper, onto which was placed Japanese Paper vertically in three panes. (Photo 5)



Photo 5. Mounting with Japanese Paper

The mounted plan was put onto a large table beneath a press between Hollytexes and felts. Almost all the weights available in the preservation laboratory were used for the press. (Photo 6)



Photo 6. The plan under press

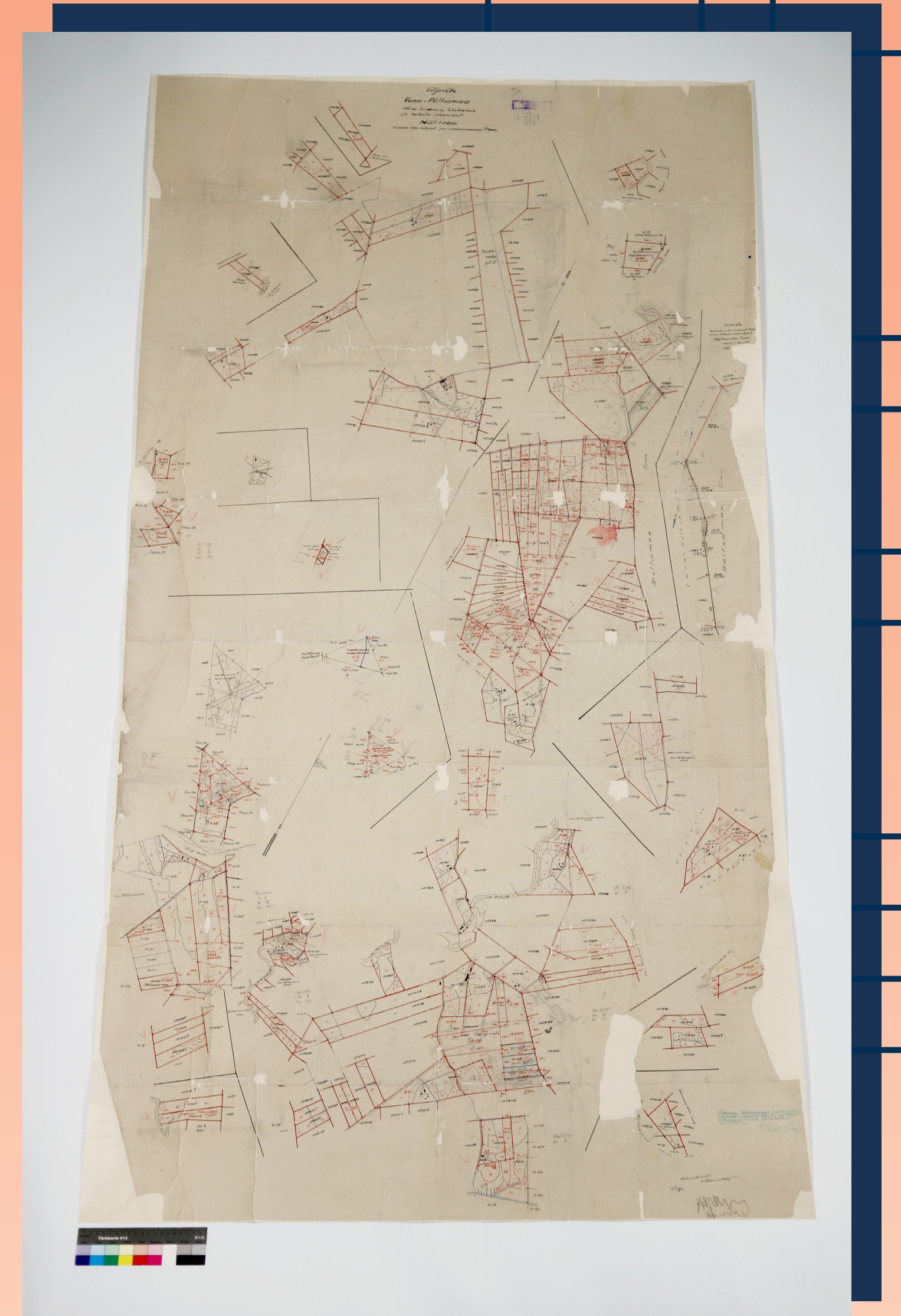


Photo 9. The plan after conservation

And now, after preservation and digitisation, it is easily readable and accessible in the National Archives Historical Maps Collection database and the original is kept on a large roll (Ø20) in accordance with requirements in a special repository for large maps and plans. (Photo 9)



Photos 7, 8. Close-up of a detail before and after conservation