

# Artistic - Stylish Traditions In The Architecture Of Samarkand

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**Abstract:** The paper considers the review of some architectural objects when studying the European part of the Samarkand city which was formed at the end of the XIX-th and the beginning of the XX centuries.

**Index Terms:** architecture, Turkistan architecture, facade, brick, ornament, ganch decoration

## 1 INTRODUCTION

Historic – architectural spatial changes of Samarkand of the end of the XIX-th and the beginning of the XX-th centuries are significantly stipulated by the previous historical period. In 1868 Samarkand was a part of the Russian Empire. Capital and Russian goods are actively penetrated in the city. The process of capitalization is especially increased with the construction of railway, which came up to Samarkand in 1888 and then connected it with Tashkent and Orenburg [1, page 32]. Changes in political and economic spheres had an effect on town – building field. With the emergence of new administrative and public buildings, bank and trade centres, worship structures are also appeared in the city. As a whole the style of Turkistan architecture was elaborated, including features of the European style, but in view of local climatic conditions, combining traditional raw brick, raw materials and burnt brick. The appearance of new types of buildings, aspiration to find new means of expressiveness were closely come into contact with the various subjects and special expressive sometimes a distinctive manner of fulfillment in all fields of fine arts and architecture. The main artistic tendency and stages of the Samarkand architecture of the end of the XIX –th and the beginning of the XX –th century were directly connected with the development of architectural ideas in Russia, but in the activity of builders of the city there were characteristic peculiarities, definite concrete – historical conditions. In this connection, the researched period can be conditionally divided into two main stages. The first stage (1868-1890) is characterized by the simplicity of construction technique and methods, many structures were distinguished by powerful walls and brickwork reminded fortified structures. The artistic expressiveness of the most buildings was distinguished by restraining in the application of decorative details [2, page 135]. For the second stage (1890-1917) eclectic architecture is typical. The external ornamentation of facades is evoked by architectural motives of different styles of the passed epoch.

## 2 ARCHITECTURE OF SAMARKAND IN THE END OF THE XIX-TH AND THE BEGINNING OF THE XX-TH CENTURY

At present, architects often use the forms of the Renaissance, Baroque, Gothic. In some buildings for achieving architectural – artistic effect, the classic means of expressiveness is skillfully applied, using plastics for walls enrichment by such elements as: pilasters, fastening belts, cornices, rustics. Designing of separate buildings, trade shops, credit – bank institutions is perfected. The outstanding structure of that period is a national house.

Modern, stained glass, windows of horseshoes-shaped forms are spreaded. In that period there appeared types of buildings called to life by the development of industry, trade and by the necessity of new social sections. Interest and attention of military – industrial circles for the development of cotton manufacture called to create cottonsorting plants, textile factories. The absence of building, namely for local conditions which can be satisfied the increasing demand of industry, agriculture, handcrafts, construction of the city – fortress in extremely historical period with a large quantity of new types of buildings, attracting local masters, use of local building materials – all these raised new technical and artistic tasks before architects. Alongside with the use of European methods of artistic designing of structures, there is an observance of searching new artistic principles in the appearance of buildings, which were based on local traditional aesthetic comprehension in the field of architectural forms. The end of the XIX-th and the beginning of the XX-th century is generally characterized by the search of new forms of expressing architectural composition (modern). In Samarkand, where local national traditions are so rich, these searches found their brightest expression in comparison with other cities. Splendid examples of the exterior ornament of the medieval architectural monuments: Registon, Bibi-Khanum, Shakhi-Zinda, the mausoleum of Guri-Amir could not but reflect in the creativity of builders, though there were another historical epoch, the other material opportunities, other tasks and purposes [3, page 64]. Construction of handicrafts and industrial enterprises, banks, residential houses and shops, arrangement of irrigation ditches and numerous bridges across them, paving streets and pavements – all these variety creative activities of architects were hard to take in those old concepts of composition of a plan and a façade, to which they were taught in Russia.



*Fig. 1. Building of Girl's school in Samarkand.*

In Samarkand, the introduction of scientific – technical achievements proceeded extremely slowly, new building materials and constructions (reinforced concrete, metal framework and etc..) were mastered with great difficulties. But, exactly this factor possibly played the positive role in the sense that Russian architects were forced to take into account local building methods (both in the field of building materials and in the field of composition of separate structures). The visiting architects could not provide the widely developed construction, that is why local personnel was involved in it, the creative cooperation with them gave rise to the original features which were characteristic for that period of the Samarkand architecture. Architects widely used the methods of ornaments which from ancient times were used by local masters [4, page 225]. New types of structures demanded new decorative design, but for all this local traditions should not be disturbed. Under the influence of an individual request of local customers and in the presence of magnificent ancient monuments, many habitual ideas about architectural tectonics changed about aesthetic nature of architecture. The rich diapason of ornamental art of the past received wide reflection in creative practice of Samarkand architects. On the basis of wood usage, ganch carving, figured brickwork, new architectural forms and ornaments are created, distinguishing from the accustomed ones, familiar to them from architectural monuments of Russia. In Samarkand, as it was in Russia, “modern” has appeared first of all in private residences. But in connection with local climatic conditions, planning of bourgeois dwelling houses was solved in such a way, that the part of a private residence, represented as winter premises and the other part of it was summer premises (which were not heated). Great significance is given to the organization of winter premises interior, especially a sitting room, where coloured glass, majolica were used. But “modern” in itself was not a stable architectural system that is why in spite of the inspired attempts of Samarkand architects to solve the problem of the development of the given phenomenon creatively, “modern” appeared to be the phenomenon of lacking vital capacity. Volumetric – spatial structure of local residents dwelling houses could not help but influence on building in a new part of the city. In the conditions of that climate, a shady courtyard with reservoir was used in summer as a dwelling place too so homogeneity perimetrics of a building and availability of ivans (terraces) were usual here. This has become the main peculiarity for both residential and profitable houses in a new part of the city. Ivans were built separately from the residential building or adjoined to them. In a new city, ivans were created directly in front of the entrance to the dwelling premises, that is, to a certain extent they paid the role of ante – room passage. Ivans had a wooden floor and a total roofing with residential premises. Questions have appeared repeatedly on creating special projects of residential buildings, which would be acceptable for that Central Asian climate. Russian engineers in their buildings took into account climate conditions when using in construction nonheat – conducting building materials – raw brick, straw, wood, clay for making – pakhsa (mud brick) On the other hand, local builders joined the work of Russian engineers using their methods in their objects. The appearance on the territory of the old city of such buildings from baked brick of the Emil Tsindal’s company, a creamery a mill, they

concentrated the attention of local residents on more durable building material – baked brick. From this brick, houses with iron and tiled roof, glazed windows, panelled doors on hinges are created, stones and shutters are also appeared at that time [5, page 86]. Samarkand houses of local residents were differed by the carefully choice of the place and when building, such orientation was defined, in which the part of residential dwellings in summer time of the year was in shade, and the other part would be heated by sun`s rays in winter time. The conditions of the climate in national dwellings played the important role, but a new mode of life influences on the orientation, glazed windows and the use of European type of stoves.

### 3 DECORATION OF FACADES

One of the characteristic features of Samarkand architecture of the end of the XIX – th and the beginning of the XX – th century was ornamented masonry from baked brick. In that period, a great number of brickworks are being built in the district Pai – Kabak, in ravines behind Khodji - Yusuf’s kishlak (village), in Lyalyazor kishlak. The largest one was the plant of M.Zaidel’s firm. From brick of that firm Girl’s school, a library, a state bank, Polish Roman – Catholic church and other structures have benn built. Construction of plant – brick stoves simplified and reduced the price of baked brick production. Great meaning is given to masonry, artistic opportunities of these ornaments spreaded at that time were releaved, most often it was the only aesthetic form in nonplastered structures. With the help of brick, pilasters, semicolumns are laid out, it diversifies the rhythm of a wall masonry. In separate buildings ornamental masonry is done so carefully that patterns remind wooden carvings. Another characteristic feature in architecture of Samarkand of that period was alabaster carving. Carved alabaster is one of the active and impressive means of ornamental decoration of the interior, that it was used to design the main hall or the most impressive structures of the city. In Samarkand, antique Corinthian capitels, cornices with meanders, ionics, motives of vegetable and geometric ornament, masks rosettes are met in Samarkand carving alabaster. The most mass spreading received those forms of ornament, which were available to local masters, they created panels with a strongly overhanging relief or plane, insignificantly overhanging on the surface of the walls. The most finished expression is vegetable ornament, which is closely connected with observation over nature, elements of the past sound more expressive (acanthus) stems, branches and where separate elements of local style (portrayal of vases) are more distinctively displayed. So, the style of Samarkand architectural ornamentation presents generalization of the century – old practice. Its historical meaning is that the style expressed a certain integrity aesthetic world outlook of different social group of population both by religious beliefs and by customs and by perception of architectural ornament. From the experience of folk masters, the mixed creativity of peoples inhabited Samarkand, only the most principal were selected, proclaiming determination the beginning to express aesthetic ideas of its time. Progress of building techniques and new methods in construction, which were brought to Samarkand by Russian builders are merged with decorative art of local masters, deeply national, saturated by century –



old traditions. Ornamental art permits to create totally special artistic originality to architectural structures of the end of the XIX – th and the beginning of the XX – th century. Based on the century – old traditions of alabasters (ganch) carving, moulding from ganch (panel, relief, decorations, separate details) received a wide spreading. New method of ganch treatment, determined new artistic possibilities: the exact, strick linear drawing of carving becomes mild, smooth in the form of moulding and that is why seemed more tender [6, page 132].



**Fig. 2.** Building of library in Samarkand.

So, from one hand, methods of ganch decoration were improved, the standard was used and from the other hand in the decorative art, valuable qualities of artistic national craft were lowered, the individual master`s handwriting was wiped off. It should be especially noted that, at that period metal details began to use in architecture. Window lattices, brackets, parapets laid on insertain pieces – all these are differed by highly sensivity of decorative methods in architecture were recognized to symbolize masterly possession of material, the skill to give them any form, sometimes even contradicting to their natural qualities, but conveying them plasticity, from here there are streamline forms of metal barriers on roofs. Metal details brought expressiveness in them, created cheerful forms. The search of a new style, new elements of ornaments, prompted architects to use metal bravely. Parapets of metal wattling on a number of buildings at first sight seemed whimsical (fantastic), but functionally justified, added to facades, they gave them external refinement, natural freedom and lightness. Striving for originality, uniqueness of methods and search of decorative details in planning and in building volumes in composition of facades all these were the main task which was solved by architects. The method of including painting in exterior in Samarkand was not valuably developed . It is interesting that this method was founded in the Uzbek residential house (Karatepinskaya street №6, at present the house was demolished). This is the first case when painting is introduced in the houses of local residents (in the exterior), after the first experiments no further steps were done to continue and to develop these ideas. So, “modern” and “eclecticism” styles found their expression in a quite number of structures but these directions experienced the influence of local buildings art too [7, page 452]. In connection with a large flow of the population coming from

Russia in Samarkand, it is naturally that Orthodox churches began to construct, on the whole harmoniously joining to the architecture of the ancient city. In 1882, a right – angled in the plan Georgievskaya Church was built after the project of G.I.Lemke. From the east to the main entrance, a law altar out – house joins with three semicircular slates and from the west there is a smart main entrance porch. In 1905 Petrovskaya church was built from the baked brick by the project of the engineer I.P.Lebedev. The only expressive element was a church bell tower, not high, rectangular, rising above a rectangular premise of the church, emphasizing the purpose of building. The largest church in Samarkand was Alekseevsky Cathedral which was built after the project of F.Smimov. In the plan the total composition of the temple presents a rectangle which is crowned by the tent church bell tower.



**Fig. 3.** Alekseevsky Cathedral in Samarkand

On the lateral facades there are one by one small porches. Outside appearance of the building façade makes up cornices, cover plates rounded upwards the windows – all these make rich, light and shade effects and add special plastic expressiveness to the temple. After 1917, the club of military glory was placed in the temple. In the years of Independence under the support of the President of the country Islam Karimov in 1997, the disfigured box remained from the building of the temple was returned to the Church. Reconstructed in the former magnificence the Samarkand Svyato – Alekseevsky Cathedral was sanctified in 1996 by the Holiness Patriarch of Moscow and all Russia Alexiy the 2-nd [8, page 284]. The last one by the time of construction the cult of non-moslem building in Samarkand is the Polish Roman – Catholic church which was built according to the project of E.O. Nelle in 1905. But the construction of the building began only in 10 years, the building is a hall type one. The entrance is stressed by the tower, coming forward from the total rectangular volume, passing to upwards in the lancet belfry, completed by the developed cornice [9, page 312].





**Fig. 4.** Polish Roman – Catholic church.

Among religious toponyms of Samarkand of the studied period, the majority of them were the objects of moslem cult. Besides the cult structures, some remarkable buildings were built in Samarkand in a new part of the city especially for different educational establishments, in a style which is nowadays customary called as “Turkistan colonial” or “Turkistan modern” [10, page 178]. The main features of this style is the use of special brick of brown – yellow colour, manufactured in Uzbekistan. Thanks to its specific composition this brick was very durable and above all it didn’t require plastering. That is why buildings of Turkistan were of brown – yellow colour and the wall surfaces were usually ornamented by the figured masonry, supplemented with cast – iron lattices, sometimes by stucco ganch. Such architectural style is highly recognized and makes up the european parts of Central Asian cities, built in the middle of the XIX-th and in the first part of the XX-th centuries. At the beginning of the XX-th century in Abramov Avenue (at present the University Avenue), a two – storey building of the Girl’s school was built (from the baked brick) by the project of G.M.Svarichevsky. The building was composed of study rooms and residential premises – apartments for the pedagogic staff. The brick façade had a great number of different details: pilasters, round completion of windows, parapets and toothed cornice, which created the play of light and shade. In 1908, a small building of the school was

built in this Avenue, by the project of I.P.Lebedev. Built capittally from the baked brick the school building had 6 rooms, in which there were 2 classes, teachers’ room, a library and a small hall. In another building, there was the manager’s flat, boarding school, a winny basement and a shed. In 1909-1912 in 7 kilometers from the city, not far from the railway station, a new building of a gardening school was built by the engineer V.S.Volkov. The determining role in the general composition of the building plays the entrance hall: rectangular, singled out by a three – angled pediment, it breaks up all the building into two halves. The basic element of the external ornament is carnices in the piers between windows. Here, the motifs of grapes, cherries, leaves, bunch of grapes were used. Original interpretation of the ornament form emphasizes the local colour and the purpose of the building. The building of the Military Meeting (House of officers) was built in 1862 under the guidance of the engineer V.I.Nepokupny. It was composed of entrance hall, a large hall, a canteen, a buffet, a library, a cardroom and a billiard. This was the first building in Central Asia in which reinforced concrete of floor was used [11, page 324]. In 1896 at the corner of Kaufman and Urgut streets (at present Alisher Navoi and Uzbekistanskaya streets) an additional building of a large hall was built to the of building of public meeting under the guidance of G.M.Svarichevsky, after a sample of a Military Meeting hall with a small gracefully trimmed up setting – room which was laid out in such a way, that it could easily be served as a theatrical stage. The development of capitalist and trade relations aroused the construction of credit – bank establishments, as well as departments of the State Bank, Azovsko – Donskoy, Siberian, the United Bank, the Moscow Discount Bank, Nizhegorodsko – Samarsky Land Bank, Poltavsky Land Bank. A two – storey building of the Russian – Chinese bank built in 1899 was located in Abramov Avenue. The first floor was intended for the official office, the second floor was for residential premises of the Bank manager. In the middle, there was a large hall. On the wall of the hall, plastic alabaster details were placed, the ceiling was painted in oil. The façade is very beautiful, the windows of the first floor are rectangular framed by flute plasters, which upwards carry cornices with a lion niches (bays).



**Fig. 5.** Russian – Chinese bank.

At the corner of Chernyayevsky and Karshinsky streets (at present Makhmud Kashgari and Firdavsy streets), in 1905 the State Bank was built by the project of the military engineer B.N.Kastalsky. The entrance to the bank is singled out to a separate volume, thanks to this it is more architecturally stressed, which was especially important at a corner position of the building [12, page 265]. The bank consisted of an operational hall, a saving bank, a monetary store – room, an entrance hall with the main entrance, rooms for meeting of the accounting committee, the manager's study, an office and archives. In Aleksandrovsy street (at present it is Shokhrukh street) in 1916-1917 Volzhsko – Kamsky bank was built by the project and guidance of B.N.Kastalsky. Then I.P. Lebedev built apartments for employees and a tea – room in the deep of the plot. Thus, in the period under review, a group of talented architects – innovators worked in Samarkand, their creativity was marked by a strained artistic innovation and large achievements which confirm the presence of independent brightly expressed local artistic – stylish traditions.

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