

## **AZERBAIJANI TOWN SHUSHA- MONUMENT OF HISTORY, CULTURE, URBAN PLANNING AND ARCHITECTURE**

**Hajiyeva Sabina-** doctor of science in architecture, honored architect of Azerbaijan, sabina.hajiyeva@azmiu.edu.az

**Abstract.** Shusha is a very valuable historical, town-planning, architectural and natural monument. This is one of the richest with architectural monuments cities in Azerbaijan. Shusha was not only the administrative, but also the cultural and economic center of Karabakh. Many remarkable cultural figures of Azerbaijan - composers, singers, musicians, poets - were born and raised here. Built by Panahali Khan 250 years ago, Shusha is the largest monument of history, culture, urban planning and architecture of Azerbaijan, an open-air museum, which was protected as a historical and architectural reserve. The unique town-planning system of the city of Shusha is characterized by a combination of separate quarters, typical for eastern cities. As a result of the occupation of the territory of Karabakh for about 30 years, the medieval city of Shusha, which has a peculiar urban structure, was half destroyed, despite the fact that before the start of the war, the ancient quarters and numerous historical and architectural monuments were in excellent condition. In the fall of 2019, the staff and students of the Faculty of Architecture of the Azerbaijan University of Architecture and Construction had launched the project "Urban Development and Restoration of the Historical and Architectural Heritage of the town of Shusha", dedicated to the study of the historical past, architectural monuments, and the unique urban structure of this pearl of Azerbaijani architecture. The need to collect a large number of archival materials, the difficulty in finding them, since Shusha was occupied, as well as the fact that the project was developed by students in their free time, led to the fact that the work was completed at the end of 2020. The project, launched at the request of the students and presented to the general public a few weeks ago, also includes proposals for the urban development of the city and the restoration of individual architectural monuments. This article talks about the historical and current state of the city of Shusha, examines various aspects of the historical development of the city associated with the formation of the urban structure, architectural monuments, explores the problems of restoration of individual objects. Some preliminary designs of monument restorations carried out by students within the framework of the above project are given.

**Keywords:** Shusha architecture, Azerbaijani architecture, deliberation of the Azerbaijan lands, restoration of the architecture

## **АЗЕРБАЙДЖАНСКИЙ ГОРОД ШУША-ПАМЯТНИК ИСТОРИИ, КУЛЬТУРЫ, ГРАДОСТРОИТЕЛЬСТВА И АРХИТЕКТУРЫ**

**Гаджиева Сабина Халид гызы-** доктор архитектуры, профессор кафедры «Архитектурные конструкции и реставрация памятников», Азербайджанский Архитектурно- Строительный Университет, sabina.hajiyeva@azmiu.edu.az

**Аннотация.** Шуша - очень ценный исторический, градостроительный, архитектурный и природный памятник. Это один из самых богатых архитектурными памятниками городов Азербайджана. Шуша была не только административным, но и культурным и экономическим центром Карабаха. Здесь родились и выросли многие замечательные деятели культуры Азербайджана – композиторы, певцы, музыканты, поэты. Построенная Панахали ханом 250 лет назад Шуша является крупнейшим памятником истории, культуры, градостроительства и архитектуры Азербайджана, музеем над открытым небом, который охранялся как историко-архитектурный заповедник. Уникальная градостроительная система города Шуша характеризуется сочетанием отдельных кварталов, типичных для восточных городов. В результате оккупации около 30 лет территории Карабаха, средневековый город Шуша, обладающий своеобразной градостроительной структурой, оказался наполовину разрушен, несмотря на то, что до начала войны старинные кварталы и многочисленные памятники истории и архитектуры были в отличной сохранности. Сотрудниками и студентами архитектурного факультета Азербайджанского Архитектурно- Строительного Университета еще

осенью 2019 года был начат проект «Градостроительное развитие и реставрация историко-архитектурного наследия города Шуша», посвященный изучению исторического прошлого, архитектурных памятников, уникальной градостроительной структуры данной жемчужины азербайджанского зодчества. Необходимость поднимать большое количество архивных материалов, сложность в их обнаружении, поскольку Шуша была оккупирована, а также и тот факт, что проект разрабатывался студентами в свободное от учебы время, привели к тому, что работа завершилась в конце 2020 года. В проекте, начатом по желанию студентов и презентованном широкой общественности несколько недель назад, есть также предложения по градостроительному развитию города и реставрации отдельных архитектурных памятников. В данной статье говорится об историческом и современном состоянии города Шуша, рассматриваются различные аспекты исторического развития города, связанные с формированием градостроительной структуры, архитектурные памятники, исследуются проблемы реставрации отдельных объектов. Приводятся некоторые эскизные проекты реставраций памятников, исполненных студентами в рамках вышеназванного проекта.

**Ключевые слова:** архитектура города Шуша, азербайджанская архитектура, освобождение азербайджанских земель, восстановление памятников архитектуры

**Introduction.** Shusha is one of the richest with architectural monuments towns of Azerbaijan. The founder of the town was the Karabakh khan Panahali Javanshir. In 1747, Panahali Khan, in order to protect the Karabakh Khanate from outside attacks, decided to build an impregnable fortress in the most beautiful place of Karabakh, surrounded on three sides by steep rocks. The foundation of the fortress was laid in 1752. In the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the town of Shusha became the center of the Karabakh Khanate. Local residents in honor of Panahali khan proclaimed the new town Panakhabad. The next outstanding ruler who developed and contributed to the flourishing of the town's power was Ibrahim Khalil khan, who ascended the throne after the death of Panahali khan. Both Panahali khan and Ibrahim Khalil khan built Shusha, the capital of the Karabakh Khanate, in the best traditions of ancient and medieval Azerbaijani architecture.

With its picturesque location high in the mountains on an impregnable rock covered with forest, the wide use of natural stone in the construction, which also paved the streets of the town, interesting architecture and, finally, abundant landscaping, the town aroused the delight and approval of all travelers who visited there.

Shusha is one of the richest cities in Azerbaijan with architectural monuments. Shusha, built 250 years ago, is the largest monument of history, culture, urban planning and architecture of Azerbaijan, an open-air museum, which was protected as a historical and architectural reserve in 1977. Shusha was not only the administrative, but also the cultural and economic center of Karabakh, the unique urban planning system of the town of Shusha has been characterized by a combination of separate quarters, typical of eastern towns. In Soviet times, town was developed in accordance with the requirements of the urban planning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. According to the list of historical and cultural monuments of Azerbaijan, adopted in 2001, there are 165 monuments in Shusha, including 122 houses and palaces, 14 mosques and 27 civil monuments [List of immovable historical...]. A huge number of national monuments, their diversity and distinctive features gave reason to call Shusha the richest cradle of Azerbaijani culture. Many of these monuments date back to the 18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> centuries. Every house, every street, majestic fortress walls, mosques, slim minarets, ruins of huge fortresses tell about our past and culture. In Soviet times, a production plant, a weaving shop of the Karabakh silk plant, a factory for the manufacture of oriental musical instruments, an agricultural technical school, a pedagogical school, a museum of the history of Shusha, a memorial house-museum of the composer Uzeyir Uzeyir Hajibeyov, sanatoriums, rest houses, pioneer camps, and a tourist center functioned in Shusha.

### **1. Architectural and urban heritage of Shusha. Urban structure of the town**

In 1832, there were many factories in the Shusha district: 42 silk-spinning shops, 28 cotton factories, 20 leather factories, 1 brick factory, 1 soap factory, 3 paint shops [Гаджиева Е., Гаджиева С., 2021]. For that time, Shusha was a town famous for its streets, paved with stones, wooden lattice balconies, stone houses on a sharp relief, colorful carpets, silks and thoroughbred horses, and most importantly for artists and culture.

It should be noted that one of the important sources in the study of the urban planning and architectural heritage of the town of Shusha is the scientific research of Professor Elturan Avalov. The author in his study conducts a deep analysis of the urban development of the town of Shusha, studies the first historical center of

the town in 1837, introduces the draft general plan of 1855, which already includes such significant buildings and structures as the Lower Bazaar, Lower Square, Rastabazar, Upper Mosque, Tsitatel-Gala, Ganja Gates, Divankhana. We see the creation of the town center, where the central axis of the Shaitan Bazaar meets the central axis of the Rasta Bazaar, and the central axis of the Lower Bazaar corresponds to the model of the town that has already been formed in the area considered to be the center of Shusha. Over the years, the territory expanded, Bazaarbashi, the Market Row, Gapan Square, the Upper Mosque, the Lower Mosque, the House of the Khan's daughter Natavan, the Caravanserai of Haji Amiraslan and many others appeared. In the 1950s, the central part of Shusha became even richer, a madrasah - Shed Mashadi Shukur Mirsiyaba oglu, the palace of the Safarov brothers, the Khoja Merjanly mosque, a new shopping center, workshops, springs. This is how the formation of the town of Shusha continued. [Гаджиева Е., Гаджиева С.,2021].



**Figure 1. a)** General view on Shusha in the 19<sup>th</sup> century [Kadjar Chingiz ,2007]



**Figure 1. b)** Djydyr- duzu [picture by author]

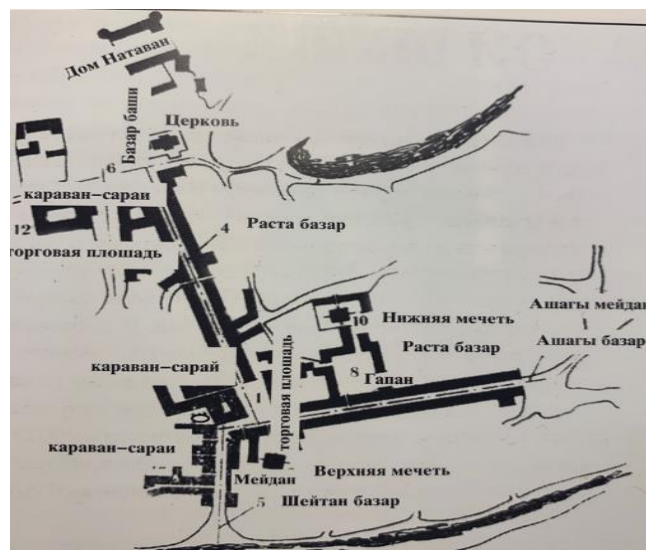
The formation of the town-planning structure of the Shusha was influenced, first of all, by the landscape and geographical features of the area where this town is located. The mountain plateau, located at an altitude of 1300-1600 m above sea level, with its geographical landscape structure, is surrounded by hard-to-reach rocks on the southern, western and eastern sides. In the southern part there is a plain called Dzhydyr-duzu, which falls in a sharp rocky landscape to the basins of the Dashalty and Khalifali rivers. *Tursh Su* mineral springs are located at a distance of 2 km from the Shusha plateau, 18 km from the Isa-bulaga spring. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century Shusha was one of the largest cities in the Caucasus. There were ten caravanserais here, which indicates a large number of travelers.

The classical system used in the construction of the medieval towns of Azerbaijan was used in Shusha as well: the central street began at the main gate and passed through the whole town. This street and the leading streets adjacent to it eventually turn into large market centers bazaars, connected to squares with mosques, madrasahs, baths and caravanserais. For this reason, the main trade roads in Shusha were called bazaars: Sheytan bazaar, Rasta bazaar, Ashagi bazaar. The main street - *Rasta Bazaar* - was built up with religious buildings and artisan workshops. So, covered galleries over stone columns formed the architecture

of the street. Rather large market squares were adjacent to the streets. The architecture of the street was formed by covered galleries framed by stone columns, all this was complemented by rather large market squares adjoining its highway. The main square - *Meydan*, placed along the axis of the Rasta bazaar street, had a rectangular shape and was built up with religious and commercial buildings. The architectural ensemble of *Meydan* is formed by rows of one-story trading shops, a two-story caravanserai and an expressive mosque of the city with two minarets. The verticals of the minarets of the mosque dominated the architectural and spatial composition of the city.



**Figure 2.** View on Shusha [Project «Shusha»]



**Figure 3.** Fragment of the Shusha general plan of 1855 [Авалов Э.В.,1978]

Urban development consisted of quarters - *mehelle*, each of which had its own local center in the form of a square - *Meydan* around which religious and public buildings were grouped - a mosque, madrasah, a bathhouse, trading dukans, a spring. There are 17 districts-*mehelle* in Shusha: *Gurdlar, Seyidli, Julfalar, Guyulug, Chukhur, Dordlyar Gurdu, Haji Yusifli, Dord Chinar, Chol Gala, Merdinli, Saatli, Kocherli, Mamayyi, Khoja Merjanli, Demirchi, Hamam Gabagi and Teze mehelle*. A huge number of national monuments, their diversity and distinctive features give reason to call Shusha the pearl of our culture.

Throughout the history of development, the city has steadily developed. In 1972, the city of Shusha, along with its historical environment, began to take shape in accordance with the principles of Soviet urban planning.

**Fortifications.Shusha Fortress-** a fortress surrounding the historical center of the town of Shusha. It became the third fortress built by Panahali khan. Due to the fact that the previously built fortresses Bayat (1748) and Shahbulag (1752) did not fully meet the modern requirements of defense capability, Panahali khan decided to build a new fortress town. The territory on which the Shusha fortress was built is a mountain

plateau in the form of an amphitheater from the west with numerous hills and rifts. The highest area of the plateau is 1600 m, and the lowest is 1300 m above sea level. The construction of the fortress wall was necessary only for the defense of the northeastern part of the plateau, which was naturally weakly defended. The defensive walls of Shusha were built of stone and they were of 2.5 km long. Since its foundation, the town of Shusha was the main fortress of Karabakh. Shusha fortress was continuously reconstructed and expanded and as a result of that fact its original appearance was partially changed by the 19th century. New defensive towers were added to the fortress. The Shusha fortress had several gates: the Ganja gate, the Irevan gate, the Agoglan gate. During the period of occupation in 1990th, the fortress, like the gates, had lost their original appearance. The inner citadel of Shusha built by Panahali khan was located on a high hill near the Ganja gate. It was palace- fortress with towers and defensive walls. During the period of occupation, the fortress, as well as the gates, lost their original appearance.

Not far from the fortress built in accordance with the town-planning traditions of the medieval East, on a hill, was the citadel-palace of Panahali Khan. The inner citadel of Shusha was located on a high hill near the Ganja gates. The inner citadel built by Panah Khan was a palace resembling a fortress with towers and walls. Shusha, built by the Karabakh Khan Panahali Khan on the site of an ancient settlement, is a rare monument of medieval culture, urban planning and a living encyclopedia of Karabakh architecture.



**Figure 4.** Restoration of Gyandja gates after deliberation



**Figure 5a, b.** Draft reconstructions of Gyandja gates [Project «Shusha»]

**Cult monuments.** Speaking about the cult architecture of Shusha, as well as the entire Karabakh, it should be noted that the Christian and Muslim architecture of this region, which grew out of the common roots of the ancient and early medieval art of Caucasian Albania, developed in close interaction and mutual influence. This was due not only to the centuries-old architectural and construction tradition, but also to the economic, political, and also ethnic community. Although after the advent of Islam, the population of historical Caucasian Albania was divided into two parts according to religious affiliation (one part of the population adopted a new religion, the other remained faithful to Christianity), the state, territorial, economic community and common ancient ideological traditions continued to create a strong foundation for close

cultural ties. mutual influence and mutual enrichment. This feature can be traced in the architecture of the monuments of Karabakh - Christian (Albanian) and Muslim.



**Figure 6a,b.** The upper mosque of Gevhar Agha before [2] and during occupation [3]



**Figure 6 c, d.** The upper mosque of Gevhar Agha after so called ‘restoration’ in the last years of occupation and today [picture by author]

The Islamic religion occupied a leading place in Shusha in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, where there was a mosque in every quarter, of which the most significant was the mosque built by the famous architect Kerbalai Safikhan Karabaghi at the expense of Ibrahim Khan's daughter Gevhar Agha. **The upper mosque of Gevhar Agha** is a monument of Azerbaijani culture of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, one of the main masterpieces of Shusha. It is called the *Juma* Mosque, the main mosque of the town. By the end of the century (1865), Gevhar Agha, the daughter of Ibrahim Khalil Khan, had built the Juma of Shusha according to the project of the famous Karabakh architect *Karbalai Sefi Khan Karabagi*. The new mosque, although it was built on the old foundation, was very different from the old one. The building of the mosque was built of stone, and the minarets were made of bricks. The prayer hall of the mosque, like most of the Shusha mosques, is three-nave. The lancet vaults of the hall were supported by six octahedral stone columns. Minarets were decorated with Koranic inscriptions and patterns. Patterns as well as the painting of the room on the second floor of the mosque were decorated by Mir Mohsun Navvab. A madrasah was built next to the mosque.

During the military attacks by the Armenians in May 1992, the mosque was seriously damaged. It was in badly damaged state for a long. So called "restoration" works on the mosque had started in 2014. As a result of completely unauthorized actions contrary to the UNESCO Conventions of 1954, 1972, etc. on the protection of heritage in the territories of the military conflict, the mosque was “restored” as an Iranian mosque without the involvement of Azerbaijani specialists. The main idea of that “restoration” was to erase traces of Azerbaijani culture and present the monument as Persian one. How to explain the participation of foreign specialists carrying out the so-called restoration work in the occupied territory, without involving Azerbaijani specialists in violation of all regulatory documents, and destroying the identity of the monument? It should be noted that at present, the mosque is working to strengthen and eliminate remodels falsifying the mosque.



**Figure 7.** Draft reconstruction of the Upper mosque of Gevhar Agha [Project «Shusha»]

Lower mosque of Govhar Agha similarly to the upper one, was built thanks to Gevhar Agha, the daughter of the second Karabakh khan Ibrahim Khalil Khan, by the eminent Karabakh architect Karbalai Sefi Khan Karabagi. Construction was completed by 1865-1866. The mosque was located lower than the first and was smaller on size. Unlike the upper Mosque, built on the site of the previous building, it was built at first and was 20 years older than the Upper Mosque.

Despite the fact that both mosques were designed by the same architect, they have many architectural differences. The main differences are the shape of the entrance *eyvans*, and the location and decor of the minarets. The minarets of the lower mosque adjoined the southern facade overlooking the square. The slim cylindrical minarets of the Lower mosque differed from the minarets of the Upper mosque by the ornamentation lined with colored bricks. The ornament was made up of the word "Allah" repeated many times in Arabic script. At the moment, the mosque is in a dilapidated state, one of the minarets has lost its crowning part, the roof is destroyed, all window openings, etc. destroyed as well. Previously, there were murals by Mir Mohsun Navvab, which were lost, like the numerous frescoes in the houses and mosques of Shusha. The spiral masonry of the dome of the lower mosque deserves special attention.



**Figure 8.** Lower mosque of Govhar Agha after occupation [5]

After the occupation, the mosque appeared in a dilapidated state, one of the minarets lost its crowning part, the roof was destroyed, all window openings, etc. Previously, there were paintings by Mir Mavsum Navvab, an artist and orientalist, whose paintings are preserved in museums, and numerous frescoes in the houses and mosques of Shusha, alas, have been lost.



Figure 9. Interior and dome of the Lower mosque of Govhar Agha. [5]



Figure 10. Draft reconstruction of the Lower mosque of Govhar Agha [Project «Shusha»]

**The Saatli mosque** was built in 1883 by the Azerbaijani architect Karbalai Sefi Khan Karabagi on the site of the old mosque and madrasah, where the Azerbaijani poet and vizier of the Karabakh Khanate Molla Panah Vagif taught. The new mosque surpassed all the mosques in the neighborhood with beautiful interior decoration, stucco, stained glass- shebeke, wood carvings and a magnificently decorated high minaret with an isolated entrance. The minaret of the mosque was destroyed by artillery shelling in May 1992 during the occupation of the town of Shusha by the Armenian armed forces.

**Mosque of Mamayi.** In the 19th century in Shusha, in the Mamayi quarter, the mosque of the same name was built by Karbalai Sefi Khan Karabagi. Rectangular in plan, the Mamayi mosque was distinguished by its simplicity and was more like a dwelling than a religious building. The only difference from the dwellings is the presence of a “*mehrab*” and a small “*guldasta*” structure for muezzins, installed on the roof of the mosque. The Mamayi Mosque had a three-nave hall, where the ceiling rested on arches thrown over octagonal columns. During the years of Soviet Union, a poetry house functioned in the Mamayi mosque. During the years of occupation, a geological museum was placed up in the Mosque in Teze Mehelle.

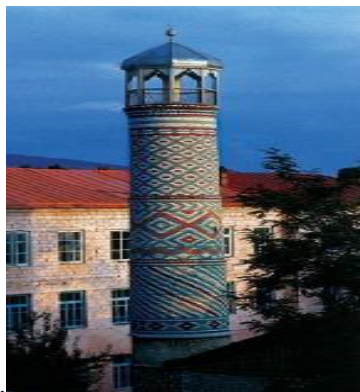


Figure 11. Saatli mosque before and after [6] occupation



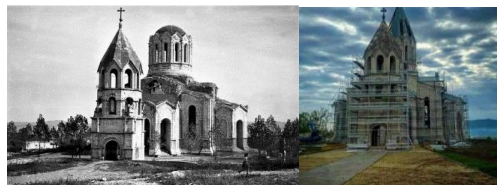


**Figure 12.** Mamayi mosque after occupation [ 7]

Several Christian structures have also been preserved in Shusha, which is also quite natural, if we recall the history of Azerbaijan of that period. After the conquest of Northern Azerbaijan by the Russian Empire at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the tsarist regime faced the need to strengthen its dominance among the local Muslim population. To achieve these goals and further develop the resources of the region, the Russian autocracy needed to create a reliable socio-political, economic and ethnic support in the region. Muslim Azerbaijan, surrounded by powerful countries professing the same religion, caused serious concern, and therefore it was decided to increase the number of people professing Christianity by resettling Christian families in the territory of Azerbaijan. The tsarist authorities carried out a purposeful resettlement of Armenians and Russians, which led to serious demographic changes in this territory. As a result of such actions, it became possible to “escamote” the Albanian church and transfer its property and archives to the Armenian one in 1836. The predictions of Velichko, Griboyedov, and Glinka came true that the temporarily migrants invited here would stay forever. And in Maragha there was a monument dedicated to the 150th anniversary of the resettlement of Armenians in Karabakh, which was subsequently destroyed. Already existing Christian monuments began to be used by alien settlers, subjected to falsifications under the guise of restorations. They tried to erase traces of Albanian architecture. And if such unauthorized actions took place relatively slowly over the past centuries, then during the period of occupation they acquired an unprecedented scope.

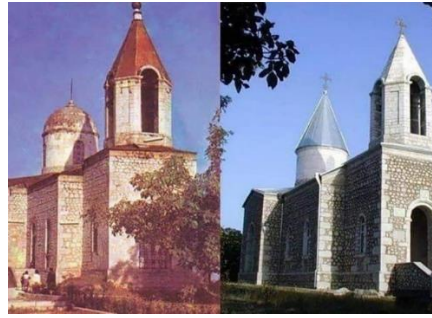
Gazanchi Church, named after the quarter in which it is located. The architectural complex consists of a church and a bell tower. The bell tower was built in 1858, and the church in 1868-1887. According to historical sources, initially "it was a wooden church, then a stone church. In 1847 it was demolished, as it was in a dilapidated state." century, the church was used as a warehouse for some time. At some stage, the dome of the church, originally having a spherical dome, was replaced by a hipped ceiling. A drum under the dome also appeared. The high hipped dome was built in 1997 and artificially raised to a height of 20 meters.

The church is being restored today. Azerbaijan, which respects all the monuments located on its territory, regardless of confessional or any other affiliation, takes care of the heritage, returning the monument to its historical appearance, which it had before numerous alterations.



**Figure 13.** Previous appearance of the Gazanchi church [8] and restoration works after liberation [9]

Another Christian church in Shusha was built in 1847. After the occupation of Nagorno-Karabakh in 1992, the dome of the church was reconstructed.



**Figure 14.** Church in Shusha. Previous appearance and the results of reconstructions during occupation [10]

### 1.2. Civil buildings. “Imarets” residential buildings and palaces

Residential buildings in Shusha were built in a style characteristic of Karabakh - mostly two-storey, facing the courtyard, with deep verandas on wooden pillars. The combination of rubble masonry with wooden constructions of verandas and colored stained-glass windows- *shebeke*, multi-colored interior decor created a unique colorful appearance of residential buildings - imarets of Shusha. Many of them, such as the house of the poetess Natavan, the estate of Haji Gulular, the houses of the Mehmandarovs, Ugurlu bey, Asad bey, the houses in which the outstanding composer Uzeyir Hajibeyov, the singer Bulbul and others were born and raised are masterpieces of Azerbaijan architecture.

**Khurshid Banu Natavan’s Palace** was included in the complex of palace buildings of the Karabakh khans. It was built at the turn of the 18-19<sup>th</sup> centuries. The house consists of two buildings, one of which was built along the street, showing an external laconic facade. Characteristic elements of decor such as *shebeke*, balconies, verandas were located on the courtyard facade, hidden from outlier eyes, as it is typical of traditional Muslim houses.

In 1932, the first children's music school in Azerbaijan was opened in the house that once belonged to Khurshidbanu Natavan. In this educational institution, there were classes on playing the Azerbaijani folk instruments *tar* and *kamancha*, on the piano, violin, and vocal training was also conducted. Soon the music school became the center of culture and art in Shusha. The Shusha music school was destroyed by the Armenian armed forces during the occupation of the city of Shusha in May 1992.



**Figure 15.** Draft reconstruction of the Khurshid Banu Natavan’s Palace

This is a two-storey building with service rooms on the ground floor. Living rooms were located around a spacious central hall on the second, main floor, where an external staircase led. The hall was about 5 meters high. Paintings and carvings on alabaster were used in its interior decoration. In the entire width of the house, this hall was illuminated from two opposite sides by large multi-colored glazed shebeke windows of  $5 \times 3.5$  meters. At the moment they are completely destroyed. Windows were assembled from standard wooden components without nails or glue. A square meter of a window shebeke consisted of 3-5 thousand of such components. In Shusha, before the occupation, shebeke survived in many houses.

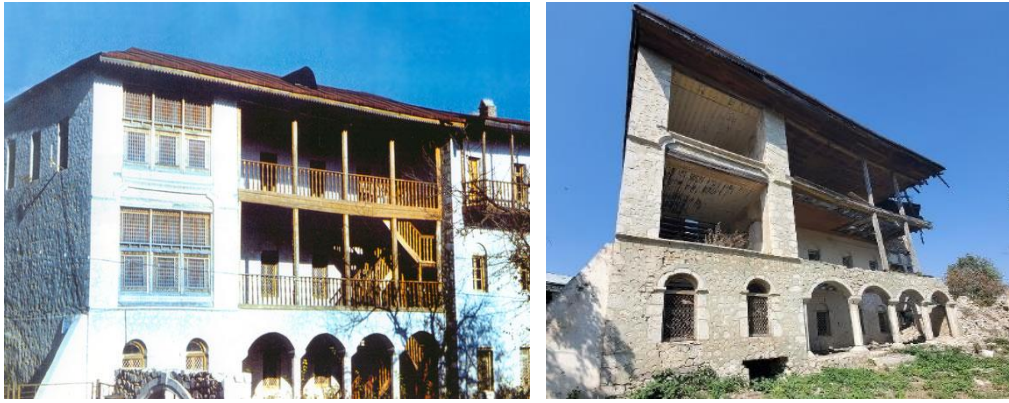
**The Zohrabbekovs' house** is a majestic building, also with incredible beauty of its *shebeke*. A deep arcade on the first floor and eyvans with wooden fences on the second and third floors created a fancy play of light and shadow, highlighting the beauty of the masonry. One can note that shebeke was a particularly valuable element here. During the military attacks, the mansion came under fire and was badly damaged. Later, all the elements of its decor were destroyed. Complete restoration of both structures and decorative elements is required.



**Figure 16.** Draft reconstruction of the “shebeke” window in Khurshid Banu Natavan’s Palace



**Figure 17.** Khurshid Banu Natavan’s Palace after occupation [11]



**Figure 18.** Zohrabbekovs' house before [Kadjar Chingiz 2007] and after occupation

**Residential complex of Mehmandarov's.** The complex dates back to the 18th century. Before the occupation, in the building of the small house of the Mehmandarov's was placed museum of oriental carpets. N. Miklashevskaya, who researched the wall paintings of Mehmandarov's house in the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, mentions a shebeke, which occupies the entire front wall of the hall, similar to the shebeke of the Shekikhan palace: "Shebeke, with its openwork weaving, combined with small colored glass pieces, make up bizarre patterns of stars and circles and complete the original decor of the room". During the Soviet period, the Museum of the History of Shusha was located in the Small Residential Building. During the years of occupation, the building was also used by the Armenians as the Museum of the history of the city. This is probably why of all the buildings of the complex, the small one is the best preserved. The mosque on the territory of the complex during the years of Armenian occupation was turned into the Museum of Geology.



**Figure 19.** Draft reconstruction of the Zohrabbekovs house



**Figure 20.** Residential complex of Mehmandarov's [13]

**House-museum of** was also built in a traditional style for the town of Shusha. The abundance of wooden carved details, the presence of shebeke windows - all this against the background of simple but beautiful wall masonry formed the type of imaret that was traditional for that period. That beautiful architectural monument was badly damaged and looted during occupation. Before the occupation, the museum kept about 1,700 exhibits. During the occupation by employees of the museum's selfless leadership, some of the museum's exhibits were taken to the House-Museum operating in Baku. About 1600 exhibits were destroyed and put out of action by the armed forces of Armenia. The house was almost completely destroyed.

**Bul-Bul house-museum** was completely plundered and destroyed as many other buildings. In general, about 9 thousand exhibits were presented in the museum's exposition, about 6 thousand of which were destroyed or taken out during the occupation in order to be presented to the world community as examples of Armenian material culture. At present, the house has been restored and the house-museum of the famous Azerbaijani singer is again functioning in it.



**Figure 21.** Draft reconstruction of the small house in the Residential complex of Mehmandarov's [Project «Shusha:»]



**Figure 22.** Ruins of the Hajibeyov's house after occupation [14]

**The Haji Gulular** mansion in the Khoja Marjanli quarter was built in 1851. The three-storey palace, built in the best national traditions, had 46 rooms and two large guest halls. In May, 1992, during the occupation of the town of Shusha by the Armenians, the walls of the Haji Gulular were destroyed by artillery, property was plundered. Over the past years, the architectural monument continued to collapse without attracting the attention of the occupiers.



**Figure 23.** Draft reconstruction of the the Hajibeyov's house [Project «Shusha»]



**Figure 24.** The Haji Gulular mansion before [Kadjar Chingiz, 2007] and after occupation [13]

A special place in the architecture of Shusha was occupied by caravanserais, baths and other civil structures. It is believed that the first caravanserais appeared in Shusha immediately after the construction of the fortress walls and were located near city squares, shopping centers and bazaars. By the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, there were 10 caravanserais in Shusha. The convenient location of the caravanserais contributed to the fact that they were used even after the need for caravanserais disappeared. In Soviet times, many of them were used as bazaars and covered markets. During the occupation, many have almost completely lost their historical appearance and turned into ruins. The current state of the caravanserais of Shusha requires urgent restoration or conservation work.



**Figure 25 a, b.** Caravanserais of Shusha after occupation [picture by author]

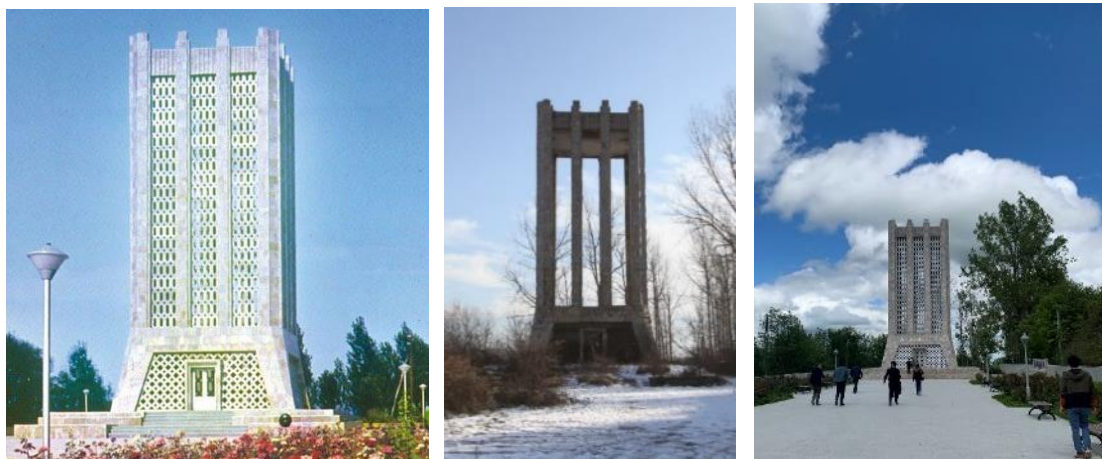
The **Shusha Real school** real school was opened in the year of 1881 and considered to be an exemplary educational center of that time. It characterizes a new era after the annexation of Azerbaijan to Russia, and therefore characterizes not the local but the European architectural tradition. After the occupation of the town of Shusha in May 1992, the Shusha Real school was burned and plundered.



**Figure 26 a, b.** Real school before [15] and after occupation [16]

Paying tribute to Shusha as a cultural center, **museum-mausoleum complex of Molla Panah Vagif** was built here in the 20th century on the grave of the outstanding Azerbaijani poet, vizier of the Karabakh Molla Panah Vagif. The mausoleum had a prismatic shape. The openwork walls of the mausoleum repeated the motives of traditional wooden shebeke in stone. There was a museum here, which displayed about eighty exhibits reflecting the life of M.P. Vagif in Shusha. Museum was destroyed and plundered completely. After the liberation of Shusha, the mausoleum was restored.

**Conclusion.** As a result of the occupation of the territory of Karabakh for about 30 years, the cultural heritage of Azerbaijan was badly damaged. The medieval town of Shusha, which has a peculiar town-planning structure, suffered especially great destruction, it was half destroyed, despite the fact that before the start of the war there were ancient quarters and numerous monuments of history and architecture in excellent preservation state. For about three decades, Baku had alarmed over the destruction of the historical and cultural heritage in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan, including the multifaceted heritage of the town of Shusha. The facts of continuing aggression against cultural objects were presented to UNESCO, UN, OSCE, Council of Europe, OIC, ISESCO and other international organizations. However, no effective assistance was received to stop such acts.



**Figure 27 a,b,c.** Mausoleum complex of Molla Panah Vagif [17], after occupation [18] and in the result of reconstruction after deliberation [picture by author]



The state structures of Armenia itself advised "if the Azerbaijani authorities are interested in the issue of preserving cultural monuments, they should contact the authorities of the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic", thereby indirectly recognizing the fact of a policy of vandalism, destruction, appropriation, falsification of material and cultural values and religious monuments, including non-Muslim heritage. In the occupied lands, 738 historical monuments, 28 museums with more than 83.5 thousand exhibits, four art galleries, 14 memorial complexes and 1,891 material and cultural resources, including 1107 cultural institutions, were destroyed. Thus, the complex of the 17<sup>th</sup> century mosque in the Jabrayil region, the Yukxary and Ashagy Govharaga mosques, the 18<sup>th</sup> century Saatli mosque in Shusha, and the 19<sup>th</sup> century mosque in the Aghdam region were turned into ruins. In Shusha, the Vagif Mausoleum, the House of Khurshidbanu Natavan, numerous monuments of architecture and art were destroyed and plundered. Such actions were carried out in violation of the Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict, adopted on May 14, 1954, and the obligations assumed by Armenia in accordance with the second Protocol of this Convention, adopted in 1999. The damage investigation and restoration activities have already begun. Azerbaijan attracts, in addition to the local, foreign specialists to carry out the restoration of monuments in accordance with modern requirements.

### Literature

1. Avalov E.B. The architecture of the city of Shushi and the problem of preserving its historical shape. Baku Elm 112p. 1978
2. Gadzhieva E., Gadzhieva S. Urban development and restoration of the historical and architectural heritage of the city of Shusha\ MEMAP magazine, №30, Baku. 2021
3. Mamedova G.G. Architecture of Caucasian Albania. Baku: Чашыоглу, 222с. 2004
4. Kadjar Chingiz Old Shusha. Baku: Sharg-Garb, 344с. ISBN, 978-9952-34-096-9. 2007
5. List of immovable historical and cultural monuments approved by the Decision №132 of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Azerbaijan dated August 2, <https://e-ganun.az/framework/2847>, 2001
6. Project «Shusha»: [https://drive.google.com/file/d/1ixpqzJcr\\_ifAT8YHsrSv3nuJPcRIVGJr/view?usp=Internet resources \(pictures\)](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1ixpqzJcr_ifAT8YHsrSv3nuJPcRIVGJr/view?usp=Internet%20resources%20pictures)
  1. <https://report.az/ru/karabakh/ilham-aliev-vozrozhdenie-shushi-idet-bystryimi-tempami/>
  2. [https://az.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fayl:Yuxari\\_goverher\\_aga\\_mescidi.png](https://az.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fayl:Yuxari_goverher_aga_mescidi.png)
  3. <https://aqreqator.az/az/siyaset/405193>
  4. [https://az.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yuxar%C4%B1\\_G%C3%B6vh%C9%99r\\_a%C4%9Fa\\_m%C9%99scidi](https://az.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yuxar%C4%B1_G%C3%B6vh%C9%99r_a%C4%9Fa_m%C9%99scidi)
  5. [https://m.facebook.com/pencereofficial/photos/pcb.195673708735280/195673582068626/?type=3&source=48&\\_\\_tn\\_\\_=EH-R](https://m.facebook.com/pencereofficial/photos/pcb.195673708735280/195673582068626/?type=3&source=48&__tn__=EH-R)
  6. [https://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/%A6%D5%AF%D5%AB%D5%A9\\_02.JPG](https://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/%A6%D5%AF%D5%AB%D5%A9_02.JPG)
  7. [https://az.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mamay\\_m%C9%99scidi](https://az.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mamay_m%C9%99scidi)
  8. <https://oxu.az/society/490657>
  9. <https://pia.az/amp/?id=400467>
  10. <https://1news.az/news/20201122125344336-Kak-armyane-prevratili-russkii-pravoslavnyi-khram-Shushi-v-armyanskuyu-tserkov-FOTO>
  11. <https://karabakh.center/ru/cd-250/susa/xursud-banu-natavan-dom>
  12. <https://karabakh.center/ru/cd-244/susa/dom-zoxrabbekovyx>
  13. <https://karabakh.center/ru/cd-273/susa/mexmandarov-pomeste>
  14. <https://karabakh.center/ru/cd-246/susa/uzeir-qadjibeyli-dom-muzey>
  15. <https://news.milli.az/culture/136296.html>
  16. [https://az.wikipedia.org/wiki/%C5%9Eu%C5%9Fa\\_real\\_m%C9%99kt%C9%99bi](https://az.wikipedia.org/wiki/%C5%9Eu%C5%9Fa_real_m%C9%99kt%C9%99bi)
  17. <http://wikimapia.org/13031044/ru/>
  18. <https://karabakh.center/ru/cd-262/susa/m.p.vaqif-mavzoley>