

THE PROCESS OF MUSEIFICATION OF HISTORICAL SITES IN UZBEKISTAN (ON
THE EXAMPLE OF THE MUSEUM OF FAYZULLA KHODJAEV IN BUKHARA)

Ziyaeva Rano Alimjanova

Employee of the State Museum
of History of Uzbekistan

ranoshka_3485@mail.ru

+998903240080

Annotation : This article examines the processes of museification of historical and architectural monuments of residential buildings in Uzbekistan, using the example of the Fayzulla Khodjaev House Museum in Bukhara. Although this monument spans a long period (late 19th – early 20th century), no information has been preserved regarding the date of its construction or the local craftsmen who created the interior decorative elements. The article also analyzes the gradual processes of the restoration of the object.

Keywords: architecture, Fayzulla Khodjaev House Museum, traditional residential building, courtyard, decorative elements, repair, restoration, and conservation.

Аннотация: В данной статье рассматриваются процессы музеефикации историко-архитектурных памятников жилых домов в Узбекистане на примере музея дома Файзуллы Хужаева в Бухаре. Несмотря на то, что данный памятник охватывает долгий период (конец 19 — начало 20 века), о дате его строительства и местных мастерах, создававших внутренние декоративные элементы, не сохранилось никаких сведений. Также в статье анализируются постепенные процессы реставрации объекта.

Ключевые слова: архитектура, музей дома Файзуллы Хужаева, традиционный жилой дом, двор, декоративные элементы, ремонт, реставрация и консервация.

The history of civil architecture in Uzbekistan reflects rich and ancient traditions. Its development has been shaped over many years by local and foreign experiences, customs, and contemporary requirements. Civil architecture in Uzbekistan is characterized by unique regional traditions. In rural areas, traditional houses and courtyards with specific designs have been widely constructed, while in urban areas, modern houses, offices, and large commercial complexes are being built. New houses and buildings being constructed in cities such as Tashkent, Samarkand, Bukhara, and Namangan are designed in a way that is consistent with their historical, cultural, and architectural context. Efforts are made to maintain a balance between social life and tourism.

One of the most prominent examples of civil architecture is the Fayzulla Khodjayev House Museum in Bukhara. Fayzulla Khodjayev was born in 1896 in Bukhara in a family of merchants. He was a statesman and political figure. He spent the considerable wealth inherited from his father on opening new-method schools and materially supporting the political activities of young Bukharians. Fayzulla Khodjayev paid special attention to the independent internal and foreign policy of the Bukhara People's Soviet Republic, carried out economic reforms, and introduced democratic freedoms. He established diplomatic relations with countries outside of Russia, including Iran, Turkey, Afghanistan, China, Azerbaijan, the USSR, as well as Germany and Japan. He also played a significant role in sending young students abroad to ensure their education. Fayzulla Khodjayev governed the Bukhara People's Soviet Republic for four years and the Republic of Uzbekistan for twelve years. As a "people's enemy" he was imprisoned and

executed alongside many intellectuals, such as Fitrat, Chulpan, and Abdulla Kadiri. He left a rich scientific legacy as a statesman, historian, economist, and publicist-journalist. [1.53-54].

Fayzulla Khodjaev's historical legacy holds significant importance in history of Uzbekistan. His social and political activities are also reflected in civil architecture, as he supported the youth of his time and promoted free thinking, striving for all-around development.

This residential building, constructed in the early 19th century, is commonly referred to as the house of its first owners, Ubaydullo Khodja and Kasim Khodjaev. There is no exact source regarding the date of its construction; this estimation is based on the building materials, decoration, and architectural style used. Later, the house passed on to his son, Fayzulla Khodjaev. After the revolution, the house was nationalized. Between 1930 and 1937, it was the residence of Fayzulla Khodjaev, who was the secretary of the People's Education Council. Until the 1950s, the building was used as a residential property. Subsequently, a large portion of the building, according to a decision by the city authorities, was repurposed as a boarding school, and later served as a preschool education college and kindergarten. In the 1970s, the first courtyard and the southeastern part of the house were allocated to the Bukhara regional organization, while the northwestern part was freed up for restoration. There is no information about Fayzulla Khodjaev's house in the archives of Bukhara city or the Bukhara museum. Only the Bukhara archive contains schematic measurements of the first and second floors of the house, left by architect Abdurasulov in 1946 [2.27-28]. This residential building has a frame-based foundation and is constructed from raw brick. The walls are covered with a mud-plaster technique. The interior walls of the rooms are coated with plaster and decorated with wall ornaments and relief patterns [2. 62]. The walls of the building's rooms have high wall niches, which are filled with decorative elements. The lower part of the building features a solid earthen floor (a kind of wooden floor). This house covers a total area of 10,133 square meters. During the excavation works in 1979, much of the house was found to be in a damaged condition. The mud-plastered areas of the courtyard collapsed, exposing the frame foundations. Several rounds of restoration resulted in significant damage to the decorative elements of the building. Due to weather, earthquakes, and other external factors, noticeable cracks appeared in the walls of the building. By this time, many of the rooms in the courtyard had accumulated bricks, plaster, and other debris that had fallen over the years. By the 1980s, around 40-45% of the house had been significantly damaged [2.63-66].

In 1979, the building was taken for restoration by the Ministry of Culture of Uzbekistan, under the supervision of the Special Uzbek Scientific Restoration Workshop and architect Kim V.V. They carried out various works to address the issues mentioned above. Their goal was to preserve the original appearance of the building as much as possible. During the restoration process, lightweight construction materials such as expanded clay and slag concrete were used. To enhance the efficiency of the work, the main layout of the house, several architectural drawings, engineering approaches, and smaller architectural sections were taken into consideration while conducting the restoration[2.40]. In the restoration project, the communicative aspect was also a priority, as the building needed to be connected to the urban infrastructure. The installation of sewage, hot and cold water networks, electricity, gas, and heating systems — everything necessary for a residential building—was carried out. One of the most important tasks for the restorers was to preserve and showcase the building's original appearance. Therefore, they first removed the old, restored plaster and replaced it with new plaster that matched the original. They also attempted to partially restore the decoration by reapplying the patterns that had faded over time [2.40].



Fayzulla Khodjaev's history and his house hold an important place in Uzbekistan's cultural and architectural heritage. The information about the construction of this house in the 19th century, its socio-political significance, and the restoration processes provides a prime example of its history, architecture, and cultural values. Today, this building holds historical significance and is noteworthy for its rich architecture and interior decorations. The technical aspects of its original construction, particularly the use of raw bricks and the mud-plaster technique, reflect the architectural traditions of the time. By the mid-20th century, the building's repurposing for new functions demonstrated its adaptation to the social needs of that era. The fact that it has served the education system further enhances its significance. The restoration work, aimed at preserving the building's original appearance, reflects an approach dedicated to maintaining the social and historical monument. Such restoration processes allow for the preservation of information for future generations and the adaptation of the building for specific purposes. At the same time, the increasing damage to the building, the effects of weather and other natural influences, the depth of the restoration process, and the use of modern construction materials ensure the building's long-term preservation. Despite the changes in its structure and architectural values, this historical object holds immense importance as part of Uzbekistan's cultural heritage.



The house, according to the Uzbek architectural traditions of the last century, has two courtyards: the first courtyard – "birun" (outer courtyard) and the second courtyard – "darun" (inner courtyard). The first part of the courtyard – "birun" – no longer retains its decorative elements. However, the second part of the courtyard – "darun" – has preserved its decorative elements, including craftsmanship, sculpture, carving, monumental painting, and woodwork, which adorn the interior and the courtyard facades [3.10].

The architectural and decorative division of the building, along with the artistic decorations in the interior, aligns closely with the traditional residential buildings of that period. This is evident

in the multi-level partitioning of the walls, which are decorated with geometric patterns (girikh) made of plaster, the partitions adorned with floral motifs (gulcha), and the wall niches. The walls also feature horizontal divisions that, together with the vertical partitions, visually expand the size of the rooms. The dimensions of the decorative patterns are also characteristic, and they are drawn in a manner that perfectly suits the shape and proportions of the rooms. In smaller rooms, the panels and niches are divided into smaller sections, filled with pictures or additional decorative elements. The wall niches and the semi-domes of the cornices are decorated with small muqarnas. In the larger rooms, the niches and panels have solid mirrors and are filled with large plaster carvings and patterns. The semi-dome and cornice parts of the niches are covered with larger muqarnas. It is evident that larger decorations were used in the bigger rooms, while smaller decorations were applied in the smaller rooms. The vertical division of the rooms in the larger spaces with panels and their cohesive decoration gives the rooms a grand and ceremonial appearance. Various decorative techniques were used to adorn Fayzulla Khodjaev's house. For instance, majestic paintings were drawn on flat surfaces in the "edirma" style. The plaster carvings and muqarnas also featured patterns. The patterns primarily included flowers in the "Munobati Gulzor" vase, small flowers in the "gulcha" style, and decorative motifs like "majuntol," all expressed in soft, subdued colors.



The plaster carvings are expressed on flat surfaces with floral and geometric decorations. These decorations are also reflected in the patterns on the ventilating shutters and the niches. In the plaster carving technique, the "qirma" style was used, while the "iroqi" and "muqarnas" styles were widely applied in the muqarnas.

Woodwork was widely used in geometric and floral decorations, particularly on the porch columns, windows, and doors.

All the types of decorations listed above were executed by masters of their craft, and the layout, decorations, and all aspects of the house are interconnected. The decorative elements of the house, with their bright Eastern colors, light shapes, and ceremonial appearance, represent a monument that embodies both artistic and historical environments. It is considered a masterpiece of 19th-century decorative art in Uzbekistan, reflecting the grandeur of Eastern art [4. 16-17].

During the research process, it was determined that, through the examination of the walls, most of the plaster decorations had shifted from their original position on the mudbrick base, creating gaps in the process. Based on the condition of the decorations, the wall gaps were reinforced using a method of protection from ground moisture and groundwater. The wall paintings were

drawn using tempera paint. Almost all of the original decorative elements in the rooms were covered during several repair processes, with layers of whitewashing applied three to five times. During the process of protection from ground moisture and groundwater, the lime layers were cleaned using a dry cleaning method with a scalpel. After cleaning, despite the fact that the plaster decorations were firmly in place, it was found that these layers were forcefully removed during the restoration process [3. 11]. Therefore, the main goal during the restoration process was to preserve the remaining parts in their original condition. In previous restoration efforts, the decorations had been painted with gouache and oil paints, which significantly affected their original appearance. The earlier cleaning process in the porch area of the building involved removing both the lime and paint layers, and it is evident that the paint was removed along with the lime. Only the upper layer of colorless paint remains. Despite the poor condition of the building, it is clear that improper treatment of the monument contributed to its deterioration. [3. 11]

Research conducted in the 1980s indicates that the decorative elements of Fayzulla Khodjaev's house have undergone multiple restorations. As mentioned earlier, the residential building should be restored in a manner that reflects its original appearance. Therefore, it is essential to carry out several scientific studies and design works. These tasks should be undertaken after the walls have been cleaned of the old lime layers. First, any restored sections should be removed from the wall decorations. Once the room is free from prior repairs, scientific research on the rooms should be conducted, and only then can restoration and conservation efforts be carried out to restore the house to its original condition. When conducting research on the building, the following tasks should be carried out: historical and archival research; monitoring the temperature, humidity, and structural integrity of the roof; describing the technical condition of architectural decorations and patterns; photo-documentation of room decorations; conducting research on the decorations using natural methods and applying specific criteria; measuring the rooms and adjusting the decorations to their original form; and creating a documentation budget. This documentation work is essential for ensuring the safety of the decorations, preventing losses, and for the renovation of all rooms in the building. Later, during the renovation process, the documented work will provide an opportunity to observe the transition of the building from its original state to its current condition.

In accordance with the government's decision dated September 28, 2022, the residence of the prominent politician and statesman Fayzulla Khodjaev was renamed "Fayzulla Khodjaev House-Museum". Prior to this, it was referred to as the "Rich Merchant Family House-Museum" [5]. The current museum exhibition consists of the men's and women's courtyards. The interior courtyard, specifically the women's courtyard, is accessed via wide stone staircases. Each room is entered through a hallway, and each room has a small chamber, which is referred to as a "madon." The madon was used for bathing and changing clothes. The designs of each house are meticulously crafted, with the patterns in the rooms being unique to each one. In the mihrabs, depictions of flowers in vases can be found. The delicacy of the patterns, the clarity of the colors, and the natural expression of the designs can only be attributed to the craftsmanship of Bukhara artisans. Each room contains carved decorative shelves, on which large and small ceramic vessels are stored [6]. Currently, the house-museum hosts several exhibitions in the Ethnography section, including "The Life of a Wealthy Merchant in the 19th-20th Centuries," "An Exhibition Dedicated to the Life and Activities of the Uzbek Statesman and Politician Fayzulla Khodjaev," "The Kitchen of a Wealthy Merchant's House," and "External and Internal Trade in Bukhara in the 19th-20th Centuries." The exhibitions feature household items from the 19th-century Russian Gardner-Kuznetsov factory, metal and gold objects made in Bukhara during the 19th-20th

centuries, 19th-century musical instruments, and silk and velvet garments crafted by Bukhara artisans in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The rooms are designed to protect from the cold in winter and the heat in summer. The rooms under the courtyard, as mentioned earlier, feature large storage areas where items related to the family and goods necessary for trade were stored. For example, fabrics such as chintz, satin, wool, and drapery, imported from Russia, Berlin, Constantinople, and other countries, were kept there. In the corner of the courtyard, there is a well with a depth of 9 meters, which was used for drinking water and for sprinkling the courtyard. The men's courtyard was renovated several times, and as a result of the renovations, the patterns of the house changed. Restoration work at the museum began in 1990, and the museum opened its doors in 1991. Today, the museum rooms are decorated with exquisite woodwork, antique items, exclusive furniture, and unique decorations, as well as over 500 valuable exhibits, including period clothing, ceramic vessels, porcelain items, household items, and other artifacts from that era.

In conclusion, the Fayzulla Khodjaev House Museum, as one of Uzbekistan's historical and cultural landmarks from the 19th century, represents an important part of the nation's architectural and cultural heritage. The restoration and conservation efforts carried out in this building reflect particular attention to architectural decorative craftsmanship. The history of the house and its decorative elements deeply reflect the national art and architecture of the country. During the restoration process, several significant renovation works were carried out. In the 1980s, the building's decorations underwent multiple restorations, with particular focus on the restoration of the plasterwork and geometric patterns. The surface coatings and lime layers that were removed from the walls and muqarnas were carefully restored. Periodically, dry cleaning and cleaning with a scalpel were carried out. The museum began operating in 1991, and during this time, particular attention was given to the preservation of architectural and interior elements in a stable condition. Comprehensive and consistent restoration work was carried out with the aim of restoring the history and decorative elements of the building. The museum's exhibition includes items from the 19th and 20th centuries, musical instruments, textile products crafted by artisans, and other valuable works of art. Additionally, in 2022, the Fayzulla Khodjaev House was officially recognized as the "Fayzulla Khodjaev House Museum" and both state and private restoration works were carried out in the museum's exhibition areas.

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