

**DEVELOPMENT OF METHODS FOR RESTORATION AND REVITALIZATION OF
THE HISTORIC CENTER OF SAMARKAND CITY**

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Annotation. This article scientifically examines the stages of urban development of the historical part of Samarkand, the legal framework for establishing and designating protected areas, and the development of methods for restoring the historic city center.

Keywords: fortress, reconstruction, historical heritage, tradition

Main Text. At a time when modern urban planning in Uzbekistan is developing rapidly, the restoration and revitalization of historical city centers remains one of the most complex fields. Therefore, we focus on issues related to the restoration and development of the historic center of Samarkand.

Stretching from India in the east to Turkey in the west, the capital of the Timurid Empire—Samarkand—has reached us not only through the monuments such as Gur-Emir and Shohi Zinda, but also through remnants hidden beneath modern buildings: the city squares, craft quarters, trade districts, and residential areas that once shaped its social and economic life. Among the most noteworthy sites is the remains of the Timur fortress—Ark—located west of Registan Square, nearly in the center of the ancient city.

This rectangular ark was built on an elevated mound and separated from the city by the deep Novadon canal. The only connection between the city and the ark was the eastern gate, which, via a hanging bridge, linked the fortress to the city's main commercial district known as "Kumush qator". The western gate opened toward the caravan route connecting Samarkand with Bukhara. Despite being the main defensive structure of the city, the ark also functioned as its political center.

To understand this fully, it is necessary to examine the history of the construction of Amir Temur's ark. Temur established the ark as a political center, although he rarely stayed there himself. Instead, he often resided in palace gardens within the city or in Konigil along the banks of the Zarafshan River. Inside the ark were two palaces—Ko'ksaroy and Oqsaroy—along with a treasury and workshops where craftsmen from various regions produced weapons and military equipment [1; 1–2].

In plans of Old Samarkand, the city center is clearly defined: Registan, the main socio-commercial square, and the small Chorsu square located behind the Sherdor madrasa, where the old domed commercial structure known as Toqi Kulahfurushon once stood. Eight main radial roads extended from this domed marketplace, connecting the city gates and residential quarters. Some, such as the road between Shohi Zinda gate and Chorsu, were straight and wide, while others were winding. These roads, interconnected by narrow streets and alleys, formed a dense and irregular medieval urban pattern.

The fortress (qal'a) stood separately on a 10-meter-high mound, half embedded within the western part of the city and half facing outward. Surrounded by its own defensive wall and separated from the city by a deep ravine with flowing water, the fortress was significantly larger than the one in Bukhara. Its width measured 3 chaqirim plus 100 sarjin (an ancient measurement equal to 2.134 meters), with a total area of 40,000 square sarjin or 100 tanob. Like other grand fortresses, it contained its own network of streets, narrow alleys, and even a cemetery in the

southwestern corner where the mausoleum of Qutbi-Chagar-Dukhum, dating back to the Timurid period, was located. One of the major buildings in the fortress was the palace of the Bek of Samarkand, constructed on the site of Temur's older Ko'ksaroy palace and still bearing the ancient name Ko'ktosh. The fortress also included the Sabzor palace (military barracks), a mosque, madrasa, and commercial stalls [2; 94].

After the Russian annexation in 1868, the fortress became the location for the first Russian military garrison and administrative offices. Many existing structures inside the fortress and nearby neighborhoods were used to house soldiers and officials. Soon after, the Russian military administration constructed new barracks with clay roofs and built residences for officers. Russian merchants also set up their own commercial rows.

Urban planning efforts around the fortress began soon after Samarkand was occupied. Under the supervision of Colonel Serov, the surrounding areas were redesigned. Wide streets were opened toward Registan, and another road was constructed northwest of Registan, passing through the old city. Both roads were radial, converging toward the center of the fortress.

The master plan of Samarkand dated 1 January 1875 shows the medieval dual-city structure clearly: the old city and the newly developed city, each with different levels of infrastructure, population composition, and architectural identity. The fortress, covering an area of 31.2 hectares, served as the central element of this planning scheme. While the old city walls on the western side were demolished, sections on the northern, eastern, and southern sides still remained.

According to the plan, the new city was built southwest of the fortress, designed according to a radial-ring system and occupying an area of 121 hectares. The main radial axis, Abramov Boulevard, separated the new city from the old and became the main connecting artery between the two. Other radial streets—Urgut Street (now Uzbekistan Street), Tashkent Street (formerly Frunze), and Katta Qo'rg'on Street (Karl Marx)—extended directly toward the fortress. Four major ring avenues interconnected these radial streets [2; 96–97].

As a result of massive construction, many modern administrative, civic, and residential buildings appeared, along with hotels. Consequently, the appearance of the medieval city was altered, many traditional neighborhoods disappeared, and the architectural heritage faced the risk of being lost. European-style redevelopment often ignored the functional significance of the historic town structure. Large residential and social buildings were demolished, while major roads such as Registan and Tashkent Streets were widened for transportation needs, causing the city to lose nearly 25% of its valuable residential areas.

Preserving the historic residential districts of Samarkand is essential, as visitors are attracted not only by monumental architecture but also by traditional crafts and cultural practices. According to architects, the traditional residential neighborhoods and historic environment play a crucial role in the city's revitalization. The project aims not only to restore the Timurid-era city but also to improve living conditions in modern areas.

Urban reconstruction in Uzbekistan is considered one of the most complex challenges in urban planning. The process requires harmony with cultural heritage and compatibility with the nation's economic and social development. Like in many countries, reconstruction aims to modernize the physical and spatial environment of the city while preserving historical and architectural identities.

International experience shows that the preservation and revitalization of historical cities is essential for social development. Modern approaches emphasize comprehensive reconstruction based on legal documents and nationwide cultural policies.

The main goals of restoring historic city centers include:

- preserving the spatial significance of key compositional dominants;

- restoring and modernizing traditional residential neighborhoods;
- adapting the street network to the requirements of contemporary urban mobility.

Additionally, the organization of protected zones around monuments is necessary to preserve the historically developed architectural identity of the city. Strict functional zoning is essential, including the removal of transport from protected areas to prevent damage to monuments.

The creation of legally defined protected zones and cultural heritage areas is crucial for preserving historical identity.

Today, the revitalization of ancient Samarkand and the enhancement of its beauty are widely recognized not only by local residents but also by tourists from around the world. Notably, the prestigious American newspaper The Huffington Post has listed Samarkand among the **50 cities everyone must visit at least once in their lifetime** [3,4]. This recognition underscores the importance of restoring and protecting the city's historic center.

In conclusion, the main purpose of urban reconstruction in Uzbekistan is to create an architectural and spatial environment that provides comfortable conditions for living, working, and recreation. Therefore, updating and improving design methods, expanding public spaces and green areas, creating new housing stock, modernizing existing neighborhoods, and enhancing the architectural and artistic appearance of cities are essential tasks.

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