



Analysis of Residential Facades in Uzbekistan In The 19th – Early 20th Centuries: Regional Features and Artistic Techniques

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Abstract: This article presents a comparative analysis of residential facades in Uzbekistan from the 19th and early 20th centuries, focusing on the distinctive features and decorative techniques of the main regional architectural schools. Using case studies such as the House of Kh. Kamolov (Bukhara), the House of T. Khudaykulov (Shakhrisabz), the House of A. Zubaydov (Samarkand), and others, the study identifies key morphological, compositional, and ornamental characteristics of facades. The research reveals how local traditions, climatic conditions, and social customs influenced facade design—resulting in a rich diversity of forms and artistic solutions. Despite variations, the facades of traditional Uzbek houses demonstrate a common aspiration for harmony between interior space and external expression, forming a core aspect of the national architectural heritage.

Keywords: Uzbekistan, residential architecture, facade analysis, regional schools, Bukhara, Samarkand, Tashkent, Fergana, Khorezm, decorative techniques, 19th century, early 20th century, aiwan, ganch, wood carving, traditional housing.

Introduction: The architectural heritage of Uzbekistan from the 19th and early 20th centuries reflects a unique blend of regional traditions and indigenous construction techniques. Among various types of traditional architecture, the facades of residential houses are of particular interest, as they not only form the urban and

rural landscape but also embody cultural, social, and climatic particularities of each region. While much attention has been given to interior layouts and spatial planning, the study of facade plasticity and decorative techniques in residential architecture remains underexplored. This article offers a comparative analysis of the facades of residential houses representing the principal architectural schools of Uzbekistan, using specific examples: the house of Kh. Kamolov (Bukhara), the house of T. Khudaykulov (Shakhrisabz), the house of A. Zubaydov (Samarkand), the house of M. Abdullayev (Tashkent), the house of Ayub-bay (Kokand), and the house of E. Otadjanov (Khiva).[2]

METHODS

A comprehensive architectural analysis was applied, comprising:

- Morphological study of facades, focusing on primary elements (aiwans, portals, windows, niches);
- Comparative description of decorative techniques (wood carving, ganch stucco, painting);
- Analysis of planning and compositional features influencing facade formation;
- Utilization of archival data, field surveys, and published documentation (measured drawings, photographs, descriptions).

The study selected representative examples from the main architectural schools: Bukhara, Kashkadarya, Samarkand, Tashkent, Fergana, and Khorezm, which best reflect the specific characteristics of each region.

RESULTS

The analysis revealed distinct regional features in the facades of residential buildings in 19th – early 20th century Uzbekistan:

Bukhara School (House of Kh. Kamolov, House of Khodzhaev Kilich-khuja): External facades are highly enclosed, with minimal decoration and a dominant monolithic wall; the most expressive elements are found in the inner courtyards, where aiwans and doors are adorned with elaborate wood carving and ganch latticework (panjara).

Kashkadarya School (House of T. Khudaykulov, House of Z. Akhmedov): Facades are laconic, plastered with clay and straw, with decorative emphasis placed on aiwans featuring carved columns and painted ceilings.

Samarkand School (House of A. Zubaydov, Kurghan Karim Budura): Facades are oriented toward the courtyard and richly decorated with ganch stucco, stalactite friezes, and painted ceilings; rural mansions (“kurghan”) display monumental facades with semi-columns and buttresses.

Tashkent School (House of M. Abdullayev, House of Shukur Kudratullayev): Facades are simple, dominated by blind walls and varied volumes; special attention is given to interior ventilation through skylights. The unique “Kashgarcha” sliding shutters system adds dynamism to the facade.

Fergana School (House of Ayub-bay, House of Yusupbay Khoja): Internal courtyard facades are richly decorated with wood carving, ganch, polychrome ceiling painting, and stalactite domes (khauzak), while external facades remain modest.

Khorezm School (House of E. Otadjanov, House of Komiljan Otaniazov, rural “hauil” estates): Facades are compact and concise, with main attention given to aiwans and entrance elements decorated with complex carving. Rural estates (“hauil”) stand out for their monumentality and defensive features, such as buttresses and merlons.

DISCUSSION

The findings demonstrate vivid regional distinctions in facade design of residential houses in Uzbekistan during the 19th and early 20th centuries. Local traditions dictated not only the choice of construction methods and materials but also the style of decorative finishes. The highest artistic expression is achieved in the inner courtyards—especially in Bukhara, Samarkand, and Fergana—where the mastery of wood carving, ganch latticework, and colorful painting is fully revealed. [3]

Climatic conditions and social customs fostered an emphasis on privacy and security, reflected in the prevalence of blind external facades, high enclosing walls, and inward-focused layouts. At the same time, individual solutions by architects and craftsmen allowed for expressive architectural images even within dense urban settings (such as the house of A. Zubaydov in Samarkand or the house of Ayub-bay in Kokand).

Thus, the facades of residential houses, despite their variety of forms and decor, demonstrate a unified tendency toward harmony between internal space and external appearance, which lies at the heart of the national building tradition.

The comparative analysis of residential facades from the major architectural schools of Uzbekistan (19th – early 20th centuries) confirms that facade architecture fully reflects the cultural, artistic, and social values of its era. The uniqueness of each region’s solutions enriches the national architectural heritage and serves as a valuable resource for contemporary researchers and restorers.

The facades of residential buildings of traditional architecture in Uzbekistan represent a unique synthesis of regional construction schools, local traditions and the centuries-old experience of folk masters. In the 19th and

early 20th centuries, expressive types of facade solutions reflecting the climatic, social and artistic peculiarities of each region emerged in the country.[5] The study of facades allows to reveal the regularities of form formation, to determine the specifics of decorative decoration and architectural appearance of the living environment.

The Bukhara school (for example, the house of Kh. Kamolov's house of 1852, the house of a scribble merchant, the house of Khodjaev Kilich-khujja) are characterised by closed exterior facades devoid of abundant external decoration, which is due to the specifics of urban development and the desire for privacy. The outer walls of these houses are blank planes with rare portal entrances and a minimum number of windows. The inner facades of courtyards are the most expressive: the aivans are decorated with carved wooden columns, lush carvings on doors, stalactite friezes and gancha panjara lattices. In particular, the courtyard facades of the house of H. Kamolov's courtyard facades are enlivened with intricate carvings, while the tiered facades of the house of Khodjaev Kilich-Khuzh are distinguished by a developed system of niches and richly ornamented window openings.

The Kashkadarya school (T. Khudaykulov's house of 1879 in Shakhrisabz, I. Rakhimov's house, 3. Akhmedov's house) is distinguished by facades with laconic decoration and rational organisation of space. The outer walls of the houses are usually plastered with clay-saman mortar, have no expressive decoration and emphasise the isolation of the estates. [4] The main accent of the facade decoration is concentrated on the inner aivans - their columns are decorated with carvings and the ceilings are richly painted. In House 3. Akhmedov's house 3. The facades are enriched with deep niches and ganche lattices, and the presence of ornamental paintings with epigraphy testifies to a high level of artistic culture.

The Samarkand school (the house in the Kazy Abdurasul quarter, the house of A. Dekhoti, the house of A. Zubaidov, the Latifa-mudarris mound, the Karim Budur mound) shows itself in the orientation of the facades towards the inner courtyard, while the outer walls are more often blank and treated with clay plaster. The inner facades are richly decorated: carved ganche details, painted ceilings, openwork niches and stalactite friezes are used. The house of A. Zubaydov is distinguished by an unusual two-storey composition, where the quince of the second tier is cantilevered, and the facades are decorated with polychrome ganche decor, openwork niches and painted ceilings. Suburban mounds (e.g. the Latifa-mudarris mound, the Karim Budur mound) have monumental facades with

semi-columned buttresses and carved solar motifs emphasising their defensive character.

The Tashkent school (M. Abdullaev's house, Shukur Kudratullaev's house) is characterised by facades with predominantly blank walls, different-height volumes, lanterns and aivans providing ventilation and lighting. [5] The houses have a unique system of lifting shutters ("kashgarcha", "rovon", "darcha"), which gives the facades functional transformability and expressiveness. In the house of M. Abdullaev, the facade is formed by a complex tiered composition, where vertical ventilation is provided by a lantern over the courtyard, and decorative elements are concentrated in the interiors (polychrome paintings, tokcha niches).

The Fergana school (the house of Ayub-bai, the house of Alimjan Khoja, the house of Judge Abdurakhman, the house of Judge Sadikhan, and the house of Yusupbai Khoja in Namangan) is characterised by the richness of decorative decoration of the aivans and internal facades. The outer facades are usually blank, with minimal decoration and a small number of windows. Inner courtyard facades are distinguished by luxurious wood carvings on columns and beams of aivans, polychrome paintings of ceilings, ganche panels, stalactite domes-hauzak. Carved ornaments with epigraphy and plant motifs are widespread in the interiors. The house of Yusupbai Khoja is an interesting combination of traditional facade solution with European design elements.

The Khorezm school (E. Otajanov's house in Khiva, Komiljan Otaniyazov's house, country khaulis in Khiva and Khazarasp) is manifested in the laconism of facades, compactness and rationality of planning solutions. The houses are characterised by a composition with two opposite aivans (ong-aivan and ters-aivan), contributing to effective aeration of the rooms. The decoration is centred on carved doors, columns and aiwan sub-balusters. In country estates (hauili), facades are reinforced with buttresses and decorated with carved lozenge-shaped ornaments, lancets and rosettes, while internal decoration is minimal.

CONCLUSION

In general, the analysis of the facades of traditional dwelling houses in Uzbekistan of the 19th and early 20th centuries demonstrates the pronounced regional peculiarities and richness of artistic techniques used by folk masters. Despite the differences in composition and decoration, the key features of the facades are their close connection with the internal layout, orientation towards privacy and creation of a comfortable environment for the inhabitants. [4] The uniqueness of facade solutions - from the austere and laconic ones of Khorezm and Tashkent to the richly decorated ones of

Fergana and Samarkand - forms an important part of the national architectural heritage.

Architectural School	Example Houses	Facade Features	Planning	Decorative Techniques & Details	Notable Characteristics
Bukhara	House of Kh. Kamolov, House of Khodzhaev Kilich-khuja	Enclosed facades, expressive courtyard two-courtyard scheme	external	Carved wooden columns, doors, ganch latticework (panjara), stalactite friezes	Privacy, minimalism on the outside, artistic richness inside
	House of T. Khudaykulov, House of Z. Akhmedov	Compact, rational layout, external emphasis on aiwans	plain facades, on	Carved columns, painted and coffered ceilings, deep niches, ganch lattice windows	Functionality, restrained decoration, rational use of space
Samarkand	House of A. Zubaydov, Kurghan Karim Budura	Courtyard-oriented, multi-story or two-story solutions, monumental rural mansions (kurghans)	multi-rural	Ganch carving, painted ceilings, stalactite friezes, ajour niches, semi-columns, buttresses	Monumentality, polychromy, ornate courtyard facades
Tashkent	House of M. Abdullayev, House of Shukur Kudratullayev	Blind external facades, varied heights, focus on ventilation (skylights), two-courtyard compositions	varied	Minimal external decor, painted ceilings, sliding shutter system ("Kashgarcha")	Simplicity, functional facades, dynamic interior-exterior transition
Fergana	House of Ayub-bay, House of Yusupbay Khoja	Two-courtyard plans, G- or P-shaped aiwans with high plinths and storerooms	or	Rich wood carving, ganch panels, polychrome painted ceilings, stalactite domes (khauzak), epigraphic motifs	Lavish interior facades, restrained outer facades, integration of traditional and European elements
Khorezm	House of Otadjanov, House of Komiljan	Compact, single-courtyard layout, opposite aiwans separation	single-	Carved columns, complex beams, niches, of minimal	Compactness, monumentality in rural estates, expressive main

Architectural Example School	Facade Planning Features	Decorative Techniques Details	& Notable Characteristics
Otaniazov, rural hauli estates	functional zones	merlons, buttresses, and clay plaster	facade details

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