

Activities of city public administration in regulation of economy, construction and urban land improvement (Russian experience)

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Abstract. The paper addresses activities of City Duma authorities under new conditions of restructuring the management of the urban economic and construction sector. In the course of those reforms, legislative materials serving as the basis for new principles of territorial, sectoral and local management were the most important at the time. The reforms of the second half of the 19th century not only changed the state policy of control over civil engineering but also ensured partial delegation of responsibilities for the economic and construction sector as well as urban land improvement to the urban community. Besides that practical work, the government initiated legislative activities at City Dumas. Despite the fact that the Building Code remained the main legislative document, mandatory regulations of urban communities served as its subordinate acts taking into account local specifics.

1. Introduction

The second half of the 19th century was the time of social and economic as well as political and legal transformations that resulted in radical reforms regarding state institutions and public relations.

At the same time, drastic changes in architectural work took place as well. Classicism architecture that, at its peak, resulted in prominent architectural ensembles of Saint Petersburg, [1], Moscow and other Russian cities [2] gave way to the process of Classicism rethinking and development of new values [3]. Following that process, a new perception of the city as a territory where various right-users acted was created [4]. Those processes required a review of the legislative system in terms of construction and urban land improvement in cities.

2. Materials and methods

City Regulations approved by the Emperor were the main documents that determined a new direction of the state policy regarding economy, construction and urban land development management in cities. Those documents were published in the second half of the 19th century: in 1870 and 1892 [1]. The City Law of 1870 stipulated the delegation of broad powers in the field of urban management, urban economy, construction, urban land development and urban welfare to the public administration. A special executive authority — City Council that was a part of the City Duma — was responsible for the resolution of corresponding matters. Despite the fact that activities of City Dumas remained regulated by government authorities, the fact that economic matters were delegated to public administration institutions became a significant event of the end of the 19th century. The process of preparing those reforms is rooted in documents and active efforts of the government in the first half of the 19th century, aimed at improving the urban welfare. Due to the increase in city budget revenues, it became possible to delegate rights to freely dispose of property, as well as resolve matters of economy, construction and urban land development management, to urban communities.



3. Research results

According to the law dated October 29, 1864, "responsibilities for the improvement of... urban settlements are given to... relevant urban public administration authorities". Provincial Office for City Matters acted as a state supervision authority that ensured the compliance of activities carried out by urban self-administration authorities with law. Starting from the 1860s, the law regulated relations between the city administration, police, provincial construction offices and supreme authority, i.e. the Technical and Construction Committee of the Ministry of Internal Affairs [5].

The Building Code was the main legal document used in the field of construction. Its guidelines regarding construction in cities provided fundamental provisions for the legal regulation of such activities. They addressed general construction as well as fire safety and sanitary requirements [6]. The sections of the Code dealt with private construction in cities, construction of state-owned and public buildings, churches, manufacturing facilities, street network development, bridge construction, etc. They also provided street parameters for various city parts, sizes of courtyard spaces. The Code represented a legislative act that, if violated, allowed the city administration and police to initiate legal prosecution of guilty parties participating in the construction process: architects, construction workers, customers (house owners and land owners).

In order to ensure effective business activities, in accordance with Article 73 of the City Regulations, executive commissions that regulated various aspects of public administration activities were established under City Councils. For instance, sanitary, hospital, water supply, education, and other executive commissions operated under the Saint Petersburg City Council. The City Council conducted technical and construction supervision through the Construction Department established in 1872 [7].

The City Council was also responsible for the approval of construction works with regard to all buildings and structures in the city, except for those that belonged to state institutions and agencies.

The nature of works subject to approval was also regulated. There were works performed under certificates issued by technicians of the City Council and works permitted only after the approval by the City Council. Works that did not require approval and could be performed by owners at their discretion were determined separately. Those were minor alterations that did not affect the building appearance, its volumetric and spatial or design solution.

Bridge pavement construction and repair were performed without prior approval. Those works were conducted by private owners who owned houses facing streets, as well as by authorities in front of their buildings. The police was to control the performance quality, and multiple government regulations were issued for those purposes. The relevant Order was published by the Saint Petersburg City Governor on March 22, 1883.

To approve repair and construction works with regard to buildings and structures of private owners, permission of the City Council was to be obtained. The nature of paperwork management during the process was specified. Owners submitted applications to the City Council for the approval of design documentation. The following design documents were to be submitted according to the approved list. A detailed project should include plans, facades, sections, as well as a cost estimate. The estimate documentation included a description of all required for construction; a cost sheet for each work item [8] based on the existing prices and types of works; a detailed cost estimate of works according to their nature [9].

Upon agreement with the City Governor, the City Council approved construction of quays for ships and unloading of goods; public bathhouses; theaters and other similar buildings; plants and factories; gas lighting in buildings.

The Decree dated July 3, 1867 determined the amount of payment for project review and a corresponding report. Each project sheet was to be paid in case of construction and top-to-bottom renovation. For stone buildings, the amount was three rubles per sheet, and for wooden structures, it was one ruble per sheet. In case it was required to approve minor renovations or obtain permissions to build sheds or fences, the amount was 75 kopecks.

Some structures planned to be built in the capital needed to be approved by the Emperor:

- facades of privately-owned buildings facing the Field of Mars, Mikhailovskaya square as well as the squares of the Alexandrinsky Theater and Bolshoi Theater. The appearance of Admiralteysky, Nevsky, Liteyny, Vladimirsky, Zagorodny and Voznesensky Prospekts as well as Gogolevskaya, Morskaya, Millionnaya, Mikhailovskaya, Italiyanskaya, Sadovaya (at the section between Nevsky Prospekt and the Field of Mars), Yekaterininskaya, Karavannaya and Gorokhovaya Streets was very important. Significant territories of Bolshaya Neva embankments included areas from the Tavrichesky Garden to the New Admiralty, as well as from the Stock Exchange to the 23rd Line of Vasilyevsky Island;

- the appearance of places of worship (of various confessions);
- the appearance of public buildings.

At the end of the 19th – beginning of the 20th century, the system of architectural and construction control under the public administration functioned in the following way. The Construction Department of the City Council considered and approved projects, issued certificates for construction works within its competence. Other projects (after consideration by the City Council) were either approved by the City Governor's Office or construction departments of provincial governments, or transferred to the Ministry of Internal Affairs with subsequent submission for the Emperor's approval. The approvals were followed by the registration of the approved project by the police. Construction control was performed by the architect and the police. For stone buildings, construction permits were issued for five years, and for wooden ones — for three years.

If a deviation from the approved project or a violation of the Building Code instructions as well as the government or State Duma decrees was revealed during the construction, the police made a corresponding report that later was sent for trial. According to the Articles 103, 110, and 114 of the City Regulations of 1870, the City Council also was entitled to initiate court action and support the prosecution in court through its representative in all cases of Building Code violation. In particular, the duties of the City Architect included the right to make reports on the initiation of court action against individuals for Building Code violation [10]. If the parties were not satisfied with a decision of the Magistrates' Court, an appeal could be submitted. Such appeal was heard during a Magistrates' session.

If the matter was rather difficult or violations during construction were of criminal nature (resulted in the death of people in a building collapse), representatives of the District Court prosecution commissioned an expert evaluation. According to one of the circular orders of the Saint Petersburg District Court Prosecutor, such expert evaluation should be of "scientific nature, which could serve as the best guarantee of the impartial and scientific solution to the case". The proposal to perform scientific expert evaluations of projects elicited a response from the Saint Petersburg Association of Architects. Its members expressed willingness to render professional assistance during such expert evaluations.

To ensure efficient urban land improvement and economic activities, positions of city architects were introduced in City Councils according to Note 2, Article 114 of the City Regulations. In the Draft Regulations "On the Establishment of the City Economy" dated December 31, 1866, it was already recommended to city communities to introduce a position of architect in the City Public Administration. The Draft stated: "to perform duties concerning city public administration and for the benefit of the locals case it is really necessary, the city council should appoint, at its discretion, architects... who would have proper certificates describing their experience, without a right for public service upon their voluntary agreement" [11]. According to the rules of the City Regulations of 1870, particular rights for public service and technical supervision were stipulated for City Architects.

The City Regulations of 1892 did not include the right for public service with regard to City Architects. The main problem related to the architects' status in the City Council, according to the City Regulations of 1892, was their social vulnerability since such position did not fall into the category of public service. The position of Chief Architect was considered elective, and, therefore, a person ceased to act as a public servant upon the expiry of the corresponding elected term. Moreover, there were no funds that could be used to provide a pension for that category of public servants. As late as at

the end of 1890, with the permission of the Emperor, "those City Architects and engineers that were appointed before the introduction of the City Regulations of 1892 should be also regarded as public servants later and could exercise the right specified in the City Regulations of 1870 [12].

The reforms of the second half of the 19th century had another result: according to the Article 55 of the City Law of 1870, city authorities were granted an opportunity to develop regulations for efficient city management. The city community could also regulate architectural and construction activities as well as urban land improvement works. All those documents entered into force upon agreement with state authorities and approval of the Emperor.

The Article 103 of the City Regulations [13] presented a list of economy sectors, for which decisions were allowed being made. Whereas the Building Code determined the general state policy in terms of architectural activities, construction and urban land improvement, regulations regarding construction in cities could take into account local conditions.

In 1881, Mandatory Construction Regulations were approved in Saint Petersburg. The document established layout characteristics of the city, volumetric and spatial parameters of privately-owned real estate, as well as the process for the approval of design documentation. The document also provided detailed construction standards for individual buildings and their parts as well as paved roads and temporary structures (for the period of construction works).

Mandatory Rules and Regulations for the construction of various types of buildings, structures and premises were published separately. For instance, Mandatory Regulations on Construction and Maintenance of Theaters, Circuses and Halls for Public Meetings were published in 1886; Rules on Construction and Maintenance of Paved Roads in Saint Petersburg — in 1883; Regulations on Construction of Public Baths in Saint Petersburg and Corresponding Procedure — in 1903; Regulations on Construction and Maintenance of Movie Theaters — in 1908; Regulations on Construction of Buildings for the Sale of Hard Liquor in Saint Petersburg and its Suburbs — in 1909. New items were added to the Mandatory Regulations of Saint Petersburg State Duma "Concerning Shipping Traffic in Saint Petersburg and Maintenance of Above-Water Structures". One of the sections provided rules for the construction of quays and other above-water structures (baths, washing houses, trade houses, fish ponds, etc.). In 1880–1890, Mandatory Regulations concerning fire safety and sanitary state of the city were published repeatedly.

Mandatory regulations were also published in other cities but with account for local conditions.

At the beginning of the 20th century, Saint Petersburg faced a number of critical (residential, sanitary and transport) situations. They were interrelated and required an integrated approach, based on accurate statistical calculations and the latest achievements of urban planning of the time, rather than separate solutions.

Active participants of creative unions (architects, engineers, and technicians) made proposals and offered projects for the reconstruction of Saint Petersburg, Petrograd. F.Ye. Enakiev, L.N. Benois, P.O. Salmanovich, and P.Yu. Suzor were among the authors of those proposals and projects. Transformation of the capital should have solved issues of sanitary safety, supply of drinking water to the city, sewage system provision, increase in the number of medical institutions, construction of cheap residential buildings, landscaping, preservation of architectural monuments, relocation of manufacturing plants outside the city, convenient and cheap transportation between the city center and the suburbs [14].

Thus, urban planning modernization of the city structure was the main way to prevent the crisis that occurred in Saint Petersburg. The modernization resulted not only in changes in the objective-and-spatial environment but also in changes in relations between the state, state authorities and the townsfolk. It was necessary to develop a new plan for the reconstruction of the city. The commission established for that purpose in 1916 did not have enough time to carry it through.

In the second half of the 19th century and later, the process of introducing changes to master plans was adjusted. Changes in master plans of main towns in provinces were approved by the Minister of Internal Affairs. Master plans of main towns in uyezds (districts) and posads (settlements) were approved by local provincial authorities.

In 1880, a new plan for Saint Petersburg regulation was approved. For almost 40 years, it was used as a legislative document for city development [15]. In 1886, development of a detailed master plan for Moscow, aimed at the regulation of city passages, started.

According to the Saint Petersburg master plan of 1880, some transformations were made related to the laying of new streets that ensured rational connections between city districts. During the implementation of the document to be used to manage large-scale construction activities, authorities faced severe challenges. That was due to the fact that city authorities were responsible for the financing of city-wide works. The implementation of large-scale events was a heavy burden for the city budget. Therefore, only top-priority and urgent urban planning matters were considered.

4. Conclusion

1. The political and economic reforms of the second half of the 19th century – at the beginning of the 20th century significantly affected the state policy in terms of economy, construction and urban land development in cities.

2. The regulation of architectural and construction activities in cities during the period under consideration shows active participation of the city community with regard to economy, construction and urban land development.

3. Urban self-administration authorities, as well as local (zemstvo) authorities, largely depended on state bureaucratic and police agencies. At the same time, the establishment of new self-administration authorities contributed to the development of social-and-political as well as cultural life, business development in Russian cities.

4. The urban planning transformations carried out in Saint Petersburg in the second half of the 19th century – at the beginning of the 20th century were typical for a city that was a large developing industrial center. That was accompanied by an increase in the population and, therefore, urban densification in the center and development in the suburbs.

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