

Cultural and historical potential of the urban environment (regional aspect)

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Abstract. The concept of ‘urban environment’ is considered in the context of cultural and historical potential of a city. There were shown architectural and planning, urban planning, environmental and other factors that determine the comfort of urban environment. Due attention is paid to its cultural and historical potential, preservation and reconstruction of architectural monuments. It is noted that the development of urban environment is largely due to its cultural and historical potential. The analysis of main elements of a city that made up the structure of urban environment is carried out. It is shown that only complex approaches to the formation of harmonious urban environment can create the best conditions for human life. Special attention is paid to the preservation and recreation of historical and cultural heritage.

1. Introduction

Currently, despite the fact that the issue of urban environment has attracted public attention for many years, the issues relating to the specifics of urban environment, the definition of mechanisms to improve its comfort and quality are still relevant, both at the level of science development and in modern practice of transformation and change of urban space. Scientific and technical development, innovative technologies and materials, achievements in the field of architecture, urban planning and other areas have found widespread use of these treasures in real life and largely predetermined the features of urban environment of the XXI century. However, special importance in addressing these issues, as before, is given to the preservation of cultural and historical potential of urban environment. There is no doubt that the strategy of urban environment development is not possible without preservation, restoration and reconstruction of architectural monuments as a priority regional project of Russia.

It became obvious that only the joint work of specialists in various fields can provide the necessary city-forming value and proper use, and, consequently, the preservation of architectural monuments in the system of rapidly developing cities [1]. At the same time, the natural landscape, spatial organization of territories, architectural objects, historical center and monuments of historical and cultural heritage are the most important elements of the urban environment. Each of these elements performs its specific function, forming the planning structure of the city together with other elements. In modern conditions, special attention should be paid to the historical center of a city - a unique cultural and historical heritage, which contains a large number of monuments of history, architecture, urban planning, monumental art, representing the cultural and historical value of past eras.



In these conditions the task of researchers becomes both the search and justification of measures to counteraction to threats, rescue of architectural and urban heritage of historical cities and a more complete fixation of existing values in case of loss of some of them [2].

2. Research methods and key concepts

The research methodology is based on a set of methods of comparative-historical, structural, integrated urban planning analysis of the Russian experience of territorial and urban planning, as well as the method of analysis of sources including the study of: scientific, legislative, regulatory and designing sources, cartographic and digital materials in order to obtain the necessary information on the problem of the research.

In our opinion, first of all we should focus on the concept of 'cultural and historical potential of urban environment' - a unique treasure of any city, its wealth. At the same time, it has its own characteristics: identity, language, culture, traditions and customs. Considering the cultural and historical potential as a world of material and spiritual values, it is legitimate to use the concept of 'cultural potential of a city', 'cultural and historical potential' and 'urban environment'. Glazychev V. L., the researcher of architectural heritage, characterizes the definition of 'cultural potential of a city' as 'a measure of ability of the urban community to create new and maintain the conditions of its development in his work' [3]. At the same time, the scientist focuses on the fact that 'cultural monuments constitute a noticeable, most obvious layer of culture material, not exhausting it in any way' [3].

Given this definition, it can be argued that the cultural and historical potential - a set of diverse objects, including architectural and artifacts of historical and cultural heritage (monuments of history and culture) as material forms of existence and non-material forms of manifestations. At the same time, this potential created by past generations and withstood the test of time throughout the period of evolutionary development of the city, is in demand today and contributes to the development of spiritual, valuable and intellectual treasures for present and future generations. Simultaneously with above mentioned concepts, it should be noted that urban environment is material nature of urban settlement, within which there are changes and transformations of life activity environment, which affect the level and quality of environment, the planning structure of the settlement as a whole, and separately on the territorial and spatial elements.

3. Problems of preservation and development of cultural and historical potential of a city

Preliminary study of the problems related to the specificity of cultural and historical potential in the architectural formation of urban environment, allowed formulating the hypothesis of the study. We believe that the cultural and historical potential is the most important resource for the architectural formation of material and spatial environment of a city, which should be considered in the relationship of the value characteristics of old and new cultural samples, traditional and modern forms of architectural objects and structures. Therefore, first of all, architectural, urban planning, construction, as well as other activities should be aimed at ensuring the preservation, development and use of this potential.

As a result of rapid transforming activity of human society into urban environment, it is necessary to solve the problems that require the resolution of issues related to the formation of architectural space in the historical part of a city, in the process of reconstruction or new construction. Therefore, it is necessary to take into account a number of factors due to the architectural, including urban characteristics of the territories of historical development, in order to preserve the cultural and historical potential and as a consequence - the treasure structures of living space.

At the same time, the uniqueness of urban situations of historical development of a city center requires the adoption of individual and subjective decisions that enrich the spatial structure of the historical zone, making it a modern large-scale, versatile rich while maintaining the traditional characteristics of urban environment [4]. The appearance of cities is changing. In the process of their development, reconstruction activities, new construction is not always in harmony with the old [5].

Investors quite often pay attention to historical buildings, which are particularly valuable territories of a city. At the same time, they sometimes lobby the balance of their interests only from economic point of view, having nothing common in cultural and historical potential of urban environment, which is not of particular value and significance for them. A number of investors are also not inclined to invest in the preservation and reconstruction of architectural monuments, in the reconstruction of historically valuable city-forming objects, and have already come with their projects, with indifferent attitude to ecology of urban environment.

Meanwhile, investors have to deal with the most frequently changing tax laws, in particular issues relating to the protection of property rights. At the same time, there is a special situation that characterizes the contradiction between the old and the new, about the disadvantage in relation to cultural and historical potential of a city. 'The presence of cultural treasures in the old city that which require attention was accepted, but there were no ways of conflict-free connection of the old and the new [6]'. Despite the obvious economic benefits the 'density' development in a city center. Even if they are not single buildings, but large blocks or a group of blocks have negative social consequences in some aspects' [7].

The problems of the organization of urban environment are inextricably linked with the problem of its sustainable development, with the preservation and use of cultural and historical potential. In this regard an important role is played by dimensional and planar objects of architectural space, as valuable works of art.

4. Principles of preservation and use of cultural and historical potential

It is necessary to develop and approve a certain algorithm of actions, appropriate rules for the preservation and use of this potential and legislative restrictions in historical buildings as well. Thus, one of the fundamental regulations is an approved project of the subject of protection, the boundaries of the territory and requirements to town-planning regulations in borders of the territory of historical settlement, including historical and cultural heritage, including monuments of architecture, town planning, monumental art, security of natural complexes and objects. Cultural and historical potential is the greatest creations of the masters of the past, a vivid example of the development of various branches of culture, art which can be attributed to architecture by the right.

As a result, architectural and artistic methods of organizing living space in urban environment should be aimed at the implementation of cultural policy in the city in unity with aspects of cultural and historical potential, among which should be highlighted:

- unity and integrity, mainly visual composition – 'harmonious combination, connection of different parts in united functional and the whole art' (лат. compositio – составление) [8];
- balance of all components of the urban system, in which objects, structures, subject-spatial environment and cultural potential interact in the same way;
- need of an orderly regional policy in the field of legal regulation not only in the field of protection, recreation and restoration of cultural heritage, but also in the field of purposeful and consistent intensification of the cultural and historical potential of urban settlement;
- improvement of designing including the conceptual with wide application of innovative technologies that allow the competent assessment of existing and prospective problematic situations in urban environment, in the context of cultural policy of the region.

Social parameters of a city largely determine its cultural climate, which allows modelling the living space, the most important components of which are the values created by past and present generations and generally recognized by modern society - significant architectural and urban complexes and individual objects, works of monumental art, as well as rationally structured spatial urban environment. The level and possibility of using the cultural and historical potential, its spatial embodiment within the boundaries of the settlement is a kind of indicator that determines the harmony of the existence of urban society, in the historical and urban aspects.

Therefore, it is necessary to integrate the architectural and urban heritage into modern life, while preserving the cultural and historical potential of urban environment, and when creating the

architectural appearance of a city ‘it is necessary to make special demands on the formation of spiritual and cultural urban formations [9]’.

Nowadays, the current situation in the city requires a special, careful approach to the cultural and historical potential on the principle not only to preserve and use wisely, but also not to damage it. Ecological and natural landscape principles, the principle of composition of the set, i.e. not only individual objects and structures of a city, but also all the constituent elements of the subject-spatial environment should form the basis for the formation of comfortable urban environment in the context of cultural and historical potential.

5. Conclusion

Thus, the concept of architectural and urban development of a city should include the implementation of cultural and historical potential as a main component affecting the urban environment. At the same time, this potential should become a priority of the cultural policy of the state, public and private organizations at the present stage in matters relating to the territorial and urban planning of a city with the preservation of architectural and urban heritage.

For many centuries, the cultural potential of a city, due to the characteristics of a certain historical era, has accumulated. ‘And now, at the beginning of the new century, there is a question of finding criteria of beauty in the organization of the environment of human activity. Thus again and again we turn to the traditions and wealth of national architecture - an inexhaustible source of beauty and inspiration’ [10]. The architectural historian, Doctor in Art History, Lisovsky V. G. objectively notes that the problem of the correlation of originality and identity in national and regional architectural works, in the context of the traditional and the innovative, will never end and will continue to be relevant under any circumstances [11].

Cultural and historical potential has a special attractive force as historical memory and should work in integral interactions of modern cultural processes and phenomena with regional features and traditions. The use of this potential associated with architectural formation in the light of new approaches and provisions in the preservation of unique natural heritage in the practice of nature management of the local population is of particular importance. Regional policy bodies of architecture and urban planning of municipalities for the organization of architectural space, to create vibrant and comfortable urban living environment, enhancing its architectural and art expression initially should be based on the cultural and historical potential. At the same time, within the competence of the above-mentioned bodies, it is necessary to monitor the careful use of this potential and immediately take measures to resolve controversial issues in the field of preservation, restoration and use of architectural and urban heritage. The quality and comfort of urban environment, its historical and cultural potential is the main indicator of the competitiveness of municipalities at the regional level.

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