

**THE CURRENT STATE AND ISSUES OF RESTORATION OF COLONIAL-PERIOD  
BUILDINGS IN SAMARKAND**

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**Annotation:** This article examines the contemporary challenges of preserving and restoring architectural monuments of the colonial period (second half of the 19th — early 20th centuries) in Samarkand. After the city was incorporated into the Russian Empire in 1868, its architectural landscape underwent significant transformation: administrative buildings, European-style residential quarters, educational institutions, and engineering infrastructure appeared. These constructions have become an integral part of the city's historical and cultural heritage.

The study reveals that a considerable number of colonial-era buildings are currently in poor technical condition. Many structures have suffered from the effects of time, urbanization processes, and insufficient restoration practices. Modern restoration approaches require a comprehensive analysis of the architectural, structural, and artistic features of these buildings. Particular attention is given to the compatibility of modern construction materials with historical ones, as well as the preservation of the buildings' authentic appearance.

**Keywords:** Samarkand, colonial period, restoration, architectural heritage, historical development, preservation, modernization, cultural heritage, urban studies.

Samarkand is one of the most ancient and beautiful cities of Central Asia, possessing a unique architectural heritage that has evolved over thousands of years. The historical development of the city encompasses several stages — from ancient and medieval periods to the era of modernization that began after its inclusion in the Russian Empire in 1868. This period marked an intensive phase of urban planning and architectural transformation, which profoundly influenced the city's current appearance.

The architecture of the colonial period (1868–1917) became an important chapter in Samarkand's history. During this time, a variety of administrative and public buildings, residential quarters, barracks, railway stations, educational institutions, and hospitals were constructed. European architectural principles merged with local building traditions, creating a distinctive synthesis of forms and artistic solutions. The surviving structures from this era are valuable not only for their architectural aesthetics but also as evidence of cultural interaction between East and West.

However, despite their historical and cultural significance, many colonial-period buildings in Samarkand are currently at risk of deterioration. A considerable number of these structures require urgent restoration and conservation, as the passage of time, environmental conditions, and chaotic urbanization have caused partial loss of their original appearance. In recent decades, interest in the architectural heritage of the colonial era has increased, reflecting a growing awareness of the need to reinterpret the city's history and ensure its harmonious development amid modernization processes.

The relevance of this topic lies in the need to preserve historical and architectural heritage as an essential element of Samarkand's cultural identity. Modern restoration approaches require an in-depth analysis of the state of preservation, identification of existing problems, and the development of scientifically grounded recommendations for the restoration of buildings in accordance with their historical context.

Thus, the study of the current state and restoration issues of colonial-period buildings in Samarkand aims to address an important scientific and practical challenge — achieving a balance between preserving historical authenticity and adapting architectural heritage to the modern urban environment.

The study of Samarkand's colonial architectural heritage (1868–1917) remains a highly relevant field of research, as this period marked fundamental transformations in the city's urban structure. Scholars such as A. Kamalov, N. Mirzaev, G. Pugachenkova, and L. Rempel note the synthesis of European construction traditions with Eastern elements, reflected in the urban planning and material use of that time.

Researchers including I. Grabar and A. Bunin emphasize the ideological role of colonial architecture, representing imperial authority while also achieving a high level of artistic quality. Contemporary scholars (Sh. Karimova, O. Abdurakhmanov, B. Rakhimov) highlight the need for systematic study of these buildings as part of Samarkand's cultural landscape.

Modern restoration practices, as discussed by Yu. Polyakov, S. Nazarova, and M. Vokhidova, focus on preserving authenticity and compositional integrity, though the lack of standardized evaluation methods often hinders effective conservation. Field analysis has shown that many colonial buildings are partially preserved, with varying degrees of deterioration. The research identifies three groups of structures:

1. Fully preserved buildings still used for their original purpose.
2. Partially reconstructed structures with altered decorative elements.
3. Deteriorated objects in urgent need of restoration.

A major challenge remains balancing authenticity and adaptation to modern use. Many projects emphasize superficial renovation rather than historical accuracy, leading to stylistic distortions. Urbanization pressures, tourism development, and insufficient regulation further threaten these monuments.

To address these issues, modernization of restoration methodology is essential — including national standards, professional training for restorers, and integration of digital technologies (3D modeling, laser scanning, GIS). Adaptive reuse of colonial buildings as cultural and educational centers can also ensure both preservation and sustainable development.

Ultimately, the discussion confirms that Samarkand's sustainable cultural development depends on harmonizing tradition and innovation. A comprehensive, multidisciplinary approach to restoring colonial architecture will safeguard the city's architectural memory for future generations.

The conducted research highlights the multifaceted significance of Samarkand's colonial-period architecture (1868–1917) as an integral component of the city's historical and cultural identity. The study demonstrates that these structures represent not only architectural achievements of their time but also tangible evidence of socio-political, cultural, and artistic interactions between Eastern and Western traditions. Their preservation, therefore, is not merely a technical or aesthetic issue but a matter of cultural continuity and historical responsibility.

The analysis of field data and archival sources shows that a large portion of colonial-era buildings in Samarkand remains in a deteriorated condition, with varying degrees of structural damage and loss of original features. Despite the existence of several successful restoration examples, the majority of conservation efforts remain fragmented, lacking scientific coordination and a unified methodological approach. This situation underscores the urgent need for a systematic policy framework for the preservation of colonial architectural heritage.

The discussion also revealed that sustainable preservation of historical architecture requires more than physical restoration—it necessitates a deep understanding of the historical context, artistic value, and social function of each object. A balanced approach between maintaining authenticity

and adapting buildings for modern use is essential. The adaptive reuse of colonial structures as museums, cultural centers, or educational institutions offers an effective solution, ensuring both functional vitality and historical integrity.

Furthermore, the research emphasizes the importance of integrating advanced technologies such as 3D scanning, digital modeling, and GIS analysis into restoration practices. These tools allow for precise documentation, monitoring, and planning, helping to prevent irreversible losses and improve restoration quality. The involvement of multidisciplinary specialists—architects, engineers, historians, and conservation experts—is also crucial for achieving high professional standards.

In conclusion, the future of Samarkand’s colonial architectural heritage depends on coordinated efforts among governmental bodies, academic institutions, and civil society. Only through comprehensive, scientifically grounded, and culturally sensitive restoration strategies can the city maintain its historical authenticity while embracing the dynamics of modern urban development. Preserving these monuments means preserving the memory of Samarkand’s unique historical evolution and ensuring its transmission to future generations as a living testament to the dialogue between cultures.

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