

## Activities of Armenian Architects in the First Quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century

Marietta Gasparyan

National University of Architecture and Construction of Armenia,  
105 Teryan Street, Yerevan, Republic of Armenia

marietta04@rambler.ru

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**Abstract.** Based on the architectural analysis, the article examines the architectural trends, the variety of styles, the features of two different historical eras, their common features and differences. In the architecture of the 19th century, fundamental changes are taking place, one of the important factors of which is architectural education. The contribution of Armenian architects to the architecture of the Russian Empire is great – these are urban planning and significant architectural works, most of which are still functioning and decorate the cities of Yerevan, Tbilisi, Baku, St. Petersburg, Moscow, Rostov-on-Don.

At the beginning of the 20th century, the development of the architecture of Armenia reached its peak. Public and residential buildings that are interesting in their functional solutions and diverse in architectural style are being designed. In the 1920s – 1930s, a new stage of architectural development in Soviet Armenia was associated with the arrival in the country of eminent architects. The first graduation of the architects of the technical faculty of Yerevan State University took place in 1928, who immediately became involved in the architectural and construction activities of the republic. By the end of the 1920s, the arrival of VKHUTEIN graduates introduced avant-garde trends in architecture.

The architecture of the 1900s – 1930s occupies a special place in the overall development of modern architecture in Armenia, creating the basis for the basic concepts that subsequently found development in one form or another.

### Introduction

In the first half of the 19th century, after the Russian-Persian war and the entry of Eastern Armenia into the Russian Empire, the process of a radical change in the general direction began in the architecture of the region. The transformations affect all spheres of architecture – worldview, content of form and function, compositional, stylistic and typological characteristics of buildings, town-planning principles, constructive-building system. Architecture turned out to be especially fruitful in the sense of enriching artistic techniques: fresh streams of general European tendencies, intertwining with national foundations, involve Armenian architecture in the mainstream of Western culture ideas and a remarkable involvement with the world history of architecture.

In parallel with the pronounced innovations, the tendency of preserving and developing national traditions, conditioned by the natural and climatic factors of the region, the landscape, and the way of lifestyle of the family, is surprisingly firmly maintained. And this is a feature of Armenian architecture, which continues for a long time into the next historical period, until approximately the middle of the 20th century. Equally imperative is the question of attitude to the construction culture and the rational use of local building materials. Here, a similar pattern of borrowing the experience of ancestors is observed and the intensive use of natural materials and their structural systems continues, and the introduction of technological innovations at the end of the 19th century and in the first half of the 20th century is marked by an egalitarian combination of old and new structures. In this aspect, an important role, of course, belongs to the actual qualities of the stones, as the unique artistic expressiveness of the national architecture is determined by the texture and polychromatic of the popular tuff. In the developing European styles, classical motifs, rustication and plastic ornaments

in the decor of facades of the early 20th century are in perfect harmony with local stone processing, and the same stone creates a new aesthetic perception of Art Nouveau, later also constructivism and Soviet neoclassicism, giving them a special visual specificity different from other single-style buildings. In the local sense, the prevailing use of one color or another of tuff in different historical periods of time influenced the image of Yerevan: city residents in the 19th and early 20th centuries are often called "black buildings", and Soviet Yerevan is called "pink city" in literature.

## Methodology

The research methodology is based on architectural analysis using natural study of objects, graphic, archive, photographic and literary materials, as well as the creative activity of architects.

## Results

Generally, the architecture of the 19th and early 20th centuries can be divided into two styles, each of which has its own branches: purely national and European, developing under the influence of international artistic trends.

The earliest buildings bring exclusively national images. These are brick or tuff facades with wall tectonics revealed by articulations. Compositions are rarely symmetrical, but always eurythmic, expressive by the harmonious ratio and balance of components, with frequent use of arches, arched apertures, simple pediments and cornice profiles, horizontal belts and vertical protrusions. One of these houses on Caravanserai Street in Yerevan, with buttresses on the sides of an arched portal and a picturesque three-arch arcature over a wide window, was loved by the famous Russian architect Ivan Zholtovsky, and in the memory of local architects it has survived as the "House of Zholtovsky".

A wooden console balcony covered with a gable roof can be found on the facade of a residential building, a hotel, and an administrative building. The unique picturesque image of the balconies is given by ornamental carving, which adorns the tympanums of arches, eaves of the roof, and railings with an exquisite openwork pattern. In the composition of the building, the structure of balconies picturesquely dominates on the screen of the plane of the wall, and this is an absolute accent that revives the buildings of old streets with major chords. The open galleries on the side of the atrium have the same construction, defining the colorful image of the courtyard facades. Among their order systems, a patterned arcade is attractive, often repeating the decoration of console balconies and in such a manner, as it were, compositionally connecting the two facades with each other. These samples of vernacular architecture, the names of the masters who created them are unknown. But this is high-quality architecture, with attributes expressing the national style that are present in the structure of residential and public buildings, church complexes, industrial facilities, in each of which they have a specific functional meaning and compositional solutions, determine the originality of architecture and especially clearly demonstrate their positive qualities on the example of residential buildings.

New architectural trends are associated with the development of professional architecture. This is reflected in the change in priorities and the development of national variants of international historical styles, which, in the image of buildings, form classicist, Renaissance, neo-Gothic artistic reminiscences.

In the interpretation of the plane of the facade wall, the relief is undoubtedly enhanced, primarily by rusticism, which has found its organic embodiment in traditional masonry. The principle of the floor-by-floor arrangement of columns, the Roman origins of which found application in the Renaissance, as well as the method of Bramante of processing the walls of the first floor in the form of masonry and rustic stones, with placing orders only on the upper floors, are the most common methods of facade compositions. The first impression they make on the viewer is reminiscent of the Renaissance, and such buildings are obviously implied by a foreigner who visited Yerevan at the end of the 19th century when he says: "Many decorated Italian-style villas look out from the greenery of the gardens. Here and there, a real little palace looks out onto the street" [1]. Carved stone ornamentation plays an important role in the decoration of the facades. In the principle of the distribution of the relief along the plane of the wall, in colorful plant motifs with images of

pomegranate fruits, leaves and bunches of grapes, in geometric patterns and braids – undoubtedly the influence of national culture. In parallel, the architecture of the facades is enriched by classical decorative motifs – modulons, dentils, ova and beads, palmettes, rosettes, garlands, acanthus leaves, etc. The interaction of the ornaments of the two cultures is diverse: sometimes classical silhouettes are inscribed in Armenian compositions, at other times, on the contrary, traditional Armenian patterns enlivened by classic ornaments.

The idea of Art Nouveau is personified by a change in characteristic compositional accents, a violation of the strict rhythm of the facade with asymmetric elements, sometimes an emphasized vertical articulation of the wall, a color combination of stones that fix the vertical and horizontal lines of the facade. The shapes of balconies, roofs, openings are original curvilinear outlines, unusual silhouettes. A different sound is given to classical motifs, giving the buildings an appearance appropriate to the spirit of the times – these are the expressive dynamics of acanthus and other stylized interpretations of antique ornaments. The new role of picturesque reliefs is expressive in the form of "pure decoration" superimposed on the smooth surface of the wall, similar to the architectural decoration of medieval buildings in Armenia, such as the famous Church of the Holy Cross on Akhtamar Island. In decorative compositions there are plant, geometric, teratological contents, including mascarons, bucrania, serpentines. Not only the content of the relief compositions has been changed, but its language itself becomes dynamic [2].

All these changes in architecture are due to the introduction of new positions in the architectural and construction activities. Already in the first half of the 19th century, professional architects were engaged in design, initially some of whom were military engineers. So, the reconstruction of the building of the mosque in the fortress under the Church of the Intercession (1839) is carried out by the engineer, Captain Turchininov. Colonel Mikhail Fon-der-Nonne also has a military rank, who has worked in the Erivan governorate since 1868 in various positions in the Construction Department up to the post of the governorate engineer and is the author of numerous buildings throughout the governorate and in Yerevan he designed a prison castle (1880s), boy's gymnasium on Astafiev street (project 1881), own apartment buildings on Governorate street (1895, 1898), boy's gymnasium on Nazarov street (1896), apartment house (1900), rectificative plant Shustov (1907). A rich list of buildings throughout the governorate, including churches, schools, public buildings, mansions, apartment houses, are the works of civil engineer Vasily Mirzoyan, a graduate of the St. Petersburg Institute of Civil Engineers, who arrived to Yerevan in 1892. His works of neoclassical style with elements of the Renaissance and Baroque, as well as Yerevan buildings in Art Nouveau are magnificent examples of new Armenian architecture. Among them, it is enough to list the mansions of Yeghiazaryan (1905) with a chic neo-Renaissance, with expressive rustication and richly decorated cornice and frieze, Afrikyan (early 20th century), with a beautifully designed frieze on the facade, along which a filigree vegetative relief of leaves and bunches of grapes stretches. Two other mansions of Brazhnikov (late 19th - early 20th centuries) and Fotinov (1908), with the usual attributes in the form of a rusticated wall in black tuff, were made with impeccable and at the same time seemingly restrained features of Art Nouveau.

The contingent of civil engineers consists of Konstantin Ionnisyan, Vagapov, L.Kasperovich, Vladimir Simonson. In archival documents L.Pogrebnoy, Veitko, Christophor Ter-Sargsyan are mentioned as architects. Boris Mehrabyan, known for survey a plan of the city of Yerevan and designing important objects in the city, acquired the right to carry out work in St. Petersburg under the Ministry of Internal Affairs, etc [3].

The architecture of the period of the First Republic of Armenia in 1918-1920 is associated with the name of Academician Alexander Tamanyan, the founder of the modern Armenian school of architecture and one of the first Russian Masters, who, with their works, predetermined the turn towards Russian neoclassicism in the architecture of the early 20th century [4]. He is the author of numerous buildings in St. Petersburg, Moscow and other Russian cities, all of his works are talented and are distinguished by perfect taste and blameless external correspondence to functional tasks. One of the brilliant works of the architect is Shcherbatov's apartment building on Novinsky Boulevard in Moscow, which received wide public recognition and a gold medal from the City government,

awarded for a "beautiful facade". A good memory of the house is also preserved in the memoirs of its owner, the Russian émigré, Prince Sergei Shcherbatov, who in his 1955 New York book "An Artist in a Gone Russia" devotes one chapter to "his beloved brainchild" [5].

Tamanyan came to Armenia in 1919 and headed the Office of the Chief Architect. In the summer of 1920, he presented to the government the general plan of Yerevan, which he later finalized in Tabriz, where he left during the change of authority in Armenia, and which the next year after his return (1924) was approved by the Soviet government.

Soviet architecture in Yerevan is developing in course with the architecture of the whole of Armenia and the Soviet Union. At the same time, specific local conditions exert a strong influence, under which the Armenian architecture breaks away from the general orientation towards uniqueness. In the 1930s - 1950s, during the period of diligent socialist realism, now called Soviet neoclassicism, the "Tamanyan school" flourished in Armenia, the creation and development of which was the merit of Alexander Tamanyan. The essence of this worldview is determined by the organic and modern combination of Armenian forms and the principles of classical architecture. A sincere understanding of the fundamental principle of the national heritage is an obvious result of the Architect's direct contact with the great culture of the ancients. This is facilitated by his service as chairman of the Committee for the Preservation of Antiquities (1923), but it seems that the personal friendship of two coryphaeus – Alexander Tamanyan and the legendary researcher of Armenian architecture Toros Toramanyan – is of crucial importance. The study of ancient and medieval architecture and later plays an important role in the formation of the views and creative development of Armenian architects who are engaged in the measurement of monuments, as it was in the era of the Italian Renaissance, when the study of ancient ruins was an excellent school of architectural education.

The variety of architectural images of all Tamanyan works testifies to virtuoso craftsmanship. At the same time, all of them are united by a single fundamental concept, which has never changed on the architect's creative path: a beautifully outlined plan, a clear functional organization of internal spaces, a multi-layered volumetric solution due to the expression of function in the facades, a hierarchy in the proportions of parts to each other and the whole, plastic design surfaces of the walls of the facades, rational and harmonious fit of the building into the given area and the environment.

The first period in the history of Soviet architecture covers the 1920s – 1930s and is characterized by a variety of architectural styles. A certain role in this is played by the arrival of a galaxy of Armenian architects from different cities of the former Russian Empire to Armenia. Among them, they have the title of civil engineer and are graduates of the St. Petersburg Institute of Civil Engineers of Emperor Nicholas I – Hovhannes Kachaznuni (1893), Hovhannes Khizanyan (1900), Nikolai Baev (1901), Ghazaros Sargsyan (1901), Freidun Agalyan (1903), Bagrat Arazyan (1911). Harutyun Zakiyan (1908) and David Chislyan (1909), who graduated from the Riga Polytechnic Institute, have the same title. Alma mater of Alexander Tamanyan (1904) and Nikoghaes Buniatyan (1914) was the Architectural Department of the Higher Art School at the St. Petersburg Imperial Academy of Arts, which awarded the diploma of an architect-artist. Like Tamanyan, who arrived before everyone else, all of them are already accomplished Masters, representatives of the architectural elite, behind whom there are grandiose structures and high positions.

Nikolai Baev, the author of the first theater of the Mayilyan brothers, the town-planning project of the Alexander Baths, Sabunchu Railway Station, Chief Engineer of the Baku City Council and in 1913-1918 city architect of Baku came from Baku. Freidun Agalyan built the Treasury and the Treasury Chamber, a hospital in the same city. City club, apartment houses in Tbilisi - works of David Chislyan. Gazaros Sargsyan has a large list of buildings built in Tbilisi, including the Zubalov People's Theater, the building of the Officers' Society, residential and apartment houses, trade malls and the trading school of the oil industrialist Mantashyan. Harutyun Zakyanyan is a member of the Council and mayor of Nakhichevan-on-Don, the architect of Shirman's apartment building, which is an object of cultural heritage, like many of the listed houses, etc [6]. Nikoghaes Buniatyan is invited to the post of the chief architect of Yerevan, on Tamanyan's recommendation. Each of them is a bright personality with an individual author's handwriting and adheres to their own, formed architectural and artistic worldview. As a result, a peaceful combination of neoclassicism, Art Nouveau,

functionalism (brought from France by Manuel Kaputikyan) is found in Armenia, which are masterly combined with national architectural and functional traditions.

The contribution of the first generation of Soviet architects is not limited to the cultural heritage of the works of architecture they created – they are the organizers and the first teachers of professional architectural higher education in Armenia. The architectural department was formed in the Yerevan University at the technical faculty, which was established in 1921.

And in 1928, the first Soviet cadres were actively involved in the architectural life of the city, four of the seven graduates of the university – Samvel Safaryan, Mark Grigoryan, Hovhannes Margaryan, Arsen Aharonyan.

The next year, constructivism, with its ideological attitudes, is being introduced to Armenia: the new direction is “brought” from the hearth of the Russian avant-garde by the graduates of the Moscow VKHUTEMAS (Higher Art and Technical Studios) – Karo Halabyan, Gevorg Kochar, Mikael Mazmanyanyan and Tiran Yerkanyan.

The characteristic of architectural innovations of these years presents the following picture.

Residential buildings of the first Soviet years, despite large-scale and social changes in their structure, retain the traditional attributes of the previous period: the organization of the building around the courtyard, utility balconies, vaulted passageways into the courtyard, basement floors. The construction of houses with an mansard, atypical for Yerevan, on Nalbandyan Street (N.Buniatyan, 1927) and Pushkin Street (A.Tamanyan, 1927) dates back to the same time. A sectional residential building with two apartments on the staircase remained a common type of the early years, which made it possible to provide the premises with natural through ventilation necessary in hot climates.

In 1924, on the initiative of N.Buniatyan and under his leadership, an architectural and planning studio of the Yerevan City Council was created for the design of residential and public buildings. Already in the 20s of the last century, the significant role of housing construction was manifested in the architectural and artistic design of the urban environment and the principle of the ensemble solution of street development was born, which found a practical continuation in Soviet neoclassicism. A similar idea found its expression at the intersection of Nalbandyan and Tumanyan streets (N.Buniatyan, 1927). According to the project, four houses of the same type with a concave plan configuration were moved away from the corners of the intersection, and squares were arranged in front of them. Although the project was partially implemented, only two buildings were built, this corner of the city is charming with artistic expressiveness created by the combination of the square with the volumetric-spatial solution of the building, its side loggias, open staircases in the central part, classical proportions and symmetry. During these years, a new architecture was created, which can be called the "Tamanyan school" – beautiful facades of buildings, with arched compositions, with classical ones, like in the house of the Council of People's Commissars on Tumanyan Street (H.Khalpakhchyan, 1938), or "Tamanyan" orders, as in the house of "Specialists" at the corner of Teryan and Moskovyan streets (M.Grigoryan, 1937), with interpretations of past attributes, as in the house of the City Council at the corner of Baghramyan and Moskovyan streets (G.Aghababyan, E.Tigranyan, 1938).

A communal house with the social attitude of the "socialization of everyday life" of the Soviet avant-garde found its expression in the design of a residential complex for Hydro power employees. The complex consists of two identical parallel residential buildings located on the same axis, a block of public services (laundry, canteen, kindergarten) and a club overlooking the Hrazdan gorge. The chess-like arrangement of loggias on the main facade of the one residential building (K.Halabyan, M.Mazmanyanyan, 1932) gave the building the name "chess house".

The continuation of innovative ideas reflects the first example of a complex development of a large residential area and a cultural and household quarter, designed for workers of a synthetic rubber plant (M.Mazmanyanyan, G.Kochar, S.Safaryan, H.Margaryan, 1932-1934). Houses in the style of constructivism can be seen on Abovyan Street – this is the house of "professors" (S.Safaryan, 1934), the house of "Armshin" (A.Aharonyan, H.Margaryan, 1930). Among the constructivist buildings, the house of synthetic rubber workers (T.Yerkanyan, 1934) on Republic Street remains memorable. It included in its composition the most expressive fragments of the avant-garde style, such as sharp and

rounded fragments of walls, vertical divisions, pentahedral bay windows, which have become iconic elements of the building. On Mesrop Mashtots Avenue, the houses-factories "Ilyich" (N.Buniatyan, 1931) and "International"(N.Buniatyan, 1931) pay tribute to the new form of social life; equally solved in simple geometric shapes, with "clean" wall surfaces, dissected by horizontal stripes.

In the same years, a new stage of large-scale work on the construction of public buildings unfolded, first of all in Yerevan. Today, these buildings personify the formation of a new, modern architecture of the capital of Soviet Armenia, its diversity and are true pearls that adorn the streets and squares of the capital.

The undoubted merit in this belongs to the legendary Alexander Tamanyan, whose worthy contribution to the architectural and construction activities of Yerevan in the first two decades of the Soviet period cannot be overestimated, his work occupies an exceptional place in the development of public buildings. In the 1920s - 1930s, the Grand Master designed for Yerevan, both from the aesthetic and functional points of view, the most majestic and key objects. These include a complex of hospital buildings on Abovyan Street, two buildings of the Polytechnic Institute and the National Library on Teryan Street, an observatory perfect in its harmony in Tekeyan Park, in the composition center of the student quarter, the Institute of Zoology and Veterinary on Nalbandyan Street, Anatomical theatre of the Medical Institute on the street Koryun. All these works are distinguished by a variety of architectural images, but they all fit equally perfectly into the environment, using and emphasizing its features, and by their essence are able to express the concept of ideal, sublime architecture.

The most magnificent works of Tamanyan in Yerevan, which his wife mentions in her memoirs as the most appreciated by the author himself, are the People's House, the Hydroelectric Power Plant and the Government House [7]. The listed three buildings played a fundamental role in the history of architecture, not only in the context of buildings that are actually unique in the architectural concept, but also their subsequent influence on the development of Soviet Armenian architecture: the best traditions and viable forms of national architecture were used here in an impeccable interpretation and received a new quality and eternally modern sounding.

About the style of A.Tamanyan's work is authoritatively professional statement of the authors of the monograph on the history of Soviet architecture, who write: "Until the end of his days A.Tamanyan developed the legacy of craftsmanship, combining the heritage of classical Armenian architecture of the XII-XIV centuries with compositional schemes of classicism. He created the magnificent building of the Government House of the Armenian SSR (1926-1940), laying the foundation for the formation of the expressive ensemble of Lenin Square in Yerevan. Carefully developing the plan of the building, which is functionally adapted for the work of a modern government institution (an extensive distribution lobby, well organizing all the internal connections of a group of working rooms, convenient interaction with offices and meeting rooms), A.Tamanyan achieved great expressiveness of the spatial solution. Turning to the works of old masters, he strove to comprehend the logic of the architectural language, and not just imitate the old architectural form - he composed it independently, expressing new ideas in the language of tradition. He deliberately brought the material conditions of construction closer to those in which they worked in past eras. Its buildings are built of stone – the material of the builders of the classical monuments of Armenia. The form was not depicted using plaster, it was hewn out of the stone by the hand of a folk master" [8]. Here the result is really unique: "A.Tamanyan has achieved that his works carry the image of modernity, organically connected with tradition".

About the House of Government, a touching statement by the famous Russian architect, academician Alexei Shchusev, who, standing in front of the building, sketched the facade and said to his interlocutor: "Do you know what a magnificent monument was built by Alexander Ivanovich Tamanyan? Centuries will pass, but this building will never lose interest. Generations will come from all over the world to study this building in detail, every line. Like several world-famous monuments, this building is a monument to the art of building and immortals. Even if a misfortune happens, they will study the ruins of the building" [7]. In the architecture of the Government House (A.Tamanyan, sculptors V.Melik-Hakobyan, S.Stepanyan, artist Taragros, after the death of the author architect

G.Tamanyan, 1929, 1941, 1952) innovative ideas were first applied, which became the basis for the formation of modern Armenian architecture and the creation of the Tamanyan school. New orders, thematic reliefs, and national ornaments are widely used on the facades. The Tamanyan building became the basis for the construction of the square and predetermined the architectural features of the later buildings of the ensemble in the 1950s, remaining unsurpassed in terms of its volumetric artistic criteria.

Another grandiose work of Tamanyan is the State Theater, today the National Academic Opera and Ballet Theater named after Alexander Spendiaryan and the Great Concert Hall named after Aram Khachaturian (A.Tamanyan, after the death of the author G. Tamanyan, 1939, 1953) it is referred to as the People's House, although the latter was never implemented. The project was created in accordance with the principles of avant-garde scenography (here you can recall the theatrical works of Tamanyan in 1916-1918 in Moscow and Petrograd, cooperation with artists Mstislav Dobuzhinsky, Orest Allegri, etc.) and orientation towards the compositional forms of the ancient theater or the Palladian theater "Olimpico" in Vicenza, which Tamanyan himself refers to [7]. The project was awarded the Great Gold Medal at the International Exhibition in Paris (1937), after the death of the author. The architectural and functional idea of the theater is unique and consists in combining the winter (1500 seats) and summer (2000 seats) theaters in one volume and numerous transformations. The stages of the two theaters are located in the center of the building, with winter and summer semicircular halls on both sides. The theaters are separated by an iron curtain, when opened, the two halls form a single oval amphitheater with 3000 seats. The stage portal in three openings was originally conceived, which makes it possible to diversify the performance, as well as "perform parallel actions at two or three points, or move several actions of the play from one scene to another without interruption". Transformation options include rotating the stalls and creating in the center of the arena, moving fragments of the stage floor up and down, etc. The three-stage ascending volume clearly demonstrates the internal functional structure in the architectural composition: the position of the foyer, halls and the dominant stage box.

In the same year, a theater was built in the Art Nouveau style (N.Baev, 1939) in the Kommunar Garden, consisting of several volumes with rectangular outlines, with a stage box on the facade and decorative ornaments on the wall and pilasters pushed forward. If we talk about the Yerevan Art Nouveau of the 1920s – 1930s, it is necessary to concentrate on the other works of the architect, in the same manner of "clean" planes, where vertical protrusions of articulations are read at the basis of the compositions, with rare decorations like emblems. The buildings of the State Bank (1933) and the Supreme Court (1936), facing each other, on both sides of the Shahumyan Boulevard, are made in this style. In contrast to them, a similar structure of the facade of the Palace of Pioneers and Schoolchildren (1936-1938) is decorated with rich relief panels in realistic subjects of pioneer life.

The revision of all the creative searches of the architects of the 1920s – 1930s convinces in the variety of architectural solutions that take to the streets and decorate them with the multicolored architectural images. The creative moods of Nikoghayos Buniatyan are many-sided. The first Soviet hotel built by him on Abovyan street, called Intourist (1926), later known as Yerevan, and today the Royal Tulip Grand Hotel, is made in a ceremonial neoclassical style with expressive Ionic columns on two floors in front of the central semicircular balcony. In the facades of the agricultural bank on Nalbandyan street (1928), there is an obvious allusion of some fragments to the Armenian medieval architecture. And for the fire station on Sakharov Square (1930), a bath with a pool on Movses Khorenatsi street (1931) and the "Sevan" hotel on Shahumyan square (1935, 1939), the architect chose different interpretations of constructivism.

The same constructivism is demonstrated by the Builders' Club (K.Halabyan, M.Mazmanyanyan, G.Kochar, 1932) on Abovyan street, opposite Charles Aznavour square, as if closing the semicircle of the square, although by that time the building of the cinema had not yet been built and the ensemble of the square not formed. It is symbolic that the first club, one of the most widespread types of buildings in Soviet society, at one time especially popular among the constructivists, was built by the Armenian constructivists and, of course, in a style corresponding to their beliefs. One of the two buildings of the complex is currently occupied by the Stanislavsky Russian Drama Theater. The

function in the external image is expressed by typical attributes of the style: laconic geometric volumes, clean wall planes, dynamic combinations of horizontal and vertical openings, ribbon-like balconies and a laconic stage box towering over the theater building.

The Charles Aznavour square itself was formed by the end of the 1930s, when the construction of the "Moscow" cinema was completed (T.Yerkanyan, G.Kochar, 1937), after which the square was named throughout the 20th century. In the history of the architecture of the Soviet country, the cinema is one of the first examples of two-hall cinemas. Its elegantly outlined semicircle of the plan is dictated by the contour of the Buniatyan hotel "Inturist", together with which they form the ensemble of a semicircular square. In the concave central part of the building, there is a foyer that unites two halls perpendicular to each other. The architectural solution of the facades is determined by simple geometric forms typical of constructivism, but here it is already a post-constructivist period, expressed by the presence of artistic decoration. Among them are realistic panels on the side facades with the theme of Soviet films. The most impressive work of constructivism in Yerevan in terms of style is the building of the KGB (G.Kochar, 1936) with its dynamically combined volumes, among which the protruding acute corner of the main portal part, the cylindrical towers of stairwells with helically punched windows, the contrast of folded from pure-hewn tuff of smooth wall surfaces with glazed openings.

## Conclusion

The 19th century marks the beginning of an important historical stage in Armenian architecture, which, from purely national priorities, begins to converge with international architecture. Since that time, it has been developing along with the progressive ideas of Western culture, maintaining continuity with the construction art of its ancestors until the middle of the 20th century.

The 1930s represent a special period in history when all Soviet creative groups unite under the slogan of socialist realism, offering architecture new images and solutions. It was at this time that the pride of Soviet Armenian architecture, the "Tamanyan school", was born and flourished in Armenia.

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