

Dacha of the Merchant K.P. Golovkin — Bright Sample of Samara Art Nouveaux

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ABSTRACT

Golovkin chose a very small area near the upper edges of the strongly descending terrain towards the Volga river and the nearby ravine for the construction of his dacha. The 2-storey stone building with a basement and an elevated tower is located on the highest point of the site. Developed by K.P. Golovkin himself, the asymmetric solution of its facades was originally designed to be perceived from a variety of angles. The composition of the facades is distinguished by impressive plasticity and exquisite decorative decoration. The three-dimensional structure and layout of the building took into account the most active visual perception of the adjacent garden, near and far picturesque surroundings on almost all sides of the world. The relevance of the article is due to the lack of consideration of the declared topic in the special literature.

Keywords: *art Nouveau, features of country ownership, the Volga region, the original architectural appearance, K.P. Golovkin's dacha*

I. INTRODUCTION

Merchant Golovkin's dacha is a striking example of Russian modern architecture, which in the special literature has not yet been the subject of a separate review. The purpose of this article is to identify the characteristic features of the original architectural appearance of this very original sample of Samara Art Nouveau.

II. FORMATION OF K.P. GOLOVKIN'S COUNTRY ESTATE

The documents of the archive Fund of the Samara city Council for 1871–1918 contain information about the allocation of land plots for gardens and cottages from Postnikov ravine (after 1917, the Podpolshikov ravine) to Barbashina Polyana (now Frunze Polyana) [1].

In fact, these plots were the property of the city and were leased for a long time to the tenant himself, who constructed his own buildings on it, including those for subsequent hiring to potential summer residents for the entire warm period of the year.

On the “Plan of the city of Samara and its surroundings”, published by the Boundary drawing bureau around 1910, this property is marked under the number 70 [2].

It seems that its original spatial dimensions have been steadily maintained without changes. For the construction of his own dacha, Golovkin took a very small space in the South-Western part of the site, near the upper edges of the strongly descending terrain towards the Volga river and the nearby ravine. In the 1900s, the tenant himself, a well-known Samara merchant, industrialist, publisher, amateur photographer, local historian, archaeologist, and artist, will determine the overall structure of the development and layout of all this inherited country estate near Studenoy buerak [3], [4], [5], [6], [7]. This section impressed him with its absolutely unique scenic features, accentuated by the steep bank of the Volga river and a deep ravine with a winding channel in the lowlands.

Thus, the southern border of the Golovkinsky section was defined by the very outline of the upper edge of this ravine, while the Western one directly approached the coastal line of the Volga river with its nearby sandbar. The Northern border was fixed by the red line of the 6th glade, which reached the steep bank slope of the Volga river. And the Eastern border closed with the adjacent country estate. Golovkin himself

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designed and laid out a garden on a large plot directly related to the dacha, which included elements of both regular and picturesque planning. Its composition contained sculptures of paired elephants and a girl, a round fountain and flowerbeds, and a large number of trees and flowers planted by Golovkin himself. The contemporary specified that “everything here was covered in flowers, lighted and decorated with an illumination”. And Golovkin's daughter recalled that the garden was created simultaneously with the construction of the house: it was he who planted fruit trees, birches and firs, sowed daisies on the bank slope of the Volga river, and arranged a rose garden near the house [8]. The Western part opened to the Volga river, represented by its steeply descending coastal slope, played a special role in the overall garden composition. It included a stairway that led to the shore and a nearby sandbar. All this vast open space planted with daisies revealed and emphasized the impressive plasticity of the steeply descending terrain of the coastal type, providing mainly near the house, from its open terraces and flat areas, as well as from the living quarters, impressive panoramic views in the South-West, West and North-West directions. Accordingly, this building rising above the terrain, accentuated by a multi-tiered tower, was no less effectively viewed from the water area of the Volga river together with the landscape part of the garden.

III. K.P. GOLOVKIN'S DACHA

The 2-storey stone building with a basement and an elevated tower was located in the immediate vicinity of the upper edges of the steeply descending terrain towards the Volga river and a deep ravine. The documents of the Golovkinsky Foundation (TSGASO) clearly show that it was built in 1908–1909 under the project of K.P. Golovkin himself, and its structural part was developed by the architect V.V. Tepfer, who soon took the post of chief architect of Samara [9].

The future sculptor V.P. Akimov, who initially served in Golovkin's office, describes the very thorough work on this project plan: “When he (Golovkin) conceived of building a dacha, he did everything himself; he drew pencil sketches, cut out dozens of paper, repeatedly glued models, strictly checking the proportions and endlessly rejecting them until he reached the desired result. All the layouts I've seen on him, were wonderfully thought out and interesting in their own way. Many of them were destroyed and replaced with new ones. His efficiency was enormous” [10].

The three-dimensional structure and compositional solution of the building's facades initially took into account the most active use of asymmetric forms, almost complete rejection of right angles and lines in favor of more “natural” outlines. Therefore, in the style context, the influence of Western European art

Nouveau architecture is clearly visible in its external appearance. For example, in the fourth volume of the architectural encyclopedia of V.G. Baranovsky (1903), a project of the facade of a relatively small country Villa by the architect H. Guimard was published, which in its compositional features is quite close to the facade solutions of Golovkin's dacha [11].

The building was constructed from large concrete hollow blocks and hollow bricks, which significantly reduced the total cost of its construction [12]. The asymmetric solution of its facades was originally designed to be perceived from a variety of angles. The composition of the facades was distinguished by impressive plasticity and exquisite decoration. Many window openings different in their shape and decorative treatment significantly enhanced the overall architectural expressiveness of the building. In accentuating the different volumes of the building, a special role was played by the high basement part, finished in contrast with the main plastered surface of the walls with small river stone. An important role in the architectural design of the building was played by open verandas and terraces placed on all its facades, as well as spacious viewing platforms arranged on flat roofs of the main and tower volumes. Preserved design layout of the cottage, created by K.P. Golovkin himself, clearly confirms their fundamental role in the most active visual perception of the surrounding garden, near and far picturesque surroundings on almost all sides of the world. He paid also the most close attention to the most impressive visual openings in the South-Western, Western and North-Western directions, which are directly connected with the water area of the Volga river that goes beyond the horizon with its coastal spaces [13].

Related to the second quarter of the XX century and compiled quite schematically by V.K. Golovkin (son of K.P. Golovkin) floor plans of the building allow you to recreate its initial planning structure [14].

Thus, on the first floor, the largest connected rooms of the dining-room and hall were located in the southern part of the building together with the living-room. In the center of the floor, the children's room, the staircase hall, and the parents' bedroom were located along a single enfilade axis from East to the West. And the Northern part included an even smaller group of rooms — a hall at the main entrance with another wooden staircase, a bathroom, a buffet, a water closet, and a square room in the plan of the tower volume.

In addition to the enfilade, this entire group of rooms was connected by a long corridor. And, accordingly, the hall communicated with two verandas of different sizes, structurally interacting with the Western facade. And the dining room had a connection with the verandah, which was a composite element of both the southern and eastern facades.

The collections of the Samara archive contain memories of K.P. Golovkin's daughter — E.K. Golovkina-Ovchinnikova [15]. In particular, she recalled that the furniture for the house was also made according to her father's sketches. In the largest room of the house — the Hall, which housed the piano, on full length of the walls were mounted broad canvases with the images of flying female figures, painted by K.P. Golovkin, patterns on the curtains were embroidered by his wife. The floor of the Hall was made «from the best parquet», and the room served for playing music and watching family performances, played and shown mainly to the guests. Each living room on the ground floor had an exceptional color scheme and original decoration. So, according to the memoirs of K.P. Golovkin's granddaughter, the parents' bedroom combined white and red color of the walls, and the living room greenish-swamp. The walls of the rooms were decorated with beautiful paintings of K.P. Golovkin.

Initially, the first floor occupied only the southern part of the building and included two square in terms of adjacent rooms, which had a direct connection with the first floor by means of a central staircase. This is where the office-workshop of K.P. Golovkin himself was located, with impressive views of the vast expanses of the Volga. And on the topmost tier of the tower volume, he placed his telescope for night observations of celestial bodies.

A significant change in the original planning organization of the building occurred in the second half of the 1940s. It was then that the club was placed in it, where the village youth spent cultural leisure, danced and watched movies. It is significant that there are numerous pencil marks on the plans of the ground and 1st floors of the building during the peace time of 1941, which are directly related to the implementation of this idea [16].

Oriented to the Volga river, the main Western facade of the building is a three-part emphasized asymmetric composition that combines the differently interpreted facade planes of all three main volumes. Its Northern part is represented by the highest somewhat tapering tower volume, only at the top of its tiers marked by narrow slits of its window openings. The rebuilt Central part of the facade still retains the original wooden design of the open verandah: the colonnade, stylobate, and railing. Here the space of the late capital stage is divided by three identical window openings, above which rises a rather heavy attic with three slit-like openings. The southern part of the Western facade, which is most characteristic of art nouveau style, is represented by a dynamic symmetrical composition based on the contrast of the accentuated wide and narrow (slit-like) window openings combined with the balcony.

It is noteworthy that the paired sculpture of elephants is placed frontally relative to the extended Western facade in accordance with its transverse axis along the West-East line. Their setting corresponds to the arched stone fence of the upper platform and the General garden composition, which was no less effectively perceived together with the dacha building not only from different sides of the garden itself, the interiors of the house and its verandas, but also from the Volga water area. Preserved photographs from the 1910s clearly show this. At the same time, these sculptures were the main part of the more chamber composition of the upper platform with a large fountain located in the center, which has not been preserved until our time [17].

The asymmetric southern facade, which is entirely oriented to the ravine, is accentuated by verandas of circular and L-shaped shape, which are adjacent to the heavy volume of the building and are of different sizes (with identical decorative paths), combined with wide external staircases. Despite the loss of the part that had previously protruded from the second-tier balcony, narrow window openings that were consistently reduced in height have been preserved here. In the upper part of the slightly protruding stone fence of the external staircases from the southern and Eastern facades, a full-length round sculpture of a girl has been introduced, her gaze turning towards the Volga river. This sculpture made of cement and plaster in a significantly increased scale compared to the natural size of the drawing by K.N. Golovkin, apparently, was created simultaneously with the sculpture of elephants [18]. Undoubtedly, most of all, the sculptor succeeded in emphasizing the ethereal silhouette of this statue, which seems to be extremely lightweight and as if floating in the air, embodying the vast expanses of the Volga. Being an integral part of a highly developed spatial composition of both the garden and the building itself, the sculpture of the girl played a very important symbolic and pictorial role, fully responding to the figurative and meaningful aspirations of art nouveau.

The three-part composition of the Eastern facade was marked by a currently glazed staircase with an external stairway, interpreted identically to the Western facade by the rising wall of the Central volume of the building and a narrow lowered part that includes the external staircase of the main entrance oriented to the street. The composition of the Northern facade is accentuated by the raised facade plane of the tower with narrow window openings (on the lower and upper tiers), as well as an L-shaped open verandah that still retains its wooden structural elements, as on all other facades based on the artful stylization of separate elements of the classical order system.

IV. CONCLUSION

It should be emphasized that the first attempt we actually made to restore the original appearance of the building is only preliminary. A more in-depth study of primary sources, along with a comprehensive full-scale study, will significantly complement the original image and artistic originality of this outstanding example of art nouveaux in the Samara region.

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