

YENISEISK'S CITY UNIQUE ARCHITECTURE

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Yeniseisk is one of the oldest cities in Krasnoyarsk region. Today the city is unique because it has almost completely retained the image of the Siberian city of XVIII-XIX centuries. Original architecture of the historic center has been evolving for nearly four hundred years. There are over one hundred cultural monuments of local and regional importance in small Yeniseisk. The city is included on the list of 115 historical cities of Russia, as well as a preliminary list of UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Yeniseisk was the biggest and most beautiful city in Preyeniseisk region in the early 19th century. But Yeniseisk had lost its former significance since 1822 when Krasnoyarsk became the administrative center of Yenisei region. After this administrative transformation, Yeniseisk's economic and social life began to fade. The slowdown of economic activity affected on its architectural landscape. Nevertheless, when Yeniseisk lost its importance as a trade and economic center, it became spiritual center of Siberia.

In the middle of the XIX century, the architecture of Yeniseisk started to develop as the citizens were growing their wealth due to the expansion of gold mining in the Yenisei region. The wooden houses were basic residential construction in this period.

City's architectural appearance was changed during the Soviet period. At first, it was destruction of churches. Secondly, it was dilapidation and loss of monuments of secular architecture, primarily mansions of rich citizens, which were built in the XIX - early XX centuries.

The integrity of historic buildings, insignificant insertions of modern buildings, and lack of a rapidly developing Yeniseisk's industry make the city a unique monument of urban art XVIII - XX centuries.

Unfortunately, the overall technical condition of historical and culture monuments should be recognized as unsatisfactory today. As of May 01, 2012 in unsatisfactory condition is 63.9% of the cultural heritage of the city Yeniseisk.

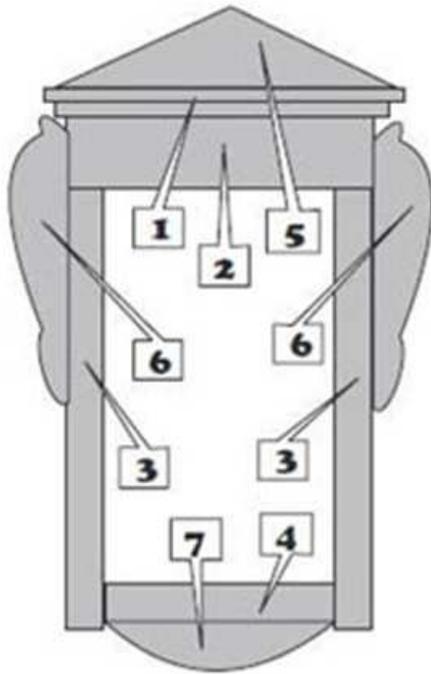
In 2019, Yeniseisk will celebrate 400-year anniversary since it was founded and to commemorate such an occasion, the city will be transformed to an open-air museum. Due to these events, active reconstruction has been started in the city.

In summer 2013, the study group consisting of SFU students went to the city to collect materials about Yeniseisk. The purpose of their trip was to enrich the archive with drawings of deteriorating windows for their further restoration.

Wooden houses are the largest and particular group of Yeniseisk cultural heritage objects and saving the architectural appearance of these structures is an important task nowadays.

These houses are a unique example of wooden architecture of the XIX century. They have common style, which is appropriate to the era of the time. Patterns on the window frames are the characteristic and identifying feature of houses in Yeniseisk.

House decor is an important part of wooden architecture in Russia. From antiquity to the present windows of houses and other wooden buildings were covered with verge boards and finish casing. The basic function of elements is to prevent the penetration of cold and drafts into the room. Also they play the role of an ornament. At first, the patterns adorning the wood were used for the protection of life and property of the house owners. Later they became an essential part of the decor.



The main elements: 1 - Cornice, 2- Frame board, 3-Side boards
 4 - Under window's boards
 The additional elements: 5 - Corbel arch. 6-"Ears", 7 - Ending or valance

Fig. 1



Fig.2

Window casing has a complex design (Fig. 1). It contains of four main elements. Parallel to the wall there are two vertical planks – side boards (3), and two horizontal boards, frame board (2) and stool (4). Cornice (1) covers them from top and it is attached to the wall at an angle. Its function is to protect the gaps from falling into it the rainwater. The cornice is made of one or two boards. In the second case, the upper board is slightly larger than the bottom board. Finial or corbel arch (5), "ears," (6) and valance or the ending (7) are additional elements of the casing that give beauty, variety and uniqueness to the window. They may be presented in the window together, or separately.

The upper part of the casing (frame board and corbel arch) has always symbolized the sky. Lower part of the window or stool symbolizes land. Side boards (sidewalls) represent the connection of sky with the ground. Furthermore, the upper part of the composition has considered a daytime, while the lower - nighttime, because the sun goes down for the night under the ground. The same can be said about the entire composition of house's carving.

Carving motives are very diverse. There are various floral patterns, abstract patterns, rare zoomorphic forms, or highly stylized silhouettes, various sockets on the casing. Also there are many ornamental elements of classical architecture, for example, fluted columns, capitals, sandriks, cords, tassels, baroque curved gable boards, volutes, flowerpots, cartouches and other geometric patterns.

Windows in urban houses of Yeniseisk have large size and different shapes. They can be single, double or triple with broad and narrow sides. Often the window openings have a bow upper part with a slight rise. Apparently, this method was borrowed from the stone architecture in which the arched stone lintels overlapped window openings. Window openings are framed by casings which are the objects of a very rich decor. The corbel arch, more than the other parts of casing, was decorated with the pattern. It is a board, covering the sedimentary seam between the logs and window-frame.

Sides of the window frames in Yeniseisk were decorated with ornamental cuttings - braids, plaits, turned figures, cuttings in the form of columns of an order architecture, which were originally interpreted in the proportions and details.(Fig.2) The under window's board was decorated less than the above window's board. Casings' carving is richer and more beautiful than the carving of buildings cornice. Due to the technique, casings' carving are very various and difficult. It includes relief bill, penetrating relief and crenate casing, as well as various combinations in complex and complete compositions.

Silhouette forms of the corbel arch are very diverse : rectangular with volutes, two bow-and - three-tiered, with superposed boards (type of perspective portal), keeled, keeled complex undulating contour, just undulating with volutes, with closed between volutes "birds rook" or a bunch of shamrocks, etc. As a rule, all kinds of boards are completed with profiled cornice containing in its silhouette quarter - rollers, or fillet with shelves or heels. Probably, casing of window openings was influenced by stone architecture of XVII-XVIII centuries. Baroque volutes, cartouches, brackets, flanking casing, rosettes, assembled in the square created space with shadow and light and gave plastic finish. Behind all this historical continuity the development of architecture of wooden houses is guessed.

On the above window's board framed with cornice were usually carved vases with plants, vines and brushes (or hops), or two shoots of floral ornament. Also stylized images of birds, flowers, buds were sometimes used in the vegetable ornament. Vertical (side) boards represented the colonnettes with carved capitals. Colonnettes were covered by carved cannelures. The under window's boards were small and sometimes they were decorated with cartouches, rosettes, floral ornaments, flowers, often transmitted in a very realistic manner.

During the education trip the group of students studied, analyzed and collected materials- sketches, drawings and photographs of Yeniseisk houses. These houses are a unique example of wooden architecture of the XIX century. They have a common style, to identify the characteristics and features, manifested in the patterns on the window casing. To draw conclusion, the most frequent subjects for decor of the window frames in Yeniseisk were water elements and solar signs. Interpretation of all the symbols in the decor of wooden architecture has a similar meaning. Only the methods and motives of the carving differ. All patterns have a function of a talisman. The tradition has been starting in pagan times and surviving to our days. That is why it is very important nowadays to preserve and investigate the culture of Russian cities and their architecture, as it is our history and heritage.