

ИСТОРИЧЕСКИЕ НАУКИ

THE ECONOMIC AND RESIDENTIAL UNITS IN QALA HISTORICAL ETHNOGRAPHIC PROTECTED SITE

DOI: [10.31618/ESU.2413-9335.2020.7.70.567](https://doi.org/10.31618/ESU.2413-9335.2020.7.70.567)*Rahiba Aliyeva**Ph. D. on architecture, assistant-professor
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ABSTRACT

The residential buildings surrounded with high walls indeed is a response to the climatic conditions of Absheron Peninsula and also the closed lifestyle inspired by the Islamic believe of the residents of the village. Based on the number of the family members and the financial situation of the household, the residential buildings have two or more rooms. Due to the lack of windows to the street in the residential buildings, the people were being forced to use the courtyard as rest places. This in turn had led to formation of some summer rest placed inside the courtyards.

The commercial and residential buildings built in Qala Village would be the subject of debate from time and purpose points of view. But from architectonics and construction points of view, generally, we can find out 3 evolution stage in these constructions:

1. Dome commercial buildings, 2. duplex residential homes, and 3. residential and commercial buildings built in XIX and early XX.

Dome commercial buildings: The history of dome residential buildings in Qala Village is backed to XVII – XVIII centuries. The hard climatic conditions, lack of wood and forest products, and due to esthetic and the architectural and esthetic considerations have altogether led to formation of original dome commercial – residential buildings.

Duplex Homes: This category of buildings merely could be found in Absheron district. The majority of buildings protected in Qala Historical Ethnographic Protected Site. The main factor for creation of such kind of structure is the climatic conditions prevailing in the zone and also the available building materials. This category of buildings is specifically used for residential buildings. The investigation on existing duplex building in Qala Village shows that they have a north – south orientation just like other buildings of the village.

The buildings built in the end XIX and early XX, have been inspired by the blooming in the country economy resulted from the role of the oil in the development of the country economy. This has also had its effects in Qala village and eventually led to formation of new extensive and large-scale buildings.

The diverse architectural appearance, composition specification and space-place features of Qala Historical Ethnographic Protected Site has eventually resulted in formation of a diverse and variable historical site with its unique appearance and that make Qala Village distinguished with all other villages in Absheron Peninsula.

Key words: Qala Protected Area , Housing , Utility Structures , Architecture , Plan, duplex houses , domed houses .

Geographically, Qala settlement has been situated in Absheron Peninsula, Azerbaijan in the Caucasus, in hillside of the branch continues up to Caspian Sea. Unlike other villages of the peninsula, which are mainly situated in coastal line, Qala is situated in inner depth of Absheron which in practice leads to a warmer summer and more arid summers. The village does not have a rich green space and it is characterized by low water resources and arboriculture sights and rich limestone mines which altogether have led to formation of a historical site with the unique town planning and architectural features.

Qala Village, with its buildings of high technique and unique architectural momentums, has protected the construction and architectural works of several eras and, altogether, it looks like footprint of the history engraved in the stones.

The defensive, religious, civil, memorial and household constructions constructed by masters and architectures of different eras in Qala Village has been become the source of proud for the villagers. The main duty ahead is to protect such a unique site and to make

the coming generations and the world community with such valuable historical site.

For the purpose of safeguarding protection, reconstruction and promotion of historical, national and cultural values of the Qala Village, “Qala State Historical-Ethnographical Protected Sit” was established based on Decision of the Council of Minister of the Republic of Azerbaijan adopted under No. 457 on April 18th, 1988.

The overall areal of Qala State Historical-Ethnographical Protected Sit is more than 200 hectare. More than 243 historical – architectural monuments have been recognized, documented and registered in the site including 1 castle, 5 mosques, 3 bath houses, 3 water reservoirs, 2 tombs, and more than 200 residential and economic buildings.

The residential buildings are among the main part of the people’s architecture and reflect the style and demands of the relevant eras and altogether form the mass buildings of any town or city. As one of the essential part of the human civilization and life, they are an indication of lifestyle, customs, and religious origin of the people. In addition to this, they are narrating us

about the whole socio-philosophical thought which is transferred from one generation to another one and finally reached to us. The people's residential places, which unifies the material, spiritual and esthetic aspects of human life, have always been renewed just like a live organ and the new residents have extended new camps based on their own specific needs and, in line with the demands of the time being, the old constructions have been demolished and replaced with new ones whereby the harmony with development trend of the relevant era has been preserved. The experience of the human being in course of long eras has eventually enabled them to build such a kind of residential units that simultaneous with protecting them against unfavorable climatic conditions, provide them with a comfort life.

The existing situation and limitations in the Absheron Peninsula, including the insufficiency of wooden materials, abundant limestone resources, the prevailing northern wind in the cold winters and southeast wind in the summer, limited water resources, the closed life style inspired by the Islamic believe of the residents, have altogether led to formation of a unique architecture style and, as a result, the architecture and plan of the residential buildings, their constructional solutions all have made them as unique structure which in the same time is in full harmony with the prevailing climatic conditions.

The specific residential building of Absheron peninsula has also found in Qala as one of the old residential sites in the peninsula. Notwithstanding the fact that the results of archeological surveys have proved that Qala has been used the residential place since 4000 years ago, i.e. from bronze age, but its paramount development since the medieval age is an undeniable fact.

The residential buildings surrounded with high walls indeed is a response to the climatic conditions of Absheron Peninsula and also the closed lifestyle inspired by the Islamic believe of the residents of the village. Based on the number of the family members and the financial situation of the household, the residential buildings have two or more rooms. Due to the lack of windows to the street in the residential buildings, the people were being forced to use the courtyard as rest places. This in turn had led to formation of some summer rest places inside the courtyards. Indeed, the platforms built inside the courtyard of the residential houses used as places for summer rest place. The platforms are built 30-50 cm above the ground level and this provides the needed conditions for family rest. The lack of enough wood in the village has been the reason for building of such platforms without any roofing. They were later roofed in the late XIX and early XX as a result of blooming in the economy of the region owing the development of oil industry in different regions of Azerbaijan which enabled the people to import wood from Russia. Due to the insufficiency of water resources in Absheron region, Qala people mainly were being used trees with large canopy and low water demand like mulberry, pistachio, fig and grape and use the grape bushes for shelter to protect them against the summer sunshine.

The courtyard is very small and has a wooden door to the street. Since the farms and livestock facilities were being located with a distance from the village and the residential houses were being constructed with high walls closed together and all close to the central "Castle" for the purpose of defense, the courtyard sites were essentially being built in small scale areas. In some cases, some close families were being lived in small houses close together, which all have had only one entrance door from the street. As the area of courtyards was very small and had no way to the street, has forced the people to cope with such a lifestyle.

The commercial and residential buildings built in Qala Village would be the subject of debate from time and purpose points of view. But from architectonics and construction points of view, generally, we can find out 3 evolution stage in these constructions: (1) Dome commercial buildings, (2) duplex residential homes, and (3) residential and commercial buildings built in XIX and early XX.

Dome commercial buildings: The history of dome residential buildings in Qala Village is backed to XVII – XVIII centuries. The hard climatic conditions, lack of wood and forest products, and due to esthetic and the architectural and esthetic considerations have altogether led to formation of original dome commercial – residential buildings. The dome buildings have a lower temperature and, due to high space under the dome, under the peak sunlight the penetration of heat inside the home is less in comparison with the houses with flat roof and are become cooled more rapidly. Due to high volume of the inside of the home, the volume of air is more than other buildings and the vertical circulation of air is increased.

Another reason for formation of dome residential and commercial buildings in Qala Village is the fact that this region transformed to a settlement place in course of human civilization. Professor H. Atakishiyev, a local resident and researcher argues: "Since the first migrants settled in this land were Tat Turks and they were being used dome-formed tents, they begun to construct such dome-formed buildings after settlement i.e. built nomad tent form buildings by use of the available constructional materials – stone, and begun to settle in a stone-made homes. They are known as "Samanliq (Barn)" today which have situated in the cemetery of Qala Village; they are the first stone-made homes built in Absheron region. Notwithstanding the fact that the main form of residential houses in other regions of Azerbaijan is Qara-Dam (black home) form but, due to lack of forest in Absheron region, the people used stone as building blocks of the residential houses which is abundant in this region. The stone buildings were constructed in the same form of nomad tents made of carpet, rug and leather and later become the main residential form of the people in the region." [1]. I think that this argument is acceptable, because due to the established facts, the footprint of old carts and the oral history told by the local people, the dome houses have been the oldest part of the village.

The dome residential – commercial buildings are classed as two following categories based on the construction level and height: (1) buildings built in

below ground surface, and (2) buildings built above ground level.

The buildings of Group I, have been built by use of architectural plan-structure and style prevailing during XVII – XVIII and is very interesting. According to Dr. A. Mehdiyev, Ph. D. in architecture, the buildings built 2-2.5 m below ground level had been mainly used as residential houses. The reason for building of such residential homes below the ground level has been remained as a mystery up to now. Due to the special climatic conditions of Absheron also for the purpose of keeping warm the residential part of houses

during cold months the some part of the houses have been built under the ground level.

The buildings of Group II have been constructed during XIX and XX. They are built in Sulh (Peace) Street of Qala Village. The situation of dome residential and commercial buildings in Qala Village is categorized in different classes from town planning point of view and in connection with other buildings:

(1) Independent from the adjacent buildings; (2) connected to the houses with flat roofs or in the same block; and (3) in different levels with the adjacent buildings.



Figure 1 – Dome black homes

All specific external surface features exist in the dome commercial – residential homes. The positive and negative effect of different plans and facing materials could be seen in the buildings.

The independent dome buildings have been built in a complex form and situated in the old cemetery of the village and are residential homes and barns built below the ground level.

Also a set of dome commercial buildings have been built in Qala Village adjacent to the residential homes. Although it is not suitable from hygienic point of view but could be justified by the hard and cold climate of the region which requires that the livestock to be as closer as possible to the residential buildings. The accomplishment of dome buildings of different levels, which had been mainly used as commercial

units, with the residential units is an interesting feature of the site.

The construction of barns with dome roof and thick stone walls has caused the stability of temperature inside them for some degree and this itself has had its role in preservation of quality of the products stored in them. The dome residential - commercial buildings of Qala Village while have their own feature, play significant role in the esthetics of the village as well. In addition to the esthetic rich feature of external appearance of domes, they have also had their esthetic role in the internal composition of the building. The internal volume – situation solution of the buildings and the difference in their plan structure composition draws the attention of every researcher. Here, we can observe 3 types of plan structures:

The residential – oval buildings with (1) Circular and elliptical; (2) quadratic; and (3) composition of two different geometric figures forms.

The circular – oval form buildings are mainly the dawns of the village and are very interesting buildings. Those form of the buildings while allows the residents to preserve their nomadic life style features, given the chance to them to cope with the hard climatic situation by use different architectural forms.

The commercial and residential buildings built in quadratic form have been mainly built during XIX. The round corner of the quadratic buildings has provided a suitable condition for protection of tromps of their dome roofs.

The buildings of 3rd category are the twine-dome buildings and duplex residential homes which are the unique feature of Qala Village's architecture. The special appearance that these buildings have given to the village in Sulh (Peace) Street is indeed a unique form which could not be seen elsewhere anymore. The

long rectangular form of the barns and stables with their semicircular ending built in the northern side of the residential units, in addition to their unique exterior appearance, has also had very nice internal richness. The stone mangers built for use of the livestock and the openings made in the stone for bridles shows the usage of these buildings. It should be also pointed out that the homes built in the cemetery of the village are very interesting from the point of view of their non-similarities.

The dome roofs have also architrave beams. The architraves provide for covering the needed load-bearing structure form one tromp to another one in quadratic-shaped structures by use of white limestone and the set of architraves protect the dome.

The result of researches in Qala Village shows that the number of such commercial – residential structures is limited in the village and they are diligently preserved by Qala Protected Site Department. (Figure 1,2,3)

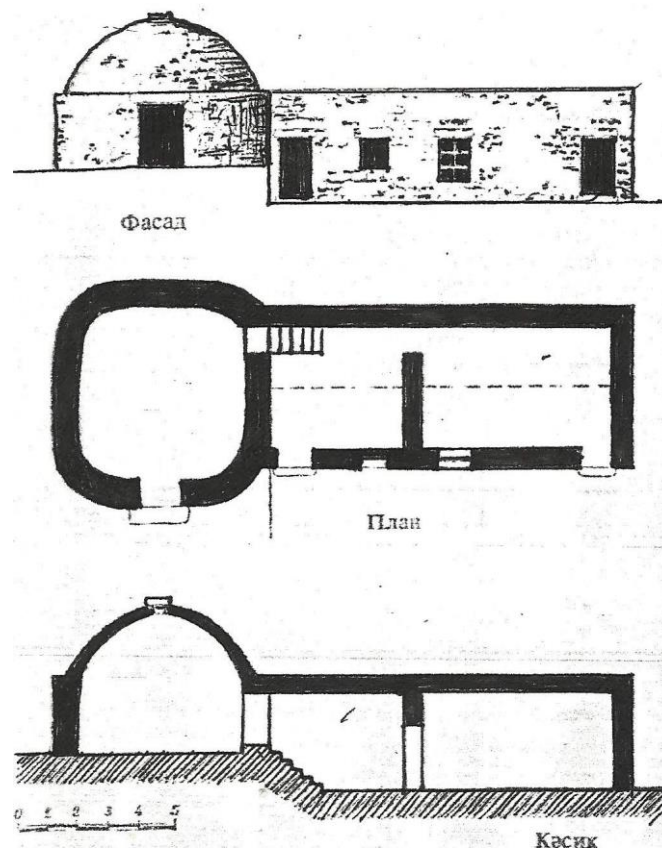


Figure 2 – Residential and Commercial Block in Qala Street

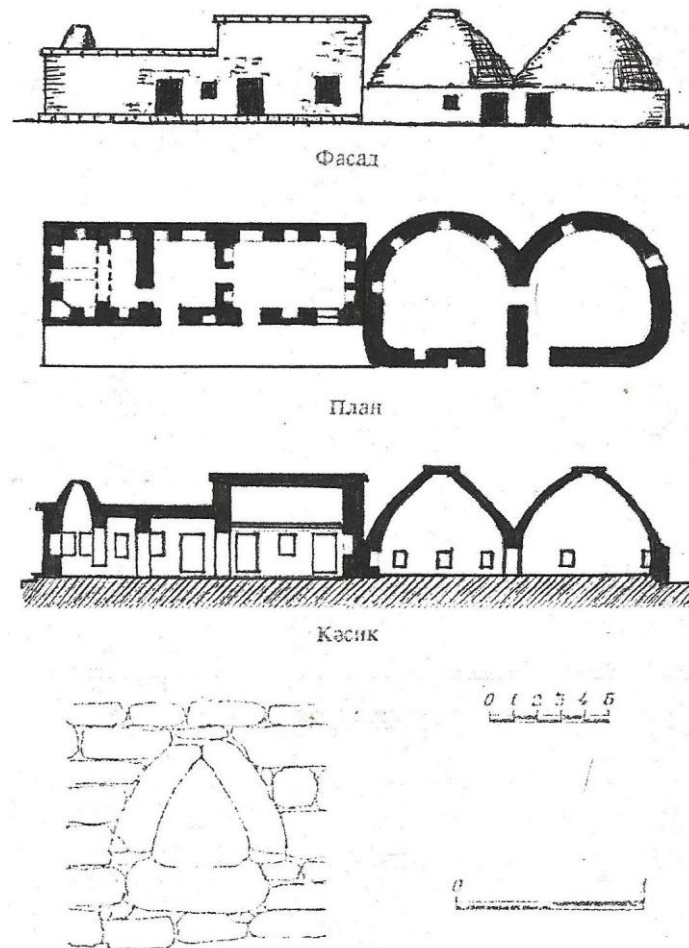


Figure 3 –Another residential – commercial block located at No. 5, Sulh (Peace) Street

Duplex Homes: This category of buildings merely could be found in Absheron district. The majority of buildings protected in Qala Historical Ethnographic Protected Site. The main factor for creation of such kind of structure is the climatic conditions prevailing in the zone and also the available building materials. This category of buildings is specifically used for residential buildings. The investigation on existing duplex building in Qala Village shows that they have a north – south orientation just like other buildings of the village. The duplex homes are characterized by a one-story building with a flat roof over which in a duplex system the oven and fireplace has been situated over which there is a dome roof.

The stone gutter on the roof has given very rich decorative feature to the building which collects and drains the rainfall from the sloped roofs.

Based on the plans of duplex buildings, they have one, two and more rooms. The majority of the investigated buildings have been built on the basis of 2-room plan (No. 15 Sulh (Peace) St., No. 7 Shors St.; Nol. 2 Sulh (Peace) St.) and a small number of them have been built on the basis of more rooms plan (NO. 8 Shors St., No. 23 Shors St.). From geometrical point of view, the duplex buildings have been built in the form of (1) linear and (2) rectangular form. We can also see buildings with L form (No. 507 Qala St., the residential home in Qadirli St.) and checkered form (No. 28 Sulh (Peace) St.).

One of the specific features of the buildings constructed in Qala Village is the structure of kitchen complex. We can see such a complex in about 90% of the historical homes. In installation of openings on the roof of kitchen complex, which has been designed for emitting the smoke of the oven and fireplace installed in the kitchen used for cooking, water heating, etc., has given another esthetic feature and beauty to the dome roofs of the duplex buildings. The building of water reservoir in all angles of the kitchen is the typical feature of buildings built in Absheron Zone. The water reservoir has been built in the form of small well in the same level with the flooring and no partition separates it from the remaining part of the kitchen. In opposite side of the hollow place a small pitch has been built with over the flooring and in a place jointed to the building with small height (15-20 cm) height. The pitch sloped to drain and discharge the waste water from the kitchen to the courtyard through an opening built in the external wall of the kitchen. The flooring of the slope pitch of buildings built in XIX – XX is stone and thereafter they have been floored by use of cement. The pitches are used for cloth washing and ablution before prayer of Muslim people.

One of the typical specifications of the duplex buildings in Qala Village is that each room has a door to the courtyard hence they have been connected to each other by means of enfilade method.

The structure of the buildings built in Qala Village is an illustration of unity between the climatic

conditions and the optimal use of the building materials available in the region. Different constructional materials have been used for roofing: (1) barrel valut

ceiling, (2) flat roof, and (3) combined form. (Figure 4,5)

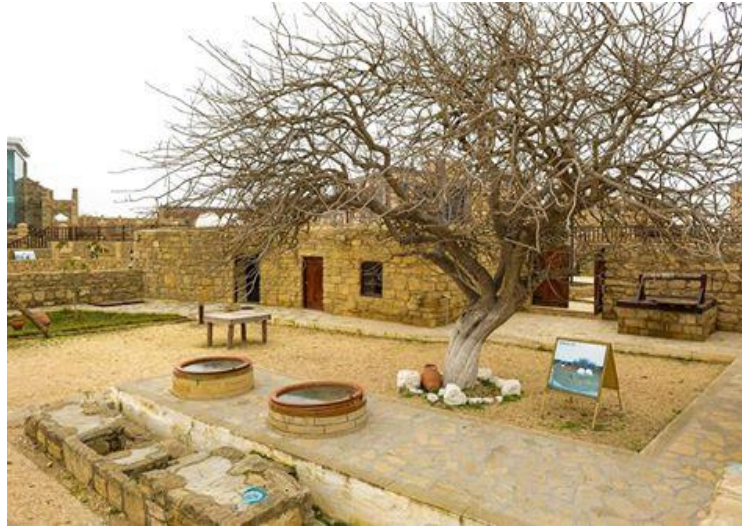


Figure 4 – Duplex residential buildings

The barrel valut ceilings are begun from the flooring of the wall and / or form shelves which have also been used as a decorative element of the interior. In the barrel valut ceilings, the national ornamental elements and features have been preserved in construction of arced ceiling. The arcs distribute the ceiling load both vertically and horizontally on the columns. The barrel valut ceiling is used for roofing all kitchens in the village. Despite the room spaces is small but they have walls with 70 - 90 cm thickness for the purpose of heat insulation built by use of adobe and mud. The flooring is stone or a mixture of mud and straw (No. 6 Shors St., a building in Sulh (Peace) St.).

Flat roofing by use of beams and columns are found rarely. The wood is used for roofing of this kind of buildings and then covered by use of a mixture of mud and straw (No. 6 Qadirli St., NO. 7 Shors St.).

Combined roofing is a mixture of barrel valut roofs and beam and column roofing. Despite the use of two different types of roofing, it could not be detected by just seeing the external appearance of the building. But in some cases the difference between the roofs of the rooms indicates that they have two different roofing forms (No. 6 Qadirli St., No. 2 Sulh (Peace) St.).

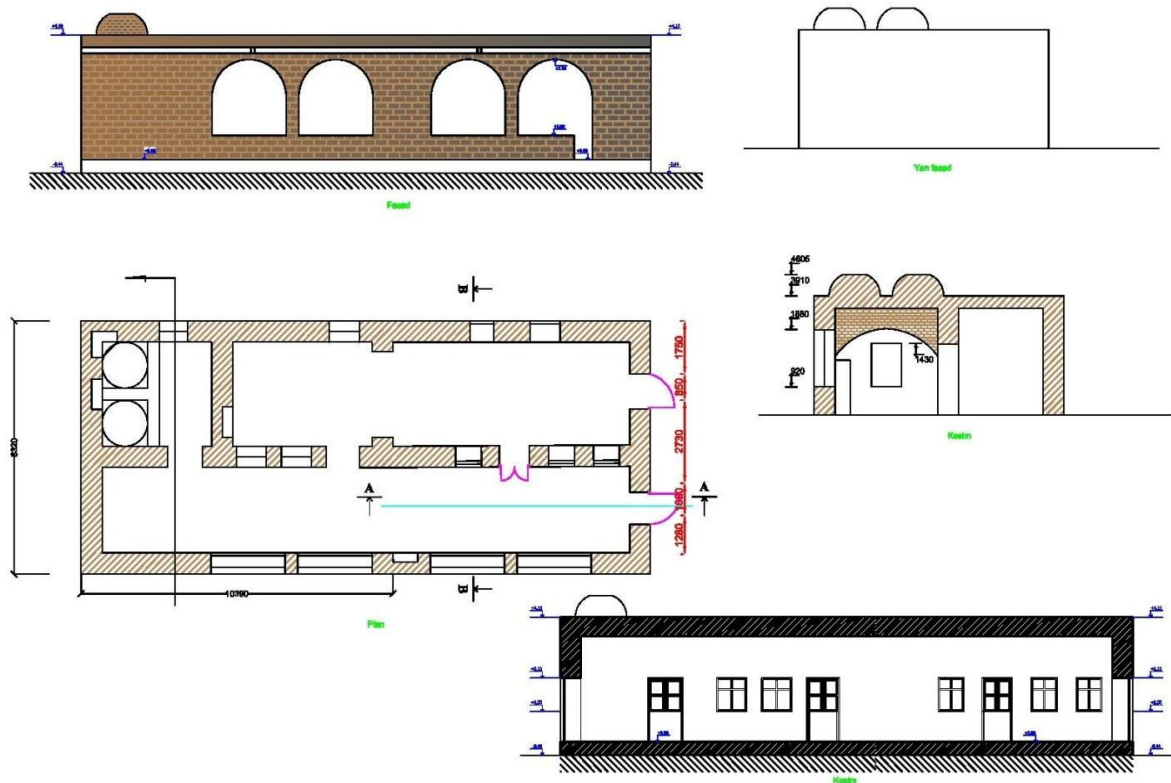


Figure 5 – Residential building with two rows of rooms

The buildings built in the end XIX and early XX, have been inspired by the blooming in the country economy resulted from the role of the oil in the development of the country economy. V. P. Kobichev in his work under title of “Residential Houses in the Azerbaijan in XIX” states: “since the second half of XIX, the woods brought from the districts of Transcaucasia and Russia was extensively used in the construction of residential houses in Absheron Zone[4]. This has also had its effects in Qala village and eventually led to formation of new extensive and large-scale buildings. At this stage the 2-story building built since this age, play an important role in the formation of the village. Despite the fact that the number of 2-story buildings is limited, they have given a special richness and diversity to the architecture of the village in whole. Indeed, the form of these buildings is an indication of the financial situation of the family.

The diverse architectural appearance, composition specification and space-place features of Qala Historical Ethnographic Protected Site has eventually resulted in formation of a diverse and variable historical site with its unique appearance and that make Qala Village distinguished with all other villages in Absheron Peninsula.

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