

© A. V. SKOCHIN, S. S. PASHIN

*Arskoch88@yandex.ru, pashin-s@yandex.ru*

UDC 94:331 (571.12)

**THE ROLE OF HOUSE BUILDING IN FORMING THE LIVING SPACE  
OF TYUMEN CITIZENS IN THE MID-1950s / MID-1960s**

*SUMMARY. This article is devoted to the problems of house building and its role in forming the living space of Tyumen citizens. The author studies the transformation process of urban space, its influence on the image of the city and the population's way of life. Having compared the indices of the dynamics of private and state housing stock growth and the speed of population growth, the author makes conclusions about the population's housing needs and their actual provision with it. The article scrutinizes the process of urban space expansion, describes the main directions, ways and rates of the regional centre's development. The author describes the living space of Tyumen citizens in detail, pays attention to its peculiarities and evaluates whether it was comfortable enough for the people. The article is based on archival files never published before.*

*KEY WORDS. House building, housing stock, standard construction, individual construction, general layout, city construction, city district, housing complex, architecture of Tyumen, the population of the city, urban space, urban environment, image of Tyumen, history of Tyumen.*

In the 1970s in Russian historiography works devoted to the study of the urban environment began to appear. Researchers' decision to turn to this topic was a natural consequence of the expansion of historical research in the field of urban life.

The concept of "urban environment" first received terminological grounding in V.L. Glazychev's works, where it was interpreted as "a structure of object-spatial environment" or "objectified cultural environment" [1; 16]. In current publications on the subject the term "living space" is employed for the most complete description of the concept in question. It is much broader than "the urban environment" and is frequently interpreted as a set of objects and phenomena of natural and social reality with which people interact throughout life [2; 77].

The set of components included in the structure of the urban environment is not clearly defined. Most often in its structure researchers distinguish architecture, asphalted and paved streets and squares, landscaping of residential areas, the development of water supply, sewerage and electricity networks, environment, public transport and its performance [3; 95]. A special place in the urban environment, in our view, is taken by the architectural complex, whose function is to organize and arrange around itself a number of other components and to form a unique "integrity" of urban space. The character of residential areas plays a very important role in urban architecture. It significantly changes the quality of life of citizens and contributes to a certain image in people's minds.

The study of urban environment based on the example of a Siberian city during the mid-1950s / mid-1960s looks especially promising. Several researchers identify this period as an important stage of urbanization and the formation of the urban way of life in Siberia. The growing economic importance of Siberia during these years contributed to the emergence of the industrial look of many Siberian cities and a substantial change in the way of life of the population [4; 164-166]. Tyumen was one of the cities where these processes found their most characteristic manifestation.

Development of the city due to economic factors was accompanied by a significant increase in the number of citizens during the period under study [5].

It should be noted that the increase in the number of urban residents was also typical of the history of the city prior to the research period. It was associated with such factors as evacuation of the population during the Great Patriotic War (1941-1945), demobilization of the military and migration of the rural population at the end of the war and during the postwar years. However, if during the period from 1945 to 1953 the number of Tyumen citizens increased by 45,154 persons [6; 49], i.e., by about one-third, in the period from 1956 to 1965 the number of residents increased by 87,617 persons, or by 69.8% of the total number living at the beginning of the researched period.

Increasing migration flows among the rural population and influx of population from other cities contributed to a significant expansion of the boundaries of Tyumen by means of the inclusion of nearby villages in the makeup of the regional centre. This phenomenon created a paradoxical situation when within an urban area two spaces — rural and urban — co-existed, leading to a clash of different lifestyles. These lifestyles manifested themselves in a number of material objects of the urban environment.

The increase in migration to the regional centre brought about favorable conditions for the appearance of a large number of single-storey wooden buildings, most of which were constructed by individual builders. In the mid-1950s, Tyumen construction companies did not have sufficient material and human resources for the rapid increase in construction volume and considerable improvement in its quality. In this regard, private housing construction in the city became widespread. On January 1, 1956, the city had about 475,177 square meters of living space, more than half of which was in the form of individual housing [7; 45, 46].

Statistical data from the Inspectorate of State Statistics show a rapid increase in the rate of individual housing construction in Tyumen in the second half of the 1950s [8]. By 1960 17,994 residential buildings had been built, of which 14,881 belonged to private house owners. After the beginning of 1960 there was a gradual decline in private construction, however, the construction of private houses in the regional centre did not stop completely. On the whole, for the period from 1956 to 1965, Tyumen individual housing stock increased by 227,600 square meters.

Proliferation of private housing construction in the city in the second half of the 1950s was promoted by state policy, which supported individual builders. The population willing to build their own houses was regularly allocated funds in the form of loans. Citizens could take them from banks or enterprises where they were employed. Loans were given for a period of 7 to 10 years, but the borrowers could repay the loan early if they had enough money.

Archival sources say that the city's population actively used the above-mentioned service. One Tyumen citizen recalled, "As soon as we got married, my husband started building a house. And he had to pay off a loan which he had taken out for its construction. He worked on the railway, and they said to him, "We can't give you a flat. Here, take a 5,000 ruble loan and build a house". He took a loan for 7 years, during which we had to pay it back in full. If I am not mistaken, he paid 15% a year, and in 2.5 years we paid it back, because my husband worked a lot" [9].

Despite the availability of funds for the construction of their own homes, Tyumen citizens faced a number of other problems. They mainly concerned shortage of building materials and transport to deliver them. Thus, Tyumen resident Z.P. Safronova recalls that citizens often obtained materials for construction by themselves: "From Neftyanik village to Kazarovo village on the right side of the road to the Upper Forest, the residents dug up all the clay, for they needed it for bricks. The clay was ready for construction; there was no need to add sand or anything. People brought this clay home, kneaded it and made bricks. After drying, they looked like real bricks, but they were not burnt. People built the inside of their furnaces with these bricks, and ringed the outside with burnt ones. People were also short of cement, so they added eggs to mortar for strength" [9].

Despite all the difficulties, the number of individual houses in the city grew rapidly. This tendency was especially noticeable in the southern part of Tyumen—in the village named after Andreev and in the village called Peasants' Places. E.N. Pakhvitsevich, an elderly resident of Tyumen who has been living in the village named after Andreev since the mid-1950s, recalls: "The construction of our village went rapidly indeed. Stepnaya Street and others were built in the blink of an eye. Both locals and newcomers were building houses... When our neighbors went to ask for land, they were immediately allocated a plot in Internatsionalnaya street. And they got all the paperwork done very quickly and immediately began to build a house" [10]. According to the newspaper *The Tyumen Truth*, in 1954 479 private contractors were building their houses there; the following year their number rose to 617. The newspaper noted, "In Andreevsky village Krasovsky and Magnitogorskaya streets have recently appeared, and a number of new streets were named Novaya, Vtoraya Novaya, Tretya Novaya, etc". [11]. By 1957, the village's population had risen to 30,000 people.

Residents of the city were allocated a lot of land of 400-600 square meters for individual building. A lot went together with a one-storey house, which people used as a shed or a basement. The only convenience residents of those houses had was electricity. The houses were usually heated with wood, and water was taken from pumps located within one or two blocks of the house. Instead of draining sewage waste, the residents dug latrines at their lots. Within the site, in addition to the main residential building, there also were a large number of functional buildings intended for farming — cattle sheds, haylofts, tool-sheds, woodsheds, etc.

Individual housing increase exacerbated a number of urban problems in Tyumen. While allowing quick alleviation of the housing problem without involving substantial material resources, the construction of low-rise buildings considerably expanded the boundaries of the regional centre, leading to a decrease in density and to inefficient use

of the urban area. Lack of land for the construction of kindergartens, schools, shops, catering businesses, cinemas and other institutions led to a decline in the quality of the living environment of citizens. The trend was not coherent with the plans of the central and local authorities to turn Tyumen into a large well-maintained regional centre.

The first attempts by the city government to streamline the process of building in Tyumen date back to the beginning of the 1950s. Thus, the general plan of 1952 involved the construction of a large number of multi-storey buildings in the centre and separation of one-storey buildings from multi-storey ones, which would balance the prevalence of one-storey wooden building in the city. At the same time, shortage of material resources and a lack of detailed plans for local development lead to only occasional appearance of multi-storey buildings in the regional centre. “More than two-thirds of the city is made up of small individual households, which are represented by one/two-family houses, which stand next to old barns and storage sheds, which are no longer in use even in the villages. Moreover, they are also in the central streets, such as Respubliki, Ordzhonikidze and others”, noted the Tyumen Region Executive Committee Chairman Krukov in June 1960 in the pages of a local newspaper [12].

By the beginning of the 1960s new projects by the city authorities attempting to modernize the urban economy of the city completely stopped single-storey housing construction. It should be noted that in almost all regions of Siberia peaks in individual building had been reached by the end of the 1950s [13; 93, 94]. Tyumen, in this respect, was somewhat behind. In 1961 a ban on individual building brought about a sharp decrease in the number of houses built by city residents. It was a necessary measure of the city authorities, without which it was impossible to continue perfecting the appearance of the city. On the other hand, the ban was instrumental in the revitalization of unauthorized construction.

It should be mentioned that unauthorized construction was carried out in Tyumen not only during the period studied here, but also for a number of years previously. Active migration of the rural population in the second half of the 1950s led to an increase in the number of unauthorized buildings. Especially widespread was unauthorized construction on the territory of suburban villages. It was easier to build individual houses outside the city, as in rural areas control over public and private buildings was more lax than in cities. The development of villages, in most cases, was carried out without any coherent plan [13; 99, 100]. Within the period under study, a significant number of suburban areas were absorbed by the city. For instance, the villages of the shipbuilding factory — Vodnikov village, as well as Parfyonova and Novye Yurty villages. By the time of their inclusion in the city territory, they had been built up with one-storey wooden houses. This situation diminished the difference between the rural and city area. The territory of the city broke down into a number of urban areas that were significantly different from one another in terms of improvement and quality of life.

In the mid-1950s and mid-1960s, the “dissociation” of the urban space started to gradually diminish with the appearance of new multi-storey houses. It should be noted that two most significant factors contributed to this process. The first of these was activation

---

of state policy in the sphere of housing construction. It led to a significant increase in funding and strengthened the material base of the construction industry, which ultimately affected both the quantity and quality of housing in the city. Secondly, in 1959 a new city plan was drafted which was aimed at high-rise building development in Tyumen and became the basis for the development of new well-equipped urban areas.

Unfortunately, the Tyumen Statistics Inspectorate does not have complete data, but those that are available show an increase in the percentage of public housing built annually in relation to overall urban development [14]. Thus, while in 1956 public housing construction amounted to 60%, in 1965 more than 97% of house construction was carried out by the state. On the whole, for the period between 1956 and 1965, public housing in Tyumen increased more than 6 times.

Thus, housing construction became an effective measure of social support. For the first time not only did the state commit itself to providing people with housing, but it also significantly improved citizens' quality of life by means of relocating people from old wooden houses to new flats equipped with all kinds of amenities. Industrialization and housing construction price reduction put the construction of houses "on the conveyor system", which made the prospect of house acquisition more real for many people. At the same time, the principle of economy applied to housing clearly manifested itself in a number of architectural and design features of the new houses.

During the period under study, the most widespread types of houses in Tyumen were standard brick or panel/ sectional four- or five-storey houses (series 1-447 and 1-464). They were almost identical in layout. The houses contained one-, two- or three-bedroom flats 2.5 meters high with an average area of 28 to 57 square meters. The flats also had lavatory-cum-bathroom facilities, which created some inconveniences for residents. Both panel and brick blocks of flats lacked lifts and rubbish chutes. Brick buildings, however, in comparison with panel houses, had better sound and thermal insulation, but panel house construction was more economical and, if ready-made parts were available, could be carried out within a shorter period of time.

The technology of brick and panel house construction was for a long time in a stage of development, which adversely affected the quality of buildings and caused residents' dissatisfaction. Builders did not use pile foundations in house construction, which led to basements being flooded by groundwater. The main administrative building of Tyumen — the House of the Soviets — was also subject to constant floods. A large number of articles about the poor quality of construction were published in the local press. Thus, in June 1965 the newspaper *The Tyumen Truth* noted, "When a lucky resident moves into a new flat, he/she is overwhelmed with joy; their excitement starts vanishing very soon, though, when they are confronted with the bitter truth of real life. In fact, it's hard to smile when one sees ill-fitting floors, cracked window frames, warped doorposts, and window panes that are impossible to open without some tools" [15].

The rapid transition to the construction of multi-storey buildings gradually began to form a new image of the city. If in 1957 mostly one-storey wooden houses were built, by 1959 the volume of stone and brick construction began to dominate, and in

1964 the city predominantly focused on building typical four/five-storey stone, brick and panel houses [16; 119, 120, 135, 442]. Typical houses placed in strict accordance with detailed plans for specific areas contributed to the elimination of the chaos of low-rise wooden buildings in the city. At the same time, filling Tyumen with grey “boxy” houses did not add architectural expressiveness to the image of the city and, in many respects, “depersonalized” Tyumen architecture.

The main complex of high-rise residential buildings was located on vacant territories in the south-eastern and western parts of Tyumen, in the industrial area. In this area the foundation of new micro-districts began, which, along with residential buildings, included such social and cultural institutions as kindergartens, schools, shops, cinemas, etc. Thus, in December 1962 at a meeting of the Technical Council of the Institute “Tyumenproekt”, a project for the development of a new micro-district near the worsted mill, the largest district in the south-eastern part of the city, was approved. Its area was to be more than 40 hectares, 29 of which were to be devoted to residential buildings. Along with the predominance of residential development in the form of five-storey buildings, a unique feature of this area was the appearance of the first four nine-storey buildings. 14,250 people were expected to reside in this micro-district. It was planned to build a vocational college, two schools, kindergartens, hospitals, a musical school, a number of shops and two shopping centers there [17; 4-10]. The project was supposed to start in 1963, and was expected to be completed in 1965. Within these three years, however, only a few buildings were erected; the main complex of the district was completed several years later.

Within the period under study, along with the construction of residential complexes in the south-eastern and western parts of Tyumen, the development of the city went in many other directions. Thus, at the end of 1960 the “Giprotorf” Institute developed a project for the construction of Zarechny district in the north of the regional centre, near Torfyannik village.

The project of Zarechny district covered an area of 515 hectares, which was planned to be built up over the period of 10-15 years. It was decided to create 12 micro-districts, including the village of the ship-repairing plant. The 12 micro-districts were lined with four/five storey houses. The project involved the deployment of large-panel construction. In each of the micro-districts it was planned to create a wide range of social and cultural facilities, shops and stores. Zarechny district was designed to accommodate 29,600 people [18; 29-33]. The designers took care of the architectural image of the district. To overcome the monotony and uniformity of the typical houses, it was decided to carry out asymmetrical construction of the streets of Zarechny district. “The simple architecture of the buildings, which are also sparsely laid out, the light-colored facades, a lot of greenery will give the area its charming look”; thus the author of the project, the architect Kolker saw the future of the city [19].

In the mid-1950s, most of the buildings in the city centre were one-storey wooden houses. Stone mansions built by renowned Tyumen merchants in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries and thereafter adapted for social and cultural facilities “diluted” wooden urban architecture of the city centre. In 1959, the city plan involved reconstruction

of a number of streets in the centre of Tyumen by means of demolition of the old and low-value housing. The city authorities, however, were very cautious about the issue of erecting buildings in the centre of Tyumen. "Reconstruction of the city centre is a very attractive, but also a very difficult undertaking. At the moment we cannot afford to demolish all the old buildings and build new ones. All is good in good time. We now plan to build at empty sites or areas where demolition of old buildings won't do any harm", thus the chief architect Grinenko described the situation in Tyumen in September 1964 [20]. The Tyumen statistical data indicate that in 1962-1965 about 17,000 square meters of dwelling space in the city was demolished, while 13 times more houses were built [21; 1, 156, 175a, 195]. Along with this, 180-200 buildings in Tyumen were annually repaired. In their memoirs, citizens of Tyumen describe large amounts of reconstruction and redecoration in those years, "[...] practically everything was being repaired back then. Even those houses which didn't need reconstruction or redecoration were renovated anyway", says E. Pakhvitsevich\*.

Lack of territories for erecting new houses contributed to the fact that in the mid-1960s within the already built-up urban areas high-rise buildings began to emerge. However, the main complex of low-rise buildings remained intact for a long time, thus forming a unique combination of "the old" and "the new" within the territory of the city.

In general, it should be noted that in the mid-1950s / mid-1960s, house construction contributed to major qualitative changes in the dwelling space of the townspeople. Individual construction with gardens and vegetable patches sprawled along city streets gave the city a traditional rustic look; however, by the end of the period under study, Tyumen had gradually lost its rural character. On the other hand, in the 1950s the construction of high-rise buildings was often delayed and only in the mid-1960s did construction volume increase significantly. This situation contributed to the formation of the image of "a city under eternal construction", a city that was experiencing constant renovation and updating.

Not only did the erection of complexes of high-rise buildings create a new image of Tyumen, but it also led to the transformation of a number of other components of the urban environment, which significantly increased the level of improvement of the regional centre, and affected the quality of life of the urban population.

Free housing for people became possible not only as a reward for good work, but also as the result of implementation of the state's social obligations to people. The slogan "A separate flat for each family" outlined the transition from the extended patriarchal family united by a common way of life within one and the same house to the modern nuclear family, each generation of which was to have its own living space. Such changes significantly affected the psychology of subsequent generations.

The fact that citizens were given an opportunity to live in their own comfortable flats not only provided them with a gift of privacy, but also helped them break free from the ideological pressure of the state. Customization of living space was a good opportunity

---

\* E.N. Pakhvitsevich's Memoirs, written by the author (born in 1940).

for protection from the impact of the social environment. The emergence of “personal space” contributed to the emergence of detachment from public life, making the barrier between “private” and “public” more distinct in the minds of citizens.

## REFERENCES

1. Glazychev, V.L. The cultural potential of the city. *Kul'tura goroda: problemy kachestva gorodskoj sredy — The culture of the city: quality problems of the urban environment*. Moscow, 1986.
2. Minjushev, A.I. Social'naja antropologija [Social anthropology]. Moscow, 2009.
3. Bukin, S.S. *Opyt social'no-bytovogo razvitiya gorodov Sibiri (vtoraja polovina 1940–1950-e gg.)* [The experience of welfare of Siberian cities (the second half of 1940s–1950s)]. Novosibirsk, 1991.
4. Bukin, S.S., Dolgoljuk, A.A., Isaev, V.I. Timoshenko, A.I. The socio-cultural adaptation of the population of Siberia in an urbanizing (1930s–1980s). *Opyt reshenija zhilishhnoj problemy v gorodah Sibiri v XX—nachale XXI vv. — The experience in solving the housing problem in the cities of Siberia in the XX century—in the beginning of the XXI century*. Novosibirsk, 2008.
5. Composed and calculated by: *Gosudarstvennoe bjudzhetnoe uchrezhdenie Tjumenskoj oblasti «Gosudarstvennyj arhiv Tjumenskoj oblasti» (GBUTO GATO)* [The State Institution of the Tyumen Region «State Archive of the Tyumen region» (SITR SATR)]. F. 698. D. 1. C. 225. L. 76a, 80; C. 248. L. 5, 76, 77; C. 260. L. 1, 31, 33, 52, 54, 86, 87, 131, 132, 133; C. 323. L. 5; C. 336. L. 5, L. 36; C. 345. L. 68, 70, 81, 82.
6. Mordvintceva, A.V. *Poslevoennaja gorodskaja povsednevnost': Tjumen' i tjumency v 1945–1953 gg.* Diss. kand. (Postwar urban daily: Tyumen and its population in 1945–1953. Cand. Diss.). Tyumen, 2010.
7. *GBUTO GATO* [SITR SATR]. F. 698. D. 1. C. 254.
8. Compiled by: *GBUTO GATO* [SITR SATR]. F. 698. D. 1. C. 265. L. 9, 47, 95, 130, 207, 208; C. 332. L. 1, 156, 175a.
9. The memories of Safronova, Z.P. (1933 b.y.), written by the author.
10. The memories of Pahvitsevitich, E.N. (1940 b.y.), written by the author.
11. *Tjumenskaja pravda* [The Tyumen Truth]. 1956. The 17<sup>th</sup> of March.
12. *Tjumenskaja pravda* [The Tyumen Truth]. The 26<sup>th</sup> of June.
13. Dolgoljuk, A.A. The individual housing in Siberia in 1946–1970. *Opyt reshenija zhilishhnoj problemy v gorodah Sibiri v XX—nachale XXI vv. — The experience in solving the housing problem in the Siberian cities in XX century—in the beginning of the XXI century*. Novosibirsk, 2008.
14. Compiled by: *GBUTO GATO* [SITR SATR]. F. 759. D. 1. C. 215. L. 2, 3; C. 247. L. 2, 3; F. 698. D. 1. C. 332. L. 1, 156, 175a, 195.
15. *Tjumenskaja pravda* [The Tyumen Truth]. The 6<sup>th</sup> of June.
16. *GBUTO GATO* [SITR SATR]. D. 1. C. 250, 300.
17. *GBUTO GATO* [SITR SATR]. F. 1888. D. 1. C. 106.
18. *GBUTO GATO* [SITR SATR]. C. 76.
19. *Tjumenskaja pravda* [The Tyumen Truth]. 1959. The 20<sup>th</sup> of June.
20. *Tjumenskaja pravda* [The Tyumen Truth]. 1964. The 27<sup>th</sup> of September.
21. *GBUTO GATO* [SITR SATR]. F. 698. D. 1. C. 332.