



Architecture

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Art Nouveau in Baku architecture





Baku. The latter half of the 19th century. The oil boom and the establishment of capitalism. Rapid growth of the city. These factors required a new “progressive” architecture and new qualified specialists. New architectural buildings were created by new generations of customers and architects.

The customers were oil producers, bankers and business people who visited and worked with European countries and often had offices there. The architects were a new generation of builders educated at the Academy of Arts in St. Petersburg and in Europe. This marked the emergence of a new period in the architecture of Baku, which replaced the traditional architecture, both public and residential buildings.

By the end of the 19th century, when classicism, baroque and gothic styles had firmly settled in the architecture of the city, a new style of Art Nouveau was introduced in Baku. Art Nouveau means “modern art”. It sought to fill everyday life with spirituality, elevating utilitarian objects to the status of masterpieces. The main features of the Art Nouveau style can be attributed to the desire to search for holistic architectural, design and decorative solutions. It is characterized by a craving for new and unique forms that convey the rhythms of life

and the predominance of plant ornaments.

These new concepts were later used by Baku architects who began to work with elements of the new style. Thus, it is safe to say that the Art Nouveau style came to Baku from Western Europe. Looking at the Art Nouveau buildings in Baku of that era, one can trace the connection between the social status of property owners and the style they chose. It was the demanding tastes of customers that led to the appearance of completely new types and functions of buildings in Baku, such as public assemblies, clubs, educational institutions, industrial enterprises, banks and residential buildings.

The Art Nouveau style appeared in Baku in the late 1880s. Despite its relatively short existence, Art Nouveau left a significant trace in the architecture of Baku. There are about 80 buildings with the use of the art nouveau style in Baku. This style was mostly manifested in the details of façades, where floral motifs were used on balcony railings, window and door coverings.

Ten years later, the Art Nouveau style was used beyond façades, in interior design and space planning.

Studying the buildings of Baku city of this period, one can see a clear connection between the social status of the customer and the chosen style. Thanks to the



customers, new types of buildings and new functions appeared in Baku – clubs for public meetings, educational institutions, banks, profit houses and industrial enterprises. The Art Nouveau style was reflected in all these buildings and structures.

While Art Nouveau was mainly reflected in the details of façades and interiors of residential buildings, in public buildings it extended to space planning and constructive solutions.

The regional peculiarities are reflected in the use of the local building material limestone, while façade details and ornaments are made by carving on local limestone.

Art Nouveau, which appeared and disappeared quite unnoticed, left behind some amazingly beautiful buildings that still adorn the cityscape and inspire architects to tirelessly search for innovative solutions. Art Nouveau was the only style in which property owners and architects could express their love of life. Even if they refrained from showing it on the building façade, they did so in the interiors of the apartments. This may well have been the reason, where the façades of buildings are in the style of classicism and the interiors of the premises in the Art Nouveau style.



One of the priorities of Azerbaijan's cultural policy is the preservation of cultural heritage, including all Art Nouveau buildings. They are under the state protection,

taking into account the requirements of the UNESCO Declaration on the Preservation of the Art Nouveau Architecture, Turin, 1994. 🌿



















