Settlements- Gardens at the Absheron Peninsula

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Abstract:

One can mentions that at the beginning of the XX-th century works on gardening weren’t performed at suburbs of the city of Baku – i.e. on the Absheron peninsula, Thus the huge gap was formed between living conditions of the population lived in the downtown and on its periphery. The model of the garden- city and the garden- settlement developed in England by E. Howard was accepted as the best method of gardening of the city neighborhood. Absheron’s climatic and soil conditions gave the chance for cultivation there not only plants of a temperate zone, but subtropical cultures as well. However when realizing an idea of the garden city, the changes concerning an arrangement of the parks were made to it. Circular parks were substituted for wedged parks, as giving inflow of external clean air. Territory in the east part of the peninsula was used for creation of settlements gardens. The researches made in this direction led to creation of the projects of settlements Bibi-Eybat, Binagady, Sabunchy, Zabrat, etc. Each settlement was projected for the population of 12000 people, without any agricultural belt, with system of wedged parks. Public buildings settled down in the parks. Thus, the huge part was assigned to improvement of an urban environment by construction of the parks, gardens and boulevards in the center of Baku turning into the garden city. Extensive works on gardening of the new working settlements- gardens located around Baku were carrying out as well. Such evergreen and deciduous trees and bushes as a lilac Indian, a stone oak, a magnolia etc. were planted in the gardens and parks. It is of great importance that the arisen settlements gardens were well thought complete architectural and landscape complexes. The wide range of wood and shrubby plants corresponding to local climatic features of Absheron was used in green construction of these settlements.

Key Terms: settlements-gardens, garden cities, Baku, Absheron peninsula, park.

Introduction:

Transformation of Baku into the largest petroindustrial center of Russia In the XIX century promoted dynamic transformations of planning system of the city and of its landscape architecture. First green zones had appeared in the central regions of the city- the Mikhaylovsky garden (Figure 1), Mariinsky (Figure 2), Tsitsianovsky squares. Gardening of the city was accompanied by great difficulties. It was caused by difficult climatic conditions of Baku, and also by some social and economic reasons.

But if in Baku works on gardening and squares construction, on cultivation of their green plantings were carried out with great difficulty, works on gardening weren’t performed at all on city suburbs. The huge gap between population living conditions in the city - the center and on its periphery was formed (Fatullayev 1978). The project of
settlements in Bailov and Kishla regions was developed in 1915. Three settlements were
designed the same year: in Sabunchi, Zabrat and Bibi-Heybate. These settlements were
projected on a usual schema of the Russian
cities. However design of such settlements
deprieved of gardens and squares at the
beginning of the XX century was inadmissible.
It was impossible to make projects without
satisfying modern requirements of sanitation
and city planning. Developed in England by
E.Howard type of the garden- city and the
garden- settlement was the best concept of
that time.

The idea of creation of garden- cities began to
find its real embodiment in Azerbaijan in the
20th years. The preparatory work on creation
of garden- cities began on the Absheron
peninsula during these years. First of all were
studied E.Howard's works (1898) that ideas
had crucial importance for creation of working
colonies as garden cities in Europe (Figure 3).

English publicist E.Howard wrote the book
"Garden-cities of Tomorrow" in 1893.
According to him the density is the main harm
of the modern city and therefore Howard
absolutely destroyed the center, placing there
an extensive park. He directed the main artery
of the city transport in the form of a ring
around this park, receiving instead of a point a
circle of big diameter from where radical
streets dispersed. He placed public, cultural
and educational buildings in the
central park; inhabited houses settled down on radiuses
and concentric circular streets. There were
five such circular streets. One of them named
"Main Avenue" ("The main circular street").

Figure 3. The group of cities- gardens by E.Govard. Figure 4. City- garden for 100 thousand inhabitants by E.Govard.

According to Howard's principle garden- city
was placed in the territory 1/6 of which
intended for the city and 5/6 - for an
agricultural belt. The number of inhabitants of
the garden city shouldn't exceeded 32000 people. The development of the city come to
the end when the population reached to limit,
the new city should be created by the same
principle. All garden cities formed by such way
connected to each other by means of the
transport line having the main branch from
each city to the industrial center. Except
external transportation, the transport
connection was widely developed inside the
garden cities as well (Figure 4).

The idea of creation of garden- cities got from
England to Germany where several cities-
gardens were created very soon. Realising the
idea of the garden- city planning in other
countries of Europe some changes took the
place concerning mainly arrangements of the
parks. Ring parks were subject to be refused
almost everywhere, preferring them the parks
created on maple system, as giving inflow of
external clean air. All lands where dwellings
of workers were constructed were only in
short-term rent in the Baku petroindustrial
region during the pre-revolutionary period.
The majority of the buildings intended for the
dwelling of workers were constructed for
short-term usage. There was almost no house with an individual garden on the crafts. The territory intended for the construction of gardens-cities of the first stage (pasture lands of the former city self-government) could be used under a garden, parks and crops. Climatic and soil conditions of the district gave broad possibilities for cultivation not only plants of a moderate belt, but also such subtropical cultures as olive, a pistachio, a fig, the laurels, some species of palm trees, etc.

The only obstacle to use these lands under crops and green plantings was lack of the cheap fresh water necessary for watering. With carrying out a «shollar» water supply system the question of an irrigation of lands considerably became simpler, water became subject to be received from a water supply system. It was planned to use valuable plants here that could give plentiful crops demanding not much water (Fatullayev 1986).

Ornamental plants as a poplar, a pyramidal cypress, an acacia, a camellia, karagach, a plane tree, a rose, a dahlia, a carnation, a sage, a geranium, a camomile, a violet etc. well got accustomed on the Absheron peninsula. It was possible to carry out improvement of a housing for the working class occupied with production in the Baku industrial region in two ways: by re-planning of existing quarters and reorganization of dwellings or by creation of new settlements. The searches made in this direction led to creation of numerous projects for Bibi-Heybat, Binagady, Sabunchi and Zabrat settlements. The principle of quarters-gardens was put in the basis of their design.

Binagady, Bibi-Heybat and Sabunchi settlements were designed for service of oil fields. Settlements were designed for the population of 12000 people each one as garden-cities without an agricultural belt and with system of maple parks. Public buildings-schools, clubs, libraries, theaters, etc. settled down in the central park. Buildings- offices, warehouses, masterful, laundries were placed on the suburb. House type- a cottage in 2 floors with the individual garden. The cost of settlements was estimated chipper in comparison with data of construction of English garden-cities. Costs of green plantings, gardens and kitchen gardens made only about 3% from all cost of working settlements planning.

The settlement for the workers on the station of Electric force in the White city was designed for 150-200 families (Figure 5). It was projected so that not less than 80 sq.m of the area were the share of each inhabitant of the settlement. The developed master plan provided increase of the settlement by addition of two streets - boulevards along which 38 houses with the gardens can be built. Calculations of work cost were made according to English data of construction of garden cities.
To solve the question of assignment of suitable for agriculture lands at the Absheron peninsula, its territory was divided into three strips: 1) east part of the peninsula - suitable for cultivation of crops; 2) unsuitable for crops, oil-bearing; 3) northwest part of the peninsula unsuitable due to the lack of fresh water. So places suitable for creation of garden cities were planned. One of the appropriate places for garden cities was suitable for agricultural culture territory about 100 sq.km around the city of Baku. It was a beautiful sublime place, going down to the sea by terraces, placed in the centre of the crafts. Territory in eastern part of the peninsula was planned as reserve for garden-cities. All existed construction at the northeastern coasts of the Absheron peninsula was temporarily stopped and these places were outlined to be used for construction of garden-cities in the future.

The special attention was paid to questions of perspective population of Baku and garden-cities of the Absheron peninsula. There were about 201300 inhabitants in the city of Baku in 1920; it was supposed that 445000 people will live in the city in 1935. It was supposed to leave 200000 people to live in the city of Baku broadened with that calculation that 60 sq.m. were the share of 1 inhabitant. And 250000 inhabitants made the population of garden cities which will be located round the city.

About 120 sq.m were provided on one inhabitant in Absheron's garden-cities. Thus, the chosen territory would satisfy housing requirement for many years. In Lechvort that was an example, the norm was 240 sq.m on the person was accepted because many places in this city was taken by gardens and kitchen gardens. It was supposed to refuse big garden economy in Baku because of restriction in water. Reservation of the big area was inexpedient in a view of the sandy soil and strong winds. The huge role was given to improvement of an urban environment by construction of parks, gardens and boulevards in historical structure of Baku, and by carrying out extensive works on gardening of the new working settlements- gardens located around it. The concept of creation of garden-cities on Absheron, formations of well-planned green settlements around Baku assumed a radical reorganization of a green zone of the capital city, the organization of the interconnected landscape gardening ensembles in its planning system.

In the outline sketch of re-planning of Baku made by professor A.P.Ivanitsky together with professor V.A.Vesnin green plantings
were planned in the form of the ring and being crossed by boulevards with width about 25-50 m (Figure 6). They could play a role of convenient connections at the same time. Number of closely lying and crossing boulevards for protection of the city against a dust brought by a northeast wind dominating here, was planned in the northeast of the city. Number of park plantings on places of the former dumps was planned except boulevards. Creation of green strips between White and Black cities, intensive gardening of residential areas of historical part of the city was planned as well. However due to the lack of finances and a lack of fresh water realization of the idea of the garden-city on the peninsula was postponed until full revival of economic life of the country (Efendisade 1986).

![Figure 6. Schema of the general planning of Baku city and of the Azneft settlements by A.Ivanitskiy, A.Vesnin and V.Vesnin, 1925](image)

After a socialist revolution in the 1920-th years Azerbaijan was the first country in the East where the idea of the garden-city began to find the concrete embodiment. Large-scale works on construction of working settlements that in fact represented small garden-cities were developed on the Absheron peninsula. Typical for Absheron coniferous breeds was gained a big distribution in settlements-gardens: Eldars pine, cypresses pyramidal and horizontal, a thuja east; it should be noted European olive and an oleander from the evergreen deciduous.

The nursery of ornamental wood and shrubby plants created in 1923 had great value for gardening of settlements-gardens of Absheron. State flower farm was created later in a residential suburb of Baku, on the northern coas of Absheron. It began to provide city with flower soil plants. Thanks to long-term work in the field of an production of subtropical wood and shrubby plants the available range of a landing material was gradually enriched. Evergreen and other trees and bushes started landing in the gardens and squares. One could say that there were not green plantings on the streets of Baku in the past, but it began to turn gradually into the garden-city. The landscape architecture of Baku wasn't rather developed yet and didn't support the problems of transformation of Baku to the blossoming garden-city.

Well planted settlement-garden approximately on 8 thousand inhabitants was constructed in 1923-1925 in Binagady (Figure 7). Small, but also densely planted with trees and shrubs settlements New Romany, Artem and named after Vorovskiy, each one
approximately on 4 thousand inhabitants arose in 1925-1926. The settlements-gardens were workers were created in the White city, Surakhany, Zabrat, Shubany and other places of oil production during 1923-1929

The settlement of Bakikhanov (25 thousand people), which was allocated with the free solution of the plan and with plentiful homestead gardening, was the largest both on gardening scales, and on population (Figure 8).

Settlement Eni-Surakhany constructed in 1930 (12 thousand people), settlements in Lokbatan (10 thousand people) and in Bina (5 thousand people) constructed in 1932-1934 were created according to the typical scheme of garden-cities with the certain changes caused by need of compliance to local traditions and climatic conditions. Many of the created settlements-gardens joined subsequently landscape planning system of the capital city of Baku.

Building and gardening of the inhabited massif of Mamedyarov is of special importance in huge on scale settlement construction of that time. Quarters of this settlement had house adjoining front gardens where trees, bushes and flowers were planted. Sites of public buildings were subject to gardening as well: kindergartens, schools, shops, etc. All this allowed to consider the settlement of Mamedyarov as one of the model examples of the landscape solution of residential areas. Green plantings not only framed its streets, but also filled considerable part of well organized intra quarter spaces.

Unlike the settlement of Mamedyarov having a little monotonous system of inhabited quarters, in the settlement of Bakikhanov, there is no compulsory isolation of quarter decisions and instead of the same blocks there is a considerable variety. Here prevails the free solution of the plan that gives to this settlement-garden some picturesqueness and a variety. Magnificent greens of the homestead gardens, rich street gardening in combination with well-planned central park turn this part of the city of Baku to one of the most ecologically favorable and healthy in the sanitary relation. The northwest suburb of Baku of that time which absolutely was not planted at all, with waste grounds, became one of the most considerable, promptly planted districts of the city, having begun development of a top terrace of the city amphitheater, so-called Mountain plateau (Figure 9). In the center of the new area, perpendicularly to the main highway, the spacious, well planted boulevard was constructed with large well planted houses built up from both sides.
Conclusions:

Value of the network of working settlements-gardens created in those hard years isn’t limited by only the great scale of the green construction. It is of great importance that the constructed settlements-gardens, in particular the largest of them- of Bakikhanov, of Mamedyarov, etc., were well thought complete architectural and landscape complexes. The wide range of wood and shrubby plants which is most corresponding to local climatic features of Baku and Absheron was used in green construction of these settlements. One should note as well the landscape and town-planning bases in the green construction: connection of the created settlements-gardens with boulevards and city parks; gardening of the streets and creation of the green massifs around public buildings: clubs, cinemas, schools, child care facilities and the shops subsequently rolling in magnificent greens of plants.

References

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