



**Sevan Writers' Resort**

# **Conservation Management Plan**



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The Sevan Writers' Resort Conservation Management Plan has been developed by **urbanlab**, commissioned by the **Writers' Union of Armenia** with the financing of the **Getty Foundation's Keeping It Modern** initiative, within the scope of the Sevan Writers' Resort Conservation Management Plan Development and Scientific Restoration Project.

The project was initiated and elaborated by **Ruben Arevshatyan** and **Sarhat Petrosyan**.

**urbanlab** is a Yerevan-based independent urban think-do-share lab, aimed to promote democratization of urban landscape toward sustainable development in its broader understanding.



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The Getty Foundation

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Special thanks to Amatuni Virabyan, Mkrtich Minasyan, Argam Karamyan, Karen Babayan



## Archives

Archive of the Russian Academy of Science, Moscow  
National Archives of Armenia, Yerevan  
National Library of Armenia, Yerevan  
National Museum-Institute of Architecture after A. Tamanyan, Yerevan  
Russian State Cinema and Photo Archive, Krasnogorsk  
Shchusev Museum of Architecture, Moscow  
TASS Archive, Moscow

### Private Archives:

Artak Kalantaryan private family archive  
Artashes Emin Private Archive  
Artsvin Grigoryan Archive  
Nairi Zarian private family archive  
Mikayel Mazmanyanyan Archive  
Tamar Hovhannissyan private family archive  
Vahagn Davtyan and Henrik Mamyan's private family archives

## **Abbreviations**

SWR - Sevan Writers' Resort

CMP – Conservation Management Plan

Complex - Residence Hall and Lounge Building

UNESCO - United Nations Education, Science and Cultural Organization

KIM - Keeping It Modern

RA - Republic of Armenia

MoC - Ministry of Culture

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# 1. Introduction

After its collapse, the Soviet empire left an enormously rich and incredibly diverse architectural heritage, which echoed various historical periods such as the revolutionary epoch of the 1920s and the early 30s' avant-garde, the Stalinist style, post WW2 Soviet Modernism, and postmodern architecture that preceded the decline of the system.

Despite the fact that after gaining their independence the post-Soviet nations took significantly different directions in their development, which led to different political systems with different economic situations, social structures and cultural contexts, attitudes towards the architectural heritage of the Soviet period have been extremely problematic and ambiguous everywhere. Right after gaining independence, in early post-Soviet collective thinking the various layers of Soviet architecture began to be perceived and interpreted negatively as remnants of a political system the people had recently disposed of. Later on, that attitude turned into a subject of complex manipulations on the cultural level by post-Soviet savage neocapitalist political and economic systems, with the aim of reshaping the urban warp of still soviet cities as a logical continuation of the denationalization process of public property, spaces and edifices.

It took a while (almost 20 years) for counter-discourses to emerge from professional and intellectual circles. This discourse claimed those strata as cultural and historical heritage, calling for their protection. It gradually began to influence not only the collective thinking but also the tendencies in cultural policies and urban development processes. Unfortunately, by that time, many of those buildings, among which there were genuine architectural masterpieces, had already been removed from the lists of historical and cultural monuments, demolished or altered beyond recognition.

The 27000 listed immobile historical and cultural monuments that currently exist in the territory of Armenia do not, in fact, give a true picture of the country's tangible heritage. More specifically, the lists do not include samples or territories of heritage from the modern period (starting from the second half of the 19th century); neither do they include modernist structures.

In 2010, after the public outcry and protests over the demolition of the Open-air Theatre of Cinema Moscow in Yerevan, a unique period of re-evaluation of Armenian modernist heritage seemed to have begun. The success of this movement and the continuous issues related to the preservation of similar buildings prompted people interested in the preservation of this heritage to switch from reactive actions to a more proactive stance, to exclude delayed actions against already accepted decisions on demolitions and modifications of such buildings.

The fact that there was an individual proprietor and the complexity of the dialogue around the re-use of the Open-air Theatre produced the desire to submit other proposals for the revitalization of similar buildings, highlighting the significance of public property.

Compared to other listed monuments, the Sevan Writers' Resort has an advantage in terms of its ownership status, its popularity, and relatively intact condition.

Throughout the years following 2010, the Sevan Writers' Resort was often in the spotlight of international platforms.

Fortunately, back in 2015 an opportunity that a proposal be submitted to add the Sevan Writers' Resort to the list of buildings included in the third round of Keeping it Modern initiative of the Getty Foundation, presented itself. The importance of developing a Conservation Management Plan was specifically stressed. Not only has a Conservation Management Plan been developed for all the heritage sites included in the initiative over the past years, but it has also become an almost mandatory political document for protected territories of all types and scopes.

This was an exciting and desirable undertaking for us, as it would be the first time that such a document was developed in Armenia. Having gone through quite an interesting and somewhat long process, and having been discussed with over 20 experts and consultants, both in part and in whole, it is now ready to be submitted as the first ever Conservation Management Plan developed in and for Armenia, and also the first for a Soviet modernist structure.

In this proposal, based on the currently accessible historical, archival and factual material, we have attempted to put forward the requirements that will best promote the protection of this particular heritage site.

Naturally, this is not sufficient for the entire conservation process of the building. It must be followed by a detailed restoration design package, the uncovering of various layers in different sections of the building, as well as a number of steps necessary to fully understand the whole picture. However, in the future, it can and should serve as guidelines for the architects and other experts that may be involved in the restoration of the building, as well as for those who will be in charge of its maintenance later. Moreover, in view of the specificities of Armenia, unlike our other colleagues, we have also included a restoration proposal and management schemes for the future re-use of the building.

We are hopeful that this will serve as a perfect precedent for the proper preservation of this and numerous other buildings.

## 2. Info Sheet

**Full name:** Sevan Creativity House of the Writers' Union of Armenia or Sevan Writers' Resort

**Address:** Republic of Armenia, Sevan town, area of the Peninsula

Handed over to the Writers' Union of Armenia NGO with a property title on 26th February, 1999, real estate property registration certificate No. 017292. See the Property Registration Certificate in Appendix 1.

**Ownership:** Writers' Union of Armenia

Address: 3, Marshal Baghramyan Avenue, Yerevan 0019, Armenia

Tel: +374 10 563 811

Email: [info@wua.am](mailto:info@wua.am)

Web: [www.wua.am](http://www.wua.am)

The Writers' Union of Armenia is a public literary organization. It was founded in 1934 as a national branch of the USSR Writers' Union. After the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991, it was renamed Writer's Union of Armenia (a public literary, non-governmental organization).

It has 364 members living in Armenia, 42 members living in Artsakh, as well as 98 members and honorary members from the Armenian Diaspora. The Writers' Union is governed by the following elective bodies: the Board (47 members), the Directorate (21 members), the Chairman and two Secretaries. The supreme body is the Assembly, which convenes every four years. The Assembly elects the Chairman for a period of four years.

**Person in Charge:** Eduard Militonyan, Chairman of the Writers' Union of Armenia NGO

**Status:** The building is not included in the list of monuments protected by the state; however it is located within the area of the Sevan National Park, which is a special protected area.

A servitude is exercised over the area of the Complex, the land is designated as a health resort, with a total surface of 2063 square metres, of which 570 square metres are on the shore of Lake Sevan.

The buildings are the property of the Writers' Union of Armenia, and according to their registration certificate, are designated for public use, with a total surface of 918.34 square metres. There is also a boiler facility of 56.84 square metres. In total, according to the ownership certificate, the buildings and facilities occupy a territory of 975.18 square metres.

**Key Dates:**

1932 – The first design proposal of the Residence Hall building

1935 – The construction of the Residence Hall building is completed

1937 – The architects of the Sevan Resort's Residence Hall are arrested

1954 – The architects are rehabilitated

1963 – The design proposal for the reconstruction of the Residence Hall building and the new Lounge building

1968 – Construction of the entire Complex is completed

1980s-2000s – various alterations of the Residence Hall building of the Complex

**Architects:**

Residence Hall building – Gevorg Kochar, Mikayel Mazmanyán

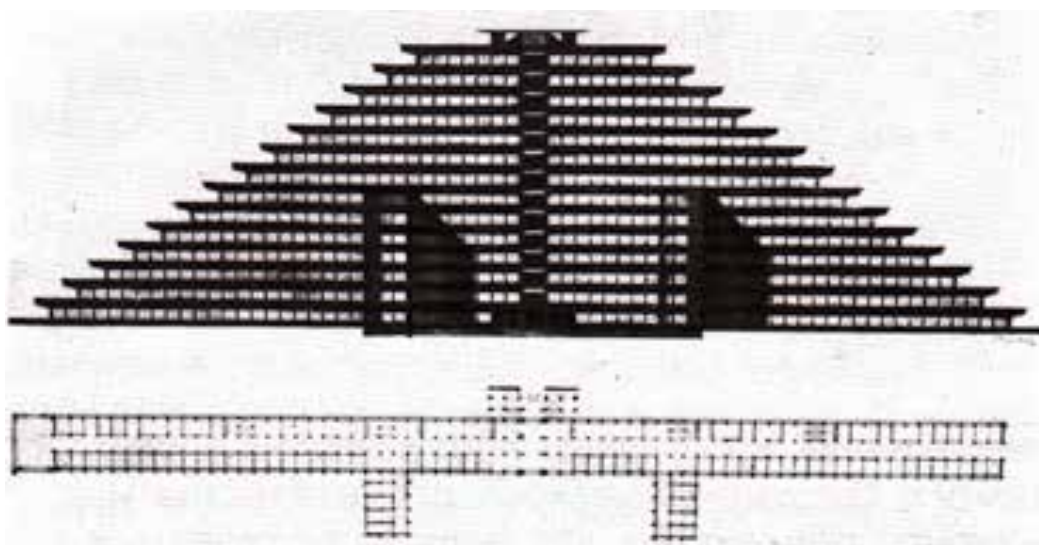
The Lounge and the reconstruction of the Residence Hall building – Gevorg Kochar

## 3. History

### 3.1. The Organization of Leisure and its Combination with Creative Activities in the Soviet Union

Leisure organization was one of the key aspects of the Soviet system from the very first years of its existence following the October revolution. In 1919, Lenin ratified the decree of the Council of People's Commissars of the RSFSR (Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic) on the nationalization of sanatorium and resort sites on the territory of the RSFSR. It was followed by the ratification of another decree in 1920 on the organization of sanatoriums and resorts. These decrees were among the first laws of post-revolutionary Russia, which regulated the establishment of the institution of resorts and sanatoriums in order to provide workers and employees with the opportunity to recover their health, strength and energy during their annual vacation period. The decree prescribed that the buildings of country villas of the pre-October revolution period, former landowners' estates, monasteries, etc. must be used for the needs of the resorts.

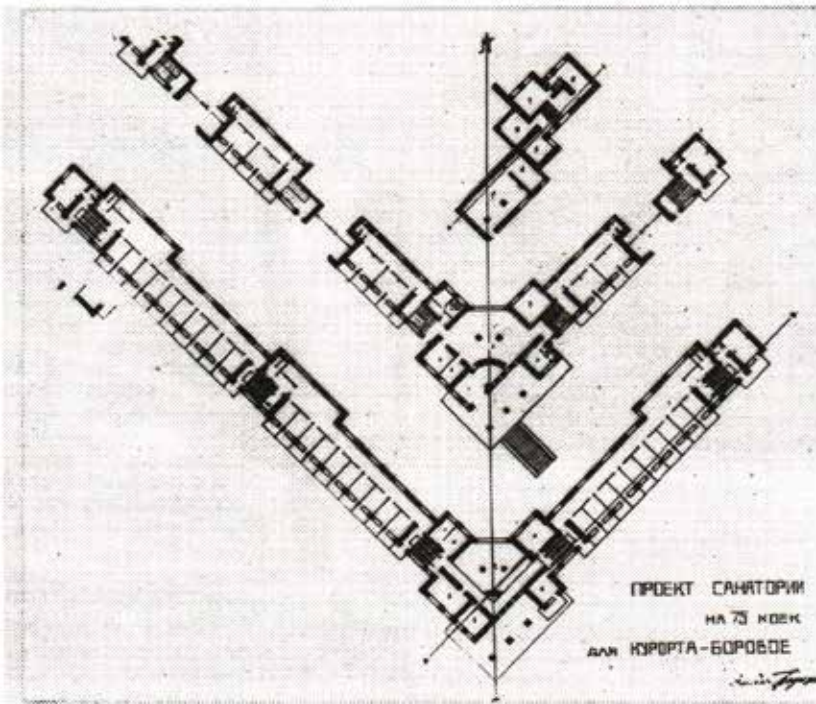
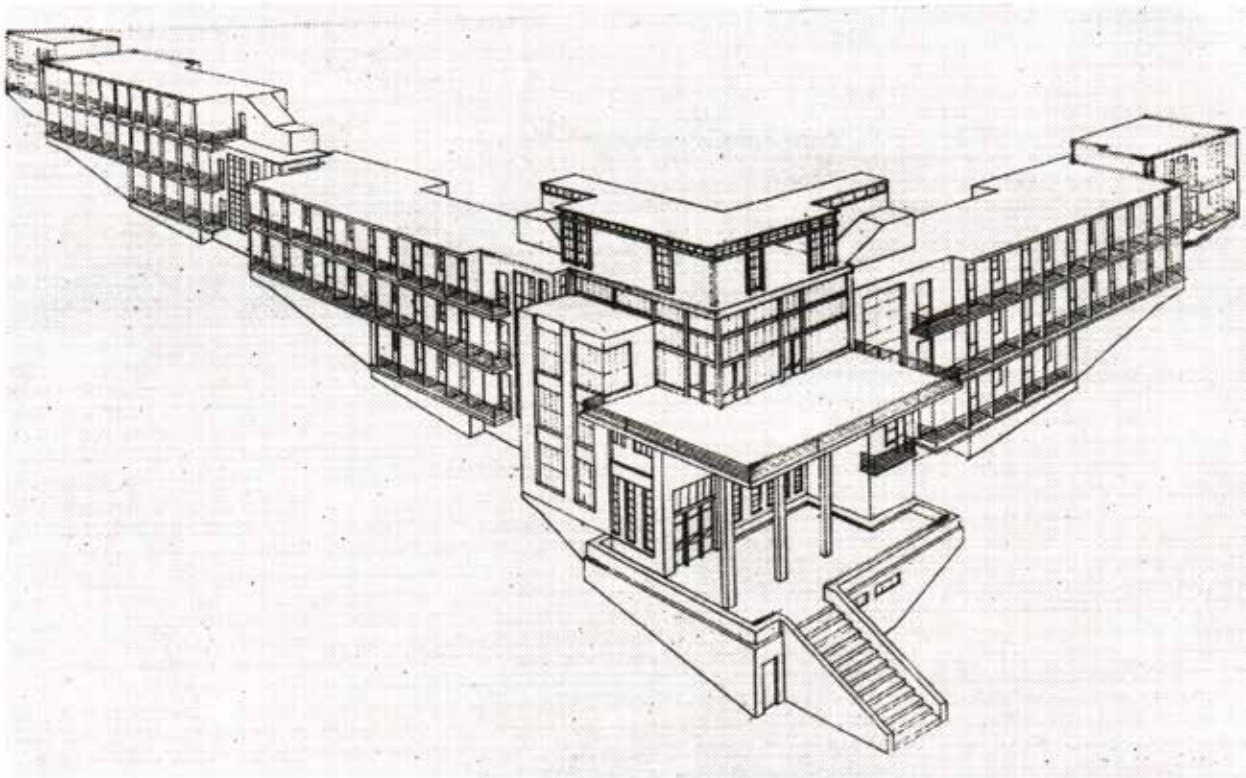
Development of the first architectural projects for health resorts and sanatoriums began in 1923-24. As usual, the development of new building typologies began on the experimental platforms of the architectural schools. The first projects of new resorts and sanatoriums were developed at the studios of MVTU (Moscow Higher Technical College) and VKHUTEMAS (Higher Art and Technical Studios), which were the major schools where soviet avant-garde was forged. The projects were led and consulted on by architects like L. Vesnin, A. Shchusev, M. Ginzburg, N. Ladovski, K. Melnikov and many other prominent masters of Soviet avant-garde. Parallel to the architectural schools, resorts were also being designed in newly organized architectural bureaus in practically all of the capitals of the Soviet republics.



**Picture 1.** Resort and Sanatorium for 500 people, VKHUTEMAS, 1925

**Architects:** M. Barsch, D. Shibaev, L. Teplitsky

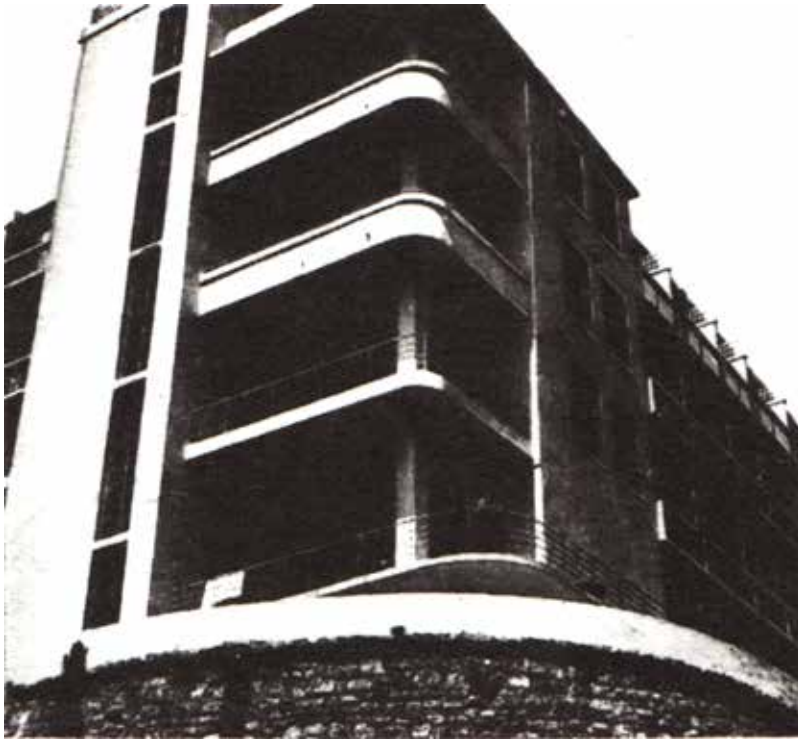
**Source:** S. Khan-Magometov, *Architecture of Soviet Avant-Garde, book 2, Social Problems*, Moscow Stroyizdat, 2001



**Picture 2.** Project of Sanatorium for Borovoe Resort, 1926

**Architects:** K. Halabyan, G. Gluschenko

**Source:** S. Khan-Magometov, *Architecture of Soviet Avant-Garde, book 2, Social Problems*, Moscow Stroyizdat, 2001



**Picture 3.** Sanatorium in Matsesta, 1927-1934  
**Architect:** A. Shchusev

**Source:** S. Khan-Magometov, *Architecture of Soviet Avant-Garde, book 2, Social Problems*, Moscow Stroyizdat, 2001



**Picture 4.** Touristic Base in a Mountainous Area, VKHUTEIN, 1928  
**Architect:** I. Kuzmin

**Source:** S. Khan-Magometov, *Architecture of Soviet Avant-Garde, book 2, Social Problems*, Moscow Stroyizdat, 2001



**Picture 5.** Sanatorium "Mountain Air" in Sochi, 1931

**Architects:** A. Vesnin, V. Vesnin

**Source:** A. Samoilov, *Sanatoriums and Resorts*, Publishing house of the Academy of Architecture of the USSR, Moscow, 1948



**Picture 6.** Sanatorium of the Ministry of the Oil Industry in Kislovodsk, 1938

**Architect:** M. Ginzburg

**Source:** A. Samoilov, *Sanatoriums and Resorts*, Publishing house of the Academy of Architecture of the USSR, Moscow, 1948



Later on, despite the changes of the political regime and the socio-economic situation in the Soviet Union, which were followed by conceptual and stylistic revisions in architectural approaches, the designing and construction of new buildings for resorts and sanatoriums continued to be one of the most important directions in Soviet architecture and urbanism, as the principle of wide accessibility of recreation and leisure was a significant component of the Soviet ideological establishment.



**Picture 7.** Resort of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Georgian SSR in Gagra, 1938

**Architect:** N. Severov

**Source:** Yu. Yaralov (scientific editor), *Architecture of Trans-Caucasian Republics*, National Publishing House of Architecture and Urban Development, Moscow, 1951

In the period between 1932 and 1935 when, according to the new policy proposed by Stalin, independent artistic and creative associations were banned and new centralized creative unions were established (such as the Union of Writers, Union of Architects, Union of Artists, Union of Composers), some of the health resorts and sanatoriums were granted to the newly established Creative Unions (associations), while at the same time taking on the additional function of a “Creativity House”. Creativity Houses could be compared to art residencies, organized and functioning under state patronage.



**Picture 8.** Sanatorium of the Leningrad Municipal Department of Healthcare, 1936

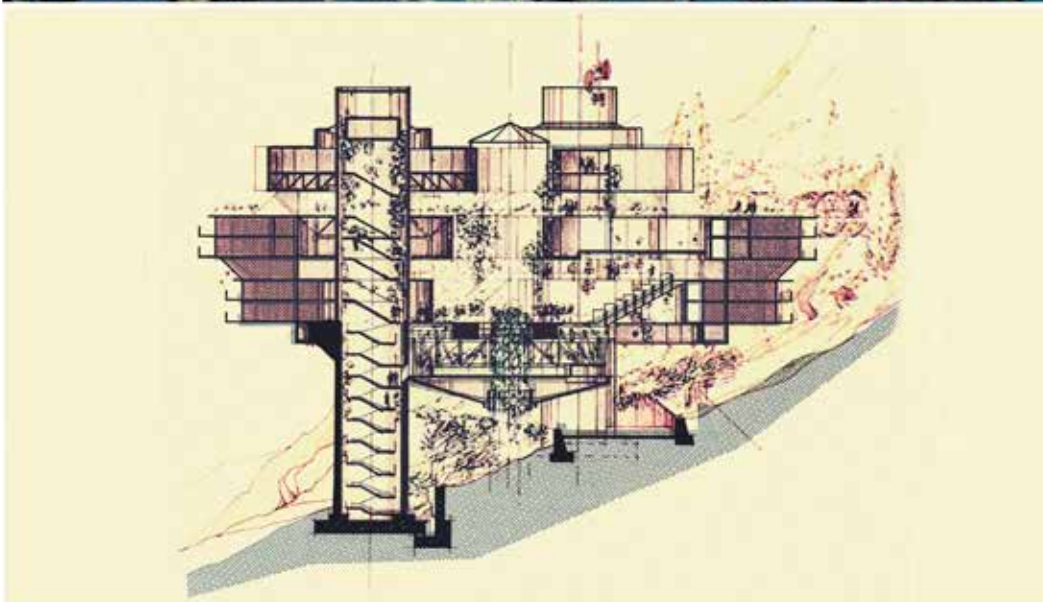
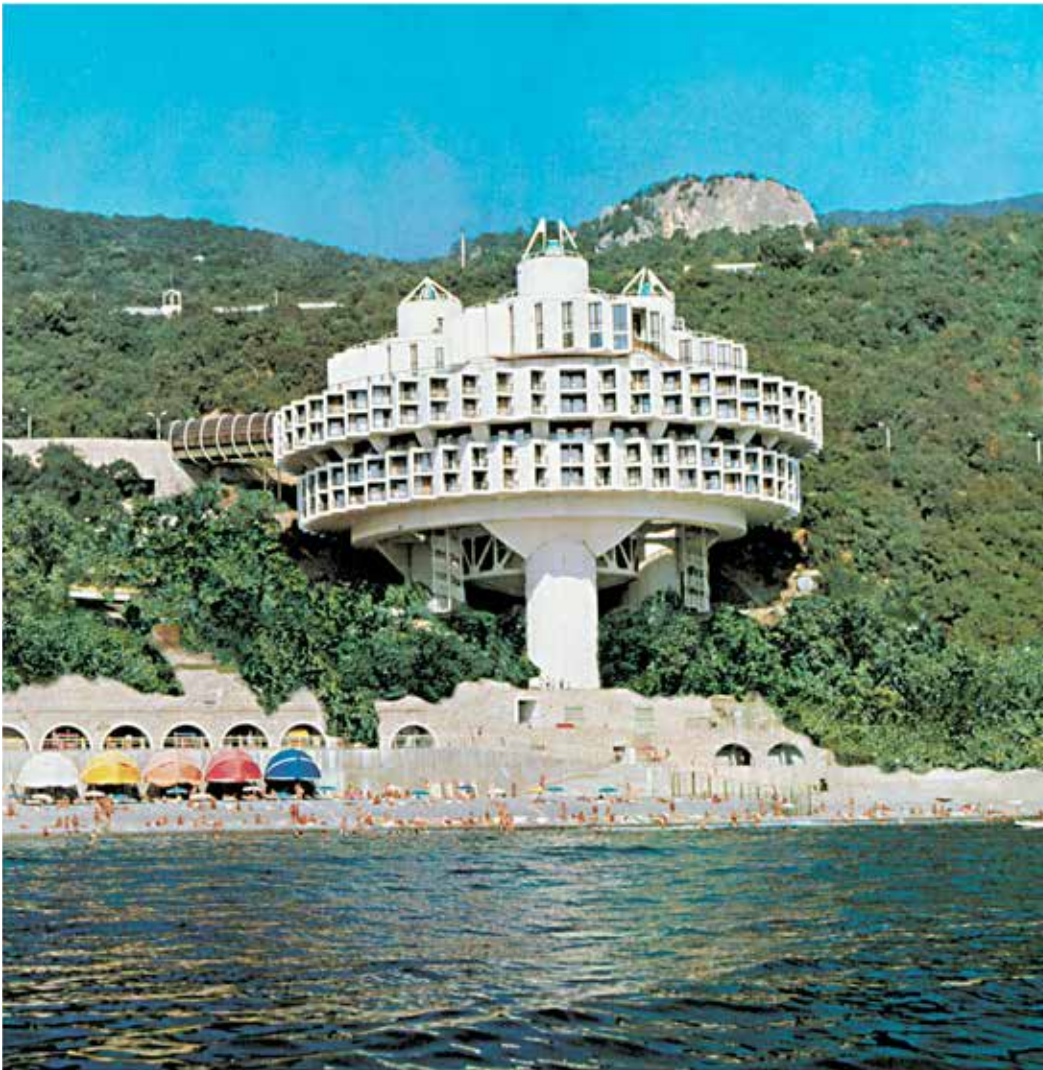
**Source:** A. Samoilov, *Sanatoriums and Resorts*, Publishing house of the Academy of Architecture of the USSR, Moscow, 1948



**Picture 9.** Sanatorium "Sochi" in Sochi, 1965

**Architects:** Y. Shvartsbreim, D. Lurie, M. Stuzhin, M. Shulmester

**Source:** F. Novikov, V. Belogolovsky (editors), *Soviet Modernism: 1955-1985*, TATLIN Publishers, Yekaterinburg, 2010



**Picture 10.** Sanatorium "Druzhba" in Yalta, 1985  
**Architects:** I. Vasilevsky, Y. Stefanchuk, V. Divnov, L. Kesler

**Source:** F. Novikov Archive, I. Vasilevsky Archive



**Picture 11.** Resort of the Union of Architects in Gagra, 1980

**Architects:** V. Abramashvili, R. Bairamashvili, I. Kavlashvili, D. Mordebadze

**Source:** T. Kvirveliia, N. Mgaloblishvili, *Architecture of Soviet Georgia*, Stroyizdat, Moscow, 1986



**Picture 12.** Composers' Creativity House in Borzhomi, 1982

**Architects:** Sh. Davitashvili, N. Solovyeva, M. Zhuruli, G. Metonidze, N. Karichashvili

**Source:** T. Kvirkeveliia, N. Mgaloblishvili, *Architecture of Soviet Georgia*, Stroyizdat, Moscow, 1986

A great number of Creativity Houses/Resorts were established during the Soviet period. They were located in the best retreat zones on the territories of the former Soviet republics. There were Creativity Houses/Resorts of republican importance and of “all-USSR” (union-wide) importance. They were used for the purpose of organizing the individual and collective creative activity of writers, artists, architects, composers, cinematographers, and for holding various symposiums, conferences, workshops, etc. The Creativity Houses also served as leisure resorts for Creative Union members and their families.



**Picture 13.** Cinematographers' Creativity House in Dilijan, 1976-83

**Architects:** S. Khachikyan, L. Safarian, H. Poghosyan

**Source:** K. Ritter, E. Shapiro-Obermair, D. Steiner, A. Wachter, *Soviet modernism 1955-1991 / Unknown History*, PARK BOOKS, 2012

After the breakdown of the USSR, as a result of the reorganization of the economic and political systems, most of the Creative Houses/Resorts were either sold by the Creative Unions or became dilapidated due to the lack of means for their maintenance. For post-Soviet independent Armenia there were also the factors of war, economic blockade, economic crises, and social upheavals. In the rush towards privatization that followed the dissolution of the USSR, the Writers' Union succeeded in keeping the Sevan Resort (as well as the Writers' Union resort in Tsakhkadzor) and operating it for its original purpose.



**Picture 14.** Beethoven concert hall at the Composers' Creativity House in Dilijan, 1983

**Architects:** E. Altunyan, L. Hovhannisyan

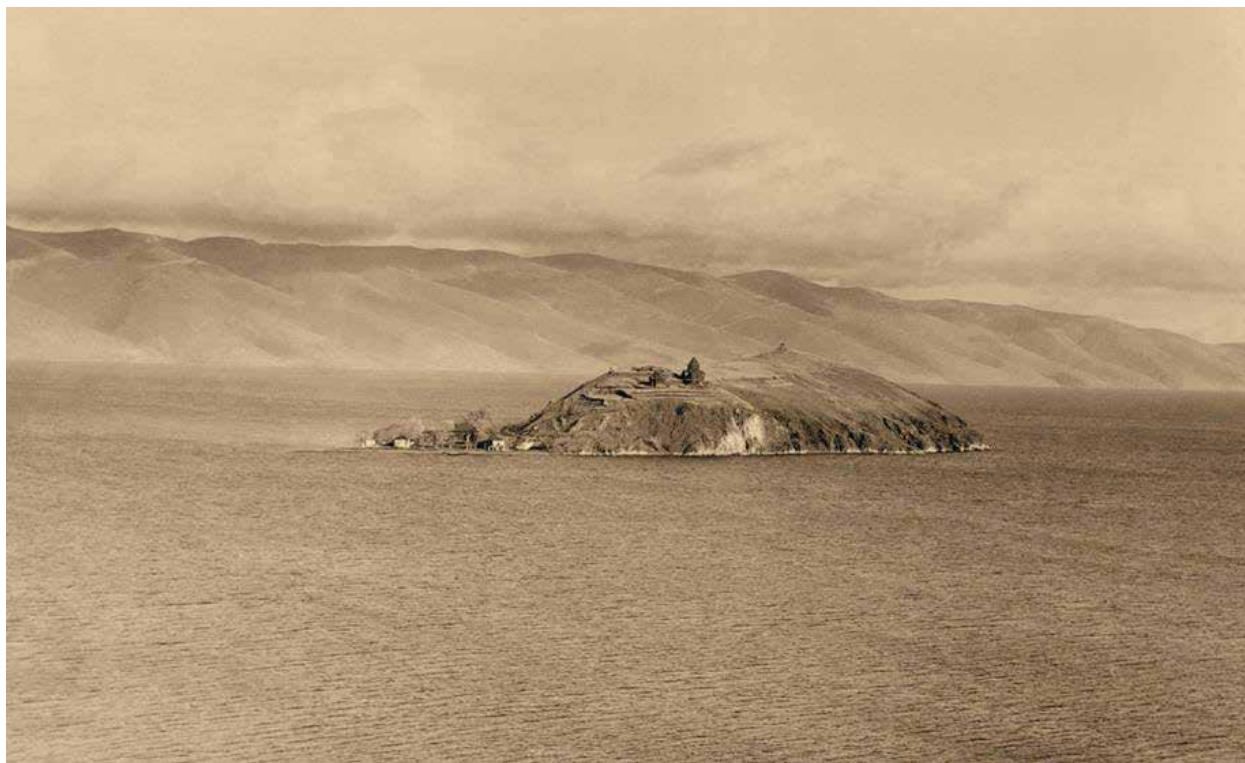
**Photo by** Ruben Arevshatyan

### 3.2. History of the Writers' Resort

The building of the Creativity House-Resort of the Writers' Union of Armenia (hereinafter: SWR) is located on the Sevan peninsula (which used to be an island before the 1950s), on the north-western shore of the alpine Lake Sevan in Armenia, in the vicinity of the 9th century *Sevanavank* (Sevan Monastery). Lake Sevan is the largest body of water in Armenia and the Caucasus region. It is one of the largest freshwater high-altitude (alpine) lakes in Eurasia. The lake is situated in Gegharkunik Province, at an altitude of 1,900 m (6,234 ft) above sea level. During the period of Stalin's rapid industrialization programme, Sevan was heavily exploited for the irrigation of the Ararat plain, and hydroelectric power generation. Consequently, its water level decreased by around 20 m (66 ft) and its volume dropped by more than 40%. Two underground tunnels were later built to divert water from highland rivers, which halted its decline and its water level began to rise.

The history of SWR starts in 1932 when architects Gevorg Kochar and Mikayel Mazmanyan developed a project for a residence hall on the island of Lake Sevan. The construction of the residence hall was completed in 1935. It was granted to the newly founded (1934) Writers' Union of Armenia.

Before the construction of the Sevan resort began in 1932, the monastery on the Island of Sevan used to be a favourite inspirational site for many local and visiting writers and poets.



**Picture 15.** The Island of Sevan, 1920s photo

**Source:** H. Charakhchyan online digital archive

<https://charkhchyan.wordpress.com/2014/04/11/%D5%AF%D5%B2%D5%A6%D5%AB%D5%B6/>





■ **Picture 16.** Photo of the Island of Sevan taken in the late 1940s after the draining of the lake had already started

■ **Source:** V. Davtyan and H. Mamyán Family Archives

Andrei Bely and Osip Mandelstam wrote their famous cycles of poems about Armenia after visiting and staying for some time on the Island of Sevan in the late 1920s and early 1930s. Some of their verses are dedicated to Sevan.

The first set of drawings of the Sevan Resort's Residence Hall date back to 1932. The project was produced by the architectural bureau GIPROGOR, which was led by Gevorg Kochar and Mikayel Mazmanyán.

Gevorg Kochar (1901-1973) and Mikayel Mazmanyán (1899-1971) were graduates of VKHUTEIN (former VKHUTEMAS) in Moscow, and founders of the VOPRA (All-Russian Association of Proletarian Architects) and OPRA (Association of Proletarian Architects of Armenia).

OPRA's architectural projects were bound up with ideas for creating a new socialist mode of life – ideas that were expressed in designs for house-communes (communal houses), residential districts, palaces of culture, and so on. By the end of the 1920s, the new school of architecture had become extremely influential in determining the main directions for the development of architecture in the country.

VKHUTEIN graduates Karo Halabyán, Mikayel Mazmanyán, Gevorg Kochar, Tiran Erkanyán, together with architects Arsen Aharonyán, Hovik Margaryán, Samvel Safaryán and other

graduates of the Armenian School of Architecture founded in 1921, united in OPRA and not only defended the modernisation and rationalisation of construction, but also conceptualised and emphasised the importance of social designation and class affiliation for architecture.



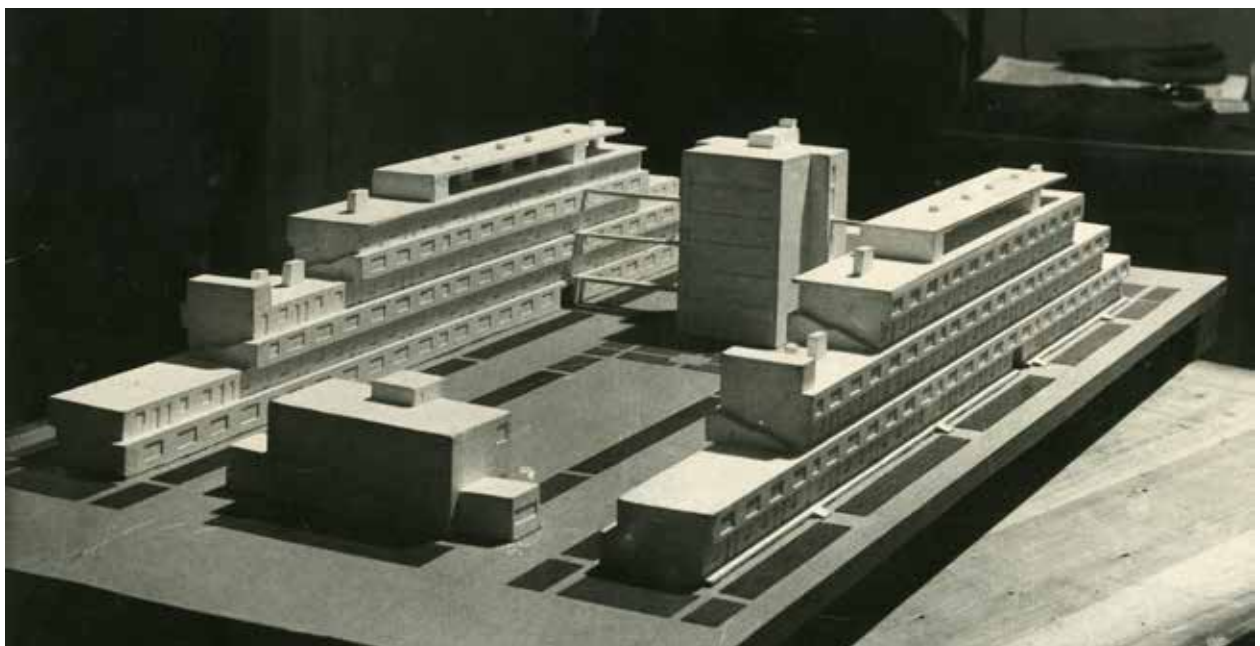
**Picture 17.** Gevorg Kochar (bottom right) with a group of VKHUTEMAS students (Georgy Krutikov - left, Karo Halabyan - top right) gathered around the poster "Long Live October in Architecture", 1920s

**Source:** A. Grigoryan Archive



**Picture 18.** Mikayel Mazmanyanyan (on the left) and Gevorg Kochar (on the right) at the Acropolis, 1935

**Source:** M. Mazmanyanyan Archive

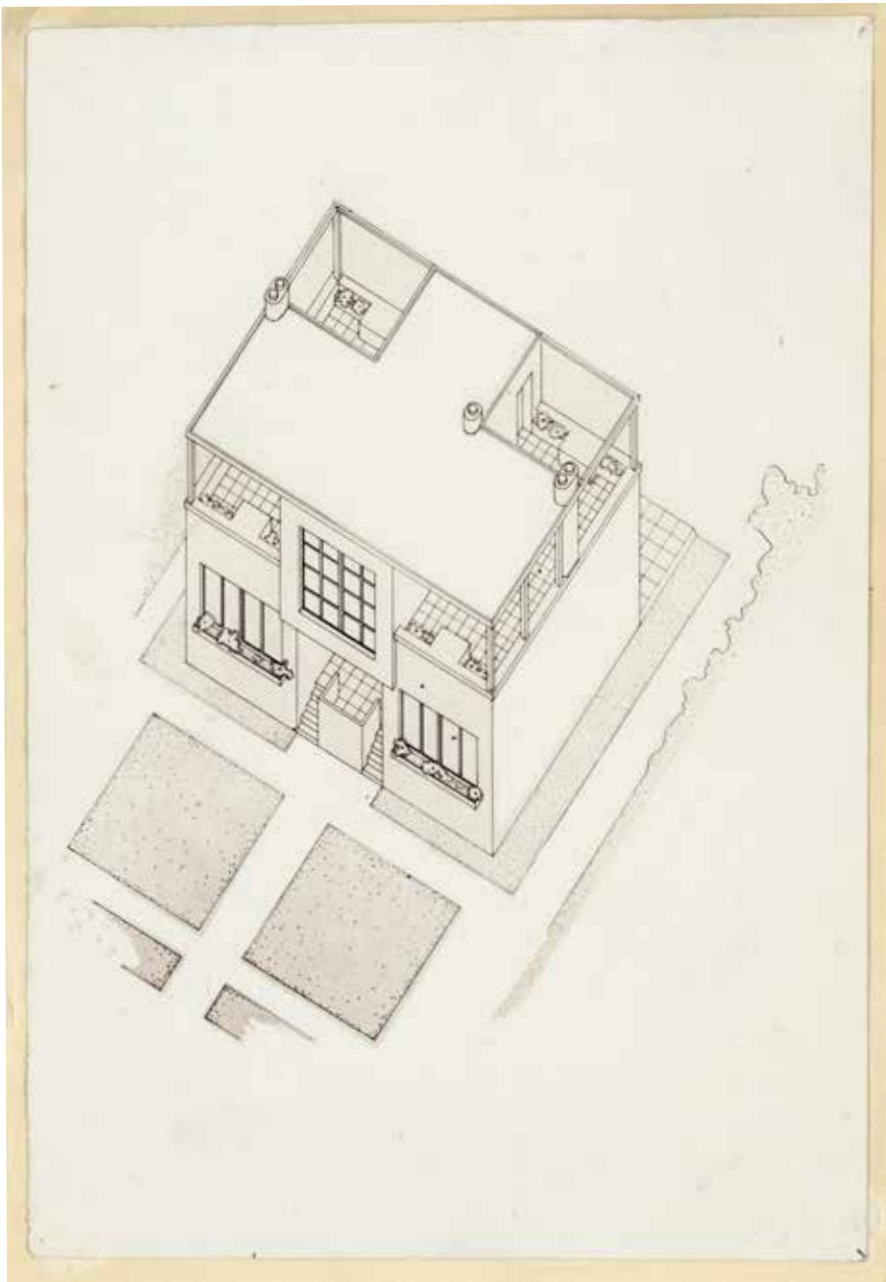


**Picture 19.** House-commune for workers of the Mechanical Factory in Yerevan, 1928

**Architects:** K. Halabyan, M. Mazmanyanyan

**Source:** M. Mazmanyanyan Archive

OPRA architects propagated a project of radical aesthetic and social renewal in opposition to another influential circle of architects in Armenia at the time that represented the so-called “neo-national” school proposing the principle of historicism. From their perspective, the new architecture had a mission - to fill the gaps in the historical evolution of culture and its interrupted statehood. Historicists regarded the Middle Ages as the point of interruption, thus considering medieval Armenian architecture as the basis for a neo-Armenian style that superposed the medieval aesthetic, structural-spatial, compositional ideas and elements over the principles of the classical school of architecture.



**Picture 20.** Residential building plan, 1929

**Architects:** K. Halabyan, M. Mazmanyan

**Source:** M. Mazmanyan Archive



**Picture 21.** Residential building for workers of the hydroelectric power station in Yerevan, the so called "Chess house", 1931

**Architects:** K. Halabyan, M. Mazmanyanyan

**Source:** M. Mazmanyanyan Archive



**Picture 22.** The construction workers' club in Yerevan, 1929

**Architects:** K. Halabyan, G. Kochar, M. Mazmanyanyan

**Source:** M. Mazmanyanyan Archive



**Picture 23.** Plan of the construction workers' club complex in Yerevan, 1929

**Architects:** K. Halabyan, G. Kochar, M. Mazmanyanyan

**Source:** M. Mazmanyanyan Archive



**Picture 24.** Model of the Labour Palace in Yerevan, 1934

**Architects:** G. Kochar, H. Margaryan, M. Mazmanyanyan

**Source:** M. Mazmanyanyan Archive

As for architecture's national affiliation, members of OPRA advocated a "truly national architecture", meaning architecture that did not mechanically reproduce forms borrowed from the past, but rather one that derived from social and economic needs. OPRA architects did not deny the issue of the national in architecture, but for them the only source capable of nourishing "proletarian" architecture was vernacular architecture, with its simple rational forms stemming from specific local situational, social/class, economic and contextual conditions, resulting in an architecture that was "proletarian in substance and national in palette".

In the initial project of the Residence Hall, one can observe the constructivist background and rationalist creative method of the architects of the time.



**Picture 25.** Model of the Sevan Resort's Residence Hall, 1932

**Architects:** G. Kochar, M. Mazmanyán

**Source:** M. Mazmanyán Archive

The Residence Hall building was initially designed as a three-storey structure located on the rocky slope of the island, facing Lake Sevan. The building had a semi-basement, a ground floor that combined the kitchen and the billiard room, and a dining hall located in the loggia that was 1.5m (4.9") lower than the level of the kitchen and the billiard room. The rooms were located on the first and second storeys. They had identical planning: four rooms. Each floor had one bathroom located at the end of the corridor.

The volume of the Residence Hall building was adapted to the topography of the slope. The mass of the ground floor protruded forward, thus creating an extensive terrace for the rooms on the first floor. On top of the staircase tower connecting all the floors of the building, there was an observation deck facing the lake.

The stamps on the drawings of the building from 1932 read "Resort on the Island of Sevan". The drawings are dated 1 November 1932. Only Gevorg Kochar's name and signature appear on the stamps as designing architect.



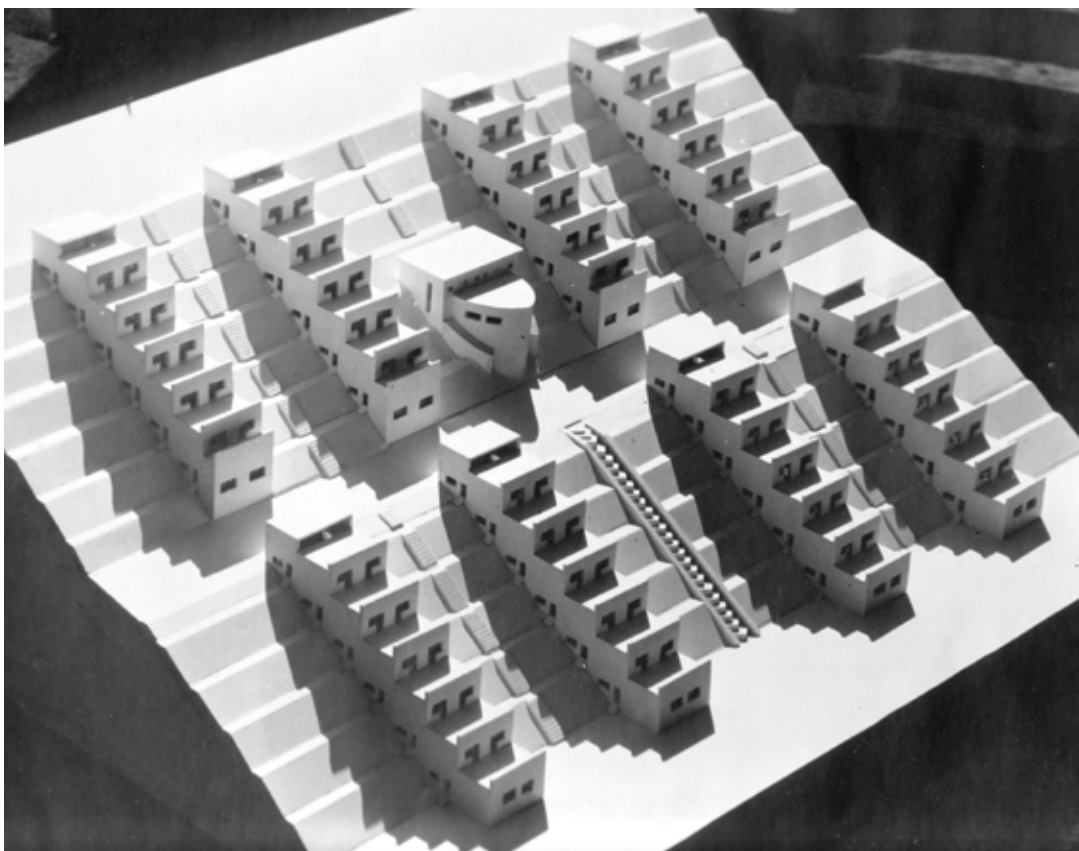
**Picture 26.** Model of the Sevan Resort's Residence Hall, 1932

**Architects:** G. Kochar, M. Mazmanyán

**Source:** M. Mazmanyán Archive



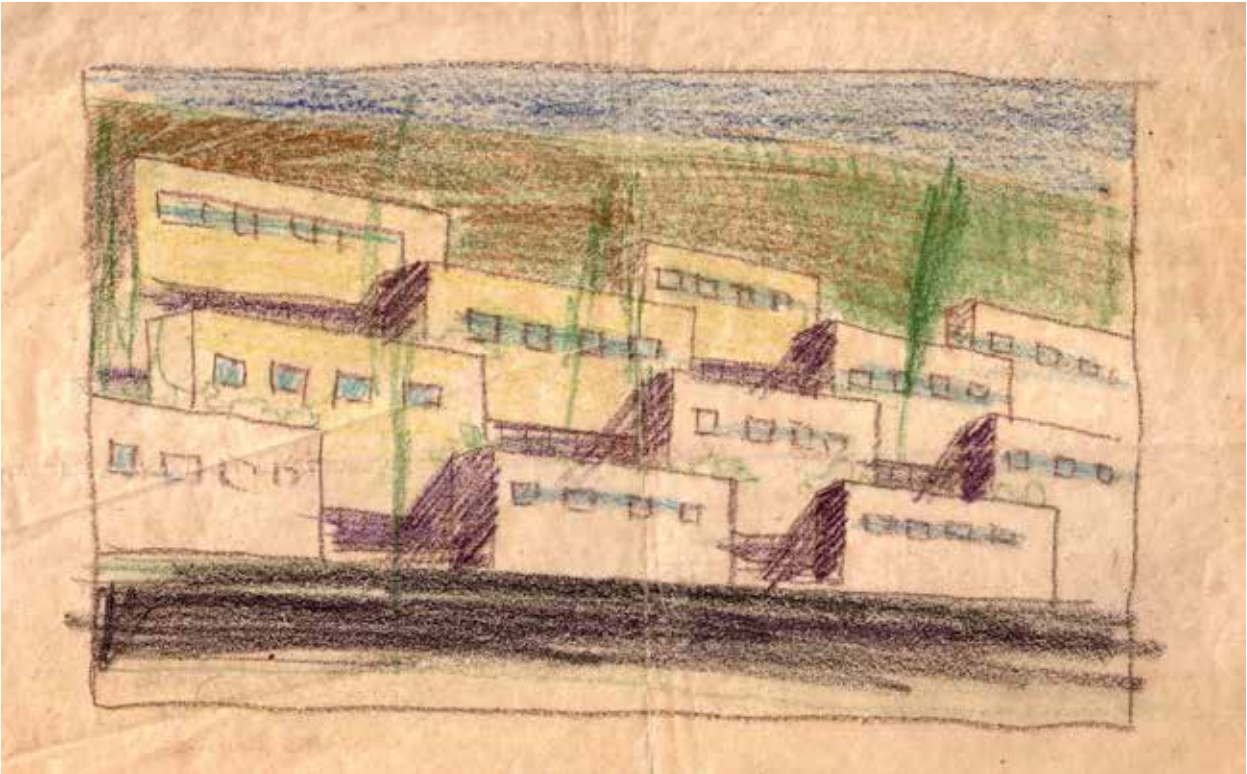
Mikayel Mazmanyán's name is not mentioned on the stamps but a number of books on the history of Soviet avant-garde and Soviet Armenian architecture mention his co-authorship of the Residence Hall building of the Sevan Resort. Mazmanyán's CVs and autobiographies also always mention the Sevan Resort among his projects. Furthermore, there are many photographic materials including site photos and architectural drawings of the Residence Hall building in Mazmanyán's archive. However, the most significant fact testifying to Mazmanyán's co-authorship of the Sevan Resort project is the compositional structure of the building with regard to the use of terraces in harmony with the natural landscape. That typology of building was very specific to Mazmanyán's conceptual approach to the application of local traditional vernacular architectural and structural forms in modern architecture (e.g. the conceptual project for residential district development in Kapan and Sisian, both in Armenia). In his texts, not only does Mazmanyán explore the formal aspects and principles of spatial organization in local vernacular architecture but he also conceptualizes and articulates their interconnection with social contexts and their potentiality to generate new forms of communal relations. He finds the references to such interconnections in the common spaces that were developed in local traditional architecture, such as the terrace serving as a roof (for the house below) and a front yard (for the house above), and different kinds of loggias that he adopted from vernacular architectural typologies into modern architectural forms.



**Picture 27.** Model of terrace type housing development for Kapan, Armenia, 1929

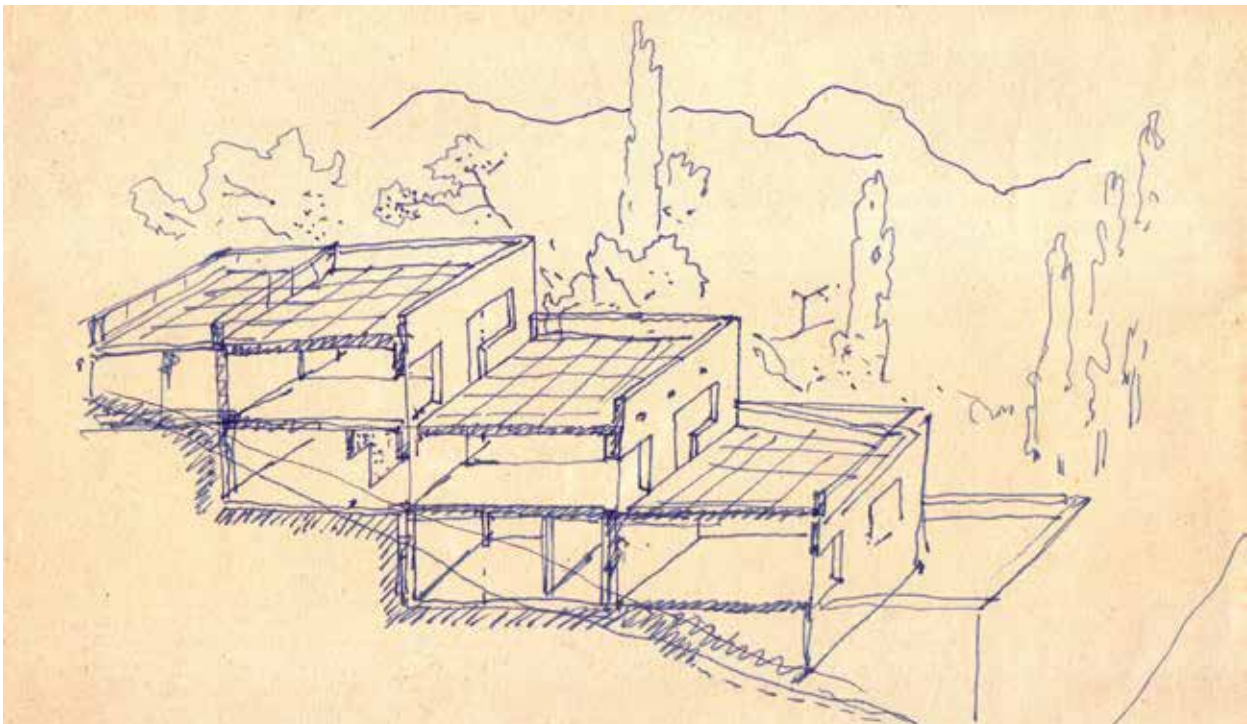
**Architect:** M. Mazmanyán

**Source:** M. Mazmanyán Archive



**Picture 28.** Sketch of terrace type housing development for Kapan, Armenia, 1929  
**Architect:** M. Mazmanyán

**Source:** M. Mazmanyán Archive



**Picture 29.** Sketch of terrace type housing development for Sisian, Armenia, 1929  
**Architect:** M. Mazmanyán

**Source:** M. Mazmanyán Archive



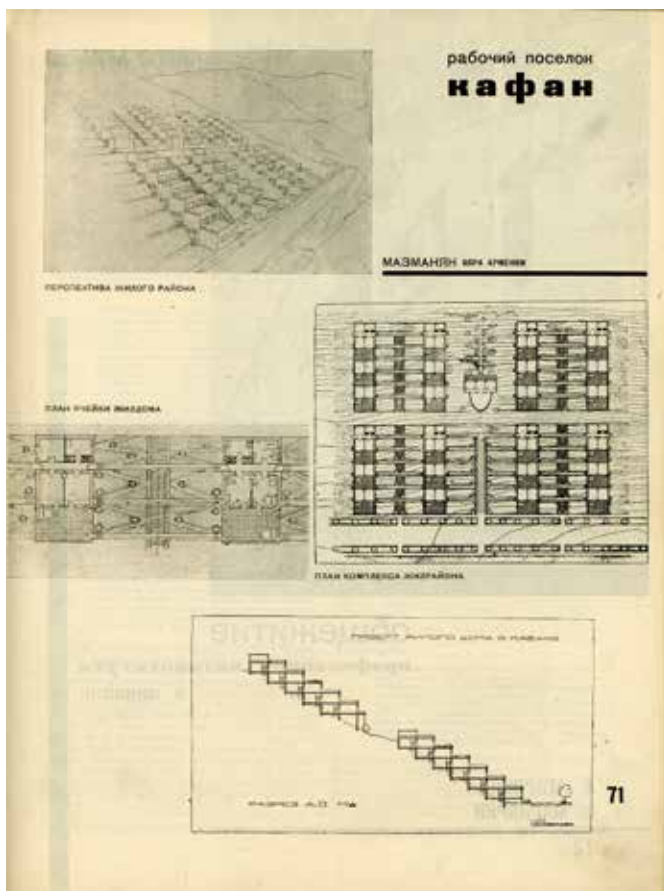
**Picture 30.** Cover of Soviet Architecture magazine's 1-2 combined issue, 1931

**Source:** R. Arevshatyan Archive



**Picture 31.** Project of terrace type housing development for Kapan, Armenia, by Mikayel Mazmanyan, 1929, published in Soviet Architecture magazine's 1-2 combined issue, 1931

**Source:** R. Arevshatyan Archive



**Picture 32.** Project of terrace type housing development for Kapan, Armenia, by Mikayel Mazmanyán, 1929, published in Soviet Architecture magazine's 1-2 combined issue, 1931

**Source:** R. Arevshatyan Archive

Today, it is very difficult to conjecture why Mazmanyán's name was not mentioned on the stamps of the drawings. One of the reasons could be the fact that despite being colleagues and close friends who had studied together and had realized a great number of projects as co-authors, by the time the Sevan Resort was designed Kochar and Mazmanyán were formally leading two different studios at GIPROGOR architectural bureau. Therefore, even if they had both worked on the Sevan Resort's Residence Hall project, formally they could not be mentioned on the stamps together.

Nonetheless, Khan Magomedov's second book on Soviet avant-garde speaks about the architects' co-authorship of the Sevan Resort. The catalogues of photo materials at the Schusev Architectural Museum in Moscow also mention them as co-authors of the project.

The year in which the first project was designed was significant, since in 1932 Stalin issued the famous decree on the Reconstruction of Literary and Artistic Organizations, which heralded the end of Soviet avant-garde. Stylistic modifications that started to take place between the revolutionary experimental epoch in Soviet architecture and the final establishment of the Stalinist style were developing along with dramatic and intensive transformations in the logic of discourses within the professional communities. For many architects it was a period of confused creativity and disillusionment, as their ideas were gaining novel interpretations by the new Stalinist cultural doctrine, driving them into a strict aesthetic and ideological format. That period ended with cruel repressions and purges of Soviet artists, writers, architects, and society in general.



**Picture 33.** The cover of Khan-Magomedov's second book on Soviet avant-garde and the page with the photo of the Residence Hall

**Source:** S.O. Khan-Magomedov; Architecture of Soviet Avant-Garde; book second: Social Problems: Moscow Strojizdat: 2001

During this period, many of the architectural projects that were in the midst of construction or design experienced partial or sometimes substantial revisions and remodelling. Certain changes that took place during the construction process of the Sevan Resort's Residence Hall had affected the functionality and stylistic completeness of the building. As no documentation on the motivations and timing of the changes to the original project has been preserved, we can only assume that, because of the expansion of habitable space in the Residence Hall, the semi-basement was transformed into an additional habitable storey and was used (according to oral histories) for utility and administration rooms. In the late 1940s, the billiard room was moved out of the ground floor to a temporary wooden pavilion that was built apart from the Residence Hall. The space of the first floor (former ground floor) which, according to the initial design, was used for the kitchen and billiard

room was divided into four separate rooms connected with a corridor – a plan similar to that of the upper floors. Perhaps the intention was to use that storey as habitable space by creating additional rooms. However, according to oral histories, those rooms continued to function as a kitchen, and the loggia in front of the rooms continued to serve as a dining hall.



Picture 33. Pre WW2 photograph of the Residence Hall

Source: Moscow Shchusev State Museum of Architecture Archive



Picture 34. Post WW2 photograph of the Residence Hall

Source: Krasnogorsk Russian State Documentary Film & Photo Archive



**Picture 35.** 1950s photograph of the Residence Hall

**Source:** Nairi Zarian family archive

Nevertheless, the most serious changes that the building underwent during the paradigmatic transformations of the post 1932 period involved the interior of the Residence Hall. The problem regarding those transformations is much deeper; it goes beyond the story of the Sevan Writers' Resort's Lounge building and deals with the contradictions embedded in the history of Soviet avant-garde architecture. According to the research and expertise on interior design provided for this project by Alexandra Selivanova, in Soviet architecture of the 1920s and early 1930s, interior and furniture design was developing more on the experimental level as part of the educational programs in VKHUTEMAS. Architects like V. Tatlin, El Lysitstky, A. Rodchenko, M. Ginsburg, S. Lysagor, etc. were developing a new typology of furniture. There were also many theoretical proposals and research concerning the use of colour in interiors and furniture design that was being developed for the new typology of living spaces, house-communes, workers' clubs, etc. At the same time, the process of furniture development in Soviet studios in the 1920s and early 1930s was taking place in a certain discursive correlation with the studios of Bauhaus. The influence of Bauhaus on the furniture design development trends in the Soviet Union was very important as methodologically the two schools in Moscow and Dessau followed two diametrically opposed directions with regard to the principle of formation of habitable space. Soviet avant-garde was less attentive to the details of micro environment, being more focused



on the organization of macro spaces (urban development and architectural designs), while for Bauhaus, architecture was considered as the highest and final stage of education and a designer's/architect's professional evolution in general. However, both schools used to have an intensive exchange of ideas through frequent reciprocal visits of professors as well as students (in 1927 both Mazmanyan and Kochar, then still students of VKHUTEIN, visited Bauhaus where they made a series of presentations), exhibitions (BAUHAUS exhibitions in 1927 and 1931), etc.

Despite the experimental proposals for new interior design, in the 1920 and 1930s the actual production of furniture in the Soviet Union was considerably different from the intentions of the architects. Usually the interiors of even the most iconic buildings of Soviet constructivism were furnished with furniture that was not even remotely related to the progressive concepts proposed by the architects. That discrepancy between concept and materialization, facade and interior, intention and outcome turned into a real curse upon not only Soviet architecture but also the entire system in general.

The transformation of architectural style that followed the paradigm shift of 1932 perhaps found its first expressions in the transformations of interiors and later of facades. The same thing happened with the Sevan Writers' Resort. According to the logic of its planning and spatial organization, the interior of the Residence Hall still supposed the furnishing approaches that were consistent with the period preceding Stalin's 1932 ideological reforms, i.e. use of light, transformative, standardized, fitted furniture typologies. No documentation or drawings that could provide any information about the architects' intentions concerning the interior design of the Residence Hall have been preserved. There are only a few photographs of the furniture and interior developed by artist Ruben Arutchyan for the Constructors' Club in Yerevan (1929) that was designed by Karo Halabyan, Gevorg Kochar and Mikayel Mazmanyan. Based on the logic of space organization that the architects applied in SWR we can assume that they might have applied the same stylistic and conceptual solution to the furniture design that they had already applied in the Constructor's Club in Yerevan. The other important detail that was uncovered during the archival research and expert consultations on interior design is that by the end of the 1920s and the beginning of the 1930s the interest of Soviet architects in interior and furniture design was mainly oriented towards the methodologies and practices of Bauhaus.



**Picture 36.** Furniture design for the workers' club in Yerevan, 1929

**Artist:** M. Arutchyan

**Source:** M. Mazmanyany Archive



**Picture 37.** Interior design for the workers' club in Yerevan, 1929

**Architects:** K. Halabyan, G. Kochar, M. Mazmanyany

**Source:** M. Mazmanyany Archive



**Picture 38.** Inmate mugshot of Gevorg Kochar from his KGB personal files

**Source:** National Archives of Armenia



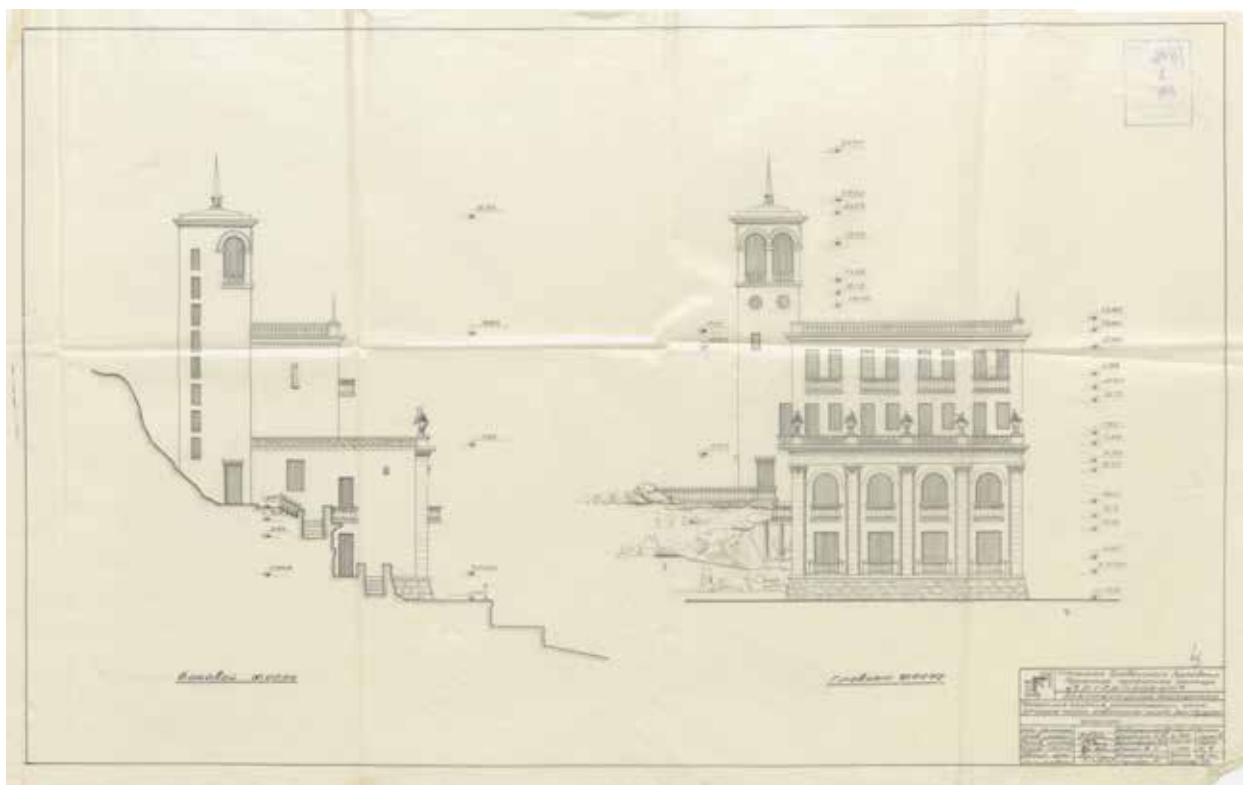
**Picture 39.** Photograph of Mikayel Mazmanyán during his time in exile in Norilsk

**Source:** M. Mazmanyán Archive

In 1937, during the period of Stalinist repressions both Kochar and Mazmanyán were arrested and sentenced to 15 years on political charges (they were accused of participation in the anti-Soviet Trotskyist right-nationalist organization and sabotage against the Soviet state). Both of them were exiled to Norilsk, Siberia where they worked as captive architects at one of the labour camps of the Gulag system.

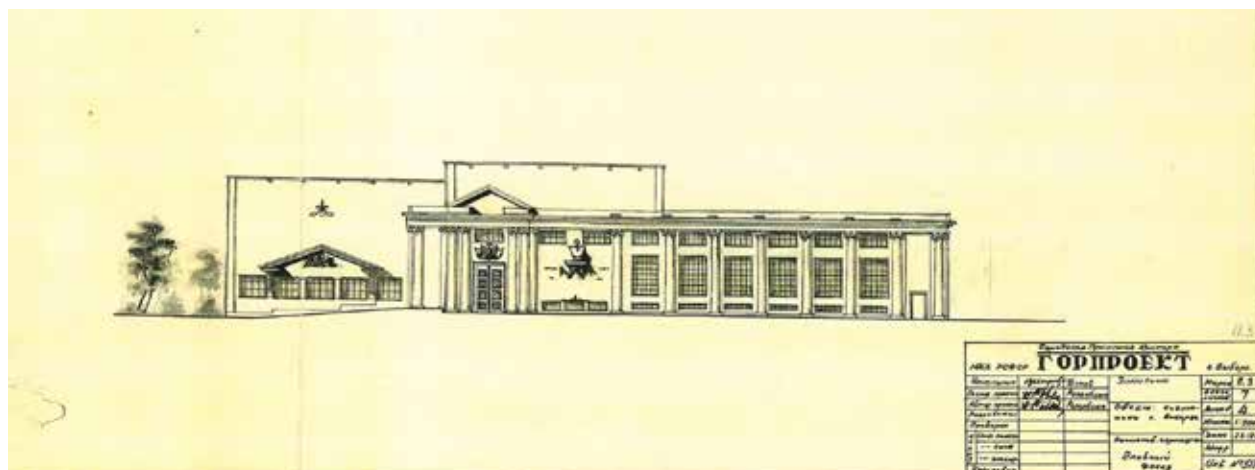
During their time in exile Kochar and Mazmanyán participated in the development of the master plan of Norilsk, designed a number of public buildings and residential houses for the cities and villages of Krasnoyarsk region.

In 1953, YerGorProject institute proposed changing the exterior design of the building to a straightforward Stalinist neo-classicist style. In the post WW2 period, reconstructing and transforming modernist architecture into a Stalinist classicist style was common practice. In 1953, a similar reconstruction project was proposed for Alvar Aalto's library in Viipuri (Vyborg). Fortunately, it was not carried out due to Stalin's death in 1953.



**Picture 40.** Drawing of the reconstruction project of the Residence Hall proposed by ErGorProject institute, 1953

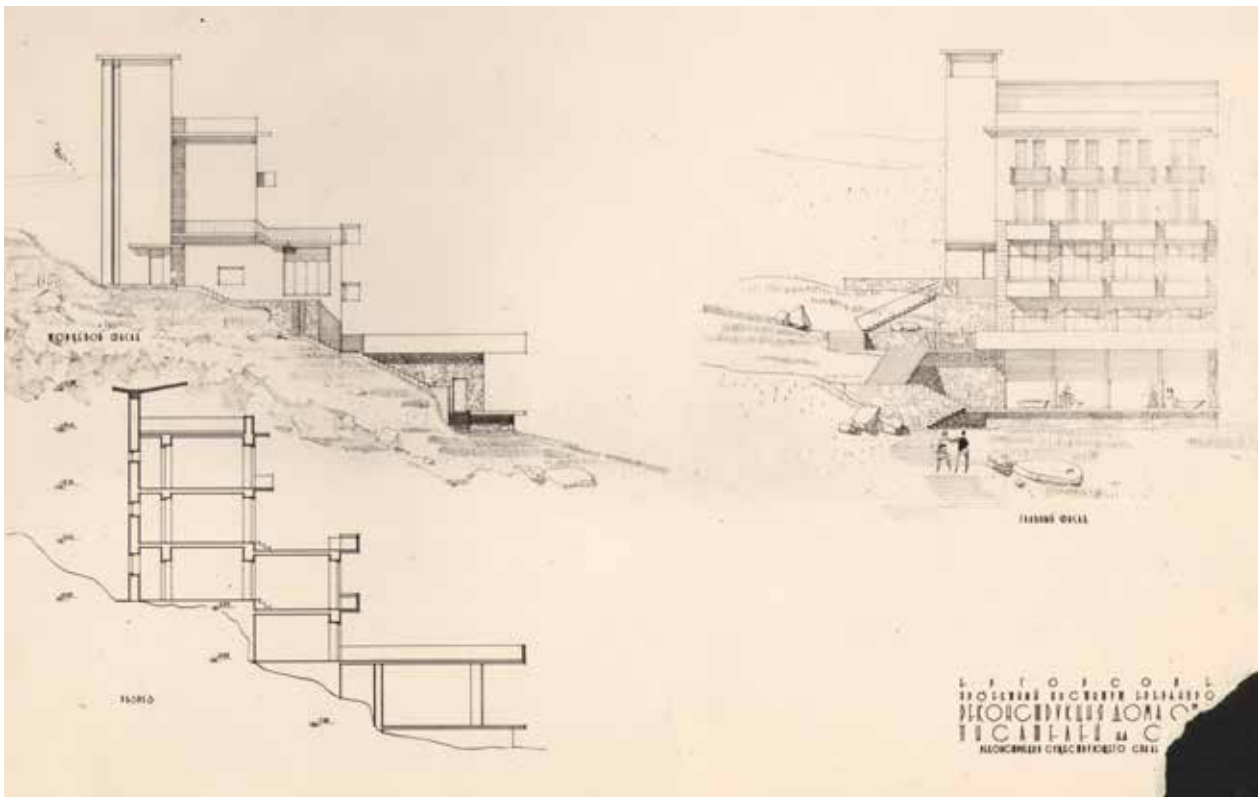
**Source:** National Archives of Armenia



**Picture 41.** Drawing of the reconstruction project of Alvar Aalto's library in Viipuri (Vyborg), 1953

**Source:** Alvar Aalto Museum

In 1956, the 20th Congress of the Communist Party denounced the cult of personality and accused Stalin of crimes and repression carried out under his rule. The Congress was the official start of a new political, social and cultural epoch in the Soviet Union known as Khrushchev's Thaw. The reforms in architecture and urban planning were announced even before the 20th Congress, when at the December 1954 All-Union Conference of Builders, Architects and Construction Industry Workers, Khrushchev severely criticized the practice of using decorations and extravagancies in architecture, thus announcing the return of functionalist and rationalist principles in architecture. The major goal of Khrushchev's policy was the minimization of construction costs and the provision of individual housing to Soviet citizens. That policy resulted, on the one hand, in the emergence of new micro-districts in Soviet towns with standardized housing that people named "khrushchevkas" (Khrushchevian houses), which had distinctly poor quality construction and extremely minimized living spaces. On the other hand, in a significantly short period of time that very same policy generated strong criticism against itself in professional and local governing circles which, as a reaction to the monotonousness of Khrushchev's standardized architectural policy, introduced new formal experimentations that were fitting to the financial constraints on construction established by the political system. In spite of the self-evident paradox, we may take the view that the eruption of local modernist tendencies in Soviet architecture from the early 1960s onwards was a reaction to the mid-1950s policy of modernizing Soviet urban planning and architecture.



**Picture 42.** Reconstruction proposal for the Residence Hall, 1963

**Architect:** G. Kochar

**Source:** Archives of the National Museum-Institute of Architecture named after Alexander Tamanyan, Yerevan

In 1954, Kochar and Mazmanyán were released from exile and rehabilitated. Mazmanyán returned home in 1955 and actively reintegrated into the architectural life of the post-Stalinist period. Mazmanyán founded an urban planning studio at the Yerevan Project Institute and engaged in the designing of new residential micro districts and the development of the new master plan of Yerevan. Kochar spent another 5 years in Krasnoyarsk in the position of chief architect of the city. He returned to Yerevan in 1960 and led an architectural studio at the same Yerevan Project Institute.

In 1963, Kochar was commissioned to develop a reconstruction and extension project for the Sevan Resort. We can assume that the task was exciting and challenging for him, given the changes that had taken place during the construction between 1932-35, which had affected the functional and aesthetic completeness of the architecture of the Residence Hall.

During the reconstruction, Kochar added an additional floor to the Residence Hall: an annex below the former ground floor of the building protruding forward and forming a new wide terrace for what was henceforth the first floor, by using the roof of the ground floor. The ground floor was designed as a clubroom.

The first floor (former ground floor) was reconstructed into a storey for common sanitary facilities (showers, bathrooms, utility rooms), and the new terrace served as a sundeck and a common recreation area for resort guests. There was another extensive terrace for shared use on the third floor.



**Picture 43.** Sketch for the reconstruction proposal of the Residence Hall, 1963

**Architect:** G. Kochar

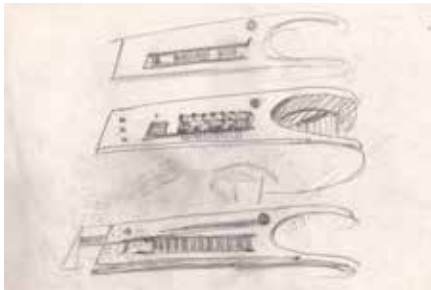
**Source:** Archives of the National Museum-Institute of Architecture named after Alexander Tamanyan, Yerevan

Now, the rooms of the Residence Hall were located on the second, third and fourth floors of the building. Those on the second floor were double rooms with semicircle balconies. The rooms on the third and fourth floors had the same single room planning. The rooms still had one common toilet at the end of the corridor on each floor but now a sink was also installed in every room.

The additional floor and extensive terraces designed by Kochar were the logical continuation of the initial approach applied in the original project. During the reconstruction, Kochar refined his architectural approach of rational organization of a limited space, still based on the belief in a communal mode of life, which also found its expression in the refinement of the 1930s aesthetic image of the building.

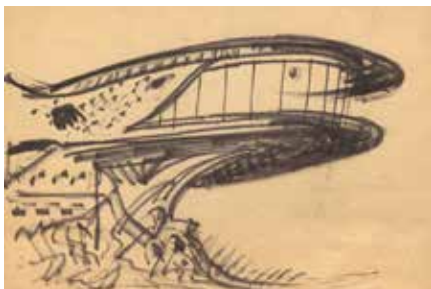
The reconstruction of the Residence Hall did not entail a historical rehabilitation of the formal aesthetics of the 1930s but rather the rehabilitation of its function, while also offering partial modernization (such as the design of an additional ground floor, and the stairway connecting the second floor with the first floor, encased in the glass gallery).

During the reconstruction of the resort, Kochar also designed and built the new Lounge building. Stylistically, the new building contrasted with the Residence Hall building but together they formed a harmonious ensemble in combination with the natural landscape, and incorporated the view of the medieval architecture of the churches of the Sevanavank monastery complex located on the top of the hill on the peninsula.



**Picture 44.** Pencil sketch of the Lounge building, 1963  
**Architect:** G. Kochar

**Source:** Archives of the National Museum-Institute of Architecture named after Alexander Tamanyan, Yerevan



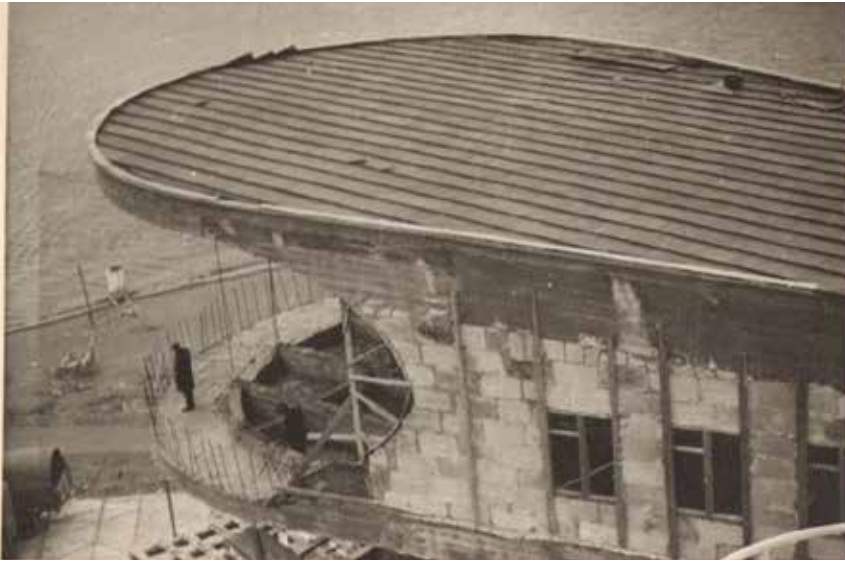
**Picture 45.** Marker pen sketch of the Lounge building, 1963  
**Architect:** G. Kochar

**Source:** Archives of the National Museum-Institute of Architecture named after Alexander Tamanyan, Yerevan



**Picture 46.** Sketch of the Lounge building, 1963  
**Architect:** G. Kochar

**Source:** Archives of the National Museum-Institute of Architecture named after Alexander Tamanyan, Yerevan



**Picture 47.** Construction process of the Lounge building, 1965

**Source:** Archives of the National Museum-Institute of Architecture named after Alexander Tamanyan, Yerevan



**Picture 48.** Lounge building

**Architect:** G. Kochar

**Source:** Archives of the National museum-institute of Architecture named after Alexander Tamanyan, Yerevan

The Lounge building is an oval shaped mass, settled on a single concrete column erected on a steep rocky hill. The wide curve of the Lounge's oval form protrudes forward as an extensive cantilever with a semi-circular loggia and huge panoramic window with a view of the lake. At the opposite end of its axis, the building is attached to the rock on a higher level of the hill. The overall space of the Lounge building is divided into two major parts.





Picture 46. Soviet Postcard with the image of the Sevan Writers' Resort

Source: A. Grigoryan Archive

One part is the dining hall, which has a circular plan and is located towards the front of the building. Half of the dining hall circle is designed as a panoramic floor-to-ceiling window looking over a spectacular view of Lake Sevan. The dining hall also has an exit to a semi-circular open-sided loggia behind the panoramic window. The second part, in the rear half of the building is used for the foyer of the dining hall, bathrooms, kitchen, as well as storage and utility rooms.

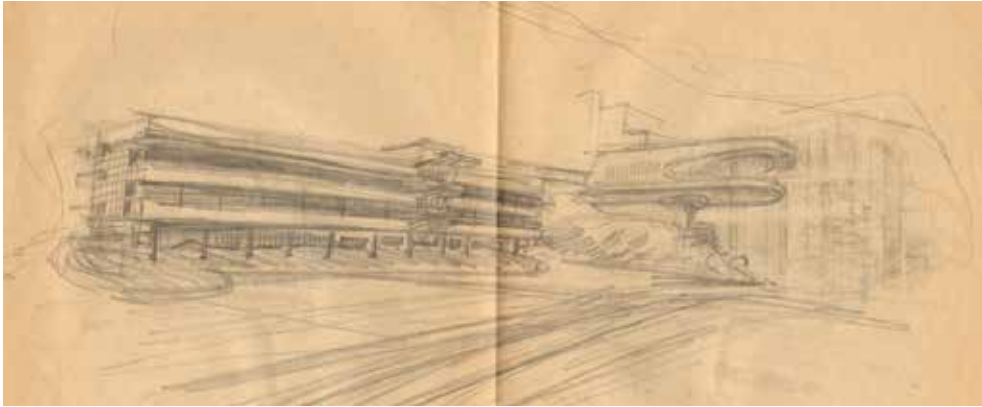
The new Lounge building invigorated the whole architectural complex conceptually and stylistically, bringing in a new philosophy specific to the architecture of that time, interweaving modernist architecture and natural environment into harmony. In this new mode, architecture was gaining extra functions, such as becoming a platform on which to stand and contemplate the lake and the horizon.

The rationalist constructive, compositional, site-specific principles, derived from local vernacular architecture, that were conceptualized through the social prism and implemented by Kochar and Mazmanyan in their avant-gardist architectural projects of the 1920s and early 1930s, besides being accentuated in the 1960s reconstruction of the Residence Hall building, also found their logical continuation in the philosophy of organic architecture of the new building of the Lounge.

Because of its zoomorphic shape and appearance, the Lounge was nicknamed “Baby Whale” right after it was built.

The third additional structure that was built during the reconstruction period was the boiler building. It was built with glass blocks and was skilfully hidden behind the rock on the right side of the SWR territory.

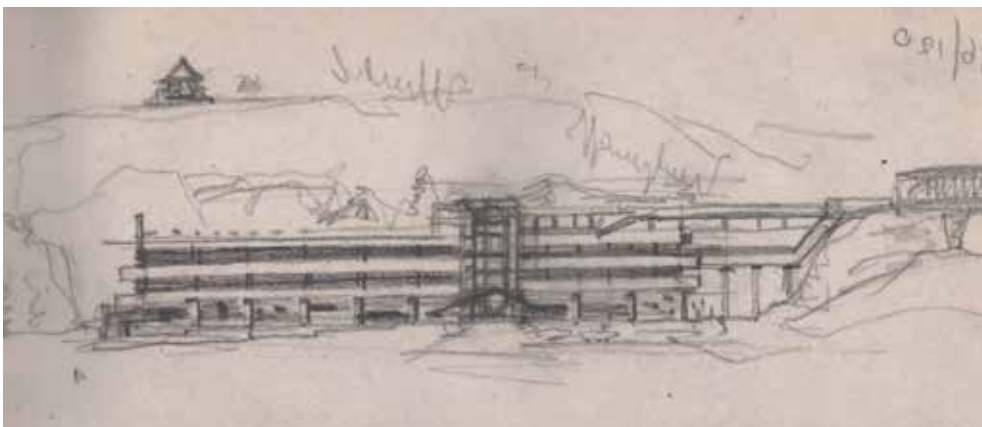
Today, it is difficult to say whether Kochar intended to create in a way an ensemble of modern buildings along the shore of the peninsula. A few sketches were found in the Yerevan National Museum-Institute of Architecture in which Kochar depicted a three-storey resort building along the shore on the western side of the Lounge building.



**Picture 47.** Sketch of the extension to the Writers' Resort

**Architect:** G. Kochar

**Source:** Archives of the National Museum-Institute of Architecture named after Alexander Tamanyan, Yerevan



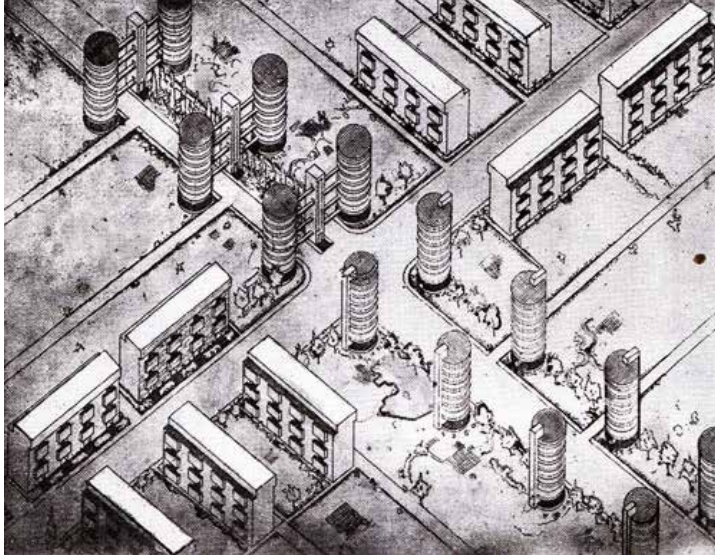
**Picture 48.** Sketch of the extension to the Writers' Resort

**Architect:** G. Kochar

**Source:** Archives of the National Museum-Institute of Architecture named after Alexander Tamanyan, Yerevan

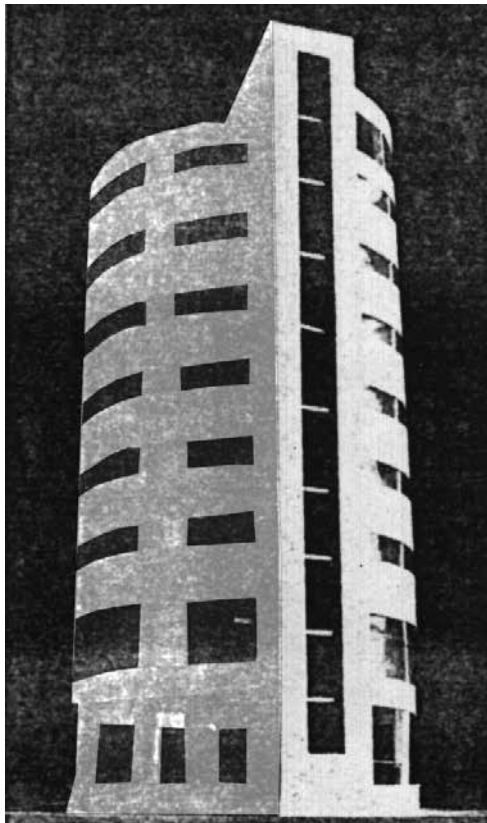
In 1969, Kochar built another building on the southern cape of the peninsula, which was initially designed as a resort for the 4th Department of Healthcare in Kirovakan (now Vanadzor). Despite the initial plan concerning the location, the building was built in the governmental area on the Sevan Peninsula. It was a building of cylindrical shape. In his notes, Kochar referred to it as the logical continuation of the other cylindrical building that he had built in Dilijan in 1936. It was also logically connected with his experimentations at VKHUTEMAS with buildings of cylindrical form. Judging from the sketches, photo materials and notes found in Kochar's private archive, and taking into consideration Marina

Khrustaleva's research on circular shaped buildings in Soviet architecture, we can assume that the architect's experimentations with the circular shape underwent a consistent evolution. The Lounge of the SWR, with its integrated circular dining hall as the main volume of the building, also perfectly corresponds to the logic of that evolution.



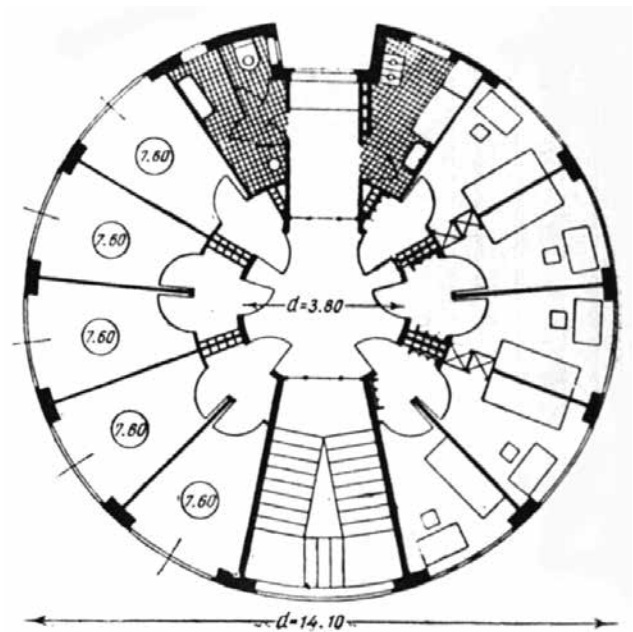
**Picture 49.** Planning and development project for the Izmaylovo settlement in Moscow. VKHUTEIN (studio of N. Ladovsky), 1928.  
**Architect:** G. Kochar

**Source:** S.O. Khan-Magomedov; Architecture of Soviet Avant-Garde; book second: Social Problems: Moscow Strojizdat: 2001



**Picture 50.** Model of a residence hall. VKHUTEIN (studio of N. Ladovsky), 1928.  
**Architect:** G. Kochar

**Source:** "Stroitelstvo Mosky" (The Construction of Moscow) magazine, N.8 1928



**Picture 51.** Floor planning of the residence hall. VKHUTEIN (studio of N. Ladovsky), 1928.  
**Architect:** G. Kochar

**Source:** "Stroitelstvo Mosky" (The Construction of Moscow) magazine, N.8 1928



**Picture 52.** Resort (the so-called “Khanjyan’s villa”) in Dilijan, 1936

**Architect:** G. Kochar

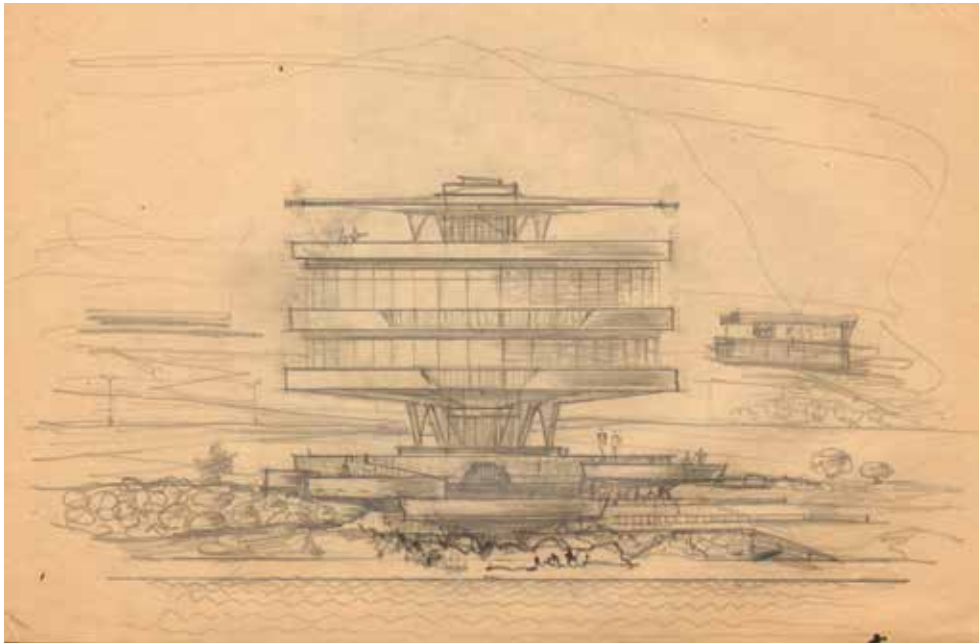
**Source:** M. Mazmanyany Archive



**Picture 53.** Model of the resort building designed for the 4th Department of Healthcare in Kirovakan, 1966

**Architect:** G. Kochar

**Source:** Archives of the National Museum-Institute of Architecture named after Alexander Tamanyan, Yerevan



**Picture 54.** Sketch of the adaptation of the resort building designed for the 4th Department of Healthcare in Kirovakan to the landscape of the Sevan peninsula, 1966-67

**Architect:** G. Kochar

**Source:** Archives of the National Museum-Institute of Architecture named after Alexander Tamanyan, Yerevan



**Picture 55.** Governmental Resort on Sevan peninsula, 1969

**Architect:** G. Kochar

**Source:** A. Grigoryan Archive



**Picture 56.** Lounge building

**Architect:** G. Kochar

**Source:** Moscow Shchusev State Museum of Architecture Archive

### 3.3. Alterations and deviations

Among the documents that were found in Gevorg Kochar's archive, there was a letter dated 3rd December 1963, from the State Committee for Construction of the Armenian SSR to the director of the Armenian department of the Literary Foundation with comments and alterations in the planning task list developed for the reconstruction of the SWR. Among the six points concerning the revisions and alterations in the planning task list, there were points concerning the removal from the list of planned structures, the construction of the swimming pool, and another point regarding the addition of the construction of the covered connections between the rooms of the Residence Hall, Lounge, sanitary facilities and billiard room, etc., to the list.

No documents concerning the actual process of reconstruction were found during the archival research. The typewritten text of an article which, judging from its content, was written for the 4th Congress of Soviet Architects in Moscow, 1965, was found among scripts of speeches in Gevorg Kochar's archive. The article contained serious criticism of the new hierarchy established during the Khrushchev period, in which the construction sector was domineering over the architectural profession.

Kochar describes in his article, "After the conference of construction workers that took place in 1954 in the Kremlin, the role and importance of the architect and architecture was diminished to a certain extent. Contractors, so to say, took over. At the construction sites, the relations developing between the contractors and the architect – the author of the project – were not quite normal. The architect became an odious figure at the construction site. Not only the managing staff of the construction trusts and organizations but also the very workers stopped listening to the architect. There were even cases where, during the compliance certification of the building, the opinion of the architect was simply ignored, and in many cases buildings passed compliance certification without their architects even being informed. That of course affected the quality of the architecture and the construction."

In the same text, after continuing to criticize the suppression of the creativity of architects by the state controlled construction organizations that were causing a negligent attitude toward the construction process by making arbitrary decisions about changes in the project, Kochar brings the case of the SWR construction, as an example. "For instance, five superintendents, three heads and four chief engineers of the construction administrations were changed within one and half years at the small scale construction of the Sevan Creativity House for writers. It's obvious that that kind of reshuffle at the construction sites strongly affects the quality of architecture and work, not to mention the delays in deadlines, etc."

The criticism in Kochar's text of the new system of organizing construction and of the newly formed relations between construction companies, contractors and architects after Khrushchev's 1954 reforms, related to an extremely serious problem that caused deep-rooted contradictions in late Soviet architecture.

That conflict had its explicit reflection in the reconstruction of the SWR. Today, by comparing the architectural project for the reconstruction with the present state of the resort, it is possible to uncover not only the defects in construction but also the logic of all the deviations that occurred during the reconstruction.

One of the major deviations from the project is the disappearance of the semi-circular cantilevered balconies of the second floor. In the 1963 reconstruction project, Kochar kept the balconies from the 1932 design as a very important element of the building that imparted a specific character to the architecture of the Residence Hall. To understand the logic of their disappearance, we need to trace the urge of the construction companies to optimize (from their perspective) excessive and needless “complications”, as a consequence of which, the different levelled flooring of the rooms on the second storey was levelled out. Furthermore, four semi-circular cantilevered balconies became one common integrated balcony. The space beneath that integrated balcony acquired a disproportional shape, serving as a gallery in front of the sanitary rooms, with the glass window reaching down from the very edge of the second floor balcony to the floor of the newly built terrace. One look at that “gallery” is enough to apprehend that it was an unprofessional attempt at “optimization” of the construction that had nothing to do with the architect’s ideas and intentions. Various other details and elements of the building (such as the welding and binding of the iron elements and the woodwork) reveal how subpar the quality of construction was at that time.

The same logic of “optimization” (in this case the minimization of costs on the interior design) can be seen in the Lounge building. As the budget for construction in the Soviet Union - which was provided and controlled by the State Construction Committee - used to be extremely limited (especially during the Khrushchev period) the contracting organizations usually used the budget allotted for the interior design and improvement of the surrounding area to complete only the visible external architectural part. That was also one of the reasons causing a further deepening in the rupture between organizations responsible for the construction and the architects of the buildings.

The Lounge of the SWR is a perfect example where we can see this. Despite the fact that the architectural work was relatively well accomplished, the interior design of the building underwent many deviations from the architect’s initial idea. There are handwritten comments by Kochar on the drawings of the Lounge concerning the interior design of the building. We can assume that the architect, who was well aware of the imminent changes to the interior, provided detailed descriptions in the annotation of the drawing referring to a separate set of drawings dedicated only to the interior, which unfortunately could not be found in the archives. According to the annotations, the walls of the dining hall were supposed to be faced with polished/lacquered bright coloured wooden planks (75mm in width). The same kind of wooden planks were supposed to be used for the radiator cases in the lobby of the Lounge. Instead of wooden planks, the walls of the dining hall were faced with chipboard planks. We can presume that chipboard planks were attached to the walls as a base for the wooden lacquered planks that would have been attached over the



chipboard, creating a ribbed surface on the wall that was a quite specific design approach for that period. The only wooden element that was used (and which has been preserved) in the interior is the yellow pine casing of the doorway between the dining hall and the kitchen. According to photos and oral history, wooden planks have never been used, neither for the dining hall facing, nor for assembling the radiator cases in the lobby. As no archival photos of the interior were found during the research, the only images that offer at least a remote view of the interior of the dining hall are the black and white photographs (produced in 1976 and 1984) from Moscow TASS Agency in which it is possible to identify the still-existing chipboard planks painted in a dark colour. According to oral history, the chipboard planks in the dining hall and the radiator cases in the lobby were painted black. The colour expertise also discovered black under two coats of another paint.

By comparing the drawings of the Lounge floor plan with the architect's descriptions, we can see that during the construction process the interior underwent several changes from the initial plan. The dining hall was supposed to have a fireplace and a round, small water basin within the lower level circle of the floor. The lobby of the Lounge was supposed to have a 1.5-metre wide partition of vertical metal bars standing on a base made of the same felsite that was used for building the fireplace in the dining hall. According to the drawings, there was also a restroom in the lobby, and the windows of the side facades, apart from having different configurations, also had frames with vertical external blinds.

There is no documentation that could shed a light on which phase the changes took place in. We can assume that the idea of the fireplace and round basin in the dining hall was revised during the construction phase, in line with the aforementioned logic and practice of limitations in Soviet construction of the early 1960s. Nonetheless, it is obvious that the felsite wall with niche shelves in the dining hall, which was built instead of the fireplace, was a specific design proposed by the architect (perhaps during the construction process itself).

There are no memories or images related to the metal bar partition in the lobby; but, a light convexity can be discerned on the floor in the exact area where the felsite bases for the metal bar partition used to be.

The same holds true for the restroom: despite the fact that there are no oral records about there having been a restroom in the Lounge lobby, we can see traces of reconstruction on the mural between the lobby and the kitchen. Moreover, the floor of the kitchen still has different tiles in the area where the restroom had been planned.

The external blinds are missing, but there are still horizontal wooden brackets over the windows that used to hold the blinds. However, it is obvious that the form of the blind casings is different from that depicted in the 1963 drawings.

Similar alterations and deviations can be seen in the Residence Hall building. We can see in the drawings that the architect planned to use the roof of the Residence Hall as an open terrace.

There were plans to build a concrete canopy on the northern edge of the roof; it was never built. Moreover, the balcony passageway from the staircase tower to the fourth floor terrace that was built in 1932 was removed after the reconstruction. According to the comments on the drawings, the side walls of the club room should have been faced with clean-cut tuff on the inside. There are more discrepancies between the initial project and the actual state of the building after the reconstruction, or more accurately put – reconstructions, which are described in greater detail in the next sections of the CMP.

In order to understand the logic of those discrepancies, it would be appropriate to regard the specificities of the contexts of the time and the circumstances in which the reconstructions were carried out, while at the same time formulating a chart divided into sections, according to the different reasons for the alterations.

1. Changes that were made because of the limitations dictated by the State Construction Administration, deficit of budget or inconsistency with the state policy concerning construction and architecture:

- Exclusion of the swimming pool from the initial project proposal in 1963
- Exclusion of the canopy on the roof terrace of the Residence Hall, and the fireplace in the dining hall of the Lounge, from the list of additional structures that might have been regarded as “extravagance”

2. Changes that took place because of the simplifications initiated by the construction companies:

- Changes that took place on the third floor including levelling the two different floors in the rooms, eliminating the semi-circular balconies, changing the architecture of the second floor
- Changes in materials and colours in the interior design of the Lounge
- Changes that affected the quality of different elements in the construction

3. Changes that took place over time or as a result of epochal/paradigmatic transformations:

- Changes in the approaches to interior design in the period of the paradigm shift in 1932, 1963, and the 1990s
- Random changes during the reconstructions that took place in different time periods

Thus, a major aspect essential to understanding the transformations that took place in the architecture of the SWR, is enfolded in the complexity of the contexts of the time and circumstances in which those transformations took place. The clash of architectural ideas with the limitations proposed by the ideological/political system caused serious dissonances in the process of their materialization in post WW2 Soviet architectural history. That clash also reflects the fundamental conflict that persisted in Soviet history in general

- between the intentions and very principles of structuring modern society, combined with the conservative authoritarian systems of political power.

Therefore, when considering the restoration and conservation of any building of Soviet modernist architectural heritage, it would be appropriate to take into account the contextual background related to the transformations of the architects' ideas.

After their reconstruction, the Lounge and Residence Hall of the Sevan Resort became one of the iconic buildings of post-Stalin modernist Soviet architecture. The image of the Lounge and the reconstructed resort appeared in magazines, photo albums, postcards, and films, symbolizing the new spirit of modernization of Soviet Armenian culture in the 60s and 70s.

During the 60s and 70s, the resort was actively used by the Writers' Union during the summer season for leisure, hosting writers, translators, artists and their families from Armenia, other Soviet republics, and from beyond the Iron Curtain.

After the breakdown of the Soviet Union, the newly independent Republic of Armenia endured war, an economic blockade, economic crises, and social upheavals. In the rush towards privatization that followed the dissolution of the USSR, the Writers' Union succeeded in keeping the Sevan Resort (as well as the Writers' Union resort in Tsakhkadzor) and operating it for its original purpose. However, during this period, the Residence Hall building underwent certain random renovations. One of them was carried out towards the end of the 1990s and ended in the reconstruction of the rooms in the Residence Hall. The major change affected the plans of the second, third and fourth floors and, consequently, the number of the rooms on each floor decreased from four to three. In addition, bathrooms were installed in every bedroom. The ground floor was also changed from a clubroom into a floor with four rooms. The clubroom was moved to the first floor while the common sanitary facilities (showers and baths) were removed, as they no longer served any purpose.

These renovations and remodelling did not improve the general condition of the building as they were mainly cosmetic changes. Furthermore, the changes were not carried out under professional architectural supervision. The building continues to function as a resort in the summer season but is in need of substantial restoration.

### 3.4. Archival Research

The archival research on the history of the SWR was extensive. Several directions and fields of the research required careful exploration of archival materials.

The first archival materials needed for the research were the technical drawings of the SWR complex; these were found in the National Archives of Armenia. Technical drawings included the project of the Residence Hall building, dated 1932; the reconstruction project and measurements of the Residence Hall building at that time, dated 1953; and the technical drawings of the 1963 reconstruction.

In addition to the architectural part, the set of drawings of the 1963 reconstruction included detailed development of the structural, technical, and electrical parts of the reconstruction project, as well as the gas supply project.

As the subject of architectural avant-garde was condemned, demonized and banned during the Stalinist period, the major studies on Soviet avant-garde were mostly carried out over the 1960s and 70s in Moscow. These studies held a centric viewpoint, and thus many important details of so-called “peripheral” histories were simply not disclosed and were neglected.

There are very few studies and publications on Armenian early modernist architecture, and these offer a fairly general view of the time period, without going deep into the contextual details.

The historical research on the SWR required a scrupulous exploration of the 1920s and early 1930s contexts in order to follow the logic of the formal transformations that the Residence Hall building underwent.

In that regard the basic archival materials that shed light upon the period of the late 1920s and the paradigmatic transformations that took place during the 1930s were found in the National Library of Armenia, Mikayel Mazmanyán Archive, Artsvin Grigoryan Archive, the National Archives of Armenia, the Academy of Science of Russia, and the National Museum-Institute of Architecture of Armenia.

Among the documents found in the archives were:

- Articles and theoretical essays found in the professional literature of that period published in Moscow and Yerevan (National Library of Armenia)
- Transcripts of discussions and Congresses at the Union of Architects of Armenia from the 1930s and 1960s to the early 1970s (National Archives of Armenia)
- The full text of Mikayel Mazmanyán’s presentation “On the Subject of National Architecture” in the Literature, Arts and Language section of the Academy of Science, 1929 (Archive of the Russian Academy of Science)

- Letters, notes, memories, drafts of articles and presentation texts (National Museum-Institute of Architecture of Armenia)
- Sketches and photo materials (National Museum-Institute of Architecture of Armenia)
- Photo materials, archival documents, draft papers (Mikayel Mazmanyan Archive, Artsvin Grigoryan Archive)
- KGB personal files on Mikayel Mazmanyan and Gevorg Kochar (National Archives of Armenia, Mikayel Mazmanyan Archive)
- Archival Photos (Shchusev Museum of Architecture, Moscow, Russian State Cinema and Photo Archive, Krasnogorsk, TASS Archive Moscow)
- Photo materials from private archives (Vahagn Davtyan and Henrik Mamyan's private family archives, Nairi Zarian private family archive, Artak Kalantaryan private family archive, Tamar Hovhannissyan private family archive)
- Footage from documentary films (National Archives of Armenia), footage from an 8mm home video (Artashes Emin Private Archive)
- Selected footage showing the SWR from Armenian films made in different periods (YouTube)

Private archives



**Picture 57.** Group photo of writers and their family members

**Source:** Nairi Zarian family archive



**Picture 58.** Billiard playing scene

**Source:** Vahagn Davtyan and Henrik Mamyan family archives



**Picture 59.** View of the resort from the monastery

**Source:** Artashes Kalantaryan family archive

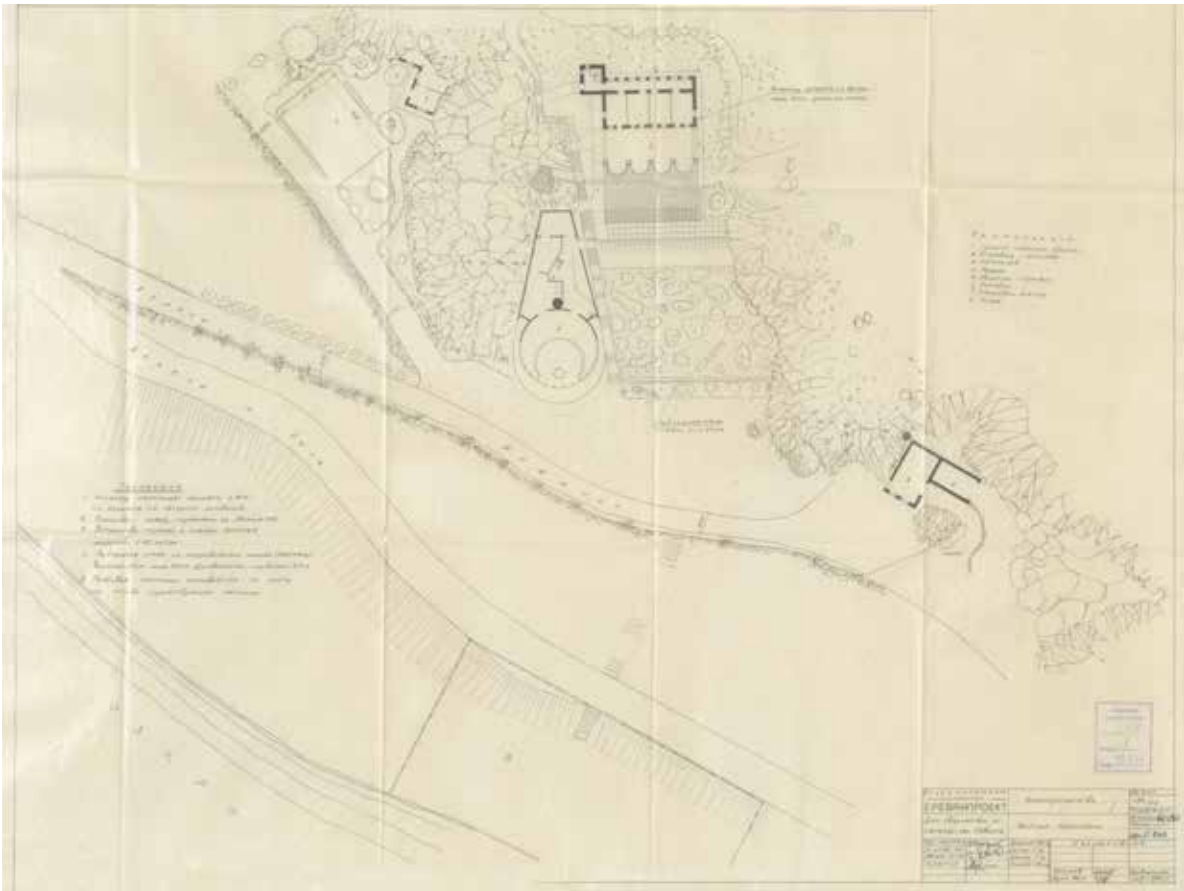


**Picture 60.** Group photo of writers' family members.

**Source:** Vahagn Davtyan and Henrik Mamyán family archive

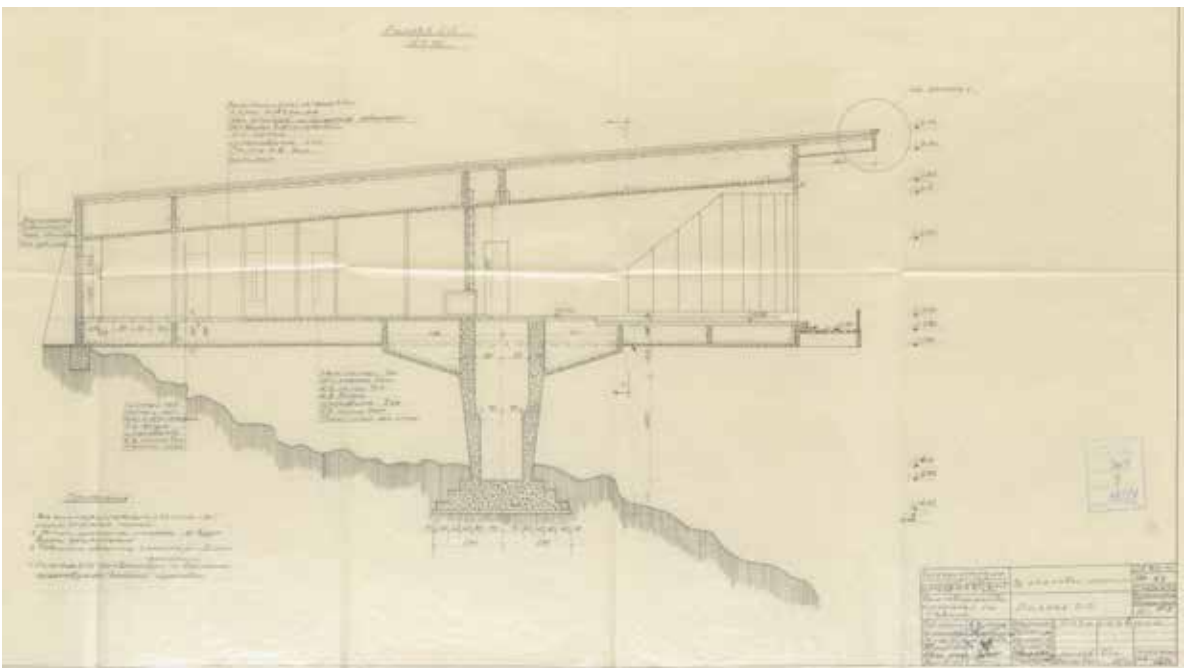






**Picture 62.** Master plan of the reconstruction, 1963

**Source:** National Archives of Armenia



**Picture 63.** Section of the Lounge building, 1964

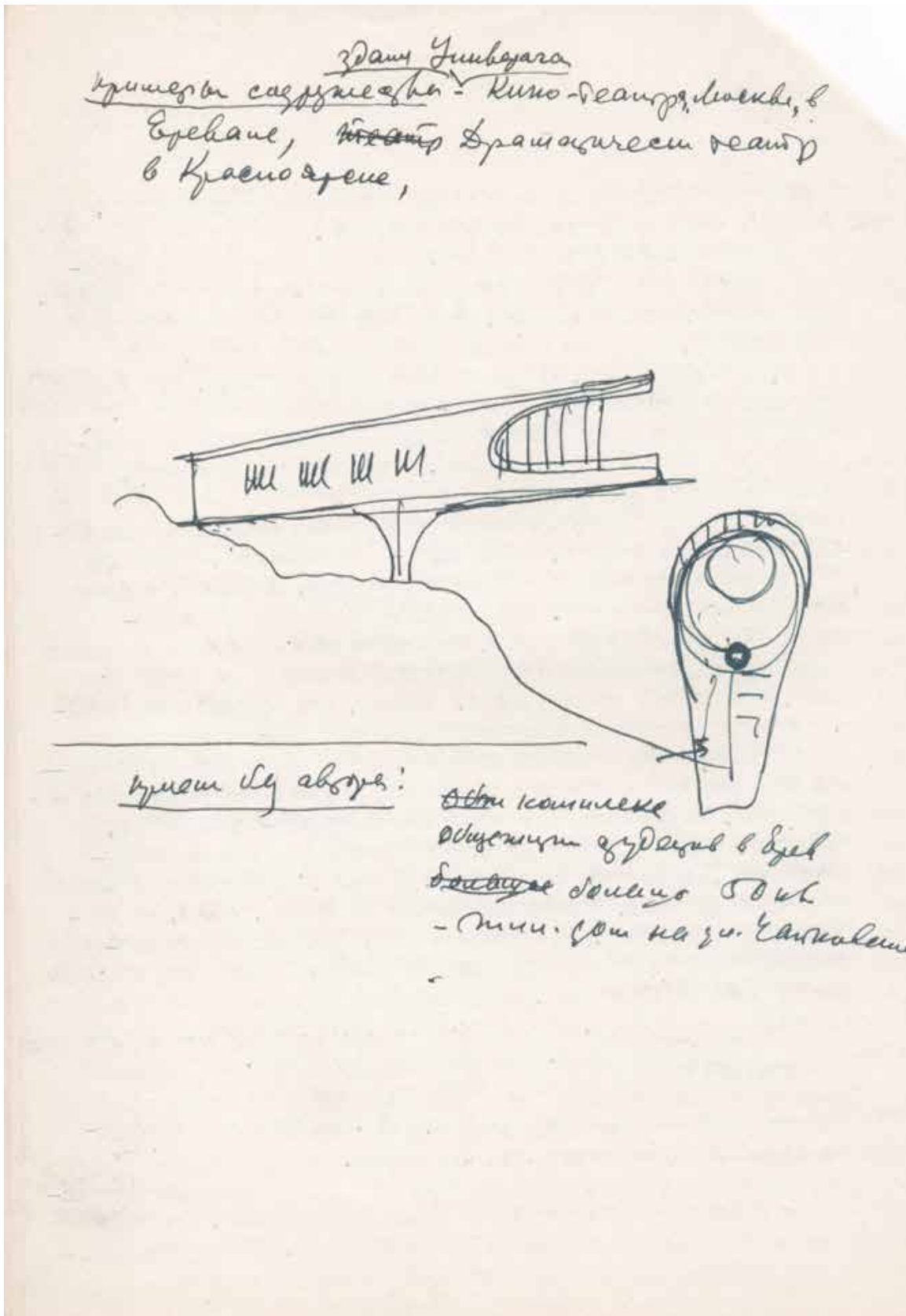
**Source:** National Archives of Armenia



**Picture 64.** Model of the Sevan Resort's Residence Hall, 1932

**Architects:** G. Kochar, M. Mazmanyán

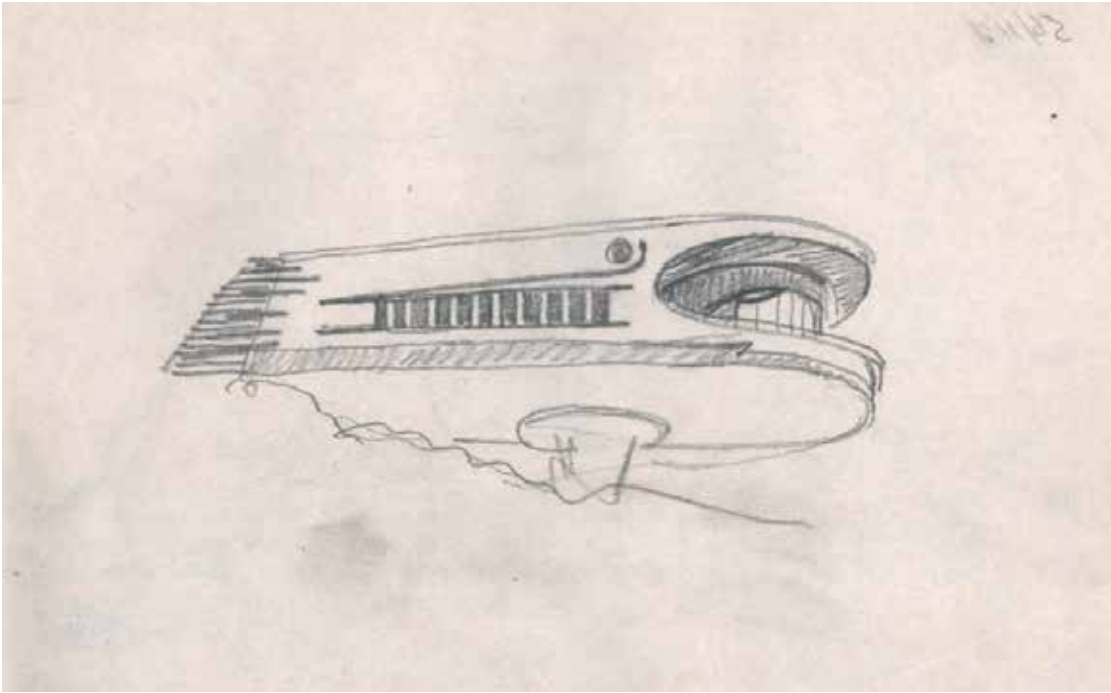
**Source:** M. Mazmanyán Archive



Picture 65. Sketch of the Lounge building, 1963-64

Architect: G. Kochar

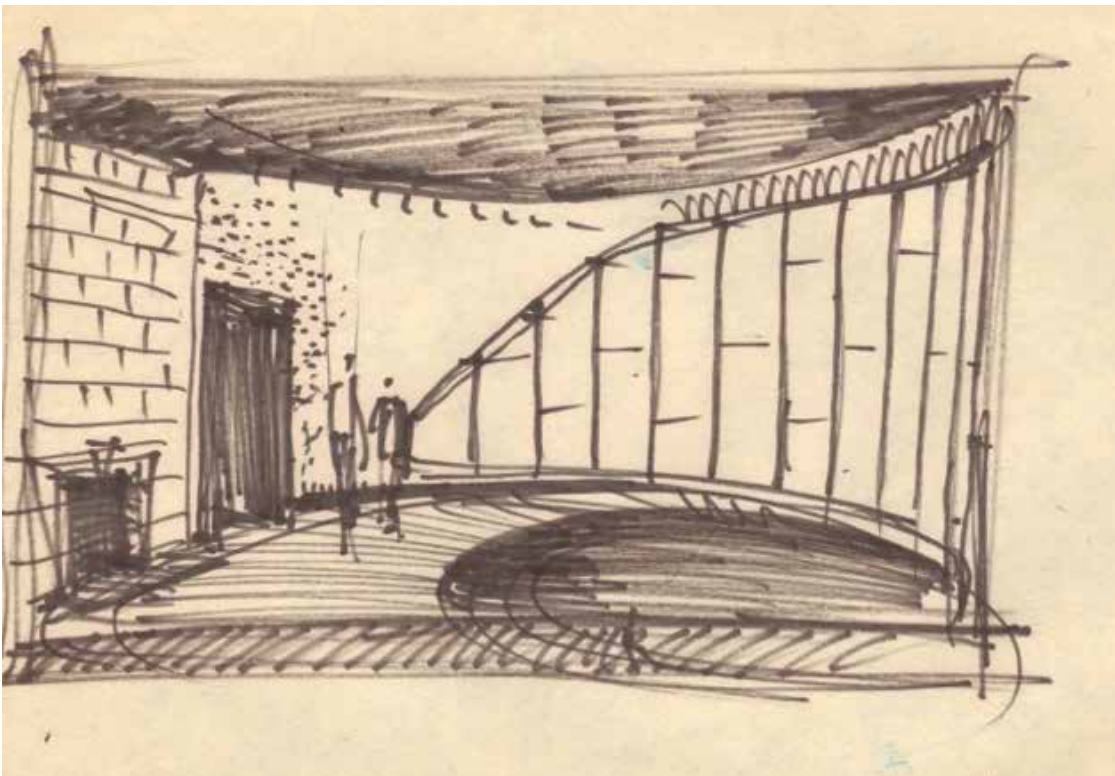
Source: National Museum-Institute of Architecture named after Alexander Tamanyan, Yerevan



**Picture 66.** Sketch of the Lounge building, 1963-64

**Architect:** G. Kochar

**Source:** National Museum-Institute of Architecture named after Alexander Tamanyan, Yerevan



**Picture 67.** Sketch of the Lounge building interior, 1963-64

**Architect:** G. Kochar

**Source:** National Museum-Institute of Architecture named after Alexander Tamanyan, Yerevan

## Photographs of the buildings



**Picture 68.** Photo of the Residence Hall, late 1930s

**Source:** Moscow Shchusev State Museum of Architecture Archive



**Picture 69.** Photo of the Residence Hall, late 1930s

**Source:** National Museum-Institute of Architecture named after Alexander Tamanyan, Yerevan



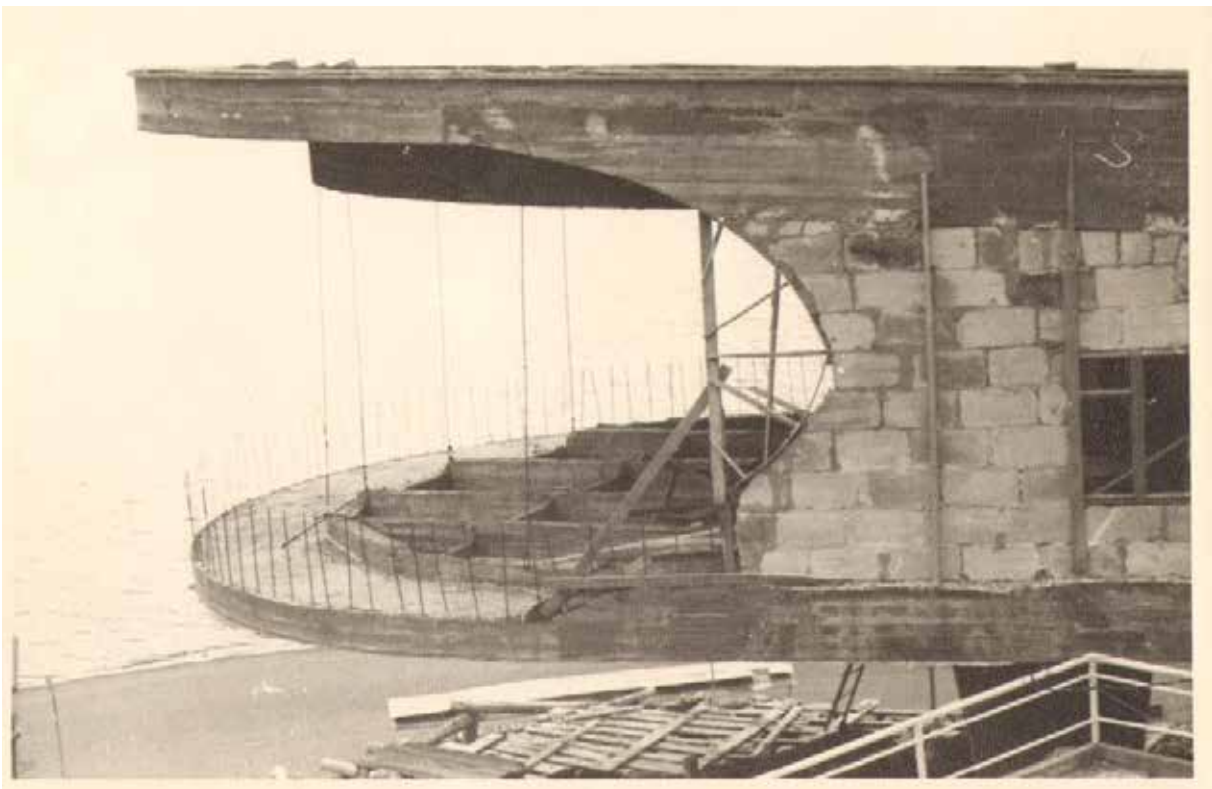
**Picture 70.** Photo of the Residence Hall, late 1950s

**Source:** M. Mazmanyany Archive



**Picture 71.** View of the resort from the lake, 1950s

**Source:** M. Mazmanyán Archive



**Picture 72.** Construction process, 1966-67

**Source:** National Museum-Institute of Architecture named after Alexander Tamanyan, Yerevan



**Picture 73.** Lounge building

**Source:** TASS Agency Archive, Moscow

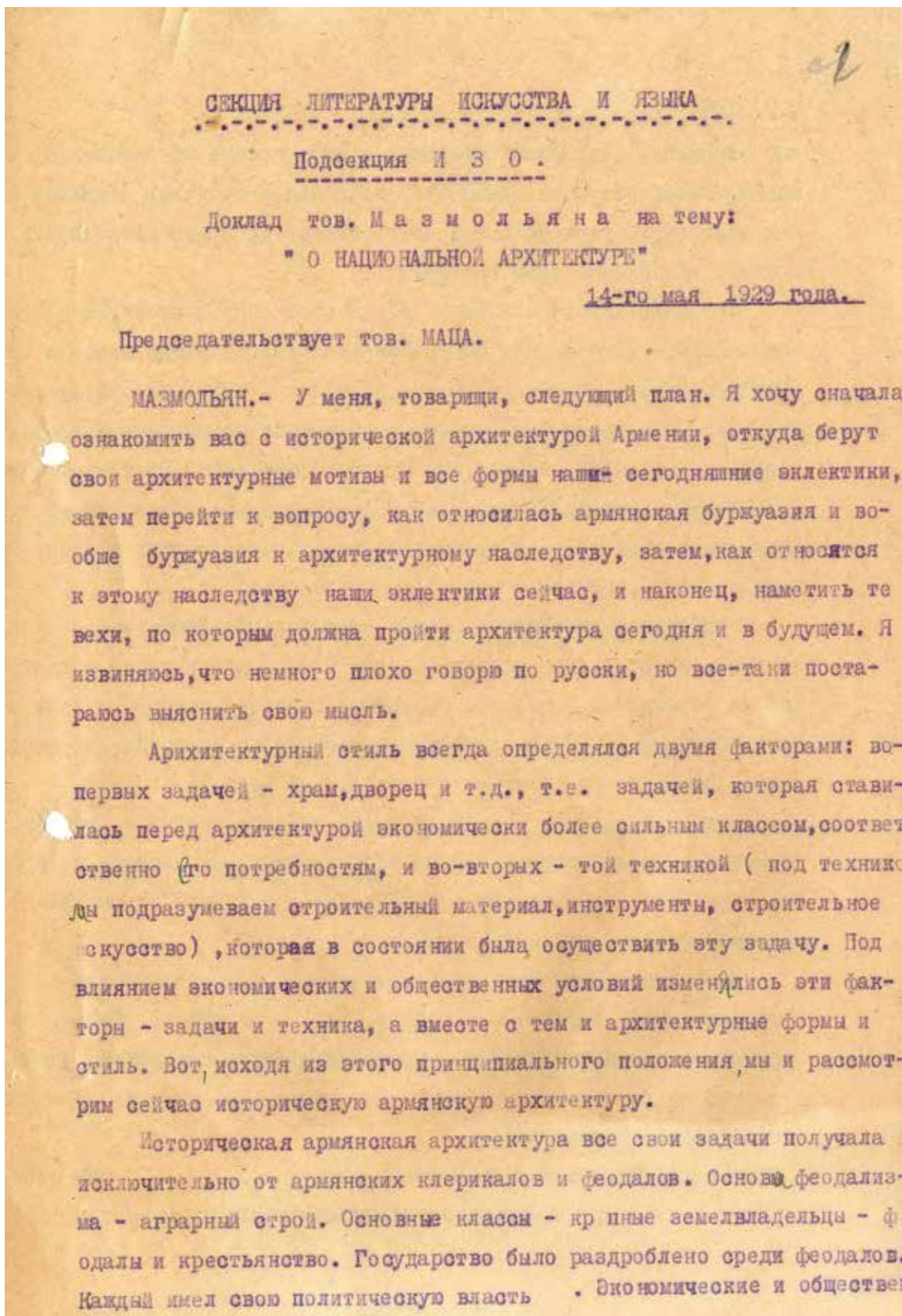


Archival documents



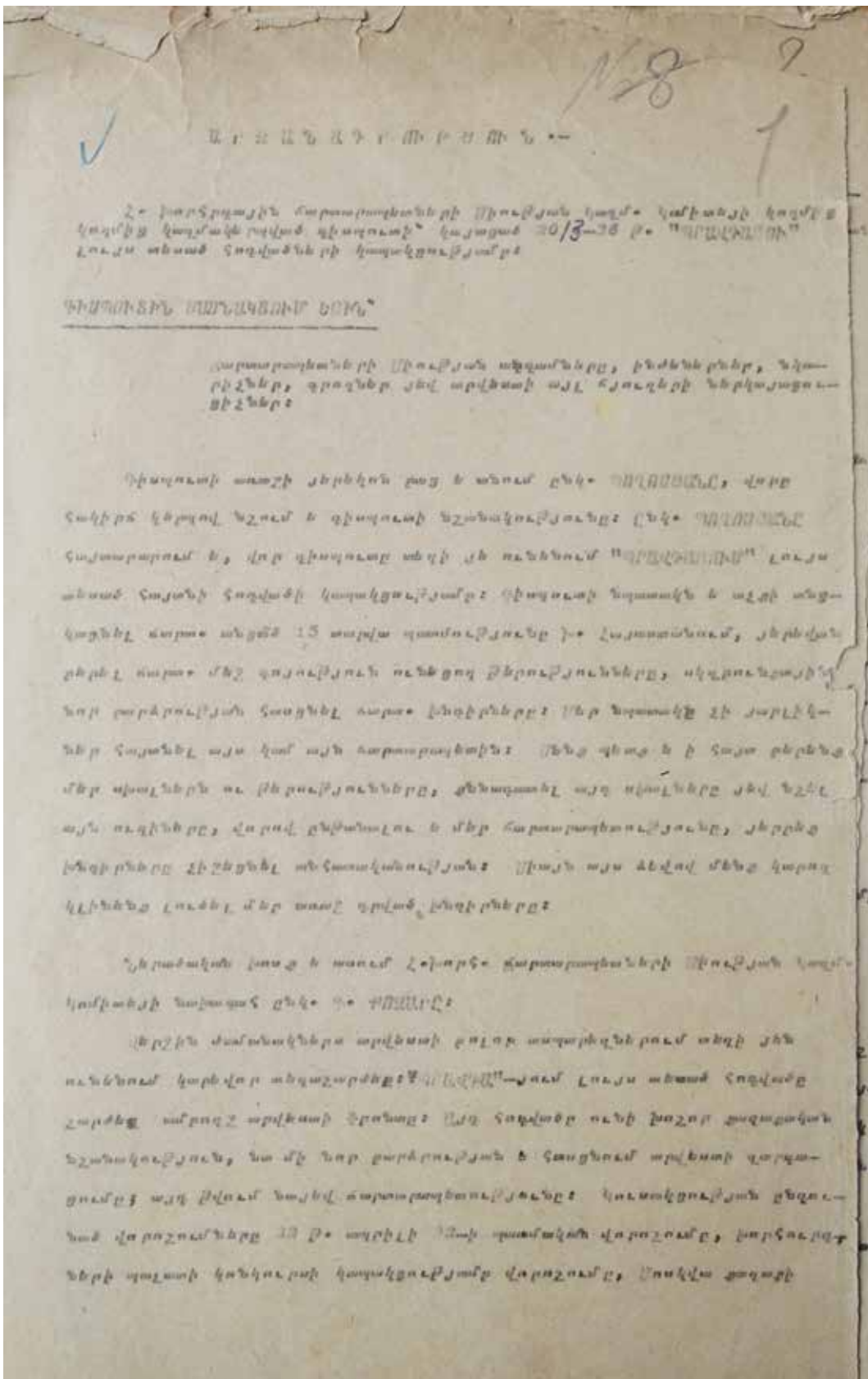
Picture 74. Folder cover of KGB's personal files on Gevorg Kochar

Source: National Archives of Armenia

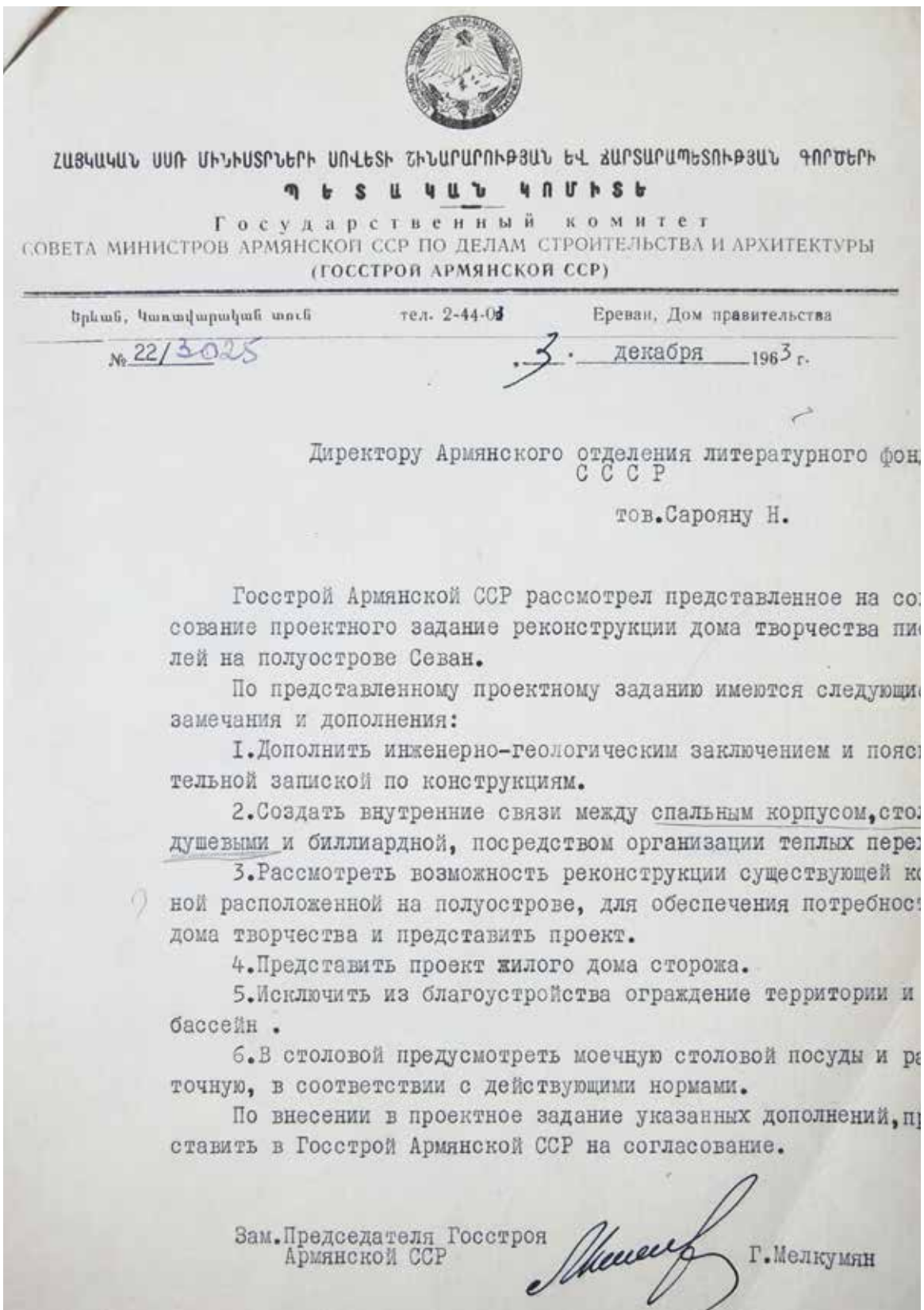


Picture 75. Mikayel Mazmanyan's presentation text "About National Architecture", 1929

Source: Russian Academy of Sciences archives



**Picture 76.** Transcript of the discussion at the Union of Architects of Armenian SSR around the article published in Pravda newspaper criticizing “formalism”, 1936  
**Source:** National Archives of Armenia



**Picture 77.** Letter from the State Committee for Construction of Armenian SSR to the director of the Armenian Department of the Literary Foundation with comments and alterations in the planning task list developed for the reconstruction of the SRW, 1963

**Source:** National Museum-Institute of Architecture named after Alexander Tamanyan, Yerevan

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ԳԵՐՄԱՆԻԱՌԻՄ

1927թվական: Գերմանիա: Այցելումը ընդհանուր գերմանիայի բարձրագույն ճարտարապետական շինարարական դպրոց: Բաճառուս Գեսայու ջարդարում Բեռլինից ոչ հեռու: Ծանոթություններ պրոֆեսոր Գրուպպուսի ճարտարապետ Հանես Մայերի հետ, նկարիչ Նովենցկու և ուրիշների հետ, Բաճառուսում մեր գալու առթիվ տեղի ունեցավ երեկո: Երկու անցավ հարց ու պատասխանի ձևով: Բովանդակությունը հետևյալն էր. թե ինչպես ենք մենք հասկանում ժամանակակից ճարտարապետության և արվեստի խնդիրները և ճարտարապետական կրթության ուսման դրվածքը, ինչպես մեր այնպես էլ փոքր նրանց մոտ: Երեկոյի վերջում եղան եվրոպական պարեր: Բայց ինչ անհարմար դրություն մեզանից ոչ մեկը հիշեց ց հոգի էինք/ պարել չգիտեիք և ջարդարած վիճակում կանգնած հիացած դիտում էինք թե ինչպես էին պարում Բաճառուսի ուսանող ուսանողուհիները իրենց նվազախմբի ուրախ հնչյունների տակ: Զգիտեմ որտեղից նրանք լսել էին որ մեր խմբում կա մի Կովկասցի - այսինքն էս և երբ լսեց նվազախմբը չբուրբուրեց հավաքվեցին իմ շուրջը և սկսեցին փփփփփփփփփփփ ստիպել լեզվի նկատմամբ: Եվ մերոնց արդարացնելու համար դուրս եկա պարեցի այնքան, որքան շնորհ ռեժի: Այս տեսնելով մեր ուսուցիչները խնդրեցին ուսական պարեղանակ նվագել: Երեք արժանացանք չտեսնված ծաղիկաբույսերի: Ինչպես երևում էր Գերմանական ուսանողների համար լրիվ նորություն էր: Եվ այսպես մենք այդ գիշեր լրիվ արդարացրինք մեզ: Կես գիշեր էր մենք դուրս եկանք Բաճառուսի շենքից: Անցնում էինք ուսանողների հանրակացարանի մոտով, երբ լսվեց, ին - տերնացիոնալը, նվագող նվազախմբի հզոր հնչյունները: Նվագը գալիս էր անմիջապես պատշգամբից այդ ուսանողներն էին, որոնք մեզ ճանապարհեցին միջազգային այդ հիմնի հնչյունների տակ դեպի մեր հյուրանոցը:

Պետք է նշել, որ Բաճառուսի ուսանողները իրենց հաղախարհներով բավական առաջավոր մտքերի էին հարուստ և համակրում էին կոմունիստական շարժմանը:

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Picture 78. Kochar's memoirs about Bauhaus, 1927  
Source: National Museum-Institute of Architecture named after Alexander Tamanyan, Yerevan

## 4. The Site

By Sarhat Petrosyan and SP2 | Planning & Design

### 4.1. The Site

The SWR area is located on the south-eastern part of the Sevan Peninsula, on the southern slope of the hill that used to be the old Sevan Island. The Summer Resort of the President of the RA is adjacent to it on the east and the Sevanavank monastery, on the north. Some plots of land, leased to private entities, lie adjacent to its west, and the shoreline of Lake Sevan is to its south.

The Complex consists of two main buildings - the Residence Hall and the Lounge Building. There is also a boiler facility, an underground facility (presumably a shelter), and other temporary facilities (cabins, pavilions). The flat plateau on the lower part of the Complex is connected to the main road joining the Sevan-Yerevan M4 highway to a secondary entrance of the President's Summer Resort.

In the past, the Complex occupied a greater area than today. The ownership certificate issued by the State Real Estate Cadastre Committee of the RA specifies the current area of the Complex as 2063 square metres.

The highest point of the area is 1931.5 metres above (Baltic) sea level and the lowest point is the current lake water surface level, which is 1900.5 metres (as of 2017) above sea level. The area has rocky slopes with large changes in elevation, in some parts reaching 12 metres.

The main flat terrace at the lower part of the Complex, which is currently used as a parking lot, is on an elevation of 1914 metres above water level, which means that it is 13.5 metres higher than the current water level. Lake Sevan's current water level is the highest since the 1960s, when the last interventions on the SWR were undertaken.

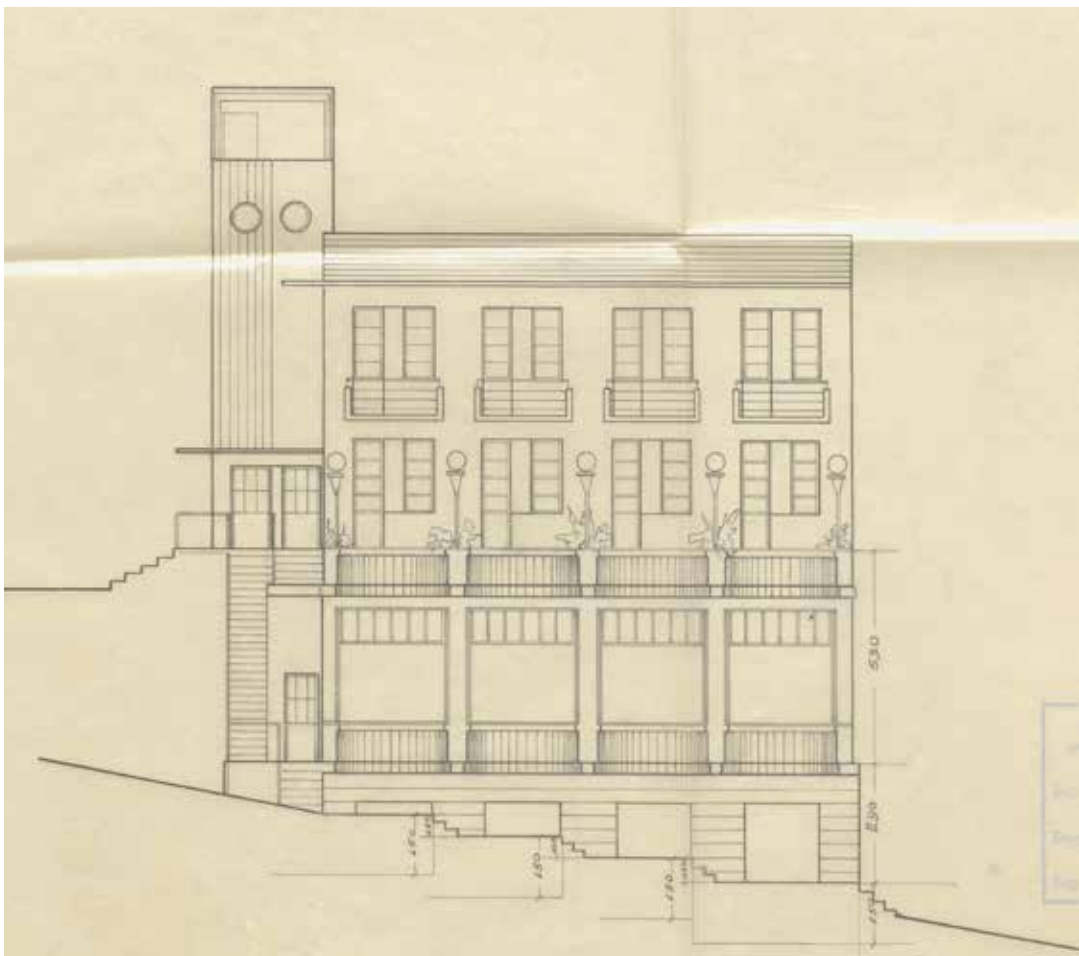
Based on current plans, which are regulated by the Law on Lake Sevan and related Government Decisions, by 2030 the water level will be at 1903.5, plus a 1.5 metres wave motion. This water level is considered sufficient for the stability of the lake's ecological system. Higher water levels will put huge infrastructures (including urban settlements) at risk.

## 4.2. Residence Hall and Alterations

The Residence Hall was designed by Gevorg Kochar (1901-1973) and Mikayel Mazmanyan (1899-1971). The examination of archival materials revealed that Mikayel Mazmanyan's name is not mentioned on the project's architectural drawings, which leads to the assumption that he only participated in the preliminary stage of design. At the same time, his name is mentioned in many publications, including some printed during their lifetime, as co-author of the building.

The first drawings are dated 1932, while archival photographs and materials suggest that the construction was completed in 1935.

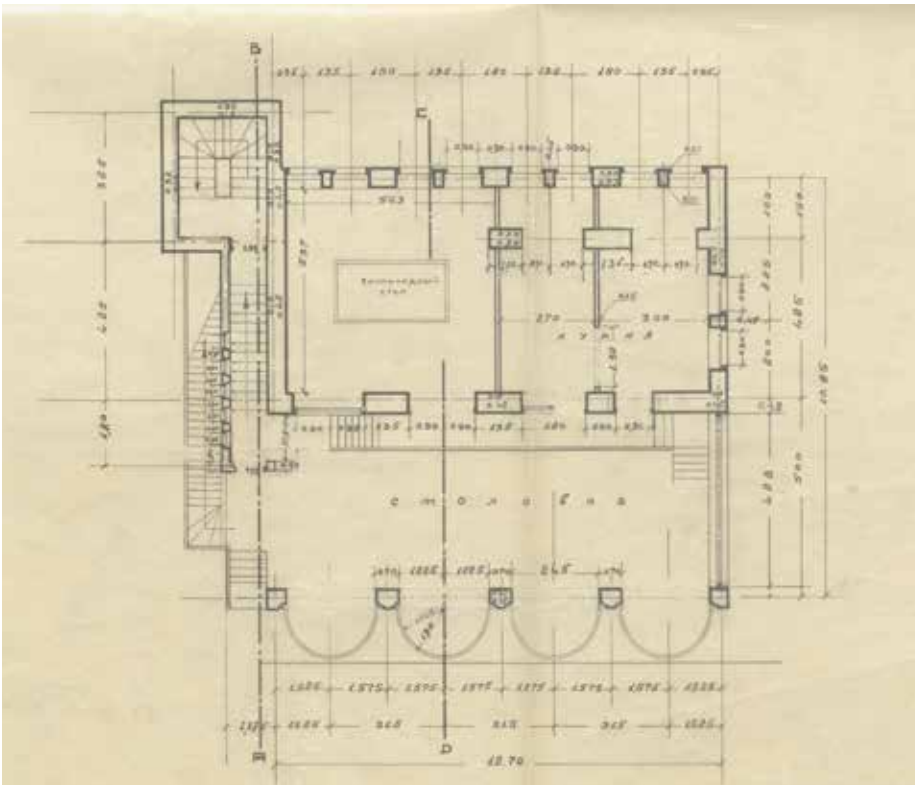
The building was initially designed as a four-storey building. One of these was a basement (now the first floor), the other was a common area. The other two floors were designed for guest rooms with four rooms on each floor, each room occupying an area of 4.3m x 2.9m (9.5"x14"). An open-air observation deck was envisaged at the top of the staircase (see Pictures 6-10).



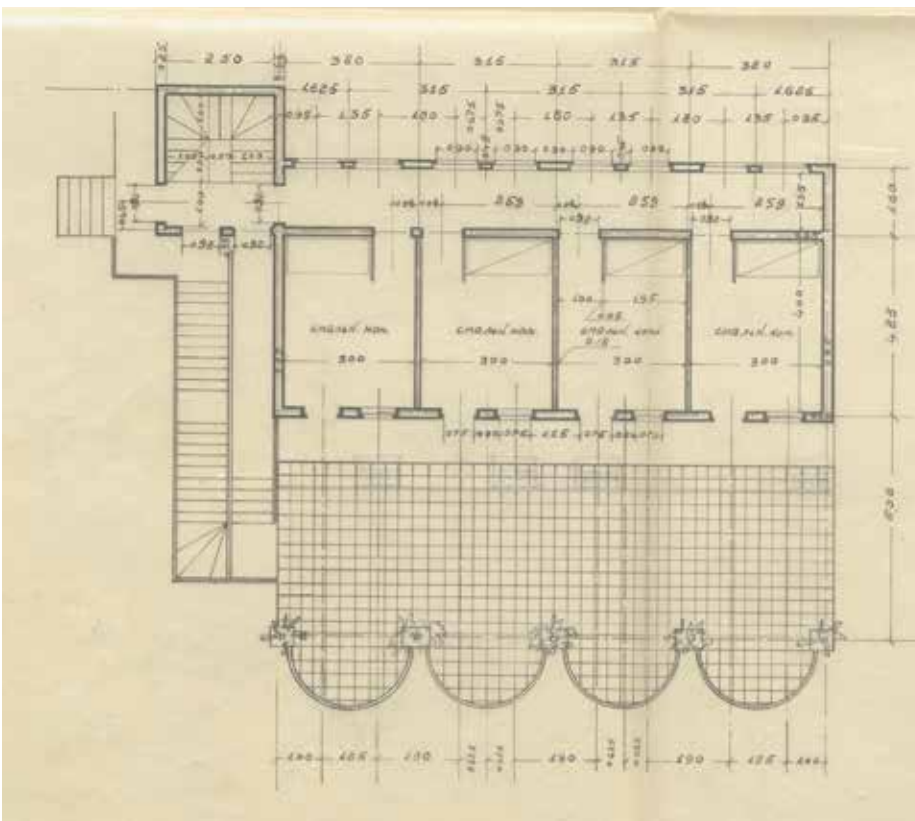
**Picture 79.** Main southern facade of the Residence Hall, Proposal, 1932.

**Architect:** G. Kochar

**Source** for all drawings in this chapter: National Archives of Armenia

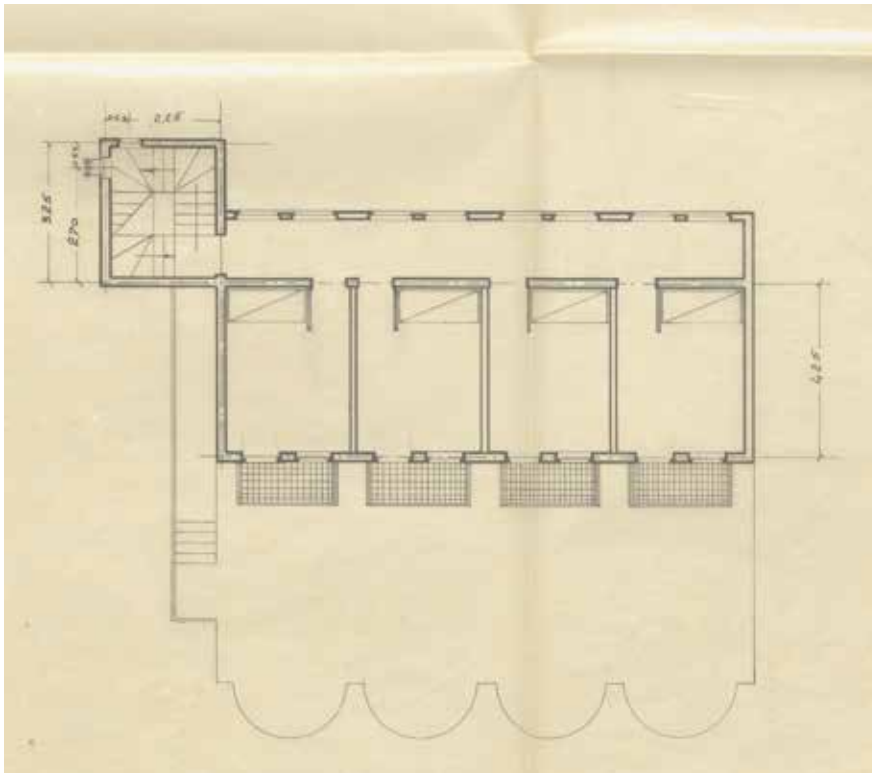


**Picture 80.** Plan of the first (now second) floor of the Residence Hall, Proposal, 1932.  
**Architect:** G. Kochar

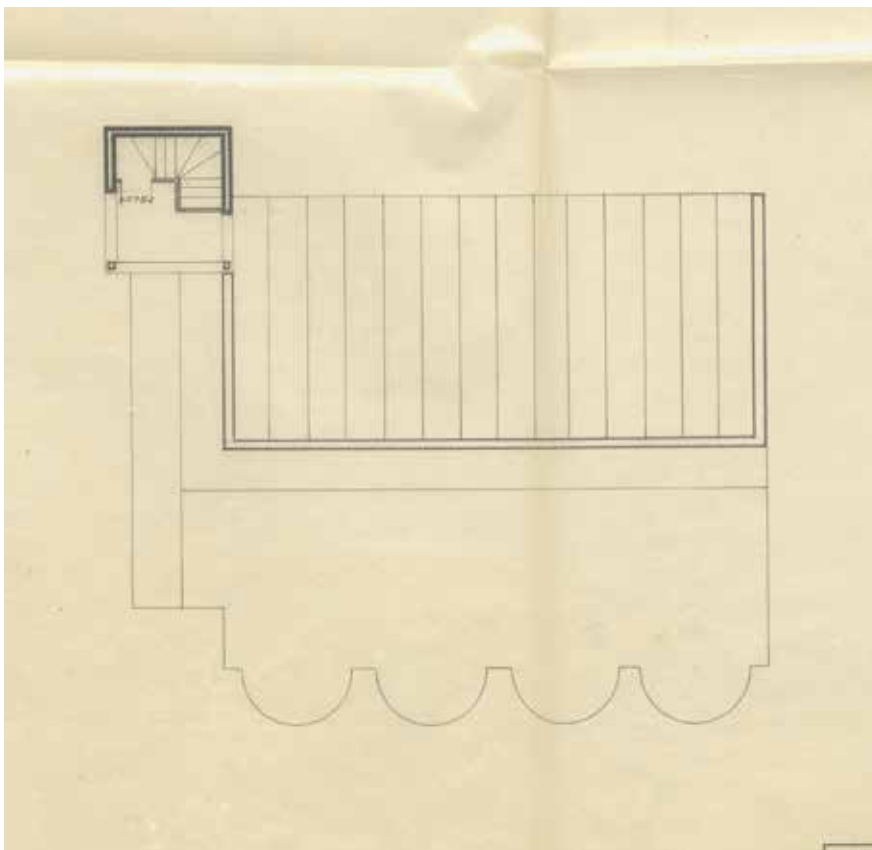


**Picture 81.** Plan of the second (now third) floor of the Residence Hall, Proposal, 1932.  
**Architect:** G. Kochar





**Picture 82.** Plan of the third (now fourth) floor of the Residence Hall, Proposal, 1932.  
**Architect:** G. Kochar



**Picture 83.** Plan of the fourth (now fifth) Observation Deck floor of the Residence Hall, Proposal, 1932.  
**Architect:** G. Kochar

Archival materials include a draft remodelling proposal from 1953, with measurements of the building. The study of this proposal revealed that the floor initially planned as a basement is in fact not a basement and is 1.4 metres higher than ground level. However, no data was found regarding this change. The change may have been made by the architects themselves at the beginning, or later on, in order to create more usable space. It should be noted that the construction was carried out from 1932 to 1935 when the area was still an island and not yet a peninsula.

In a few archival photos, we can see two pavilions built of light materials (presumably wood) located where the Lounge currently stands. The larger of these was a glass pavilion and, according to some accounts, served as a club area (see Picture 11). Photos of the model of the Residence Hall designed in the 1930s, retrieved from Mikayel Mazmanyán's archives, show another rotunda-shaped pavilion (see Picture 12).



**Picture 84.** Photo of the Residence Hall, 1950s.

**Author:** unknown

**Source:** National Museum-Institute of Architecture of Armenia

On the first (now second) floor of the Residence Hall a billiard room, a kitchen and a restaurant area - lower by 1.5 metres - were planned (see Picture 7). The second (now third) floor had a terrace on top of it, which was one metre lower than the guest rooms. It served as a common area and was linked to the staircase with a balcony-passageway. This difference in levels allowed the separation of the rooms from the common area. These two levels were linked with stairs parallel to the longitudinal facade of the building.



■ **Picture 85.** Photo of the Residence Hall, 1930s.

■ **Source:** Mikayel Mazmanyán family archives

The top floor had an open-air observation deck, which at some point was covered with glass, presumably in view of the windy weather and precipitation. Judging from photos, this was done not long after the building began operating as a writers' resort.

The stone masonry of the building follows the method of “midis” with a ribbon-shaped foundation. According to the design, all the facades of the building were plastered, with the exception of the plinth floors (basement and first floor). Before the remodellings in 1963-65, the building had wooden ceilings. It also had wooden windows and doors; the intention was to retain them.

Our study does not give a full understanding of the logic behind the elements used in the 1930s and reconstructed in the 1960s, because the solutions that exist today have a number of fundamentally different coverage and designations. It is, however, without doubt that with the 1963 proposal the architect attempted to preserve the utilitarian purpose of the initially planned spaces while maintaining the common use. According to this design, there are three common terraces accessible from the first and third floors; the roof is also used as a terrace. It is noteworthy, that the terraces of the third floor, as well as those in the 1932 design were common and adjacent to the rooms of the residence hall, which were at different levels and thus, visually separated.

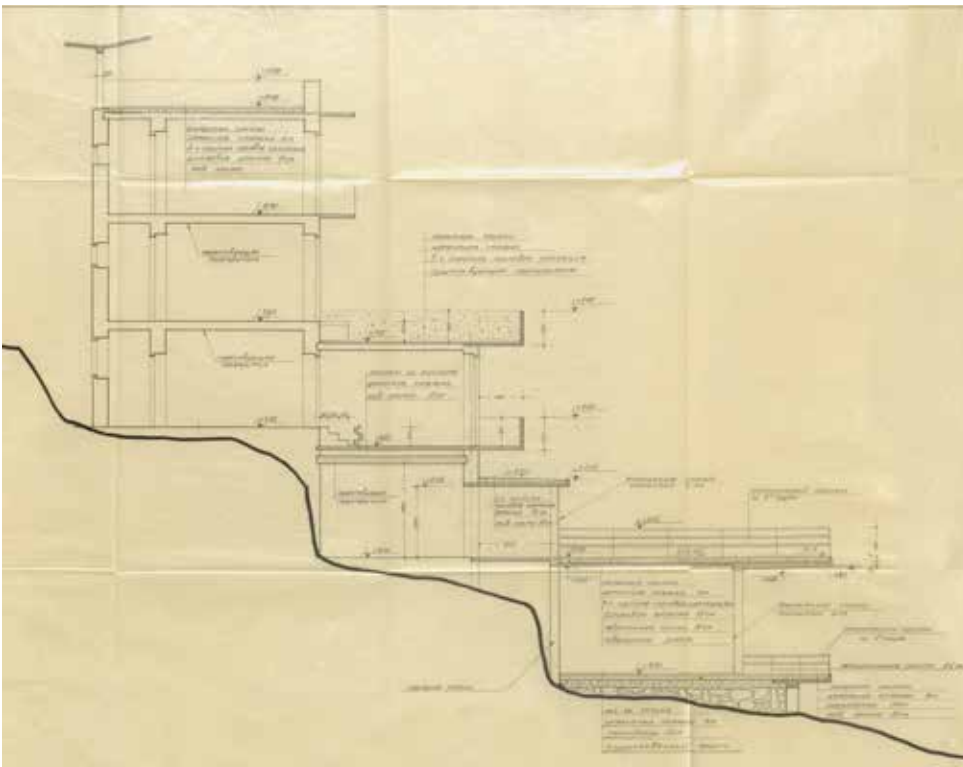
Our site inspections revealed a few crucial deviations from the remodelling design of 1963. It was difficult to detect the exact changes made due to undocumented alterations done in the

late 80s or early 90s to equip each guest room with a washroom. It is also difficult to track down which of the alterations were made with the knowledge of the author-architect during the restorations of the 1960s.

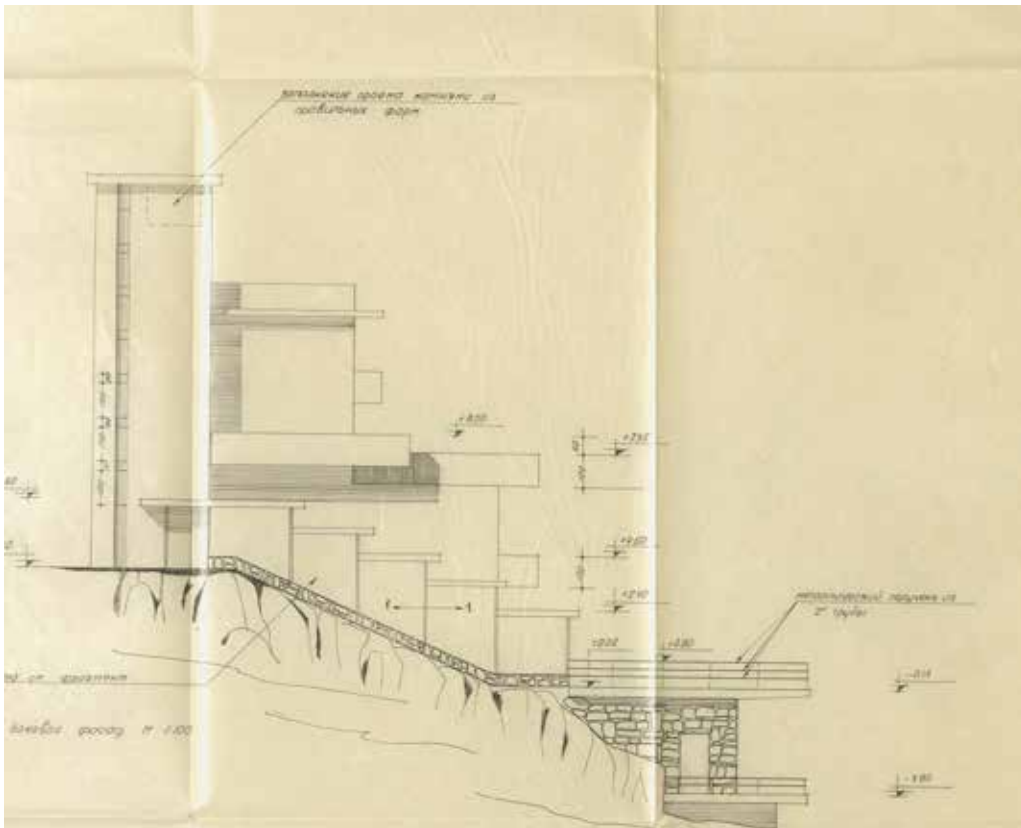
In the 1963 restoration design, one of the more important and key alterations was the creation of 1.2 metres of space between the first and second floors, which no longer exists. Presumably, it was done in order to maintain the symmetry of the vertical openings and the rhythm of the horizontal planes of the 1932 design (see Picture 13).

As a result of the same alterations, the balcony-passageway connecting the terrace to the staircase, thus making the terrace an accessible common area, has not been preserved. The canopy of the northern façade, which was meant to make the flat roof usable and protect it from wind, was not built, thus restricting public access to this area (see Picture 14).

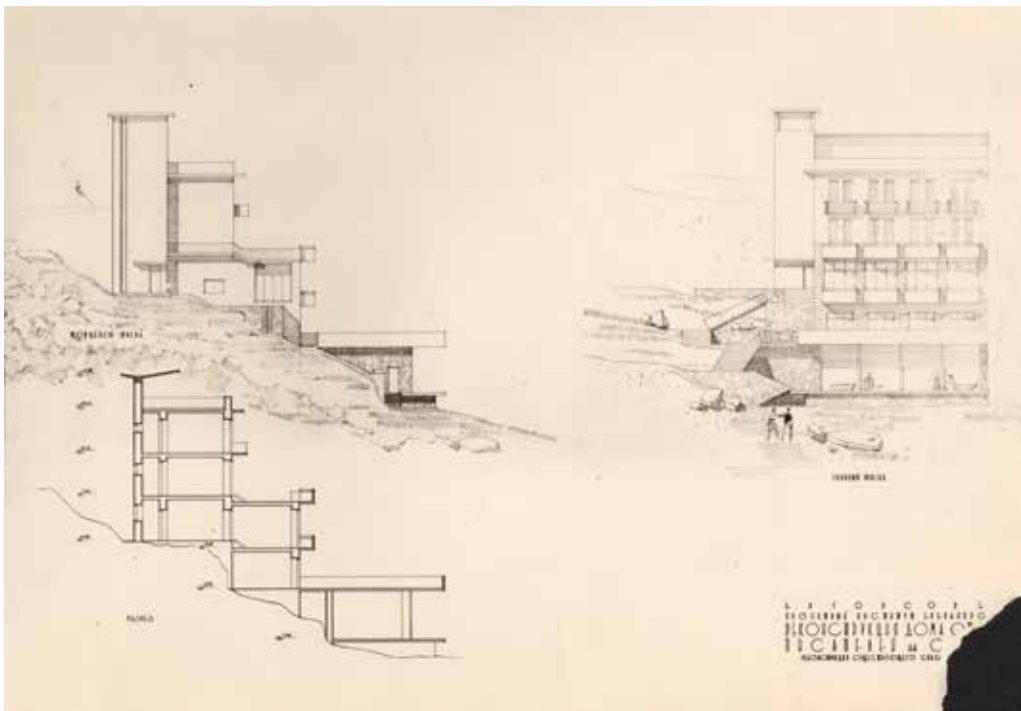
The above-mentioned balcony-passageway can be considered an important component in the different restoration layers of the building. Despite the fact that the balcony-passageway is present in almost all the plans, even that of 1963, its status is unclear, because even though it was sketched in the plans and in the facade and section drawings, it does not have an entrance door in the plans of the facade. This can be interpreted both as a mistake and as a sign of the architect's hesitation. It is interesting that the steel tendons of the concrete floor of these balcony-passageways still exist on the western facade. Based on this, we can assume that it was built in 1960, and then dismantled in later reconstructions of the 80s and 90s (see Picture 15).



**Picture 86.** Section of the Residence Hall, proposal, 1962.  
**Architect:** G. Kochar



**Picture 87.** Western elevation of the Residence Hall, proposal, 1963.  
**Architect:** G. Kochar



**Picture 88.** Reconstruction proposal for the Residence Hall, 1963  
**Architect:** G. Kochar

During the site inspection, a space was discovered on the basement level that was created between the additions of the 1960s and the walls of the 1930s. The existing hewn (polished) stone cladding gives an idea about the facade solutions of the 1930s. Starting at this level, these facade solutions ascend to the current third floor terrace. The entrance to this section of the building is from the eastern facade.

The basement, in which the remodelled and recently renovated VIP rooms are located, has four openings. There are additions that were not part of the 1963 plans. According to the building's design, reinforced 20x30cm concrete columns were designed at these openings. These were isolated foundations ascending up to the ceiling of the first floor. However, the openings present today are smaller and the columns have been converted into diaphragms of no diametric/latitudinal constructive function and are simply there to separate the rooms.



**Picture 89.** Western elevation of the Residence Hall, 2016.

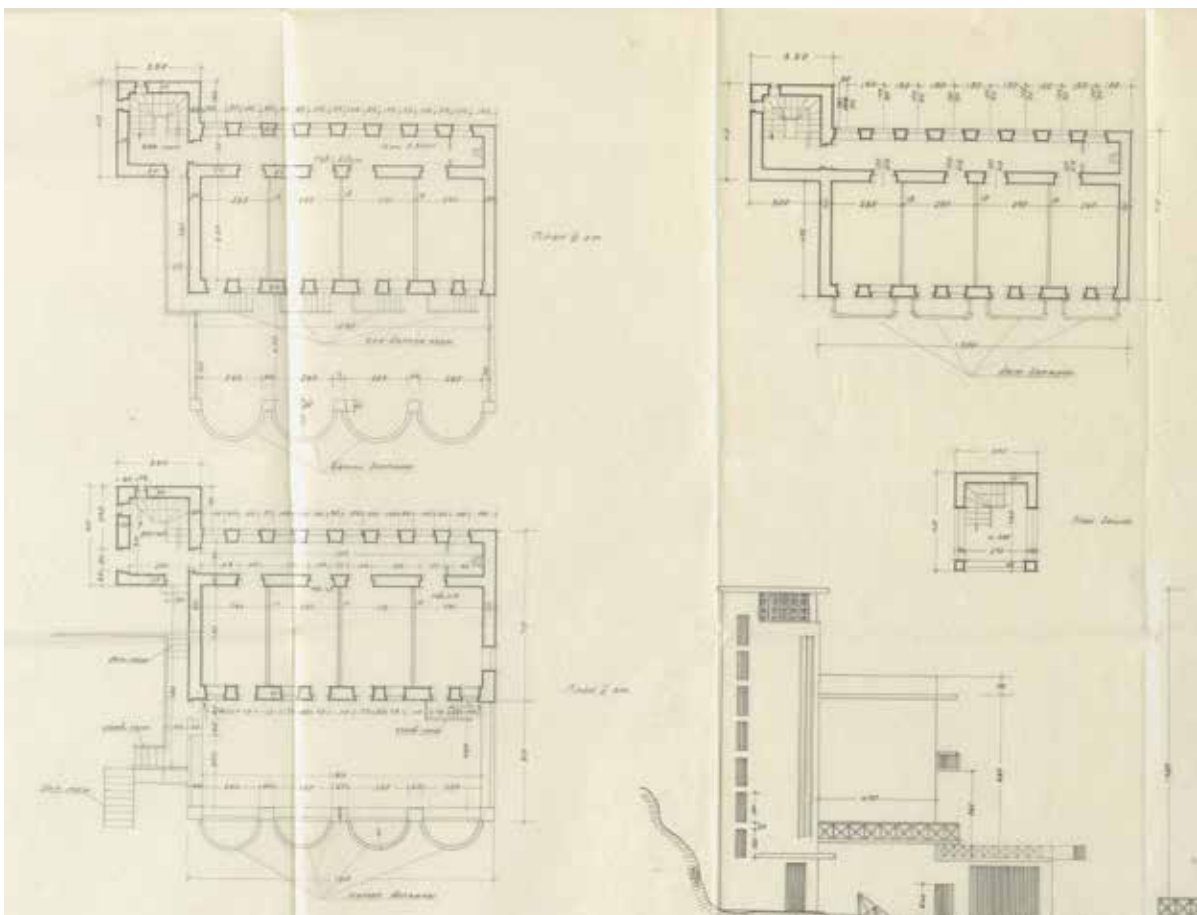
**Photo by** Sarhat Petrosyan

At this level, on the western facade there are two external openings, only one of which is reflected in the 1963 design. That design planned an interior finishing with polished tufa cladding, which is not visible nowadays as it was covered with plasterboard during renovations in the 2010s. According to the 1963 plan, stone cladding with mixed stone masonry was designed for the decoration of the external facade of the basement and the first floor.

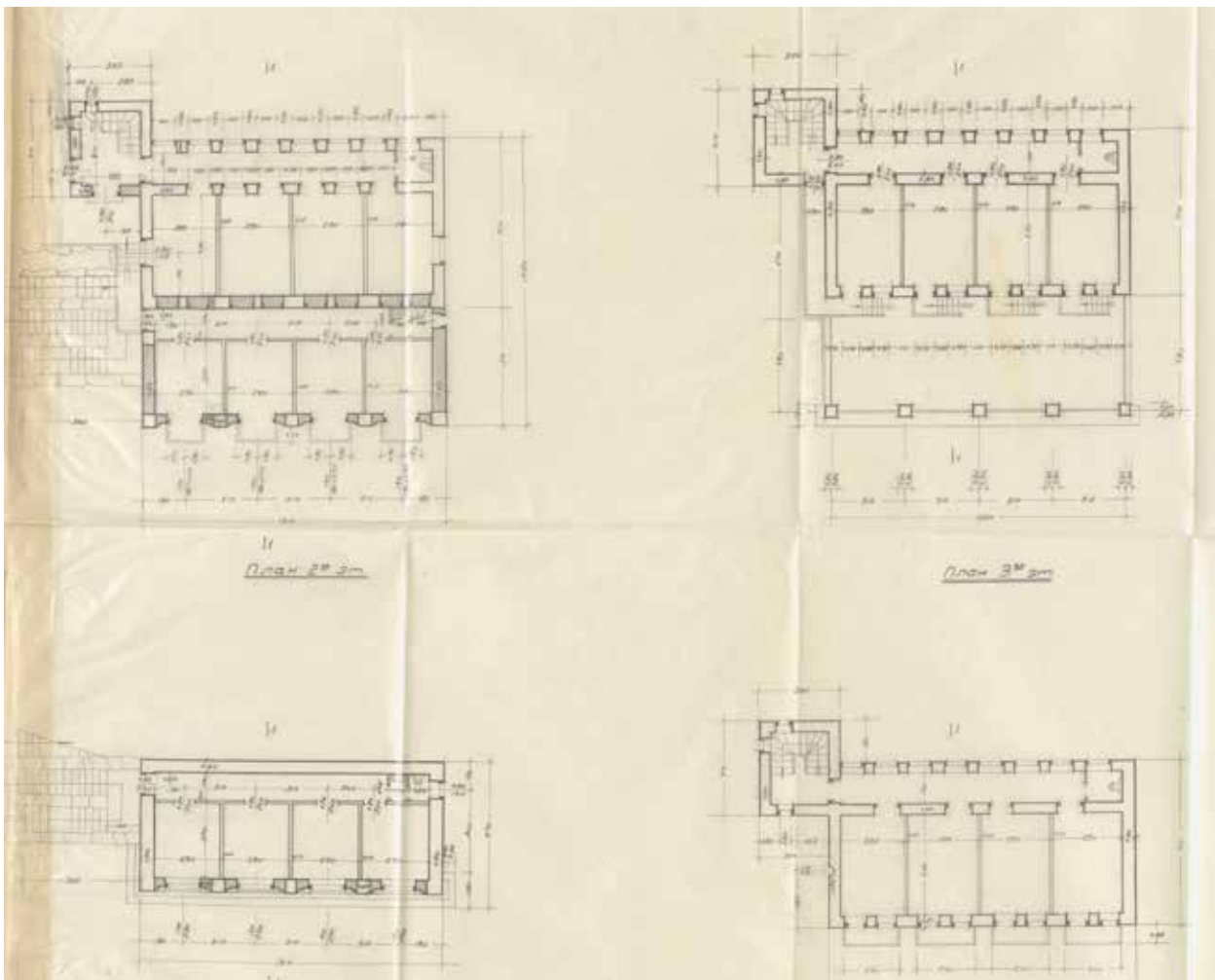
A study of the architectural plans revealed that the stairs connecting the basement with the first floor were adjacent to the western façade; however, they were deformed, presumably due to humidity, and consequently required a small retaining wall.

The present-day first floor has undergone the most significant deviations from the 1963 plan. In 1932 it was considered a basement, while in the 1963 design it was considered the main public floor with a common area. According to the 1963 plan, this floor consisted of restrooms and shower rooms. While the 1932 design does not mark the washroom areas, the 1963 plan designs sinks in each room, with a common restroom in the corridor of each floor and a common restroom and shower room on the first floor. Interestingly, by the 1950s the second, third and fourth floors of the Residence Hall had common restrooms, which can be seen in the measurements from 1953 (see Pictures 16-17).

The 1932 design of the building also planned a billiard room, a kitchen and a canteen. During our field observations, it became clear that the 1.5m level difference planned in 1932 (between the kitchen and the canteen) had been changed to 60cm in the 1953 plan and is currently 20 cm. This is a result of the change in the level of the first floor, which was done either during the remodelling that was carried out in 1960, with the knowledge of the author, or at a later time.



**Picture 90.** Measurements of the Residence Hall building, 1953, YerKaghNakhagits (Yerevan City Project)



**Picture 91.** Residential floor plans of the Residence Hall building, Proposal, 1953

**Author:** G. Kochar

This is the reason why the rooms on the second floor have two different levels as opposed to the rooms on the other floors. They are also twice as long as the rooms on the other floors. On the third and fourth floors, the distance from the corridor wall to the external wall is 4.2 (4.5 metres in various rooms), while on the second floor it is 9.3 metres.

Presumably, this should have been used to advantage during the re-planning, thereby facilitating the restructuring of the rooms into individual restrooms. However, we can assume that during the alterations of the 80s and 90s the four rooms on the second and subsequent floors that were preserved until 1963 were restructured into three rooms on each floor. This is the reason why, in order to create individual restrooms, the eight openings adjacent to the southern facade were distributed between three rooms: three windows per room for the two rooms adjacent to the staircase, and two for the room facing east (for the latter, they also used the space of the corridor).

We assume that during this period of reconstruction, the wooden ceilings between the floors were altered. As a result of this, there are three longitudinal beams and three columns up to



the third storey. Most probably, these carry the additional weight of the inter-storey reinforced ceilings. It is noteworthy that these pillars are missing in the 1963 plan in which coffers were used to carry the weight of the reinforced ceilings. The three beams and columns have been preserved to date.

Throughout the building's existence, there have always been eight windows on its northern side, in the section adjacent to the corridor. The height of the windows is currently 120cm, with a 170cm window sill, while on the third and fourth floors their height is 45cm with a 150cm windowsill. Despite the fact that the northern facade is missing in the 1963 drawings, the sections suggest that the windows had been kept. However today, those on the second floor are completely covered, presumably to counteract excess humidity. The windows of the third and fourth floors can be seen on the facade but are completely covered internally in the area adjacent to the corridors. We can assume that they were covered during the reconstructions of the 1990s (see Picture 18).

The changes made to the openings adjacent to the southern facade are also interesting, as the solutions that were applied are not quite clear. The openings on the second floor, which were designed to be large, were reduced to "Moscow-type"<sup>2</sup> window and door openings. As a result, radiators could be placed underneath the windowsills. The two openings on the third floor have been preserved; one of these has been turned into a window in order to place a radiator underneath, but the height of the opening for the door has been changed. The height of the window lintel is 2.43m from the floor, the height of the door lintel is 2.09m. These changes can be attributed to either the 1980s or 1990s since they are a result of the materials available and accessible in the construction market of the time. In this regard, it seems that only the openings on the fourth floor have remained unaltered, despite the fact that because of the remapping of the rooms, one of the balcony doors has been reassigned to another room; similarly, a window now belongs to another room.

Our examination of the radiators allows us to make a number of assumptions about the period of the building's reconstructions. There are no radiators in the rooms; they must have been removed during the first years of Armenia's independence, i.e. in the 1990s. We can assume from this, that in the 1980s the rooms underwent thorough planning, which was followed by superficial, minor renovation during the 1990s when the radiators were removed.

The flat roofs of the second and third floor terraces have been raised from their initial level due to the addition of new layers, presumably for water drainage and insulation purposes. This is especially visible in the large terrace of the third floor where it reaches about 20cm, while on the second floor it is only 5cm.

The inspection of balconies and terraces revealed that because of a deviation from the 1963 proposal for the ceiling of the first floor and how the floor was supposed to be built on the

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2. "Moscow-type" (Moskovski): standardized double-leaf windows that were 150 cm in height and of different widths, with leafs of 40 cm and 110 cm. The 40 cm leaf had a small casement at the top that could be opened for ventilation. This window typology was common in Armenia starting from the 1960s until the collapse of the USSR.



**Picture 92.** Northern elevation of the Residence Hall building, 2016.

**Photo by** Sarhat Petrosyan

second storey, the form of the balconies of the second storey was also altered, turning four semi-round cantilevered balconies into a common integrated balcony. Interestingly, although there are three hotel rooms on this floor, the common balcony is divided into four equal parts with metal (aluminium) and glass partitions. This leads to the assumption that these divisions were present before the restoration of the 1960s.

The only available material on the staircase are the sketches, which depict it as rectangular spiral stairs. However, the existing staircase is round, spiralling and completely made of metal. Its relation to the existing windows is difficult to comprehend, and this leads to the assumption that at some point it was altered.

Back in 1932, an observation deck was designed on the top floor of the staircase, which, as we have already mentioned, was initially planned to be open-air. Despite the fact that it had already been covered in the measurement maps of 1953, the 1963 plan depicts it once more without the glass-cover. Additionally, the 1963 plan also envisaged closing the opening on the western façade and restoring it to its previous open-air design. This finding

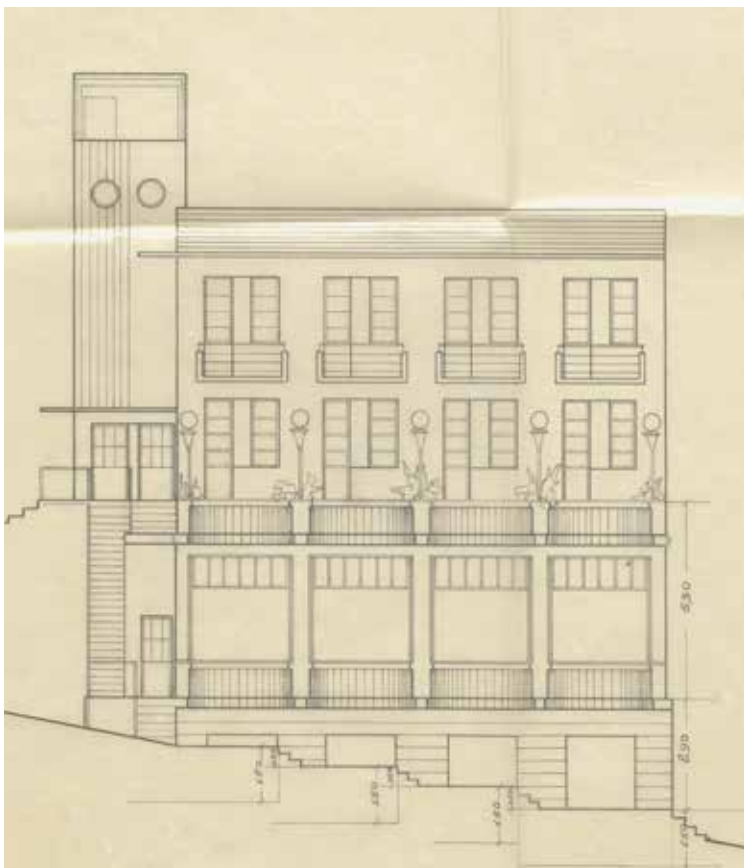
is also supported by the fact that the roof reaches the opening of the door, which, as we have already mentioned, should have had a canopy. Presumably, this design was revised because it was impossible to organize proper water drainage and water insulation and, according to the available photos, it was never carried out.

As of today, there is a concrete cover supported by wooden beams, which is at the level of the windowsills of the veranda. The sketches from 1932 and 1953 include a similar solution, while in the sketches from 1963, there is a high window stretching from the floor to the ceiling. Interestingly, today there are two round windows that were included in the 1932 plan but not in the 1963 one.

The developments of the decorative solutions of the building are also interesting. The handrails were made of metal both in the 1932 plan and in the photos; they had a simple design, without embellishments. However, in the measurements from 1953, the handrails are substituted by a wooden cross-like solution with rigid elements (see Pictures 19-20).

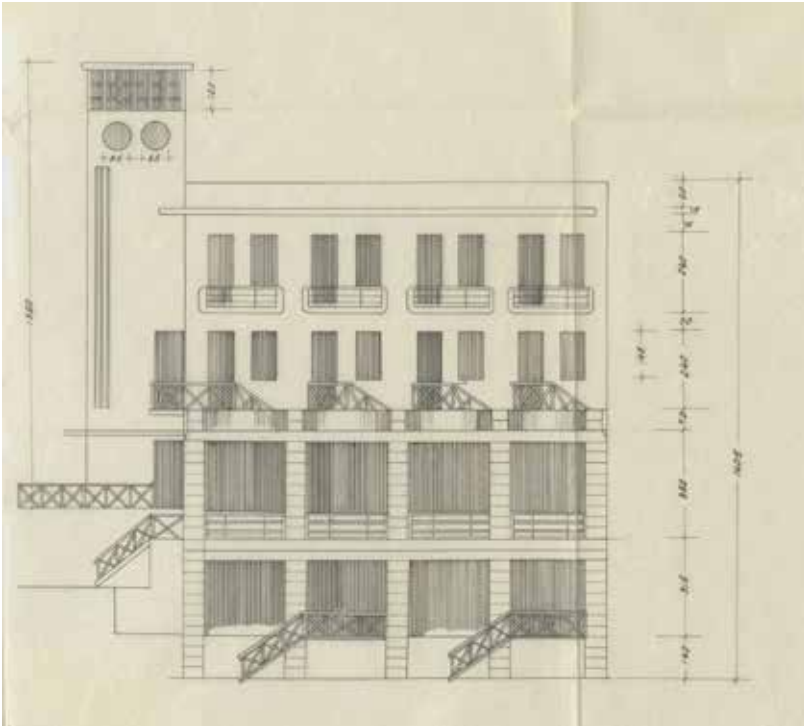
These lead to the supposition that either they were substituted before 1953 or an impermissible arbitrary intervention took place during the measurement sketching.

Judging by the photos, the balconies of the fourth floor have almost the same solutions both in the plans of 1932 and 1953. For unknown reasons, however, their form was altered during the reconstruction of 1965; and today they look the way they were designed in 1965 (see Picture 21).

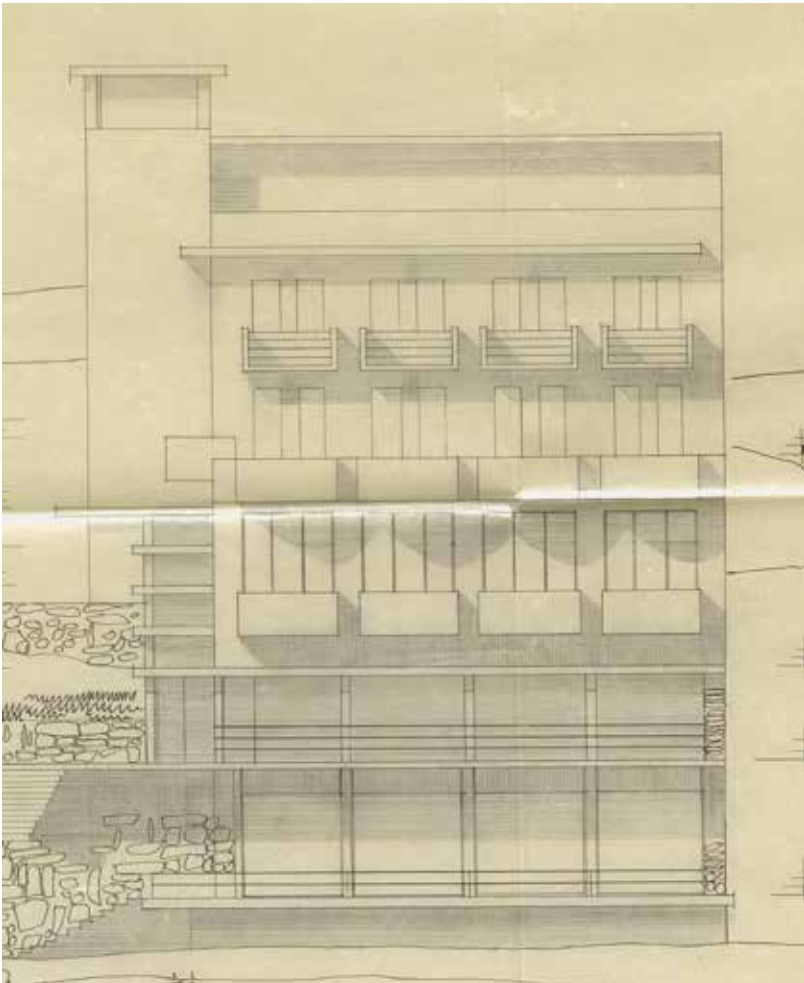


**Picture 93.** Main southern elevation of the Residence Hall building, Proposal, 1932.

**Architect:** G. Kochar



**Picture 94.** Main southern elevation of the Residence Hall building, Measurement, 1953, YerKaghNakhagits (Yerevan City Project)



**Picture 95.** Main southern elevation of the Residence Hall building, Proposal, 1963.

**Architect:** G. Kochar

The windows from this period are preserved in the first and second floors (see Picture 22), as are those used for the glazing of the veranda.

A number of interesting details were discovered by comparing plans, photos and measurements of the facade solutions. Before touching upon them, it is important to note that the authors, considering the context of the period, did not envisage stark decorative solutions and tried to focus on the functionality. We can consider the three linear plaster elements vertical to the staircase, decorative. With these the authors most probably intended to emphasize the functional purpose of the staircase (see Picture 23).

Despite the fact that in the proposal, the elements take up half of the height of the staircase, both in the photos and measurements, there are only three lines that have become more decorative and do not continue all the way up to the opening of the observation deck; this is also their present condition. During our inspection, we also discovered that the measurements from 1953 are incorrect, as they show them to be shorter than both in the photos and the existing condition. It should also be noted that these lines were missing in the 1963 proposal.

In conclusion, this building is the material witness to the chronicle of the Complex and will most likely be the key challenge during the course of the Project's implementation.



**Picture 96.** Window on the second floor dated 1936, 2016.  
**Photo by** Sarhat Petrosyan



**Picture 97.** Staircase element, 2016.  
**Photo by** Sarhat Petrosyan

### 4.3. Lounge Building

According to the 1963 proposal, a new structure was to be built where the former club and pavilion stood. This structure was to serve as a restaurant. Today, this building is a significant landmark for the entire Complex.

The entire building rests on one column base, although to the north it also rests on a retaining wall built on the basalt rock. This irregular structure, with an external size of around 27.5x14m, rests with horizontal beams on a hollow conical column with a diameter of 2.9m, while all the infrastructures are built-in. The building is recognizable by its 11-metre-long semi-circular cantilever on the basalt rock.

Both at the bottom and near the top of the building there are spaces that are 80cm and 150cm high, respectively, which apart from solving structural issues, serve the linear infrastructures.

As opposed to the Residence Hall, the initial design and condition of the Lounge building have remained almost completely intact. According to the “Technical Assessment of the Structural Systems” conducted by ArmProject OJSC, the building has no serious structural issues despite the fact that it was designed with bold solutions for its time. It is noteworthy that due to the enhancement of seismic regulations after the Spitak earthquake of 1988, the seismic safety of both buildings needs to be reinforced. While there are quite simple reinforcement solutions for the Residence Hall and there are no issues that may impact the external and internal organization of the building, the solutions for the Lounge building are very delicate and complex. As presented in ArmProject’s report, there are a number of proposals that need to be discussed in the upcoming phases of the Project.

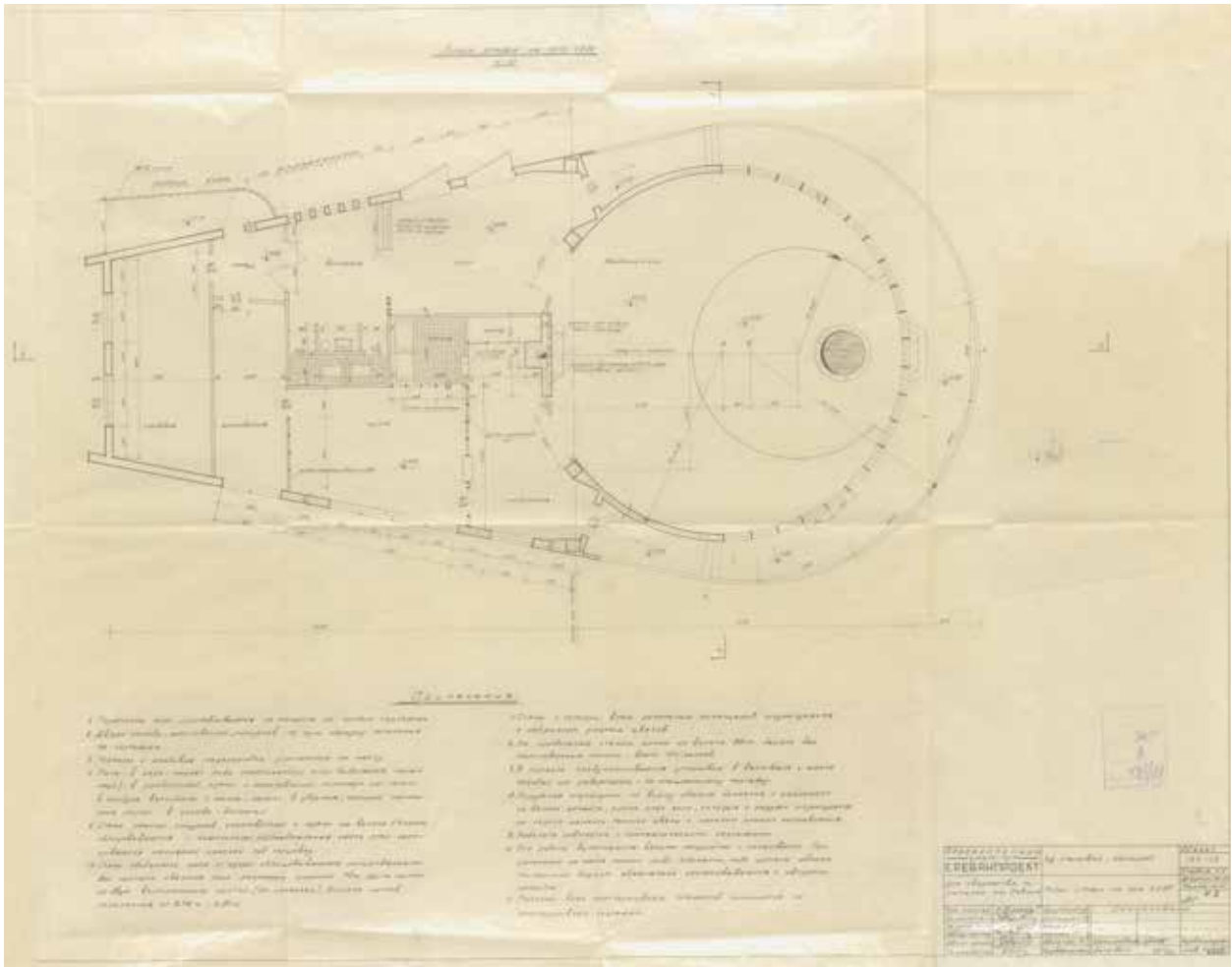
The only substantial change that the Lounge building has undergone is the enlargement of the kitchen area, which was done at the expense of dismantling the restrooms. Site inspections, specifically the inspection of the floor tiles and the existing wastewater system, provide ample grounds to conclude that at some point the current kitchen area included two restrooms, as seen in the 1963 design (see Picture 24).

A comparison of the design and the current state reveals that a number of elements envisaged by the design were not implemented during construction, in particular a fireplace and a decorative water basin in the middle of the main room were not built (see Picture 25).

Fortunately, the interior finishing solutions in this same area have been preserved as described in writing in the design. According to the original design, the existing wooden planks should have been varnished, which they were not. The study of the current state of the planks shows that in later stages they were painted black, pink and blue. Nonetheless they express the initial intention of the architect.

In terms of deviations from the exterior solutions of the building’s design, the only difference observed up until now are the missing decorative rocks on the surface of the main column, which were presumably never added, with the architect’s knowledge.

There are some deviations with regard to the windows. Yet again, we can assume that they



**Picture 98.** Plan of the Lounge building, Proposal, 1963.

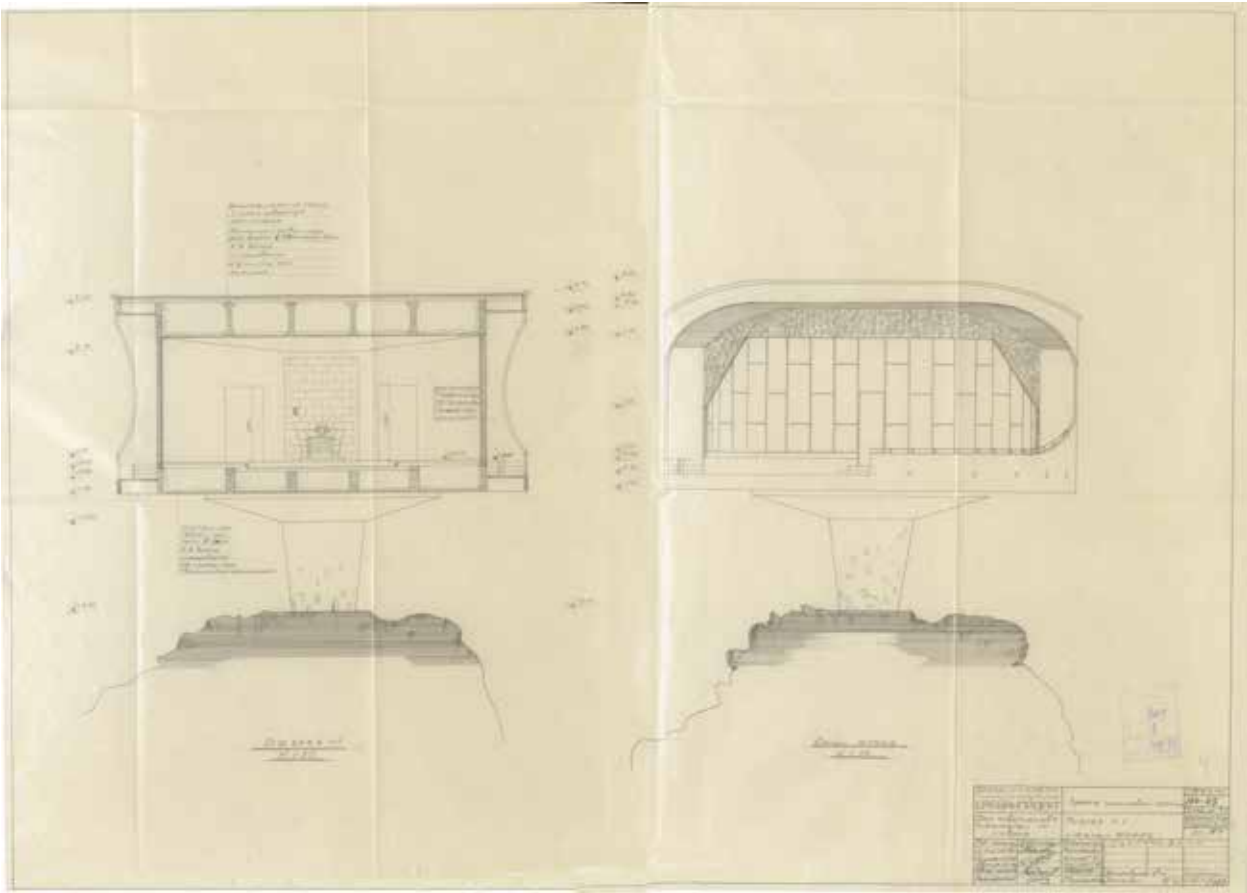
**Architect:** G. Kochar

were altered with the architect's knowledge during construction. Among these are the round window on the side elevation and the external protrusion for ventilation.

As with the Residence Hall, here too there were issues related to the flat roof, despite the fact that it had a comparatively steeper slope (~5%) and was not planned to be used for any purpose. However, as with the Residence Hall, the flat roof of the Lounge building was covered with tin shortly after its construction was completed.

The external plaster of the building is also the original. It now has some cracks in different places. Several attempts were made to renovate it in the past, but in general, it has kept its original appearance.

The entrance railings are also part of the original design but they were built only partially. They were supposed to extend to the eastern façade windows. A minimal part of this solution was realized, most probably in order to minimize the costs. The original design had some interesting solutions for the side windows, with hanging glass elements and louvres; these were never realized.



**Picture 99.** Latitudinal section of the Lounge building, Proposal, 1963.

**Architect:** G. Kochar



## 4.4. Interiors

### Residence Hall

As mentioned earlier, among the preserved elements of the Residence Hall that date back to the 1930s, are the two wooden windows on the eastern facade of the second floor. The wooden windows covering the openings on the upper floors of the observatory and the exterior door of the lower staircase can also be dated to the same period.

Although later on we will thoroughly present the results of the examination of the finishing layers of the walls throughout different parts of the buildings, at this point it is essential to mention that the examination of the interior space layers of the Residence Hall revealed that almost all the inner walls used to be light yellowish and ivory white. This coincides with information received during the interviews; the information also corresponds to the principles of interior space finishing and decoration of that time.

The current finishing in the halls was mainly done in the 1990s, while the finishing in the rooms was also mainly done at that time or perhaps even later.

What we now have on the upper part of the observatory, is the initial colour of the stairs dating back to the 1960s, which, according to archival studies and on-site observations, was added during the expansion in the 1960s.

The concrete stairs can be considered as another valuable element of the Residence Hall's interior space. Although the stairs are painted, the initial surface will probably be revealed after cleaning.

### Lounge Building

As both the structure's interior and exterior are preserved and no major changes have been made after its construction, it still keeps its authenticity. Most of the alterations were done for and around the kitchen area and did not extend to the main hall, which is the essential feature of the building's interior.

One of the original, important and rare elements, which is still in quite a good condition, is the floor, which has a wooden structure and parquetry. Only some corners are in a poor condition and will require proper repair. There are underfloor heating ducts and metal heating louvres on the floor. They seem to be the originals but are of very poor quality.

The same can be said about the wooden and chipboard wall finishing of the main hall and heating battery louvres at the entrance. As the colour analysis showed, the main hall chipboards were originally varnished, and were painted black, pink and azure blue later. Kochar explains his intentions in writing on drawings dating back to the 1960s, explaining that he wanted to have a surface of vertical varnished wooden sticks. We think that the existing chipboard was installed as a base for the future wooden surface. We see it only around the entrance connecting the main hall with the kitchen.

In the same drawings, we see a fireplace at the central part of the main hall, which for some reason, was not realized. Instead, now a felsite wall decorates the central part of the room, with several incorporated voids.

The kitchen has very few original elements; these are the white wall and floor tiles and the partitions that divide the kitchen area from the washing corner and the main hall.




### 4.5. The Colour Schemes


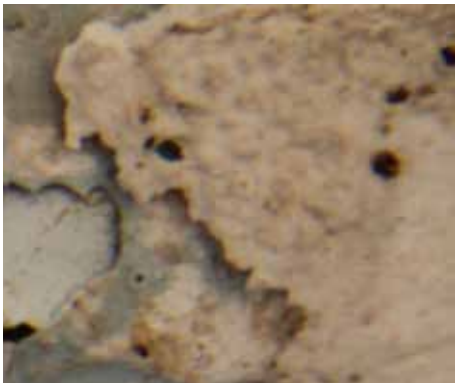


By Areg Petrosyan and Marina Gevorgyan, Art & Heritage






Within the framework of the proposed survey of paint layers and the examination assignment, an examination of paint layer samples taken from the specified surfaces was carried out:






1. Initial inspection
2. Schematic image
3. Dissolution of paint layer
4. Revealing paint layer (Samples 1-18)
5. Paint composition
6. Conclusion


The schematic image of the paint layer samples taken from the specified surfaces.

Sample N	Image	Description
1		<p>The colour blue prevails on the wider frontal parts of the wood at the back of the dining hall of the Lounge.</p>
2		<p>The wall fortified with wood has a palette of two colours, as seen in the picture. The first layer is white oil paint; the second layer is light grey water-based paint.</p>
3		<p>The colour blue prevails on the wider anterior part, while black is the prevailing colour on the sides. There are also fragments of pink.</p>

Sample N	Image	Description
4		<p>There are remnants of plaster on the black paint of the sides, which does not cover the entire surface. The front part contains a layer of white oil paint.</p>
5		<p>There are remnants of plaster on the black paint of the sides, which does not cover the entire surface. The front part contains a layer of white oil paint.</p>
6		<p>With the passage of time, the sun and weather conditions have caused the main colour of the building's facade to fade and attain shades of yellow and brown. However, the paint layer currently conveys a warm colour palette where traces of red/cinnabar Chinese red can be spotted. These are results of reactions with the climate and microbiology of the surrounding rocks and caves. With the passage of time, some segments have become mouldy, which also influences the overall colour palette.</p>
7		<p>With the passage of time, the sun and weather conditions have caused the main colour of the building's facade to fade and attain shades of yellow and brown. However, the paint layer currently conveys a warm colour palette where traces of red/cinnabar Chinese red can be spotted. These are results of reactions with the climate and microbiology of the surrounding rocks and caves. With the passage of time, some segments have become mouldy, which also influence the overall colour palette.</p>

Sample N	Image	Description
8		<p>Our detailed inspection revealed two main colours and a layer of half-shade of one colour. It is evident that the main colour of the first layer is the one that has a red shade/cinnabar Chinese red/Shakhnazar red.</p>
9		<p>Our detailed inspection revealed two main colours and a layer of half-shade of one colour. It is evident that the main colour of the first layer is the one that has a red shade/cinnabar Chinese red/Shakhnazar red.</p>
10		<p>The inspection revealed two main colours – white and light blue /azure/. It is evident that the light blue /azure/ is the main colour of the first layer</p>
11		<p>The inspection revealed two main colours – white and light blue /azure/. It is evident that the light blue /azure/ is the main colour of the first layer.</p>
12		<p>This part contains three layers of oil paint. The first, main layer is of dark red colour.</p>

Sample N	Image	Description
13		<p>Fragments of white and grey watercolour and oil paints were observed. This part has one main colour: light blue /azure.</p>
14		<p>Our detailed inspection revealed that this part contains white oil paint, however the first layer underneath the wood is painted with red oil paint/cinnabar Chinese red, Shakhnazar red.</p>
15		<p>The physical removal of the plaster layer revealed that there is one watercolour paint of a shade of red/cinnabar Chinese red, Shakhnazar red.</p>
16		<p>The physical removal of the plaster layers revealed that no colour shades were preserved in these parts, therefore no paint layer sample was found.</p>
17		<p>The physical removal of the plaster layers revealed that no colour shades were preserved in these parts, therefore no paint layer was found.</p>

Sample N	Image	Description
18		<p>The physical removal of the plaster layers did not reveal any paint layer observable with the naked eye, however the application of a compound solution revealed two colours: traces of a shade of red and traces of a shade of light yellow.</p>

### Analysis of Sample No 1



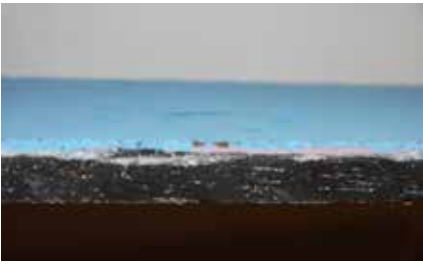
Our initial inspection made it evident that the wood carries layers of three colours of paint. On the wider front part, the prevailing colour is blue, while on the sides it is black. Fragments of a layer of pink are also present.



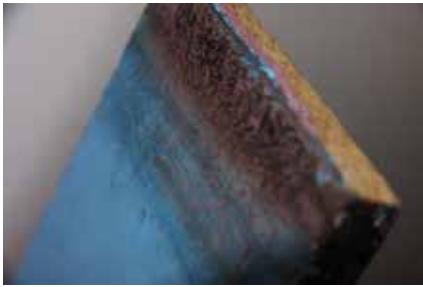
1 layer. By dissolving the first layer in a simple solution, it was revealed that the layer is of a watercolour-based paint.



1 layer. The dissolution of the first layer of paint made the second layer of the pink paint that was found on the front and side surfaces, distinctly visible.



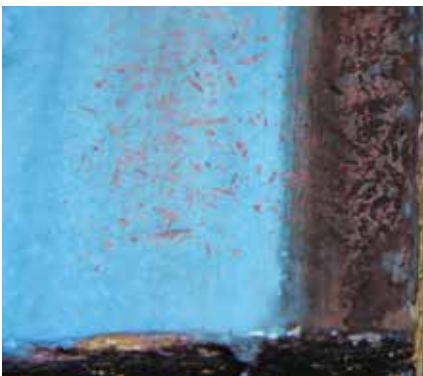
2 layers. The dissolution of the surface of the second layer in a 2-compound simple solution revealed that the pink layer is also comprised of a watercolour-based paint.



2 layers. The dissolution of the pink paint layer on the wider surface with a compound solution revealed a third, black layer of paint.



3 layers. The black layer was also of a watercolour-based paint. The side and front are also painted with a black painting material.



3 layers. The dissolution of the black paint with a compound solution confirmed that there were no more paint layers underneath, there was no plaster either; what remained was the wood.



Three layers of paint were discovered during the inspection and examination of paint layers: 1st layer – blue paint material, 2nd layer – pink paint material, 3rd layer – black paint material. The 3rd black paint is also the primary foundation for the front and sides of the wood.



## Conclusions

The inspection and examination of paint layers was conducted using material inspection methods involving simple and compound solutions; other theoretical and practical measures were also taken to provide exhaustive answers in regard to this task. Based on the results, it was no longer necessary to conduct complex technical, microbiological and chemical analyses, and to apply such methods and measures.

The inspection and examination revealed that Samples N 1, 3, 4 of the wood in the foyer of the Lounge and the Lounge itself carried three-coloured layers, while on the sides there was only black. The 3rd layer with black is the first and main foundation, which can also be found on the front and sides of the wood. Sample N2 from the wood-reinforced wall in the Lounge contains a 2-layered colour palette clearly discernible in the picture. One of the colour layers is comprised of white oil-based paint, the second one is comprised of light grey watercolour paint, which is the main paint material.

- Conclusion regarding Samples N 1, 2, 3, 4

For the interior finishing of the Lounge, watercolour paint materials of light grey and shades of blue were used, while on wooden parts a black watercolour paint material was used.

With the passage of time, the sun and weather conditions have caused the main colour of the facade of the building to fade and turn into shades of yellow and brown. However, at the moment the paint layer conveys a warm colour shade, with fragments of red/cinnabar Chinese red, Shakhnazar red, which are results of reactions with the climate and microbiology of the surrounding rocks and caves. With the passage of time, some parts have become mouldy, which also affects the colour palette.

- Conclusion regarding Samples N 5, 6

The main colour of the facade was initially white watercolour paint on a lime foundation. A detailed inspection revealed 2 main colours and 1 half-shade on the gypsum plaster in this part. It is evident that red/cinnabar Chinese red, Shakhnazar red is the colour of the first, main layer

- Conclusion regarding Sample N 7

The colour of the first, main layer is red/cinnabar Chinese red, Shakhnazar red; it is painted with watercolour. A naked-eye visual inspection revealed 2 main colours: white and light blue/azure. It is evident that the colour of the first, main layer is light blue/azure.

- Conclusion regarding Samples N 8, 9, 10, 11

The first primary colour of the gypsum plaster surface is light blue/azure; it was painted

with a watercolour-based paint. There are 3 layers of paint in this part. The first layer is of a dark, crimson red colour, which is the main colour.

- Conclusion regarding Sample N 12

The colour of the first, main layer of the iron surface is dark crimson red; it was painted with oil paint. Fragments of white and grey paint are also discernible. This part is comprised of 1 main colour: light blue/azure.

- Conclusion regarding Sample N 13

The first, main colour of the gypsum plaster surface is light blue/azure; it was painted with a watercolour paint.

A detailed inspection revealed that this part contains white oil paint. However, the first layer underneath is painted with a red-shaded paint/cinnabar Chinese red, Shakhnazar red.

- Conclusion regarding Sample N 14

The first, main colour of the wood surface is the red-shaded colour/cinnabar Chinese red, Shakhnazar red, which is an oil-based paint material. The physical removal of the gypsum plaster layers revealed 1 colour layer of paint in this part; this was a red-shaded paint/cinnabar Chinese red, Shakhnazar red.

- Conclusion regarding Sample N 15

The first, main colour of the plaster surface is a red-shaded colour/cinnabar Chinese red, Shakhnazar red, which is a watercolour-based paint material. The physical removal of plaster layers made it evident that no colour layer is preserved in these parts, and no samples could be taken.

- Conclusion regarding Samples N 16, 17

No colour layers were available in these samples. After physically removing the plaster layers in this section, a visual inspection did not reveal any layer of paint. However, using a compound solution, 2 colours were discovered: a shade of red and traces of light yellow.

- Conclusion regarding Sample N 15

The first, main colour of the plaster surface is a light, red-shaded colour. It was painted with a watercolour paint material.

#### 4.6. Other Structures

There is a boiler room in the area, incorporated in the 1963 design. This is a one-storey building of 10x6m, with a glass facade to the south. Both the facility and its stack are hidden as far as possible behind the basalt rock, and therefore do not interfere with the visual perception of the key buildings of the Complex.

There are also two temporary/mobile cabins, two pavilions and one unfinished water fountain, which were most probably built in recent years. An underground locked facility was also discovered in the eastern part of the staircase leading to the shore of the lake. Presumably, it served as a shelter.

The beach has shrunk significantly due to rising water levels. The official plan to increase the water level to 1905m will cause the beach to completely disappear, as the current level of the road is already at 1905m.

It is also noteworthy that the view of the Complex encompasses other buildings, which beg their own approaches. Similarly, the vegetation of the area has a considerable impact on the perception of the Complex. It is of particular significance when viewed from the observation deck at the parking lot of Sevan Monastery, which is a popular tourist attraction. The view also includes four tall evergreen pine trees near the southern facade of the Residence Hall overlooking the lake and likely planted in the 1960s (see Picture 26).



**Picture 100.** The Complex as viewed from the east. 2016.

**Photo by** Sarhat Petrosyan

#### 4.7. Manmade and Natural Landscapes

Sevan Peninsula is one of the most important, frequently visited attractions in Armenia because of its natural and manmade sites. The Peninsula used to be an island until the 1950s when water levels were higher. Even today the previous water level is discernible on the rocks around the Complex.

The peninsula is located fairly close to the Yerevan-Sevan M4 highway that connects Yerevan with north-eastern Armenia. The shore on this side is considered one of the warmest, where many beaches operate in the summer.

Sevan Monastery (*Sevanakvank* in Armenian) is a monastery complex dating back to 874. Two churches and some walls remain in the area. The two standing churches, *Surp Arakelots*, meaning the Holy Apostles, and *Surp Astvatsatsin*, meaning the Holy Mother of God, are now managed by the Armenian Apostolic Church located at the Mother See of Holy Ejmiatsin. The Vaskenian Seminary (Theological Academy) is located on the northern shore of the peninsula and is also managed by the Armenian Church; the Seminary is one of two religious educational institutions of the Mother See of Holy Ejmiatsin.

The Sevan Monastery Complex is a listed heritage site and is protected by law as a national monument of the highest significance.

The Presidential Summer Resort is located on the eastern shore of the Peninsula. It is under strict protection as a special restricted zone. The area is gated on two sides (the Complex and Vaskenian Seminary). The resort was also established in the 1960s and consisted of several buildings of which the first one was designed by Gevorg Kochar, some others were designed by another prominent Armenian architect of the 60s and 70s, Levon Cherkezyan. A number of new additions were made during the period following Armenia's independence.

Currently, there are many new structures on the peninsula. These were added after the collapse of the Soviet Union and after the adoption of the Law on Lake Sevan in 2001. After this law was adopted, several legislative and regulatory documents were passed, which forbade any permanent construction activity in the Sevan National Park area. With the exception of a few (Parvana Restaurant, the Sevan National Park administrative building and the structures mentioned in the previous paragraphs), the new structures on the peninsula were built illegally.

Although there are several spatial planning documents regarding the Sevan National Park and there is stricter control compared to other regions of Armenia, landscape protection is rather weak in this area. This can be easily discerned, even by a nonprofessional.

The area of the Complex has also seen some interventions; initially, it had a much wider shore and the resort had a larger surrounding area. Currently the Complex includes a shoreline that is around 100 metres in length. There are several cabins to the east of the Boiler House that can be accessed through the same entrance. There is also an abandoned structure on the western side of the Complex, which is not considered to be within the area of the Complex.

This is a concrete structure which used to be an open air café for a very short period of time.

In the future, additional territories will need to be added to the overall area of the Complex, in order to effectively manage the building.

## 4.8. Summary

The above-mentioned observations lead to a number of key conclusions that can serve as a basis for the subsequent development of a restoration strategy and an intervention policy regarding the conservation of the Complex in the future.

1. For a physical assessment of the buildings of the Complex, the following phases must be considered, on the basis of significant or potentially significant materials that are available at the moment and processes that have already been carried out.

1. Design proposal of 1932 (Residence Hall)
2. Actual building as of 1935 (Residence Hall)
3. Measurements of 1953 (Residence Hall)
4. Design proposal of 1963 (Residence Hall Expansion, Lounge Building Boiler Room)
5. Actual building as of 1965 (Residence Hall Expansion, Lounge Building, Boiler Room)
6. Reconstruction of the 1980s (re-arrangement of the rooms on the second floor of the Residence Hall for the purpose of adding private restrooms)
7. Reconstructions of the 1990s (re-arrangement of the rooms of the Residence Hall for the purpose of adding private restrooms)
8. Reconstruction of the 2010s (new VIP rooms in the Residence Hall)
9. Measurements and assessment of 2016

2. Out of the two main buildings of the complex - the Residence Hall and Lounge - interventions in the former should be prioritized as its structural systems are in a poor condition. According to the results of the assessment of its structural systems, the building needs a large-scale restoration, which means an almost complete reinforcement and restoration in many sections.

3. Not only has the Residence Hall building undergone changes in various years, as a result of which the primary principles of its spatial organization and architectural solutions have been lost, it also needs substantial interventions today in order to restore and reutilize it.

4. Despite its complex solutions, the Lounge building is in a significantly more stable condition and has a more reliable structural system. At the same time, additional measures should be taken in order to make the building more secure and bring it in line with current seismic requirements.

5. The Lounge building has largely retained its original condition, enabling a proper restoration and reutilization without almost any impairment to its original design solutions.

## 5. Heritage Legislation

By Narek Ashughatoyan, LegalLab

This report is on possible restrictions on certain works in the preservation zone of Sevan Monastery and adjacent areas.

### On legal acts regulating the preservation of immobile historical and cultural monuments

#### Legislation

1. Declaration of Independence of the Republic of Armenia
2. Constitution of the Republic of Armenia
3. European Cultural Convention
4. Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage
5. (UNESCO) Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions
6. Framework Convention of the Council of Europe on the Importance of Cultural Heritage for Society
7. Convention for the Protection of the Architectural Heritage of Europe
8. The second protocol of the Hague Convention of 1954 on the Protection of Cultural Values during Armed Conflicts
9. The RA Law “On the Preservation and Use of Immobile Historical and Cultural Monuments and the Historical Environment”
10. The RA Law “On Immobile Historical and Cultural Monuments Considered as State Property of the Republic of Armenia and not Subject to Alienation”

11. Decision No 385-N of the Government of the Republic of Armenia dated 15 March, 2007 on the approval of the national list of immobile historical and cultural monuments that are considered as state property and are not subject to alienation

12. Decision No. 438 of the Government of the Republic of Armenia dated April 20, 2002 on approving the procedure for state registration, study, preservation, strengthening, repair, restoration and use of immobile historical and cultural monuments.

## Discussion

In this discussion, we consider it necessary to refer to the basic legal acts that provide for the preservation of the historical and cultural monuments in the Republic of Armenia.

The RA Declaration of Independence has laid the basis for legal acts in the RA legislation regulating the preservation of immobile historical and cultural monuments:

“The national wealth of the Republic of Armenia, the land, the soil, the air space, the water and other natural resources, the economic, intellectual, cultural capabilities are the property of its people...”<sup>3</sup>.

As the basic law of the Republic of Armenia, the Constitution defines:

“The Armenian language and cultural heritage are under the care and protection of the state”<sup>4</sup>.

As has been repeatedly mentioned, the main and most comprehensive legal act regulating the preservation of immobile historical and cultural monuments is the RA Law “On the Preservation and Use of Immobile Historical and Cultural Monuments and the Historical Environment”. It defines:

“Historical and Cultural Monuments (hereinafter: monuments) are state registered structures of historic, scientific, artistic or other cultural value, their structural ensembles and complexes, with the space occupied by them or historically connected with them, archaeological, artistic, lithographic, ethnographic elements and fragments, historical-cultural and natural-historical reserves, memorable places, that make a part of them, regardless of the degree of their preservation.

Monuments located in the territory of the Republic of Armenia are under the protection of the state”<sup>5</sup>.

Another law – the RA Law “On Immobile Historical and Cultural Monuments Considered as State Property of the Republic of Armenia and not Subject to Alienation” – defines:

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3. Declaration of Independence of the Republic of Armenia, article 7.

4. Declaration of Independence of the Republic of Armenia, article 5, point 2.

5. The RA Law “On the Preservation and Use of Immobile Historical and Cultural Monuments and the Historical Environment”.



“... the law regulates the immobile historical and cultural monuments, which are considered as state property of the Republic of Armenia and are not subject to alienation, according to their types, as well as defines the ways in which these monuments and the territories they occupy may be used for specific purposes”<sup>6</sup>.

By combining the provisions of the above mentioned two laws, with its Decision of March 15, 2007 the RA Government has established:

“... the national list of immobile historical and cultural monuments that are considered as state property and are not subject to alienation...”<sup>7</sup>.

Another Decision of the RA Government dated April 20, 2002 prescribes in detail a series of procedures regarding immobile historical and cultural monuments. This Decision specifically states:

“This Procedure determines the competence of the subjects involved in the field of state registration, preservation, archaeological research, fixing, repair, restoration and use of immobile historical and cultural monuments (hereinafter: monuments), the procedure for document making and approving, and for the execution of said subjects’ functions according to the RA Law “On the Preservation and Use of Immobile Historical and Cultural Monuments and the Historical Environment” and the RA legislation”<sup>8</sup>

As regards international legal regulations, the Hague Convention of 1954 on the Protection of Cultural Values during Armed Conflicts has special importance. Its second protocol reads:

“Conscious of the need to improve the protection of cultural property in the event of armed conflict and to establish an enhanced system of protection for specifically designated cultural property; ... Desiring to provide the High Contracting Parties to the Convention with a means of being more closely involved in the protection of cultural property in the event of armed conflict by establishing appropriate procedures therefor; ...”<sup>9</sup>

The introduction of another Convention on the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage reads:

“... Noting that the cultural heritage and the natural heritage are increasingly threatened with destruction not only by the traditional causes of decay, but also by changing social and economic conditions, ... Considering that parts of the cultural or natural heritage are of outstanding interest and therefore need to be preserved as part of the world heritage of

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6. The RA Law “On Immobile Historical and Cultural Monuments Considered as State Property of the Republic of Armenia and not Subject to Alienation”, article 1.

7. Decision No 385-N of the Government of the Republic of Armenia of 15 March, 2007 on the approval of the state list of immobile historical and cultural monuments that are considered as state property and are not subject to alienation.

8. Decision No. 438 of the Government of the Republic of Armenia dated April 20, 2002 on approving the procedure for state registration, study, preservation, strengthening, repair, restoration and use of immobile historical and cultural monuments, point 1.

9. The second protocol of the Hague Convention of 1954 on the Protection of Cultural Values during Armed Conflicts.

mankind as a whole ... this convention has been adopted on November 16, 1972”<sup>10</sup>

Another international document, the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, establishes:

“... Recognizing the need to take measures to protect the diversity of cultural expressions, including their contents, especially in situations where cultural expressions may be threatened by the possibility of extinction or serious impairment ... , this convention has been adopted on October 20, 2005”<sup>11</sup>

The European Cultural Convention provides:

“Each Contracting Party shall regard the objects of European cultural value placed under its control as integral parts of the common cultural heritage of Europe, shall take appropriate measures to safeguard them and shall ensure reasonable access thereto.”<sup>12</sup>

Another framework convention of the Council of Europe on the Importance of Cultural Heritage for Society defines:

“The Parties agree to promote an understanding of the common heritage of Europe, which consists of: a) all forms of cultural heritage in Europe which together constitute a shared source of remembrance, understanding, identity, cohesion and creativity, and b) the ideals, principles and values, derived from the experience gained through progress and past conflicts, which foster the development of a peaceful and stable society, founded on respect for human rights, democracy and the rule of law”<sup>13</sup>

And the Convention on the Protection of the Architectural Heritage of Europe defines:

“For the purposes of this Convention, the expression “architectural heritage” shall be considered to comprise the following permanent properties: 1) monuments: all buildings and structures of conspicuous historical, archaeological, artistic, scientific, social or technical interest, including their fixtures and fittings; 2) groups of buildings: homogeneous groups of urban or rural buildings conspicuous for their historical, archaeological, artistic, scientific, social or technical interest which are sufficiently coherent to form topographically definable units; 3) sites: the combined works of man and nature, being areas which are partially built upon and sufficiently distinctive and homogeneous to be topographically definable and are of conspicuous historical, archaeological, artistic, scientific, social or technical interest.”<sup>14</sup>

Thus, the national and international legal acts that define what preservation of immobile historical and cultural monuments consists of and set out the procedures for their preserva-

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10. Convention on the Protection of the Worldwide Cultural and Natural Heritage.

11. Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions.

12. European Cultural Convention, article 5.

13. Framework Convention of the Council of Europe on the Importance of Cultural Heritage for Society, article 3.

14. Convention on the Protection of the Architectural Heritage of Europe, article 1.

tion, serve as a fundamental and sufficient basis for implementing this policy in the Republic of Armenia, given that the bodies applying these legal acts operate within the scope of their authority, and implement the policy with the objective of preserving the monument.

## The issue has been discussed in the context of the future restoration and utilization of the Sevan Writers' Resort.

### Legislation

1. The RA Law "On the Preservation and Use of Immobile Historical and Cultural Monuments and the Historical Environment".
2. The RA Law "On the Relations between the Republic of Armenia and the Armenian Apostolic Church".
3. Decision No. 438 of the Government of the Republic of Armenia dated April 20, 2002 on approving the procedure for state registration, study, preservation, strengthening, repair, restoration and use of immobile historical and cultural monuments.
4. Decision No. 80-N of January 9, 2003 of the Government of the Republic of Armenia on approving the national list of immobile historical and cultural monuments in the Gegharkunik region of the Republic of Armenia.
5. Decision No. 720-A of the Government of the Republic of Armenia dated May 25, 2005 on making amendments to the Decision No 213-A of the Government of the Republic of Armenia dated February 17, 2005.

### Discussion

Located in the north-eastern part of the Sevan peninsula is the Sevan monastic complex, which includes monuments from the 9<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. This complex is included in the state register of monuments and has the status "of republican significance".<sup>15</sup> This status means that the monument is under the special preservation and use regime set by the RA legislation. We focus on this preservation mode because such regimes have a certain influence on the surrounding area/objects. According to the law, "Monument preservation zones, cultural and historical projects of settlements are a starting point for detailed planning and development projects of regions, cities and other settlements."<sup>16</sup>

The same law defines the notion of "a historical and cultural monument"; "historical and cultural monuments (hereinafter: monuments) are state registered structures of historic, scientific, artistic or other cultural value, their structural ensembles and complexes, together with the space occupied by them or historically connected with them ..."<sup>17</sup>

It is obvious even to the layperson that the monastery of Sevan is historically linked to the

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15. Decision No. 80-N of January 9, 2003 of the Government of the Republic of Armenia on approving the state list of immobile historical and cultural monuments in the Gegharkunik region of the Republic of Armenia, point 4, sub-point 4.4, paragraph 18.

16. The RA Law "On the Preservation and Use of Immobile Historical and Cultural Monuments and the Historical Environment", article 16.

17. Ibid, article 1.

island/peninsula of Sevan. However, from a legal point of view, the “historically related territory” should have clear physical boundaries. Another article of the Law states that “[o]bjects in the field of monument preservation and use include: monuments located in the territory of the Republic of Armenia, together with their preservation zones, the historical environment surrounding them - construction, natural or artificial landscape”<sup>18</sup>

For the purpose of preserving monuments and their historical environment, identifying historical and artistic values, their targeted use and favourable visual perception, a system of monument preservation zones and their modes of use has been established. In order to have a clearer understanding of the boundaries of the Sevan monastic complex with the SWR buildings, it is necessary to further investigate the preservation zones of the monument, which may include:

- “A) a monument preservation zone;
- B) a construction regulation zone;
- C) a landscape preservation zone”<sup>19</sup>.

Nonetheless, regardless of the preservation zone, if the monument is in a special nature protection area, “... all works relating to the natural-historical environment are coordinated with the competent authority.”<sup>20</sup> Moreover, “project layouts and projects for planning, construction and reconstruction of settlements with their monuments or their separate parts are coordinated with the authorized body.”<sup>21</sup> At this point in time it is difficult to say whether or not the peninsula will be considered a settlement. But in any case, the premises in the area imply a place of residence - a theological academy, a hotel, a residence hall, etc.

Based on the foregoing, we can conclude that, regardless of the monument’s main preservation area, if certain construction work is going to be carried out on the “surroundings” of the Sevan monastic complex, then it should be coordinated with the authorized body. To attest to this, we quote the following provision of the Law: “Land allocations, construction, engineering, transportation and communications plans for construction, agricultural and other works in areas containing monuments are coordinated with the authorized body.”<sup>22</sup> Note that in the abovementioned article instead of “monument preservation zone” the term “areas containing monuments” is used, which may have been done intentionally to suggest a wider area than the actual protection zone.

Should an additional study find that the building/area adjacent to the Complex is included in the preservation zone of the Sevan monastic complex, besides reaching an agreement with the authorized body, certain other actions must also be taken. For instance, the RA Government Decision provides:

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18. Ibid, article 4.

19. Ibid, article 16.

20. Ibid, article 18.

21. Ibid, article 19.

22. Ibid, article 22.

“While using monuments and their preservation zones, it is necessary to:

- a) maintain the architectural-dimensional structure of the monument, engineering layout structure, decorative details and decoration undistorted;
- b) take into account the relevance of the monument’s operational significance to the surrounding urban development or natural and historical environment;
- c) preserve the buildings, gardens, parks, other historical elements as well as natural and historical-cultural landscapes in the territory of the monument and its preservation zone;
- d) ensure the fulfilment of modern hydro-geological, engineering, sanitary-hygienic and monument exploitation conditions, while maintaining the artistic and structural features and integrity of the monument;
- e) follow the methodological instructions of the authorized body for the operation and preservation of the monument”<sup>23</sup>.

It must be noted that the monument under discussion is currently the property of the Armenian Apostolic Church<sup>24</sup> (an area occupying 218,000 square metres).

According to the law on the relations between the Republic of Armenia and the Armenian Apostolic Church: “... The Armenian Apostolic Church and the Republic of Armenia jointly preserve churches and other religious buildings that enjoy the status of a “historical monument”.”<sup>25</sup> This means that issues related to the preservation zone of the monument will also need to be coordinated with the Armenian Apostolic Church.

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23. Decision No. 438 of the Government of the Republic of Armenia dated April 20, 2002 on approving the procedure for state registration, study, preservation, strengthening, repair, restoration and use of immobile historical and cultural monuments, article 107.

24. Decision No. 720-A of the Government of the Republic of Armenia dated May 25, 2005 on making amendments to the Decision No 213-A of the Government of the Republic of Armenia dated February 17, 2005.

25. The RA Law “On the Relations between the Republic of Armenia and the Armenian Apostolic Church”, article 6.

## **The possible impact of the regime prescribed by the RA legislation for the maintenance of the state-owned summerhouse serving the President of the RA, on the Sevan Writers' Resort during its future reconstruction and operation**

### **Legislation**

1. Constitution of the Republic of Armenia
2. The RA Law “On the Protection of Persons Eligible for Special State Protection”

### **Discussion**

The state summer house, which serves the President of the Republic of Armenia, is located in the vicinity of the Sevan Writers' Resort.

According to the Law, “[t]he President of the Republic of Armenia ... is provided with state protection at his/her permanent and temporary residence ...”<sup>26</sup>

The state summer house is classified as an object under state protection. The Law defines the notion of a protected object thus: “[p]rotected objects – accommodations, buildings, structures, adjacent territories, and vehicles pertaining to the permanent and temporary locations of state protected objects that are under protection for the purpose of ensuring the safety of state protected objects, as well as accommodations, buildings, structures, adjacent territories and vehicles used by the state protection authority.”<sup>27</sup>

Another provision of the same law establishes the measures of state protection thus:

“... ”

- 1) realising the personal protection of state protected objects, special communication and transport services, and providing information on threats to their security;
- 2) carrying out intelligence activities in accordance with the legislation;
- 3) protecting public order and taking safeguarding measures in the permanent or temporary locations of state protected objects;
- 4) ensuring the movement regime and procedure established in the protected objects.<sup>28</sup>

Based on point 4 above, we can assume that a movement regime and procedure can be established not only within the building, but also in adjacent areas, if reasonably necessary. Moreover, the Law clearly mentions “adjacent territories” as protected objects. And these “adjacent territories” can, if necessary, change their borders.

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26. The RA Law “On the Protection of Persons Eligible for Special State Protection”.

27. Ibid, article 1.

28. Ibid, article 4.

It should also be noted that, regardless of the surrounding objects being under protection, the protection of the property of others is a supreme constitutional norm,<sup>29</sup> therefore any action prescribed by the law must be consistent with that constitutional norm.

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29. RA Constitution, article 10



## The possible impact of Sevan National Park’s preservation regime on the Sevan Writers’ Resort, should it be reconstructed and operate in the future

### Legislation

1. The RA Law “On Lake Sevan”.
2. The RA Law “On Special Nature Protection Areas”.
3. The RA Law “On Urban Development”.
4. Decision No. 927-N of the Government of the Republic of Armenia dated May 30, 2002 on reorganizing the Sevan National Park State Institute and approving the charters of Sevan National Park and Sevan National Park State Non-Commercial Organization.
5. Decision No. 205-N of the Government of the Republic of Armenia dated January 18, 2007 on approving Sevan National Park’s 2007-2011 management plans.
6. Decision No. 1563-N of the Government of the Republic of Armenia dated December 18, 2008 on the lease, provision of construction right, and implementation of urban development activities in Sevan National Park and adjacent territories.

### Discussion

Ecological zones of central, direct impact and non-direct impact<sup>30</sup> are established for the restoration, preservation, reproduction, normal development and utilization of the Lake Sevan ecosystem, and for the regulation of economic and other activities in its catchment basin.

“The central zone is the territory of Sevan National Park, and the purpose of its separation, is to restore and maintain the normal state of the lake’s ecosystem: water quality, natural and artificial landscapes and biodiversity of the lake and coastal terrain.”<sup>31</sup>

This zone is under a special maintenance regime and has certain restrictions on economic and urban development activities. It should be noted that the procedure for carrying out activities in areas under special regulation with regard to urban development activities, is defined by the law.

The next zone is a direct impact zone that “... includes the catchment basin outside the central zone, up to the watershed where any activity directly or indirectly affects Lake Sevan, the hydro-physical, hydro-chemical, hydro-biological, sanitary-hygienic, hygienic and other qualitative and quantitative indicators of the rivers flowing into it ...”<sup>32</sup> The area of the direct

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30. The status of specially preserved areas located within the ecological zones shall not be subject to change, unless it is provided for by law.

31. The RA Law “On Lake Sevan”, article 7.

32. Ibid, article 8.

impact zone is also subject to special regulation of urban development activities.

The third zone is a non-direct impact zone that is “the territory of the Republic of Armenia, which has a potential impact on Lake Sevan and is located outside of its catchment basin. The non-direct impact zone is set in order to prevent possible harmful effects on Lake Sevan”.<sup>33</sup> Urban development activities in non-direct impact areas are not subject to special regulation.

Our perception is that the territory of Sevan National Park includes the central zone and the direct impact zone (entirely or in part).

The Sevan National Park State Institute was the organization responsible for the preservation of this area. The institute was reorganized into the Sevan National Park State Non-Commercial Organization by the Decision of the Government<sup>34</sup> of the Republic of Armenia of May 30, 2002. The Decision also approved the organization’s charter. “The purpose of this organization is the scientific research, preservation, protection, restoration, reproduction, recording, inventory, monitoring of the natural ecosystems of the park area, its landscape and biological diversity, and the natural heritage, the sustainable use of the park’s natural resources, and public beaches that are located in the national park area.”<sup>35</sup>

To clarify, apart from the charter of the abovementioned organization, the charter of Sevan National Park (hereinafter also: the Park) was also approved by Annex 1 of the same Government Decision, which sets the management plan of the Park, its territorial-operating zones, its maintenance zone, the regime and a number of other provisions.

### **Sevan National Park**

“The area of the Park’s maintenance zone is Lake Sevan’s catchment basin. The maintenance area may include plots of land that have different owners, including those that are part of the administrative territories of communities. Their use is regulated in the manner prescribed by the legislation of the Republic of Armenia.

In the Park’s maintenance zone, any economic activity permitted by the authorized state body may be carried out if it does not disrupt the stability of the park’s ecological systems, the protection of the flora and fauna, the objects of scientific, historic or cultural value, and the preservation of their maintenance zones.”<sup>36</sup>

Lands that belong to the Park are special preservation areas, which include lands of environmental, historic, cultural and other importance, on which any activity contradicting the

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33. Ibid, article 9.

34. Decision No. 927-N of the Government of the Republic of Armenia dated May 30, 2002 on reorganizing the Sevan National Park State Institute, on approving the charters of Sevan National Park and Sevan National Park State Non-Commercial Organization.

35. Charter of Sevan National Park State Non-Commercial Organization, point 8.

36. Charter of Sevan National Park, Chapter 4.

intended purpose of the Park is prohibited in the manner prescribed by the law. Lands of other landowners, land users and land proprietors, as well as buildings and structures within the Park owned by individuals and legal entities shall be used for their intended purpose.

For a more descriptive interpretation, we shall note that the Park area is divided into the following territorial-operating zones, which have their individual regulations:<sup>37</sup>

- 1) reserve;
- 2) conservation area;
- 3) recreational;
- 4) economic.

The charter of the Park defines the purpose of establishing these territorial-operating zones and the ways in which they can be used. We believe that with regard to the future reconstruction and use of the structure in question, we should focus particularly on the recreational zone.

Thus, point 10 of the charter specifies the purpose of creating a recreational zone.

“10. A recreational zone is created for the purpose of:

- 1) maintaining the natural-historic and cultural-scientific values of the natural and cultural heritage of the natural landscapes, vegetation cover and coastal areas of Lake Sevan in order to organize leisure activities for the population;
- 2) identifying and maintaining the tourism potential of the national park territory and promoting the development of different types of tourism, including cultural tourism;
- 3) ensuring the targeted use of recreational zone areas;
- 4) ensuring the preservation of historic-cultural monuments and their maintenance zones in the recreational zone;
- 5) the prevention of anthropogenic adverse effects on the normal development of ecosystems in the recreational zone.”<sup>38</sup>

The RA Law “On Special Nature Protection Areas” prescribes the following regime for the Park’s recreational zone:

“In the territory of a national park’s recreational zone, the following activities are forbidden:

- a) any activity that violates the water regime;
- b) any activity that violates the habitat of plants and animals;

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37. Decision No. 205-N of the Government of the Republic of Armenia of January 18, 2007 on approving Sevan National Park’s 2007-2011 management plan. Maps are attached to the decision.

38. Charter of Sevan National Park, point 10.

...

- e) the use of pesticides for plant protection, and the use of mineral fertilizers;
- f) the use of ecologically harmful technologies that generate sewage and emissions exceeding the permitted thresholds established by the legislation of the Republic of Armenia;
- g) the production, use and storage of radioactive materials and wastes, and other materials that are dangerous or toxic for human health and the environment;
- h) geological studies (that disrupt the soil surface), exploitation of mineral deposits, mineral exploration, the establishing of mineral processing facilities;
- i) lumbering (except pruning for sanitation and care);
- j) the use of flora and fauna objects and their derivatives for industrial purposes;
- k) traffic of motor and caterpillar vehicles off public roads and waterways and their parking in areas beyond the road network or those not designated for parking.”<sup>39</sup>

The Park’s charter specifies the preservation features of this zone thus:

- “1) to exclude the operation of facilities generating wastewater without having wastewater treatment plants;
- 2) to prevent pollution of the area with household, industrial and chemical waste;
- 3) to preserve nature and the historical-cultural monuments.”<sup>40</sup>

The above-mentioned law “On Special Nature Protection Areas” also determines the ways in which special nature protection areas may be used. Thus, in the recreational zone, the following is permitted:

- “a) leisure activities by the public;

...

- f) lease of land for recreational purposes in the manner prescribed by the law and for organizing appropriate services;
- g) pruning for sanitation and care;

...

- i) measures to ensure proper sanitary conditions and hygiene, and prevent and eradicate infectious diseases;

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39. The RA Law “On Special Nature Protection Areas”, article 17, part 2.

40. Charter of Sevan National Park, point 17.

j) entry and parking of means of transportation in areas designated for this purpose; ...”<sup>41</sup>

The Park’s charter only regulates urban development activities in leased territories; however, it is presumed that the procedure is the same for all territories:

“Urban development activities in leased territories of the recreational zone are permitted only in the manner prescribed by the legislation of the Republic of Armenia, provided that the environmental impact and urban development assessment has come to a positive conclusion.”<sup>42</sup>

With regard to the aforementioned, the RA Law “On Urban Development” defines the following:

“Objects under special urban development regulation may be demarcated:

...

c) in the territory of the catchment basin of Lake Sevan, in special nature protection areas, and in the areas of hydraulic engineering structures relating to the use of water resources;

...

The procedure for urban development in objects under special urban development regulation defined in this article shall be set by law and (or) by a decision of the Government.”<sup>43</sup>

We have now presented and discussed all the laws and their provisions that could be significant to our activities.

As regards Government decisions, there is one that complements article 19 of the RA Law “On Urban Development”. The following are some of the provisions of that Government decision (the most relevant are underscored):

“4. In the sub-zones defined in point 1 of this decision:<sup>44</sup>

- 1) for construction purposes lands and architectural and planning design assignments shall be provided, and architectural and constructing design documents shall be prepared in accordance with the provisions of approved zoning projects and construction sketches (schemes);
- 2) it shall be ensured that the mandatory assessment of design documents is carried out without the application of the provisions of point 4 of the procedure established by decision No. 96 of the Government of the Republic of Armenia dated 2 February 2002 on

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41. The RA Law “On Special Nature Protection Areas”, article 26, part 3.

42. Charter of Sevan National Park, point 25.

43. The RA Law “On Urban Development”, article 19.

44. a. first sub-zone: areas defined by the RA legislation that are subject to flooding and inundation due to rising water levels of Lake Sevan;

b. second sub-zone: areas beyond the border of the first sub-zone toward the coast, up to the border of the “Sevan” National Park, as defined by the RA legislation.

approving the procedure for the assessment of urban development documents. The environmental impact assessment shall be carried out in the manner prescribed by the RA legislation;

3) until the approval of zoning projects and construction sketches (schemes) defined in sub-point 1 of this point, the architectural and planning design assignments, together with the proposed placement of land plots for construction shall be coordinated with the Ministry of Urban Development of the RA, as submitted by the Governor of Gegharkunik region of the Republic of Armenia<sup>45</sup>;

4) the urban development project (spatial planning) documents shall be approved by the Government of the Republic of Armenia upon submission by the Minister of Urban Development of the Republic of Armenia, after having coordinated them with the concerned bodies and the expert committee on the preservation of lake Sevan, in accordance with the legislation of the Republic of Armenia;

5) the construction sketches (schemes) shall be confirmed by the customer with prior consent from the Ministry of Urban Development of the Republic of Armenia.

5. The first sub-zone defined in paragraph “a”, sub-point 1, point 1 of this decision includes the beach and buffer zones. In the first sub-zone:

1) the construction of permanent objects (with the exception of the cases specified in sub-point 3 of this point) is prohibited. The functional furnishing and renovation of leisure and service facilities must only be done with non-permanent structures, in accordance with the requirements of the RA legislation;

2) the term of the right of construction, granted for the purpose of carrying out urban development activities, cannot exceed 3 years, and the term of the lease for the purpose of carrying out agricultural activities cannot exceed 5 years, unless another term is set by law or by a decision of the Government;

3) should the construction of coastal protection, engineering-transportation infrastructures and/or permanent hydraulic structures be necessary, for the purpose of the urban development activities land plots shall be provided and the construction process shall be carried out exclusively on the basis of projects approved by the Government of the Republic of Armenia (including the technical and economic bases for the use of the land), while taking into account the environmental protection restrictions.

6. Depending on relief features, the areas designated for construction in the second sub-zone and defined in paragraph “b”, sub-point 1, point 1 of this decision, may include the buffer zones of the new (future) beach, depending on the increase of water levels, those of old and new beaches, as well as the construction of permanent buildings and structures.

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45. Currently, the Urban Development Committee adjacent to the Government of the Republic of Armenia.

...

9. In the coastal areas of Lake Sevan's ecotone, which is set by the law, beach zones and, towards the coast, buffer zones shall be demarcated. Based on the territorial characteristics of the area, the borders of the zones may be adjusted in accordance with design documents.
10. The total area provided to individuals and legal entities for the purpose of organizing beaches cannot exceed 80 per cent of the overall area of the beach zone, while ensuring that the rest of the beach is accessible to the public for their unrestricted use.
11. Contracts signed with physical and legal entities according to the legislation of the Republic of Armenia, with regard to the beach and areas in the buffer zones, shall include the following requirements:

...

- 6) Prohibiting vehicles (except for rescue, medical and other emergency vehicles) in the beach area. Using water transport and sports vehicles outside the swimming area, and limiting their access to the land to areas off the beach specially designated for that purpose;
- 7) Organizing parking lots for cars and other vehicles in sections adjacent to the roads. Adjacent to the parking lots, in the direction of the lake, a green sanitary protection zone shall be planned;
- 8) Prohibiting partition fences and barriers on the beach. In the buffer zone, separate area segments may be demarcated with vertical green fences (up to 1.5 metres high) or with vegetal barriers.
- 9) Ensuring wastewater treatment exclusively through treatment plants, in according with the quantities established by the standards. Toilet pits should be closed after they are disinfected and the sanitation services' report has been drawn up;
- 10) ...<sup>46</sup>

The above-mentioned Government decision is the basic legal act that, in a certain sense, contains a clear action plan. It will be applied in our project implementation phase. In our discussion, as mentioned above, we have considered the restrictions associated with the recreational zone. However, if other research finds that regulations concerning other zones should also be applied to the area in question, restrictions that are more stringent may apply.

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46. Decision No. 1563-N of the Government of the Republic of Armenia dated December 18, 2008 on the lease, the granting of a right for construction, and the implementation of urban development activities in Sevan National Park and adjacent territories.

## On the inclusion of monuments of national or local significance in national lists, and their removal from the lists

### Legislation

1. The RA Law “On the Preservation and Use of Immobile Historical and Cultural Monuments and the Historical Environment”.
2. Decision No. 80-N of the Government of the Republic of Armenia dated 9 January 2003 on approving the national list of immobile historical and cultural monuments of the Gegharkunik region of the Republic of Armenia.
3. Decision No. 438 of the Government of the Republic of Armenia dated April 20, 2002 on approving the procedure for the state registration, study, preservation, strengthening, repair, restoration and use of immobile historical and cultural monuments.
4. Decision No. 711-N of the Government of the Republic of Armenia dated May 6, 2010 on approving the procedure for the assessment of urban documentation; Appendix.

### Discussion

As already mentioned, the monastery of Sevan includes monuments from the 9<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Due to this, the complex is listed in one of the national lists of monuments and holds the status of a monument of national significance.<sup>47</sup>

Based on their valuation criteria, monuments are classified into those of republican and local significance. According to the law, “[m]onuments of republican significance are valuable, ancient, emblematic or rare samples of significant monuments of the history of the people, and of its material and spiritual culture. Monuments of local significance are those that characterize the history and culture, and the local peculiarities of any region in the country.

The classification of monuments is performed by the state administration body authorized by the Government of the Republic of Armenia (hereinafter: the authorized body) based on the conclusion of the expert commission. Monuments of exceptional historic and cultural value can be included in the list of world cultural heritage in accordance with the standards established at the international level ...”<sup>48</sup>

According to another article of the same law, “[a]ll the monuments in the territory of the Republic of Armenia are subject to state registration regardless of their ownership. The state registration of monuments includes the discovery and study of the monuments, the creation

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47. Decision No. 80-N of the Government of the Republic of Armenia dated 9 January, 2003 on approving the national list of immobile historical and cultural monuments of the Gegharkunik region of the Republic of Armenia, Paragraph 18, sub-point 4.4, point 4.

48. The RA Law “On the Preservation and Use of Immobile Historic and Cultural Monuments and the Historical Environment”, article 6.



of their registration documents, and the compilation and approval of national monument lists. The authorized body shall carry out the state registration of monuments in the manner prescribed by the Government of the Republic of Armenia. All state registration documents shall be kept indefinitely.”<sup>49</sup>

An important component of the registration of monuments is the compilation and approval of national lists, which are also regulated by the law.

“National monument lists are basic documents and a legal basis for granting objects the status of a monument and according them state protection. The national lists of monuments shall be approved by the Government of the Republic of Armenia, upon submission by the authorized body. Depending on the location of the monument, the authorized body shall notify the territorial bodies of state administration and the local self-governing bodies about the listing of the monument; it shall also notify the owner or user of the monument ...”<sup>50</sup>

The procedure governing the activities of the authorized body is also set by a Government decision, which reads:

“The authorized body periodically organizes expeditions in the areas of all the regions and settlements of the Republic of Armenia, in order to identify, record and study immobile objects of historic and cultural value, and to update, correct and complete the data of the national list of historic and cultural monuments of the Republic of Armenia.”<sup>51</sup>

A new object is added to the national monument lists or removed from the lists “based on an expert conclusion, in the manner prescribed by the Government of the Republic of Armenia ...”<sup>52</sup>

A proposal to add a certain structure to the list should be submitted to the body authorized by the Government:

“State authorities and local self-governing bodies, scientific institutions, religious and cultural organizations and creative unions may also submit a proposal to include a new object in the national monument list or to remove one from the list, by applying to the authorized body with relevant substantiation.”<sup>53</sup>

In the relevant legal acts, there are no other procedural provisions.

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49. Ibid, article 12.

50. Ibid, article 13.

51. Decision No. 438 of the Government of the Republic of Armenia dated April 20, 2002 on approving the procedure for the state registration, study, preservation, strengthening, repair, restoration and use of immobile historical and cultural monuments, point 4.

52. The RA Law “On the Preservation and Use of Immobile Historical and Cultural Monuments and the Historical Environment”, article 14.

53. Decision No. 438 of the Government of the Republic of Armenia dated April 20, 2002 on approving the procedure for the state registration, study, preservation, strengthening, repair, restoration and use of immobile historical and cultural monuments, point 15.

Thus, all actions related to the inclusion and removal of monuments of national or local significance to and from national lists are regulated by Government Decisions, and the basic regulations are set forth in the RA Law “On the Preservation and Use of Immobile Historical and Cultural Monuments and the Historical Environment”.

## 6. Significance<sup>54</sup>

### 6.1. Historic Value

The authors of the Residence Hall, Gevorg Kochar (1901-1973) and Mikayel Mazmanyan (1899-1971) were among the most prominent architects of Soviet avant-garde of the 1920s and 1930s. In 1937 they became victims of Stalinist repression and were exiled to Siberia until 1954. After his rehabilitation and return to Armenia one of them, Gevorg Kochar, continued the enlargement of the building and the construction of the new Lounge Building. The history of the paradigmatic transitions in the socio-political and cultural situation in the Soviet Union, intertwined with the dramatic personal stories of the architects, is expressed through the architectural evolution of the Sevan Writers' Resort Complex. Belonging to still underexposed, so to say "peripheral" contexts within the colonial frames of the historical master narrative of the 20th century Soviet architecture, as well as the global modernist trends in the non-occidental world, Sevan Resort is a prime example of a parallel history for modernist architectural evolution in Armenia from the experimental revolutionary epoch of avant-garde to the revived modernist trends in the post-Stalinist architecture of 1960s.

### 6.2. Cultural Value

Starting from the 1930s, creative resort-houses were important platforms for creative unions in the Soviet Union. These unions were the main, and after 1932 the only, institutional establishments for creative communities (writers, composers, architects, artists, etc.) through which

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54. The Sevan Writers Resort site is not listed as a heritage site and does not have any protection or restriction as a monument (building/landmark).

the communist ideology was promoted and supervised. One of the first of its kind in Soviet Armenia, the Sevan Writers Resort is a unique example of this typology. The Complex was a meeting point and a place for creative work for local and foreign intellectuals traveling to Armenia, particularly in the post WWII period.

### **6.3. Architectural Value**

The Complex is one of the rare combinations of late Soviet avant-garde and post-WWII Soviet Modernism that has been preserved. The Residence Hall, designed in 1932, is a unique example of terraced architecture with clear modernist spatial and aesthetic solutions that has been preserved to this day. Kochar's alteration of the building in the 1960s followed the same attitude while enhancing the rationality of the typology.

The Lounge Building, designed in 1963-64, with its impressive form and organic integration with its surroundings became one of the icons of the period thanks to its bold architectural solutions and structural experimentation. It is exceptionally well-preserved and has great material authenticity.

### **6.4. Structural Experimentation**

The Lounge Building became a landmark of the Soviet modernism period and twentieth century Armenia for its dynamism, organic and soaring architectural solution. The entire structure, with its 11 metre-long cantilever, sits on a single hollow pillar made of reinforced concrete on a basalt rocky slope. Even though seismic regulations have changed, the structure is still in a satisfactory conditions.

### **6.5. Landscape**

The Sevan Peninsula, which used to be an island in the 1930s when the first Residence Building was built, is the most visited and appreciated natural site of Lake Sevan. The Complex, the *Sevanavank* Monastery Complex dating back to the 9<sup>th</sup> century, and some other structures are an integral part of the natural and manmade landscape of the peninsula, and are under protection within the framework of both the Sevan National Park and the landscape protection zone of *Sevanavank*, which is a heritage site of national significance.

## 7. Policy

### 7.1. Principles

A policy for the future conservation of the site should be developed, bearing in mind the significance of the site; the policy will set the permitted and prohibited activities with regard to the future development and maintenance of the site and the structures within the area. For this purpose, we have identified the key and basic principles below, based on which the guidelines have been developed.

These principles highlight the main aspects of the site that require specific attention and treatment. These aspects and the elements that shape them were selected taking into account the comments and observations of the project staff and experts, and presented during the stakeholders meeting and throughout various discussions (conferences, workshops).

As the first step of the long-term policy of the Complex's conservation, urbanlab has initiated the process of including the Complex in the state list of immobile historical and cultural monuments of the Gegharkunik region of the Republic of Armenia.

The following have been selected as the main principles of the future conservation of the site:

1. The Complex must be preserved, and the site used, so as to serve the needs of the Writers' Union of Armenia, Armenian writers and other intellectual circles and associations, even if the future operation of the resort requires a more profitable dimension to be developed.
2. The main principle for any intervention in the Complex and its surrounding area is that professionals with full knowledge of the Complex's history and the available studies, especially this CMP, should be the ones carrying it out. This principle also applies to the later stages of the conservation.

#### **Residence Hall**

3. The elements preserved from the earliest stage of the building - the 1930s – must continue to be preserved. These disclose the visions of that time.
4. Any future restoration must be based on Gevorg Kochar's sketches and design solutions from 1963 and 1964. These must be considered as a benchmark for future restoration

proposals, attributing special importance to the spatial organization, the relation between private-public spaces, internal and external artistic solutions, and the wishes of the architect(s) that may have been abandoned due to the lack of technical means or for other reasons.

5. Considering the lack of information regarding the original internal space design solutions, specifically with regard to interior finishing and furnishing, attempts must be made to recreate the internal space, including furnishing that matches the solutions of the construction era created by the architects themselves or with the help of their colleague architects and designers.
6. While taking into consideration the previous points, solutions that meet modern hospitality and technical requirements, particularly pertaining to individual bathrooms, air conditioning and heating, energy saving and privacy, must be used.

### **Lounge Building**

7. Only minimal interventions in the architecture of the building must be allowed, as the entire structure is relatively well preserved and has kept its authenticity, including the internal finishing and coating of existing surfaces and elements.
8. The integrity of the architecture and landscape of the building must always be taken into consideration, and physical interventions in the area around this structure must be minimized.
9. The requirements to modern restaurant businesses must, to the best possible extent, be distributed between existing or new buildings in order to relieve the Lounge building of extra technical requirements and burden.

### **Site (Landscape)**

10. While developing the master plan of the resort through landscape conservation, attempts must be made to make access to the lake easier and to develop it by identifying the best vantage points for viewing the Complex and its components from various parts of Sevan Peninsula.
11. In the future, the everyday maintenance of the Complex and a proper parking space for expected vehicles, including buses for group visitors, and on site movement with light vehicles for the staff, must be organized, while ensuring the accessibility of the site for all visitors (guests with disabilities, seniors and children).
12. The *Sevanavank* Monastery receives around 1 million visitors each year. A visitor management policy must be developed as part of the future conservation plans.

These principles may be revised, if new historic evidence is discovered (archival drawings and images, new layers of the buildings, etc.) and/or if the significance of the building is revisited.

## 7.2. Guidelines

Taking into consideration the significance of the Complex and its valuable elements, we suggest that the conservation and preservation of the Complex and the site are carried out following the guidelines presented below.

These guidelines were developed based on the research, data and evidence available at the time when this CMP was developed. They may be revised and/or improved, if new evidence and findings come to light (archival drawings and images, new layers of the buildings, etc.).

### Preamble

1. Any planned and discussed intervention, including small-scale renovations, improvements and intentions to add new elements (furniture, signs, vegetation, etc.), has to be carried out with the involvement of conservation specialist(s) and other related professionals. The selected specialist(s) must to have access to the entire documentation available at that time, and also to this CMP, including its appendices.
2. The final decision on the interventions, their methodology and final technical solutions have to be widely discussed, providing for a multi-disciplinary and multi-interest grasp and assessment of the problem, and taking into account the proposals of the key stakeholders involved.
3. During any construction activity - renovations, structural strengthening, mechanical and wiring system improvements, etc. - every step and action needs to be properly documented, including detailed descriptive and visual (photo, video, drawings, etc.) explanations. The results have to be incorporated into future revisions and editions of the CMP.
4. The staff of the future resort should be trained to value the authenticity of the heritage site over its profitability, and to consider and respect the spirit of the site when holding temporary events and carrying out maintenance activities.

### Residence Hall

- a. Given the fact that the building was designed back in 1932 and went through expansion works in the 1960s, it must be noted that Gevorg Kochar attempted, and partially managed, to preserve the initial character of the building.
- b. Taking into consideration the results of the expansion works and the fact that the building was later modified in a non-professional manner and poor quality; and
- c. Taking into consideration the fact that there is limited information regarding the initial state of the building (1930s) due to the dearth of archival and other research, unlike those conducted in the 1960s onwards;

### Recommendations:

5. During any construction activity - renovations, structural strengthening, mechanical and

wiring system improvements, etc. - every step and action needs to be properly documented, including detailed descriptive and visual (photo, video, drawings, etc.) explanations. This is particularly important, as it will help fill missing data and add evidence to our incomplete knowledge on the building.

6. All the original elements dating back to the 1930s, windows, doors, walls, etc., must be preserved and undergo deep and comprehensive examination.
7. Any intervention aimed at recreating and/or reconstructing missing elements should be carried out on-site and must be based on archival research. If an intervention is not substantiated, it is preferable to reject it rather than to approve and carry it through.
8. Ideas or elements existing in archival projects and design documents should be implemented with care, after thorough discussions. The following three interventions have been discussed and are considered controversial:
  - 8.1. The passage linking the second floor terrace with the staircase (foreseen in the 1932 and 1963 designs, built in the 1930s and later dismantled);
  - 8.2. Roof canopies (these were suggested in the 1963 design but were never built);
  - 8.3. The space between the roof of the first floor glass passage and the second floor semi-circular balconies, which was foreseen in the 1932 and 1963 designs and built in the 1930s. Later, it was dismantled or incorporated into a new floor (there is no documentation or drawing regarding this change).
9. Should it be necessary to reorganize the spaces of the Complex, the classification of the initial spaces – the ratio of private, semi-private (semi-public) and public spaces, and the principles for their design and use - should be taken into consideration. While redesigning these spaces, the new realities that emerged because of the expansions of the 1960s, should also be considered.
10. Should it be necessary to comply with modern operational and technical requirements of the hotel industry, the logic of the building's reconstruction, in particular the one applied in the 1960s, should be taken into consideration.
11. Based on the previous point, from an architectural point of view, the essential elements (furniture, toilets, elevator, etc.) should either adhere to the logic of the building or at least not devalue it.
12. All modern additions must be unobtrusive and of secondary significance, so as not to affect the general and partial perception of the preserved parts of the building.
13. While preparing for future reinforcements and/or other large-scale interventions or dismantling of existing elements, all details and uncovered layers should be carefully examined and documented so that they provide a complete picture of the building's history; all available evidence and previous narrative studies should also be critically examined.



14. As the future restoration of the building includes a complete reinforcement, the possibility of preserving or displaying the initial structure and fabric of the building should also be considered. This should be done after identifying the most significant aspects of the original structure and fabric.
15. Special attention should be paid to the local polished black tufa stone (rear wall of the basement, and the railings of the second floor balcony) that has been preserved, as it is the actual facade of the 1930s. Structural interventions covering this original stone cladding should be avoided.

### **Lounge Building**

- a. This relatively small building makes an immense architectural impression thanks to its unique organic solutions, which make it one of the symbolic structures of late Soviet modernism and 20th century Armenian architecture.
- b. Taking into consideration this fact, after some improvement, the building will become one of the most visited sites in the area of Lake Sevan. This can also revive the Complex and secure its future and sustainable conservation;
- c. The building has been preserved almost intact.

### **Recommendations:**

16. Interventions should be minimized and considered only in the scope of conservation activities, rather than refurbishment or adaptations.
17. Any exterior alteration, including those of the roof and lower cantilevered section, should be rejected as these are key aspects of the building's outline that forms the building's identity.
18. All initial elements dating back to the 1960s should be preserved and incorporated in interior and exterior solutions that may be applied in the future. These include all the exterior details (plaster texture of the balcony, railings, entrance canopy, etc.) and interior space elements, among them all the components and solutions that constitute the initial idea of the entrance, lobby, kitchen and balcony.
19. Elements that once existed but have not been preserved (evidenced in drawings, photos, films), can be re-created only if complete data is available. Unsubstantiated oral information cannot be regarded as factual data.
20. Elements and solutions that were part of the initial idea but, for whatever known or unknown reason, were not implemented with the author's knowledge, should not be re-created.
21. Only minimal intervention is required to ensure that the infrastructures necessary for the proper operation of the Lounge building are functioning. These include renovating (not

expanding) the kitchen, re-constructing the bathroom, installing ventilation and air-conditioning.

22. Any intervention that does not fit within the scope of the conservation and restoration of the building, should either correspond to the architectural logic of the building or at least not devalue it.
23. New additions should be based on thorough examination of historical evidence and be implemented through extensive discussions and multi-factor considerations with key stakeholders.
24. The glass structures, in particular those facing Lake Sevan, are one of the most important aspects of the building, giving it its architectural value, and should be handled with special care during maintenance and improvement (if necessary) activities. No addition (curtain, blinds, new glass, etc.) should alter the integrity of the structure. All additions should be in harmony with the building's architecture and interior.
25. The entrance and other doors are original and preserved components of the building, and before any replacement with new, more advanced solutions, the integrity of the initial idea of the building and the materials used, should be carefully considered.
26. Existing interior elements, fabrics, including the wooden floor, wooden and chipboard wall finishing, underfloor heating ducts, heating louvres at the entrance, kitchen tiles and glass partitions are crucial aspects of the building's architecture and have to be conserved and restored so as to preserve the original fabric and coating.
27. The northern facade solution, which is depicted in structural drawings and highlights the fact that the building leans on a single pillar, has to be properly displayed in order to emphasize the importance of structural experimentation and the courageous contemporary solutions that the architect and engineers had applied.
28. All additions must be unobtrusive and of secondary significance, without damaging the general and partial perception of the preserved parts of the building. In particular, this refers to the modern requirements for ventilation and lighting, since the former was not foreseen, and there is no factual data about the latter.

### **Site (Landscape)**

- a. Taking into account that a number of adjunct buildings (boiler room, parking lot, check-point) were foreseen after the 1960s expansion of the building designed in 1932, and also the fact that a swimming pool was foreseen in the initial design of 1963;
- b. Taking into account that the Sevan peninsula faces serious challenges with regard to both natural and artificial landscape conservation and restoration;
- c. Predicting that the flow of tourists might eventually be directed towards the area of the Complex;

**Recommendations:**

29. The initial landscaping principles and the possibilities of removing landscaping elements that alter the perception of the Complex should be reviewed, so as to highlight the integrity of the Complex and to identify the best vantage points for viewing each of the components of the Complex.
30. The natural setting of the area, with its rocky topography and mass of water, is essential to the significance of the building. Any future intervention and landscaping activity, including temporary structures (umbrellas, sunshades, etc.) and vegetation, need to be carefully considered in order not to alter the perception of the manmade and natural landscapes.
31. All the buildings and infrastructures necessary for the future exploitation of the Complex should be located in a specially designated area. Alternatively, solutions, which do not obstruct the perception of the building or its separate components from any important viewpoint, should be applied.
32. Any newly built building should meet protected area requirements and serve the interest of revealing and presenting the significance of the Complex.
33. A visitor-flow management programme should be developed, in order to exclude visitor movement that may obstruct the views of the Complex, while also considering the future desirable cultural atmosphere in and around the Complex, and the expectations of resort clients.
34. All site areas should be accessible for people with disabilities, seniors and children. The accessibility planning has to be developed considering the different types of access (visitors, resorts clients, staff and logistics) that need to be organized, and should be based on current advanced technologies. At the same time, however, this should be subordinated to the Complex's heritage value and its perception from surrounding areas.
35. Parking areas for future users of the Complex (visitors, resorts clients, staff and logistics) should be planned and organized in a manner as to avoid and/or minimize parking facilities and lots in areas within view of the Complex or areas that can be seen from the Complex itself.
36. An extension for the Complex that will house a visitor centre, should be proposed; this can also be used as space for events. The visitor centre should be housed in one of the existing structures and/or be located in a new structure that will not be considered part of the Complex, thereby not harming the integrity of the site.

## 8. Appendices

1. **Structural Study** by ArmProject
2. **Furniture Researches** by Olga Kazakova and Alexandra Selivanova
3. **HORECA Recommendations** by Anahit Tantushyan