Classification of public housing varieties in the territory of the Don Cossacks resettlement

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Abstract. This article provides a part of the research work on the traditional Don dwelling Cossacks varieties’ study. The author seeks to follow the process of shaping and the evolution of the people’s houses by means of its characteristic features’ classification and identification. Particular attention is paid to the main and additional species range of the national dwelling, which give an idea of the external factors affecting the change in the architectural image of the dwelling, which is called “national”.

1. Introduction
Folk housing is a unique creative form in Russian architecture and reflects the vibrant cultural differences of ethnic groups represented in the Russian cultural space. This architectural form has been evolved over ten centuries under the influence of various external factors, such as geopolitical, historical and cultural, economic, geographical and natural-climatic. A number of factors, listed above, are of primary importance when people need to organize their way of life, namely, geographical and climatic.

From the North to the South, the considered territory of the European part of Russia has various natural zones and, as a result, various climatic conditions that determine the national dwelling’s characteristics. Extremely severe climate features were noted in the northern territories, in the polar climate zone, near the White Sea, where the type of northern nomadic dwelling (plague, yaranga) is represented. It is this type of dwelling that is adapted to the conditions of tundra and forest-tundra, characterized by swampy lowlands, strong winds, and also permafrost [1]. The northern climatic zone is represented by forest-tundra and forest, and the North Russian dwelling fully reflects the specific climate of this zone - a hut of the “glagol”, “bag boom”, “timber” type [2]. Moving south, it is possible to note such types of dwellings as a hut and a Belarusian hut, which are located in the middle climatic zone, represented by forest and forest-steppe. The southern zone occupies a fairly long territory from the West to the East, capturing a part of the present-day Ukraine territory, the Rostov region, as well as the territories of the lower Volga, southern Urals and southern steppe territories. The southern zone in different territorial parts is represented by forest-steppe, steppe and semi-desert.

Specific environmental conditions affect the type of public housing in the southern zone, which, under the climate influence, has clear differences in terms of design and planning decisions. The following types of buildings are distinguished here: Ukrainian hut, Don Kuren, the dwelling of the Slavs of the lower Volga region, the nomadic dwelling of the southern Urals, as well as the southern nomad dwelling (yurt and ger).
The Don dwelling is not the last among the general species classification of the national dwelling in the European part of our country, further narration will be directed to the consideration of the architectural, planning and design features of the Don dwelling and, in particular, the Don Cossack kuren.

2. Species classification of public housing in the Lower Don region
In the Don region, several types of national dwellings are noted, both stationary and mobile types of dwellings used by different ethnic groups are included in the species classification. Stationary types include a hut, a Ukrainian hut and a Don Cossack kuren, all these structures belong to the Slavic ethnic group, and mobile types include a yurt and a ger belonging to the Mongol-speaking and Turkic-speaking ethnic groups. The listed types of public housing are found throughout the Don region.

The Upper Don is characterized by the construction of log huts. The Ukrainian hut is more often found in the Lower Don region, where the forest-steppe and steppe and steppe prevail. Don Cossack kurens, distributed in all regions of the Don region, in this climatic zone, as well as the Ukrainian hut, are represented by forest-steppe and steppe. The use of a yurt and a ger are related to mobile housing is common in the southern part of the Lower Don region, where steppe and semi-desert prevail.

Each kind of national dwelling was formed in its own special conditions. One of the primary factors that had a decisive influence on the formation of the building architectural image and design decisions are, of course, the geographical and climatic features of the territory. The temperature and humidity conditions, the power and direction of wind flows, the nature of the surrounding nature and landscape, the availability of local materials for construction are the conditions in which the architectural image of the building was born.

2.1. Architectural and constructive features of the Don Cossack kuren
Don Cossack Kuren is an independent phenomenon in the architecture of the Eastern Slavs’ folk dwelling. The study of the characteristic architectural and structural features of this type of building, as well as the comparative analysis with similar buildings in other regions, emphasizes its uniqueness.

Before considering the distinctive features of the Don Cossack kuren, it is necessary to give a general description of its appearance. The structure has a two-level asymmetric volume with accents on its open part. Usually, the kuren was located on the estate separately from the rest of the buildings and thus all four of its facades were visible, one of which was facing the street and was the main one, and three were the secondary ones, but each of the facades had an expressive architectural and artistic image.

2.1.1. The traditional Cossack kuren is an exceptional aesthetic example of decorating the exterior of a dwelling
The desire for traditional decoration of the facades of houses can be explained by the influence of Asian and other cultures, with which the Don Cossacks, who inhabited the Lower Don and the Azov Sea region, have long been in contact [6].

The Don Cossack Kuren, as the national dwelling of the southern Slavs, formed by the end of the 19th century was an elevated structure, square in plan, two-level with a four-slope roof. The two-level organization of volume has become one of the characteristic architectural features that distinguished it from other types of Slavic folk dwellings in the southern territories of Russia.

Each of the levels had its own specific functional organization. The lower level of the “Bottom” or basement had a stone structure and was built taking into account the average height of a person. This part of the building had a system separate from the living level, partly buried below ground level and formed as a two-chamber space with an autonomous heating system in the form of a furnace, the light openings in the walls were not large, and the door led into the courtyard of the estate, there were no internal vertical connections with the upper level arranged. Mostly the “bottoms” were intended for the household purposes and for the temporary seasonal residence in the summer.
The second level is called – “Top”, functionally performed a residential role. Unlike the “bottoms”, the “tops” were built only of wooden structures, they had three functional zones: open (galleries, verandas, balconies, porch), closed unheated (corridor, pantry), closed heated (three or four living rooms, including the kitchen-dining room). At this level, a front door was organized with a richly decorated porch with access to a roundabout gallery, as well as its own scheme for a four-gable roof with a large eaves.

In addition to the two-level organization of the house, it is also worth noting a number of features identified on the basis of the collection of field material in expeditions and its subsequent analysis. These features have become: the elevation of the ground floor high from the ground (at least 1.2 m.); asymmetric architectural design of the facades, which consists in mismatching the windows of the lower and upper levels, as well as in the façade’s placement of the main elements and in the composition of minor details; a plan close to the shape of the square, while the contour of the “tops” is significantly increased relative to the lower level due to the arrangement of developed open areas (galleries, balconies, verandas), as well as a large extension of the eaves; the slope of the four-pitched roof never exceeded 28-30°; in the traditional solution, the Don Kuren has two entrances to each residential level, regardless of the number of storeys; there are no internal vertical connections, stairs are arranged only outside; widespread use of decorative elements of the facade, decor is used in the design of cornices, pilasters, window and doorways, tympanums, various supports; on the eastern or northern facade of the Don Cossack kuren on consoles a small extension without window openings is arranged, which has an internal connection with the premises of the dwelling - “camora”, or “zakamora” [3].

The above-described features are noted only in the region of the Lower Don and the Azov Sea region; in other residential buildings of the Eastern Slavic peoples of Europe, such elements are not found.

3. Classification of the Don Cossacks’ traditional national dwelling varieties

Over a vast period of time, from 1987 to 2012, a large number of expeditions were conducted to the farms and villages of the Don region. All the material that we managed to collect, in the form of photographs, sketches, historical records and archival materials, made it possible to carry out an important part of the research work - to compile a classification of the Don Cossacks’ national dwelling varieties.

The classification is based on dividing the buildings into two enlarged groups: the first group includes all the options for the traditional folk dwelling of the Don Cossacks in the Don region, and the second group includes the traditional buildings of migrants from Central Russia, Belarus and Ukraine, who settled in the Don region and Azov in XVIII and XIX centuries.

The first group consists of ten varieties, each of which, in turn, can be assigned to the “northern” or “southern” subspecies of the Don Cossacks’ dwelling (Figure 1). The northern subspecies of the Don Cossack kuren is a characteristic of the Khopersky, Ust-Medveditsky subregions of the Don region. The southern subspecies of the Don Cossack kuren - for Taganrog-Rostov, Salsko-Manychsky, North-Donetsk, Don-1 and Don-2 districts.
Figure 1. General classification of the Don people’s dwelling

As a result of the field materials’ analysis, the following varieties of the national dwelling of the Don Cossacks were identified, relative to the first group:
Version one. The classic look of the national dwelling of the Don Cossacks. This version has been preserved in the villages and farms, as well as in the cities, as a rule, in the buildings of the XIX - early XX centuries. This type is characterized by stone “bottoms” of a two-chamber type, with windows facing two facades. “Tops” are made of wooden structures. The main entrance to the “top” of the kuren to the right or left of the axis of symmetry is covered by a canopy on two or four supports. Bypass gallery - on two or three facades. The working porch - the second entrance to the “top” of the kuren - is on an adjacent or opposite wall from the main entrance. On the eastern or northern facade there is a “chamber” on cantilevered beams with a small window. The windows of the “bottom” and “top” of the Cossack kuren do not coincide vertically. The roof is four-sloped, with a cornice overlapping a bypass gallery. The ledges of the cornice have a take-out beyond the contour of the wall up to one meter, a frieze board, the upper part of the wall, pylons, window openings, the “canopy” of the front and working porches have a traditional decor [4].

The second variant has all the classic space-planning elements of the traditional Cossack kuren. The difference from the first version is the absence of a bypass gallery replaced by a shallow veranda covered with a roof of a smoking crate, and the vertical pillars on which the roof rests are also a fencing of the veranda.

The third version has the classic space-planning elements of the Cossack kuren. We distinguish this view from the first two is a deep veranda throughout the main facade, covered by two symmetrically arranged canopies and a single-pitched canopy resting on the vertical racks.

The fourth version is characterized by the placement on the main and one of the adjacent facades with a deep angular veranda covered with a roof of a smoky resting on vertical racks. The entrance to the kuren is located on the corner veranda.

The fifth version is a universal type of housing and is found in all the lands of the former Don Army Region, especially in large villages - Konstantinovskaya, Romanovskaya, Tsimlyanskaya, etc. The difference from the previous types is that the “top” has two residential levels, in some cases a two-story veranda is attached to one of the facades under a shed roof.

The sixth version stands out with a strict square plan and has six load-bearing walls. The cross-shaped connection of vertical structures is clearly visible along the facade and the presence of medium pilasters covering the ends of the structure locks. The facades’ symmetry is violated by the free placement of the windows of the “bottoms” and a veranda is attached along one of the facades, covered by a shed roof. At the end of the veranda facing the main facade, at the “top” level, a false front door with a tympanum is arranged. The working entrance leads directly to the courtyard. The considered kuren’s version is characterized by a modest use of traditional decorative elements on the facade.

Version seven. The buildings of this version have high uninhabited stone “bottoms”, “tops” are made of wooden structures. This version is inherent in the main features of the Cossack kurens, but nevertheless there are the characteristic features, which include a modest decoration of the facades, the absence of a “kamora” and bypass galleries.

Version eight. This version includes kurens, built primarily from the beginning of the 20th century. During this period, the high inhabited stone “bottoms” ceased to be erected, they were replaced by a stone underground. Kuren lost its special characteristic appearance and the bottom row of the window openings. A bypass gallery is not arranged, as there are no “bottoms”, and as a result the structural scheme of the roof is simplified, but two entrances to the kuren-house, traditional decorative elements on the ledges are preserved.
Version nine. Such buildings were recorded only in the Azov and Lower Don subregions, there are traditional elements of the Don Cossack kuren, but at the same time there is a clear influence of the adjacent cultures.

Version ten. The constructions of this version were recorded during expeditions in the regions of the Lower Don and Khopr. It differs from other varieties by the absence of a traditional lower level and the presence of a large closed unheated winter veranda, arranged on the columnar stone or wooden supports, from which the two traditional entrances to the residential part of the smoking area are built. All the decorative elements inherent in the architecture of the Don Cossacks are fully used in the facades’ decoration. These buildings were recorded in the historical settlements of the Don Cossacks in the Great Bend of the Don. This version of kurens is attributed to the northern version of the Cossack people’s dwelling.

The classification of the second group includes six varieties.

The buildings of the first version in the region were called “dugouts”, this is due to the fact that they had an earthen rammed floor. The buildings themselves were relatively small with no base and no extra space, using clay as a building material and covered with reeds. Decorative facade characteristic elements of traditional Cossack dwellings are absent. Such structures are recorded in the southern and western parts of the Don region and belong mainly to Ukrainian immigrants.

The second version includes the wooden structures on a high stone base. Not very large in plan, covered by a gable roof. The internal space of a dwelling of this type is divided into two or three rooms. Decorative elements on the facades of such buildings, as a rule, are absent. The buildings of this type are noted in the northern and eastern territories of the region and belong to immigrants from the central Russia provinces.

Version three. Buildings of this type are significant in size wooden houses on a low stone base. In shape, they are close to the “connected” huts common for the northern region. Such buildings are noted in the extreme northern regions of the Lower Don, where immigrants from the central territories of Russia lived. Buildings of this type have a decor typical for Don Cossack kurens.

Version Four. The houses of the indigenous mixed population living in the extreme western lands of the Don Army in the Don Delta and in the Azov Sea. This type of buildings is distinguished by an elongated plan, oriented with a narrow side to the street, without the “bottoms” traditional for the Cossack kuren. Instead of a bypass gallery, on one or two sides of such a building, a far-hanging coating edge, based on wooden racks, is marked. There are no elements of traditional decor, like in the Cossack kurens on the windows and above the front doors.

Version five. The dwelling of the indigenous population of the Upper Don, not related to the Don Cossacks. This type of residential building has an almost square plan, similar to the Don Cossack kuren, but it does not have a lower floor, bypass galleries, terraces or verandas. Architectural decor is much poorer or even absent on the facades of such buildings. The interior space of such a dwelling formally resembles a Don Cossack kuren by planning features.

Version six. The houses of Armenian immigrants from Crimea, transported to the Don during Catherine II reign at the end of the XVIII century. The Armenian ethnos transferred the traditional type of dwelling to a new place of settlement, which it retained in the subsequent XIX and XX centuries [5]. The main feature of this species is the adjoining to the residential part of the house from the courtyard of the utility rooms’ entire complex and the construction of a high fence, at least from the street.

Summary
As it can be seen from a comparative analysis of various types of folk dwellings in Eastern Europe, Don Kuren occupies its own place in this series and has the right to become a separate species range with its own space-planning and design features.

As a result of the general folk architecture development assessment in the study region we consider the formation of the species series of the people’s dwelling and their varieties to have been completed by the beginning of the 20th century. The study of this process led to the conclusion that in the public housing development, such factors as autochthony and cultural influences, as well as the direct cultural borrowings are in optimal relationships, not destroying, but complementing each other. In the architecture of the people’s dwelling, functional, aesthetic, engineering-structural and spiritual principles reach the peak of the dialectical unity of form and content and make these buildings a valuable legacy of the entire Slavic ethnic group.

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