ARMENIAN ARCHITECTURE OF INDEPENDENCE PERIOD: GENERAL GLANCE AT HOTELS AND CENTERS FOR TOURISTIC ENTERTAINMENT

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The Armenian Architecture of today used to be called Architecture of Independence or Architecture of the Post-Soviet Period. The architecture in the country recorded many changes either in building type developments or in styles, images and technologies. Very notable are the changes in commercial architecture, due to economic strategies of world communication and transfers, as well as touristic attitudes. The defined impetus is manifest in the case of hotels, transportation buildings and their infrastructures, places for entertainment and other services. However, hotel structures and their services today have noticeably changed for the better as compared with the Soviet period Armenian Architecture of 1920–1991. Actually, this issue deserves a detailed analysis to enable the control of future attitudes. With regard to the Armenian contemporary architecture issues, very urgent are the classification of the hotel buildings and systematization of their main architectural features.

Soviet Armenian hotels were distinguished by their architectural monumentality and middle-capacity of service amenities. Such were the hotels, sanatoriums and resorts spread throughout Armenia which functioned until recently. In general, brands and network of hotels of large capacities were

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2 Such buildings are the following renowned establishments: Hotel Intourist (1928, arch. N. Buniatyan), Sevan in Yerevan (1930, arch. N. Buniatyan), Writers’ Vacation House on
typical of the period. However, these huge complexes and mega-structures have not been renowned yet. It is worth mentioning that the divergent hotel designs resembled those built for the 1980 Olympic games in Moscow and other great cities such as Leningrad, Tallin, Minsk, Kiev and cities in other capitals of the former USSR, Armenia included. Apart from the Olympic villages in Moscow and Tallin, ten “Grand” hotels were constructed in Moscow: Izmaylovo (one of the largest hotels in the world then), Luxury Kosmos, Sevastopol, Salut, Vesna, Dom Turista, Sport, Soyuz, Bitsssevsky Lesopark, Pribaltiyskaya, NA and Pulkovskaya in Leningrad, as well as the Rus and the Olympic in Kiev and Tallin. The mentioned hotels had upgraded the Soviet practice in accordance to the world standards, and this had an indirect effect on hotel building in Armenia as well.

Theoretically, contemporary hotel building practice in the world shows that hotels are very different in capacity. Regarding the case of Armenia, we have focused on average four and five-star rating hotels, including sanatoriums, sport centers, motels, touristic hotels in particular. The touristic hotels are usually classified into hostels, apartments and usual hotels which have compositions of blocked, angular, courtyard types and cottage system arrangements. The mentioned instances are varied according to the number of floors included – from a single-storey to a low-rise, multistorey and high-rise structures.

Hotels in contemporary architecture are temporary residences. The buildings that house them must provide hospitable spaces that can tolerate considerable turnover of users. Thus, apart from addressing particular functional requirements of each project, the design will need to make flexible use of space to meet the

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3 See USSR: Olympic Games preparations, an intelligence assessment of 7 December 1979.

needs of many different customers. Contemporary hotels, besides presenting monumental buildings, are also different size flexible temporary residences, such as student dormitories and guest-houses. Although the mentioned types vary regarding location and use, all of them have something in common: they succeed in creating a pleasant environment in a robust building. The present study shows that from the viewpoint of world architecture, they actually correspond to the category of hotels, being not only luxury shelters, but also buildings, which convey social and cultural messages.

Hotels in Armenia today are very different, too. There are around 1122 registered hotels, which are mainly apartments and hostels. 400 of them are located in the capital city Yerevan. The present survey will cover hotels inherited from the Soviet period, and newly built ones, as well as hostels, apartments of different types. The latter will be presented separately.

A) ARMENIAN HOTELS INHERITED FROM THE SOVIET PERIOD (Fig. 1).

The independence period created its new attitudes to hotel architecture. However, the start was marked with upgrading the existing traditions, i.e. modernizing the hotels of the Soviet period. Actually all the old hotels were revitalized and regenerated according to the new conditions. The former hotel “Armenia” transformed into “Marriott” without any change of external image. Main changes include adding new premises to the old building, remodelling all

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6 Vistiros’ Center in Yushara (arch. Kengo Kuma, 1994) is a restaurant and a hotel with Western-style and Oriental-style bedrooms. It is for a more romantic style of living. Another example is Hotel Kempinski (arch. Helmut Jahn, 1996) – a flexible space adjacent to the airport. Hotel Paramount in New York (arch. Philip Stark, 1990) includes bedrooms and 2 restaurants, an elegant club, a gymnasium, a creche space, areas for shops and exhibitions, and even a small cinema. A typical example of contemporary life is Cooper Union Residence in New York which includes student residence dormitories, a meeting room and many services. Different aspects of modern life are displayed in S.Maria de Bouro Hotel (arch. Eduardo de Moura and Humberto Vicent, 1989). The purpose of this project was to make use of the stones available from a ruin beside a monument. Hotel Il Palazzo in Fukuoka (arch. Aldo Rossi, 1986) was built with the objective of changing the general perception of a hotel, to be socially, culturally, and intellectually functional rather than merely providing accommodation.
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interior spaces and services, according to the UNESCO convention priorities. The case is the same for hotels Ani Plaza, Intourist or modern Golden Tulip, Hrazdan hotel in Hrazdan Valley near Yerevan, Jermuk Armenia, Hotel (Drinking Natural Jermuk Gallery), Mountainous Armenia sanatorium in Dilijan, Writers’ Vacation House in Sevan (on the island), Writers’ House in Tsakhkadzor, etc.

There have also been violations of international standards of hotel building: demolition of the hotel Sevan at the heart of Yerevan. The building was worth protecting since it was built in 1923 and used to be the heritage of Yerevan’s first chief architect. The case is more sensitive for the demolished Youth Palace (arch.-s A. Tarkhanyan, H. Poghosyan, S. Khachikyan and M. Zakaryan) in Yerevan. Although this complex was a monument of Soviet architecture of the 1980s, it was declared non-functioning in 2005, and then a competition under the auspices of UIA (Union of International Architects) was under way to construct a new building in its place. This project did not work because of the sponsor’s bankruptcy. It is an unfortunate fact that the complex of the Youth Palace was demolished and has not been rebuilt so far.

Among the inherited hotels, we have included the sanatoriums mentioned above, as well as the reuse or architectural adaptations of ancient buildings for hotel purposes. A typical example of this are the recently opened traditional hotel in Gyumri, hotel Caucasus and four other hotels of Tufenkian network named “Armenian Heritage Hotels”.

1. The Historic Yerevan Hotel, in the main Avenue, has been transformed from an old XIX century mansion according to the eclectic style of neoclassicism. Featuring traditional Armenian restaurant and café, an outdoor pool and conference facilities, the hotel offers 83 stylish rooms. The interior of the hotel is designed by handcrafted décor elements and luxurious

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7 The problem reflected in many literary works by Masters of Modern Architecture from 20th century and in World Conventions include the following publications: UNESCO, Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, ICOMOS Publication, Paris, 1987. C. Grodach, R. Ehrenfeucht, Urban Revitalization: Remaking cities in a changing world, Routledge, 2015, etc.

8 For more details of the last building see: https://slobodneveze.wordpress.com/2014/11/05/naben-arevshayan-conflicting-modernities/

9 For more details see: https://www.emporis.com/buildings/226371/yerevan-youth-palace-yerevan-armenia

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furnishing. The warm and inviting atmosphere of Kharpert restaurant provides a unique recall of ancient Armenian tradition.

2. The Avan-Marak-Tsapatagh hotel has nestled in a most tranquil village near lake Sevan. It is a perfect site where visitors can enjoy breathtaking views of the world’s largest high-elevation lake. The hotel offers a range of on-site recreational facilities, loft bedrooms, the traditional restaurant Zanazan. The outdoor dining patio overlooks the sparkling panorama of lake Sevan. All the complex is a revival of a style from late medieval architecture.

3. The Tufenkian Avan-Dzoraget hotel sits along Debed river, between forest-covered hills and rocky slopes of the Caucasus mountains. The hotel has 54 spacious rooms of different types. The restaurant has the option to dine in the opulent atmosphere on the open terrace overlooking the rushing Debed river. The center presents a typical historical tradition from the XIX century vernacular architecture.

4. The Tufenkian Old Dilijan Complex is a travel centre in time and experience of the XIX century Dilijan in native luxury. Comfortable guestrooms feature intricately detailed handmade chandeliers. The guesthouse offers two suits and 12 guest rooms. The suits are filled with beautiful, intricate woodwork (from furniture to balcony hand-rails), other architectural details, care and craftsmanship, antique wardrobes, hand-woven carpets, etc. The restaurant Haykanoush, is designed traditionally, considering the inspiring XIX century elements of the Armenian architecture.

**B) NEWLY BUILT HOTELS IN ARMENIA**

There are not more than twenty five-star, sixty four-star and many three-star rating hotels in Armenia today. Actually, the rating of the hotels does not include any architectural indication. The rating is for the comfortable functions included in the hotels and nothing more. The study of the hotels includes the following compositional values:

**High-rise and multi-storeyed hotels**

This type of hotels are within the area of the city.
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Usually housed within the limits of a single building or accommodated on an individual site including a bedroom apartment and adjacent services, such as restaurants, taverns, spas, private spaces, etc.\textsuperscript{10} This type of hotels are notable for their architecture. We have included only the following two examples.

1. **Radisson BLU hotel (fig. 2)**

Having a superior hilltop overlooking Yerevan, the ensemble is beautifully positioned by the Victory Park and Lake Areni. The Radisson complex offers five-star accommodation on the upscale Azatutyun Avenue. Magnificent hilltop setting provides awesome views of the city center against the backdrop of Mount Ararat and delivers a resort feel with proximity to businesses and embassies. Guests can walk to attractions in the Cascade Complex and the Charles Aznavour House Museum or easily board the bus or train to reach other destinations. In addition to its breathtaking location, the hotel features 142 rooms and suites housed in an eye-catching stone and glass architecture. Armenian design and soothing colors gorgeously fill each room. Magnificent views from every room and from two on-site restaurants offer lovely outdoor dining areas to maximize access to the surrounding scenery. Other amenities include two on-site bars, laundry services, a spa and a fitness center with a pool. The hotel also offers six aesthetic meeting rooms perfect for business or social gatherings of up to 200 delegates. The composition of the hotel is a nave type design at the core which stretches to the covered entrance and parking lots around. The architecture is modern in sense, colorfully harmonizing the city panorama and woody environment. The volumetric solution is in the rational style of architecture.

2. **The Caucasus complex of Hotel-Restaurant-Tavern-Spa on Ashtarak Highway (fig. 3)**

The Caucasus Hotel is conceived in Organic Architecture approach. The composition centers around mounts Ararat and Aragats on both sides of the area. The hotel complex is first and foremost intended to objectify the centuries-old traditions of the hospitality of the Caucasians, particularly the Armenian people. The 46 rooms constructed in a boutique style, symbolize

Armenia in their details, the entire palette of furnishings, design, and used materials. Suffice it to say that as in the case of the restaurant complexes, here, too, only natural construction materials have been used: stone, boulder, brick, clay, iron, wood, canvas, bamboo, straw, and natural leather. The chandeliers, lamps, balusters, even the doorknobs are the work of a smith. As a matter of fact, Armenian stone has exclusively been used. And the bar-café bearing the name of Rubinians from medieval Cilicia promotes more meaningful interactions. The rooms include “standard”, “deluxe”, and “luxe” presidential types. The swimming pool, fitness and massage rooms are auxiliary with the hotel building. The meeting hall is additional for appropriate undertakings and is equipped with luxurious and modern amenities. It is ready to accommodate discussions, conferences, and meetings of business, scientific, and other format. The restaurant is connected to Vahagn neighborhood and the motel complex is to the west. The hotel complex includes a large parking area. To the south of it are the hotel and the restaurant buildings. They are both placed successively to the right and left of a road leading to the conference halls, as well as to private cottages at the far south-east. The conference and restaurant halls include different capacities such as\textsuperscript{11}.

- The Artaxiad Hall (330 seats) is built in the amphitheater image, and that is not accidental. During the reign of King Artavazd B (56–34 BCE) a theater of Hellenistic style had been created in Armenia’s northern capital Artashat. According to historical sources, a theater troupe under the leadership of tragedian and comedian Yazon had performed here. In 53 BC, the tragedy \textit{Bacchae} by Euripides was staged. The hall is very interesting with its interior because an intriguing waterfall is built in the hall. It grants an unusual calmness, while in the evening guests can dance and have fun under cheerful music and lights.

- The Arsacid hall (550 seats) stands out from the other halls with its splendor and exquisite style, where one can celebrate merriments under the illumination of luxurious chandeliers and around gorgeous tables. In this hall, the Armenian royal style has been recreated to the fullest. The design of the hall is such that it creates interesting pairings in historical Armenia, particularly with festivities and wedding ceremonies in the time-period of

\textsuperscript{11} The information about the halls is from the internet site of the hotel.

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the Arsacid kingdom which is testified in the works of Armenian historians of the 5th century.

- The Bagratuni hall (50 seats) is classical, exceptionally beautiful, and bright. The style of the hall is in harmony with the spirit of medieval Armenian revival and that is not accidental. It was precisely in the time-period of the Bagratuni rule that Armenian culture had a new ascent, and several centuries before the Europeans, gave samples of Renaissance culture to the world. The stylistic and architectural nuances of Ani, the capital of the Bagratids, have a unique place in the design of the hall.

- The beautiful Orontid Hall (60 seats) is decorated with historical paintings and gorgeous chandeliers, which while having a modern style, at the same time ensure a unique feeling of historicity. This hall is an ideal place for organizing small gatherings with friends or relatives. The interior obliges one to forget daily troubles and rest a little in this beautiful hall with a marvelous and interesting scenery.

- The Tavern, with its style and internal furnishings is in extreme harmony with the general spirit of the Caucasus restaurant complex. Here the Caucasian elements are underscored at most. It is in the style of taverns and inns of the end of the XIX and the beginning of the XX centuries, starting from chairs and tables, and ending with the chinaware and various accessories.

Most hotels in Armenia are within the texture of the cities, where they are usually collected in one building. The indicated buildings are somehow of the high multi-storeyed type, i.e. the number of the floors rarely surpasses 12 storeys. The center of Yerevan is full of hotels of the mentioned type, such as: Grand Hotel Yerevan between Abovian street and North Avenue, North Hotel in the same avenue, Opera Suit Hotel in Baghramyan street, Best Western Congress Hotel in Shahumyan square, Paris Hotel, National Hotel, Hyatt Place Yerevan, Republican Hotel, Diamond House Hotel, La Piazza Hotel in North Avenue, Double Tree Hilton Hotel, Alley Residence Hotel of Komitas. High-rise new buildings may have three or four-star ratings: Family Hotel in the main avenue, Ibis Yerevan Center Hotel. Other examples are Ararat Resort Hotel and Apartment Mori Plaza in Tsakhkadzor, Shoushi Hotel Armenia, etc.
The distinguished style of the demonstrated type is evident in Double Tree Hilton Hotel in Yerevan (fig. 4). The building is conveniently located in the heart of Armenia’s capital Yerevan. It features 176 comfortable guest rooms, the Gold restaurant, a large hall with seats for up to 250 guests. The latter is ideal for a number of business events and gala dinners, as well as small get-togethers in a meeting room with all the necessary conference technology. All are arranged within a 10-storeyed building designed in a precast modulation method. The volumetric solution holds between two curvilinear facades. The one looking towards the south has a plastically featured entrance and a glass modulated surface. The opposite side is enforced by sector-like arranged columns. The exterior and interior are in modern style. Through its architectural properties and regularities the building creates an outstanding and distinguished scale at the environment of Yerevan down-town.

a. Multi-storeyed hotels have 5–6 storey-high examples. This type resembles the former type in architectural properties, only differing by the number of the floors. Here are some notable examples of the type in Yerevan: Avia trans, Bass Boutique Hotel, Imperial palace, Hotel Shirak, Metropole Hotel in Panorama Hotel, Kantar hotel, Royal Palace Hotel, Hotel Silachi, Moscow House Hotel. Here are some notable examples from other cities in Armenia: Mariott Stepanakert, Hyatt Regency Jermuk, Elegant Hotel, Golden Palace Hotel and SPA in Tsakhkadzor.

A distinguished example of the mentioned type is Elegant Hotel in Tsakhkadzor (Fig. 5). Featuring a panoramic view of the Tsaghkadzor Valley, the Elegant Hotel & Resort offers a restaurant, a bar and a terrace. After a long day of hiking or skiing, guests can relax. The complex provides a five-storeyed apartment and a private villa type guestroom gathering around a long courtyard. Parking is available all around. The complex is very convenient and architecturally harmonious with the surrounding landscape. The style adopted is rational by wonderful modern interiors varied in every individual building.

b. Low-rise hotels are harmonious within the scale of the Armenian cities. They are expressive and modern at the same time. Having a variety of styles, they are distinguished by interior solutions. Actually, the compositional solutions and images achieved are in relation both to external and internal design layouts. Such examples from Yerevan include the
following hotels: Latar Hotel complex, Europe hotel on Republican street, Minotel Barsam hotel in Mher Mkrtchyan street, Hotel Roma, Ibiza Hotel at Yerevan Kanaker Zeytoun district, Deluxe hotel Yerevan, Yerevan Palazzo Hotel, Bellagio complex on the highway leading to Norki Massive district, Sochi Palace hotel in Jrvezh village near Yerevan, etc. Some examples of the type from other cities are: Hotel Russia and Marriott Hotel in Tsakhkadzor, Multi-Rest House, Dzaghkahovit Hotel, Jupiter Hotel, University Dormitory Hotel, Kecharis Hotel. Other examples are: Shoushi Grand Hotel and Gandzasar Hotel in Gharabagh, Syunik Hotel in Kapan, Hotel Ani in Jermuk, etc.

All the mentioned examples of the type have distinguished architectural features. Here the **Hyatt Place in Jermuk (Fig. 6)** can be introduced. As has been described, Hyatt Place is a tasteful hotel in green paradise. The complex consists of a lobby between two triumphal arch-like entrances. On the left and right of it are bedrooms in a four-storeyed winged composition. Incredible harmony dominates the placement. A glass surface at the core is embraced by nicely fitted arches composing the datum of the main facades, multi-storeyed wings truncated by regularly arranged balconies and rectangular windows emerging in the surrounding nature, an arcaded multi-storeyed row of galleries at the back. All are fantastically located in the heart of green mountains. The interiors are like modern realms of romanticism as is the style of the building on the whole, national romanticism in the sense of Armenian medieval motivations.

A new approach to modern design is noticed in **Gandzasar Hotel (Fig. 7)**. The building is conceived as an amphitheater and a two-storeyed hotel, including a restaurant on the first floor. The complex is a commercial type of tourism entertainment. Actually, the hotel part is a boatel shape colorful composition. The interior of the restaurant has an antique content by atlantes of bearing supports on the perimeter. The amphitheater is a free style open design created by light elements.

c. A special type of the low-rise hotels are **the courtyard type hotels (Fig. 8)**. Some good examples of them are: Areg Hotel in Yerevan center, Panorama Yerevan Resort in Nork Marash district, Diana Hotel in Goris. Some other remarkable instances are in Tsakhkadzor, such as Park Village
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Hotel and Resort, Splendor Resort and Restaurnt, BestWestern Alva Hotel and SPA, etc.

C) HOSTELS AND APARTMENTS (Fig. 9, 10).

This group includes private sector hotels in Armenia. They are the reflection of the social conditions and a living means for limited income population nowadays. They range from single-family capacity flats to villas, apartments, row of rooms, or cottage arrangement complexes. All the services are covered by private means. As experience shows, these hostels in addition to reasonable charges, are very clean and have high quality personal amenities and services. They are great in number and we do not intend to present them separately. There is a list of them provided by touristic internet sites\textsuperscript{12}. The following are some examples: Yerevan Hostel, Apricot House in Ashtarak, Hostel glide, No Problem Hotel in Glinka street in Yerevan, SD hotel, La Vacanza Hostel, Grammy Hostel, House Abel Aria Hostel, Villa Casas di Maria in Tsakhkadzor, Family Resort in Teghensis village, Yeghevnut hostel in Goris, Christy Goris, Jermuk Villa Imperial and Resort MJ\textsc{a} in Sisian, etc.

It is worth mentioning that within this class of hotels are included many motels and campings of different capacity on the leading highways in Armenia. Such are: Valensia resort of Aqua marina Yerevan, Cross Resort Hotel Kasakh - Ashtarak, Multi Grand Pharaon Hotel Yerevan, Valetta camping in Tsakhkadzor, etc.

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Contemporary architecture or the Architecture of the Independence period is expressed generously in the context of Armenian Architecture, it is even possible to compare it with Medieval and Soviet eras of Armenian culture. Although the stylistic and architectural image problems are not consolidated yet, the created enormous heritage can be figured out. Besides 200 inherited hotels, there are more than 900 newly constructed individual buildings and complexes. Architecturally, very urgent is their classification and systematization. As the present study reveals, the creative principles of the hotels are not only typological, but also social and cultural. Typologically

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\textsuperscript{12} See the result of Keyword at My Way Google: “hostels in Armenia”.

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hotels in Armenia are mainly of middle rating varieties. In average they are not more than 200 client capacity. Five-star rating hotels in Armenia are almost 20. The majority are hotels of four-star rating. There are no Renowned Grand Hotels of contemporary architecture in Armenia such as Las Vegas Hotels or Marina Bay Sands of Singapore. Moreover, the existence of mega hotels from contemporary world practice of Dubai, China, Saudi Arabia, Far Eastern countries, etc. is out of question. The social aspect of hotels in Armenia is expressed in the hostels spread throughout the country. Presenting a suitable way of hotel services in Armenia, they offer highly qualified services, and have appropriate demand from tourists visiting Armenia. The cultural aspect of the hotels in Armenia is expressed in “heritage hotels.” Besides being in origin of Arts & Crafts descent, they are new in Armenian practice, good enough for vernacular architecture of Contemporary era. In fact they present the sustainable philosophy in contemporary Armenian architecture. Examples of this type are the Tufenkian network of modern hotels in Armenia, Caucasus Hotel and many others.

The stylistic interests in the Independence period of Armenian architecture in hotel building have not consolidated yet. It is notable that the inherited Soviet period instances are protected by their exterior solutions and modernized by interior designs. They even have stylistic dissonance in external and internal notions. The new hotel building has good examples of national style of romanticism (Hyatt Regency Hotel in Jermuk, Marriot of Stepanakert, The Imperial and Paris Hotels in Yerevan, Latar Complex, etc.). There are few examples of the Post Modern tendency, such as Western Congress Hotel and Ibis Hotel in Yerevan. The Caucasus Hotel Restaurant and Venezia Entertainment have traditional expressionistic style, others are of rationalistic taste (North hotel in North Avenue, Opera suit hotel in Yerevan, Double Tree Hilton Hotel Yerevan, etc.). The Tufenkian network hotels are intended to adapt national revival design approach being fine enough for uncial expressions of world architectural practice.
Fig. 1 Grand Yerevan Hotel or Golden Tulip Armenia

Fig. 2 Radisson Hotel Complex in Yerevan

Fig. 3 Hotel Building of Caucasus Complex on Ashqarik Highway

Fig. 4 Double Tree Hilton Hotel in Yerevan
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Fig. 5 Elegant Hotel Complex in Tsakhkadzor.
Fig. 6 Hyatt Place Hotel in Jermuk.

Fig. 7 Gandzash Hotel in Gharchugh
Fig. 8 Courtyard Type Hotel Tsakhkadzor

Fig. 9 Hostel Type Hotels.
Fig. 10 Camping Type Hotel in Vicinity of Yerevan
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АРМЯНСКАЯ АРХИТЕКТУРА ПЕРИОДА НЕЗАВИСИМОСТИ: ГОСТИНИЦЫ И ЦЕНТРЫ ТУРИСТИЧЕСКОГО ОБСЛУЖИВАНИЯ

КЕРТМЕНДЖЯН Д.

Резюме

В современной Армении с большим размахом развивается строительство гостиниц и объектов сферы обслуживания. Наряду с реконструкцией архитектурного наследия советского периода построено около 900 новых отелей, 400 из которых находятся в Ереване. Типологически в Армении
получили распространение гостиницы со средним уровнем обслуживания. В основном преобладают четырехзвездочные отели. Пятизвездочных гостиниц не больше двух десятков. В архитектурном плане, независимо от времени создания, гостиницы не имеют стилистической цельности. В оформлении интерьеров наблюдается тенденция придерживаться системы современного международного дизайна. В этом смысле исключение составляет гостиничная сеть Туфенкян, являющаяся отражением новых веяний периода независимости. Ряд гостиниц в Армении построены в стиле романтизма, постмодерна и рационализма, но с неизменным армяńskим архитектурным акцентом.