

## ANCIENT ARK

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Kokhna ark is an ancient fortress of Khiva, one of the khan's palaces in "Ikhon fortress". The history of the castle is closely related to the history of the city of Khiva. This architectural monument complex in Khiva was built between the 17th and mid-19th centuries. Ichan is located in the western part of the castle. The buildings in the Old Ark were built mainly by the master poet Mavlano Vafai in the 17th century during the reign of Arang Khan, the son of Anosha Khan. It was restored and repaired in 1804-1806. The Old Ark is divided into four courtyards and is surrounded by a high thatched wall. From the gate on the east side, go to the corridor on the right side, through which you will go to the palace mosque and the khan's mint. The Haramkhana is in the north of the arch, in the western part of the viewing hall, in the middle is the shrine of Grandfather Ak Sheikh. On the left side of the gate were the rooms where the khan's servants lived, a storehouse and stables.

In the arch, the remains of the coffin named Akshaikhbobo have been preserved. A city gradually appeared around Koshk. The palaces of the last Khans of Khiva were also built here. The history of the fortress can be called the history of the city of Khiva. Only a few buildings from the 19th century have been preserved in the area of the arch, which was surrounded by a fortress wall made of raw bricks. But the ancient arch was like a special city within the city. There were houses for the khan and his family and officials in the ark.

In addition to the buildings of the viewing room (reception), mint, summer mosque and harem, the former armory, ammunition workshop and ammunition warehouse, offices for the khan's relatives and officials, kitchen, stable, dungeon and a special area for fighting rams have been preserved in the arch.

The term Old Ark was used in the city in 1832-1838 when another such palace - Taskhovli was built. Rows of rooms are connected, and a courtyard is formed in the middle. There are special corridors to pass between the courtyards.

An ambassador who entered the reception hall of Muhammad Rahim Khan in the old Ark reported that he had to walk three yards from the palace gate to the gallery. The gate of the arch is similar to the "Polvon" gate in the city.

There was a domed lantern above the towers of the gate. A row of small arches was connected to the wall of the castle on the side.

It is difficult to think about the structure of the ruined room in the arch. However, the preserved observatory, summer and winter mosques, mint (treasury) and harem buildings give a partial idea of the palaces of the first khans from the Kungirat dynasty.

The exterior of the palace buildings does not attract much attention. Because in the past, these buildings were connected to other buildings, so the facade was blocked. The artistic architectural features and advantages of the buildings can be seen from the courtyards. "Zarbkhona" located in the area of Kokhna Ark was built during the reign of Muhammad Rahim Khan I. It consists of three vaulted rooms. The rooms of the mint are made of baked bricks, and the roof is covered with a balkh dome.

Also, the Old Ark complex has a "Mosque" and a number of rooms located around the courtyard. The porch in the south of the courtyard was built facing north. The walls are decorated with colorful rivets. Its ceiling is supported by 6 columns in two rows. The top of the column is decorated with eyebrows, and the column is decorated with marble seats.

"Korinishkhana" located in the complex, i.e. the khan's reception hall, was built during the reign of Arang Khan. Its current appearance was built by Eltuzar Khan. Decorations of Koshingori are characteristic of the reign of Ollokuli Khan. In the south of the courtyard, a high porch facing north and flower beds on both sides are decorated with tiles and rivets. At the back of the porch is the hall of the khan - the room where the throne stands. The walls of the room are decorated with ganchkori patterns. From the door on the left side to the courtyard. There is a corridor that connects the storeroom, stables and servants' quarters with the gallery, and a small room on the right side of it leads to the second floor through a staircase. On the western side of the courtyard, there were two-story rooms. The rooms in the north were built in the European style at the beginning of the 20th century. A tent was erected on a circular brick platform in the middle of the courtyard, where the khan received ambassadors.

The high porch with two large columns stands out. Ceremonial official receptions were held on this porch, state affairs were resolved. That's why the porch is beautiful and luxurious. The one-pillar porches in the harem are more compact, simple, typical of residential architecture, and not as luxurious as in the khan's lobby. The mihrab and minbar in the wide porch with many columns show that the building is a summer mosque.

In addition to the porch and the adjacent hall, there were a number of rooms adjacent to the courtyard from the west. This semi-dark double-storey room housed the treasury, library and the khan's resting place.

A small room to the east of the porch served as a corridor leading to the courtyard, the walls of the courtyard have been partially restored, but the walls were not decorated as they are now. That's why, against the background of inconspicuous brick walls, the colorful decoration of the porch, like a carpet, is clearly visible and quickly attracts attention. The surface of the wall is covered with glazed rivets depicting various plant and geometric shapes. The lacquered decoration of the wall, consisting of blue, white, and blue colors, contrasts sharply with the bright golden paint patterns on the porch ceiling. The porch and the summer mosque in the old Ark were built anew during the time of Ollokuli Khan (1825-1842). It is said that the glazed decorations on the porch also belong to this period. That's why the patterns and color structure of the summer mosque and the gazebo are similar to each other.

On the walls of the throne room, we can see the art of local carving. In terms of artistry, this carving is far inferior to the glazed rivet covers on the porch. The khan's throne stood under a decorative dome at the far end of the long hall. This simple throne is made of wood and covered with silver.

The summer and winter mosques and the mint were built at the same time as a single building. The courtyard of the mosque is not very big. It is surrounded by vaulted rooms. Coins were minted here.

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