

ARCHITECTURE

Central Asian Architectural History

Many groups and societies influenced the area of Tajikistan. For more than 2500 years the Persians, considered by many Tajiks to be their ancestors, influenced Tajik language, art and architecture.



Fig.16 United Nations Map of Tajikistan and Surrounding Countries

UN Website

Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, China and Afghanistan surround Tajikistan today.

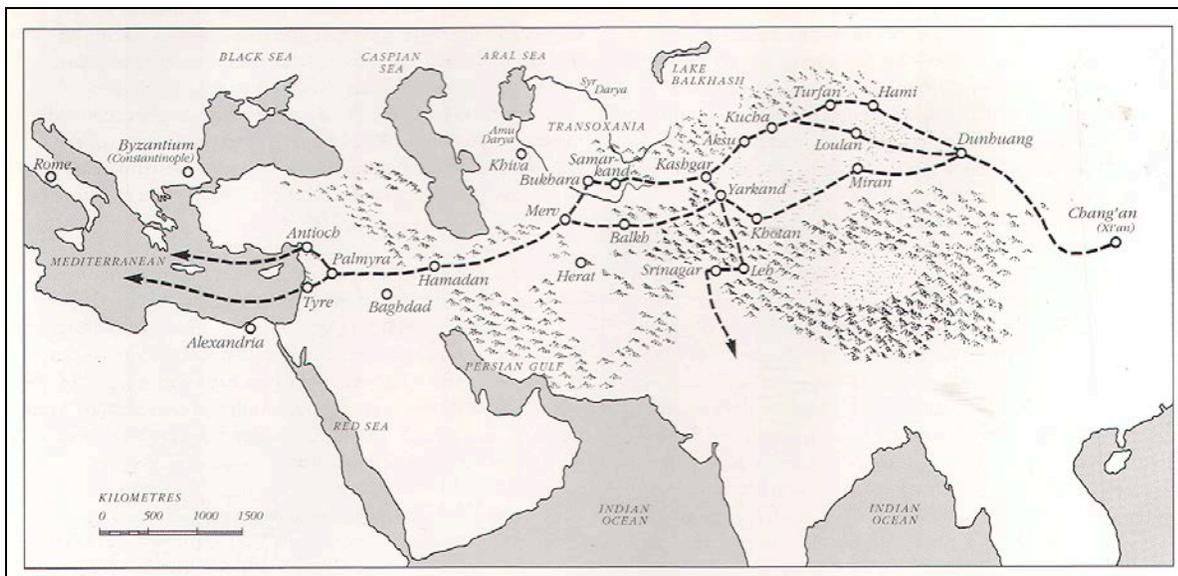


Fig.17 Map of Silk Route from Xian to theMediterranean

UZBEKISTAN, Heirs to the Silk Road

For 1200 years goods and ideas moved along the Silk Road through the cities of Bukhara and Samarkand which are northwest of Dushanbe. Cultural influences from the traders were felt throughout Central Asia.

Throughout history Tajikistan was the cross roads of many cultures. Alexander the Greek conquered the region in early 327/8 BC leaving Greek influences on Central Asia, and for twelve hundred years traders and explorers like Marco Polo traveled along China's Silk Road (200BC-1400AD) interacting with the populations along the route bringing Eastern ideas and artistic influences to the area.

In the eighth century AD, Arabs conquered Central Asia, which today includes Tajikistan. They brought Islam to the Persians, including the artistic emphasis on geometric and natural forms and prohibiting the representation of the human form.

Continuing through the end of the sixteenth century, various other groups including Turks, Mongols, Uzbeks, and Kazakhs ruled the area that is Tajikistan today. In the more recent past, from the mid-nineteenth century on, the Russian Empire and later the Soviet Union, controlled the region. During the Soviet Period, Tajikistan was called the Tajik Republic of the USSR.

In September 1991, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, Tajikistan became an independent republic. A civil war followed (1992 to 1997) ending with a power sharing agreement by various political factions.

The tradition of taking tea, resting and exchanging information and news has a very long history, going back to the caravanserai that were located about a days journey apart along the Silk Road. This route linked China to the Mediterranean, from Xian, China, through Central Asia to Palmyra, Syria, finally ending at Antioch, Syria, and Tyre, Lebanon. The caravanserai provided traders and travelers with a safe and hospitable place to break their journey and feed and rest themselves and their animals. They were usually a square or rectangle shaped collection of buildings and often grew to be towns or cities.

Caravanserai are discussed as early as the 5th Century BC by Herodotus, the world's first historian, in "The History:"

*"Now the true account of the road in question is the following: Royal stations exist along its whole length, and excellent caravanserais; and throughout, it traverses an inhabited tract, and is free from danger."*⁵³

And they are romantically described in the Rubiyat of Omar Khayyam:

*" Think, in this batter'd Caravanserai
Whose Portals are alternate Night and Day,
How Sultan after Sultan with his Pomp
Abode his destined Hour, and went his way"*⁵⁴

The ancient cities of Bukhara and Samarkand, although now part of Uzbekistan, were originally caravanserai stops along the Silk Route which became very large and important cities. They were and still are inhabited by many people who are ethnically Tajik, although they are located about 200km northwest of Dushanbe.

Early buildings found in those cities influenced the massing, materials and design elements found in Central Asian architecture. The pure square and/or rectilinear forms with domes and vertical elements of towers, columns as well as the decorated surfaces, abstract geometric patterns, arched entries, and corbelled friezes found in the early buildings as seen below continue to be architectural features today and are seen in the Boulder-Dushanbe Teahouse.

⁵³ [The History](#), Herodotus, 450 B.C.

⁵⁴ [The Rubiyat of Omar Khayyam](#), Edward FitzGerald, 1859, Stanza17



Fig.18 Bukhara, Mausoleum of the Samanids (early 10th c.),

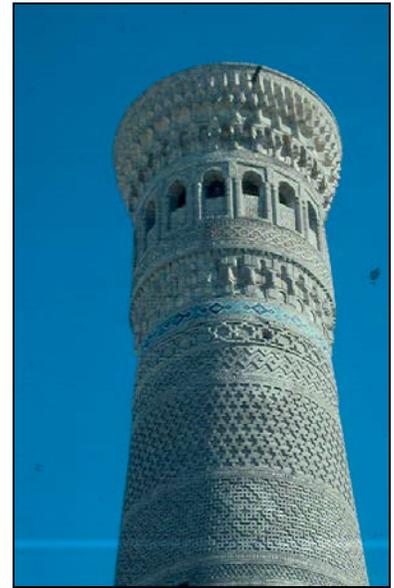


Fig.19 Kalan Minaret (1168) M.Axe Photos

Tan bricks similar in color to those seen above were chosen for the Boulder-Dushanbe Teahouse enclosure design.

The monochrome colors of mud-brick structures of the tenth century, seen in the Bukhara Mausoleum above, continued for several centuries until small amounts of turquoise color, glazes based on copper oxide, began to be tentatively added to buildings in the twelfth century, as seen in the Kalan Minaret above. Experimentation with greater amounts of applied color continued with the introduction of glazed bricks and tiles and polychrome decoration used more often by the end of the twelfth century.

In the early thirteenth century after the Mongols invaded the region from the east, architectural innovation slowed down until the second half of the fourteenth century when buildings began to be decorated with bright colors and intricate patterns.

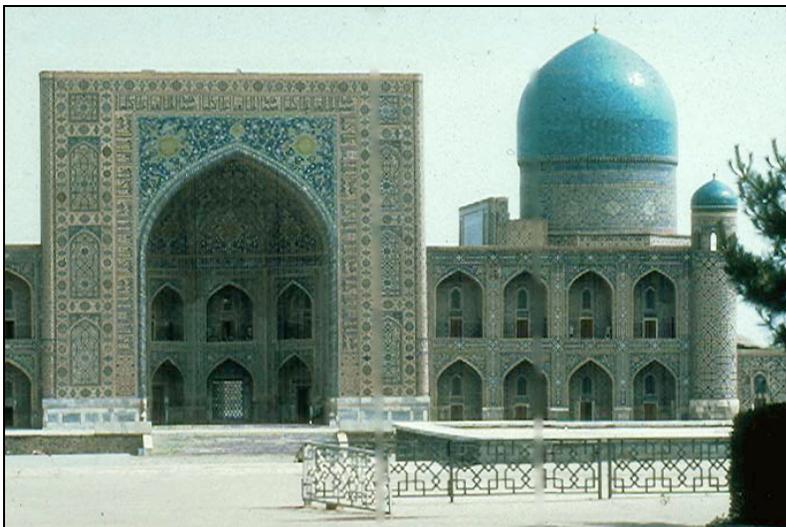


Fig.20 Samarkand, Registan Square photos, 15th-17th Centuries AD

Mary Axe Photo

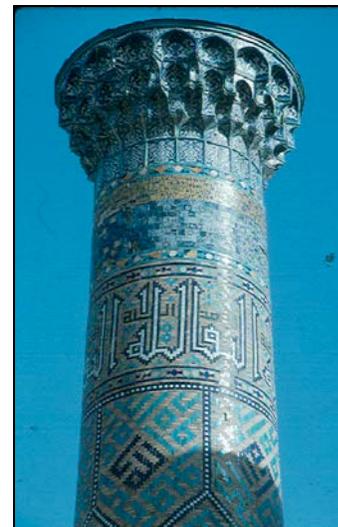


Fig.21 Minaret

Mary Axe Photo

Flat blue tiled walls like those above inspired the exterior tiled panels of the Boulder-Dushanbe Teahouse.

As a result of an extensive building program during the reign of Timur (1370-1405), Samarkand became a very beautiful city. Historic records indicate that in 1404, one hundred and fifty thousand skilled laborers and craftsmen from all over the Islamic world were at work in Samarkand. Historic colored tile work still embellishes present day buildings throughout Central Asia.⁵⁵

The Boulder-Dushanbe Teahouse has imagery found in Persian (Islamic) palaces, mausoleums, mosques and madrasas. The decorated surfaces included geometric forms, flowers and other natural forms.

⁵⁵ UZBEKISTAN. Heirs to the Silk Road, Johannes Kalter and Margareta Pavaloi, Thames and Hudson, 1997, p.84-85



Fig.22 Palace of Shah Abbas the Great, Isfahan, Persia, ca 1600

Meaning of Boulder-Dusahnbe Teahouse

Tea would have been served to guests on the covered terrace of this early 17th century Persian pleasure palace.



Fig.23 Drinking Tea at home, 1900 UZBEKISTAN, Heirs to the Silk Road
Historic photos show two tea drinkers in an opulent home and a group of elders with tea and delicacies in a garden.



Fig.24 Drinking tea in a garden, 1900 UZBEKISTAN, Heirs to the Silk Road

Traditionally, tea was served to male friends and associates at home or in the open air. Often teahouses were open structures that had a primary commercial function, but also functioned as social and sometimes political centers. Business was done in teahouses, marriages were arranged and community problems were solved. Teahouses were the community centers of the time.

Contemporary Teahouses

Teahouses in Tajikistan and Central Asia today are meeting places for all, young and old and women and men. They continue to have a commercial and community function, as well as a social component.

Incorporating the Persian aesthetic tradition, contemporary teahouses are usually beautifully crafted structures that showcase the artistic talents of local artisans.

Water and gardens, representing Paradise, are traditional elements of Central Asian design and are often integral components of the building and its site. Tajik teahouses can be grand places that host weddings and parties or be simpler places for the average person. They can be located along a river or be covered spaces that open to gardens.



Fig.25 Drinking tea along a river,1988

Mary Axe Photo



Fig.26 Drinking tea in a covered area

The Meaning of the Boulder-Dushanbe Teahouse

Water and lovely gardens that symbolize Paradise are settings for contemporary teahouses.

The Rohat and Sa'odat teahouses in Dushanbe and the Isfara Teahouse in northern Tajikistan are all excellent examples of traditional teahouse design.

Rohat Teahouse, Dushanbe: Built 1959, Soviet Period. Rohat means “comfort” or “relaxation.” Part of the Rohat Teahouse was an historic teahouse that was incorporated into the Soviet design.



Fig.27 Looking up at the ceiling of the Rohat Teahouse, Dushanbe Scott Radersdorf photo
Women are shown in the photo above on the second level of this Soviet style teahouse, which is decorated with brightly painted columns, ceiling coffers and what appears to be a decorative pastel tile panel on the rear wall.



Fig.28 Lower level of the Rohat Teahouse, Dushanbe Scott Radersdorf photo
Men in warm coats and fur hats drinking tea in the lower level of the teahouse.



Fig.29 Entry to Rohat Teahouse, Dushanbe

Mary Axe Photo

During the Soviet period, the scale of the open building was designed to be monumental and impressive.

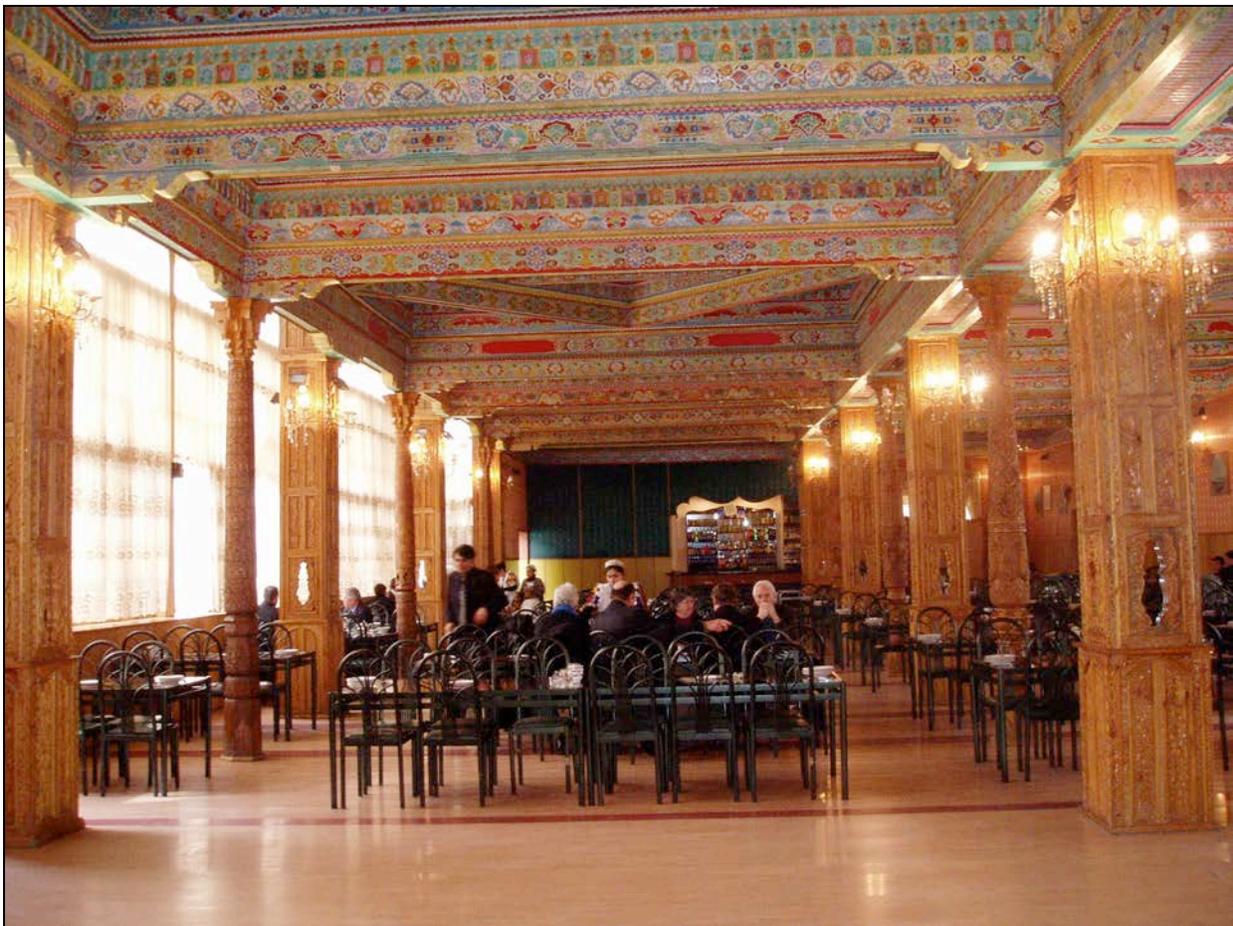


Fig.30 Historic Portion of Rohat Teahouse, Dushanbe

Scott Raderdorf Photo

The historic portion of the teahouse is decorated with carved wooden columns and painted ceiling coffers as seen at the Boulder-Dushanbe Teahouse.



Fig.31 Ceiling in Historic Portion of Rohat Teahouse, Dushanbe

Scott Radersdorf Photo

The ceiling of the Boulder-Dushanbe Teahouse has elements similar to this ceiling detail of the Rohat Teahouse.

Sa'odat Teahouse, Dushanbe: Sa'odat means "happiness." The Sa'odat Teahouse has the same large scale as the Rohat Teahouse with a divided stair reaching the upper level. Traditional Tajik design elements of the Sao'dat Teahouse include plasterwork, brightly painted columns and an intricately carved wooden coffered ceiling.

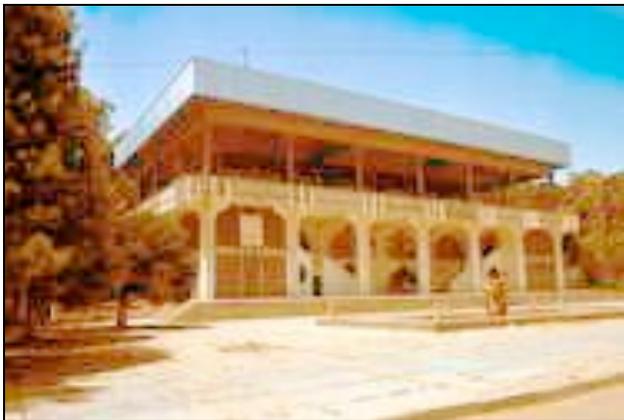


Fig.32 Sa'odat Teahouse,1994 Aga Khan Trust for Culture photo



Fig.33 Sa'odat Teahouse,1994 Aga Khan Trust for Culture Photo

The teahouse is located in a park. On the upper level there is an interior space surrounded by a covered exterior area for drinking tea. A more sheltered enclosed area is found on the lower level.

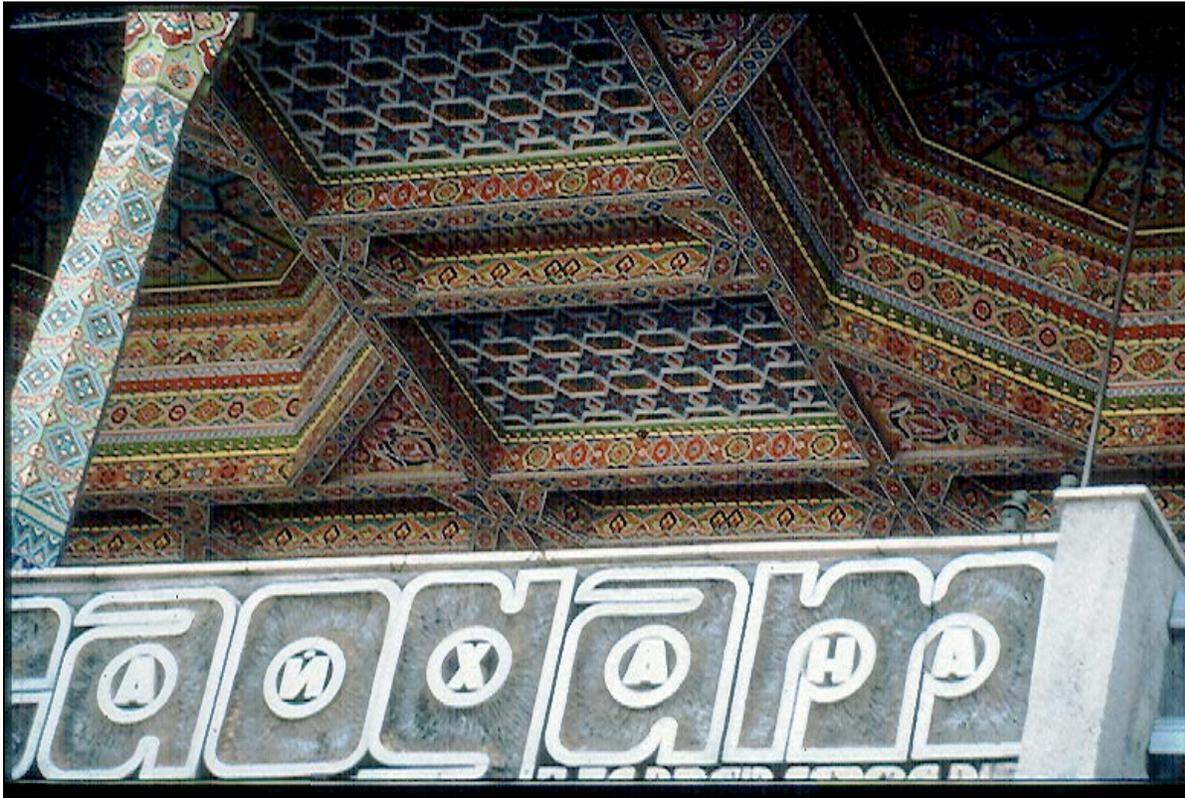


Fig.34 Ceiling of the Sa'odat Teahouse, Dushanbe

Vern Seieroe AIA, Photo

Looking up at the brightly colored painted coffers and beams that are similar to those of the Boulder-Dushanbe Teahouse. The columns here are brightly colored whereas the columns in Boulder are carved and not painted.



Fig.35 Interior of Sa'odat Teahouse

Vern Seieroe AIA, photo

Typical decorative elements, plasterwork, fountain, colorful wooden tables and stools, are also found in the Boulder-Dushanbe Teahouse.

Isfara Teahouse, Isfara, Tajikistan: Isfara is located in northeastern part of Tajikistan, close to the

border with Kyrgystan and Uzbekistan. Some of the same workmen who built the Boulder-Dushanbe Teahouse also worked on the Isfara Teahouse, as evidenced by the many colorful painted decorations, carved cornices, coffered ceiling and slender columns as seen in Boulder.



Fig.36 Isfara Teahouse, Isfara,

The Rough Guide Website Photo

Patrons can be seen sitting in the shade of the overhanging roofed area drinking tea while the street below is busy with cars, people walking and a cart. Numerous elements, such as tiled walls, ceiling coffers, and slender columns, are seen at this teahouse and the Boulder-Dushanbe Teahouse.

Tajik Teahouses in Europe

Berlin Teahouse in Palais am Festungsgraben, Berlin, Germany (Tadshikische Teestub): During the Soviet period, Tajikistan sent a display of a teahouse to the 1974 Leipzig trade fair. It was presented as a gift from the Tajik Republic of the USSR to the German Democratic Republic.

It was later moved and installed as an exhibit in the Palais am Festungsgraben in Berlin, which during the Soviet period, served as the House of Culture. Tea and light refreshments can still be enjoyed there today as they were in the days before the Berlin Wall came down.



Fig.37 Interior of Tajik Teahouse in Berlin

www.berlin-hidden-places.de

Typical Tajik elements from a 1970s exhibit are featured here in this restaurant, located in part of a palace. Carved slender wooden columns and ceiling beams and low tables with cushions for seating were installed in this area. The same items that are found here in Berlin are also found in the Boulder-Dushanbe Teahouse and still found in new Tajik teahouses today.

Klagenfurt Teahouse, Klagenfurt, Austria (Tadshikische Teestub): The same Tajik artists and artisans who built the Boulder-Dushanbe Teahouse originally built this teahouse for an international exhibit in Poland. Afterward, it went to Algiers and then it came back to Dushanbe around 1988. After restoration work, it was sent to Klagenfurt, Austria, one of Dushanbe's Sister Cities. It is located in a city park and has seasonal tea and food service.



Fig.38 Klagenfurt Teahouse, Klagenfurt, Austria

Photo Wikipedia.com

Many elements in this teahouse are very similar to those of the Boulder-Dushanbe Teahouse, as they were built by some of the same craftsmen. The carved wooden columns have similar proportions and the exterior fascia and carved cornice are brightly painted as in Boulder. This teahouse is one-quarter the size of Boulder's.

Architectural Description

Site

The Boulder-Dushanbe Teahouse is located in downtown Boulder at 1770 13th Street. The site of the Teahouse is part of the larger Civic Center site that covers Lots 1-3 and 7-12 in Block 14, Boulder Original Townsite, 1868.

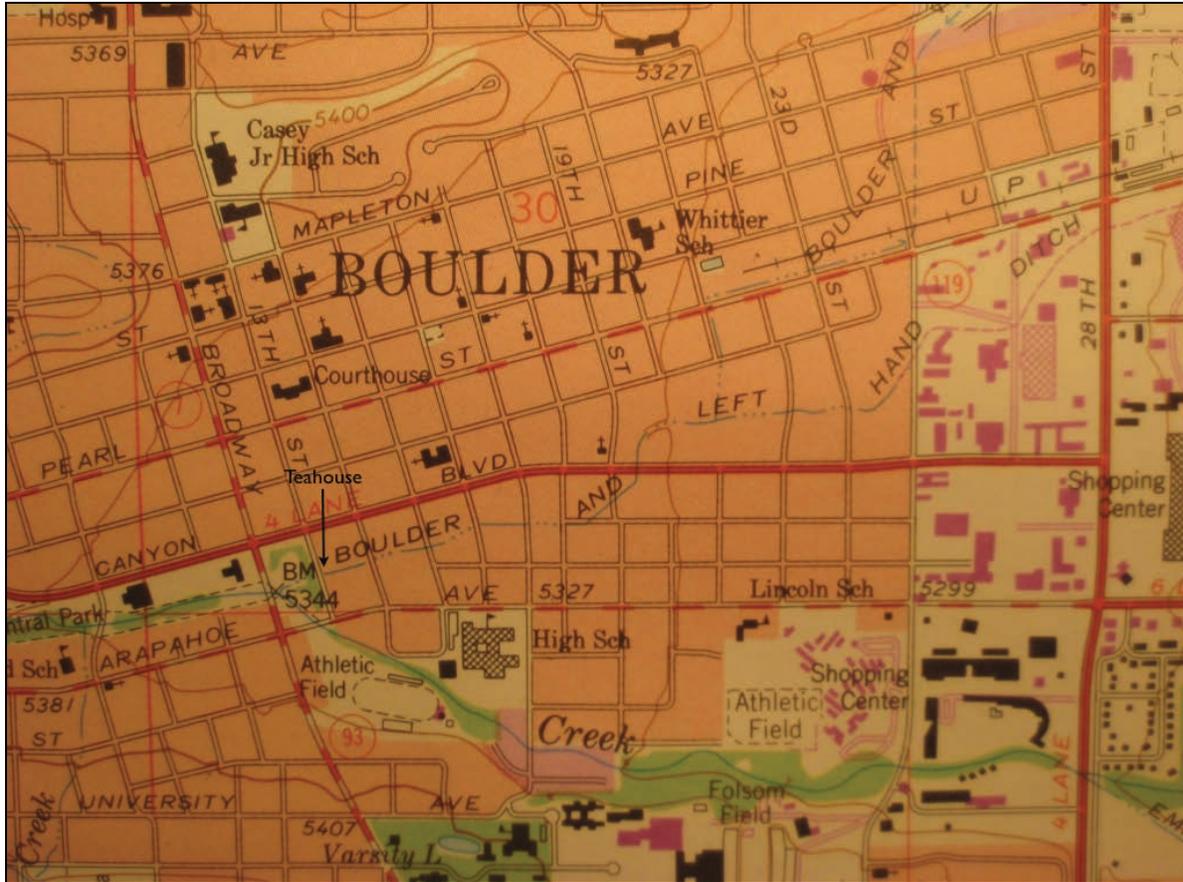


Fig. 39 USGS Map: BOULDER QUADRANGLE 1966 Photorevised 1979 (north is up on the map)
The Teahouse is centrally located in downtown Boulder, with the Pearl Street Mall, Central Park, Farmers Market, Boulder Museum of Contemporary Art and the Boulder High School all nearby.

The Boulder-Dushanbe Teahouse is located between two major east-west roads, Canyon Boulevard to the north and Arapahoe Avenue to the south. To the west is Thirteenth Street, a one-way street going from south to north. Beyond parking lots to the east is Fourteenth Street, a two-way street. The Teahouse is immediately bordered on the south by the Boulder and White Rock/Left Hand Ditch.

Boulder civic and community facilities surround the Boulder-Dushanbe Teahouse. Across the irrigation ditch to the south is the Teahouse Bike Path, part of the Boulder Creek Path system, and just beyond the ditch and bike path to the south is the Boulder Museum of Contemporary Art (BMOCA). The City of Boulder's Atrium Building and Civic Plaza, site of the seasonal Boulder Farmers Market, are located immediately to the north of the Teahouse. A public parking lot is located to the east. Central Park is located immediately to the west across the 13th Street Community Plaza.



Fig.40 Aerial View of Teahouse and Surrounding Area (north is up on image)

Google Earth

The Teahouse is surrounded by community activities in Central Park and the Civic Plaza, which holds Farmers Markets twice per week. The Atrium Building to the north houses City of Boulder offices and to the south is the Boulder Museum of Contemporary Art. The line of trees between the Teahouse and the Museum shows the path of the irrigation ditch.

The following Site Plan Study shows the building footprint of the Teahouse and the gentle entry ramp that comes up from Thirteenth Street on the west terminating at a planter in front of the entry door. Steps lead to lower dining areas covered with trellises on the north and south sides of the entry ramp. Roses and other plantings shield the dining areas from the sidewalk.

Handicapped access to the north dining area is directly taken from Civic Plaza. Access to the south dining area is via a ramp from the beginning of the entry ramp turning south along the fence to the ditch and then east along the fence bordering the irrigation ditch. As the Site Plan Study drawing is a preliminary drawing, the handicapped accessible ramp to the south dining area is not shown.

Site Plan Study

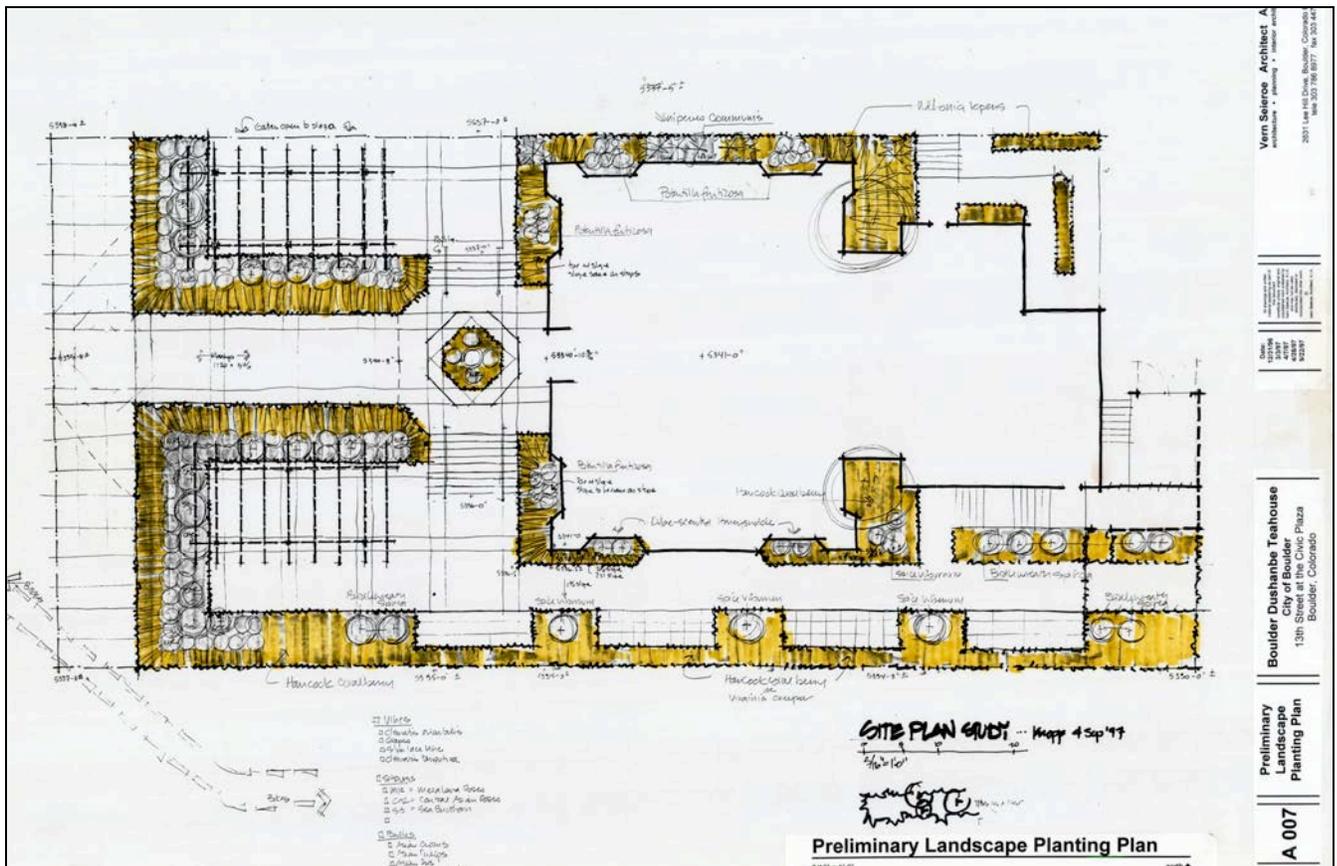


Fig.41 Site Plan Study A007, Preliminary Landscaping Planting Plan, Vern Seieroe, AIA, Architect (north is up on drawing)
 Roses shield the two trellised, lower outside dining areas from the main central access to the Tea house.
 An existing disabled access ramp starts at the beginning of the sidewalk ramp near 13th Street and turns south where plantings are shown on the drawing. The ramp is not shown on this drawing. A portion of the Bike Path is sketched in on the lower left hand corner of the drawing. The remainder of the bike path that was built is not shown on this drawing.



Fig.42 Front view to the east looking up the sidewalk to Entry from across 13th Street Kathryn Barth, AIA, Photo 2010
Trellises and roses line the gently sloping entry ramp. Beyond the gate a disabled access ramp leads to the south dining area along the front fence and continues east along the fence bordering the ditch.



Fig.43 View to the southeast across the Civic Plaza Kathryn Barth, AIA, Photo 2010
Steps lead up to the entry beyond the fence and the trellised covered north dining area.



Fig.44 View to northeast with Bike Path Bridge in foreground

Kathryn Barth, AIA, Photo 2010

Steps lead up to the entry beyond the Bike Path Bridge over the ditch and the ramp to the trussed covered south dining area.



Fig.45 View to north of Addition w Delivery Steps and Ramp from Bike Path

Kathryn Barth, AIA, Photo 2010

Beyond the Bike Path and bridge over the ditch a sidewalk leads back toward the west to the south dining area.



Fig.46 View to south of Addition w Disabled Access Ramp and Steps from Civic Plaza Kathryn Barth, AIA, Photo 2010
Ramps provide secondary disabled access to the building. Designated parking is nearby in the east lot.



Fig.47 View to NW of Delivery Ramp Kathryn Barth,AIA, Photo 2010
Deliveries, trash removal and storage occur at the rear of the addition.



Fig.48 View to SW, of Disables Access Ramp K Barth, AIA, Photo 2010
Disabled parking is located in the lot to the right.