

Original Teahouse Design and Construction

Design of the Teahouse in Tajikistan

During the Soviet Period, architects, artists, sculptors, and trained artisans such as wood carvers were under the umbrella of the Artists Fund which guaranteed them work and a living wage, and ensured that they had the materials needed for their work and a studio in which to work and sometimes live. Many architects and artists were educated in Moscow or Leningrad during this time.

In 1988, Lado Shanidze, a Georgian born and Moscow trained architect, designed the Boulder-Dushanbe Teahouse in Dushanbe and produced beautiful hand drawn and colored plans. In 1989, the finished drawings were formally presented to the Mayor of Dushanbe and a delegation of Boulder visitors in Dushanbe.



Fig.115 Tajik Architect Lado Shanidze, Designer of the Boulder Teahouse Mary Axe Photo
1989 presentation of the drawings to dignitaries from Dushanbe and Boulder.

The Teahouse was originally designed to be a traditional raised open-air structure, with an open roof and coffered painted ceiling surrounding a central pool (*Hauz* in Tajik). The pool was to be surrounded by ten hand-carved wood columns, and one column on each side of the building with two columns flanking the central stair, for a total of fourteen columns. Each of the columns was to have a unique design featuring floral, vine and leaf motifs.

The pool was also to be surrounded by traditional seating: eight painted low tables with six stools each and four low hand-made wood tables in the corners called *kats* (*chorpois* in Tajik and *topchan* in Russian).

The exterior façade of the structure was to be decorated with hand-made blue ceramic faience panels. Also, there was a very small kitchen planned at the rear of the building.

Shanidze's original hand-colored drawings with notes in Russian follow.

Floor Plan

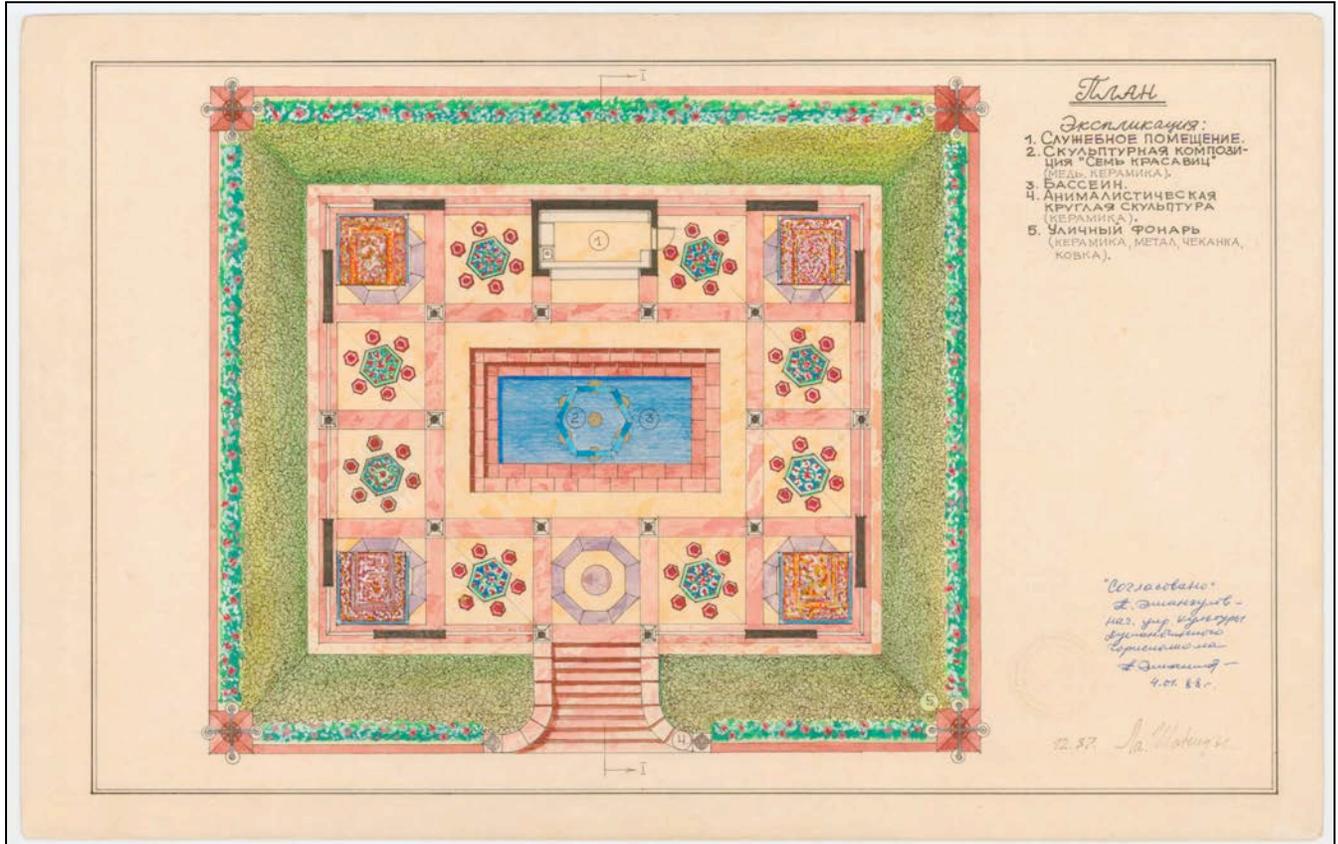


Fig.116 Boulder-Dushanbe Teahouse: Original Floor Plan, Lado Shanidze, 1988

This beautiful drawing gives a very schematic plan for the building. Simple geometric forms and colors are very pleasing.

The floor plan shows a sunken central pool surrounded by eight hexagonal shaped tables and stools and four topchan raised dining areas in the corners. The floor is an inlaid beige stone floor divided into squares by pink stones. Octagonal shaped floor patterns of inlaid purplish stones decorate the floor of the entry and the four corners of the building.

A very small kitchen area (1) is shown on the back wall of the Teahouse opposite the entry. Seven circles signify statues (2) located in a central pool (3). Green grass and flowers surround the rectangular building which is set within a rectangular wall. Curving walls and a grand staircase (4) lead to the building. A light fixture (5) marks each corner of the surrounding wall.

This "Teahouse" was intended to fit on an unknown site at the time it was designed, and thus is a schematic drawing. Due to the many issues of a complicated site located in a flood plain, climate, building code and disabled access requirements, modifications had to be made to the original design.

Front Elevation

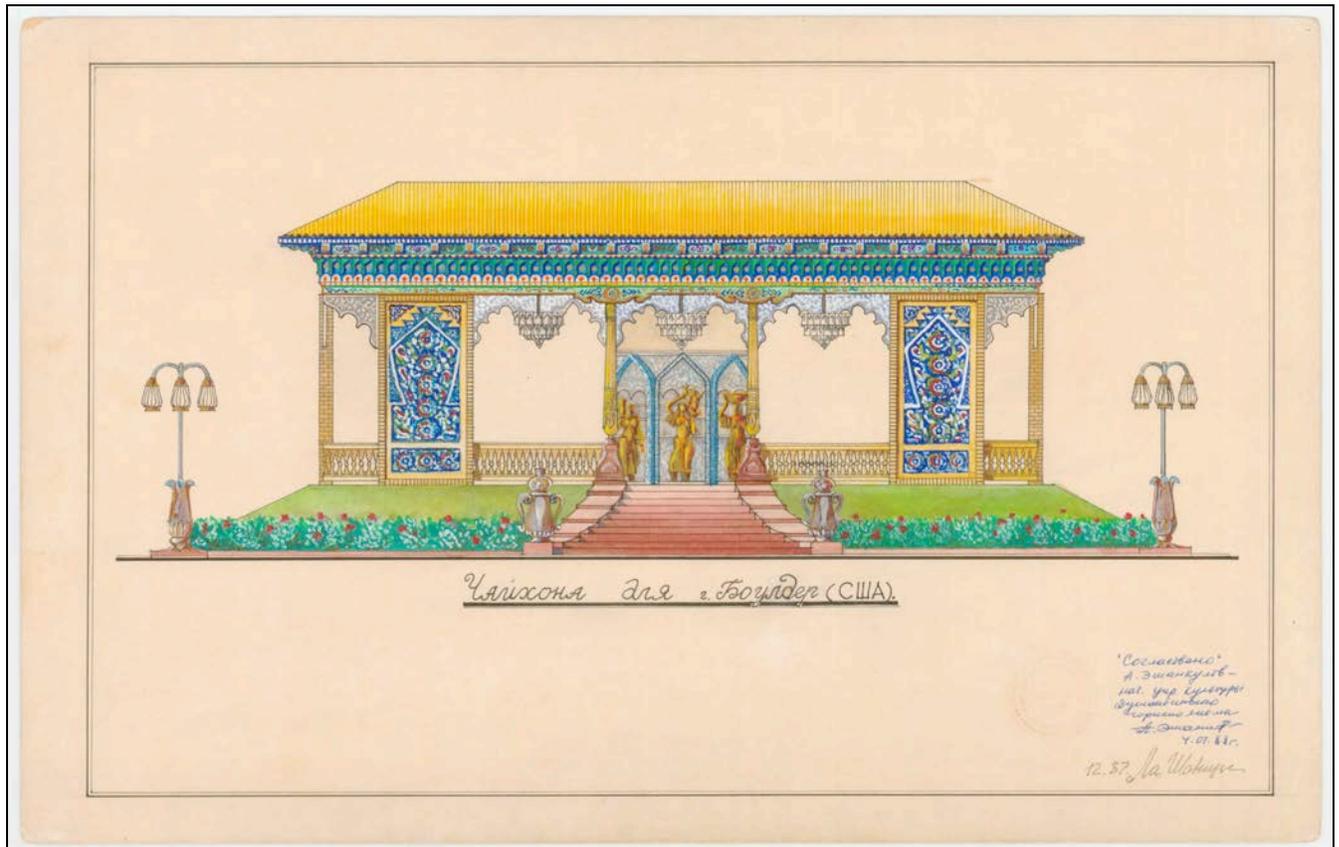


Fig. 117 Boulder-Dushanbe Teahouse: Original Front Elevation, Lado Shanidze, 1988
This drawing reflects the vision for an open-air teahouse.

The basic geometry, roof and cornice, tile panels, baluster, columns and proportion of solids and voids reflect the way the Boulder-Dushanbe Teahouse was actually built.

This front elevation shows an open building on a raised platform, defined by a wall with streetlights at each corner and a grand staircase leading up to the centered entry. This drawing also shows the vision for the seven princess sculptures around a central pool.

Building Section

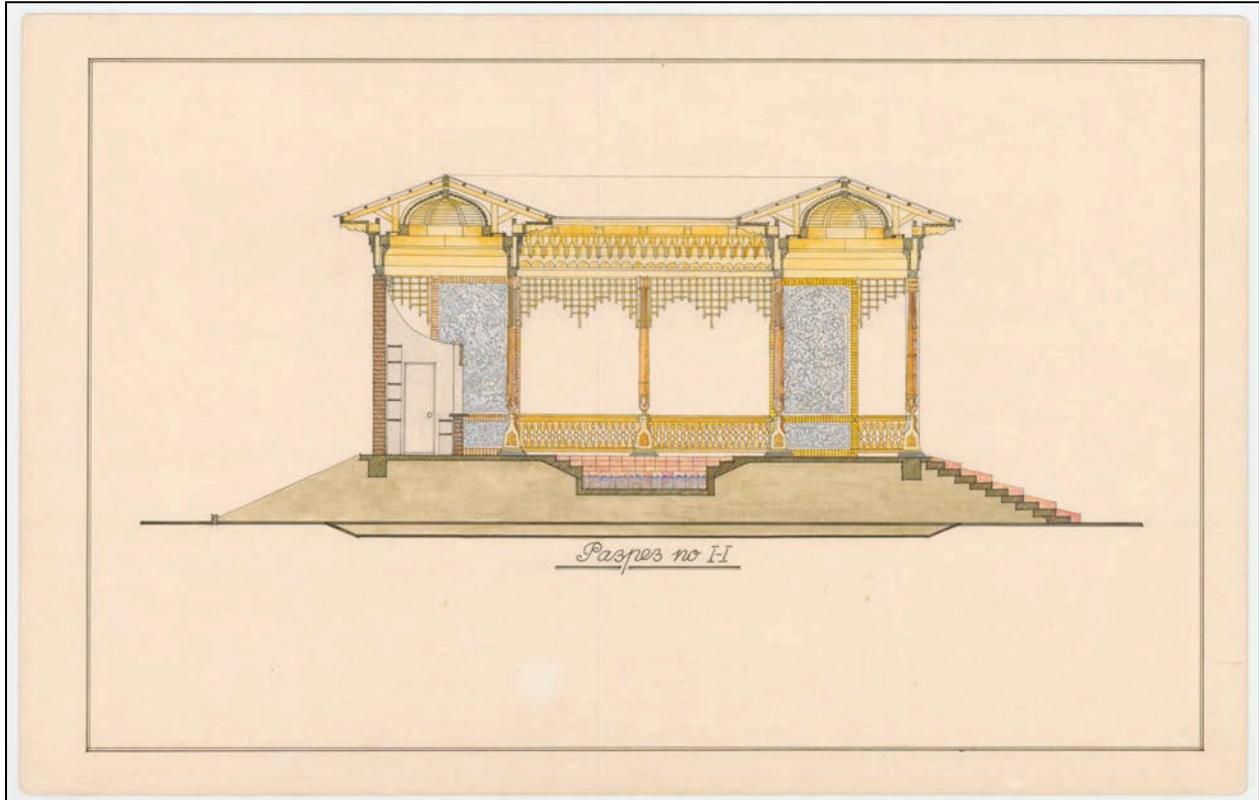


Fig.118 Boulder-Dushanbe Teahouse: Original Building Section, Lado Shanidze, 1988

This cross section shows the spatial relationships of an open roof, a sunken pool, a raised site, and a grand stair.

Reflected Ceiling Plan

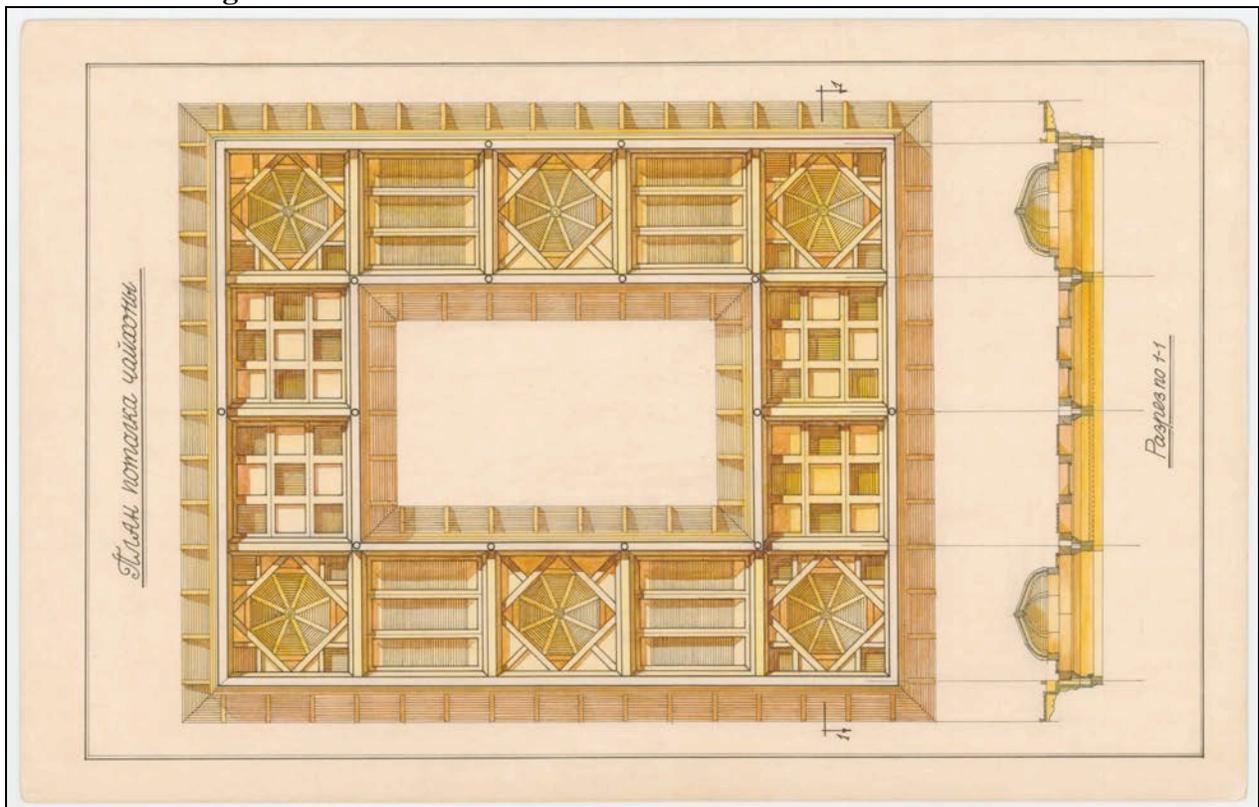


Fig.119 Boulder-Dushanbe Teahouse: Original Reflected Ceiling Plan, Lado Shanidze, 1988

This drawing shows the wood structural ceiling, supported by the columns surrounding the center opening.

Column #1 Design

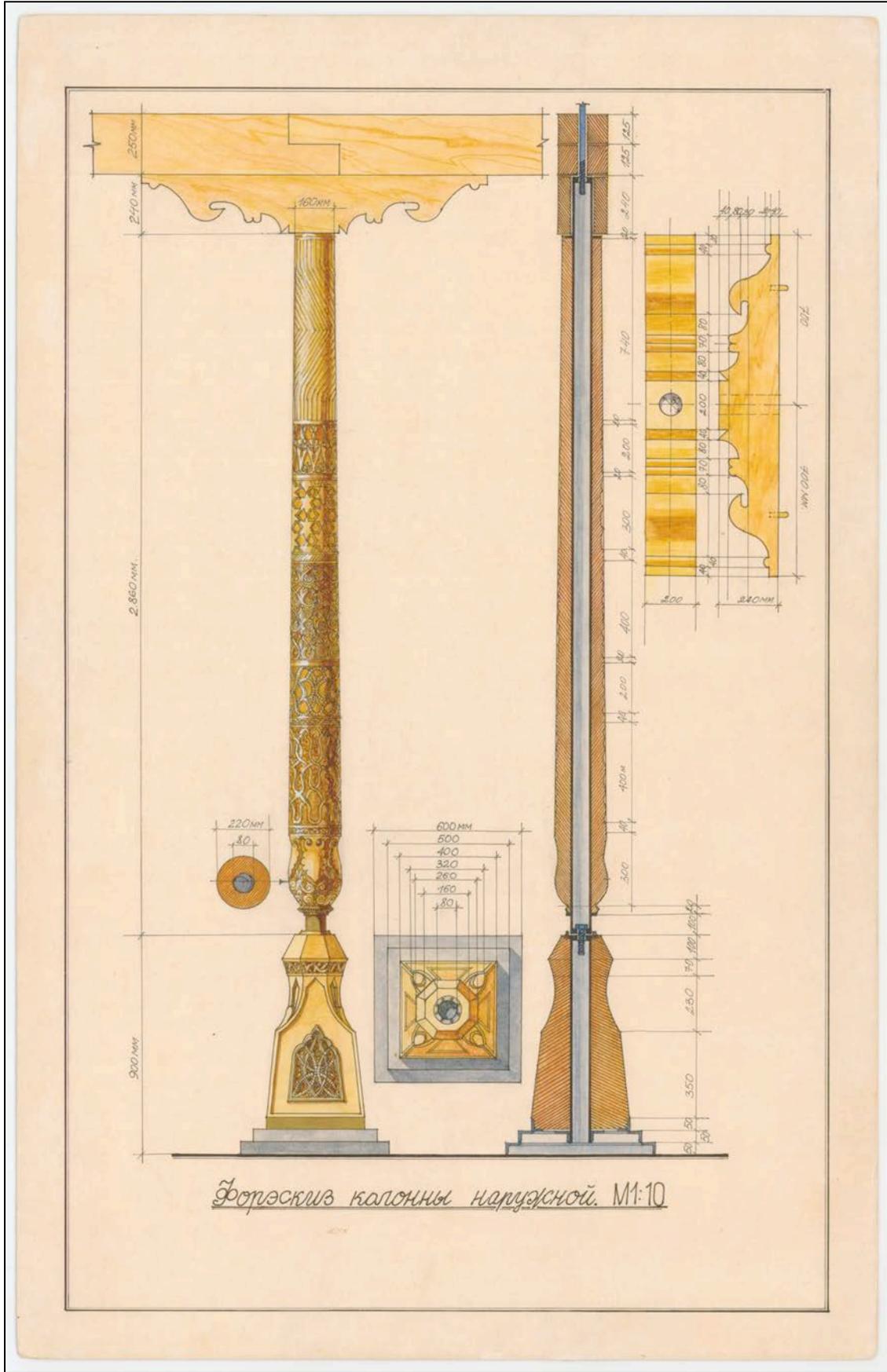


Fig.120 Boulder-Dushanbe Teahouse: Original Column #1 Drawing, Lado Shanidze, 1988
 Dimensions are given for carving the fancy capital, six divisions of the shaft and the column base.

Column #2 Design

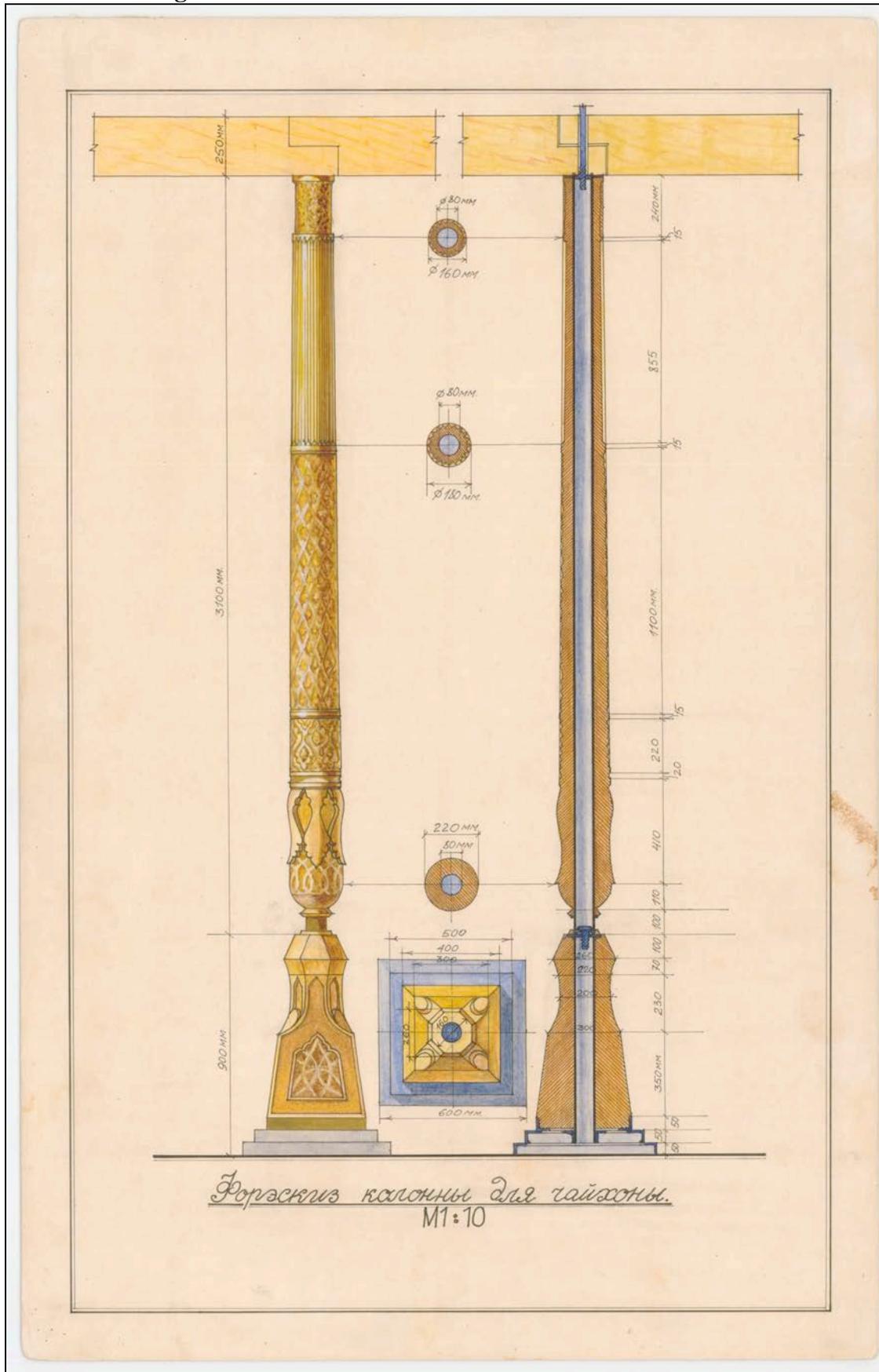


Fig.121 Boulder-Dushanbe Teahouse: Original Column #2 Drawing, Lado Shanidze, 1988
A simpler design with four different areas of carving on the shaft, a smaller capital, and less decorated base.

Tile Panel #1 Design

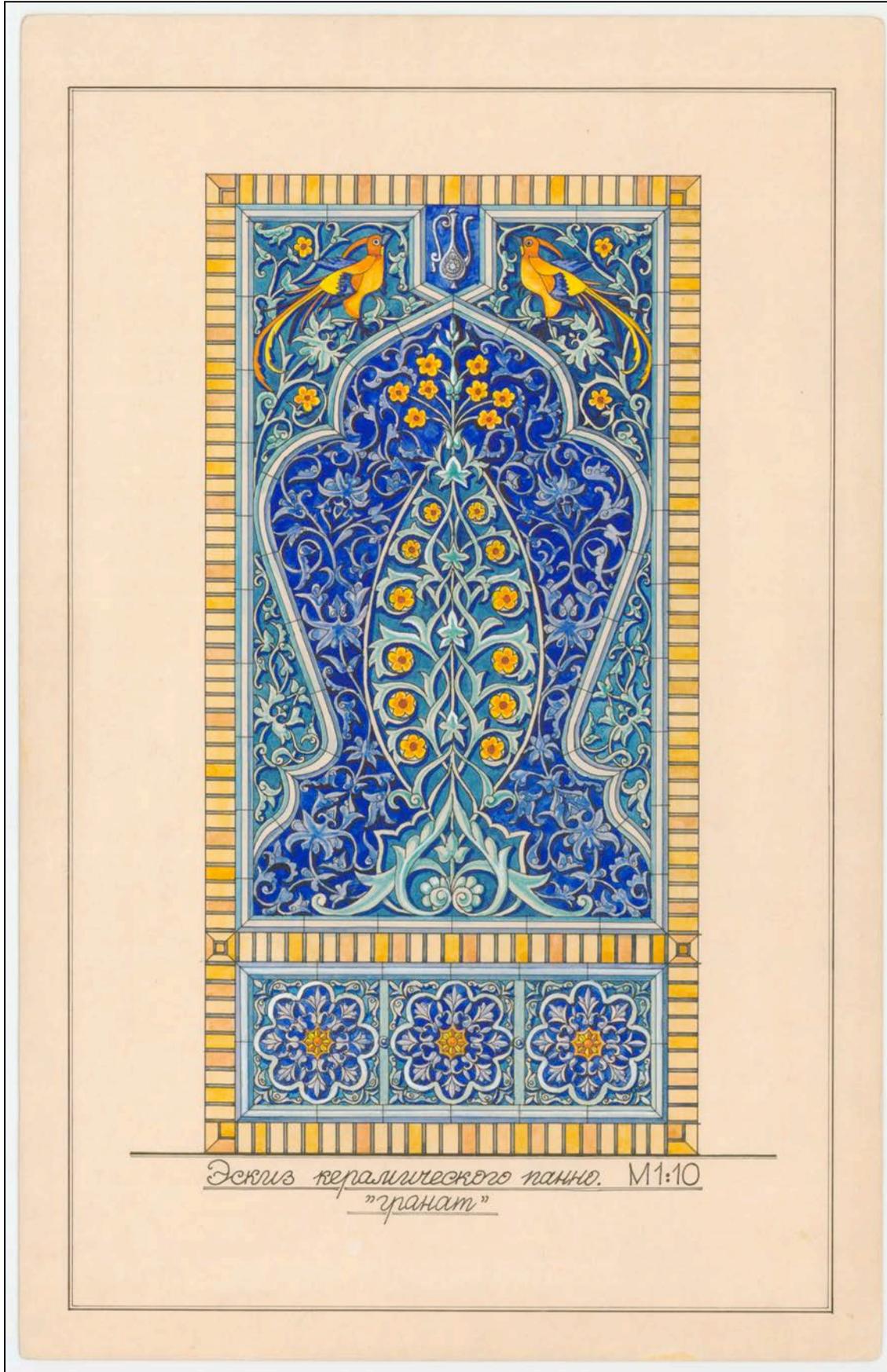


Fig.122 Boulder-Dushanbe Teahouse: Tile Panel #1 Drawing, Lado Shanidze, 1988
This drawing represents a vision for a tile panel design. Four of the eight tile panels feature birds and flowers.

Tile Panel #2 Design

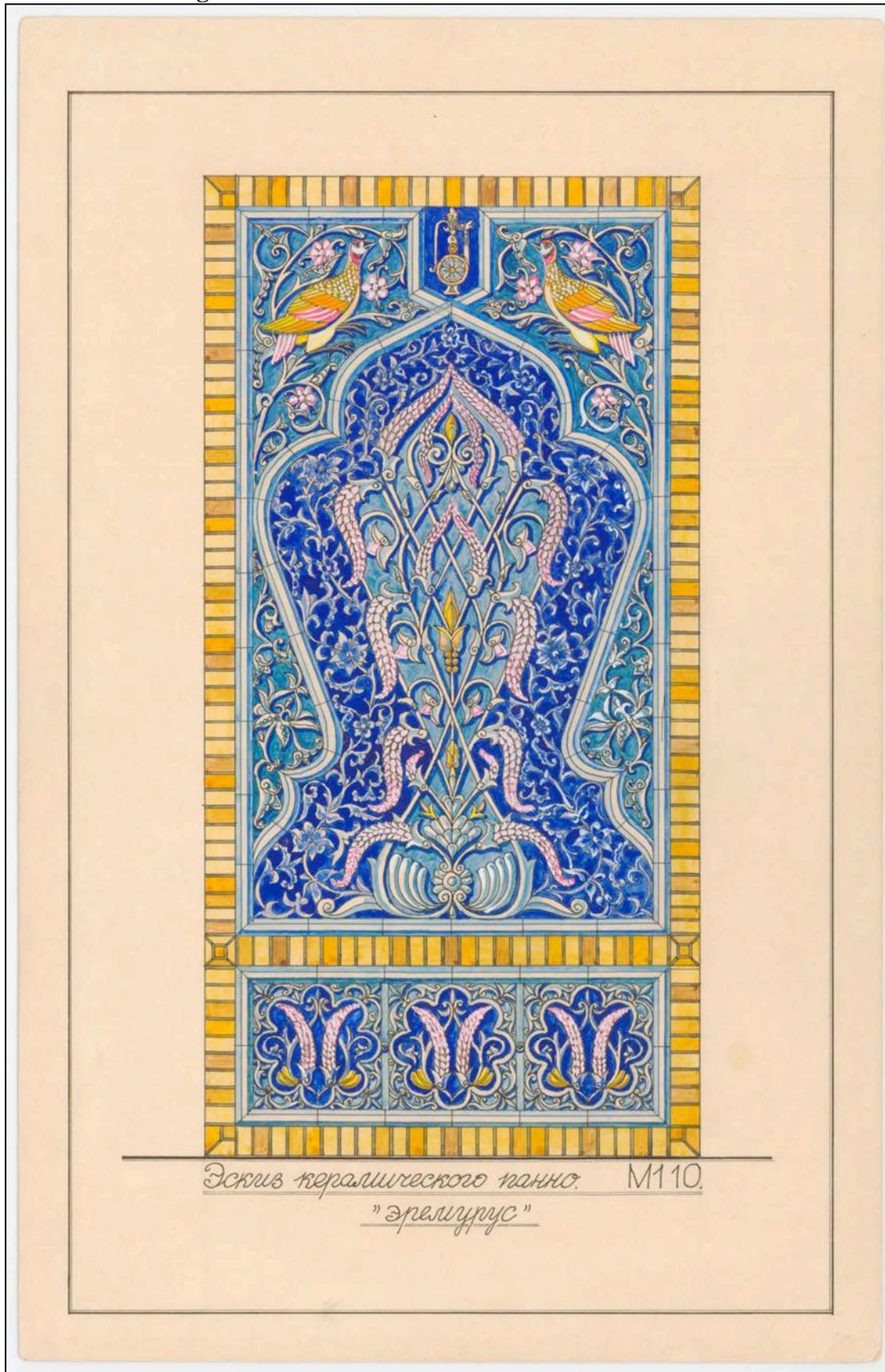


Fig.123 Boulder-Dushanbe Teahouse: Tile Panel #2 Drawing, Lado Shanidze, 1988
This drawing shows another type of bird and flower tile panel. Artistic expression resulted in other panels featuring butterflies and grapes.

After the formal 1989 presentation of his design in Dushanbe, Lado and Vern Seieroe were able to sit down together and discuss the design in detail. With the help of a translator, they tackled the various challenges that would be present in Boulder: enclosing the space against the weather, meeting required building and disabled access codes, and programmatic requirements of providing a commercial kitchen with public toilet facilities. Lado sketched out solutions to those challenges on the following drawings.

Sketch Drawing #1

At the top part of the drawing there is the main entry with two sets of double doors, two curving ramps for disabled access, and monumental central steps leading up to the entry.

A detail on the right of the drawing shows the side view of the projecting front entry.

The main part of the drawing shows an addition at the rear of the Teahouse that includes two toilet rooms, the kitchen area, two storage areas, and a rear second exit. There is a central axis through the whole addition. A bar area visually blocks the access to the addition. The two toilet rooms are entered directly from the dining area.

A dimension of 1.2m for the depth of the toilet rooms is noted.

A dimension of 4m for the depth of the kitchen is noted.

A dimension of 3m for the depth of the storage is noted.

The overall dimensions of the addition are 5m wide by 7.2m deep, or approximately 16'-4" by 26'-10" (the finished Teahouse measured 36' by 40').

The main part of the drawing also shows the concept of shallow bay windows enclosing the perimeter columns and corner windows enclosing the corner columns. The building's main entry is noted as extending 2m from the building. At both the front and rear entries flanking walls extend a small distance beyond the doors.

Sketch Drawing #1

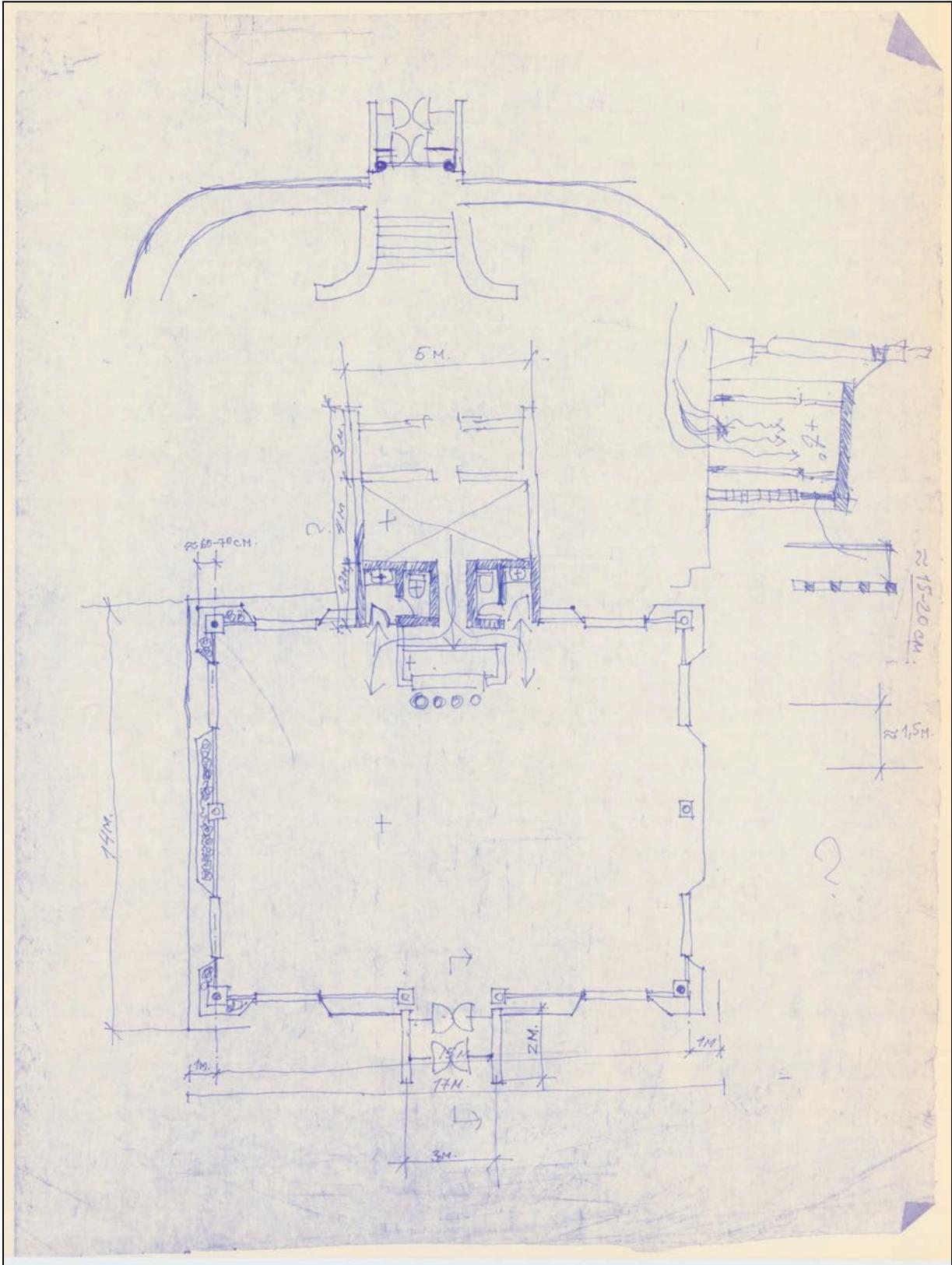


Fig.124 Architect Lado Shanidze's Sketch 1, Plan for modifications, 1989
Sketch shows modifications for entry, adding bay windows, an addition with toilets, kitchen and storage.

Sketch Drawing #2

This drawing shows an early idea for the skylight with a space frame of different colored and tinted glass panels. It also shows a front view of an extended front entry that was to have a flag of Boulder and a flag of Dushanbe. Neither the extended front entry nor this version of the skylight were actually built.

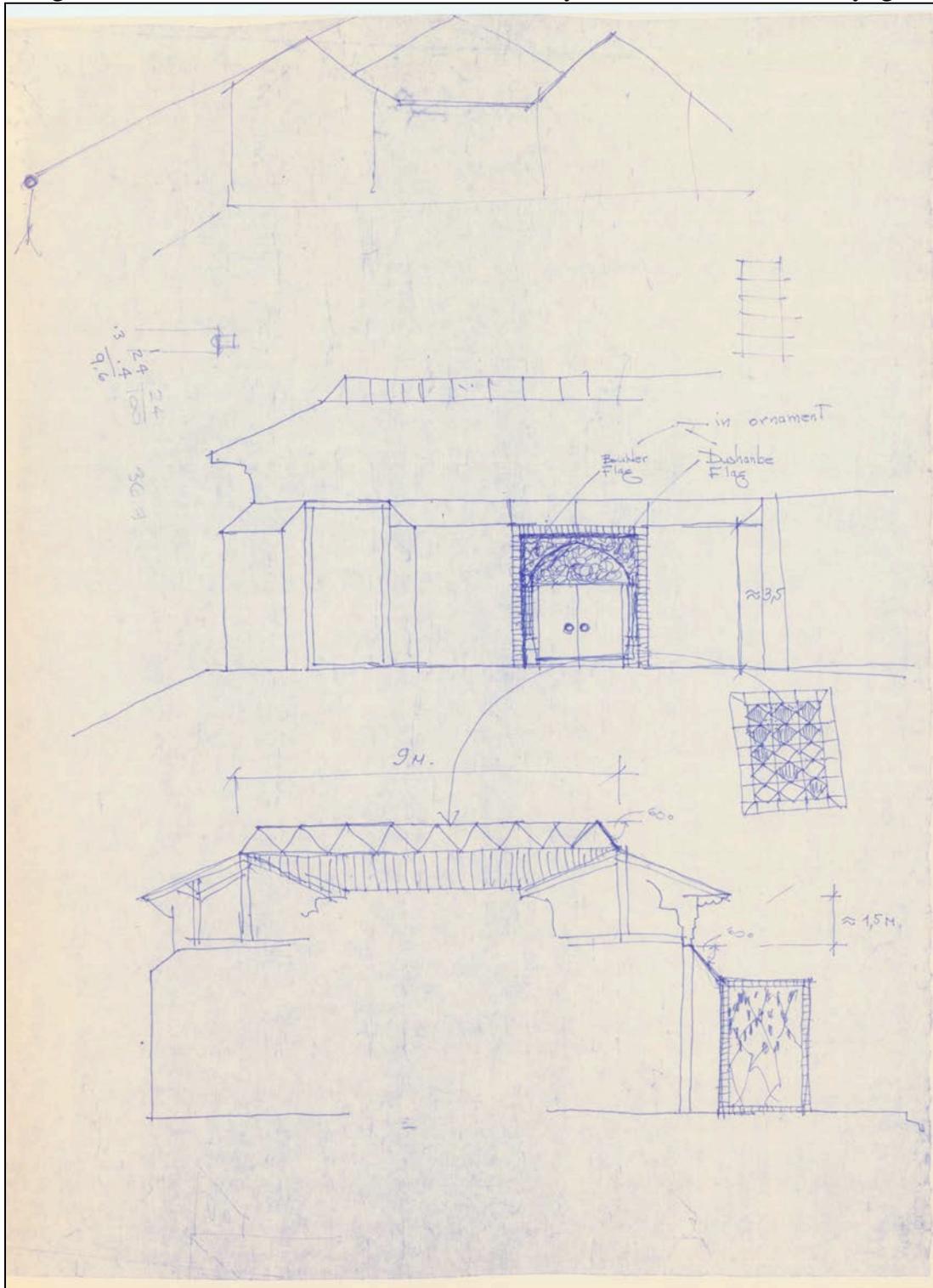


Fig. 125 Architect Lado Shanidze's Sketch 2, Building Elevation and Section, 1989

Drawing shows skylight with multicolored glass, a projecting entry, and view of front doors

Construction in Tajikistan

For approximately two years from 1988 to 1990, forty skilled artisans, generally in specialized crews, constructed the cornice, ceiling coffers, furniture and sculpture for the Teahouse. Only hand tools were used for woodcarving and for assembling the coffers and cornice. All the painting was done by hand.

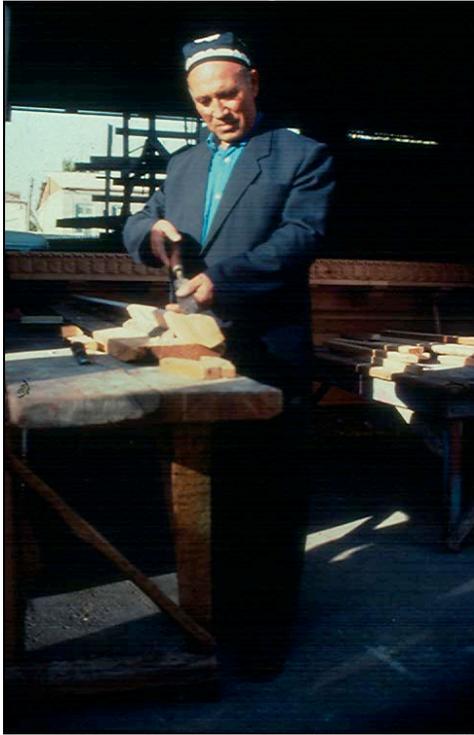


Fig. 126 Manon Khaidarov Vern Seieroe, Photo 1988



Fig 127 Mirpulat Mirakhmadov, Manon Khaidarov at Khujand Teahouse M. Axe Photo 1988
Manon and Mirpulat were the master carvers of the Teahouse in Khujand and erected it here in Boulder.

In 1988, Manon Khaidarov and Mirpulat Mirakhmadov, master Tajik woodcarvers, received permission to travel to the Lake Baikal region of Siberia to select individual cedar trees for the Teahouse columns before the construction began. As master carvers, they were free to interpret the general design. Architect Lado Shanidze met only one time with them to explain his drawings and order the work.



Fig.128 Construction Scene in Khujand Vern Seieroe, AIA. Architect Photo1988
The painting has just been completed on the raised fascias and cornice.

After returning to Tajikistan, work began on the Teahouse in Khujand where Manon and Mirpulat completed Shanidze's design for the cornice and coffers, creating the joinery, carving the intricate designs entirely by hand, and painting the finished product. Three crews of six to eight men worked with them on the coffers and furniture for the Teahouse in Khujand. Manon and Mirpulat and their assistants also worked in Dushanbe, carving the intricate columns. The bronze Seven Beauties sculptures were made in Khujand by Milan Milashevich.



Fig. 129 Construction of Cornices in Khujand Vern Seieroe, AIA. Architect Photo1988
Teahouse cornice supported by temporary wooden structure.