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# THE DEVELOPMENT AND MODERNIZATION OF THE FERGANA REGIONAL MUSEUM OF HISTORY AND CULTURE IN THE YEARS OF INDEPENDENCE

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## Abstract

This article is dedicated to the history, material and technical condition, and activities of the Fergana Regional History and Culture State Museum. It discusses the renewal of the museum during the years of independence, the strengthening of its material and technical base, its regulations, the activities of its existing branches, and the implementation of modern technologies. Proposals are presented regarding the development of the Fergana Museum based on new concepts, the enhancement of its tourism potential, and the preservation of cultural heritage.

**Key words:** *Fergana history, cultural heritage, museum, museum exhibits, museum research, material and technical base, museum renovation, scientific research, museum concept, tourism potential.*

**INTRODUCTION.** Museums are institutions engaged in the preservation, research, and public presentation of cultural heritage. The effectiveness of their operations largely depends on the level of development of their material and technical infrastructure.

The Fergana Museum of History and Culture, which has been operating for more than a century, is among the oldest cultural institutions in our country. Throughout its history, it has functioned under various names: it was established on May 26, 1899, as the "Fergana Regional People's Museum," renamed in 1920 as the "Fergana City Scientific Museum" and since 1938, it has been known as the "Regional Museum of Local Lore"[3:6].

By the 1980s, more than 50,000 exhibits had been accumulated in the museum's storage. This created the necessity for constructing a new, modern museum building. Although the planning for the new building had begun in the 1970s, construction only started in 1982 at the intersection of Murabbiylar and Vatan Ravnaqi streets. The construction was completed in 1985, and the museum was relocated to this new building.

In accordance with the decision of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan №975, dated December 11, 2017, the Fergana Regional Museum of Local Lore was renamed the "State Museum of the History and Culture of Fergana Region"[1]. Currently, the museum organizes and regulates its activities based on the Charter of the State Museum of the History and Culture of Fergana Region, which is approved by the Agency for Cultural Heritage of the Republic of Uzbekistan. The updated Charter consists of 9 chapters and 36 articles, and it was

registered by the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Uzbekistan, the Department of Justice of Fergana Region, and the State Services Center of Fergana City on February 7, 2024.

**ANALYSIS OF LITERATURE AND METHODOLOGY.** The museum carries out its activities in accordance with the Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan, the laws of the Republic of Uzbekistan, the decisions of the Supreme Assembly of the Republic of Uzbekistan, the decrees, orders, and resolutions of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, the decisions and orders of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan, the resolutions of the Board, and the orders of the Agency for Cultural Heritage of the Republic of Uzbekistan, as well as in compliance with this Charter.

The main objectives and tasks of the State Museum of the History and Culture of Fergana Region are as follows:

- ~ Preservation of museum objects and collections;
- ~ Identification and acquisition of museum objects and collections;
- ~ Implementation of cultural, educational, scientific, and instructional activities;
- ~ Study of museum objects and collections;
- ~ Publication and presentation of museum objects and collections.
- ~ To provide a fair representation of the rich cultural heritage of our people and its role in the history of humanity;
- ~ To organize museum exhibitions aimed at promoting the achievements in political, social, economic, cultural, and other areas in the country;
- ~ To carefully preserve, study, enrich, and display museum objects and collections, which represent the cultural wealth of our people, to the citizens of the country, introduce them to the global community, and promote them;
- ~ To foster and strengthen feelings of respect, pride, and loyalty to the homeland, as well as the appreciation for national and universal values, and the priceless historical and cultural heritage among citizens, especially among the younger generation, through unique exhibits;
- ~ To enhance scientific research on museum objects and collections and publish the results of such studies.
- ~ To make extensive use of modern information technologies in the organization of museum exhibitions;
- ~ To hold scientific and practical conferences on current issues of museology and disseminate best practices;
- ~ To strengthen mutually beneficial cooperation with foreign museums in organizing exhibitions;
- ~ To establish scientific and artistic councils at the museum with the involvement of scholars and specialists;
- ~ To organize thematic expeditions with the aim of enriching the museum's collection;
- ~ To conduct traveling exhibitions in accordance with established procedures.
- ~ To create the necessary conditions for extending the lifespan of artworks in the transmission of cultural heritage to future generations, and to carry out restoration work using scientifically grounded and tested methods;
- ~ To conduct editorial, publishing, and advertising activities in accordance with the established procedures;

- ~ To carry out artistic work, engage in advertising, and facilitate the sale of souvenirs and folk applied art products within the framework of the law;
- ~ To provide scientific and methodological assistance to organizations;
- ~ To create the necessary conditions for applying global museology experience, among other activities[2:3-4].

**CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION.** Currently, the museum, which reflects the nature and ancient history of our country, houses more than 100,000 archaeological findings, examples of applied art, and artworks. Over time, the Fergana Museum has changed its location several times. Today, the Fergana Museum of History and Culture is located in a modern three-story building, with a total area of 4,220 square meters, of which 1,890 square meters are dedicated to exhibition halls. The building was specially constructed for the museum, and separate rooms have been allocated for its collections. These rooms meet modern requirements and are equipped with the necessary facilities. In addition, the museum provides sufficient conditions for scientific research, educational activities, and lectures.

The museum also operates a special library. Its collection consists of more than 12,655 books, the majority of which are in Uzbek and Russian languages. These books are primarily related to the history, nature, art, and culture of the region, but there is also a significant number of books on social and political topics. In recent years, the library's collection has been enriched with books on the path and achievements of independent Uzbekistan. The library not only serves the museum's scientific staff but also provides paid services to external researchers.

Currently, the new concepts being developed for state museums focus on the reliable preservation of museum objects, creating comfortable conditions for visitors, particularly for individuals with disabilities, improving services for tourists, and paying attention to architectural planning, interior design, and landscape solutions. The preliminary design of each museum building is approved based on the material and technical condition of the museum refers to the physical infrastructure, equipment, and technical capabilities of the museum. This concept includes the following key factors:

1. Museum buildings and structures. The museum building and its architectural condition play a crucial role in creating a favorable environment for both exhibits and visitors. On the museum's direction and essence.

Technical condition of the museum building – the structural integrity of the building, its earthquake resistance, and the strength of the roof and walls.

Fire safety system – fire extinguishing equipment, fire alarms, and evacuation routes.

Restoration and repair work – the ongoing maintenance and renovation of historical or modern buildings.

2. Preservation and protection system of exhibits. Special conditions are required to ensure the long-term preservation of museum collections.

Climate control – monitoring temperature and humidity (for example, a temperature of 18–20°C and humidity levels of 50–55% are required for wooden and paper exhibits).

Lighting system – special light fixtures protected from ultraviolet radiation.

Storage conditions – glass display cases, special shelves, and boxes that protect from humidity. Protection from harmful factors – measures to protect exhibits from dust, insects, and harmful gases.

Equipment and facilities. The museum must possess modern technical equipment to ensure effective operation.



Exhibition display cases and stands – special glass and dust-resistant cabinets, wall-mounted or freestanding display cases.

Restoration laboratories – chemical laboratories and scientific equipment for the restoration and preservation of exhibits.

Archives and libraries – necessary equipment for conducting scientific and historical research at the museum.

4. Information technologies and multimedia capabilities. Modern museums extensively use digitization and interactive technologies.

Virtual tours – viewing the museum online using 3D technologies.

Interactive panels – obtaining additional information about exhibits through touchscreens.

Digital archiving – storing exhibits and documents in electronic form.

Audio guides and mobile applications – voice-guided tours and smartphone apps for visitors.

5. Security system. It is crucial to protect museum exhibits from theft and other harmful effects.

Video surveillance system – surveillance cameras operating 24/7.

Alarm system – security system activated by motion or touch sensors.

Guard service – security personnel monitoring the museum premises.

6. Museum transportation and logistics. Special transport and equipment are required for the transportation of exhibits and museum items.

Special transport vehicles – vehicles equipped with humidity and temperature control for transporting exhibits.

Lifting equipment – lifts and hoisting devices for the careful movement of exhibits.

7. Conditions for visitors. Creating a comfortable environment for museum visitors is essential.

Facilities for disabled visitors – ramps, lifts, and special walkways.

Signage and wayfinding system – information boards, maps, and audio guides.

Rest areas and cafes – designated rest areas and a museum café for visitors.

When discussing the material and technical condition of the museum, it is unfortunate to note that a fire occurred at the Fergana Regional History and Culture State Museum on April 11, 2024. In an interview with a Kun.uz correspondent, Khayrullo Zokirov, the director of the Fergana Regional History and Culture State Museum, confirmed that a fire had taken place at the museum. According to the official, the fire was caused by a short circuit in the outdated electrical wiring of the museum building, which was constructed and commissioned in 1985.

In the fire, only one display case was burned, and the rifle stock and decorated door were completely destroyed. The display case and the burned section of the museum have since been repaired. An artwork created by artist Gavrilov in 1938, depicting the 1916 uprising, was partially damaged.

Additionally, in the fire, a decorative mosque door and the rifle stock made by English gunsmiths were completely destroyed, and several historical exhibits were damaged[6].

The Decree of President Sh.M. Mirziyoyev, signed on May 26, 2020, titled "Measures to Further Enhance the Role and Impact of Culture and Arts in the Life of Society", along with the Cabinet of Ministers' Resolution dated December 11, 2017, on "Approval of the Program of Measures to Improve the Activities of State Museums and Strengthen Their Material and Technical Base for the Period 2017–2027", as well as other regulatory documents, place significant responsibility on museum staff. These documents serve as a practical guide to further develop the museum's operations and elevate them to higher levels.



In this regard, it is worth noting that in order to further improve the material and technical condition of the Fergana Regional History and Culture State Museum, several positive steps have been taken. Specifically, at the initiative of the Fergana regional administration, a total of 3 billion 100 million soums were allocated from the local budget in 2021–2022, and comprehensive repair works were completed in the museum building.

Fergana region's governor, Khayrullo Bozorov, visited the ongoing construction and development works at the museum. He provided his recommendations for the development of the institution's activities based on modern standards, the expansion of services and marketing sectors, and the application of foreign best practices. In this regard, he emphasized the importance of creating a new concept for the museum, as well as involving highly qualified specialists from abroad in the planning and design of museum exhibitions.

"On average, 100,000 local tourists and nearly 3,000 foreign guests familiarize themselves with our activities each year," says Khayrullo Zokirov, the director of the Fergana Regional History and Culture State Museum. "To this end, cooperation agreements have been signed with higher and secondary educational institutions and the heads of local citizens' assemblies. Every first Sunday of the month, as well as Tuesdays and Fridays, museum entry is free for everyone, and for children and teenagers under 18 years old. A retail shop has been established under the museum's management, facilitating the sale of cultural heritage, artworks, and pottery items from the region."

Currently, work is underway to develop a special program aimed at promoting the museum's activities through social media, based on global best practices[5].

Initially, the Fergana Regional History and Culture Museum had 7 branches in the districts, which included: the Hamza Hakimzoda Niyoziy Museum in Shohimardon village; the Usmon Yusupov Memorial Museum in Kaptarxona village, Fergana district; the History Museum of Uzbekistan's Yaypan district; the History Museum of Margilan city; the Uvaysiy House-Museum; the Ziyovuddin Khaziniy House-Museum in Uchko'prik district; and the History Museum of Oltiariq district[3:7].

However, in accordance with the Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan dated February 7, 2017, No. PF-4947, which approved the "Action Strategy for the Five Priority Areas of Uzbekistan's Development for 2017–2021" under the State Program for the Year of "Dialogue with the People and Human Interests," as well as the Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan on "Measures to Further Develop and Improve the Culture and Arts Sector" dated May 31, 2017, No. PQ-3022, the Cabinet of Ministers adopted a decision regarding the list of state museums to be newly established, reorganized, or closed by 2027. In accordance with this, the following branches of the Fergana Regional History and Culture Museum ceased their activities in 2018:

1. The Regional Local Lore Museum's Kh. Kh. Niyoziy Memorial Museum;
2. The Regional Local Lore Museum's Uzbekistan District History Museum (branch);
3. The Regional Local Lore Museum's Oltiariq District History Museum (branch);
4. The Regional Local Lore Museum's Usmon Yusupov Memorial Museum (branch).

In accordance with this decree, the Fergana Regional Museum of History and Culture and its branches: Margilan City History Museum, Uvaysiy House Museum, Erkin Vohidov House Museum, Haziniy House Museum, and Erkin Vohidov Memorial Museum have been listed as museums funded by the State Budget of the Republic of Uzbekistan. Moreover, based on the targeted program for the construction, reconstruction, major repairs, and equipping of state



museums' buildings for the years 2018–2027, major repair works are planned to be carried out in the following museums in Fergana region (Table 1)[1].

T/r	Name of museums	Implementation period	Initial project cost of the facility qiymati	Including breakdown by years:			
				2019 year	2020 year	2024 year	2027 year
1.	State Museum of History and Culture of Fergana Region	2019-2020 years	4,300 million UZS	2000	2300		
2.	Margilan City History Museum (Branch of the State Museum of History and Culture of Fergana Region)	2024	1,200 million UZS			1200	
3.	Uvaysiy House Museum (Branch of the State Museum of History and Culture of Fergana Region)	2027	800 million UZS				800

At present, the material and technical condition of the State Museum of History and Culture of Fergana Region is steadily improving, and the number of exhibits it houses is increasing day by day. In particular, in cooperation with the Fergana regional branch of the Academy of Arts of the Republic of Uzbekistan and the Union of Artists, the museum organized an exhibition dedicated to the work of the renowned Rishtan-based ceramic master, Alisher Nazirov.

Alisher Nazirov holds a distinguished place in the history of craftsmanship, having preserved the historical roots of ceramic art in his creative work. His contributions to refining, developing, and transmitting this art to future generations are invaluable. The unique artistic works created by A. Nazirov and his students have consistently occupied a place in museum exhibitions and collections, drawing the attention of numerous visitors[7].

It is also worth noting that certain aspects still require further attention. For instance, when one becomes acquainted with the artifacts in the historical section of the State Museum of History and Culture of Fergana Region, one is involuntarily drawn into the past. The exhibits vividly bring to life the daily life and events of ancient times, the medieval period, and the era of



khanates. Visitors can take great pleasure in observing the craftsmanship and examples of applied arts on display.

The museum houses numerous exhibits that capture the attention of visitors. Among them is a remarkable collection of furniture dating back to the late 19th century. This furniture initially adorned the office of the regional military governor. Following the October Revolution, it served as a backdrop on the stage of a drama troupe. After World War II, the furniture was used for an extended period in the administrative offices of the regional government. Finally, in the 1990s, by decision of the regional administration, the furniture was transferred to the museum. Since then, it has been displayed as part of the museum's core exhibits, accessible to the general public.

This furniture was crafted in Europe in the classical style at the end of the 19th century, commissioned by the regional general-governor. Made from oak wood, the pieces are distinguished by their high-quality craftsmanship and refined aesthetic taste. The anthropomorphic and zoomorphic forms incorporated into the designs leave a lasting impression on the viewer. The complex architectural structures and intricate carvings reflect the classical bureaucratic style of European design. Various themes were employed in the decoration of the furniture, with motifs including ancient symbolic forms and figures such as lions, serpents, and dragons, as well as botanical elements and elaborate geometric patterns.

Unfortunately, the complete set of this furniture has not been preserved within the museum. Some of its components are still held in private hands. It is hoped that in the future, the remaining pieces of the collection will also find their place in our museum[4].

One of the key responsibilities of the State Museum of History and Culture of Fergana Region is to enhance the quality of its services by integrating advanced and modern technologies and implementing innovative ideas. Virtual museums are regarded as vivid representations of national cultural achievements. At present, the museum is actively working on developing 3D models of rare exhibits and uploading them to the website, as well as creating an electronic catalog. Such a catalog will provide enthusiasts with the opportunity to embark on a virtual tour of the museum[8].

**CONCLUSION.** Today, the State Museum of History and Culture of the Fergana Region is considered one of the oldest museums in the country, having evolved and developed through various historical periods. At present, the museum houses a number of valuable materials related to the history of our homeland, and its exhibits continue to attract the attention of the international community.

In conclusion, the material and technical condition of museums directly influences their capacity for scientific research, preservation, and exhibition of artifacts. Well-equipped museums with modern technical infrastructure are better positioned to ensure the long-term safeguarding of cultural heritage and to make it accessible to a broader public. Therefore, it is essential that the state continues to prioritize the modernization and technological advancement of museums.

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