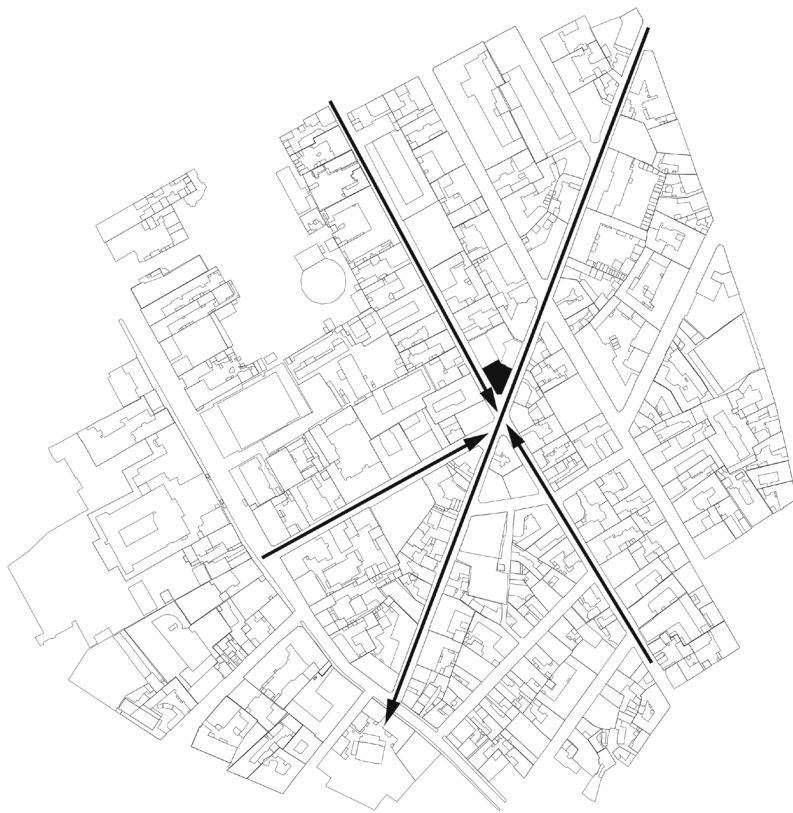


Tsinamdzgvrisvili 49 / Mazniashvili 10

Sitara Abuzar Ghaznawi / Ketuta Alexi-Meskhishvili / Tolia Astakhishvili / Won Cha / Elene Chantladze /

20/05/2023

res / Eliza Mamardashvili / Yong Xiang Li



ishvili / David Meskhi / Natalia Nebieridze / Chadwick Rantanen / Ser Serpas / Understructu

Andro Eradze / Ratik Greiss / Thea Gvetadze / Ana Gzirishvili / Stefanie Heinze / Nino Kapanadze / Melike Kara /

Morag Keil / Nina Kintsurashvili / Keto Logua / Nancy Lupo / Mata Mania / Sophio Medoidze / Gen Mepar



Tolia Astakhishvili / *Just Deserts* / Mixed media, dimensions variable
Image by Angus Leadley Brown

On the occasion of LC Queisser's 5th anniversary, the exhibition *Tsinamdzgvrishvili 49 / Mazniashvili 10* takes our neighborhood and city as its framework. We have commissioned an original piece of scholarship on our neighboring building – Tsinamdzgvrishvili 49 with its landmark staircase – from architectural historian Maia Mania, as well as a piece on the area around us from architect Natalia Nebierdize. This research is presented alongside work from 24 artists who have been involved in the gallery's inaugural years. The exhibition tells a story of the fragile context and environment LC Queisser has emerged within.

Developed in the mid-19th century, our neighborhood reflects the intimacy between urban development, historical change and daily life in Tbilisi. Mania's essay elaborates on the architectural typologies seen in Tsinamdzgvrishvili 49, including the wooden staircase that faces our interior courtyard. This staircase has become the signature element of our building, visible at all times from our gallery windows. It is a continuous element of our exhibitions, sometimes intentionally, as in Tolia Astakhishvili's work, or unintentionally as a striking background feature. Natalia Neberdize's contribution looks at the influence of the adjacent public square on the neighborhood. This study tells a story of the rich and multi-layered history of our city, while pointing to the many changes that have taken place in the neighborhood.

Alongside this historical project, we present works from 24 artists. Emerging from diverse and distinct practices, the collected works engage with related questions around mutable and multi-layered urban space, collective memory, and volatile fluctuations in architecture and identity. Spanning painting, photography, sculpture, video, performance and installation, the works propose new approaches to space and place, engaging with their environments in innovative ways.

Tsinamdzgvrishvili 49 / Mazniashvili 10 also speaks to LC Queisser's commitment to supporting experimental, interdisciplinary and emergent practices, while fostering international dialogue between Tbilisi and the larger art world.

Place. Intersection. Square.

Natalia Nebieridze

In a city's historical neighborhoods, the specific character of a certain place can be in some measure eminently experienced. Multi-layered images are what often trace these places. The unity of both tangible and intangible elements gives its magnetic vibes to the city.

What is it that brings along this sense? What factors determine varying senses about places? Do places have a spirit (Genius Loci)?¹ What reveals spirit, and how can we read into it?

The ideas about space and place have been important in human history. The notions of Platon and Aristotle about the spirit of a place stirred up the worldview of the Middle Ages and Renaissance and laid the foundation for the new concepts in the philosophies of Newton, Descartes, Leibniz, and Kant², all of which gave an immense impetus to the phenomenological approaches of the 20th Century.

The vivid experience of a place became an important subject in the study and examination of human existence. In his book "Being and Time", Heidegger argues about the ontological essence and illuminates that place and space are not only physical states but rather substantial and lively occurrences that conclude one's perception of the universe and lead to his or her self-awareness in it.³

A modern-day analyst of place, Canadian-born geographer Edward Relph (1976), underlines the sense of place, how it is experienced or can change and points out both the role of its formation on one's development and the impact of the environment over an individual. Soon after in 1980, Christian Norberg-Schulz connected the same issue to the notions of commonness and identity. He highlights the intersection

within the places and reveals its character as a platform that, on the one hand, determines social relations, and on the other hand, where the same social formations shape the identity of the place.

In the diversity of a city, the abundance of historical layers, together with specific characteristics of certain places, collective memory plays a significant role. A certain place, some old district or a neighborhood, with its layers or tales, textures, extensions, scales, and layouts can also tell history. Together with the arrangement of streets and levels of a building, scales and spatial relations create unique volumes that could be a way to read into historical layers. Urban patterns, the local context, and on top of them, the extensions and built-on fragments – can be understood as signs of place that reveal its semiotic significance.

1. Masha Chigvinadze / Blog / Genius Loci - As An Intangible Phenomenon Of Transforming Spaces Into Places, Tbilisi, Georgia 2022

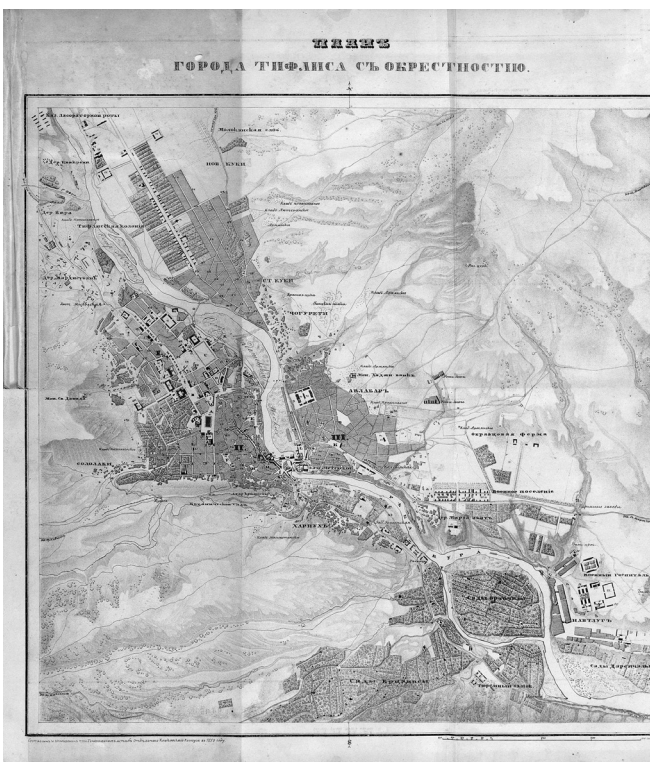
2. GENIUS LOCI AS A META-CONCEPT By Marilena Vecco CEREN, EA 7477, Burgundy School of Business - Université Bourgogne Franche-Comté, France Professor Associated to the Carmelle and Rémi Marcoux Chair in Arts Management, HEC Montréal, Canada

3. Christian Norberg-Schulz / Genius Loci, Towards a Phenomenology of Architecture Rizzoli, New York.1980

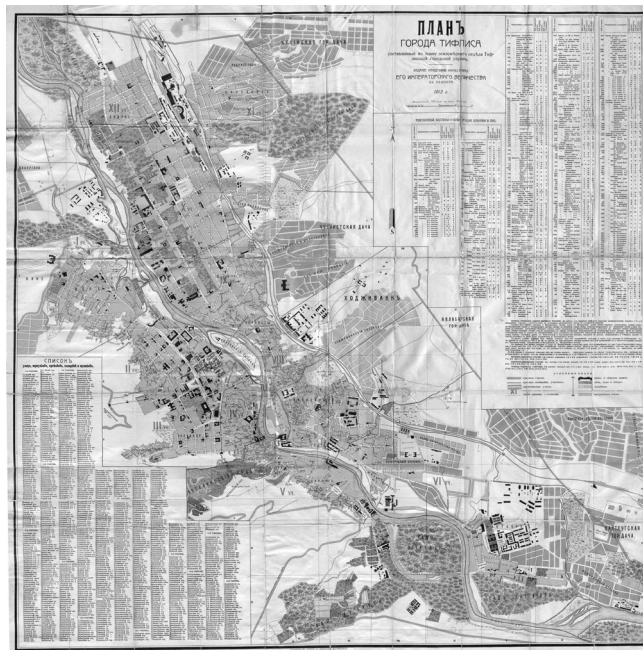
The Square at an Intersection

In Tbilisi, at the intersection of Giorgi Mazniashvili and Mikheil Tsina mdzgvrvishvili Streets, there is a small square that is aligned by two residential buildings. The actual shape of the square is, on the one hand, instigated by the overlap of two streets, and on the other hand – tied together by the arrangement of surrounding buildings. After examining the maps and the district’s morphology, it becomes noticeable that this place stands out by its distinct shape from the regular structure of the whole area.

Mazniashvili Street is an important urban outline of the district. The history of this street starts in the 19th century, and as it is known, it was built in 1846 by the “Tbilisi Suburb Arrangement Commission”, under the leadership of General-Lieutenant Joseph Reut.



Map of Tbilisi. 1850



Map of Tbilisi. 1913

Old maps show that the street was initially named after Reut, then, in 1923 after Aprasion Merkviladze and eventually after Giorgi Chkonideli. In 1991, the street was called General Giorgi Mazniashvili Street who had lived here in the past. Mikheil Tsina mdzgvrvishvili Street was originally called Elisabeth Street and during the Soviet years named after Clara Zetkin. According to city rumors, Tsina mdzgvrvishvili Street is the longest street in Tbilisi.

Tbilisi maps show that the development of this quarter started in the second part of the 19th century. Historical-architectural research demonstrates⁴, that the adjacent commercial house on #49 Tsina mdzgvrvishvili was designed in 1896 and belonged to the Shakhbazov brothers. The native of this house, an 80-year-old photographer Misha recalls that during his childhood, the square was the very yard of the building and even had a fence around it.

4. Maia Mania / Architectural and Art Historical Review of a Former Tenement House at 49 Tsina mdzgvrvishvili Street and its Surrounding Quarter. Tbilisi, 2023.

When looking at both current and historical maps, the diagonal order of Mazniashvili Street in the network of rectangular streets is clearly noticeable. The direction of the street is precisely connected to the arch of a former Surb Gevorg Cathedral located on Agmashenebeli Avenue.⁵ It is important that the street's installment coincided with the building of the Church by an Armenian national, Tandoev. The cathedral changed its function numerous times: during the Soviet era, it housed a movie theater "Kolkhida", afterwards became a Janitor's Club, and is currently vacated and mostly in ruins.

The intersection of Mazniashvili and Tsinamdzgvrishvili Streets, this district as a whole, with its buildings and different architectural elements, is somewhat a known and familiar image for Tbilisi and its old, historical neighborhoods. The relationship of the locals, as well as that of the visitors to the surroundings, is also a common way of being.

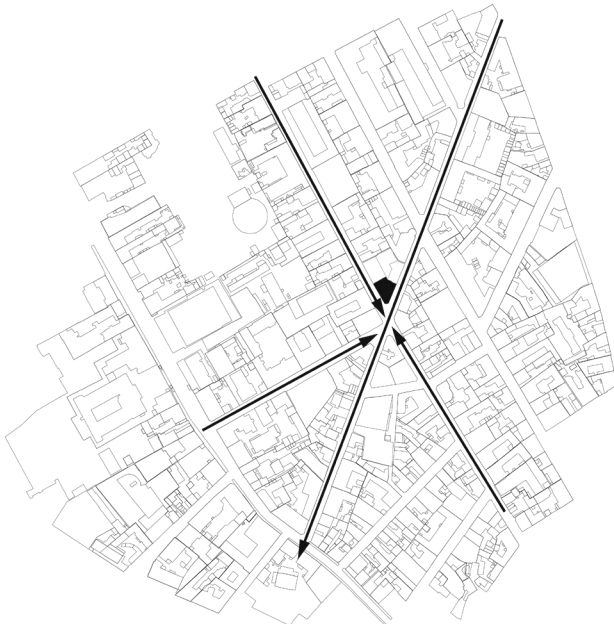


Diagram - square within street network (arrows show pedestrian relation of roads)⁶

However, this particular place, just like the others, has its own peculiar character that is a synthesis of a number of tangible and intangible elements.

For example, the square's relation to the street's intersection creates a unique context and reveals the attractiveness of the place, where different functions and directions collide and challenge the surroundings for the new interactions.

Speaking with the neighbors shows that this square is mainly visited by those living not far from here, while the natives of this place use it for mobility purposes only. The frequent visitors of the square have aligned the benches to their needs. They, who often sit here and play cards or backgammon, have placed the long benches facing each other and positioned a backless chair in the middle as if a table, they gather here in the same place throughout all seasons of the year.

The other side of the street has multiple shops: a grocery shop, a clothing shop and a home goods store. In one of these shops there is a lady called Lali. She rents a small space to make a living by selling goods. From her shop, the view looks out right at the square. Lali comes here every morning, opens her shop, sits at her desk and watches the square. As she tells us, this district has many pickpockets who gather at the square. "As soon as it gets warm, they come here and occupy the whole square, not leaving room for anybody else, not because they're many, but because they litter and swear all the livelong day!". That is why Lali will not even cross the street and breathe some fresh air.

All around interesting is the former residential house located on #10 Mazniashvili Street which also borders the square. The house contains many different functions: apartments,

5. Zurab Bakradze / An Observation made during a Conversation / Tbilisi, 2023

6. ©Natalia Nebieridze

an art gallery 'LC Queisser', a bookshop 'Posta da Kona', and a few second-hand stores. The appearance of the art gallery here in this building has revived the quarter and increased the interest towards the whole area among its visitors and local or international artists. The images of the quarter often appear in either social media or online magazines, but more so happens because of that infamous staircase, placed in the inner yard of #49 Tsinamdzgvishvili, seen through the windows of the Gallery which due to its distinctive shape, often attracts attention.

now a few bathroom windows installed and here and there on these walls, we see some minor extensions built with different materials.

Inside the courtyards, the water drops falling down from the hanging laundry moisten the asphalt. The cars make endless noises on the street. Near the square, the garbage cans splash the 'scent', but nonetheless, the backgammon games never stop.

No less mesmerizing are the old rooftops that are charmingly fixed up according to one's needs or possibilities. A fixed wall of one of the rooftops that is entirely nailed with the tin sheets, reflects the sky (not an unimpressive panorama) and creates quite a contrast with the other roofing materials. Old wooden stairwells are pretty common here. Some have a unique structure while others are ordinary and in distress, however, still functioning and being actively used. Within some of the walls, which originally had no openings, there are



Fragments from local built environment
(photo is shot from the balcony of the Gallery LC Queisser)⁷

Special thanks to Misha Chighvanidze and Zurab Baqradze.

7. Photo by Natalia Nebieridze, 2023

Architectural and Art Historical Review of a Former Tenement House at 49 Tsinamdzhvrishvili Street and its Surrounding Quarter

Maia Mania

On the left bank of the Mtkvari River, the urban development historically known as Kukia settlement commences on Leo Tolstoy Street and expands to Didube Street. The enormous development of Tbilisi was executed from 1817 until 1819 by German colonists settled in Tbilisi and elsewhere in Georgia. Bringing some of the German population to Georgia began during the reign of the Russian Emperor, Alexander I, and continued until 1917. However, where they first settled in Tbilisi, there already existed a village called Akhalsopeli, which arose between the 17th and 18th centuries. On the 1772 map of Tbilisi, this place is already mentioned as Kukia.

The lands, appointed to Germans by the Imperial government, were on a rectangular plot and directly aligned towards the former Mikheil Avenue (later Plekhanov and now David Agmashenebeli Avenue). On the place of Mikheil Street (later Avenue), in late Middle Ages was a road that followed a vast territory more or less parallel to the river Mtkvari, dividing it into two uneven parts: eastern and western.

The rectangular orchards and vineyards built by German colonists and their single-storey residential buildings along Mikheil Street are easily identifiable on Tbilisi's old maps. This particular development is called the 'Tbilisi Colony' (Tiflisser Kolonie) in most 19th century maps of Tbilisi. It is significant that in different bibliographical sources Tiflisser Kolonie is mentioned as Neu Tiflis.

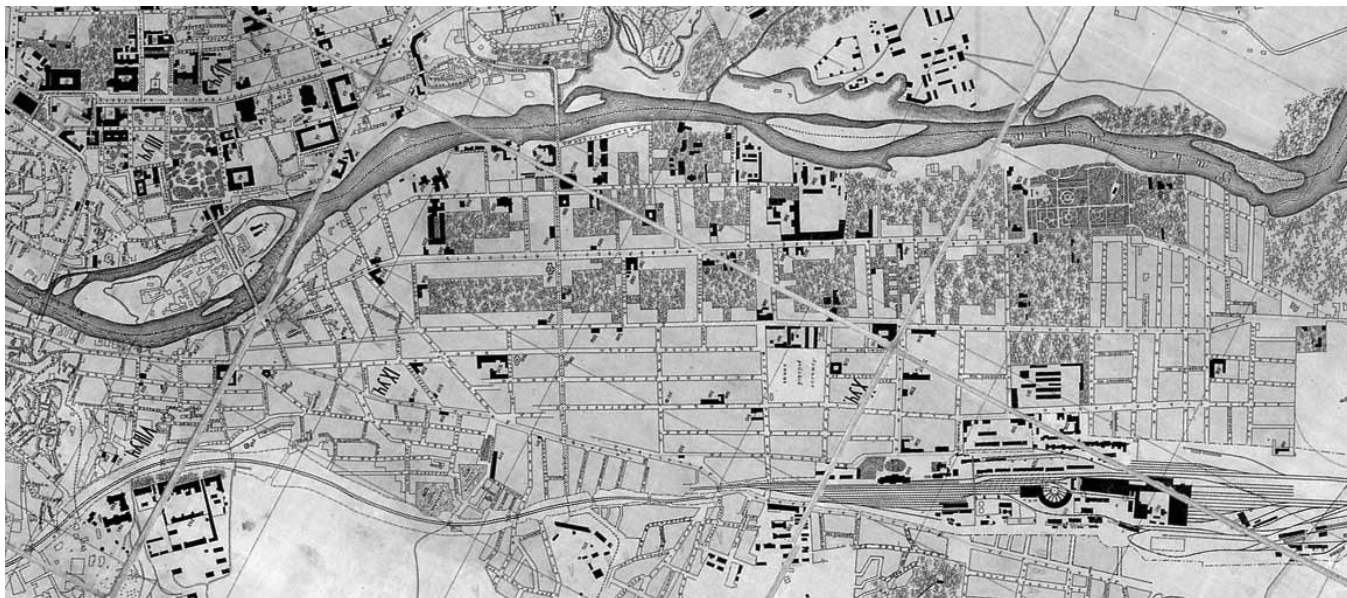
Because of the fact that German merchants and artisans settled along Mikheil Street, the territory of Kukia developed into a distinctly urban settlement. One-storey or two-storey German houses, or single storey commercial buildings (dukhangs), were replaced by large-scale buildings over the course of 19th century Tbilisi's historical and urban development. These old German buildings, with narrow façades punctuated by triangular pediments,



Former tenement house at 49 Tsinamdzhvrishvili Street. Tbilisi. Courtyardside façade. View from 10 Mazniashvili Street house.

are still easily recognizable in the adjacent quarters of Mikheil Tsinamdzhvrishvili, Ivane Javakhishvili, Egnate Ninoshvili, Giorgi Chubnashvili Streets.

The elongated rectangular plots of lands that created regular planning of the left bank of the Mtkvari in the Kukia settlement remain to this day nearly intact; however, there are parts of the urban fragments that, in terms of morphology, have been influenced by the buildings of the second half of the 19th century. The large-scale residential houses of a new typology, as well as the so-called tenement houses, soon became dominant; this in turn affected the morphological layout of streets and most importantly changed the overall scale and spatial relations of 19th century Tbilisi.



Tiflisser Kolonie. Fragment of Tbilisi map. 1907

49 Tsinamdzgvrishvili Street

The urban segment in which the house at 49 Tsinamdzgvrishvili is located is between Mikheil Tsinamdzgvrishvili and Ivane Javakhishvili Streets. The area is bordered on the south by Giorgi Mazniashvili Street (formerly Reut Street), which diagonally crosses the network of streets in Kukia, from David Agmashenebeli Avenue to Sabcho Square. The northern border of the quarter is the current Kita Abashidze Street (formerly New Catholic Street, and in 1902, renamed Melikov Street). This particular urban area is characterized by the concentration of heritage-listed buildings, but the area also includes houses which have high artistic merit and do not have protected status.

The whole urban area is valuable from an architectural point of view, but several buildings of different typologies and chronologies particularly elevate the architectural significance of the entire district. Such buildings include the so-called New Catholic Church on Ivane Javakhishvili Street (55 Javakhishvili, architect Albert Salzman, 1870s), private homes of Mariam Jambakur-Orbeliani on the same street (66/4 Javakhishvili) and the architect Mikheil Ohanjanov (16 Mazniashvili, architect

M. Ohanjanov), and 1 Egnate Ninoshvili Street. The three-story tenement house at 49 Mikheil Tsinamdzgvrishvili Street (the former Elisabeth Street) is set back from the street. The building belonged to two brothers, Ivan and Bagrat Shakhbazov.¹ (Please see the publication attachment).

Drawings for the design were executed with black Indian ink on whatman paper, glued to fabric backing. Project drawings include the situation plan, three plans, a façade, and section. The plans and section are colored red, while the situation plan is marked pink. The project author's signature is indecipherable.

The plan of the building is symmetrical. The entrance and stairwell are situated on the central axis. On each floor contains a single apartment on either side of the stairwell. On the courtyard side, on each level includes a wooden balcony. However, it is important to note that the contour of rectangular balconies is not developed towards the contour of the courtyard façade and is instead converted within the adjustment of the façade. The part of the stairwell placed on the central axis is insignificantly projected from the bearing wall.



Fragment of the plan of Old Kukia.

© GEOGRAPHIC. GIS and RS Consulting Center

1. Georgian National Archive, Fund 192, 8A, Case 4962, The project of three-story house of Ivan and Bagrat Shakhbazov, in the 9th district of Tbilisian soil.



Former tenement house at 49 Tsinamdzgvrishvili Street. Tbilisi. Main façade.⁵

On the ground floor plan, from the courtyard side, the stairs are marked on both corners. The section is done on the axis of the building, which shows the construction of wooden balconies.

In the depths of the quarter, the house has a courtyard. The courtyard with its rectangular trapezium plan is enclosed by residential houses of different chronologies and typologies (10, 13 Mazniashvili Street and 49 Tsinamdzgvrishvili Street). The entrance to the courtyard is arranged through an iron gate that is placed between the side elevations of 10 Mazniashvili Street and

49 Tsinamdzgvrishvili Street.

The main façade, located on Elisabeth Street, results from the peculiarity of the plan and is strictly symmetrical. The three-storey façade is divided by means of side and central projections. The narrowness of these projections is underlined by the fact that their edge sides are flanked by rusticated pilasters in such a way that the rustication of the pilasters of the first and second floors are uninterrupted. The separation of floor registers is marked only between the ground and first floors. Because of the giant rusticated pilasters, the proportions of the projections appear elevated. The projections have flat arch openings; the in-between flat surfaces have three openings of the same shape. The framing of the window openings and the main door is different on each floor.

The openings of the first floor, according to the design, are embellished with keystones. The second-floor openings on the upper side have plain cornices. The flat surface of the wall, as well as projections, are rusticated. According to the design, the façade has a plain parapet. It consists of horizontally placed rectangular shape recessions that alternate with square-shaped accents on the edges of the projections.

Comparing the façade of the initial project to the current façade shows the difference between the two. On the current façade, which stands on a low socle, the middle projection is neglected and those on the side are placed on additional pilasters. The ground floor is entirely rusticated. Except projections and the ground floor the entire surface of the façade is smooth.

2. The photographs of the building's current condition were made by the author herself in December 2022 and 2023.



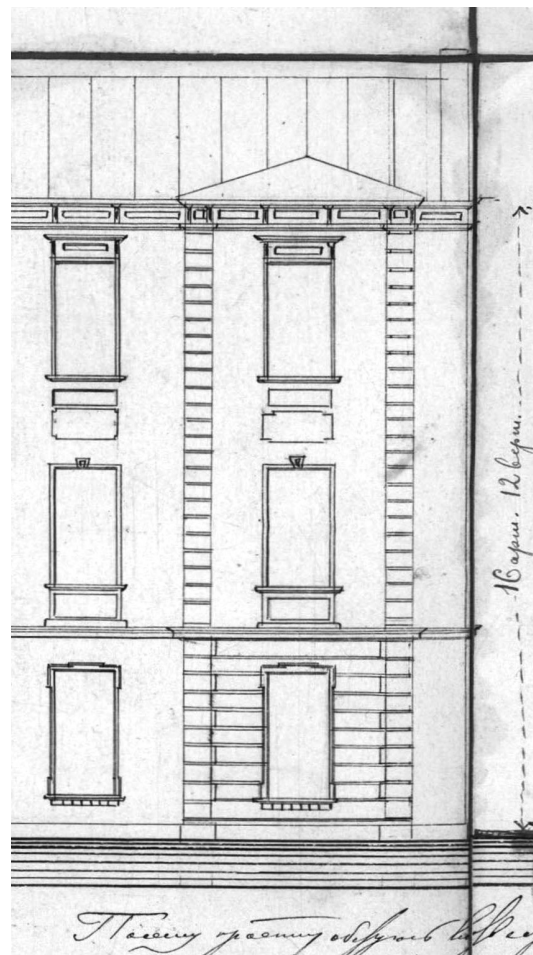
Former tenement house at 49 Tsinamdzgvrishvili Street. Tbilisi. Fragment of main façade.



Former tenement house at 49 Tsinamdzgvrishvili Street. Tbilisi. General view.



Former tenement house at 49 Tsinamdzgvrishvili Street. Tbilisi. Side elevation.



Former tenement house at 49 Tsinamdzgvrvishvili Street. Tbilisi. Fragment of main façade; Ivan and Bagrat Shakhbazovs three story house. Fragment of the design of 1896. ©Georgian National Archives

The main façade overlooking the street is adorned by elements typical of European architecture such as rustication of the ground floor, triangle pediments of first floor windows, keystones atop flat arched windows on the ground floor, unplastered brick pilasters flanking the risalits, and profiled lines marking the floor construction and cornices. Noteworthy are the decorative use of brick for cornices atop the window openings on the second floor, and the decorative, heavy entablature.

The artistic effect of the main façade of the former Shakhbazov tenement house is mainly due to the alternation of the so-called Russian brickwork and the imitation of the flat stone, extracted by its plastering.

The ground and first floors of the building are built with brick and flat stone, whereas the second floor is entirely made of brickwork. The strongly elevated side elevations of the tenement house are freely visible from all

sides of the neighboring urban area. This is due to the one-story house of the 51 Tsinamdzgvrvishvili Street and a square, situated at the intersection of Mazniashvili and Tsinamdzgvrvishvili Streets, from which the side elevation of the Shakhbazov house is fully visible. The arrangement of the alternation of the flat stone and brickwork is characteristic of most old houses in Kukia. The tradition could well be traced in the oldest part of Tbilisi, Tbilisi Proper.

It is important to note for the future development of the adjacent quarter that the building at 51 Tsinamdzgvrvishvili Street, which contained courtyard space in the depth of the quarter (1879, architect Paul Gotthardt), is in ruins now. The house was of high artistic and architectural merit some time ago. In the case of the planning of new construction on, the new edifice must not exceed the height of the Shakhbazov house, but it also has to be much lower than the existing neighboring house.

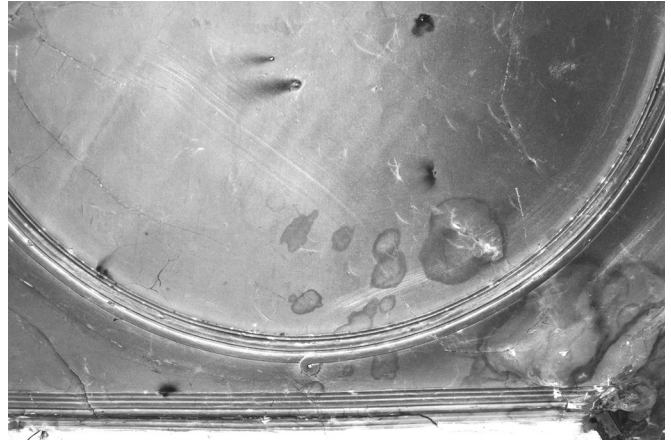
The bright red color of the uncovered brick, protruding from the façade's architectural adornment—like triangle pediments of window openings, keystones, decorative termination atop window openings, and most importantly the high proportions of the main three-floor façade—distinguished the Shakhbazov's former tenement house from adjacent houses and dominate the nearby urban area around the intersection of Mazniashvili and Tsinamdzgvrishvili streets.

The high architectural value of the above-described façade and the whole building is undeniable; however, what makes the former Shakhbazovs' house a remarkable phenomenon is its courtyard-side façade as long as it is adorned by the wooden stairwell—the typology of which is not typical for Tbilisi. The design solution of the staircase sets this building apart from other buildings of the neighbourhood.

The staircase is placed on the central axis of the courtyard façade and vertically follows all three floors. The stairwell is arranged on so called stair stringers (Treppenwange, German), which are diagonally placed and are its main constructive elements. The stairs have balustrades of wooden fretwork, much of which is missing now. The part of the staircase located in the depth appears to be fixed to the courtyard façade bearing wall. The staircase itself is entirely covered from the top. Arranged on the both sides of the stairs are balconies with three spans, which are glazed now; these balconies have columns which are square-shaped in plan. The staircase has wooden fretwork railing. This staircase, placed on the axis of symmetry, is significant for its unusual construction.



Former tenement house at 49 Tsinamdzgvrishvili Street. Tbilisi. General view.



Former tenement house at 49 Tsinamdzgvishvili Street. Tbilisi. Entrance hall.



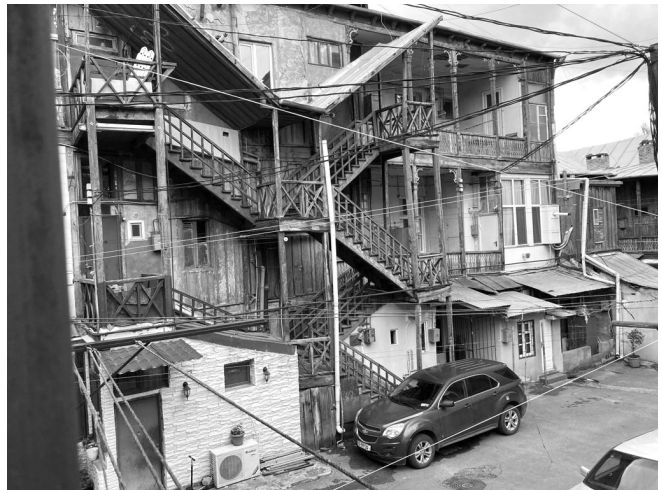
Former tenement house at 49 Tsinamdzgvishvili Street. Tbilisi. Courtyardside façade. Staircase.

It is noteworthy that the stairwell inside the entrance hall has wooden stairs and a wooden balustrade, which alternates with the cast iron balustrade. The iron balustrade consists of multiple volutes. Interestingly similar balustrades can be found in the entrances of Tbilisi houses from the late 19th century.

The wooden staircase, with its stair stringers, creates a dynamic composition of the structure.

The described staircase is not found in the initial 1896 design. The original plan had only wooden balconies (now glazed balconies, shushabandi), which are arranged on all three floors of the courtyard side of the building. The vertical staircase is what unites and ties together the wooden balconies of each individual apartment. It is interesting that the volume of the staircase is partially placed within the general contour of the balconies and partially extends out of the main façade of the courtyard. The staircase might be an original idea of the author, but it is more than clear that local masters, who were in charge of its construction greatly contributed to its design. There is no doubt that the local masters contributed a great deal to the high artistic value of the resulting whole.

The shape and spatial structure of the staircase echoes one of Andrea Palladio's staircases. Unusual for Tbilisi's spatial construction of a staircase, it once again is repeated within the urban development of the left bank of the Mtkvari River. It embellishes the courtyard of a building, located at 13 Davit Kldiashvili Street.



House at 13 Davit Kldiashvili Street. Fragment of courtyardside façade.



Former tenement house at 49 Tsinamdzgvishvili Street. Tbilisi.
Entrance of the courtyard.



Former tenement house at 49 Tsinamdzvrishvili Street. Tbilisi. Fragment of the courtyard-side façade.

Editing: Ana Chorgolashvili
Translation: Elene Kobidze
Proofreading: Anna Kats
Publication Design: Tamar Chaduneli

Published by LC Queisser, Tbilisi

Thanks to:

Ana Chorgolashvili / George Zhorzholiani / Tina Janiashvili / Qeu Meparishvili / Gvantsa Jgushia
/ Anna Tsereteli / Tina Bakhtadze / Tata Managadze

100 copies

Printed at Publishing House *Nekeri*, Tbilisi.

May, 2023

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