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Codification of the Cultural Meanings of the Krasnoyarsk Street Ornaments

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In the given article we consider the interpretation of cultural meanings of ornaments in Krasnoyarsk city. The theoretical part of the paper is devoted to the analysis of the role of ornament (the ornamental visual field) in its impact on humans and, therefore, in forming of the city cultural meanings.

Applied part of the article is devoted to the analysis of visual ornamental fields of one of the city microdistricts located within Zheleznodorozhny District. Certain ornamental fields (the facades) and the ornament of the whole microdistrict image are analyzed. Four types of ornamental field are considered in the historical chronology of their origin, the definition is given to their characteristics and meanings.

In conclusion the problem of the formation of an entire ornamental field has been formulated.

Keywords: “ornament”, “city ornament”, “meaning of the ornament”, “krasnoyarsk ornament”, “ornament in the Krasnoyarsk streets”, “ornamental field”, “Krasnoyarsk”, “cultural pattern”, “significance of the cultural year”, “H.P. Koptseva”, “significance of ornaments in the cultural system”.

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Point

*The theoretical grounds
of the topical approach of study
of ornamental field visualization
in Krasnoyarsk city*

Today one of the pressing research processes in the field of culture system in Krasnoyarsk city and Krasnoyarsk Territory is the study of city cultural meanings that could reveal the specificity of the ideals and ideals formation and determine the specificity of Krasnoyarsk, Siberian and Russian identity.

Modern studies of “individual civilization identity” reveal its importance with the purpose of understanding and determining the human place in the world. Particular interest of Russian researchers is aimed at determination of “regional identity”. Factors of the “regional identity” formation are different. Therefore, interest of researchers in this field is aimed at very different objects and phenomena that reflect the regional identity to some extent. In particular, there are series of studies in Siberian Federal University that reveal the specifics of regional identity and its

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role in forming of certain cultural ideals. There are articles written by Koptzeva N.P., Bakhova N.A., Semenova A.A., Zamaraeva Yu.S., Luzan V.A. (1–10), as well as research grant “Social construction of all-Russian national identity in Central Siberia”.

As an object of study that forms regional identity we have chosen the ornament of Krasnoyarsk streets. The topicality of ornament research is obvious. The ornament is one of the oldest forms of artistic activity. The ornament carries a set of symbols and signs of the culture to which ornament belongs. The culture code is the information that is encoded in certain form for identification of regional identity. Revealing of the codification of the Krasnoyarsk street ornament cultural meanings will make it possible to understand “regional identity”.

Usually “city ornament” means the carving of wooden cases of old buildings, uncommon building painting, fences and railings. But in authors’ opinion the most important is the city visual ornamental field. There are ornamental qualities of the visual fields that are observed by the citizens in daily life, e.g. the facades of the buildings, the complex of the court or street, etc.

In the works that cover the phenomenon of ornament the researchers determine several important system fields of the ornament using culture:

- Religious culture: ornament became widespread in the decoration of churches, church utensils, sacred books. In the Ancient Rus the word “ornament” had its origins from the word “pattern-carving” and “pattern”. In its turn the origins of the words “pattern” and “pattern-carving” are derived from the word “dawn” and “sun”. Patterns had the symbolic and religious nature.
- Domestic culture: ornament could be found in daily life, in the decoration

of the buildings, clothes, interiors and others.

- Artistic culture: ornament strikingly shows its worth in decorative and applied arts.

Now we will turn to the very concept of “ornament”. Most sources that reveal the concept of “ornament” point out its connection with the concept of “decor” and specify its belonging mostly to architecture.

According to the translation from the Latin language (“omemantum” – decoration) it is the pattern that consists of rhythmically ordered elements used for the decoration of various objects (utensils, tools, weapons, clothing, etc.) and architectural structures¹. Researchers of the ornament particularly mark out the ornament depth, give symbolic, magical meaning to it and highlight its symbolic and semantic functions. “Ornament is rather complex artistic structure, and different expressive means are used for its creation. Among them there are color, texture and mathematical fundamentals of ornamental composition – rhythm, symmetry, graphic expression of ornamental lines, its elasticity and mobility, flexibility or angularity, plasticity in relief ornaments... “(N.S. Voronchikhin and others, 2004).

The ornament’s influence on the person on the psycho-physical level is of particular interest of researchers that is relating to the concept of ornament. For example, M.D. Toren² in his study reveals regularity of physical and psychological influence of the folk ornament on the person. For example, a number of modern studies of the ornament influence on the human body show that there is a proposed connection in rhythmical pattern line that is an oscillation circuit, matching human electromagnetic field and certain human organs with the electromagnetic field of the Earth. This supposition was based on the study of certain principles of textile ornament structure

and effects of human visual perception of the ornament. Scientists who are studying the effect of human perception of the ornament argue that certain pattern structure can favorably influence humans. There are a number of asymmetric ornament patterns that have favorable influence on humans, but they also have certain structure principles.

Rhythm is the basis of the ornament. Some researchers during the study of ornament attach special importance to the rhythm. Rhythm is the order that is the basis of human life and overrides and sets a guideline in the human universe. Disrhythmia (disorder) leads to the destruction and chaos. Study of the ornament in the context of world order makes it possible to reveal the specificity of human world view.

For the study of the cultural meanings codification of the Krasnoyarsk street ornament it is necessary to define the idea of the concept "city ornament": it is the visualized system of ornamental field signs that are expressed with the help of artistic means and carry the meanings of the cultural codes.

With the main principle of ornament structure that is the establishment of the order and certain rhythm humans can reconstruct own tempo of life that is comfortable or not comfortable for the relationship with the world.

Example

The specificity of the Krasnoyarsk cultural code on the basis of ornamental field of Zheleznodorozhny District

This part of the article is devoted to the analysis of several types of visualized ornamental field. We will reveal the codification of the cultural meanings of the Krasnoyarsk street ornaments by study of one of the representative Krasnoyarsk districts – Zheleznodorozhny District. For the study we have chosen typical microdistrict with developed infrastructure.

Zheleznodorozhny District was formed in 1979. One side of Zheleznodorozhny District borders on Central District, another side borders on Oktyabrsky District of Krasnoyarsk city. Geographically the district is located in the higher part of the Yenisey River and extends along the railway from the Railway Bridge to the West. Considering the specificity of the Krasnoyarsk identity, it should be noted that the quality of "extension" is carried by many cultural elements of Krasnoyarsk city in whole and of Zheleznodorozhny District in particular. The elements that have this quality include railroad, street length, size and shape of the buildings, etc. For instance, there are buildings at Kuibysheva St., 85; Menzhinskogo St., 6; Kopylova St., 42 and Kopylova St., 48, Svobodny Pr., 28, etc. Cultural codes will be disclosed more detailed during the analysis of the visualized field of city streets.

Therefore, the part of Zheleznodorozhny District that has been chosen for the study of Krasnoyarsk visualized ornamental field is representative.

With the analysis of ornamental fields of the facades of the buildings that are located in Zheleznodorozhny District we will consider the way of visualized ornamental field formation. We will see how Krasnoyarsk identity features are revealed in concrete elements that form the ornament of Krasnoyarsk city.

For the decoding of the codification of cultural meanings in the city visual ornamental field we will define the basic parameters of comparison:

1. Type of ornament in terms of structure and symmetry, because symmetry is the most common compositional method of ornament modeling. It is also important to define the degree of dissymmetry and asymmetry.

2. Rhythm that is inseparably linked with the feeling of motion. Rhythm is the reiteration of the elements of ornamental pattern with the

same interval, highlighting and submission of these elements.

3. Ornamental composition: contrast, because it has a great influence on artistic expression, for example, contrast between large and small elements, transparent and non-transparent elements. Often contrast specifies anti-symmetry. It is also important to consider such ornamental characteristics as an elementary cell, lines and its nature, texture, color, etc.

At first we will analyze cultural meanings of certain object ornamental fields (mostly, the facades of the buildings), then we will analyze their complexes. Four types of ornamental field of Zheleznodorozhny District are defined for the study.

The first type of ornamental field

During the analysis of ornamental field we will consider two types of architectural structures that are based on one type of ornamental composition. There are buildings at Svobodny Pr., 28/1, Svobodny Pr., 28/2, Demyan Bedny St., 29, Demyan Bedny St., 22 (Fig. 1, 2).

The front facades of wooden buildings have a clear vertical “mirror” symmetry. The side faces are lengthened. Horizontal “translational” symmetry, represented by two rows of windows can be noticed in the side faces and wooden siding of the facade. All details give the construction concepts of “length”, “typicality” and “order”.

Dominant type of symmetry in the formation of visual ornamental fields of wooden architectural structures is the “mirror symmetry”. Considering specificity of the Krasnoyarsk identity in the Krasnoyarsk ornamental visual field, mirror symmetry reveals the code of “length”. It is not accidental, because during the 17th-19th centuries Krasnoyarsk city was developing in the northern and southern directions. The dynamics of “length” is set by the main element of the

district – the railway. The active construction of the railway in the 19th century has attracted to the city hundreds and thousands of out-migrants. Krasnoyarsk city began to expand and grow. This dynamics of expanding development in the given ornamental space is emphasized by the rhythm of “translational symmetry” and set by symmetrically placed windows, elementary cells and siding of the facade. Wooden texture emphasizes and complements the idea of young Krasnoyarsk to be a young growing living organism. At present wood as a building material is quite popular, but it is actively used only in the outlying districts of the city. At present wood is not in demand of the inhabitants of one of the central districts, it probably depends on regulated district development that does not give urban residents an opportunity to express their individuality. Analyzing the present coloration of wooden residential buildings, it should be noted that there are tendency of “blending”, “fitting” into the district system. The color scheme of residential buildings is submitted to the dominant architectural structures of this microdistrict. For example, the building at Demyan Bedny St., 29 (Fig.1) has the same brown-red color scheme as the highest building at Svobodny Pr., 28 (Fig. 4). The colour scheme can also blend architectural structure with the environment. Thus, analyzable visual ornamental field of the facades of the buildings at Svobodny Pr. has blue and green colors that help to fit it into the environment and hide it in the green foliage. Coloration reveals the code of “dissolution” and “blending” losing its quality of element independence and getting the quality of adaptation. The elements that distort ornamental field include rare insertion of blue and green shades of color, window grates, advertising banners, shabby facing paint.

We will consider ornamental field of standard serial residential buildings. There are buildings at Demyan Bedny St., 22, Krasnomoskovskaya St.,



Fig. 1. Krasnoyarsk, 29 Demyana Bednogo street

27, Mechnikova St., 10 and Mechnikova St., 12 (Fig.2).

Analyzable ornamental fields of the facade are typical architectural structures – the types of mass serial buildings of the Soviet period that are the basis of the architectural image of many residential districts. According to the construction technology serial buildings can be panel, sectional and brick.

Because of political, ideological, and demographic reasons, the period of the Khrushchev Thaw in the history of the Soviet planned economy was the first period when along with the development of heavy industry it was expected to increase everything that was connected with human needs. In particular it was residential construction. Development of the industrial enterprises in Zheleznodorozhny District of Krasnoyarsk city also actively furthered the inhabitants growth. The construction of the typical residential house that could accommodate more people and offered the best comfort became topical.

As a part of typical residential building ornamental fields of these facades have vertical “mirror symmetry”. “Translational symmetry” can be traced in the building material texture (bricks or panels) and sets cyclicity. “Cell”, “structure” and “integrity” are the main elements. In contrast to the wooden buildings there is an increase of the percentage of glass surface that has the quality of “transparency”.

Coloration has two versions: gray (the color of the concrete) and yellow and red (the color of the bricks). In contrast to the wooden buildings that in the past have showed its naturalness of the natural element and eventually have begun to be painted, this type of structures have already got more extensive range of colors and made the city visual ornamental field more diverse. Moreover, now it is possible to trace that coloration of natural material (stone that visualizes the ideological fundamentals of the strength and solidity of the forming state) gain new color, some buildings are even partially painted lilac.



Fig. 2. Krasnoyarsk, 22 Demyana Bednogo street

Despite the rigorous insertion in the integrated social system that has strict symmetry and is represented by alternation of such ornament elements as the “cells” (bricks in the brick buildings and square blocks in the panel buildings) at this stage there are elements that destroy the rigor and uniformity of the city visual ornamental fields (Fig. 3). These elements include color scheme of balconies, window and balcony grates. Plant ornament also appears here. In addition, in these buildings there are such public places as stores, hairdressing salons, tailoring shops and beauty salons that clearly violate the united facade image and lead to dissonance of the perception of the unified city ornamental field.

Visual ornamental field of wooden buildings has geometric ornament that is derived from the combination of simple figures with distinct elements – straight lines and geometric figures (square, rectangle, and triangle). The rhythm nature is metrical and uniform, but mostly uniform. The motif of ornamental composition is motif-based (the motif is repeated at regular

intervals, there are window and wooden wall as a motif). Ornament composition has a static nature.

Visual ornamental field of typical serial buildings is very different from the ornamental field of wooden buildings, but has united compositional structure. As the basis of the ornament there are the main forming elements – rectangle and cell. The pattern becomes dynamic, there are elements that violate the static nature such as a line of loggias. The motif and ornamental field pattern become more complicated (there are window and brick (concrete) wall as a motif).

Large ornamental fields (the building facades) are supported by small ornamental fields of fences (in particular school fences), curbs and grates. These ornaments also have simple rectangular grids, minimal coloration and contrast, its elementary motifs are simple and submitted to the general idea of system order.

Therefore, with the analysis of the visualized ornamental field of the facades of wooden, typical and serial residential buildings the type of the

ornament could be characterized as “barrack”. The clear structure of ornamental field, clear typical elementary rectangular cell and frontal examination of the whole ornamental field reveal a certain type of world-view when person is the part of the whole. Clear understanding of certain structural elements such as the highlighting of the main part and pediment reveals the hierarchy of parts of the whole. The dominance of “mirror symmetry” over “translational symmetry” establishes a certain subordination order, in particular between humans and society. While describing the inhabitants of the building in the period of building construction it is possible to mark out the basic qualities of “typicalness”, “uniformity”, “subordination” and “unity”.

The second type of ornamental field

For the definition of the second type of visual ornamental field, we have chosen as the objects of study the reverse side of the facade of the same standard serial buildings (Fig. 3, 4).

The main distinctive feature of this type of visual ornamental field is appearance of cells that are fundamentally different from other cells and its adaptation to the standard serial building:

- Individual construction of balconies;
- Individual construction of the facades of the ground floor apartments (the store, gastronomy, dry-cleaner’s).

It seems that given elements have nothing in common:

- balconies construction is often negligent, old, bendy and dilapidated;
- stores that are located in the ground floor apartments, are new, clean, bright, color-highlighted, with a signboard, etc. – each facade has a strongly pronounced individual nature.

But in the context of ornament both elements represent the destruction of certain cells without harmonization of integrity. The general ornament of “barrack” is distorted by destructive elements that are not concerned about general view.



Fig. 3. Krasnoyarsk, 22 Demyana Bednogo street

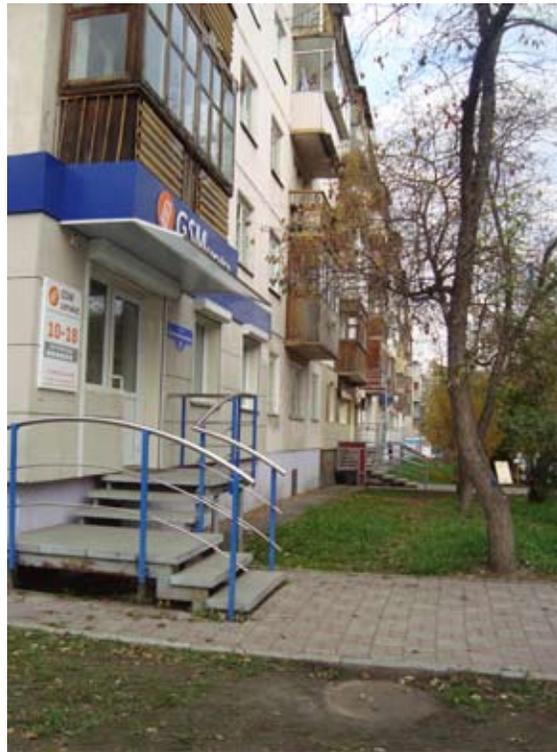


Fig. 4. Krasnoyarsk, 25 Krasnomoskovskaya street

All these different styles are emphasized by such small elements as fragments of pavestones. Small fragments of pavestones are located in front of stores and certain objects and are made in different unharmonious style; pavestones are consisted of cells with completely different shapes and different directions, etc. In the pavestone ornament there are various types of symmetry (mirror, rotational, translational types of symmetry, dissymmetry), that are rather strictly matched within the fragment, but are not matched in whole.

Marked specificity of ornamental field makes it possible to assert that there is destruction of the unified ornamental pattern of the building facade. The tendency of “individuality” is obvious, every façade tries to stand out, but it destroys the structural composition of unified pattern. This type of ornamental field can be described as “barrack under destruction”. Individuality that

has appeared “in barrack” still cannot solve the problem of building unified ensemble, the main object is to escape from typicality and show individuality.

The third type of ornamental field

An important aspect of the study of the codification of ornamental cultural meanings in Krasnoyarsk city is the concepts of “district” and “microdistrict” as a certain closed space. These concepts provide for some “order”, “organization” and “unity” of people in the urban area.

We will consider the third type of ornamental field relying on the analysis of the building facade at Svobodny Pr., 28 and 28 A (Fig. 5). This type of architectural building belongs to so-called “infill construction”. At present “infill construction” is one of the common types of construction in Russian large cities.



Fig. 5. Krasnoyarsk, 28A Svobodny prospect

The building facade has a complex structure, its entire line has irregular angular nature. It is the first significant distinctive feature that specifies dynamics and motion. Three-dimensionality of protruding facades sets circular motion that has not been found before in ornamental field of buildings under study. The circular motion is also supported by visual ornamental field of the playground that has “repetitive” symmetry. Elements of mirror symmetry can be partially traced in the location of windows and balconies and colour of the facade.

The dominant type of symmetry can be defined as “translational dissymmetry.” However, despite the interior individual original design solution that is presented by complex image of the outer facade it is compensated by a very strict symmetry of certain fragments and elements. This symmetry restores the balance of external and internal image, the balance of the facade,

balancing the dissymmetry of certain elements position (balconies, loggias, small and large windows) with the structure of its inner mirror symmetry.

Ornamental field of the facade has gained fundamentally new quality of texture. The surface nature exposes its internal structure. For the first time a metal frame juts out and displays the quality of “openness”. The complex wall body is balanced by protruding metal construction with glass balconies. The glass surface of balconies and windows reflects the environment and dissolves in it by blending with the surrounding area. The coloration is obviously revealed. The colour has become dominant in the visual ornamental field. Moreover, small architectural forms are submitted to it. Thus, we can say that the building at Demyan Bedny St., 29 (Fig. 1) has a unified color scheme. The elements that distort ornament include private entrances to the stores

and signboards. They are mostly concentrated in the lower part of the building.

Visualized ornamental field of modern housing estate can be referred to the type of “complex organic ensemble”. Compositional structure is complicated. Fractured facade line has protruding voluminous parts, different colors, different elements (windows, balconies, loggias). On the one hand it fits the building into the small microdistrict area, on the other hand it gives the impression of “continuous motion”. It is impossible to examine ornamental field of the facade from one point, and everybody has a desire to go round the building.

The dominant type of symmetry in the ornamental field (“dissymmetry”) can be traced in the location of windows, balconies, loggias, location of stores on the ground floor of buildings and stairs, the form of the stairs. There are several local ornaments in the general visual ornamental field. On the one hand, it destroys previous strict order and the dominant uniform cell and helps to form human individuality in society. On the other hand, “mirror symmetry” and “translational symmetry” in the elements that create visualized ornamental field in the balcony and loggia balustrades, window openings and fragments of the facade introduce proper order with the help of unified ornamental pattern of paving stones around the housing estate, in the inner court and on the playground. The order of motion emphasizes the ornament of handrails around the entire complex, low fences on the playground. The uniformity of the ornamental pattern of fence elements of a modern housing estate on the microdistrict territory isolates this complex from the other buildings that are presented in the given ornamental field.

The symmetry of the visual field ornament can be seen from the interior of the building. Both houses are situated opposite each other with a playground in the center. Closed space that is

emphasized by a single pattern of fence element ornament creates the feeling of calmness and silence, but also the feeling of life. Dissymmetry of the general background of the visual ornamental field is balanced by symmetry of the ornament pattern elements. It creates a feeling of comfort, coziness and calmness, security from everyday life and a living microcosm in the microdistrict of Zheleznodorozhnyi District of Krasnoyarsk city. This ornamental field meets the requirements of modern society, because this field emphasizes and demonstrates the identity both of the living space interior and exterior. It gives an opportunity to prove oneself as a personality. However, in contrast to previous ornamental field, this ornamental field also solves the problem of matching certain individualities.

The fourth type of ornamental field

During the study of the fourth type of ornamental field we will turn to the entire ornamental field that is observed every day by local residents. As an example for study we will take one of the angles of the microdistrict inner court (Fig. 6).

Ornamental field has a complicated multilayer structure and consists of multiple local ornaments. We should also add ornamentality of small architectural forms: garages, underground cellars. Fragmentation of ornamental field is strengthened by pavestones, fences and flowerbeds. However, it is impossible to recognize the nature of entire visual field ornament, because it seems to be too chaotic and inconsistent. The proportions of ornamental field elements are distorted: there are big massive houses and small low buildings, dark local spots and light spots.

Identification of a single ornament motif is difficult. It is possible to mark out “windows” as a single motif, but windows differ greatly. Regularity of motif alternation and reiteration is distorted in the entire visual image. The



Fig. 6. Krasnoyarsk, 28A Svobodny prospect, Krasnoyarsk, 28 Demyana Bednogo street

windows are of different size, color and surface finish. Rhythm distortions can be identified in every element of entire ornament, and it is particularly emphasized by ornament of small architectural structure that is located in the foreground.

Motif composition of certain elements of entire ornamental field is distorted by the trees that block ornamental pattern. Color asymmetry of modern architectural structure cannot find its continuation in other elements of ornamental image. All elements are independent and separated from each other.

All elements of compositional structure carry the meaning of qualities, such as “fragmentation” and “lack of coordination”. This type of visual ornamental field can be defined as “chaos”. Irregular rhythm of ornament sets a complex chaotic motion and causes a feeling of “chaos”, “disharmony” and “discomfort”. It would be more precise to speak about absence of ornamental nature of the given visual field, because ornament requires repetitions, rhythm and regularity, but its detection is not successful.

Thus it can be asserted that ornament of the microdistrict as a whole has not yet been created and formed. It is confirmed by the comments of the microdistrict residents, who use towards their microdistrict such expressions as “a mess”, “disorder”, “I want to look down and go directly to the bus stop,” “I do not understand,” etc.

Resume

Thus, the ornament as an art phenomenon of artistic culture has a particular importance. The person who uses the basic principle of ornament – the establishment and arrangement of order and a certain tempo, is able to recreate his own tempo of living that is comfortable or not comfortable for the relationship with the world.

The analysis of both certain ornamental fields of facades of residential architectural structures and the ornamental image of Zheleznodorozhny District of Krasnoyarsk city, has enabled to identify the transformation tendency of the urban ornament over time. Four types of ornamental field presented above demonstrate the specificity of daily relations between people and society,

people and surrounding world during certain historical periods.

Ornamental field (“barrack” type) during its destruction (the appearance of individuality that is built into the barrack, and contradicts it) has been transformed into the local complex organic integrity that combines order and individuality not as a conflict, but as a whole. However, the entire nature of the visual field ornament has not yet been formed.

Modern urban ornamental image has complex and contradictory nature by contrasting old and new, bright and dull, wooden and brick, low and high, reserved and transparent. The old identity is destroying, adoption of something new and modern is bringing revival and discomfort of general visualization of ornamental field.

The formation of entire ornament of microdistrict visual fields is an object of the city development.

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Кодификация культурных значений в орнаментах улиц города Красноярска

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В статье рассмотрена интерпретация культурных значений орнаментов города Красноярска. Теоретическая часть работы посвящена анализу роли орнамента (орнаментального визуального поля) во влиянии на человека и, значит, в формировании культурных значений города.

Прикладная часть статьи посвящена анализу визуальных орнаментальных полей одного из микрорайонов города, расположенного внутри Железнодорожного района. Проанализированы отдельные орнаментальные поля (фасады домов), затем – орнамент целостного облика микрорайона. Рассмотрены четыре типа орнаментальных полей в исторической хронологии их появления, определены их характеристики и значения.

В заключение сформулирована проблема становления целостного орнаментального поля города.

Ключевые слова: орнамент, городской орнамент, значение орнамента, красноярский орнамент, орнамент улиц Красноярска, орнаментальное поле, Красноярск, культурный код, значение культурного года, значение орнамента в системе культуры.

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