

**ANIPEMZA: FROM GENOCIDE ORPHANS VILLAGE TO WORKERS VILLAGE.
FIRST PROPOSALS FOR CONSERVATION, VALORISATION AND IMPROVEMENT OF AN
INTERESTING ARCHITECTURAL SETTLEMENT EXAMPLE AND OF A RICH HISTORY SITE
IN ARMENIA**

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Location and main data

Anipemza is situated 49 *km* far from the centre of Shirak province, at 185 *km* from Yerevan to southeast and 50 *km* from Gyumri town to north. It is only 300 *m* far from the state border of Armenia with Turkey and about 15 *km* crow flies from the ancient site of Ani, the old Armenian capital, situated on the left side of Akhuryan River, on a flat area on 1430 *meters* on the sea level and which has been included in Turkish territory since 1920.

The only point of view, from Armenia, to Ani is in Kharkov, a village far from Anipemza a few kilometres. But it is impossible access there without permission. Anipemza was included in the province of Yerevan, district of Alexandropol (now Gyumri). In 1938 Anipemza became town-borough in Shirak province. After the reform of 1995 it is known as village as rural series.

Anipemza is served by Gyumri-Yerevan railway and the nearest rail station is in Aniavan, a village far from Anipemza 5 km. A branch of railway enters in the manufacturing area of the village. Heading southwest from Gyumri and parallel to the Turkish border, the road crosses the only rail link between Armenia and Turkey at a level crossing. This rail link was opened in 1898 to provide a connection between Tiflis (nowadays Tbilisi in Georgia) and Kars (nowadays city in Turkey) at a time when both cities were in the Russian Empire. By the latter days of the Soviet Union, there was only one train each week across the border but even this has been suspended since 1992 because the border is officially closed. The military significance of the area, the frontier between the former Warsaw Pact and NATO, can be judged from the continued presence of Russian soldiers.

The well-known Yererouik cathedral, which is one of the best examples of Armenian architecture of 5th century, is situated near Anipemza village. It is one of the most important monuments of Armenia (Fig. 1). According to specialists, it is the biggest cathedral known from early middle ages in Armenia. It is made of red tuff and nowadays is semi ruined. The cathedral is a part of a big complex, but the relation between the cathedral and other elements of the complex is still a mystery. Although scientists have done surveys for about one century on the complex but the results has not been completely published yet. Other structures around the building are dedicated to Bagraduni period (10th century). There is also an Iron Age necropolis nearby with monuments and some jewellery related to 2nd millennium BC was found.

The climate in the village is temperate mountainous. Anipemza municipality area occupies an area of 6,7 sq km. The winter is long and cold with constant snow cover. The summer is hot and moist. Annual precipitation amount is 500...600 mm. The highest temperature in summer is 30 °C and the lowest temperature in winter is -20°C. Downfalls amount is 450 mm. Natural landscape is black soil valley. Climate and geographical situation is like a foothill (fig. 1).

Migrants from nearby villages founded the “new” village in 1926. Some of the ancestors of the inhabitants have moved here in different periods from Armenia: Talin, Ani, Artik, etc. In 1831 there were 647 residents, in 1873 they were 2359, in 1931 they were 529, in 1959 they were 1119, and in 1979 they were 558. The national statistics community of 2013 said that on January 1st there were 392 people in municipality territory of Anipemza. Men make up 49 % and women 51 % of the population. The age percentage of the population is: children 32 %, able to work 53 %, adult 15 %. The occupied area is 340 hectares. The ones for pastures are 220 hectares. There are pumice and tuff mines. Population is nominally 520 person (live there 392), 120 families. The population occupation is ranching and seasonally mines. Near to village there was an industrial complex of building materials. Anipemza is rich of these materials. Anipemza has been a specialized branch of industry in the economy advanced by building materials production. They were supplying the products to different cities and Soviets countries too. Nowadays the activity of mines is limited to seasonal and few works. Especially tuff stone, andesite, cement and pumice, of which it has the name “pemza” near Ani. Even the name Anipemza has particular significance for Armenians because it reminds their inaccessible ancient capital of Ani. The available lands are as following: 10 % is the living residential land area, while the industrial land is 12 %. The agricultural lands and large pastures are the 72 % of the land (477 hectares). Other occupations are animal husbandry (cattle and small livestock), beekeeping, and vegetable growing [1-7, 10].

The village has a school, a library, a post office and a labourers canteen but as it will described after, main of this facilities nowadays do not work (fig. 7, 8).

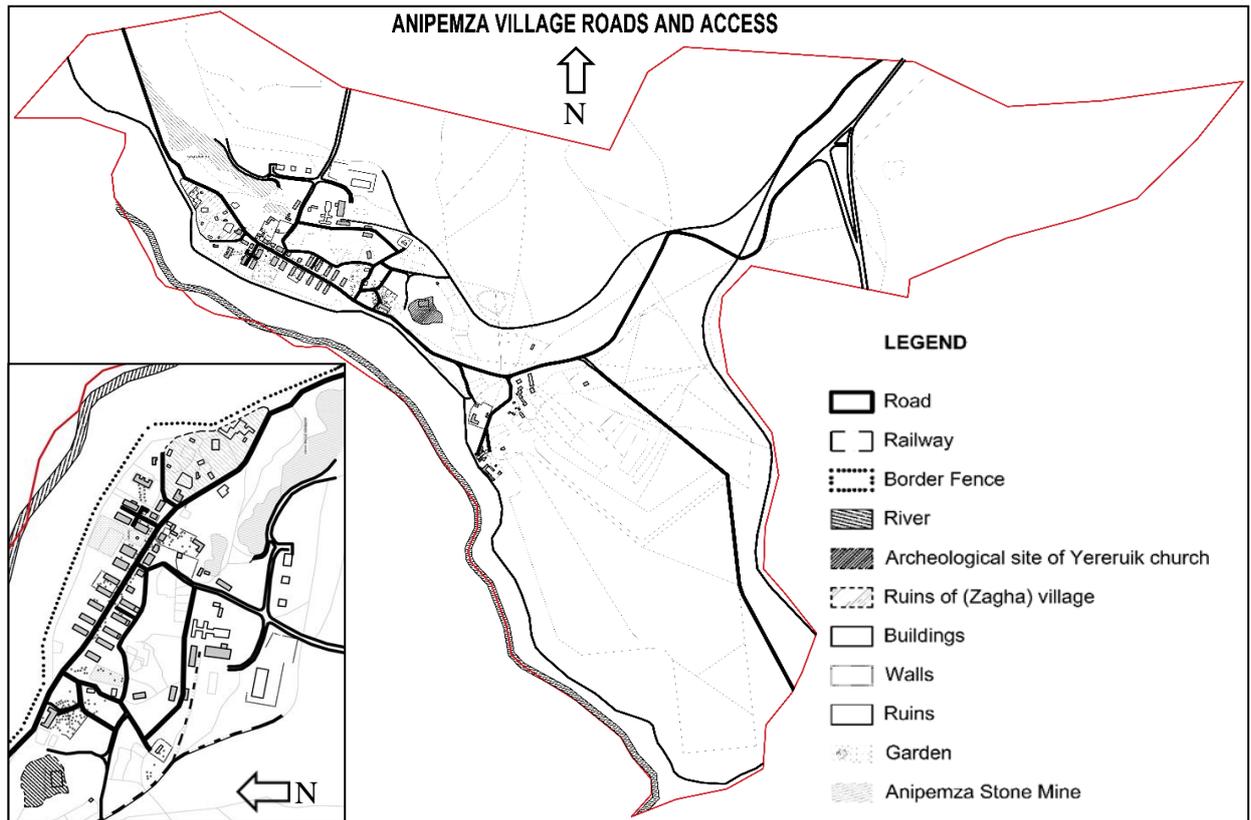


Fig. 1. Anipemza's municipality area and the main parts of it



Fig. 2. Anipemza's general current view from the main road

Anipemza in the past

Anipemza is one of the first industrial cities founded during the Soviet period. It is related to the foundation of the factory in 1926. The founders are mainly the habitants of the neighbour Zagha village (fig.1, 7) destroyed after Anipemza's foundation. According to the testimonials of the older interviewed inhabitants of Anipemza, Zagha was a village who hosted the orphans of 1915 genocide from some villages of the west Armenia (mainly Kars) and from Gyumri (Alexandropol at that time) in 1916 to 1920. Americans took the population from orphanage of Leninakan to work in mine. With the opening activities of the industrializing quarry, specialists were coming with their families from other nearby villages and cities too in order to work there (fig. 3).

The settlement was almost completed in 1936, when the factory had more workers and specialists. After the administrative-territorial division of the area in provinces, in 1936 Anipemza was included in province of Ani, and in 1996, according to the division by the Republic of Armenia, it was announced as a village and was included in Shirak's province.



Fig. 3. Anipemza's orphans in the thirties

The inhabitants recounted about the prosperous period of the village, when there were different types of manufactures there. Particularly they mentioned the stone mine which was exploited well, and produced stone blocks were used in construction works of many outstanding buildings in Yerevan and Gyumri, such as the Yerevan State University designed by architect Alexander Tamanian (1878-1936) who, in 1926, designed the new Yerevan. In addition, some orphans who were moved from Greece during the genocide, have moved to work in Anipemza in 1934. The salary of mineworkers was very high; people were working on 3 shifts. There was a lot of work. They should load 100 wagons for Kaspi, Ararat, and other sites.

The interviewed people said that during the Soviet period, life in Anipemza was perfect, they were rich, people had job. Also the residents of other villages were coming to work there (fig.4).



Fig. 4. Anipemza life scenes in a photograph of the '60s. In the background the Culture's House

The village had many facilities: hospital (N°21 in the fig. 8), pharmacy (N° 19 in the fig.8), kindergarten (N° 22 in the fig.8), laborers' canteen (N°24 in the fig. 8), library, house of culture and cine-theatre (N° 16 in the fig.8), garden etc. There was also a hotel (N° 11 in the fig.8) for the businessperson. Now it is residential.

The garden, visible from the main street, is enclosed by fence and nowadays is used as a private vegetable garden and orchard. There are three shops which serve Gyumri too.

During the visits in site we discovered that Anipemza was also both a forced labor settlement camp for Armenian dissidents during the Soviet period. The area of the prisoners was fenced and they were working in mine. The prisoners were not in contact with regular people without permission and they lived in the building in front of cultural house (N° 16 in the fig. 8). Four prisoners lived in a room. Some armed soldiers were controlling their area so that they could not escape.

In the Soviet period the village was protected but never had an enclosure, only a toll bar as a frontier village. The entrance was possible only with special pass until 1985. People wanted to go to village for shopping, because they could find everything. In each room there was a family. It means that in each apartment there was more than one family. The population was so much and there was not place enough to live for all. The train was entering in the manufacture area. The rails still exist.

The first impression one gets when entering to Anipemza is of a place designed by an important architect that, perhaps here wanted to experience a new urbanistic theory similar to those of philanthropic one, made in Europe in the nineteenth and early twentieth century. Anipemza appears in fact as a company town, as a garden city similar to those we can still visit in England, in Italy and elsewhere in Europe and today it is protected by national governments or even by UNESCO for its historical significance sociological and cultural as well as urban and architectural.

The question is: Who designed the village? Anipemza is not a spontaneous settlement as many in Armenia's territory. The urbanistic implant suggests that it was designed by a great architect. In 1940 and 1948 famous architects, Alexander Tamanyan and Toros Toramanyan, have restored the cathedral of Yereruik. Someone tell that Tamanyan was the designer of Anipemza but now still there are not archives documentation evidences support this hypothesis. Researches are still in progress. However, some similar evidences suggest his style. Maybe used by a direct or indirect pupil of him. For example a Tamanyan's 1925 project (only one year before Anipemza) of “New Arabkir” town (now a district at north of Yerevan center) discussed by Harutyunyan in her book [9] shows the floorplan and elevation of a double residential unit similar to the prospectus and plans used in Anipemza only one year later (fig. 5, 6) .

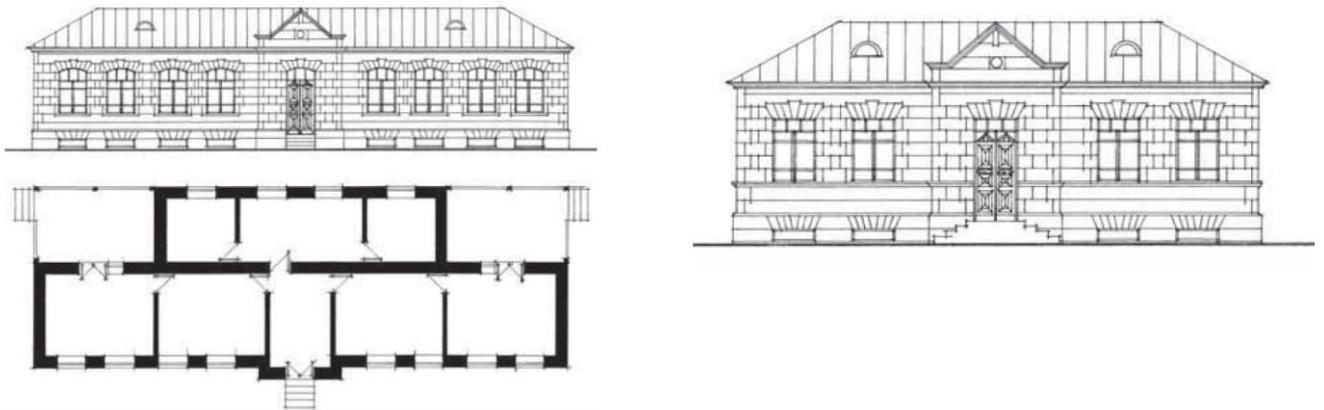


Fig. 5. On left drawings of the floorplan and elevation of a double residential unit in “New Arabkir” town. On right the drawing of the elevation recomposition of the double residential unit in “New Arabkir” town [9]



Fig.6. The building N° 18 similar to Tamanyan style

Anipemza today

Anipemza is one of the former Soviet industrial towns (well known for its pumice and stone mines) that obtained the status of village after the Republic of Armenia announced its independence.

The construction, in the small village of Anipemza, is mainly arranged on the right and left of a large main driveway. The driveway still preserves, at the sides, the flowerbeds and trees as well as remains of lighting systems streetlight cast iron with decorative details.

Entering the village, coming from the basilica of Yererouik, the buildings on the left are two stories while those to the right are on one floor except the two stories former quarry direction building (fig. 9, 10).

The materials used are mainly the tuff stone blocks, certainly derived from the quarry on the edge of the village, and wood. Also the temple of Yererouik was built with the same stone. The same stone was used for the church of Saint Grigor of Yerevan too. It seems that the orange stone is excavated only from Anipemza mine. The pink one is from Artik quarry.

The roof covers are made of steel sheet but sometimes when we look below it, there are some fiber cement trapezoidal elements. Rare is the use of the full brick (i.e. for the realization of chimneys).

During the first surveys and interviews with inhabitants, especially the older ones, it was obvious that Anipemza was a village almost self-sufficient and densely populated at one time.

It was also possible to identify most of the original use destinations of the buildings by the help of the elder inhabitants and the Anipemza administration (fig. 7, 8).

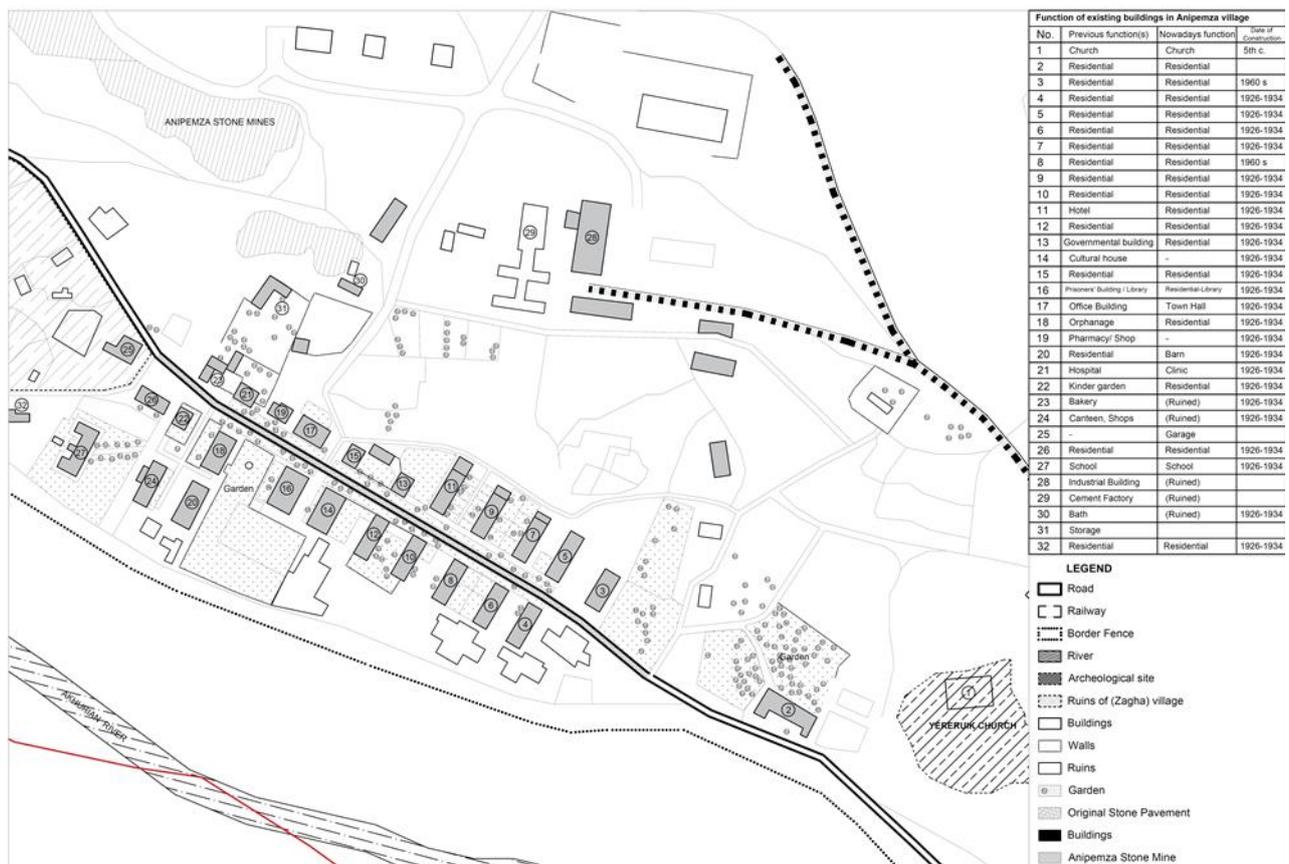


Fig.7. Map of Anipemza functional analyses

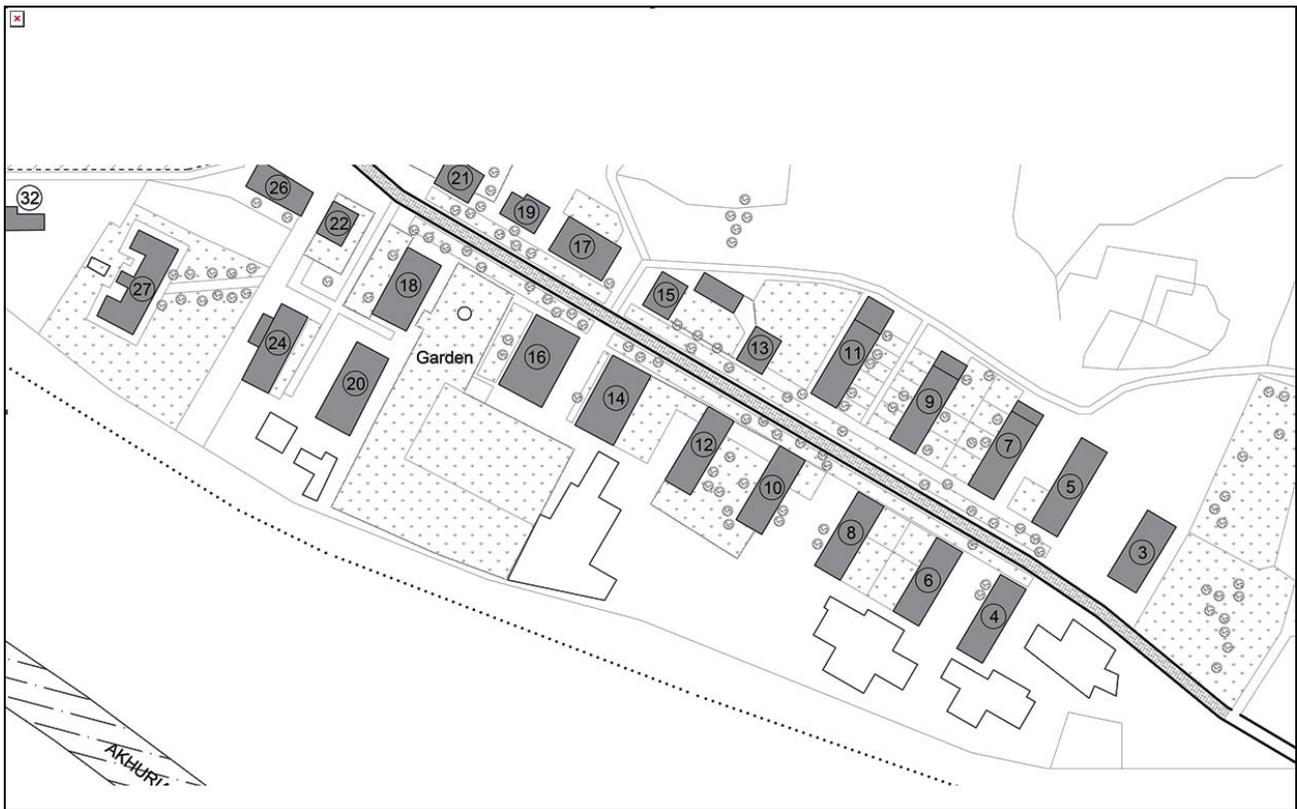


Fig.8. Enlargement of Fig. 7 about Anipemza functional analyses

Once they have had cement combine too, but now it doesn't work. The low-rise buildings (one floor) were constructed by exiles and by the orphan kids when they grow up. The third building in southern row (N°10 in the fig.7, 8) is called "Harvatsain" (impact), because (the old people of Anipemza said) the best laborers have built it. It is one of the first buildings. The walls are on meter thick.

The one floor and the two stores buildings were built in different periods (fig. 9, 10). They used to call the buildings by the names of habitants (Gayan's building, Aramik's building).

The village is small, it has about 500 official residents, but most of them are moving to Yerevan to find job.

There are different typologies of apartments. The apartments are from 1 to 4 rooms. The inhabitants had never had kitchen and bathroom because, when the quarry farm worked, they used the canteen and the common bath (N 30 in the fig. 7). The building of the common bath was destroyed during the Soviet period. Then someone created their own facilities. The public buildings were closed, except the town hall, the ambulatory with a doctor and two nurses, the primary and secondary school for 180 students (but to date only 33) and the kindergarden [1-7].

During the Soviet period train also stopped in Anipemza. Now it stops in Aniavan, which is 7 km away from Anipemza. For going to Aniavan station people should take a taxi. Trains go to Yerevan three times a day (at 9:30, 13:00 and 18:00), and to Gyumri twice a day. There is also a microbus that leaves at 8:30. People prefer to use this bus because it is more comfortable. The price of journey is 1000 *drams* for Yerevan and 500 *drams* for Gyumri (one way).

Once Anipemza had a bakery but the building, that still exists, is now a wreck and it does not work anymore. Some people have beehive, others hens or sheep.

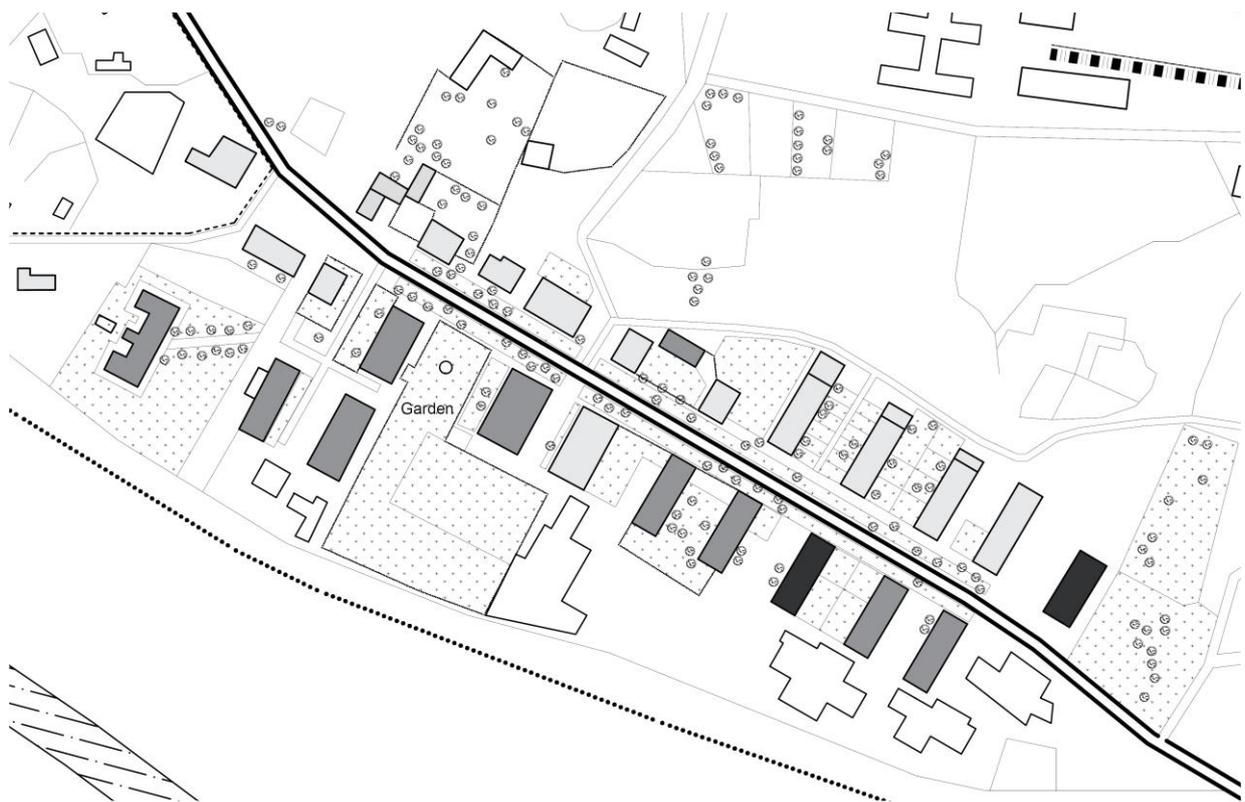


Fig.9. Map of Anipemza building analyses

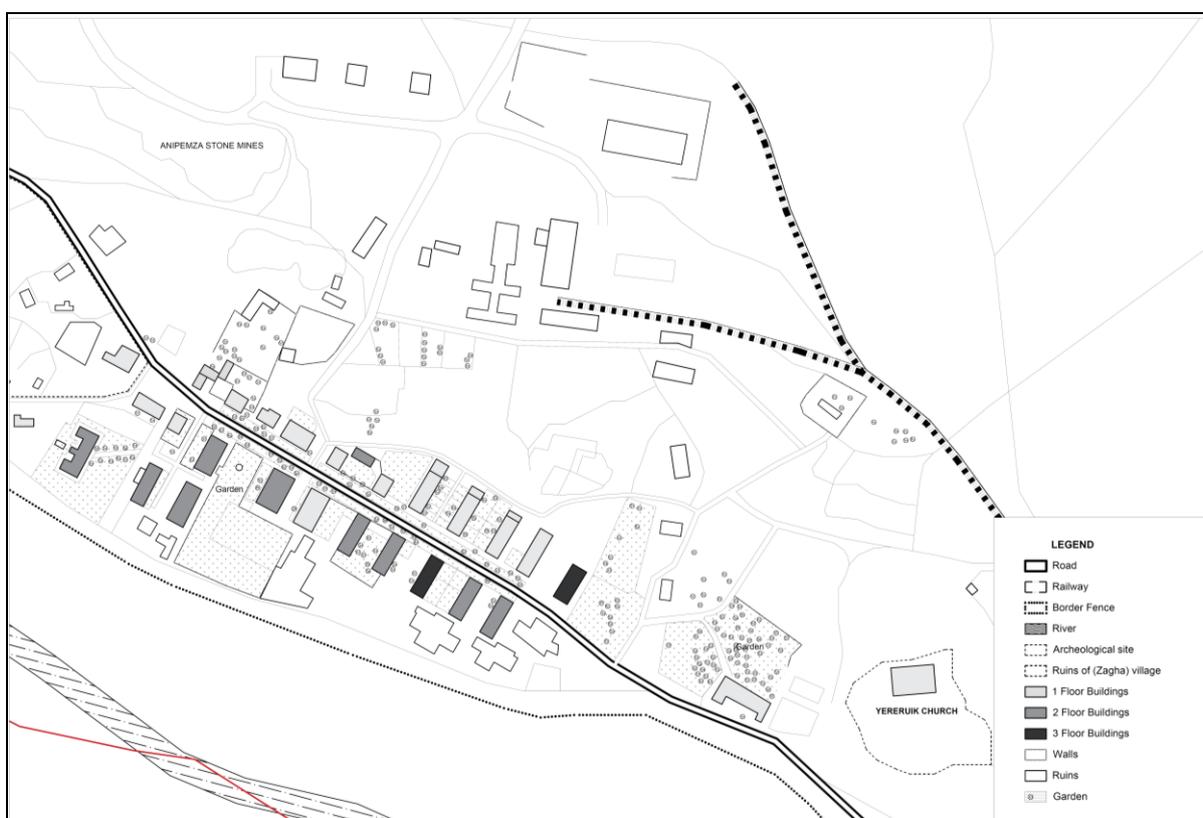


Fig.10. Enlargement of fig. 9 about Anipemza's building analyses

Problems

The village was a very good and well-organized place during the Soviet period. After that everything was destroyed. Unfortunately, till now, this amazing village has remained out of attention, although it is said that some programs have been organized for the development of villages near the borders. Anipemza used to be a town-borough that is why it does not have agriculture areas. Now it is a village without agricultural fields. Some of the residents are working seasonally in nearby stone mines. Many of them have left the village long time ago and others are still leaving. People interviewed by us have told: “The village is already empty. Young residents are leaving. The ones who remain are working in the mines. If they do not go away they can't live. It was better before. Now young people are going away. Families are also leaving the village because of their children. Before it was not a village, it was an amazing borough”.

The District Manager Harutyun Tarlanyan told during the interview of 2013: “From 3500 residents have remained only 500 registered, but in fact 300 live here. They will go away too as the job here is seasonal in the mines. Workers are only men, though not all of them are working in mines because it is a hard job. The reason is the social condition of residents, the school is about to close. We have 30 pupils. We have asked to everyone, any possible one. We said that we are a village near to the border; we don't have agricultural fields, no means of subsistence. If it is continued like this no one will remain in the village. Those who are still here are those who do not have the chance to leave, buy a house, find a job, otherwise they would go. There is no development and perspective here. In the mines of Anipemza there are few places of work. But one of the owners of the mines protested that they also pay equal taxes with other companies meanwhile he insists that they should pay less because of their condition” [8].

The wire border passes just near the school. On the backside there are viewpoints of frontiers. In the interview [8] the journalist asked to the teacher, Tigran Hakobyan, if the situation of border dose straiten them. He answered “Honestly no. I was born and grew up here. For me it is regular. Now the world has developed. Only this border of 360 *km* and the wires. Also we can say to the pupils that this separating border divides us from our historical land. It is not a border between two countries, but a border between our past and present”.

Tarlanyan voiced as a concern: “The number of the population drastically went down in the last 20 years. The number of school age children has been declining and the community has registered more elderly in the total number of the population. At present 10-15 percent of working age men migrate for earning bread. This tendency is high among young families. Only 20% of the population is employed” [8].

The inhabitants had very serious water problems a few years ago. Now the situation is better.

The residents were out to collect rainwater for the living facilities for years. Therefore the draining pipes are connected to water reservoirs in order to save the rain water. Some years ago the problem of supplying water was solved, but the water is not drinkable (it comes twice a week). The residents are out to buy the drinkable water. They pay 200 drams for 20 litres. The community manager said that they have requested for final solution of water problem but certain date for that has not been announced [8].

They have organized the supplying water system, but it is only irrigative water not drinkable. Drinkable water is imported with cars, irrigation water is not delivered to the area and people use rainwater preserved in bins. There is no canalization system in any of the buildings, no toilet, no bath; each of them tries to create the required facilities on their own.

About the problem of gas accessibility, the main pipe of gas exists, but the habitants are not able to pay for the rest and provide the necessary equipment in order to use gas in their apartments.

Before no one wanted to have farm animals because it is almost impossible to farm them without water. The people said that they pay 100 drams for each bucket of water, 10'000 drams for a trunk. It would serve only for 20 days. Now a ton of water costs 200 drams. Water is very important now and they live just a little better. Every 2 or 3 days they supply water. They register the usage amount and they pay. They had vegetable gardens, apricot trees, and other fruit trees. Now people do not have enough harvest to sell, they only plant vegetables for their own use. There are shops in the village. They bring bread from Gyumri, many people also bake it at home.

It seems that the buildings have water infiltration problems from the roof. Half of the building roofs are substituted but the new ones have a very bad quality. The Soviet period roofs were much more qualified. The new ones resist only 2 months. The wind strips and hurls some portions of them away.

The habitants do not organize this renovation works because they are state project organized by the government.

Anipemza's infrastructures are in a very poor shape. The low social-economic level of the community is explained by the lack of potable water, lack of land with agricultural value, as well as non-operating mines. The climate of cold winters and cool summers is typical for the region. Droughts and hail and its location in a seismic zone are hazards and risk factors for the community.

In short the most important problems to solve are as follow:

- a) find new job opportunities for Anipemza's inhabitants;
- b) repair of roads;
- c) renovation and improvement of drinkable water pipelines;
- d) renovation of school furniture;
- e) realize heating devices and gas delivery;
- f) sales of agricultural products.

Buildings need improvements in a conservative way.

So the community issues are:

1. School furnitures, which is necessary for 3 million drams
2. 60 *km* of drinkable water pipeline construction, which requires 600 million drams.
3. 5 *km* of pipeline construction, which is requires 40 million drams.
4. 7 *km* asphalt road, which requires 280 million drams.
5. Repair and furnishing of health center, which requires 30 million drams.
6. Repair and furnishing of cultural house, which requires 30 million drams.
7. Repair of pre-school building (elementary), which requires 15 million drams.

The solution of main problems of the community requires around 998 million drams [1-8, 10].

Solution proposals

The first problem is, of course, to find job for the population. To achieve that we think it is important to connect Anipemza with the cultural tourism route in the area. Many tourists (many hundreds every year) visit Yererouik along the route to Gyumri and for this they need facilitations as well as bathroom and info point. In this way a tourist could discover a beautiful village where it would be possible to eat something, to buy some local products. This first step could permit to start gradually a virtuously process to enhance the economic conditions of the Anipemza people and to start more demanding interventions as well as roads

repair, water availability, repair and improve of residential buildings, repair and reuse of other buildings for cultural and tourism purposes.

The restoration projects of this wonderful village must consider different matters in order of urgency below shortly listed:

1-Guidelines for maintenance by the inhabitants: to explain them that they should not replace the materials but repair them and preserve them. We must explain that they live in a village of historical and cultural interests. We need to teach them how to maintain with little money what is improving it there. If they will change the historical materials and typology, tourists will not be interested to visit, to stay and to spend money in Anipemza;

2-Propose the tourists who are visiting Yererouik, to buy quality local products such as honey, bread and baked goods, typical sweets, lavash, katha, cakes, fruits (fresh and dried) and vegetables (fresh and in jar), jams, small carved stone objects,... In addition, organize lunches and guided tours to Anipemza and to interesting natural sites, bird watching, archaeological and monuments sites around Anipemza and trip to Kharkov to look Ani the ancient Armenian Capital. Possibly provide hospitality for the night;

3-Initiate the establishment of a visitor centre, information point, bookshop, coffee shop and bathrooms for the tourists in transit from Yerevan to Gyumri and permission for visiting Ani from Kharkov;

4-During the first three steps make aware, public opinion and those of national and international authorities, on the interesting and unique case of Anipemza;

5-During the first four steps, identification of national and international sources of funding for interventions;

6-Repair of road paving, improvement of water supply and electricity: Designing of self-sufficient systems that use solar energy, recovery of rainwater, artesian wells, geothermal system and so on;

7-Conservation project, consolidation and compatibly integration of toilets, kitchen and all needed comforts in all buildings;

8-Reuse design of abandoned buildings as museum, restaurant and apartment for tourists as well as diffuse hotel;

9-General design reorganization of the Village and the reconversion of mine for tourism purposes in connection with other sites in the area and on the road Yervan-Gyumri;

10-Starting business in Anipemza, involving all the inhabitants, addressed to tourism as well as homely restaurant, residences for guests and widespread hotel;

11-Creating an international summer school for sculpture in tuff;

12-Improve minibus and taxi-shuttle for tourists and residents;

13-Realization in not used buildings, of Museums and stable exhibitions regarding: Museum and Study Centre of the extraction and processing of tuff in Armenia and Anipemza; Photo exhibition of daily life at Anipemza in the past; Museum of the Armenians orphanage and orphans; Museum of the labour camp and workers' village in Armenia; Museum of Yererouik; Museum of Ani; Exposition of Tamanyan and Toramanyan restorations and studies on Yereruik.

Conclusion

Anipemza is an interesting and unique, example of a workers village, which, over time, has been enriched by more significantly historical particularities for Armenia.

Today the settlement is likely to disappear because of the crisis of the mining activities of the tuff and the consequent abandonment of the village, by the residents, seeking employment elsewhere.

The abandonment is already causing, and even more will determine in the future if nothing will do urgently to avoid this condition, the loss of this important example of Armenian urban planning and architecture of XX century.

The potentiality of Anipemza is huge and considered to initiate a virtuous circle, which could trigger a turnaround in the sad progressive abandonment, modest investments would be necessary. Investing few economic resources for the Protection of Anipemza could allow, starting by the cultural tourism interest that Anipemza and its territory are certainly able to show, to trigger a series of initiatives that would benefit the inhabitants and, more generally, Armenia's tourism offers that certainly must still be linked to its important monuments constituted by the churches and fortresses as well as its extraordinary landscape, but it can and must be diversified and strengthened through the testimonies of recent history for example the preservation of a unique case as well as Anipemza it is and, in general, are many Armenian XIX and XX century architectures.

Maybe, in the future, Anipemza with Ani (in the UNESCO World Heritage tentative list since 2012) and Yeyerouik (in the UNESCO World Heritage tentative list since 1995) together will constitute a transnational UNESCO World Heritage site also as a reconciliation symbol of two Peoples.

The authors of this paper, along with four other fellow designers, are preparing a rough draft of the first interventions aimed to identifying funding sources for the first steps. This will be followed an executive plan to implement, according to the Anipemza people and authorities, the program listed above.

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