

Eureka Journal of Civil, Architecture and Urban Studies (EJCAUS)

ISSN 2760-4977 (Online) Volume 2, Issue 6, June 2026



This article/work is licensed under CC by 4.0 Attribution

<https://eurekaoa.com/index.php/8>

THE FORMATION AND STRUCTURE OF THE HISTORICAL NEIGHBORHOODS OF JIZZAKH CITY

Shoisoyev Izatullo Kenjayevich

Doctor of Science (DSc) in Architecture, Associate Professor

Tashkent University of Architecture and Civil Engineering (TUACE)

Abstract

This article analyzes the formation, stages of development, and role of the historical mahallas of Jizzakh in the city's urban structure based on historical, archaeological, and cartographic sources. It examines their planning characteristics, functional composition, and historical topography, while substantiating the scientific principles for their preservation and protection as elements of the historical and cultural heritage.

Keywords: Rabod, Residential mahallas, Juma mosques, Madrasas, Market squares, Craft workshops, Tuproqko'rg'on, Orda, Oqqo'rg'onlik, Jizzaxlik, Toshkentlik, Zargarlik, Sovungarlik, Hayrabod, O'ratepalik.

Introduction

Jizzakh is one of the most ancient urban centers within the territory of present-day Uzbekistan, and numerous historical, archaeological, and written sources indicate that its origins date back to the beginning of the first millennium BCE. The emergence of the city and the initial stages of its urban development were closely associated with the Bronze Age cultural traditions, demonstrating that permanent settlements and early urban planning practices had already been established in this region. At present, historians and archaeologists continue to investigate the precise chronology of Jizzakh, focusing on the scientific

Eureka Journal of Civil, Architecture and Urban Studies (EJCAUS)

ISSN 2760-4977 (Online) Volume 2, Issue 6, June 2026



This article/work is licensed under CC by 4.0 Attribution

<https://eurekaopenaccess.com/index.php/8>

examination of its earliest cultural layers and the remains of its architectural heritage.

Available historical, archaeological, and cartographic evidence confirms that Jizzakh was strategically situated at one of the principal crossroads of the Great Silk Road, occupying a geographically advantageous location that connected the East and the West. This favorable geographical position played a decisive role in the city's economic, political, and cultural development and provided the foundation for its continuous evolution as a historically inhabited urban center over several millennia.

Throughout its history, Jizzakh attracted the attention of rulers of successive states, local governors, military commanders, scholars, poets, religious leaders, travelers, and merchants. Owing to its strategic position along the Great Silk Road and its favorable natural-geographical setting, the city became one of the principal arenas of political rivalry and military confrontation. Historical records indicate that the territory of Jizzakh witnessed military campaigns and conflicts involving the Achaemenid Empire, the Greco-Macedonian armies, the Arab Caliphate, the Mongol Empire, internecine struggles during the Timurid period, and, in the nineteenth century, armed confrontations between the forces of the Russian Empire and the local population. As a consequence of these repeated military conflicts, the city experienced substantial destruction during several historical periods: its defensive fortifications and residential quarters were severely damaged, after which they were repeatedly reconstructed, contributing to the formation of successive urban layers that enriched the city's historical and architectural fabric.

Archaeological and historical evidence indicates that the urban structure of ancient Jizzakh followed the three-part planning system that was characteristic of historical cities throughout Central Asia. This traditional urban model consisted of the following principal components:

Eureka Journal of Civil, Architecture and Urban Studies (EJCAUS)

ISSN 2760-4977 (Online) Volume 2, Issue 6, June 2026



This article/work is licensed under CC by 4.0 Attribution

<https://eurekaopenaccess.com/index.php/8>

- Ark (Citadel) – the ruler's residence and the administrative and military center of the city;
- Shahrستان – the principal residential quarter and the socio-economic core of urban life;
- Rabod (Suburb) – the outer urban zone where craft production, commerce, and economic activities were concentrated.

The Ark occupied the highest and most naturally protected part of the city. It accommodated the ruler's palace, the military garrison, arsenals, government institutions, and other administrative buildings, thereby serving as the political and defensive nucleus of the city.

The Shahrستان constituted the principal inhabited area of Jizzakh, containing residential neighborhoods (mahallas), congregational mosques, madrasas, market squares, and craft workshops. As the civic and commercial center, it played a central role in the city's social, economic, and cultural life.

The Rabod comprised the suburban zone surrounding the Shahrستان and contained caravanserais, trading arcades, production workshops, orchards, gardens, and agricultural facilities associated with the city's economic activities. Functioning as the principal area for trade, manufacturing, and agricultural production, the Rabod played a vital role in sustaining the economic prosperity and regional commercial significance of historic Jizzakh.

Jizzakh has historically occupied a strategically advantageous geographical position, which enabled it to emerge as one of the principal political, military, and commercial centers of Central Asia. Owing to this strategic location, the city attracted the attention of successive states and ruling powers throughout its history. Historical sources indicate that Jizzakh became the focal point of numerous military confrontations during the periods of the Achaemenid Empire, the Greco-Macedonian campaigns, the Arab Caliphate, the Mongol invasions, and the Russian Empire's conquest of Turkestan in the nineteenth century. As a consequence of these repeated conflicts, the city was devastated on multiple

Eureka Journal of Civil, Architecture and Urban Studies (EJCAUS)

ISSN 2760-4977 (Online) Volume 2, Issue 6, June 2026



This article/work is licensed under CC by 4.0 Attribution

<https://eurekaopenaccess.com/index.php/8>

occasions, resulting in extensive damage to its defensive fortifications, residential quarters, and public infrastructure.

Nevertheless, Jizzakh's advantageous geographical location at one of the principal crossroads of the Great Silk Road, together with its enduring political and economic significance within the region, ensured its repeated reconstruction and continuous urban development following each episode of destruction. Historical records refer to the city by various names, including Dizak, Gazo, and Faknon, reflecting its long historical evolution as well as changes in its political-administrative status and urban character over successive historical periods.

Archaeological investigations constitute one of the principal sources for reconstructing the early history of Jizzakh. In particular, excavations conducted at the archaeological sites of Qaliya Fortress and the Jizzakh Orda (Citadel) have yielded a substantial assemblage of material remains dating to different historical periods. These discoveries include stone and iron tools, ceramic artifacts, objects associated with jewelry production and blacksmithing, ancient weapons, coins, pottery, architectural decorative elements, and fragments of clothing. Collectively, these archaeological materials provide compelling evidence for the existence of highly developed craft production, extensive commercial and economic networks, advanced military traditions, and a flourishing urban culture in the Jizzakh region from ancient times. Consequently, these finds represent an important body of archaeological evidence for understanding the historical development, economic life, and urban civilization of ancient Jizzakh.



Figure 1. Residential Architecture of the Historical Mahallas of Jizzakh, 1880.

Eureka Journal of Civil, Architecture and Urban Studies (EJCAUS)

ISSN 2760-4977 (Online) Volume 2, Issue 6, June 2026



This article/work is licensed under CC by 4.0 Attribution

<https://eurekaopenaccess.com/index.php/8>

The available archaeological and historical evidence demonstrates that Jizzakh was one of the major centers of ancient urban civilization in Central Asia. These sources reveal the city's multi-phased process of urban development and the continuity of its urban planning traditions over an extended historical period. Therefore, a comprehensive investigation of Jizzakh's historical topography, defensive system, residential neighborhoods (mahallas), and architectural heritage is of considerable scholarly importance, not only for reconstructing the historical development of the city itself but also for advancing the study of the evolution of historical urban centers throughout Central Asia.

According to archival records, the inhabitants of Jizzakh resided in courtyard houses located within the Tuproqo'rg'on (Orda) residential quarters from late autumn until early spring, while during the principal agricultural season they temporarily moved to rural homesteads situated outside the fortress to cultivate their fields. In his research on ancient Jizzakh, M. Pardayev, drawing upon written testimonies obtained from a local resident (Sh. Ortiqova), notes that the residential quarters within the Orda were built with such a high density that it was possible to traverse almost the entire fortified settlement by walking across the interconnected flat rooftops of adjoining houses.

The spatial location of the Orda also exerted a direct influence on the formation of the city's street network and the organization of its historical mahallas. The principal streets of Jizzakh originated at the fortress gates and connected them with the central market squares and residential quarters. The historical city developed through a hierarchical system of mahallas, whose formation was determined by the inhabitants' place of origin, occupational specialization, or territorial affiliation. Population groups arriving through the Great Silk Road and other caravan routes settled in newly developed districts, giving rise to distinct residential communities. Consequently, historical mahallas such as Oqo'rg'onlik, Jizzaxlik, Toshkentlik, Zargarlik, Sovungarlik, Hayrabod, and

Eureka Journal of Civil, Architecture and Urban Studies (EJCAUS)

ISSN 2760-4977 (Online) Volume 2, Issue 6, June 2026



This article/work is licensed under CC by 4.0 Attribution

<https://eurekaopenaccess.com/index.php/8>

O'ratepalik gradually emerged around the Orda, contributing to both the territorial expansion and the functional development of the city.

The mahalla represented not only a territorial subdivision but also a fundamental socio-economic institution within the urban structure. Each neighborhood typically incorporated the following essential public facilities:

- a neighborhood mosque;
- a guzar (community square or neighborhood gathering place);
- a well or communal pond;
- craft workshops;
- commercial establishments.

The streets were characteristically narrow and irregularly aligned, reflecting traditional urban planning principles adapted to the hot summer climate by creating shaded pedestrian environments and improving natural ventilation. Residential quarters consisted predominantly of inward-oriented courtyard houses, which constituted one of the defining features of traditional Islamic and Central Asian urban architecture.

The historical mahallas of ancient Jizzakh evolved in accordance with the traditional principles of Central Asian urban planning and constituted an integral component of the city's social, economic, and cultural life. They functioned not only as residential neighborhoods but also as centers of craft production, commerce, religious and educational activities, and local self-governance. Consequently, the formation and evolution of the mahalla system represent one of the distinctive characteristics of Jizzakh's historical urban development.

It should also be emphasized that the historical mahallas were distinguished by their compact internal layout and defensive characteristics. Narrow, winding streets, cul-de-sacs (dead-end streets), interconnected courtyard compounds, and neighborhood gates collectively enhanced urban security while simultaneously creating a favorable microclimate under the region's hot summer conditions. These planning principles represent characteristic features of the traditional urban

Eureka Journal of Civil, Architecture and Urban Studies (EJCAUS)

ISSN 2760-4977 (Online) Volume 2, Issue 6, June 2026



This article/work is licensed under CC by 4.0 Attribution

<https://eurekaopenaccess.com/index.php/8>

morphology of Central Asian cities, where defensive considerations were effectively integrated with environmental adaptation and residential comfort. The spatial distribution of the mahallas was closely associated with the natural landscape and the local hydraulic network. The Sangzor River, together with an extensive system of irrigation canals and watercourses, played a crucial role in supplying water to residential areas, supporting the cultivation of gardens and orchards, and improving sanitary and environmental conditions within the city. Consequently, natural water resources constituted an essential component of the historical urban planning framework and the sustainable development of Jizzakh. The historical evolution of Jizzakh was accompanied by the gradual territorial expansion of its urban area. The earliest residential neighborhoods were established around the Orda and the Shahrستان, after which urban development progressively extended into the Rabod, giving rise to new residential quarters and craft districts. This phased process of spatial growth significantly contributed to the expansion of the city's urban structure and reflects the dynamic evolution of Jizzakh's historical urban landscape over successive periods.

As the population of Jizzakh increased, the urban area expanded accordingly. To strengthen the city's security, the ancient urban core was enclosed by defensive walls, while new mahallas and guzars (neighborhood centers) gradually developed beyond the original fortified enclosure. During this period, access to the city was provided through four principal gates. The Samarkand Gate connected Jizzakh with Samarkand, the Bukhara Gate led toward Bukhara, the O'ratepa Gate provided access to the Fergana Valley and Andijan via O'ratepa (present-day Istaravshan), and the Tashkent Gate connected the city with Tashkent. These gateways constituted the principal transportation corridors linking Jizzakh with the major political and commercial centers of Central Asia and were continuously guarded to ensure the security of the city and its inhabitants.

Eureka Journal of Civil, Architecture and Urban Studies (EJCAUS)

ISSN 2760-4977 (Online) Volume 2, Issue 6, June 2026



This article/work is licensed under CC by 4.0 Attribution

<https://eurekaopenaccess.com/index.php/8>

Until the second half of the nineteenth century, the historical urban structure of Jizzakh remained largely intact, preserving its traditional Central Asian pattern of urban planning. However, following the capture of the city by the forces of the Russian Empire in 1866, the Orda Fortress and a substantial part of the historic urban fabric sustained severe damage. In the aftermath of this conquest, the traditional spatial organization and planning system of Jizzakh gradually underwent significant transformation under the influence of Russian colonial urban policies, resulting in profound changes to the city's historical morphology and architectural character.



Figure 2. Graphic Reconstruction of a Traditional House in the Historic O'ratepalik Mahalla around the Ancient Jizzakh Orda Fortress (after A. Ziyayev and I. K. Shoisoyev).

The historic city of Jizzakh was accessed through four principal gates: the Samarkand Gate, O'ratepa Gate, Bukhara Gate, and Tashkent Gate. Throughout its long history, the city repeatedly withstood attacks by foreign armies and became the scene of numerous fierce military confrontations. Although its defensive fortifications were destroyed on several occasions, they were

Eureka Journal of Civil, Architecture and Urban Studies (EJCAUS)

ISSN 2760-4977 (Online) Volume 2, Issue 6, June 2026



This article/work is licensed under CC by 4.0 Attribution

<https://eurekaopenaccess.com/index.php/8>

repeatedly reconstructed, reflecting both the strategic significance and the resilience of the city.

The city was administratively organized into guzars and mahallas, each of which was headed by an oqsoqol (community elder), assisted by a poykor (deputy or administrative assistant) and an ellikboshi (local community representative responsible for neighborhood affairs). Every mahalla possessed its own cemetery, mosque, and primary school (maktab), reflecting its role as a self-governing socio-religious and administrative unit within the urban structure.

The inhabitants of the historical neighborhoods obtained their domestic water primarily from communal reservoirs (hovuz), which were supplied by the Sangzor River through the Mirzaariq irrigation canal. This hydraulic infrastructure played a fundamental role in sustaining urban life by providing water for domestic consumption, religious activities, and environmental management within the historical city.

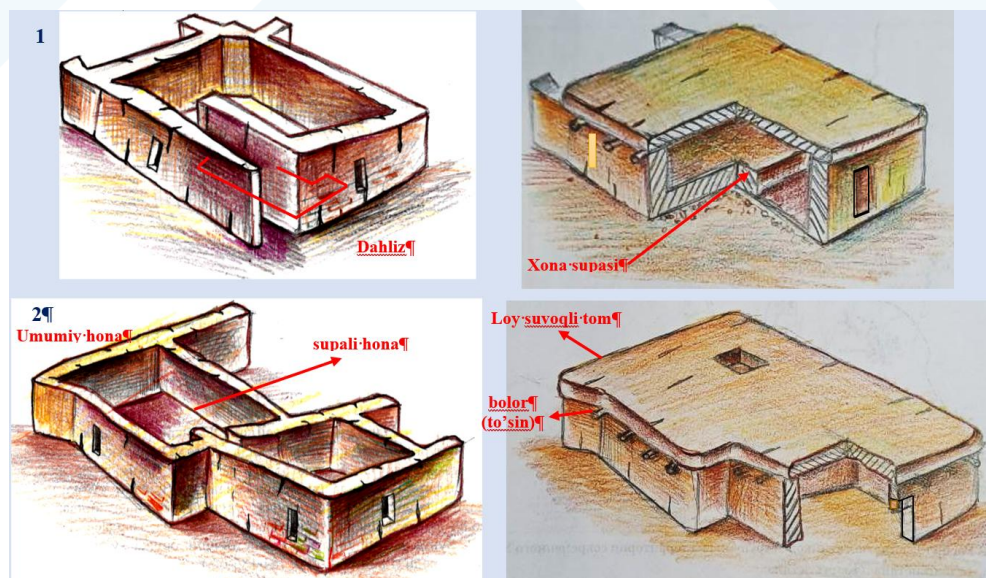


Figure 3. Graphic Reconstruction of the Interior Spaces of a Traditional Residential House. (after I.K. Shoisoyev).

Eureka Journal of Civil, Architecture and Urban Studies (EJCAUS)

ISSN 2760-4977 (Online) Volume 2, Issue 6, June 2026



This article/work is licensed under CC by 4.0 Attribution

<https://eurekaopenaccess.com/index.php/8>

Following the conquest of Jizzakh by the Russian Empire, the development of the New Town (Yangi Shahar) commenced, where military personnel, civil officials, and merchants who had relocated to the city constructed new residential buildings and administrative facilities. At the same time, traditional economic activities continued to flourish, including flour mills, juvozxona (oil-pressing workshops), blacksmiths' workshops, and pottery production centers, illustrating the coexistence of newly introduced colonial urban elements with the established craft-based economy of the historic city.

In conclusion, the historical mahallas of Jizzakh represent a complex urban system that evolved through the interaction of urban planning, architecture, social organization, and cultural traditions. Their spatial organization, planning principles, functional characteristics, occupational specialization, and historical-topographical distribution constitute an invaluable source for understanding the centuries-long urban development of Jizzakh. Furthermore, the study of these historical neighborhoods provides an essential scientific basis for reconstructing the historical urban landscape, preserving the city's cultural heritage, and developing evidence-based strategies for the conservation and sustainable management of one of Central Asia's most significant historic urban centers.

References

1. Shoisoyev, I. K. (2026). Traditions of Ancient and Modern Architecture of Ustrushana. Tashkent: Fan Ziyosi Publishing House. p. 43.
2. Rtveladze, E. V., & Alimova, D. A. (Eds.). (2009). History of Statehood in Uzbekistan. Vol. I. Tashkent: Uzbekistan Publishing House. 560 p.
3. Mamatmusayev, T. Sh. (2019). Genesis and Transformation of the Historical Cities of Uzbekistan. Doctor of Science (DSc) Dissertation in Architecture. Tashkent Institute of Architecture and Civil Engineering (TASI).
4. Maev. (1870). No. 2; see also:
5. Pardayev, M. (2000). pp. 128–130.

Eureka Journal of Civil, Architecture and Urban Studies (EJCAUS)

ISSN 2760-4977 (Online) Volume 2, Issue 6, June 2026



This article/work is licensed under CC by 4.0 Attribution

<https://eurekaopenaccess.com/index.php/8>

6. Pardayev, M. Kh. (2000). "Some Observations on the Stratigraphy of the Ancient Urban Site of Qaliyatepa." History of Material Culture of Uzbekistan (IMKU), Issue 31. Samarkand.
7. Haydarov, Kh. (1996). History of Jizzakh Region. Tashkent: Mehnat Publishing House. p. 15.
8. Pardayev, M. Kh. (2000). "Some Observations on the Stratigraphy of the Ancient Urban Site of Qaliyatepa." History of Material Culture of Uzbekistan (IMKU), Issue 31. Samarkand.
9. Maev. (1870). No. 2; see also: Pardayev, M. (2000). pp. 128–130.