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Secretive Mausoleum of Timurids

Mausoleum Rahasia Timurid

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Abstract

One of the brightest examples of Timurid's architecture is the Ashatkhana monument attracting many people. Ashratkhana is also appreciated and considered heritage of not only for Uzbekistan, but also for humanity. For this reason, the mausoleum is included in The World Heritage List of UNESCO. However, some unproved and misleading information which is spread by unknown sources made the monument have misleading opinions. It can be as a result of lack of fundamental and reliable information about the history of building, construction, description of the monument. This article describes the history of its construction, structure, research and its aspects as a tourist destination. This monument has been renovated many times over the years and the process is continuing

Introduction

The monuments were built in Samarkand in the period of Timur and Timurids have been appreciated and estimated according to their glorious, beauty and the integrity of the composition and construction. Most of the monuments and mausoleums have become on the top of discussion among many researchers, scientists and scholars, even some of them have contradictory conclusions during the last few decades. One of the secretive mausoleums of Timurids which has about five hundred year of history - is Asharatkhana, also named "Ishratkhana" by some residents and researchers. Popular master, Abdugaffor Hakkulov who has been actively participated in restoration of the monuments has stated some important information. According to him, "the mausoleum was built on the grave of Sultan Havonbeka, the beloved daughter of Sulton Abusaidkxon, which consist of ten rooms called "Asharatkhana". The word - "ashara" means "ten rooms" in Arabic language. Subsequently, the word "asharat" turned away to "ishrat" which means "enjoyment" [1].

Methods

Asharatkhana mausoleum is located in in the south-eastern part of Samarkand city, which is near Abdi Darun mauseloum. Nowadays Asharatkhana was destroyed relatively recently - during the earthquake in 1903 and almost ruined, yet the monument fascinates many with its size, structure, beauty and history of building [Figures 1-2](#). In addition to this, another characteristics of the monument have been achieved by researching in historical resources, itineraries, remaining documents from those periods, giving interviews from locals, review in articles and contemporary writings and the construction image which plays predominant role in recognizing, discovering and identifying the reality of mausoleum.



Figure 1. General view of the monument (2019)



Figure 2. General view of the monument . (1900) [2]

Literature review

The purpose of studying the mysterious complex and its magnificent construction composition has prompted many scholars to undertake a series of studies and their findings were published in the press. Abu Tahir Khodja described the monument in his book "Samariya". Further research have done by Pugachenkova and buplished workshop named "Ishratkhana" in 1941 and by Vyatkin article published under the name "Ishratkhana mausoleum". In the XX century, another researchers also have published the result of their works. One of the brightest funtamental research have done by Mavluda Yusupova, and published article on theme: "Research, History and Problems of Restoration of the Business Complex in Samarkand". Collection of materials of the scientific-practical seminar "Historical and cultural heritage and modern culture" in 2012. Study, history and restoration issues of the Ishratkhana Mausoleum in Samarkand". Based upon the historical sources, scientific literature, archival data and personal expeditions this article reflects the study of history and problems of restoration process of the Ishratkhana Mausoleum in Samarkand.

Results

As a many historical monument of Timurid architectures, Ashratkhana is also appreciated and considered heritage of not only for Uzbekistan, but also for humanity. For this reason, the mausoleum is included in The World Heritage List of UNESCO on 16th December 2001. For the criteria C (i) (ii) (iv) which can be described as a following:

Criterion (i): The architecture and townscape of Samarkand, situated at the crossroads of ancient cultures, are masterpieces of Islamic cultural creativity.

Criterion (ii): Ensembles in Samarkand such as the Bibi Khanum Mosque and Registan Square played a seminal role in the development of Islamic architecture over the entire region, from the Mediterranean to the Indian subcontinent.

Criterion (iv): The historic town of Samarkand illustrates in its art, architecture, and urban structure the most important stages of Central Asian cultural and political history from the 13th century to the present day [3]

The nomination proposes a series of monuments for inscription to the World Heritage List. The most important of these are the following:

1. Shakhi-Zinda ensemble, Hazrat-Hizr Mosque, and remains of the city walls in the Afrosiab archaeological area;
2. The Bibi-Khanum ensemble;
3. The Registan ensemble;
4. The ensembles of Gur-Emir and Rukhabad;
5. Ulugh-Bek's Observatory;
6. The ensembles of Abdi-Darun and Ishrat-khona (picture 3);
7. The City Garden ensemble in the 19th century town. [4]

Ishrat-khona Mausoleum has many rooms and its planning is one of the most complicated. Besides the large ziaratkhana in the center, there is a mosque, consists of three rooms, and several subsidiary rooms. The first floor includes several small premises. Ziaratkhana is led to the underground vault with a huge number of graves. The main portal is decorated by a slender portal. The outside dome of ziaratkhana is on the high drum, but it was destroyed by the earthquake. The decorations are very rich and variable: marble panels, paintings with gold. According to the documents the monument is a family mausoleum intended for women of Timurids dynasty was built in 1464. In spite of numerous destruction, the monument is still possesses an amazing harmony [5].

According to scientist M.E.Masson, the monument was included for the first time in the plan of Samarkand, named "The Construction of Timurid periods" in 1841 by Ya.P.Yakovlev [6]. The real step discovering of the monument was started by investigating cadathtrial documents (Va'qf hujjatlari) which is composed in 1464. The discovering data is suits to information which is written in the book "Samariya" (written in 1844-1848 years) by Abu Takhirkhujja [7]:

"Ashratkhana monument is located in the south of Khoja Abdi Darun mausoleum. The monument is called "Ishratkhana" by locals, is a tomb of Timurid women. Her mother Khabiba Sulton begim was a daughter of Amir jaloluddin (God bless him). He died in 1006 A.H. (1597-98)". The archeologic research have done on the eve of 500 year of anniversary of Alisher Navoi and as a result of them monography named "Ishratkhana" published in 1958, by scientist M.E.Masson.

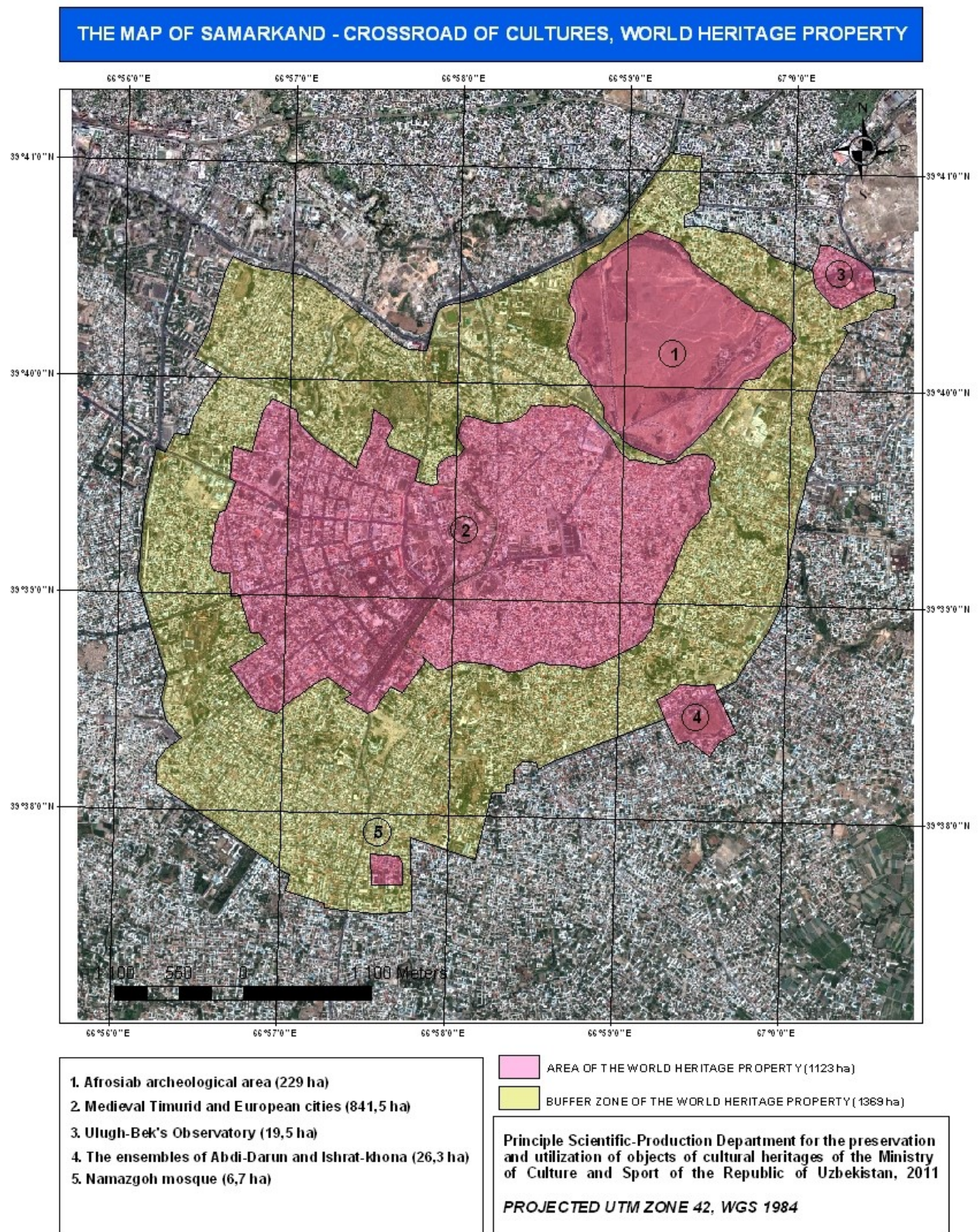


Figure 3. The map of Samarkand- Crossroad of cultures, world heritage list [8]

Structure of the monument

This wonderful heritage of ours was built in the XV century (almost equal to Oksaray monument). Here buried around 20 women and children of Timurids and is considered as a dynasty mausoleum. This two-storey complex is rectangular (23,5x28,2m) with a high dome and a dome-shaped cylindrical in the middle hall. Despite its many years of destruction, the monument is still unique in its structure and elegance. The obituary's buildings were built along the three main lines, the center line was in the middle of the entrance, and the other two lines crossed its sides (picture 5).

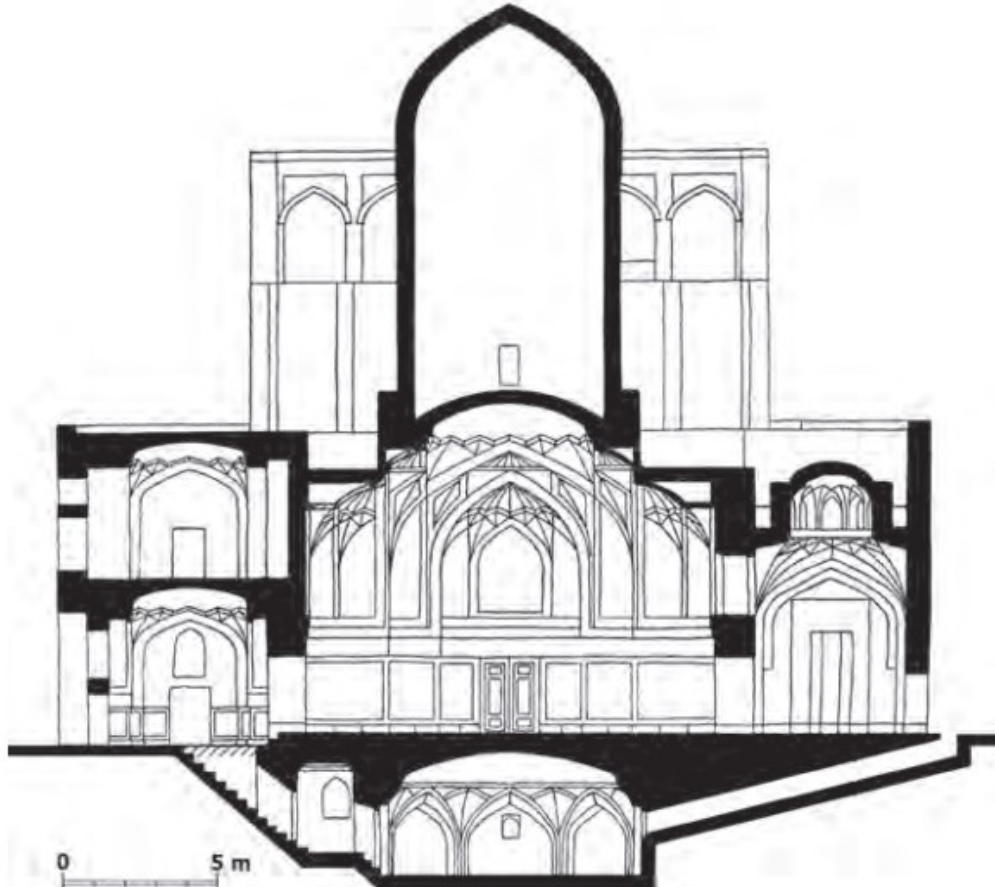
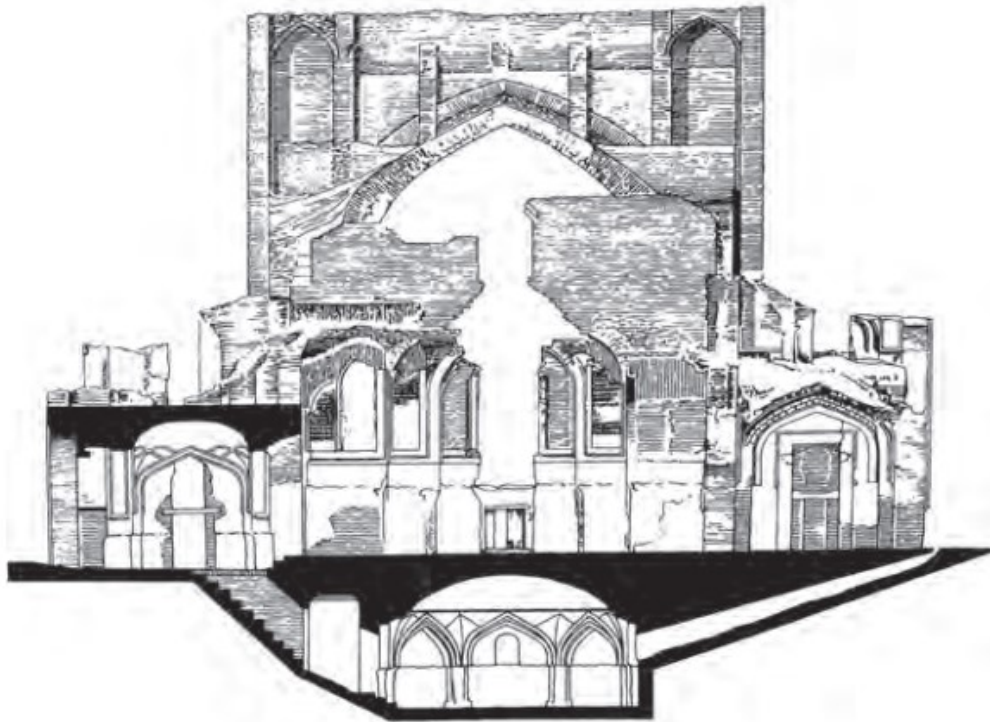


Figure 4. *Cross-section of the complex*

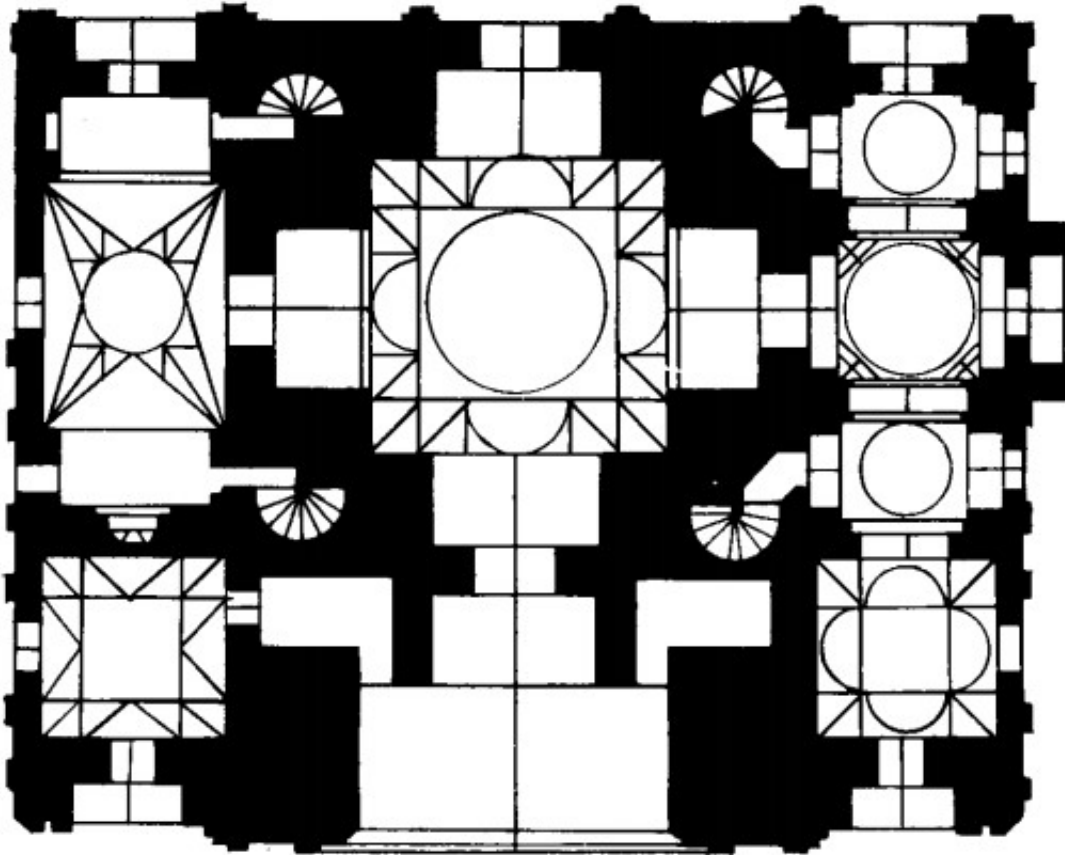


Figure 5. *First floor plan of the complex. The reconstruction of GA Pugachenkova [10].*



Figure 6. Reclaimed Interior Designs (taken photo by author)

The plan of the central hall of the building is in the form of a cross, with a depth of 2.7 m, adjacent to 8 central arrows. On the first and second floors, there is a mosque and several auxiliary rooms. At the four corners of the hall are stairs with a circular 1.08 meter diameter. Below the central hall there is an 8-foot (8.4-meter) crypt, which runs from the lower part of the building to the southeast. There are tombs in the lower floor, and their bodies were taken away during the Soviet era and are not buried again. On the first floor, to the left of the entrance, there is a large mosque and a smaller square hall. To the right of it are four halls connected by a single arrow. The second floor is almost the same as the first floor. There is a carved marble panel at the bottom of the walls. The exterior of the mausoleum is simple and elegant, and the interior is completely decorated. The high (2.2 m) panels of the central hall wall are decorated with delicate blue ornaments and exquisite jewelry on the glazed surface. At the top of the panel, the walls, arches, and the entire surface of the poles are covered with glittering reliefs with the use of kunal paint. (Picture 4). The central dome is positioned on top of hoisting arches and shields, using a ceiling system. Its founder was from Herat, a talented architect of the Shahrukh palace - Kawamiddin Sherozi. For 35 years (1405-1440) he developed and perfected the idea of ceilings in the intersecting arcs system in Khurasan buildings. The first and last stages of Kawam ad-Shirazi's creative research were in the Gavhvrsld Mausoleum in Herat (1405-1418). In Mawarounnahr its striking patterns are used in Chupan ota (1436) and Oksaroy (1440) in Samarkand, and almost a quarter century later in the Astrakhan (1464). It is noteworthy that the ceilings in the four intersecting arches in the building and especially in the central hall are examples of the most advanced and advanced engineering of this type of construction in Maverannahr at that time.

Discussion

Repair and restoration. This monument has been renovated many times over the years. They can be conditionally divided into three periods:

1st period. Late 1930s - 1970s.

2nd period. 1978-1991.

3rd period. From 1991 to present [11].

First stage. The first proposals for a partial reconstruction of Ishrathana were made by G.A. Pugachenkova on the basis of her measurements and studies in 1939-1940. Technical condition of the building in 1940 was rather deplorable: abandoned for centuries, it has long been the victim of robbers. Based on the collected fragmentary material, Pugachenkova graphically recreated the decor of the drum and dome, the scheme of collapsed ceilings.

Second stage. In 1978, in the Uzbek SNRPM of the Republican Scientific and Restoration Production Association "Memor" engineer I.E. Pletnev completed preliminary (pre-design) work on the mausoleum of Ishratkhan [12].

The third stage. With the independence in the Republic of Uzbekistan, approaches to the restoration business have changed somewhat. Sometimes, for the development of projects for the restoration of monuments, ready-made, but not implemented, fully professionally completed projects of predecessors are taken as a basis. On their basis, adjustments are made for the restoration, repair, conservation of the monument, or landscaping of the area around the building, as proposed in the project and in kind. At the same time, new terrain conditions, changes in the state of the monument, acquired over the elapsed time of loss, etc. are taken into account. In this regard, previous projects were finalized taking into account the necessary new measures.

The repair works were carried out on the basis of the research of Pugachenkova, I.Usmanhodzhaeva, R.Fahritdinova, VG Sobirov. During this period the monument was partially restored. While these have only partially improved the condition of the monument, they have not guaranteed the full preservation of the monument. Last refurbishment was carried out in 2015 on the basis of the Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan № 164 dated June 7, 2011 "On conservation, restoration and study of cultural and architectural monuments in Samarkand" [13].

The repairs are currently underway. This immense monument attracts not only the scientists of our country, but also the entire world. In order to bring it to future generations and make it a tourist destination, the following should be done:

1. To publish brochures and books with reliable data, picture and construction about the monument in different languages: uzbek, russian, english and others.
2. General areas of the monuments is about 3700 meter squar, size of the building of the monument is about 760 square meter. The infrastucture around the monument should be improved by building additional halls and gallarey (which meets the demand of UNESCO and have no dame to the monuments). Inside them should decorate and provide technologies, photographs and wall paintings which inform visitors (both locals and foreigners) about the monument and reconstruction of square, roads and others (picture 6).
3. According to reliable information, it should be created the maket of the monument and it can be done by organizing national or international competition. It also shoul set in galery which built near the monument. In addition 3D maket of the monument shoul be created and presented to visitors.



Figure 7. Location and area of the monument (image from space) (2019)

Conclusion

Asharatkhana monument is mentioned as valuable memorial-monument and heritage of our nation. However, some unproved and misleading information which is spread by unknown sources made the monument have misleading opinions. It can be as a result of lack of fundamental and reliable information about the history of building, construction, description of the monument. Since the monument is our heritage and bright example of architecture of Timurids period, we have to keep, reconstruct and deliver it to our new generation. and it sets a number of duties to scientists, specialists, archeologists, architects and historians.

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