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ANALYSIS OF ARCHITECTURAL AND PLANNING SOLUTIONS FOR ELITE RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS IN THE CITY OF ASTANA

АСТАНА ҚАЛАСЫНДАҒЫ ЭЛИТАЛЫҚ ТҰРҒЫН ҮЙ КЕШЕНДЕРІНІҢ АРХИТЕКТУРАЛЫҚ-ЖОСПАРЛАУ ШЕШІМДЕРІН ТАЛДАУ

АНАЛИЗ АРХИТЕКТУРНО-ПЛАНИРОВОЧНЫХ РЕШЕНИЙ ЭЛИТНЫХ ЖИЛЫХ КОМПЛЕКСОВ В ГОРОДЕ АСТАНА

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ABSTRACT

The article analyses architectural and planning solutions for elite residential complexes in Astana. The study reveals a discrepancy between regulatory requirements and existing design solutions for elite housing. The study is based on regulatory documents, theoretical materials and a comparative analysis of three residential complexes located in Astana. The analysis found that 'luxury' is mainly based on minimum numerical indicators – area, height, number of bathrooms and number of floors. At the same time, key quality indicators such as functional space organisation, ergonomics, number and configuration of bathrooms, availability of auxiliary rooms, design of entrance areas, and ensuring comfort and privacy of rooms are not regulated by standards. It follows that the status of 'elite' is largely not confirmed by actual architectural and planning solutions. The results of the study highlight the need to expand regulatory requirements and rethink existing concepts of elite housing.

Түйінді сөздер:

элиталық тұрғын үй
кешені, тұрғын үй
түрлері, жіктеу, цифрлық
минимум, эргономика,
тұрғын аймақ, тұрғын
емес аймақ.

ТҮЙІНДЕМЕ

Мақала Астанадағы элиталық тұрғын үй кешендерінің сәулеттік және жоспарлау шешімдерін талдайды. Зерттеу элиталық тұрғын үйге қойылатын нормативтік талаптар мен қолданыстағы жобалау шешімдері арасындағы алшақтықты анықтайды. Зерттеу нормативтік құжаттарға, теориялық материалдарға және Астанада орналасқан үш тұрғын үй кешенінің салыстырмалы талдауына негізделген. Талдау көрсеткендей, «люкс» негізінен минималды сандық көрсеткіштер – аумағы, биіктігі, жуынатын бөлмелер саны және қабаттар саны бойынша анықталады. Сонымен бірге функционалдық кеңістікті ұйымдастыру, эргономика, жуынатын бөлмелердің саны мен орналасуы, көмекші бөлмелердің қолжетімділігі, кіреберіс аймақтардың дизайны және бөлмелердегі жайлылық пен жеке өмірді



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қамтамасыз ету сияқты негізгі сапа көрсеткіштері стандарттармен реттелмейді. Осыған сәйкес, «элиталық» мәртебе нақты сәулеттік және жоспарлау шешімдерімен негізінен расталмайды. Зерттеу нәтижелері реттеу талаптарын кеңейту және элиталық тұрғын үйдің қазіргі тұжырымдамаларын қайта қарастыру қажеттігін көрсетеді.

Ключевые слова:

Элитный жилой комплекс, типы жилья, классификация, цифровой минимум, эргономика, жилая зона, нежилая зона.

АННОТАЦИЯ

В статье проводится анализ архитектурно-планировочных решений элитных жилых комплексов в городе Астана. Исследование показывает несоответствие между нормативными требованиями и существующими проектными решениями жилья элитного класса. В основу исследования взяты нормативные документы, теоретические материалы и сравнительный анализ трех жилых комплексов, находящихся в городе Астана. В ходе анализа установлено, что «элитность» в основном происходит из минимальных цифровых показателей – площадь, высота, количество с/у и этажности. При этом ключевые показатели качества, такие как функциональная организация пространства, эргономика, количество и конфигурация с/у, наличие вспомогательных помещений, проработанность входных зон, обеспечение комфорта и приватности комнат нормативами не регламентируются. Отсюда следует, что статус «элитный» в основном не подтверждается реальными архитектурно-планировочными решениями. Результаты исследования подчеркивают необходимость расширения нормативных требований и переосмысления существующих понятий элитного жилья.

INTRODUCTION

Modern residential construction in the city of Astana is characterised by the active development of the luxury housing segment. This class of residential complexes is positioned as the embodiment of a high level of comfort, thoughtful architecture and high-quality integration into the urban environment.

The very concept of luxury housing implies a special category of houses with a high degree of comfort, high price, and developed infrastructure, built to the author's order. In this regard, it is relevant to study the compliance of architectural and planning solutions with the actual level of the declared class of housing. This is because, in architectural design and urban planning, this class of housing serves as urban accents and has a higher level of architectural solutions.

The aim of the study is to identify existing problems and inconsistencies in the architectural and planning solutions of elite residential complexes.

To achieve this goal, the following tasks were set:

- to analyze theoretical works and regulatory documents governing the design of multi-apartment residential buildings of various classes;
- to study the architectural and planning solutions of modern elite residential complexes;
- to carry out a comparative analysis of the objects under study in order to identify characteristic problems and contradictions;

The results of the study will make it possible to assess the real meaning of the concept of "luxury" in residential architecture and to identify areas for improvement in design approaches in architectural and planning solutions that ensure not only quantitative but also qualitative indicators of comfortable living.

LITERATURE REVIEW

An elite residential complex (ERC) is a residential property offering enhanced comfort, quality and beauty. Their architectural and planning solutions are based on spacious rooms,

special requirements for privacy and security, and built-in service facilities. They also provide residents with a special status and level of prestige.

The "elite" status of a residential complex is determined by a combination of tangible and intangible qualities. A certain segment of the population that values coziness and comfort has the opportunity to attract more resources for the design and construction of such housing. The experience gained from designing such houses opens up new opportunities for implementation in other classes of housing (Grebenshchikov K.N.). «Elite» residential buildings are residential buildings constructed according to individual author's design solutions with design elements and a prestigious urban location (Danyaeva L. N., Postnova K., 2019).

According to Kent and Thompson, for architects and designers working on residential complexes, this concept serves as a rationale for implementing planning solutions such as multifunctional public spaces, developed recreational infrastructure, and pedestrian accessibility to services (J. L., Thompson S, 2014).

Elite residential complexes are also characterized by elite low-rise buildings, constructed or renovated according to an exclusive design in a prestigious landscaped area for a select group of residents belonging to the same social class and with a high level of wealth and property (M. Molchanov, E. Molchanova, E. Irmanova, 2018).

According to the study results, seven elements of luxury home design were identified. These include security features, space, building materials, façade design, interior design, courtyard, and landscaping. These design aspects are achieved through careful attention to detail and a focus on creating an atmosphere that enhances the residents' lifestyle (M. J. H. Wong, J. N. Cotter, M. A. Noorawavi, L. P. Chung, 2024).

From an architectural point of view, the decisions made during the design process are guided by the internationally recognized semantics of "elite status". Panoramic glazing and natural materials are often used, as well as sectional techniques and multi-level construction.

Energy efficiency principles should also be taken into account in the design of luxury residential complexes. Ideally, a passive house should be an independent energy system that does not require any expenditure to maintain a comfortable temperature (Iskhodzhanova G. R., Turekulova A., 2019).

Free global capital and wealthy buyers to the city, who can then bring economic benefits to the city through luxury consumption and spending on personal services, renovations and business activities. The features of modern planning solutions were identified in a scientific article by Esenbaeva A., which discusses how apartments with poor layouts may require costly and lengthy repairs or renovations (A. Yessenbayev, 2024). This scientific work is based on comfort and convenience for people with limited mobility, but ergonomic requirements such as free space under the sink, spacious kitchens and bathrooms fully correlate with modern standards for elite design.

Modern scientific articles also discuss the creation of flexible and comfortable layouts. Creating opportunities that users expect, mainly for everyday activities, joint events, and a pleasant feeling of home. To support personalization, the study showed that homes should have flexible interior layouts and construction technologies (Jusan, Sulaiman, 2007).

METHODOLOGY

- Theoretical material

In order to obtain reliable results, it is necessary to conduct a comprehensive study, which includes the study of theoretical material and critical analysis of practical work;

- Regulatory documentation

In design activities, regulatory documentation is formed from theoretical research. Therefore, at this stage, architectural and construction standards in the field of forming the object of research, an elite residential complex, are analyzed.

- Project documents

For architectural and planning analysis, it is necessary to study projects related to the formation of the research object.

- Typological comparison

Comparison is a cognitive operation that forms the basis for judgments about the similarity or difference between objects. Comparison is used to identify the qualitative and quantitative characteristics of objects.

- Architectural and graphic method (drawing up plans, diagrams)

A method of illustrating scientific conclusions and proposals using graphic material. It allows you to visually demonstrate existing layouts and diagrams, highlighting strengths and weaknesses. Generalization

Summarizing and reviewing the identified results: errors, inconsistencies in architectural and planning solutions. Method of summarizing. At the end of the study, the scientific novelty and social relevance of the theoretical results obtained are recorded.

- Forecast

A method that allows you to trace the expected path of development of architectural and planning solutions. A forecast is a statement about the future that is obtained as a result of research conducted on a sound scientific basis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

As a modern technological hub, Astana is setting an example for other cities in the context of luxury residential complex construction. This is because the design of luxury residential complexes sets certain objectives: the creation of a comfortable living environment, spaciousness and efficient use of square footage, safety, public spaces, amenities and green areas.

Housing class is a classification of residential buildings that reflects the level of comfort, quality of construction, infrastructure and surrounding area.

In Kazakhstan, there are four housing classes: IV – economy, III – comfort, II – business, I – elite. This classification is approved by SP RK 3.02.-101-2012 "Multi-apartment residential buildings". [4] It is actively used in modern design. Often, it shows the "digital" minimum, i.e. the minimum comfort threshold required to designate a residential building as elite. However, these criteria only apply to the interior of the building – the apartments (Table 1).

Table 1. Modern classification of residential complexes

Indicators	Classification of residential buildings				
	Class I	Class II	Class III	Class IV	Small-sized housing
Living space per person	more than 25 m ²	up to 25 m ²	up to 18 m ²	15 m ²	at least 12 m ²
Height of living spaces from floor to ceiling	3 m and above	3.0 m	2.7 m	2.5 m	2.5 m
Number of living rooms	From 1 to 7	From 1 to 6	1, 2, 3, 4	1, 2, 3, 4	1, 2, 3, 4
Minimum kitchen area	Kitchen-dining room no less than 18 m ²	Kitchen no less than 12 m ²	Kitchen no less than 9 m ²	Kitchen no less than 9 m ² , kitchen niche no less than 6 m ² , with 3 or 4 living rooms – no more than 12 m ² .	Kitchen or kitchen niche – no less than 5 sq. m.



End of table 1

Indicators	Classification of residential buildings				
	Class I	Class II	Class III	Class IV	Small-sized housing
Availability of summer rooms (balconies, loggias, terraces, verandas)	By number of rooms, including kitchen areas, in accordance with the design brief design	In number 3, 4 living rooms – no at least 2; with 1 or 2 living rooms - 1	No more than 1	No more than 1	
Bathrooms and toilets	Bathrooms and toilets in bedrooms and for common use are determined by the design assignment	1 bathroom room, 1 toilet	Combined sanitary unit, with there are 3 or 4 living rooms - separate sanitary unit	Combined bathroom, with 4 living rooms - separate bathroom	Bathrooms and toilets
Availability of parking spaces per apartment in the car park, underground, above ground	2	1	0.5	According to the design assignment	According to the design assignment
<i>Note – compiled by the author (Rakhimzhan, 2025) based on data from the Republic of Kazakhstan Statistics Committee, 2012</i>					

The consequences of the lack of appropriate criteria in the classification of buildings are that people do not receive the appropriate level of comfort in accordance with the finances that have been invested. At the same time, architectural and planning solutions for residential complexes of adjacent classes are becoming more typical, which leads to the extinction of architectural individuality (N.A. Chernysh, A. Ibraeva, 2021)

Accordingly, to be classified as elite housing, it is sufficient to meet minimum standards. This approach can create a superficial, incomplete picture of the architectural, planning and engineering structure of an elite residential complex.

This leads to the conclusion that formal compliance with minimum standards does not in itself guarantee full "elite" status. The existing classification hides many qualitative details – the division of space and its flexibility, convenience of living, connectivity of areas and their ergonomic composition. These points are not disclosed in regulatory documents, but are more often found in theoretical materials. However, for construction and design, it is sufficient to comply with the "digital minimum." This allows one to obtain the advertising status of elite housing. As a result, developers rely on formal compliance and individual architectural techniques (large areas and a large number of rooms), while the actual architectural and planning organization of elite residential complexes remains superficial.

A modern residential complex, designed in accordance with existing building regulations, has the architectural and planning structure of a residential complex with services, which was common at the end of the last century (Mamedov S., 2022).

We can see the consequences of this approach in the example of elite housing in the city of Astana.

The La Vie residential complex (Fig. 1) is an elite building in the Almaty district at the intersection of Koshkarbayev and Momyshuly streets. The residential complex is positioned as an elite and premium class residential complex. There are three green parks and a place for walking nearby. The buildings have 12-18 floors. The minimum area starts at 42 square meters, and the number of rooms in an apartment ranges from 1 to 5. The ceiling height is 3.15-3.6 meters. The residential complex has underground parking, public spaces for various purposes, playgrounds, and green recreation areas.

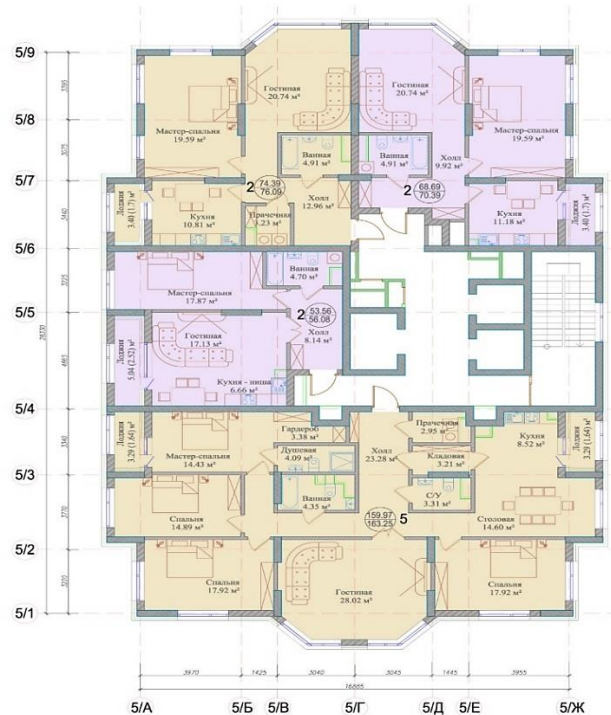


Figure 1. Layout of the La Vie residential complex. Typical floor plan for block 5

Note – create by the author (Rakhimzhan, 2025)

The housing class is listed as "premium" or Class I. According to the developer, the main criteria for elitism are the number of floors, height, landscaped area, and location in a prestigious district of Astana. Analysis of the layout of this residential complex revealed the following problems:

1. Insufficient space for kitchen equipment
2. Insufficient number of bathrooms
3. No space for a TV in the master bedroom.
4. Volume at the entrance. Irrational layout of the entrance area, which does not meet the principles of comfort and aesthetics (dead ends, long corridors, bathrooms or other technical rooms).
5. Master bedroom. No wardrobes or private bathrooms.
6. Apartment and room size. The availability of one-bedroom apartments, one-and-a-half-bedroom apartments with a reduced total area, and kitchens do not correspond to the elite class of housing. The Tumar Exclusive residential complex is located at Askara Tokpanova Street, Esil District. The location provides urban accessibility with a view of the natural environment – the embankment. The buildings have 7-16 floors. Visually, the residential complex combines height

with a comfortable scale. Infrastructure includes sports areas, playgrounds, and parking. The landscaped area focuses on safety (no cars in the courtyard).

The Tumar Exclusive residential (Fig. 2) complex is located at Askara Tokpanova Street, Esil District. The location provides urban accessibility with a view of the natural environment – the embankment. The buildings have 7-16 floors. Visually, the residential complex combines height with a comfortable scale. Infrastructure includes sports areas, playgrounds, and parking. The landscaped area focuses on safety (car-free courtyard). Based on the preliminary design of this project, the total area of the site is 0.73 hectares, and the building area is 4,980 square metres. The architectural design of the project is executed in bright colours, which contributes to the positive visual perception of the complex both on a human scale and in the composition of the nearest new residential buildings (Kim. D., Mamedov S.E., 2024).



Figure 2. Typical floor for block 4. Layout of the Tumar Exclusive residential complex

Note: create by the author (Rakhimzhan, 2025)

The project includes 2-, 3- and 4-room apartments ranging in size from 46 to 158 square metres. The layout consists of four apartments per floor, except for the top two, which are penthouses. It is also positioned as premium-class housing. Its elite features include the number of floors, premium finishes, high ceilings, landscaped grounds and location in a prestigious area of Astana.

In multi-storey residential buildings, it is preferable to design the layout so that at least one room faces south. Non-residential premises are more often oriented to the north, thereby reducing energy costs. Bedrooms are lit by skylights on the south side, and heated by underfloor heating.

However, the project has some architectural and planning shortcomings:

1. Not enough space for kitchen equipment
2. No space for a wardrobe
3. Insufficient number of bathrooms
4. No space for a TV
5. Volume at the entrance. Irrational organisation of the entrance area, which does not meet the principles of comfort and aesthetics (dead ends, long corridors, bathrooms or other technical rooms).

The main emphasis on "elite" status is on ceiling height and amenities. The main and recurring shortcomings are: small kitchens and poorly designed spaces for additional kitchen equipment, insufficient number or size of bathrooms, no space for media systems, problematic entrance areas, i.e. poorly designed entrance areas, lack of privacy/adjacency of rooms.

Increasing the number of flats per floor area reduces the cost of the section and at the same time reduces its convenience (Shlyakhtich E. 2022).

One of the distinctive features of luxury residential properties is their ability to attract buyers. These developments form an archipelago of luxurious 'black box' residences that offer strictly limited living spaces in both a symbolic and practical sense. The luxury real estate sector, its developers, estate agents and lawyers often promote these developments because of their ability to attract (Atkinson, R., & Mingay, M., 2024).

As shown by a comparative analysis of the architectural and planning solutions of two elite residential complexes, the criteria for "elite" status are mainly based on the minimum regulatory requirements for area, height, and number of bathrooms (Table 2).

Table 2. Comparative table of normative and design parameters

Parameter	SP RK "multi-apartment residential buildings"	La Vie residential complex	Tumar Exclusive residential complex
Area and configuration	Number of rooms 1-7, area per person 25 sq. m. Zoning: living area at the entrance, sleeping area at the back, bedrooms isolated from stairwells and lift shafts, bathrooms adjacent to bedrooms	The floor has one apartment with a kitchenette, two 2-room apartments and one 5-room apartment. Some apartments have adjoining walls between the kitchen and bedroom. The bedrooms are isolated from the stairwells and lift shafts.	There are four flats on the floor: one with one and a half rooms, two with two rooms, and two with three and four rooms. The bedrooms are isolated, but the flat with one and a half rooms has a shared wall with the bathroom of another flat.
Room sizes	In the SP, room sizes are not regulated, except for the kitchen, which must be at least 18 square metres.	Small kitchens, insufficient number of bathrooms, many corridors, area of quiet rooms.	Small kitchens, insufficient number of bathrooms, many corridors, quiet rooms.
Bathrooms	Bathrooms must be at least 2.25 square metres, toilets must be at least 1.2 square metres, and there must be an additional bathroom for every 6-7 rooms. The presence of bathrooms in bedrooms and shared bathrooms is designed according to the specifications.	Bedrooms without their own bathrooms, except for 5-room apartments, where only the master bedroom has its own bathroom. To sum up: insufficient number of bathrooms for luxury housing.	Bedrooms without their own bathrooms, but with one shared bathroom per apartment. The area does not greatly exceed the minimum threshold. Insufficient number of bathrooms.
Balconies	The width of shared balconies is at least 1.2 m, and at least 1.4 m for people with limited mobility. Located outside the windows of living rooms, in front of non-living rooms (kitchens)	Loggias are present in all apartments. However, their area and configuration serve a traditional function (storage room).	Loggias are only available in two apartments. Their area and configuration suggest a traditional function (storage room).

End of table 3

Parameter	SP RK "multi-apartment residential buildings"	La Vie residential complex	Tumar Exclusive residential complex
Kitchens	At least 18 square metres, it is permissible to combine the kitchen with the living room or dining room	None of the kitchens meet the standards. In the 5- room apartment, the kitchen is combined with the dining room, but high-quality equipment is not provided	The kitchen in the four-room flat complies with the standards, measuring 20 square metres. However, the other rooms do not comply, measuring less than 18 square metres.

Note – compiled by the author (Rakhimzhan, 2025) based on a comparative analysis

The agreed minimum figure is not sufficient to adequately characterise the "elite" nature of the housing. The same minimum can also be applied to lower classes. At the same time, the difference between a premium residential complex and other classes may be insignificant and expressed in numerical terms. However, the price per square metre and the status of the residents vary significantly.

To verify this statement, we will consider the Argymak residential (Fig. 3) complex and conduct a comparative analysis. The Argymak residential complex is located on Tauelsizdik Street/B. Momysuly Avenue in Astana. The project has a total of four sections, one of which is a 16-storey block, while the others are 12 storeys high. The complex is positioned by developers as "comfort+". It is worth noting that such a class of housing does not exist in regulatory documents; there is only "comfort" or class III. However, the features of this residential complex can be attributed to the conditional criteria for elite housing. For example, it is located in a sought-after, even prestigious area, the number of floors corresponds to elite housing, and there is parking. The architectural solutions are also of a high standard. However, the planning solutions must be based largely on the norms and standards specified in special documents. The status of "comfort+" has been declared, but it will be based on either comfort or business characteristics.



Figure 3. Planning solution for the Argymak residential complex. Typical floor plan
Note – create by the author (Rakhimzhan, 2025)

The Argymak residential complex generally complies with the parameters of Class III housing – the number of rooms, living area and minimum requirements for bathrooms are met; kitchens exceed regulatory requirements and loggias are present. There are discrepancies in ceiling heights related to the task of adding a "+" to the "comfort" class. This is expressed in a height of 3 m. In summary, the Argymak residential complex, in terms of its architectural and planning solution, more closely corresponds to Class II "business", with minor discrepancies (Table 3).

Table 3. Comparative table of differences between residential complexes

Names	Class	Number of floors	Area	Height	Price per sq. m.
La Vie	Elite	12-18	56-163 m ²	3.6 m	795,000/ m ²
Tumar Exclusive	Elite	7-16	8-146 m ²	3.3 m	730,000/ m ²
Argymak	Comfort/declared comfort+	12-16	61-119 m ²	3 m	595,000/ m ²
<i>Note – compiled by the author based on data from open sources</i>					

The following conclusions can be drawn from the study:

- 1) The difference between the elite residential complexes La Vie, Tumar Exclusive and the Argymak residential complex consists mainly in numerical values (room size);
- 2) The difference in price per square metre for luxury homes is three times higher;
- 3) The economic difference does not correspond to the architectural and planning solutions
- 4) All three residential complexes have a similar number of floors.

It is also worth noting that, according to regulatory documents, rooms in apartments are divided into mandatory (living space and kitchen) and design-specific. The design solutions divide the living area into children's rooms, master bedrooms, and add auxiliary rooms in the form of wardrobes and laundry rooms. This creates a more complex internal structure. These elements form a qualitatively different level of comfort and privacy, ensure rational use of space, and support everyday living scenarios.

When designing an individual flat of any level of comfort, it is important to ensure the best possible living conditions for the family and all its activities - family communication, active and passive recreation, raising children, personal housekeeping, hygiene maintenance. To this end, the space is divided into functional areas - common and individual (Sadykova S. Sh., Toishieva A., 2020).

However, despite the fact that these rooms have a significant impact on improving the standard of housing, they are not regulated and are not designated as mandatory for elite housing.

As a result, the presence or absence of such spaces remains at the discretion of the developer and is not determined systematically. This leads to a situation where housing advertised as elite may only formally meet the minimum requirements.

Thus, the lack of clear regulations for all rooms creates a gap between regulatory parameters and design characteristics. Accordingly, it is necessary to review and expand the regulatory data for all rooms.

CONCLUSION

In fact, developers and design organizations are free to call buildings elite if they meet the minimum requirements according to regulatory documentation. Living rooms are not regulated in terms of area and content, ergonomic issues have not been resolved, apartments have long



corridors and inconvenient bathroom configurations, as well as sanitary fixtures. The identified problems are not digital in nature, but rather aesthetic and related to comfort.

An analysis of the architectural and planning solutions of the La Vie and Tumar Exclusive residential complexes reveals a gap between formal compliance and the actual principles of luxury housing. Both residential complexes comply with the "numerical" minimum, according to the SP RK "Multi-apartment residential buildings" in terms of area, height, and number of bathrooms. However, this does not guarantee the expected level of comfort and functionality. Their criteria for elitism exceed other classes of housing only in terms of numerical indicators (floors, area). This is shown by a comparative analysis of elite residential complexes and Argymak, which is a Class III housing complex.

At the same time, the qualitative parameters that determine the comfort and functionality of living – zoning logic, number and configuration of bathrooms, availability of auxiliary rooms – are not taken into account. Thus, the difference between housing classes is manifested not so much in architectural and planning solutions as in marketing positioning and economic indicators. This confirms the need to rethink the concept of "elite" in housing construction with an emphasis on functional, spatial and user characteristics, rather than on a minimum set of numbers.

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