



CULTURAL INSTITUTION IN UZBEKISTAN: THE HISTORY OF THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A RECREATION PARK (CASE STUDY OF FERGANA REGION)

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Article history:	Abstract:
Received: 14 th February 2026 Accepted: 11 th March 2026	This article describes the history of the emergence, development, and contemporary significance of the recreational park in the city of Fergana, which is recognized as an important cultural site.
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INTRODUCTION

The peoples of Central Asia have historically possessed well-established traditions of landscape gardening and park design. In Uzbek epic literature and medieval miniature art, idealized, paradisiacal gardens are vividly depicted, incorporating architectural elements such as palatial residences and pavilions, as well as water features including pools and fountains, alongside diverse arboreal compositions and cultivated floral landscapes.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Accounts of 8th-century Arab travelers indicate their profound astonishment at the extent to which the cities of Central Asia—particularly Samarkand—were enveloped in lush garden environments. In his seminal work "History of Bukhara," Narshakhi provides valuable historical evidence concerning the gardens of Bukhara during the 10th–11th centuries, describing notable examples such as the ڤ (garden) complex in the Juyi Mumiyon locality, various orchards and flower gardens, and the Shamsabad garden established by Malik Shams al-Mulk near the Ibrahim Gate.

By the late 14th and early 15th centuries, extensive garden complexes commissioned by Amir Temur were developed in the environs of Samarkand. These gardens, intended primarily for leisure and ceremonial purposes, were systematically organized according to two principal typologies: the charbagh (a quadripartite garden layout based on axial symmetry) and enclosed reserve-type garden landscapes.[2;588]

The tradition of garden construction was consistently maintained and further developed during the Timurid period by prominent rulers such as Shahrukh Mirza, Ulugh Beg, Babur, and other princely figures, who not only preserved but also systematized the established principles of landscape design. Their activities contributed to the continuity and gradual evolution of garden architecture as an integral component of courtly culture and urban planning.

In the subsequent period, particularly during the 17th–18th centuries, the practice of establishing charbagh-type gardens remained widespread within the Bukhara Emirate, as well as in the Khiva and Kokand Khanates. These gardens were predominantly laid out in peri-urban zones, reflecting both functional and aesthetic considerations, and serving as important elements of recreational, ceremonial, and environmental infrastructure beyond the confines of densely built urban centers.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Beginning in the late 19th century, the deliberate establishment of urban parks designed for mass public recreation emerged as a notable phenomenon within the framework of urban development. These spaces reflected changing socio-cultural dynamics and the growing institutionalization of leisure infrastructure. Among the earliest and most illustrative examples is the Tashkent City Park, founded in 1882, which represents a significant stage in the formation of organized public recreational environments in Central Asia. [2;589]

During the 1960s and 1980s, cultural and recreational parks in Uzbekistan were predominantly constructed according to a standardized design, characterized by extensive landscaped tree groves. These parks functioned not only as spaces for leisure but also as venues for socio-political events, cultural and domestic activities, physical education, and health-oriented programs. Typical facilities within these parks included open-air cinemas, theaters, reading rooms, amusement machines, and communal dining areas. Such multifunctional design reflects the Soviet-era emphasis on integrating recreational, educational, and social functions within public spaces, aiming to foster community engagement, cultural development, and the physical well-being of citizens.[1;196]



"Recreational parks with similar features have started to appear in other regions of the country as well, as can be seen in Fergana region." Historically, it is documented that in 1876 the Kokand Khanate was formally abolished, and the Fergana Province General-Governorship was established on its former territory. In Kokand, alongside the newly instituted administrative apparatus, a comprehensive network of military and civil institutions was organized, including an Orthodox church, official residences for military personnel and civil administrators, storage facilities, retail establishments, barracks, and hospitals. The first military governor of Fergana Province, General M. D. Skobelev, addressed a formal communication to the Governor-General of Turkestan, K. P. Kaufman, advocating for the establishment of a new provincial administrative center. He substantiated his proposal with several observations, noting in particular that Kokand was a densely built city, characterized by highly exposed, windy, and dusty conditions, and that its climate posed significant discomfort during the winter season.

Taking into consideration the proposals of Fon Kaufman, Skobelev, and other officials, as well as direct reports on the region's sanitary conditions and climate, it was decided to relocate the administrative center of Fergana Province to a more suitable site. This site was situated on the upper part of the Margilan Valley, several kilometers from Margilan, and was to be developed in the European style. The area offered a more favorable climate, reliable access to drinking water, and better sanitary conditions compared to Kokand. The construction project for the provincial center was officially approved on June 18, 1877, by K.P. Fon Kaufman, the Governor-General of Turkestan. The new city was to be named "New Margilan."

On June 18, 1877, the "Draft Rules for the Development of a New City" was approved. It was named New Margilan, renamed Skobelev in 1907, and became Fergana in 1924. The city lives and develops in time and space, meaning it always has and will always have its own history.

The initial plan for the new city was developed by military topographer I. U. Zhilin and military engineers Korolkov and Sinclair. Sergei Valentinovich Lekhanov, architect and head of the regional construction department, played a decisive role in shaping the city's initial appearance. Architects I. R. Sakovich, E. A. Brun, G. M. Svarichevsky, I. I. Aksentovich, A. I. Bot, Bardovsky, and others contributed significantly to the project in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Main construction work began in 1878, as time was needed to establish brick production, especially burnt brick. Brick factories located in Yarmazar burned one hundred cartloads of barbed wire delivered from near Margilan in just one day. The city plan immediately included space for a public garden and park, or, as it was then called, a city garden. Preparatory work for the establishment of the city garden began in 1886, and the main development took place in 1887.[3;1]

Nikolai Ivanovich Korolkov played a fundamental role in the development of the city's park and garden. An experienced administrator, he was also an amateur botanist, so distinguished that he was a member of one of the foreign academies of sciences. Dozens of Central Asian plant species are named after him, including sage, lousewort, honeysuckle, and morning glory, as well as the uniquely beautiful tulips and iris. Despite the park's diverse dendroflora, he managed to adapt southern exotic species, including lianas, to urban conditions. Unfortunately, the park's tree and shrub diversity was reduced by two-thirds during the historical upheavals of the early 1920s. The park's area was originally very large: following the city's current topography, from Mustakillik Street to what is now School No. 2, including the entire block to Akhunbabaev Street and along it to the corner with Bobur Street.

Later, some land was alienated, such as in 1902-1903 during the construction of a boys' gymnasium, now the university campus. Under irrigated agriculture, foresters made productive use of the wealth of experience of local plant breeders and irrigators when landscaping the city's streets, public gardens, and parks.[3;2]

The city park-garden had its own small lake. On Sundays and holidays, festivities were held here, with a brass band always a part of the entertainment. Sometimes, however, not in the park, but on the alleys of the square, prize races were held for bicycles, which were just beginning to become a part of the city's everyday life. And this passion for cycling became so fashionable and popular in the city that a special cycle track was built. The city park-garden was perhaps one of the most beautiful in Turkestan at the time. At least, in the travel essays of the capital's journalist Gartenveld, we find the following lines about the city in 1891: "...the city has a lot of greenery and water. And the latter is a rarity for a Turkestan city. The wonderful park occupies a large space right in the center of the city; and each house has a garden and a swimming pool."

In the early 1930s, a soccer field was built on the lake's site, which lasted for fifteen years. The park became lively, first with simple attractions, then with more technical ones, and especially with dance parties on the dance floors, which became one of the park's most distinctive features during that era.

A fifty-meter parachute tower existed for a time from the mid-1960s. The summer theater hosted tours by many famous pop groups and artists. However, it should be noted that the enormous number of buildings, both necessary and unnecessary, ultimately narrowed and cramped the park proper to just a few alleys.



A drastic redesign of the park and the entire complex for Al-Farghoni's anniversary in 1998 restored the spaciousness of its green space.[3;2]

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Regarding the naming history of this recreational park in Fergana, its evolution can be traced through several periods: Original Name ("National Park")

The park was established in the mid-20th century and was initially called the "National Park" (Xalq bog'i). At that time, it served as the city's primary cultural and recreational venue.

Soviet Period Name ("Park of Culture and Recreation")

During the Soviet era, the park was officially named the "Park of Culture and Recreation." It featured attractions, fountains, reading halls, and sports facilities. This name remained in use until the 1990s.

Early Independence Period ("Independence Park")

In the early 1990s, the park was renamed "Independence Park." During this period, new landscaping projects were undertaken, although the infrastructure gradually began to deteriorate.

"Al-Farg'oni" (2019)

In 2019, the park received its current name, "Al-Farg'oni," honoring the renowned scholar and reflecting the city's cultural heritage.

CONCLUSION

In 2019, the park underwent a complete renovation, and on August 20, it was officially named "Al-Farghoni." This was done in accordance with the Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan (dated August 20, 2019, "On Naming Certain Streets and Public Places in Some Districts and Cities of Fergana Region").[4] The park now features modern attractions, fountains, children's playgrounds, cafes, and pedestrian walkways. A bust of the renowned scholar has also been installed to honor him.

Overall, what was initially designed as a natural landscape park has gradually evolved into a recreational space: an amusement park with various rides for children and a cultural leisure area for the community.

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