UDC 93/94

Fundamental differences and similarities in the architecture and interior of English, Scottish and Irish dwellings

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Abstract

The article is devoted to the history of the interior in traditional English, Scottish, and Irish dwellings. It pays attention to the fact that England, Ireland, and Scotland have followed a somewhat similar path in the development of the interior of residential buildings. The traditional culture of England, Ireland, and Scotland, on the one hand, is different due to a number of differences in cultures and the peculiarities of natural conditions. On the other hand, all three countries are geographically close, and their cultures have been interacting in one way or another for many centuries. In all three countries, there has been a transition from a primitive dwelling with an open hearth to a chimney as the organising axis of the dwelling, which has contributed to the establishment of walls and thereby zoning of space. The author of the article points out that this process occurs at different times and with different intensity in different countries. The desire for moderate heating of houses is common to the countries under consideration: there is no tendency to maintain high temperature, and therefore heating systems are not aimed at this. The author comes to the conclusion that all the interior traditions of the countries under consideration are, to one degree or another, the embodiment of tradition and conservative in a good way.

For citation

Dautov E.N. (2020) Fundamental differences and similarities in the architecture and interior of English, Scottish and Irish dwellings. "*Belye pyatna*" rossiiskoi i mirovoi istorii ["White Spots" of the Russian and World History], 6, pp. 14-23.

Keywords

Irish architecture, Scottish architecture, English architecture, British architecture, house without a chimney, history of interior design.

Introduction

The traditional culture of England, Ireland, and Scotland, on the one hand, is different due to a number of differences in cultures and the peculiarities of natural conditions. On the other hand, all three countries are geographically close, and their cultures have been interacting in one way or another for many centuries. The study of the interior of these three countries from this perspective is represented by an analysis of their history and culture, reflects the path of development that each of them has chosen. Considering successively the development of architecture and the interior of dwellings reveals the following: despite the fact that all three countries have pursued a similar path and have come to some common patterns of construction, there is also ethnocultural originality in these processes.

English dwellings

The traditional British house, especially a peasant one, was not distinguished by luxury. In Saxon times, "a house, as a rule, was built of wood; huts surrounding it were made of wood, wattles, and daub. They were encircled by a wooden fence. <...> The hall of a Saxon house was also built of wood and had a thatched or wooden roof. It was divided into sections, each of which was about 5 m wide; the number of sections depended on the welfare of the owner. Sections were supported by wooden pillars with bifurcations in their upper part. Bifurcations supported a wooden beam, on which narrow beams rested in the upper part, which was a basis for the roof. Such houses lacked headroom. The space of a hall inside was divided into sleeping and living areas for a family, servants, agricultural workers, and animals. The vast majority of people lived in small huts made of straw or branches covered with peat, ferns, mud, and heather" [Lyubimtsev, Alekhin, 2015, 65].

In poor houses that were closest to the traditional dwelling, "a door led to a dark hall: it was lit only by the central hearth, used for cooking and heating a dwelling. There was relatively little furniture in the houses of most peasants. The poorest segments of the population, especially in rural areas, lived in "cottages", which can rather be called huts" [Golovko, 2019, 207]. Houses in England had no chimneys before the advent of the chimney in the 13th and 14th centuries.

Brick chimneys contributed to the rethinking of the space of a house. The chimney became the heart of the house, and its erection contributed to a number of processes:

- dividing a room with a heated wall;
- building houses that were more than one storey high;
- dividing a dwelling into separate rooms, the functions of which eventually became more special: a kitchen, a bedroom, a living room, etc.

As some researchers note, "as soon as the hearth was placed against the wall, the interest in the house itself and its comfort dramatically increased. There appeared two-storey houses, divided into several rooms, each of which performed its own function. The amount of furniture has increased, it became more diverse. Fabrics began to be used for decorating houses, carpets were hung on walls and tables were covered with them, furniture was upholstered, walls were covered with tapestries. Wooden surfaces were carved" [Lyubimtsev, Alekhin, 2015, 125].

Later, the hall turned from a single room into an important, but no longer central one; already in the Elizabethan era, the family began to gather in a sitting room: "This is a room that is usually reached by stairs in the far part of the hall" [Golovko, 2019, 208]. The interior of an English house in the Middle Ages was enriched with primitive bulky furniture, the main genres of which, as in other cultures of that time, were a chest (a place for storing things, sitting, sleeping and a travel case), a wardrobe, low benches, and simple tables [Lyubimtsev, Alekhin, 2015, 82-84].

The further history of the English interior is connected with changing styles, which were determined not only by fashion, but also by cultural interaction and development [James-Chakraborty, 2014; Jenkins, Newman, 2019]. In particular, it played an important role as a colonizer in the development of the English interior, which in fact was one of the factors contributing to the onset of the era of historicism and the love of exoticism in the interior [Pile, Gura, 2014; Stobart, 2017].

The 18th and 19th centuries were marked by the spread of "fashion" magazines and then encyclopedias of interior design in England. In particular, in Loudon's *Encyclopaedia of Cottage, Farm, and Villa Architecture and Furniture* (1833), there were the following tips on arranging a country house: "Entering our drawing-room from the saloon, at the end opposite would be a square or circular bay window, commanding a view of the park and the distant country beyond it. On the right side would be the fireplace, and on the opposite side two windows looking over the terrace and parterre. In this room I would have a splendid white marble chimneypiece" [Wall, 2014, 553].

Along with numerous books about architecture and interior design, various interior catalogs began to be distributed in the Victorian era: "The Victorian period is very much the age of the trade catalogue and the building journal. Over the course of the 19th century we see an increase in their importance, particularly in the final quarter of the century, and by 1900 these types of publications had overtaken some conventional modes of transmitting information. Such a shift reflected vast changes occurring in the building industry in response to the demand for housing and ornamentation generally. Journals provided the same type of information as books, patterns, prices, and instruction, but also trade news and correspondence and information was regularly updated. Firms increasingly advertised their wares in journals, and indeed in manuals and price books, made easier after tax on advertising was dropped in 1853. In their effort to compete in supplying the building trades with ready-made materials and components, firms developed a large apparatus of publicity, including extensive and profusely illustrated catalogues. This was made possible by cheap printing methods and new modes of illustration, and large companies issued various catalogues for different markets" [Long, 2002, 97].

The three most important types of residential buildings in England include a detached house, a semi-detached house, and a terraced house (terrace, row house, linked house, townhouse) [Oshchepkova, Bulkin, 2000]. As a rule, houses are built of red brick, in the eastern part of England—of yellow brick. 75% of English houses have a central heating system [Golovko, 2019, 211].

There are the following important signs of the English interior. English houses often have a brag wall, i. e., a wall where various diplomas and photos with reputable people hang. Net curtains are typical of the windows of living rooms for the poorer strata of society. Middle-class young people prefer laconic furniture with a large TV set; in richer houses there may be a special room for a stereo system and a TV set (a back room, a family room). Poor homeowners often put carpeting on the floor, the floor in richer houses is usually uncoated, and it is prestigious if it is old [Fox, 2014].

The traditional English interior is also characterized by wallpaper with classic stripes, floral or heraldic prints, double-layered curtains with lambrequins, and a fireplace with a mantelpiece on which you can put candlesticks and photo frames [Golovko, 2019].

Irish dwellings

The features of the architecture and interior of any country are related to the characteristics of its climate and geographical location. This also characterizes the relationship between the natural conditions and the architecture of Ireland. As A. Rowan notes, "the Irish countryside is littered with the stones left behind by glacial activity, and it is stone which characterizes almost all of our native

architecture. Apart from the cities of Dublin and Belfast there is little building in brick. Almost 80% of the Irish land mass is a saucer-like plain of grey carboniferous limestone ringed by granite mountains round the coast, and it is this beautiful stone, which generally is finely textured, easily worked and holds an edge for centuries, that is the Irish building material *par excellence*" [Rowan, 1997, 1].

The story of national Irish architecture begins with tiny stone churches from the early Christian period. Several churches survive on the Dingle peninsula. These are "tiny rectangular oratories with a door in an inclined west gable and a single window immediately opposite" [Ibidem, 2].

The eating place was very important in residential buildings, especially among the nobility. "As conceptualized in early Irish literature, the interior of the ideal hall, itself a circular building, was laid out on a north-south or east-west axis, along which were arranged (1) raised dining compartments with low partitions on the sides, (2) eating platforms, and (3) floor-level places. Throughout, a height differential matched the differences in rank of the diners. The conjoined compartment and platform had places for one preeminent person, two companions, and two subaltern figures on the lower dais" [Sayers, 2015, 84].

R. Lober wrote about the residential architecture of Ireland that was very simple, devoid of aesthetic delights in the 16th century: "The poorer tenants had a transient life-style part of the year and lived in rectangular or round cabins made of wattles and clay with straw roof and no chimney. Wealthier dwellings too made a poor impression still in the 17th century" [Loeber, 1979, 49]. Gradually the motifs of classical architecture penetrated into Ireland: "The early 17th century saw a slow development in the facades of buildings" [Ibidem, 54].

Houses with "direct entry", in which the entry leads directly to the main room, are common in the north and west of Ireland; the entrance is usually located at the end of the room that is opposite to the hearth. The fireplace is most often located in the center of the gable wall, but where there was another room behind the fireplace, it could be placed against the inner wall. Houses with direct entry often had a back door opposite the main entrance; and where the bed-alcove was located, it was usually near the back wall, next to the fireplace. Houses with opposite front and back doors are believed to be associated with long-standing building traditions, and documentary evidence suggests that such houses were once common in most of eastern and northern Ireland.

Houses with "hallways" are more common in central and south-eastern Ireland. The fireplace in these houses was usually located near the partition, and sometimes near the gable wall, and the entrance to the house was directly adjacent to this place. There was a wall between the doorway and the fireplace; it was parallel to the front wall of the house, creating a "hallway" shape. However, both in the south and in the east there are a lot of houses with direct entry. There are also houses with hallways in the northern and western parts, in areas where houses with direct entry predominate. The house with a hallway seems to be a more recent phenomenon compared to the house with direct entry, and its spread in central and southeastern Ireland may suggest some influence from the east, possibly from outside the country.

Such houses, with hallways, have been recorded in some parts of England since the 16th century. The jamb-wall is known in some parts of Ireland as the "hallan" wall, a term common to Scotland and Northern England, which suggests that its origin may lie outside Ireland. The presence of this jamb-wall directly opposite the doorway almost eliminates the possibility that animals were housed under the same roof. Thus, the hallway could only be used in places where cattle were kept in a separate byre [Mackie, 2013, 312-314].

Religious symbols were an important part of the traditional Irish interior: "Faith reigned in the kitchen" [Bits..., 1902, 573]. A spinning wheel and a loom were also an integral part of the

interior [Boland, 2006]. Today, Ireland has the largest number of private home owners in Europe [Boyd, 2004, 23].

Scottish dwellings

As for Scotland, urban architects, planners, folklorists, and scientists sought to define the cultural identity of the Scottish Highlands through its residential architecture during the 20th century. "The region has two architectural traditions: the millennia-old indigenous blackhouse and the imposed Classical farmhouse and cottage. As a consequence of the transformative process of agricultural improvement during the 18th century, the latter now dominate the Highland landscape, while the former persisted into the 20th century only in impoverished coastal crofting communities, and have now largely disappeared" [Maudlin, 2009, 45].

The blackhouse is an indigenous, Gaelic type of house, viewed by folklorists and architects as a Highland cultural icon in the 1930s. Nevertheless, by the 20th century, Scottish society considered the blackhouse to be a symbol of backwardness, and improved farmhouses emerged in the Highlands as a symbol of modernity and Britishness.

The blackhouse is a long structure adapted to the harsh weather and climate of the region and the social practices and rituals of Highland culture. It was the common dwelling of the Highlanders through the 18th century (Figure 1).



Figure 1 - An early 18th-century Highland settlement, modern reconstruction. The Highland Folk Museum, Kingussie, Scotland [Ibidem, 46]

"The blackhouse was a semi-permanent dwelling linked to the perambulatory settlement patterns of extended family groups within a clan's lands. Traditional settlements... consisted of small irregular clusters of blackhouses... [whose] form, shape and colour merged naturally with the fields. The exterior structure, interior space and site orientation of the blackhouse were developed to minimize the effects of the windy and wet Highland environment and create a warm, dry living space" [Ibidem].

The rounded gable end of the blackhouse faced the prevailing wind, and all the openings and the door were placed on the south-facing side. "Inside, the long, low, rectangular form of the blackhouse

provided a single living place. This was heated by a peat fire in asimple stone hearth in the centr of the floor, with the heavy peat smoke escaping slowly through the thatch. <...> The central hearth was the social heart of Gaelic culture. The Highland... gathering originated in communal storytelling... sessions held around the glow of the central hearth through the long, house-bound winter months" [Ibidem]. There was simple wooden furniture around the hearth, haystacks or mattresses stuffed with herbs could be used (Figure 2).



Figure 2 - The interior of the blackhouse in Scotland, modern reconstruction. The Highland Folk Museum, Kingussie, Scotland [Ibidem, 47]

The blackhouse was characteristic of most ranks of Scottish society. However, traditional houses began to disappear along with the clan system in the 18th century: "Across vast areas of the Highlands the blackhouse and *bailtean* were forcibly eradicated by clan chieftains turned commercial landowners. Communities were evicted, and a new commercial agricultural landscape and an early-modern, British built environment were created, which remain predominant in the region to this day" [Ibidem]. Blackhouses have been preserved only in crofting communities, which usually settle on unprofitable wasteland, which is inconvenient for cultivation and is not used for other purposes.

"The period 1775 to 1825 saw a building boom, when more than 300 farmhouses were built... <...> Highland tenant farmhouses are relatively large, two-story buildings with a three-cell rectangular plan typical of late-eighteenth-century British everyday Classicism" [Ibidem, 48]. They were built of square-cut stone blocks laid in regularcourses, their roofs were covered with slates, and their gable-end walls were terminated by chimneystacks. The ground-floor facade had a door in the center and a rectangular window on either side; the upper storey had three windows located above the ground-floor windows and door.

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Such a house was at least double the size of the typical blackhouse. The rooms were arranged symmetrically, a kitchen and a living room were placed downstairs, and there were bedrooms upstairs. Walls were plastered and decorated with simple classical details such as cornices. Large windows had curtains. Manufactured furniture, carpets, paintings on walls were common (Figure 3).



Figure 3 - A hall in a farmhouse. Perthshire, Scotland [Ibidem, 49]

A lot of wood was needed to build a roof and floors, walls, and steps. In addition, such a house required many manufactured parts that had to be bought: nails and hinges, fireplaces, window frames and windowpanes. Such a house became a symbol of modernity, wealth, and comfort in Scotland.

The bed-alcove was a characteristic feature of the interior of the Irish and Scottish houses of the 19th and 20th centuries (Figure 4).

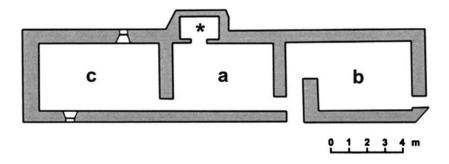


Figure 4 - A house with a bed-alcove (*). Mainland Orkney, Scotland [Mackie, 2013, 318]

A niche for a bed as an alcove was typical of northern and western Ireland, and a special extension protruding beyond the outer wall to create a niche was typical of northeastern Scotland. In general, the tradition of alcoves seems to be quite characteristic of northern Europe, including Brittany and Scandinavia [Ibidem]. These beds were usually used by the older members of the family. The niche near the hearth was a privileged place; beds were screened with curtains or wooden doors. There could be more than one bed in the niche.

Interior design styles

The "modern" style, both in architecture and in the interior, originated in England. Charles Mackintosh and his wife Margaret McDonald were the pioneers of the Art Nouveau interior style: "The enormous creative potential of the Mackintosh couple was first realized in the interiors of four tea rooms in Glasgow, decorated in 1897-1903" [Polyakov, Donchuk, 2018, 16]: they painted interiors in the Art Nouveau style, as well as changed the architecture of the Willow Tea Rooms; the interiors here "included white walls with friezes of multicolored glass, luxurious mirrors, magnificent double doors of leaded glass with silver ornaments, purple armchairs, and high-back sofas" [Ibidem, 18]. The couple also made a great contribution to the development of residential interiors by decorating not only their house, but also the estate of the publisher Walter Blackie in Helensburgh in 1902-1904 (Figure 5).



Figure 5 - The interiors of the Hill House designed by Charles Mackintosh [Ibidem, 21]

The principles of the new Art Nouveau interior style included color minimalism, monochromatic colors, clarity of lines, lightness of designs, and laconic refinement of details. Stylized floral patterns and Celtic symbols were viewed as ornaments in the modern style, which reminded of the Scottish origin of the designers.

Coorie is an interesting modern concept associated with the Scottish spirit, including the interior. Coorie means convenience and "slow" cozy life, embodied in Scottish everyday life. However, coorie is more than just convenience and comfort. There is some connection between them, but first of all coorie focuses on creating a harmonious relationship with surroundings and thereby awakening a sense of comfort" [Bennett, 2019, 19].

Conclusion

England, Ireland, and Scotland have followed a somewhat similar path in the development of the interior of residential buildings. In all three countries, there has been a transition from a primitive dwelling with an open hearth to a chimney as the organising axis of the dwelling, which has contributed to the establishment of walls and thereby zoning of space. This process occurs at different times and with different intensity in different countries. The desire for moderate heating of houses is common to

the countries under consideration: there is no tendency to maintain high temperature, and therefore heating systems are not aimed at this. All the interior traditions of the countries under consideration are, to one degree or another, the embodiment of tradition and conservative in a good way.

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Принципиальные отличия и сходства в архитектуре и интерьере английского, шотландского и ирландского жилища

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Аннотация

Статья посвящена истории интерьера в традиционном английском, шотландском и ирландском жилище. Указывается на то, что во всех странах наблюдался переход от примитивного жилища с открытым очагом к дымоходу как организующей оси жилища, что способствовало установлению стен и тем самым зонированию пространства. Отмечается, что в разных странах этот процесс происходит в разное время и с разной интенсивностью. Общим для рассматриваемых стран является стремление к умеренному обогреву домов: нет тенденции к поддержанию высокой температуры, поэтому обогревательные системы не нацелены на это. Делается вывод о том, что все интерьерные решения рассматриваемых стран в той или иной мере являются воплощением традиций и по-хорошему консервативны.

Для цитирования в научных исследованиях

Даугов Е.Н. Fundamental differences and similarities in the architecture and interior of English, Scottish and Irish dwellings // «Белые пятна» российской и мировой истории. 2020. № 6. С. 14-23.

Ключевые слова

Ирландская архитектура, шотландская архитектура, английская архитектура, британская архитектура, черный дом, история интерьера.

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