

Early worker's camp (around 1960)

The official foundation of Shevchenko dates back to 1963. Previous geological explorations led to the erection of a worker's camp to exploit the regional uranium sources. In the first stage of development most buildings were made of wood which had to be transported by ship across the Caspian Sea.



Surveyors in western Kazakhstan (1960s)



Workers tents in the isolated steppe region (late 1950s)



First restaurant in Shevchenko (3rd microdistrict)

City growth and row structures (until late 1970s)



Erection of high-risers in the 1st microdistrict (around 1970)

Soon the city became the centre of one of the most isolated and sparsely populated regions in the USSR. Once the city's supply situation was assured additional residential areas emerged. Increasingly those buildings were industrially fabricated. Due to micro-climatic reasons row structures have been chosen.



Further extensions and emergence of courtyards (1980s)



View of the 26th microdistrict (1982)



Residential building in the 27th microdistrict (early 1980s)

Post-Soviet developments (since mid 1990s)



New town house (15th microdistrict)



Youth centre "ARMAN" (8th microdistrict)



Recently erected mosque (K2 microdistrict)

With Kazakhstan's independence the renamed city Aktau fell into an economic decline. But due to the growing importance of oil export, the seaport currently faces a boom for trade with construction sites emerging all over the place. This boom is accompanied with dilapidation of the historic socialist building stock.

Shevchenko/Aktau - The heritage of an ideal socialist city Historic Urban Development

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Wooden residential building in the 3rd microdistrict (2004)



View of the 3rd microdistrict (2004)



Shop "Childrens world" in the 2nd microdistrict (1969)



Row structures in the 1st microdistrict (2004)



Row structures in the 4th microdistrict (2004)

Shevchenko's status as a "closed city" promised numerous benefits and privileges. The city grew steadily until the collapse of the Soviet Union (1991). In this stage of development a combination of traditional and industrial types of construction as well as individualized structures (eg. courtyards) became important.



Courtyard structure in the 27th microdistrict



Settlement of individual homes (1st microdistrict)



Hotel "MARRIOT" (9th microdistrict)



New apartment building (15th microdistrict)