The most northern museum in the world

Reconstruction and museumification of the Soviet Polar Station
“Tikhaya Bay” on the Franz Joseph land

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In 2009, the Government of the Russian Federation established the Russian Arctic National Park in the northern part of the Novaya Zemlya archipelago. In 2016, its territory expanded considerably, practically the entire territory of Franz Josef Land was included¹. Bukhta Tikhaya (Tikhaya Bay, « Calm Bay » in English) on Hooker Island, one of the first and very well-preserved polar stations in the Arctic, became the main stronghold of the National Park on Franz Josef Land (Fig. 1). Almost all ships that come to the high latitude of Russian Arctic visit Bukhta Tikhaya. The polar station was organized in 1929 under the leadership of Otto Yulyevich Schmidt, a prominent Soviet academician. The station represents a very well-preserved complex of structures of the 1920s-1950s, associated with the history of development of the high latitude Arctic and the North Pole, namely a hangar for seaplanes, a weather station, a wooden garage for equipment, a wind farm, residential buildings, a post-office, small warehouses, etc. The most significant structure is a hangar for seaplanes (255 m²) (Fig. 2).

In June 2017, an agreement was signed between the Russian Arctic National Park and the NGO « Arctic Museum and Exhibition Center ». The document allowed the establishment of a museum-guest center in a hangar for seaplanes. Eventually, it was planned to create the northernmost museum of the Arctic, where one can meet the history of the Franz Josef Land, the Arctic and the North Pole. The Russian Arctic National Park, in cooperation with the Arctic Museum and

1. Expansion of the territory of the Russian Arctic National Park. Resolution of the Government of the Russian Federation dated August 25th, 2016, n 840 // http://government.ru/dep_news/24307/

Exhibition Center, is developing a long-term program for the gradual restoration of the station in order to create an open-air museum and manage the cultural heritage of the station by its 100th anniversary in 2029.

Fig. 1. - "Bukhta Tikhaya" station

Photograph by Pavel Filin

Fig. 2. - The hangar at the end of the 2018 season. Restoration works in progress

Photograph by Pavel Filin

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