The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

VVTs Exhibition Center Transferred to Moscow City Hall

By The Moscow Times

November 18, 2013



The 'Friendships of Nations' fountain at the VVTs complex showcases 16 golden figures, each representing a different USSR republic.

City Hall wants to renovate the sprawling All-Russia Exhibition Center in northern Moscow and restore it as a popular park and expo center after receiving a controlling share in the project from the federal government.

The more than 500-acre complex, formerly known as VDNKh and now commonly referred to by its newer acronym VVTs, was originally designed to showcase Soviet achievements. It features Stalinist Gothic architecture, fountains and a looming statue titled "Worker and Collective Farm Woman," with a man and woman raising a hammer and sickle.

After two decades of watching buildings fall into disrepair while renting out elaborate pavilions to small vendors who peddled computer equipment, cheap watches and underwear, the federal government said on Friday that it was turning over a 70 percent share in the

complex to the Moscow city government.. The share transfer is to be completed within six months, RIA Novosti reported.

Renovations to the complex will likely bring back its original functions as a technological exhibition center and park, while possible adding a conference center, stores, offices and apartment buildings, officials and developers said.

A board member of Russia's Union of Architects, Maxim Perov, said the city can devote more funds than the federal government to bring back the site's former festive glory.

"The main thing is to avoid the kind of bazaar that was there in the 1990s," Perov said, adding "It was just a dump with unclear functions."

The head of the city-run Mosproekt-2 architectural design company, Mikhail Posokhin, lauded the complex as a treasure trove of architectural monuments to Soviet ambitions and the country's history.

"We need to bring back the festive atmosphere that was there 50 years ago, when Muscovites came there to relax, take walks, visit interesting pavilions," he said.

But this may take awhile to accomplish. Sergei Kapkov, head of the city's culture department, said architects and engineers must first assess the degree of damage the pavilions had sustained during decades of neglect and evaluate the state of basic utility services, such as electricity.

Former VVTs director Ivan Malakhov said the reconstruction may last until 2034.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2013/11/18/vvts-exhibition-center-transferred-to-moscow-city-hall-a29659