

CONSTRUCTION

City With a View Of The Arctic

Recently I read in one of the central newspapers about how some architects undertook to design a city with a view of the Arctic. Everything in it is unusual and beautiful: polar houses, spacious passages between them, indoor gardens. Simply breathtaking. But how far is that from the actual life of a real city with a view of the Arctic - our Murmansk... How can you speak about public welfare and special architectural design when, for instance, the Ministry of Housing and Communal Economy of the republic bases its appropriations for these purposes on some mathematical average norms? The same ones that apply to the central zone of Russia and to the south.

That ministry, by the way, lacks originality in its approach to our problem. The average-based approach is discernible in everything that has a bearing on the development of municipal infrastructure of Murmansk. This explains the poor living conditions and the acute housing problem in our city. According to statistics, the availability of housing and stores in the city amounts to only 79%, restaurants and cafeterias - 50%, schools, daycare centres and hospitals - about 75%.

The main thing, however, is housing. More than nineteen thousand families are waiting for it; in the meantime, they live in communal residences and share an apartment with another family. Some other ten thousand live in substandard buildings. For thirteen thousand families, the available space so far does not exceed six square metres per person. The total number of families on the waiting list for