



**Politecnico
di Torino**

Honors Thesis

Master's degree Architecture Heritage Preservation and Enhancement

Abstract

THE HOUSE OF ZARUMA. KNOWING A CONSTRUCTION SYSTEM IN ITS 'GOLDEN' AGE

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Throughout its history, Zaruma has relied heavily on mining exploitation in the region; this was the primary reason for the city's foundation and subsequent urban growth and architectural development. However, at present, this mining activity has become illegally invasive of the urban subsoil and poses a significant risk to the city's structure and its inhabitants, jeopardizing their very existence.

The present study aims to analyze the construction system of historic timber houses built between the late nineteenth century and the early twentieth century when there was the most significant mining boom in the area, also considering the difficulty of the territory where they were built.

A field study was conducted, focusing on the historic houses located within the First Order Zone of the city, using as reference the buildings included in the inventory developed for the nomination as World Heritage at UNESCO, analyzing

their urban, constructive, and architectural characteristics. As a result, a model of an “Ideal House” was created by unifying elements common to the houses. In addition, constructive details of each part of the architecture were developed to understand their constructive and operational characteristics.

Furthermore, the study identifies and documents elements that have suffered degradation, accompanied by general recommendations for intervention and preservation, taken from similar cases, that can be used as a starting point to develop a specific process for restoring and safeguarding the historical architecture in Zaruma.

