

La Casa Solariega de Gil de Gumucio

Maintenance program for policy management of historical building



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Abstract

Despite its historical values, the Casa Solariega de Gil de Gumucio that allow its conservation. This situation reveals the problems that historical buildings face in our city. In this perspective, the present document has three objectives:

To evaluate existing and necessary information to organize the archives that allow the solicitude of the declaration of municipal cultural heritage according to the normative requirements

To design a supporting program for its application by the owners of this building that includes simple but urgent steps that could be developed in a year by the owners.

To suggest actions to the local government for the conservation under the perspective of the NCPE¹, which recognizes the cultural diversity of Bolivia in *its essential base*.

The following report aims to present a management and conservation initial strategy for one of the most emblematic historic buildings of the city of Cochabamba (Bolivia): La Casa Solariega de Don Gil de Gumucio which paradoxically lacks a declaration of cultural heritage.

Background

The Object: its history, location and surroundings

La Casa Solariega de Don Gil de Gumucio is a colonial architectural example of domestic and productive character typical of the central valleys as Cochabamba, in the Bolivian Andes .

¹ New Political Constitution of Bolivian State promulgated the 7th of February in present year, by the President Evo Morales Ayma.

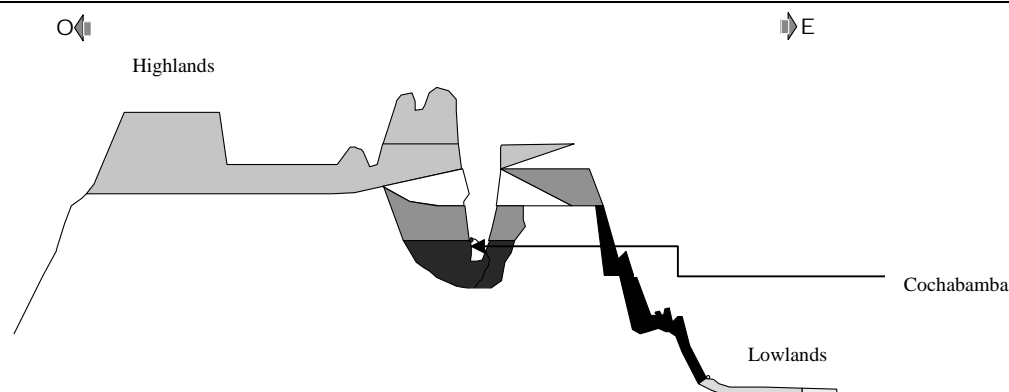


Figure 1: Bolivia, Ecological levels

For its origins as an estate house, is not situated in the historic center. Nowadays the house is located on the edge of the Rocha river (the only one that crosses the city), in a residential area of the city.

The current owners named the estate house as “*Casona Chimba Chica*”². This historic building is best known as the old property of Don Gil de Gumucio (1820-1885), an important mathematician and intellectual. However the ancestral home was built by his grandfather in the second half of the 18 c.: Don Francisco Gumucio y Goyri y Astuena, *perpetual mayor of Oropesa*³ *Village in Indias* (Gumucio, 2008).

Don Francisco Gumucio - from Vizcaino origin – arrived in 1750 at a very young age to these lands, to then get married with Doña Juana Manuela García Claros in 1775 who belonged to a traditional creole family⁴. Mixed data indicate that during the Independence war (at beginnings of the 19 c.) the house was the headquarter of the Spanish army, then become the refuge of patriots and a place of temporary housing for two Bolivian’s presidents: Simón Bolívar and Mariano Melgarejo.

² The current owners prefer to name this Casa Solariega de Don Gil de Gumucio to Casa Chimba Chica. In Quechua (one of the original languages of the Andean zone of Bolivia), Chimba means across of the river and indeed, this zone is typical named like this for being on the other side of Rocha River.

³ The old name of Cochabamba city was Villa de Oropesa.

⁴ Doña Manuela García Claros’ father promoted the construction of Santo Domingo Church in Cochabamba (s. XVIII). The Gumucio-García Claros marriage had several children. The old José Gabriel Gumucio García Claros got married with María de los Angeles Echichipea, they had 11 children, among them: José Gil y José Vicente. José Gil (whom keeps the name of the ancestral home) got married in 1852 with Maximiliana Theresa Matthews. Their oldest son Gil Angel (1854) had just one child José Luis (1892) from his marriage with Ana Casta d’Entenza Céspedes. José Luis got married in 1918 with Doña María Cárdenas, oldest sister of the most recognized Bolivian scientist, the botanist Martín Cárdenas.

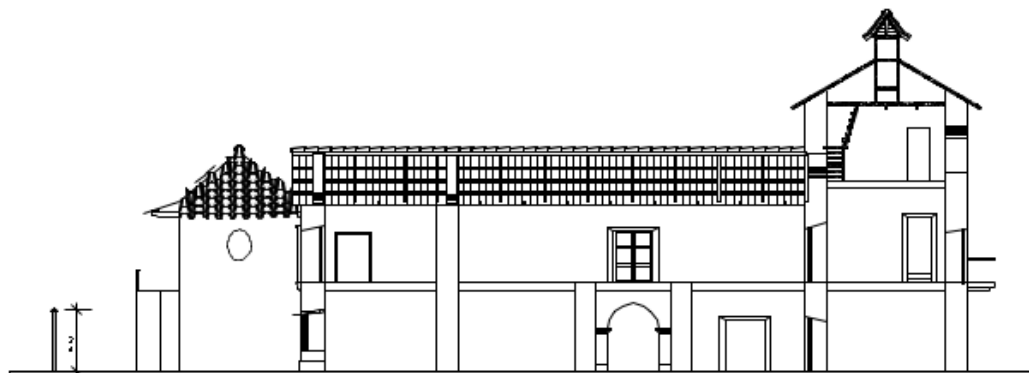


Fig. 2 The Casa Solariega de Don Gil de Gumucio. Section.

A long one hundred years passed by without any factual information about the House, but it is possible that the great extension of the agrarian property had been divided by its successive heirs.

In the first decades of the 20th Century the house's owners left the building. Gradually homeless families took the house and realized different activities there (costume shop, brush factory, and shoes repairs). Overcrowding and the diversity of activities deeply affected the status of the House.

Around 1930, the municipality of Cochabamba decided to alter the course of Rocha River, almost approaching it until the east limit of the House, in order to use this land for build new urbanizations.

In 1938 the house passed to belong to the current owners: the brothers José Guillermo and Luis Torrez - Gómez Ortega⁵ (Torrez,2000). Around 1950 several neighboring and homeless families of the place asked for the expropriation of the land surrounding the house (which formed part of the original property) and the outline of contiguous streets and avenues began⁶. In 1980 the construction of a religious center destroyed a part of the house. The last aggression takes place in 2007 with the construction of a road project that environmentally attacks the building and its landscape. By this time the *vaults* (corn deposit) and the stables – past estate's symbols - have already disappeared.

Nowadays the owners have conflicts with the municipality. They demand compensation for damages received to their property and they don't pay taxes. On the other hand the municipality demands the payment of taxes under expropriation threat. At the same time the owners want to find financing for a project to build a Guest House, however, with the investment required and the conditions of financial institutions, the project slowly becomes less and less feasible.

⁵ Information related with the House has been revised for the objectives of this study, as well as for the economic valuation of the building and the compilation for the archives.

⁶ In the decade of 1950 the Urban Reform Law was applied which imposes a ban to have properties bigger than 3000 M² in the urban area. In this way old estate properties quickly form part with an agile land market to save them from governmental expropriation and in other cases, the properties were taken by organized social groups.

Analysis



Figure 3 Location of La Casa Solariega, at the east the Rocha river and probably an area original of the hacienda

Functional description and typological characteristics

This *cochabambina* estate house represents the daily life in an agrarian society whose economy was based in corn production. This residence manifests the trace of a colonial time which reproduces the association “conqueror-indigenous”; a situation that showed little change with the arrival of the Republic. The essentially agricultural character of the surroundings made the property work at first like an Estate House, with all the dependencies necessary for storage and commercialization of the big estate production, then to transit and slaughter animals and for the existence of free labor *who served in large estates... in upper parts of the residence, a dominant caste, surrounded by* according to a very Hispanic tradition of dignity and pride, dedicated to political and social tasks... the house has a perfect functionality within its complicated dichotomy .

Of *accented colonial profile* (Byrne, 1986:20), the house has the typical typology of estates: four prismatic blocks - of two floors or double height - with two water roofs (with exception of the viewpoint) they are organized around the courtyard, important element in the colonial architecture. The Rocha River flows closely to the east façade of the house. Byrne (op.cit.) offers a description of the House:

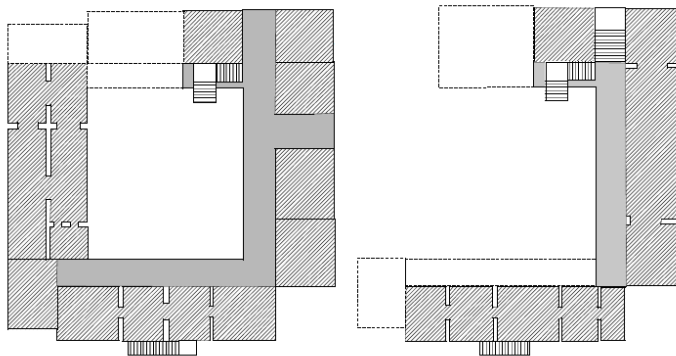


Fig. 4 La Casa Solariega de Don Gil de Gumucio: Typology. The House is organized around the courtyard

It has great honor staircase of carved stone that leads to the first floor. A discrete and steep service step [now demolished] in the south facade serves the domestic reparations. On the high floor there were spacious galleries (today no much conserved at all) that surround and define the central courtyard, the columns of this galleries are slender and they are made of cedar wood with stone base. To the left of the main entrance is an oratory or chapel dedicated to the Virgen del Carmen and in the upper floor – on the Chapel – *there was a big library that had old books of the sixteenth century, it was property of Don Gil de Gumucio who besides to be a rich landowner, he was an important mathematician.* There is a viewpoint area or a control tower that allows watches the valley and Cochabamba city. *In the north wing are vault and stables spacious [now missing] that open big grounds which served to dry and husk crops [of corn].*

The Casa Solariega reproduces active technology present in colonial and republican buildings in the region. The materials and the original constructive system possessed the following characteristics (some which have already been modified).

Resistant structure:

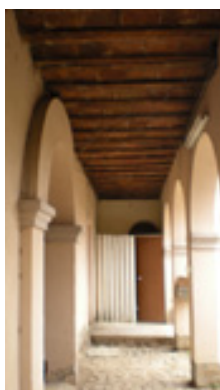
A system of thick bearing walls of adobe (of 1,30 m and 0,90 thickness), a structure made of wood . A mezanine with a structure made of wood and brick.

Cover:

Leaning on two stools, a wooden structure on which it counts with a network of a native cane (*caña hueca*) and above it a layer of mud and straw on which it contains clay tilings.

Other materials:

Brick floors, lime plaster, a main staircase of carved stone shaped in L. Secondary stairs with a wooden structure, wooden floors in the galleries upstairs, arches for doors and windows, exterior plaster of



mud and interior plastering. The house has discintives such as plaster sculptures, polychromed, which are adhered to the walls of the main hall. The carpentry of the doors and windows are made of cedar wood, the balusters are made of carved wood.

Recent history of interventions

In the decade of the 80s, the owners intervened in the two-storey block facing East. The aim of this intervention was to replace the materials which support from the cover tilings to the bricks from the floor and to protect the walls with new plasters⁷.

In the case of the covers the materials that served of support to the tiles were taken off, substituting them with wood tables and cardboard asphalt. In the case of the floors, the traditional floors made of brick were removed and substituted with wood tables.

The exterior mud plasters were substituted with cement and sand. The exterior plastering (made of mud and straw) on which wallpapers were placed were substituted with plaster.

The other blocks have not suffered intervention and the north block has been mutilated and demolished.

The effects of these interventions are the following:

Rooftops: reduce the deterioration of the building.

Exterior and interior plaster: have affected the original texture of the walls.

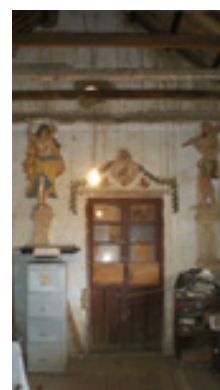
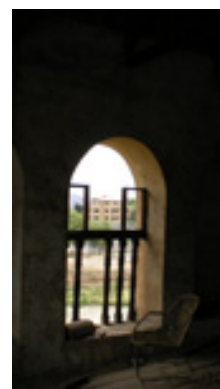
Mezzanines: has changed the structural behavior of beams.

Floor of the galleries: the changes have not been completed and the wooden beams remain exposed.

General description of the state of conservation

An evaluation of the state of conservation of the house reveals two different situations:

- The East and North blocks (two levels) are in stable condition, maintaining part of their original characteristics and values. The constituent parts are found in acceptable conditions of conservation in relation with their structures, fulfilling its role in an adequate manner and not requiring, in a short term (in this year) urgent measurements of intervention.
- The Northeast block (in its three levels) has factors of decay which started process that affect the integrity of this heritage, this block presents initial and permanent stages of decay in its structure. It is required for this block to be submitted to conservation and



⁷ It is possible that the initiative of the owners was to provide better sanitary conditions to the building, particularly those areas of the house that were to be used by them. By eliminating the native cain (caña hueca) and the mud plasters, the possibilities of infestation of the building by vinchucas (trypanosoma cruzi), an endemic in the region, greatly diminished.

preservation measurements of medium term (at least to 1 to 3 years). This factors are due to human causes: lack of maintenance and changes in the original form of the building.

- The south blocks (two levels) and West (one level with a standard single and double height) have been affected by the collapse of roofs and mezzanines, causing irreversible physical decays. These blocks require on short term intervention to ensure their conservation.

Why conserve?

Because of the cultural and historical values of the Casa Solariega de Don Gil de Gumucio that resides in the following arguments that make it worthy its title of Municipal Heritage:

Architectural value: This is the best example within the urban area of the municipality that maintains –to a great extent – the typology of a colonial estate house in the valleys of Cochabamba.

Landscape value: The link between estate house and river is representative of the landscape of the valleys, which keeps itself alive because of its closeness, despite the urban aggressions of the environment. Because of its scale and presence, it is a landmark in the landscape of the city.

Historical Value: Because of its antiquity, over to 250 years, has been a silent witness of the great periods of the regional history. While the current state of the historical investigation requires greater depth and precision (Dueri, 2008), the historical authenticity of the Casa Solariega is undeniable..

Great problems for the first proposals: challenges and vulnerabilities

The current problems that put pressure on the historical building are:

- A road junction in development located at 80 m. from the house with potential impact on its quality.
- Lacks a declaration of cultural heritage.
- The owners and the local government seem to ignore that the loss or destruction of this building will affect its economic value, on which they seem to endlessly discuss without reaching any agreement.
- The owners cannot apply for a bank loan to implement a Guest House.
- The building is facing a grave process of decay that has destroyed part of the roofs and walls.
- There is neither will nor institutional capacity from the Municipality to facilitate the conservation of historical buildings.

Proposal

To initiate the conservation process, the proposal must contain three aspects:

1 About the file

That compiles required information about the building to present it to the local government (see Appendix 1).

Objective of organizing the file

To obtain the declaration of municipal cultural heritage. Necessary requirements will be indicated by the Ministry of Culture⁸. This action cannot be isolated and needs to be accompanied by the following:

2 About first steps of a maintenance program

Applicable from this year, after the rainy season (which ends on March in Bolivia). Indicates urgent and priority actions necessary to protect the structure of the building (see Appendix 2).

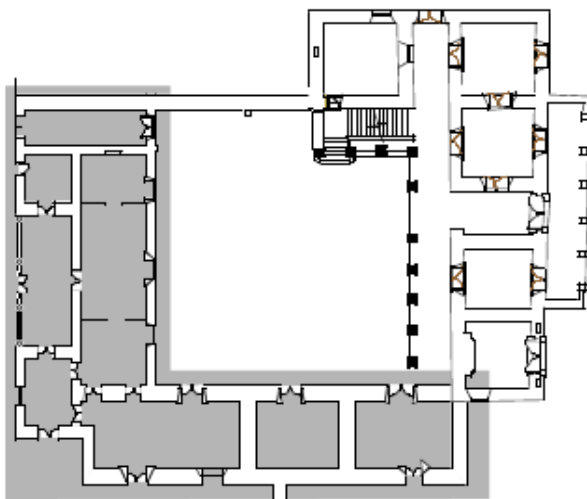


Fig. 5 La Casa Solareiga de Don Gil de Gumucio; Area of maximum damage

Objective of the first steps of the maintenance program

Protect the original structure of the house from present and future cases of decay that provoke damage and put the life of the building and the owners on risk.

a) Immediate steps identified for South and West blocks

- Removal of debris, vegetation and other objects at a distance greater or equal to 1 m. from the walls.

⁸ Identification (geographical location), proponents, classification of the cultural heritage, chronological and historical data, description, author, property, custody and possession, legal history and records, registration or documentation, valuation, delimitation, conservation status, factors of decay, impact, uses, possible impact of the declaration of cultural heritage identificación, attached documentation (BOLIVIA, 2008)

- Save the original material that can be recovered from mezzanine and deck floors (lift, clean, protect and keep indoors).
- Protect the adobe walls from the next rains.

b) Immediate steps identified for a solid north wall

- Request the neighbors to stop damaging the ancient wall. During the last 23 years the wall serves as a board or a basketball court. The wall must be repaired, replacing damaged parts of the wall and plaster. The wall can not withstand impacts of their structure.
- Replace the tiles that existed in the crowning of the wall to protect it from the rain.

c) Immediate steps identified for the future stability of the historic building

- Study damage by road: Place *witnesses* in the tower – lookout, to register the behavior of the deepest crack in the building and in the failures of the archery and determine whether this damage are still active (the owners have realized a small intervention). Considering the current road junction being currently in construction will start to function, it is important to record possible structural impacts on sensitive parts of the historical building.

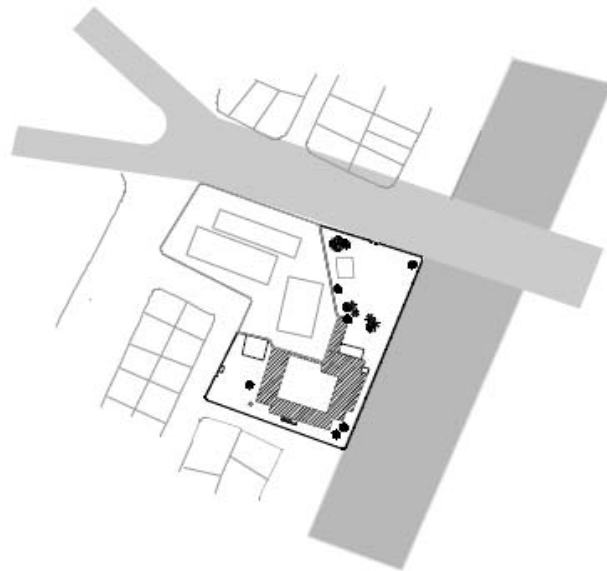


Figure 6: The current road project and La Casa Solariega

3 Strategic Alliances

Objective of the strategic alliance

To be able to influence plans, programs and norms on issued related to historical buildings and that are being currently developed by the municipality⁹.

Urgent issues to influence on the strategic alliances

- Demand the house gets into the future catalog of local heritage of Cochabamba.
- Request apply the law of tax stimuli for historical buildings (which is applied on other municipalities).
- Request the city to grant the declaration of local heritage.

Method

1) About the file

The Heritage Directorate of the Ministry of Culture has facilitated the preliminary work document of the future law of declaration of cultural heritage for this Project¹⁰. The requisites that depend on the compilation for this project have been completed.

For historical research, several photos, press notices and interviews to the actual owners, including the current patriarch of the Gumucio family, the original owners of the property, have been collected. (See Anex 3).

The architectural plans – made by Saca et al. (2003) – have been digitized and adjusted for our objectives.

2) Defining the first steps of a maintenance program

Detailed observation in the rainy season, which starts in November, when the buildings are subject to major decay due to the increase in humidity.

Recording data of severe damage and imminent risk, making emphasis on structures that have collapsed roofs and mezzanines.

Analysis of the present situation and its influence on the aggravation of the decay processes.

Emergency proposal of simple actions that do not imply large financial investments.

⁹ The current Ministry of Culture is elaborating law proposal for the a Declaration of cultural heritage. At the same time, the Municipality of Cochabamba is designing territorial policies, one of which refers to the management of the built heritage.

¹⁰ Which are currently being revised for their presentation at the nacional parliament, it is therefore an unpublished document kindly supplied for the academic purposes of this scholarly work by the Architect Flavio Escóbar, an oficial of the Ministry of Culture in Bolivia on January 2009, in the framework of a workshop organizad by the Colegio de Arquitectos de Cochabamba in November 2008.

3) Establishing strategic alliances or expected outcomes

Given the legal backing for the conservation of the cultural heritage in the NCPE¹¹ and the current PMOT¹², a conserved and revitalized heritage is sought that will be able to reflect within its urban and architectural context an inherited pluricultural identity, a revitalized economy and a recovered residential vitality. In this structure, the Casa Solariega de Gil de Gumucio will be part of the areas, sites and historical buildings considered by the new management instruments of the Municipality (until now ignored for being outside of the historical center)¹³.

Results/Current Status of the Work

According to the planned objectives, the following results are obtained:

- Complete data to begin the formal organization of the file (data is at hand).
- Initial steps for a maintenance program (for one year), with a plan consisting of very simple and economic actions. After this time, the house needs a maintenance program and to begin a complete restoration project.
- Context legal favorable (the NCPE, PMOT, please see footnotes 11 and 12) for the possible development of strategic alliances amongst the owners of the property and the municipality.

Discussion & Conclusions

It is important for this experience that the owners truly feel interested in preserving their historical building. On the other hand, the Casa Solariega requires greater attention for their great values. One of the most important lessons that we can learn with this project is that it is not possible to begin a conservation of a historical building (specially in Latin America) while ignoring issues such as conflicts of interests, municipal politics, financing and legal frameworks, hence the interest in including a series of features that make viable, small and urgent actions of maintenance available immediately.

¹¹Article 100 states that the State will guarantee the registration, protection, restoration, recovery, revitalization, enrichment, promotion and dissemination of its cultural heritage, according with the Law (BOLIVIA, 2009).

¹²The PMOT (a new plan for the Cochabamba's Municipality) is in the final stage of preparation.

¹³The issue of taxes is a crucial point (a source of conflict among the municipality and the owners). Considering the law 2068 (from 12 April 2000), that provides the owners facilities to keep their heritage properties, it is suggested for the Torrez family to initiate the required managerial procedures. The tax cuts may be around 75%, a discount that has to be invested in the property. However, this tax agreement will free the owners of the fear of an expropriation.

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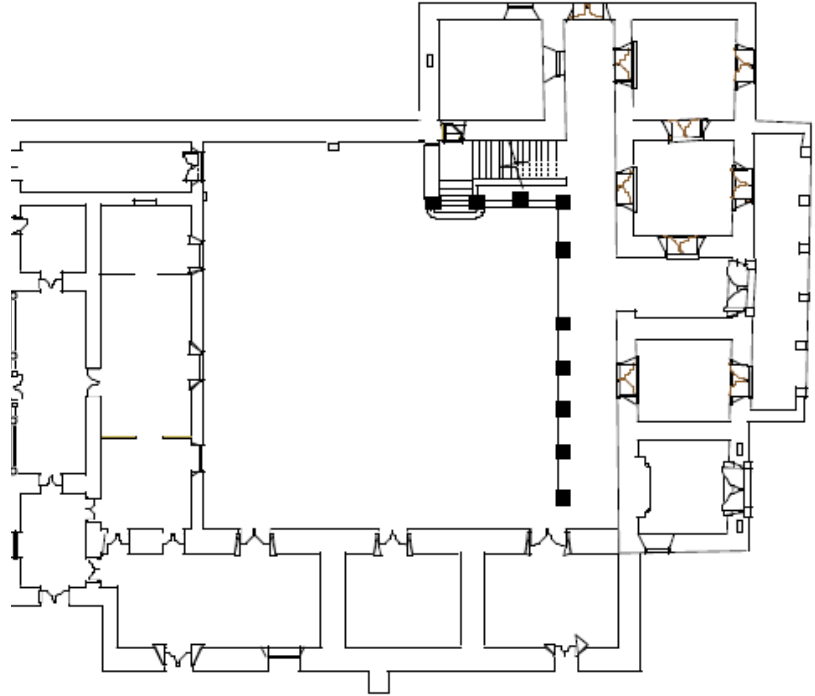
Torrez, José Guillermo y Luis

2000 *Expediente familiar sobre la Casona Chimba Chica*. Mimeo,
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Appendix 1

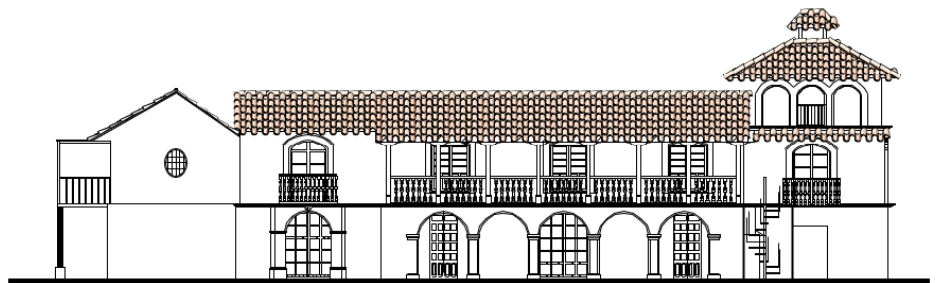
Plans

House area	1.368,00 M2
Courtyard	320,00 M2
Property	3.703,00 M2

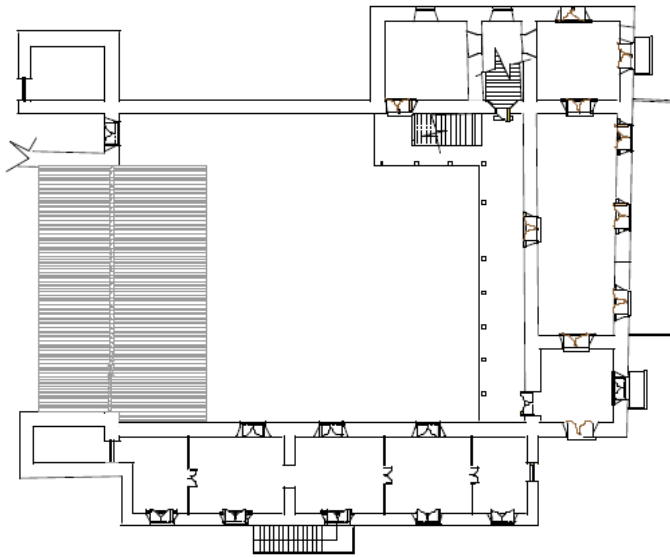


Ground floor

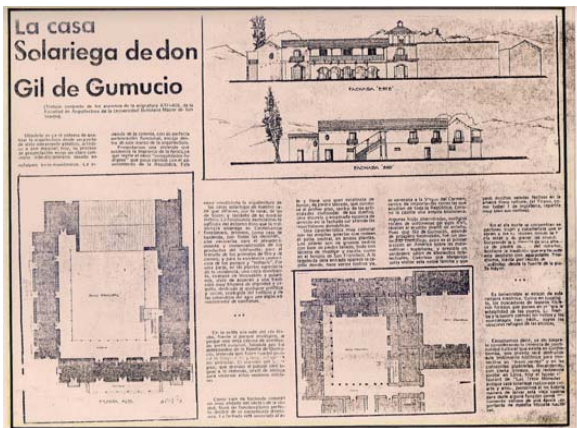
The ground floor has its organized around the courtyard, it was used in the economic activities (corn storage). In the actuality conserves clearly, the typology.



East elevation over the Rocha river.



Second floor, In the second floor was used for the family activities, was the domestic space.



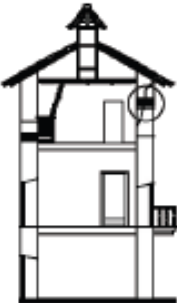


A report in the local newspaper (1978), provided by Mr. Eduardo Gumucio



La casa Solariega de Don Gil de Gumucio: a drawing in the local newspaper (Provided by Mr. Eduardo Gumucio)

Appendix 2

Tables for each damage (an example)

CASA SOLARIEGA DE DON GIL DE GUMUCIO		Ficha 1			
Damage identification		Photography			
					
Damage analysis	Causes or origin	Cuánta de la lesión			
Se desconoce si las rajaduras siguen activas. Los propietarios han hecho arreglos colocando fierro y cemento.	Posible humedad en planta baja Posible muy antigua intervención sobre el volumen construido. Asentamiento diferencial del terreno. Mutilación del bloque Norte.	La rajadura abarca toda la altura del tercer nivel (3,60 m.)			
Name of the lesion	Actions	Technical Specifications			
Rajadura en muros y falla de arcos.	Consolidación	Limpiar el area de observación e ir marcando líneas de 10 cm. perpendiculares a la rajadura, cuidando de que el eje de la rajadura coincida con el punto medio de la línea. Verificar semanalmente si se mantiene la dimensión inicial de la línea. Al mismo tiempo colocar sobre algunos puntos de la rajadura, una mezcla de yeso para observar su comportamiento			
	Reforzamiento				
	Reposición parcial				
	Liberación				
	Mantenimiento				
	Refuerzo				
	Sustitución				
Intervención proposal	Budget (Dollars)				
Colocación de testigos o puntos de observación.	Items	Cantidad	U	Precio Unitario	Total
	Colocación de testigos	10.00	M	15.00	150.00
	Tareas de control	1.00	Gbl	160.00	160.00
	Elaboración de reportes	1.00	Gbl	50.00	50.00
TOTAL					360.00

Appendix 3

Pictures and drawings



General view from the bridge over the Rocha river (Provided by Mr. Eduardo Gumucio)



The actual project (a road junction) near from the Casa Solariega..



View of the gallerie in the second floor. See the absence of the floor.



Interior view in the second floor, salón. View the decoration with natives figures.



Detailed in assambled wood