

## PROCEEDINGS ARTICLE

# M.D. Mashtakov's House in the Context of Historical Wooden Samara

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## ABSTRACT

Urban wooden buildings of the 19th – early 20th century have a significant historical and cultural value. We have analyzed the typology of wooden buildings in Samara and conducted architectural/structural and stylistic analysis of the study objects. This article presents the results of the survey and restoration of a prominent cultural heritage site in Samara: the house of Mikhail Dementyevich Mashtakov. It describes the construction history of the house, outlines its restoration concept, provides justification of the restoration solution, and defines the criteria for restoration feasibility assessment.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

In Volga cities such as Samara, Saratov and Astrakhan in the 19th – early 20th century, there was a fairly large-scale wooden construction. This was due to the industrial timber-rafting of construction timber from the Vetluga river. Nowadays, many of the historical wooden buildings have been lost, but wooden architecture occupies a significant place in the architectural heritage of the Volga cities.

Many old wooden buildings have been preserved in the historical center of Samara. In the past, the city mainly had abutting wooden buildings, one or two stories high. In present-day Samara, there remain significant fragments of former housing, sometimes occupying almost entire blocks and interspersing with modern buildings. The historical wooden housing of Samara consists mainly of buildings from the early and first half of the 20th century. Some buildings date back to the late 19th century.

In the wooden buildings of Samara, there is a noticeable lack of good construction timber. Block houses are made of relatively thin logs. The wall cladding uses narrow boards. The houses of ordinary citizens display flat simplified decor, the wealthier houses have voluminous decor with intricate carved elements, but also consisting of thin and narrow boards. The wooden buildings of Samara are heterogeneous in their style and character. Wooden houses of Samara belong to several types.

## 2. TYPOLOGY OF HISTORICAL WOODEN BUILDINGS IN SAMARA

Originally, there existed two types of traditional wooden dwellings: one was a hut with an anteroom (*seni*), with the sidewall facing the street, and the other was a house consisting of two or three log cabins standing along the street [1]. All other, more complex types of wooden dwelling houses, were, in fact, derived from these two basic structures.

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Therefore, in Samara we can see houses facing the street by the sidewall or by the longer side.

The first one is a traditional dwelling house with three windows on the street-facing facade. Such houses are quite prevalent, and this implicates that most of the dwellers were not wealthy. Basically, these houses have a simple appearance. The decorative elements are rather modest. A carved cornice board (*friz*) with a characteristic carving consisting of an arcade and a small ornament stands out on the facade. The window trims are decorated with triangular cornices. The gable is clad with boards in herringbone pattern following the roof slopes. Two round holes are cut in the upper part of the gable. These motifs persistently repeat themselves and determine the appearance of a typical small residential building in Samara.

Building 188 on Sadovaya Street is undoubtedly one of the oldest in the city. Its unclad walls are made of old cracked logs. The traditional decor is well preserved. The roof has been re-built. Another interesting building is at 97 Buyanova Street. It is constructed of half logs, into which heavy window trims are embedded. The log walls are plastered, and almost all decorative elements have been preserved.

The houses oriented along the street are generally more extravagant, with cornices and window trims decorated with complex carvings. Many of these have two stories with the first story made of stone. Some of the buildings have a different number of stories with a two-story central part, accommodating the attic room, and one-story wings. This arrangement clearly points out a rich man's mansion.

There are several two-story wooden buildings in the city featuring richly decorated facades and a very prominent outline: Mashtakov's house, Poplavsky's house, etc. They feature balconies on the street facades, small turrets on the roofs, and lace-like carvings. The architectural appearance of these buildings bears the imprint of eclecticism with noticeable Russian-style elements, which is characteristic of the late 19th – early 20th century [2].

Thus, in Samara one can see all basic types of residential wooden buildings found in other historical cities. Wooden structures form the image of a historical downtown and create a picturesque historical environment, which has only been preserved partially. One cannot but notice somewhat simplified architectural design of regular houses, which is one of the characteristic features of Samara wooden architecture. This shows that the traditions of wooden architecture had not fully taken root here. At the same time, some rich residential buildings are perfect examples of wooden architecture adorning the

city. Wooden houses in towns and cities have their own place in the Russian architectural heritage [3].

### 3. M.D. MASHTAKOV'S HOUSE: A PROMINENT MONUMENT OF WOODEN ARCHITECTURE IN SAMARA

One of the most remarkable and distinctive wooden buildings in Samara is the house of M.D. Mashtakov located at 207 Samarskaya Street (Fig. 1). It is a two-story wooden structure placed along the public property line of Samarskaya Street, with its corner facing the former Voskresenskaya Square. The building is rectangular with three avant-corps at the street facade. Structurally, it is divided into three main parts by two lateral bearing walls. The house is divided into small apartments. It has two entrances and two sets of stairs on corners of the street facade.

The main facade of the building is symmetrical. There is a wide avant-corps in the center crowned with a triangular gable, and two avant-corps on the corners with quadrangular tent-roofed turrets with small windows. The facade is decorated with pilasters, cornices, belt courses, and rich carvings. The inter-story cornice is a wide belt course formed by two profiled bars. Window openings have a complex decor. The top string of the cornice is at second-floor windowsill level. The window trims are carved columns on both sides of the windows ending with a cornice on carriers richly decorated with carvings. The bottom trim piece with a small apron and side overhangs is incorporated into the decor of the inter-story belt course. The façade is clad with battens oriented in different directions. All this creates an expressive, complex, and vivid image. The lateral facades and the backyard facade are very neat with little decor.

The house has a low-pitched hip roof with two quadrangular tent-roofed turrets above the avant-corps on the corners. Subroof structures include a set of close couples. Roofing is sheet iron; turrets are clad in a checkered pattern. The front facade of the turrets has a dormer window with elegantly carved trims. Downpipes are used to remove rainwater off the roof.

The external and internal bearing walls are assembled from logs. The finished floors are made of painted wooden boards. The floor structures are wooden and placed on beams. The walls separating the staircases from the apartments are made of half logs placed vertically. The partitions in the apartments are framed. The ceilings are decorated with shaped cornices. Four round stoves with iron cladding have been preserved in the rooms of both floors.



**Figure 1.** M.D. Mashtakov's house: street view.

From the building's construction history, we know that as of 1898 the land plot on the corner of Voskresenskaya Square and Samarskaya Street belonged to Mikhail Demytyevich Mashtakov, a lower-middle-class citizen (*meshchanin*). In 1899, the architect A.A. Shcherbachev designed a residential wooden house for him. Some floor schematics and a street facade drawing have been preserved to this day (Fig. 2). On 22 January 1899, M.D. Mashtakov filed a petition with the Samara city administration to obtain a permit to build a two-story wooden house on his allotment near Voskresenskaya Square. The city administration was very quick to issue the construction permit on 25 January.

Apparently, the house was built in no time. It could already be found in the address directory of 1900. The cost of the house was 2,700 rubles, which was a significant amount, especially for this district of Samara, the outskirts of the city at the time. The comparison of the design drawings and the completed building shows that the construction process deviated from the design. Only the general arrangement of the facade was kept, and the decor suffered quite a lot of design deviations, particularly in the implementation of the turrets. Most likely, it cannot be attributed to spontaneous decisions of the construction contractors, but suggests involvement of an architect.

The real estate evaluation sheet of the 3rd part of Samara for 1902 states that the allotment of M.D.

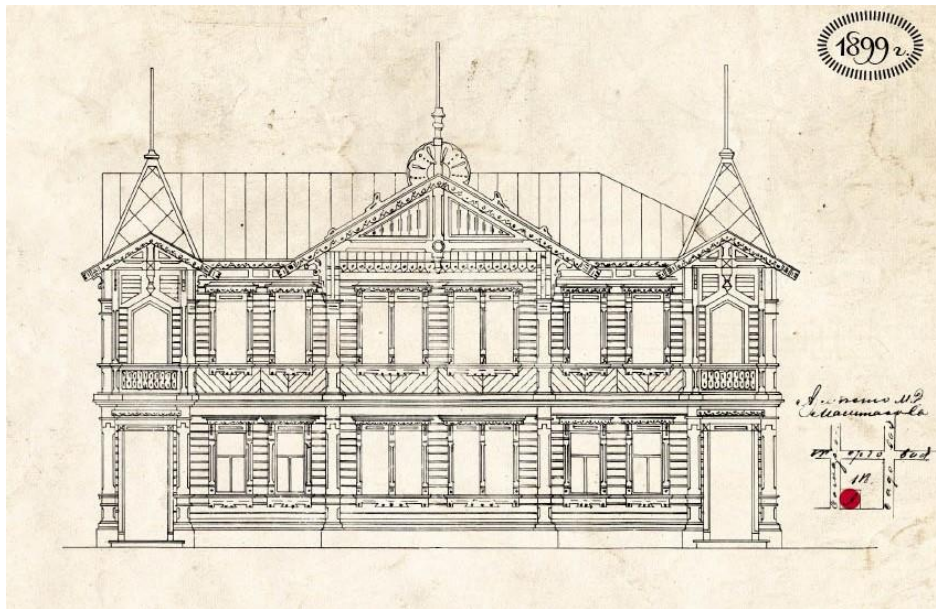
Mashtakov on the corner of Voskresenskaya square and Samarskaya street, No. 14-16, with the area of 500 sq. *sazhen* (20x25 *sazhen*) accommodated: along Samarskaya Street – a two-story wooden house with the area of 45 sq. *sazhen* (9x5 *sazhen*), on the corner – a one-story house clad with stone with the area of 68 sq. *sazhen* (4x17 *sazhen*), along Voskresenskaya Square – a two-story house made partially from stone with the area of 25 sq. *sazhen* (5x5 *sazhen*); in the yard – a two-story wooden house with the area of 16 sq. *sazhen* (4x4 *sazhen*) and wooden outbuildings.

In addition, in the early 20th century, M.D. Mashtakov owned a grain barn on the shore of the Samarka River.

In August 1911, the land plot of M.D. Mashtakov, including all buildings and structures, became the property of Samara merchant Nikolay Fedorovich Markov, according to the extract from the Samara notary archive endorsed by the senior notary of the Samara district court on 16 August 1911 according to the register No. 45 and the letter of the senior notary dated 16 August 1911 No. 16561. N.F. Markov owned the allotment on the corner of Voskresenskaya Square and Samarskaya Street in 1912–1918.

After 1917, the property was nationalized, and during the entire 20th century, the main building was used as apartment housing.





**Figure 2.** Facade of the designed two-story wooden building of Samara *meshchanin* Mikhail Demytyevich Mashtakov on the 118th block on Samarskaya Street (architect: A.A. Shcherbachev, 1899).

#### 4. CONSTRUCTION HISTORY AND RESTORATION CONCEPT OF M.D. MASHTAKOV'S HOUSE

The building was initially constructed for the personal use of a rich owner, which is proved by its extraordinary architecture (Fig. 3). Now we see rather a modest apartment housing with small rooms.

Reconstruction and conversion to apartment housing were carried out either when the building got its new owner (N.F. Markov), or when it was nationalized after 1917, so somewhere in the first quarter of the 20th century. Judging by the room finishing, the conversion likely took place in the 1910s.



**Figure 3.** State of M.D. Mashtakov's house before restoration.

Before reconstruction, the layout of the house was a bit different. The design drawing by A.A. Shcherbachev provides some insight into the original layout. Two lateral walls were load-bearing structures supporting the floors. The area within the central avant-corps was a single space, which is proved by the layout of the windows. Naturally, the second-floor rooms overlooking the street were also single spaces, as the current partitions in them touch the walls very close to the windows. There are some mured-up windows in the back wall at the southern staircase. All this confirms that the stairs existing today were added later. The original stairs can be seen in the design plan. The second floor could be accessed via the stairs in the right avant-corps. As per the design, there was a back door opposite the northern entrance to the yard. However, there are indications that a bearing wall (now missing) was built in the yard facade in the northern corner, across the stair landing; it is possible that there used to be a latrine attached from behind.

The side avant-corps on the second floor have mured-up doorways, which indicates there used to be balconies as shown in the design by A.A. Shcherbachev. There was a door in the middle of the yard facade on the second floor in the central room. It is all mured up now and leads nowhere. Most likely, there was a terrace on the yard facade on the second floor accessed through this door. According to the design drawing, the building had three heating stoves placed in the corners of the rooms and one large kitchen stove.

We assume that during the second construction stage the rooms were divided into smaller spaces. The conversion to apartment housing was carried out quite neatly, in line with the historical tradition. The ceilings in the new rooms were lined with cornices. The house was divided in two equal halves, with symmetrically positioned double-flight staircases in the corners on the yard side. There were attachments on the corners of the rear façade, apparently used as toilets and closets. These attachments have not survived to the present day, but their traces are clearly visible. It is obvious that the attachments are not original. The location of round and half-round heating stoves positively corresponds to the apartment layout, which suggests that the stoves were not there at the beginning.

Thus, two construction stages can be identified for M.D. Mashtakov's house, both of which have historical value. The second construction stage introduced significant and irreversible changes that do not allow to return the building to its truly original appearance. This must be taken into account when developing restoration solutions. The preferred approach to

preserving the house of M.D. Mashtakov is a reasonable combination of the first and the second construction stages. The main criteria for adopting a restoration solution are accuracy and authenticity [4].

The works to preserve the M.D. Mashtakov's house are carried out by the partnership of the Samara city administration and the non-governmental organization "All-Russian Society for the Preservation of Historical and Cultural Monuments".

One technical complication for the restoration of the M.D. Mashtakov's house is the lack of structural safety margin. This is caused by the use of medium quality materials and the presence of numerous large openings weakening the walls. This means that structural imperfection and short lifespan were incorporated already at the construction stage. This is typical for wooden construction of the second half of the 19th – early 20th century [5]. Basically, a new structural enclosure had to be created during the restoration to prevent the building from collapsing. This is a characteristic feature of almost all wooden structures in Samara.

## 5. CONCLUSION

Preservation of wooden buildings in Samara is a real challenge. The buildings are dilapidated, and the living conditions they provide are evidently poor. Many of them are in a critical condition and depopulated, which is clearly not consistent with the visual environment of a downtown area. The condition and state of preservation of old wooden houses in Samara raise a lot of concerns. The buildings are disappearing one after another.

The first rational step to deal with this issue is to make the inventory of all historical wooden buildings in the downtown, identifying the most valuable specimens and architectural ensembles. It is necessary to assess their condition, as many of the houses are so old and fragile that it is unlikely they can be restored, despite their architectural value. Any building can be restored even from ruins, but the main value of a historical object lies in its authenticity. The survey must result in a list of structures with the highest historical and cultural value, which can still be preserved. It is clearly impossible to save all the wooden buildings in Samara still standing, so priorities must be set.

The buildings are private property. They all have their own history and circumstances. Is it possible to work out a single and effective preservation approach, which would create the conditions for maintenance and restoration of old wooden buildings? Placing

them in state guardianship is unlikely to yield positive results. The owners of the buildings formally recognized as cultural heritage sites usually see this status as encumbrance, and they are unwilling to proceed with restoration. This is why such monuments burn down or just stand there for years until they finally collapse on their own. The possibility of preserving the wooden buildings of Samara lies in the sphere of urban development regulations and legal support of building owners [6].

Wooden Samara is not like Tomsk, Vologda, or Totma, where the historical and cultural value of the wooden heritage is acknowledged and its preservation is well-justified [7]. One must fight for wooden Samara and look for ways to preserve it.

## AUTHOR'S CONTRIBUTION

This article was independently completed by Andrei Bode.

In the majority of towns and cities, historical wooden buildings are poorly studied. Usually, we only have some general understanding of individual monuments. This article introduces a previously unexplored urban wooden architecture monument into the scientific discourse. The field survey has revealed the true construction history of the building. The author's participation in the restoration work helped to gain insight into the main architectural and structural issues of the building and to suggest a custom solution to reinforce the historical structures while maintaining the architectural and artistic appearance of the monument.

We have gained understanding of the historical and architectural value of Samara's wooden buildings and identified the challenges of their preservation. The results have practical value for restoration of wooden architecture monuments.

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