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SAN FRANCISCO JAVIER COLLEGE. JESUIT ARCHITECTURE, EDUCATION, AND HERITAGE IN THE CITY OF PUERTO MONTT, CHILE

COLEGIO SAN FRANCISCO JAVIER.
ARQUITECTURA, EDUCACIÓN Y PATRIMONIO
JESUÍTICO EN LA CIUDAD DE PUERTO MONTT,
CHILE

ESCOLA JAVIER DE SAN FRANCISCO.
ARQUITETURA, EDUCAÇÃO E PATRIMÔNIO
JESUÍTICO NA CIDADE DE PUERTO MONTT, CHILE



Figure 0. Church facade under
repair, 1962. Source: Castro Fones &
Brauning Salazar (2022).

ABSTRACT

This research examines the concept of religious-educational heritage, a typology that has been little studied and scarcely acknowledged in the country. The case study is San Francisco Javier College in Puerto Montt, which serves as a living testament to foundational architecture in the city and is one of the few legacies of the presence of the Society of Jesus and the German immigrants' carpentry school. However, despite the material and intangible importance of the case, it lacks broader recognition that fully acknowledges its value as urban, educational, religious, and constructive heritage.

Keywords: Jesuit School, religious-educational heritage, jesuit architecture, Chiloé's School of Carpentry, Fachwerk

RESUMEN

Esta investigación examina el concepto de patrimonio religioso-educacional, una clasificación poco revisada y reconocida en Chile. Se tomó como caso de estudio el Colegio San Francisco Javier de Puerto Montt, el que constituye un testimonio de la arquitectura fundacional puertomontina al ser, además, un legado señero de la presencia de la Compañía de Jesús y de la escuela de carpinteros alemanes inmigrantes. Sin embargo, pese a la importancia material e inmaterial del caso, carece de un reconocimiento mayor que reconozca su valor como patrimonio urbano, educacional, religioso y constructivo de manera integral.

Palabras clave : Colegio Jesuita, patrimonio religioso-educacional, arquitectura jesuítica, Escuela de Carpintería Chilota, Fachwerk

RESUMO

Esta pesquisa examina o conceito de patrimônio religioso-educacional, uma classificação pouco revisada e reconhecida no Chile. Tomou-se como estudo de caso o Colegio San Francisco Javier de Puerto Montt, que constitui um testemunho da arquitetura fundacional de Puerto Montt, sendo também um legado singular da presença da Companhia de Jesus e da escola de carpinteiros alemães imigrantes. Contudo, apesar da importância material e imaterial do caso, este carece de um reconhecimento mais amplo que contemple, de forma integral, seu valor como patrimônio urbano, educacional, religioso e construtivo.

Palavras-chave: Colégio jesuíta, patrimônio religioso-educacional, arquitetura jesuítica, Escola de Carpintaria de Chiloé, Fachwerk

INTRODUCTION

Educational institutions have become more complex over time and in their built spaces. Therefore, it is not a novelty to reflect on educational architecture. Analyzing its scope in a private or state context, considering its built expression, construction regulations, identity codes and social imaginaries, among others aspects, represents an opportunity to prepare an incipient specialized historiographic production (Ramírez Potes, 2011; Torres Gilles, Valdivia Ávila & Atria Lemaitre, 2015; Albanelli, 2021; Mondragón & Marini, 2021; Marini & Mondragón, 2023; and Garrido, 2014).

Consequently, there is not a very in-depth and sustained academic debate on architecture and education in Chile (Exss, 2016) as a topic for investigation, as publications addressing the unique relationship between education and school architecture are lacking. They also favor approaches that strongly emphasize State action to the detriment of other relevant actors.

Hence, the revision of the significant educational architecture related to religious orders has been abandoned. They were pioneers in Latin America in establishing the educational role, maintaining it to the present day. Their educational buildings and facilities constitute a unique historical, religious, and educational heritage.

As a result, the Jesuit San Francisco Javier educational complex, in the city of Puerto Montt (Los Lagos Region), is proposed as the object of study. This complex, a recognized historical expression of Chilean school architecture, is a symbol of the Society of Jesus's presence and community service, which has left an indelible imprint on this southern city. Its buildings and facilities, given the aforementioned social representativeness, suggest the possibility of considering them a heritage asset, asking which values, stemming from the action of private (religious) education, the San Francisco Javier School represents, and whether they consolidate an outstanding urban heritage and architectural case in Puerto Montt and other cities where schools of different religious orders were established.

This assessment is pending, as it is significant given the absence of an architectural analysis of the characteristics of the religious-educational complex, which results in limited heritage valorization of this example of educational architecture, Jesuit heritage, and the German carpenters' school in Puerto Montt.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In the field of school architecture, Exss (2016), in his research on architecture and education, suggests a quantitative deficiency. Similarly, in studies that link school space to historical lines, experts such as Garrido (2014) and Marini & Mondragón (2023) have recently emerged, focusing on state architecture and government policies. Meanwhile, Egaña Baraona

(2000), Garrido (2014), and Torres Gilles et al. (2015) have researched public education of a heritage nature. However, there is no research in Chile related to the school architecture of religious orders.

In the field of Spanish-American Jesuit architecture, authors such as Enrich, Schwerter & Tilly (2002), Cherini (2009), and Page (2019) have worked on Jesuit educational campuses. However, according to Page (2019), while there is valuable information, there is also meager research on buildings and few specialists in the field. The application of Jesuit architecture, since its foundation in 1558, has been characterized by St. Ignatius's development of the idea of a "Modus Noster" (what is ours), which organizes and directs an institution in functional, economic, and constructive aspects, but not in an artistic style (Page, 2019).

Consequently, the Jesuit outline of the ideal school is characterized by the arrangement of spaces around courtyards, with the ground floor containing all kinds of services, in addition to the classrooms, and the second floor housing the bedrooms. What is seen is that the school studied was designed under the concept of the "Modus Noster", taking the prototype of the establishment that constitutes the organization in organizational and administrative areas, in its construction. Thus, the school is a set of elements that comprise a religious educational complex (Cherini, 2009).

On the other hand, the urban morphology of Puerto Montt features port architecture characterized by a set of overlapping picturesque constructions that cover the mountainsides that dominate the maritime space. Thus, forms that reinterpret previous styles predominate, such as neoclassical, neo-Greek, neo-renaissance, etc., as expressed in the architectural composition and decoration of the 19th century and the pre-modernist and industrial eras (Benavides, Pizzi & Valenzuela, 1994), achieving particularly common ties, in the sobriety of the architectural language of public and private buildings,

Similarly, the San Francisco Javier School in Puerto Montt, given its history and architecture, is relevant to be examined through several concepts and stages. Academic studies related to this Jesuit Puertomontino school are mainly ethnographic and historical, divided into school, port, Jesuit architecture, and German migration, with which this educational complex was designed and built (Hanisch Espindola, 1974). The works of Tampe Maldonado (1999), Enrich et al. (2002), Schmidt & Tampe (2011), Ortega, Fábregas & Abud (2022), Castro Fones & Brauning Salazar (2022), and Fábrega (2022) on these aspects stand out.

Subsequently, this case study is linked to the school's construction system, which, in the first instance, is related to the "Fachwerk" system as a traditional construction method associated with the school of German carpenters in German migratory buildings (Cherubini, 2015). Indeed, D'Alencon Castrillón & Prado García (2014) explain that among the Germanic villages, differences were identified in their building methods, resulting in "types of Fachwerk"

depending on environmental conditions, the organization of houses, the availability of materials, etc. Therefore, when arriving at a new territory, this Germanic construction system would adapt. Finally, Araya Toro & Almonacid Burgos (2022) highlight the *Fachwerk* system's use of Roman numerals, its assembly and splicing techniques, and a certain correlation between the German method and the Chilote carpenters, due to migratory flows that coexisted during the German migration.

METHODOLOGY

In this research, an exploratory methodology was employed, including a bibliographic analysis of the school's history, the city's port character, the Jesuit order, and the cultural contribution of German migration to the development of the built complex. Archives of images documenting the building's historical evolution were also consulted.

The fieldwork collected information through interviews and the Delphi method with key actors (workers, architects, and local historians) associated with the educational complex.

Subsequently, a historical, cultural, and patrimonial analysis of the San Francisco Javier school was conducted, with primary information obtained through fieldwork and a Delphi survey, which analyzed the material and immaterial heritage value of the educational complex studied, ultimately yielding the corresponding conclusions.

CASE STUDY

The Jesuit complex studied is located in the city of Puerto Montt (Los Lagos Region, Chile). Its surface area covers a block of 21,600 m², which contains the small hill of the Jesuit Priests. Its perimeter is delimited to the north by the Santa María, Vial, and Ochagavía roads, to the south by Benavente Street, to the east by Guillermo Gallardo, Talca, and Cauquenes Streets, and to the west by Balmaceda Street. It houses a built area of 12,987.2 m², comprising the school with about 714 m² (5.5%); the church at 405 m² (3.1%); its bell tower with an area of 37.2 m² (0.3%); finally, the aforementioned built elements are connected by a 11,831 m² park (91.1%) (Figure 1).

DEVELOPMENT

San Francisco Javier School (Formerly the San José School)

The first Jesuit priests arrived in Puerto Montt in 1858. After a long journey and a shipwreck, they occupied a house and a donated piece of land, called "Cerro de los Jesuitas" or the Jesuits Hill, located between Guillermo Gallardo and Vial Streets. This high ground was more extensive than it is today because it was accessible only from Curicó Street. After its inhabitation, on the orders of the Bishop of Ancud, some houses had to be built, with funds from the Melipulli "Evangelical Society" (Enrich et al., 2002).

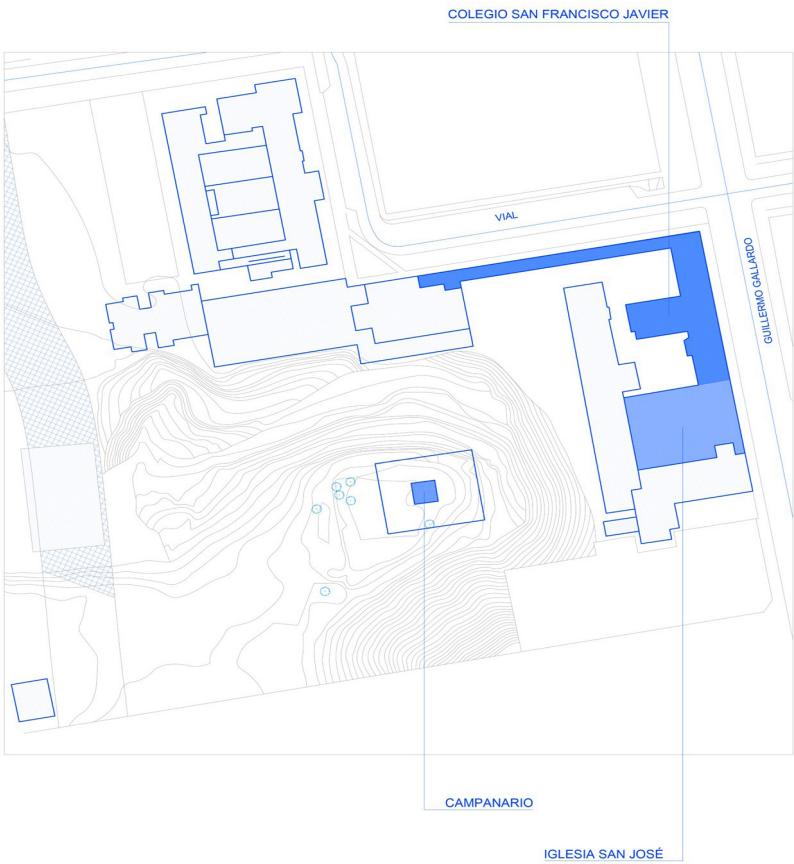


Figure 1. Layout of the San Francisco Javier Educational Complex. Source: Obando Aedo (2024).

Figure 2. Image of the Church of the Jesuits and the San Francisco Javier School, when it had not yet reached Vial Street. Source: Fabregas Zelada (2022).



In 1859, with the founding of the San José school, which would later become the San Francisco Javier School, the German settlers gradually sent their children to be educated at this Jesuit establishment, enabling the school to become a residence and providing it with a solid academic and religious foundation. In 1880, the San José School was complemented with a boarding



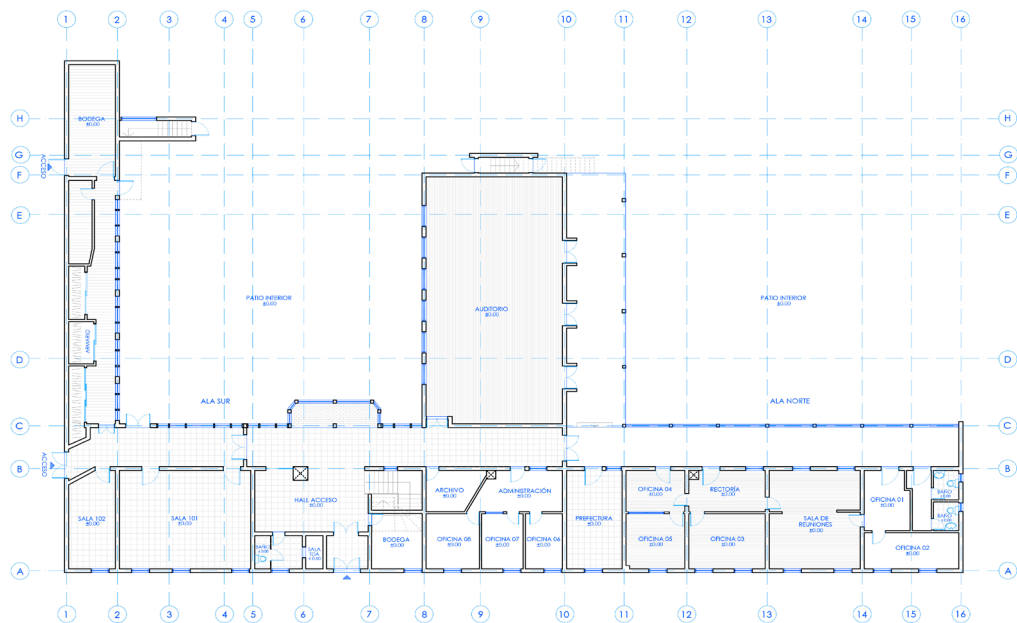
Figure 3. Image of the facade of the San Francisco Javier School.
Source: Obando Aedo (2024).

school called “San Francisco Javier”, building a new large construction (Enrich et al., 2002) (Figure 2).

In 1881, the Chilean state faced an economic deficit resulting from the War of the Pacific, leading to the closure of public schools nationwide. Complementing this, Lutheran influence was absent from Llanquihue Lake, so the San Francisco Javier Jesuit School was established as a boarding school (Fábregas Zelada, 2022).

In 1882, the head priest and the Jesuit priests resided at the San Francisco Javier boarding school. The San Javier house opened on April 27th with a small number of students; by the end of the year, there would be a total of 48 students, 24 of whom would be boarders (Fábregas Zelada, 2022).

The most characteristic building of the school and residence, still standing today, was built in 1894 (called the “blue building”), and the following year the priests and students were brought together there. The most important extension took place in 1926, on the corner of Guillermo Gallardo and Vial streets. It was 19 m. long by 9 m. wide and 14 m. high. A third floor was added that overlaps with the old house and extends about 7 m. farther towards the south.



This building has three floors, laid out as follows. On the first floor, there is a study hall for day students, with a capacity for 100 people; there are also the rooms of Father Prefect and Father Procurator; while on the second floor there is the priests' library, alongside the study hall, and some rooms for them; and the third floor was exclusively for bedrooms (Figure 3).

The construction took place amid the port boom and the city's rapid expansion. Its architectural features include a simple box-like volume, with corridors featuring glazed galleries and interior courtyards (Benavides et al., 1994). It has regularly placed rectangular windows made of larch wood, in a guillotine style. Together, these characteristics provide a simple but imposing composition (Castro Fones & Brauning Salazar, 2022).

The arrangement of the continuous façade's volumes, with regular sections, and the integration of interior courtyards, reflects the intentionality in the design of the building under the company's "Modus Noster", complying with a "useful, functional, inexpensive architecture", which notes a character of rationality and functionality (Cherini, 2009).

For the building's construction, which considered the older two-story section and the more recent three-story one, with constructions dating from 1894 and 1926 respectively, native woods were used, transforming it into one of the few buildings with these characteristics remaining in the city of Puerto Montt, with a built area of 714 m² and a maximum height of 14 meters (Figure 4).

Figure 4. Planimetry of the floor plan of the San Francisco Javier School, based on the survey by the Restauro Team (2021). Source: Obando Aedo (2024).



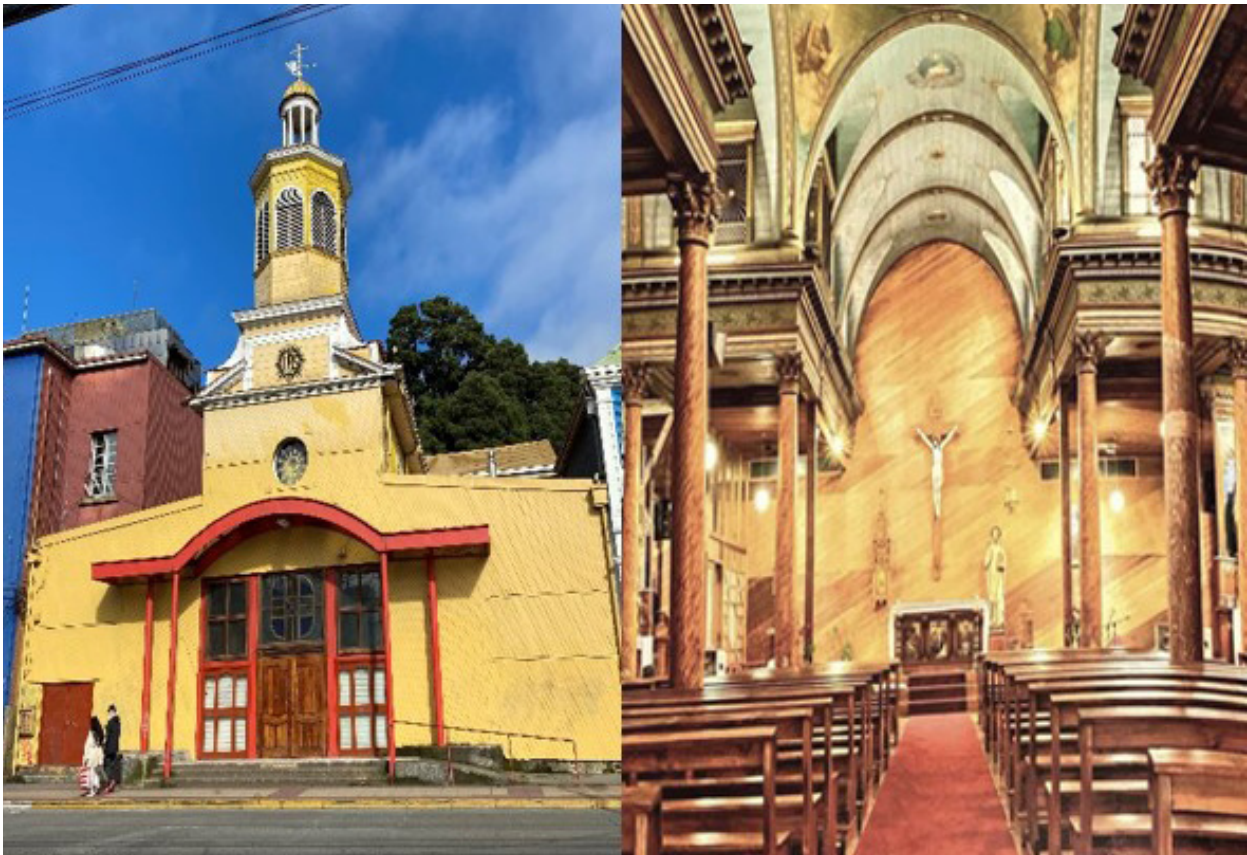
Figure 5. Image of the San Francisco Javier School with the damage from the 1960 earthquake. Source: Fabregas Zelada (2022).

In 1931, the construction of the Assembly Hall was completed. Since its opening, this room has been used for different activities; in addition, the lower part of the Hall has served as a covered courtyard on rainy days. Between 1952 and 1954, the indoor gymnasium was built, with a capacity of 1,500 people (Tampe Maldonado, 1999). The 1960 earthquake hit the building hard, the most obvious damage being that one of its exterior walls was left leaning (Figure 5).

Over time, the building has seen considerable damage to its foundations. As a result, the two-story structure from 1894 was studied in a critical survey for facade restoration by several teams of heritage architects in 2022 (Castro Fones & Brauning Salazar, 2022).

It should be noted that the Jesuit community used this educational building for almost a century. However, in 2011, the school moved from its historic and central premises to the Pelluco Alto sector, where the new infrastructure is located, exceeding the dimensions of the old campus and abandoning the site.

Today, this building has been declared in the communal regulatory plan as a historical conservation building, which recognizes its heritage value, mainly its materiality, its wooden structure, as well as its corrugated metal sheet cladding (Castro Fones & Brauning Salazar, 2022).



San José de los Padres Jesuit Church

The San José de los Padres Jesuit Church was built in 1872, making it one of the oldest buildings of Puerto Montt. From the very beginning, the Jesuits tried to provide themselves with as many priests as possible, since they did not have the minimum number of missionaries needed for such an extensive territory, corresponding to the Diocese of Ancud. Therefore, the Bishopric decided to bring German Jesuits for this evangelizing work.

With the arrival of Father Francisco Enrich in 1860, the San José Temple was built in Puerto Montt, and another was built in Puerto Varas. Father Ramón Tubau was commissioned as the architect of the San José Church.

The San José Church has the main temple of the Society of Jesus in Rome, called “Gesù”, as its design reference. Its structure is 30 meters long, 12.5 meters wide in the central part, and 20 meters wide by the transept, to accommodate up to 1,000 people. Its interior had a Corinthian style, with three naves and five altars, and a bell tower on the facade. The Jesuits Juan Struck and José Patten worked on the finishes and the furniture, together with the carpenter Matías Doggenweiller (Castro Fones & Brauning Salazar, 2022) (Figure 6).

Figure 6. Images of the facade and central nave of the Jesuit Church. Source: Obando Aedo (2024).



Figure 8. Images of inside the Jesuit Church. Source: Obando Aedo. (2024).



Figure 9. Church facade under repair, 1962. Source: Castro Fones & Brauning Salazar (2022).

The restoration carried out by the Pontifical Catholic University of Valparaiso (PUCV) School of Architecture between 1962 and 1964 introduced changes to the Church, such as the removal of the pulpit and the main altar, with the Eucharist celebrated facing away from the public.

Figure 10. Panoramic view of the San Francisco Javier Jesuit educational complex. Source: Fabregas Zelada (2022).



Structural walls were also demolished to create a free floor plan in line with the modern concepts of the time, and the resulting openings were replaced with tensioners. Due to differences of opinion between the Jesuit fathers and the architects, this restoration project was left unfinished. However, the structural consequences of this work are currently visible (Castro Fones & Brauning Salazar, 2022) (Figure 9).

Due to the deterioration of the church, the Society of Jesus, through a 2022 collaboration agreement with San Sebastian University, conducted a "critical architectural survey" of the Temple. This study seeks to develop knowledge of the property's state of conservation to implement optimal maintenance, conservation, and preservation measures over time for new generations.

Finally, the San José de los Padres Jesuit Church is the oldest historical conservation building in Puerto Montt. The Municipality of Puerto Montt also declared it a Historical Conservation Property in the community regulatory plan.

Bell Tower

In 1893, under the administration of the Jesuit Head Priest Lorenzo Wolter, a bell tower was erected at the top of the hill next to the college to announce and brighten religious holidays and extraordinary events. However, there is no agreement among historical sources on the year of its construction, which dates between 1891 and 1893 (Tampe Maldonado, 1999; Castro Fones & Brauning Salazar, 2022). Father Wolter entrusted its construction to the German carpenter Theodor Langenbach (Enrich et al., 2002) (Figure 10).

Its design has a single volume, built on gravel from the same hill; approximately one meter of soft ground was excavated, and stones



Figure 11. View of the facade of the Bell Tower of the San Francisco Javier School. Source: Obando Aedo (2024).

brought from Ancud were used to cement the bases of its structural columns. In its construction, a system of regulating sections was applied based on a square module of 6 meters of edges for the floor plan and the body of the base, the cane and the roof, and a square submodule of one and a half meters of edge, for the roof slopes that interlock the bodies of the tower; obtaining a height of the tower of three and a half squares (Cherubini, 2015) (Figure 11).

Its materiality is mainly native larch, pine, and oak. For the structural joints, box and herringbone assemblies were used, with wooden dowels to secure the beams and diagonals. The second-floor structure supporting the bells is the only one reinforced with bolts to bear their weight. Finally, the roof has an orthogonal floor plan in neo-Gothic style, completing the structure with a cross that, together with the entire construction, reaches a height of 21 meters, covers a built area of 37.2 m², and has a volume of 781.2 m³. (Cherubini, 2015) (Figure 12).

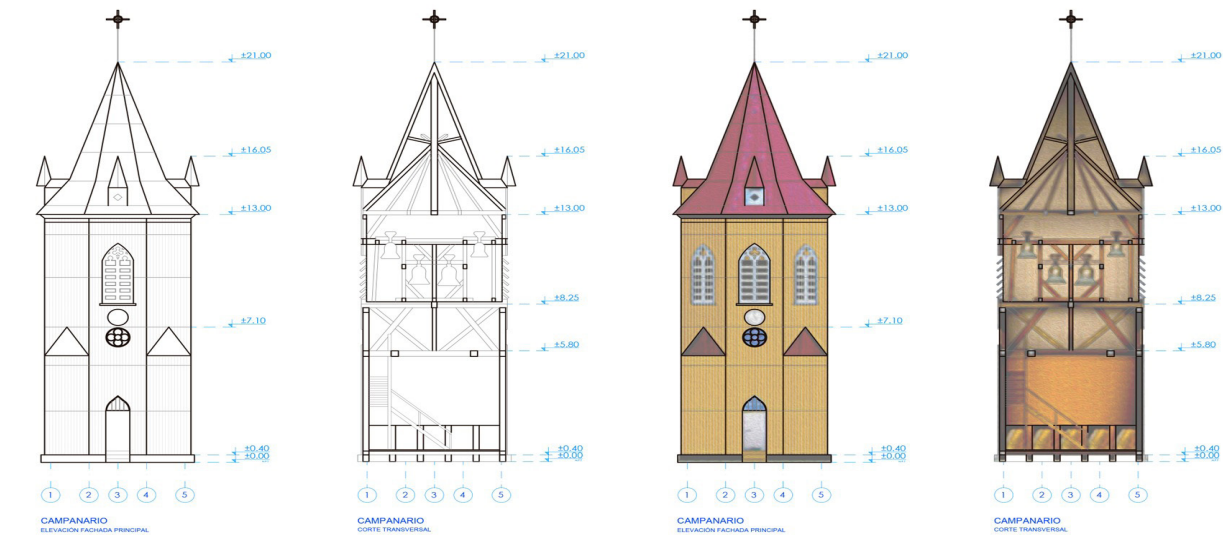


Figure 12. Planimetry of the side elevation of the Bell Tower, based on the architectural survey of Oficina Plan Arquitectos (2010). Source: Obando Aedo (2024).

Figure 13. Details of the clock and the bells of the Bell Tower. Source: Castro Fones & Brauning Salazar (2022).

This bell tower is lined with corrugated zinc plates, with semi-oval windows, rose windows, and a Gothic-style roof, topped by small minarets crowned with crosses at their tips, whose slenderness and location make it a historical urban landmark in Puerto Montt. Unfortunately, this bell tower is affected by xylophagous agents (Castro Fones & Brauning Salazar, 2022). Finally, in 1997, the National Monuments Council declared the bell tower a National Monument under declaration N° 975 (Figure 13).

Fachwerk Construction System adapted to the San Francisco Javier Educational Complex

The German migratory influence in southern Chile during the mid-19th century is relevant to its cultural, social, and economic development. Their contribution was also materialized in the birth of new cities. This urban development is evident in the large number of buildings, mostly wooden, that can be classified as “German architecture”, such as churches, housing,



Figure 14. Bell tower structure with sighting of joint recess and use of dowels. Source: Oficina Plan Arquitectos.

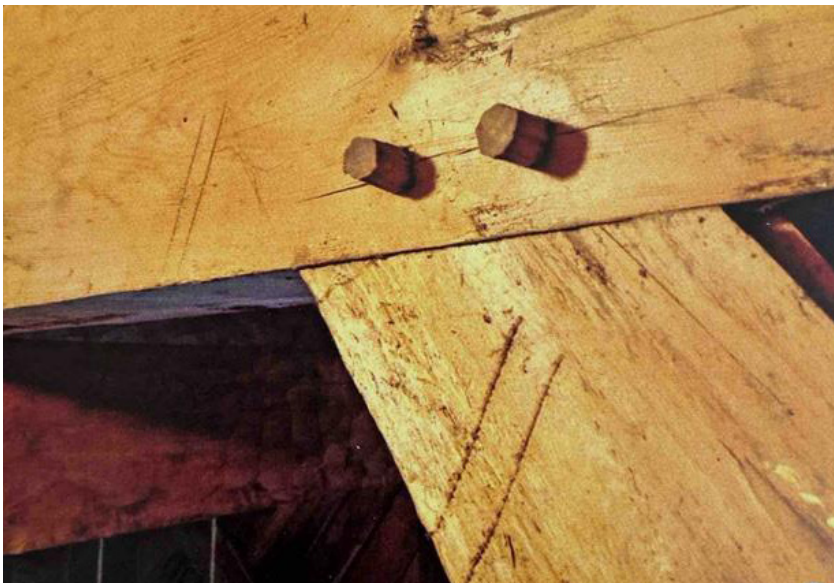


Figure 15. Detail of the mark of German carpenters in the union of beams in the school. Source: Castro Fones & Brauning Salazar (2022).

schools, stables, and industrial buildings (Cherubini, 2015). Of these architectural examples, some are highly documented and have National Monument status, while others are totally ignored (D'Alencon Castrillón & Prado García, 2014).

Since its arrival in Puerto Montt, the Society of Jesus allegedly employed German builders to construct the school under study, which allows us to highlight the traditional construction system they employed. In addition, it is known that German migrants would have brought their construction techniques to Chile, including the use of the Fachwerk System (Cherubini, 2015).

Figure 16. Bell tower structure with carpenter's mark visible.
Source: Castro Fones & Brauning Salazar (2022).



This vernacular system is characterized by large wooden frames with complex joint assemblies, separated from the ground by wooden panels set on masonry foundations of stone or brick. On the conveniently diagonalized partitions, the mezzanine layout is created, with the second-floor partitions supported, or the roof structure is formed, consisting of a central partition that supports the truss structure that shapes the roof's slope. The aesthetic nature of the framework is to remain visible, subject to climatic variations (Cherubini, 2015). According to the definition by D'Alencon Castrillón & Prado García (2014), this place would be filled with seals without raw-earth supports or bricks, on a fabric of branches fixed to the frames. The structure would be combined with horizontal platforms that eliminate the need for wood on one or more floors (Figure 14).

At its foundation, the San Francisco Javier School was built using the traditional Fachwerk system, as were many buildings in Puerto Montt at the time, by German migrants.

In a second stage, according to the interview with the architect G. Paredes (19/03/2025), it was possible to establish that the construction system that the educational complex had was not a replica of the Fachwerk system used by German migrants, but that it was adapted to the area, closer to the definition provided by D'Alencon Castrillón & Prado García (2014) (Figure 15 and Figure 16).

Finally, Araya Toro & Almonacid Burgos (2022) agree that the school's building would have an assembly-and-splicing constructive system with characteristics of the *Fachwerk* system. However, this work would not have a stone filling in its structure, unlike the wooden framework, which would be more closely aligned with the Chilota carpentry school and unrelated to the traditional *Fachwerk* system.

Firstly, this research, through historical and ethnographic sources, has managed to determine that in the San Francisco Javier Jesuit School, there are different historical periods for the origin of its construction, its constructive interventions, and the current state of the building, which allows understanding and complementing the evolution of an architectural analysis that goes beyond general descriptions of its style and **materiality**.

As for the historical-urban dimension that represents the complex studied for the development of Puerto Montt, by identifying and linking the different historical episodes such as the immigration of German families, the arrival of the Society of Jesus, and other events that affected this city, the existence of this educational and heritage complex is identified as a remnant of the Jesuit presence in Puerto Montt, as well as the academic cradle from which outstanding citizens graduated who had a relevant role in the activities of Puerto Montt. These include regional and national figures, such as the former Minister Enrique Paris, the former Mayor Ramón Yuraszeck, the former Senator Fidel Espinoza, and the anthropologist Pablo Ortuzar, among other outstanding alumni. However, the current Puerto Montt community is in a state of ignorance or “heritage amnesia” about the old enclosure.

In this sense, the abandonment and neglect of the old site demonstrate a lack of recognition of its architectural value, given that it is one of the few preserved complexes in the city of Puerto Montt that still retain German-migrant architecture.

In the same way, the Jesuit work of the “Modus Noster” in this educational complex is not recognized, which is demonstrated in different spaces, such as the inner courtyards, arranging the layout distribution around them, in addition to having complementary buildings that would help a correct schooling, as is the case of the church.

Finally, the relevance of researching educational architecture from religious orders, as a case study: the San Francisco Javier school, has shown that it is part of the genesis and identity of Puerto Montt. Likewise, this case study is one of the first schools built by the Jesuits upon their return to Chile. This demonstrates that conducting this type of study, from its characterization to its dissemination, would enable, in the near future, a possible and appropriate architectural enhancement by different local actors. Hence, it is necessary to continue research related to Jesuit heritage and the educational campuses of religious orders in Chile.

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CONCLUSIONS

CONTRIBUTION OF AUTHORS CRediT

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