THE CONTRIBUTION OF ZANINE CALDAS TO TIMBER CONSTRUCTION IN BRASILIA: FOUR PROJECTS OF SELF-TAUGHT ARCHITECT

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ABSTRACT: Architectural references built in timber are not commonplace in Brazil. Zanine Caldas has legated some great buildings. The goal of this work is to present this architect’s works from the 1960s up until the 1980s and, furthermore, to present some constructive characteristic that have made it unique, showing beautiful examples of timber construction in Brazil’s central region. Visits have been made to many buildings, along with interviews, photographic records and other gathering of information, attesting the quality of constructive and structural details, besides architectonic components from the work of this self-taught architect, developed in the mid-west region of Brazil.

KEYWORDS: Zanine Caldas, Timber construction, Brasília

1 INTRODUCTION

In the 1980s, in Brazil, the architecture of Zanine Caldas has become synonym of quality timber construction, but his works are better known in the state of Rio de Janeiro, with a great number of buildings in the Joatinga neighborhood [1]. However, the collection of his works in Brasilia also stands out for the amount and quality of its architecture.

Zanine passed away in Rio de Janeiro, in 2002, leaving a legacy of relevant interest for the quality of his architecture, besides a characteristic technique that has marked his architecture: the constant application of wood in the structural systems of his works.

Even though Zanine did not have a formalist training in any official architecture school, his accomplishments include striking passages in the Musée des Arts Decoratifs, in Paris, in 1990, or the receiving of public acclaim from Lúcio Costa for the legal exercise of the profession during the Brazilian Congress of Architecture in 1991. Still, he had a space reserved in the Architecture d’Aujourd’hui magazine, in 1988 [2], presenting one of his houses.

His apprenticeship took place in the persistent and constant accompaniment of the growing Brazilian architecture of the 1950s, following architects of the modern school of architecture, such as Niemeyer, Alcides da Rocha Miranda, Sérgio Rodrigues, and many other professionals. He began his work in the 1940s with a small scale models atelier, and this practice has marked his work, besides the good quality of his wood constructions.

Figure 1: Outside view of the house Bethiol

The main objective of this paper is to present a part of the work, as in the example of Figure 1, from this unique architect in the city of Brasília, located in the mid-western region of Brazil, and the most striking characteristics of his work.

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2 METHODS

Due to the lack of any record of Zanine’s works in Brasília, the research included the gathering of its information, which was made possible by authorized visits to the houses designed by the architect at the Brazilian capital.

The methodology included, firstly, the prediction and, then the confirmation of Zanine’s designed houses within the architecture of the city. The next step included the contact and interviews with the current residents, which were not necessarily the original owners of each place.

During the visits of the twelve selected houses, the work consisted in registering, by taking general and detailed photographs, recording the authorized informal conversations with the residents and, thus, rescuing information from the constructive details and the history behind the architecture of each place.

3 RESULTS

The first work accomplished with the information from the visits to Zanine’s works in Brasília was the confection of small scale models of approximately 15 of his projects. This work is still in the process of being presented in the form of an exhibition in the University of Brasília.

The remaining results of the registry of his works will be presented in the variety of door and window frames, in the constructive details of the structural connections, in the different types of solutions for the flooring structures, and also, in the diversity of the roof carpentry, as in the figure 2.

![Figure 2: Internal detail](image)

This collection of work from Zanine Caldas in Brasília comprises the period from 1960s up to the early 1990s, when he returns to the city of Rio de Janeiro.

4 CONCLUSIONS

The diversity of characteristics to be highlighted in the work of Zanine Caldas in Brasília, be it for the carpentry of the floors and roofs, the wealth of connection details and even for the design of doors and windows, demonstrates by itself the importance of this collection of four examples of projects in the Brazilian capital. His work shows a quality that stands out for its beauty associated with the simplicity, as well as for the good example of wood buildings. Particularly, his projects in Brasília, continue to show the same relevance of quality wood architecture, more than twenty years after his most recent works, not only for the attention given by the owners, but also because of the solutions found by the architect.

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REFERENCES