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INDIAN ARCHITECT & BUILDER

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Final state of restored 19th century home.

Revival In Times

Restored 19th century home, Italy

Architect Rocco Valentini has blended traditional structures with contemporary styles and modified this project with his engaging elements, reviving the rubbles back to its stronger self.

Text: Divya Pai
Drawings and Images: courtesy Rocco Valentini

Renovation:
It is the process of improving a broken, damaged, or outdated structure. They are typically either commercial or residential. Additionally, it can refer to making something new or bringing something back to life which can apply in present social contexts.

History

The 19th century house is located in a small town of Abruzzo in Italy. Originally, the house was built with brick vaults, dating from the late nineteenth century. In the early twentieth century, the house went through transformations and a second building to the original oil mill was added. In the later fifties, the new front was built as a third low block. Finally, during the eighties of the last century, they added several buildings, which caged the original structure, depriving it of light and air.

Intervention

Through the passage of time, several structural as well as functional changes were made, creating remodification to this structure according to its purposes. The two originally built buildings, were individual units working without any connectivity between them. The forms were classic and majestic, with elements making the overall space encapsulated. The traditional architectural style of organising spaces in the interiors was completely based upon the hierarchy of owners rather than the function of the space.



Originally built structure.



Renovated area fills the space with natural light



↑ Front view under construction



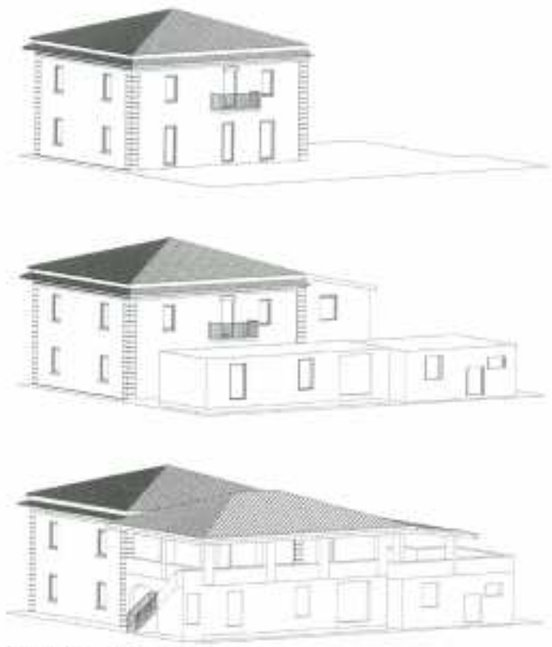
↑ Revived front view



↑ ELEVATION



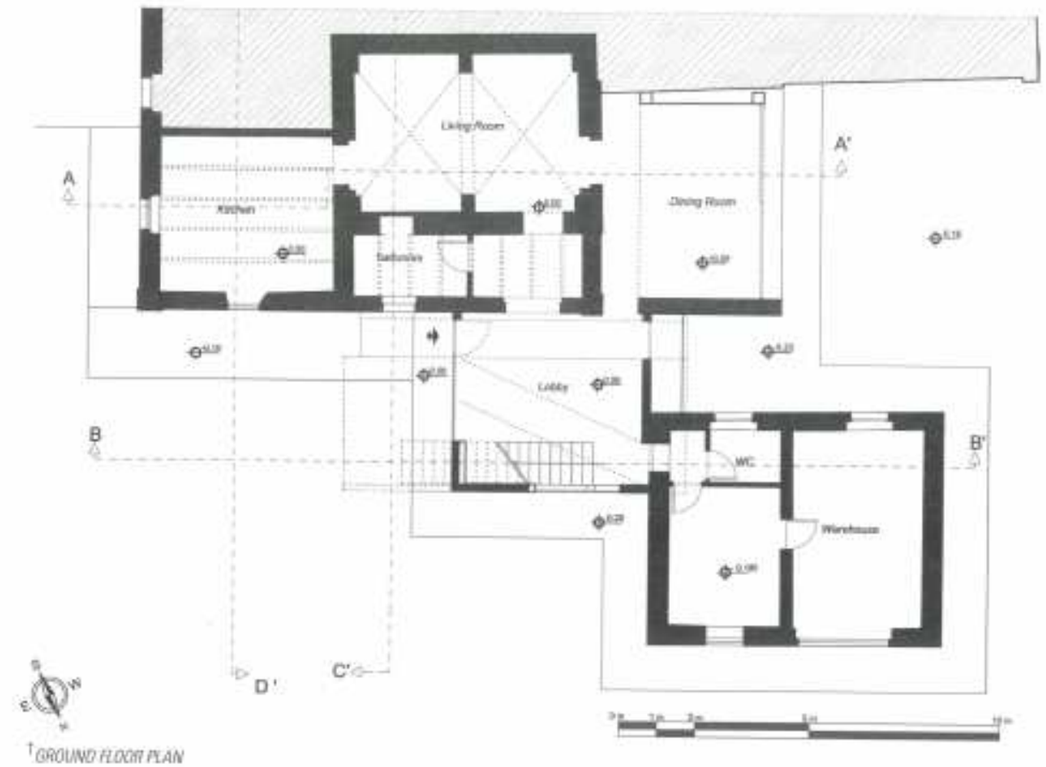
↑ SECTION



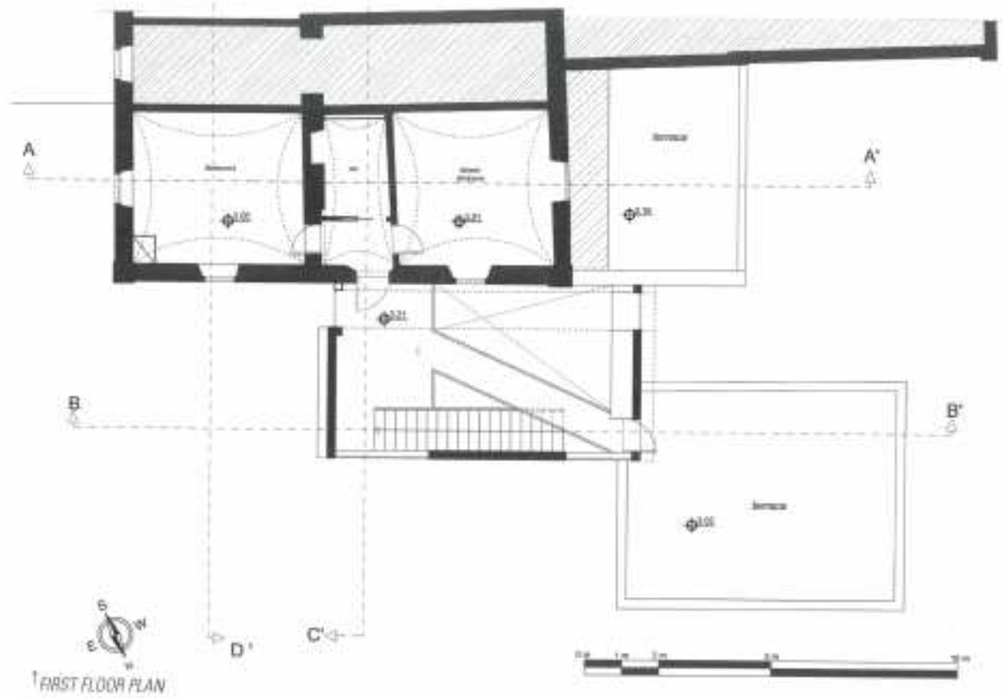
↑ Evolution of originally built structure

The purpose of this intervention was to bring new life to the house with the demolition of the structures added during the 20th century. The structure had been through various stages of development. The initial hypothesis of intervention were tied to more traditional architecture styles. The choice of designing an object in dissonance with the existing buildings allowed the enhancment of the original architecture of the house. The two old buildings were connected through the insertion of a new structure, the space of the hinge, with hall functions, a corridor and vertical connection. The new shape which was derived from the lines of the staircase was manifested as an oblique form. The landing of the staircase also functioned as the roof in this new inserted form. Foreign elements, such as the shape of fenestrations, and harmonised colours, which induced dynamism to the classic forms were from the vernacular styles seen in the Abruzzo countryside.

The connected structure was made of Corten steel and glass, which echoed the forms of the 17th century machines used for the processing of agricultural products. The addition of a new dining room in the west, using a modern architectural language, detached from the nineteenth century style, by differentiating the horizontal plane using glass surface. The strips of cove lighting in the walls and roofs seggregated the old structures from contemporary ones. The Corten steel and the brown stoneware for the floors were congruent with the colours of the materials used in the original buildings made of local sandstone and yellowish bricks. The treads of the stairs and walkway were made of mahogany. The new lighting system saw the



↑ GROUND FLOOR PLAN



↑ FIRST FLOOR PLAN





† *Interior spaces in the restored structure blending past with the contemporary styles*





† *The amalgamation of materials in the building*

use of LED luminaires in warm light that enhanced the colours of the materials used for renovation. The Corten steel structure became a time-portal which showcased architecture from different periods, like; the living area of late nineteenth century, kitchen from the early twentieth century, the dining room in a modern style and the lobby in a contemporary style.

The modern, dynamic inputs to the structure not only amplified its aesthetics, but also remodelled and extended the life of the structure in its surrounding space. The traditional architecture was retained wherever it amalgamated with the functions, but the connecting spaces in contemporary style showed the blend of the past with the present. Such time-travelling structures find it necessary to transform themselves after a certain while and to do so the entire structure is demolished. Here the architect has followed the technique of renovation only to revive the "old" structure via "newer" tides of time. ■

FACT FILE:

Project	:	Restored 19th century home
Project Area	:	280 sqm + 60 sqm terrace
Client	:	Valeria Orsini
Architects	:	Rocco Valentini and Chiara Valentini
Location	:	Chieti, Abruzzo, Italy
Project Estimate	:	€ 240,000.00
Initiation of Project	:	2012
Completion of project	:	2015