Chapter 15
Residential Architecture of Russian Imperial Age (1703–1843) in Drawings of Italian Architects

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ABSTRACT
The object of research is the residential architecture of the heyday of the Russian Empire that has undergone many changes under the influence of time and urban transformation. However, the drawings of Italian architects as primary sources, can tell a lot about architectural and landscape heritage of the Russian cities of XVIII-XIX centuries. That was the period of origination and development of architectural drawing and Building Code in Russia. Domenico Trezzini, Francesco Rastrelli, Giacomo Quarenghi, Luigi Rusca, Domenico Gilardi, Giuseppe Bova, and others created their precious works of art. Thanks to the remaining drawings it is possible to write not only the history of architecture, but also restore the monuments of the Russian Empire.

INTRODUCTION
The history of architecture is inseparably linked with all sorts of economic and cultural changes in the country. Only in the last 100 years, the territory of modern Russia has undergone numerous reforms and political turmoil. However, the idea of writing this chapter is based on a desire to show some facts about residential architecture and the places where people lived in the era of the Russian Empire. Travelling through Russia, studying its suburbs and centers, public buildings and facilities, first of all it should do pay attention to the historic background residential site coverage. At that time, every Russian city was built as a work of art. But as time went on, often from the once residential architecture, at best, only load-bearing walls remained. And so, to piece together an idea about this or that monument, it is necessary to address to the written sources, projects and documents. The first step was to study the laws about residential development during the Russian Empire. Information was also obtained through the study of literary works, bibliographies of individual architects, archival drawings, traveler’s notes and textbooks.

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-5225-0675-1.ch015
on the history of Russian and foreign architecture. This chapter will be useful to those who work in the
field of restoration and reconstruction of monuments of residential architecture of the Russian Empire,
which is 80% built-up of historic city centers.

BACKGROUND

Turning to the history of urban development of the Russian state, it should take into account the periods
of reign of Peter I, Catherine II and Alexander I, and their laws about architectural drawings, urban
planning and residential building.

Peter was crowned, and in 1682 assumed the title of Emperor of Russia. Endowed by nature with all the
advantages that can form a large monarch, he did not neglect the help and efforts of all kinds, such as
the total prudence to instill in his men fighting spirit, and to make them formidable on the land and at
sea. He was a genius that distinguished himself from the others; he reached his goal in any way that he
could find. He delivered the empire from its enemies; he has introduced civilization, commerce, and all
the arts; finally, Russia was given a new life. (De Laugier di Bellecour, 1826)

Peter the Great, Emperor of Russia, from March 1697 to August 1698 studied in Western Europe.
After the return to his home country, he established a new order of urban planning in Russia. In 1703
he founded the city on the Neva River - St. Petersburg that from 1712 to 1918 became the capital of
the country. At that time he also adopted the Building Code through some important laws (Arzhantsev,
2003; Speranskiy, 1830a) that concerned the image of the residential architecture of all Russian cities:

- 5 June 1714 on the construction of houses in St Petersburg to boyars, courtiers, merchants and
craftsmen. According to this decree from each province it was given a list of selected residents
who had to build dwelling houses in St. Petersburg in the summer and autumn of 1714.
- 7 June 1714 on the prohibition of the construction of dwelling houses in masonry in Moscow, in
the Zemlyanoy Gorod of Moscow and behind the street Zemlyanoy Val.
- 9 October 1714 the law that imposed a ban for a few years on the construction of brick houses in
all over the state, in all provinces and cities, except in St. Petersburg. The decree was passed due
to the shortage of masons and artists in order to build a new Russian capital. From the date of pub-
lication of that decree the construction of the stone dwelling houses in Russian cities was paused
for several decades, despite the fact that the 31 January 1728 a law allowing the construction of
the stone in Moscow was issued.
- From the 14 September 1715 by the decree of Peter I, any construction of residential houses with-
out architectural drawings became forbidden, for non-execution of the law, all constructed was
taken away, and for the each housing the fine of 10 rubles was imposed. Even the architects who
worked without architectural drawings were severely punished. The law referred to the construc-
tion of housing. Social and religious sites such as the Kremlin, monasteries, churches, cathedrals,
royal mansions, have always been built on drawings and plans. But housing was often built with-
out complying with the strict lines of the adjustment, planning and facades. In Russia with that
law the work of architectural drawings and the sense of the project became even more important
than the actual object’s construction.