

Article

Form and Detail in the Half-Timbered Architecture of Western Pomerania, Poland

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Abstract: The conducted archival and field research focused on the analysis of details in timber-frame construction in Western Pomerania within the borders of the Republic of Poland. The researcher examined the influence of high architecture on the vernacular architecture of towns and villages in Western Pomerania throughout historical development, specifically on distinct, characteristic building types. In this study, I took into account the impact of local traditions as well as those brought by settlers. The groups of timber-frame structures that were investigated included residential buildings in small towns, rural cottages and farmsteads. The analyzed structures were erected from the second half of the 17th century to the early 20th century. This broad timeframe is explained by the limited number of structures with preserved wooden ornaments in the studied area. Particular attention was given to the relationship between detail and the form of the structure, as well as its impact on the perception of the whole.

Keywords: Western Pomerania; vernacular architecture; half-timber construction; form; detail; artistic role

1. Historical Background

In the early Middle Ages, Western Pomerania, located along the southwestern coast of the Baltic Sea, was inhabited by Slavic populations. The Christianization of this region, initiated by the Polish prince Bolesław III Wrymouth, was carried out by Bishop Otto of Bamberg in 1124. The process of Christianization was supported by the first local ruler from the House of Griffin, Wartislaw I. The 13th and 14th centuries saw intense colonization and urbanization processes that influenced the entire settlement network. The Griffin princes, Barnim I and Wartislaw III, played a significant role in founding new towns and villages under German law. Settlers from the southern and central German principalities, including the Lusatian Serbs, migrated to Pomerania during this period. The duchy's adoption of the Reformation at the end of 1534 had a profound impact on social and ethnic relations, leading to closer ties with the states of the Reich. The Thirty Years' War (1618–1648) brought depopulation and impoverishment to the region. The rule of the House of Griffin ended with the death of Bogislaw XIV. Subsequently, Swedish rule over the western part of Pomerania, including Szczecin, and Brandenburg rule over the eastern part contributed to the privileging of the nobility and the development of a manorial-serf economy (Piskorski 1999, p. 178). Efforts were made during this period to expand landholdings by displacing peasants from the better soil, and the amount of serf labor was increased.

During the reign of the Prussian ruler Frederick II (1744–1797), a second colonization campaign was conducted: (...) *approximately 200 new villages were established, and around 26,500 settlers were relocated* (Piskorski 1999, p. 214). Many of these villages did not survive



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due to economic reasons. However, the Frederician colonization led to the widespread adoption of the wide-front (or broad-front) house type.

As a result of the fire regulations introduced in 1770, which prohibited the placement of barns within towns, buildings with gate passages began to disappear. In the same year, the Prussian Building Authority was established, which promoted the construction of masonry buildings in Pomeranian towns (Arlet and Arlet 2015, p. 301).

Economic prosperity in Pomerania emerged only after the First Partition of Poland (1772), although the processes of Germanization intensified. The Stein reform of 1807 brought significant economic and social changes, abolishing the personal serfdom of peasants and introducing free trade in land. This reform strengthened wealthy farms but worsened the situation for peasants in noble-owned villages. The edict issued the following year enhanced the role of municipal self-government, while the 1811 edict abolished serfdom, albeit with compensation paid by peasants to landowners. These dynamic social changes were accompanied by favorable economic conditions. These factors facilitated the spread of *high* architectural styles in towns and villages, as well as in noble estates and manor buildings. The unification of Germany in 1871 was met with approval. The Industrial Revolution contributed to urban growth but also led to the rural population's decline.

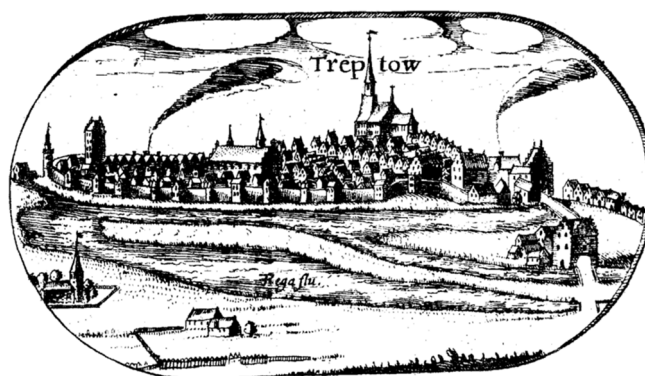
2. Aim and Methods of the Research

The research presented in this article covers timber-framed residential buildings in small towns as well as residential houses and farmsteads in the villages of Western Pomerania. The aim of the research is to analyze selected examples of wooden vernacular architecture in terms of the details used, as well as the influence of fashionable architectural styles and details on these structures. The study examines the impact of buildings designed according to prevailing architectural styles by architects or builders relying on architectural treatises or pattern books. The research methods employed include source criticism, field and comparative research.

The presented map of the West Pomeranian Voivodeship shows the location of the towns illustrated and described in this article (Figure 1a).



(a)



(b)

Figure 1. (a) Map of the West Pomeranian Voivodeship with towns in the photos included in the article; drawing: Piotr Arlet, (b) View of Trzebiatów, fragment of the Great Map of the Duchy of Pomerania, by Eilhardus Lubinus; source: Wikimedia Commons.

The research presented in this article covers timber-framed residential buildings in small towns as well as residential houses and farmsteads in the villages of Western Pomerania. An archival survey was conducted, and a selection of objects was made in line with the research objectives. The archival research included, among other sources, publications by Gerhard Bronisch, Walter Ohle, Robert Holstein, Urszula Dalska-Sienkiewicz, Juliusz Sienkiewicz, Maria Witek and Waldemar Witek but also archival photographs and maps. Particularly valuable is the Great Map of the Duchy of Pomerania by Eilhardus Lubinus, created in the years 1611–1618, with 49 views of Pomeranian towns (Figure 1b).

Given the large number of timber-framed structures in the area under examination, a selection was made of objects distinguished by their form and detail. The next step involved a stylistic analysis of these objects and their associated architectural details. The forms of the structures, distinctive characteristics of the primary types of buildings presented and their corresponding details are discussed in Section 4. The architectural details are analyzed in Section 6. The conclusions of the research are summarized in Section 7.

3. Decorative Elements in Timber-Framed Buildings in the Towns of Western Pomerania Inspired by Architectural Styles

Among the oldest timber-framed buildings in the towns is the well-preserved narrow-fronted tenement house in Dobra Nowogardzka (Figure 2a) dating from 1695. The date, along with an inscription in German and Latin, was placed on a profiled beam: *SOLI DEO GLORIA. MENSCH SIEG BEY GOTT IN GNADEN, SOLDEN HAT KEIN MENSCH IHRE SCHADEN. ANNO 1695.* (GLORY TO GOD ALONE, HUMAN VICTORY BY THE GRACE OF GOD, NO MAN SHALL HAVE THEIR HARM. YEAR 1695). The two-story tenement house with an adjoining gate passage is covered by a shared asymmetric roof (Arlet 2004, p. 120). Gabled tenement houses dominated the market square buildings in towns during the Gothic and Renaissance periods. This is reflected in the Szczecin engravings on the Eilhardus Lubinus map from 1611 to 1618 as well as the panoramas of Szczecin from the Oder side by Daniel Meisner, Eberhard Kieser (1625) and Friedrich Hulsi (1625), as well as the maps by Matthäus Merian (1641) and Lucas Schnitzer (1660).

Only a few timber-framed buildings remain in Pomeranian towns from the eighteenth century, including the Hildebrandt House in the market square in Kamień Pomorski, and tenement houses at 11 Jan Paweł II Street in Mieszkowice as well as 9 Wąska Street in Moryń with gate passages at the following locations: 12 and 61 Niepodległości Street in Lipiany, 23, 25 and 27 Grunwaldzka Street in Widuchowa, 13 Wojska Polskiego Street in Maszewo and 8–10 1st Maja Street (Arlet and Arlet 2002, p. 26). Such buildings, with gated passages, began to disappear as a result of fire regulations (1770) prohibiting the construction of barns in towns. Among the preserved narrow-fronted buildings with visible half-timber construction is also the two-story house at 12 Niepodległości Street in Lipiany from the 18th century, covered by a hipped roof. The only decoration is a profiled eaves beam that imitates a cornice.

A relatively early example of the influence of *high* architecture is the mentioned Baroque bourgeois tenement house at 1 Gryfitów Street in Kamień Pomorski (Figure 2b). Built in the second half of the 18th century, for the wealthy Hildebrandt family, it was expanded 100 years later into an L-shaped form. The tenement house was covered with a mansard roof, a feature popularized in French Baroque architecture. A decorative element of the facade is the cordon cornice (Arlet and Arlet 2002, p. 27).

A wide-front, two-story tenement house (first half of the 19th century) with a half-hipped roof at 1 Plac Wolności in Maszewo has been plastered, but the historical arrangement of columns and beams has been painted onto the plaster. Near the timber-framed town hall in Nowe Warpno (1697) is a wide-front tenement house at Plac Zwycięstwa from

the turn of the 18th/19th centuries. This building was meticulously restored between 1986 and 1994 and features historic entrance doors with complex decorative orders. Among the most documented non-existent gabled buildings are the timber-framed structure at 1692 ks. Bogusław II Street in Koszalin and a tenement house in the Old Town in Pyrzyce, also from the second half of the 17th century, located at 7 1st Maja Street. It featured a gable decorated with diagonal lattice beams and a carefully profiled cordon cornice (Lemke 1906, p. 149).



(a)



(b)

Figure 2. (a) Half-timbered tenement house (1695) in Dobra Nowogardzka; photo: Piotr Arlet, (b) half-timbered tenement (second half of XVIII c.) at 1 Gryfitów Street in Kamień Pomorski; photo Joanna Arlet.

After 1770, the building authority supported the construction of masonry buildings. However, timber-framed buildings were still being erected, disguised with plaster to resemble solid masonry structures. Such buildings can still be found in Trzebiatów, Dobra Nowogardzka and Lipiany. These plastered timber-framed buildings were often given cornices and accentuated corners, sometimes even pilasters.

4. Architectural Form and Detail of Timber-Framed Buildings in the Villages of Western Pomerania

The landscape and soil conditions of Western Pomerania resulted in the presence of various building types running almost parallel to the Baltic Sea coastline. In the north, the narrow-fronted fisherman's house transformed from a Low German house (German: *Fachwerk Hallenhaus*), and quadrangular farmsteads (German: *Vierkanthof*) built around a square yard were dominated. These buildings were smaller than their originals, and characteristic elements were large, hipped roofs that protected the houses from strong winds. In the northeastern part of the region, modest, wide-front fisherman's cottages of the Slovicians were common (Arlet 2004, pp. 66–69).

In the 17th century, narrow-fronted arcade houses were prevalent, both in the Oder River bend (German: *Oderbruch*) and in the eastern areas of Western Pomerania. These were most often accompanied by a U-shaped farmstead (Arlet 2012, p. 214). The only surviving example of such a house is in Siekierki. Wide-front buildings became widespread with the colonization of King Frederick II, and now they dominate.

4.1. Form and Detail of Narrow-Fronted Timber-Framed Houses

In the villages of Western Pomerania, only a few narrow-fronted buildings remain, which were widely used in the 16th and 17th centuries. Gabled houses oriented towards the village road were commonly constructed in oval-shaped villages. Their size and function depended on the needs and profile of the farms. The narrow-fronted house with arcades (German: *Vorlaubenhaus*) was found in the Oder River valley, in *Krajna* and in the *Kashubian* region bordering Western Pomerania.

During the interwar period, there were nine narrow-fronted arcade houses in Siekierki, once common in the Oder River bend in the *Oberbuch*—a region spanning the Polish and German border. In the village of Lüdersdorf in Brandenburg, nine arcade houses have been preserved and restored between 2015 and 2019. Among them is a six-bay house known as *Loewinghus* (Thiede 1937, p. 56). The arcades are supported by seven columns, and the carefully crafted struts form a complete arch with a keystone decorated with a transverse roll. Currently, the last surviving arcade house on the Polish side is the one from Siekierki (Figure 3a). More precisely, it is a four-bay arcade from an old house dating around 1767 (Tłoczek 1985, p. 104), which the owner added to the house, built in the 1930s.



(a)



(b)

Figure 3. (a) The narrow-fronted arcaded house (1767) in Siekierki; photo Piotr Arlet, (b) A group of two narrow-fronted houses named *pyrzycki* (mid-19th century) in Nieborów; photo Piotr Arlet.

In the fertile lands of Pyrzyce, the large narrow-fronted Pyrzyce house (German: *Markisches Dielenhaus*), was found, sometimes adorned with an arcade. It combined residential and agricultural functions within its interior. This type was represented by houses from Brzesko Pyrzyckie, Letnin, Zaborsko (building with a usable area of 248 m²), and the arcade house from Ryszewo (1790), known from archival descriptions (Holstein 1914) and photographs. The entrance was preceded by a forecourt and decorative doors, while the gables of the houses from Brzesko Pyrzyckie were topped with a wooden gable spire, named—*pazdur* (Thiede 1937, p. 58). The house in Ryszewo, with a complete agricultural program, also served as an inn. It was adorned with a representative arcade at the front.

Currently, the most valuable example is the last group of houses, the so-called *Pyrzyckie* in Nieborów (Figure 3b), consisting of only two structures, numbered 33 and 34, dating from the mid-19th century. Due to its meticulous gable decoration with intersecting diagonal lattice beams, the house at number 34 is particularly notable. Archival photographs indicate that the adjacent building also had similar detailing. Additionally, struts

in the form of Saint Andrew's crosses flanked the entrance of the *Pyrzycki* house in Letnin (Szymanski et al. 2006, p. 165).

4.2. Form and Detail of Fishermen's Cottages in the Low German House Type

The Low German house, which combined residential and agricultural spaces through a large hall (German: *Grosse Diele*) gave rise to more modest fishermen's cottages, which are now only occasionally found in Western Pomerania. Shortly after the war, a large group of these houses burned down in the village of Kępa Morska, near Lake Resko. These were narrow-fronted fishermen's cottages, arranged in a planned, side-by-side layout. They featured a drive-through hall with protruding annexes that shielded it from the wind. Decorative gable ornaments in the shape of horse heads were placed above the chimneys (Thiede 1937, p. 59).

Until recently, there was a fishermen's house from the late 18th century at 4 Rybacka Street in Mrzeżyno, in the style of a Low German house (Figure 4a). Its thatched roof, covered with reeds, was adorned with gable ornaments in the shape of horse heads. Unfortunately, the historic building was vulnerable to fires due to its proximity to a bakery. At the beginning of the 21st century, this heritage site was extensively renovated.

A house in the style of a Low German house is located at 4 Nadmorska Street in Sarbinowo, dating back to 1804, featuring a massive half-hipped roof (Witek 2004). In archival photographs, this building is seen covered with thatch, featuring an irregular timber-framed construction that indicates multiple renovations. Unfortunately, in the 1980s, it was covered with asbestos cement and later plastered. The side walls have a division into horizontal rectangular sections, typical of the lightweight thatch covering. A thatched-roof fishing house still exists in Wrzosowo, Kamień Pomorski municipality.

A well-documented example in the literature is the now-nonexistent group of fishermen's houses in the village of Dąbki (Dalska-Sienkiewicz 1975). The last remaining house from Dąbki, dating from 1869, is displayed in the courtyard of the Koszalin Museum at Młyńska Street. This building features two halls perpendicular to each other, and it likely represents a transitional form between the Lower Saxon house and the wide-front house.



(a)



(b)

Figure 4. (a) The Low German house at Rybacka Street no 4 in Mrzeżyno, with spears in the shape of horses' heads (end of the 18th century); photo Joanna Arlet (b) The Low German house in square shaped farmstead no 26 (1717) in Krupy; photo Piotr Arlet.

4.3. Form and Detail in Quadrilateral Farmsteads

In quadrilateral farmsteads (German: *Vierkanthof*), found in the lake district and occasionally by the sea, the residential house was positioned either perpendicular or parallel to the barn that featured a carriage entrance. In earlier examples, this was a narrow-fronted Low German house, while from the second half of the 18th century onward, it was a wide-front house. In later examples, the barns served as the carriage entrances.

Quadrilateral farmsteads were present in Denmark and southern Sweden and are also found in Poland in the Kielce region, Nowy Sącz region, and the Łowicz area, as well as in the Pomeranian Voivodeship along the lake district. Characteristic elements of the agricultural farmstead were the gatehouse and livestock buildings, often featuring a projecting gallery along the upper floor with decorative, carved balusters. In the carefully decorated gatehouses: (...) *Craftsmen skillfully combined quite disparate formal elements here, such as sword joints (retainers), an overlay with an ornate cutout, rope-like ornamentation, and imitation of classical wooden cornices* (Arlet 2012, p. 45).

In Krupy (Darłowo municipality), a unique quadrilateral farmstead at No. 26 (Figure 4b) features a narrow-fronted Low German house dated to 1717. The gable wall is adorned with curved struts and a half-hipped roof. In 1812, a gatehouse (German: *Thorhaus*) was constructed, with the date, the owner's name, and the carpenter's name inscribed above the entrance. The building, which was in poor technical condition, was preserved and covered with a new roof in 2017. Chronologically later, the quadrilateral farmsteads in the oval village of Dziadowo near Gryfice were built. Noteworthy here is the livestock building with a small gallery in farmstead No. 12, dated 1797, as indicated by the inscription placed above the entrance.

In enclosed courtyards, the gateway building was meticulously decorated. In the quadrangular farmstead in Niechorze at 2 Ludna Street, the gateway building with a gallery (1848–1861) is adorned with a decorative blind opening above the pedestrian entrance (Figure 5a), next to the asymmetrically positioned passageway. A similar blind opening was also found in the gateway building of the quadrangular farmstead in Gostyniec (Szyski et al. 2006, p. 140) and in the gateway buildings in ruins in Janów, Karnice municipality (these buildings were situated on one side of the road) and in Łąck, Postomino municipality. In the gateway building examined in Łąck, the decoration above the main gate consisted of a centrally placed roll with two smaller ones on either side, as well as carefully profiled swords. An extremely interesting and largely restored timber-framed architecture can be found in the village of Swołowo, Redzikowo municipality. Most of the buildings consist of elaborate quadrangular farmsteads arranged around a courtyard. Among the buildings, a notable house is located on the farmstead at number 22, featuring a motif of a double St. Andrew's cross above the entrance.

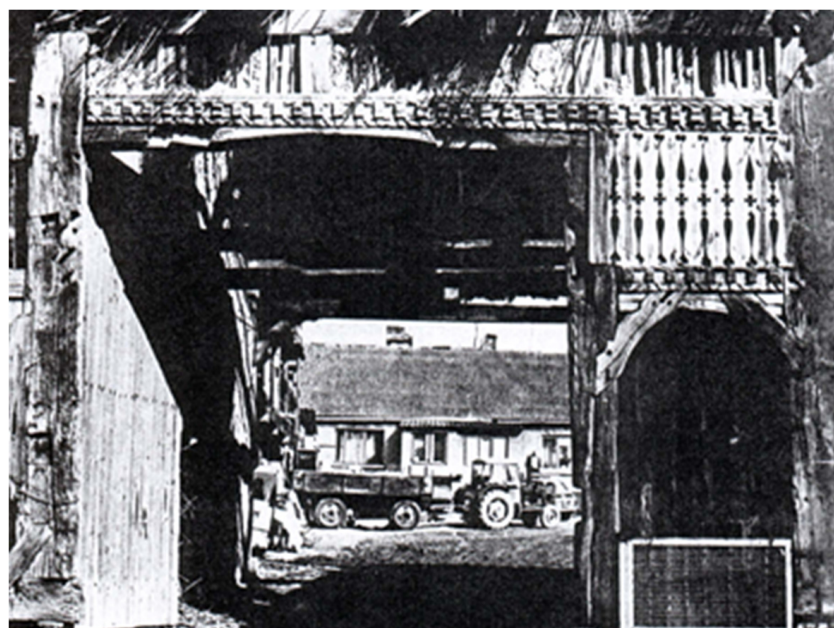
An enormous gatehouse from the 19th century has also been preserved in Stary Jarosław, Darłowo municipality. The decoration features openwork braces in the form of St. Andrew's crosses, symmetrically placed above the passage and an inscription on the lintel above the entrance. In the back of the courtyard, a wide-fronted farmhouse is adorned with curved braces positioned on either side of the entrance doors.

A well-known but no longer existing structure was the gatehouse at Farm No. 19 in Samlino, Golczewo municipality (Figure 5b), from the second half of the 17th century. It was the oldest part of the farmstead and, like the other buildings, was constructed from oak wood. I visited this unique structure in Western Pomerania during my student internship in 1986. The last measurements and photographs of the gatehouse were taken in 1988 (Arlet 2004, p. 74). Above the gateway entrance (with a double-leaf gate and entrance), one could notice a cornice in the form of a cymatium, as well as smoothly shaped braces and a decorative blind opening: *The lintels of the gate and the wicket are supported by braces*

connected to the beams using notches that are more or less similar to the typical “dovetail” joint. The braces—both in the gate and the wicket—are slightly indented, and the gate braces are further adorned with a narrow carved band in the form of a spiral rope (Stankiewicz 1959, p. 234). Moreover, attention was drawn to the large, wide-fronted residential house, which reflected the wealth of its former owners. Jerzy Stankiewicz mentions several non-existent buildings of this type: the homestead No. 15 in Machowinek from 1649 and in the village of Łabusz near Jamno. In all of these buildings mentioned, the gatehouse was the most meticulously crafted structure.



(a)



(b)

Figure 5. (a) The gate building in a four-sided enclosure (1861) with decorative motif at Ludna Street no 2 in Niechorze; photo Joanna Arlet, (b) The gate building in a square-shaped farmstead in Samolino enclosure (2nd half 17th century); archival photo Grzegorz Solecki.

A distinct tradition was represented by the Jamno group. This group consisted of Slavic people who had been settled for centuries in the villages of Jamno and Łabusz, which historically belonged to Koszalin. The houses in Jamno, including a two-family house, were modifications of the Low German house. A characteristic decorative motif found in this area was the tulip flower, which was also seen in Central Pomerania and on Wolin Island in the Baltic Sea. In the village of Sierosław, bridal chests from 1792 and 1804 featuring painted tulip motifs were inventoried (Łapott 1974, p. 426). This motif was known in 12th-century Turkey and reached Austria in the 16th century, from where it likely spread to the Netherlands. It is probably from there that this ornament became widespread in art, including folk art (Czekiel Świtalska and Arlet 2005, p. 69).

The isolation of the villages of Jamno and Łabusz, surrounded by marshes, led to the development of a unique style, evident in the richly furnished interiors. Notable are the carved dowry chests, profiled and polychromed, along with chairs and armchairs featuring floral motifs, including wildflowers and the tulip flower (both painted and carved). Among the rich ornamentation of furniture such as cupboards and alcove beds, one can find motifs of the sun, hearts and rosettes. The dominant colors are dark green, red and blue. Exhibits, mainly from the 18th century, can be seen at the Jamno Farmstead, reconstructed in the open-air museum in Koszalin (Figure 6a).



(a)



(b)

Figure 6. (a) The interior of a cottage from Dąbki with richly decorated furnishings from Jamno in the museum in Koszalin; photo Piotr Arlet, (b) The wide-fronted fishing huts in the Museum of the Slovincian Village in Kluki; photo Piotr Arlet.

4.4. Form and Detail in Wide Fronted Half-Timbered Houses in Western Pomerania

An independent type of house is represented by the Slovincian cottages, which are exhibited at the Museum of the Slovincian Village in Kluki (Figure 6b). In the less attractive, marshy areas that were not favored by colonists, the indigenous Slovincian population preserved their traditional way of life. The narrow-fronted, two-bay cottages with an arcade that originally existed in this area were replaced by modest, wide-fronted fishing cottages. These cottages were often designed to accommodate two or more families and were covered with gable roofs (Sienkiewicz 1976, p. 51). The buildings formed a quadrangle but were not interconnected. They were distinguished by the absence of fences and a flower garden in front of the house. Decorative elements included thatched roofs and the articulation of dark timber posts and beams: *It is also worth noting the frequently occurring fish emblems on fishing sheds, which serve both as wind direction indicators and decorations. On barns and some houses, you can often see gable ornaments* (Stelmachowska 1960, p. 31).

Wide-front buildings, located deeper within the property, became widespread with the colonization carried out by King Frederick II (Thiede 1937, p. 57). During the planned settlement campaigns, new villages were established in West Pomerania, often as linear settlements with regular, uniform buildings. A well-preserved example of this is Niekłóńczyca, in the Police municipality, founded in 1750, featuring a road lined with green belts planted with tall trees and wide sidewalks.

From the mid-18th century onwards, buildings of wealthy farmers, inspired by urban architectural forms, became larger and exclusively frontally wide. Along with outbuildings and axially positioned residential buildings, they often created a layout in the shape of the letter C, echoing baroque residences *entre cour et jardin*. An excellent example of a baroque residence in Western Pomerania is the half-timbered manor (1718) of the Fleming family in Świerzno. This building was designed by an architect from Dresden, Jan Krzysztof Neumann (Arlet 2004, p. 127). A modest example of baroque design adaptation can be found in the homestead at No. 28 in the village of Rogozina near Trzebiatów. The two-family residential building (1795) with a wide hallway is one of the oldest wide-front houses in Western Pomerania. The asymmetrically constructed farm buildings formed a kind of *cour d'honneur* (honor courtyard).

A well-documented and valuable structure is the wide-front cottage from Rusinowo, in the Postomino municipality, dating back to 1780, located in the enclosed homestead at No. 41. The cottage is covered with a half-hipped roof, featuring a dormer in the shape of an *ox-eye* above the decorative double doors. The asymmetry of the front facade resulted from the building's use as a residence for both the farmers and their elderly parents. This asymmetry was further accentuated by the adjoining covered gate with a pedestrian passage (Sienkiewicz 1976, p. 41–42).

A late example of a wide-front house is the half-timbered house in Stare Łysogórki on the Oder River, featuring a decorative central dormer. Another building from the early 19th century is the rectory, now-restored presbytery, located at Rybacka Street in Trzebież, Police municipality. This single-story building has a symmetrical front elevation and a *Baroque* mansard roof with a dormer. Below the dormer, there are double doors with a decorative transom window (Arlet 2004, p. 123). The building's placement on a small elevation across from the church, along with symmetrical stairs leading from both sides, gives the structure a somewhat monumental character.

An interesting structure is the two-story forester's lodge with a half-hipped roof in Widzeńsko, Stepnica municipality, dating back to 1829, accompanied by a timber-framed stable. The lodge, which has retained its original construction and form, was modeled after rural houses. A standout decorative feature is the door joinery with a transom and matching window joinery. Originally, a dormer was placed on the entrance axis, with two smaller, symmetrical dormers in the upper part of the roof. Around 2001, a large dormer was added, which has since become the dominant element.

5. The Characteristic Features of Spa, Guesthouse and Villa Architecture in Western Pomerania

The early 19th century saw the development of seaside resorts and bathing establishments. During this period, thermal bath buildings, hotels, guesthouses, concert halls, water pavilions and piers were constructed, often using timber-framing construction. There was also a search for inspiration and models from the architecture of fashionable resorts. Spa parks were established as well. The oldest spa resort in Western Pomerania was Połczyn (German: *Bad Polzin*), where the first thermal bath building was erected in 1705 and still exists today, *Sanatorium Irena* (German: *Marienbad*), located at Zdrojowa Street and established in 1854.

It is distinguished by its decorative woodwork and veranda with a view of the Spa Park. Subsequent spa towns included Kołobrzeg (German: *Kolberg*), Świnoujście (German: *Swinemünde*) and Kamień Pomorski (German: *Cammin in Pommern*). Unfortunately, as a result of wartime actions, little of their spa architecture has survived.

Świnoujście, located on 44 islands, was designated a spa resort in 1824. During this period, buildings known in Germany as *Bäderarchitektur* were constructed here, modeled after other Baltic resorts such as Binz and Putbus as well as imperial spas like Ahlbeck, Herinngsdorf and Bansin (Arlet 2022, p. 248). By the end of the 19th century, Międzyzdroje (German: *Misdroy*) also became a well-known resort town. In 1860, a thermal bath building was constructed here, and various historic buildings can be found on Kopernik Street. At No. 6, there is a wooden structure with features of Russian architecture. It features carved columns and brackets supporting the deeply overhanging roof eaves, a molded cornice, and decorative window frames. These details are polychromed—plant motifs predominate, including the edelweiss flower. The neighboring buildings on Kopernik Street, at No. 8 (*Villa Tyrol*) and No. 10, and the pension located across the street at No. 7 (1894), known as *Swiss-style*, exhibit features of Alpine architecture. The pension at No. 7, with decorative wooden bands running around the facade—one below the windows and one beneath

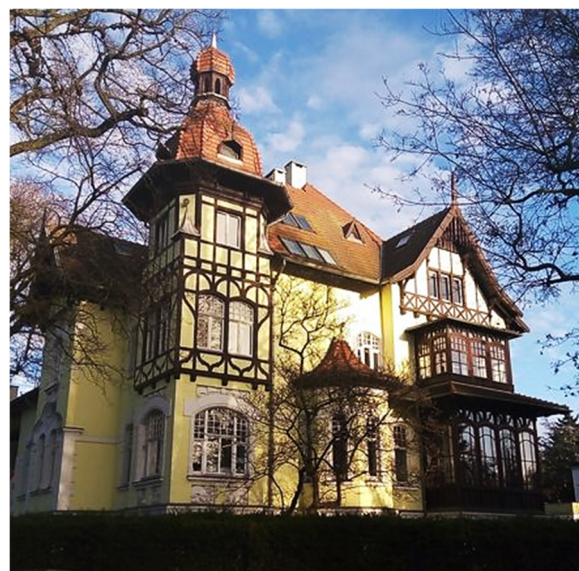
the eaves—is clad in shingles, and the horizontal boards are adorned with a scale motif (Hamberg-Federowicz 2002, p. 78).

As a result, throughout the Baltic Sea coast and in seaside towns, buildings inspired by Swiss architecture became more common. The forms of these buildings, with arcade loggias, bay windows and turrets, are more varied. The fashionable Romantic movement in art and architecture led to a keen interest in folk and historical styles. For example, in the 19th-century guesthouse at 5 Sienkiewicz Street in Świnoujście, the arcade of the veranda and the bay windows evoke the German Renaissance.

A monumental, shingled building in the modernist style, but with a mansard roof, was the thermal bath Familienbad (1903) in Kołobrzeg. There were terraces and piers surrounding the building, which was elevated on massive wooden piles because of its picturesque location by the water. It was functioning until 1995, under a changed name: *Morskie Oko*. Distinct in form and detail is the *Floryn* café, located on the beach in Mielno (Figure 7a). It was created as a modernist pavilion—*Café Hohenzollern*—just before World War I. It features a lightweight timber frame structure, large glazing and a vast terrace overlooking the sea (Arlet 2004, p. 126). Next to it is the *Meduza Hotel*, which is an adaptation of a historic timber-framed beach pavilion in Alpine style.



(a)



(b)

Figure 7. (a) Café *Floryn* in Mielno (early 20th century); photo Piotr Arlet. (b) Swiss-style villa at 3 Ludwik Solski Street in Szczecin; photo Piotr Arlet.

Although the types of buildings presented were not widely disseminated, they contributed to the enrichment of form and detail in timber-framed architecture in seaside towns and cities (Arlet 2004, pp. 123–26). In villa architecture, there was a strong interest in drawing inspiration from folk timber-framed architecture from various regions of Europe, including Switzerland, Norway and occasionally Russia. Examples of such buildings include those at 28 Żeromski Street in Świnoujście, 12 Międzyzparkowa Street in Szczecin and 3 Ludwik Solski Street in Szczecin (Figure 7b). In all of these examples, the refined and meticulously crafted details stand out.

6. Architectural Details—Discussion

Architectural detailing in timber-framed buildings is closely tied to their form and construction. It has evolved over the centuries, yet consistently impacts perception by

drawing attention, emphasizing form and highlighting the characteristics and qualities of the wood. It also reflects the owners' artistic aspirations as well as the sensitivity and skills of the carpenters. The dating of timber-framed structures is facilitated by the common practice of leaving carpenters' marks, dates, names of owners or inscriptions on the collar beams or lintels.

In older buildings originally covered with thatch, the spacing of rafters and posts was greater, which made the dark-painted timber framework divide the infill panels into rectangular, horizontal sections. This is evident in archival photographs and is still observed in the Low German house in Sarbinowo. In Low German houses: (...) *roof was predominantly thatched with reed, "flowing" over the sides of the building with very large eaves. The ends of the ridge were articulated with chimneys finished with wide boards, carved into folk motifs such as horse heads or "cocks".* (Arlet and Petryshyn 2022, p. 20).

In newer houses that were covered with tiles, the spacing of rafters and columns was reduced, and fewer struts were used. As a result, the timber-framed buildings in Western Pomerania feature a pattern of dark columns and beams against a whitewashed infill with a distinctive checkered pattern. The simplest form of a strut is an element that connects the sill to the plate diagonally, spanning across two or three panels. This type evolves into struts shaped like the letter K or in the form of St. Andrew's crosses (Figure 8a). Diagonally cut, decorative struts or sometimes braces play a significant structural and esthetic role. Regular or decorative patterns of beams, struts or braces add a sense of prominence to buildings. More refined forms of struts are occasionally seen. Examples include the residential house in the rectangular farmstead in Krupach and the lodge near Dargomyśl in the Dębno commune, featuring curvilinear struts and braces decorating the oriel (Witek and Nowakowski 2012, p. 28). In rectangular farmsteads, attention is drawn to the decoration of the gatehouse (often a barn with a passage) and the carved galleries in the livestock buildings. Today, we can find ornamental gables on narrow-fronted buildings only in a few places, such as in Nieborów.



(a)



(b)

Figure 8. (a) The double St. Andrew's cross motif in the wide-fronted house in the homestead no. 22 in Swółowo; photo Piotr Arlet. (b) The entrance with balustrades and double doors in Modlimów; photo Piotr Arlet.

In the 19th century, the number of masonry and plastered houses increased due to regulations favoring solid buildings: *At present the most number of preserved objects in Western Pomeranian towns come from the 19th and beginning of the 20th century. The wooden structure is not always apparent since the office of construction, established in 1770, favored solid buildings. Regardless the regulations the timbered constructions were still erected, but they were plastered in order to pretend the brick-built ones* (Arlet and Arlet 2015, p. 310). They then featured cornices and accentuated, rusticated corners, and even pilasters, referencing the classical architectural orders of the period. The influence of Classicist architecture is confirmed by the analysis of the door joinery. The windows, on the other hand, were given an architectural framework in the form of classical order detailing aediculum. The raised ground floor of the rural house is accessed by a stoop, which features decorated ‘monumental’ railings and double-leaf doors adorned with classical order detailing (house in Modlimów, Karnice municipality, nr 23 (Figure 8b). The influence is also evident in the oldest surviving dowry chest from Niczonów, in the Karnice municipality. The motif of the arcade gallery, supported by profiled pilasters, features floral and animal designs in the spandrels (Łapott 1974, p. 450).

Vertical, singular gable ornaments shaped like flower buds, cones or spearheads, named *pazdury* (German: *Giebelspitze*), and decorations constituting an extension of the windchests in the shape of horns or horse heads, named *śparogi* (German: *Giebelzeichen*), are ornaments of folk provenance. Unfortunately, these can now only be seen in archival photographs and drawings: in Robert Holsten’s 1914 publication on Pyrzyce houses, and the work of D. Penkal and E. Bielecka from Karsibór, near Świnoujście (Pinińska 1974, p. 408).

Exceptionally diverse, turret-shaped *pazdury* on Wolin Island featured forms such as buds, cones, points, hearts and even stars, and adorned agricultural buildings in farmsteads. This diversity was likely influenced by the influx of farming communities arriving on the island in the second half of the 19th century, as previously, fishing houses had predominated in the area (Pinińska 1974, p. 408). Decorative floral motifs, including the tulip motif, are found in the Middle Pomerania region, for example, in Łącko, Postomino municipality, in Słowo and Krupy, Darłowo municipality and also in *Krajna* and the Kashubian region (Czekiel Świtalska and Arlet 2005, p. 70).

In the wooden folk architecture of West Pomerania, characteristic features included a modest form and a gabled or hipped roof with a slope of approximately 45 degrees. In contrast, during the 19th century, guesthouses and villas in the Alpine style adopted more elaborate forms, enriched with bay windows, verandas and loggias. Buildings were set on high plinths, which added to their monumentality. The angle of the roofs with projecting eaves also decreased significantly. Roofs were enhanced with turrets and belvederes, and the gables were decorated with intricately carved boards featuring friezes or profiled brackets, consoles and dormers. Curved struts were often used on building facades, and verandas and loggias were adorned with ornate railings and frequently included gallery elements with Alpine-style woodwork.

7. Conclusions

Western Pomerania has a landscape that runs almost parallel to the Baltic coast. The main types of rural farmsteads also occurred in strips, which were associated with environmental, climatic and soil conditions. The conducted archival and field research on timber-frame structures in Western Pomerania reveals significant diversity in types and forms of half-timbered architecture, including folk architecture. This diversity is influenced by the primary activities of the inhabitants—whether agricultural, mixed farming and livestock or fishing—and by local traditions as well as those of the settlers. Key elements of

the architectural expression in these structures include their form and the articulation of dark structural elements against white infill panels, creating the characteristic grid pattern.

The study area was dominated by single- or two-story buildings. The buildings were covered with half-hipped roofs, with the oldest ones covered in reed thatch. The roof angle was close to 45°. The coastal strip was dominated by large, hipped roofs that protected the houses from strong winds. The Low German houses in this district were adapted into simpler fishing houses. Valuable examples, distinguishing the discussed region, include the carefully decorated gate buildings and often the cantilevered galleries on second floors in the animal stalls at the quadrangular farms.

There were lots of narrow-fronted houses in Pomerania in the XVII century, sometimes with decorative arcaded porticos. The narrow-fronted houses that appeared on the fertile soils of Pyrzyce were distinguished by their large dimensions. But after the colonization carried out by King Frederick II, they were replaced by wide-fronted houses. Wide-fronted houses were common in villages with a linear or street layout. Relatively modest forms of the buildings were accompanied by suitable, unrefined details. The few preserved architectural details reflect the blend of local traditions with those of successive waves of colonists.

The archival and field studies of timber-framed residential houses in the towns of West Pomerania indicate that architectural style influences on their form were not very discernible in the past. For example, the mansard roof on the Hildebrandt House in Kamień Pomorski and the profiled cornice suggest that we can only speak of the influence of baroque architecture in this context.

At the end of the 18th century, the facades of bourgeois and wide-fronted houses in rural areas began to acquire a more representative character through the use of symmetry or the regular arrangement of window axes. These features, along with the urban-style window and door joinery, are a distant echo of Classicism. The influences of historical architectural styles on the details used in vernacular timber-framed architecture in West Pomerania are sporadic. This is due to the peripheral location of West Pomerania.

Economic development only occurred in the 19th century, during which time fashionable architectural styles began to appear in Pomeranian spa resorts, health resorts and villa architecture. In the Pomeranian villages, these influences are only seen in parsonages or farm buildings designed by architects for the estates. These efforts reflected the higher aspirations of the Pomeranian nobility and the affluent bourgeoisie, leading to the employment of renowned architects. When constructing prestigious buildings, architects and investors were more inclined to draw inspiration from Alpine architecture rather than local vernacular architecture.

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