

TECHNICAL SURVEY OF THE HISTORICAL SITE OF PATU: THE CONTRIBUTION OF UNIVERSITY EXTENSION TO THE PATRIMONIALIZATION OF CONCENTRATION CAMPS IN CEARÁ

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ABSTRACT

This extension action, carried out by IFCE in partnership with the Municipal Department of Culture of Senador Pompeu and the Department of Culture of the State of Ceará between 2021 and 2022, assisted the public authorities in the listing of the Patu Historic Site, then claimed by civil society and the state Public Ministry. Located in the Central Sertão of Ceará, Patu is the only one of the eight concentration camps built in the state to house migrants from the drought and that still has buildings. A topographic survey of the 89-hectare polygonal that makes up the historic site was carried out; the photographic survey and the building survey of twenty buildings with varying sizes, uses, and states of conservation. The information collected, analyzed, and systematized was passed on to the government, contributing directly to the process of state listing of the Patu Historic Site.

Keywords: Concentration camps. Ceará. Patu. Historical heritage.

INTRODUCTION

During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, northeastern Brazil – one of the most populous dry areas in the world – suffered from long-lasting drought periods, referred to by the newspapers of the time as the "great droughts", notably those that occurred in the years 1877, 1915, and 1932. In response to this problem, among other actions, the government acted in the implementation of the so-called barracks and, later, concentration camps, places of confinement for the migrant backcountry population and which were used as isolation strategies for the scourged who migrated to Fortaleza (Rios, 2001; 2020). In Ceará, eight concentration camps were erected at two different times (1915 and 1932), six of them in cities in the interior and two in the capital. Together, they came to shelter more than tens of thousands of drought migrants from various parts of Ceará and even from other states, functioning as imprisonment spaces strategically scattered along the migration routes, preventing this population from reaching Fortaleza in search of help (Rios, 2001; 2020).

Among these concentration camps, only Campo do Patu, located in Senador Pompeu, still has buildings remaining from that time. The preservation of this chapter in the history of the people of Ceará has been sought, at least since the 1990s, by various subjects and institutions. In 2019, the historic site was listed at the municipal level, and subsequently, the listing was demanded at the state level. In 2021, through an institutional partnership established between the Federal Institute of Ceará and the Department of Culture of the State of Ceará, an extension action was initiated that consisted of collecting necessary and complementary technical information to instrumentalize, at the state level, the process of listing the Historic Site of Patu.

This action took place between December 2021 and May 2022, still in the context of a pandemic. Through human, material, and technical resources from the IFCE Quixadá campus, the topographic survey of the 89-hectare polygonal that makes up the Patu Historic Site, in Senador Pompeu; the photographic survey and the building survey of twenty buildings of the most varied sizes, uses, and states of conservation. The technical information was collected, analyzed and systematized by the extension project team and, later, was passed on to the Secretary of Culture of the State of Ceará, contributing directly to the process of state listing of the Patu Historic Site, which was carried out provisionally in August 2022 and definitively in November of the same year.

This text reports the experience of the technical survey of the Historic Site of Patu as an extension action that directly contributed to the patrimonialization of the concentration camps in Ceará. The text is organized into four main parts. In addition to this introduction, the item 'Materials and methods' briefly recovers the history of the concentration camps in Ceará and details resources, methodologies, and materials used in the extension action. The item 'Results and analyses' indicates the results obtained with the technical survey of the Patu Historic Site, pointing out the impact of the action for the instrumentalization of its listing by the government. At the end, some 'Final considerations' are indicated, when the main aspects that characterize this extension action are resumed.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

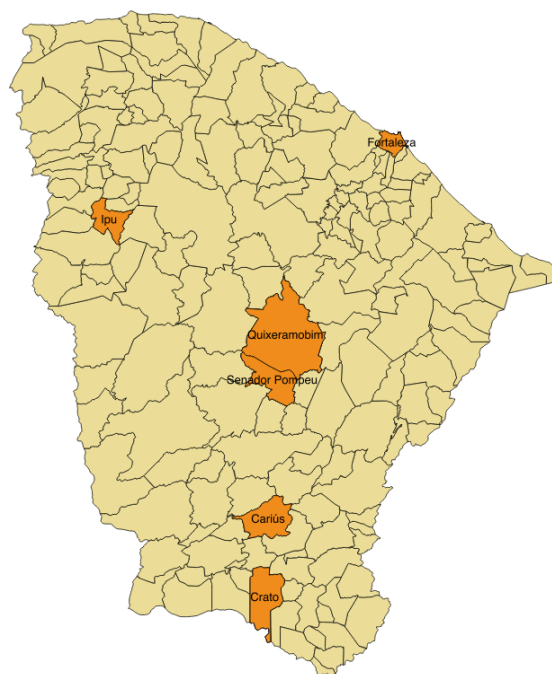
Before detailing the extension action itself, it is worth highlighting the context of emergence, abandonment, and search for the preservation of the Patu Historic Site, one of the eight concentration camps built in Ceará territory. One of the most populous dry areas in the world, northeastern Brazil suffered from long-lasting drought periods during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, referred to by newspapers at the time as the "great droughts," notably those that occurred in 1877, 1915, and 1932. In the drought of 1877, poverty and precarious living conditions in the hinterland in the face of climatic adversities caused an increase in migrations to mountainous and coastal regions and, mainly, to Fortaleza. Thus, the response of the government was the construction of the so-called barracks that served to shelter the retreating population in a precarious and dispersed way until the end of the drought in 1879. Some of these barracks were deactivated, and others gave rise to neighborhoods and favelas in the capital of Ceará (Rios, 2001; 2014; 2020).

At the beginning of the twentieth century, there were other severe droughts, such as the one in 1915, which even inspired a novel by Ceará writer Rachel de Queiroz (Queiroz, 2023). This year, as a response to the intense migratory flow of sertanejos towards Fortaleza and following a similar strategy previously adopted to control the access of the 'drought victims' to the capital, the state government built a first 'concentration camp' called Alagadiço and located in the western part of the capital of Ceará. Unlike the barracks, which were installed in a dispersed way throughout the city, the strategy adopted was to concentrate the migrants, aiming to ensure that the migrants who arrived in precarious conditions did not spread throughout the city or settle close to the areas occupied by the

higher-income classes. According to Neves (1995, p. 97), the Alagadiço concentration camp housed *"[...] permanently more than 8 thousand people"*.

In 1932, the practice of keeping the city of the rich away (or partially distant) from misery resulted in the construction of other places for the imprisonment of the scourged, as well as in work fronts and policies of forced emigration to other states (Rios, 2014). As a response to this drought, the government isolated part of the sertanejos in seven Concentration Camps, distributed in strategic places in the state territory, seeking to *"[...] guarantee the corralling of a greater number of migrants in the Sertão of Ceará"*. Of these, two were located in Fortaleza: one in Otávio Bonfim and the other in Campo do Urubu, now Pirambu. According to Rios (2014, p. 22), these areas were built in strategic places: *"[...] one was on the banks of the Baturité Railroad and the other near the Sobral Railroad. But, even so, several migrants managed to reach the streets of the neighborhoods where the rich of Fortaleza lived."* It is estimated that more than eighteen hundred people were scourged in these two concentration camps in the capital.

Illustration 1 – Map of the location of the municipalities where the Concentration Camps were built in Ceará.



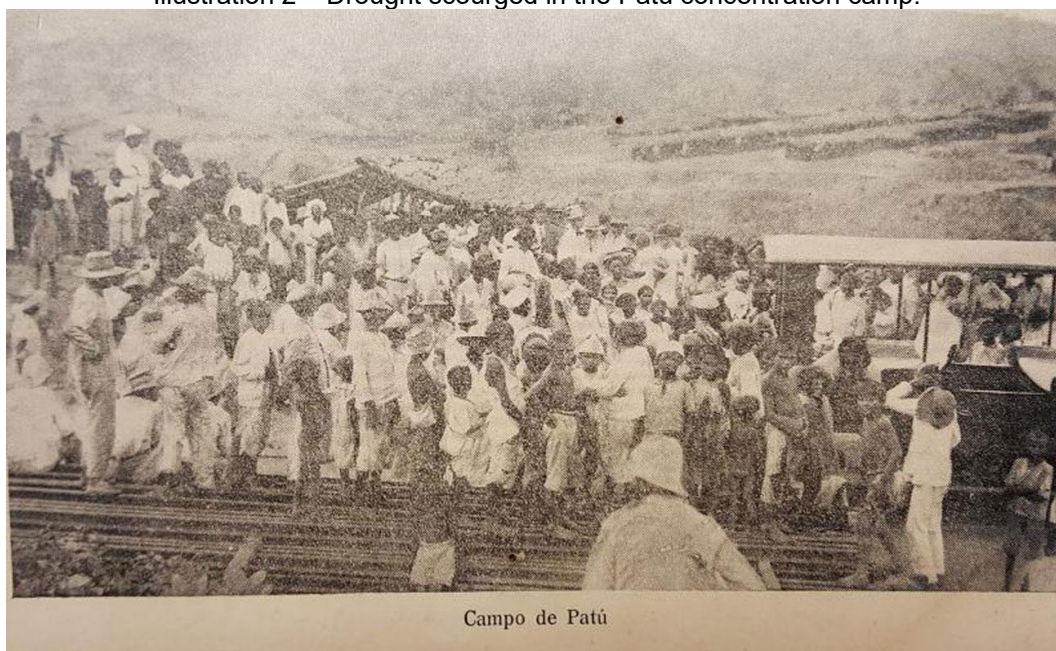
Source: prepared by the author.

The location of these two concentration camps in the vicinity of railway stations caused the trains to dump *"[...] the scourged in the part of the city that was closest to the*

sea, where the last railway stations of Fortaleza were located. In this way, many migrants erected their huts near the beach." Even with the return of the rains and the offer of government incentives for the return of migrants to their places of origin, many remained in Fortaleza (Rios, 2014, p. 31). These aspects help to understand the process of the constitution of the first favelas in the state capital, such as the large, precarious settlements located on the coastal strip. According to Rios (2014, p. 31), *"[...] some studies on the process of slumization in Fortaleza point to the years 1932/33 as milestones in the expansion of the periphery of Fortaleza. [...] In this movement, the migrants stopped being scourged and became favela residents."* The surroundings of the Urubu Concentration Camp, where part of this population settled, was occupied by shacks and precarious houses in the dunes and on the beachfront, consolidating Pirambu, currently the most populous precarious settlement in Fortaleza.

As already mentioned, five other concentration camps were also built in the interior of the state (see illustration 1). Further south of the state, the Buriti concentration camp was implemented in Crato, which received more than sixteen thousand people, and the concentration camp of Jucás, in Cariús, which received more than twenty-eight thousand flogged. This was the largest of the eight concentration camps built in Ceará. In the north of the state, the Ipu concentration camp was built in the city of the same name, which housed more than six thousand people. In the region of the Central Sertão, the Quixeramobim concentration camp was built in the city of the same name, which received more than four thousand people, and also the Patu concentration camp in Senador Pompeu, the object of this extension action, and which housed more than 16 thousand victims. In total, about seventy-two thousand people were in the five concentration camps in the interior, strategically positioned near the railway lines, hindering or preventing the migratory flow of these migrants to the capital of Ceará.

Illustration 2 – Drought scourged in the Patu concentration camp.



Source: National Archives.

In mid-1933, when the first rains of the season marked the end of the drought, the activities of the concentration camps were officially closed. Local newspapers defended the distribution of tickets for refugees to return to their homes in the countryside or to move to other states if they were not allocated to some public work. At the same time, there was also the need to keep workers in Fortaleza, guaranteeing cheap labor for the urban improvement works. Some of the backcountry migrants returned to the hinterland, but others remained in the capital in disobedience to government rules and orders (Rios, 2014, p. 78). With these spaces having lost their function and being in disuse, the concentration camps were abandoned, generating the disappearance of their physical structures. Currently, of the seven concentration camps built in 1932, only Campo do Patu, in Senador Pompeu, has physical remains remaining (Neves, 1995, p. 110), as we will discuss below.

In 1919, seeking to mitigate the effects caused by droughts in the backlands of Ceará, the newly created Federal Inspectorate of Works Against Droughts (IFOCS) – currently the National Department of Works Against Droughts (DNOCS) – began the construction of the Patu Dam in the municipality of Senador Pompeu. The work on the dam, however, was paralyzed in 1923, and a set of buildings remained on the site erected by professionals linked to the British company responsible for the work and that would support the construction of the Patu dam, notably with the purpose of housing the workers. The complex of buildings erected became known as Vila dos Ingleses, with several

buildings such as residences for pointers and engineers, a hospital, railway station, warehouse, workshop, power generation house, houses for the workers' village, warehouse, and gunpowder houses.

With the great drought of 1932, of such proportion that it was treated by the then president Getúlio Vargas as a national issue, there was the decision of the state government to build concentration camps in the countryside and the capital. One of them was installed next to the works of the Patu dam. This was for two main reasons. First, because of the geographical location of Senador Pompeu, located in the macro-region of the Central Sertão and which also had an important railway axis that connected the capital to the south of the state. Second, because of the availability of a set of previously unoccupied buildings that could be used to house the scourged who arrived at the city station (Coelho, 2021).

In 1933, with the beginning of the first rains, the concentration camp was dismantled. More than sixteen thousand migrants passed through the place, many of them dying from contagious diseases, a condition aggravated by the confinement and the precarious facilities. In addition to several buildings in different states of conservation, most of them in a state of deterioration, there is currently a cemetery built in memory of those who lost their lives during this period of confinement. The remaining buildings and ruins represent a testimony to the policy of confinement and isolation implemented by the government, which was characterized by the exclusion and exploitation of people in poverty (Coelho, 2021).

The preservation of this chapter in the history of the people of Ceará has been sought, at least since the 1990s, by various subjects and institutions. In 2019, the historic site was listed at the municipal level, and subsequently, the listing was demanded at the state level. In 2021 - through an institutional partnership established between the Federal Institute of Ceará and the Department of Culture of the State of Ceará, an extension action was initiated that consisted of the survey of necessary and complementary technical information to instrumentalize the process of listing the Historic Site of Patu at the state level.

Illustration 3 – Extension project team in the city of Senador Pompeu and in the Historic Site of Patu.



Source: Author's collection, 2022.

Illustration 4 – Extension project team at the Patu Historic Site.



Source: author's collection, 2022.

Given the scarcity of human and material resources necessary to gather fundamental technical information to carry out the listing of the Historic Site of Patu, demanded by civil society and the Public Ministry of the State of Ceará, an extension project was prepared that would enable the realization of actions – considering the knowledge, servers and equipment available at IFCE Quixadá – that would assist the Secretary of Culture of the State of Ceará in the process of listing in course. With only resources from the IFCE Extension Dean's Office, made available through unit scholarships for eight students and institutional and logistical support from the Quixadá campus, the Department of Culture of the State of Ceará and the Municipality of Senador

Pompeu, training and technical visits were carried out that guided and enabled the technical survey activities to be carried out.

Illustration 5 – Extension project team at the Patu Historic Site.



Source: Author's collection, 2022.

This extension action consisted of the survey of technical information necessary to instrumentalize the process of listing, at the state level, of the Historic Site of Patu. The action took place between December 2021 and May 2022 in the context of a pandemic as a result of the institutional partnership between IFCE and the Secretariat of Culture of the State of Ceará. Initially, on an exploratory basis, two visits were made to the site (in November and December 2021), each lasting one day, by IFCE employees involved in the extension action and by the team of technicians from the Senador Pompeu Department of Culture. In this first contact, preliminary mapping and georeferencing of the buildings were carried out, visual inspections of the main buildings and initial photographic records were taken in order to size and plan the actions that would be carried out by the extension project.

Subsequently, scholarship holders were selected to work in the action. Eight students from the Civil Engineering, Civil Production Engineering, and Environmental and Sanitary Engineering courses at the IFCE Quixadá campus were selected. Who had financial resources in the form of a single scholarship from the IFCE Extension Dean's Office. These students then underwent two trainings. The first, lasting four hours, was theoretical-historical, which addressed the context of the implementation of the concentration camps, especially the Patu camp, and basic knowledge about historical and architectural heritage. A second, focused on methods and techniques for collecting and

recording technical information on buildings, of a theoretical and practical nature, lasting twelve hours; It tried to offer the necessary technical training for the scholarship students-to adequately carry out the collection of technical data on the buildings when carrying out the fieldwork, in addition to training on how to systematize and organize the data collected.

In January 2022, fieldwork was carried out to collect the information that made up the technical survey. For three days, three servers and eight students from the IFCE, six technicians from the Department of Culture of Senador Pompeu and three technicians from the Department of Culture of the State of Ceará were at the Historic Site of Patu carrying out or giving direct or indirect support to the actions of technical survey of the buildings and the land where they are located. The group was divided into 5 teams, 4 of which were responsible for the building and photographic surveys of the twenty buildings that make up the Historic Site of Patu, and 1 of which was responsible for the topographic survey and georeferencing of the buildings and the polygonal that houses the historic site.

To carry out the photographic survey, DSLR cameras and the *smartphones* of the members of the extension project team were used. The data from this survey were organized according to the buildings and stored in digital files shared in a cloud storage system (Google Drive). To carry out the topographic survey, a total station and two GPS (Global Positioning System) devices were used. The data from this survey were extracted from the equipment and transferred, in DWG format, to be used in technical drawing software, such as AutoCAD. To carry out the building survey, 8 common metal tape measures were used, with dimensions ranging from 3 to 10 meters; 2 fiberglass tape measures with dimensions of 30 and 50 meters, 4 Bosch laser tape measures, portable clipboards of A4 size and mechanical pencils. The data collected from this survey were systematized and then digitized through the AutoCAD technical drawing software, and DWG and PDF files were generated containing technical drawings (floor plan and facades) of each of the twenty buildings surveyed.

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

The extension project "Technical Survey of the Historic Site of Patu", as reported in this text, consisted of three main activities: (1) topographic survey of the polygonal of 89 hectares that makes up the Historic Site of Patu, in Senador Pompeu; (2) photographic survey and (3) building survey of twenty buildings of the most varied sizes, uses and states of conservation. The technical information was collected, analyzed and systematized by the

extension project team and, later, was passed on to the Secretary of Culture of the State of Ceará, contributing directly to the process of state listing of the Patu Historic Site, which was carried out provisionally in August 2022 and definitively in November of the same year.

Table 1 – Buildings present in the Patu Historic Site, with approximate area and state of conservation.

order	edification	Conservation status	Approximate built area (m2)
1	Powder House 1	Healthy	7,9
2	Warehouse	ruin	748,9
3	Hospital	ruin	277,0
4	Season	ruin	342,5
5	Pointer's House 1	Healthy	117,3
6	Casa do Apontador 2	ruin	117,3
7	Casa do Apontador 3	Healthy	117,3
8	Casa do Apontador 4 / Employees' House	Healthy	312,1
9	Workshop	ruin	243,1
10	Cafeteria	ruin	Not measured
11	House of Engineers 1	Healthy	362,2
12	Engineers' House 2	Healthy	158,1
13	Province Mansion	Healthy	396,2
14	Unidentified house	Healthy	Not measured
15	Water tower	ruin	117,0
16	Cemetery	Healthy	1.038,3
17	Gothic Power Plant	ruin	292,3
18	Powder House 2	Healthy	36,7
19	Powder House 3	Healthy	25,7
20	Powder House 4	Healthy	16,7

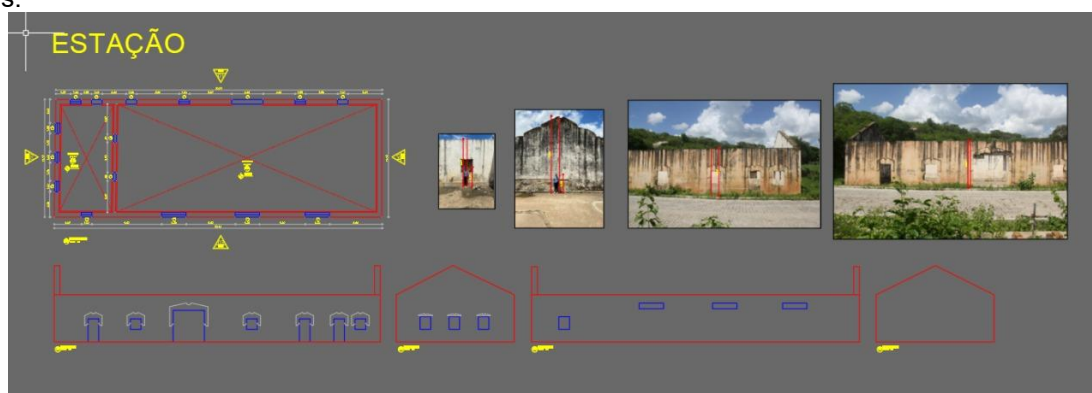
Source: prepared by the author.

The architectural survey consisted of the collection in the field and subsequent systematization of the technical information about the twenty buildings present in the historic site. General dimensions (height, width, and depth) and specific dimensions of the environments and construction components of each of the buildings were surveyed, such as masonry, frames, pillars, stairs, sidewalks, balconies, doors, windows, ramps, roofs, cisterns, and window sills, among others. From these surveys, technical drawings (floor plan and facades) of all twenty buildings present in the historic site were developed (see illustration 8). A building survey was carried out of buildings that add up to almost five thousand square meters of built area, including buildings and ruins, as can be seen in Chart 1. This material was delivered to the Secretariat, which used it directly in the listing process, as can be seen in the listing instruction of the Patu Historic Site (Ceará, 2022).

The photographic survey consisted of recording and assembling a visual collection of all twenty buildings present in the historic site. The collection, organized by building, has more than two hundred photographs, which were cataloged and made available to the

Secretary of Culture of the State of Ceará. These images, while helping in the process of digitizing the technical drawings, as they bring more detailed information that is often not possible to observe and record in the field (see illustration 6), also allow for a more detailed observation of the state of conservation of the buildings, allowing – at a later time – to dimension the actions necessary for restoration or preservation interventions of the buildings. In addition to the images captured by the extension project team, there are images captured by a drone and that were provided to the project (see illustration 7).

Illustration 6 – AutoCAD software screen showing the process of elaboration of the technical drawings of the buildings.



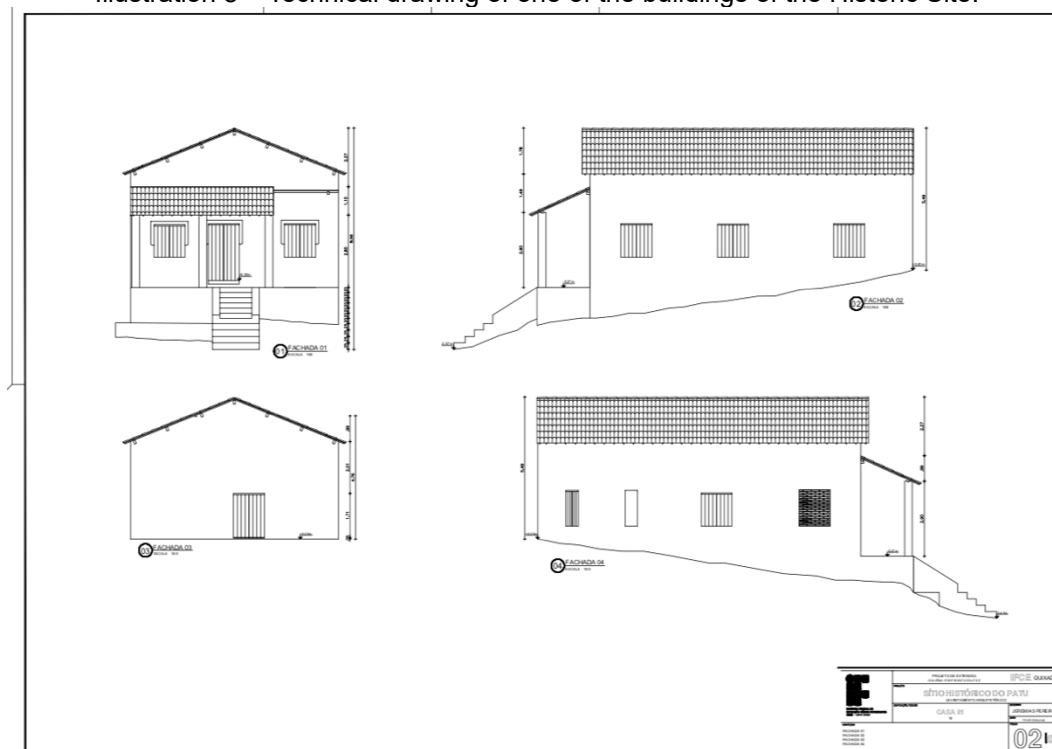
Source: author's collection.

Illustration 7 – Aerial image of one of the buildings that make up the Patu Historic Site.



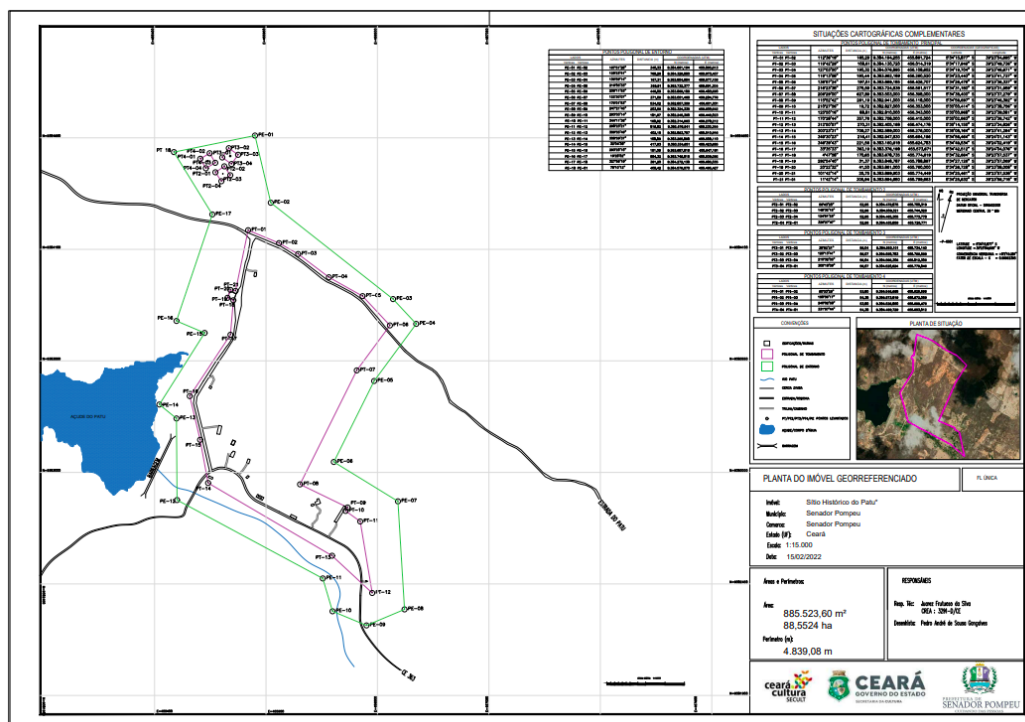
Source: O Povo, 2022.

Illustration 8 – Technical drawing of one of the buildings of the Historic Site.



Source: author's collection.

Illustration 9 – Polygonal that delimits the Patu Historic Site.



Source: Ceará (2022).

The topographic survey consisted of the georeferencing of the twenty buildings and the delimitation of the polygonal that would correspond to the limit of the Historic Site to be

listed. Among the three surveys carried out by the extension action reported here, this was the one that required the most technical knowledge and work of the team, given the imprecision of the available information and the difficulty of accessing the IBGE geographical landmarks on the site that helped in the construction of the definitive polygonal. It was necessary to access areas of caatinga vegetation in periods of drought and to count on the help of residents who helped in the identification of geodesic landmarks. In the end, a polygonal area of 89 hectares was delimited, which covers the twenty buildings and corresponds to the now-listed Historic Site of Patu (see illustration 9).

In addition to the technical survey – building, photographic, and topographic – delivered to the Secretary of Culture of the State of Ceará, this extension action produced other important results. It is worth highlighting, among them, the establishment of an institutional partnership between the IFCE and the Municipality of Senador Pompeu, through the Municipal Department of Culture, with the potential to carry out other technical survey actions that can instrumentalize listing processes at the municipal level. In addition, there was the strengthening of the institutional partnership between the IFCE and the Government of the State of Ceará through the Secretariat of Culture, with indications of new similar actions related to the preservation of the state's historical and architectural heritage.

It is also worth mentioning the experimentation of professional practice by engineering students, expanding the scope of professional practice of engineers trained by IFCE; the experimentation of an activity that can compose an institutional framework within the extension curricularization process; the preparation of two Course Completion Papers using materials obtained from the project (one at IFCE Quixadá and the other at FAU-UFRJ); and the dissemination of IFCE in print and digital media based on the results obtained with the project, reinforcing the role of IFCE as a teaching, research, but also extension institution (see illustration 10).

This extension action had an impact on the internal community, with the eight students of the Civil Engineering, Civil Production Engineering, Environmental and Sanitary Engineering and Buildings courses involved in the project directly benefiting from practical learning in photographic and building surveying and preparation of technical drawings; and for participation in action with effective social impact. Indirectly, other students from the courses of Civil Engineering, Civil Production Engineering, Environmental and Sanitary Engineering and Buildings who, knowing the results of the project, became interested in

participating in extension actions; as well as civil servants who began to see possibilities of approximation between extension actions with others related to research and teaching.

There was also an impact on the external community, with the residents of the municipality of Senador Pompeu as direct beneficiaries, who now have a listed and protected historic site, especially about the buildings that remain in the Patu Historic Site, which may result in projects and budgetary resources for actions in the area of tourism, education and training in history and culture, strengthening technical and educational visits to the site and consolidating events already held in Patu, such as the Drought Walk. Technicians from the Department of Culture of the Municipality of Senador Pompeu and the Department of Culture of the State of Ceará also benefited from the exchanges carried out and the knowledge shared with the IFCE team. More indirectly, the population of the state of Ceará was also benefited, which will be able to protect historical and architectural heritage representative of an important, albeit tragic, chapter of its history.

Illustration 10 – Excerpt from a report by the *Diário do Nordeste* on the listing of the Patu Historic Site.

Diário
do Nordeste

Campo de Concentração que abrigou 16 mil retirantes no Ceará deve ter prédios e ruínas tombados

As estruturas usadas, há 90 anos, em Senador Pompeu para aglomerar populações que tentavam fugir da seca, são os únicos vestígios físicos dessa época.

Escrito por **Thaíany Nascimento**, thaiany.nascimento@svm.com.br 07:15 - 21 de Julho de 2022



Os prédios, distribuídos em quase 89 hectares, estão em distintos graus de conservação, explica o arquiteto e urbanista, professor do Instituto Federal de Educação, Ciência e Tecnologia do Ceará (IFCE), Rérisson Máximo, que atuou junto a outros profissionais do IFCE no auxílio técnico do processo de tombamento.



Legenda: Os retirantes chegavam, sobretudo, pela via férrea e eram contidos em um grande terreno.

Foto: Camila Lima

Ele explica que "as construções e as técnicas construtivas tem uma certa qualidade que explicam porque elas ainda estão de pé". De acordo com ele, há prédios que podem ser recuperados, com reestruturação do telhado, da pintura e do piso. Mas, há outros "estão em ruínas e têm caráter mais de memória. É preciso um projeto para manter".

Source: *Diário do Nordeste*, 2022.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The history of the Concentration Camps of Ceará, implemented in the early twentieth century as an action of the public power, is one of the tragic chapters in the history of Ceará. These temporary spaces, built in 1915 and 1932, which sheltered thousands of refugees from droughts in search of better living conditions in Fortaleza, are important elements for us to understand the history of society and the territory of Ceará.

However, the chapter of droughts in Ceará, which has Senator Pompeu as an emblematic witness, has over the years been left on the margins of history, silencing excluded and marginalized voices of those scourged by the drought in a process of disappearance of memories and narratives. Fortunately, subjects and institutions have acted to recover, preserve, and seek to intervene in such a way that history and its material and immaterial fragments are not forgotten.

It is in this sense that the reported extension action is expressed as a significant experience as a contribution to the patrimonialization of the Concentration Camps in Ceará. The technical survey carried out by the extension action, by subsidizing the actions of the State Department of Culture in the process of definitive listing of the Historic Site of Patu, fulfilled a double role. First, it allowed the realization of extension experience as a practice necessarily gestated in conjunction with the teaching and production of scientific-academic knowledge. Second, it demonstrates the importance and social function of higher education institutions in articulating knowledge at the service of society. Thus, it is hoped that this extension action can represent a reference and demonstrate the possibility that new projects and partnerships between universities and public authorities in the field of heritage occur in order to contribute to other chapters of our history being written.

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