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OPEN HERITAGE COMMUNITY-DRIVEN ADAPTIVE REUSE IN EUROPE: BEST PRACTICE

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Publisher: Birkhäuser Verlag GmbH
Basel, 2023

Proofreading: Julia Dawson
Design and layout: HE&AD Büro für Gestaltung

216 pages, 74 colored illustrations
[24/16.5 cm, paperback, English]

ISBN 978-3-0356-2680-3
Download:
<https://birkhauser.com/books/9783035626827>



Open Heritage: Community-driven Adaptive Reuse in Europe is a rich and comprehensive resource for those interested in the adaptive reuse and management of built heritage, particularly within community-driven contexts. Edited by Heike Oevermann, Levente Polyák, Hanna Szemző, and Harald A. Mieg, the book presents outcomes from the EU-funded *OpenHeritage* project, which examined numerous adaptive reuse cases across Europe. With a special focus on participative planning, project financing, policies, and governance, the book addresses the need for a deeper understanding of the complexities of built cultural heritage and the diverse actors involved in its preservation and planning processes.

Serving as the basis for the book, the *OpenHeritage* project was a four-year European initiative funded by the Horizon 2020 program, involving experts from 11 countries who explored adaptive heritage reuse (AHR) in geographically, socially, and economically diverse areas across Europe. The project aimed to address challenges of reusing underused or neglected, listed, and unlisted heritage sites in a way that is both sustainable and inclusive, making it particularly relevant in today's rapidly changing urban landscapes. By establishing six Cooperative Heritage Labs and analyzing 16 Observatory Cases, the project collaborated with local communities, businesses, and authorities to experiment with new engagement methods and crowdfunding strategies. This has led to the development of adaptable models and practical tools for inclusive heritage management, in line with the EU's cultural policies aimed at fostering accessible and community-driven reuse of heritage sites.

Structurally, the book is divided into two main parts. Practical examples are laid out first in *Cases, Labs, Tools: Enabling Collaboration*, and followed by theoretical analyses, discussions, and conclusions in *Theory, Definition, and Context*.

The first part provides an in-depth examination of nine selected case studies from the *OpenHeritage* project: Cascina Roccafranca in Turin (Italy), High Street West in Sunderland (UK), London CLT (UK), Färgfabriken in

Stockholm (Sweden), Stará Trznica in Bratislava (Slovakia), Jam Factory in Lviv (Ukraine), Largo Residências in Lisbon (Portugal), Praga Lab in Warsaw (Poland), and Broei in Ghent (Belgium). Although the case studies are grouped according to three main overarching themes: *Policies and governance, Financing projects, and Supporting regional integration*, each offers a multifaceted perspective rooted in its specific cultural and regulatory environment. Together, these case studies illuminate diverse pathways and strategies that can be employed to navigate the complexities of adaptive reuse, providing practical insights for achieving sustainable and inclusive heritage management across various European contexts.

The second part of the book delves into the theoretical lessons learned from the project, embedding the findings within the broader academic discourse on heritage management. It begins by exploring the concept of *open heritage*, which challenges traditional definitions of heritage and promotes an inclusive approach to heritage management. In this context, *open heritage* emphasizes openness in three key areas: the definition of what constitutes heritage, the inclusion of diverse stakeholders in its preservation, and the processes through which heritage sites are reused. This notion of openness advocates for expanding the boundaries of heritage beyond traditional, often rigid, categorizations, allowing for a more inclusive recognition of heritage sites. The authors argue that adaptive reuse should not only preserve existing heritage values, but adapt to contemporary needs and challenges too, making heritage sites more relevant, accessible, and beneficial to society as a whole.

The second part of the book also includes a critical examination of the policies and regulations that shape adaptive heritage reuse across Europe. Specifically, the chapter on *Adaptive Heritage Reuse: Mapping Policies and Regulations* provides a detailed analysis of how national governance structures either support or hinder these projects. It underscores the importance of flexible, context-sensitive policies that can accommodate the

unique challenges of each project, particularly in areas where traditional heritage practices may be less effective.

One of the key contributions of this book is the chapter on *Transferability*, which addresses the challenges and opportunities of applying successful adaptive reuse practices across different contexts. The presented *5M Model* – covering *Management, Motivation, Money, Maintenance, and Monitoring* – serves as a framework for evaluating the transferability of adaptive heritage reuse projects. However, the authors emphasize that while certain strategies can be adapted to new contexts, it is essential to remain sensitive to local specificities and to engage deeply with the communities involved.

The concluding chapters of the book synthesize the lessons learned from the *OpenHeritage* project, offering a comprehensive reflection on the future of adaptive heritage reuse in Europe. The authors highlight the potential of community-driven approaches to not only preserve cultural heritage but also to foster social cohesion, economic resilience, and environmental sustainability. They argue that for adaptive reuse to be truly effective, it must be underpinned by a commitment to inclusivity, transparency, and long-term engagement with local communities. This holistic approach to heritage management is presented as a blueprint for future projects, encouraging a shift away from top-down, profit-driven models toward more collaborative, community-focused practices.

In summary, *Open Heritage: Community-driven Adaptive Reuse in Europe* is a highly useful resource for anyone involved in the preservation, management, and adaptive reuse of cultural heritage. By combining practical case studies with an in-depth theoretical analysis, the book offers both meaningful insights and practical guidance for implementing sustainable, inclusive heritage projects. As urban environments continue to evolve, lessons and models presented in this book will undoubtedly serve as a valuable reference point for ensuring that our cultural heritage remains a vibrant and integral part of contemporary life.