



POLITECNICO  
DI TORINO

# Honors thesis

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Master of Science in Architecture Construction City

*Abstract*

**The Tomioka Silk Mill. The valorization of the former Japanese industrial heritage by the Meiji Regime to date.**

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The Tomioka Silk Mill, one of the largest silk industrial complexes of the 19th century, is the instrument with which thesis research investigates the former Japanese industrial heritage from the Meiji Era to the present day. Since the beginning of its construction in the Gunma Prefecture, the Mill has been the protagonist of the urban changes produced with the entry of modernization in the country, after the fall of the Tokugawa shogunate, becoming over the years the best example of government investment in industry. The value of the industrial complex has been recognized in the years initially classifying it as cultural property and only later as UNESCO heritage, together with the sites that between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries have contributed to foreign exports and the spread of the culture of silkworm farming in other regions of the territory. Tajima Yahei's Farm, Takayama-sha's School and Arafune's Cold Storage are the three sites that have established an independent production network bringing instrumental innovations and new scientific knowledge to the industry. The theme of the valorization of the patrimony is therefore treated with requalification actions through the study of former industrial structures requalified in the territory, with the identification during the search of specific criteria of analysis with which the case studies have been compared. The subsequent application of these criteria to the case of Tomioka was the means by which the hypothetical redevelopment actions on the industrial complex were based, establishing guidelines for future adaptive reuse actions in the country. The results of these investigations have brought to light the concepts at the basis of the designers' interpretative choices, contributing to a reflection that has opened to the industrial complex in various scenarios. The industry has been the driving force that has led Japan to relate to the modernizing currents, has been the protagonist of urban change and has contributed to the development of the surrounding urban and environmental areas. The reuse of its heritage is therefore a theme that concerns society and the economy, acts as a tool in the memory of the place and in the knowledge of its history. Therefore, reuse intervention actions must be able to consider a former industrial asset on the basis of its potential value in response to the needs of a constantly changing society.



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