

POLITECNICO DI TORINO  
FIRST SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE  
Master of Science in Architecture (Construction)  
***Honors theses***

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**The silk factory of Cavallerleone between history and design**

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At the end of the seventeenth century, the silk manufacturers of Racconigi, unwitting stars of a productive transformation that in a few years would lead to the disappearance of domestic activity, they saw around them rise to numerous factories, those magnificent factories where the unification of the entire processing cycle and the use of a waterwheel mills, anticipated events that would have occurred a century later in the cotton districts of England during the Industrial Revolution.

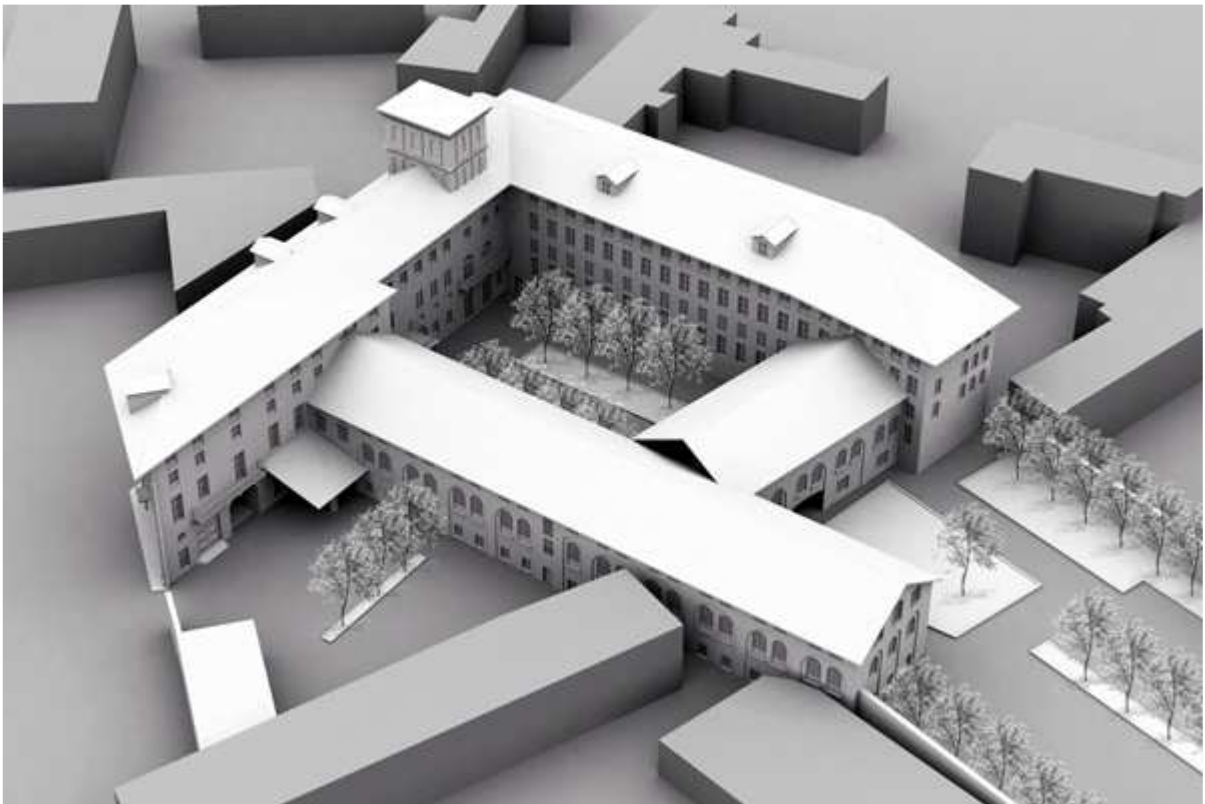
The new work organization and technological change, were not ephemeral: they were meant to last over time and spread throughout the southern Piedmont, leaving imprinted in the agricultural landscape - rich of mulberries and dotted with silk factories - the tangible evidence of a new productive reality, creating a very active and varied world of entrepreneurs, workers and merchants who made of Cuneo and his province the cornerstone of a thriving economy serum.



The main front of the silk factory Cavallerleone stating Via Carlo Alberto

Today, most of this important heritage has been lost with the disappearance of many of the most significant archaeological industrial examples; moreover, most of the surviving buildings bear conspicuous signs of continued neglect, while it's more and more remote the prospect of their reuse.

And this is the case of the silk factory of Cavallerleone emblematic witnessed of the eighteenth century conversion of use of an existing building core, whose structure and functions were, originally , closely related to agricultural activities. This silk factory is one of the most important industrial site of Piedmont for the production of the organzine: located a few miles from Racconigi, it could take advantage not only of the widespread cultivation of mulberry trees, but also of the dense network of relationships and exchanges that Racconigi maintained with the capital and thus, with the European market.



Exterior view of the design proposed for the entire industrial complex

Considering the historical significance of this important example of the industrial heritage of Piedmont, the renovation project has sought to emphasize the historic architectural features of the building by fusing it with the use of technological solutions and intended use to ensure a receptive purpose reuse. The intentions were those to show in the best way the historical memory of the 'factory, very interesting from an architectural standpoint, but at the same time to open this place to present and future life of the city.



Interior view of the restaurant, located inside the ex-mill

The work done in this thesis is therefore directed towards the design and organization of space dedicated to activities of tourist accommodation (like information, commerce, catering and accommodation): the aim was to include this important "finding" of industrial archeology in a series of tourist and cultural routes of whom this territory is rich.

Just think of the many initiatives related to Racconigi Castle, but also to the wine and food tasting tours of the entire area (Roads of Wine and Flavours, the festivals of Carmagnola,..). Great attention, especially in "The route of the silk in the province of Cuneo" : this project, supported by the Department of Culture of the Piedmont Region, focuses on the involvement of local authorities, cultural associations and those who can contribute to the enhancement of evidence of labor, with the ultimate purpose of placing them in a tourist and cultural specific route.

Finally, in the silk mill redevelopment project, great value has been given to aspects of identity and recognition of the place, through the presence of elements of conservation and innovation. A restoration project whose objective was to ensure quality and individuality to the site. A distinguishable space within the city, a place defined and protected, yet open to present and future life of the city of Cavallerleone and the entire surrounding area.

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