

POLITECNICO DI TORINO

Master of Science in Architecture Heritage Preservation and Enhancement

***Honors theses***

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***PROTECTING THE MILLS HERITAGE. THE POLLERI-BALOCCO MILL IN MONASTERO BORMIDA BETWEEN MEMORY CONSERVATION AND MUSEUM ENHANCEMENT***

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The Polleri-Balocco mill in Monastero Bormida, in the province of Asti, was built in ancient times, then enlarged and transformed down the centuries; it originally worked with millstones, then it became a cylinder mill until it was no longer used from the Sixties – Seventies.

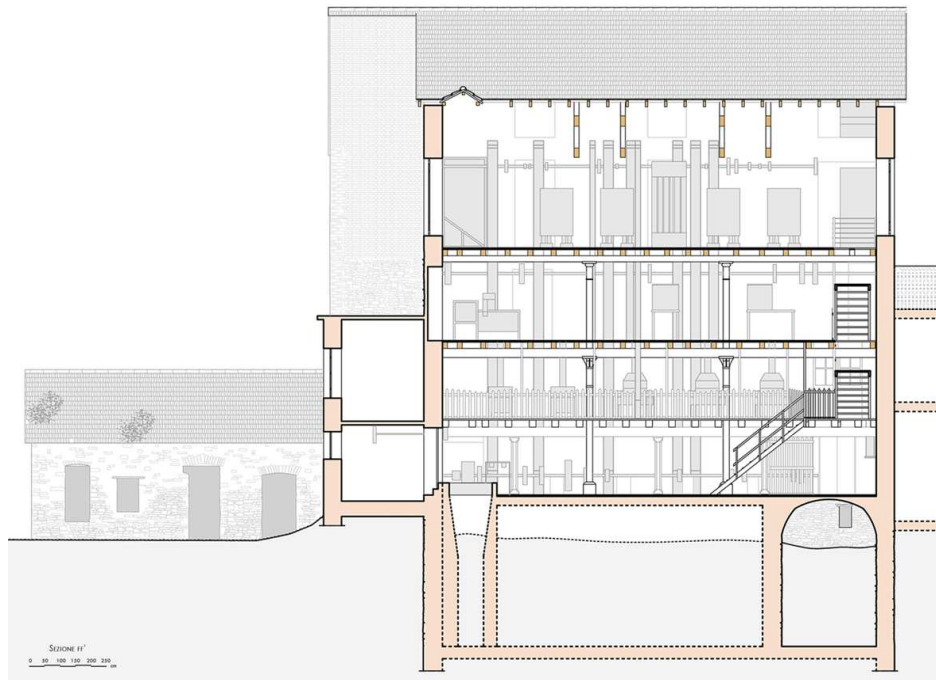
The mill restoration and reconversion project comes after an analysis of the stratified building and the context it is in, from the system of activities linked to water energy in rural territories around the mill to the European policies preserving the historical mills heritage.

Our research started from an overview of the watermills heritage in Europe: we studied how mills are preserved and used today and which are the protection and enhancement policies about mills. In this analysis, we decided to focus on the present situation in three Countries: we compared England, France and Italy about the respective approach and the authorities preserving the architecture heritage, so to understand how they protect and enhance the mills heritage, considering some significant mills as examples.

Starting from the current situation, then we went back to the origin in Italy of the cylinder mills heritage, working with a new industrialized system from the XIX century, trying to understand how this innovation affected the milling economy and the rural world. In this way we could consider the Polleri-Balocco mill as part of a wider technologic development phenomenon and recognize how the mill transformations correspond to the ones of other mills, born as millstones working and become industrialized. Then we studied the cylinder milling system analyzing how it and the machinery work, so to understand how the mill was organized.

We retraced the mill history helped by historical documents concerning the building, the transfer of property, the phases of construction, conserved in the municipal archive in Monastero and the State Archives in Asti, Alessandria and Torino, and by the bibliography about the community development and the rural, commercial and industrial activity in the territory. The mill integrates in a system of traditional activities linked with the water energy produced through a thick canal network spread in the countryside, taking water from the river Bormida.

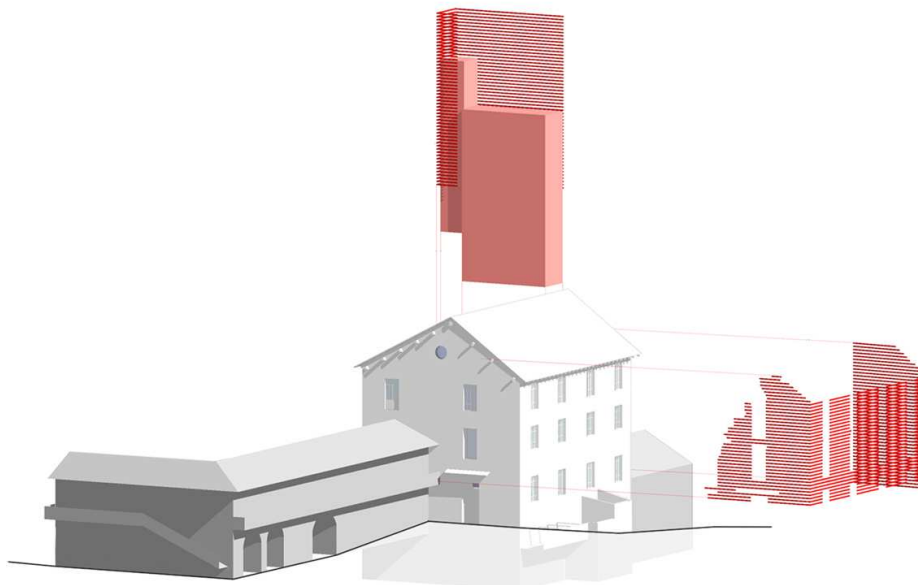
After the historical research, we analyzed the building current condition: structures, materials, damages and the machinery inside it.



*The current state: mill section*

The restoration project aims to permit the public to visit the mill, with a different function from the original productive one: it will be a museum with a didactic itinerary which heads the public through all the building aspects. The new museum function is completed by a reception, didactic and meeting spaces, intervening also on the historical forge building and the miller's home.

Starting from the conservation, we projected the needed interventions to make the building secure, to put in the new function, to respect the current norm, to enhance the energy efficiency and satisfy the energy requirement, to light the building, projecting also new contemporary parts.



*The added contemporary parts*

The new function is completed by the outside enhancement, linking the mill with the territory through an evocative path on the original site of the historical canal, destroyed by the flood in 1994.



*Render of the external space*

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