



*The Convent of San Francesco d'Assisi in Salerno (Italy):
current and postproject status.*

A methodology in choosing a new compatible function in the recovery project of disused religious buildings. Research study in Italy

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ABSTRACT

The phenomenon of abandoned religious buildings is today felt in many countries of the world and particularly in Europe, where the problem has taken on such dimensions as to worry the ecclesiastical institutions, which are encouraging to work with particular caution in order to avoid improper use and to consider each case according to its historical peculiarities. The topic involves many actors (clergy, population, associations, tourists, traders, etc.) since it has several meanings: Social, because religious buildings have held together many generations; Economic, because these places fascinate foreign visitors; Environmental, because their physical presence in the urban or rural landscape revives contexts and traditions; Cultural, because sacred buildings represent the largest portfolio of European historical heritage. From 2018, the Holy See encouraged to produce recommendations especially oriented towards new functional, social and architectural choices able to preserve both the material and spiritual value of the artefacts over time.

By starting from an analysis of the theme, the contribution provides a methodological approach in searching for a new compatible function, in accordance with the new programmatic guidelines and the principles of the discipline of architectural conservation and recovery, applying it to the case of the old abandoned convents in the historical centre of Salerno in Italy.

KEYWORDS

conservation, religious buildings, methodology, technology

1. INTRODUCTION

The topic of reusing disused religious buildings needs careful scientific and doctrinaire reflection, in order to understand the theme and propose virtuous solutions. The dimension of the problem requires multidisciplinary and multi-actor approaches (citizens, clergy, technicians, associations, administrations, etc.) in a fruitful collaboration aimed at promoting the recovery of the constructions and, if necessary, identifying new possible uses able to ensure the original consistency and shape.

In each cities and countryside churches, monasteries, convents, chapels, and any other sacred settlements represented important aggregation centres and essential reference points for the historical and civil identity of the population. They conditioned the evolution of the urban regions and represented the first cell of the inhabited area of small villages (Tomatis, 2016). In fact, Church's Cultural Heritage has very peculiar characteristics in terms of quantity, quality, typological extension and stratification, attested by the rich relations over the centuries with society and culture. Only their simple presence has often guaranteed the survival of country portions or small communities in the more peripheral areas. Currently, according to the trend throughout Europe, especially in countries with a Protestant tradition, such as England, Germany and Holland, churches, monasteries and chapels were used for the most different functions (i.e. coffee, libraries, cinemas, discos, private homes and more), often not compatible with the vocation of the place (Cavana, 2016).

The problem must be challenged according to a multi-level approach that considers the many aspects involved; on the one hand, the rules of Canon Law and the Civil and Administrative Code, on the other one, the guidelines for the conservation and restoration of Cultural Heritage, without neglecting the affection of the community that perceives more than a set of stones, motifs and styles, but a fusion of both local identity and traditions.

2. CANON LAW AND "NON SORDIDUM" USE

The disposal of religious buildings undergoes to a particular procedure of the Canon Law that in 1917 provided for the legitimate reduction of buildings for secular use only if two conditions were met simultaneously: (1) the impossibility of using the church for public worship and (2) the impossibility of restoring it (Montini, 2000). The current formulation of the norm introduced the "good of souls" as discrimination and the presence of "serious causes" in order to proceed with the suppression (Cavana, 2009). Canon 1222 (§ 2) allows greater discretion to the diocesan bishop in reducing a church to profane use not indecorous in several cases: for "serious reasons", "hearing the presbyterial council", "with the consent of those who legitimately claim rights over it", "as long as no damage is done to the good of souls" or "for other serious causes" (Gullo, 1997).

The sentence "for other serious causes" generated a lot of misunderstandings and arbitrary interpretations. In fact, over the years there were many petitions from the faithful felt injured by the decree of reduction to profane use of the church they habitually used. According to the Supreme Tribunal of the Apostolic Signatura, "the seriousness can be judged differently only considering the circumstances of place, heritage and people" (Didimodugno, 2017).

The "profanum non sordidum" use - an expression that Canon Law uses to indicate a profane use not immoral - represents a valid guarantee for the future use, by preserving them from incongruous and incompatible destinations and, therefore, from wild intentions of transformation. The purpose of the non-indecorous use is to protect both the material and the immaterial value related to the religious sense of the faithful. In choosing the new function, according to the Guidelines of the Holy See, it is necessary to evaluate the possibility of using the artefacts for subsidiary worship functions or for particular communities needs, taking into consideration other uses by cultural nature, such as locations for artistic activities, archives, libraries and museums, non-profit and speculative business, etc.

Non sordidum is the use that, besides being compatible with the architectural features, does not alter the image, the original functional layout and the planimetric extension of the outdoor spaces, by producing a different and alien building compared to the previous one. Non sordidum is the use that does not transform or destroy the ancient material, since the same masonry is considered a real metaphor for the construction of living stones that the Church is (Longhi, 2016). Non sordidum is the use of *res sacrae* that certainly contemplates the instrumental and functional factors but, at the same time, also those that are part of the history of Christianity.

3. THE NEW FUNCTION

Sacred buildings are the expression of the faith of people, so their reduction to a simple cultural good, without any symbolic meaning, would necessarily involve the loss of substance.

The Canon Law regulates a specific procedure for the disposal of religious buildings, with the main rules of common law thanks to which the new uses can be concretely carried out in accordance with the main principles of protection, conservation and enhancement of monuments (*Charte sur l'utilisation des anciens bâtiments ecclésiastiques*, 1987).

Among the main levels of investigation - law, faith, protection - the new function could become a real *trait d'union* useful to extend the holy complexes and ensure that they are still tangible signs of devotion, artistic seasons, trades and works now disappeared.

The plurality of possible destinations can create some problems that must be taken into consideration in the design and redevelopment of the spaces, in relation to the different types of users and, especially, to the compatibility of each function with the specific artefact.

The new use should be declined differently depending on the original one: church, cathedral, monastery, convent, sanctuary, votive chapel or other. Each intervention must be studied case by case and calibrated in respect to the historical background and the construction's constraints: spaces, paths,

courtyards and cloisters are not related only to distribution or compositional needs, but they are closely linked to the activities that were carried out in (Ribera and Cucco, 2019).

Today, the tourist-cultural function seems to be privileged, thanks to the architectural relevance and to the particular localizations in the place, almost always central, able to generate non negligible economic incomes, ensuring the growth of the whole communities.

The choice of the new non-decorous function is a result of a real "knowledge system" aimed at enhancing the historical heritage, through an effective network of relations between local, national and international public organisations, faithful, cultural groups and clergy.

Knowledge must lead to a systematic inspection of the existing religious heritage, both from a quantitative and conservative point of view, in order to have a rich database with always updated and easily available information. The data can help the decision-makers in choosing the best function, compatible not only from the historical-cultural point of view, but also from the architectural, structural and urbanistic one, in order to make effective decisions in terms of maintenance, enhancement and future investment.

The identification of the new uses should be made both in relation to the needs of the communities, to the vocation of the places and to the specific environmental situations, which may suggest, from time to time, the most suitable solutions (Bullen, 2011:32-46; Cellucci and Di Sivo, 2015:845-852).

3.1 METHODOLOGY

Preliminary proposal

The phenomenon of the different possibilities, in the first analysis, can be investigated according to 5 general categories outlined in accordance with the guidelines of Holy See (2018):

1. Urban or rural settlements. Each element of the ecclesiastical heritage is part of an urban or rural system, to which it is strongly linked and to which it has given shape and social, cultural and religious

Measure of Social and Cultural Aggregation		D.	YES	YES	NOT
01	Should the new function be similar to the religious one?				
02	Should the new function be capable in generating new tourist flows?				
03	The new function must be capable of involving multiple players in the area (administrations, protection bodies, clergy, associations, private, etc.)?				
04	Should the new function be of an aggregative and associative nature?				
Measure of Architectural Compatibility		D.	YES	YES	NOT
01	Does the new function have to respect the original architectural layout?				
02	Can the new function provide for grafts of new shapes, style and structures?				
03	Can the new function radically modify the external image?				
04	Can the new function radically change the internal spatial organization?				
05	Can the new function lead to the demolition of several portions of the structure?				
06	Can the new function provide for the installation of permanent and temporary works distant in form and image from the religious spirit?				
07	In order to comply with seismic safety criteria, can adaptation involve some sacrifices in terms of original material and architectural structure?				
08	In order to comply with the accessibility criteria, can adaptation involve some sacrifices in terms of original material and architectural layout?				
09	In order to comply with the fire-fighting criteria, can adaptation involve some sacrifices in terms of original material and architectural structure?				
10	In order to comply with the energy criteria, can adaptation involve some sacrifices in terms of original material and architectural layout?				
11	In order to comply with the criteria of urban decor, can adaptation involve some sacrifices in terms of materials, styles and colors?				
Measure of Economy and Development		D.	YES	YES	NOT
01	Should the religious building belong to public entities (municipal administration, superintendence, local authorities, etc.)?				
02	Should the religious building belong to private company (economic investors, individual patrons, companies, etc.)?				
03	Should the religious building belong to religious bodies (Curia, religious Orders, Congregations, etc.)?				
04	The disused religious building must belong to third sector actors (non profit associations, cooperatives, foundations, etc.)?				
05	Should the new function generate economic benefits for the community?				
06	The new function must generate economic benefits for the public administration?				
07	Can the new function allow entry and paid visits?				
08	Can the new function prohibit entry and public visit?				
09	Should the new function provide for the employment of new human resources?				
What could be the most compatible function with a disused religious building?					
Cultural					
Education and research					
Tourist accommodation					
Show (cinema, theater, dance, etc.)					
Private workplaces					
Public workplaces					
Social and spiritual aggregation					
Private residence					
Public residence					
Other					

Figure 1.
Proposed questionnaire.

meaning. A unitary territorial vision of both social dynamics (demographic flows, cultural policies, market, tourism, etc.) and pastoral policies makes possible to insert the new function into a right territorial strategy.

2. Tangible heritage. A deep knowledge of material heritage and its historical, architectural and structural characteristics, as well as conservative and adaptive emergencies (vulnerability, risk levels, intrinsic value of buildings and works, etc.) allows for shared strategies, by preserving its capacity to suffer various kinds of pressures (catastrophes, ideological damage, transformations of use, liturgical and devotional adjustments, etc.), without losing its own recognizability.
3. Intangible heritage. The intangible heritage collects all the cultural and spiritual elements that give emotion and identity to a place such as rites, devotions, liturgical practices, social customs and traditions, memories, stories, written documents, values, colours, smells, etc.
4. Sustainability. The horizon of sustainability must guide the processes of transformation of religious goods, taking into account environmental, economic, political-administrative and managerial factors, and facilitating the dimension of co-responsibility between all the actors involved.
5. Participation. The involvement of local communities, both religious and civil, in the decision-making process represents a fundamental stage in order to plan a satisfying intervention on religious goods in which several generations recognized themselves.

By starting from these 5 general categories, after a careful and systematic research that covers every aspect mentioned above, the professional operates a first proposal of non sordidum reuse, able to preserve the good and the "essence of the place" with operations evaluated case-by-case.

It should be noted that the decision could also be supported by multi-criteria approaches in order to choose of the high and best use, which must include, above all, the historical value and the 5 general criteria (Ribera, Nesticò et al., 2020).

The involvement of the community

In a context of depopulation of rural areas, diminishing clergy and faithful, the regeneration process must necessarily allow the involvement of the local community, which over the years placed a feeling of identity in the holy buildings. This phase is perceived as a priority in order to continue to revive the places through the history and the local traditions.

Therefore, the "participation" criterion makes possible to investigate citizens opinion and emotion in the face of different alternatives and to perceive their state of mind. This is a delicate and wide phase, which leads to a change of perspective from time to time. The opinion of people, free from any conditioning, must be placed at the centre of cultural processes, so as to build a truly desired proposal with the methods of real participation (together with technicians, institutions, associations).

Below, it is proposed the possible questionnaire to be submitted to the community (Fig. 1), divided into 3 sections of "measures":

- measure of social and cultural aggregation;
- measure of architectural compatibility;
- measure of economy and development.

The questionnaire consists of 24 questions to which the interviewee can exercise his own choice among 3 alternatives of decreasing importance:

- D. YES - Definitely yes, definitely important;
- YES - Yes, important;
- NO - No, not important.

It is obvious that the sample must be properly representative of the reference population, evaluated case by case by the expert, considering both the number of inhabitants of the single centre, the number of inhabitants of the largest diocese, the number of employees (workers, external users, etc.).

Validation of the proposal

The expert proceeds to validate the function chosen ex ante according to 3 main criteria that summarize all the contents and allow to verify the goodness of the new use. They are:

- Social Criterion;
- Historical, Artistic and Architectural Criterion;
- Economic and Environmental Criterion.

CHECKLIST - NEW FUNCTION				
SOCIAL CRITERION		YES	Y/N	NOT
		1	0,5	0
01	Analysis of citizens' opinion (faithful, inhabitants, workers, etc.) assessed through a large and well-structured questionnaire.			
02	Ability to involve new actors, third sector and tourism.			
03	Listening and acceptance of social requests or specific pastoral urgencies.			
04	Analysis and interpretation of social dynamics (demographic flows, cultural policies, labor market, etc.).			
STORIC, ARTISTIC AND ARCHITECTURAL CRITERION		YES	Y/N	NOT
		1	0,5	0
01	Preliminary investigation.			
02	Representativeness of the new function in accordance to the spirit of the place.			
03	Historical-cultural compatibility of the new intended use.			
04	Architectural and structural compatibility of the new intended use.			
05	Preservation and / or relocation of decorations (furniture, paintings, etc.)			
06	Compliance with the criterion of minimum intervention for Cultural Heritage.			
07	Reversibility of interventions and ease in restoration of the state of the places			
08	Flexibility of spaces to multiple uses			
09	Involvement of several specialists and technicians			
ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL CRITERION		YES	Y/N	NOT
		1	0,5	0
01	Ability to produce income for private investors.			
02	Ability to produce income for public government.			
03	Ability to produce income for the community and for private citizens.			
04	Ability to produce income for third sector operators.			
05	Economic sustainability in the recovery and reuse intervention			
06	Employment of new human resources.			
07	Compatibility with the context.			
08	Analysis of urban transformation dynamics.			
09	Recovery of open spaces and gardens.			
10	Sustainability strategies of the building and site.			
Result				
BRONZE		SILVER		GOLD
< 10		10 - 20		> 20
It is recommended to investigate the compatibility of a new function.		It is recommended to take appropriate action and changes that can make the function clearly compatible. Act on the most unfavorable criteria.		It is recommended to keep the high level of compatibility during all stages of the project, construction site and management.

Figure 2. Checklist.

The following Checklist is proposed to verify the compatibility of the new function (Fig. 2).

The model consists of 3 criteria for a total of 23 credits to which the professional is called to answer according to compatibility, integration and adaptation levels.

- YES - value 1
- YES/NO, i.e. partly - value 0,5
- NO - value 0

The final result may fall within one of the 3 following ranges:

- Bronze - result < 10 points
- Silver - 10 < result < 20 points
- Gold - result > 20 points

Additional operations are recommended for each level: for "bronze" it is advisable to choose a different use, since the one verified is too distant and invasive from the original one; for "silver" it is suitable to make appropriate changes that can make the function clearly compatible, by acting on the most unfavourable criteria; for "gold" it is recommended to maintain the high level of compatibility during the design, implementation and project management phases.

4. A NEW FUNCTION FOR THE CONVENT OF SAN FRANCESCO IN SALERNO, ITALY

More than twenty years have passed since the international competition for the recovery of the historical centre of Salerno, a city on the Italian Tyrrhenian coast, born from an idea of Oriol Bohigas. The focuses of the competition were some disused convents located in the northern area, defined for their size and their particular spatial and architectural connotations as "Edifici-Mondo" (World-Building): San Massimo Palace, the Convent of Santa Maria della Consolazione (former female prison), the Convent of San Francesco d'Assisi (former male prison), the Convent of San Pietro a Maiella e San Giacomo, and others.

In the first phase, the competition saw the participation of a large number of designers among whom eight competitors were selected (Aymonino, Boeri, de las

Figure 3.
Proposals by Chipperfield, Monestiroli,
Sejima-Nishizawa, Venezia.

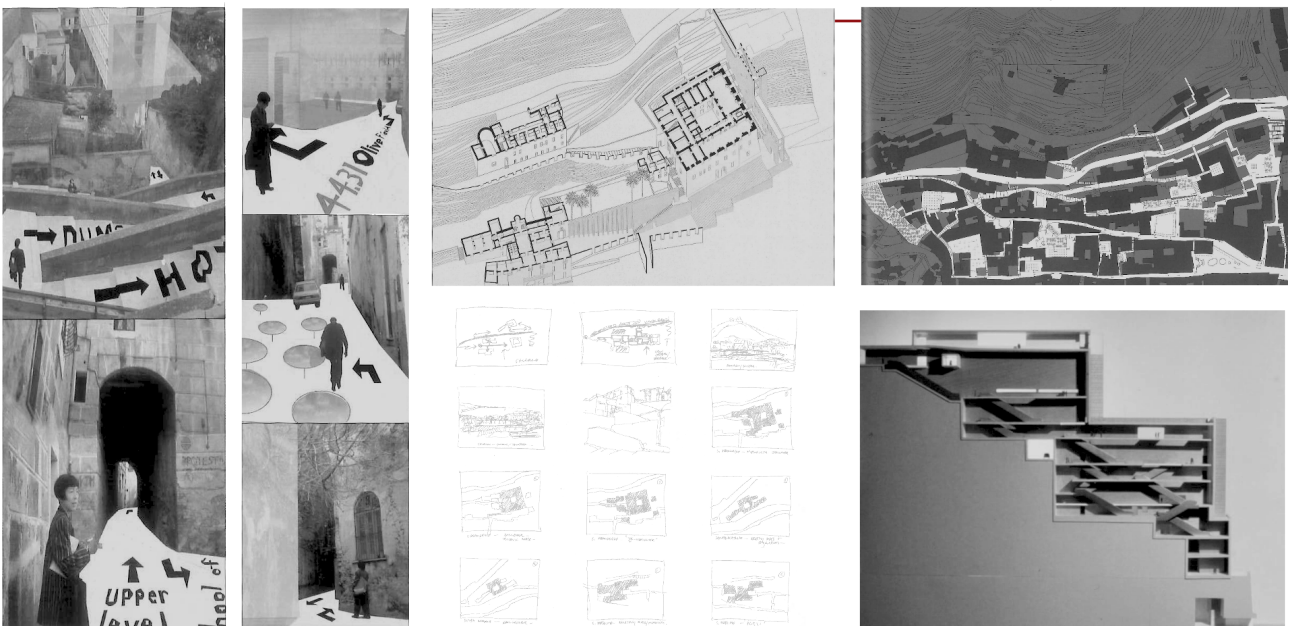




Figure 4.
*Identification of the Palium
Montis area, Salerno (Italy).*

Casas, Descombes, Màcola, Seneca, Spirito, Vido) and asked to participate in the second phase together with four other designers expressly invited (Chipperfield, Monestiroli, Sejima-Nishizawa, Venezia). The result was a very interesting range of projects and proposals that highlighted different attitudes, but united by the desire to explore both the boundaries between conservation and innovation and the possibility of contemporary additions within the ancient city without camouflage (Secchi, 1999) (Fig. 3).

This competition was an important event for the city that relaunched the role of the ancient area in the deep work of *renovatio urbis*, which began in 1992 with the new Master Plan signed by Oriol Bohigas. Unfortunately, those ideas were not followed by any concrete form of implementation and today the "Edifici-Mondo" are in the deepest state of degradation and abandonment.

In this ancient area, named *Plaium Montis*, by starting from the 9th century, the first conventual complexes linked to the Benedictine Order were built, then by 13th and 14th centuries, a kind of conventual citadel, a religious city within the city limits but in a private and dominant position, was realized (Fig. 4).

Each of these building complexes had streets and squares, gardens and churches inside it, incorporating methods and architectural forms as a peculiar expression of the local traditions (Cucco, Torsiello et al., 2017) (Fig. 5).

The religious expansion continued until the 17th century when the last convent, Santa Maria della Mercede, was realized. However, in 1807 and then in 1866 with the new Italian government all the convents were suppressed, closed or destined to other incompatible uses (Serra Raspi, 1981).

The continuity in use that over centuries guaranteed the development of local communities and a place of identification, aggregation and distinction, was interrupted.

By starting from these assumptions, thanks to a careful historical investigation, architectural and decay surveys, structural and environmental analyses, the current research is working on defining a coherent methodology in searching for a new function for these buildings, giving back to the community a real treasury of art, architecture and culture.

This contribution focuses on the Convent of San Francesco d'Assisi.

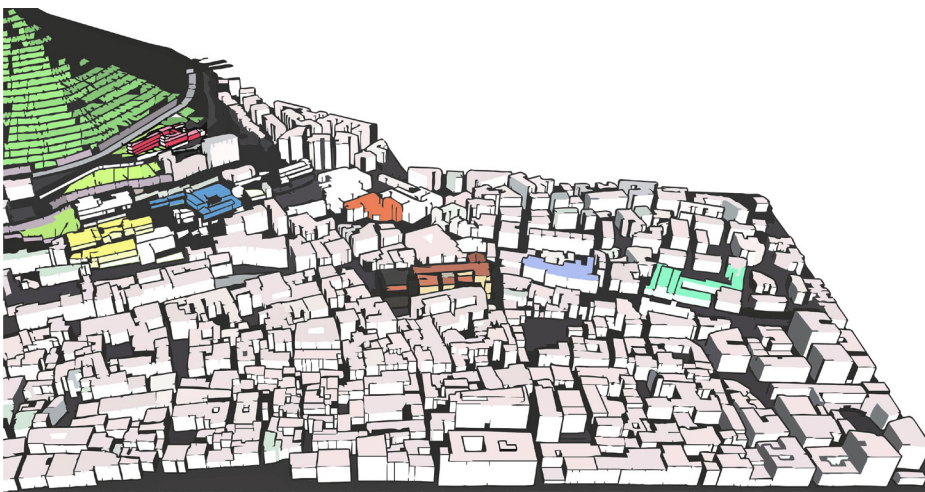


Figure 5.
Identification of the main
disused convents.

Historical news

The first interesting news about the Convent of San Francesco d'Assisi in Salerno (Italy) date back to 1238 when the Abbot of the nearby Convent of San Nicola brought to the attention of the Archbishop the existence of the Church of San Francesco, discovered thanks to the opening of a new source of water emerged in the ground of the Church of San Nicola (Crisci and Campagna, 2001).

Already in the first decades of the 15th century the conditions of both the convent and the Franciscan Order were critical, that the religious were forced to sell part of their own possessions in order to carry out urgent repair and conservation works, supported financially also by Queen Margherita di Durazzo, reigning in Salerno in those years. In fact, originally, the funeral monument of the queen, who died in 1412, was placed in the Church of San Francesco, then moved to the Cathedral of Salerno (Pasca, 2000). Suppressed in 1808 by Napoleon's decree, the building was turned into a men's prison together with the nearby Convent of San Pietro e San Giacomo. The prison complexes were active until the mid-eighties of the Twentieth century, when the city's new prison was inaugurated (Fig. 6).

From then it is in a state of neglect and degradation, by waiting for structural, technological and functional restoration operations (Fig. 7).

The involvement of the community

During the first phase of analysis, the above questionnaire was submitted to the inhabitants of the northern part of the city, as well as to students of architecture and cultural heritage and young entrepreneurs. The results of the survey allow us to intercept the perception of this "sleeping" building among the usual city streets and activities. This process made possible to formulate a recovery proposal capable of collecting all the community needs and suggestions, filtered according to the criteria of the discipline.

The sample is made up of 168 subjects, 98 women and 70 men, divided as follows by age groups: 68 (19-25 years); 37 (26-35 years); 54 (36-50 years); 9 (>50 years). It should be noted that the majority of interviewed proposed the "Cultural" and "Education and Research" functions as the most compatible ones.

The recovery proposal

In the light of the 5 preliminary criteria and the opinion of the community, the Convent of San Francesco d'Assisi is turned into a building for University faculty, in support of the Campus of the University of Salerno, successor to the oldest prestigious Salerno Medical School. In detail, the Convent will host the headquarters of the Department of Dentistry, currently located in the distant town of Baronissi.

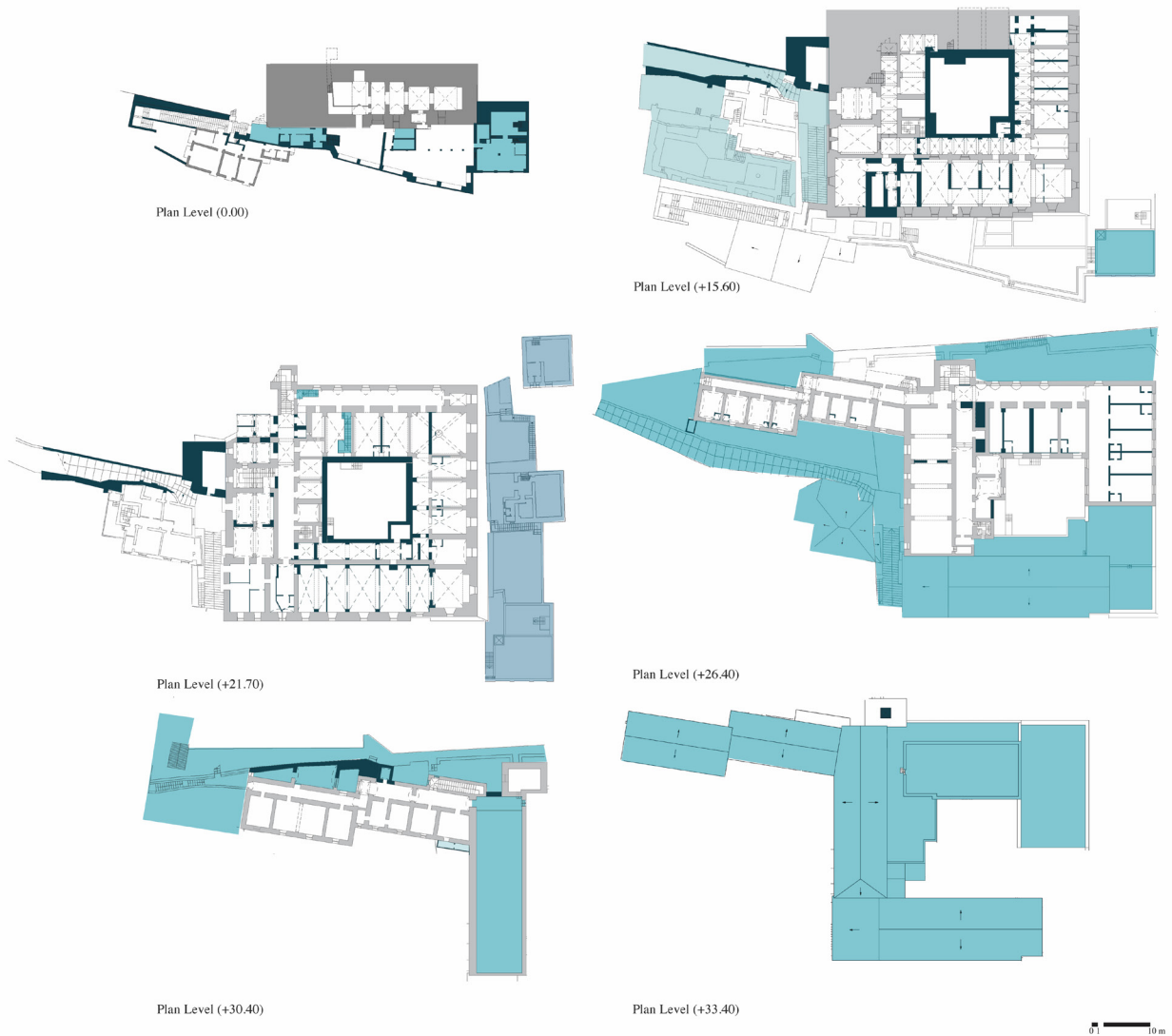


Figure 6.
Current State of the Convent of San Francesco d'Assisi
 (design by Sofia Lorena Corigliani Bolatti under the supervision
 of the authors).

Figure 7.
Current state of the Convent of San
Francesco d'Assisi
(photos by authors).



CHECKLIST - NEW FUNCTION				
SOCIAL CRITERION		YES 1	Y/N 0,5	NOT 0
01	Analysis of citizens' opinion (faithful, inhabitants, workers, etc.) assessed through a large and well-structured questionnaire.	✓		
02	Ability to involve new actors, third sector and tourism.		✓	
03	Listening and acceptance of social requests or specific pastoral urgencies.		✓	
04	Analysis and interpretation of social dynamics (demographic flows, cultural policies, labor market, etc.).	✓		
STORIC, ARTISTIC AND ARCHITECTURAL CRITERION		YES 1	Y/N 0,5	NOT 0
01	Preliminary investigation.	✓		
02	Representativeness of the new function in accordance to the spirit of the place.	✓		
03	Historical-cultural compatibility of the new intended use.	✓		
04	Architectural and structural compatibility of the new intended use.		✓	
05	Preservation and / or relocation of decorations (furniture, paintings, etc.)	✓		
06	Compliance with the criterion of minimum intervention for Cultural Heritage.		✓	
07	Reversibility of interventions and ease in restoration of the state of the places		✓	
08	Flexibility of spaces to multiple uses		✓	
09	Involvement of several specialists and technicians	✓		
ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL CRITERION		YES 1	Y/N 0,5	NOT 0
01	Ability to produce income for private investors.			✓
02	Ability to produce income for public government.	✓		
03	Ability to produce income for the community and for private citizens.		✓	
04	Ability to produce income for third sector operators.			✓
05	Economic sustainability in the recovery and reuse intervention		✓	
06	Employment of new human resources.	✓		
07	Compatibility with the context.	✓		
08	Analysis of urban transformation dynamics.	✓		
09	Recovery of open spaces and gardens.	✓		
10	Sustainability strategies of the building and site.	✓		

Result 17/23 SILVER

Figure 8.
Result of the compatibility check.

The modern Hospital San Giovanni di Dio e Ruggi d'Aragona, destination of many aspiring doctors, is located in the district of San Leonardo in Salerno. Therefore, the allocation of the new Department in the city centre would guarantee a better proximity to the hospital. The number of students for the Degree Course in Dentistry reaches a maximum of 30 units per academic year and, in 6 cycles, a total of 180 students. Such a small number allows to support the project from an economic point of view and, above all, to recover the complex with minimum impact in terms of spatial and structural transformations. Moreover, together with the EBRIS medical foundation located in the nearby monumental complex of San Nicola, the construction could become an excellence centre of study and research.

The nearness to the other disused artefacts could allow the creation of a real urban cluster with a specific development direction. The Convent of Santa Maria della Consolazione could become a possible extension of the Department of Medicine and Dentistry, with many other annexed services; San Massimo Palace could be converted into a residence for students, teachers and visiting scholars.

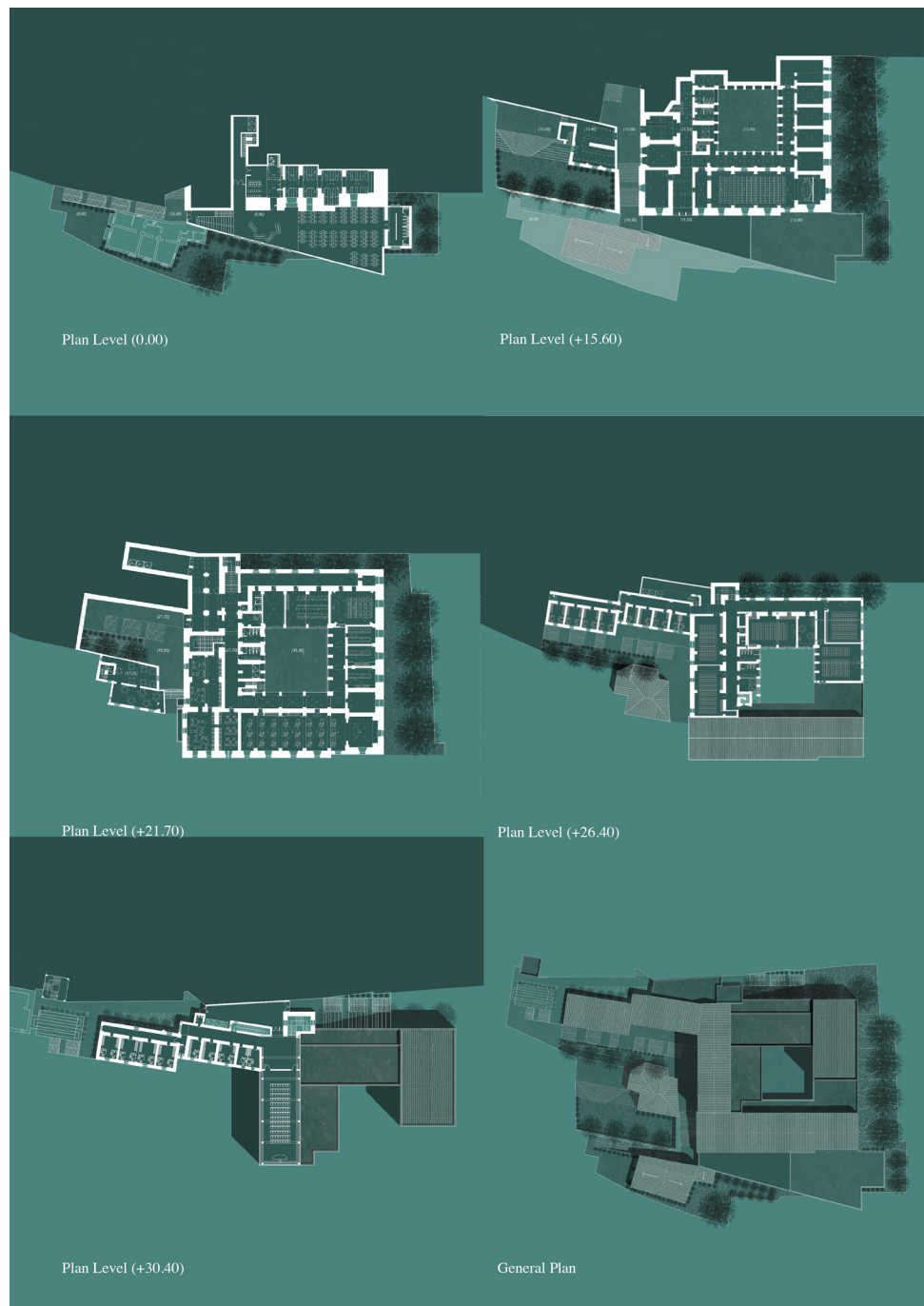
The Checklist used to verify the compatibility of this function returns a result of $17/23 = \text{SILVER}$ (Fig. 8).

The main functions are distributed on 4 levels according to their quality and to the spatial layouts: on the first level, the library and the study room; on the second, the student secretary, Aula Magna, single classrooms for specific teachings, PhD and Master classrooms, restaurant; on the third, didactic laboratories, classrooms, administrative area; on the fourth level, study rooms, meeting rooms and teachers' offices (Fig. 9).

The historical materia is recovered and preserved as much as possible, through restoration and consolidation interventions that respect the quality and the composition of the original technology. New inserts are conducted through the use of distinguishable and reversible materials.

In fact, the choice of the appropriate materials in the recovery of historic buildings wishes to reduce or eliminate the recognized vulnerabilities, by respecting the authenticity of the good, limiting

Figure 9.
Project plans
(design by Sofia Lorena
Corigliani Bolatti under the
supervision of the authors).



replacements as much as possible and preserving the original constituents. Each intervention must be non-invasive, reversible, and therefore replaceable when new materials or even less invasive technologies are available (Carbonara, 1997). The wooden elements allow the recognition of the modern intervention and are particularly significant when integrated with the original structural elements. In addition, steel and wood elements perform the possibility of creating systems to achieve specific tasks without altering the virtuous resistant mechanisms of the existing system (Gulli, 2014).

In this case, the structural wood is used for the new roofs, respecting the authentic morphology, and wood and glass for non-structural dividing elements. In the cloister, after any necessary structural control, the columns are covered with wooden elements and the wheelbases are filled with transparent glass in order to highlight the internal structure preserved. The wood from irremediable floors or windows is recovered and subjected to a process of transformation into crafts furnishings that will adorn the common areas of the building.

The exteriors are redesigned according to the new accesses to the structure in order to guarantee new public spaces for the whole city district: equipped green areas, open-air museum routes where it's possible learn about the history of the religious buildings, spaces for rest and sharing, new parking spaces for teaching and administrative staff and improved pedestrian accessibility to overcome architectural barriers (Fig. 10).

The project allows to rediscover the past through the vision of the present and, at the same time, to build the present through the past, made of techniques, materials, ideas, shapes and emotions that represent the starting point of the "project of the new", considered as the extension of the surviving architecture.

Therefore, the compatible and not indecorous reuse consists in identifying strategies able to enhance the existing heritage and to allow its enjoyment and protection through the recognition of all the qualities and essence of places and constructions (Schmidt et al. 2010:233-242; Sgarbi, 2016)



Figure 10.
*Renderings (design by Sofia
Lorena Corigliani Bolatti under
the supervision of the authors).*

5. FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Conservation. The conservation of the sacred heritage is introduced by the religious community and carried out in collaboration with an interdisciplinary team made of professionals in conservation and architectural restoration, as well as structural engineers, liturgists, architects, social workers and the faithful.
2. Cataloguing. It is the responsibility of each ecclesiastical body to draw up an inventory of its real estate and movable property, both used and abandoned, so as to provide a valuable database for future maintenance, re-functioning and safety works.
3. Contextualization. Every decision on religious cultural heritage must be part of a broader territorial and social dynamics, pastoral strategies and contingent emergencies.
4. Knowledge. Before each new use, it is mandatory to investigate historical evolution of the disused buildings in order to know all the transformations that have led the construction to its current look, so as to evaluate the original layout, any alterations and possible superfetation.
5. Reuse. When it is no longer possible to maintain a religious building in its own original function, an effort must be made to ensure a new, non-decorous use, evaluated according to the 5 general criteria and validated according to the proposed Checklist. Commercial reuse or destinations damaging the spirit of the place are excluded. Adaptations with cultural, social and welfare purposes are preferred.
6. Readability. When it is not possible to make reversible changes, in terms of space and materials, the planovolumetric readability - also through advanced technology - of original spaces, construction components, paths and material and immaterial symbols must be maintained

6. CONCLUSIONS

The care of the religious heritage is a responsibility of the whole society and in particular of the ecclesial community, for which this legacy has also spiritual and transcendental importance. Therefore, it is necessary to share every decision with the several actors involved, in order to know the different social, cultural and artistic contexts.

In the current panorama of architectural research, it is a priority to give the right value to the passage of time, in terms of changeable perceptions, implementation of practices, immutable traditions of the past, visions for the future, by seeking a fruitful balance between contemporary desires to break "space-time" boundaries and always valid ideals of pure conservation.

This research makes clear how it is no longer useful to continue to oppose transformation to conservation, contemporary to ancient, present to past. It is, instead, a continuous process of transition between different levels and approaches that, if apparently irreconcilable, prove to be similar and complementary in many ways.

For disused religious buildings this issue becomes more intricate and, at the same time, ambitious; knowing how to govern the intervention according to the uniqueness of each building involves neglecting the sensationalism typical of modernist culture and achieving compatible, reversible and distinguishable solutions, in maximizing the development of the intrinsic and never-ending resources.

In this context, it is necessary to provide always updated tools to deal with a growing phenomenon, in the awareness of the great variety of situations and the different quality of buildings. Knowing how to manage the renewal process (conception, measurement and realization) allows to guarantee prudent interventions of transformation, aimed at the conservation of the historical architecture and its spiritual values.

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AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Federica Ribera and Pasquale Cucco have conceived and structured the article. Federica Ribera has deepened the study on the reusing disused religious buildings (chapters 1, 2, 3). Pasquale Cucco has deepened the methodology and the proposal of a compatible recovery project (chapters 3.1, 4, 5, 6).