

Article

Military Barracks as Cultural Heritage in Italy: A Comparison Between Before-1900- and 1900-to-1950-Built Barracks

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Abstract: This paper addresses the fundamental role that cultural heritage can play in local development processes to guarantee community wellbeing, quality of life, and quality of society. The enhancement of cultural heritage's tangible and intangible values may result in sustainable and resilient territory, but a number of issues emerge when dealing with the reuse of specific inherited assets, such as former military barracks. This paper conducts an in-depth analysis of these assets, especially those released from the military after the end of the Cold War. We thus explore the Italian case through the comparison of before-1900 and 1900-to-1950 former military barracks. The objectives are the following. First, to discover how these two types of military sites are approached (or no) as proper heritage. Second, to understand how the reuse management is carrying out and how it deals with conservative and profit-driven approaches towards the achievement of cultural, economic, environmental, and social sustainability. Third, to compare the Italian case with similar international good practices to discover common/different trends and innovative solutions to be applied in Italy.

Keywords: former military barracks; cultural heritage management; territorial government; urban regeneration; tangible and intangible values; profit-oriented and non-profit-oriented approach; local sustainable development

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1. Introduction

The paper addresses the issue of management and enhancement of a specific “cultural heritage”, the former military barracks, to frame it as a resource for the creation of sustainable and resilient territories in Italy. The focus is particularly on the comparison between former military barracks built before 1900 and from 1900 to 1950, all of them released by the military after the end of the Cold War. This paper follows and delves into the preliminary debate introduced by Cacciaguerra and Gatti in 2009 [1], which was successively reinforced by the 2017 international conference “Military Landscapes—A future for military heritage” [2,3]. Based on the analysis of former military barracks in the Italian city of Trento, Cacciaguerra and Gatti pointed out the existence of different treatment in the conversion process of before-1900- and 1900-to-1950-built military architecture [1]. The authors above claimed that when military architecture suffered from abandonment, the before-1900-built sites are treated as “cultural heritage”, and thus for such buildings restoration measures have been taken. On the contrary, when it comes to 1900-to-1950 military architecture, these authors found that demolition is the “only” feasible proposal for the future of such military architecture, with no attention to its cultural values. There seem to be many potential issues regarding the preservation/reuse/redevelopment of military barracks arising from Cacciaguerra and

Gatty's hypotheses: typologies of military architecture (in this case, these authors referred exclusively to former military barracks); market-driven vs public-oriented reuse/redevelopment approaches; heritage vs old structure/architecture; tangible vs intangible values of military barracks; and so forth.

In this context, our research question is the following: Are the tangible and intangible values of former military sites built before 1900 and 1900-to-1950 resulting in sustainable and resilient development? The purpose of this work is, therefore, to deepen the discussions and practice regarding the Italian former military barracks conversion into new uses for the civil society and the ways in which these sites are conceived as heritage in Italy. We seek to reinforce Cacciaguerra and Gatty's hypotheses and demonstrate two specific trends involving these two types of Italian former military barracks. On the one hand, former military barracks built before 1900 are considered as cultural artefacts and treated as a proper heritage preserved and enhanced through conservative reuses. On the other hand, 1900-to-1950 former military barracks are treated differently as they are perceived as buildings with little architectural value, so their dismemberment is commonly-accepted in urban planning and urban policy guidelines.

The outputs of our work are substantially three. First, the review and update of the current international and national literature on military heritage in terms of land use management and redevelopment, but more essentially as potential heritage assets. Here, the focus is to deepen the debate introduced by Cacciaguerra and Gatti on the treatment that barracks built before 1900 and between 1900 to 1950 are receiving nowadays. Second, our research delineates how the redevelopment projects of such abandoned barracks are currently managed in Italy based on the comparison of a number of selected cases. Lastly, this work clarifies if tangible and intangible values of the two types of barracks are currently being preserved and enhanced in comparison with international good practices.

2. Literature/Practice Review

The literature/practice review comprises three sections.

2.1. Former Military Barracks as Cultural Heritage. Towards a Definition of Tangible/Intangible Values and Use/Exchange Values

The emergence of modern military sites perceived as "cultural heritage" [4] arose progressively worldwide over the second half of the 20th century. The 1954 and 1999 agreements arising from the "1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict" [5] dealt with the following heritage issues: the governmental administration of military sites classified as monuments characterized by a heritage value; the role of the agents involved, i.e., Ministries or agencies created ad hoc; the involvement of public and private actors in the management and enhancement of military heritage; and the legal instrument for the protection of military heritage in the countries under analysis. In particular, "military heritage places" are claimed to be part of cultural heritage sites according to the UNESCO World Heritage Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage [6].

The end of the Cold War constituted a benchmark in the research on military heritage [7]. A significant quantity of national defense sites has been closed in many countries since then by virtue of the reorganization of the Armed Forces following geopolitical changes and spending review policies [8–11]. As argued by Strange and Walley [12], broadening heritage debate to include military sites abandoned after the end of the Cold War lie within wider discursive and institutional structures of national, regional, and local policymaking and practice [13–15].

Among the wide range of military remains, we took into account former military barracks as the object of study. As stressed by Klupsz [4], barracks are one specific component of a wide variety of military sites, i.e., arsenals, fortifications (including fortified towns), harbors, military and naval bases, testing fields, works of military engineering, and other enclosures and constructions built and/or used for military

purposes. Barracks, more specifically, were meant to housing the military personnel. This practice, called quartering, began in the early 18th century [16] and consisted of the building of barracks to house the soldiers for a long time period [17]. The building of specific barracks typologies has followed an international debate at the European level on national defense systems as well as quartering criteria and innovations over the decades [18]. Turri, Cappelletti, and Zamperini [19] provided an in-depth analysis of barracks typologies and found four main types: ‘barracks with central patio’, ‘linear barracks’, ‘isolated block barracks’ in the form of pavilions organized in three different ways, and barracks not belonging to a specific typology due to an overlapping of models.

According to Sørensen and Viejo-Rose [20], former military barracks can be recognized as heritage as they are a specific feature of wars, conflicts, and their aftermaths. Military barracks are, therefore, specific types of settlement that include specific tangible/intangible values and use/exchange values when they become redundant.

On the one hand, the tangible values of former military barracks refer to the inherited building or group of buildings used to accommodate military personnel separated from the local population in a foreign territory (i.e., Ministry of War and/or Defence’s real estate assets). Former military barracks’ intangible values are mostly geared towards the socio-spatial context of the site and are strictly linked to two specific features. First, how well the public is involved in the planning, design, and development of reused/redeveloped military barracks. Second, to what degree reused/redeveloped military barracks are linked to the local culture, character, and history (i.e., to the oral traditions and expressions, performing arts and social practices, rituals, and festive events) and consequently enhanced through tourism [21]. On the other hand, by taking into account the classical political economy and Marxian economics [22], former military barracks should be perceived as ‘commons’ [23]. In this sense, their use values refer to the satisfaction of social needs, for instance by the provision of new public spaces (gardens, parks, equipment, etc.). The exchange value is, instead, the real estate market value acquired by the barracks over time, which makes them an interchangeable commodity for the owner (i.e., the Ministry of Defense) so as to satisfy other civil society needs.

In the field of urban studies, various authors [24–32] have stressed the importance of former military barracks as heritage, regardless of the time they were built. These sites are generally recognized as a relevant piece of architecture in the built environment for their symbolic architectural, engineering, and urban qualities, all of which can provide numerous conversion opportunities to civil society. According to Fiorino [33], their reuse has emerged progressively as an issue towards the 21st century. Fiorino stated that these artefacts often do not meet the updated constructive architectural, energy, and technological standards. Military settlements are consequently not being in line with the current requirements of 21st century military architecture and do not have an acceptable state of conservation for the maintenance of military functions. This situation may open the way to more than probable speculative expectations on the part of the real estate developer-financial capital. The latter, hence, could take advantage of the real estate values of the places where the military sites are located to create new profit-oriented spaces.

2.2. Early Attempts to Theorize the Management of the Cultural Values of Former Military Barracks Built Before 1900 and Between 1900 to 1950 in Italy

Although international academic and non-academic critics focused on the importance of cultural heritage values of both before-1900 and 1900-to-1950 former military barracks, in Italy we can identify two contrasting positions that apparently do not exist at the international level. On the one hand, according to Turri, Cappelletti, and Kakolyris [34], the regeneration of abandoned military barracks after the end of the Cold War occurred against the speculative-oriented mechanisms of the real estate market. These authors stated that the complete demolition of former military sites is carried out only in exceptional cases, i.e., buildings’ state of almost irreversible disrepair. In the latter

cases, it is claimed that the actors involved (i.e., Ministry of Defense, State Property Agency, and City Councils) have tried to exclude solutions that would substitute the 'use-value' for the 'exchange-value'. However, Turri, Cappelletti, and Kakolyris referred to the before-1900-built former military barracks and claimed that assets that formerly had ecclesiastical uses are worth preserving for their architectural, cultural, and historical value. On the other hand, Cacciaguerra and Gatti [1] presented a partially contrasting position. Their research supported a very interesting topic regarding how the Italian military settlements built in the first half of the 20th century are currently perceived. The thesis of these engineers, which we strongly argued can be extended to the military premises built in the logic of the Cold War period, was based on a double consideration. First, Cacciaguerra and Gatti claimed that barracks built before 1900 or barracks coming from other previous uses, i.e., former Church assets, are considered to hold intrinsic cultural value. This could be the reason behind the attempt to maintain former military barracks' original architecture and morphology and to propose non-profit-driven uses according to local community needs. Examples of this casuistry include the conversion into university facilities, not just in Italy, but also abroad (Figure 1). In fact, 13 Spanish former military settlements have been converted into university campus and headquarters [35], a Swedish former Navy base is nowadays the Karlskrona's BTH Blekinge Institute of Technology [36], and 1863-to-1865-built Santa Marta barracks in Verona [37] and the 1862-to-1889 built Perrone barracks in Novara [38] are nowadays university campuses. In contrast with the conservative reuse of the before-1900-built barracks, Cacciaguerra and Gatti stated that the most commonly held opinion about 20th-century military architecture is very different. This type of barracks is apparently considered worthless so its architecture and morphology can be erased. These considerations are demonstrated by several cases of speculation-oriented strategies of demolition-reconstruction carried out in such military building models, but Cacciaguerra and Gatti referred solely to the city of Trento.

The contrasting positions of Turri, Cappelletti, and Kakolyris [34] and Cacciaguerra and Gatti [1] have not been analyzed in detail by the existing literature. Moreover, the Italian case lacks an inventory of the reuses already carried out that could show dynamics and trends in the management of former military barracks. Filling this gap may lead towards a theory on the management of former military barracks' cultural value.



(a)



(b)



Figure 1. (a), (b), (c), and (d) Former military sites converted into University. (a) The former military hospital converted into the School of Architecture in Granada (Spain); (b) the former Roger de Llúria barracks converted into the Pompeu i Fabra University in Barcelona (Spain); (c) the Gräsvik military area converted into the BTH campus in Karlskrona (Sweden); (d) the former Santa Marta barracks is nowadays Università degli studi di Verona's center. Source: Federico Camerin (2016, 2017, and 2018).

2.3. The Key Features of Some of the Heritagization Best Practices Around the Globe

Among the examples of the before-1900 and 20th-century military sites heritagization processes, a number of initiatives stand out in the international context in the application of both 1954 and 1999 agreements (Section 2). Military heritage issues have been recently discussed in several international conferences promoted by ICOMOS [39], Wessek Institute in Southampton [40–43], FORTMED (2015-onwards) [44–46], and ICOFORT [47]. These events mainly focused on maintenance, conservation, and reuse of former military remains (i.e., battlefields of WWI, WWII, and other wars before the 20th century, and military sites and artefacts) and monuments (i.e., cemeteries, tombs, ossuaries, and mausoleums) according to the needs and aspirations of local communities.

First, the UK English Heritage [48] released thematic studies on both before-1900 and 20th-century military sites to identify important examples of building types worthy of preservation. Among the several reuses, the 18th-century Berwick-Upon-Tweed Barracks And Main Guard is claimed to be a pragmatic example of preservation and enhancement of tangible and intangible values through the wide range of temporary and permanent exhibitions in its museum and art gallery [48,49]. Second, the 1999 New Dutch Waterline Management Plan promoted the conservative reuse of this military heritage, made up of approximately 100 fortifications built in the early 19th century [50]. As stated by Verschuure-Stuip [51], the revitalization combined preservation, renewal, and narrative approaches are changing from a nationally-driven project to a series of local interventions. The conservative reuses revitalized individual fortresses and enhanced regional identity and tourism, introducing a new scale in heritage debates. Third, Cold War military sites (1947–1991) seem to gain more attention in some countries as they have recently undergone specific heritagization processes in Sweden, the USA, and the UK [52–54]. Fourth, as stressed by Camerin [55], the European Union launched projects and programs related to the enhancement, reuse, and regeneration of former military sites. A number of these initiatives are the following: the 2004–2006 ASCEND-Achieving the Socio-Economic Re-use of Former Military Land and Heritage (Fortifications, Arsenals, Dockyards, etc.); the 2012–2014 ATFORT-Atelier European Fortresses; the 2012–2015 ADRIFORT-Adriatic Fortresses and Military areas; and the 2015–2018 MAPS-Military Assets as Public Spaces [56]. In particular, MAPS has involved mostly former military barracks across nine European cities to provide feasible solutions aimed at the preservation and enhancement of tangible and intangible values. This program appears to be a remarkable reference that

extracted key drivers for innovative reuses on the ground of two types of solutions. On the one hand, MAPS took into consideration previous EU programs dealing with the conservative reuse of former military sites during the 2000s. On the other hand, good practices of former military barracks redevelopments, such as the former Soviet Spīķeri Block barracks in Riga (Latvia) converted into a creative and cultural enterprises local hub [57].

3. Materials and Methods

3.1. Data Collection

The methodology relies on the authors' intention to build on the theory, even roughly, proposed by Cacciaguerra and Gatti. Section 2 introduced the management of former military barracks perceived as heritage in the field of international and national urban studies, showing that little attention has been paid to the comparative analysis of the before-1900 and 1900-to-1950 military barracks. To overcome the substantial lack of scientific research on this theme, our work comprises three ways to obtain the information. First, archival research, i.e., cities' archives and Italian and Spanish Universities libraries carried out mostly at Università Ca' Foscari Venezia and Università IUAV di Venezia (Italy) and Universidad UVA de Valladolid (Spain). Second, a series of fieldwork, i.e., on-site visits and interviews with actors and stakeholders involved, between 2017 and 2018 conducted in Italy's Florence (February 2017), Rome (February 2017 and October 2018), and Turin (February 2017). Eventually, the search for international scientific literature using the bibliographic databases Scopus and JSTOR along with the grey literature (i.e., press articles, government's legislative documents, and local administrations' urban and territorial planning sources) was performed.

We conducted this analysis on the basis of two methods: a quantitative and qualitative analysis as well as a gradual categorization of the data. The data collection includes a review of the existing literature on the case studies and the interpretation of official documents released by the actors involved in the management of former military barracks (mostly Ministry of Defense, State Property Agency, and City Councils). In addition, each case study analysis comprises the morphological analysis of the site (with a 100-m-scaled localization map) and the context through a barrack-centered walkable catchment (400-m-scaled map). This work resulted consequently in the identification of the former military barracks' main features:

- Plot size and gross floor area (m^2); number of buildings within the enclosure, and their volume (m^3) when possible. In some cases, gross floor area and volume are not publicly available;
- Year, or époque, of both construction and military abandonment;
- Type of redevelopment projects, i.e., conservative reuse and demolition/reconstruction, and risk profile under the point of view of the real estate market;
- Presence of building classified as "cultural heritage" and their management from the point of view of disposal and regeneration procedures and the architecture and urban design proposals (conservative reuse or demolition);
- Involvement of local citizens in the decision-making process through community-based management and planning;
- Promotion of temporary reuse and activities before starting the redevelopment works;
- Owner, i.e., City Councils, bank foundations, Ministry of Defense, and real estate investment funds;
- Barracks typology according to Turri, Cappelletti, and Zamperini analysis [19], i.e., barracks with central patio, linear barracks, isolated block barracks, and no typology;

- Current state of the former military barracks, i.e., abandoned, reused, partially reused, and temporary reused and new future uses (i.e., commercial, housing, and tertiary).

These data helped us to proceed with the categorization of before-1900 and 1900-to-1950 military barracks, allowing us to decipher common elements and differences in the current redevelopment projects:

- Tangible and intangible values of the two types of barracks for local communities and society, and the official recognition (or not) of these barracks as “cultural heritage”;
- The way of management of the redevelopment of the two types of barracks to understand to what extent “cultural heritage” values are linked to urban and territorial development through cultural tourism, event organization, the attraction of creative industries and other business.

3.2. Case Study Selection

The case study analysis aims to update and deepen Cacciaguerra and Gatti’s theory and to understand the way military barracks built before 1900 and between 1900 and 1950 are treated nowadays. Among the various former military barracks located in three Italian capital cities (i.e., Florence, Rome, and Turin), we chose two in each city to represent the before-1900- and 1900-to-1950-built barracks that have been officially abandoned and included in conversion strategies. Our attempt was the comparison of management and enhancement of their conversion, the understanding of their tangible and intangible values, and their treatment as cultural heritage.

The choice of the cities and the specific former military barracks relies on their similar characters that help a comparative analysis based on three main assumptions. First, each city hosts a number of barracks built prior to 1900 and between 1900 and 1950 [18]. Second, these cities have been largely affected by the disposal processes of military settlements since the late 1990s [58]. A total amount of 365,703 m² of abandoned military sites were officially listed in Florence in 2009 [59]. The 2010 draft agreement between the Ministry of Defense and the Rome’s City Council foresaw the abandonment of 15 military settlements, totaling 800,000 m² [60]. Around 100,000 m² of military areas have been released in Turin since 2010 [61]. Eventually, in 2014, these cities signed a memorandum of understanding with the “Ministry of Defense-State Property Agency” task force for the rationalization of the military presence and the redevelopment of the redundant assets [62].

4. Case Study

4.1. The Cavalli Barracks (Florence)

The late-17th-century Cavalli barracks (Figure 2) is located in the Historic Center of Florence that F.I.V. fund purchased after its disposal in 2014. The site was then sold through a public auction in 2017 for 8.6 million euros to “Cassa di Risparmio di Firenze” banking foundation [63,64]. The current state of the buildings is good as they were occupied until 2016. According to Cassa Depositi e Prestiti CDP fund, the risk profile of the redevelopment project is added value and the conservative reuse will cost around 10 million euros [65]. The barracks is currently converting into a digital hub divided into three main spaces: a school to teach graduates digital crafts, an incubator for innovative start-ups intended to attract 40–50 companies, and public open spaces meant to be “social café” and restaurant. The surrounding area will be refurbished as a part of the operation, according to which the City Council will invest 526,000 euros in redeveloping the overlooking Piazza del Cestello. Although the barracks conversion works started in 2017 and the Piazza del Cestello refurbishment was agreed upon in 2018 through an agreement in the Building Regulations, a lengthy negotiation between the owner and the City Council resulted in the General Master Plan Modification only in August 2020. This Modification divided the former military barracks into two main functions (95% for

tertiary and 5% for commercial uses) that will result in the “House of Florentine and International Start-ups” [66]. The aim is to provide a “Digital Square” on the ground floor opened to local citizens and permeable on both sides of the site, offering perspectives of the neighboring Piazza del Cestello. Notwithstanding the left-wing political party “Sinistra Progetto Comune” protests to demand proximity shops and activities for the repopulation of Florence’s Historic Center [67], the works are expected to end by early 2021. The profitability of this operation will be the cost of renting the co-working spaces, which will be around 200–250 euros for each space [68].



Figure 2. (a) and (b) Two views of the Cavalli barracks. Source: Federico Camerin (2017).

Morphological Analysis of the Site and the Context

The Cavalli barracks lies in a 2260 m²-plot-size block, in which one 2-to-3-storey building is located around a 413-m-sized central patio, supposing a total volume of 30,040 m³. The site was initially built as a storage building for grain in 1695, being called Wealth Granary—Granaio dell’Abbondanza. During the 19th century, the granary was converted into a military bakery and eventually into an Army headquarter in 1956. The Cavalli barracks belongs to the typology with central patio as it consists of a unique building organized around one interior courtyard. Its long history and architectural value meant being registered as a cultural monument under the Legislative Decree no. 42/2004 in 2014 [64].

The site is part of the Historic Center and lies on the Arno River left side within Amerigo Vespucci and Alla Carraia bridges. Numerous historic features (i.e., churches, a theatre) and plazas are located within a radius of 400 m, being mostly surrounded by a residential area with tourist rental apartments and small retail business. Pedestrian-oriented mobility is not well guaranteed as bike lines and sidewalks are severely deteriorated (Figure 3).



Figure 3. (a) and (b) Localization of the site and walkable catchment centered on the barracks. Source: Federico Camerin's elaboration (2020).

4.2. The Lupi di Toscana –or Gonzaga–Barracks (Florence)

The Lupi di Toscana–or Gonzaga–barracks (Figure 4) was built during the 1940s in the southwestern outskirts of Florence, having an urbanizing effect on the neighboring area in the second half of the 20th century. Officially made redundant in 2008, the ancient barracks are currently suffering open spaces and existing built environment deterioration. After the 2014 draft agreement between the City Council, Ministry of Defense, and State Property Agency, the property was transferred to the City Council through the state property federalism in 2015 [69]. Based on a participatory process called “Not Homes but City” [70], an International Urban Design Ideas Competition for the creation of an opportunistic-risk-profile new residential settlement was launched (October 2016–July 2018) [71]. Notwithstanding the failed hypothesis to convert the military compound into a mosque in 2017, the 2018 winning project aimed to demolish all the existing architecture apart from the Command Building. The new morphology will be new 3-to-5-floor residential buildings (60%), the ground floor of which will be for commercial, handcraft, social, and tertiary functions (40%) for a total new gross floor area of 53,000 m² [72]. The current situation is on stand-by for two reasons. First, the City Council should approve the General Master Plan Modification and, second, there is no real estate investor willing to invest in this large urban project.



Figure 4. (a) and (b) Two views of the Lupi di Toscana barracks: (a) The Military Command Building and (b) one of the degraded mono-functional pavilions. Source: Federico Camerin (2017).

Morphological Analysis of the Site and the Context

The Lupi di Toscana barracks lies in a 102,015.36 m²-plot-size block on the border between the municipalities of Florence and Scandicci. The site comprises 26 buildings supposing a total volume of 223,827 m³ and a total built-up area of around 33,000 m² are located around a sports ground. A water power station and a 25-m-high water tower in high strength concrete with a capacity of 80 m³ stood out inside the enclosure. This former military compound is an outstanding example of an isolated block barracks in the form of pavilions with functional blocks. Thought as U-shaped isolated and mono-functional pavilions organized in groups of three on both sides of the large central square (in this case the sporting field), the barracks is among the best example of military architecture in seeking the maximum ventilation and sunshine. Despite its valuable morphology, the long-standing abandonment has dramatically deteriorated the pieces of architecture. Only one building will be preserved—Palazzina di Comando, in English “Military Command Building”—, as it is thought as a piece of late-protorationalist architecture worthy to be declared “cultural heritage” in 2014 [73].

Within a radius of 400 m, the former military barracks is mostly surrounded by fields and fragmented residential areas, typical phenomena of the Italian peripheries. Three main territory-scaled functions are located nearby the site, i.e., the Ponte a Greve commercial center, San Giovanni di Dio Hospital, and the Rehabilitation and Health Care Center running by Don Gnocchi Foundation. The accessibility to the city center is provided by public transportation (tram); nevertheless, this area is affected by rush-hour traffic congestion (Figure 5).

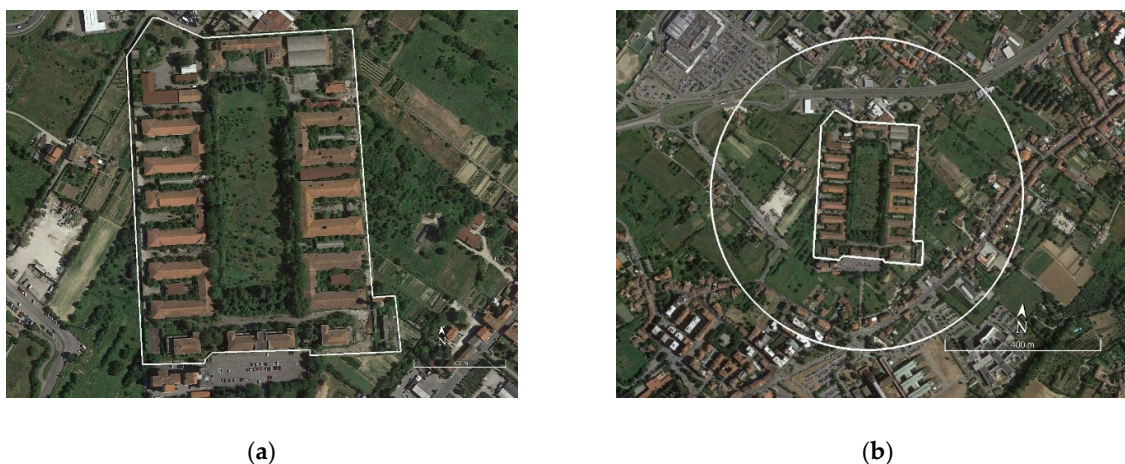


Figure 5. (a) and (b) Localization of the site and walkable catchment centered on the barracks. Source: Federico Camerin’s elaboration (2020).

4.3. The Ulivelli Barracks (Rome)

The Ulivelli barracks (Figure 6) is part of the late 19th-century fortification system named “Entrenched camp” located in Rome’s north-western outskirts. The military compound was transferred to Rome’s City Council in 2015 after being included in the 2014 draft agreements signed with the State Property Agency and the Ministry of Defense [74]. The local administration then involved the citizens in the 2016–2017 participatory process with the elaboration of a number of scenarios for the conservative reuse of many of the buildings and the demolition/construction of new ones [75–77]. The overall redevelopment foresees the conservative reuse of the Trionfale fortress and the Hangar for public equipment, and the creation of new residential settlements through interventions of conservative reuse, demolition/reconstruction, and the construction of

new buildings. Today, every reuse scenario is apparently blocked due to the lack of public and private funding and the still unapproved General Master Plan Modification. The reuse project, as a matter of fact, was granted with 3 million euros in 2017 in the frame of the “Extraordinary intervention programmed for the urban regeneration and safety of the metropolitan and capital cities’ suburbs”, but still not assigned [78]. In the meantime, tours of the former military settlement for cultural and tourist reasons are permitted, but local committees and associations have recently protested against the stalemate [79].



(a)



(b)

Figure 6. (a) and (b) Two views of the Ulivelli barracks. Source: Federico Camerin (2017).

Morphological Analysis of the Site and the Context

The Ulivelli barracks covers approximately 100,000 m² of Rome’s northwestern hilly outskirts and comprises 26 buildings of different époques (from 1880s to 1930s), two of them officially declared cultural heritage in 2007 (the 1882–1886 irregular four-side Trionfale fortress with asymmetrical sides due to the particular defensive requirements according to the local orography) and 2014 (the 1930–1932 Airship Hangar that from 1933 was converted into space for the military accommodation, offices, and warehouses). The existing morphology does not match any barracks typology as the military compound had been the result of the gradual insertion of new buildings surrounding the primordial Trionfale fortress [80].

The Ulivelli barracks surroundings comprise a mix of functions within a radius of 400 m, such as relevant public services (i.e., the Gemelli University Hospital, the Ministry of Defense’s Joint Command for Network Operations–COR DIFESA–, the Roma Belsito post office, and an elementary school) and residential areas with abundant public green spaces. The existing mobility infrastructures favor private cars as the primary mode of mobility within this area and access to the city center (Figure 7).



Figure 7. (a) and (b) Localization of the site and walkable catchment centered on the barracks. Source: Federico Camerin's elaboration (2020).

4.4. The Guido Reni Barracks (Rome)

The Guido Reni barracks (Figure 8) is situated in Rome's Flaminio neighborhood, being a car factory then converted for military uses in 1916. The underuse of the military compound started in the late 1980s, but the official abandonment took place only in the late 1990s. The definition of the barracks' new uses has been strongly influenced by the 2005 strategic plan "The Neighborhood of the City of Science-the Urban Project Flaminio" [81] and the creation of new arts and culture spaces over the past 15–20 years. The new items were the replacement of the nearby Montello barracks into the MAXII museum between 1998 and 2010 [82], the building of the Renzo-Piano-designed Auditorium [83], and the realization of the 2008–2011 Music Bridge [84]. The strategic plan for the creation of a new cultural district and these new urban pieces boosted definitely Flaminio's cultural and tourism accessibility. In this context, the Guido Reni barracks was identified as a proper location for the so-called "City of Science", but in 2013, no buildings were deemed worth preserving. After the selling of the former barracks to F.I.V. fund, the 2014–2015 International Urban Design Ideas Competition [85] established the building of a new gross floor area of about 72,000 m². This intervention comprises the following functions: 27,000 m² for the City of Science, 29,000 m² for private housing, 6000 m² for social housing, and 5000 m² for commercial and tourism functions each, all of which will be connected by a new system of public spaces [86]. The urban project's expenditure will be approximately 270 million euros, while the cost of selling in the real estate market will fluctuate around 4800–5000 euros/m² [87]. While waiting for the City Council's final approval of the "City of Science" urban project and the beginning of the conversion works, the owner, F.I.V. fund, promoted the "Guido Reni District" urban marketing strategy. The activities referred to the action marketing, events, and advertising society "Ninetynine" from December 2016 to May 2018, also related to the MAXXI museum ones [88]. As a result, more than a million people visited several kinds of exhibitions, conferences, festivals, presentations, parades, performances, and shows over a year and a half.



Figure 8. (a) and (b) Two views of the Guido Reni barracks spaces and their temporary reuse in 2017. Source: Federico Camerin (2017).

Morphological Analysis of the Site and the Context

The Guido Reni barracks lies in a 55,480-m² plot, in which 28 1-to-4-storey buildings are located, supposing a total volume of 223,827 m³. Built initially as a car factory, during WWI it was acquired by the military for providing war supplies. Over time this barracks underwent significant transformations within the enclosure and due to this feature, no specific barracks typology can be found here. Nowadays, the state of conservation of the buildings is very precarious due to the long-standing abandonment to the point that significant structural replacements would be necessary for the conservative reuse [89].

The Guido Reni barracks surroundings underwent huge transformations in recent decades toward the creation of a Cultural District surrounded by preexisting social housing (the former 1960 Olympic Village) and tertiary services. The new aforementioned cultural- and art-intended architectural pieces have been added to the existing sporting ones, i.e., Flaminio Stadium and Sports Hall built for the 1960 Summer Olympics. Other facilities within a radius of 400 m are Santa Croce church, a cinema, a Police Academy, a secondary school, the Ciarpaglini barracks right next to the MAXXI museum, and the institutional headquarters of the Defense-owned real estate company “*Difesa Servizi spa*”. In addition, the former military site is located within a triangle-shaped area made up of three boulevards, the so-called “Flaminio”, “Pinturicchio”, and “del Vignola” Avenues. The tram line guarantees a good connection to the city center (Figure 9).



Figure 9. (a) and (b) Localization of the site and walkable catchment centered on the barracks. Source: Federico Camerin's elaboration (2020).

4.5. The La Marmora Barracks (Turin)

The 1887–1888 Alessandro La Marmora barracks played an urbanizing role in the making of the Borgo Po neighborhood, one of the most renowned residential areas in eastern Turin, very close to the historic center [90]. The military officially abandoned the barracks in 2005 and the site was afterward used as temporary accommodation for migrants and refugees and for the 2006 Winter Olympics volunteers. After the failure of the 2010 memoranda of understanding, the new agreement signed in 2014 triggered the selling of the asset to the CDP fund. The new uses were then established in November 2014 through a General Master Plan Modification. The redevelopment will provide housing (at least 60%), and services for citizens and businesses (40% as maximum), corresponding respectively to 11.800 m² and 7.870 m² [91]. Later, in April 2015, the local association “Free Via Asti” occupied La Marmora barracks for seven months to foster cultural and training activities. A participatory process took place between late 2016 and early 2017, resulting in the presentation of the regeneration project by the international design firm “Carlo Ratti Associates” [92,93]. The old barracks redevelopment will provide two main functions for the wealthy: 60% of the gross floor area will be housing (between 120 and 140 units, whose square meterage will range from 20 to 180 m²) and up to 40% of the gross floor area to workplace. Additionally, a 2200-m²-built-up area Museum of Italian Resistance will illustrate the history of this barracks due to La Marmora barracks importance in two periods [94]. First, in 1943, during WWII, it became the headquarter of the Political Investigation Office–Ufficio Politico Investigativo–of the National Republican Guard–Guardia Nazionale Repubblicana, with the task of repressing the clandestine struggle of the partisans in Turin and its province. Second, in the late 1970s, the barracks was converted into a fortified holding cell and a tribunal to judge some of the terrorists belonging to the far-left armed organization and a guerrilla group called Red Brigades–Brigate rosse. Nowadays, the La Marmora barracks remains empty despite sometimes hosting temporary activities, such as the incubator for emerging arts named “Paratissima” [95] (Figure 10).



Figure 10. (a) and (b) Two views of the La Marmora barracks. Source: Federico Camerin (2017).

Morphological Analysis of the Site and the Context

The Alessandro La Marmora barracks lies in a 19,445 m²-plot-size block of the wealthy neighborhood of Borgo Po, in which seven buildings for a total built-up area of 11,105 m² are located around the Parade Ground—Figure 11a,b. This former military barracks is an emblematic example of neo-gothic architecture: the whole site has a strong visual impact derived from the will to assign a high value to military architecture [96]. In this sense, the medieval castle-shaped structure and the other six buildings are protected, but one will be demolished due to its high degradation. The barracks typology belongs to the isolated block with orthogonal comb-shaped blocks on two sides of the square.

The barracks morphology resembles the formal structure and building organization of Borgo Po, set up by an orthogonal grid scheme generating a diversity of rectangular blocks. The reticular layout came from both the land parceling and the large existing public spaces, such as Great Mother of God square—Piazza Gran Madre di Dio. As Borgo Po is a typically bourgeoisie-shaped neighborhood, the functions located within a radius of 400 m are mostly residential. The buildings' ground floors are dedicated to commercial and workshops and the blocks are occupied by mostly private gardens. The accessibility to the city center is made possible by two bridges while the existing transportation infrastructures favor private cars as the primary mode of mobility. Nevertheless, Borgo Po neighborhood is provided with a functional bus transport system.



Figure 11. (a) and (b) Localization of the site and walkable catchment centered on the barracks. Source: Federico Camerin's elaboration (2020).

4.6. The M.Ar.di.Chi. Warehouses (Turin)

The 43,461-m²-size M.Ar.di.Chi. warehouses—Artillery and Defense’s chemical weapon warehouses—was built in the early 20th century in an industrial neighborhood, whose underuse started in the mid-1990s (Figure 12). The military officially abandoned it in 2009 and the area was afterward opened to the public as a museum space of the National Historical Artillery Museum, but it did last only a few months. While abandoned, the site has been subjected to sporadically illegal occupations by anarchists and squatters that definitely vandalized the area. In the meantime, the site underwent a phase of uncertainty as the 2010 memoranda of understanding between the City Council and Ministry of Defense failed and the subsequent 2014 memoranda of understanding did not define any concrete solutions. Although the Turin City Council clear goals for three former military assets involved in the 2014 memoranda of understanding (La Marmora barracks, 4418-m²-size Cesare di Saluzzo and the 7373-m²-size De Sonnaz barracks), the debate centered on the future for M.Ar.di.Chi. warehouses is currently ongoing [97]. The 2010 General Master Plan Modification aimed to redevelop the old barracks into housing (80% as a minimum) and services for citizens and businesses (20% as a maximum). The basic idea was to provide a large amount of social housing for medium and low classes [98]. The planning tool prescribed the maintenance of the U-shaped building, but the final decision on the other buildings (partial maintenance or demolition) will be taken in the executive phase [99]. After the 2014 memoranda of understanding, a number of projects have been discussed, such as the reuse for the Artissima International Contemporary Art Fair [100]. In June 2019, M.Ar.di.Chi. warehouses were included in the “2019–2021 extraordinary Disposal Plan” by the Italian Government, but the asset was eventually not sold.

Morphological Analysis of the Site and the Context

M.Ar.di.Chi. warehouses were initially installed in 1911 as a woolen mill by Piacenza brothers (*Lanificio Fratelli Piacenza* in Italian) and successively acquired by the Ministry of Defense after WWI. The buildings dated back from 1911 to 1940 surrounded by Bologna, Cimarosa, and Monteverdi Streets, being adjacent to an existing factory. No specific barracks typology is recognized here due to the former industrial use and the addition of several buildings by both Piacenza brothers and the military until 1940. Most of the rectangular-shaped buildings overlook Bologna Street, and the only U-shaped building is located on one corner, being very distinguished for its specific early-1900 industrial iconography and decorations (Figure 12a). Regardless of recognizable values held by the site, which comprises industrial and military characters, today none of the buildings have been officially declared cultural heritage (Figure 13).



Figure 12. (a) and (b) Two views of the M.Ar.di.Chi. warehouses. (a) The U-shaped building and (b) desolated military walls. Source: Federico Camerin (2017).

This former military barracks is located on Turin's northeast outskirts, in the historical working-class neighborhood "Barriera di Milano". This area is currently waiting for its regeneration under the 2010 General Master Plan Modification and the 2008–2011 large urban project of about 880,000 m² called "Old Vanchiglia Railway Yard" [99]. The barracks surroundings have plenty of other abandoned and degraded large public properties, i.e., the post office in Monteverdi Street, the military warehouses in Cimarosa Street, and the Vanchiglia railway yards. While the presence of urban voids is significant in this neighborhood, the nearby former 90,000-m² Tobacco Factory, Manifattura Tabacchi, is an outstanding example; this zone presents a mix of activities within a radius of 400 m. These functions are mostly meant for the lower social classes, i.e., commercial shops, factories and warehouses, social housing, an employment center, a football stadium, and the Turin's Red Cross headquarters.

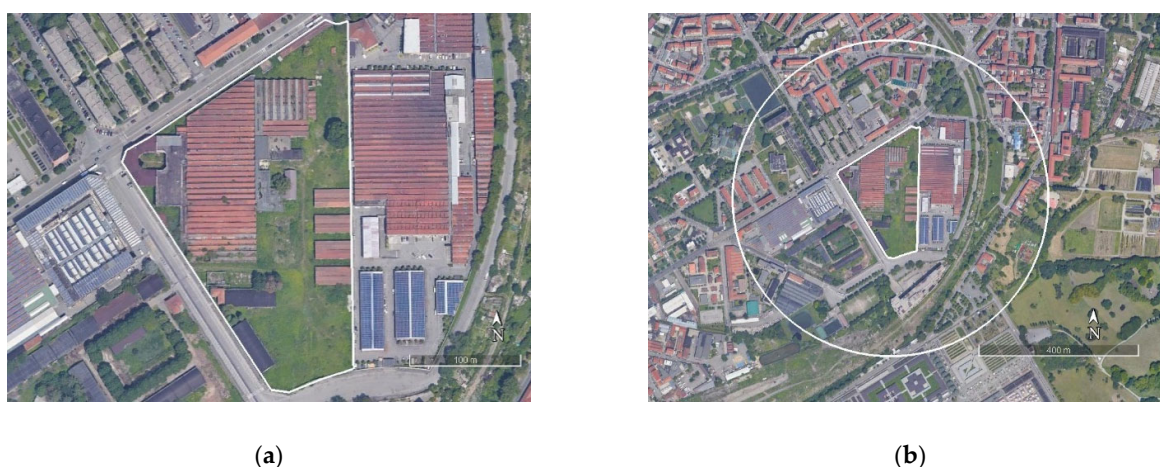


Figure 13. (a) and (b) Localization of the site and walkable catchment centered on the barracks. Source: Federico Camerin's elaboration (2020).

5. Results

The analysis conducted on the two types of barracks results in the following interpretation of the redevelopment projects and the way tangible and intangible values have been managed.

5.1. Redevelopment Projects

The common characteristics of former military barracks redevelopment projects are the following (Table 1). On the one hand, reuses are subjected to real estate development, sometimes through flagship architectural projects [101]. We found two types of risk when the information is available. First, the risk profile affecting Lupi di Toscana barracks, Guido Reni barracks, and La Marmora barracks is classified as “opportunistic”. As stated in the international real estate portal “InvestinItaly” [102], these investments involve high-risk/return strategies that need a high degree of capital expenditure with just capital growth returns. Second, the risk profile of the Cavalli barracks is “added value”. It means an investment with a medium-to-high risk/return strategy as this asset presents a high vacancy rate that needs to be fully refurbished with mainly capital growth returns. Due to their complexity, these real estate development processes take many years to complete the conversion (until now no project has been entirely executed), drawing public attention and causing disputes and controversies [103]. Among the new uses, five out of six barracks will comprise mostly housing for the wealthy (with a very small percentage of public or subsidized housing) along with a mix of functions fit for residential uses. Only the Cavalli barracks will exclude housing to be converted into a tertiary hub along with commercial activities. Most of the projects, thus, are meant for making a profit from real estate developments and pay little attention to the citizens’ real needs and local cultural values.

On the other hand, the approach behind the redevelopment projects of the two types of former military barracks responded to diverse reasons. First, the progressive Ministry of Defense’s reorganization and rationalization within the State administrative reforms [104]. Second, the conversions aim to create profit-driven spaces following the trend of public-owned land management. Former military barracks are consequently perceived as assets to generate financial income [105]. Third, the management of the redevelopment projects responds to the “entrepreneurial city” and its competitiveness. In the context of increasing competition between cities, the conversion of public goods into new civil society functions takes place following the entrepreneurial urbanism patterns. Former military barracks change their status. From being primarily collectively consumed for reasons of territorial defense, they are nowadays considered real estate assets to primarily boost competitiveness [106]. The redevelopment projects are expected to result in dramatic social, economic, functional, and urban changes [107].

In a nutshell, we found that the two types of barracks redevelopments are quite similar, showing common basic conditions, features, and results. The search for new profit-driven spaces is the main aim of the barracks’ reuses, which give less importance to urban and territorial development through cultural tourism, event organization, the attraction of creative industries, and other business. The temporary reuse of the Guido Reni barracks can be claimed as the only exception, but still is intended for the wealthy and for boosting consumerism. It involved a 1.5-million-euro investment that created 287 new jobs between 2017 and 2018, included 1000 companies, and generated 37 million euros of business volume [108,109]. The temporary reuse of the La Marmora barracks for events and creative industries is expected to start within 2020, while a sector of Ulivelli barracks is open for guided tours.

Table 1. The case studies redevelopments' data.

Capital Cities	Assets *	Plot Size and Gross Floor Area (m ²)	Buildings and Volume (m ³)	Year of Construction/Abandonment	Redevelopment Project/Risk Profile	Cultural Heritage	Community Involvement (Yes/No)	Temporary Reuse	Owner
Florence	Cavalli barracks (1)	2260/6226	1/30,040	1695/2017	Conservative reuse/value added	All buildings	No	No	Bank foundation
	Lupi di Toscana barracks (2)	102,015.36/33,000	26/180,555	1941–1947/2008	Demolition-new buildings/opportunistic	1 building (Palazzina Comando)	Yes	No	City Council
Rome	Ulivelli barracks (1)	97,000/-	26/not given	1882–1888/2014	Conservative reuse, demolition, new buildings/-	Two buildings (Trionfale fortress and Hangar)	Yes	Yes	City Council
	Guido Reni barracks (2)	55,480/72,000	28/223,827	1916/late 1980s	Demolition- new buildings/opportunistic	No	Yes	Yes	CDP fund
Turin	Alessandro La Marmora barracks (2)	19,978/18,513	8/not given	1887–1888/2005	Conservative reuse/opportunistic	Two buildings	Yes	Yes	CDP fund
	M.Ar.di.Chi. (1)	43,461/-	8/not given	1911/2009	No project (but conservative reuse of one building)/-	No	No	No	Ministry of Defense

* Number 1 is assigned to the before-1900-build barracks and number 2 to 1900-to-1950-built barracks. Elaboration by Federico Camerin, 2020.

5.2. *Tangible and Intangible Values*

The management of tangible and intangible values of the two types of barracks shows two main features (Table 2). On the one hand, tangible values are related to the preservation of the existing built environment and its morphology within the military enclosures. On the other hand, intangible values deal with the preservation of the cultural memory of the barracks through a number of activities.

The most prominent difference between the redevelopment projects affecting the before-1900 and 1900-to-1950 military barracks' tangible values is the presence of listed buildings to protect and preserve. Only the Cavalli barracks would be entirely preserved, while the Ulivelli barracks and La Marmora barracks would suffer from minor demolitions, with the 1900-to-1950 barracks being subjected to dramatic demolitions. This analysis demonstrates that the management of the six study cases' conversions follows a profit-driven approach instead of preserving and enhancing tangible and intangible values. Former military barracks and their surroundings, in effect, present suitable characteristics to provide new profitable functions for the wealthy. The two types of barracks are generally large enclosures that lie in strategic locations for the real estate markets (i.e., well connected to the city centers or located even within historic centers). They present a low building density and extended green areas, but deteriorated and thus subjected to demolitions [110,111]. Before-1900 and 1900-to-1950 barracks stand out in the urban landscape for their morphology and architecture and they are characterized by a strong identity, endowed with history. Their value in terms of architecture, landscape, symbolism, and identity belongs to the individual and collective memories of the 19th and 20th centuries [112]. The case studies present strong tangible values and good potential for the conservative reuse, but the long-lasting abandonment has played a fundamental role in the current degradation of the built environment and open spaces. Their official recognition as cultural heritage maybe, therefore, the key to guaranteeing the preservation and enhancement through conservative reuse. The former military barracks built before 1900 comprise protected buildings according to the Legislative Decree 42/2004 and just few elements to demolish due to their poor conditions and apparently not worthy to be preserved. The 1900-to-1950 former military barracks, instead, do not comprise buildings and artefacts considered worth protecting. In addition, redevelopments seem not to take into consideration the barracks typology preservation in the case of the 20th-century assets. Regardless of the relevance of their innovative morphology and building disposition at the time of their building, nowadays the most important factor is their potentiality in terms of real estate developments. The Lupi di Toscana and Guido Reni barracks are blatant examples of this tendency. Their tangible values will be erased to give space to a morphology that better matches the 21st-century civil society needs. The manipulation of the existent environment for providing new functions for the wealthy, as a consequence, fails to preserve and enhance 1900-to-1950 former military barracks' tangible values.

Intangible values appear to be underestimated by the public entities (City Councils) and the real estate developers (bank foundations and investment funds). These actors give intangible values very little attention in terms of preservation and enhancement in both types of former military barracks. On the one hand, City Councils provide specific urban planning guidelines for the redevelopment, mostly through the modification of the existing planning tools. The tasks of design are generally entrusted to private architectural firms, sometimes through international design competition projects (the Lupi and Guido Reni barracks) or the designation by the private owner (the Carlo Ratti Associates chosen by CDP in the case of the La Marmora barracks). The task of development is usually assigned by the owner of the area once planning and design duties have ended. By taking into consideration the new future projects expected, intangible values seem not to have been included despite citizens' protests and former comrades-fostered activities related to the culture, character, and history of former military barracks. Annual meetings of former

comrades have been taking place nearby the Lupi barracks and the La Marmora barracks with a rediscovery of a sense of belonging amongst former comrades is facilitated by the social networks [113]. In addition, the local citizens involvement in the decision-making process appears to be just to inform people of a top-down decision by the public and private bodies involved in the transformation (the Lupi, Ulivelli, Guido Reni, and La Marmora barracks). Notwithstanding local committees' protests and occupations against the profit-driven projects, such as in the case of La Marmora barracks, the need to make profits from the ancient military barracks prevails to the valorization of intangible values. The exceptions to this casuistry may be the La Marmora barracks 2200-m²-building reuse into a branch of the so-called Widespread Museum of Resistance, Deportation, War, Rights and Freedom [114] and the conservation of the old fortress within the Ulivelli barracks. Only in these cases, intangible values seem to be partially preserved, although every former military barracks should be linked to the local culture, character, and history through the valorization of their intangible values.

Table 2. A number of features related to the case study's tangible and intangible values.

Assets	Barracks Typology	Current Use	Future Projects Expected	Degree of Values Preservation and Enhancement *		* Involvement of the Public in			Degree Military Barracks Could Be Linked to the Local Culture, Character, and History *
				Tangible Values	Intangible Values	Planning	Design	Development	
Cavalli barracks	With central patio	Under conversion works	Tertiary, commercial	High	None	High	None	None	Low
Lupi di Toscana barracks	Isolated block barracks—functional blocks	Total abandonment with high degree of degradation	Housing and mix of commercial and tertiary	Very low	None	High	None	High	Low
Ulivelli barracks	No typology	Partially used to touristic visit	Mix of functions and touristic	Medium-high	Medium	High	None	High	Medium
Guido Reni barracks	No typology	Temporary reuse and abandonment	Mix of functions	None	None	High	None	Low	None
Alessandro La Marmora barracks	Isolated block barracks—Orthogonal comb-shaped blocks	Temporary reuse	Housing and mix of commercial and tertiary	Medium-high	Low	High	None	None	Medium
M.Ar.di.Chi.	No typology	Total abandonment with high degree of degradation	Housing and mix of commercial, tertiary and touristic	None	None	no data	No data	No data	None

* None, very low, low, medium, high, very high. Elaboration by Federico Camerin, 2020.

6. Discussion

The discussion comprises three main sections dedicated, respectively, to our understanding of the opportunities that cultural heritage can provide in the current society, the international initiatives of preservation and enhancement of military heritage, and our theoretical position of the six-case study in the attempt to claim how our findings can be used by international academia.

6.1. Cultural Heritage as Driver for Local, Territorial, and Sustainable Development

The role of cultural heritage, both tangible and intangible, is widely recognized in the current contemporary society for boosting local development processes [115–118]. Cultural heritage can, therefore, be an excellent vehicle to achieve broader economic, social, political, and environmental objectives [119–122].

We can find different features and trends in these regards. First, cultural heritage can be intended as a booster for territorial competitiveness [123–125] for the following reasons: creating new jobs and employment [126], stimulating new knowledge and its transmission to society, and encouraging creativity and tourism [127–131]. In particular, as regard tourism, cultural heritage can stimulate tourist flows to both reinvigorate hospitality sector and complementary services, and collect revenues based on visits to cultural sites, museums, monuments, villas, or festivals [132–136]. An increasing number of cities and regions are, therefore, trying to take advantage of these opportunities through multiple initiatives, projects, and policies. The aim is the creation and/or consolidation of entrepreneurial networks around cultural assets and the formation of new cultural ecosystem services [137,138] and cultural clusters [139–142].

Second, cultural heritage is increasingly associated with the paradigm of sustainable development [143–145]. More and more experiments with technological and management solutions are implemented within the urban agendas to guarantee fruition and intergenerational exploitation [146]. Cultural heritage is also increasingly associated with projects aimed at safeguarding the landscape, as well as encouraging behaviors and decisions more attentive to environmental and climate change issues [147,148]. Cultural heritage may indeed contribute to create a sense of community starting from the values of the past and build bridges connecting the past with the future [149].

Third, contemporary society recognizes cultural heritage as a tool to achieve greater involvement of local communities. Impacting civil society, revitalizing neighborhoods [150,151], strengthening social cohesion [152,153], and building new social capital [154] can be achieved through the inclusion of citizens in the cultural heritage management. The conservation, enhancement, and sustainable reuse of cultural heritage could improve quality of life, make places more attractive for new economic, financial, and human resources and enrich society as a whole [155–157], and protect community well-being against the impacts of cultural globalization [158].

Fourth, in the past, cultural heritage was mainly seen as a cost difficult to recover for a community and as the object of pragmatic transformations based on functional and financial criteria [159]. Today, instead, we are witnessing a change in the paradigm of cultural assets. Cultural heritage is recognized as a feasible enabler for social welfare and can be assimilated to a public good that legitimizes public expenditure for its protection and enhancement [160]. Cultural heritage-intended policies are being released, with increasing institutions promoting them as sustainable pillars [161–164].

Having clarified these trends and opportunities, some questions arise in relation to our work: Which are the main initiatives/programs/projects fostering the conservative reuse of former military sites at international level? Are the recovering/reusing approaches of cultural heritage capable of transforming tangible and intangible values into sustainable development opportunities? Are the interventions on former military barracks aimed at sustainability or are just meant for mere safeguarding and/or economic exploitation?

6.2. Former Military Sites as Cultural Heritage: To What Degree the Selected Italian Cases Are Geared to the Key Features of International Best Practices?

This part of the discussion highlights to what degree the selected Italian cases are geared to the key features of international best practices by taking into consideration Section 2.3. In particular, the drivers we can extract from the aforementioned country- and EU-fostered projects are the following: the involvement of local and state stakeholders, both public and private, to identify feasible reuse solutions of buildings and open spaces; the temporary reuse to experiment unexpected short-term and cheap functions and/or activities to enable the reuse in the medium and long term; the definition of a Management Plan based on sustainability pillars to enhance business, cultural, economic, environmental, and social characters of the context; the identification of former military barracks' tangible and intangible values; and the identification of local opportunities and weaknesses that foster or prevent the creation of cultural and creative industries, experiential tourism, and food culture. These drivers, nevertheless, need an initial financial expenditure provided, usually by the public sector (City Councils; territorial authorities such as Regions and State; international bodies, i.e., the EU; and private owners, i.e., real estate investment funds and banking foundations) to start the projects.

All the case studies are far from matching the key features of international best practices in the enhancement of tangible and intangible values (Table 3). The former military barracks' reuses seem to be primarily based on financial goals according to the logic of capital. The management of both types of barracks can be intended as one of the entrepreneurial forms of urban governance as it shows three main key aspects [106,165]. First, the goal of public–private partnerships is to secure the flows of capital investment through the mobilization of state powers. Local urban planning tools appear to justify top-down decisions, while resilience and sustainability, if included in the reuses, are just meant for the wealthy. Second, the prevalent speculative nature of the activities undertaken by the partnership and the risks borne by public agencies such as the State Property Agency. Third, former military barracks' reuses are usually not embedded with the local context and the residents' claims. The redevelopments affecting the sites go beyond the local scale and their significance resembles the changing form of the capitalist city.

Table 3. Shows to what degree * the selected case studies are geared to the key features of international best practices.

Capital Cities	Assets	Stakeholders Involvement for Feasible Reuse	Unexpected Functions and/or Activities	Management Plan on Sustainability Pillars	Tangible and Intangible Values Identification	Opportunities and Weaknesses Definition	Initial Financial Expenditure
Florence	Cavalli barracks	None	None	None	Medium	None	Very high
	Lupi di Toscana barracks	Medium	None	None	Very low	None	Very low
Rome	Ulivelli barracks	Medium	None	None	Medium	None	Very low
	Guido Reni barracks	Medium	None	None	Very low	None	Low
Turin	Alessandro La Marmora barracks	Medium	None	None	Medium	None	Low
	M.Ar.di.Chi. warehouses	None	None	None	Low	None	None

* None, very low, low, medium, high, very high. Elaboration by Federico Camerin, 2020.

6.3. Former Military Barracks as Cultural Heritage: A Reflection Starting From the Case Studies

Our work contributes to the literature on cultural heritage by addressing the specific case of former military barracks in Italy. Our research aimed at investigating whether, and in what terms, these assets are involved within far-sighted conversions capable of (re)interpreting them as cultural resources for sustainable and resilient territorial development.

The focus was particularly on the comparison of former military barracks built before 1900 and between 1900 and 1950. The selected study cases cannot be considered quantitatively exhaustive and representative of the whole former military barracks in Italy (whose inventory has not been made public by the state authorities, [166]), but qualitatively. The six cases represent, in fact, relevant examples of before-1900 and 1900-to-1950 former military barracks to understand the way of carrying out their reuse management. Based on the data available, the comparison focused on the main features of the redevelopment projects. The aim was to identify to what extent the conversions may be able to fully exploit tangible and intangible values of the two types of barracks through official (or not) recognition as cultural heritage. Our results detected the patterns confirmed by Cacciaguerra and Gatti's initial theory [1]. Former military sites built prior to 1900 appear to be frequently considered cultural artefacts and treated as a real heritage, to preserve and enhance through conservative reuse. Instead, the 1900-to-1950 former military barracks are suffering from a different policy. Being afflicted by a lack of recognition of their tangible and intangible values, the redevelopments appear to be based mostly on speculative demolition–reconstruction actions. Both types of former military sites comprise strong tangible and intangible values, but their preservation and enhancement appear not to be the focus of the redevelopment projects. The private profit-driven interest, as a matter of fact, seems to prevail on the public one. Indeed, tangible values are protected just in the case of the building recognized as cultural heritage according to the Legislative Decree 42/2004. This finding is confirmed by the qualitative interpretation of the degree of values preservation and enhancement, the involvement of the public in planning, design, and development, and the degree military barracks could be linked to the local culture, character, and history.

The analysis resulted in other emerging aspects that deserve attention, going beyond the boundaries within which the national and international debate on former military barracks has so far developed. In light of the aforementioned European cases (Sections 2.3 and 6.2), the Italian cases show little attention to the more general recognition, preservation, and enhancement of cultural heritage values. Both two groups of former military barracks underwent “*the growing centrality of urban real estate to capital's [...] growth strategy*” so “*the price of land becomes a central economic determinate and a dominant political issue*” [167] with less attention to the local authentic characters. The picture emerging from both the international and Italian experiences is quite different as Italy has not still adopted policies to protect the two kinds of barracks. There is also a substantial distance between the protection and enhancement of tangible and intangible values carried out in the case studies and the potential resources embedded with cultural heritage (Section 6.1).

Although located in cities with renowned art heritage and with a strong tourist vocation (i.e., Florence, Rome, and Turin), the case studies include neither strategies nor actions aiming to boost the military inheritance in relation to art, culture, tourism, and food policies. The redevelopments are involving only sporadic events and festivals that could exploit the particular military-shaped open spaces and architecture. Instead, the conversions have focused prominently on the advantages offered by the real estate sector, without activating innovative networks with local entrepreneurship. An exception can be the Guido Reni barracks' temporary reuse. The reuses management in the study cases is pretty in contrast with a number of European best practices (e.g., ASCEND, ADRIFORT, and MAPS projects). The EU-fostered programs showed that former military barracks may not be simple assets to safeguard or exploit on a (speculative) real estate basis.

Instead, these sites could be meant for the establishment of cultural clusters or ecosystems restoration to boost territorial competitiveness and resilience. As regards the hoped-for repercussions on the social dimension, both types of former military barracks redevelopments are neither concretely inclusive nor significantly open to local community needs. Beyond the future uses of the specific barracks, tangible and intangible values preservation and enhancement did not (and apparently will not) enable any real social and economic benefits for local communities. These outputs were not generally the reuses targets, but new profit-driven spaces.

7. Conclusions

The research does not aim to be an exhaustive exploration of questions of the Italian military heritage reuse but represents a partial study focused on two specific features, i.e., before-1900 and 1900-to-1950 former military sites. By doing this work, we intended to urgently raise an international debate on the tangible and intangible values of these types of barracks based on the Italian case study.

Our analysis can be assumed as a first step to build up a theory based on Cacciaguerra and Gatti [1] findings and do a national inventory so as to comprehend to what extent former military barracks are treated nowadays as cultural heritage. A broader international perspective is also needed to grasp the major limits of the Italian reuse policies, which also show a case-by-case application not responding to a specific national strategy. A deep study of national and international good practices (i.e., an inventory) will be useful to achieve two main objectives. First, partially filling the research gaps at the national level and expanding the findings in other European countries hit by massive disposals of military settlements since the late 1980s [168–170]. Second, raising awareness of how the intrinsic values of former military sites may provide unexpected solutions in terms of cultural, economic, and social sustainability. Our analysis puts into evidence, on the one hand, the serious lack of a comprehensive planning strategy on the former military barracks that exclude the paradigms of sustainability. On the other hand, the prevalence of more rigorously conservative actions or specific profit-oriented choices gave us information on the specific projects and revealed the factors behind such approaches. The disposal of military settlements has been driven by undeniable public budget constraints in relation to the geopolitical changes and the capitalist city-making process. Therefore, one of the consequences has been the speculative approach to both before-1900 and 1900-to-1950 barracks. Not only did the redevelopments aim to provide new spaces for the wealthy, but also failed to combine the regeneration of the existing buildings with the need for a more sustainable and resilient development of regions and cities.

New lines of research should, therefore, focus to connect former military barracks' tangible and intangible values with a broader territorial-government-led approach, which may also resemble existing European best practices. The way of carrying out the redevelopment should really include local communities and stakeholders to provide more locally-centered uses to boost community potentialities, such as tourism and cultural entrepreneurship. Moreover, further reflections should focus on the weak recognition of the former military barracks' intrinsic values. The barracks' morphologies inherited from the past are the result of great military engineering works based on evolving international debates [111]. The relevance of these sites can be quite comparable to other types of cultural heritage in Italy and abroad. Assets such as villas, gardens, or monasteries constitute valid examples of cultural heritage widely recognized as valuable. For this reason, these sites have already enjoyed the necessary public financial support to preserve and enhance tangible and intangible values [171,172]. A comparison between former military barracks and these assets at both national and international level may result in more virtuous recovery options than those affecting our case studies.

Bridging all these gaps, eventually, seems a very necessary precondition in order to conduct new analysis and interpretation of former military barracks reuse at the national and international level. We should not forget that each before-1900 and 1900-to-1950

former military barracks embodies specific cultural heritage values. Raising consciousness among the institutions and citizens may be a fundamental step to improve our wealth and well-being.

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