

Article

Cultural Heritage Recognition through Protection of Historical Value and Urban Regeneration: CSOA Forte Prenestino

Laura Ricci, Carmela Mariano  and Francesca Perrone 

Department of Planning, Design and Technology of Architecture, Sapienza University of Rome, Via Flaminia 70/72, 00196 Rome, Italy; laura.ricci@uniroma1.it (L.R.); carmela.mariano@uniroma1.it (C.M.)

* Correspondence: francesca.perrone@uniroma1.it; Tel.: +39-3488141304

Abstract: The conformation and dynamics of metropolitanisation act as propulsive elements of territorial transformations. The deficiency of infrastructural equipment, the heterogeneity of urban fabric and the lack of services and public spaces contribute to severing the identity ties between settled communities and territories. In light of this, within the more general reflection concerning urban regeneration, we recall the role that cultural heritage plays in the physical and functional organisation of the city, as a reflection of the interaction between community and context. The contribution is contextualized in the research work on the activities related to Thematic Line 4 of the Extended Partnership 5—CHANGES (NRRP). The thematic line activities follow three phases: 1. contextualization; 2. operational phase; 3. experimentation. The research work presented here is part of the ‘operational phase’, to identify strategies and projects for heritage-led regeneration. The article analyses the pilot case of CSOA Forte Prenestino as a starting point for thinking about expanding the research activity to other similar cases. It is a self-managed community centre in Rome (Italy) located in the nineteenth-century Forte, which has become a symbol of collective identity. The case study was identified following three levels of investigation: 1. identification of the municipality, first-level administrative subdivision of the city of Rome (Italy); 2. identification of the main historical, archaeological and architectural emergencies of the municipality; 3. identification of an asset to be analysed as “*Heritage by designation*” (involvement of experts) and “*Heritage by appropriation*” (involvement of communities). The research results show the “Recognition Path” of Forte Prenestina: according to what has been ‘designated’ by urban planning instruments, project instruments, legislative instruments and authors of scientific publications and conferences; and on the basis of the bottom-up ‘appropriation’ process of the asset that has allowed its management, assessment of its cultural and social potential and its development. The research results allow us to reflect on heritage-led urban regeneration as a strategy capable of capturing and promoting the links between social integration and cultural–historical identity.

Keywords: cultural heritage; historical value; collective identity; protection; adaptability; urban regeneration



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1. Introduction

1.1. Metropolitanisation Demands Urban Regeneration Strategies

Metropolitanisation is the result of a complex set of phenomena and actions affecting the evolutionary process of large urban dimensions and the territories they cover [1–4]. “It constitutes a model in which the processes of concentration, commandment, control, coordination, and the creation of codes prevail over other modes of regulation” [5] (p. 253). In fact, metropolitanisation is strongly linked to changes in the production system and to the development of new technologies and communication networks (both in the transmission, reception, processing and aggregation of data and in the management of means of transport) [2,5]. And it is the networking of cities that has made the redistribution of activities possible [6], described as “the re-territorialisation of the daily activities of the inhabitants of the largest urban

agglomerations, businesses and governments [...] the expansion of the metropolitan area, the fragmentation of built-up areas and the development of polycentric urban agglomerations" [4] (p. 77), with consequent changes for inter-urban relations [5,7].

Meanwhile, the exponential growth of cities causes a gradual and significant transition of inhabitants from the centre to suburban areas [2,8] and a *"selective concentration of populations, activities, functions and flows"* [5] (p. 253). This development, on the one hand, encourages activities in peripheral areas that are complementary to those concentrated in the centre and, on the other hand, it causes the progressive impoverishment of the cities' identities. Those circumstances worsen with the lack of infrastructural endowments within cities, with the strong discontinuity and heterogeneity of urban fabrics, and with the lack of adequate public services and spaces to guard the territory. The result is an increased sense of marginality that contributes to severing identity ties between settled communities and territories. The processes of metropolitanisation, therefore, bring about transformations in the organisation of the city and the territory, such that adequate strategies to govern increasingly complex realities are required. *"The metropolitanisation demands a 'unified, integrated and interscalar public government strategy' that makes 'urban regeneration and the restoration of a territorial balance' its main priorities in order to restore the prospect of fairness, quality and efficiency to contemporary city government"* [9] (p. 121).

1.2. Cultural Heritage as an Engine of Urban Regeneration

In this context of reference, cultural heritage can have a significant impact on the revitalisation of the urban environment, promoting sustainable development and fostering social inclusion [10].

Heritage refers to sites, buildings, places and artefacts that are *"'old', grand, monumental and aesthetically pleasing"* [11] (p. 11). It is important to note that the term 'heritage' is not without controversy and can be subject to interpretation. Cultural heritage represents historical memory [12,13]: it is a symbol and expression of collective identity [14,15] and of the interaction between inhabitants and the context of reference [15,16]. It may be considered as a set of material goods but also as a cultural and social process [11], which includes contemporary manifestations [17], ideals, identity values, experiences and traditions. *"'Heritage' is therefore ultimately a cultural practice, involved in the construction and regulation of a range of values and understandings. [...] The discursive construction of heritage is itself part of the cultural and social processes that are heritage"* [11] (pp.11; 13). Heritage is the result of an evolutionary process, which has matured due to past progress and conflicts, and which the community recognizes as a source of its cultural identity [18–21].

The authorities associate some values with each cultural heritage asset —*"aesthetic, historic, scientific, and social"* [15]—in relation to the role they play for the community [21]. According to Spennemann [16], the values assigned to cultural heritage are *"anthropogenic projections"*. Therefore, the relevance and sense of heritage are strengthened when the community is asked to evaluate the heritage [15]. At the same time, it is useful to understand the 'sources' of the identifying and representative values of goods, and, therefore, the political, emotional and moral meanings attributed to specific events, places, objects, or social practices [21–23].

"From a purely normative approach, of an objective and systematic nature—the recognition of cultural heritage of an object depended on its being included on a list—one went to a less restrictive approach, one based on the capacity of the object to arouse certain values that led the society in question to consider it as heritage [...]". [24] (p. 324)

Cultural heritage can be understood as a *"shared resource and common good"* [25]: it depends on the *"intrinsic value"* (aesthetic, spiritual, intellectual) derived from the authentic bond between people and heritage and on the *"instrumental value"* derived from the social and economic benefits brought by heritage to individuals and the community [26]; it is valuable for social cohesion since it renews memories and associations and allows people to share experiences [11,27]; it is important for the personal, interpersonal and community well-being and for the mental health of the individual [16,28] when it evokes a sense of

belonging, attachment [29] and “*affective association*” [16] to cultural heritage; it stimulates a deep sense of connection between individual elements, individuals, and contexts (environmental, social and economic) [29,30] and reflects the diversity of communities and places in terms of their structure and evolution over time [25,31]; and it is a driving force for economic growth, for the implementation of employment policies [27].

“[...] It is acknowledged as a valuable instrument for human development, improving cultural diversity, promoting intercultural dialogue, and implementing an economic development model that relies on sustainable use of resources”. [18] (pp. 221–222)

To conclude, a comprehensive and polysemic conception of cultural heritage is taken into account: (i) extended in geographical–territorial terms, potentially including parts of the city and contemporary territories in their entirety. “*Heritage conservation area is an area of land recognized and valued for the collective nature of buildings and elements in that area which distinguish it from other places and from its surroundings*” [32] (p. 5284); (ii) integrated in disciplinary terms, synthesising the different knowledge and cultural forms of contemporaneity. “[...] *Heritage may be defined and understood in any number of ways*” [33] (p. 154); (iii) extended in terms of time [10]. “*Heritage is a multilayered performance [...] that embodies acts of remembrance and commemoration while negotiating and constructing a sense of place, belonging and understanding in the present*” [11] (p. 3).

In light of this, within the more general reflection concerning the regeneration strategies for the city and contemporary territories leveraging cultural heritage, we recall the urgency of activating policies, strategies and tools that provide integrated responses to environmental demands of an urban–ecological nature, social revitalisation and the cultural and economic enhancement of the city [34,35]. This requires the promotion of cultural heritage while also integrating it into a process of democratization [18,36,37].

1.3. Introduction to the Phases of the Research

The contribution presented here is contextualized in the research work that its authors have been conducting regarding the issue of “*heritage-led regeneration*”. In particular, the research work concerns the activities related to Thematic Line 4—“*Actualisation_Cultural heritage and urban regeneration. Towards a multidisciplinary and experimental dimension*” (CoPI Prof. Laura Ricci), within the scope of the framework of the Extended Partnership 5—CHANGES—Cultural Heritage Active Innovation for Sustainable Society and concerning the project proposals envisaged by Spoke 8—Sustainability and Resilience of Tangible Cultural Heritage. It is outlined in the National Recovery and Resilience Plan (NRRP), Mission 4—Education and Research—Component 2—From Research to Enterprise—Investment 1.3, which is supported by funding from the European Union—NextGenerationEU. The activities envisaged in Thematic Line 4 include the framing of the concept of cultural heritage (“*phase of contextualization*”); the identification of heritage-led regeneration strategies (“*operational phase*”); and the development of guidelines for heritage-led regeneration interventions (“*phase of experimentation*”). The three main stages (mentioned above in round brackets) are described in more detail in Section 3.

The research work contains a preliminary investigation work carried out as part of the “*operational phase*” previously explained.

In particular, the manuscript focuses on applying a methodology to analyse cultural heritage assets, with specific emphasis on assessing unique identification processes [36]:

- Through “*designation*” of the asset’s intrinsic characteristics, formal recognition is determined by disciplinary experts through investiture from above;
- Through “*appropriation*” of the good’s intrinsic and contextual components, informal recognition is determined through nomination from below to involve the target population.

The cultural heritage is identified and evaluated by a series of disciplinary experts (consulted for their consultancy and management skills on the topic), with the related involvement of the community, which recognizes its role and value for the purpose of its

authentic protection and medium- and long-term valorisation [38–40]. The communities to which the cultural heritage belongs form a personal and collective bond [39] with it and play a central role since they are the ones who transmit these living heritages to future generations [37]. *“The celebration and protection of the diversity of cultural heritage [...] became a token of faith”* [41] (p. 434).

The aim of this contribution is to explore cultural heritage sites that are significant for the well-being of a community and to comprehend the processes of designation and appropriation that have shaped them. This is a preliminary analytical approach, which tries to highlight the existing differences, for informational purposes, between the above-mentioned processes, starting from a specific case study.

The contribution focuses on the self-managed social centre CSOA Forte Prenestino, situated in Rome (Italy) within a 19th-century military fortress. Please note that the original name was Forte Prenestina and that it changed to CSOA Forte Prenestino in 1986, the year in which the military fortress became home to the self-managed social centre. In that sense, the ex-military fortress has assumed a critical role as a symbol of collective identity. It was considered a reference for an identification process involving structural, management, socio-cultural and relational issues between urban systems.

From the bibliographical references identified and quoted, the analytical–cognitive approach leading to the definition of a “Recognition Path” ‘by designation’, and at the same time, ‘by appropriation’, of cultural heritage as a lever for urban regeneration strategies seems to not have been much explored and plumbed in the literature. This is what this contribution is attempting to fill. Starting from a detailed analysis of the above case study, we made some observations on the ideas of *“Heritage by designation”* (top-down) and *“Heritage by appropriation”* (bottom-up). Moreover, this article reflects on the role of heritage as a reflection of a constantly evolving community and expression of the interaction between people and places over time. The document finishes with a reflection on urban regeneration as a strategy capable of grasping and promoting the links between social integration and the historical–cultural identity of the heritage.

The contribution tries to answer the following research questions: How do the paths of recognition ‘by designation’ and ‘by appropriation’ of cultural heritage develop; how do they interact and what process do they follow? How and in what way can cultural heritage potentially act as a lever for urban regeneration strategies?

2. Theoretical Approach

This research project began by reflecting on the essential connections between the recognition of cultural heritage and identifiable top-down and bottom-up approaches that result in the preservation, conservation, enhancement and use of cultural heritage (Figure 1).

According to Rautenberg (1998) in Tweed, Sutherland [36], cultural heritage can be treated as: *“Heritage by designation”* and *“Heritage by appropriation”* [42–44]. The role and value of cultural heritage *“[...] are realized either through designation by scientists, experts or politicians, or through appropriation by a socioeconomic group”* [44] (p. 7).

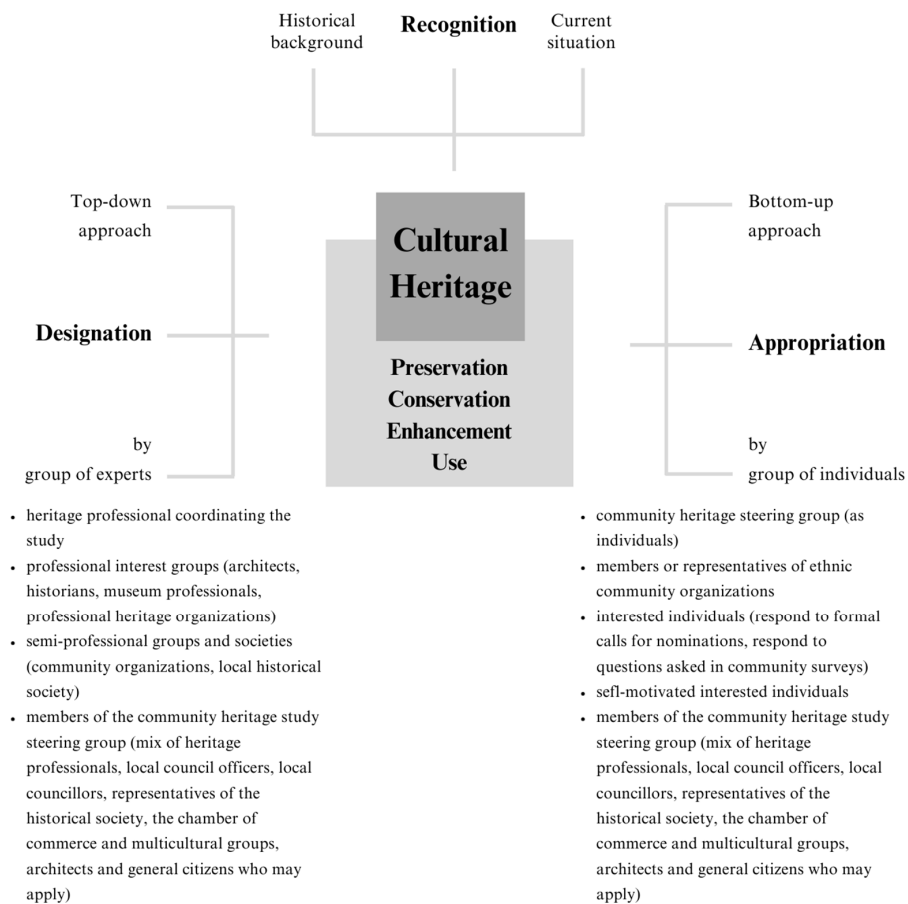


Figure 1. Concise outline presenting the theoretical approach adopted to recognize and analyse the role and significance of cultural heritage. The groups of experts and individuals were identified through the contribution of Spennemann [39].

2.1. Cultural Heritage by Designation

“Heritage by designation” refers to the identification of cultural heritage assets by experts from different disciplinary categories, based on adequate cognitive activity. The experts then apply an “honorary label” to these assets [36,43], ensuring their protection and preservation for public enjoyment. As part of this process, all cultural goods and resources are registered and institutionalised [42]. This approach follows top-down deliberation strategies [36]. “It is a process of collective credit reconnaissance in the scientific (research, publications, conferences), legal (delimitation of property rights), financial, fiscal, and technical (obligation to use restoration specialists) fields” [44] (p. 21).

Let us try to summarise the points described so far in Table 1.

Table 1. Recognition of cultural heritage by designation.

Cultural Heritage by Designation		
Recognition	Urban Planning field	city planning regional planning rural planning plans
	Legal field	specific law protective restrictions property rights
	Scientific field	research publications conferences

2.2. Cultural Heritage by Appropriation

“Heritage by appropriation” typically arises from the evaluation and nomination of the property by the public responsible for its management and promotion, rather than solely through top-down initiatives and actions. It is sometimes called “*de facto heritage*” [36] since its status is based on intended use and assumed functions, rather than a decision established from above. Dupagne [42] defines it as “*the social or ethnologic heritage*”. A particular socio-economic group has taken a good and transformed it into a form of heritage. This heritage may not be recognized as such by scientific specialists [44]. It may lack legal validation from the competent authority, but ordinary citizens legitimise and cultivate its value. “*Its legitimacy is based on its capability to summon up lay people, social actors and stakeholders. It does not exist a priori in a substantial way or lasting for long time*” [42] (p. 11). This approach follows bottom-up methods of deliberation [36]. Here, the preservation of cultural heritage rests on a network of collective interests, which develop over time. The asset’s use and context, economic demands, power ideologies, citizen management, the social status of those who have appropriated it, and the competent authority’s role can result in revised or excluded functions and modified priorities. “*The heritage through appropriation is commonly later integrated in the officially designated heritage for reasons of public management and authority. It then passes from the status of putative heritage to that of legitimate heritage. This means that an intervention on an urban ensemble that initially was damaged and/or without specific cultural character, may lead to its heritage designation*” [44] (p.22).

Let us try to summarise the points described so far in Table 2.

Table 2. Recognition of cultural heritage by appropriation.

Cultural Heritage by Appropriation		
Recognition	Management	collective interests civil legitimisation functions assumed
	Assessment	material/immaterial aspects end use outlook
	Development	cultural promotion historical position social advancement

2.3. Cultural Heritage: From Recognition to Preservation, Conservation, Enhancement and Use

The process of designating and appropriating cultural heritage assets starts with identifying them in order to define suitable activities for their protection, conservation, enhancement and use.

The recognition phase outlines the asset’s characteristic conformity in relation to the relevant social, historical, cultural, economic and environmental context. When describing the different facets of goodness, consideration is given to both the historical context and the current situation.

Preservation involves performing all required functions and adopting appropriate measures to safeguard the asset from any potential harm and ensure its public benefit. The concept of preservation is linked to the duty that the present has towards the past to receive, venerate and, in turn, pass on to present and future generations what has been inherited [11,40,44]. “*Heritage wasn’t only about the past—though it was that too—it also wasn’t just about material things—though it was that as well—heritage was a process of engagement, an act of communication and an act of making meaning in and for the present*” [11] (p. 1). The sense of heritage is linked to the cultural heritage. The latter belongs partly to those who generated it and partly to those who benefit from it and will benefit from it [11]. “*If we wish that our cultural heritage indeed has a future, then heritage must be relevant to the present*” [40] (p. 7).

Conservation enables the preservation of an asset's character and value over time, even when it undergoes certain operations and transformations [45]. *"It is an approach which aims to preserve and enhance for the purposes of public access and understanding"* [46]. Reference is made to the concept of *"active conservation"* [40], which envisions greater involvement of users and stakeholders by the authorities in the preservation of heritage values. Additionally, *"integrated conservation"* [40,47] is mentioned as an approach aimed at resolving conflicts between heritage conservation and the promotion and continuation of urban development [40], taking into account the existing physical and social context of a given location.

Enhancement involves regulating activities and performing functions to improve knowledge of cultural heritage. This ensures its optimal use for public benefit and promotes cultural development. It also encourages and supports activities that preserve cultural heritage. *"[...] The process encompasses renovating endangered or spoilt listed buildings and zones, and establishing fresh, consistent, and merged environmental features"* [12] (art. 1).

Use, which denotes the ability to avail oneself of and relish an asset in its distinct forms and embodiments, is implemented in a way that does not compromise the worth of cultural heritage or its associated purposes.

The Table 3 below summarises those concepts.

Table 3. Recognition of cultural heritage according to its preservation, conservation, enhancement and use.

Cultural Heritage		
Recognition	Preservation	Defending the good from what could harm it and compromise its public enjoyment.
	Conservation	Preserving the asset's character and worth unchanged over time, and during specific operations and transformations.
	Enhancement	Promoting awareness of cultural heritage and ensuring the optimal conditions for public access and enjoyment.
	Use	Disposing of an asset in a manner that preserves its value and associated functions.

A balanced solution must be reached that acknowledges the significance and prominence of cultural heritage alongside effective management, planning, utilisation and evolution of the asset in question. This will enable its unfettered enjoyment over time.

3. Materials and Methods

The activities envisaged by the larger research program outline a methodological scheme divided into 3 main phases:

1. A first *"phase of contextualization"*, aimed at highlighting the different and possible typological articulations and meanings of cultural heritage, understood in comprehensive and plural terms;
2. A second *"operational phase"*, aimed at defining, according to three levels of investigation—local scale, municipal scale, large scale—a framework of operational references for the implementation of urban regeneration strategies and projects, which uses cultural heritage as a strategic lever;
3. A third *"phase of experimentation"*, aimed at implementing the simulation of a process that significantly combines urban regeneration and cultural heritage and which allows the theoretical, methodological and operational references identified in the previous phases to be verified and updated, in order to define guidelines for heritage-led regeneration interventions.

This research work is a preliminary investigation work carried out as part of the *"operational phase"* previously explained.

3.1. Recognition of Case Study

The proposed case study was identified, and then analysed, starting from 3 phases of cognitive analysis based on different levels of investigation:

1. Identification of the reference municipality, which represents a first-level administrative subdivision of the city of Rome (Italy);
2. Identification of the main historical, archaeological and architectural emergencies within the municipality;
3. Identification of an asset to be analysed as “Heritage by designation” and “Heritage by appropriation”.

3.1.1. Phase 1: Identification of the Reference Municipality

Municipality V of Rome was chosen as the reference area because it is second only to the historic centre when it comes to archaeological and architectural presences and emergencies, as well as being an area with a very high population density—the second highest in Rome (Table 4).

Table 4. Roman municipality locator map with numbers. Identification of population, area and density data [48].

Municipality	Population *	Area in km ²	Population Ensity	Map
Municipality I—Historical Centre	164,520	19.91	8263	
Municipality II—Parioli/Nomentano	165,496	19.60	8444	
Municipality III—Monte Sacro	204,342	97.82	2089	
Municipality IV—Tiburtina	171,890	49.15	3497	
Municipality V—Prenestino/Centocelle	237,648	27.00	8802	
Municipality VI—Roma Delle Torri	242,082	113.40	2135	
Municipality VII—Appio-Latino/Tuscolano/Cinecittà	311,500	46.80	6656	
Municipality VIII—Appia Antica	128,417	47.29	2716	
Municipality IX—EUR	183,282	183.17	1001	
Municipality X—Ostia/Acilia	228,042	150.64	1514	
Municipality XI—Arvalia/Portuense	152,569	70.90	2152	
Municipality XII—Monte Verde	140,337	73.12	1919	
Municipality XIII—Aurelia	130,379	68.70	1898	
Municipality XIV—Monte Mario	190,283	131.30	1449	
Municipality XV—Cassia/Flaminia	160,630	186.70	860	

* 31 December 2022.

3.1.2. Phase 2: Identification of the Main Emergencies within the Municipality

On a historical level, Municipality V has three phases of settlements, characterised by the presence of numerous historical, archaeological and architectural emergencies [49]:

- A first phase relating to imperial antiquity. Testimonies of the time are of the patricians Villas Gordiani and Ad Duas Lauros; the remains of the Alessandrino, Anio Vetus and Novus Aqueducts; the Mausoleum of Helena; the Catacombs of Saints Marcellinus and Peter and other historical finds or discoveries;
- A second phase consisting of the long Middle Ages. The following date back to this period. Villa Serventi and Villa De Sanctis, owned by the agrarian bourgeoisie; among the monumental remains are Tor dé Schiavi and Tor Tre Teste, for defensive purposes;

- A third and final phase opened after 1870, following the proclamation of Rome as the capital of the New Kingdom. Examples from this period include the former SNIA factory. As far as the urban history of the area is concerned, the Villini district in the Pigneto, the Tor Tre Teste urban zone and the Casilino Local Plan no. 23 are worth mentioning. The Forts of Rome date back to this period, military works erected to defend the strip of territory immediately surrounding the city, constituting the entrenched field of the city.

Figure 2a,b describe the territory of the current Municipality V—established by the Capitoline Assembly in 2013, by merging the previous Municipalities VI and VII—highlighting, of its salient features, the set of qualifying elements and structuring elements—existing and planned—of its specific urban structure [50,51]. Forte Prenestina is referred to as a “*Centralità e luogo centrale dove si svolgono le attività collettive*” (centrality and central place where collective activities take place) and it falls into the following category “*Spazi aperti ed assi*” (open spaces and axes).

3.1.3. Phase 3: Identification of an Asset to Analyse as Heritage by Designation and Appropriation

The pilot case of Forte Prenestina is analysed as a starting point for thinking about expanding the research activity to other similar cases located in the Roman territory (Italy). The nineteenth-century Forte Prenestina currently accommodating the self-managed social centre CSOA Forte Prenestino exemplifies an identification process that presents structural, administrative, socio-cultural and relational challenges for the urban system.

The consultation in the case of Forte Prenestina and CSOA Forte Prenestino occurred via bibliographic research. The main reference publications relating to the history of the case study and the transformations undergone over time, from a structural and functional point of view, were taken into consideration.

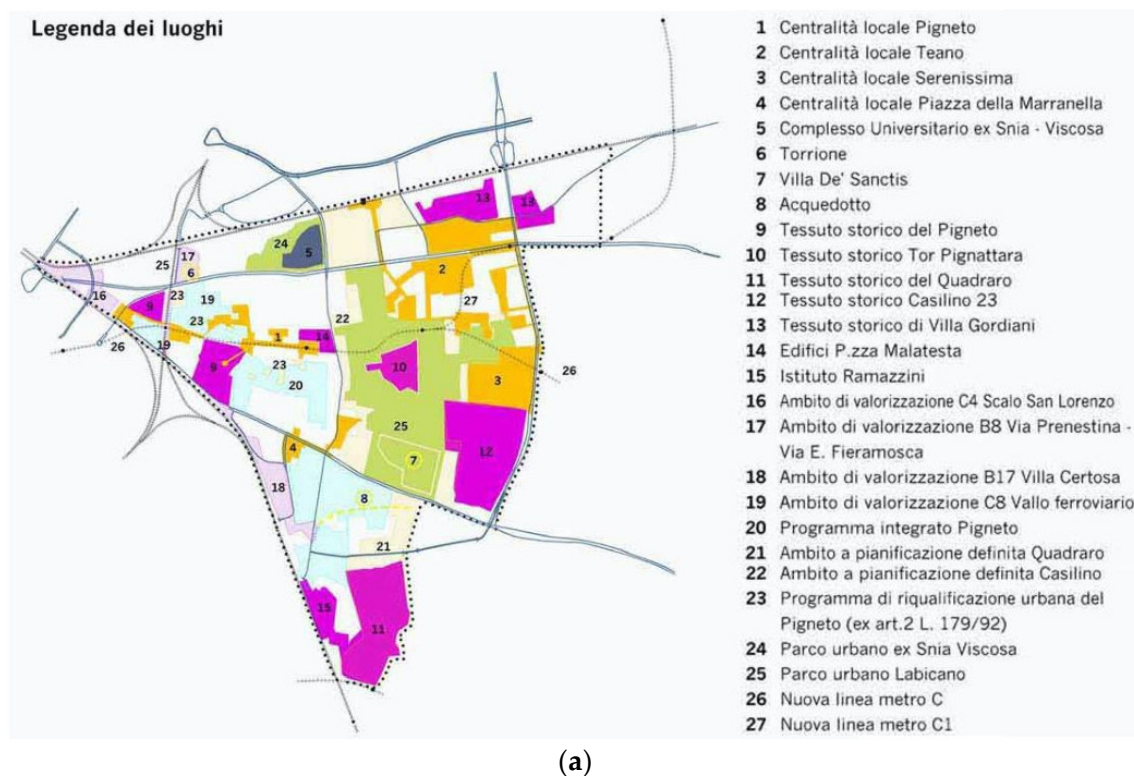
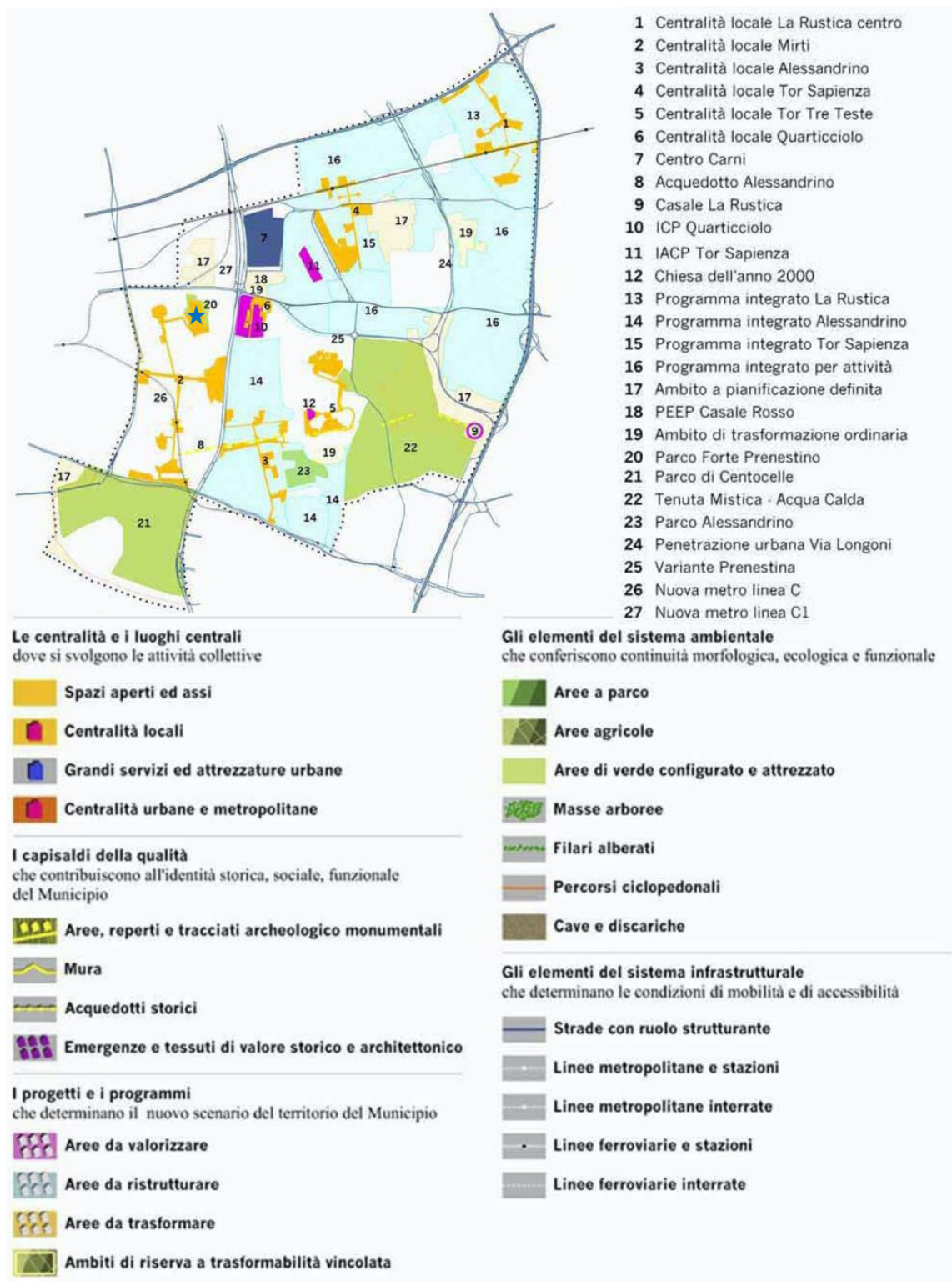


Figure 2. Cont.



(b)

Figure 2. General Regulatory Plan—PRG of the Municipality of Rome 2008. Communication drawings. Scenarios of municipalities. “Legenda dei luoghi” (legend of places): (a) C06—Ex-Municipality VI [50]; (b) C07—Ex-Municipality VII [51]. The blue star symbolizes Forte Prenestina. It was allocated to “Spazi aperti ed assi” (open spaces and axes).

Historical Background

Forte Prenestina is a military fortress located in Rome, Italy. It was commissioned by King Victor Emmanuel to bolster the city's defences [52–54]. The fortification was constructed between 1880 and 1884 along Via Prenestina, from which it derived its name [55–57]. The isolated, trapezoidal structure forms part of the Campo Trincerato (the entrenched field of the city), a discontinuous ring spanning approximately 37 km and featuring 15 forts and 4 batteries situated along the consular roads (Figure 3) [57,58]. The defensive military system consisting of the forts was designed between 1877 and 1891, following the issuing of Royal Decree No. 4007 of 12 August, “as a deterrent against a possible French invasion aimed at restoring the sovereignty of the Pope in the now former Papal State” [59]. However, due to the obsolescence of the forts in warfare and tactics, their strategic defensive role changed to different functions over time. Initially, they served as the sites for periodic military exercises and later transformed into barracks and depots for military operations, some of which continue to operate today [58].

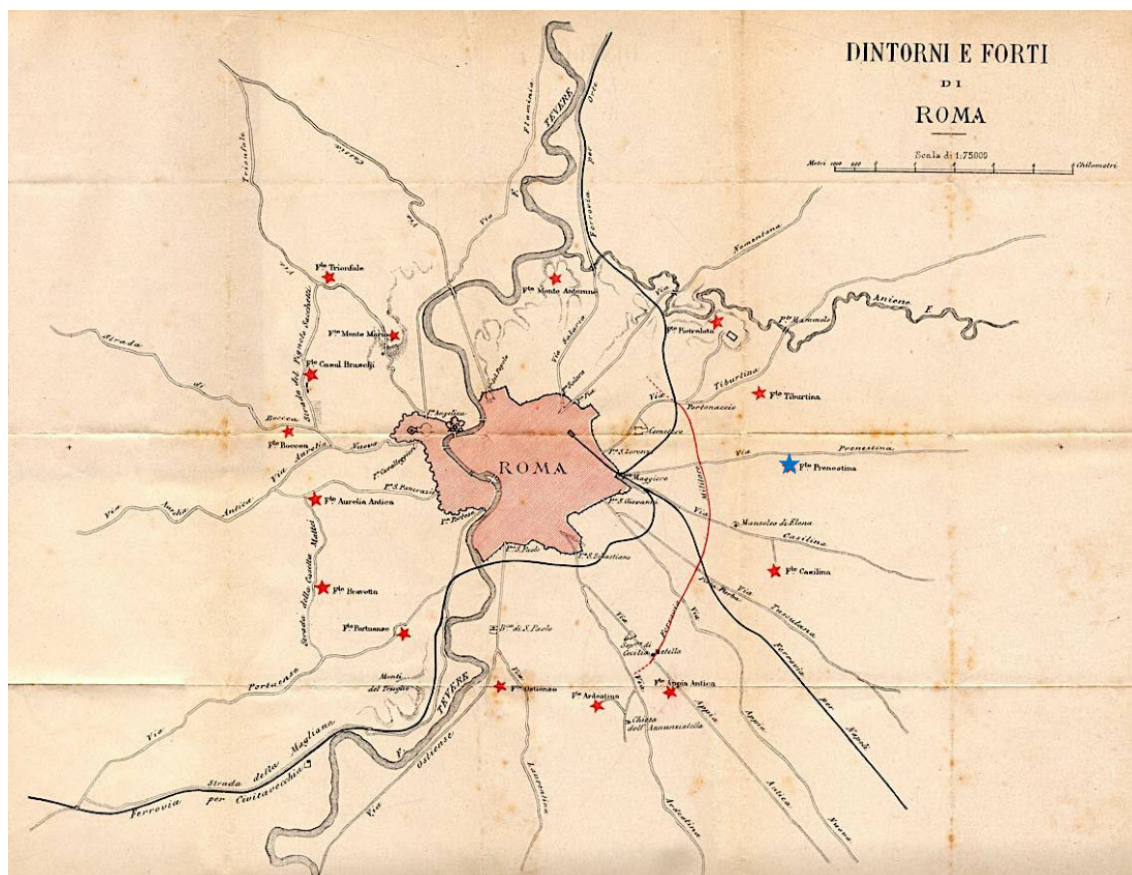


Figure 3. This is Campo Trincerato (the entrenched field of the city) of Rome [57,59]. The red stars represent the Forts of Rome. The blue star symbolizes Forte Prenestina.

Current Situation

The Forts of Rome were removed from the list of state fortifications with Royal Decree n. 2179 of 9 October 1919. This decision was made based on the recommendation of the war minister at that time [60–62]. Subsequently, these forts were no longer configured as a system of interdependent elements; instead, they remained isolated. The spaces between one and the other became progressively denser, touching the areas of the compendiums, i.e., the buffer zones serving and complementing the aforementioned fortifications [61].

Since that moment, having become incorporated into the urban fabric, the forts have taken on various functions or have been temporarily abandoned (Table 5):

- Among the forts currently or partially abandoned are Monte Mario, Casilina;

- Among the forts are Trionfale, Boccea, Bravetta, Portuense, Ardeatina, Monte Antenne;
- Among the forts used as barracks there are Braschi, Aurelia Antica, Ostiense, Tiburtina, Pietralata;
- Among the forts used for Air Force activities are Appia Antica, Casilina;
- Among the forts, the only one to have assumed the function of a social centre, as a place of sociability, meeting, entertainment and organisation of collective time, and of exchange of ideas, visions, energies and knowledge, is Forte Prenestina.

Table 5. List of the Forts of Rome: years of construction, surface area (ha), municipality, location, distance from the next (km), current use, restriction [57].

Forts of Rome	Years of Construction	Surface Area (ha) **	Municipality	Location	Distance from the Next One (km) **	Current Use	Restriction
Monte Mario	1877–1882	8.4	I	Viale del Parco Mellini snc	2	Italian Army—8th Infrastructure Department (abandoned)	D.M. * 6 August 2008
Trionfale	1882–1888	21.0	XIV	Via Trionfale 7400	4	Italian Public Property Agency—Ex-Barracks “Arnaldo Ulivelli” (being delivered to Rome Capital, IT)	D.M. * 23 November 2007
Braschi	1877–1881	8.2	XIV	Via della Pineta Sacchetti 216	4	Italian Army—Barracks “Casal Forte Braschi—Nicola Calipari”	D.M. * 6 August 2008
Boccea	1877–1881	7.3	XIII	Via di Boccea 251	1.5	Italian Public Property Agency—Ex-Military Prison Forte Boccea (being delivered to Rome Capital, IT)	D.M. * 28 April 2008
Aurelia Antica	1877–1881	5.7	XII	Via Aurelia Antica 443	2	Italian Finance Police—Barracks “Cefalonia Corfu”	D.M. * 11 August 2008
Bravetta	1877–1883	10.6	XII	Via di Bravetta 739	2	Italian Public Property Agency (being delivered to Rome Capital, IT)	D.M. * 28 April 2008
Portuense	1877–1881	5.2	XI	Via Portuense 545	2	Italian Public Property Agency (being delivered to Rome Capital, IT)	D.M. * 13 July 1984
Ostiense	1882–1884	8.8	IX	Salita del Forte Ostiense 15	2.5	Italian Police—Barracks “Forte Ostiense”	D.M. * 15 November 1975
Ardeatina	1879–1882	11.2	VIII	Via di Grotta Perfetta snc	2.5	Italian Public Property Agency (being delivered to Rome Capital, IT)	D.M. * 28 April 2008
Appia Antica	1877–1880	16.5	VIII	Via Appia Antica 258	2	Italian Air Force—Re.S.I.A.	D.M. * 5 August 2008
Casilina	1881–1882	3.8	V	Via di Centocelle 301	4	Italian Air Force—Ex-Air Base Centocelle “Francesco Baracca” (partially disused)	D.M. * 23 February 1984
Prenestina	1880–1884	13.4	V	Via Federico Delpino snc	3	Italian Public Property Agency—CSOA Forte Prenestino	D.M. * 28 April 2008
Tiburtina	1880–1884	23.8	IV	Via Tiburtina 780	2	Italian Army—Barracks “Albanese Ruffo”	D.M. * 29 April 2004
Pietralata	1881–1885	25.4	IV	Via del Forte Pietralata 7	2	Italian Army—Barracks “Antonio Gandin”	D.M. * 23 April 2012
Monte Antenne	1882–1891	2.5	II	Viale del Forte Antenne 25	4	Rome Capital, IT	D.M. * 6 August 2008

* Ministerial decree. ** This information was taken from the Wikipedia page Forts of Rome.

Regarding the preservation status, Forte Prenestina (Figure 4) is presently in satisfactory condition. As per the Social Promotion Association Progetto Forti, “it displays every subterranean volume and rampart profile in their original state. Additionally, the parade ground, featuring an earth bottom and typical surface water collection channels made of cobblestones, is also showcased” [57]. Many of the fort’s original structural elements, including the moat, Carnot-style walls, the powder magazine, drawbridge, ravelin, entrance gate, frieze and cast-iron parapet on the rampart, have been preserved despite being cemented. The

parade ground and some galleries have undergone aesthetic alterations, in the form of colourful murals.

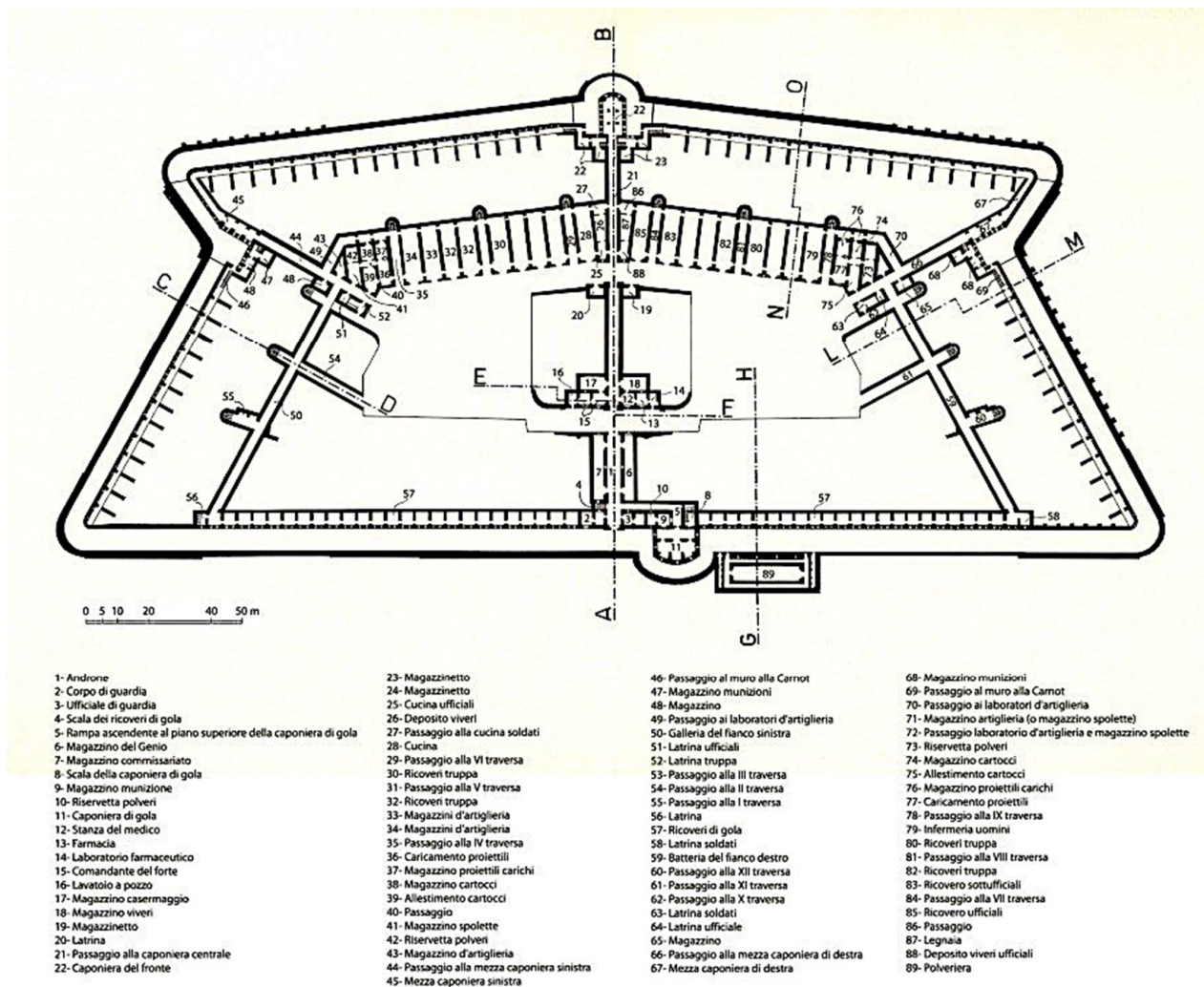


Figure 4. This is a revised version of the Forte Prenestina Plan along with its structural components [60], specifically focusing on “*Pianta delle Murature*” (plan of the masonry). TAV III. Rome, Forte Prenestina, military engineering, Rome Territorial Command, Rome Headquarters, Piazza di Roma 1889 [59].

4. Results

4.1. Recognition of Forte Prenestina by Designation (Top-Down)

Starting from Royal Decree n. 2179 of 1919, the attempts to reconvert Forte Prenestina in a civil way were unsuccessful [63].

It was not until the General Regulatory Plan of the Municipality of Rome, which was approved by D.P.R. (President of Italy Decree) on 16 December 1965, that Forte Prenestina’s definitive civil function was established. It was allocated to “*Zona N—Parchi pubblici e impianti sportivi*” (Zone N—public park and sports facilities) [55,56,61,64] (Figure 5), recognizing for the first time its social and cultural potential in the complex dynamics of urban transformation [62]. Unfortunately, unfavourable economic, organisational, managerial and strategic conditions have prevented the enhancement of the fort’s role. Consequently, it was assimilated into the surrounding built-up area without serving any specific function [56].

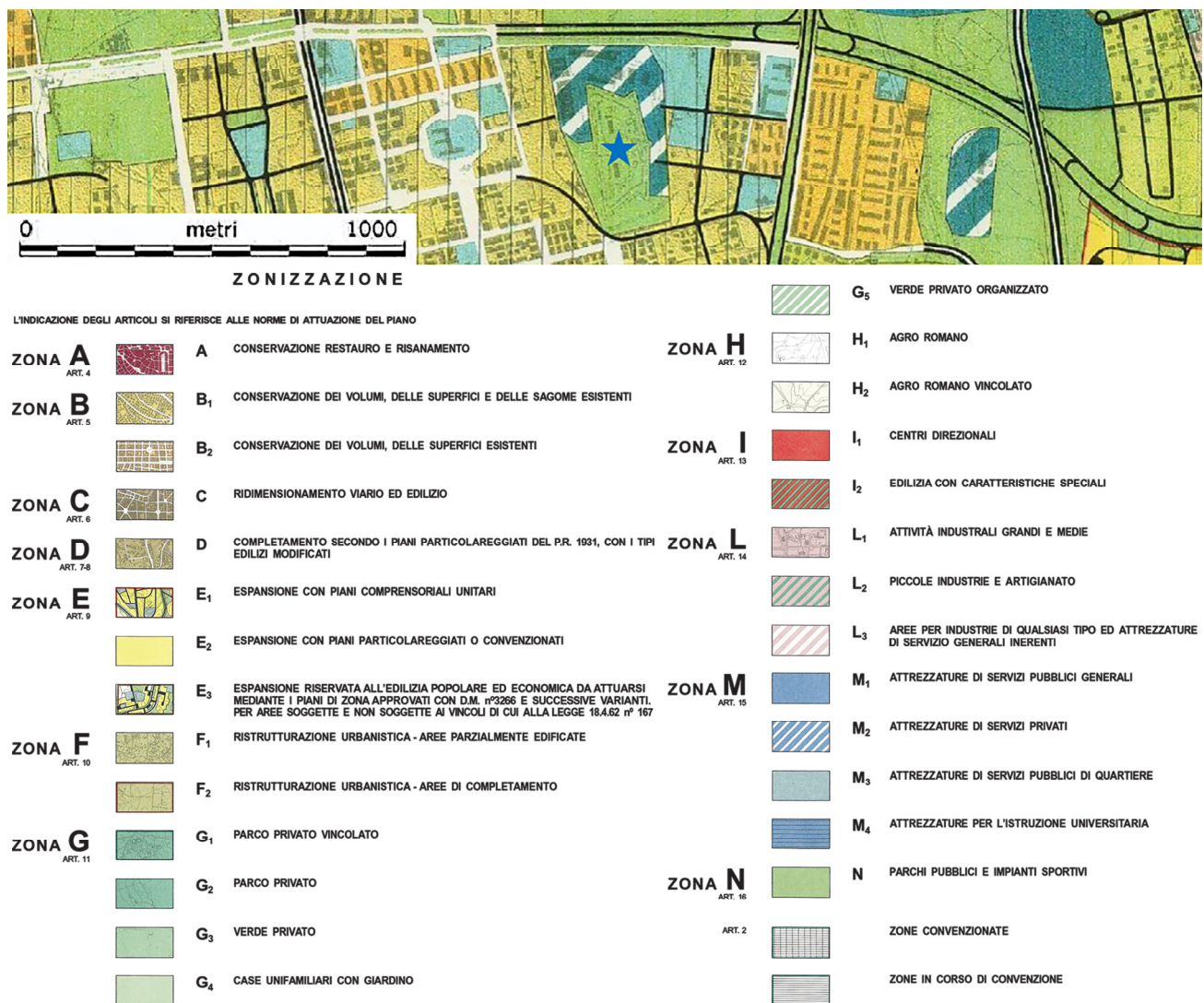


Figure 5. General Regulatory Plan—PRG of the Municipality of Rome 1965. “Zonizzazione” (zoning). Table scale 1:20,000 [65]. The blue star symbolizes Forte Prenestina. It was allocated to “Zona N—Parchi pubblici e impianti sportivi” (Zone N—public park and sports facilities).

Forte Prenestina was transferred to the ownership of the Municipality of Rome in 1977, which initiated the process of expropriation, which ultimately did not reach its conclusion [57,66].

Furthermore, the 1965 decree approving Rome’s PRG had mandated the creation of the Historical Archaeological Map Documenting The Monumental And Landscape Features Of The Suburbs And Countryside Around Ancient Rome. This requirement received approval from the Deliberation of the Municipal Council n. 959 on 18 March 1980. The map surveyed “emergencies of historical, archaeological and landscape interest” [67] in the Municipality of Rome. Forte Prenestina features in the list of “Elementi areali di interesse storico-monumentale” (area elements of historical-monumental interest) detailed in the Map (no. 364) as an “Insediamento unitario d’interesse storico-archeologico-tipologico” (unitary settlement of historical-archaeological-typological interest) [67]. The fort is characterised by the presence of “Alberature lineari di interesse naturalistico e/o paesistico” (linear trees of natural and/or landscape interest) and an “Area archeologica di interesse storico-monumentale” (archaeological area of historical-monumental interest) (Figure 6).

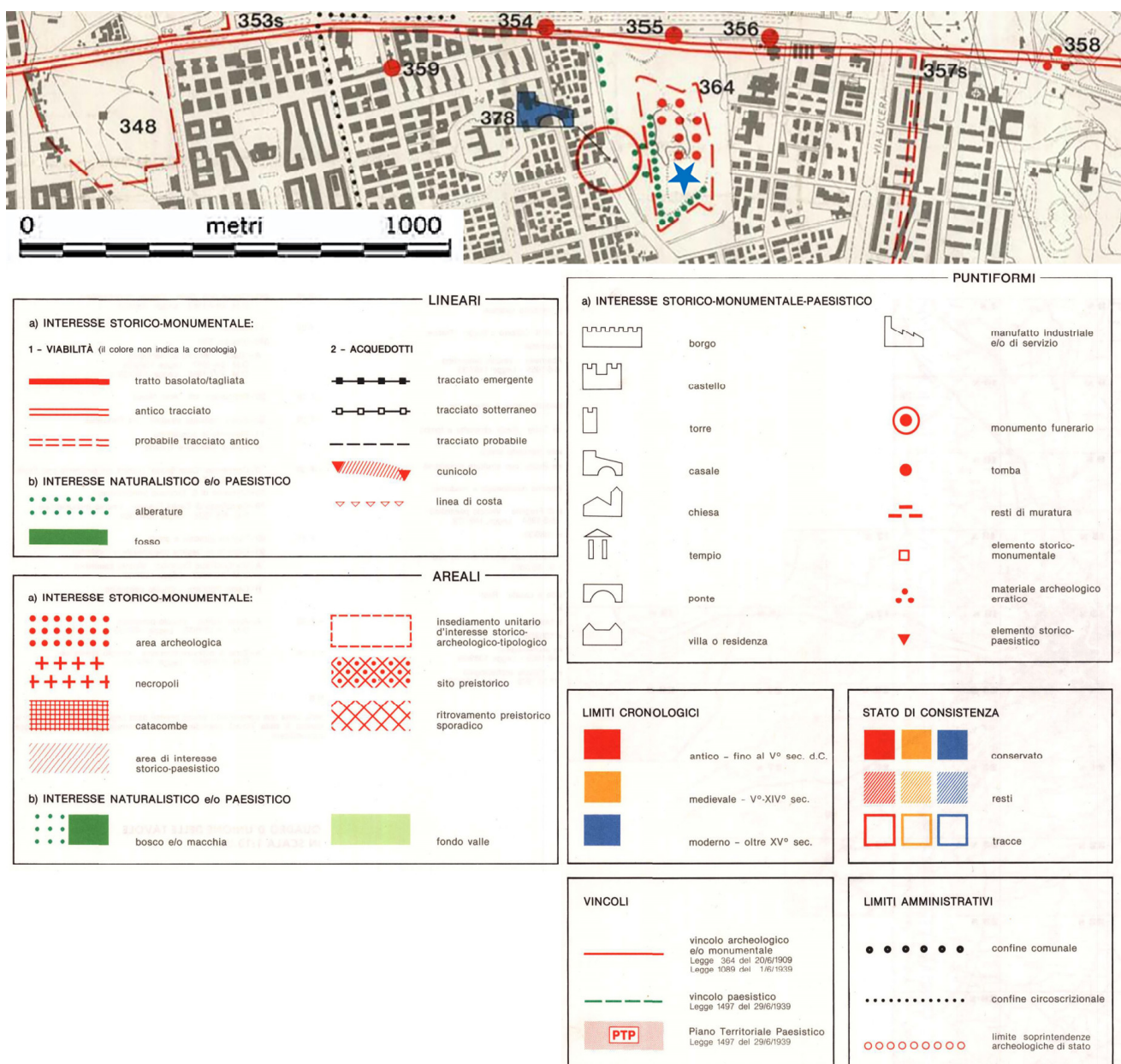


Figure 6. Historical Archaeological Map Documenting The Monumental And Landscape Features of The Suburbs And Countryside Around Ancient Rome, published by the Municipality of Rome's X Department of Antiquities and Fine Arts. Consisting of Sheets 16 S and 25 S. Table scale 1:10,000 [67]. The blue star symbolizes Forte Prenestina. It was allocated to "Elementi areali di interesse storico-monumentale" (area elements of historical-monumental interest) as an "Insediamento unitario d'interesse storico-archeologico-tipologico" (unitary settlement of historical-archaeological-typological interest).

The General Regulatory Plan—PRG of the Municipality of Rome, which was approved via Deliberation of the Municipal Council n. 18 on 12 February 2008, designates, within the "Elaborati prescrittivi: Sistemi e Regole" (prescriptive drawings: Systems and Rules, scale 1:10,000), Forte Prenestina as part of the "Sistema dei servizi e delle infrastrutture" (system of services and infrastructures) under the category of "Verde pubblico e servizi pubblici di livello locale" (public green spaces and local public services) [68], as portrayed in Figure 7. Furthermore, Forte Prenestina was recognized as a component of Local Centrality n° VII-3: Mirti, which was identified as the "Schemi di riferimento per le centralità locali" (schemes of reference for local centralities) under "Elaborato Indicativo" (indicative elaborate) I2 of the

PRG. “The Mirti Centrality has been chosen to enhance the current spaces and amenities within a framework that possesses a sense of strong identity. However, there are noticeable defects in terms of equipment endowment and quality” [69] (p. 63).

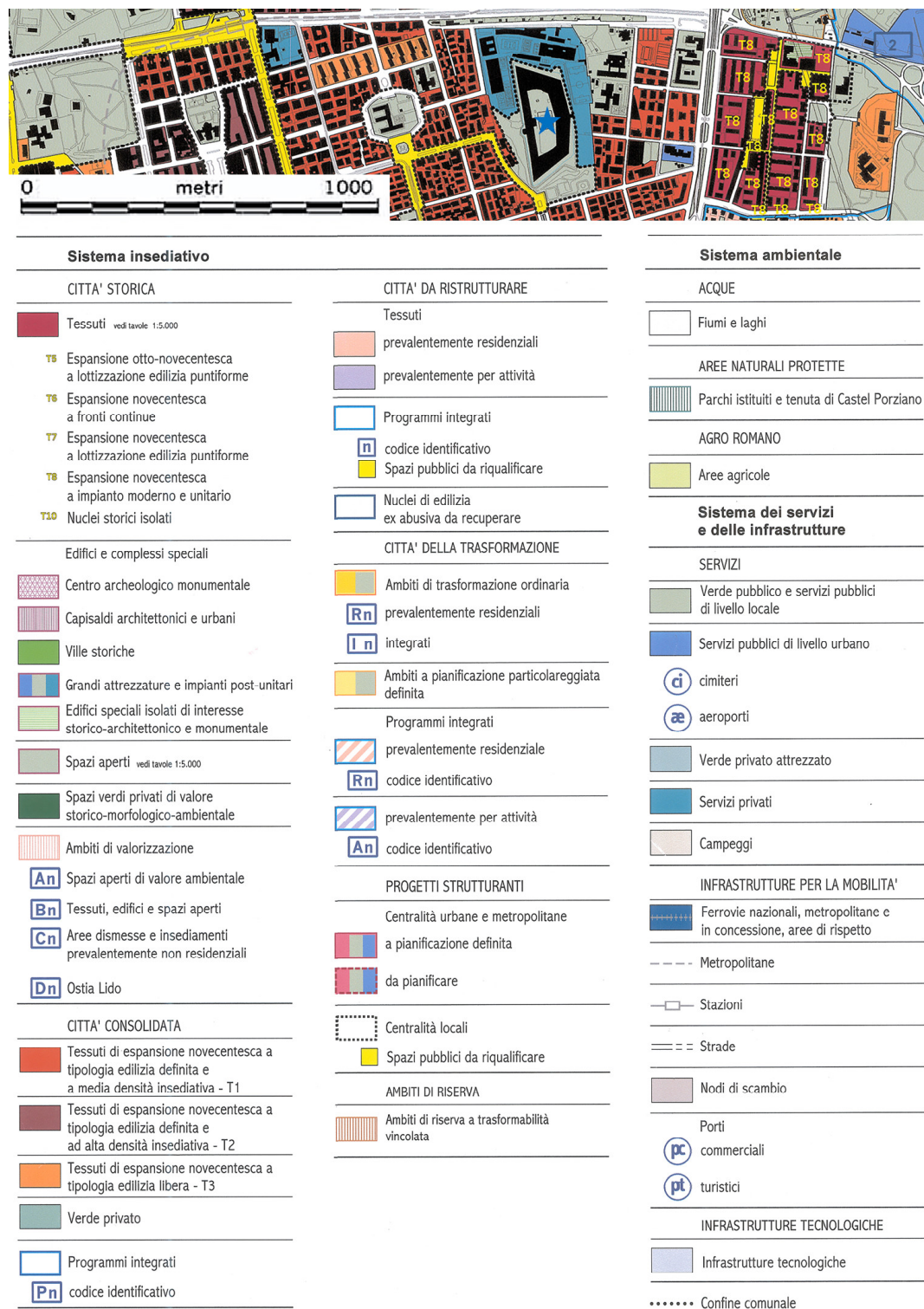


Figure 7. General Regulatory Plan—PRG of the Municipality of Rome 2008. Prescriptive drawing: Systems and Rules. Sheet 18. Table scale 1:10,000 [68]. The blue star symbolizes Forte Prenestina. It was allocated to “Sistema dei servizi e delle infrastrutture” (system of services and infrastructures) under the category of “Verde pubblico e servizi pubblici di livello locale” (public green spaces and local public services).

According to the "Carta per la qualità" (Charter for quality), "Elaborato Gestionale" (management elaborate) G1.18 of the PRG [70], Forte Prenestina has been defined as "Edificio con tipologie edilizia speciale - ad impianto singolare: Forte - FO" (building with special building types - with singular plant: Forte -FO). In this case, the "Guida per la qualità degli interventi" (guide for the quality of interventions), "Elaborato Gestionale" (management elaborate) G2 of the PRG, provides for the "enhancement of the original spatial layout, consisting of the set of built environments and uncovered spaces" [71] (p. 25). In addition, it joins the category "Complessi di edifici di rilevante interesse architettonico, urbano o ambientale" (complexes of buildings of outstanding architectural, urban or environmental interest) under the legend entry "Edifici e complessi edilizi moderni" (modern buildings and building complexes). In this case, the quality of the building is given not only by its configuration, but also by its relationship to the urban surroundings. Therefore, the permitted interventions (e.g., ordinary maintenance, restoration and conservative rehabilitation) have the task of qualifying the relationship spaces between buildings.

Forte Prenestina is bound under the Cultural Heritage and Landscape Code with the D.M. (ministerial decree) 28 April 2008 [49]. It has been designated among the forts on divestment that are included in the Memorandum of Understanding between the Italian Public Property Agency and the Municipality of Rome, dated 29 April 2009. Furthermore, it has been identified as one of the state assets that can be transferred to municipalities without interest, in accordance with the provisions of the D.L. (legislative decree) 85/2010. In this instance, it is up to the responsible territorial entity to ensure the "functional valorisation" [72] of the asset, in the interest and for the benefit of the community represented. However, "it has been observed that there is a significant conflict of interests concerning the ownership of the Forts by Rome Capital, which results in the solidification of any plans that suggest hypotheses for reuse" [56] (p. 39).

The same "Carta della Città Pubblica di Roma Capitale" (Charter of the Public City of Roma Capitale) [73], which has a reconnaissance value, lists Forte Prenestina as one of the "Beni immobili di proprietà dello Stato" (state-owned real estate assets) and specifically "Beni facenti parte del federalismo demaniale D.Lgs. 85/2010" (assets forming part of the federalism of State property Legislative Decree 85/2010). It takes as its starting point the Programmatic Lines 2013-2018 for the Government of Roma Capitale, which was approved via Deliberation of the Municipal Council n. 66 on 18 July 2008.

Starting in 2019, the military authorities responsible for the forts, as well as the Special Superintendency of Rome ABAP (archaeology, fine arts and landscape), the Italian Public Property Agency, Rome Capital and the Superintendency OO.PP. (public works), established a technical round table to discuss the valorisation of the military heritage of the forts [62]. The aim of this initiative is to improve preservation and offer opportunities for reuse in the civil context of the forts, which are historically significant sites but have deteriorated over a prolonged period. This is an explanation for why Forte Prenestina is included in the Anthropological Itinerary of the Casilino Ecomuseum "Ad duas lauros", which is situated in the Municipality of Rome. The ecomuseum is an urban museum recognized for its regional importance by Determination of the Directorate for Culture and Youth Policies of the Lazio Region n. G13389, issued on 7 October 2019. A space has been created for the preservation, valorisation, integration and development of cultural heritage in the Casilino District and surrounding territory. Forte Prenestina has been acknowledged as a location of cultural and artistic significance, facilitating social inclusion and active integration [74].

Let us try to summarise the points described so far in Table 6.

Table 6. Recognition of Forte Prenestina by designation.

Forte Prenestina by Designation							
Recognition	Urban planning field	City planning	Year	Urban planning instrument	Drawing	Legend	NTA ¹
			1965	PRG Roma	Zoning	Zone N—public park	
			1980	Historical archaeological map documenting the monumental and landscape features of the suburbs and countryside around ancient Rome		Unitary settlement of historical, archaeological and typological interest	
					Systems and Rules	Public green spaces and local public services	Art. 85
			2008	PRG Roma	Charter for quality	Building with special building types—with singular plant: Forte -FO Complexes of buildings of outstanding architectural, urban or environmental interest	Art. 16
			2016	Charter of the Public City of Roma Capitale		Assets forming part of the federalism of State property Legislative Decree 85/2010	
	Legal field	Plan	Project instrument		General objective	Specific recognition	
			2019	Casilino Ecomuseum “Ad duas lauros”	Identifying, censusing, inter-relating, re-connecting material and immaterial cultural resources in fruition paths	Anthropological pathway: -space of cultural production, social relations and integration	
			Legislative instrument		Instruction		
			2008	D.M. 28 April 2008 ²	Restriction		
			Specific law	2010	D.Lgs. 85/2010 ³	Art. 1, Para. 1: State assets that can be allocated to municipalities, provinces, metropolitan cities and regions without ownership are specified	Art. 1, Para. 2: the entities responsible for the allocated assets are obligated to ensure their maximal functional value
			Scientific field	Publications	Author		Title
1998	Giannini G.	I forti di Roma.			[53]		
2006	Cajano, E.	Il sistema dei forti militari a Roma.			[52]		
2010	Bruschi A.; Giovannelli, A.; Grimaldi, A.; Guarini, P.	Operare i forti. Per un progetto di riconversione dei forti militari di Roma.			[54]		
2012	Ferretti, S.	Le complesse vicende normative dei forti di Roma.			[61]		
2013	Cimini, S.	Il Sistema dei Forti Militari di Roma. Valorizzazione, rifunzionalizzazione ed efficientazione energetica del patrimonio pubblico.			[75]		
2018	Spadafora, G.; Ferretti, S.; Pallottino, E.	Roma e i suoi Forti. Studi, rilievi e attività di sensibilizzazione per il recupero del campo trincerato.			[56]		
2023	Spadafora, G.; Ferretti, S.; Pallottino	I Forti di Roma: una lettura a scala urbana.			[62]		
Conferences	Place			Title			
	2012	Biblioteca del Senato “Giovanni Spadolini”, Roma, Italy, 16 aprile 2012		Atti tavola rotonda: Un patrimonio sepolto tra oblio e riscoperta: i forti di Roma.		[61]	

¹ Technical implementation rules. ² Ministerial decree. ³ Legislative decree.

4.2. Recognition of CSOA Forte Prenestino by Appropriation (Bottom-Up)

Forte Prenestina served as a place for the collection of heavy artillery until the 1970s, and then remained unused and abandoned to decay, turning into an illegal dump until the 1980s [66]. In 1986, it became the headquarters of the self-managed social centre CSOA Forte Prenestino, which took its name. The management of the structure is handled by CSOA, who continuously work on requalification, space adaptation and promotion, making it the only fort accessible to ordinary citizens [55,61]. It is a self-managed place, in which the organisation of the various environments and activities is based on the free and spontaneous association of individuals united by a shared plan and ethics [76]. Decisions are made in an assembly and a horizontal manner, in such a way as to guarantee everyone the same decision-making powers. In this case, self-financing is the only economic form adopted to support initiatives and activities for the conservation and enhancement of Forte Prenestina [66,76]. *“The subscription required at the entrance during cultural and musical initiatives is used to pay for daily, political, cultural and social activities and all the campaigns and mobilizations to which the CSOA participates. The subscription and the cost of all the activities promoted within the Forte have a political and accessible price, decided in the assembly, and together contribute to keeping the social center alive”* [76].

CSOA Forte Prenestino stands as a significant landmark within a densely populated neighbourhood lacking adequate green and leisure spaces. Its organisation of activities, workshops, courses, events, festivals and other manifestations (as shown in Figure 8) serves to attract not solely external users, but chiefly the inhabitants of the Q. XIX Prenestino-Centocelle (Municipality of Rome V), where it is situated.

The historical and highly iconic experience of CSOA Forte Prenestino is told through *“Fortopìa, stories of love and self-management”*, a self-produced book, edited by a self-managed editorial team, full of memories and collective stories written by the activists who have gone through and experienced the social centre and which celebrates three decades of occupation of this place of meeting, resistance, research and planning.

In an article in *La Repubblica*, Italy's second generalist newspaper, CSOA Forte Prenestino is described as a *“Hotbed of cultural events”*, among which are mentioned: Crack!, focused on the world of comics and visual arts; Enotica, dedicated to wine producers from all over Italy; and important concerts at reduced prices, from Mano Negra by Manu Chao, to Afterhours by Manuel Agnelli, passing through Caparezza, Subsonica, Capossela. The first social centre to be entirely wired, CSOA Forte Prenestino hosts historic experiences such as Avana, one of the first Italian nodes of the BBS, Bulletin Board System [77].

In an article in *Abitare*, international magazine on architecture and design, CSOA Forte Prenestino is presented as the largest social centre in Europe that has transformed an abandoned space, mainly used as a landfill, into a place *“restored in a conservative manner. Made habitable, and therefore returned to the city and brought back to life. To welcome people and initiatives”* [78].

In an article by Zero, the reference magazine for events held in the main Italian cities, CSOA Forte Prenestino is described as *“synonymous with Rome and vice versa. A thirty-year history, with infinite contents, which have irreversibly marked first a neighbourhood, Centocelle, then an entire city”* [60].

In conclusion, CSOA Forte Prenestino performs a very important function as a cultural training ground for a vast and varied sector of users: in addition to being home to many cultural, political and musical initiatives and activities, it is a place of sociality, entertainment, of exchange of ideas, visions and knowledge [79–82].

Let us try to summarise the points described so far in Table 7.



(a)



(b)

Figure 8. The photographs depict a selection of activities conducted at CSOA Forte Prenestino: (a) the fort's main parade ground, from which part of the rampart can also be seen; (b) the cells on the lower levels of CSOA Forte Prenestino during the Crack! Disruptive Comics event [60].

Table 7. Recognition of CSOA Forte Prenestino by appropriation.

Cultural Heritage by Appropriation					
Recognition		Year	Structure	Management	Financing
	Management	1986	CSOA Forte Prenestino	Self-managed social centre	Self-financing
	Assessment			General Initiatives	Specific Initiatives
				Cultural, political and musical activities	Workshops, courses, events, festivals
	Development			Reference	
	https://www.forteprenestino.net/ (accessed on 21 March 2024)				

5. Discussion

5.1. Cultural Heritage between Recognition by Designation and Appropriation

CSOA Forte Prenestino is a site of dense and heterogeneous history that has generated controversy. Nevertheless, it is a crucial space for intercultural coexistence, dialogues between diverse identities, and the emergence of proposals and cultural experimentation. *“The Forte experiences another sociality and another economy because it is part of an immense and varied reality, made up of individuals, associations, peoples and anyone who fights every day to make another world possible, made up of free individuals who are equal and in solidarity. This is why the Forte is anti-fascist, anti-sexist, anti-racist, anti-prohibitionist”* [76].

Despite the outstanding unresolved management, structural and socio-cultural issues, an analysis of the CSOA Forte Prenestino case study prompts a reflection on the meaning of *“Heritage by designation”* (top-down) and *“Heritage by appropriation”* (bottom-up) concepts, and the existing correlation between conservation interventions and activities and strategies to enhance the cultural heritage, facilitating its utilisation and enjoyment in formulations that are consistent with conservation. *“Any decision based on political ideology or merely physical intervention affects the urban context not only physically but also economically, socially, a culturally”* [83] (p. 236).

The process of the ‘designation’ of the value of cultural heritage proves to be a long one, because it is based on the affirmation of recognition by multidisciplinary experts who, in different periods of time, recognize its previous function and promote its valorisation and development. The ‘designation’ takes place on the basis of a cognitive assessment by professionals who interface and analyse the determining characteristics of the asset in question for the recognition of its patrimonial and identity value, with respect to the social, historical, cultural, economic and environmental context of reference. The objective is to trace a path for recognising and understanding the asset in its entirety and complexity of characteristics that (i) must make it preservable from inadequate and damaging interventions over time (ii) and must regulate and foster precipitous and lasting actions for the enhancement of the asset’s functions (characterised by premises and foundations that guarantee its continuity over time), its accessibility and its dynamic and optimal use. It must be acknowledged that, in the case of *“Heritage by designation”*, an insignificant or lack of contribution by the beneficiaries and users in general in nominating an asset as a cultural heritage asset certainly leads to less debate and discussion and to greater predictability of the awarding of the title by the experts [43]. *“However, as often happens when expert opinions are imposed without consultation, charges of elitism are inevitable and it is difficult to gain recognition for anything other than conventional heritage”* [36] (p. 63).

The process of ‘appropriation’ of an asset and reconsideration of its structural contents and functions, by a community and/or interested individuals, proves to be particularly lengthy due to the difficulties in guaranteeing the security and quality of the planned actions. The act of ‘appropriation’ of an asset refers to a process that is physical in nature, but conceptual first. Underlying it is the public’s recognition of the good as an active component of an integrated social, cultural, historical, identity and political system. Consequently,

an experimental process of involving the community (users and stakeholders) in actions and practices of urban transformation is initiated. In this case, this process occurred for the purpose of enhancing and promoting the value and functions of cultural heritage. The local community becomes the ‘spokesperson’ for ideas that serve to ensure its “‘active and integrated conservation’, demonstrating great decisive capacities in proposing interventions to guarantee safety within their living places through daily actions of urban regeneration. This ‘bottom-up’ approach is based on the functional and continuous involvement of the local community in the process of articulating and promoting activities and on the full trust in citizens and their ability to identify the problems of the places they use on a daily basis, to propose initiatives and work out solutions to solve them [84]. On the other hand, in the instance of “*Heritage by appropriation*”, the substantial and distinct input from users, beneficiaries and the public in general, who consider and ‘nominate’ a cultural artefact as evidence of cultural heritage, highlights an increasing trend of democratization within considerations of heritage [43]. The importance of heritage is acknowledged collectively by various parties with distinct and evolving perspectives [44]. “*In contrast to charges elitism levelled at heritage by designation, this type of heritage is open to accusations of populism. Heritage by appropriation includes objects and phenomena that would previously have been dismissed as kitsch, such as the ‘black spots’ of cultural tourism cited by Rojek (1997)—death and burial sites of contemporary celebrities*” [36] (p. 63). In numerous instances, attention towards an asset is generated by several factors and situations that pertain not solely to its inherent worth, but also to its tactical positioning and the tangible, socio-cultural environment it engages with [44]. According to Basarir et al. [83], design interventions “[...] can offer meaningful contributions only if they are based on the political realities of the context that are recognized by all [...] (p. 238)” where all parties involved are participants. A ‘top-down’ view of interventions should not privilege the intentions of decision-makers, planners and institutional practitioners over those of the community, and the design of the built environment should not be considered separately from its place if a sustainable design approach is to be fostered. “*It should be emphasized that any intervention affects the urban context physically, economically, and culturally*” [83].

The difficulty in identifying a relationship and interaction between ‘designation’ and ‘appropriation’ processes of cultural heritage is evident. Several reflections emerge from the CSOA Forte Prenestino case study. The enhancement and development perspectives of the asset established by the ‘designation’ process (determined by urban planning, legislative, cognitive instruments, etc.) seem to be unfulfilled. According to Saif and Yüceer [85], a “a building that survived [...] can maintain its autonomy, through the maintenance by new users of the absent other, even when the building has been assigned a new function” (p. 750). The community plays a crucial role in protecting cultural heritage by assigning new uses. “*Protecting the heritage sites from decay through adaptive re-use seems to offer a temporary solution, which may maintain the buildings’ autonomy for further generations. [...] Leaving buildings abandoned without new uses, or using them infrequently, can be major factors in their destruction and decay*” [85] (pp. 760–761). Yet, the process of asset ‘appropriation’ involving community involvement and collaborative actions needs support from above. The public administration has the task of guiding its community in the regenerative transformation phases of the city and stimulating active involvement and concrete participation. This is an approach that entails the activation of constant dialogue, constructive debate and confrontation “*to build a common vision and develop initiatives together that arise from the whole city*” [84]. It means speeding up action by coordinating the available human, organisational and physical resources and stimulating the inventive and entrepreneurial aspects of the community.

5.2. Cultural Heritage Recognition through Identity Recognition and Sustainable Development

What emerges from the the analysis of CSOA Forte Prenestino is that sensitivity to its cultural heritage and the recognition of its role are growing in order to ensure its continuous defence and lasting enjoyment. The reference institution can play the role of facilitator and work towards co-building a critical and conscious awareness of citizens on the issue

of cultural heritage, conveying the knowledge and value of the goods belonging to it. As cited in Bellato [18] (p.223), *“standing up for heritage entails engaging with reality and producing innovative forms of active citizenship”*. This involves considering and managing the increased engagement of the target audience [43], allowing for the restoration and regulated public appreciation of cultural heritage. It is necessary to balance the economic and social requirements of the local community, where conservation becomes a sustainable form of usage [86]. The objective is to protect the heritage and its values, envisioning its *“functional relocation”* [18] that encompasses a broad and diverse range of society.

According to the Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society, *“it is necessary to recognise the need to put people and human values at the centre of an enlarged and cross-disciplinary concept of cultural heritage”* [87]. This type of approach enables a balance to be struck between preserving cultural identity, promoting cultural value and achieving sustainable development of cultural heritage [86]. This is achieved by promoting solutions that foster urban diversity, creativity and cultural dynamism, while also introducing activities that generate economic capacity [88]. *“Preventing the degradation, neglect, and loss of identity of a cultural asset necessitates reactivating a community, providing employment opportunities, fostering cultural initiatives, and creating advantageous prospects for time utilization”* [86] (p.8). Therefore, heritage-led regeneration interventions are undeniably beneficial for cities and local communities [83]. According to research, reintroducing heritage into circulation is an efficient example of deliberative democracy and generative innovation [89,90].

“Taking care of heritage today means, in fact, investing in the cultural and social capital of a territory, promoting its regeneration. A capital that is generated when interventions on cultural heritage are an opportunity for democratic participation in decision-making processes, for the promotion of diversity and intercultural dialogue, for strengthening the sense of belonging to a community, for understanding and respect between peoples, thus contributing to reducing social inequalities and promoting intergenerational dialogue”. [89] (p. 56)

6. Conclusions

As a governance strategy for the contemporary city, urban regeneration is able to promote cultural heritage as a driver of sustainable development by protecting and, at the same time, enhancing the cultural assets and resources of reference [43]. *“A development that relates to the territory in terms of stratifications, from which to start and with which to relate to propose innovation, placing the public use of history as the starting point of urban transformations”* [91] (p. 106). Urban regeneration is a strategy capable of making the most of cultural heritage because it allows functional comparison between structures and communities [26]. *“It is configured not only as an urban planning strategy that affects the physical part of the city, but also as a project of social inclusion and local economic development”* [92] (p. 454). The initial objective is to understand the connection and/or gap existing between services offered in a given urban and territorial area and the needs of users and corresponding users.

In the case of CSOA Forte Prenestino, a valorisation process was put in place capable of capturing the specificity of the place, and as a means for a re-composition—in contrast with the fragmentation, fragility and homologation—of the links between physical continuity and social integration and between formal specificity and historical-cultural identity [91,93]. Citizens figure as precious protagonists who are responsible for recognizing the role of the asset [18] and the care of heritage. This has generated an increase in its value and its productive, social, cultural and economic uses. In this regard, it is necessary to take into account the fact that due to the pressures to which the asset is subjected, continuous interventions are required. Otherwise, the property undergoes a slow and inexorable process of degradation due to the absence of maintenance of public property, with consequent problems of structural deterioration, physical and functional redevelopment and urban safety, so much so that it could be banned from public use [86].

The case study of CSOA Forte Prenestino teaches us that the main challenge to be faced concerns the ability to manage the changes to which cultural heritage is inevitably subjected, from a social and economic point of view (for example, through functional diversification interventions) while keeping its role and value alive (for example, through renovation and adaptive reuse interventions) in relation to the reference context. It is necessary to ensure that cultural heritage assets are considered pillars for development and not obstacles. The key issue is identifying the right compromise between conservation objectives and the need to valorise cultural heritage.

“[...] Sustainable valorization passes not only through the discovery, analytical classification and passive defense of heritage values, but through their ‘reinvention’, through participation processes that are not just re-appropriation by local society but co-planning, creating new opportunities so that a community can plan its future starting from the cultural resources of the territory”. [89] (p. 58)

The ultimate goal is the recognition of the potential of cultural heritage in order to propose and activate long-term strategies for the transformation and reappropriation of the spaces of the property object of the intervention [90]. Therefore, some concrete takeaways for practice could be followed: (i) encourage active community participation and interaction with relevant institutions at each stage of the planning process and formation of design groups to identify solutions and make decisions regarding the project; (ii) adopt a bottom-up approach in decision-making and the encouragement of urban regeneration strategies as a key to the recognition of all parties involved and mutual understanding, even between conflicting groups; (iii) base planning and urban-design decisions and the design process on a thorough knowledge of the characteristics and requirements of the site of concern.

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