OBSTACLES TO REUSE

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TO WHAT EXTENT DO LEGISLATIVE BARRIERS INHIBIT THE STANDARDISATION OF ADAPTIVE HERITAGE REUSE IN EUROPEAN RESIDENTIAL ARCHITECTURE?

FIGURE 1: SPANISH HERITAGE APARTMENT BLOCK, MADRID

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my tutor, Monica, for her continued support and guidance, and Jason Craig, for his time and generosity during our interview and my site visit to Brewers Quay, in Weymouth, my hometown.

FIGURE 2: DORCHESTER BREWERY, DORSET

FIGURE 3: DUBROVNIK OLD TOWN, CROATIA

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ABSTRACT

In response to the growing need for sustainable housing solutions, and the preservation of Europe's heritage architecture, this dissertation critically examines how regulatory frameworks influence the adaptive reuse of heritage buildings. By exploring the intersection of policy, historical preservation, and practicality, this research intends to uncover the extent to which legislative systems enable or constrain adaptive reuse initiatives.

Using a mixed-methods approach, the study combines secondary research from policy documents, academic literature, and architectural reports with a primary, semi-structured interview. The interview, conducted with the property developer leading the restoration of Brewers Quay – a Grade II listed former Victorian brewery in Weymouth, Dorset – provides a grounded, real-world perspective on the regulatory and external challenges encountered in residential heritage reuse projects.

This research bridges the gap between policy and practice, offering new insights to both the interior architecture and architectural preservation industry on how we can better facilitate the sustainable development and respectful reuse of historic buildings. By examining how developers, such as Jason Craig, navigate the interplay of legislative and practical challenges – such as sourcing skilled labour and addressing community concerns – this dissertation contributes a holistic understanding of the obstacles to reuse and offers actionable recommendations to policymakers and practitioners.

INTRODUCTION

The adaptive reuse of heritage buildings is increasingly recognised as a sustainable alternative to demolition, preserving cultural identity and reducing the carbon footprint of new construction. As a focus of environmental conservation, heritage reuse coincides with global climate objectives, such as the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the European Green Deal. However, legislative inconsistencies across Europe present significant obstacles, often inhibiting the standardisation of these practices. This dissertation investigates the extent to which regulatory barriers inhibit adaptive heritage reuse in residential architecture, examining governance frameworks, protective policies, and non-regulatory factors that shape project feasibility across diverse European contexts.

The emphasis on residential architecture addresses a critical gap in existing literature, where academic reports and reviews predominantly explore adaptation in commercial, large-scale projects. Through exploring how legislation and governance models influence heritage reuse, this study also aims to examine how non-legislative factors, such as funding and sourcing heritage-compatible materials, interact with regulatory hurdles and hinder adaptive reuse in smaller-scale projects, where consumer-driven renovations are common.

FIGURE 4: SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGS)

'THE 2030 AGENDA FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT, ADOPTED BY ALL UNITED NATIONS MEMBERS IN 2015, CREATED 17 WORLD SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS. THE AIM OF THESE GLOBAL GOALS IS "PEACE AND PROSPERITY FOR PEOPLE AND THE PLANET" - WHILE TACKLING CLIMATE CHANGE AND WORKING TO PRESERVE OCEANS AND FORESTS.'


FIGURE 5: POMBAL CASTLE'S ADAPTIVE VISITOR CENTRE, PORTUGAL

'THE CASTLE OF POMBAL IS A MEDIEVAL CASTLE IN THE CIVIL PARISH OF POMBAL, PORTUGAL. THE MAIN CHALLENGE OF THE COMMISSION OF THE VISITOR CENTRE WAS THE DEFINITION OF A DESIGN STRATEGY THAT COULD LIVE UP TO THE RICHNESS OF THE CASTLE'S MULTI-LAYERED HISTORY, WITHOUT BEING NEITHER OSTENSIVE NOR SUBDUED.'

Employing a mixed-methods approach, this dissertation combines policy analysis, a qualitative interview, and case studies for countries including the Netherlands, England, Italy, and Germany. These regions reflect varied cultural attitudes and policy frameworks, providing differing perspectives on this dynamic landscape. However, limitations such as instability in accessing stakeholders and policy documents across numerous jurisdictions must be acknowledged, which may impact the depth of analysis.

By bridging the gap between policy and practice, this research contributes to the architectural discourse on sustainability, heritage conservation, and residential innovation. It seeks not only to illustrate the urgency of addressing legislative and external barriers, but also demonstrates pathways for the respectful reuse of historic European architecture.

FIGURE 6: THE FUZJA PROJECT, IN ŁÓDŹ, POLAND

'THE FUZJA PROJECT IN ŁÓDŹ IS A MULTI-USE REDEVELOPMENT AT A FORMER TEXTILE FACTORY. OUT OF THE 22 BUILDINGS AT THE SITE, 17 ARE HISTORIC. THE OLD POWER STATION AT THE SITE HAS BEEN RENOVATED, INCLUDING NEW STAINED GLASS WINDOWS DESIGNED ACCORDING TO THE ORIGINAL STYLE. THE SITE IS MULTIFUNCTIONAL – APARTMENTS ARE FOR SALE, AND THE AREA WILL HAVE RESTAURANTS, SHOPS AND OFFICES.'

METHODOLOGY

A mixed-methods approach was selected – combining qualitative secondary resources, thematic policy reviews, and primary research through an expert interview. This approach ensures an extensive evaluation of theoretical and practical obstacles, thoroughly addressing the complexity of factors influencing European heritage reuse.

Rationale for Mixed-Methods Approach

The mixed-methods approach integrates legal, cultural, and practical perspectives on adaptive reuse. This includes a comprehensive review of European policy documents, legislative case studies, and academic literature to establish a broad understanding of reuse across varied economic and cultural contexts. Primary research, in the form of a qualitative interview with a property developer involved in an ongoing residential heritage reuse project, complements this secondary research by providing first-hand insights into the challenges encountered during the process. The dual focus bridges theoretical findings with real-world applications, ensuring a thorough and balanced investigation.

Country Selection and Relevance

England, the Netherlands, Italy, Germany, and Romania were specifically chosen for secondary research due to their diverse regulatory landscapes, historical architecture, and approaches to heritage preservation. England, as the site of Brewers Quay, offers insights into the strict legislative frameworks governing heritage reuse in a high-income economy. The Netherlands exemplifies innovative reuse practices under progressive policies, while Italy represents the interplay between a rich historical legacy and stringent preservation standards. Romania, with its emerging preservation efforts in a transitional economy, highlights the challenges of balancing heritage reuse with limited resources. Together, these countries capture a spectrum of European trends, making the findings more representative of broader patterns.

Case Study Justification & Limitations

The Brewers Quay case study provides an in-depth exploration of adaptive reuse in a Grade II listed heritage building. Located in Weymouth, Dorset, it offers local context, and a tangible example of how legislative and non-legislative factors influence residential heritage reuse. The property developer's experience provides valuable insights into navigating complex regulatory frameworks and addressing practical challenges. While the specificity of this study adds depth and authenticity, its limitations must be acknowledged. The findings from one project do not fully generalise to other contexts, particularly outside the UK. However, observations drawn from this case are combined with broader secondary research to enhance their applicability.

Data Collection and Analysis

Secondary research focused on architectural reports, policy documents, and peer-reviewed academic journals sourced from reputable heritage organisations, such as ICOMOS and European government archives. Legislative documents provided insight into governance structures affecting reuse feasibility, while case studies illustrated real-world policy impacts across countries.

Primary data collection involved a semi-structured interview with the property developer of Brewers Quay. This method facilitated a guided, yet flexible discussion, capturing planned responses and unexpected insights. The pre-determined questions focused on legislative barriers, regulatory compliance, non-legislative obstacles, and recommendations for policy innovation. Conducted in-person, the interview was audio recorded with consent, transcribed, and analysed.

Thematic analysis was applied to both primary and secondary data. Themes included financial constraints, legislative complexity, and societal perceptions of heritage reuse. Cross-referencing interview data with secondary research ensured consistency and enabled a comparative framework for evaluating findings.

Ethical Considerations and Reflexivity

Ethical protocols were rigorously followed to uphold academic integrity. Consent was obtained prior to the interview, anonymity was provided where requested, and the participant was informed of their right to withdraw. Secondary resources were critically evaluated for reliability, and all personal data was securely stored in line with Arts University Bournemouth guidelines.

Reflexivity was integral to this study. Personal connections to Weymouth and fond familiarity with Brewers Quay informed the selection of this case study, but also necessitated critical self-awareness to minimise bias, and ensure all findings remain credible and objective.

Feasibility and Scope

Given the twelve-week timeframe, focusing on secondary resources alongside one, detailed primary case ensured the research was feasible and manageable. This approach enabled a multi-dimensional analysis of legislative barriers and their implications, while combining theoretical and practical insights. The mixed-methods strategy provides a holistic understanding of adaptive reuse in European heritage architecture, contributing meaningful recommendations for policymakers.

FIGURE 7: BREWERS QUAY CONSTRUCTION

CHAPTER 1 - HISTORICAL & CONCEPTUAL CONTEXT

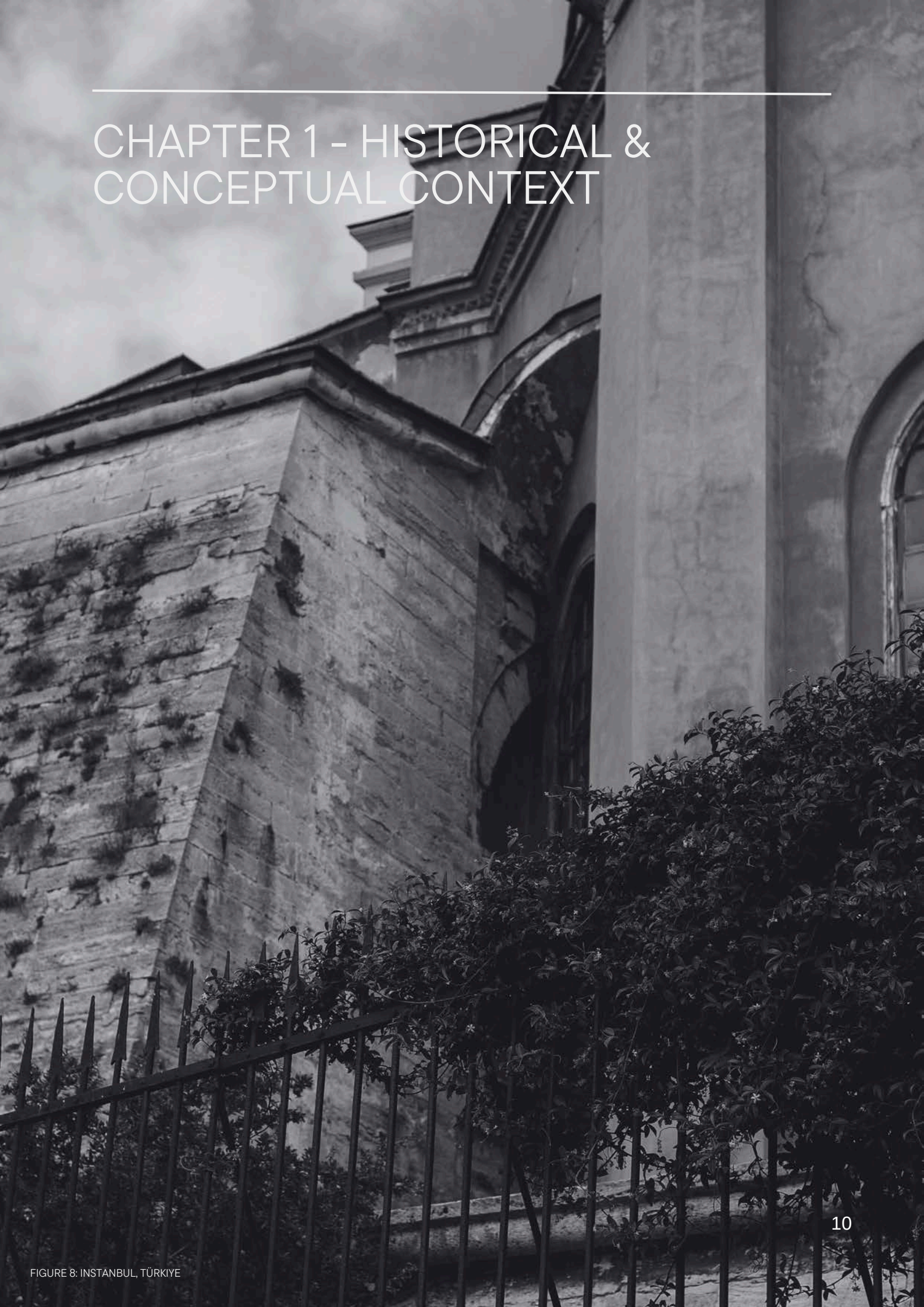

FIGURE 8: INSTANBUL, TÜRKIYE

1.1 - EVOLUTION OF ADAPTIVE HERITAGE REUSE

Adaptive heritage reuse, the process of repurposing historic structures, has emerged as a fundamental in conscious architecture and the preservation of cultural history. This section explores the historical evolution of adaptive reuse – with a critical focus on European legislative frameworks and their influence on residential heritage projects.

The term '*adaptive reuse*', although first coined in 1973 (Davies, 2023, p.2), can be traced back to antiquity, where structures like Roman basilicas were transformed into churches, illustrating early examples of adaptation and evolving societal needs. However, these transformations were irregular, with limited formal preservation standards. It was during the Industrial Revolution, as rapid urbanisation displaced historic structures, that deliberate efforts to preserve cultural heritage gained momentum (Jokilehto, 1999, p. 105).

The twentieth century was pivotal for adaptive reuse, with the adoption of international charters and classified conservation principles. The Venice Charter (1964), later adopted by ICOMOS (International Council on Monuments and Sites) in 1965, formalised the balance between preservation and adaptation, advocating for the safeguarding of historic integrity while accommodating contemporary uses. These frameworks provided a foundation for national legislation, such as Germany's Monument Protection Laws, which exemplified the Federal and Länder Governments' aim to coordinate resources in order '*to secure the effective protection, conservation and preservation of cultural heritage*' (Ringbeck for Historic England, 2017). However, such legislation and strict authority often limited the scope for innovation, particularly in residential reuse projects (Plevoets and Van Cleempoel, 2019, p. 77).

FIGURE 9: ST. PETER'S BASILICA, PIAZZA SAN PIETRO, VATICAN CITY

FIGURE 10: VENICE CANALS, ITALY

Critical evaluation reveals that while these frameworks institutionalised adaptive reuse, they also introduced further challenges. For instance, the emphasis on authenticity in the Venice Charter, while commendable, has been interpreted rigidly in some jurisdictions, complicating the creative adaptation of heritage structures for residential use (Pickard, 2001). Furthermore, the international principles set by ICOMOS often struggle to account for the diverse socio-economic contexts across Europe, where resource disparities can inhibit application of these universal standards (Douglas, 2006, p. 132).

This historical evolution highlights a dual narrative; adaptive reuse has been both enabled and constrained by legislative frameworks. Early charters and laws have successfully integrated heritage preservation into architectural discourse, but their rigidity sometimes conflicts with the demands of modern housing. By critically evaluating these limitations, this dissertation aims to offer actionable insights for ensuring that adaptive reuse continues to evolve as a viable strategy for sustainable developments in Europe.

FIGURE 12: AUSTRIAN TAKE ON '*MODERN HOUSING*', VIENNA

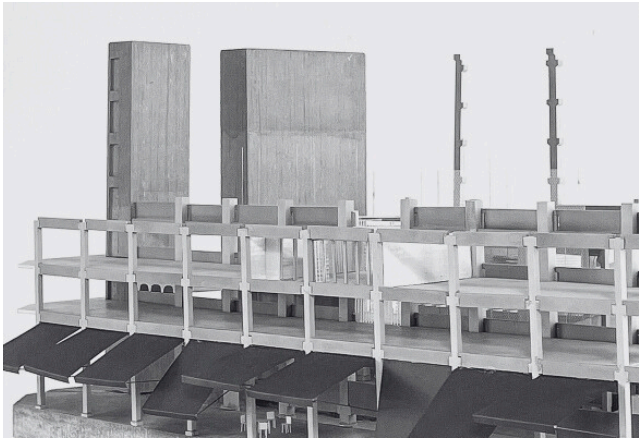

FIGURE 11: REASSEMBLING THE REJECTED: ADAPTIVE REUSE OF PALEET CAR PARK.

'REASSEMBLING THE REJECTED AIMS TO SEARCH FOR QUALITIES IN UNWANTED SPACES, BY WORKING WITH ADAPTIVE REUSE OF PALEET CAR PARK AS CASE—A MULTI-STOREY PARKING AND OFFICE STRUCTURE LOCATED IN THE CENTRE OF OSLO, KVADRATUREN, ABOUT TO BE DEMOLISHED IN FAVOR OF A NEW OFFICE BUILDING LATER THIS YEAR.

IT HAS BEEN AN EXPLORATORY STUDY IN MODELS AND DRAWING TO SEE IF A BUILDING DIMENTIONED FOR CARS CAN BECOME A SPACE OF COMFORT AND JOY.'

1.2 - DEFINITIONS OF HERITAGE

The definition of heritage is a pivotal determining factor in assessing the eligibility of historic structures for adaptive reuse. As argued by Rodwell (2007), heritage is not a static concept, but an evolving model shaped by cultural, social, and political contexts. Within residential architecture, this becomes particularly significant, as structures must balance historical authenticity with contemporary functions to remain viable.

Policy documents, such as the EU's Heritage Label definition and the UK's National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2021) reinforce these balances by framing heritage as both a cultural asset and a resource for sustainable development. For instance, the NPPF prioritises preserving the '*architectural and historical significance*' of buildings while allowing adaptive reuse to address modern needs. However, definitions vary across jurisdictions, creating disparities in how heritage is valued, and how adaptive reuse projects are implemented (Rodwell, 2007).

This inconsistency is particularly evident in the residential sector, where eligibility for protection and reuse often hinges on subjective interpretations of historical significance. Conceptual analysis of conservation reports reveal that adaptive reuse feasibility is deeply intertwined with these definitions, as they can influence funding, regulatory permissions, and design strategies. By clarifying these definitions, this study seeks to explore how European legislative frameworks can better coordinate heritage values with the demands of residential reuse, aligning conservation efforts with contemporary housing challenges.

FIGURE 13: EXTERIOR OF CABLES WYND HOUSE, EDINBURGH

PICTURED IN *'ASSESSING THE SOCIAL VALUES OF BUILT HERITAGE: PARTICIPATORY METHODS AS WAYS OF KNOWING,'* A PAPER THAT EXPLORES THE ROLE PARTICIPATORY METHODS PLAY IN UNDERSTANDING THE SOCIAL VALUES OF BUILT HERITAGE, INCLUDING PEOPLE'S SENSE OF IDENTITY, BELONGING, AND PLACE.

FIGURE 14: PRESERVING THE PAST, ADAPTING FOR THE PRESENT: THE USABILITY CHALLENGE IN HERITAGE CONSERVATION

CHAPTER 2 - LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT & POLICY FRAMEWORKS IN EUROPE

FIGURE 15: COLOSSEUM, PIAZZA DEL COLOSSEO, ROME, METROPOLITAN CITY OF ROME, ITALY

2.1 - GOVERNANCE OF HERITAGE BUILDINGS IN EUROPE

The governance of heritage buildings in Europe demonstrates significant diversity shaped by national priorities and institutional frameworks. The UNESCO World Heritage Convention (1972) established a foundation for heritage preservation, emphasising the role of state-led governance. However, as Mérai et al. (2022, pp. 526-546) observed, in their investigation of international heritage regulation, adaptive heritage reuse is heavily influenced by socio-economic and cultural conditions, resulting in governance disparities.

In the Netherlands, adaptive reuse (or herbestemming) benefits from national policies that consider heritage, planning, and cultural agendas. This proactive approach facilitates resource-sharing, communication of specialist knowledge, and government support, enabling successful reuse projects. In contrast, Romania exemplifies the challenges faced in less-resourced governance contexts. Mérai et al. (2022) highlight this and the absence of financial resources, paid expertise, and integrated policy frameworks as barriers, complicating adaptive reuse initiatives in Romania.

These contrasts underline the importance of flexibility and integration in governance systems. While countries like the Netherlands demonstrate how strategic policy integration can facilitate adaptive reuse, Romania illustrates the critical need for resource allocation and cross-sector collaboration to overcome systemic barriers. These differences highlight the need for governance frameworks that balance national priorities with local resources, allowing adaptability without compromising local context. As shown, by this study, supportive governance systems are essential for promoting adaptive reuse as a sustainable practice across Europe.

FIGURE 16: A GATEWAY IN THE HISTORICAL CITY CENTRE OF LEIDEN, THE NETHERLANDS

FIGURE 17: REUSE THROUGH TEMPORARY FUNCTIONS AT HALELE CAROL IN BUCHAREST

2.2 - SYSTEMS OF HERITAGE PROTECTION

As previously mentioned, heritage protection in Europe is governed by a network of international charters and national legal frameworks, each influencing conservation practices and adaptive reuse in different ways. The Venice Charter (1964) not only established the necessity of preserving the '*original fabric*' of heritage buildings, but also emphasises the importance of authenticity in restoration efforts (ICOMOS, 1964). Beyond conservation, its principles have been adapted to address modern challenges, such as balancing historical preservation with sustainable reuse, a theme that resonates with the UNESCO World Heritage Convention (1972) and its commitment to global heritage protection.

While the Venice Charter primarily influenced restoration protocols, the ICOMOS Guidelines have evolved these concepts further – advocating for the integration of heritage conservation into broader socio-economic strategies. This is particularly relevant for adaptive reuse, as aligning conservation with contemporary needs is still a pressing challenge. For example, the UK's Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas Act (1990) provides strict protections but has also faced criticism for its inflexibility in allowing heritage buildings to adapt to modern residential requirements.

Crucially, as Mérai et al. (2022) note, effective heritage protection systems hinge on the capacity to integrate conservation laws with local urban planning. Countries like the Netherlands demonstrate the significance of aligning policy agendas across governance levels, while inflexible protection frameworks, as seen in Eastern Europe, often hinder progress. This evaluation exemplifies the need to reinterpret established protection charters and frameworks, in light of emerging practices, creating adaptable governance systems that respect heritage while fostering reuse initiatives.

FIGURE 18: UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE CONVENTION (1972)

FIGURE 19: UNDERSTANDING MATERIALS AND THE WAY THEY WERE USED IS CRUCIAL TO THE CARE AND CONSERVATION OF HISTORIC BUILDINGS

FIGURE 20: EUROPEAN TRAINING FOR THE PROTECTION OF CULTURAL HERITAGE AT RISK

2.3 - REGULATORY IMPLICATIONS FOR RESIDENTIAL ADAPTIVE REUSE

Adaptive reuse in residential contexts often encounters regulatory barriers that complicate projects and compromise outcomes. Across Europe, legislative frameworks present both opportunities and challenges, influencing the feasibility and quality of reuse efforts. This section critically examines these implications, focusing on the Corte Alfieri case study in Turin, Italy, alongside insights from England's legislative frameworks.

Heritage regulations, though essential for preservation, often impose rigid demands that conflict with residential functionality. As Madeddu and Clifford (2022) note, heavily '*regulated [reuse] approaches*,' although '*increasingly considered by the [Italian] Government as a means of [sustainably] reducing land consumption*,' can delay adaptive initiatives. For instance, England's Heritage Partnership Agreements (2013) streamline processes, but do not fully address heritage-specific challenges, leaving gaps in adaptability. Similarly, Italy's preservation-focused approach prioritises aesthetics, often at the expense of practicality.

The Corte Alfieri project, completed in 2021, transformed a former finance headquarters into 71 residential units. Retaining commercial uses on the ground floor to comply with Turin's *Piano Regolatore Generale* (PRG), otherwise known as its' land use development framework, the project highlights how zoning policies shape reuse outcomes. However, façade listing prevented modifications to street-facing balconies, limiting improvements in liveability. Additionally, regulations forbidding skyline alterations restricted plans for rooftop terraces, diminishing both architectural quality and the residents' quality of life (Madeddu and Clifford, 2022, pp. 16-18).

This case study underscores the need for regulatory systems that balance preservation with residential functionality. Even though England's permitted development rights simplify some conversions, they lack tailored provisions for heritage sites. On the other hand, Italy's preservation-centric approach somewhat constrains innovation. Flexible frameworks are needed to reconcile heritage values with modern residential needs, ensuring that adaptive reuse fulfils its potential as a sustainable, culturally-acceptable solution to housing shortages.

This analysis supports the dissertation's broader argument that misaligned regulations inhibit adaptive reuse and highlights the importance of policy reform to facilitate preservation and adaptation.

FIGURE 21: CORTE ALFIERI, ITALY

2.4 - POLICIES FACILITATING ADAPTIVE REUSE IN HERITAGE ARCHITECTURE

Effective policies are crucial when mitigating the financial, political, and technical challenges associated with adaptive reuse. By examining successful governance frameworks, this section illustrates the role of policy as a catalyst for preserving cultural heritage while aligning with modern sustainability goals.

In the Netherlands, the integration of adaptive reuse into national policies exemplifies a progressive approach to heritage conservation. Government-led initiatives, including subsidies and tax incentives, actively promote adaptive reuse by facilitating collaboration across '*planning, culture, design, and heritage agencies*' (Mérai et al., 2022). This model demonstrates the importance of direct policy support in reducing barriers, '*such as financial strain and regulatory complexity*', enabling smoother transitions of heritage structures into new residential uses (Mérai et al., 2022).

Conversely, in England, even though the term '*adaptive reuse*' is absent from policy, its principles are embedded in frameworks such as the National Planning Policy Framework (2021) (Mérai et al., 2022). This document '*emphasises conserving heritage*' by finding appropriate new uses, subtly supporting reuse as a mainstream practice (Ikiz Kaya et al., 2024). However, the lack of specific terminology or targeted incentives may limit its capacity to actively encourage innovation in reuse.

Adaptive reuse policies also align with broader sustainability objectives. This notion is supported by Ikiz Kaya et al. (2024), as '*the adaptive reuse of cultural heritage is a conservation and urban development strategy that supports circularity in the built environment.*' The 2011 UNESCO Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape (HUL) advocates '*conservation through transformation*,' encouraging stakeholders to integrate adaptive reuse into urban planning while preserving cultural significance (UNESCO, 2011).

While progress is evident, gaps in policy persist in addressing barriers to adaptive heritage reuse, particularly in regions lacking targeted incentives. Strengthening regulatory frameworks across Europe could streamline these initiatives, bridging the divide between heritage preservation and sustainability. This underscores the need for more cohesive strategies, encouraging the exploration of non-legislative challenges that further complicate adaptive reuse.

FIGURE 22: LEANING HERITAGE HOUSES IN LISBON, PORTUGAL

CHAPTER 3 - NON-LEGISLATIVE OBSTACLES TO ADAPTIVE HERITAGE REUSE

FIGURE 23: WORKING RESTORER RESTORES THE OLD WALL OF THE HERITAGE BUILDING. TEXTURE OF OLD BRICK WALL.

3.1 - IMPACT OF FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Financial challenges are a significant barrier to adaptive heritage reuse, particularly in the residential sector, as many projects are self-directed and funded. The substantial upfront costs, limited funding methods, and uncertain profitability often discourages stakeholders, making these projects difficult to finance. These economic factors, alongside legislative constraints, reinforce the complexity of adaptive reuse initiatives.

A core issue is the high initial costs associated with the restoration and repurposing of heritage buildings. According to the Open Heritage Policy Brief #03 (2021), '*adaptive reuse projects often exceed the costs of new construction due to specialised restoration requirements, compliance with safety codes, and preservation mandates for historically significant elements.*' Residential adaptive reuse projects face unique challenges in balancing these costs, especially with the existing global focus on market-driven affordability and profitability.

Funding gaps further heighten these issues. The Journal of Architecture and Construction (2024) highlights the inconsistent availability of grants and subsidies, noting that '*while financial incentives exist in some regions, they are often insufficient to cover the high capital investments required for adaptive reuse projects.*' Private investors frequently perceive these endeavours as high-risk, which further limits available financing options.

Despite these challenges, adaptive reuse offers long-term financial and environmental benefits. Successful projects reduce lifecycle costs by maximising the utility of existing structures and minimising demolition and construction expenses. However, financial feasibility depends on innovative funding strategies, such as public-private partnerships and revolving funds, which remain underutilised in many countries.

To make adaptive reuse a more viable option, particularly for residential applications, a collaborative approach to funding and investment is essential. These strategies could bridge financial gaps, ensuring that adaptive reuse is not only a sustainable option, but also an economically-viable alternative to new construction.

FIGURE 24: OPEN HERITAGE - FINANCING THE ADAPTIVE REUSE OF CULTURAL HERITAGE - POLICY BRIEF #03

3.2 - IMPACT OF HUMAN RESOURCING

FIGURE 25: ANCOATS DISPENSARY LAUNCH DAY

The availability of skilled and experienced labour represents a considerable non-legislative challenge to heritage reuse. This barrier is particularly evident in the repurposing of historic buildings, where the expertise required often extends beyond standard construction skills to include knowledge of traditional materials, approaches, and conservation standards. The London-based Conservation Labour Market Intelligence Report (2022) revealed that '*32% of respondents highlighted that they had faced challenges when recruiting staff with conservation skills over the last 12 months*,' reflecting a slight shortage of skilled professionals in England's capital. These shortages are emphasised in more rural areas and are further compounded by the increasing complexity of heritage projects, which demand tailored solutions for these historically-significant structures.

Case studies, such as the Grade II-listed Ancoats Dispensary in Manchester, England, a former hospital complex building repurposed into 39 residential apartments, exemplified the impact of these obstacles. The developer, Great Places Housing Association, identified '*the importance of specialist heritage advisors in successfully navigating the project*,' allowing them to create a '*robust strategy*' in order to handle '*potential harm to the building*,' as the site was derelict for over three decades and was in very poor condition (Historic England, 2024). Deciding on a part-demolition with a '*façade retention scheme*,' the skilled advisors and developers utilised their specialist knowledge of heritage conservation to rescue the building from ruin and enable it to be '*adapted for residential use*' (Historic England, 2024). This case study demonstrates how access to skilled professionals can overcome certain obstacles proposed by heritage structures.

The findings discussed in this subsection highlight the significant role that specialist labour and advisors play in the successful implementation of heritage reuse projects. However, these findings must be critically evaluated in light of their geographical and contextual limitations. Due to limited access to resources on this topic, both references originate from England, which raises questions about their generalisability to other regions in Europe. While challenges of sourcing skilled labour are likely to resonate broadly, variations in labour markets, education systems, conservation traditions, and national policy frameworks suggest the severity and solutions to this barrier may differ significantly. By recognising these knowledge gaps, this analysis reinforces the need for adaptable approaches to heritage reuse that account for both local and cross-regional labour dynamics.

3.3 - IMPACT OF CULTURAL & SOCIETAL PERCEPTIONS

Cultural and societal perceptions also play a critical role in shaping the feasibility of adaptive heritage reuse. Public attitudes towards conservation and repurposing can seriously impact project outcomes, often acting as barriers when communities perceive modern interventions as threats to historical authenticity or local identity. For instance, Ikiz Kaya et al. (2024, pp. 379-407) highlighted, in their study of the 111 identified barriers to adaptive reuse, that '*lack of awareness and knowledge*' on cultural heritage, as well as social attitudes and mindsets were one of the top three '*most predominant*' barrier categories in terms of adaptive reuse implementation. This resistance can delay projects or limit their scope, even when aligned with broader economic and sustainability goals.

Moreover, recent literature on the barriers to adaptive reuse for social housing reveal that '*public perception and community resistance can pose substantial barriers to property reuse initiatives*' (Oza et al., 2024, pp. 210-220). The '*stigmatisation of social housing*,' (Oza, et al., 2024) and broader '*cultural attitudes [on this topic] influence the acceptance of adaptive reuse projects*', as in some contexts, there is a '*preference for new construction over renovated properties*,' that oppose reuse initiatives (Oza et al., 2024; Sengers & Peine, 2021). These somewhat damaging societal perceptions and cultural differences, such as Italy's strict safeguarding of their rich cultural heritage, can be solved with better knowledge dissemination on the goals of preservation projects and collaboration among hesitant communities. For example, in a study on the Participatory Evaluation of Cultural Heritage Reuse Interventions, Gravagnuolo et al. (2024) explored, using case studies of historic buildings in Salerno (Italy), how '*local communities can become active participants in the decision-making process*' on reuse projects.

These findings underline how cultural and societal perspectives can act as non-legislative barriers to heritage reuse, with resistance deriving from lack of awareness, stigmatisation, and protection over local context and authenticity. Despite setbacks caused by these challenges, the factors mentioned also underscore the potential for transformative solutions through public engagement, collaboration, and education. Encouraging participatory approaches, as demonstrated by Gravagnuolo et al. (2024), offers a pathway to ensure acceptance over reuse initiatives. However, the effectiveness of these strategies depends on context-specific applications and the ability to balance historical preservation with societal needs. This suggests that inclusivity could mitigate cultural resistance and enable standardised reuse practices across diverse regions.

FIGURE 26: YOU CAN HAVE BOTH HERITAGE PROTECTION AND MORE HOUSING

CHAPTER 4 - EUROPEAN CASE STUDIES & PROSPECTIVE DEVELOPMENTS

FIGURE 27: ZOLLVEREIN COAL MINE INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX IN ESSEN, GERMANY

4.1 - SUCCESSFUL EXAMPLES OF ADAPTIVE HERITAGE REUSE

Brewers Quay in Weymouth, Dorset, exemplifies how adaptive reuse can preserve cultural heritage while addressing contemporary residential needs. Built in 1904, as a Victorian brewery, the Grade II-listed structure reflects Weymouth's industrial and maritime legacy (Historic England, 2021). However, after falling into disrepair in the early twenty-first century, the site became both a symbol of nostalgia and an opportunity for restoration.

FIGURE 28: BREWERYS QUAY SITE VISIT #1 - RESIDENTIAL MEWS

During a semi-structured interview, insights from Jason Craig, the lead developer of the ongoing Brewers Quay transformation, revealed the multifaceted challenges of heritage reuse. Craig noted that regulatory frameworks commanded the preservation of certain original materials, such as the Welsh slate for the roof, only substituting it with Spanish slate as an accessible alternative '*when necessary*', ensuring minimal deviation from the building's historic fabric (Craig, 2024). Conservation officers, described by Craig as '*pragmatic*', facilitated the balance between preservation priorities and functional requirements, yet overlapping demands from environmental agencies and planning authorities created delays. For instance, disputes arose over balcony designs and compliance with Building Regulation Part L, necessitating '*weekly meetings with building control*' to navigate these challenges (Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, 2021; Craig, 2024).

FIGURE 29: BREWERS QUAY SITE VISIT #2 - THE OLD BREWERY VATS

Non-legislative challenges were equally significant. The derelict state of the building, including structural instability and '*an accumulation of pigeon guano*', required extensive preliminary work (Craig, 2024). Removing the old brewery vats without compromising the building's integrity highlighted the logistical complexity of '*working within the constraints of a historic building*' (Craig, 2024). Furthermore, Craig explained that sourcing skilled labour and heritage-compatible materials proved difficult in a smaller town, like Weymouth, often necessitating external expertise. Securing financial backing presented another obstacle, as lenders initially hesitated due to the building being such an '*unknown entity*,' especially regarding issues such as asbestos and age-related structural implications (Craig, 2024).

FIGURE 30: BREWERS QUAY SITE VISIT #3 - EXTERNAL HERITAGE DETAILING

Despite these obstacles, collaboration between planners, conservation officers, and the Weymouth Museum established innovative solutions – like redesigning the internal layouts to *'improve accessibility'* and resolve staffing inefficiencies in public spaces. The adaptive reuse of Brewers Quay demonstrates how historic preservation can address the need for modern housing, provided there is '*sufficient communication between all [independent] agencies*' (Craig, 2024). European comparisons, such as the Zollverein Coal Mine Industrial Complex in Essen, Germany, '*comprises all the elements of intensive nineteenth and twentieth-century industrial exploitation*,' and is another example of heritage preservation through contemporary conservation (UNESCO, 2018). This UNESCO World Heritage Site has undergone significant development and illustrates the importance of '*collaboration with heritage specialists*,' and '*effective [strategic and physical] planning*' in enhancing the feasibility of these initiatives (Alshami, 2022, pp. 5-6).

FIGURE 31: PROSPECTIVE BREWERS QUAY DEVELOPMENT RENDER

FIGURE 32: ZECHE ZOLLVEREIN, GELSENKIRCHENER STRASSE, ESSEN, DEUTSCHLAND

4.2 - EMERGING POLICIES & SYSTEMS FACILITATING HERITAGE REUSE

Adaptive reuse projects, such as Brewers Quay and Zollverein, demonstrate how coordinated policies and protection laws impact the preservation of heritage buildings. In Essen, the Zollverein Complex benefits from a clear management system, consisting '*of a set of maintenance and conservation measures*' that outline the Zollverein Foundation's strategy for preservation, focusing on the '*responsible redevelopment of the buildings for the purpose of culture and design*' (UNESCO, 2018). Funded by the state of North Rhine-Westphalia (NRW) and the European Union, this case study exemplifies how emerging policies and coordinated funding systems can directly facilitate adaptive heritage reuse. By mitigating financial barriers through sustained investments and logical management, the Zollverein project highlights the critical role of integrated frameworks in balancing preservation with sustainable redevelopment goals.

Globally, sustainability initiatives increasingly favour adaptive reuse as part of broader environmental and urban planning strategies. Methodologies, such as analyses of policy trends, highlight emerging frameworks that directly support reuse initiatives. For instance, the EU Green Deal outlines '*goals for reducing urban sprawl and embedding circular-economy principles into construction practices*' (European Commission, 2020). Recent sustainability initiatives within the European Union and the United Kingdom illustrate progressive legislative approaches, including green building certifications and streamlined planning processes for heritage projects. These initiatives are reflected in the EU's Green Deal and the UK's National Planning Policy Framework (Department for Communities and Local Government, 2019), which emphasise the integration of sustainability into the reuse of heritage structures.

These emerging policies and systems indicate a growing recognition of adaptive heritage reuse as a strategic tool for addressing both conservation and contemporary challenges, such as housing shortages and wasteful construction. The Zollverein Complex and Brewers Quay, although illustrate different applications of modern reuse, demonstrate how coordinated planning, policies, funding, and progressive legislative approaches can mitigate logistical barriers, enabling heritage sites to transform with ease. By examining these trends, this dissertation demonstrates how adaptive reuse can shift from isolated projects to standard practice, aligning heritage conservation with societal and environmental priorities, as envisioned by initiatives like the EU Green Deal.

FIGURE 33: BREWERS QUAY SITE VISIT #4 - ADAPTIVE RECONSTRUCTION

4.3 - DISCUSSION

The findings from the Brewers Quay site visit and interview, and the Zollverein literature review, illustrate the complex interplay between legislative frameworks, financial incentives, and the unexpected challenges of adaptive reuse. Critically reflecting upon the Brewers Quay project, Jason Craig noted that his team anticipated certain regulatory hurdles, such as compliance with Building Regulation Part L, '*for local authority*', but the non-legislative issues – including structural instability and heritage-compatible material shortages – proved to be more unpredictable and somewhat disruptive to the development. As Craig commented in the interview, working around these external factors becomes *'really complicated*,' which underscores the need for adaptable policy frameworks that account for these outliers.

One critical regulatory issue Craig identified was achieving compliance for the large arched heritage windows in the residential spaces, which clashed with modern energy efficiency requirements. To meet these standards, the team upgraded internal corridors and apartments, enhancing EPC ratings for block-wide compliance, despite individual non-conformities. This innovative yet challenging workaround again exemplifies the delicate balance between preservation and functionality in heritage projects. Craig further suggested that giving planners '*greater control over the agencies that work for them*' could streamline these processes, aligning local authority goals with project objectives more effectively.

The Zollverein Complex complements these findings by demonstrating how financial backing mitigates economic risks while encouraging sustainably-funded, circular practices. Together, these case studies contribute to affirming this research hypothesis – that adaptive heritage reuse can evolve into standard practice if policies facilitate inter-agency collaboration, support innovative compliance solutions, and minimise financial and other external barriers. Future research should explore how governments can coordinate these factors to make adaptive reuse more feasible across diverse contexts.

FIGURE 34: INDUSTRIAL ZOLLVEREIN, GERMANY

CONCLUSION & REFLECTION

This dissertation explores the barriers and opportunities in adaptive heritage reuse for residential applications within Europe – a subject that is becoming increasingly relevant in the field of interior architecture and design. By addressing both legislative and non-legislative challenges, analysing successful case studies, and proposing actionable recommendations, this research has achieved its objectives, offering valuable insights to existing academic and professional discussions.

Summary of Main Findings

This study revealed numerous obstacles – legislative, financial, human, cultural, and structural – that shape the feasibility of adaptive heritage reuse. Regulatory barriers, such as compliance with building regulations and policy frameworks, remain significant challenges. However, findings identified that non-regulatory barriers, such as financial implications and skilled labour shortages, can often be more impactful, depending on the geographical context of each project. These findings align with case studies, such as Brewers Quay and the Zollverein Complex, which demonstrate how collaborative approaches, policy flexibility, and sustained financial backing can overcome these hurdles.

A notable conclusion is the dual role of the heritage building itself in acting as both an opportunity and a barrier. Factors like age, condition, structure, and location often amplify difficulties, but these challenges can be mitigated through strategic collaboration, innovation, and adaptive policy frameworks. As illustrated in the Zollverein project, Germany's robust heritage management systems support preservation, contrasting approaches in other parts of Europe. However, Mérai et al. (2022) note that '*Germany has well-resourced heritage protection and management systems, but with less flexibility or local discretion*.' This observation underlines the importance of context-sensitive strategies in heritage reuse.

Reflection on Objectives

- Examining Legislative Constraints: Through an in-depth exploration of policy frameworks, regulations, planning processes, and protection systems, this study highlighted critical areas for improvement, particularly in promoting flexibility and reducing governmental inefficiencies.
- Evaluate Non-Legislative Challenges: Financial, cultural, and logistical barriers were examined in detail, with practical recommendations provided to address them, like innovative funding systems and public engagement strategies.
- Investigate Successful Case Studies: Case studies, such as Brewers Quay, illustrate how adaptive reuse can succeed despite barriers, offering transferable insights for future projects.
- Propose Strategies to Overcome Challenges: Recommendations emphasised the importance of stakeholder collaboration, policy innovation, and sustainable practices, contributing actionable ideas to this field.

Significance of this Study

This dissertation contributes to the Climate Emergency and Sustainability conversation by showcasing heritage reuse as a viable strategy, aligning environmental conservation with urban development. By minimising demolition waste, reducing resource consumption, and preserving cultural value, adaptive reuse demonstrates a circular-economy approach to interior architecture and design. Furthermore, this research underscores the urgency of integrating sustainability into heritage conservation policies, to address global housing shortages while safeguarding historical integrity.

Research Process Reflections

The research process has been instrumental in shaping the development of future projects. Through critical evaluation of reuse barriers, it provided valuable insights into how legislative frameworks and external factors influence design outcomes. Case studies demonstrate the complex logistical and cultural aspects of adaptive reuse, informing the design strategies needed to balance preservation with modern functionality.

Looking forward, this dissertation will inform future design approaches by exemplifying collaborative strategies and innovative compliance solutions. Incorporating community-focused design elements and exploring material reuse can enhance the sustainability and acceptance of reuse projects. This knowledge will guide the development of future design proposals, integrating both historical and contemporary components.

The reflective process also underscored the importance of precision and clarity in representing complex ideas. While this study effectively synthesises diverse resources, future projects will benefit from grounding theoretical insights in more actionable design applications.

Generalisability – Scope and Limitations

Although focused on European contexts, these findings have broader implications, especially for regions with similar heritage challenges. However, variations in cultural attitudes, governance spheres, and labour markets limit the generalisability of certain conclusions. For instance, the accessibility of skilled labour in rural England significantly differs from urban regions in Germany, affecting the applicability of strategies, like those seen in Zollverein. These regional disparities emphasise the need for localised solutions that support broader policy recommendations.

FIGURE 35: A PICTURESQUE VIEW OF A HISTORIC BUILDING WITH A DISTINCTIVE GREEN COPPER DOME, SET AGAINST A PARTLY CLOUDY SKY, GERMANY'S HERITAGE.

FIGURE 36: HISTORIC BUILDINGS INSPECTOR

Evaluating Effectiveness

This research effectively supports future design projects and professional developments by providing a robust analytical framework for understanding adaptive reuse. The detailed examination of barriers and facilitating factors offers crucial knowledge to propose realistic, context-sensitive design solutions. However, future iterations could enhance these theoretical findings by integrating more actionable recommendations for policymakers, as suggested by feedback, and by refining the presentation of complex ideas through concise phrasing and visuals.

Pathways for Future Development & Conclusive Comments

This research has strategically positioned future projects to emphasise sustainable, adaptive design practices. By coinciding design principles with circular-economy concepts and community engagement, the study contributes to the ongoing discourse on climate-responsive design.

Adaptive heritage reuse represents a critical intersection of sustainability, cultural preservation, and urban development. The barriers identified – both legislative and non-legislative – necessitate coordination and collaborative approaches. Legislative obstacles often heighten the challenges posed by the age, condition, and location of heritage buildings, reinforcing the need for flexible policies.

As reflected within Brewers Quay, robust heritage support and protection systems can facilitate adaptive reuse, though balancing modern requirements with preservation remains essential. By bridging the gaps between policy, practice, and public perception, adaptive reuse can transition from isolated successes to standard practice, significantly contributing to sustainable development goals in interior architecture.

This dissertation affirms the transformative potential of adaptive heritage reuse and establishes a foundation for future research and practice. The insights gained can inform design strategies that respect historical context while addressing future urban development needs.

FIGURE 37: PRE-DEVELOPMENT BREWERS QUAY

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FIGURE 38: HERITAGE LANDSCAPE & CONTEXT, MALTA

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APPENDICES

- AUB ETHICAL IMPLICATIONS FORM
- INTERVIEWEE CONSENT FORM
- INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT - CONTAINING PRE-DETERMINED QUESTIONS

ARTS UNIVERSITY BOURNEMOUTH

ETHICAL IMPLICATIONS OF RESEARCH ASSESSMENT

BA (HONS)/MA/MRES

Student Contact info.

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Level 6
2201685

Project Start and End date

07/10/2024 – 24/01/2025

Project Title

IAD662 - Dissertation

Project purpose

Describe the purpose and the background rationale for your proposed primary research.

The purpose of the primary research is to investigate real-life application to the contextual secondary research I have been conducting for my dissertation.

State the hypotheses/research questions that you will examine through your primary research.

The research title for my dissertation is 'Obstacles To Reuse: To what extent do legislative barriers inhibit the standardisation of adaptive heritage reuse in residential architecture in Europe?'

Please describe any expected outcomes. Examples below.

The dissertation focus will be more clearly defined, and this primary research will demonstrate real-life application of adaptive heritage reuse in residential projects, supporting my secondary research and hypothesis that legislation does/doesn't inhibit adaptive reuse practices.

Research Methods

What research method will you use (i.e. a survey, an interview)? Please describe how your primary research will be structured and why. Delete as appropriate.

In-person interview, including questions on the process of adapting a listed building into residential housing, legal, social and potential financial limitations, site photos, and voice recordings.

Recruitment

Please state clearly how the participants will be identified, approached and recruited. Include any relationship between yourself (the researcher) and the participant(s).

Participants will be emailed.

Please show any recruitment advertisements or messages used to your tutor before using them.

Consent

Describe the process that the investigator will be using to obtain valid consent. If consent is not to be obtained say why. If the participants are minors or for other reasons are not competent to consent, describe the proposed alternate source of consent. Some examples may include:

The interviewee will sign the AUB-supplied consent form and have given written consent via email.

Verbal consent will be attained before any voice recordings take place.

Consent can be withdrawn at any time.

Please also email your tutor an **Interview Consent Form**, an **Activity Consent Form** or a consent statement that will accompany a survey.

Confidentiality and anonymity

Will participants be anonymous? (i.e. the identities of participants are not known to the researcher, and no identifying information is collected).
No.

If participants are not anonymous, will participant data be kept confidential? (i.e. will the researcher separate the participant identities from the data they provide, and take care not to include data which might identify participants in the research report?).
Yes, data will be kept confidential, unless consent from interviewee is given to share data.

Or will participant data be attributed?
Yes.
Interviewee will have the option to be anonymous or named in the references, whether that is by personal name, job title, or company name.

Participants as subjects

Describe the type, number and important characteristics of your participants (e.g. age, gender, location, affiliation, level of fitness, intellectual ability etc). Add detail or delete as appropriate.

I will have one participant for the interview, based in Dorset, who is a working professional in the property development industry.

Participant withdrawal

Participants have the right to withdraw at any time/up to the project end date (stated on page one).

By checking this box 'Y', I confirm that I will delete all forms of their data. Y

Does the study involve:

'Y' = YES / 'N' = NO

Participation of people other than the researchers? Note: 'Participation' includes both active participation (such as when participants take part in an interview) and cases where participants take part in the study without their knowledge and consent at the time (for example, crowd behaviour research).	Y
Vulnerable groups, such as children and young people aged under 18 years; those with learning disability, or cognitive or physical impairments?	N
Research that induces or results in or causes anxiety, stress, pain or physical discomfort, or poses a risk of harm to participants (which is more than is expected from everyday life)?	N
Risk to the personal safety of the researcher?	N
Deception or research that is conducted without full and informed consent of the participants at time study is carried out?	N
Risk to animals?	N

Feedback

How will participants be provided with feedback on your study following the investigation. Some examples may include:

The participant can request a copy of the findings and final report, and I will keep them updated with the progress of this research and dissertation via email.

Storage, Access + Disposal

Describe what research data will be stored, where, for what period of time, the measures that will be put in place to ensure security of the data, who will have access to the data, and the method and timing of disposal of the data. Some examples may include:

Data will be stored on a password-protected hard drive, for up to two years. The dissertation content will be reviewed by myself, peers, my lecturer, and potentially put forward to the Interior Educator Awards board in the climate emergency and sustainability section.

Risks

Outline any potential risks to individuals including you, the researcher, research participants and any other individuals not involved in the research. Explain what measures will be taken to minimise any risks, and what plans are in place in the event of a mishap.

Risk examples:

Minor risk to personal health and safety, as well as participant, as interview will take place at the site (a construction site for a property development).

No personal information will be given.

Benefits

Outline any potential benefits to individuals including you, research participants and any other individuals.

Benefit examples:

Insights gained will help to define problem context for the researcher. It will also increase my knowledge and awareness of the problem.

Declaration

I submit this form as an accurate and final description of the ethical considerations of the primary research I wish to conduct for the project. I understand that if the plans raise concerns with my tutors, they will take my plans to the School Ethics Adviser or AUB Research Office for further consideration before I get approval to begin primary research.

Name Emily May Mowlam

Date 18/11/2024

Student signature

Support by Unit Tutor

This project is deemed to represent:

- Minimal risk and approved — Y
- More than minimal risk and approved
- More than minimal risk and has been forwarded to School Ethics Adviser for further consideration.

Name (...)

Date 20/11/2024

Unit Tutor signature

ARTS UNIVERSITY BOURNEMOUTH

INTERVIEW CONSENT FORM

BA (HONS)/MA/MRES

Student Contact info.

Emily Mowlam, 2201685
[redacted]

Project Title

IAD662 - Dissertation

Project Start and End date

07/10/2024 – 24/01/2025

Research Invitation

You are being invited to take part as an interviewee in an undergraduate research project, resulting in a dissertation outcome.

Before you decide to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Ask if anything is unclear or if you would like more information.

You are completely free to decide how much or little information you include in your answers.

This research will be conducted in compliance with the Research Ethics Policy of Arts University Bournemouth.

Project purpose

The interview intends to investigate real-life application to secondary research on the adaptive reuse of heritage buildings, in a residential context.

The dissertation aims to explore the extent to which legislation inhibits the standardisation of adaptive heritage reuse in residential architecture – opposed to non-legislative challenges – such as financial and resourcing limitations.

Why you?

I, the researcher, have invited you to be involved because of your transformational development work on the Brewers Quay renovation, in Weymouth.

Usage

The findings for this project will be used solely for non-commercial, educational practices. Quotes may be used in printed, online and electronic publications, for example, process books, dissertations, AUB's website, journal articles and competition presentations.

Recording/Transcript

You understand that you are giving your consent for this interview to be recorded and then transcribed for inclusion in the above project.

Attribution

You understand that your involvement in this study, and particularly your comments from this interview, will either be *anonymised or attributed* to you and may be included in the final project outcome.

Data Confidentiality

All your data will be stored and used in accordance with current legal requirements (Data Protection Act).

Right of withdrawal

By answering these questions, you understand that you have the right to withdraw your consent to use your comments in writing (over email) prior to the 17th of January 2025 without disadvantage to yourself and without having to give any reason. If you did so, the interview *recording, transcript* would be destroyed.

You understand that past the submission date of the 24th of January 2025, you are unable to withdraw your consent for the use of your comments.

Statement of Consent

The project has been fully explained to me and I hereby fully and freely consent to participate.

I will answer these questions reflecting accurately my personal or professional views.

Name of Participant: Jason Craig
Signature:

Thank you very much for your time and agreement to participate in this project!

Date Signed

22/11/2024

Contact info. (optional)

Contact email address and/or telephone number (Details to be kept securely for up to one year/duration of the project).

Email/Telephone

[redacted]

[redacted]

Researcher: Please supply the participant with a duplicate copy for their records.

AUB School contact information

If you wish to know more about the about the project or participants rights, please contact:

Monica Franchin
Dissertation Unit Leader
mfranchin@aub.ac.uk
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JASON CRAIG: INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT

CONDUCTED ON DECEMBER 12TH, 2024

INTERVIEWER: EMILY MAY MOWLAM
DURATION: 23 MINUTES, 30 SECONDS
LOCATION: WEYMOUTH, DORSET

*consent was gained to audio record and transcribe this interview for analysis within the dissertation.

*insights were also noted and used within this dissertation from before the recorded conversation took place.

Interviewer: Lovely. So, I read the article published by Dorset Biz News on how the transformation of Brewers Quay will bring history back to life at this local landmark. What inspired you to come out of retirement and take on this project?

Jason Craig: To be honest, we've built the houses round at Old Castle Road, on the beach, which we were going to move into, and so I passed this building every day. It was seriously distressed, so we decided to take it on.

Interviewer: That's wonderful. The reason I decided to contact you, actually, was because my partner's grandmother lives near Brewers Quay, and we were passing it a few weeks ago and I had, at that point, just generated this focus for my dissertation, and it just clicked. I thought that this building would be brilliant to investigate as part of my research.

Interviewer: And how does your experience with Brewers Quay, so far, compare to other projects you've worked on in the past?

Jason Craig: With all Grade II-listed buildings, it's the same. You know, it's long and arduous to get through planning and to get consents from all the various parties. It's not just the council planners or the conservation officers. It's also the environmental agency, it's all the various agencies that work for the council independently, that become tricky. But we've been lucky, to be honest, on this one. We've managed to get it through quicker than we expected.

Interviewer: That's great, and what have been the most significant challenges you have faced, so far, during this development?

Jason Craig: The building itself, really. You know, trying to demolish sections of the original building without actually compromising the structure. You know, taking out the vats. The building had been derelict upstairs for about 10 years, so we had about a foot-deep of pigeon guano throughout, and where the building had been left derelict, actually working in some of the areas, you have to have a structural plan even just to get to these areas, let alone carry out the work. So, that's been tricky.

Interviewer: Were there any specific heritage protection laws or listed building codes that have complicated the process?

Jason Craig: Yeah. I mean, it's a listed building. The conservation officers have been really good; they've worked with us. We've had a number of meetings with them on-site, and they have been pragmatic in understanding the building needs to be saved, and where we can, we save all the heritage we can. Where it's not possible, where it's beyond repair, then that has to be replaced.

Interviewer: Are you aware of, or did you encounter, any difficulties in obtaining planning permission, building permits, or navigating compliance with any heritage preservation requirements?

Jason Craig: Yes, but nothing unusual. We inherited a set of plans, which weren't very practical for the building or for the [Weymouth] Museum, which we're working in conjunction with. So, we sat down with the Museum and with the planners, and we came up with a scheme which made it a more viable project, but also gave the Museum a better layout. Originally, they [the museum] were over four floors, a smaller area over four floors, so we moved them all down onto the ground floor, so it removes all their disabled access issues, and their staffing issues, because you'd have to have staff on various floors. Now, it's all on one floor, and far more practical for the Museum. And then we were able to take those upper areas to create some additional apartments, to cover costs.

Interviewer: And have regulations regarding the preservation of the historical integrity of the building impacted the design or construction plans?

Jason Craig: Yeah, so, all of the internal designs are based around working around the existing structure. So, we're not taking out any of the existing building structure or the original building structure. All of the apartments and the retail [units] are working between those existing walls. So, the main spine of the building is left in, and then stuff like the chimney, at the rear, and all the windows are being put back in exactly the same place. So, the apartments, again, have to be designed around that.

Interviewer: Yes, and like you said before about the Welsh and Spanish slate roofing [salvaging the original Welsh slate where possible, and substituting it with an approved, more-accessible Spanish slate, when necessary].

Jason Craig: Yeah, so where we can repurpose materials, we are. So, you know, all the bricks that are coming out are being saved to be reused again, to be doing repairs. The front of the building is just having a steam clean, with minimal repairs, only where it's dangerous. And yes, the Welsh slate that's already there, we can't find a replacement for it, so it is being repurposed into the areas that you see from the ground, and a new slate is being used in upper, higher areas, out of the way.

Interviewer: Do you expect any regulatory hurdles that may delay or alter the project, from this point onwards?

Jason Craig: Yes, I'm sure there will be some conditions; there are still conditions that we're still working on. We've gone ahead with construction, which we're allowed to do, but as we come up to do certain areas of work, those conditions will then have to be dealt with. So, stuff like flooding conditions have been very onerous and very difficult. The windows, the finishing schedule, all stuff like that, we are working on every day and those conditions will be settled as we come to carry out the work.

Interviewer: And do you think that existing legislation around adapting listed buildings, such as this one, allows for enough flexibility?

Jason Craig: That's a good question.

Interviewer: A loaded question.

Jason Craig: Yes. Um, I think there are enough safeguards. I think what there isn't is sufficient communication between all the agencies. So, as an example, the planning and conservation officers wanted to reduce the balconies, but the environment agency wanted to increase the balconies. So, you know, it's a catch-22 on those, and whereas one of the conditions was they wanted a Heritage video and statement done for the building, one of the conditions stated that we couldn't start construction, apart from in certain small areas, without that. However, we had to start construction to be able to facilitate that, because we have to do the demo to create the video of the existing features. So, sometimes you're put in a position where you can satisfy one agency, but not the other, but they're all supposed to be working together.

Interviewer: Beyond regulation, what other challenges have you faced regarding the development of Brewers Quay?

Jason Craig: Well, people who are experienced in doing that type of work are difficult to find. Finding the right labour, the right subcontractors, the right suppliers. Finding the right materials to match the existing is tricky. And where there are alternatives, it's then getting the alternative materials to be either close enough, or far enough away from the existing Heritage building to be right.

Interviewer: Exactly. As part of my dissertation structure, I'm investigating to what extent legislation inhibits adaptive reuse, but I'm also looking into non-legislative obstacles, such as financial constraints, community opposition, and sourcing skilled labour and tradespeople.

Jason Craig: Yeah, so financing was difficult, because there are not many banks that will take on a building like this. Mainly because it's just such an unknown entity. How much asbestos will you find? How many structural issues will you find? So, yeah, we struggled quite considerably to get a bank involved, and we have one now, so that's good. Obviously, the labour has been a real issue and finding the right tradesmen. It's much easier in London or in the capitals. There's just people always around, but down in the smaller communities, it is difficult. We have had to import some labour. With regards to, even management of this type of project, and finding the right managers is difficult, someone with experience of these types of buildings. There's not that many down here [in Weymouth], so we were lucky that the guys who did the Dorchester Brewery could be the same guys we've moved in to do this. So, they have experience.

Interviewer: Do you feel that the local community have been supportive of the development?

Jason Craig: So, in the beginning, no. In the beginning, there was some resistance. We carried out a media campaign with Facebook and social media, and with the newspapers and the planners, where we explained what we're doing and why we're doing it. And so, I think, unlike a lot of developers, we do weekly updates on our Facebook page. I think we have a couple thousand followers on that now – local people. And we take photographs and explain what we're doing and why, and also, when we did the original planning application, our revised planning application, I attended the planning meeting and spoke to the council and the public to explain why we're doing it and how we are doing it, and the reasons for changing the planning. And what's so good about that is, because we did it in conjunction with the Weymouth Museum, who have been here forever, those guys are very supportive, as they were getting a better deal. So, they spoke on our behalf also, and then after that, yes, we are now at, I think, 98% positive remarks on our Facebook.

Interviewer: Brilliant. I think that the Weymouth Museum and representing the local history is really important to a lot of people.

Jason Craig: Yeah, and, you know, the space they're taking is a space that would have been tricky for us to convert into apartments anyway. But it's ideal for them, because it doesn't have windows, so we won't get degradation of artifacts etc. So, yeah, it will be tricky shoehorning all their requirements in, but I think we're pretty much there.

Interviewer: Great, and were there any logistical or technical difficulties that arose due to the age or condition of the building?

Jason Craig: Yeah, I mean we're in the middle of a town centre, and we've got a six-story building, so craning and everything like that is logistically difficult. The site is big, but the exterior isn't, so you must have seen it out there. Storing materials and having routes for labour has been really tricky. The logistics of getting materials down here, and in, has been tricky. The roads aren't the best. [Weymouth] hasn't got the best road links.

Interviewer: It's also quite narrow around here as well.

Jason Craig: It is, yeah. We're lucky because we own the car park behind as well, so we've been able to utilise the car park and obviously we're doing all this for the other two sites behind it, so we have been causing a lot of logistical issues. And then we have the cruise ships. So, the cruise ships drop off [passengers] on that roundabout [behind the Brewers Quay building], so on cruise ship days, nothing happens. You know, we can't get materials in or out, so we have to liaise with Portland Port.

Interviewer: Goodness, these are things you don't really think about until you have to go through it.

Jason Craig: Oh yeah.

Interviewer: And were there any issues with balancing modern residential needs and the history of the building and its' historic features?

Jason Craig: Yeah, I mean, things such as, you know, getting the windows to comply with Part L, for local authority. You can't have a huge arch window in a heritage style and also comply with building control. Because it's a Grade II-listed, we work with building control, and now we've had to upgrade the internal corridors and flats, so we can bring the EPCs up, so we get block compliance, and so the windows don't comply but the block, as a block, does. So, it's working around stuff like that to make it work, but also some of the walkways are narrower than normal, and we can't make them wider because it's part of the historical part of the building. So, like I say, weekly meetings with building control and we agree what we can and can't do, and then we design around it.

Interviewer: Oh wow, and do you view Brewers Quay as a model for future adaptive heritage reuse projects?

Jason Craig: I really hope so. Well, we know it's not the first Brewery that's been done, but I've [worked on] a lot of Grade II-listed buildings and Heritage buildings around the world, and this is one of the worst conditions I've come across, because it was left for so long. When we took the building on, it was a section 215, ordered by the council, which is basically an order to repair, because it was in such disrepair. So, when we purchased, that was the first thing we did, [we] complied with that order and did all the repairs to seal the building up, temporarily. But now we've opened the building up, because our first job is to remove all the roofs and put them back on again, so we won't be watertight here until March next year.

Interviewer: It's come such a long way since you started.

Jason Craig: Yeah, it has. I mean, it was just a mess. It was being used as a dumping ground for several developers before us and who had been involved and dumped material or done little parts of work, but not finished anything. So, all that had to be removed, except some, and we started from scratch. So, as you see it now, it has been completely stripped back.

Interviewer: Yeah, and in your opinion, how could government policies or local authorities better support adaptive reuse projects, like this one?

Jason Craig: I think if the planners were the people who were making all the decisions, it would probably be easier, but they have multiple agencies outside of their control. They have no control over the environment agency and people like that. They are as frustrated as we are with some of the responses, and that would be because they are so busy. But also, if you take something like the conservation team, they are so busy, [but] if you send an email, you're lucky if you get an email back the following week. And that might be just asking more questions, and if you respond, you may have to wait another week, because they have such a backlog and it's not their fault. They are just simply underfunded and in demand. So, we do what we can by giving them everything, but that then takes them time to read everything. So, yes, it is a drawn-out process because of that and some of the agencies get 21 days to respond, and then they may reply with another question, and once you answer that question, they get another 21 days and [might] come back with another question, so you're now 60 days in and all we wanted to do was put a door in. So, I think if the planners had more control over the agencies that worked for them, it might be better.

Interviewer: Upon reflection on the development so far, what lessons have you learnt from this project that you would share with other developers who are considering undertaking adaptive reuse projects?

Jason Craig: Don't do it! [laughter]. No, engaging with the planners and the public on day one, which we did, and we've benefited from it. You know, like when we had our councillors meeting before. I'd already engaged with all the councillors. We'd already sent them the drawings and our plans. Before we did our planning approval, we spoke to planners and the conservation officers to see what they would or wouldn't let us do. And we explained to them what we could and couldn't do, and I think doing that rather than putting in block planning applications and then fighting is not going to work. Again, getting the public on side, if you do that, you've already won. And the public have been good, because they've been very supportive, which tends to help you when it comes to committees and stuff. So, yeah, engagement with all is the way forward.

Interviewer: And do you think that the primary challenges, during this process, are impacted or influenced more by legislative or non-legislative obstacles?

Jason Craig: I think it's both with a regeneration project like this. You know the legislative problems you're going to have, and we went into it eyes open. We knew what we were going to have to deal with. It may have been a tad more challenging than it should have been, but we dealt with that. But, you know, as you've got a building of this size, as you work your way through the building, almost every week we come across a structural issue. So, we have a structural engineer who comes weekly and deals with problems weekly, and that's the only way to do it.

Interviewer: And finally, what's next for you after Brewers Quay? Do you plan on taking on any more heritage restoration projects, and if you ever did, is there anything you would do differently?

Jason Craig: Um, I don't think I'd do it differently. I think, considering what we've done, we've done well here. [It] may be more luck than judgement, but it has gone well. And yes, we are looking at some. As a person, I'm not interested in doing a block of flats from the ground up, but a heritage building is something of interest that would keep me interested.

Interviewer: That's exactly why I'm looking into this, as part of my dissertation. There is so much out there about why adaptive heritage reuse is so important, but so little about why it's not standard practice**.**

Jason Craig: The obvious [reason] is time constraints, because developers buy and then it takes years to get the plans through. And it's the funding. We went to 8 banks, at the beginning, and all weren't even interested in funding a project like this. And then, of course, as you know, we were lucky in that we are a good customer of a particular bank, so we didn't give them a choice but to fund us. But, if you're a developer doing it first off, then there's probably not much chance that you'll get funding. And the build cost on this is about 20 million [GBP] and across the 3 sites, it's 26 million [GBP], so no one has that in their back pocket. So, you need banks and we have two involved here, one on the new build and one on the refurbishment of the actual Brewers Quay building. So, yes, it's complicated, really complicated.

Interviewer: Yes! There are so many components that make it work.

Jason Craig: Yes, yeah. I mean, as part of your research, if you look into the planning portal for this, and you look at all of the documents from the various agencies, they'll probably give you an idea of what we've been dealing with. Because, when you look at the environment agency, you'll see questions and then a big delay, and then more questions and a big delay. It's documented, it's historical, and it's easy to follow the documentation.

Interviewer: I have been looking at a few charters and policy documents, as part of my research, and yes, I think that is evident throughout them all.

Jason Craig: Yeah, and [there is] stuff that people don't even think about. Like the original surveys for asbestos, for land, for land contamination, for traffic management systems [and] for flood risk. They were all done here. But then we did our new planning, and we were forced to do them all again, at the cost of close to £150,000. They all had to be done again, and then because the legislation changes so regularly, like, as an example, the flood risk, they raised it by 250 millimetres between when we had the original planning to our new planning. So, the whole place had to be redesigned to the new flood risk, and that happens frequently.