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MASTER'S QUALIFICATION THESIS

**RETHINKING THE PURPOSE OF HISTORIC BUILDINGS
AS A TOOL FOR THEIR PRESERVATION**

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Abstract. In the context of post-war reconstruction and ongoing urban transformation, the preservation of historic buildings faces new challenges, particularly related to their functional and economic obsolescence. The analytical problem addressed in this research concerns the tension between the imperative to preserve historical structures and the evolving demands of contemporary urban development. The study focuses on the central question: How does the redefinition of a historic building's function affect its long-term preservation under conditions of urban change?

To explore this question, an exploratory research design was employed, combining case study analysis (including both Ukrainian and international examples), typological-functional classification, visual and spatial documentation, and synthesis. Special attention was given to the case of the Baron Steingel Castle in Kyiv, considered as a potential example of adaptive reuse—from a heritage landmark into a hotel or hostel.

The findings suggest that rethinking function can serve as an effective strategy for the preservation of historic buildings, provided that a balance is maintained between contemporary urban needs and the protection of authenticity and cultural significance. At the same time, the study highlights the risks associated with over-commercialization or poorly aligned forms of adaptation, which may undermine the integrity and symbolic value of heritage structures.

Keywords: historic buildings, revitalization, preservation.

Word count: 12321.

1. INTRODUCTION

The challenge of preserving historic urban fabric has acquired renewed relevance in the context of ongoing urban transformations, post-war recovery, and the shrinking availability of spatial and financial resources. In academic discourse over the past decades, there has been a growing shift from purely technical or legal approaches to heritage conservation toward more integrated and socially embedded strategies. Among them, adaptive reuse is increasingly recognized as a means of maintaining the heritage value of buildings under changing conditions. The theoretical foundation of this research draws upon three key strands: the theory of adaptive reuse (Plevoets & Van Cleempoel), value-based approaches to heritage assessment (Feilden), and sustainable reuse in the face of urban and environmental challenges (Yung & Chan). In professional practice, these ideas are increasingly reflected in revitalization projects that combine architectural heritage with contemporary social or market needs.

The analytical problem addressed in this study lies in the tension between the need to preserve historic buildings as carriers of cultural and architectural value, and the contemporary functional, economic, and social demands of the urban environment. In many cases, historic buildings remain underused or derelict precisely due to the mismatch between their original function and today's realities. This raises the central question of whether adapting a building's function may serve as an effective tool for its long-term preservation.

Analytical question:

How does the rethinking of a historic building's function affect its long-term preservation in the context of urban transformation?

Sub-questions:

- What factors facilitate or hinder successful functional adaptation?
- How can a balance be achieved between preserving authenticity and redefining use?

The research employs an exploratory design, as the goal is not to confirm a predetermined theory, but to uncover patterns, contradictions, and contextual influences that shape the outcomes of functional adaptation. This approach allows for the investigation of both successful and failed examples and supports the formulation of recommendations grounded in empirical observation. At the same time, the exploratory nature of the research limits generalizability and requires close attention to local and historical context.

The thesis consists of five main chapters. The first chapter outlines the theoretical and analytical framework, drawing on relevant scholarly literature. The second chapter describes the methodology and research design. The third chapter presents a comparative case study analysis of historic buildings that have undergone functional transformation, both in Ukraine and abroad. The fourth chapter focuses on spatial and visual analysis of the case study site — the Baron Steingel Castle in Kyiv. The final chapter synthesizes findings and offers conclusions regarding the Revitalization Scenarios for Baron Steingel's Castle.

2. ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

This master's thesis is grounded in a conceptual and theoretical framework that integrates three interrelated concepts: historic building, function (or intended use), and preservation. These notions form the core analytical lens through which the central research question is posed: *Can the rethinking of a historic building's function serve as an effective strategy for its long-term preservation?* The analytical framework combines not only definitional clarity of these terms but also engages with wider theoretical and practical discourses within the field of heritage conservation.

The first key theoretical concept examined is the historic building. This notion can be interpreted from multiple perspectives: from classical definitions rooted in urban theory, to contemporary reinterpretations that emphasize values-based frameworks, and even to critical perspectives that regard such buildings as obstacles to urban growth and investment.

From the standpoint of classical urbanism, historic buildings derive their significance from collective memory and symbolic value. Kevin Lynch, in his seminal work *The Image of the City*, notes:

“Historical associations, or other meanings, are powerful reinforcements, as they are for Faneuil Hall or the State House in Boston. Once a history, a sign, or a meaning attaches to an object, its value as a landmark rises.”¹

However, more recent scholarship urges a shift away from rigid dichotomies of old versus new. Plevoets and Van Cleempoel advocate for a nuanced, processual view of heritage buildings that centers on the negotiation of different types of values, rather than on their mere age or authenticity:

“Our interest lies not in the relationship between the old and the new but instead in a process of reevaluation between different sorts of values.”²

At the same time, it is critical to recognize that not every historic building necessarily warrants preservation. In evolving urban contexts—especially in post-war or post-industrial cities—some heritage assets may be perceived as obsolete or economically unviable. Bullen and Love highlight the economic pragmatism that frequently underpins decisions regarding reuse or demolition:

“The decision to reuse or demolish built assets is driven by economic considerations

¹ Lynch, Kevin. *The Image of the City*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1960.

² Plevoets, Bie, and Koenraad Van Cleempoel. *Adaptive Reuse of the Built Heritage: Concepts and Cases of an Emerging Discipline*. London: Routledge, 2019.

such as development costs, project costs, investment returns and market.”³

Therefore, within this research, a historic building is defined as a structure that holds architectural, cultural, and symbolic value, often recognized both through formal legislative protection and informal community recognition. Nonetheless, such buildings may become functionally devalued when they no longer align with contemporary urban needs, particularly in times of socio-economic or geopolitical transformation.

The second core concept within this research framework is the function or intended use of a building—referring to the typical or historically designated purpose that a structure was built to fulfill. In practical terms, this refers to whether a building historically served residential, public, administrative, cultural, or commercial purposes.

This study adopts the lens of adaptive reuse, emphasizing the redefinition of a building’s function as a means of both extending its lifespan and preserving its identity as part of cultural heritage. By altering function, buildings that may otherwise become obsolete or underutilized are reintegrated into the urban fabric, while their historically valuable attributes are maintained or reinterpreted.

Plevoets and Van Cleempoel, in their foundational work *Adaptive Reuse of the Built Heritage: Concepts and Cases of an Emerging Discipline* (2019), frame this process not as a binary opposition between old and new, but as a layered negotiation of values:

“Our interest lies not in the relationship between the old and the new but instead in a process of reevaluation between different sorts of values.”⁴

This quotation highlights that adaptive reuse is not only a strategy for physical preservation, but also a reinterpretation of meaning. It enables heritage buildings to meet contemporary functional demands while maintaining their symbolic and cultural roles within the urban environment.

By focusing on function, the research addresses how reprogramming the use of a historic structure can become a sustainable and context-sensitive form of heritage conservation—particularly in urban contexts where rigid preservation may render a site economically or socially marginal.

The third foundational concept in this analytical framework is conservation, which is understood not as a static act of safeguarding, but as a dynamic and ongoing process. It involves the preservation of material substance, the functional relevance of a building, and the safeguarding of its cultural values. Rather than merely preventing physical deterioration,

³ Bullen, Peter A., and Peter E.D. Love. “Factors Influencing the Adaptive Re-Use of Buildings.” *Journal of Engineering, Design and Technology* 9, no. 1 (2011): 32–46.

⁴ Plevoets, Bie, and Koenraad Van Cleempoel. *Adaptive Reuse of the Built Heritage: Concepts and Cases of an Emerging Discipline*. London: Routledge, 2019.

conservation is also about managing change in ways that sustain the significance of heritage assets in evolving urban contexts.

As Bernard Feilden articulates in his influential work *Conservation of Historic Buildings* (2003), conservation:

“is not merely the preservation of the physical fabric, but the process of managing change so that the significance of a place is maintained and understood without distortion.”⁵

This expanded interpretation of conservation is central to the present study. It allows for a conceptual framework in which functional transformation—the reprogramming of a building’s use—is not seen as a threat to heritage but as a legitimate and sometimes necessary component of sustainable conservation strategies.

In cities where space is scarce and development pressures are intense, rethinking conservation as a blend of cultural continuity and adaptive reuse becomes essential. Functionally reintegrating historic structures into contemporary life enables their continued relevance and survival, while also contributing to the rational and efficient use of urban resources.

This perspective not only aligns with current international conservation guidelines but also resonates strongly with urban realities in post-industrial and post-war cities, where economic and spatial constraints often demand innovative approaches to heritage management.

To explore what should be done with different historic buildings, it is useful to examine key international documents that outline approaches to conservation, restoration, and intervention. Two foundational frameworks are particularly relevant: the Venice Charter (1964) and UNESCO’s Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention (first issued in 1977). Together, these documents establish internationally accepted principles for the protection and management of historic buildings and sites.

The Venice Charter, formally known as the International Charter for the Conservation and Restoration of Monuments and Sites, was adopted in 1964 by heritage professionals and government bodies worldwide. Its main purpose is to set out globally recognized standards for conservation, protection, and restoration. One of the Charter’s central tenets is respect for the authenticity of historic buildings, emphasizing that any interventions should be minimal and carefully considered. Modern techniques may be employed, but only when they are compatible with the historic fabric and values of the site.

The Venice Charter distinguishes between three core types of conservation and restoration activities:

1. Conservation — This approach prioritizes the preservation of the building with minimal intervention, aiming to safeguard its authenticity and historical value

⁵ Feilden, Bernard M. *Conservation of Historic Buildings*. 3rd ed. Oxford: Architectural Press, 2003.

without altering its existing state.

2. Restoration — Restoration refers to the process of returning a site or building to a known earlier state, using authentic materials and techniques based on solid historical evidence. This approach involves reconstructing missing or damaged details, but only when fully documented.

3. Reconstruction — The Charter takes a restrictive stance on reconstruction, stating that when a building has been destroyed, it must not be rebuilt in imitation of its previous form. Only anastylosis—that is, the reassembly of existing but dismembered original parts—may be permitted. Any new materials integrated into the structure must be clearly identifiable and should be used sparingly, strictly limited to what is necessary to ensure the conservation of the monument and the readability of its form.

Complementing the Venice Charter, UNESCO's Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention (first developed in 1977) provide detailed practical procedures and define five types of interventions that may apply to heritage properties. These are:

1. Preservation — The primary goal of preservation is to retain the physical integrity, materials, and features of a site that have developed over time. This method focuses on ongoing maintenance, including small repairs, cleaning, and the stabilization of weakened or at-risk structures. Preservation deliberately avoids the removal, replacement, or reconstruction of elements unless absolutely necessary. Crucially, it differs from restoration in that there is no aim to return a site to a specific historical appearance, and it differs from rehabilitation or adaptation because it does not seek to accommodate modern uses. Unlike reconstruction, it does not involve rebuilding missing or destroyed components.

2. Conservation — The main goal here is to prevent decay or deterioration and to extend the life of the heritage property. Conservation does not necessarily entail restoring or reconstructing features, but rather focuses on careful management and protection of what already exists. Typical conservation measures may include the installation of physical barriers, such as fences, to prevent public contact; the use of protective coatings or enclosures to shield against environmental factors like humidity, sunlight, or weather fluctuations; and specialized cleaning or maintenance techniques designed to preserve fragile materials.

3. Restoration. Involves returning a property to the appearance of a particular historical period, based on solid documentary or physical evidence. It may include removing later additions or reconstructing missing parts that are essential to the historical understanding.

4. Rehabilitation. Refers to adapting a property for a contemporary use that is compatible with its heritage values, ensuring the historic character is retained while allowing the site to function in today's context.

5. Reconstruction. Means rebuilding a lost or destroyed structure or feature, permitted only in exceptional circumstances and strictly based on accurate, verifiable documentation and evidence. UNESCO and ICOMOS discourage hypothetical or speculative reconstruction.

The theoretical foundation of this framework is built upon three key strands of literature: the theory of adaptive reuse (Plevoets & Van Cleempoel), value-based heritage assessment (Feilden), and the sustainable reuse of historic buildings in urban and environmental contexts (Yung & Chan, 2012). Together, these perspectives reposition conservation not merely as a technical intervention or a legal designation, but as a socially integrated process, wherein function emerges as a central mechanism for the long-term safeguarding of heritage assets.

Plevoets and Van Cleempoel assert that adaptive reuse is:

“not a compromise but a strategy to allow heritage buildings to continue a meaningful existence.”⁶

They describe adaptive reuse as a process that:

“adapts old structures to new needs while preserving their heritage values.”⁷

This notion of adaptability enables the reconciliation of historical identity with contemporary functional requirements, allowing heritage buildings to remain active and contextually meaningful components of the urban landscape, without diminishing their significance.

From a different yet complementary angle, Bernard Feilden emphasizes the ethical dimension of interventions in cultural heritage. He argues that:

“any intervention must be governed by unwavering respect for the aesthetic, historical, and physical integrity of the cultural heritage object.”⁸

For Feilden, conservation is not simply about maintaining the material fabric, but rather about:

⁶ Plevoets, Bie, and Koenraad Van Cleempoel. “Adaptive Reuse as a Strategy Towards Conservation of Cultural Heritage: A Literature Review.” In *Structural Studies, Repairs and Maintenance of Heritage Architecture XII*, 155–157. Southampton: WIT Press, 2011.

⁷ Plevoets, Bie, and Koenraad Van Cleempoel. “Adaptive Reuse as a Strategy Towards Conservation of Cultural Heritage: A Literature Review.” In *Structural Studies, Repairs and Maintenance of Heritage Architecture XII*, 155–157. Southampton: WIT Press, 2011.

⁸ Feilden, Bernard M. *Conservation of Historic Buildings*. 3rd ed. Oxford: Architectural Press, 2003.

“managing change without loss of significance.”⁹

This approach is particularly relevant in cases where functional transformation might otherwise risk undermining a building’s symbolic or cultural status, or affect collective memory tied to the site.

Expanding on these positions, Yung and Chan examine adaptive reuse in the context of sustainable urban development. They note that such projects frequently face systemic barriers, including:

“outdated regulations, high conservation costs, and conflicting stakeholder interests.”¹⁰

Nevertheless, they conclude that:

“functionally viable adaptive reuse offers the most sustainable pathway for urban heritage to survive.”¹¹

Their approach positions functional adaptation not as a concession to modernity, but as a means of resilience amid environmental, economic, and social pressures.

Together, these three conceptual directions construct an integrated theoretical framework. Within it, functional reinterpretation is not seen as a threat to authenticity, but rather as a strategic tool for conservation, enabling heritage buildings to retain relevance and identity while being actively embedded within the dynamics of the contemporary city.

The central hypothesis of this research is that the rethinking of a historic building’s function in line with contemporary needs increases the likelihood of sustainable preservation. However, this relationship is not always straightforward. As demonstrated in the literature, excessive or inappropriate transformation—particularly when driven by market-oriented imperatives—can pose a threat to the integrity and authenticity of heritage buildings.

Bernard Feilden (2003) warns that:

“any intervention must be governed by unwavering respect for the aesthetic, historical,

⁹ Feilden, Bernard M. *Conservation of Historic Buildings*. 3rd ed. Oxford: Architectural Press, 2003.

¹⁰ Yung, E. H. K., and E. H. W. Chan. “Functionally Viable Adaptive Reuse Offers the Most Sustainable Pathway for Urban Heritage to Survive.” In *Implementation Challenges to the Adaptive Reuse of Heritage Buildings: Towards the Goals of Sustainable, Low-Carbon Cities*, *Habitat International* 36, no. 3 (2012): 355–356.

¹¹ Yung, E. H. K., and E. H. W. Chan. “Functionally Viable Adaptive Reuse Offers the Most Sustainable Pathway for Urban Heritage to Survive.” In *Implementation Challenges to the Adaptive Reuse of Heritage Buildings: Towards the Goals of Sustainable, Low-Carbon Cities*, *Habitat International* 36, no. 3 (2012): 355–356.

and physical integrity of the cultural heritage object.”¹²

This ethical imperative underscores the importance of striking a balance between utility and identity. While adapting function can offer buildings a renewed relevance and facilitate their reintegration into urban life, such adaptation must be carefully managed to avoid eroding the symbolic and material dimensions that constitute their cultural value.

Accordingly, this research explores not only the positive potential of functional adaptation but also the risks associated with over-commercialization or insensitive reuse—factors that may compromise the very qualities that render a building worth preserving.

¹² Feilden, Bernard M. *Conservation of Historic Buildings*. 3rd ed. Oxford: Architectural Press, 2003: 11

3. METHODOLOGY

The research design of this study is based on a multi-method qualitative approach, aimed at examining how changes in the functional designation of historic buildings influence their preservation and long-term survival. The following four methodological components were employed:

1. Case Study Analysis. At the core of this research lies a comparative case study analysis of selected historic buildings in Kyiv and internationally. The focus is on buildings that have undergone functional adaptation similar to the potential transformation of the Baron Steingel Castle—specifically, cases where castles or similar heritage structures were converted into hostels or hotels. The analysis incorporates both successful and unsuccessful examples, offering insights into the determinants of outcomes, including socioeconomic conditions, legislative frameworks, and the roles of various stakeholders in heritage preservation. This method enables cross-spatial comparison to better assess the viability of adapting the Baron Steingel Castle to modern hospitality functions.

2. Typological and Functional Analysis. This method involved the classification of buildings according to their original (primary) and adapted (secondary) functions—residential, medical, administrative, cultural, commercial, etc.—and cross-referenced these categories with the buildings' physical condition and legal protection status. The aim was to identify patterns and contradictions between typology, functional load, and conservation strategies. This analysis supported a more nuanced understanding of how function shapes the preservation trajectory of built heritage.

3. Visual and Spatial Documentation. This component included the collection and analysis of visual and spatial data such as photographs, architectural drawings, satellite imagery, and publicly available cartography. The objective was to trace physical transformations, detect signs of neglect or intervention, and investigate the spatial relationships between historic structures and the contemporary urban environment. Particular attention was given to the morphological links between preserved and decayed segments of the Baron Steingel Castle, as well as to the effects of past or proposed functional changes on their material integrity.

4. Synthesis Method. At the final stage of the study, a synthetic method was applied to integrate empirical findings with the theoretical framework. This approach facilitated the formulation of generalized conclusions regarding the role of function in heritage preservation practices and the development of recommendations for reprogramming historic buildings in post-war and transitional urban contexts.

4. COMPARATIVE CASE STUDY ANALYSIS OF HISTORIC BUILDINGS

The experience of the United Kingdom in the preservation and adaptive reuse of historic sites offers valuable lessons and stands out as a model worth examining. It is particularly useful to explore successful revitalization projects where the Youth Hostel Association (YHA) has demonstrated a long-term commitment to managing and maintaining historic properties, including castles. These cases provide meaningful insights into how heritage conservation can be effectively integrated with community engagement and tourism. A summary table of all case studies presented in the master's thesis is provided in Appendix A.

4.1. St. Briavels Castle

A notable example is St. Briavels Castle, originally constructed between the 12th and 13th centuries. The castle initially served as the administrative center for the Forest of Dean and later functioned as a courthouse and prison. By the late 18th century, and well into the early 20th century, the site had fallen into neglect and disrepair. However, its transformation began when the Youth Hostel Association undertook its restoration, repurposing it as a youth hostel—a role it continues to fulfill today. The property itself is under the ownership of English Heritage, a charitable organization dedicated to the conservation of historic buildings. Although English Heritage was originally established as a governmental body, it now operates independently as a charitable trust.

The adaptation of St. Briavels Castle has created a unique visitor experience, allowing guests to stay in historic castle rooms or former prison cells, and to share breakfast in a medieval dining hall. Beyond its appeal to tourists, the project also emphasizes local employment by involving local residents in the daily operation of the hostel, which strengthens the connection between the site and its surrounding community. Visitors are welcome to explore the exterior grounds and moat during daylight hours, while interior access is generally available from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m., under staff supervision. In this way, the site serves as both a cultural landmark and a public space, exemplifying how heritage sites can be preserved and activated for contemporary use.

The revitalization process was carefully planned and executed, involving heritage architects, conservation specialists, and local craftsmen experienced in working with medieval structures. Particular attention was paid to maintaining the castle's original features, such as its historic prison cells and chambers, which were creatively transformed into dormitories and communal spaces. The project benefited from strong support from the local community and heritage organizations, which viewed it as an opportunity to safeguard a significant historical site while enhancing its public value.

In terms of governance and funding, the YHA worked closely with local councils and heritage authorities to ensure full compliance with conservation regulations. Financing was provided primarily through the YHA's own resources, supplemented by grants from local

heritage funds and governmental programs designed to support cultural tourism and adaptive reuse of historic buildings. This collaborative model underscores the potential of public-private partnerships and community involvement in ensuring that heritage conservation not only preserves the past but also serves present and future generations.

4.2. Beverley Friary

While St. Briavels Norman Castle is located in a remote forest setting, the preservation of Beverley Friary offers a case study more directly comparable to the Castle of Baron Staingel, as it is situated within the urban fabric. Beverley Friary is located in Beverley, a market town in the East Riding of Yorkshire, England, with a population of approximately 30,000. Unlike the isolated St. Briavels Castle, Beverley Friary is embedded within the city and forms part of its historical core.

Before its preservation, Beverley Friary—also known locally as the Old Friary—was recognized as a 600-year-old restored Dominican friary, notable for its historical features and a large walled garden adjacent to the building. The transformation of the friary was driven by local initiatives and supported by various stakeholders. In the mid-20th century, the structure had fallen into disrepair and was at risk of demolition. In response, the Beverley Friary Preservation Trust was established in 1974, initiating restoration efforts that prioritized the conservation of both the building and its historical elements.

The site's conversion into a youth hostel was well-received by the community, and the building now also serves as a venue for local events, exhibitions, and social gatherings. Today, Beverley Friary provides accommodation for up to 32 guests. It is important to note the central role played by key stakeholders in this project, including the Youth Hostel Association, the Beverley Friary Preservation Trust, the East Riding of Yorkshire Council, and local community supporters. Together, they shared a common goal of preserving the friary from demolition and ensuring its continued use as a valuable community asset.

While there is no regular free public access to the hostel during standard operating hours, the site becomes accessible to the public during specific events and activities, such as social gatherings, meetings, small-scale conferences, and exhibitions organized by local groups. Additionally, festivals—such as flower festivals—offer further opportunities for the public to engage with the historic site, even without being overnight guests. This model highlights how adaptive reuse can successfully blend heritage conservation with community-oriented programming, reinforcing the social and cultural value of historic buildings.

Numerous cases from around the world illustrate successful examples of castle revitalization into hotels, hostels, or cultural hubs within major cities. While each project is unique in its local context, many share similar opportunities, benefits, and challenges. For instance, **Astley Castle in Warwickshire**—once a medieval moated castle that suffered significant fire damage—was revitalized by the Landmark Trust and transformed into holiday

rentals, blending modern living spaces with historical architecture. This project is often cited as a benchmark for adaptive reuse in the UK. Another notable example is the **Royal Horseguards Hotel in London**, situated in a grand Victorian building at the heart of the city. Overlooking the River Thames and landmarks such as Trafalgar Square and the Houses of Parliament, it has been successfully repurposed into a luxury hotel, offering guests a combination of historical ambiance and high-end accommodation.

4.3. BURSA Hotel

In discussions of best practices for heritage preservation and adaptive reuse, it is common to look abroad for reference cases, analyzing international experiences to identify their advantages and limitations. However, it is essential to recognize that the Ukrainian context itself offers substantial opportunities for innovative approaches to integrating historical structures into the contemporary urban fabric. A case particularly relevant in this regard is the revitalization of the BURSA Hotel, located at 11 Kostyantynivska Street in Kyiv's historic Podil district.

The building, a stone structure erected at the end of the 19th century, originally functioned as part of the commercial and artisanal infrastructure of Podil, which at that time was a vibrant hub of trade and small-scale enterprise. Following the political transformations of 1917, and consistent with broader Soviet urban policies, many historical buildings in Kyiv—including this one—were repurposed for administrative, residential, educational, or medical use. Decisions regarding their reuse were predominantly based on pragmatic evaluations of the buildings' internal configurations: multi-roomed, corridor-rich structures were typically assigned to state functions that prioritized utility over heritage value.

Unlike many international revitalization projects, which are often driven by local authorities and involve strong public participation, successful adaptive reuse initiatives in Ukraine frequently rely on the commitment of private investors and individual enthusiasts. The BURSA Hotel exemplifies this trend. Its revitalization was initiated and developed by Ukrainian businessman Illia Kenigshtein, in collaboration with a multidisciplinary team of designers and architects. The project's conceptual framework focused on transforming the historic building into a contemporary boutique hotel and cultural hub, while maintaining a high degree of architectural authenticity.

The revitalization strategy prioritized the conservation of key historical features. Original brickwork was carefully preserved on both interior and exterior walls; historic brick façades were exposed and restored; and original window openings and architectural detailing were reinstated. This sensitive approach reflects a broader cultural aspiration: to cultivate spaces that allow contemporary urban life to coexist with historical identity. The project challenges a persistent narrative within Ukrainian urban development, which often frames private investors as agents of demolition and high-rise construction, rather than as stewards of heritage.

The BURSA Hotel now operates as a multifunctional space, encompassing not only hotel accommodation but also a gallery, rooftop bar, underground and a small cinema that programs arthouse films and public lectures. This hybrid model reinforces the building's role as an active participant in Kyiv's cultural life, enhancing its social relevance while preserving its historic character. However, the project also highlights a critical issue within Ukrainian urban governance: the relatively low levels of public participation in processes of urban regeneration and the gentrification of historic neighborhoods. The commercial success of such projects underscores the need for more inclusive urban policies that balance heritage conservation, economic revitalization, and social equity.

A particularly commendable aspect of this revitalization is the transparent approach adopted by the project's leadership. Original architectural drawings and detailed historical documentation have been made publicly accessible via the hotel's official website, enabling residents and visitors alike to engage meaningfully with the site's history and transformation. This gesture not only enhances public understanding of the building's heritage but also sets a positive precedent for how revitalized heritage assets can contribute to a more informed and participatory urban culture.¹³

It is particularly noteworthy that the owner of the project openly acknowledged the prevailing skepticism within Ukrainian society, which often assumes that private investors seek to acquire historic buildings solely to demolish them and replace them with high-rise developments. Contrary to this widespread perception, the leadership team of the BURSA Hotel project emphasized their commitment to heritage conservation and their broader vision of maintaining the authentic fabric of the city for future generations. This approach demonstrates that private-sector initiatives, when guided by cultural sensitivity and respect for historical context, can play a constructive role in urban regeneration—preserving not only the material heritage of the city but also reinforcing a sense of continuity and identity within the evolving urban landscape.

4.4. Reikartz Hotel in Kamianets-Podilskyi

Another notable example of the revitalization of a historical site is the Reikartz Hotel in Kamianets-Podilskyi, located on Starobulvarna street 2 in the heart of the city's old town, near the marketplace and the historic town hall. The hotel occupies a historic mansion dating back to the late 19th and early 20th centuries, serving as a representative example of a typical city tenement house from that era. Originally, such buildings were owned by wealthy citizens of Kamianets-Podilskyi and, across different historical periods, functioned as residential properties, often rented out as small income-generating apartments. This project is another clear example of successful heritage revitalization driven by private investment. In this case, the Reikartz Hotel

¹³ <https://www.balbek.com/bursa-hotel-kyiv>

Group undertook the restoration, adaptation, and redevelopment of the historic building, aiming both to preserve its architectural integrity and to return it to active use. The restoration respected the original structure and spatial organization, while integrating the building into a modern hotel complex. Today, the Reikartz Hotel is recognized as one of the premier accommodations in Kamianets-Podilskyi, demonstrating how private-sector initiatives can contribute meaningfully to the conservation of historical urban landscapes, while simultaneously supporting local tourism and economic development.

To summarize the case studies discussed, it is possible to formulate key criteria that contribute to the success of revitalization projects involving historic buildings. Across all successful examples, the renovation process placed significant emphasis on preserving the historical integrity of the site. In some cases, this meant full preservation of the building's original structure; in others, meticulous attention was given to using authentic materials, such as original bricks and traditional façade elements, to maintain historical authenticity.

A second critical factor was the active involvement of local residents and community groups. Successful projects consistently demonstrated strong community engagement throughout the renovation process. This participation not only helped to guide and legitimize the projects but also fostered a sense of shared ownership and stewardship, which is essential for the long-term sustainability and vitality of revitalized heritage sites. It is worth emphasizing that community support emerged as a decisive factor in ensuring both the stability of the site's function during renovation and its continued relevance afterward.

A third key element was the establishment of effective partnerships between public, private, and non-profit sectors. Cross-sectoral collaboration and efficient project management were central to the success of many revitalization initiatives. Frequently, projects that combined crowdfunding with institutional investment, alongside legal and administrative support from heritage bodies, achieved greater stability and smoother implementation. These partnerships not only provided diverse financial streams but also reinforced the legitimacy and public accountability of the projects.

The economic viability of revitalization projects also played a pivotal role. Sustainable adaptive reuse requires a balance between preserving heritage value and integrating up-to-date functions that meet contemporary needs. For example, converting castles, monasteries, or other historic buildings into hostels, cultural centers, or multifunctional spaces (such as cinemas, lecture halls, exhibition venues, and festival sites) allows these structures to become active components of modern urban cultural life. Such adaptive reuse models enhance economic sustainability by diversifying revenue streams, increasing tourist interest, and creating long-term value that appeals to investors.

Finally, successful projects demonstrated a high degree of professional expertise and a cross-disciplinary approach. Collaboration between architects, historians, designers, cultural heritage specialists, and local craftsmen enabled a balanced outcome that respected historical authenticity while ensuring functionality, aesthetic appeal, and modern usability. Transparent

communication with the community throughout the process further reinforced the legitimacy and sustainability of these projects, helping to align investor interests with broader public and cultural objectives.

In conclusion, the intersection of historical preservation, community engagement, cross-sectoral partnerships, economic viability, and expert project management forms the foundation for sustainable and successful revitalization of historic urban sites. These criteria should serve as guiding principles for future initiatives aiming to integrate heritage assets into the evolving urban landscape.

Unfortunately, not all revitalization projects succeed. Some initiatives face significant challenges, resulting in financial losses, public dissatisfaction, and in some cases, the complete loss of heritage assets. It is important to critically examine such cases to understand the factors that contributed to their failure, which can provide valuable insights for future research and practice.

4.5. The Château de la Mothe-Chandeniers

One instructive example is the Château de la Mothe-Chandeniers in France. This castle was originally established in the 13th century as a romantic medieval fortress and underwent substantial reconstruction in the 19th century. However, after a devastating fire in 1932, the château fell into severe disrepair and was largely abandoned. Despite multiple attempts at restoration, the site languished for decades.

A new chapter began in 2017, when the castle gained global attention through an innovative crowdfunding campaign organized by the French platform Dartagnans. Over 20,000 people from around the world participated, collectively purchasing the castle with the shared vision of restoring and preserving the site. This project was celebrated as a pioneering model of public engagement in heritage conservation, and it attracted significant media coverage.

However, despite high levels of public interest and initial funding success, the restoration has progressed only slowly and remains incomplete. This case highlights several critical challenges that have hindered its success. First and foremost, the structural damage to the château was far more extensive than initially estimated; considerable work was required merely to stabilize the building, diverting substantial funds from more visible restoration efforts. This underestimation of the project's technical demands significantly slowed progress from the outset.

Secondly, the project's innovative but highly complex ownership model—where tens of thousands of micro-investors became co-owners—introduced serious administrative and legal obstacles. Managing decision-making processes with such a large and dispersed group proved extremely cumbersome, creating delays and complicating strategic planning. While this model was celebrated for its inclusivity, in practice it demonstrated the difficulties of collective ownership when applied to heritage restoration.

Finally, due to the ongoing restoration and structural stabilization work, the château has been unable to fully open to tourism. This has severely limited its capacity to generate revenue through ticket sales or other visitor-based activities, undermining the financial sustainability of the project. The combination of underestimated restoration needs, bureaucratic and legal hurdles associated with the ownership model, and prolonged limitations on public access have all contributed to the project's stalled progress.

In summary, this case study underscores several key risks: the importance of accurate initial assessments of restoration requirements; the need for manageable and efficient governance structures, particularly in innovative funding models; and the critical role of sustainable financial planning, including clear strategies for generating revenue during long-term restoration processes. Recognizing and addressing these factors is essential to improving the resilience and success of future heritage revitalization initiatives.

4.6. The Krzyżtopór Castle

Another challenging example comes from Poland: the Krzyżtopór Castle, located in Ujazd. Built in the 17th century, it was originally designed as a fortress-palace in the Mannerist style and was once considered one of the largest castle complexes in Europe. Today, the site remains an impressive and highly attractive destination, drawing a significant number of tourists each year. Despite numerous ambitious proposals for its revitalization—including plans to transform it into a cultural center—none of these initiatives have been fully realized. Restoration efforts in recent years have focused primarily on superficial enhancements, such as specialized lighting installations, improved pathways, and informational signage, rather than substantive reconstruction or adaptive reuse.

Understanding why revitalization has not been successful, despite strong public interest, is crucial. The first major obstacle lies in strict regulatory constraints. The castle's designation as a national heritage site imposes very rigid limitations on permissible interventions. According to Polish heritage preservation laws, any structural or spatial modifications must undergo extensive scrutiny and approval processes from multiple heritage authorities. These regulatory requirements severely restrict the scope of potential redevelopment, making it nearly impossible to undertake significant structural changes or reconfigurations that could facilitate adaptive reuse.

The second significant challenge is financial. The scale and complexity of restoring a site of this magnitude entail extremely high costs, estimated at hundreds of millions of Polish złoty. The combination of high financial risk, enormous upfront investment requirements, and relatively low expectations for profitability has deterred private investors from engaging with the project. Without substantial public funding or alternative financial mechanisms, the castle remains in a state of semi-preservation: while it is not abandoned and continues to operate as a

tourist attraction, it has not undergone the comprehensive restoration or revitalization necessary to fully realize its potential.

This case illustrates the dual challenge of balancing strict heritage preservation mandates with the economic realities of large-scale restoration. It underscores the need for innovative funding strategies, as well as adaptive policy frameworks that allow for meaningful reuse while safeguarding heritage values. Without addressing these systemic barriers, even the most celebrated historic sites risk remaining underutilized and vulnerable to further decline.

4.7. The Mansion House

Another instructive case is the Mansion House in Jesmond, Newcastle. Built in 1887 in the Gothic Revival style, it was originally the private residence of Sir Arthur Sutherland. In 1953, Sutherland's family gifted the property to the City of Newcastle, and it subsequently became the official residence of the Lord Mayor, serving as a venue for civic receptions and official events. However, in 2000, as part of a broader cost-cutting strategy and a rethinking of municipal property use, Newcastle City Council decided to lease the Mansion House to a private company. The intention was to transform the building into a luxury events venue and boutique accommodation, while retaining some level of access for civic purposes.

This decision sparked significant public concern. Many local residents and heritage advocates expressed frustration and disappointment over what they perceived as the effective privatization of an important civic and historical asset. The core of the opposition centered on fears that public access to the building—long a symbol of local governance and civic pride—would become severely limited.

Additionally, the high costs associated with maintaining a listed building with significant historical features have posed persistent challenges. Achieving profitability has proven difficult, and despite the site's architectural prestige, its new function has not fully resolved the tension between heritage conservation, public access, and commercial viability.

Today, the Mansion House remains owned by the City of Newcastle but is operated by a private hospitality group that manages it as an exclusive venue for weddings, corporate events, and private functions. This case raises critical questions about the shifting role of public heritage in contemporary cities: the transition from public ownership and use to semi-private luxury functions, the resultant restrictions on community access, and the ongoing struggle to maintain financial sustainability while preserving historical integrity. It highlights the delicate balance required when negotiating between cultural heritage, public benefit, and commercial imperatives within the context of urban governance and heritage management.

What makes these examples common, and what fundamentally contributes to their lack of success?

First of all, it is often an overestimation of the building's potential—both in terms of return on investment and expected tourist appeal—paired with an underestimation of the required scope

of construction, restoration, and visualization works. This dual misjudgment results in two main consequences: on the one hand, it diminishes the profitability of the asset, making it less attractive to investors; on the other hand, incorrect initial assessments of the necessary investments lead to incomplete works, substandard restoration, or prolonged timelines, all of which create significant financial challenges for the project.

Secondly, the strict and rigid heritage preservation legislation plays a critical role. Excessive regulation often makes it extremely difficult to implement revitalization and adaptive reuse projects. These legal complexities limit the scope for innovation and, in some cases, foster environments where corruption can flourish, as the bureaucratic hurdles to secure the required documentation are unrealistically high. Investors may be discouraged from committing to such projects due to fears of legal pitfalls and reputational risks, leaving historical sites without adequate private funding. Since governments typically lack sufficient resources to preserve and maintain all heritage assets independently, many buildings face neglect or functional obsolescence.

In addition, restrictions on public access and erosion of the social value of heritage spaces can provoke dissatisfaction within local communities. This often manifests in protests, legal challenges, and social unrest, further complicating project realization and undermining trust in revitalization efforts.

A critical structural problem is the absence of stable financial mechanisms that would ensure continuous profit generation and reinvestment into the maintenance and conservation of heritage sites.

Finally, a distinctive barrier in Ukraine is the prevalence of dishonest practices by certain private developers. These actors often claim to pursue authentic revitalization but in reality aim to quietly demolish heritage structures and replace them with new developments, merely simulating restoration to avoid public scrutiny. Such bad-faith cases foster deep mistrust within local communities and create additional obstacles even for genuine investors who wish to engage in fair and transparent revitalization.

5. SPATIAL AND VISUAL ANALYSIS OF THE CASE STUDY SITE – THE BARON STEINGEL CASTLE IN KYIV

The Castle of Baron Rudolph Stengel stands as a significant example of late 19th-century Neo-Gothic architecture in Kyiv, reflecting clear influences of traditional German stylistic forms. However, during the 1970s, the site underwent a drastic and insensitive Soviet-era intervention. A utilitarian administrative building was inserted through the very center of the original structure, effectively bisecting the castle and compromising the architectural integrity of the ensemble.

This study explores the potential strategies for the restoration, reconfiguration, or recontextualization of the site as part of broader efforts to preserve cultural heritage within the evolving urban fabric. Before examining possible future interventions, it is necessary to reconstruct the site's original condition and spatial organization at the turn of the 20th century.

At that time, the estate covered approximately 1.5 hectares and comprised a two-storey stone residence, a carriage house, horse stables, a woodshed, a cowshed, and a substantial fruit orchard. In 1907, the property was acquired by Baron Rudolph Stengel, a prominent entrepreneur and transport engineer. He commissioned a complete redesign of the estate and invited the renowned Kyiv architect Volodymyr Nikolaiev—responsible for numerous landmark buildings in the city—to oversee the project.

Over several years, Nikolaiev designed and constructed a refined Neo-Gothic castle. The building's façades were accentuated with battlements, and its windows and doors featured ornate Gothic detailing. The central portion of the building faced what is now Boulvarno-Kudriavska Street. Adjacent to the castle was a landscaped park that included formal alleys, flowerbeds, a fountain, decorative bridges, pergolas, and even a pond with black swans.

A separate three-storey service building was connected to the main residence by a covered passageway. The ground floor contained stables and quarters for coachmen, while the upper levels were used to house the domestic staff.

Following Baron Stengel's death, the estate was sold to Professor Mykhailo Lapinskyi of Saint Volodymyr University. He converted the property into a physiotherapy sanatorium, incorporating hydrotherapy, light therapy, and electrotherapy as part of an early 20th-century medical treatment model. However, in 1919, Professor Lapinskyi was forced to emigrate, and the estate was subsequently nationalized by the Soviet authorities. In the following decades, the grounds were repurposed to house the Ukrainian State Children's Orthopaedic Institute. The images, architectural plans, and drawings of the old castle are included in Appendix B.

Since 1952, the former residence of the baron has housed the Institute of Traumatology and Orthopedics of the Academy of Medical Sciences of Ukraine. It was within these historic walls that, for the first time in Ukraine and the former USSR, congenital hip dislocation was successfully corrected. The institute subsequently became the site of numerous other significant scientific and medical advancements.

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, a new building for the institute was constructed. However, its architectural integration was poorly executed, as it physically divided the original structure, significantly altering and distorting the historical appearance of the ensemble. This controversial reconstruction was designed by architect Valentina Korneeva.

Simultaneously, the main façade of the original estate (located at No. 27) underwent restoration. Today, it holds the status of a national architectural monument (Registry No. 136). Despite this recognition, the estate's wing—an element of equal architectural and historical value—remains in a state of disrepair.

Currently, this wing has suffered multiple fires and is closed to the public. Sections of the roof have collapsed, and the structural integrity of the walls continues to deteriorate. Although this part of the complex is officially designated as a newly discovered architectural monument, it lacks proper conservation and maintenance.

Moreover, during the reconstruction process, the historically significant Steingel Park was irreversibly destroyed. Along with it, unique species of trees, intricate path networks, and a decorative fountain were lost. As a result, the former grandeur and aesthetic harmony of the estate survive only in archival photographs.

Currently, the building houses the Institute of Traumatology and Orthopedics of the National Academy of Medical Sciences of Ukraine, which serves as a key national institution providing specialized care in orthopedics and trauma surgery. The Institute's infrastructure comprises 11 specialized departments, including: the department of bone and purulent surgery, adult traumatology, joint diseases in adults, reconstructive orthopedics, pediatric and adolescent trauma care, spinal surgery with a spinal neurosurgical center, polystructural trauma management, foot pathology and complex prosthetics, sports and ballet injury care, microsurgery of the upper limb, and issues of osteosynthesis.

The general surgical inpatient unit consists of 400 beds distributed among these departments. The medical staff includes over 650 employees, of whom 132 are researchers, including 28 doctors of science, 32 candidates of science, and 9 professors. This professional structure reflects a high level of medical expertise and scientific potential.

In the context of the ongoing war in Ukraine, the role of the Institute has become even more critical. In 2022, over 4,500 patients received inpatient care, and more than 3,000 complex reconstructive and restorative surgeries were performed. In the outpatient department, more than 30,000 patients receive qualified consultations annually. In 2023, a new rehabilitation center was opened on-site to provide active recovery services to up to 2,000 wounded soldiers per year.

However, the current condition of the building—which was not originally designed as a medical facility—presents significant challenges. According to publicly available sources and private accounts from patients, up to six individuals with different injuries may be placed in a single ward, undermining conditions for adequate rehabilitation. Accessibility is also a pressing concern: the building is located on a hilly terrain, and the area experiences heavy traffic congestion, which complicates travel for patients with reduced mobility, even by taxi or private

vehicle.

Moreover, overcrowding in the inpatient unit makes it difficult for family members and caregivers to visit comfortably. The surrounding area lacks adequate public space, aside from a few benches near the main entrance and a paved rear yard that is devoid of greenery or sheltered outdoor seating. This forces patients to spend most of their time in overcrowded rooms.

The architectural character of the building also poses structural limitations. As a castle built in the 19th century, it does not meet current sanitary, hygienic, or accessibility standards for medical facilities. With new national building regulations expected to come into effect soon, the inadequacy of the structure will become even more pronounced.

In conclusion, despite its strategic role in Ukraine's healthcare system, the Institute of Traumatology and Orthopedics urgently requires a comprehensive reevaluation of its spatial and infrastructural organization. It must be adapted to meet modern standards of medical care and accessibility, while also taking into account the heritage value of the historic building in which it operates.

In order to conduct a meaningful **visual analysis** of the current state of Baron Steingel's Castle, it is appropriate to divide the structure into three distinct segments based on their architectural characteristics, condition, and function:

1. the preserved and restored historical wing (photographs of the current condition of the building are included in Appendix C),
2. the modern addition constructed in the 1970s (photographs of the current condition of the building are included in Appendix D)
3. the neglected historical wing (the annex or rear building). Photographs of the current condition of the building are included in Appendix E.

Each part of the complex represents a different stage of development and reflects diverse architectural styles and conditions. Therefore, the building cannot be analyzed as a unified whole.

Preserved Historical Wing (Restored). This is a two-story structure featuring a symmetrical facade composed of yellow and ochre brickwork. The facade is ornamented with pointed arch windows, decorative cornices, and arcades on the first floor forming a gallery-like effect. A small oriel window with trefoil motifs and ornamental detailing further enhances the elevation.

The facade has been fully restored: the brickwork cleaned, joints repointed, and plaster decorations renewed. Windows have been replaced with stylistically consistent modern ones. The roof has been renovated with no visible signs of damage or leaks.

Modern Wing (Constructed in the 1970-1980s). This seven-story rectangular structure features a white ventilated facade. The windows are modern, rectangular, and arranged in a grid-like fashion. Numerous air conditioning units are chaotically installed beneath the windows. Other visible elements include antennas, metal features, glass doors with aluminum frames, and contemporary signage.

The building is in excellent technical condition. Its facade is uniform and clean. The area

in front is landscaped, with paving, benches, and waste bins.

According to public procurement data, several major renovations were carried out within the past three years:

- Capital renovation of the surgical unit (central sterilization department), basement level, and the clinical wing with a conference hall
- Renovation of the 6th floor of the clinical building
- Replacement of three passenger elevators and one service lift

Currently, construction materials and equipment are stored on-site, indicating ongoing external repair works.

Neglected Historical Wing (Annex/Rear Building). This three-story section of the original estate displays features of Neo-Gothic architecture: oriel windows, balconies, decorative plasterwork, and arched window openings. However, many decorative elements have been lost or damaged.

It has a separate entrance through an arched gateway, now partially bricked up.

The building is in a critical state of disrepair:

- Windows are broken or boarded up with OSB panels;
- Spontaneously grown trees are visible on the roof;
- Roughly one-third of the roof is missing;
- The facade is deteriorating, with plaster peeling and visible cracks in the masonry;
- Balconies have collapsed; cornices are partially destroyed;
- Interior spaces are dark, unsafe, and unsuitable for any functional use.

Despite being part of the original historic estate, the annex bears no heritage plaque. It likely falls under the protection status of the overall Baron's Castle complex, yet this status is not visually marked or signposted. The building is currently not in use. It remains closed off, though there are signs of unauthorized access.

Spatial Composition of the Three Parts. The preserved historical wing and the annex together form the original estate ensemble dating back to the late 19th century. Both buildings are situated within a shared courtyard and are positioned at approximately a 90° angle to each other. The modern wing connects these two structures, enclosing them within an internal courtyard.

As a result of this layout:

- The annex has become visually and physically isolated, wedged between newer developments.
- The restored historical section appears visually autonomous but has lost its original connection to the annex.
- The modern building visually clashes with both historical sections due to differences in scale, architectural style, and materials.

According to information from the “Renovation Map” portal, the building is state-owned

and is managed by the Institute of Traumatology and Orthopedics of the National Academy of Medical Sciences of Ukraine. Baron Steingel's Castle is officially recognized as a cultural heritage site of local significance. According to the official registry of immovable cultural heritage of Kyiv, published by the Ministry of Culture and Information Policy of Ukraine as of March 25, 2025, the building is listed under the following identifiers:

- Registry number: 442-Кв.
- Classification: Architectural monument of local significance.
- Object name: Residential house, end of the 19th century (Baron Steingel's Castle).
- Address: 27 Вульварно-Кудрявська Street, Shevchenkovskyi district, Kyiv.

As an architectural monument of local significance, Baron Steingel's Castle is protected under Ukrainian law as a cultural heritage asset. Any intervention in its structure or appearance is strictly regulated by the Law of Ukraine "On the Protection of Cultural Heritage." In accordance with Articles 22–26 of this law, permissible actions regarding such a monument include its conservation, maintenance in proper condition, scientifically justified restoration, conservation works, repairs, and adaptive reuse — provided that the building's authenticity and spatial characteristics are preserved (Law of Ukraine "On the Protection of Cultural Heritage," Articles 22 and 24).

All works that may impact the site must be carried out exclusively on the basis of project documentation approved by the relevant cultural heritage protection authority (Art. 24). Unauthorized changes to facades, reconstruction, or demolition of the monument are strictly prohibited (Art. 23), except in cases explicitly permitted by a resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine.

If the monument is state-owned, the legislation allows for its lease or concession to an investor — but only under the condition that a heritage protection agreement is signed and approved by the heritage authority (Arts. 22, 26). The lessee is obliged to comply with protection regulations, maintain the building in proper technical condition, and carry out all works strictly within the framework of approved projects — usually limited to adaptation for a new function without compromising authenticity.

The transfer of such a building for investment purposes must fully account for its protected status and cannot entail alienation or devaluation of its cultural significance. Thus, functional transformation of a heritage site is legally possible, but must be implemented in compliance with a complex set of preservation, urban planning, and legal procedures aimed at safeguarding its integrity while integrating it into the contemporary urban context.

It is crucial to discuss the location of the Castle of Baron Steingel. The castle is situated in the heart of Kyiv's Kudryavets micro-district, a historic area along Yaroslaviv Val Street, known for its rich architectural heritage. Although the castle is not currently a public space, it

remains a significant example of the city's architectural and historical fabric.

The district of Kudryavets, located in the central part of Kyiv between the Podil and Shevchenkivskyi districts, serves as a transitional zone between the historic core of the city and its administrative center. This strategic positioning provides high potential for integration into tourist and cultural routes.

It is noteworthy that the street morphology is predominantly orthogonal, with a mixed typology of buildings: historical structures of 2–4 floors alongside modern developments of 8–16 floors. The area can be characterized by medium density; however, the streets are relatively narrow and lack sufficient pedestrian accessibility. There is also a noticeable absence of public and open spaces, as many inner courtyards remain private and enclosed for residents. While there are some green zones near Lviv Square, there is no park infrastructure that offers fully accessible, inclusive space for the wider public.

Currently, the grounds of the former Baron Staingel estate are not open to the public, as the castle is occupied by medical services. Nevertheless, the site is well connected by public transport: major streets such as Sichovykh Striltsiv and Hlybochytska serve as key transport corridors for Kyiv, and nearby metro stations (Lukianivska and Zoloti Vorota) provide convenient pedestrian access.

It is important to note that the surrounding landscape is not accessible for residents with limited mobility, due to elevation changes and narrow pedestrian zones. Despite these challenges, there is clear potential to develop a historical quarter focused on art, heritage interpretation, and urban identity. However, such a framework has not yet been fully realized.

From the perspective of spatial analysis, the location of the Baron Staingel Castle appears highly suitable for transformation into a public or touristic space that could attract significant foot traffic. Its strategic position within Kyiv, situated between various historic landmarks, combined with its size and architectural heritage, makes it an ideal candidate for adaptive reuse. Depending on the vision of potential investors and the scale of investment, the site could be successfully repurposed as a hotel, hostel, or other tourism-oriented facility. However, before we explore the feasibility of revitalizing this building—from its current function as a medical center into an integral part of Kyiv's cultural and touristic network—it is essential to examine comparable case studies. By looking at examples from both Ukraine and abroad, we can assess successful and unsuccessful instances of repurposing heritage buildings in the context of modern urban needs, which will help inform best practices for preserving and integrating such structures into the contemporary cityscape.

As of today, the following key issues can be identified in relation to the building and its broader urban context:

1. The progressive deterioration of a historic structure: Part of the original architectural complex, located within a historically significant district of the city, is in a critical state of decay and lacks active conservation measures.
2. Functional inadequacy: The building, originally not intended for medical

use, does not comply with current healthcare facility standards (including DBN – Ukrainian State Building Norms), which limits its suitability for its current function as a medical institution.

3. Inefficient spatial utilization: The surrounding area is poorly organized and underused, with a lack of integrated open spaces, recreational zones, or green infrastructure that would enhance the therapeutic environment for patients and visitors.

4. Landscape and infrastructural mismatch: The site's topography, geographical location, and existing transportation links conflict with the principles of accessibility and comfort, particularly for patients with limited mobility. The steep terrain and dense traffic make both access and movement across the site difficult.

5. Lack of accessible accommodation for patient families: There is a notable shortage of temporary or affordable housing options for the relatives and caregivers of patients undergoing long-term treatment at the Institute of Orthopedics, adding to the social and logistical burdens associated with the facility.

6. REVITALIZATION SCENARIOS FOR BARON STEINGEL'S CASTLE

Following the assessment of the building's current condition, its historical and cultural value, urban context, and an analysis of international best practices in heritage revitalization for the hospitality sector, three strategic scenarios are proposed for the future reuse of Baron Steingel's Castle. Each scenario addresses different levels of transformation and investment, with varying degrees of intervention:

1. Scenario 1: Full Adaptive Commercial Reuse of the Entire Complex
2. Scenario 2: Partial Restoration Focused on the Historical Annex (Fligel)
3. Scenario 3: Comprehensive, Phased Revitalization Combining Scenarios 1 and 2.

All three scenarios share a common urban condition: the central historic area of Kyiv is already saturated with a wide range of apartments, hotels, and boutique accommodations — most of which are positioned in the higher price segment. In this context, the adaptive reuse of the castle and its adjacent territory as a hostel presents a compelling alternative. There appears to be a lack of affordable short-term lodging in this part of the city, especially for travelers, students, or the families of long-term hospital patients.

Moreover, the hostel format is compatible with the existing spatial structure of the complex, as it typically requires fewer structural modifications, less invasive reconfiguration, and minimal extension of utilities and services. This makes it a feasible and cost-effective solution both in the short and medium term, while also contributing to the sustainable preservation of a heritage site.

Scenario 1: Full Adaptive Commercial Use of the Entire Complex. This scenario envisions the full adaptive reuse of Baron Steingel's Castle for commercial purposes. Drawing on global case studies, a consistent trend in revitalization practice is the integrated reuse of both the architectural structure and its surrounding territory to their maximum potential.

Given that the complex currently houses approximately 400 inpatient beds, the modern wing (as identified in this study) could be repurposed into a hostel facility, while the historical wings (both preserved and neglected) could be transformed for mixed commercial and cultural functions, including but not limited to:

- Food courts and culinary spaces
- Art galleries and museums
- Offices, coworking environments, and conference halls
- Cafes and restaurants
- Wellness and spa centers
- Studios for artists, rehearsal spaces, theaters, concert venues, and cultural

hubs

Such programming would allow for the preservation of the building's historical facades while integrating the structure into the city's cultural and tourist economy. It would also enhance public access to a site of architectural significance.

However, several critical obstacles currently limit or significantly complicate the implementation of this scenario:

1. **Wartime Conditions.** The ongoing war in Ukraine presents significant investment risks. Investor interest is currently suppressed due to security concerns, corruption-related uncertainty, and a dramatic decrease in international tourism. These conditions make large-scale adaptive reuse projects highly challenging to finance.

2. **The Continued Operation of the Medical Institute.** The building is still in active use by the Institute of Traumatology and Orthopedics, which annually serves over 30,000 patients. For any complete transformation of the building's function to be feasible, the institute would need to be relocated to a new facility that meets modern healthcare infrastructure standards. This would require:

- Identification and acquisition of a new plot of land; Design and construction of a purpose-built medical complex compliant with updated DBN (State Building Norms);
- Substantial financial and temporal investment.
- The growing number of patients as a result of wartime injuries only increases the urgency and complexity of maintaining uninterrupted service delivery. Temporarily closing the institute or redistributing patients to other facilities during the transition is currently unrealistic.

3. **Legal and Strategic Framework for Redevelopment.** Should relocation become possible in the future, the building — which is state-owned and managed by the institute — could be listed for public auction, long-term lease, or concession via the Prozorro system. The proceeds could be reinvested in constructing a modern healthcare facility in a new location. However, this would require detailed legal arrangements - contracts must ensure that the investor enters the site only after the institute's relocation is complete.

Despite these constraints, such an approach offers a balanced pathway to preserve a protected architectural monument, adapt it to contemporary needs, and revitalize an underutilized urban asset. Additionally, the construction of a new, purpose-designed medical facility could ultimately enhance the comfort and quality of care for patients and align with the future vision of healthcare infrastructure in Ukraine.

However, under current wartime conditions, this scenario appears to be of low feasibility. The cumulative investment risks — including security threats, macroeconomic instability, and a shrinking tourism sector — significantly outweigh the potential attractiveness of such a redevelopment project, making large-scale implementation unlikely in the short to medium term.

Scenario 2: Partial Restoration Focused on the Historical Annex (Fligel). The revitalization of the historical annex, currently in a state of severe neglect, presents a feasible and strategically relevant intervention for several reasons.

Firstly, the fligel is part of the designated cultural heritage complex and holds value as an architectural monument that contributes to the historical continuity and urban identity of Kyiv. Secondly, it is owned by the Institute of Traumatology and Orthopedics but is not currently used for medical purposes. Through long-term lease or conditional sale, this structure could generate additional revenue for the institute — funding the modernization of medical equipment, staff training, or the implementation of advanced treatment and rehabilitation methods. Thirdly, the institute's vicinity currently lacks low-cost, short-term accommodations for the relatives of patients. Many of these family members remain in Kyiv during lengthy rehabilitation processes and seek to stay close to their loved ones. This demand, coupled with the absence of affordable options in the area, underscores the logic of repurposing the annex into a hostel-type facility.

Given the current wartime conditions — including a weakened tourism industry and drastically reduced inflows of international visitors due to ongoing shelling and infrastructure insecurity — it would be inefficient to orient the project solely toward tourism. In contrast, the constant inflow of civilian and military patients undergoing rehabilitation at the institute forms a stable, year-round demand for adjacent short-term accommodation. A facility enabling patients and their families to meet, rest, or stay near the institute would respond to a real, unmet need.

Moreover, the open area adjacent to the annex could be transformed into therapeutic gardens or semi-public green zones, enhancing the psychological and emotional recovery environment for patients, especially veterans. Such spaces would provide privacy, nature exposure, and opportunities for reflection away from crowded hospital wards.

This scenario is also attractive from an investment standpoint:

- The capital cost of revitalizing a single structure is significantly lower than that of redeveloping the entire complex.
- The location, proximity to a high-use public institution, and potential for long-term user demand increase the project's commercial viability, even under wartime conditions.
- The current market value of heritage properties in conflict zones is significantly depressed, allowing investors to secure a strategically located asset at a lower price.

However, several risks and constraints must be acknowledged:

1. Uncertainty regarding structural stability: Visual inspection and historical documentation are insufficient to determine the condition of the load-bearing elements. A full structural assessment is necessary to evaluate the scale of investment required. Should the building require extensive reconstruction, the project could become costlier and more time-consuming than anticipated.

2. Lack of clarity regarding technical infrastructure: The condition and capacity of utility systems (e.g. sewage, electricity, water supply) are unknown. Given the site's age and adjacency to an energy-intensive medical facility, upgrading connections to modern hostel standards may require substantial investment and coordination with municipal infrastructure agencies.

3. Complicated and opaque permitting procedures: Obtaining necessary approvals from various cultural, architectural, and urban planning authorities could be time-intensive and vulnerable to bureaucratic delays or corruption risks. This may deter institutional or foreign investors unless transparent, pre-negotiated frameworks are established.

Nonetheless, despite the risks, this scenario appears to be the most feasible for near-term implementation, even during wartime. It offers a relatively low-cost, high-impact intervention that could preserve cultural heritage, serve a critical social function, and generate modest but reliable revenue, while also enhancing the surrounding urban environment.

Scenario 3: Comprehensive, Phased Revitalization Combining Scenarios 1 and 2.

This scenario proposes a long-term, phased revitalization strategy that incorporates the objectives outlined in both Scenario 1 (full adaptive commercial use) and Scenario 2 (partial restoration of the historical annex). The approach emphasizes gradual implementation, flexibility, and strategic alignment with existing functions of the medical institution.

The first step could involve the development of therapeutic and semi-public green spaces on underutilized land adjacent to the hospital and the annex. This intervention requires relatively modest investment, does not necessitate the relocation of the medical institute, and can be realized without sacrificing any functional hospital space.

It would enhance the quality of the healing environment, offering patients — especially those undergoing long-term treatment — access to calming, natural outdoor spaces. This step aligns with global healthcare design trends that emphasize healing landscapes and public micro-infrastructures. Such a space could also serve as a transitional public realm (a civic “pocket space”) between the hospital and the neighborhood.

The second stage could be focused on the rehabilitation of the deteriorated historical annex (fligel) and its adaptive reuse for low-impact commercial functions, such as a small-scale restaurant, café, or hostel. This would provide adjacent services for families of patients and hospital visitors, while beginning the process of reactivating heritage architecture. This phase could be structured as a pilot revitalization effort, testing investment models, legal frameworks, and technical feasibility.

The final stage involves a progressive transformation of parts of the currently functioning hospital, contingent upon the relocation of selected departments to more modern and suitable medical facilities elsewhere in the city. For example, a single floor or non-critical wing could be gradually converted into hostel accommodation as orthopedics departments are relocated. This

step would demand high-level coordination, long-term funding commitments, and a phased masterplan that preserves continuity of medical care during transitions.

The strength of this scenario lies in its scalability and adaptability. By proceeding in stages, the project could be adjusted in real-time based on financial conditions, public demand, urban policy shifts, or changes in healthcare strategy. It also distributes risk over time and avoids the immediate disruption associated with full relocation or demolition.

However, the main risk is systemic: long-term projects in Ukraine often face delays or abandonment due to shifting political priorities, leadership changes, and discontinuities in policy implementation. This is a common phenomenon in large-scale public-private initiatives. Without a dedicated project office, integrated governance model, and binding long-term agreements, there is a risk that the vision remains unimplemented or stalls midway.

Still, phased revitalization offers the most pragmatic and politically resilient model, allowing incremental improvements, early public benefits, and the preservation of architectural heritage — while keeping open the possibility of full transformation in the post-war context.

7. CONCLUSIONS

This study provides a detailed investigation into the complex relationship between functional adaptation and the long-term preservation of historic buildings in transitional urban contexts. Drawing from theoretical literature, empirical case studies, spatial documentation, and comparative typological analysis, the research affirms that the redefinition of a building's function—when carried out with respect for heritage values—can significantly enhance its chances of survival and reintegration into the contemporary city.

The central hypothesis of the study—that adapting the function of historic buildings in line with present-day urban needs supports their preservation—was generally supported. However, the findings complicate this assumption by revealing that not all functional transformations are inherently positive. Transformations driven purely by market logic or devoid of sensitivity to spatial and symbolic context can result in the loss of historical character, displacement of local meaning, or even physical degradation of architectural fabric. Thus, function is neither a universal solution nor a neutral category; it is a critical variable that must be negotiated through ethical, cultural, and urbanistic lenses.

The research strongly reinforces the theoretical position of Plevvoets and Van Cleempoel, who frame adaptive reuse not as a compromise but as a strategy for meaningful continuity. This is particularly resonant in the Ukrainian context, where rigid conservation practices and underfunded institutional frameworks have frequently failed to secure the future of neglected heritage sites. In parallel, Feilden's assertion that any intervention must preserve the aesthetic, historical, and physical integrity of the heritage asset emerges as a normative principle that was consistently challenged in the cases studied. The research also aligns with the work of Yung and Chan, confirming that systemic barriers—regulatory, financial, and institutional—remain key constraints on adaptive reuse projects, especially in post-socialist cities where heritage policy remains fragmented or outdated.

A particularly valuable contribution of this study lies in its integration of functional and morphological analysis, which revealed that spatial fragmentation (e.g., partial collapse, neglected wings, or inconsistent ownership) can both hinder and enable adaptive reuse. The case of the Baron Steingel Castle exemplifies this complexity: its hybrid structure—comprising preserved, altered, and ruined parts—creates both challenges and opportunities for reprogramming use without undermining heritage value. These findings offer a nuanced perspective to the academic discourse, challenging binary distinctions between preservation and development, and advocating for preservation through integration, not isolation.

Nevertheless, the study is not without limitations. The inability to access certain primary sources (such as project documentation and stakeholder interviews) and the reliance on publicly available spatial and photographic data may limit the depth of site-specific conclusions. While sufficient for generating contextual insights and hypotheses, these constraints restrict the generalizability of findings across wider urban settings. The research thus refrains from

proposing universally applicable models but rather aims to advance a set of adaptable principles grounded in observed urban realities.

From a disciplinary standpoint, this work contributes to the fields of urban studies, heritage planning, and transitional city research by reframing the role of function as a strategic axis in the governance of cultural heritage. It advances the argument that adaptive reuse should be embedded in broader urban policies that account for social equity, memory, and sustainability—moving beyond technical preservation toward cultural and spatial reintegration. The research also addresses a notable gap in the literature by bringing Eastern European and Ukrainian cases into a predominantly Western-centered discourse on adaptive reuse.

Based on the findings, the study identifies several key areas for future research:

- Participatory studies on how residents and users perceive authenticity and comfort in adapted heritage spaces;
- Comparative legal research on incentives and obstacles to functional change in post-socialist cities;
- Spatial governance studies focused on fragmentation and ownership patterns in large-scale historic structures;
- Quantitative assessments of environmental and economic outcomes of adaptive reuse versus new construction;
- Development of integrated indicators to evaluate the sustainability of functionally adapted heritage sites—combining cultural value, economic viability, social use, and ecological impact.

Ultimately, this research offers both a theoretical refinement and a practical framework for addressing the preservation-function nexus. It promotes a more flexible, ethical, and context-aware approach to heritage in transition, and calls for future urban policy to recognize adaptive reuse not merely as a tool of survival, but as a platform for urban regeneration, civic identity, and collective continuity.

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<https://www.balbek.com/bursa-hotel-kyiv>

Appendix A.

Table 1. Revitalization Case Studies - Overview with Positive and Negative Factors

<i>Case Name</i>	<i>Country</i>	<i>Outcome</i>	<i>Urban Location</i>	<i>City Population (2023)</i>	<i>Administrative Significance</i>	<i>City</i>	<i>Key Positive Outcomes</i>	<i>Key Challenges / Negative Factors</i>
<i>St. Briavels Castle</i>	United Kingdom	Success	Within city	1,297	No	St. Briavels	Sustainable reuse, community access, low-intervention conservation	Limited year-round access due to rural location; revenue reliant on seasonal tourism
<i>Beverley Friary</i>	United Kingdom	Success	City center	30,930	Yes, district center	Beverley	High level of preservation, tourism integration, public use	High restoration cost; limited capacity as hostel
<i>BURSA Hotel</i>	Ukraine	Success	City center	2,887,974	Yes, capital	Kyiv	High-quality design, synergy of hotel and culture, raised value of historic building	Gentrification concerns; accessibility issues for local community
<i>Reikartz Hotel</i>	Ukraine	Success	City center	96,896	Yes, historical center	Kamianets-Podilskyi	Respectful facade conservation, added tourist infrastructure	Commercial focus may override authenticity; limited public access
<i>Château de la Mothe-Chandeniers</i>	France	Failure	Outside city	1,116	No	Les Trois-Moutiers	Innovative public ownership, international visibility, conservation efforts	Remote location; high maintenance needs; not all stakeholders can influence management
<i>Krzyżtopór Castle</i>	Poland	Failure	Outside city	1,533	No	Ujazd	Partial structural stabilization, limited cultural awareness	No active reuse strategy; major structural decay; low funding and visitation
<i>Mansion House</i>	United Kingdom	Failure	City center	87,455	Yes, metro center	Doncaster	Structural repairs completed, historical identity maintained	Lack of adaptive program; failed business model; underused space

Appendix B.

Figure 1. Baron Shteingel Castle, photo from open sources.

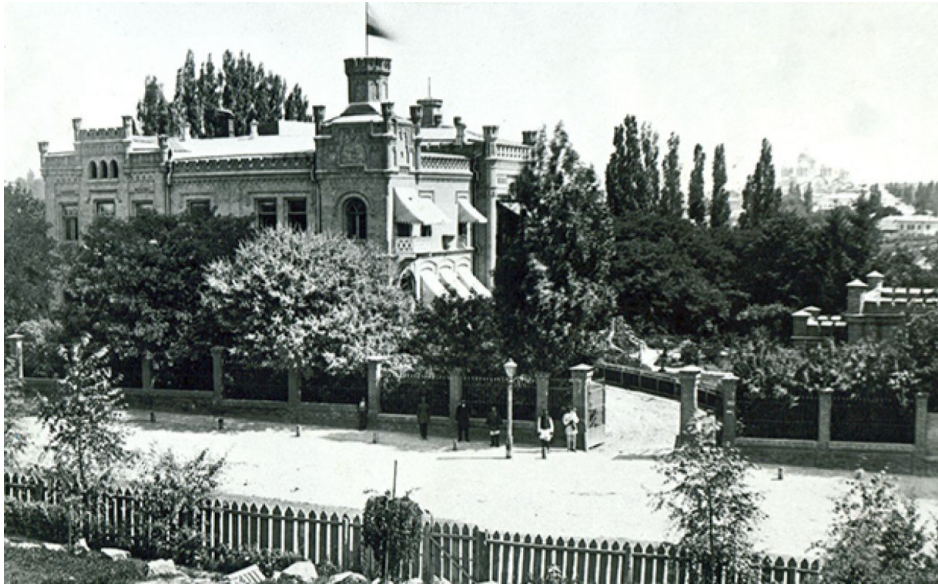
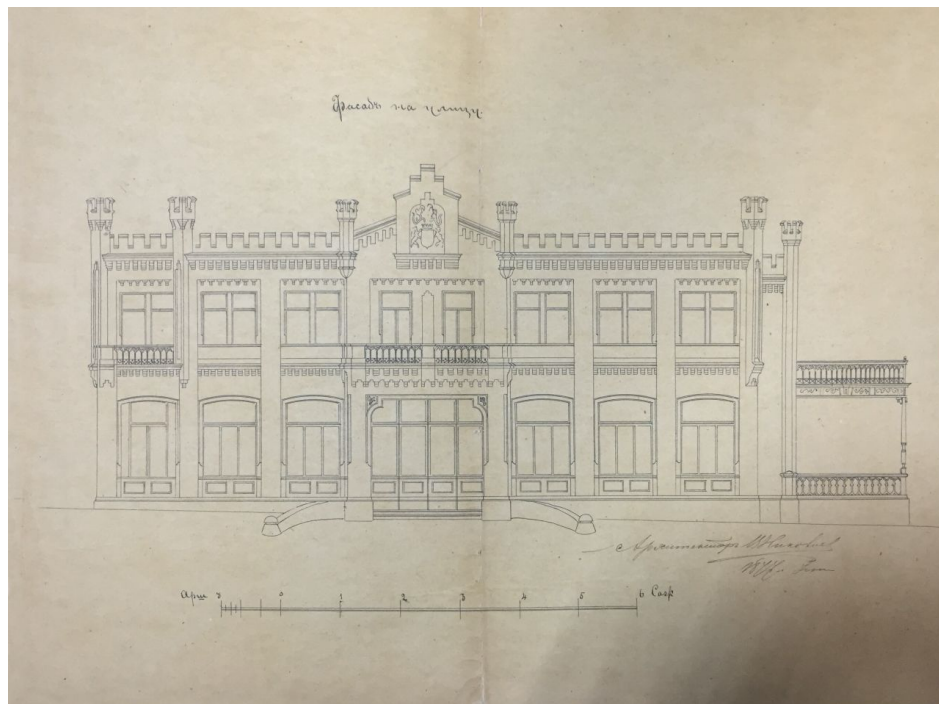


Figure 2. Design drawings of the estate, photo “Map of renovation”



Appendix C.

The preserved and restored historical wing of the Baron Shteingel Castle, own photo.





Appendix D.

The modern addition constructed in the 1970s, own photo.



Appendix E.

The neglected historical wing of the Baron Shteingel Castle, own photo.











