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Industrial Heritage and Adaptive Reuse in Corfu: Reinterpreting Industrial Buildings

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A b s t r a c t

This paper examines the industrial building stock of Corfu as an underexplored component of the island's cultural heritage, with a focus on adaptive reuse potential. Despite Corfu's well-documented monumental and defensive architecture, its industrial heritage remains insufficiently studied and lacks systematic spatial and typological documentation. Grounded in industrial archaeology (Tagil, 2003; Slotta, 1992), the study integrates archival research, spatial analysis, and architectural interpretation to analyse selected industrial sites. The findings reveal a strong coastal concentration of industrial buildings, a dominance of agro-industrial typologies, and a critical condition characterised by abandonment, partial loss, and limited reuse. The research addresses a significant empirical gap by providing the first structured spatial and typological dataset of Corfu's industrial heritage. It contributes to broader debates on industrial archaeology and adaptive reuse by proposing a framework for understanding industrial landscapes in Mediterranean island contexts and highlighting their potential role in sustainable urban development and cultural continuity.

K e y w o r d s : Industrial Heritage; Adaptive Reuse; Industrial Archaeology; Cultural Identity; Sustainable Development.

1. Introduction

Industrial heritage has gained increasing attention within architectural history, urban studies, and cultural heritage management, particularly in relation to the reuse of obsolete industrial structures and post-industrial landscapes. Within this context, industrial archaeology provides a systematic framework for understanding the physical remains of industrial development, including buildings, machinery, infrastructure, and associated cultural landscapes (Slotta, 1992). Recent studies have emphasized that industrial heritage should not be interpreted solely as a collection of obsolete production facilities but as a multidimensional cultural resource reflecting technological development, social memory, and local identity. Contemporary research highlights the growing importance of industrial heritage within broader heritage management and urban regeneration frameworks, particularly in regions undergoing economic and spatial transformation (Bocquet & Wahba, 2021; Lusiani et al., 2022). Furthermore, industrial landscapes are increasingly recognized as complex cultural systems that require integrated conservation approaches extending beyond individual buildings and monuments (Felicioni et al., 2021).Recent research emphasizes that adaptive reuse is increasingly embedded within sustainability-oriented frameworks and circular economy strategies, highlighting its role in reducing environmental impact and extending the lifecycle of existing built assets (Ikiz Kaya et al., 2021; Arbab & Alborzi, 2021). Furthermore, contemporary studies underline the importance of heritage-led regeneration approaches that integrate environmental, social, and economic dimensions in the transformation of industrial sites (Wei et al., 2024). Despite this growing academic interest, industrial heritage in many peripheral and insular contexts remains under-documented and insufficiently integrated into spatial planning and conservation strategies. This study is situated within this gap, focusing on the industrial landscape of Corfu and its systematic documentation, spatial interpretation, and assessment within the framework of adaptive reuse and heritage management.

1.1 Research Context and Objectives

Industrial heritage has gained increasing attention within architectural history, urban studies, and cultural heritage management, particularly in relation to the reuse of obsolete industrial structures and post-industrial landscapes. Within this context, industrial archaeology provides a systematic framework for understanding the physical remains of industrial development, including buildings, machinery, infrastructure, and associated cultural landscapes (Slotta, 1992). Great Britain is considered the birthplace of industrial archaeology, where the term first appeared in 1955 through D. Dudley. The decisive factor in both the emergence and the development of industrial archaeology was the intense deindustrialization of urban areas at the end of the 20th century. Countries such as the United Kingdom, France, and

Germany saw entire regions become deserted, suffering from high unemployment and poverty (Rodopoulou, 2020). The recognition of historic industrial sites as part of cultural heritage took time, with some European countries not acknowledging their value until the new millennium. More specifically, in 1970 the Council of Europe contributed to the revival of interest in industrial monuments after the signing of the Convention for the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage.

The term "adaptive reuse" has often been defined with various related terms, including renovation, remodeling, restoration, conversion, transformation, modernization, upgrading, and recycling of buildings (Douglas, 2006; Wilkinson et al., 2014). Recent scholarship emphasizes that adaptive reuse has evolved into a central strategy within circular economy and sustainability frameworks, where the conservation of existing building stock is prioritized over demolition and new construction (Foster, 2022; Bullen & Love, 2021; Aziz Amen & Ali, 2025). This shift reflects a broader transformation in architectural and planning theory, where heritage is increasingly integrated into environmental and socio-economic development agendas.

However, despite this growing academic interest, industrial heritage research continues to highlight tensions between preservation, economic redevelopment, and the socio-cultural value of industrial sites, particularly in post-industrial and peripheral contexts (Yung & Chan, 2021). Recent studies further underline the importance of heritage-led regeneration strategies that integrate environmental, social, and planning dimensions into a unified framework (Arfa et al., 2022).

Within this theoretical context, cultural heritage is no longer understood as a static collection of monuments but as a dynamic system embedded in spatial and historical processes.

The island of Corfu provides a representative case for examining these dynamics. Historically shaped by Venetian, French, and British influences, Corfu developed a distinctive industrial landscape between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Industrial development was closely connected to agricultural production, maritime trade, and port infrastructure, particularly in areas such as Mantouki, Garitsa, and Lefkimmi.

The industrial history of the island has been extensively documented through local historical studies, particularly the multi-volume work of Kypriotis and Moraitis (2016a; 2016b; 2016c; 2016d), which provides detailed evidence on factories, production systems, and spatial organization of industrial activity in Corfu.

Despite this historical significance, much of the island's industrial heritage remains under-documented, fragmented, or absent from systematic spatial planning frameworks. Many industrial buildings have been abandoned, demolished, or partially transformed without comprehensive heritage evaluation.

Today, key industrial complexes such as olive oil factories, soap industries, and textile-related facilities constitute important physical traces of Corfu's industrial past. However, their spatial distribution, functional typology, and preservation status have not yet been systematically analyzed within an integrated heritage framework.

In response to this gap, this study aims to systematically document and analyze the industrial heritage of Corfu through an integrated methodological approach combining historical research, spatial mapping, typological classification, and field investigation.

Specifically, the study focuses on: (i) identifying industrial buildings across the island; (ii) analyzing their spatial and functional characteristics; (iii) assessing their current condition; and (iv) evaluating their potential for adaptive reuse within contemporary planning and sustainability frameworks.

By addressing these objectives, the study contributes to ongoing debates on industrial heritage, adaptive reuse, and sustainable urban development, offering empirical evidence from a Mediterranean island context that remains underrepresented in international literature.

1.1.1 Research Questions

This present study is structured around three interrelated research questions that guide the analysis of Corfu's industrial heritage.

First, it seeks to identify which industrial buildings and production sites constituted the industrial landscape of Corfu during the late nineteenth to mid-twentieth centuries, a period marked by significant economic and spatial transformation of the island.

Second, it examines the dominant industrial sectors represented in the island's industrial building stock, focusing on activities such as olive oil production, soap manufacturing, textile processing, and other agro-industrial and port-related functions that shaped the productive identity of Corfu.

Third, the study investigates the current condition, spatial distribution, and institutional protection status of these industrial buildings, assessing the extent to which they have been preserved, abandoned, demolished, or adaptively reused within the contemporary urban and rural context.

These research questions are informed by recent international discussions on industrial heritage conservation, adaptive reuse, and heritage-led regeneration, which emphasize the need for systematic documentation, spatial analysis, and sustainable management of former industrial sites (Conejos et al., 2020; Plevoets & Van Cleempoel, 2021; Bocquet & Wahba, 2021; Felicioni et al., 2021). By examining the case of Corfu, the study seeks to contribute to the growing body of research exploring the role of industrial heritage in cultural preservation, local identity formation, and sustainable development.

2. Materials and Methods

This section presents the materials and methodological framework employed in the study of Corfu's industrial heritage. The research adopts a multidisciplinary approach that integrates archival research, field survey, cartographic mapping, and qualitative documentation to systematically record, classify, and interpret industrial buildings and production sites dating from the late nineteenth to the mid-twentieth century. The methodological design is grounded in industrial archaeology and heritage studies, treating industrial buildings not only as isolated architectural objects, but as components of broader socio-economic and cultural systems embedded within urban and regional landscapes.

The overall methodological strategy is structured in sequential and interconnected stages, allowing a systematic transition from data collection to classification and spatial interpretation. This structure was developed in response to the lack of comprehensive documentation and integrated spatial analysis of Corfu's industrial heritage. By combining historical reconstruction with empirical fieldwork and spatial representation techniques, the study ensures a multi-layered understanding of industrial heritage, both as a physical and as a cultural phenomenon.

The research also integrates qualitative contextual information to capture the social and cultural dimensions of industrial sites. This is considered essential for understanding not only the material remains of industrial activity, but also their historical significance and relationship to local communities.

2.1 Methodological Framework

The methodological framework consists of four main interconnected phases: archival research, field survey, data classification and database development, and cartographic mapping and spatial analysis. Each phase contributes to a cumulative process of data construction and interpretation.

(1) Archival Research

The first phase involved extensive archival research aimed at reconstructing the historical development of industrial activity in Corfu. A wide range of sources was consulted, including historical books, archival records, technical reports, historical maps, photographs, and documentation retrieved from local public services and institutional archives. These materials provided essential information for identifying industrial sites, understanding their historical evolution, and contextualizing their role within the island's economic and spatial development.

Archival research also enabled the identification of industrial sectors that were historically active in Corfu, such as olive oil production, soap manufacturing, textile processing, tanning industries, flour milling, salt production, and other agro-industrial activities. This phase formed the historical foundation of the dataset used in the study.

(2) Field Survey

The second phase involved systematic fieldwork conducted across Corfu to verify the existence of identified industrial sites and document their current condition. On-site surveys included direct observation, photographic documentation, and spatial recording of each industrial building.

Field survey activities focused on evaluating the physical state of preservation, structural integrity, and environmental context of each site. Attention was given to the relationship between industrial buildings and their surrounding urban or rural fabric, including proximity to ports, transportation networks, and agricultural areas.

This phase was essential for updating archival information and identifying discrepancies between historical records and current conditions, particularly in cases of demolition, abandonment, or partial survival of industrial structures.

(3) Data Classification and Database Development

Following data collection, all identified industrial buildings were systematically organized into a structured database. Each entry includes multiple categories of information: typological classification, historical function, construction period, geographical location, current use, preservation status, and potential for adaptive reuse.

In addition, buildings were categorized according to their current physical condition, including extant and functional structures, abandoned or disused buildings, partially preserved structures, and demolished sites. This classification allows for a clear understanding of the degree of transformation of Corfu's industrial landscape over time.

The database serves as the core analytical tool of the study, enabling cross-comparison between historical development, spatial distribution, and current condition.

(4) Cartographic Mapping and Spatial Analysis

The final methodological phase involved cartographic mapping and spatial analysis of industrial buildings across Corfu. Mapping techniques were used to visualize the geographical distribution of industrial sites in both urban and rural contexts.

This spatial representation enabled the identification of clear patterns of industrial concentration, particularly in coastal zones and areas closely connected to port infrastructure and transportation routes. It also highlighted the spatial relationship between industrial development and agricultural production zones in the inland areas of the island.

Cartographic analysis provided a visual and analytical framework for interpreting the spatial logic of industrial development and its transformation over time. It also supports the identification of areas with higher potential for future adaptive reuse strategies.

2.2 Data Collection and Analysis

Data collection was carried out through a systematic combination of archival research and field-based investigation, forming the empirical foundation of the study. Archival research constituted the first and essential stage of the data collection process, as it provided the historical documentation required to reconstruct the industrial development patterns of Corfu from the late nineteenth to the mid-twentieth century. A wide range of sources was examined, including historical publications, archival records, technical reports, historical maps, photographic material, and documentation retrieved from local public services and institutional archives. These sources enabled the identification of industrial sites, the reconstruction of their historical trajectories, and the understanding of their role within the broader socio-economic development of the island. Through this process, key industrial sectors such as olive oil production, soap manufacturing, textile processing, tanning, flour milling, salt production, and other agro-industrial activities were identified as central components of Corfu's industrial landscape.

Field-based investigation formed the second major component of the data collection process and was conducted to verify, document, and update the archival information. Systematic field surveys were carried out across the island, including both urban and rural areas, with the aim of directly observing the current condition of industrial buildings and production sites. On-site inspection involved visual assessment, photographic documentation, and spatial recording of each identified structure. Attention was given to the physical integrity of the buildings, their degree of preservation, and their relationship with the surrounding urban or landscape context. This process was crucial for identifying discrepancies between historical records and current reality, particularly in cases where buildings had been abandoned, partially demolished, significantly altered, or entirely lost.

In addition, the official Archaeological Cadastre of Greece was consulted as a complementary institutional source to confirm the legal and protection status of industrial buildings designated as cultural heritage monuments by the Greek state. This step ensured the reliability and accuracy of the dataset regarding heritage designation, protection frameworks, and formal recognition of industrial structures. The inclusion of this institutional layer allowed the research to distinguish between protected, unprotected, and informally recognized industrial heritage assets, thereby providing a clearer understanding of their legal and conservation status within contemporary heritage management frameworks.

Furthermore, supplementary qualitative information was collected through informal discussions and conversations with residents, particularly individuals familiar with the industrial history of Corfu. These qualitative insights provided valuable contextual knowledge regarding the historical use, operational practices, workforce conditions, and social significance of specific industrial sites. Although not structured as formal interviews, this qualitative dimension enriched the dataset by adding experiential and memory-based perspectives that are often absent from archival sources. As a result, the study integrates both documented historical evidence and lived local knowledge, strengthening the interpretative depth of the analysis.

The analytical process combined typological classification, spatial interpretation, and condition assessment in an integrated framework. Industrial sites were systematically categorized according to their original sectoral function, including olive oil production units, soap factories, textile and rope manufacturing facilities, tanneries, saltworks, flour mills, and related agro-industrial infrastructures. This typological classification enabled the identification of dominant industrial activities and their contribution to the historical economic structure of the island.

At the same time, spatial analysis was conducted to examine the geographical distribution of industrial sites across Corfu. This included the identification of spatial patterns, with particular emphasis on the concentration of industrial activity in coastal zones, port areas, and transport-connected urban districts, as well as the presence of agro-industrial facilities in rural areas. This spatial interpretation made it possible to understand the relationship between industrial development and geographical, infrastructural, and economic factors shaping the island's industrial geography.

In parallel, a systematic condition assessment was conducted to evaluate the current state of preservation of each industrial building. Sites were classified according to their condition as fully preserved and functional, partially preserved, abandoned, heavily deteriorated, or demolished. This classification provides a clear picture of the transformation and decline of industrial heritage over time and highlights the uneven survival of industrial structures within the contemporary landscape.

By integrating archival research, field survey, institutional verification, qualitative insights, typological classification, and cartographic mapping, the methodological framework provides a robust, coherent, and multi-layered structure for analyzing industrial heritage. This integrated approach enhances the validity, reliability, and originality of the study by ensuring cross-verification between different data sources and analytical levels.

Overall, this methodological strategy allows for a comprehensive interpretation of Corfu's industrial landscape, not only as a historical phenomenon but also as a spatial and cultural system undergoing continuous transformation. It provides a systematic basis for understanding the evolution, current condition, and potential future trajectories of industrial heritage on the island.

3. Results

This section presents the main empirical findings of the study derived from the integrated analysis of archival sources, field survey data, and spatial mapping. The results provide a systematic overview of the identified industrial building stock in Corfu, focusing on spatial distribution, typological classification, and current condition. The findings are structured to reflect the primary analytical dimensions of the research framework.

3.1 Spatial Analysis and Classification

A total of twenty-four (24) industrial buildings and production sites have been identified and recorded across Corfu, including both the urban fabric of Corfu town and the wider island territory. This data set represents the current stage of documentation and may be further refined in future research phases. The spatial distribution of the recorded industrial sites is presented in Table 1.

The spatial analysis reveals a clear concentration of industrial buildings in coastal and urban areas. A significant proportion of sites is near port infrastructures, with notable clusters in areas such as Mantouki and Garitsa. This spatial pattern indicates a high degree of spatial correlation between industrial development and maritime transport infrastructure. Outside the urban core, industrial buildings are distributed across rural areas of the island. These sites are predominantly associated with agricultural processing activities, indicating a differentiated spatial structure between urban-industrial and rural-production systems. The results confirm dual spatial organization of industrial activity, combining port-oriented industrial concentration with dispersed agro-industrial installations in the hinterland.

Table 2 presents the classification of industrial buildings according to their original function. The analysis shows that olive oil production facilities constitute the dominant category within the sample, representing the largest proportion of recorded sites. These facilities are mainly located in rural and semi-rural areas of Corfu, reflecting the strong relationship between agricultural production and early industrial development on the island.

Additional industrial categories identified include soap manufacturing units, textile and rope production facilities, flour mills, tanneries, and saltworks. Although these categories are less numerous, they collectively demonstrate the functional diversity of Corfu's industrial system during the period under investigation.

Table 1: The spatial distribution of the recorded industrial buildings. (Source: Author's mapping based on field survey and OpenStreetMap data).

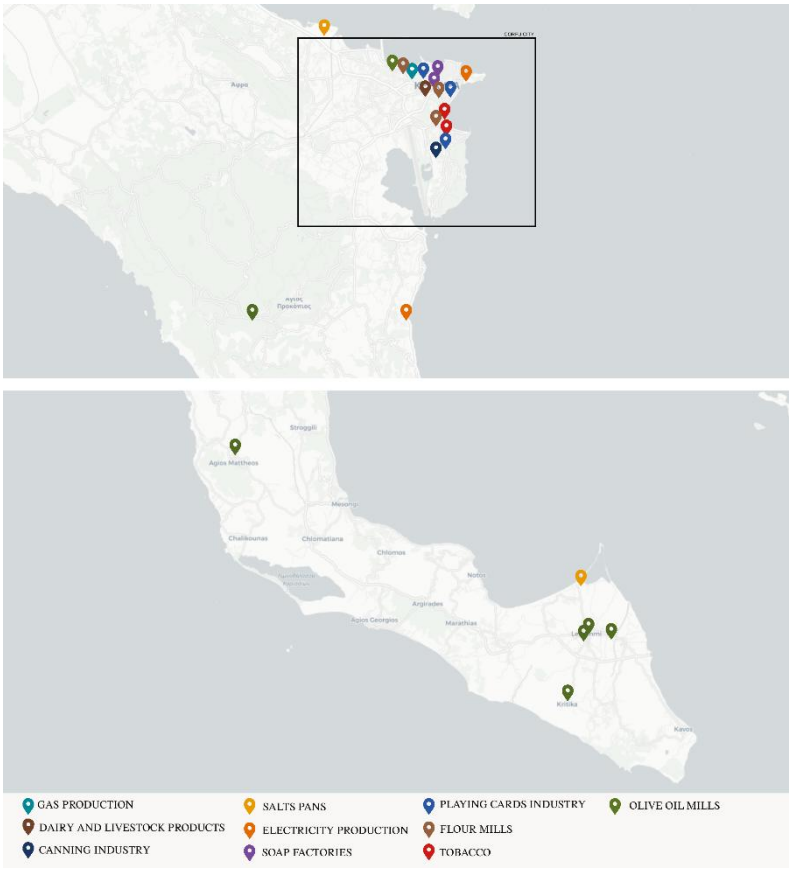

Table 2: The classification of industrial buildings according to their original use. (Source: Author's creation).

INDUSTRIAL USES IN CORFU
(total mapped industrial sites : 24)

GAS PRODUCTION	4.2%
DIARY&LIVESTOCK PRODUCTS	4.2%
CANNING INDUSTRY	4.2%
SALT PANS	8.3%
ELECTRICITY PRODUCTION	8.3%
SOAP FACTORIES	8.3%
TOBACCO INDUSTRY	8.3%
PLAYING CARD INDUSTRY	12.5%
FLOUR MILLS	12.5%
OLIVE OIL MILLS	29.2%

3.1.1 Building Condition and Current Status

The current condition and functional status of the recorded industrial buildings are presented in Table 3. The analysis indicates that a substantial proportion of the identified industrial structures are currently abandoned, while a smaller share has been demolished or completely lost. This reflects a significant transformation of Corfu's industrial landscape, particularly since the mid-twentieth century.

The prevalence of abandoned industrial buildings is evident in several large-scale complexes, including the Corfu Olive Oil Industry (A.E.B.E.K.) in Mantouki and the Desyllas factory in Garitsa. The A.E.B.E.K. complex, founded in 1924, comprises multiple production buildings and associated industrial infrastructure and represents a characteristic example of early twentieth-century industrial architecture (Argyrou, 2010). Similarly, the Desyllas factory, established in 1871, operated as a major industrial unit for the processing of flax, jute, and hemp until its closure in 1985 (Argyrou, 2012). Both complexes are currently classified as abandoned within the dataset.

Only a limited number of buildings remain in active use or have undergone functional continuity. This is demonstrated by the Patounis Soap Factory, established in 1891, which continues to operate using traditional production methods and equipment, representing a rare case of uninterrupted industrial activity (Ministry of Culture, Directorate of Modern Cultural Heritage, 2017; Patounis, 2014).

In addition, a small subset of sites has been partially or fully restored and is currently in use under a different functional regime. A representative example is the Lefkimmi saltworks, which has been restored and currently functions as an Environmental Education Center (Aspiotis & Kamonachou, 2006).

The dataset also reveals variations in the physical condition of industrial buildings, ranging from relatively well-preserved structures to severely deteriorated or partially ruined buildings. Differences in preservation status are observed across the sample, with some sites formally designated as protected monuments by the Greek Ministry of Culture, including the A.E.B.E.K. complex, the Patounis Soap Factory, and the Desyllas factory.

Overall, the results provide a structured classification of the current condition of Corfu's industrial building stock, highlighting the diversity of preservation states recorded in the dataset.

Table 3: The analysis of the current condition of the buildings. (Source: Author's creation).

STATUS OF THE 24 MAPPED INDUSTRIAL SITES IN CORFU

REPURPOSED AND IN OPERATION	2 SITES - 8.3%
EXIST BUT ABANDONED	11 SITES - 45.8%
NO LONGER SURVIVING	11 SITES - 45.8%

4. Discussion

This section discusses the main findings of the study in relation to the research questions and the existing literature on industrial heritage and adaptive reuse. It interprets the spatial, typological, and condition-based patterns identified in Corfu's industrial landscape, highlighting the key structural characteristics that emerge from the analysis.

The discussion situates these findings within broader scholarly debates on industrial archaeology, heritage conservation, and post-industrial transformation, with particular attention to Mediterranean and insular contexts where industrial heritage remains under-documented and unevenly studied. It also examines the extent to which the results confirm or extend existing understandings of industrial spatial organization, functional differentiation, and processes of abandonment and transformation.

Furthermore, the section reflects on the implications of the observed limited adaptive reuse practices, considering how these outcomes relate to wider discussions on sustainable heritage management and urban regeneration. In doing so, it highlights the relevance of the study for both academic discourse and future planning approaches concerning the integration of industrial heritage into contemporary urban and regional development frameworks.

4.1. Interpretation of Findings

The findings of this study provide new insights into the spatial structure and historical development of Corfu's industrial heritage, contributing to the limited body of research on industrial landscapes in Mediterranean island contexts. By integrating spatial analysis, typological classification, and archival documentation, the study enables a comprehensive interpretation of industrial distribution patterns and their transformation over time.

The results highlight a clear spatial logic in the development of industrial activity on the island, strongly associated with coastal infrastructure and port accessibility. Industrial concentration in areas such as Mantouki and Garitsa reflects the critical role of maritime transport networks in shaping industrial location patterns. This spatial configuration aligns with broader international literature on industrialization, where proximity to transport corridors and trade routes has been identified as a key determinant of industrial development.

In parallel, the presence of industrial sites in rural areas emphasizes the importance of agricultural processing within Corfu's industrial system. The dominance of olive-oil production indicates the strong integration between agricultural economies and early industrial activity on the island. This dual spatial structure—comprising coastal industrial clusters and dispersed rural production sites—suggests a territorially integrated industrial system in which urban and rural functions operated in a complementary manner.

From a conceptual perspective, the study addresses a significant research gap by providing a systematic and spatially grounded documentation of Corfu's industrial building stock. Previous research has predominantly focused on individual monuments or descriptive historical accounts, without developing a comprehensive analytical framework. In contrast, this study repositions industrial heritage as a distributed spatial system, encompassing both large-scale industrial complexes and smaller production units. This approach expands the scope of industrial heritage studies by moving beyond monument-centered interpretations and recognizing the broader infrastructural and productive landscape as part of cultural heritage.

The findings also indicate that a large proportion of industrial buildings are currently abandoned, partially deteriorated, or demolished, while only a limited number have been adaptively reused. This pattern reflects broader trends observed in post-industrial and Mediterranean contexts, where deindustrialization, urban expansion, and fragmented conservation policies have led to the gradual loss of industrial assets. The limited implementation of adaptive reuse strategies further highlights the absence of an integrated heritage management framework capable of linking documentation, conservation, and redevelopment.

Overall, the current condition of Corfu's industrial heritage illustrates the combined effects of historical industrial decline and insufficient planning coordination. These findings underscore the need for more structured and spatially informed approaches to industrial heritage management that can support both preservation and adaptive reuse within contemporary urban development strategies.

4.1.1 Implications, Limitations, and Future Research

The findings of this study indicate that industrial buildings in Corfu constitute a significant yet underutilized component of the island's-built heritage with considerable potential for adaptive reuse. Their spatial distribution, structural characteristics, and strategic positioning within both urban and peri-urban areas suggest suitability for a range of contemporary functions. Their proximity to former industrial zones and transport infrastructures enhances their potential for reintegration into the urban fabric. Within this context, adaptive reuse scenarios such as residential development, student housing, cultural facilities, and mixed-use programs emerge as relevant options for addressing current urban pressures, including housing demand and the need for sustainable regeneration strategies. These observations are consistent with recent literature highlighting adaptive reuse as a key mechanism for sustainable urban transformation and housing provision in post-industrial contexts (Bullen & Love, 2021; Yung & Chan, 2021).

Beyond their functional potential, the study reinforces the conceptual role of industrial heritage as an active element in shaping local identity, collective memory, and long-term spatial continuity. Industrial buildings should not be understood solely as obsolete remnants of past production systems, but rather as cultural and material assets embedded within the historical layering of the urban landscape. Their conservation and adaptive reuse contribute to more sustainable development pathways by reducing demolition impacts, preserving embodied energy, and maintaining the continuity of place-based identity. In the case of Corfu, where industrial development is closely linked to broader socio-economic transformations, such approaches highlight the importance of integrating heritage considerations into contemporary planning processes.

Despite these contributions, several limitations should be acknowledged. First, the dataset remains open-ended, as the identification of twenty-four industrial sites reflects the current stage of ongoing research rather than a definitive inventory. Additional sites may be identified in future fieldwork, particularly in less accessible rural and peri-urban areas. Second, although the study combines archival research, spatial analysis, and field observation, the qualitative dimension is still limited. While informal oral information was included, a more systematic qualitative framework involving structured interviews with stakeholders, local communities, and heritage professionals has not yet been fully implemented. As a result, the social and experiential dimensions of industrial heritage remain partially underexplored.

Future research should therefore focus on expanding the spatial and documentary database of industrial buildings to achieve more comprehensive coverage and finer-grained classification. In addition, the integration of structured qualitative methodologies would enhance understanding of the social meanings and community perceptions associated with industrial heritage. Further research could also develop detailed adaptive reuse design proposals tailored to specific sites, bridging the gap between documentation and architectural intervention. Finally, future studies should address the governance and policy dimension of industrial heritage management, examining planning frameworks, institutional mechanisms, and funding strategies that could support the sustainable conservation and reuse of industrial assets. Such an integrated research agenda would strengthen the connection between empirical documentation, design practice, and policy implementation, contributing to a more holistic approach to industrial heritage management in Corfu.

5. Conclusions

This study has examined the industrial building stock of Corfu as an underexplored component of the island's cultural heritage, contributing to the broader fields of industrial archaeology and heritage management. Through a combined historical, spatial, and architectural approach, the research has systematically documented and analysed industrial buildings as integral elements of Corfu's urban and regional landscape.

The main findings indicate that Corfu's industrial heritage is characterized by a strong concentration of sites in coastal and port-related areas, alongside a secondary distribution linked to rural and agricultural processing activities. This spatial structure reflects the historical interdependence between maritime trade networks and local production systems. In addition, the typological analysis reveals the predominance of olive-oil production facilities, followed by soap manufacturing and textile-related industries, confirming the central role of agro-industrial activities in shaping the island's industrial development.

A further key finding concerns the current condition of the recorded building stock. Most industrial buildings are either abandoned, partially deteriorated, or no longer exist, while only a limited number have been adaptively reused or remain in continuous operation. This demonstrates a significant gap between the historical importance of these structures and their present-day functional and planning integration.

These findings directly respond to the research objectives by providing the first systematic spatial and typological documentation of Corfu's industrial heritage. In doing so, the study addresses a clear empirical and methodological gap in the existing literature, where industrial heritage in Mediterranean island contexts has remained fragmented and insufficiently analysed. The research therefore contributes to a more structured understanding of how industrial landscapes evolve, persist, or disappear within insular environments.

From a broader theoretical perspective, the study contributes to ongoing debates in industrial archaeology and adaptive reuse by highlighting the need to move beyond object-based conservation towards spatially informed and context-sensitive approaches. It reinforces the argument that industrial heritage should be understood not only as isolated architectural remnants but as part of wider socio-economic and territorial systems.

Practically, the findings suggest that adaptive reuse—particularly for housing, student accommodation, and mixed-use development—offers a viable strategy for integrating industrial buildings into contemporary urban dynamics. However, such potential remains largely unrealized in Corfu, indicating the need for coordinated planning frameworks that link heritage conservation with urban development policies.

As the research is ongoing, the conclusions presented here should be considered part of an evolving analytical process. Future work will expand the dataset, deepen qualitative investigation, and further explore policy and design-oriented

strategies for adaptive reuse. In this context, the study provides a foundational step toward a more integrated and sustainable approach to the management of industrial heritage in Corfu.

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Conflicts of Interest
The author report no conflicts of interest.

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