When Interiors Remember: Adaptive Reuse Against the Forgetting of Modernity

Modernity, as Paul Connerton argues in How Modernity Forgets, is marked by systematic acts of erasure, cycles of demolition, material obsolescence, and the replacement of durable environments with disposable ones. Individuals' daily lives are shaped by forgetting in modern societies, which directly affects not only how civilizations evolve but also the development of built environments. All types of architectural entities, whether public or private, and regardless of scale, consistently renew and lose their historical context. Most severe cases can be observed in interior spaces due to their frequent alterations and reconfigurations. This paper aims to explore adaptive reuse in interior architecture as a counter-practice: a means of resisting modernity's tendency toward forgetting by sustaining material and spatial continuity across time. Space's ability to narrate helps to create environments where memory is not merely preserved but actively communicated and simultaneously exists. Building on this understanding, the paper reframes adaptive reuse as a form of cultural sustainability. To support this argument, the adaptive reuse project of the Museum Lab was utilized as a case study.

Keywords: *Adaptive Reuse, Modernism, Narrative Spaces, Cultural Sustainability, Interior Architecture.*

Introduction

Modernism has always been a contentious term and remains more a cultural field than a historical period[1]. In this context, the innovations that emerged with modernism can also be considered cultural commodities. With modernism, extreme changes become noticeable at the urban scale since culture manifests significantly through architecture and buildings. Rapid urbanization, industrialization, technological advancements, and continuous replacement of the 'old' with the 'new' mark characteristics of modernity, particularly affecting the built environment while weaving the nets of new cultural perspectives.

Interior spaces are significant parts of the built environment and architecture. As Verschaffel[2] notes, the beginning and principle of architecture is the creation of an"interior". To dwell or to live and to be rooted, it may be sufficient to mark a place and create a center. For the interior spaces, this process of creation is a continuous, endless cycle as the production of space has a profound, reciprocal relationship with its inhabitants. In that sense, layers embedded in interiors carry traces of various social, cultural, and spatial transformations. Societies project their collective memory and identity onto spaces that anchor the transformations in culture. Understanding and deciphering these spatial layers is engaging with narrative materiality, where physical aspects hold memory and resist cultural amnesia generated by modernity. As forgetting progressively dominates the spatial environments, adaptive reuse emerges

[1] Dinerstein (2008)
[2] Verschaffel (2017)

as a vital strategy to protect the integrity and identity of spaces while supporting cultural sustainability. Preservation and reinvention replace erasure and demolition, transforming interiors into a dynamic archive.

The study consists of five consecutive sections. The first section focuses on how spatial forgetting is generated in architectural environments after modernity. Theories of pioneering researchers on modernity and its reflections are briefly mentioned. Paul Connerton's suggestions on the relationship between forgetting and urban scale are introduced. The second section explores how interiors become carriers of memory. The relationship between culture, narrative, and space is further explored in detail. Throughout the section, the hypothesis on narratives being composed from bodily interaction in the interior space is predominantly discussed and explored, and it is argued that material aspects of spaces majorly contribute to this creation. The third section analyzes the literature on adaptive reuse shortly, following the exploration of how adaptive reuse contributes to the protection of the unique fabric of buildings and supports cultural continuity. This section also includes a detailed portrayal of Museum Lab, the case study of the research. Section four is a discussion where Connerton's theories are referenced for creating evaluation criteria to conceptualize and determine the effectiveness of adaptive reuse on the loss of spatial elements. Section five concludes and ends the study.

Aim & Methodology

This study aims to explore the relationship between interior space and forgetting from the perspective of cultural continuity. The research question of the study is 'Can adaptive reuse help to resist forgetting by preserving narrative materiality and sustain cultural continuity in interior spaces?' It is known and widely argued among different fields and studies that modernity augments forgetting by introducing new ways of understanding, doing, and building. Historically, all new features of modernism were adopted and incarnated until a certain turning point. The accumulation of erasure and a feeling of rootlessness lead the way to searching for a new solution. For that matter, adaptive reuse emerged as the answer by creating a middle ground between old buildings and the new requirements of modern living.

Throughout the study, adaptive reuse will be introduced as the main strategy to prevent loss and forgetting generated by modernism. For the purpose of this study, narrative materiality is considered as the material aspects of a spatial environment that communicates with the individuals and connects them to the space. The degree of loss and forgetting will be evaluated based on material aspects, which also produce a narrative.

One key factor considered in the research is the role of culture. The built environment is closely linked to the culture of the society where it's placed and lived. Loss of narrative and material traces will directly enhance the loss of cultural accumulation. Therefore, this study argues that protecting narrative materiality by adaptive reuse will also protect, preserve, and eventually sustain the cultural elements. This essentially supports the cultural sustainability of the built environment.

Qualitative research has been acquired as the methodology of this study. Qualitative research is considered suitable to further investigate the relationship between adaptive reuse and cultural sustainability. For analyzing the data gathered from the literature review, the adaptive reuse project of Museum Lab was selected as the case study. The case building was chosen primarily because of its adaptive reuse strategy. This specifically focuses on eliminating all interventions to regain the old and original qualities that the spaces were offering.

For the evaluation criteria, Paul Connerton's book How Modernity Forgets was used as the main source. In the chapter of Topographies of Forgetting, Connerton classifies three aspects that create forgetting and cultural amnesia on the urban scale. These are considered a starting point. Key factors of each aspect are detected, listed, and marked as representations of loss on the spatial level. All three aspects and related factors are compared with Museum Lab's adaptations. Lastly, based on the adaptive reuse project, Museum Lab's capacity for the achievement of cultural sustainability is rated and commented on.

Literature Review

Adaptive reuse constructs a common ground for all components of the built environment, from housing to public spaces or heritage with strong collective meanings. Even though, for the last decade, adaptive reuse has aided buildings at any scale, as Kahvecioglu & Arslan Selcuk[3] suggest, adaptive reuse (AR), considered as a strategy, is frequently used in the revitalization of heritage buildings. Accordingly, previous studies in this subject have mainly focused on the preservation and transformation of heritage buildings. However, with the help of changing the direction of selecting the building, the field shifted its focus and scope, resulting in a diversity of subjects. Recently, adaptive reuse is commonly associated with conservation, preservation, regeneration, and ultimately continuity of all types of architectural entities.

Any research focusing on the protection and transfer of cultural meaning should consider narrative as a key element. Narrative establishes a meaning to space relative to its context and function[4]. Consequently, narrative in architecture suggests that materials, spatial configurations, and bodily engagement contribute to the construction and transmission of meaning, particularly through interior architecture. In this context, interior environments function beyond their physical and material existence by operating as experiential settings where cultural components and traces can remain visible and perceivable.

Despite the growing body of research on adaptive reuse and cultural continuity, the intersection of cultural amnesia, narrative materiality, and interior architecture remains relatively underexplored. Predominantly, existing studies focus on urban scale, preservation strategies, or environmental effects of adaptive reuse. Studies exploring how interior architecture resists forgetting by securing material and spatial continuity with adaptive reuse are fewer. Therefore, this study offers a framework

[3]Kahvecioglu & Arslan Selcuk (2023)
[4]Qadir (2011)

to examine and explore interior spaces' contribution to cultural sustainability through continuity of spatial experience and meaning with adaptive reuse at its core.

Modernity and the Spatial Condition of Forgetting

The volatile nature of modernity is strikingly summarized by Karl Marx[5]'s infamous phrase, 'All that is solid melts into air.' In this scope, modernity refers to a historical period beginning in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, marked by industrialization, technological advancement, and sweeping social, economic, and cultural changes. Modernity has always known to disrupt established systems, challenging traditional understandings, norms, and boundaries. These changes affect not just social structures but material conditions, fundamentally altering the idea of permanence. Modernity is characterized by continuous change, where construction and deconstruction coexist. Consequently, traces of the past are gradually erased, and the continuity between past and present is increasingly fractured.

Marshall Berman[6] describes modernity as a paradoxical unity: it brings people together across geography, class, and ideology, yet immerses all in *perpetual disintegration and renewal, struggle and ambiguity. To be modern is to exist in a world where, as Marx said, 'all that is solid melts into air.'* Modern environments transcend boundaries, creating shared yet unstable ground marked by constant change. Thus, modernity is a unity of disunity, placing individuals in cycles of transformation and contradiction. This condition leads to forgetting, as stable systems weaken and the bond between memory and space fragments causing ongoing displacement and understanding of meaning.

The condition for instability is further intensified by the vagueness that underlies modernity. Modernity is not the transformation of all values; it is the destruction of all former values without surpassing them, it is the ambiguity of all values under the sign of a generalized combinatory[7]. Based on this framework, meaning is no longer anchored in stable structures. Now it becomes fluid and interchangeable. Ambiguity intensifies the progressive condition of forgetting, since the erosion of consistent value systems disrupts continuity at both cultural and spatial levels. This ultimately creates an environment in which memory can no longer be sustained on a concrete ground.

The process of instability and ambiguity associated with modernity extends beyond social and cultural conditions to the material aspects of the built environment. Otto Paans[8] argues that the built environment is not merely a neutral background. It especially reflects social values, simultaneously constructing behavioral and subjective experience. In this perspective, the function of the space becomes a formative medium where individuals perceive, translate, and engage with their surroundings. As an outcome, the transformations created by modernity are physically embedded in architectural environments, both on the interior and

[5]Marx & Engels (2002)
[6]Berman (1988)
[7]Baudrillard (1987)
[8]Paans (2009)

exterior levels. The everlasting alterations, replacement, and decomposition of the built environment break the experiential and spatial continuity through which memory is formed and sustained. As environments are transformed or separated from their original states, the embodied and perceptual frameworks that support remembrance weaken. This leads to fragmentation of the relationship between the past and present. Then, forgetting evolves not only as a cultural or psychological condition, but also as a spatially produced phenomenon embedded within the ongoing transformation of space.

Memory has a profound connection to the space. Whether public or private, spatial environments are continuously experienced and reproduced through everyday practices. Therefore, any transformation in the built environment directly affects human perception and, more broadly, memory. There, as Paul Connerton[9] suggests, a 'topography of remembering' is established. Connerton argues that spatial production is closely linked to localization of cultural memory, and that the conditions of modernity actively contribute to processes of forgetting. He conceptualizes this phenomenon as 'cultural amnesia' and relates it to three interrelated features: Scale of Human Settlement, Production of Speed, and Repeated Intentional Destruction of the Built Environment. (Table 1.)

Table 1. *Topographies of Forgetting*

TOPOGRAPHIES OF FORGETTING		
CATEGORY		**SPATIAL CONDITION**
1	SCALE OF HUMAN SETTLEMENT	Loss of human scale
		Loss of spatial familiarity
		Disapperance of perceptible boundaries
		Spatial formlessness
		Rupture between people and places
2	PRODUCTION OF SPEED	Mechanized percetion
		Dominance of circulation over occupation
		Space of flows replacing space of places
		Loss of territorial reference points
		Loss of stability
		Aesthetics of disappearance
		Erosion of pedestrian experience
3	REPEATED INTENTIONAL DESTRUCTION OF THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT	Rootlessness
		Destruction of creativity
		Breakdown of urben building blocks
		Change from architecture of volumes to architecture of surfaces
		Homogeneous and placeless environments
		Reduced lifespan of objects and materials

Source: *Developed by the author based on Connerton (2009).*

The built environment should not be considered separate from human social and cultural history; consequently, memory develops in an organic relationship with space. These domains exist in a dynamic, reciprocal interaction, wherein spatial environments both shape and are shaped by cultural practices and collective experiences. However, the transformations associated with modernity have profoundly altered the conditions governing this relationship. As instability, ambiguity, and continuous change intensify, the spatial frameworks that once

[9]Connerton (2009)

sustained memory become increasingly disrupted. As a result, the connection between memory and space becomes more fragile, and the built environment's capacity to maintain continuity is significantly diminished. Forgetting thus emerges not only as a temporal or cultural condition but as one actively produced through spatial transformation. This raises a critical question: whether, and how, the built environment can continue to retain, negotiate, or reconstruct its role as a carrier of memory under modern conditions.

Interiors as a Carrier of Memory

Buildings interact with people predominantly in two ways: by their exteriors and interior environments. Both have different levels of effectiveness for the user or spectator. It is possible to say that interiors have a more intimate relationship than the outer shells because interiors operate at the scale of human experience. They are seen as the most immediate and continuously inhabited dimensions of the designed environment. Compared with urban and architectural frameworks, interiors are scenes of direct encounter and engagement in which perception and occupation occur simultaneously. This feature recontextualizes interiors from mere physical settings into a channel through which individuals experience, interpret, and relate to their surroundings. As Shashi Caan [10]suggests, the interior is the best medium for addressing the interaction between human beings and design. Caan's argument emphasizes interiors' pioneering role in mediating human experience and spatial environments. The built exterior/interior environment is a key player in establishing meaning in people's lives. It contributes to people's emotions, physical comfort, general well-being, and sense of belonging[11]. Therefore, focusing on the interior facilitates a more precise examination of spatial experience, as it is a critical domain for understanding how meaning is formed.

Architecture is an experiential territory. As Juhani Pallasmaa[12] emphasizes, experiencing architecture is multi-sensory; qualities of space, matter, and scale are measured together by the eye, ear, nose, skin, tongue, skeleton, and muscle. Therefore, reducing spatial experience to solely visual perception or to the interpretation of formal qualities would not be inclusive enough to understand the relationship between humans and spatial realms. The immersive experience that architecture offers is amplified tenfold in interiors. Inhabitants do not merely observe space from a distance when engaging with an interior space. Rather, they inhabit it through continuous bodily interaction, which places the human body as a primary mediator for spatial experience. These experiences morph from a detached cognitive process into a lived condition framed by the integration of physical presence and environmental stimuli.

Sensory engagement generates emotional and cognitive responses, as well as perceptual awareness. An interior experience that emphasizes the body and

[10]Caan (2011)
[11]Perolini (2011)
[12]Pallasmaa (2007)

environmental stimuli represents an immersive experience, affecting emotion[13]. By actively engaging with the body, interior environments hold the ability to evoke feelings of comfort, familiarity, or discomfort. This influences how individuals relate to space on a psychological level and should not be considered as incidental. They rather represent an integral process for the formation of spatial meaning since experience is continuously shaped through the interaction of one's surroundings. Space becomes a tool of interpretation, both constructed on collective and personal levels, which is not in an isolated or temporary state. In time, they accumulate emotional, personal, and collective meanings. Recurring exposure to materials, textures, and spatial configurations creates consistent connections that extend beyond immediate perception. Eventually, interiors reinvent themselves from a merely functional state into a personal and cultural accommodation. Here, traces of occupation and habitation are rooted within the space itself. Consequently, interior spaces are conveyors of memory and preserve the connection between the past and the present. This creates a prolific ground for positioning interiors within the narrative materiality: a place where materials and spatial elements preserve, communicate, and reconstruct cultural meaning over time.

Narrative can be considered a method of storytelling. But presenting it only as this would present a limited definition. Rather, it is beneficial to perceive narrative as a meaning mechanism organized and communicated over time. Narratives are intrinsically connected with human beings, as Paul Cobley[14] states: Wherever there are humans there appear to be narratives. Individuals have the opportunity to conceptualize their surroundings through narratives. This enables to transform lived experiences into organized forms of meaning. By doing so, narrative holds a structuring capacity, operating both in temporal and spatial dimensions where meaning emerges through the interaction between time, space, and human activity. Therefore, it becomes a locus of cultural construction that stems from shared values, identities, and collective memories.

The built environment, particularly in terms of spatial organization, both represents and constructs narrative. Architecture carries content through the arrangement of spaces, materials, social relationships, and the cultural purposes with which it is invested. It is underpinned by agencies and the systems of thought that are involved in its production[15]. The task of carrying content is undertaken by the narrative itself, eminently observable at the interior scale. Since interior environments interact with their inhabitants through movement and senses, every interaction contributes to the creation of new narratives by allowing them to unfold a sequence of occupation and use. Key features such as spatial organization, material selection, and paths of circulation collectively advance the process of meaning formation. By doing so, interior environments evolve into sites of narrative creation, also heavily fueled by cultural traces. In this sense, culture and narrative shared a two-way interaction, nurturing one another. Therefore, architectural environments, and especially interior spaces, became the focal point of this interaction.

[13]Lee (2022)
[14]Cobley (2014)
[15]Psarra (2009)

Interiors are created by physical elements. Meaning is constructed as a shared system of signification[16]. The material dimension of interiors is the system of specified signification. For architectural productions at any scale, tangible spatial elements are transmitters of meaning by projecting traces of time, use, and transformation. These enable observation of the narrative capacity of space. The condition can be referred to as narrative materiality and further understood as the capacity of spatial constructs to preserve continuity over time. What operates at narrative devices in interior spaces are materials and spatial qualities. Through the process of habitation, usage, and alteration, these features accumulate layers of information that extend beyond their immediate timeline. Their narrative materiality constitutes the ground for the coexistence of past and present, allowing continuity.

Continuity is essential for memory. If modernity disrupts continuity and creates cultural amnesia through systematic erasure of built environments, as Connerton[17] suggests, the significance of narrative materiality dramatically enhances. Because it has the ability to create a counter condition by offering preservation. Interiors that retain traces of previous use and spatial organization enable continuity to remain legible and accessible. Within this scope, narrative materiality is an instrument of resistance, allowing memory to be conserved and reinterpreted through ongoing interaction.

Adaptive Reuse as Cultural Sustainability Practice

Instability and dissolution of the established structures are the main characteristic elements of modernity, underlined as 'all that solid melts into air.' However, this condition is not necessarily definite or infinite. Modernity may contribute to the process of forgetting through disruption and replacement; however, built environments continue to exist. In time, modernity and its conditions start to be increasingly questioned, allowing the emergence of new understandings and concepts of living, creating, and building. As Daniel Abramson[18] argues 'What architects and others concerned with the built environment also discovered was that all that was solid did not melt into air. Preservationism ascended. Postmodernism revalued older symbols. Adaptive reuse became chic. Sustainability negated expendability. There were lingering attachments that would have to be addressed.' This change impacted on the relationship between memory, continuity, the built environment, and narrative materiality.

There are numerous interpretations of adaptive reuse in a contemporary sense. Initially, the term adaptive reuse was mostly associated with literature advocating an approach to planning and architecture that was conservation-oriented, in a decisive break with ideas of 'clean sweep' planning, common (although never ubiquitous) in the 1950s and 1960s[19]. However, the scope of adaptive reuse expands over time, resulting in multidimensional discourse. One example of this would be

[16]Terzoglou (2018)
[17]Connerton (2009)
[18]Abramson (2015)
[19]Lanz & Pendlebury (2022)

the selection of buildings. Earlier approaches commonly regard heritage buildings as primary subjects for the practice. In contrast, recent perspectives approach any building as a potential source, allowing for a more diverse understanding of conservation.

Throughout history, places, buildings, and settings have been reused and adapted; they could survive as cultures and civilizations change. Existing buildings provide a direct link with the past; it is a connection with the historical and cultural foundations of the society. They narrate the story of how a particular culture evolved. A simple building may depict a certain moment in time; it may relate to the particular sensibility of a specific era[20]. As a building conservation and protection strategy, adaptive reuse helps ensure continuity in physical, cultural, and experiential aspects of the buildings. This positions existing structures as active producers and transformers of cultural meaning.

The built environment's capability of encapsulating meaning is closely linked to the concept of narrative. Starting from the early design process, narratives are embedded in the fabric of buildings. In constructing a narrative of a building, we first must choose what we want to communicate[21].This intended selection at the creation stage of the buildings, combined with the inhabitants' narrative accumulated through active engagement. As Onamade[22] suggests, architecture acts as a living storybook. In this way, it preserves intangible cultural elements such as rituals, craftsmanship, and community values through physical spaces.

It is possible to find many successful projects that embrace adaptive reuse as the key development concept. One of them is the Museum Lab in Pittsburgh, an adaptive reuse project of Koning and Eizenberg Architecture. The existing building, known as Carnegie Free Library (see Figure 1), was commissioned in 1886 for the public by philanthropist and industrialist Andrew Carnegie. It was completed by John L. Smithmeyer and Paul J. Pelz in the late 1890s and registered as a historic building in 1974. The building continued to serve as a public library until the clock tower was struck by lightning in 2006, causing a chunk of granite weighing three tons to fall through the roof. The damage forced the library to relocate[23].

[20]Stone (2019)
[21]Kersting (2006)
[22]Onamade (2025)
[23]Gibson (2020)

Figure 1. *Historic View of the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh*

Source: *Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh*

Van Slyck[24] describes the original building's features as follows: As built, the building was an asymmetrical mass dominated by a clock tower and cloaked in a medieval vocabulary. The entrance opened directly onto the lobby, where a marble staircase was located and dominated the area (see Figure 2). To the south of the lobby, a trustees' room is located while on the east side lies the delivery room, which represents the organizational core of the library (see Figure 3). The main reading room was on the south side of the delivery room. Ending with an octagonal bay, this area was on the same axis as the delivery room and the bibliographic room.

Figure 2. *Carnegie Library Entrance*

Source: *Van Slyck (1991)*

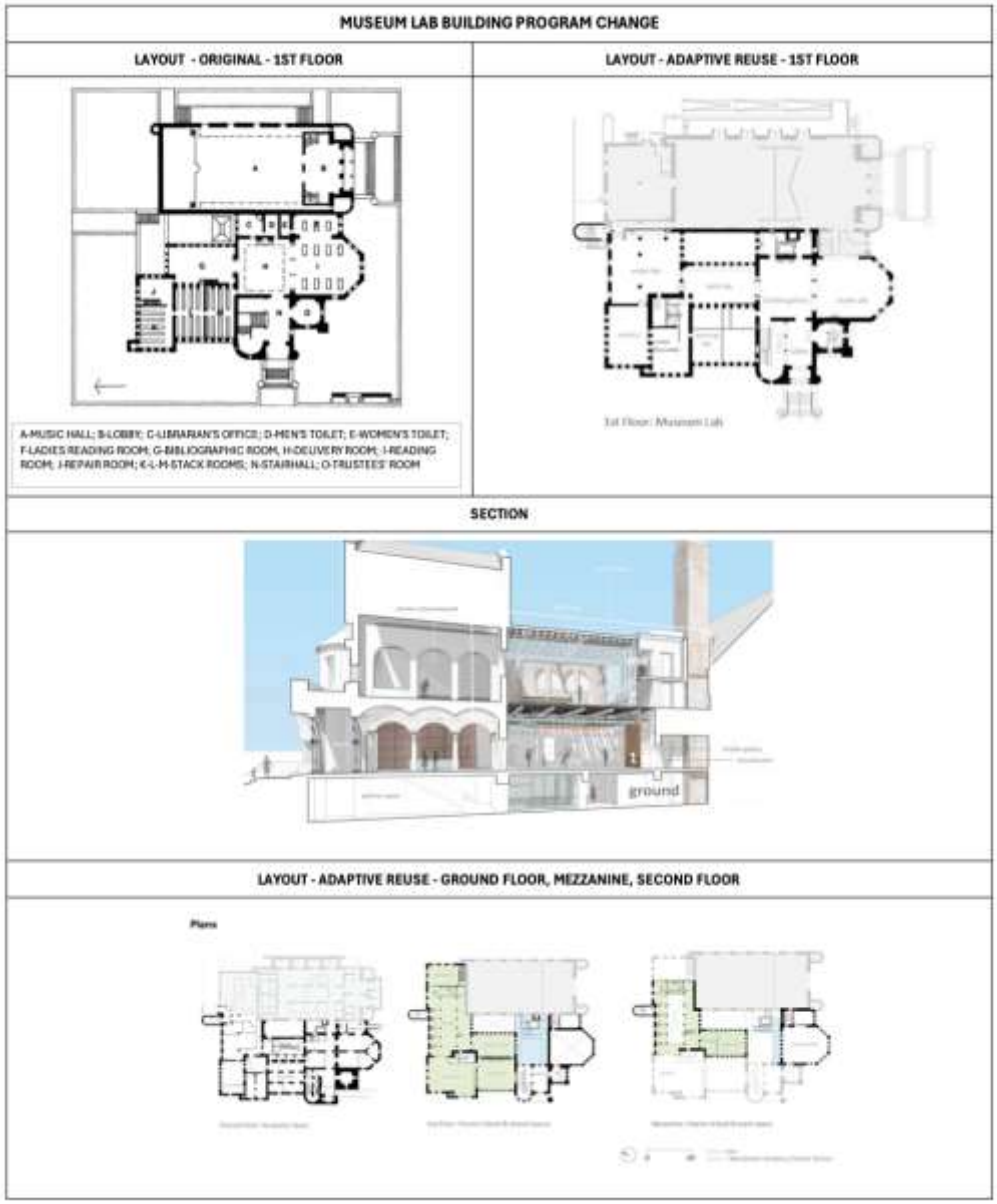
[24]Van Slyck (1991)

Figure 3. *Carnegie Library Delivery Room*

Source: *Van Slyck (1991)*

Prior to the adaptive reuse intervention, the building had been abandoned. The new function incorporated a new spatial program as well. After the completion of the project, the building is now used by children 10 years and older to experiment with art and technology, a charter middle school, and an incubator space for non-profits in the education sector. Table 2 highlights the changes in the spatial program and layout of the building.

Table 2. *MuseumLab Building Program Change (Before & After Adaptive Reuse)*



Source: Original Layout, Van Slyck (1991). Section & Adaptive Reuse Layouts, Koning&Eizenberg

During the 1970s, the interior was 'improved', i.e., rendered a white-box setting with drywall hiding characteristic architecture[25]. While Koning&Eizenberg [26]describes the result of the interior interventions as 'a beautiful ruin' that evokes local history, and highlights the act of discovery, the process of adaptive reuse achieves this outcome by stripping back the interior alterations. Julie Eizenberg, the Founding Principal of Koning Eizenberg Architecture, describes their work in interiors as '*To make a long story short, we removed all of the alterations we could*

[25]Cohen (2020)
[26]Koning&Eizenberg

— there was nothing about them that helped honor the historic legacy or convey program goals to encourage curiosity and experimentation.'[27]

Figure 4. *Carnegie Library Interior as Found by Koning Eizenberg*

Source: *Koning&Eizenberg*

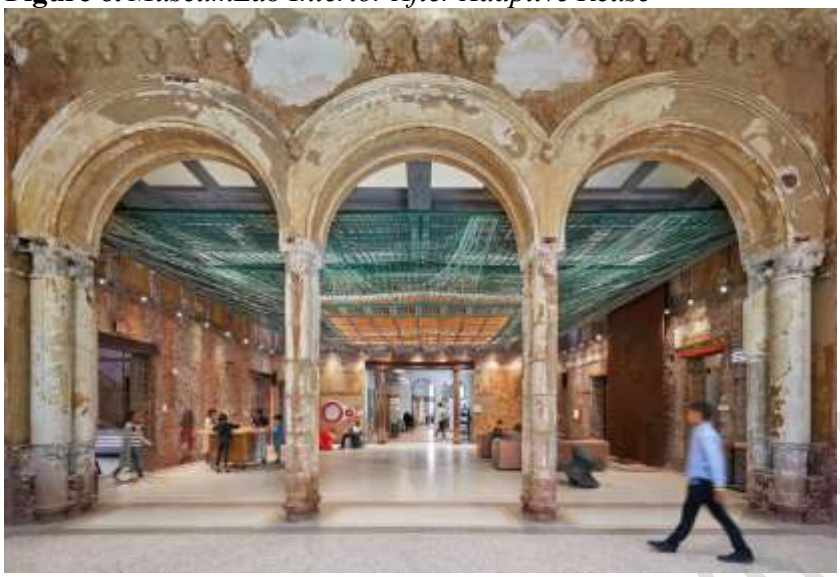
After the elimination of the drywall, the interior space recovered its identity, which appeared significantly closer to the building's original characteristics. (see Figure 4, Figure 5 and Figure 6).

Figure 5. *Carnegie Library Historic Interior*

Source: *Koning&Eizenberg*

[27]Baldwin (2020)

Figure 6. *MuseumLab Interior After Adaptive Reuse*



Source: Koning&Eizenberg

The use and access of natural light in the interior space are enhanced by opening the boarded-up windows. This allows natural light to reach the program spaces. A gathering space is created on the second floor, illuminated by skylight, hence creating a light well. To maximize the usable space area, a cantilever mezzanine floor is designed (see Figure 7). This addition is made from a white mesh structure, preserving the continuity of the original structure while simultaneously creating a 'space within a space'. This could be considered as a gesture that intentionally demarcates the contemporary intervention from the historic fabric. Daylight was an essential design element to emphasize the revelations discovered after the elimination of the previous alterations.

Figure 7. *MuseumLab Mezzanine Floor Addition & Lightwell*

Source: *Koning&Eizenberg*

The old and new coexist in the adaptive reuse. One of the remarkable examples of this is the ceiling installation. Created by FreelandBuck, the installation depicts the old glass ceiling that previously enclosed the space before the renovation in the 1970s. The installation is made from printed and cut textile suspended over an aluminum frame (see Figure 8)

Figure 8. *Ceiling Installation by FreelandBuck*

Source: *Collage prepared by the author using photographs retrieved from ArchDaily.*

The juxtaposition of old and new is also visible in the children's workshop (see Figure 9). This space is mostly defined by white walls, machinery, and benches. On the other hand, this area is adjacent to a very detailed, original part of the building with arches, exposed columns, and ornaments with the visible trace of the patina.

Figure 9. *Children's Workshop Interior*

Source: *Koning&Eizenberg*

Figure 10. *Interior Views of MuseumLab After Adaptive Reuse*

Source: *Collage prepared by the author using photographs retrieved from Dezeen and Interior Design.*

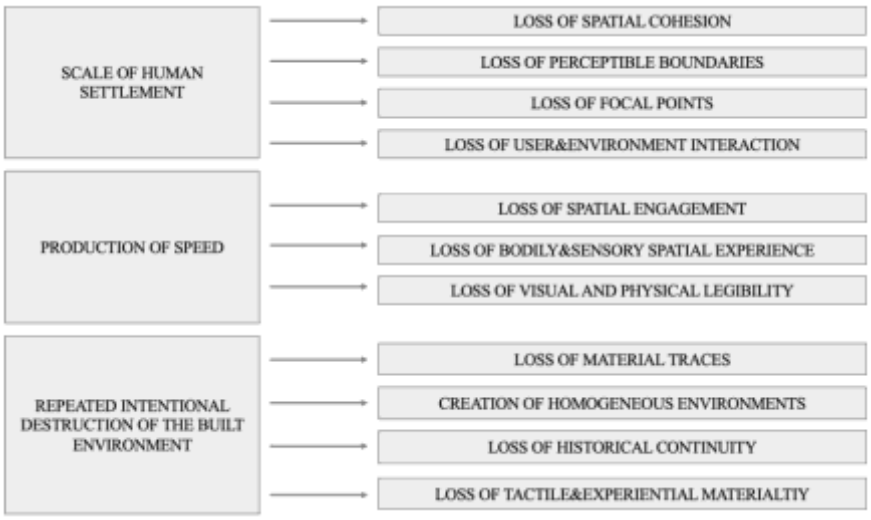
Overall, interior spaces represent a unique frame encapsulating different timelines the building has existed and lived through (see Figure 10).

Discussion

In the chapter Topographies of Forgetting, Paul Connerton[28] classifies three systems that produce forgetting: the Scale of Human Settlement, the Production of Speed, and the Repeated Intentional Destruction of the Built Environment. Key features of the systems are summarized in Table 1. However, this discussion on cultural amnesia mainly focuses on the urban scale. Yet, there are certain points that make them adaptable to the building environments and interior spaces. The following schema (see Figure 11) indicates the possible adaptation of Connerton's framework to interior spaces. This is a reference point; it represents a checklist of the aspects generating conditions of forgetting on the spatial perspective.

[28]Connerton (2009)

Figure 11. *Features of Topographies of Forgetting Adaptable for building Environments and Interior Sapces*



Source: *Developed by the author based on Connerton (2009).*

It is possible to indicate that the framework is associated with negative outcomes since it observes loss of numerous qualities on different scales. Nonetheless, adaptive reuse, when carefully and successfully conceptualized, designed, and constructed, holds the capacity of altering losses to a certain degree. Building upon this understanding, Connerton's three key features are used as a reference for creating an evaluation system to determine the Museum Lab's effectiveness in the creation of spatial forgetting. For each aspect, a separate table is created to assess adaptive reuse's capacity to defy losses emphasized by Topographies of Forgetting.

Scale of Human Settlement

The starting point for the Scale of Human Settlement is the medieval society. Connerton[29] suggests that pre-modern cities possess strong and easily definable boundaries that help the citizens develop a sense of familiarity with their urban environments. Every city has a central focal point, and the layout naturally orients to that building. Perimeters are clearly defined. However, modernism altered the city into a mobile, always transforming and developing entity. In other words, the city has become an endless territory. In interior spaces, this reflects as loss of spatial cohesion, loss of perceptible boundaries, loss of focal points, and loss of user & environment interaction. After the adaptive reuse, Museum Lab successfully restored some of its original spatial identity (Table 3).

[29]Connerton (2009)

Table 3. *Scale of Human Settlement Spatial Condition & MuseummLab Adaptive Reuse Response*

SCALE OF HUMAN SETTLEMENT	
SPATIAL CONDITION	**ADAPTIVE REUSE RESPONSE IN MUSEUM LAB**
Loss of Spatial Cohesion	Preservation of original spatial organization and continuity between spaces
Loss of Perceptible Boundaries	Retention of original walls, openings, and spatial thresholds
Loss of Focal Points	Regaining original architctural features
Loss of User & Environment Interaction	Creation of interactive educational and communal spaces

Source: *Developed by the author based on Connerton (2009).*

Production of Speed

When elaborating on the Production of Speed, Connerton[30] specifically focuses on the new ways of transportation that emerged with modernism, especially automobiles. Rapidly elevated usage of vehicles caused a change in the perception and temporality, since human beings started to experience the environment from the interior of the vehicle at a fast pace compared to walking. In spatial terms, change in the perception and temporality could be interlinked with loss of spatial engagement, loss of visual and physical legibility, and loss of bodily and sensory spatial experience. As Table 4 suggests, Museum Lab offers different strategies through adaptive reuse.

Table 4. *Production of Speed Spatial Condition & MuseumLab Adaptive Reuse Response*

PRODUCTION OF SPEED	
SPATIAL CONDITION	**ADAPTIVE REUSE RESPONSE IN MUSEUM LAB**
Loss of Spatial Engagement	Preservation of original spatial organization and continuity between spaces
Loss of bodily & Sensory Spatial. Experience	Retention of original walls, openings, and spatial thresholds
Loss of Visual and Pyhsical Legibility	Regaining original architctural features

Source: *Developed by the author based on Connerton (2009).*

Repeated Intentional Destruction of the Built Environment

Of all three systems, Repeated Intentional Destruction of the Built Environment has the most visible connection with adaptive reuse. As Connerton[31] argues, modern space is wiped clean. For built environments, demolition of old structures and replacing them with new ones represents the understanding of clean environments. Both buildings and objects have immensely shortened lifespans; being absent is normalized. However, another significant feature of the 'wiped clean' environment is the elimination of ornaments, decorative elements, or any material representative of the previous periods or owners of the spatial environments. As an outcome, loss

[30]Connerton (2009)
[31]Connerton (2009)

of materials, creation of similar and homogeneous environments, loss of historical continuity, and loss of tactile and experiential materiality could be observed in spaces (Table 5).

Table 5. *Repeated Intentional Destruction of the Built Environment Spatial Condition & MuseumLab Adaptive Reuse Response*

REPEATED INTENTIONAL DESTRUCTION OF THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT	
SPATIAL CONDITION	**ADAPTIVE REUSE RESPONSE IN MUSEUM LAB**
Loss of Material Traces	Preservation and exposure of original materials and ages surfaces
Creation of Homogeneous Environments	Retention of unique architectural identity and layered interventions
Loss of Hostorical Continuity	Integration of new functions withiout erasing previous spatial narratives
Loss of Tactile & Experiential Materiality	Visibility of textures, ornaments, patina, and structural traces

Source: *Developed by the author based on Connerton (2009).*

Topographies of Forgetting initially described an essential degradation of the built environment on varying levels. On the contrary, adaptive reuse proposes a viable solution to restore what has been neglected. Museum Lab, as a case, represents an example of how a topography of forgetting could turn into a place of remembering (Table 6).

Based on the assessment, Museum Lab could be considered a successful and strong example for reversing the destructive effects of modernism. Out of eleven spatial aspects, only three were considered as 'Partially Achieved.' These aspects are Preservation of Spatial Cohesion, Protection of Material Traces, and Historical Continuity. Overall, these aspects are achieved, but in detail, not all materials are discovered and protected. Material conservation techniques, such as scraping the white boxes to reveal the original features, were applied selectively. For the new function to work smoothly new spaces were created and added, also the layout of the old library building was altered. These compensations are considered partial achievements for the protection of the building after the adaptive reuse intervention.

Table 6. *Evaluation of Adaptive Reuse Against Spatial Forgetting*

EVALUATION OF ADAPTIVE REUSE AGAINST SPATIAL FORGETTING			
SPATIAL ASPECT	**DEGREE OF ACHIEVEMENT**		
	ACHIEVED	**PARTIALLY ACHIEVED**	**NOT ACHIEVED**
Preservation of Spatial Cohesion			
Preservation of Perceptible Boundaries			
Preservation of Focal Points			
User & Enviornment Interaction			
Spatial Engagement			
Bodily & Seonsory Spatial Experience			
Visual and Pyhsical Legibility			
Protection of Material Traces			
Prevention of Homogeneous Environments			
Historical Continuity			
Tactile & Experiential Materiality			

Source: *Developed by the author*

Resurfacing the old building elements, materials, and decorations especially enhances the momentum of remembering in space. Not solely preserving and protecting but also enabling the observation and allowing experience of this

originality helps to maintain the building's narrative qualities, especially on the material level. This process supports narrative materiality to become visible as a dynamic component in the creation of spatial experience. As spatial fragments finish, textures and decorative ornaments operate as narrative devices that sustain continuity. Thus, adaptive reuse secures the experiential and cultural values embedded within the fabric of the building.

In this context, cultural meaning survives and thrives. This situation does not depend only on the preservation of architectural form or outer shell of the building, but also on the revival and transmission of spatial narratives by perpetual occupation and usage. After the adaptive reuse, Museum Lab allowed the unique identity of the building to remain visible and accessible. Therefore, adaptive reuse becomes the pioneering strategy for resisting the spatial loss and cultural amnesia interlinked with modernity while sustaining narrative continuity at the same time, as interior spaces at the center.

Conclusion

This study aimed to explore interior architecture's capacity to resist the pervasive conditions of spatial forgetting and cultural amnesia introduced by modernity. To accomplish this task, Paul Conenrton's urban scaled theories for forgetting are adapted to interior spaces. This research demonstrates that due to its sensory, human-centered nature, interiors serve as preservers of memory. It is possible to indicate the research question answered affirmatively. As illustrated through the Museum Lab project, interior spaces function as experiential settings where historical layers are active narrative devices. Interventions in the interior space intentionally expose the historic fabric and patina. Hence, the physical qualities begin to communicate with the individuals, transforming a potentially 'wiped clean' environment into a living topography of 'remembrance.'

Furthermore, the assessment of the Museum Lab reveals that a successful adaptive reuse does not require a state of frozen historical continuity. The '*partially achieved*' aspects highlight realistic and dynamic qualities. Because the building must evolve to accommodate new functions and programs, an absolute retention is neither feasible nor desirable. Instead, a middle ground was founded where past and present have a productive and collaborative relationship. The survival of spatial meaning relies on this ongoing tension, where contemporary interventions coexist with historical layers to realistically portray the effects of time legible to the user.

Ultimately, this research positions adaptive reuse as a fundamental practice of cultural sustainability. The deliberate preservation of materiality secures the unique identity and history embedded within the interior spaces to remain intact. Protection of sensory and tactile traces of previous eras anchors tangible qualities to the memory in interior spaces. Preventing absolute erasure and reshaping spaces as dynamic and habitable records allows the built environments to achieve lasting cultural sustainability.

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