

IDENTITY AND ARCHITECTURAL VALUES OF THE MONASTERY OF SÃO BENTO DE CÁSTRIS IN THE PERIOD 1957-2005

Patricia Salomé Faustino¹, Sofia Aleixo², Antónia Fialho Conde³

1 PhD, University of Évora, School of Architecture, Faculty of Architecture, Évora, Portugal; 2 PhD, University of Évora, School of Architecture, Faculty of Architecture, Évora, Portugal; 3 PhD, University of Évora, School of Architecture, Faculty of Architecture, Évora, Portugal. E-mail: salomefaustino@uevora.pt, sofiaaleixo@uevora.pt, antoniafialho@uevora.pt

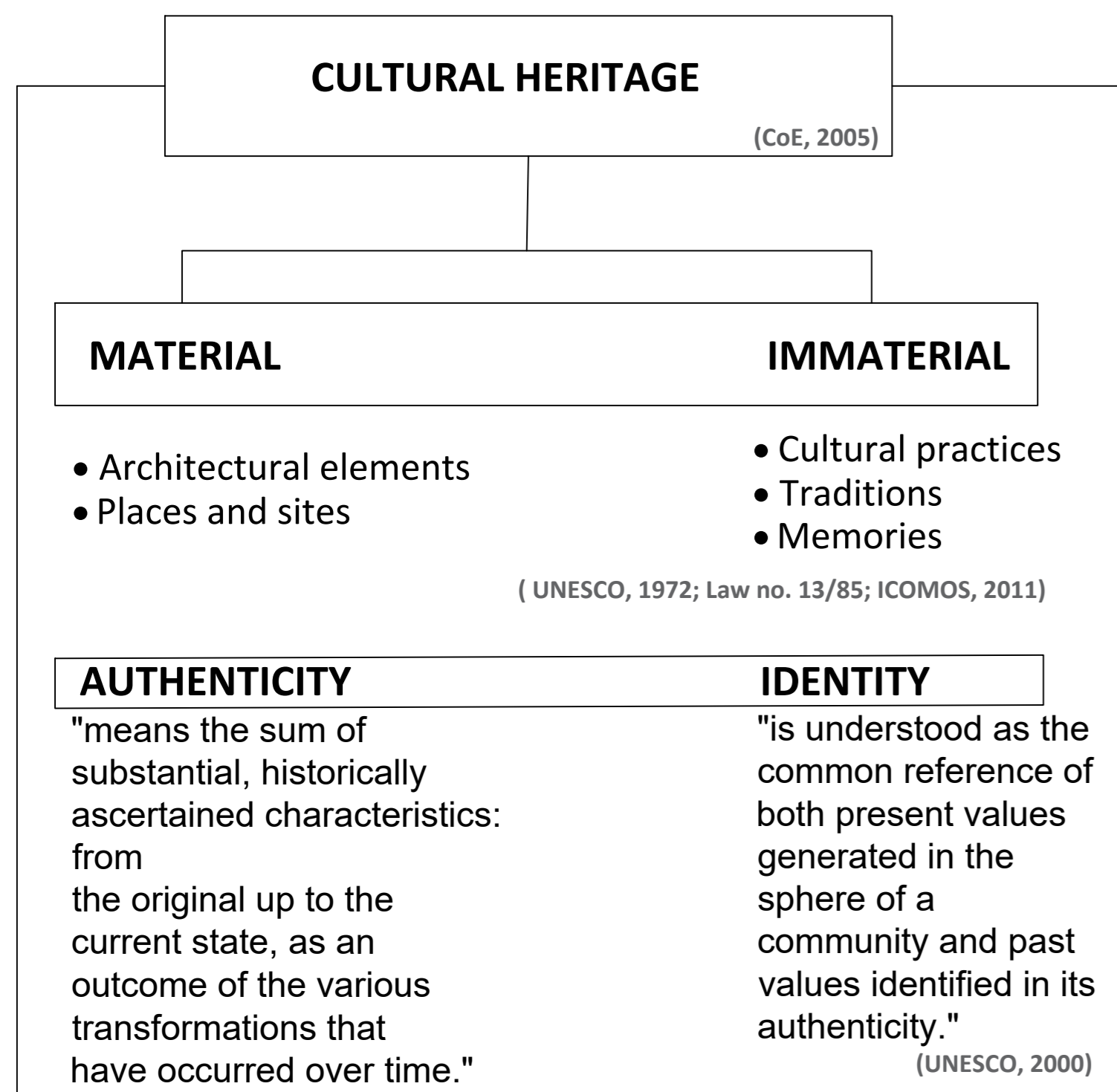
The theme identity of the architectural heritage here presented is part of a recently presented dissertation to achieve the master in Architecture at the University of Évora, entitled "The Monastery of São Bento de Cástris: Memory and Identity". The Monastery of São Bento de Cástris is located in Évora, 2 kilometres from the classified Historical Centre. Previous investigations about the monastery focused mainly on historical aspects, not on the present memory, its authenticity and continuity of its identity thought time. Therefore, our study focus on its use as a child care institution, named Casa Pia, from 1957 to 2005, being the last and most consistent use since the use as a Cistercian monastery ceased in 1890. In the context of this conference and to the subject of the contribution of tangible values to establishment of intangible values, this poster presents the study on the last use of the place as a child care institution, where it was defined the *place's memory map* through the memory of its last users.

Objective

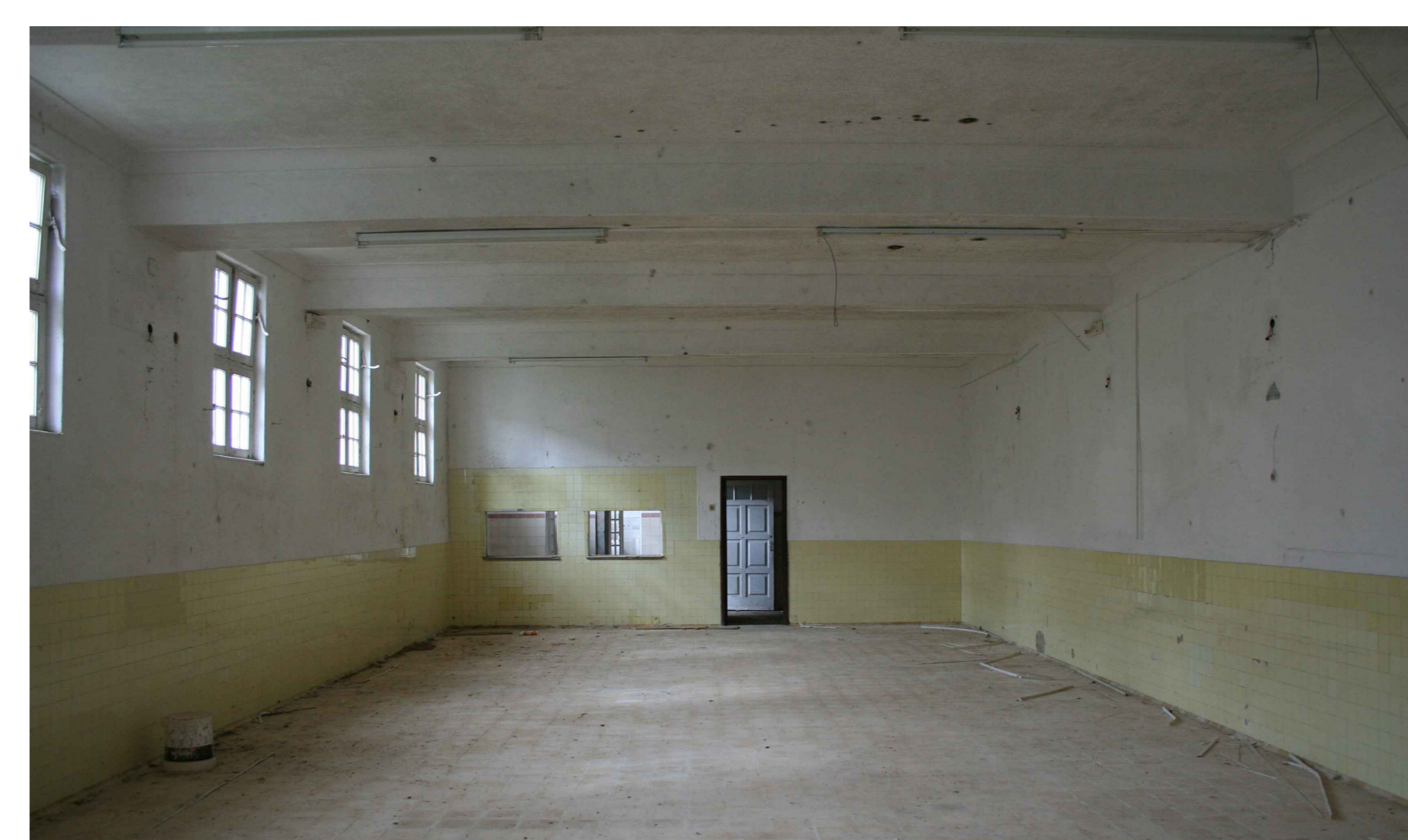
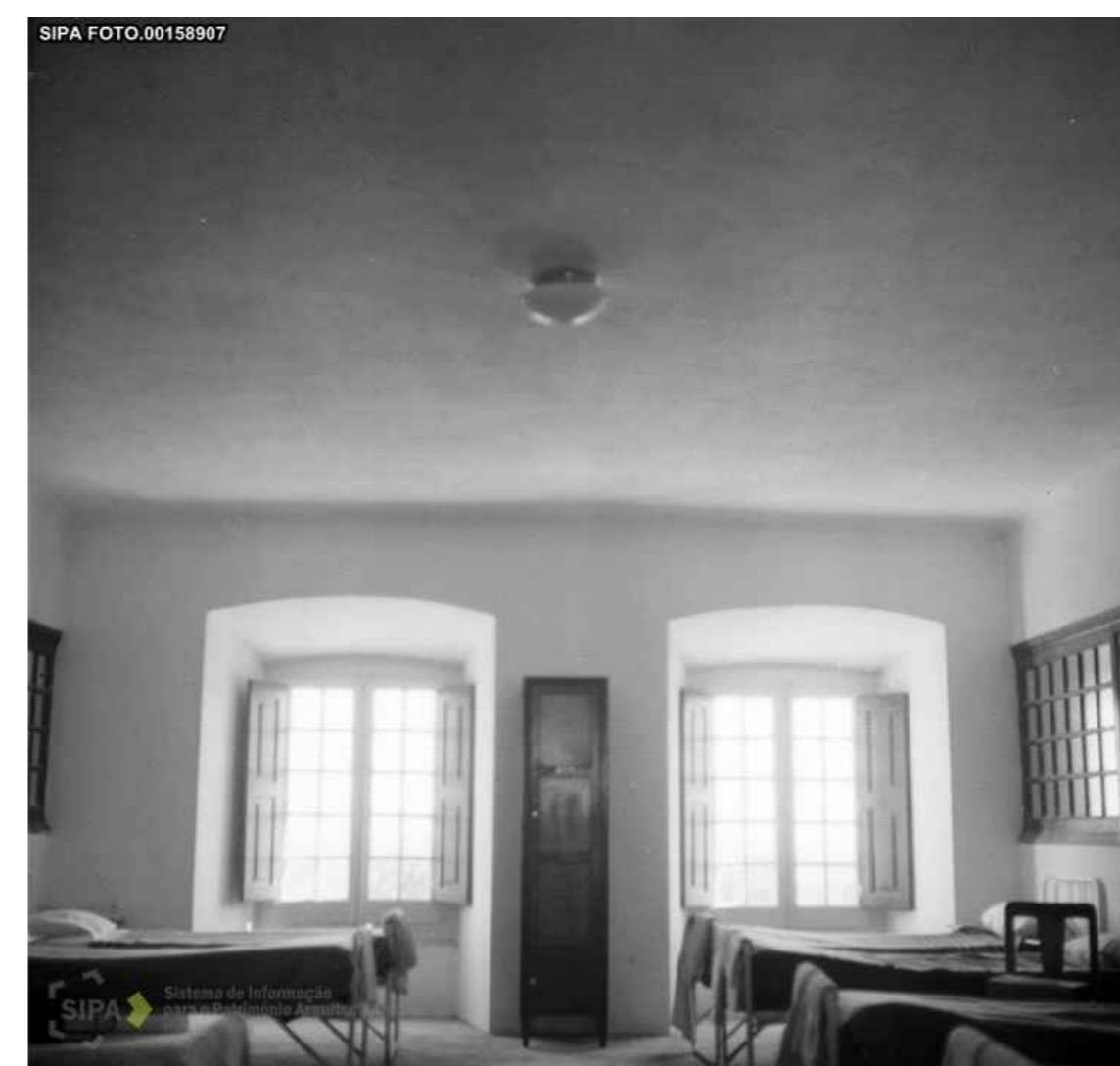
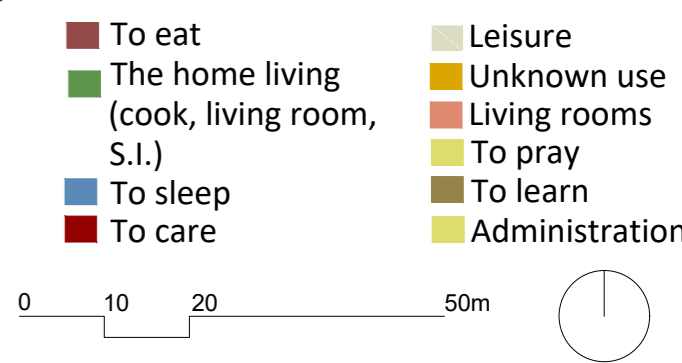
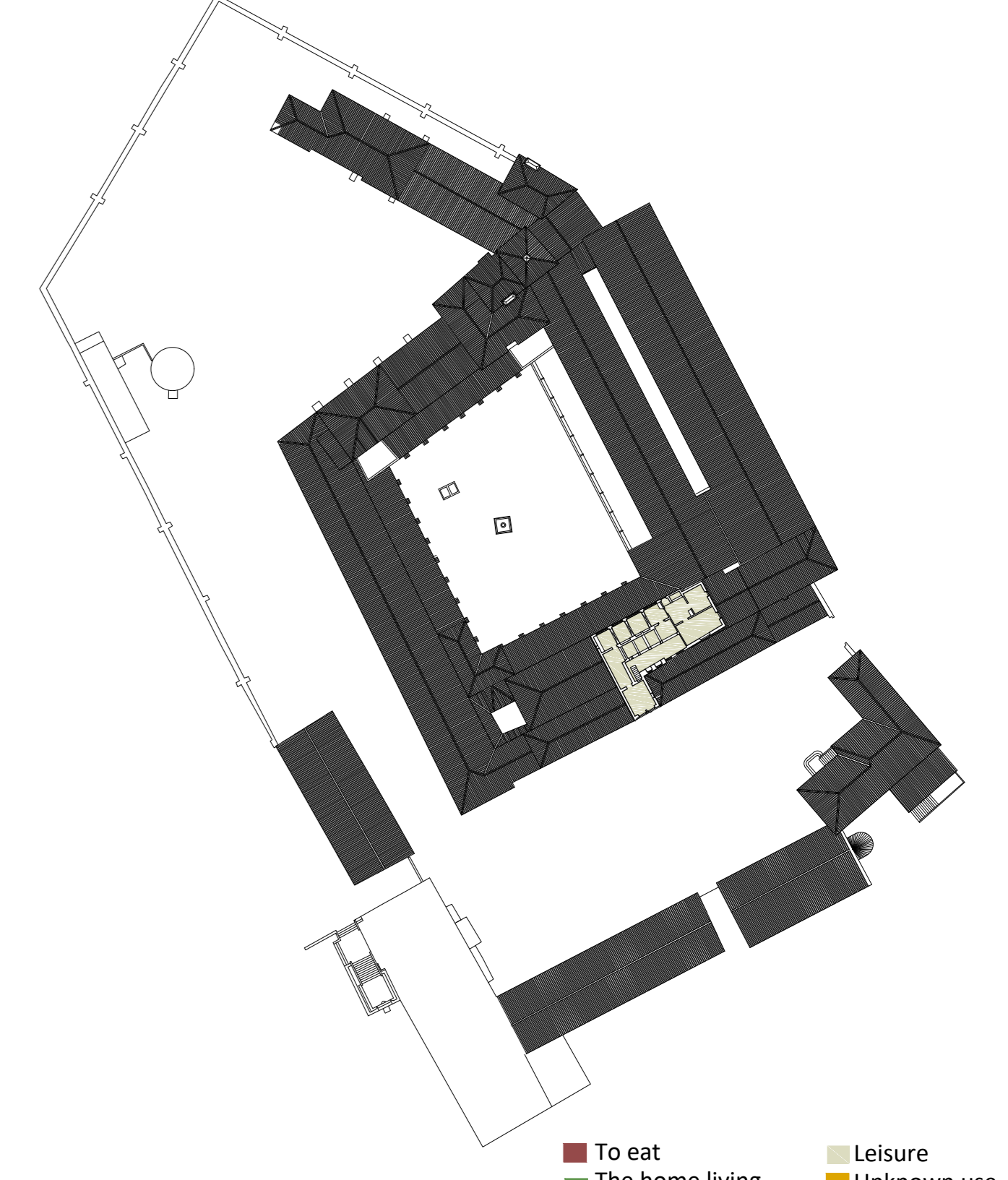
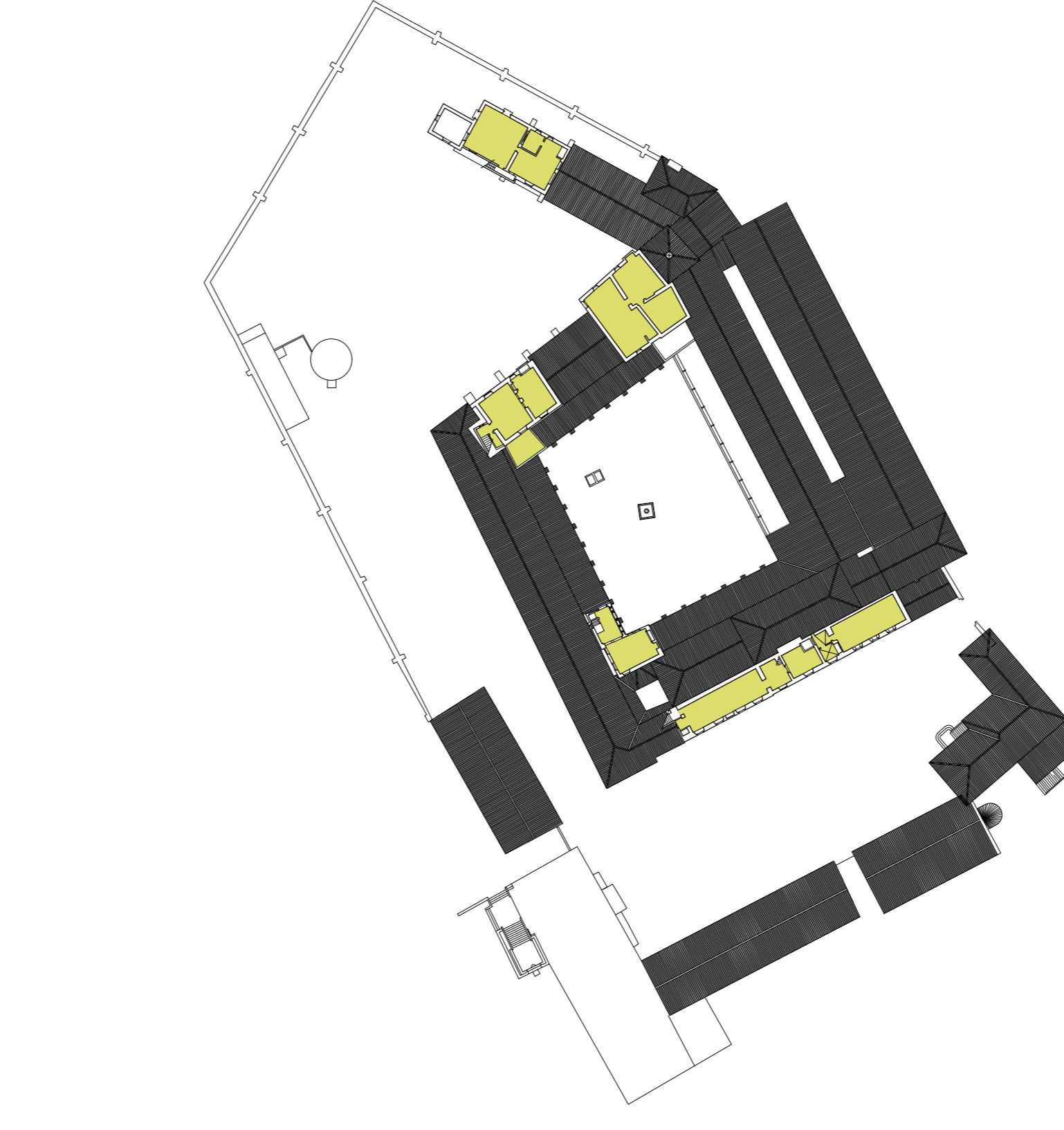
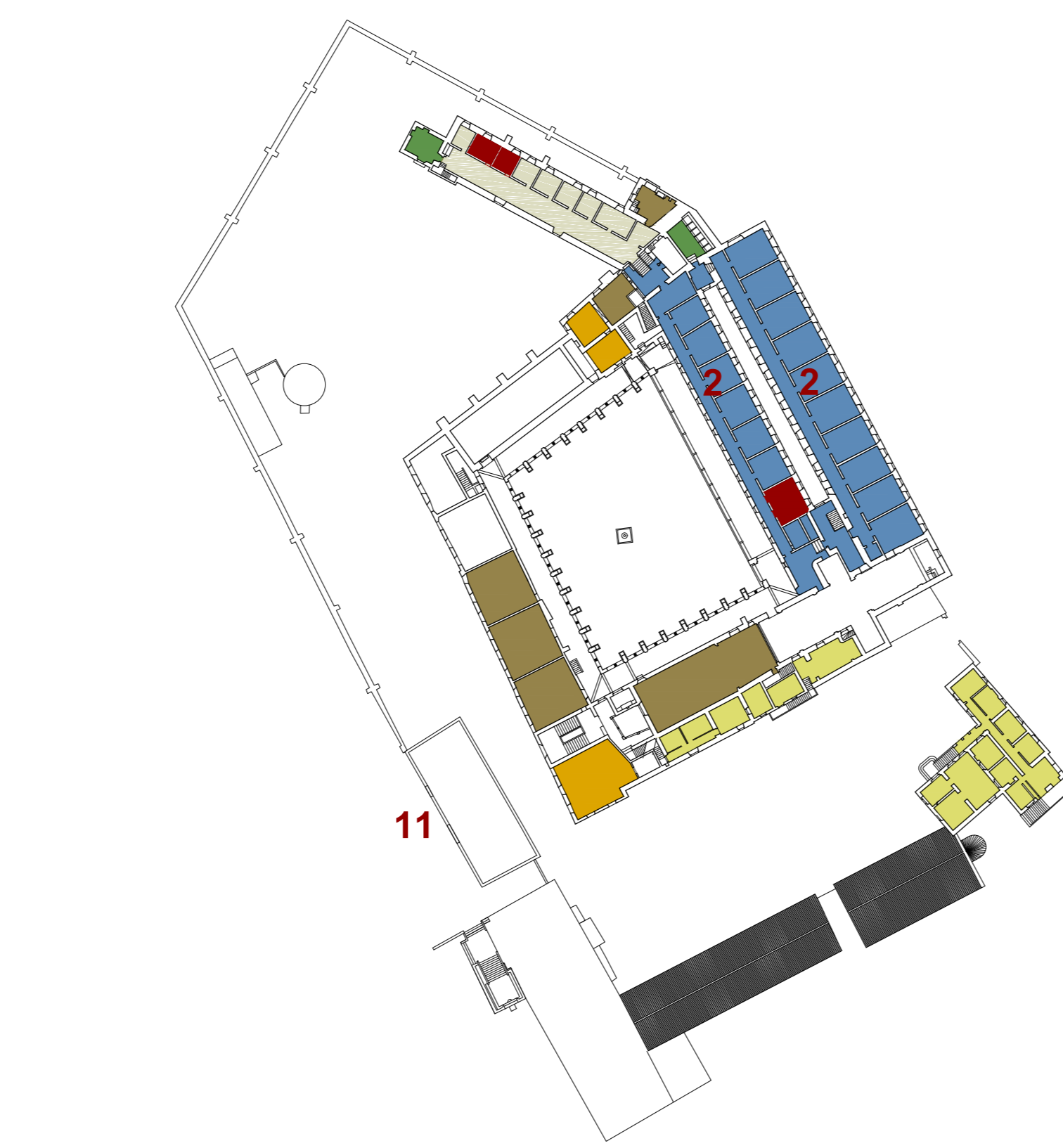
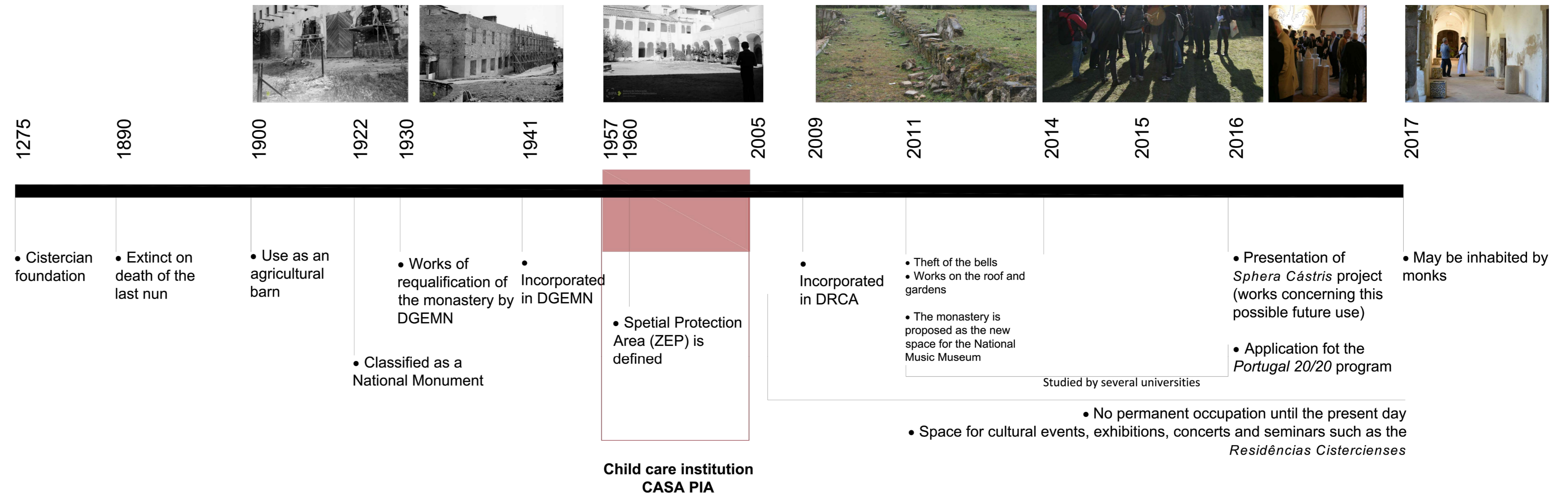
- To define the *place's memory mapping* (to spatially identify the spaces, present in people's memories), after the physical adaptation of the place to the new use, once it's still possible to collect and document the memories from its previous users;
- Study the material values of the Monastery of São Bento de Cástris, from the new use, that coexist with the original features from the 13th to 19th century;
- To register the present identity of this place and its authenticity.

Methods

- Analyses of the different uses of the place, through bibliography research and collected data from its last users, through interviews;
- Analyse the new and the previous functions to compare the uses of the spaces.



Conceptual framework



Abstract

Identity is part of the architectural heritage, related directly to the cultural values of the place. In Portugal the monasteries were significantly changed after 1834, reason why they are architectural entities whose materiality reflects the adaptations to which they have been subjected over time, integrating its authenticity. This is the case of the Monastery of São Bento de Cástris, in Évora, which had several uses through time, adapting the place to allow its physical continuity. Through the study of its material and immaterial values it was sought to recognize the identity of the place between 1957-2005, when it was used as the male section of Casa Pia, a child care institution. This study aims to contribute to a future intervention methodology that considers this place values, due to the need to safeguard this currently abandoned place. This will contribute to regain a new collective esteem, essential for its continuity.

Conclusion

The identity of the Monastery of São Bento de Cástris lies in its material and spatial original characteristics, present in its religious configuration inherent to the Cistercian order. The 20th century spatial adaptations, between 1930 and 1950, changed some of the original features, which allowed a new use that became part of its identity and authenticity. Besides these changes in the building we came to conclusion that a significant amount of the monastery original identity features remains intact, such as its surroundings, its fences and its isolation from the city, that now coexist with the new spatial adaptations.

In conclusion, the material elements resulting from the 20th century spatial adaptations to Casa Pia make, nowadays, as much part of the place's identity as the original Cistercian features. This means that these two distinct identity epochs can coexist in the same place. Therefore, it is still important to recognize them in every future intervention and safeguard methodology for this architectural heritage. However, it is still relevant to study the memory as an intrinsic part of a place's identity, which will be an important value to better understand these places that live in the collective memory.