

Case 5

● SK-Velký Šariš: Steam Mill Regeneration

Location: Velký Šariš, Prešov Region, Slovakia

Type of site: Industrial heritage building (steam mill)

Size: ~20.5 ha plot, approx. 23 300 square meter floor space area

Ownership: Municipal (since 2020)

Main legacy: Grain milling and regional trade

Period of activity: 1868-1990s

Main challenges: Structural decay, lack of function, limited funding

Priority of cluster relevance: Heritage & City Image, Economy & Reuse

Historical Overview

Founded in 1858, the Velký Šariš Steam Mill was among the most important industrial sites in Eastern Slovakia.

In 1984, when it became a national cultural monument, it had been one of the most important businesses in the region for almost 150 years.

The mill in Velký Šariš went from ambitious beginnings through periods of boom and crisis related to fires and fierce competition from America to a gradual decline that even modernization and changes in ownership couldn't stop.

In 2020, the municipality purchased the building with plans to redevelop it into a multifunctional cultural and community centre.

Present Condition

The dominant seven-storey building, though structurally stable, remains closed due to safety risks. Surrounding areas serve mainly for transit; public access is minimal. Currently, some buildings in the complex are maintained from the outside, mainly the service buildings of the original mill near the entrance to the complex.

The project concept envisions combining cultural, social, and small-business uses – creating a local landmark and catalyst for urban revitalisation.

Governance & Actors

- Municipality of Velký Šariš – owner and initiator of the redevelopment.
- Regional NGO (Spolka) – provided research on adaptive reuse and civic involvement.
- Regional heritage authorities – oversee conservation compliance.
- Community associations – involved in early consultations.

Key Insights

Velký Šariš demonstrates that small-town heritage can anchor multifunctional regeneration when ownership and local vision align.

Municipal acquisition was a turning point: transforming a decaying industrial site into a civic asset. The challenge now lies in aligning cultural programming with economic sustainability

Leverage Points

Municipal ownership of heritage

Mixed-use cultural programming

Phased restoration funding

Lessons Learned

Public control enables integrated planning

Balance between tourism & community function

Incremental investment ensures continuity

Transferable Tools

Adaptive reuse for buildings checklists

Models for small-town cultural hubs

Municipality adaptive heritage budget allocation



Rural settlement near the former Šarišský Mlyn industrial site, where agricultural plots and residential houses coexist with the decaying multi-storey mill building in the background.

Photo: Viktoria Mravčáková / Spolka