



Façade of the Emilio Aguinaldo Shrine

Site of the Proclamation of Philippine Independence

Management Plan for the Emilio Aguinaldo Shrine

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Abstract

This paper on the Management Plan for the Emilio Aguinaldo Shrine was developed as a requirement for the course Conservation and Management of Historic Buildings conducted by Lund University Housing Development and Management.

Management plan for the Emilio Aguinaldo Shrine is an assessment of the developments done during the last decade and the effects it brought to the community. The possibilities that may be undertaken to strengthen the operation of the Shrine. It is also envisioned to formulate environmental solution to address present and future threats to the existence of the historic structure.

Introduction

Tangible evidences of the past are important tools in the promotion and teaching of history. They serve as reminders of our achievements, trials and tribulations as a nation. But more than being a symbol of a bygone era or a reminder of the greatness of men, these edifices do serve another noble purpose – they are part of the collective memory of a nation – sites or structures where people of nations identify themselves. Such is the case of the Gen. Emilio Aguinaldo Shrine in Kawit, Cavite.

Background

The Shrine is located near the town plaza in the oldest municipality in the province of Cavite, known as Kawit.

Kawit is situated in the northern part of the province. It is bounded by Cavite City and Bacoor Bay on the north and Bacoor on the east. Noveleta can be found beyond the western boundary while General Trias and Imus share its southern limits. It is about 25 kilometers southwest of Manila and about 4 kilometers south of Cavite City across Bacoor Bay.

Description of the building

The house measures 1,324 square meters and is situated on a 5,490 square meters of land bounded by General Tirona Avenue on the north, by the Marulas River on the east, and on the south by the rest of the Aguinaldo land which comprises a total land area of 26,206 square meters.

The ground floor contains a two-lane bowling alley and a swimming pool. The ground floor is now converted into an exhibit hall with special features that include a hologram of the late General and a small room where the origins of the Philippine National Anthem and Philippine Flag are narrated and where the proclamation of Philippine Independence is relived.

The flight of stairs leading to the second floor, which is the principal storey of the house, is of solid *narra* hardwood, waxed and husked for over a century by energetic househelps. The

Pictures show the geographical location of Kawit, Cavite, Philippines



stairs leads to a spacious *sala* or living room. In the early 1920s, when the General was having his house reconstructed, the symbolical depictions on the ceiling became the expression of his ardent nationalist yearnings.

Embossed on the southern part that canopies the *ante-sala* are a dove in flight and six furled flags, representing the members of the League of Nations, where the bird intends to fly. The central part is decorated with an eight-rayed sun representing the eight Philippine provinces that first rose in arms against Spanish sovereignty. Another symbol on the ceiling is that of Mother Philippines holding the flag against a backdrop of sea, sky and sun peeping over the mountains. Just beside the carving is a jagged hole created by a cannon ball in 1897 when Kawit was subjected to the shelling of Spanish guns in the attempt to capture the town. From the ceiling of the formal dining room is a colored relief map of the Philippines.

At the transoms of the living room windows are paintings depicting events in the General's life and the Revolution. Next to the living room is the Veteran's Hall where the General used to meet his comrades-in-arms. A door connects this room with the kitchen, where the eight-burner stove, which uses rice husk for fuel, can be found. On the walls are white-tiled antique iceboxes.

A kitchen opens into the small dining room whose main feature is the table made of a solid slab of wood set on a stout cement base. When the slab of wood is lifted, it reveals that the base is hollow, and that this was the entrance to a secret passage leading to the air raid shelter constructed below. From this area, a door opens to the east patio, where during sunny mornings, the General used to have his hair cut.

Adjoining the *sala* is the big bedroom of the General and his second wife, Maria Agoncillo. Here can be found the couple's beautiful antique four-poster bed and wardrobe closets.

Behind the stairwell toward the northern part is the Family Wing, which contains rooms for the General's daughters. These two suites open out into a corridor that overlooks the garden behind the house. This wing was annexed to the original house during the 1920s reconstruction. This wing ends into an *azotea*

or balcony known as the *Galería de los Pecadores*, or *Gallery of the Sinners*, where many of the General's subversive schemes were plotted. The black and white tiles are laid out to form stars. Likewise, star motifs are encircled within the curlicues of the black iron railings of the balcony. Floral vines and blossoms intertwine to form the delicate tracery of the arches above.

An interesting feature of the house is the tower, located over the area occupied by a mezzanine library. The first level of the tower contains a room for his son-in-law while the second level has a room for the General. A steep narrow wooden ladder leads up to a hatch, which is the access to the gable room, the ultimate one. Up to the last days of his life, the General spent most of his time here, his room in the clouds. With its spire-like gables, it manifests the aspirations of General Aguinaldo and passionate love affair with history and his country.

In 1964, the Philippine Government declared the house as a National Shrine. Its maintenance and care were turned over to the Philippine government as expressed in the last wishes of Aguinaldo. It is one of the premier historical buildings managed by the National Historical Institute of the Philippines.

Analysis

The Emilio Aguinaldo Shrine is one of the well-known historical destinations for foreign and local tourists in the Philippines.

The major restoration of the General Emilio Aguinaldo Shrine started at the Central Tower of the house in 1983. From 1983 to 1998, the Emilio Aguinaldo Shrine underwent restoration, phase by phase, until its major restoration with site development was completed in 1998. Due to funding constraints, the restoration took a long time before final completion. The absence of architectural and engineering plans and detailed drawings made it necessary to draw them. Thus, the survey and documentation of the structure was prioritized before the actual execution of the restoration works. Actual restoration works on the structure was implemented in several phases. The Family Wing or right wing was restructured and some areas were restored in 1987. Aside from the actual restoration of the structure, the development of the site was also considered. After initial restoration works were completed in 1988, site development of the lot occupied by the

structure was implemented. This began in the last quarter of 1988 and continuously progressed through the succeeding years. During the celebrations for the Centennial of Philippine Independence in 1998, site development progressed and heightened from 1996 to 1998. This was in preparation for the Philippine Centennial Celebration on June 12, 1998 that was to be held at the Emilio Aguinaldo Shrine in Kawit.

The following was the timeframe for the Restoration and Site Development works at the Emilio Aguinaldo Shrine:

1983	- Survey and Drawing of As-built Plans and Preparation of Conservation Programme
1986-1987	Restoration of Family Wing
1988	Restoration of Main House
1988 - 1998	Site Development Works

Value Typologies

The preliminary researches, photographic documentation and ocular inspection and assessment conducted by the National Historical Institute of the Philippines (NHI) became the bases for the proposed conservation programme for the historic building. In addition to these basic considerations, the restoration plan also took into account local and national building code requirements. Thereafter, plans for the restoration of the mansion were prepared and developed by the NHI's technical team in coordination with the Philippine Tourism Authority and the Aguinaldo family. National funds were spent for the restoration of the national shrine. All these previous enhancements have to be developed because the Shrine has many values to the collective memory of the Filipinos that includes;

- Historical value, The Shrine is the house of the first President of the Republic and is the place where Philippine Independence was proclaimed on 12 June 1898. When Aguinaldo finally retired from active campaign for Philippine Independence, his house became the venue for the yearly celebration of Philippine Independence. Blessed with a long life, Aguinaldo hosted prominent personalities and luminaries in Philippine political and social milieu in this house.

- Associational value, the Shrine symbolizes the struggle of our ancestors to fight for Independence against our colonizers.
- Aesthetic value, The provision of a tower in any residential houses is quite unusual in the Philippines, nonetheless, this very provision made the Shrine stand-out. Despite the fact that the house had many additions which were based on the wishes of General Aguinaldo, it contained a lot of stone and wooden carvings that depicted or otherwise symbolized the history of the Philippines.
- Authentic value, Originally built in 1864, this house which have undergone many alterations during the 1920's is one of the very few houses in the area that survived the ravages of the Second World War (1942-1946).

Current Status

Ten years after the final phase of the restoration of the site was undertaken (i.e, site development works in 1998). Several conservation issues have cropped up that necessitates the crafting of a new conservation plan for the Emilio Aguinaldo Shrine. Among the major issues include; 1. Natural calamities such as floods and typhoons and 2. Man-made causes such as the need for more residential and urban space.

The municipality of Kawit is a coastal town; it lies just a few inches above sea level. The Shrine itself is located near the *Marulas* River. Kawit is one of the catch basins for water coming from the upland towns of Cavite. But even with this situation, the Shrine has never experienced any problem as regards flooding. However, the rapid development of the upland towns into industrial zones and residential subdivisions resulted in the uprooting of trees and leveling of natural waterways. The negative effects of these developments are being experienced by the municipality and the Shrine during the last five years (see pictures 1 and 2). Today, it is not unusual for the streets of the municipality to be flooded due to occasional high tide even during the summer season. This, coupled with the clogged



Picture 1- Photo shows the flooded grounds of the Shrine



Picture 2 – The Marulas river on the left side of the Shrine

waterways, brought about by improper garbage disposal from illegal settlers along these waterways aggravates the situation.

On July 2007, the construction of a seven kilometer reclaimed road that will connect the Manila-Cavite Coastal Road to Kawit commenced. Officially known as the R-1 Expressway Extension Project, this project is being undertaken by the Philippine Reclamation Authority and a consortium of private developers, envisioned to ease the decrease travel time to the province and minimize traffic problems. (see Appendix 1) This project is expected to be finished by 2009. However, this also means that natural waterways and tributaries have to be reclaimed. Certain sectors of the community have voiced their observation that this may aggravate the current problem of the municipality regarding flooding. It should be noted that even before the construction of this road, flooding of the area including the immediate vicinity of the Shrine has always been a problem.

Proposed Action Plan

DRAFTING OF A NEW MANAGEMENT/CONSERVATION PROGRAMME FOR THE SHRINE

Presently, the Emilio Aguinaldo Shrine is in good condition. However, since the structure is mostly made of wood and stone with a lot of decorative moldings and designs it is quite vulnerable to natural and man-made causes of deterioration. As such, the maintenance of program of the Shrine is designed as a continuing management plan to be observed and implemented on a year round basis. An estimated budget of Php 2,000,000.00 (approximately US\$40,000.000) must be allotted yearly for the maintenance program of the Shrine.

- Restoration of Tower

The tower consists of seven levels. The part of the concrete balcony at the fifth level serves as a roof deck to the lower floors. Water leaks from the balcony was evident, that it caused the deterioration of the columns, beams and connections at the front and left portions of the tower. Structural and architectural wooden components needs to be replaced to restore the tower to its original state.

1. Tower
 - 1.1 Waterproofing of the fifth floor azotea
 - 1.2 Replacement of structural wooden components
 - 1.3 Replacement of architectural wooden components
 - 1.4 Retrofitting of wooden *capiz* windows
 - 1.5 Replacement of deteriorated corrugated G.I. roofing
 - 1.6 Replacement of deteriorated plain sheet roofing
 - 1.7 Treatment of wooden components with termiticides
 - 1.8 Installation and periodic inspection of fire alarm system
 - 1.9 General repainting and varnishing

- Restoration of the Family Wing

The family wing is composed of two storeys. The ground floor is used as a Curator's Office, Audio-Visual Room, Exhibit Hall and Information/Souvenir Counter.

2. Family Wing
 - 2.1 Ground Floor
 - 2.1.1 Periodic replacement of damaged *vigan(clay)* tiles
 - 2.1.2 General repainting
 - 2.1.3 Repair and retrofitting of *capiz* windows
 - 2.1.4 Installation and periodic inspection of fire alarm system
 - 2.2 Second Floor
 - 2.2.1 Repair / replacement of deteriorated wooden planks on floor and ceiling
 - 2.2.2 Waterproofing of concrete floor and balcony
 - 2.2.3 Periodic repair and fabrication of wooden carvings at the balcony
 - 2.2.4 General repainting and varnishing
 - 2.2.5 Periodic inspection and rehab of electrical system

Restoration of the Main House

The principal level of the house is the second storey because the first storey was originally an open space now used as an exhibition area.

3. Main House
 - 3.1 Ground Floor
 - 3.1.1 Periodic replacement of damaged *vigan(clay)* tiles

- 3.1.2 Installation and maintenance of in-ground termite bait system.
- 3.1.3 Replacement of damaged wooden structural components
- 3.1.4 Replacement of damaged wooden architectural components
- 3.1.5 Repair and retrofitting of *capiz* windows
- 3.1.6 Periodic inspection and rehab of electrical system
- 3.1.7 Installation and periodic inspection of fire alarm system
- 3.1.8 General repainting and varnishing

3.2 Second Floor

- 3.2.1 Periodic cleaning of decorative moldings on the ceiling
- 3.2.2 Periodic inspection of trusses and reinforcements for termite infestation
- 3.2.3 Installation and maintenance of wall mounted termite bait system
- 3.2.4 Repair/ replacement of damaged wooden floor planks
- 3.2.5 Repair/replacement of damaged glass panels and windows
- 3.2.6 General repainting and varnishing
- 3.2.7 Periodic inspection of electrical system

- Development of a Holistic Flood Mitigation Plan for the municipality

Structural Flood Mitigation Measures

- Full Scale River Channel Improvement
- Construction of Flood Retarding Basin
- Construction of Flood Diversion Channel
- Construction of Inland Drainage System
 - Coastal Dike
 - Tidal Gate

Non – Structural Flood Mitigation Measures

- Activities for Removal of Garbage in Waterways
- Administration of River Area
- Control of Excessive Land Use Development and Legislation on Construction of On-Site Flood Detention Facility by Land Developers

Discussion & Conclusions

The most serious threat to the Aguinaldo Shrine is the increased demand for urban space and natural climactic conditions. Despite the historic and emotional values attached to them, many structures and sites are threatened, physically degraded, or even destroyed by the impact of development projects. Yet, these old sites and structures symbolize our unique heritage and identity as a nation. They are the links to the historical and cultural consciousness of the past. They help share our future. Because they are threatened by lack of awareness, development schemes and the promise of revenue-generating programs, they are now considered as heritage at risk.

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Appendix 1



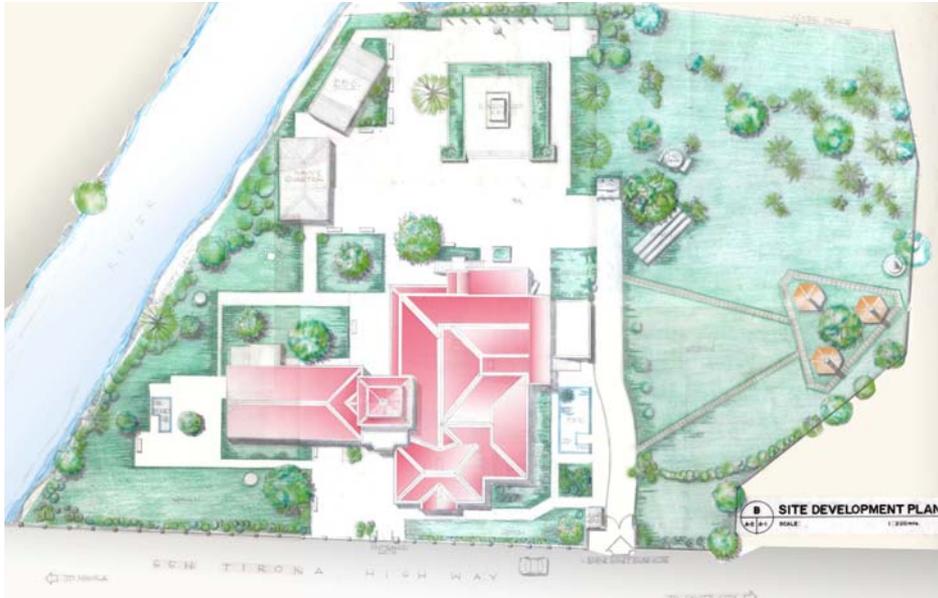
Preliminary Study Report for R1 Expressway Extension Manila - Cavite Toll Expressway Project (MCTEP), Segment 4, Cavite, Philippines

Proposed Expressway Extension – The green line indicates the existing expressway while the red line indicates the expressway extension being developed presently.

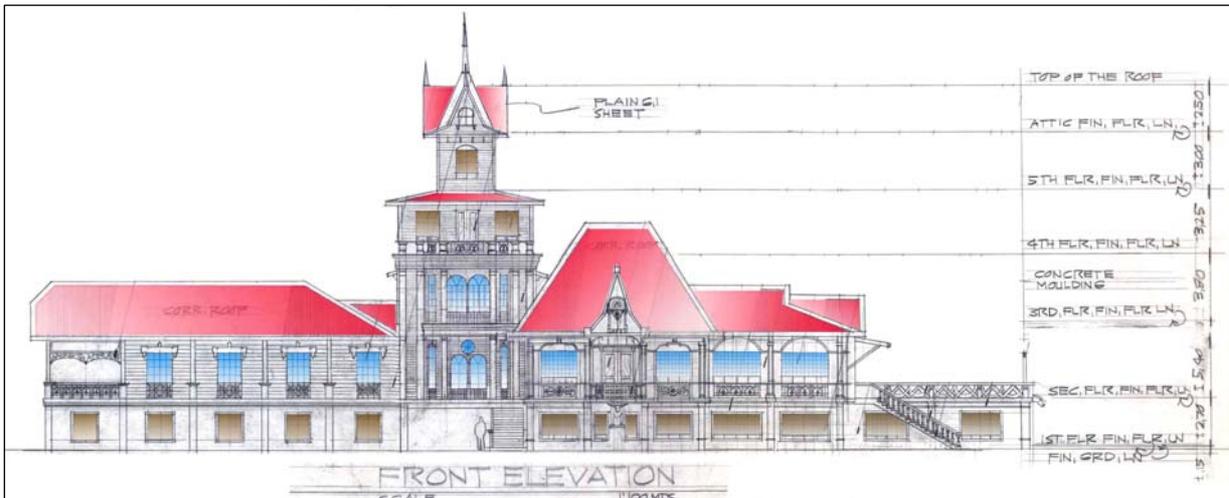


Appendix 2

SITE DEVELOPMENT PLAN (1998)



ELEVATION



FLOOR PLAN OF GROUND FLOOR AND SECOND FLOOR

