

Identification

<u>Nomination</u>	Baroque churches of the Philippines
<u>Location</u>	Church of the Immaculate Conception of San Agustín: District of Intramuros, City of Manila Church of Nuestra Señora de la Asunción, Municipality of Santa Maria, Province of Ilocos Sur Church of San Agustín, Municipality of Paoay, Province of Ilocos Norte Church of Santo Tomás de Villanueva, Municipality of Miag-ao, Province of Iloilo
<u>State Party</u>	Republic of the Philippines
<u>Date</u>	6 November 1992

Justification by State Party

The four churches are nominated as outstanding examples of the Philippine interpretation of the Baroque style. Several examples of Latin American Baroque churches and ensembles have been found worthy of inscription on the World Heritage List, and the peripheral development of this style in the Philippines deserves equal recognition. The properties are proposed for inclusion on the basis of criteria i, iii, iv, v, and vi.

History and DescriptionHistory

The Church of the Immaculate Conception of San Agustín was the first church built on the island of Luzon in 1571, immediately after the Spanish conquest of Manila. A site within the district of Intramuros was assigned to the Augustinian Order, who were the first to evangelize in the Philippines. In 1587 the impermanent earliest building in wood and palm fronds was replaced by a church and monastery in stone, the latter becoming the Augustinian mother house in the Philippines. As a result the church was richly endowed, with a fine retablo, pulpit, wall paintings, lectern, and choir-stalls. It was the only structure in Intramuros to survive the liberation of Manila in 1945.

The mission at Santa Maria, founded in 1765 on a narrow, flat plain between the sea and the central mountain range of Luzon, was one of the most successful Augustinian houses in the Philippines. It served as the base for the Christianization of the northern parts of the archipelago.

The Augustinian mission station of Miag-ao became an independent parish in 1731, when a simple church and convento (parish house) were built. However, destruction of the town by Moslem pirates in 1741 and 1754 led to the town being rebuilt in a more secure location. The new church, constructed in 1787-97, was built as a fortress, to withstand further incursions. It was, however, damaged severely by fire on two occasions - during the revolution against Spain in 1898 and in World War II.

The town of Paoay is called "Bombay" in early documents, in keeping with the legend that the earliest inhabitants came from India. It is first mentioned in 1593 and became an Augustinian independent parish in 1686. Building work on the present church started in 1694 and it was finally completed in 1710.

Description

The Church of the Immaculate Conception of San Agustín is box-like and rather plain. Two bell-towers were added to the squat facade in 1854, but the northern cracked in the 1880 earthquake and had to be demolished. The interior of the church is more important than the exterior. The existing wall paintings date from the 19th century, but research has shown that they overlie the original tempera murals. Of special interest is the series of cryptocollateral chapels lining both sides of the nave. The walls separating them act as buttresses, similar to the Wandpfeiler of German Baroque churches. The stone barrel vault, dome, and arched vestibule are all unique in the Philippines. A monastery complex was formerly linked to the church by a series of cloisters, arcades, courtyards, and gardens, but all except one building were destroyed in 1945.

Unlike other town churches in the Philippines, which conform with the Spanish tradition of siting them on the central plaza, the Church of Nuestra Señora de la Asunción in Santa Maria with its convento are on a hill completely surrounded by a sturdy defensive wall. Also unusual are the siting of the convento parallel to the facade of the church and that of the separate bell-tower (characteristic of Philippine-Hispanic architecture) at the midpoint of the nave wall. This arrangement was dictated by the topography of the hill on which it is situated.

Built in brick, the church follows the standard Philippine layout, with a monumental facade masking a straight roof-line covering a long rectangular building. It is alleged to be built on a solid raft as a precaution against earthquake damage. The walls are devoid of ornament but have delicately carved side entrances and strong buttresses, also designed to resist earthquakes. The curved pediment motif is repeated in the church, school, and cemetery.

The Church of Santo Tomás de Villanueva stands on the highest point of Miag-ao, its towers serving as lookouts against Moslem raids. These and the squat appearance of the church underline its role as a fortress, and it is the finest surviving example of "fortress Baroque". The sumptuous facade epitomizes the Filipino transfiguration of western decorative elements, with the figure of St Christopher on the pediment dressed in native clothes, carrying the Christ Child on his back, and holding on to a coconut palm for support. The entire riotously decorated facade is flanked by massive tapering bell towers of unequal heights.

The Church of San Agustín at Paoay is considered to be the most outstanding example in the Philippines of "earthquake Baroque", first defined by Pal Kelman in relation to Latin America. Fourteen buttresses are ranged along the lines of a giant volute supporting a smaller one and surmounted by pyramidal finials. A pair of buttresses at the midpoint of each nave wall are stairways for access to the roof. The lower part of the apse and most of the walls are constructed of coralstone blocks, the upper levels being finished in brick, but this order is reversed on the facade. The massive coralstone bell-tower, which was added half a century after the church was completed, stands at some distance from the church, again as a protection against damage during earthquakes.

Management and Protection

Legal status

All four churches are the property of the Roman Catholic Church. They are protected by the Philippine Government under Presidential Decrees 260, 375, and 1505 as being of national importance, and so are eligible for Government funding.

Management

The central agency responsible for overall maintenance of the churches is the National Commission on Culture and Art, created in 1991. It has the role of coordinating the work of a committee for each property with representatives from the following national agencies and organizations: ICOMOS Philippines; Department of Tourism; Department of Education, Culture and Sports; National Museum, National Historical Institute; and the relevant provincial and local authorities.

Only the Manila church is the subject of a management plan, drawn up by the Municipal Administration of Intramuros. It is designated as a Special Historical Zone by the Municipality, which makes the services of its conservation architects available for work needed on the church.

Conservation and Authenticity

Conservation history

Church of the Immaculate Conception of San Agustín Very little conservation work has been needed on the church. The Augustinian Order has a budget for routine repairs and maintenance. It is currently seeking private donations for the eventual reconstruction of the monastery buildings destroyed in 1945 and the restoration of the botanical garden.

Nuestra Señora de la Asunción Only routine maintenance work has been carried out on the church. The interior of the church is in relatively good condition, but the stucco was removed from the external walls misguidedly in the 1960s, and as a result the brick is slowly deteriorating.

Santo Tomás de Villanueva After the church was severely damaged by fire in 1944 partial reconstruction work on the interior was initiated by the parish priest. This was taken over by the National Historical Institute after the church was declared a National Historic Landmark in 1973. The roof was repaired and stones missing from the facade were replaced. The facade and all the exterior walls were restored in 1980. The permanent replacement of the roof, begun in 1987, remains uncompleted owing to lack of funds. At the present time the interior is in need of total restoration.

San Agustín The parts of the church damaged by earthquakes in 1865 and 1885 were repaired immediately. The 1990 earthquake appears not to have caused any structural damage, though thorough structural damage assessment has not been carried out. The exterior of the church is deteriorating as a result of uncontrolled foliage growth on the walls and bell-tower. The stucco covering the walls is chipping and exposing portions of the structural coralstone to the elements. The interior has been entirely renovated.

Authenticity

All four churches are authentic in that they represent the progressive evolution of the structures of places of worship that have been in continuous use since their original construction.

Evaluation

Qualities

To quote the report of the mission carried out by ICOMOS expert Jorge Gazaneo (1992), "No Philippine church is a complete example of one art period, but a living document of how time and context have left traces on the early founding intentions of the original designer-builder ... at the crossroads of different cultures - Malay, Chinese, European, American. The architecture and art of the Philippines should be valued on standards different from those developed by European scholars".

These churches are architecture built in response to local natural and climatic conditions by Filipino and Chinese craftsmen with no knowledge of European architecture. The men of God who commissioned them reinterpreted the European Baroque to establish a peripheral Baroque which is deceptively western in appearance but wholly Filipino in spirit and context.

Comparative analysis

The architecture of the Philippine archipelago is a unique one and comparative analysis can only be internal. The dating and settings of the four churches selected for the nomination represent a good sample of the development of this style over some 150 years.

Additional comments

The state of conservation of the churches at Miag-ao and Paoay gives cause for concern about their long-term future.

No evidence was supplied in the nomination dossiers of the exact extent of each site nor of any buffer zone. However, the Philippines authorities subsequently provided details of adequate protective zones around the Churches of Nuestra Señora de la Asunción, San Agustín Paoay, and San Tomas de Villanueva. In the case of San Agustín protection is afforded by its situation within the Preservation Zone of Intramuros.

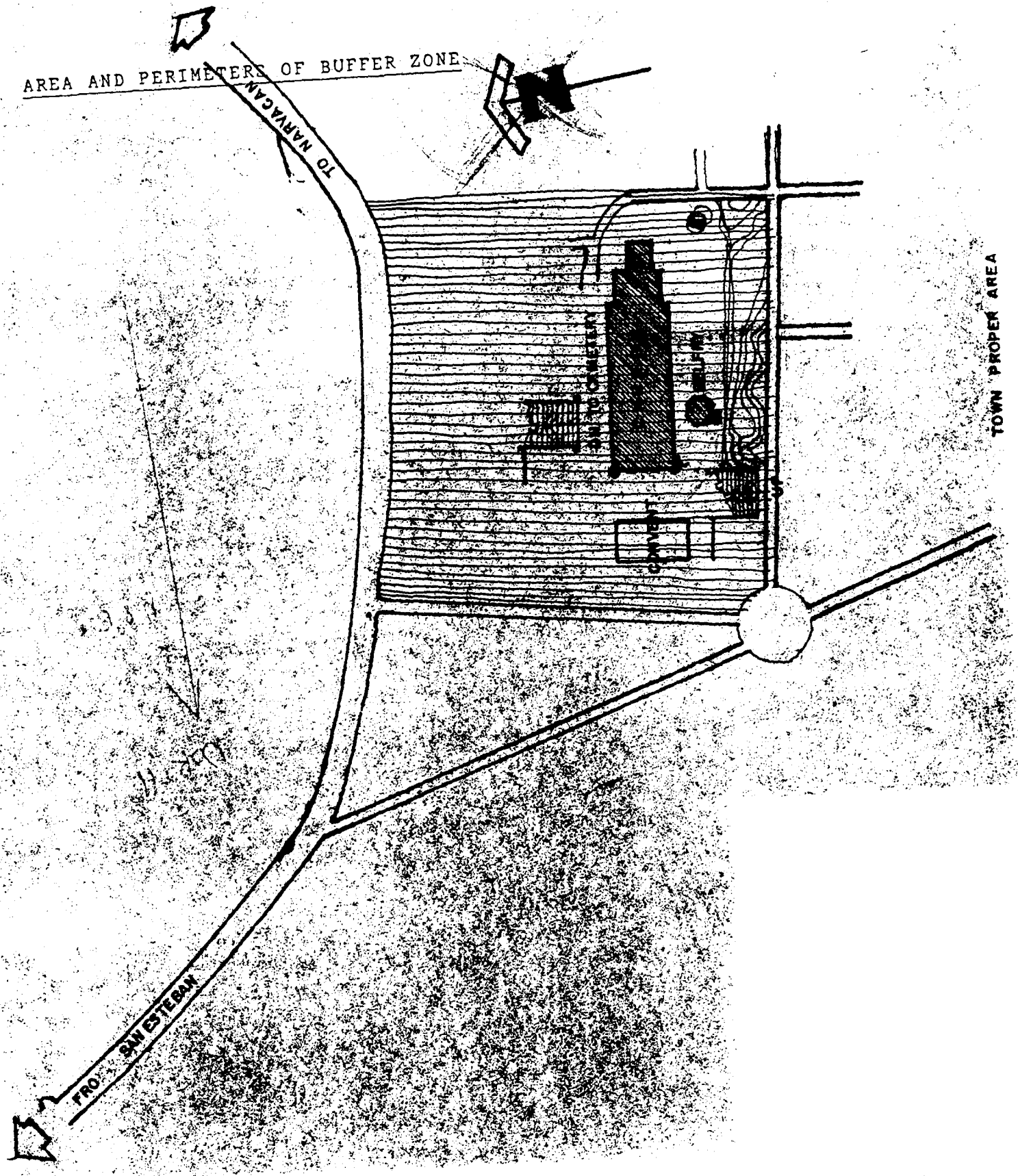
Recommendation

That this property be inscribed on the World Heritage List on the basis of criteria ii and iv:

- Criterion ii This group of churches established a style of building and design that was adapted to the physical conditions in the Philippines and had an important influence on later church architecture in the region.
- Criterion iv The Baroque churches of the Philippines represent the fusion of European church design and construction with local materials and decorative motifs to form a new church-building tradition.

ICOMOS, October 1993

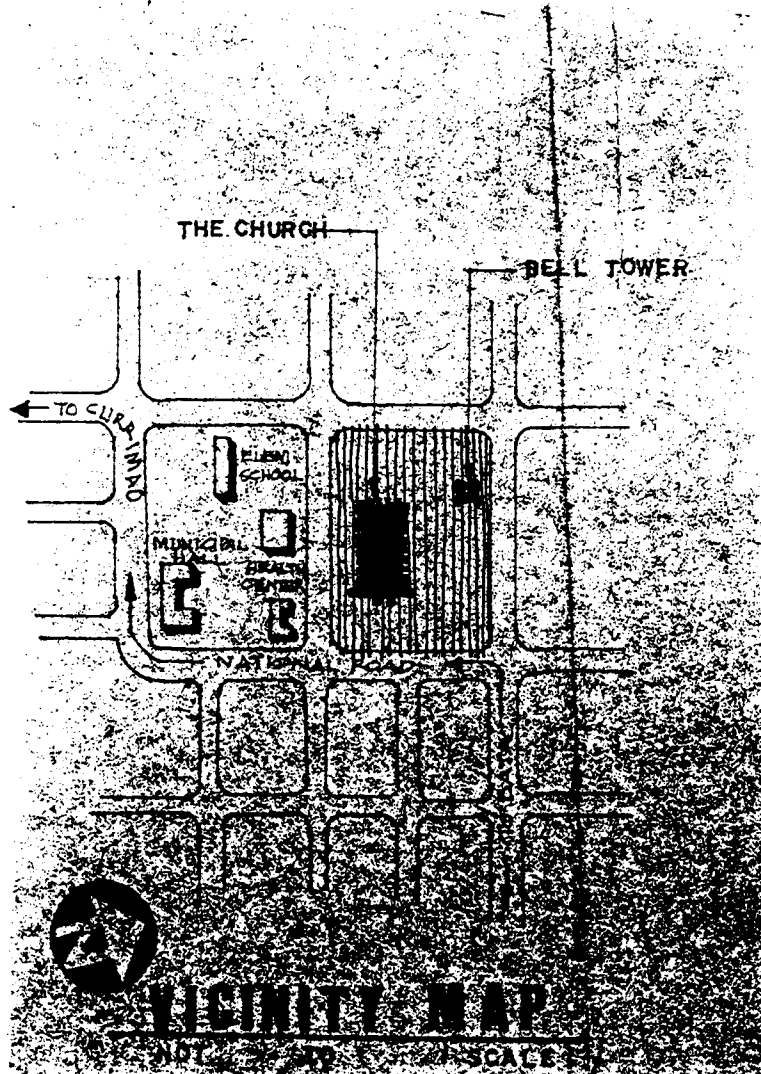
NUESTRA SENORA DE LA ASUNCION CHURCH
Santa Maria, Ilocos Sur, Philippines



Philippines : Nuestra Senora de la Asuncion, zone proposée
pour inscription et zone tampon /
Nuestra Senora de la Asuncion, nominated area
and buffer zone

SAN AGUSTIN CHURCH
Paoay, Ilocos Norte, Philippines

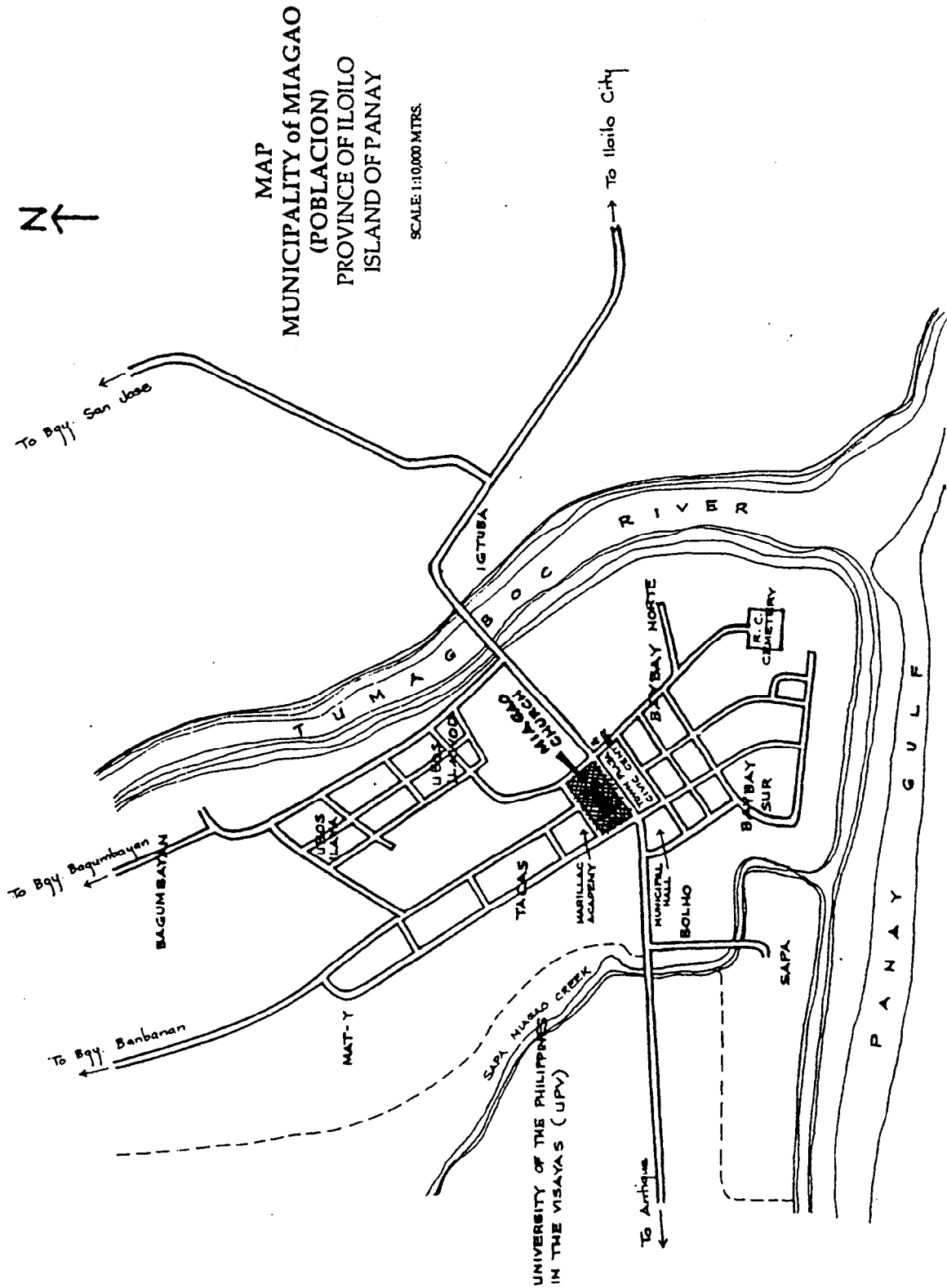
AREA AND PERIMETER OF BUFFER ZONE



Philippines : San Augustin, zone proposée pour inscription /
San Augustin, nominated area

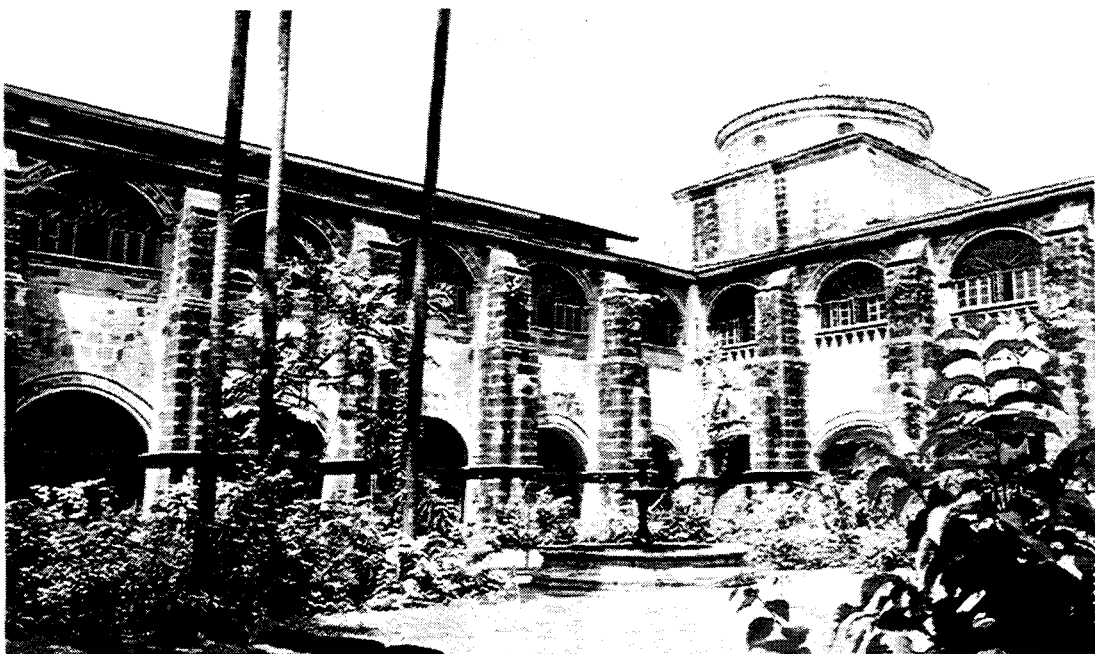
SANTO TOMAS DE VILLANUEVA CHURCH
Miag-ao, Iloilo, Philippines

PERIMETER OF ZONE PROPOSED FOR INSCRIPTION





Philippines : San Augustin, partie supérieure de la façade
San Augustin, upper level of the main facade



Philippines : San Augustin, Manille, Intramuros, cloître /
San Augustin, Manila, Intramuros, the cloister



Philippines : Santo Tomas de Villanueva, clochers/ belltowers



Philippines : Nuestra Señora de la Asuncion, façade ouest /
Nuestra Señora de la Asuncion, main facade