

PHILIPPINES

Baroque Churches of the Philippines



II.1 Introduction

Year of Inscription 1993

Organisation Responsible for the Report

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II.2 Statement of Significance

Inscription Criteria C ii, iv

Statement of Significance

- Proposed as follows:
“The four Baroque churches besides being outstanding architectural examples reflecting admirable building technology of its time, also affirm the prehistoric importance of their ancient location as they became the nucleus for new towns that have continued to grow, thus anchoring the present to the past.”

“The situation is fluid because the four baroque churches are still very much in use and their development will depend on the current needs of the church. The Catholic Bishops Conference has always maintained that the mission of the church should prevail on all issues referring to restoration.”

Status of Site Boundaries

- The boundaries and buffer zones are considered adequate, except in the case of Sta Maria.
- A revision of the site boundaries around Sta Maria is being actively considered to gain access to retaining walls that are in need of remedial action.

II.3 Statement of Authenticity/Integrity

Status of Authenticity/Integrity

- Authenticity and integrity are considered to have been retained except in the case of Sto Tomas. Additional structures have been attached to the rear end of Sto Tomas, but steps are being taken to remedy the damage.
- A further change in authenticity is anticipated at San Agustin (Intramuros) where there are plans for a conjectural reconstruction of some ruins on the site into a commercial building.

II.4 Management

Administrative and Management Arrangements

- The report cites 17 legal instruments, from the 1987 Constitution to Presidential Decrees, Republic Acts and Executive Orders indicating a highly complex situation defining national heritage and its protection.
- Cultural heritage legislation in the Philippines depends on the type of object, its regional or national significance, and the tasks surrounding its discovery, identification, preservation and refurbishment.
- The Baroque churches are managed by a task force created in 1996 and composed of the National Historic Institute, the National Commission for Culture and the Arts, the Department of Tourism, the Diocese of Laoag and the Parish Priest of Paoay Church.
- “A tripartite agreement among the three agencies is currently being negotiated to further refine the collaborative efforts, primarily for the preservation of the World Heritage Site Churches.”

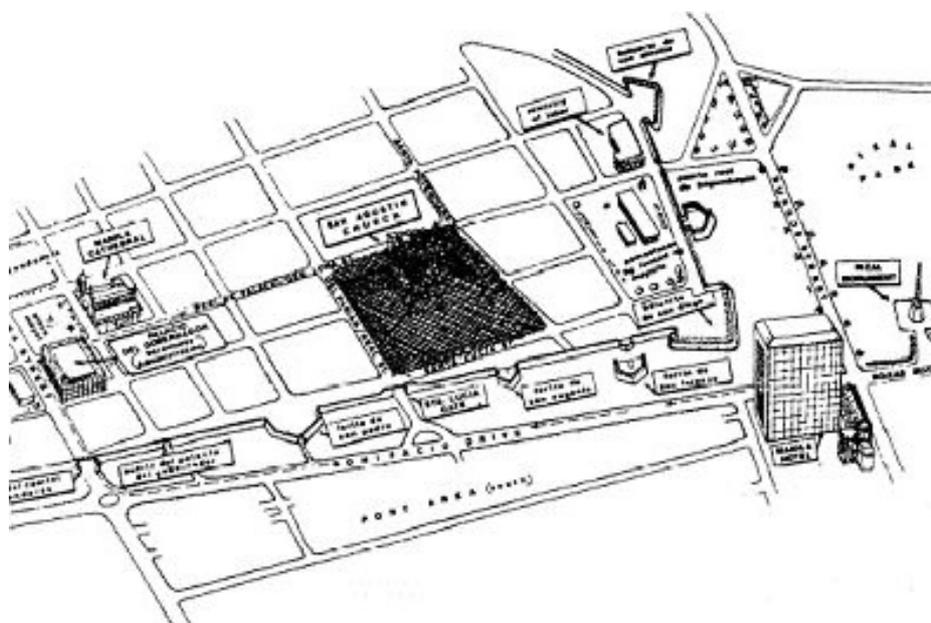
Present State of Conservation

- “The situation is fluid because the four baroque churches are still very much in use and their development will depend on the current needs of the church. The Catholic Bishops Conference has always maintained that the mission of the church should prevail on all issues referring to restoration.”
- Major interventions at the property include: (i) archaeological excavations; (ii) building material sampling for laboratory analysis and structural/engineering studies.

Staffing and Training Needs

- Individual churches retain carpenters for routine maintenance, and NCCA has a pool of experts to provide technical advice.
- NCCA offers training to church authorities and their maintenance staff.
- NCCA’s own training needs relate to use of equipment for monitoring structures.

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3D plan of St. Agustin Intramuros Church, with its Buffer zone (in grey)

- Sto Tomas is threatened by excessive “beautification” and San Agustin (Intramuros) has suffered from inappropriate use of concrete in repair works.
- “There is an increasing impact of air pollution and vibrations caused by tourist influx and other activities surrounding the Churches.”

Counteractive Plans

- Emergency/management plans are in preparation. San Agustin (Intramuros) is to have seismic monitoring.
- Sta Maria is to have an improved drainage system.
- San Agustin (Paoay) will benefit from a traffic re-routing programme.

Financial Situation

- NCCA allocated US\$ 377,000 to the site in 2002 for structural repairs, studies and preparation of a master plan. Funding is considered inadequate.
- * International Assistance from WHF as follows: (i) 1997, US\$22,000 training assistance for enhanced management; (ii) 1998, US\$22,000 Training assistance for enhanced management; (iii) 1998, US\$5,000 Promotional assistance.

Access to IT

- 2 PCs are available with Internet access, as well as a printer, a scanner and a digital camera. E-mail is not in use.

Visitor Management

- There are no visitor statistics available.
- Parish offices serve as information centres, and San Agustin has a museum.
- There is a need for improved information centres and publications.
- There are no visitor management plans.

II.5 Factors Affecting the Property

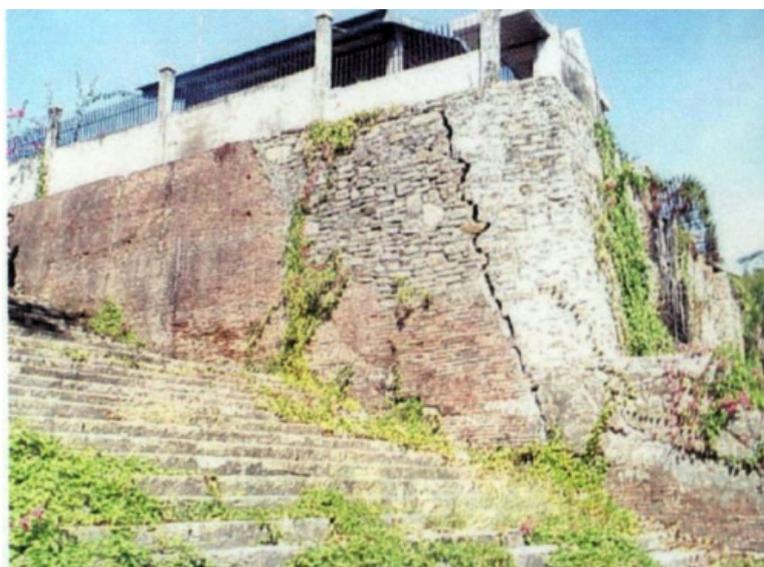
Threats and Risks

- All four churches are in a seismic zone that puts them at risk of earthquake damage.
- All the properties are affected by airborne salts from the sea, Sta Maria is threatened by soil erosion on the slope where it is built, and San Agustin is threatened by air pollution and urban pressure.

II.6 Monitoring

Monitoring Arrangements

- No formal monitoring system is in place.
- A monitoring plan for San Agustin (Paoay), developed by ICOMOS Japan, is to be adopted.
- Monitoring plans will be developed for the other sites after completion of detailed engineering studies.
- There is a shortage of monitoring equipment and trained staff to use it.



Cracks in the retaining wall of Sta Maria Church, Ilocos Sur

© UNESCO

Monitoring Indicators

- Indicators identified as the Philippines Procedural Standards on Conservation and Restoration are : (i) feasibility study; (ii) retained engineering study; (iii) conservation and restoration.

II.7 Conclusions and Recommended Actions

Conclusions and Proposed Actions

- “A legal protective framework has to be laid out in order to implement fully the restoration procedure laid down by UNESCO.”
- At San Agustin (Paoay) the Detailed Engineering Study recommended by ICOMOS Japan will be completed. Monitoring of movement in the main façade will be upgraded. Vegetal growth will be removed from the walls, walls will be consolidated, and seismic monitoring will be implemented.
- At Sta Maria urgent work is required to improve drainage and secure the retaining walls.
- Further action plans will be developed after completion of Detailed Engineering Studies for Sta Maria. “A technical assistance, like that requested for Paoay Church, should also be requested for Sta. Maria, so that a reactive monitoring mission may be conducted.”

** No State of Conservation Reports*