

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The San Agustin Church in Intramuros, Manila, officially known as the Church of the Immaculate Conception of San Agustin, is an inscribed World Heritage Site (WHS) in 1993 under the serial declaration of the Baroque Churches of the Philippines, together with the three churches in Paoay, Ilocos Norte; Sta Maria, Ilocos Sur; and Miagao, Iloilo. The Baroque Churches of the Philippines was inscribed in the WHS list because of criterion (ii): the group of churches established a style of building and design that was adapted to the physical conditions in the Philippines which had an important influence on later church architecture in the region, and criterion (iv): the Baroque Churches of the Philippines represent the fusion of European church design and construction using local materials and decorative motifs to form a new church-building tradition. In particular, San Agustin Church displays specific features such as retablos (altars) of high Baroque style, in wall buttresses separating criptocollateral chapels, the fusion of styles is also seen in the construction of bell towers, and lastly, in ceiling paintings in the tromp l'oeil style.

The San Agustin Church defined the whole Intramuros as its buffer zone, and it was approved by the World Heritage Center (WHC) in 2013. The church is owned and managed by the Order of St. Augustine (Augustinian Vicariate of the Orient). Under Section 5 of Republic Act No. 10066 or the National Cultural Heritage Act of 2009, Rule IV Section 9 of its Implementing Rules and Regulations, Presidential Decree 1616, and the other corresponding laws of the cultural agencies, below are the jurisdictions assigned to each cultural agency relative to the church and its buffer zone:

- National Commission for Culture and Arts –World Heritage Sites
- National Museum – National Cultural Treasures (Walls of Intramuros) and any archaeological finds
- National Historical Commission of the Philippines –National Historical Landmark
- Intramuros Administration (IA) – the administrator for Intramuros

Last October 2018, the World Heritage Center queried on the proposed Binondo-Intramuros Bridge Project, which will pass over the Pasig River and will connect San Fernando Street in Binondo to Solana Street and Riverside Drive in Intramuros. The proposed bridge would affect the edge of the San Agustin Church's buffer zone at the north-east side, specifically on the Riverside Drive and Solana Street where the two separated ramp will align. The project was alleged to bring additional traffic volume that might affect the Outstanding Universal Value of the church.

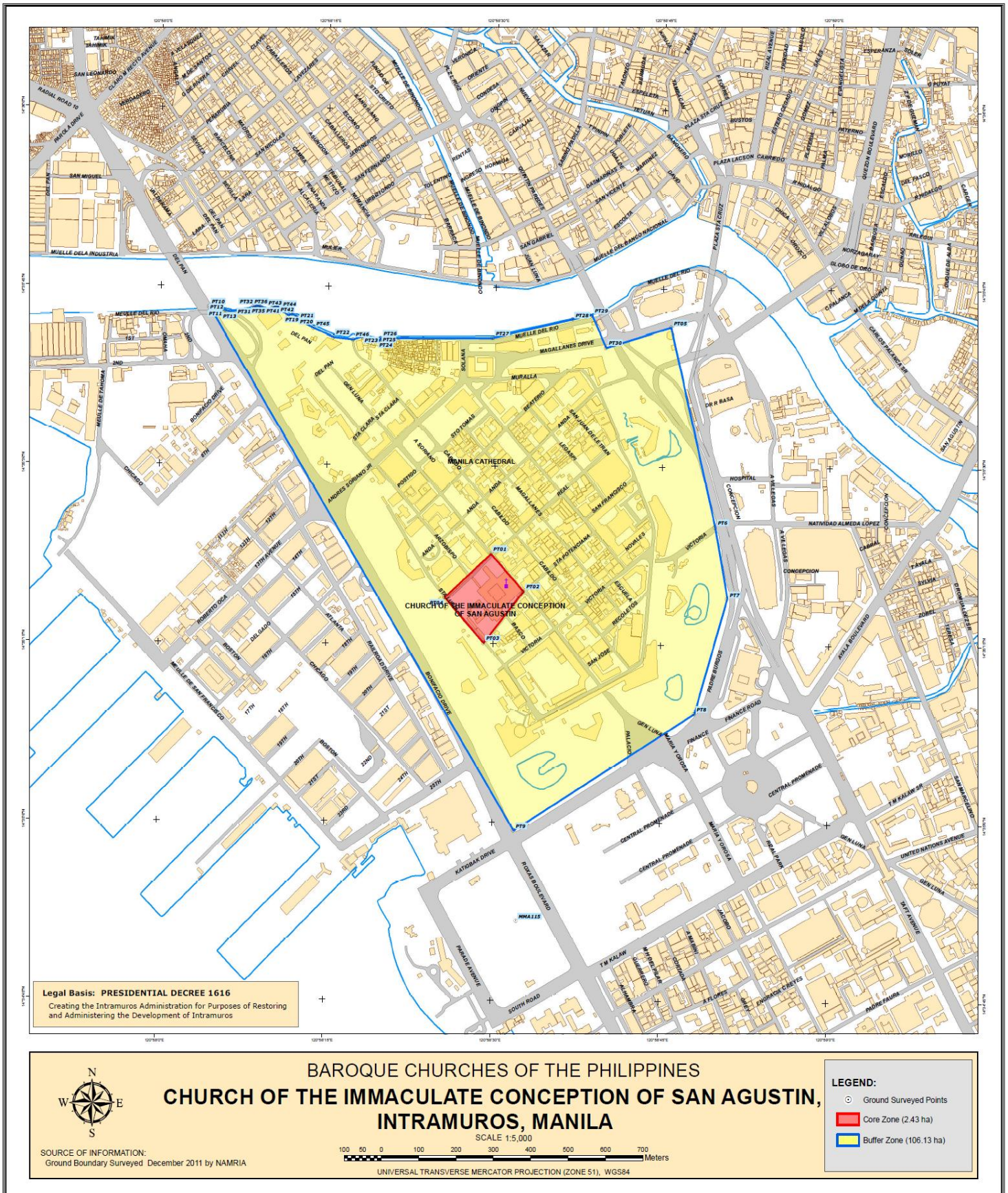
Nonetheless, various steps are being undertaken to address the potential impact of the project. As IA is the administrator of Intramuros, IA is also the authority to control vehicle traffic and volume inside and passing through Intramuros. IA has assured that only light vehicles are allowed to pass through Intramuros, as is currently being implemented. The IA at present is proactively doing the Conservation Management Plan (CMP) of Intramuros which would define and clearly elaborate on what measures are to be undertaken to conserve Intramuros and control and optimize different variables such as traffic, tourism, etc. The IA also initiates and plans to pedestrianize and totally close the street of General Luna, road adjacent to the right-side of the church, to vehicular traffic from Plaza Roma or Manila Cathedral to Victoria Street.

Accordingly, nearby heritage structure/s would be greatly considered for preservation and/or protection such as employment of mechanical stabilized earth (MSE) wall and providing interface for possible reconstruction of heritage structures. Meanwhile, the river and its promenade would not be compromised as the project follows the required easements under pertinent laws, and the bridge would incorporate pedestrian walkways and bike lanes. Further, open spaces would be integrated into the project design.

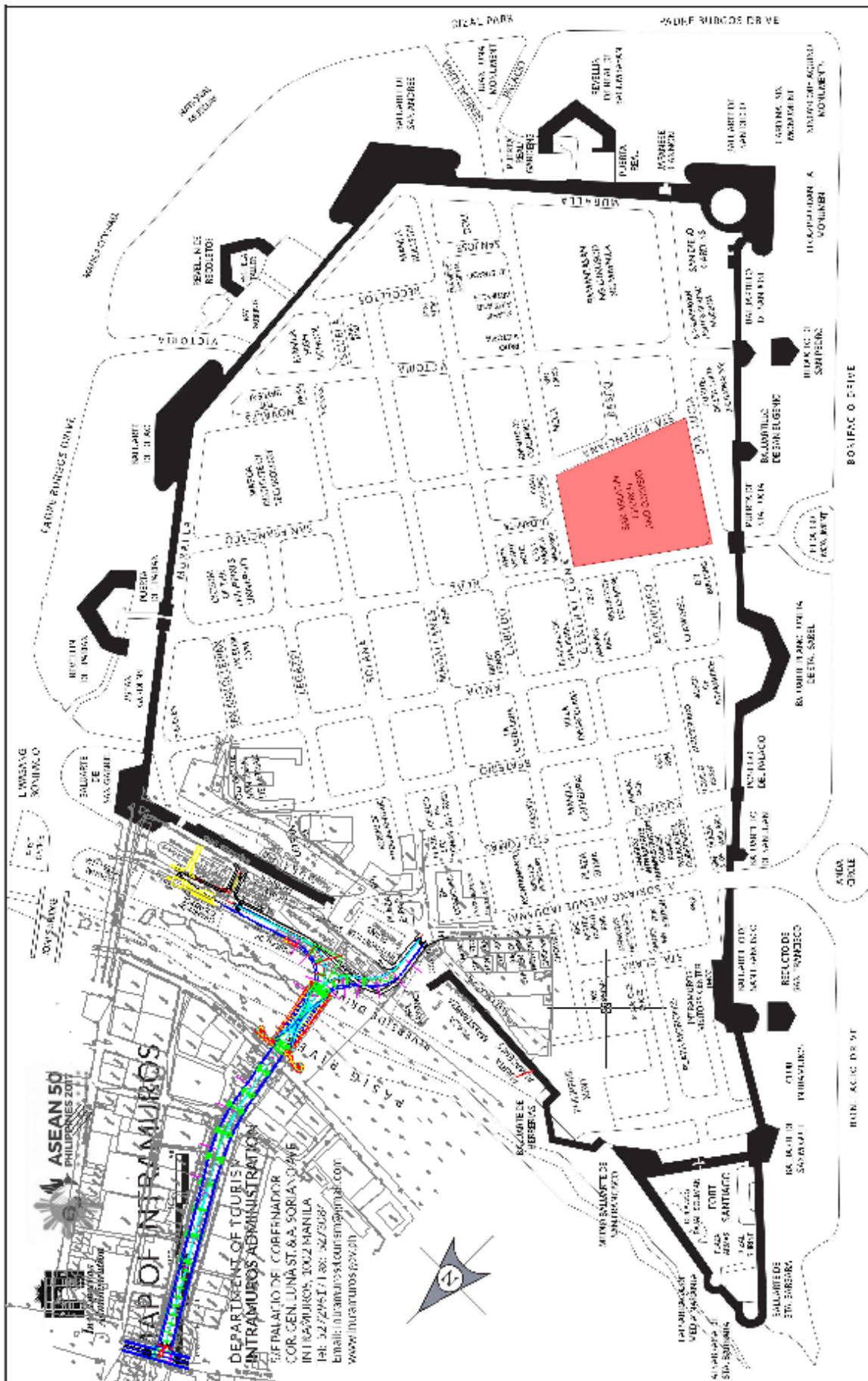
Currently, the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) is undertaking an Archaeological and Heritage Impact Assessment (AHIA) of the project. The AHIA would help this Commission and the other cultural agencies to clearly identify the impact of the project to San Agustin's OUV. In addition, the project is presently on temporary work stoppage as DPWH is undertaking major design changes to the project as a result from discussions with cultural agencies to minimize the effect of the project to the country's cultural heritage.

The cultural agencies and IA are in continuous coordination with DPWH to ensure that the on-going AHIA for the project would be finished as soon as possible and that the design changes being made would put the heritage structures in consideration.

The defined buffer zone of the San Agustin Church, Intramuros, Manila approved by the World Heritage Committee in 2013 :



The overlay of proposed Binondo-Intramuros Bridge with focus on Intramuros side:



Artist's perspectives of the proposed bridge showing the bridge's downramp and upramp in Intramuros side:

