

## **A Critique of the Theme Park Las Casas Filipinas de Acuzar Based on Some Principles of Heritage Conservation and Contending Perspectives**

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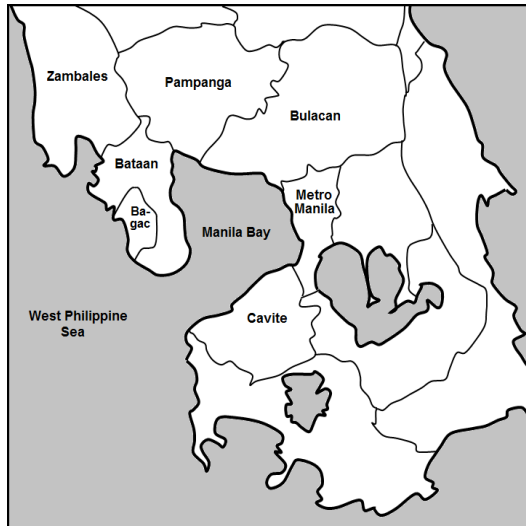
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### **ABSTRACT**

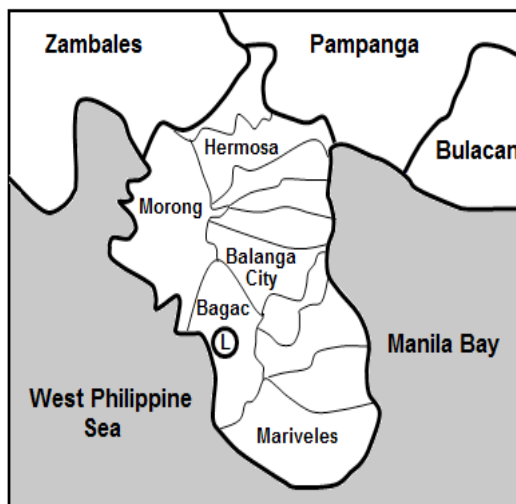
Las Casas Filipinas de Acuzar (LCFdA) is a heritage theme park located in the town of Bagac, in the province of Bataan. It sits on a waterfront 400-hectare property and boasts of more than 50 colonial and traditional Philippine architectural structures. This paper shows that LCFdA has at least five strategies for the building/rebuilding of its architectural collections: 1) acquisition and dismantling of old structures in various stages of ruin and their subsequent relocation and reconstruction, 2) acquisition and reconstruction of already demolished houses, 3) construction of partial replicas, 4) construction of full replicas, and 5) construction of entirely new structures modeled after colonial architecture. Using some pertinent international and national principles on heritage conservation, this paper analyzes the soundness of LCFdA's five building/rebuilding strategies. It contains three substantive sections: an elaboration of each of these five building/rebuilding strategies, an overview of the selected pertinent documents on heritage conservation, and a critique of each of the five building/rebuilding strategies. The paper aims to make a holistic evaluation of LCFdA's treatment of Philippine architectural heritage.

*Keywords:* Las Casas Filipinas de Acuzar, Philippine colonial architecture, Philippine architectural heritage, principles of architectural heritage conservation

Las Casas Filipinas de Acuzar (LCFdA) is a heritage theme park located in the town of Bagac, in the province of Bataan (figs. 1 and 2). Bataan is a peninsular landmass that juts out from the provinces of Zambales and Bulacan into the West Philippine Sea and the Manila Bay. Bagac is about 140 kilometers by land and about 110 kilometers by water from the Philippine capital city of Manila.

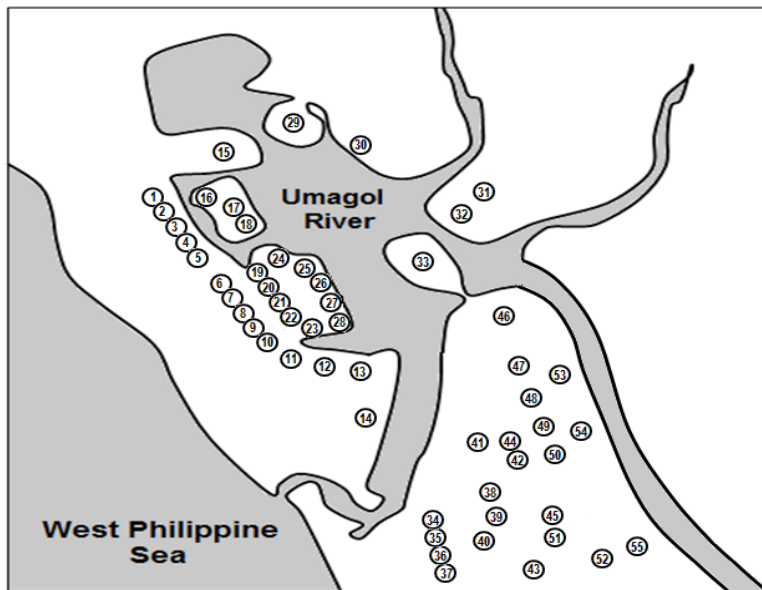


**Fig. 1.** Location of the town of Bagac within the province of Bataan and relative to Metro Manila and some nearby provinces.



**Fig. 2.** Location of LCFdA (marked by an encircled L) in Bagac and relative to Balanga City, Mariveles, Morong, and Hermosa.

LCFdA is owned by Jose Rizalino Acuzar, a 62-year-old architect and native of Bataan's capital city Balanga, who made a fortune in Metro Manila and the rest of Luzon as founder and chair of the construction firm New San Jose Builders, Incorporated. An art and antique aficionado, Acuzar evolved into a collector of Philippine houses as the wealth of his company grew (Net 25). In 2000, he started rebuilding old structures in his 400-hectare waterfront property. LCFdA opened to the public in 2010 as a heritage theme park complete with museums, amusement and recreational facilities, restaurants, hotels, squares/parks, cobblestone pavements, and landscapes and waterscapes (GMA Public Affairs). Today, its more than 50 and still growing number of colonial and traditional Philippine architectural structures are drawing Filipino and foreign tourists to its rather remote location. Figure 3 shows how LCFdA's structures (numbered 1 to 55) are situated around a man-made lake and some canals that are fed by the Umagol River and empty into the West Philippine Sea (Orange Magazine TV). Table 1 provides the names and brief descriptions of the numbered structures.



**Fig. 3.** The constellation of traditional Philippine structures within the 40-hectare sprawl of LCFdA.

**Table 1.** Names and Brief Descriptions of the 55 Structures as Numbered in Fig. 3

Number in Fig. 3	Name of Structure	Brief Description
1	Accesoria 1	A row of two- to three-story colonial apartments on the beachfront. Their stone or brick ground floors are mostly recessed to provide a shaded side walk to pedestrians. "Accesoria" is the Spanish term for apartment.
2	Accesoria 2	
3	Accesoria 3	
4	Accesoria 4	
5	Accesoria 5	
6	Accesoria 6	
7	Accesoria 7	
8	Accesoria 8	
9	Accesoria 9	
10	Accesoria 10	
11	Casa Terraza	A single-story wooden house with a wide front balcony made of stone. The structure is light brown with olive trimmings. Its windows are glazed with capiz. It is one of the smallest structures in LCFdA and is located at the beachfront. "Terraza" is a Spanish term for balcony or terrace.
12	Casa Ladrillo	A two-story brick structure with white window frames. Sculpted terracotta figures adorn its façade. It is located at the beachfront. "Ladrillo" is the Spanish term for brick.
13	Casa Hagonoy	A two-story wooden house that sits on stone stilts. Stone and wood staircases lead directly to its first and second floors. Its windows have awnings and are covered with colored frosted glass. Located on the beachfront, the house is named after its place of origin, Hagonoy, Bulacan.
14	Hotel de Oriente	A replica of the three-story Spanish period hotel in Binondo. Its ground floor is made of exposed bricks, while its second and third floors are made of wood and painted cream with olive trimmings. One of the biggest structures in LCFdA, its façade is characterized by a series of Moorish arches. The replica sits directly on the beachfront but faces inland. It serves as the convention center of LCFdA. It is named after the original hotel in Binondo, Manila.

Number in Fig. 3	Name of Structure	Brief Description
15	Casa San Juan	A two-story stone structure. It is one of the latest additions in LCFdA, and is still in its finishing stage. It is located on a landmass on the man-made lake and is named after its place of origin, San Juan, Batangas.
16	Casa Irosin	A two-story brick and wood structure. Its ground floor is made of bricks and wood, with the exposed bricks forming a surrounding skirt. The wooden parts are painted white with cream and sky blue accents and trimmings. The second floor is fitted with capiz-glazed windows. It is located on a landmass on the man-made lake and is named after its place of origin, Irosin, Sorsogon.
17	Casa Balanga	A two-story stone-and-wood structure. Its wooden second floor is painted pale blue with white trimmings, and fitted with capiz-glazed windows and <i>ventanillas</i> . The stone ground floor is designed as a series of arches. It is located on an islet on the man-made lake and is named after its place of origin, Balanga, Bataan.
18	Casa Gapan	A two-story stone-and-wood structure. Its wooden second floor is painted cream with light brown trimmings, and with arched windows and <i>ventanillas</i> . Green awnings shade the windows in between their rectangular openings and arches. The ground floor is made of exposed stone. It is located on an islet on the man-made lake and is named after its place of origin, Gapan, Nueva Ecija.
19	Accesoria 11	A row of two- to three-story colonial apartments that are directly sitting on a canal named Estero de Binondo. Their stone or brick ground floors are also recessed to provide pedestrians with a shaded sidewalk.
20	Accesoria 12	
21	Accesoria 13	
22	Accesoria 14	

Number in Fig. 3	Name of Structure	Brief Description
23	Casa Esquina	A two-story stone-and-wood structure. Its ground floor is made of wood with a stone skirt. Its second floor is made entirely of wood and fitted with glazed windows and ventanillas. The stone skirt is left unplastered, while the wooden exterior is painted olive green, with dark olive green trimmings and pink accents. A brown wooden staircase provides direct access to the second floor. It is one of the smallest structures in LCFdA and is located on an islet on the man-made lake. "Esquina" is the Spanish term for "corner."
24	Casa San Luis	A two-story stone-and wood-structure of the typical "bahay na bato" style. Its ground floor is made of exposed stones. Its second floor is colored light sky blue with white trimmings, and fitted with capiz-glazed windows and ventanillas. A wood and stone staircase provides direct access to the second floor. It sits on a landmass on the man-made lake and is named after its second place of origin, San Luis, Pampanga. Its first place of origin is actually Pulilan, Bulacan.
25	Casa Bonita	A single-story wooden structure. It sits on a stone foundation. It is painted cream with olive green trimmings. Its windows are glazed with capiz. A small balcony forms an approach to its main entrance. The structure is located on a landmass on the man-made lake. Although it is assembled from two old houses from La Union, Casa Bonita is one of the smallest structures in LCFdA. "Bonita" is the Spanish term for beautiful or cute.
26	Casa Tuguegarao	A two-story brick-and-wood structure. Its ground floor is made of exposed bricks and fitted with white window frames. Its second floor is painted white with powder blue accents, and fitted with glazed windows. The casa has a balcony at the back, and four gables punctuate its roof. It is located on a landmass on the man-made lake and is named after its place of origin, Tuguegarao, Cagayan.

Number in Fig. 3	Name of Structure	Brief Description
27	Casa Santa Rita	A two-story stone-and-wood structure of the typical “bahay na bato” style. Its second floor is painted off-white and gray and surrounded with capiz-glazed windows and ventanillas. Its ground floor of exposed stone does not cover the whole floor area to give room for an open air restaurant. It has a spacious wooden balcony. Located on a landmass on the man-made lake, the casa is named after its place of origin, Santa Rita, Pampanga.
28	Casa Lemery	A two-story stone, wood and tile structure. Its second floor is painted white with light brown and powder blue trimmings and accents, and its window panes are glazed with capiz. Wooden caryatids are attached to every corner of the house. One of the smallest structures in LCFdA, the casa sits on a landmass on the man-made lake and is named after its place of origin, Lemery, Batangas.
29	Casa Majayjay	A two-story stone, wood, and tile structure of the typical “bahay na bato” style. Its wooden second floor is painted cream with light brown and gray trimmings and accents, and fitted with capiz-glazed windows. Its ground floor is made of exposed stone. The casa sits on a landmass on the man-made lake and is one of the structures of LCFdA located farthest inland. It is named after its place of origin, Majayjay, Laguna.
30	Casa New Manila	A two-story mansion of concrete and wood from the American colonial period. It is painted white and displays a huge balcony. It sits in front of the man-made lakes. One of the structures of LCFdA located farthest inland, it is named after its place of origin, New Manila, Quezon City.
31	Casa Maranao 1	Single-story wood-and-reed structures that sit on wooden stilts. These are the traditional houses of the Maranaos of Lanao del Norte and del Sur. They are characterized by jutting beams bearing carved okir motifs. Surprisingly, they are not small when compared with the other stone structures of LCFdA. They sit further inland.
32	Casa Maranao 2	

Number in Fig. 3	Name of Structure	Brief Description
33	Santuario de San Jose	A stone, brick, and tile structure that serves as the chapel of LCFdA. It is modeled after the old photographs of the Cathedral of Saint Joseph in Balanga City, the capital of Bataan. It is one of the biggest structures in LCFdA and sits on an islet near the center of LCFdA.
34	Casa Cagayan 1	Single-story wood structures that sit on rough wooden stilts. They are unpainted but their windows are glazed with capiz. Located on the beachfront, they could appear like beach houses. They are some of the smallest structures in LCFdA and are named after their place of origin, Cagayan Province.
35	Casa Cagayan 2	
36	Casa Cagayan 3	
37	Casa Cagayan 4	
38	Casa Jaen 1	A two-story stone-and-wood structure. Its wooden second floor is painted white and cream, and fitted with glazed windows and ventanillas. Its ground floor is made of exposed stone and part of its ground floor is an arched portico. It is located away from the beachfront. It is named after its place of origin, Jaen, Nueva Ecija.
39	Casa Luna	A two-story brick, wood-and-tile structure following the typical “bahay na bato” design. Its second floor is made of wood and painted white with gray trimmings and accents, and fitted with capiz-glazed windows. Its ground floor is made of exposed bricks. It sits towards the interior of LCFdA. It is named after its place of origin, Luna, La Union, as well as after the fact that its former owner is an uncle of the Luna brothers, Antonio and Juan.
40	Casa Baliuag 2	It is a two-story stone-and-wood structure following the typical “bahay na bato” design. Its second floor is made of wood and painted white with brown trimmings, and fitted with capiz-glazed windows and wrought-iron ventanillas. Its ground floor is made of exposed stones, but altered into an arched driveway as the structure sits over a major street in LCFdA. It is named after its place of origin, Baliuag, Bulacan.



Number in Fig. 3	Name of Structure	Brief Description
41	Casa Lubao	A two-story stone, wood, and tile structure with a wide front balcony and a second floor made of wood and painted blue green. Its window panels are made of plain glass. It sits towards the inland of LCFd and is named after its place of origin, Lubao, Pampanga.
42	Casa Unisan	A two-story stone-and-wood structure following the typical “bahay na bato” design. Its ground floor is made of exposed stone, punctuated by shallow arched doorways. The wooden second floor is painted cream and light brown, and fitted with capiz-glazed windows and latticed ventanillas. It is located away from the beachfront and is named after its place of origin, Unisan, Quezon.
43	Paseo Escolta	A row of two- to three-story stone, brick and wood structures replicating some dwelling and commercial buildings along Escolta Street, Manila. Located at the southern edge of LCFdA, its central structure is composed of a three-story apartment building with a colonnaded façade. “Paseo Escolta” in Spanish means Escolta drive/promenade.
44	Casa Meycauayan	A two-story stone-and-wood structure. Its ground floor is made of exposed stones with rectangular doorways and windows. Its second floor is painted cream with gray trimmings, and fitted with capiz-glazed windows and wrought-iron ventanillas. A roofed staircase gives direct access to the second floor. It is located near the center of LCFdA and is named after its place of origin, Meycauayan, Bulacan.
45	Casa Mexico	A two-story stone-and-wood structure. Its ground floor is made of stone and punctuated with huge iron-grilled windows. The wooden second floor is painted olive green and fitted with capiz-glazed windows and wrought-iron ventanillas. There is a stone-and-wood staircase that leads to its second floor balcony. Located near the southern edge of LCFdA, it is named after its place of origin, Mexico, Pampanga.

Number in Fig. 3	Name of Structure	Brief Description
46	Casa Biñan	A two-story stone, wood, and tile structure of the typical “bahay na bato” style. Its ground floor is made of exposed stone punctuated with rectangular windows and doorways. Its wooden second floor is painted cream and fitted with capiz-glazed windows and ventanillas. It is one of the biggest structures in LCFdA. This is so far the most controversial structure in LCFdA because parts of the building were taken from an old house owned by Jose Rizal’s maternal ancestor. The casa is located near the man-made lake and is named after its place of origin, Biñan, Laguna.
47	Casa Baliuag 1	A two-story stone and wood structure of the typical “bahay na bato” design. Its second floor is painted olive green and fitted with capiz-glazed windows. Three caryatids adorn the columns of its balcony and the stone ground floor is decorated with ribbed pilasters. The casa sits further inland and is named after its place of origin, Baliuag, Bulacan.
48	Casa Quiapo	A two-story stone-and-wood structure of the typical “bahay na bato” design with a second floor painted white and lined with ventanillas and capiz-glazed windows. Its stone ground floor is recessed to give pedestrians a shaded sidewalk. This is one of the biggest structures in LCFdA and it sits further inland. It is named after its place of origin, Quiapo, Manila.
49	Casa Tondo	A two-story stone-and-wood structure. Its ground floor is made of exposed stones and fitted with an arched doorway and rectangular windows, while its wooden second floor is painted cream and gray punctuated with capiz-glazed windows and wrought-iron ventanillas. Its windows are shaded by red awnings. Located near the middle of LCFdA, the casa is named after its place of origin, Tondo, Manila.
50	Casa Candaba	A two-story stone-and-wood structure of the typical “bahay na bato” design. Its second floor is painted white and fitted with capiz-glazed windows, and its roof is punctuated with gables. The casa sits further inland and is named after its place of origin, Candaba, Pampanga.

Number in Fig. 3	Name of Structure	Brief Description
51	Casa Jaen 2	A two-story stone and wood structure of the typical “bahay na bato” style. Its ground floor is made of exposed stone and has shallow arch doorways and rectangular windows. The wooden second floor, collared with a red awning, is painted cream and gray, and surrounded by capiz-glazed windows and ventanillas. It is located towards the southern end of LCFdA. Like Casa Jaen 1, the structure is also named after its place of origin, Jaen, Nueva Ejica.
52	Casa Bizantina	A three-story brick-and-wood structure of the late Spanish period. Its ground floor is made of exposed bricks while its second and third floors are made of wood. Balconies surround the second floor, while ventanillas and glazed windows surround the third floor. The structure sits further inland in LCFdA and because of its Neo-Mudejar design, it is named Casa Bizantina in LCFdA.
53	Casa Binondo 2	A two-story stone, wood, and tile structure of the typical “bahay na bato” style. Its ground floor is made of exposed stones and punctuated with shallow arch doorways and windows. The front wall of this ground floor is recessed to provide pedestrians with a shaded sidewalk. The wooden second floor is painted off-white and light brown, and is fitted with capiz-glazed windows and ventanillas. It has a huge balcony at the back side. Located in the easternmost section of LCFdA, the casa is named after its place of origin, Binondo, Manila.
54	Casa Binondo 1	A two-story stone, brick, wood, and tile structure. Its ground floor is made of exposed stones and bricks, and fitted with shallow arched doorways and windows. The wooden second floor is painted cream and gray and surrounded with capiz-glazed windows and wrought-iron ventanillas. It is located at the eastern most section of LCFdA. Like Casa Binondo 1, it is also named after its place of origin, Binondo, Manila.

Number in Fig. 3	Name of Structure	Brief Description
55	Casa San Miguel	A two-story stone-and-wood structure of the typical “bahay na bato” style. Its second floor is made of wood and painted olive green and fitted with capiz-glazed windows and ventanillas. A Caryatid is added to a column in its second floor balcony. Located towards the interior of LCFdA, the casa is named after its place of origin, San Miguel, Bulacan.

LCFdA, as an open air museum, can trace its lineage to Arthur Hazelius’s Skansen Museum in Stockholm, Sweden, which first opened in 1891 (Hitchcock 16). Because of such innovation, the term “Skansen” has been used to denote “open air museum.” In Asia, Japan has a famous skansen, Moto-o Tsuchikawa and Yoshiro Taniguchi’s Museum Meiji-Mura in Inuyama, which first opened in 1965 (“About the Museum Meiji-Mura”). In the Southeast Asian region, Thailand has Lek Viriyaphant’s Muang Boran in Samut Prakan, which first opened in 1972; Indonesia has Siti Hartina’s Taman Mini Indonesia Indah in East Jakarta, which first opened in 1975; and Malaysia has the twin skansens of Mahathir Mohamad, the Taman Mini Malaysia and the ASEAN Cultural Park in Ayer Keroh, which first opened in 1986 and 1991, respectively (Cabalfin 29).

The Philippines has a skansen that is older than those of Thailand, Indonesia, and Malaysia: Imelda Marcos’s Nayong Pilipino, first opened in Pasay in 1970, closed in 2002, and relocated to Clark, Pampanga in 2007 (Cabalfin 27). The Philippines has a younger skansen, Benedicto Cabreran’s Tam-awan Village in Baguio City, which first opened in 1998 (“About Us”).

LCFdA shares with the Skansen Museum, the Museum Meiji-Mura, and the Muang Boran, the invasive strategy of relocating old structures; this is significantly different from the Taman Mini Indonesia Indah, the Taman Mini Malaysia, the ASEAN Cultural Park, the Nayong Pilipino, and the Tam-awan Village, all of which house replicas. LCFdA, like the Museum Meiji-Mura, the Muang Boran, the Taman Mini Malaysia, and the ASEAN Cultural Park, is also more of an architectural museum than an ethnographic museum; on the other hand, the Skansen Museum, the Taman Mini Indonesia Indah, the Nayong Pilipino, and the Tam-awan Village are considered a combination of architectural and ethnographic museums. LCFdA is similar to the Skansen Museum, the Museum Meiji-Mura, the Taman Mini Indonesia Indah, the Taman Mini Malaysia, and the Nayong Pilipino, which feature collections that encompass a national scope; meanwhile, the ASEAN Cultural Park has a transnational

scope, and the Tam-awan Village has a local scope. However, LCFdA, the Museum Meiji-Mura, and the Muang Boran are not premised on the grand project of nation-building. Lastly, LCFdA, the Museum Meiji-Mura, the Muang Boran, and the Tam-awan Village are all privately owned; in contrast, the Skansen Museum, the Taman Mini Indonesia Indah, the Taman Mini Malaysia, the ASEAN Cultural Park, and the Nayong Pilipino are publicly owned.

Among the open air museums mentioned above, LCFdA is closest to the Museum Meiji-Mura and the Muang Boran in being privately owned architectural skansens which at the same time use the invasive strategy of relocating old structures. But LCFdA is 38 to 45 years younger than these museums. LCFdA can therefore learn much from the histories and experiences of these two older privately owned architectural skansens.

Acuzar's aggressive and invasive manner of treating Philippine architectural heritage has drawn varied responses from Filipinos. On one extreme are the likes of Senator Manuel "Lito" M. Lapid who filed a resolution on July 2, 2013 to commend Acuzar for "... the development of cultural heritage resort ... which has allowed for the preservation of Philippine architecture ... thereby promoting the richness and enduring value of Filipino culture and history" (Proposed Senate Resolution Number 10). On the other extreme are the likes of Gerard Lico, an architecture professor at the University of the Philippines, who argued that LCFdA is a place where heritage structures are fetishized, become as hollow as western movie sets, and eventually die (Rowe 144).

This paper is premised on the assumption that it is not fair to give a blanket judgment on Acuzar and the LCFdA without looking first into the details of how they assembled their more than 50 heritage structures in Bagac. It aims to show that LCFdA has at least five strategies for building/rebuilding its architectural collections: 1) acquisition and dismantling of old structures in various stages of ruin and their subsequent relocation and reconstruction, 2) acquisition and reconstruction of already demolished houses, 3) construction of partial replicas, 4) construction of full replicas, and 5) construction of entirely new structures that modeled after colonial architecture. A fairer judgment on Acuzar and LCFdA, therefore, can only be made after a thorough analysis of these five strategies using pertinent principles of architectural heritage conservation.

The principles of architectural heritage conservation used by this paper are from the following international and national documents: 1) the International Council on Monuments and Sites's (ICOMOS) "The International Charter for the Conservation and Restoration of Monuments and Sites" of 1965; 2) Republic Act Number 4846 of

1966, otherwise known as the Cultural Properties Preservation and Protection Act; 3) Article XIV, sections 15-16, of the 1987 Philippine Constitution; 4) Republic Act Number 10066 of 2009, otherwise known as An Act Providing for the Protection and Conservation of the National Cultural Heritage, Strengthening the National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA) and its Affiliated Cultural Agencies, and for Other Purposes; 5) the National Historical Commission of the Philippines's (NHCP) "Guidelines on the Declaration of Heritage Houses" of 2010; 6) an undated document from NHCP titled "The Process of Architectural Restoration;" and 7) another undated document from NHCP titled "Basic Conservation Principles."

Thus, this paper contains three substantive sections: 1) an elaboration of each of the five strategies for building/rebuilding, 2) an overview of selected pertinent documents on architectural heritage conservation, and 3) the analyses of the five strategies the five strategies for building/rebuilding. The paper concludes with a holistic judgment on Acuzar and LCFdA's treatment of Philippine architectural heritage. The data for the first substantive section was gathered from published literature and online video materials about LCFdA, as well as several visits of the authors to the actual site, and conversations with LCFdA's tourist guides.

## **THE BUILDING/REBUILDING STRATEGIES OF LCFdA**

### **Acquisition, Dismantling, Relocation, and Reconstruction of Structures**

The strategy of acquisition, dismantling, relocation, and reconstruction was used by LCFdA for 31 of its 55 structures, or for 56 percent of its collection. Table 2 provides a list of the names of these structures and their corresponding numbers in figure 3.

Once LCFdA learns of an old structure that is up for sale or demolition, an initial research is conducted to determine if the structure has enough historical or dramatic character to fire up the interests of the patrons of the theme park (Wazzup Pilipinas). It is important to note that at least two of the current structures of LCFdA were not actually sold by their owners, but instead were donated to Acuzar (Wazzup Pilipinas). Most probably, the owners had already accepted that they could no longer maintain or repair these old structures. Donating them to LCFdA was a way of preserving their existence.

**Table 2.** Names of Structures (as Numbered in Fig. 3) Built/Rebuilt Using the Strategy of Acquisition, Dismantling, Relocation, and Reconstruction

Number in Fig. 3	Name of Structure	Number in Fig. 3	Name of Structure
13	Casa Hagonoy	37	Casa Cagayan 4
15	Casa San Juan	38	Casa Jaen 1
16	Casa Irosin	39	Casa Luna
17	Casa Balanga	40	Casa Baliuag 2
18	Casa Gapan	41	Casa Lubao
24	Casa San Luis	42	Casa Unisan
26	Casa Tuguegarao	44	Casa Meycauayan
27	Casa Santa Rita	47	Casa Baliuag 1
28	Casa Lemery	48	Casa Quiapo
29	Casa Majayjay	49	Casa Tondo
30	Casa New Manila	51	Casa Jaen 2
31	Casa Maranao 1	52	Casa Bizantina
32	Casa Maranao 2	53	Casa Binondo 2
34	Casa Cagayan 1	54	Casa Binondo 1
35	Casa Cagayan 2	55	Casa San Miguel
36	Casa Cagayan 3		

Once LCFdA decides to acquire an old structure, or in some cases, receive a donated structure, the process of dismantling follows. For LCFdA, dismantling requires thorough documentation of the internal and external appearance of the house, as well as labeling and cataloguing its parts, to assure that an accurate reconstruction can be made (Orejas). The materials are then brought to LCFdA. These recovered materials are mostly the wooden, wrought iron, and glass parts. Since most of the masonry that had become brittle could not be dismantled easily, they are no longer transported to LCFdA.

Once a suitable new location for a particular old structure is identified, the process of reconstruction begins. Using the documentary photographs, drawings, as well as the labels and catalogue of retrieved materials, the dismantled structure is re-assembled on site. In this process, only around 60 to 70 percent of the original materials are actually used (Guerrero 2010). For instance, the stone ground floor

typical of the “bahay na bato” style is no longer reconstructed using traditional stone, brick, and lime mortar, but is made instead with steel-reinforced concrete and hollow blocks that would later on be cladded with stone or brick. Casa Hagonoy (number 13 in fig. 3), as a two-story wooden structure, is an exception in retaining 60 to 70 percent of original materials, since LCFdA is more efficient in retrieving and reusing the non-masonry parts (Wazzup Pilipinas). The same exception also applies to the two Casas Maranao (numbers 31 and 32 in fig. 3) and the four Casas Cagayan (numbers 34, 35, 36, and 37 in fig. 3), as wooden structures. Because LCFdA is interested in adaptively reusing relocated structures, its reconstruction process focuses more on the external appearance of such structures. The internal details of these structures are altered to accommodate hotel rooms, restaurants, museums, conference halls, shops, or offices. Nevertheless, LCFdA invests a lot on the internal details of its reconstructed structures. To supply the missing details of a relocated structure and add antique style features, LCFdA established four workshops right outside the theme park: the Brick Department, the Mosaic Department, the Wood Carving Department, and the Art and Furniture Department.

One of LCFdA’s most stunning structures built/rebuilt through the strategy of acquisition, dismantling, relocation, and reconstruction is the Casa Bizantina (number 52 in fig. 3, see table 1 for a brief description). The structure was originally located in Binondo, Manila, and owned by Don Lorenzo del Rosario (Laya et al. 71). After the Second World War, it deteriorated into a tenement of some twenty impoverished families.

Another important structure that was built/rebuilt using the same strategy is the Casa Quiapo (number 48 in fig. 3, see table 1 for a brief description). As the name suggests, it originally stood in Quiapo, Manila, specifically on Hidalgo Street. It was owned by Rafael Enriquez and once served as one of the school buildings of the University of the Philippines (Laya et al. 75). However, it also deteriorated into a tenement and commercial edifice that housed a motley crew of businesses, including an abortion clinic and a live sex show joint.

### **Acquisition and Reconstruction of Already Demolished Structures**

The strategy of acquisition and reconstruction of already demolished structures was used by LCFdA for only one of its 55 edifices, or for only two percent of its collection. Casa Mexico (number 45 in fig. 3, see table 1 for a brief description), was bought as bundles of used wood and wrought iron from a second-hand lumber shop (Team Orange). LCFdA did not have a hand in dismantling the house, and consequently did not have the chance to document, photograph, and draw its exterior and interior



prior to demolition. LCFdA also did not have the chance to label and catalogue its materials. Hence, the bundles of wood and wrought iron were pieced together, like a giant jigsaw puzzle, with just a few old photographs as reference. It is doubtful if Casa Mexico was able to retain 60 percent of its original materials, as parts of it could have been easily lost somewhere in the demolition and display at the second-hand lumber shop. The stones that the ground floor is supposedly made of are just claddings on steel-reinforced concrete and hollow blocks. The house is adaptively reused as the sales office of LCFdA, and the starting point of its day tours. As suggested by the casa's name, it originated from Mexico, Pampanga.

### **Construction of Partial Replicas**

The strategy of constructing partial replicas was used by LCFdA for two of its 55 structures, or four percent of its collection. Specifically, the said strategy was used for the building/rebuilding of Casa Biñan (number 46 in fig. 3, see table 1 for a brief description) and Casa Candaba (number 50 in fig. 3, see table 1 for a brief description). The previously discussed building/rebuilding strategies of LCFdA had about 60 to 70 percent retention of original materials. This implies that any structure standing in LCFdA that was built/rebuilt through the first two methods is, strictly speaking, also a partial replica of its original. But the word "partial" in this third strategy means below the 60 to 70 percent average rate of retention of original materials of the first strategy.

Like Casa Mexico, the stones of Casa Biñan are in reality just claddings on steel-reinforced concrete and hollow blocks. One of the biggest structures in LCFdA, it is also so far the most controversial structure in the theme park because about five percent of its parts were taken from an old house owned by Jose Rizal's maternal ancestor (Wazzup Pilipinas). The structure was originally located in Biñan, Laguna and was owned by Gregorio Alonzo, then by Alberto Alonzo, the half-brother of Teodora Alonzo, mother of Rizal. As the house deteriorated, the owners decided to donate it to LCFdA in order to give it a new lease on life. When LCFdA started the dismantling process, a public uproar erupted, which eventually resulted in the construction of a partial replica in Bagac (Laya et al. 81-83). The structure has been adaptively reused as a restaurant.

Built in the 1780s, Casa Candaba is the oldest structure in LCFdA's collection. It was originally located in Candaba, Pampanga, and used to be owned by a prominent family named Reyes. When Acuzar bought the structure in 2005, it was already half-demolished (Laya et al. 63-64). This gives us an estimate that in its reconstructed state, only about 30 to 35 percent of the original materials were retained. The structure is now adaptively reused as an exhibit gallery.

## Construction of Full Replicas

The strategy of constructing full replicas was used by LCFdA for 17 of its 55 structures, or 31 percent of its collection. Table 3 provides a list of the names of these structures and their corresponding numbers in figure 3.

**Table 3.** Names of Structures (as Numbered in Fig. 3) Built/Rebuilt Using the Strategy of Making Full Replicas

Number in Fig. 3	Name of Structure	Number in Fig. 3	Name of Structure
1	Accesoria 1	10	Accesoria 10
2	Accesoria 2	20	Accesoria 12
3	Accesoria 3	21	Accesoria 13
4	Accesoria 4	22	Accesoria 14
5	Accesoria 5	33	Santuario de San Jose
6	Accesoria 6	14	Hotel de Oriente
7	Accesoria 7	19	Accesoria 11
8	Accesoria 8	43	Paseo Escolta
9	Accesoria 9		

Unlike the first three strategies mentioned above, the strategy of making full replicas is totally non-invasive. It merely recreates significant structures based on their existing photographs. In most cases, such photographs document only the façade of these significant structures. Hence, the strategy of making full replicas is similar to the strategy of acquiring already demolished structures in terms of the amount of creative reconstruction and guesswork involved.

One of the most impressive structures that was built/rebuilt through this strategy is the Hotel de Oriente (number 14 in fig. 3, see table 1 for a brief description). As already mentioned, it brought to life the three-story Spanish period hotel from Binondo that was destroyed during the Second World War (GMA Public Affairs). It is the biggest structure in LCFdA and is adaptively reused as a convention center and a Spanish restaurant. Another impressive structure that was built/rebuilt through this strategy is the Paseo de Escolta (number 43 in fig. 3, see table 1 for a brief description), which replicates some dwelling and commercial buildings along Escolta Street, Manila's old business and shopping district. Its central structure currently houses a hotel, as well as food and souvenir shops.

## Construction of Entirely New Structures Modeled After Colonial Architecture

The strategy of constructing entirely new structures modeled after colonial architecture was used by LCFdA for 4 of its 55 edifices, or seven percent of its collection. Specifically, the said strategy was used for the building/rebuilding of Casa Terraza (number 11 in fig. 3), Casa Ladrillo (number 12 in fig. 3), Casa Esquina (number 23 in fig. 3), and Casa Bonita (number 25 in fig. 3). Like making full replicas, this strategy is non-invasive. Unlike making full replicas, which copies structures that actually historically existed, new structures built in the manner of colonial architecture are modeled after historical architectural plans (about 50 to 100 years old) retrieved from the archives, which were never actually executed (Madrid). This is the reason why LCFdA also refers to these entirely new structures as “archival structures.”

One of the most impressive structures built/rebuilt through this strategy is the Casa Ladrillo (see table 1 for a brief description). The Casa’s architectural plan was drawn during the late Spanish period. It is now adaptively reused as a hotel. The same strategy was used to build Casa Esquina (see table 1 for a brief description). Casa Esquina is one of the smallest structures in LCFdA and functions as a hotel.

## Summation on the Five Building/Rebuilding Strategies of LCFdA

Figure 4 shows how the structures that were built/rebuilt using each of the five strategies are located, scattered, or distributed in LCFdA.

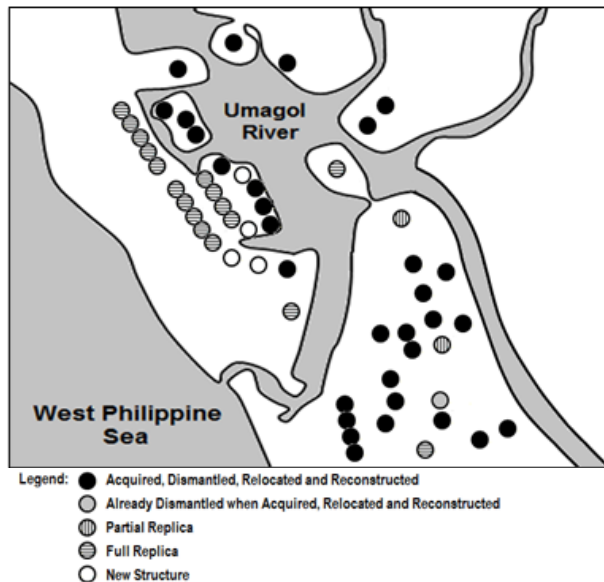
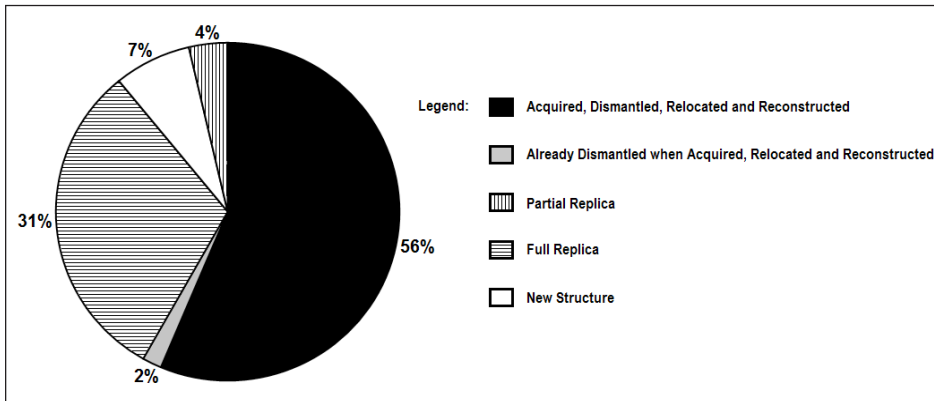


Fig. 4. Locations of the structures built/rebuilt by each of the five strategies.

Figure 5 shows how 56 percent of LCFdA's structures were built using the first strategy, two percent the second strategy, four percent the third strategy, 31 percent the fourth strategy, and seven percent the fifth strategy. The most used strategies are the first and fourth, while the second and third are rarely used.



**Fig. 5.** Visual comparison of the percentages of structures built/rebuilt through each of the five strategies of LCFdA.

## PRINCIPLES OF HERITAGE CONSERVATION

In examining the important principles for architectural heritage conservation, this paper refers to seven pertinent documents mentioned earlier. The following subsections elaborate on these documents.

### ICOMOS's "Venice Charter" of 1965

ICOMOS's "Venice Charter" of 1965, titled "The International Charter for the Conservation and Restoration of Monuments and Sites," is still currently the most important international document pertinent to the protection of architectural heritage. Articles 1, 2, 4, 7, 12, and 16 of the charter are directly relevant to the concerns of this paper. Article 1 clarifies that historic monuments are not limited "to great works of arts" but also include the "more modest works of the past which have acquired cultural significance with the passing of time." Article 2 stipulates that the conservation and restoration of such historic monuments should have the benefit of "all the sciences and techniques which can contribute to the study and safeguarding of the architectural heritage."

Article 4 specifies that the conserved historic monuments should "be maintained on a permanent basis." Article 7 explains that a historic monument is inseparable from

its original setting, and therefore the relocation “of all or part” of it is something that “cannot be allowed except where the safeguarding of that monument demands it or where it is justified by national or international interest of paramount importance.” Article 12 requires that in case some missing parts of a historic monument are to be replaced, such replacements “must integrate harmoniously with the whole, but at the same time must be distinguishable from the original so that restoration does not falsify the artistic or historic evidence.” Article 16 necessitates that all states of all works of preservation and restoration should be accompanied by meticulous “documentation in the form of analytical and critical reports, illustrated with drawings and photographs.” The same article recommends that such reports be published.

### **Republic Act 4846 of 1966**

Republic Act 4846 of 1966 or the Cultural Properties Preservation and Protection Act was amended by Presidential Decree Number 374 of 1974 (Amending Certain Sections of Republic Act Number 4846). The amended Republic Act 4846 contains 24 sections. Sections 3 and 15 are directly relevant to the concerns of this paper. Section 3 defines cultural properties as

old buildings, monuments, shrines, documents, and objects which may be classified as antiques, relics, or artifacts, landmarks, anthropological and historical sites, and specimens of natural history which are of cultural, historical, anthropological or scientific value and significance to the nation; such as ... houses ... architecture... .

Section 15 regulates the sale of cultural properties, stipulating that they “should be registered” first “with the National Museum” and that the “Government shall be given the first option for three months to buy these cultural properties when placed on sale.”

### **Article XIV, Sections 15-16 of the 1987 Philippine Constitution**

The 1987 Philippine Constitution’s rather cryptic reference to architectural heritage conservation is found in Article XIV, titled “Education, Science and Technology, Arts, Culture, and Sports.” Section 15 of this article mentions that the government has the obligation to “conserve, promote, and popularize the nation’s historical and cultural heritage and resources . . .”; on the other hand, section 16 recognizes that the government is the protector of these historical and cultural heritage and resources and therefore “may regulate” their “disposition.”

## **Republic Act 10066 of 2010**

Republic Act 10066 of 2010, entitled “An Act Providing for the Protection and Conservation of the National Cultural Heritage, Strengthening the National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA) and its Affiliated Cultural Agencies, and for Other Purposes,” contains 15 articles. Articles I, III, V, and XIII are directly relevant to the concerns of this paper. Article I explains that the Government has the obligation “to create a balanced atmosphere where the historic past coexists in harmony with modern society” and that it should “approach the problem of conservation in an integrated and holistic manner, cutting across all relevant disciplines and technologies” (section 2).

Article III stipulates, among others, that “structures dating at least fifty (50) years old” are presumed to be “important cultural properties,” and that the owners of such structures have the burden of petitioning the appropriate Government cultural agency to remove such presumption (section 5). The same article guarantees that any cultural property that was officially declared as an important cultural property is qualified to receive government “funding for its protection, conservation and restoration,” and if it is an immovable cultural property it is also qualified to have a heritage marker (section 7). The same article prohibits the sale of any cultural property without “clearance” from its pertinent government cultural agency (section 11).

Article V states, among others, that the conservation of an important cultural property “shall be undertaken through the appropriate” government “cultural agency which shall supervise” such conservation (section 15). The same article obliges this government agency to “approve only those methods and materials that strictly adhere to the accepted international standards of conservation” (section 15). Article XIII bares the teeth of Republic Act 10066 by specifying that violators of this law, including dealers of cultural properties that are not properly registered and cleared by the appropriate government cultural agency, will be fined the amount of no less than two hundred thousand pesos (Php 200,000.00) and will face imprisonment of no less than ten years (section 48).

## **The NHCP’s “Guidelines on the Declaration of Heritage Houses” of 2010**

The NHCP’s “Guidelines on the Declaration of Heritage Houses” of 2010 appears to be the agency’s elaboration on the official declaration of specific architectural structures as important cultural properties following the mandate set by Republic Act 10066 of 2009. The NHCP is one of the appropriate government agencies in as far as heritage architecture is concerned. The document contains six parts. Parts I, II,

III, and IV are directly relevant to the concerns of this paper. Part I defines heritage houses as structures of “significant cultural, historical, social, architectural, and artistic value” that must be preserved for the present and future generations. It also enumerates the period styles of such heritage houses: “ethnic/indigenous tradition,” “Spanish colonial, American colonial, Post-war,” and “mixed.” Part II lays down at least three criteria in identifying a heritage house: 1) it “must be at least fifty (50) years old”; 2) it must represent a particular “development or style in architecture”; and 3) it must have retained its “form, character, and style” as well as at least 70 percent of its original materials.

Part III specifies the privileges of the owners of heritage houses: 1) tax incentives “in the form of reduced realty tax or tax deductions from income for repairs and maintenance” of said heritage houses; 2) government subsidy for repairs or maintenance, as well as assistance in terms of giving “technical advice on how to carry out preservation and restoration works”; 3) the installation of an official heritage marker; and 4) prior negotiation for a memorandum governing the access of the general public to the heritage structures.

Part IV itemizes the responsibilities of the owners of heritage houses: 1) they should maintain the structure, but “any repair, addition, alteration, renovation, restoration or reconstruction” can only be done after the issuance of a written permission from the NHCP; 2) if and when the land where a heritage house sits is intended to be used for other purposes, the owner of the heritage house may opt to dismantle and transfer it to another site; 3) they must allow the public to have access to the heritage house based on a previously negotiated memorandum with the NHCP; 4) they must pass on all the responsibilities to their heirs and succeeding owners; and 5) if and when the heritage house and its property will be sold, “the government shall be given the first priority of purchase.”

### **The NHCP’s “The Process of Architectural Restoration”**

NHCP’s undated document “The Process of Architectural Restoration” is a set of general guidelines on how to undertake the conservation and restoration of heritage architectural structures. The document contains eight numbered parts, of which numbers 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8 are directly relevant to the concerns of this paper as they tackle the separate stages of the conservation and restoration of heritage architectural structures, namely: 1) planning and research, 2) approval of the formulated conservation and restoration plan, 3) execution of the actual conservation and restoration, 4) documentation and publication, and 5) use and maintenance of the conserved and restored structure. The significant addition made by this document to the previously mentioned principles is the necessity to publish the documentation in book form (Part 7).

## **NHCP’s Undated “Basic Conservation Principles”**

NHCP’s undated document “Basic Conservation Principles” is the agency’s explicit endorsement of ICOMOS’s “Venice Charter,” reprinting the charter in its entirety. But in this NHCP document, the reprinted “Venice Charter” is preceded by an enumeration of some conservation and restoration principles, such as: “the least intervention is the best conservation”; “it is better to preserve than to restore, to restore than to reconstruct, to reconstruct than to do nothing at all”; “restoration is not carried to return the work to its ‘primitive splendor’”; “only negative factors which do not allow the correct interpretation of the object must be removed”; “whatever is added to, applied on, or into the monument, must be able to reverse or be taken out in cases of negative effects proven after intervention”; “restoration must never be an imitation, a falsification or in competition with the original”; and “restoration is not luxury . . . , not nostalgic . . . , not a masking.”

## **ANALYSES OF THE BUILDING/REBUILDING STRATEGIES OF LCFdA**

In this section, which is the heart of this paper, each of the five building/rebuilding strategies of LCFdA is critiqued using the conservation and restoration principles gleaned from the seven pertinent international and national documents that were presented in the preceding section.

### **On the Strategy of Acquiring, Dismantling, Relocating, and Reconstructing Structures**

The strategy of acquisition, dismantling, relocation, and reconstruction is LCFdA’s most aggressive, invasive, and controversial building/rebuilding strategy. This paper’s critique of LCFdA’s first strategy focuses on five areas, namely: 1) the 31 edifices’ presumptive status as heritage structures, 2) the process of acquisition, 3) the process of relocation, 4) the process of reconstruction and renovation, and 5) the process of documentation and publication.

Concerning the 31 edifices’ presumptive status as heritage structures, the pertinent documents that would clearly determine their actual status are Republic Act 10066 and NHCP’s “Guidelines on the Declaration of Heritage Houses.” Casa Hagonoy (number 13 in fig. 3), which was built in 1936, is the “newest” among the LCFdA’s structures that were built/rebuilt through this strategy (Wazzup Pilipinas). If Casa Hagonoy is already more than 80 years old today, surely the other 30 structures are more than 50 years old, which is the minimum presumptive age for important cultural properties under Republic Act 10066 (Article III, section 5). Under NHCP’s “Guidelines,” these structures that represent particular developments and styles in



Philippine architecture and are more than 70 percent original in their pre-relocation state, are presumed to be heritage houses. But the crucial cut-off year here is 2010, or the year when NHCP’s “Guidelines” and Republic Act 10066 took effect. Table 4 shows which of the 31 structures were rebuilt in LCFdA before and after 2010.

**Table 4.** LCFdA’s Structures Built/Rebuilt through the First Strategy (as Numbered in Fig. 3) Before and After 2010

Structures Rebuilt in LCFdA Before 2010		Structures Rebuilt in LCFdA After 2010	
Number in Fig. 3	Name	Number in Fig. 3	Name
34	Casa Cagayan 1	13	Casa Hagonoy
35	Casa Cagayan 2	15	Casa San Juan
36	Casa Cagayan 3	16	Casa Irosin
37	Casa Cagayan 4	17	Casa Balanga
38	Casa Jaen 1	18	Casa Gapan
39	Casa Luna	24	Casa San Luis
40	Casa Baliuag 2	26	Casa Tuguegarao
41	Casa Lubao	27	Casa Santa Rita
42	Casa Unisan	28	Casa Lemery
44	Casa Meycauayan	29	Casa Majayjay
47	Casa Baliuag 1	30	Casa New Manila
48	Casa Quiapo	31	Casa Maranao 1
49	Casa Tondo	32	Casa Maranao 2
51	Casa Jaen 2		
52	Casa Bizantina		
53	Casa Binondo 2		
54	Casa Binondo 1		
55	Casa San Miguel		

The dating of the structures in table 4 is based on two old versions of LCFdA’s brochure map that were posted on the internet on 29 September 2010 and 1 April 2014 by two Filipino travel bloggers, Daphne Osen and Donna Fuentes (“Las Casas Filipinas de Acuzar” 2010; “Bataan International Triathlon 2014”). Based on Republic Act 10066, NHCP’s “Guidelines,” and table 4, only 13 of LCFdA’s 31 edifices

that were built/rebuilt through the first strategy hold the presumptive status of being important cultural properties and heritage houses at the time of their dismantling and relocation to Bagac. Going by the technicality of Philippine laws and policies, the other 18 edifices cannot be given the presumptive status of being important cultural properties and heritage houses at the time of their dismantling and relocation to Bagac, because they antedated the effectivities of the said two documents. These 13 edifices that hold the presumptive status of being important cultural properties and heritage houses represent less than half (42 percent) of the said 31 edifices, and less than a quarter (24 percent) of LCFdA's total collection of 55 structures.

Only LCFdA's 13 presumptive heritage houses can be critiqued using the exacting provisions of Republic Act 10066 and NHCP's "Guidelines." Republic Act 10066 prohibits the sale of any cultural property without "a clearance" from its pertinent government cultural agency; meanwhile, NHCP's "Guidelines" orders that if a heritage house and its property is to be sold, "the government shall be given the first priority of purchase" (Republic Act 10066, Article III, Section 11; "Guidelines," Part IV). This paper is inclined to give the acquisition process of the 13 edifices—now located in LCFdA—the presumption of regularity. They were built/rebuilt after 2010 and became objects of public and media attention, and were even showcased by the National Government to the representatives of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) in 2015, without raising any objections from NHCP and other heritage experts and watchdogs.

Regarding the process of relocating these 13 presumptive heritage houses, ICOMOS's "Venice Charter" specifies that a historic monument is inseparable from its original setting, and therefore the relocation "of all or part" of it is something that "cannot be allowed" (Article 7). Its exceptions are very stringent: "the safeguarding of that monument demands it or where it is justified by national or international interest of paramount importance" (Article 7). However, NHCP's "Guidelines" is very permissive on this regard: if the land on which a heritage house stands is intended to be used for other purposes, the owner of the heritage house may opt to dismantle and transfer it to another site (Part IV). Therefore, relocation, which is the most controversial aspect of the building/rebuilding strategy of LCFdA, is something that is actually permitted under Philippine policies.

When it comes to the processes of reconstruction and renovation of the 13 presumptive heritage houses of LCFdA, ICOMOS's "Venice Charter" insists that these processes should be done under the light of "all the sciences and techniques" (Article 2). Republic Act 10066 maintains that such processes should be done under appropriate supervision and approval of the appropriate government agency.

On the other hand, NHCP's "Guidelines" stipulates that such processes can only be done once a written permission from NHCP is issued (Republic Act 10066, Article V, section 15; "Guidelines," Part IV). Again, for these reasons, this paper is also inclined to give the reconstruction and renovation of these 13 structures the presumption of regularity. However, there is one important principle from ICOMOS's "Venice Charter" that seems to have been overlooked by LCFdA. This principle demands that the replacements of missing parts be "integrat[ed] harmoniously with the whole, but at the same time must be distinguishable from the original so that restoration does not falsify the artistic or historic evidence" (Article 12). However, the average tourist or patron of LCFdA will not be able to easily distinguish the original materials from the replacements in any of these 13 presumptive heritage structures.

With regard to the documentation of baseline, dismantling, relocation, reconstruction, and renovation of these 13 presumptive heritage houses, ICOMOS's "Venice Charter" requires meticulous "documentation in the form of analytical and critical reports, illustrated with drawings and photographs"; the same article recommends that these reports be published. NHCP's "The Process of Architectural Restoration" specifies that this publication requirement is in the form of book publication ("Venice Charter," Article 16; "Process," Part 7). While LCFdA has been meticulous in documenting the materials and structures prior to the dismantling process, the documentation is only intended for the accurate reconstruction of the relocated structures. The shortcoming of LCFdA is that it was not able to generate "analytical and critical reports, illustrated with drawing and photographs" of the baseline, dismantling, relocation, reconstruction, and renovation of the said presumptive heritage structures, and publish these reports as a book.

### **On the Strategy of Acquiring and Reconstructing Already Demolished Structures**

This strategy was used only on a single edifice, Casa Mexico, which was brought to LCFdA prior to 2010 (Las Casas Filipinas de Acuzar 2010). Hence the clear provisions of Republic Act 10066 and NHCP's "Guidelines" were not yet in effect and could therefore not be the basis for labeling Casa Mexico as a presumptive important cultural property and heritage house during the time its parts were spotted by LCFdA. But even if this had happened after 2010, LCFdA's retrieval of Casa Mexico's bundled parts from the lumber shop mentioned above should be considered noble and laudable.

### **On the Strategy of Constructing Partial Replicas**

The strategy was used on two edifices, Casa Biñan and Casa Candaba, under different circumstances. Casa Candaba was built/rebuilt in LCFdA before 2010 and is therefore not subject to the strict regulations of Republic Act 10066 and NHCP's "Guidelines" (Las Casas Filipinas de Acuzar 2010). In the first place, it cannot be

considered a presumptive important cultural property and heritage house at the time of its dismantling and relocation. But even if it were, LCFdA's work in salvaging the property and reconstructing it in Bagac is commendable.

Casa Biñan, on the other hand, was donated by its owners to LCFdA in 2011 (Ranada). Therefore, it already had that presumptive status of being an important cultural property and heritage house when LCFdA started dismantling it. As already mentioned, public uproar prevented LCFdA from relocating the whole structure to Bagac, forcing the heritage theme park to recreate about 95 percent of the edifice. Relocating the parts of a presumptive important cultural property and heritage house is prohibited by ICOMOS's "Venice Charter" (Article 7). NHCP's "Guidelines" does not allow partial relocations either. This makes it difficult for LCFdA to seek exception on the basis of "safeguarding" the parts of this structure, or by claiming that a partial transfer serves "national or international interest."

### **On the Strategy of Constructing Full Replicas**

None of the principles of architectural heritage conservation found in the documents reviewed by this paper could serve as a basis for critiquing the building/rebuilding of 17 edifices following this strategy. Nevertheless, as these replicas amaze tourists and patrons and make them realize the beauty and value of Philippine heritage structures, constructing full replicas is actually laudable. As long as these replicas are clearly presented as replicas so as not to mislead the general public that they are originals, their educational function is very significant.

### **On the Strategy of Constructing Entirely New Structures Styled after Colonial Architecture**

None of the principles of architectural heritage conservation mentioned can serve as a basis for critiquing the building/rebuilding of 4 edifices using this strategy. However, since they are impressive and boost tourism, this strategy is still considered commendable. As long as these entirely new structures are presented clearly as styled after colonial architecture, they retain their educational value.

### **Conclusion**

Table 5 shows which among the 55 structures of LCFdA have compromised certain conservation and restoration principles studied in this paper. The same table presents the degree of such compromises.

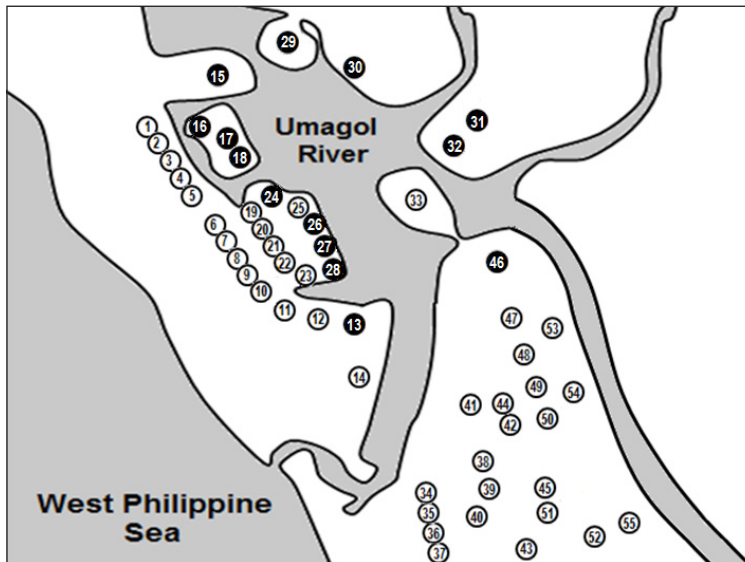
**Table 5.** Summary of this Paper's Critique of the 55 Structures of LCFdA

Number in Fig. 3	Name	Strategy of Building/Rebuilding	Pertinent Conservation Principle Compromised	Specifics	Magnitude of Compromise
1	Accesoria 1	Strategy 4	None	N.A.	N.A.
2	Accesoria 2	Strategy 4			
3	Accesoria 3	Strategy 4			
4	Accesoria 4	Strategy 4			
5	Accesoria 5	Strategy 4			
6	Accesoria 6	Strategy 4			
7	Accesoria 7	Strategy 4			
8	Accesoria 8	Strategy 4			
9	Accesoria 9	Strategy 4			
10	Accesoria 10	Strategy 4			
11	Casa Terraza	Strategy 5			
12	Casa Ladrillo	Strategy 5			
13	Casa Hagonoy	Strategy 1	Article 12, ICOMOS's "Venice Charter"; Article 16, ICOMOS's "Venice Charter"; Part 7, NCHP's "The Process of Architectural Restoration"	Replaced parts are not easily noticeable; no documentation in the form of critical and analytic reports; no book publication of such reports.	Light/Procedural
14	Hotel de Oriente	Strategy 4	None	N.A.	N.A.
15	Casa San Juan	Strategy 1	Article 12, ICOMOS's "Venice Charter"; Article 16, ICOMOS's "Venice Charter"; Part 7, NCHP's "The Process of Architectural Restoration"	Replaced parts are not easily noticeable; no documentation in the form of critical and analytic reports; no book publication of such reports.	Light/Procedural
16	Casa Irosin	Strategy 1			
17	Casa Balanga	Strategy 1			
18	Casa Gapan	Strategy 1			

Number in Fig. 3	Name	Strategy of Building/ Rebuilding	Pertinent Conservation Principle Compromised	Specifics	Magnitude of Compromise
19	Accesoria 11	Strategy 4	None	N.A.	N.A.
20	Accesoria 12	Strategy 4			
21	Accesoria 13	Strategy 4			
22	Accesoria 14	Strategy 4			
23	Casa Esquina	Strategy 5			
24	Casa San Luis	Strategy 1	Article 12, ICOMOS's "Venice Charter"; Article 16, ICOMOS's "Venice Charter"; Part 7, NCHP's "The Process of Architectural Restoration"	Replaced parts are not easily noticeable; no documentation in the form of critical and analytic reports; no book publication of such reports.	Light/ Procedural
25	Casa Bonita	Strategy 5	None	N.A.	N.A.
26	Casa Tuguegarao	Strategy 1	Article 12, ICOMOS's "Venice Charter"; Article 16, ICOMOS's "Venice Charter"; Part 7, NCHP's "The Process of Architectural Restoration"	Replaced parts are not easily noticeable; no documentation in the form of critical and analytic reports; and no book publication of such reports.	Light/ Procedural
27	Casa Santa Rita	Strategy 1			
28	Casa Lemery	Strategy 1			
29	Casa Majayjay	Strategy 1			
30	Casa New Manila	Strategy 1			
31	Casa Maranao 1	Strategy 1			
32	Casa Maranao 2	Strategy 1			
33	Santuario de San Jose	Strategy 4	None	N.A.	N.A.
34	Casa Cagayan 1	Strategy 1			
35	Casa Cagayan 2	Strategy 1			
36	Casa Cagayan 3	Strategy 1			
37	Casa Cagayan 4	Strategy 1			
38	Casa Jaen 1	Strategy 1			

Number in Fig. 3	Name	Strategy of Building/Rebuilding	Pertinent Conservation Principle Compromised	Specifics	Magnitude of Compromise
39	Casa Luna	Strategy 1	None	N.A.	N.A.
40	Casa Baliuag 2	Strategy 1			
41	Casa Lubao	Strategy 1			
42	Casa Unisan	Strategy 1			
43	Paseo Escolta	Strategy 4			
44	Casa Meycauayan	Strategy 1			
45	Casa Mexico	Strategy 2			
46	Casa Biñan	Strategy 3	Article 7, ICOMOS's "Venice Charter"	LCFdA relocated parts of the Alberto House and integrated it into Casa Biñan without satisfying the exceptions of the said principle of architectural heritage conservation.	Grave/ Material
47	Casa Baliuag 1	Strategy 1	None	N.A.	N.A.
48	Casa Quiapo	Strategy 1			
49	Casa Tondo	Strategy 1			
50	Casa Candaba	Strategy 3			
51	Casa Jaen 2	Strategy 1			
52	Casa Bizantina	Strategy 1			
53	Casa Binondo 2	Strategy 1			
54	Casa Binondo 1	Strategy 1			
55	Casa San Miguel	Strategy 1			

Figure 6 visually presents the specific locations of these 14 structures (numbers highlighted in black) that compromise some of the pertinent conservation and restoration principles.



**Fig. 6.** Specific locations of the 14 structures of LCFdA that compromised some of the pertinent conservation and restoration principles.

Table 5 and figure 6 demonstrate that 25 percent of LCFdA's 55 structures compromised certain conservation and restoration principles. Such compromises are all remediable. LCFdA can easily devise a system to let tourists and patrons know which parts of its heritage structures, or of the theme park as a whole, are original and which ones are replacements. It can produce and publish books containing the analytical and critical reports of the baseline, dismantling, relocation, reconstruction, and renovation of its 13 presumptive heritage houses. LCFdA can also opt to return to Biñan, Laguna, the questionable parts of its Casa Biñan. These rectifications would not hurt LCFdA. On the contrary, they could even stir up publicity that can be used to show that the theme park adheres to conservation and restoration standards.

After thoroughly critiquing each of the five building/rebuilding strategies of LCFdA and its treatment of Philippine architectural heritage, this paper claims that although 25 percent of its total collection of edifices is characterized by compromises, its educational value to Filipinos far outweighs such questionable practices. LCFdA can always opt to adhere more closely to local and international standards of architectural conservation and restoration, and eventually decide to address its existing shortcomings.



## **LCFdA's Hidden Potential**

This paper cannot not mention LCFdA's hidden potential as a skansen. Aside from its initiative to market itself as a resort and tourist destination, it could also venture into developing itself as an ethnographic museum instead of just being an architectural museum. Pertinent government agencies could also partner with LCFdA in exploiting its capacity for nation-building just like what many skansens that were reviewed earlier by this study are doing.

## **Persistent Questions and other Threats**

Treating LCFdA as a skansen—and at the same time recognizing its strengths and weaknesses—can help mitigate the criticisms made by the country's most respected heritage conservation advocates. This paper already mentioned Lico's stand on how heritage structures are fetishized by projects such as those of LCFdA. But even before he expressed his sentiment, he had already stated his dislike for the fragmentation of the past or how it is "packaged and consumed at the present time," as this would "dismiss the full context of the past and trivialize its recollection" (527). The late Augusto Villalon, who was an architect and dedicated heritage conservationist, argued that "once a heritage structure is removed from its original environment and transferred to another, it loses its authenticity, and therefore loses its value" (qtd. in Cruz). Edson Roy Cabalfin, an American-based architecture professor, found in Nayong Pilipino and in similar skansens the tendency to self-exoticize and self-orientalize, and therefore distort their represented phenomena (28).

These persistent issues, valid as they are, cannot be adequately addressed in this paper. A possible topic that could be pursued by the authors of this paper is a critique of the pertinent Philippine principles on heritage conservation using the arguments and insights of these representative Filipino heritage conservation advocates. Architectural skansens, if they involve replicas only, would not be as interesting as those that also involve the relocation of old structures. But all architectural skansens are actually doomed to decontextualize and recontextualize their displayed structures, as well as meddle with their authenticities. Perhaps it is the duty of a given country's scholars and intellectuals to constantly study these skansens so that more acceptable levels of decontextualization, recontextualization, and self-distortion are possible.

Lico's comment on LCFdA should be given a more materialistic and pragmatic reading by considering LCFdA as an architectural skansen. This means that the 31 presumed heritage structures' long-term existence could be compromised by the possibility that LCFdA would eventually be parceled out to the heirs of Acuzar or

tied to the financial fortune of Acuzar's New San Jose Builders, Incorporated. As an architectural skansen, LCFdA can circumvent the possibility of being parceled out to the heirs of Acuzar by remaining a separate corporation that would eventually be owned by Acuzar's heirs. It can avoid being tied to the financial fortune of New San Jose Builders, Incorporated, by benchmarking on the practices of the privately owned Museum Meiji-Mura and the Muang Boran. In both scenarios, the Philippine government should vigilantly monitor LCFdA for the sake of the 31 presumed heritage structures.

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