

The Lifework of Architect Antonio A. Flores

Bela S. Lanyi¹

blanyi@usc.edu.ph

Abstract

Antonio Andres Legaspi Flores, a Filipino architect and educator, strongly shaped the built environment of his clients, mostly the Society of the Divine Word (SVD). It is now time to revisit his buildings, the motivations behind them, and their acceptance by investors and users. Up to today, the person of Flores is under debate. The paper examines Flores' major design ideas and debated solutions where design advocacy seemed to contrast with physical sustainability. In conclusion, the research presents Flores' lifework as an out-of-the-box approach that widens perspectives of Philippine architecture.

Keywords: Flores, UAP, nature-inspired architecture, history of architecture, religious architecture

I. Introduction

This article is a monograph on the works and significance of Ar. Antonio Andres Flores, SVD. Upon the researcher's transfer to the Philippine Southern Province of the Society of the Divine Word (SVD-PHS), in 2007, he first encountered Flores who was at that time Chairman of the Department of Architecture. But later the researcher got more acquainted with him as both of them were part of FARLYD Architects, a collaboration of six architects who designed the Learning Resource Center of the University of San Carlos (USC-LRC). Beyond that, very few written sources remained after Flores: mostly correspondence with religious superiors. He died with dreams but without notes on his lifeworks. This researcher still felt equipped to do research on him based on many conversations, the support of SVD, and colleagues' personal memories. He also visited most of Flores' works and heard reflections from the builders and users regarding Flores' legacy of nature-inspired architecture.

A. Logical Framework

The logical framework of this research follows the literary rules of the genre monograph. After the abstract, introduction, logical framework, and method, first, the chronology of Flores' professional development is presented. Then, second, the characteristic features of Flores' lifework along with the application and interpretation of his characteristic design features follow. Third, from these analyses, Flores' advocacy as an architect, educator, and leader is being stated and evaluated. The conclusion presents his influence on Philippine architecture.

B. Research Method

The research method is based on methods of "Cornell School historicism", with Wittkower as the main representative, "connecting disparate formal manifestations with underlying conceptual matrices" (Hendrix, 2006, 2008), in order to widen the vision from formal and functional solutions to human factors: psychological, social and even political roots. (Lavin, 2007) (Rowe, 1994) (Muschamp, 1999) In this inductive method, the first line of premises consists of typological statements on design features which were matched with a second line of premises: the given design features' appearance in Flores' various designs, in order to achieve their interpretations. This leads to the study's conclusion on the presence and validity of Flores's lifework. The research ends with evaluation, endnotes, and references.

¹ Br. Bela Lanyi, SVD graduated from the Budapest Technological University in Hungary (Master of Architecture) and from the Philosophisch-Theologische Hochschule Sankt Gabriel in Austria (Master of Theology). In the place of his first mission assignment, in Byelorussia, he was construction director of the four Catholic dioceses of the country, which counted some 1.5 million Catholics. He worked as a registered architect in Byelorussia (Commonwealth of Independent States). Then (2001-2007) he was handling philosophy and sacred architecture at the Sapientia School of Theology in Budapest, Hungary.

From 2007, he has been teaching at the Department of Architecture at University of San Carlos, Cebu City, first as a faculty member and later the Office-in-Charge of the Department. As Editor-in-Chief of Lantawan, the official architecture magazine of USC, he contributed to Philippine architectural communication. He handles Theory of Architecture 1.-2., Design 5.-6., Architectural Journalism and Criticism 1.-2., an elective subject. He has published the very first Philippine interview book on architecture: Architectural Communication and Criticism in the Philippines, 2015-2016. His research fields: contemporary architecture in the Philippines, international architectural education, sacred architecture.

II. Chronology: The Life of Flores

Antonio Andres Flores was born in Dumaguete City, Negros on November 30, 1957. This heritage city in the Philippines offered a lot of artistic inspiration. His initial schooling—from first grade to the first two years in college—was at St. Paul College in Dumaguete. In 1975, he moved to the University of San Carlos in Cebu. In March 1977 he decided to enter the SVD Brotherhood Novitiate; then he continued his studies in architecture. He made his first religious vows in 1980. He finished his architecture studies and subsequently passed the professional licensure exams for architects in 1984. First, he had been assisting the SVD mission parish priests in Agusan, particularly Bunawan. He took his perpetual vows in 1985. Shortly afterward, he was assigned to the Philippine Southern Province to teach at the University of San Carlos. In 1986, he received the appointment as the Administrator of the USC Talamban Campus and as a part-time teacher in the College of Architecture and Fine Arts. Then, for three years (1988–1990), he took up graduate studies in architecture at the Catholic University of America in Washington DC where he finished with a Master of Architecture degree. On his return in May 1991, he was formally engaged by the SVD Province as a building consultant. He also established the ALF Design Office on April 20, 1992. Then, he was appointed Chair of the USC Architecture Department. Through his Design Office, he accepted commissions for the design and supervision of various buildings for the SVD Province. He was thrice elected as Chapter President of the United Architects of the Philippines in Cebu. He died in August 2012. (Province, 1985-2012)

His most renowned designs are the following.

- Bunawan Parish Church, Bunawan, Mindanao (BPC, 1990)
- St. Theresita Parish Church, Malibcong, Ilocos, 1991
- SSpS Hospital Chapel, Ilocos, 1991 (Br. Gruener, 2021)
- St. Arnold Parish Church, Cebu City (design draft, 1999)
- Bates Building, Holy Name University, Tagbilaran City (HNU-BB, 1999)
- St. Gabriel SVD Residence, Holy Name University, Tagbilaran City (HNU-STG, 2000)
- Nursing Building, Holy Name University, Tagbilaran City (HNU-NB, 2003)
- USC Downtown Campus Chapel, Reconstruction Altar Area (USC-DCC, 2000)
- SVD St. Joseph Freinademetz Formation House (SJFFH, 2004)
- USC North Campus Chapel (USC-NCC, 1999)
- USC Montessori School, an adaptive reuse of the former SVD Formation Center, Cebu City (USC MS, 2007)
- St. Michael's Residence, Talamban Campus, University of San Carlos (SVD-SMR, 2007)
- Josef Baumgartner Learning Resource Centre of University of San Carlos (USC-LRC, 2012),

- Holy Name University Medical Foundation Hospital in Bohol" (HNUMFH, 2012)
- USC Downtown Campus Clinic (USC-DCCL, 2000)
- USC-TC Cemetery (USC-DCCL, 2012)

III. Comparison of His Buildings

The researcher studied and visited the buildings of Flores (except for the one in Ilocos) and tried to extract design features for further analysis

A. Amorphous Shaping

Several buildings of Flores present monolithic and plastic volumes in contrast to traditional church architecture which preferred simple volumes but carefully elaborated details.

Flores' most characteristic application of this design feature is the USC NCC in Cebu City. It presents several characteristic features that are unusual and refer to the unique thinking of its architect. Although it carries surface outlines, it is easy to see that its architectural expression consists not of the elevations but of the volume which is broken up into small forms. It is the amorphous volume that makes the small building outstanding in its environment. Among his smaller buildings, USC-DCCL, a clinic building also carries this amorphous character. Flores' biggest architectural achievement, USC-LRC, is more similar to a hill than to a building. It impresses the visitor through its volume, not through its details. These buildings don't demonstrate rectangular forms on their floor plans or elevations—which would be characteristic of traditional architecture. The volume counts for architectural effects—and that is amorphous.

Putting this feature in context, the recent discourse on Deconstructivist architecture presents amorphous volumes as ones that question a traditional hierarchy of volume and applied decorations which used to be essential for traditional architecture. Fiona Shipwright even calls an amorphous shaping of buildings *anti-architecture*. She distinguishes it from the usual architectural form giving. In her article in *Architectural Review* journal, she asks: "What might anti-architecture mean in the post-industrial, digitized landscapes of 2017?" In amorphous shaping, Shipwright also sees a crisis of traditional architecture of institutions, moving toward a more personal approach. For her, architecture, as a means of untying hierarchies, has found particular resonance in a sphere beyond architecture: music. "It points also to the deconstruction of political frameworks that engender the architecture of institutions." (Shipwright, 2017)

For theorist Jill Stoner, amorphous architectural trends refer to architectural fiction. In her book, *Toward a Minor Architecture* (2012), she notices a displacement of architecture from hierarchy to the spatiality of fiction. (Bremner & Till, 2012) Fiction in architecture is not new. It

had been used for storytelling even in ancient representative architecture. For example, the pyramids are architectural fiction. Why did the religious Brother architect Flores apply this kind of anti-architecture? We who knew him can remember that he dreamt of a more open vision for SVD missionary institutions.

B. Artificial Hill



Figure 1. An artificial hill. Joseph Baumgartner Learning Resource Center, Talamban Campus, University of San Carlos, Cebu City (Image: Farlyd Architects, Cebu City, 2012)

The design volume of USC Library is not only amorphous, but it is an artificial hill. The researcher was working together with Flores for three (3) years and heard many stories about his “provocative” first ideas. Allegedly the present design was the fifth version of Flores. Some previous designs foresee a *hollowed-out space* inside the hill that would accommodate the library. The researcher was looking for these submissions to the Provincial Council, but they got lost. The researcher was informed that upon the submission, Provincial Council members and other important stakeholders were scandalized. The presently built version is already a compromise: not departing from nature, the existing hill remained untouched, but Flores created an *artificial hill* that grows out of the existing mountainous landscape. We have to add that at the end of the present building (which is a thicket or scrub now) the original site development envisioned two other buildings, USC Theater and USC Museum, according to the imagination of then USC President Fr. Salazar. They will probably not anymore be built.

Talking about artificial hills, Flores used to refer to the organic architectural understanding of Frank Lloyd Wright. Organic architecture connects buildings (artificial forms) with hills (natural forms). Wright wrote: No house should ever be *on* a hill or anything. It should be *off* the hill. Belonging to it. Hill and house should live together each the happier for the other.” (Wright, 1932) It expresses Flores’ commitment to the beautiful nature of USC Talamban Campus similarly to Wright. “...Organic architecture is often described as a translation of the ‘all-inclusive’ concept of Wright’s organic design, whose main principles teach us to strike a harmony that unifies both nature and architecture as a single entity.” (Hidayat, 2020)

Mimicking artificial hills in design through new construction is accepted in architecture, due to various motivations. The *Zoopark* in Budapest (Hungary) is famous for such a solution. (Péter Kis) Recently, BIG Architects shaped a resort, *Hualien Residences*, after mountains to encourage walking and exercise as it incorporates speed walking paths studded with interest. (Sudhiksha)

C. Cave – “Hollowed Out”

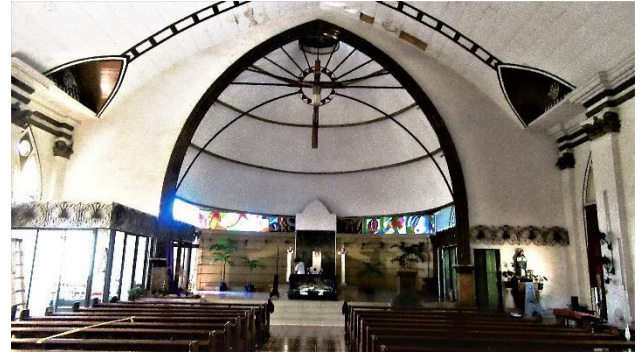


Figure 2. An artificial cave. Sanctuary of Downtown Campus Chapel, University of San Carlos, Cebu City (Photo: Author)

Even the design activity behind amorphous, sometimes artificial hill-like forms is unique. He does not add up volumes to create a “building” but removes, “hollows out,” spaces.

An interior, USCD-DCC’s new altar area’s design idea is most typical for “hollowing out” instead of piling up architectural volumes. While the original Neogothic form was striving high vertically, Flores’ reconceptualization of the altar space exhibits horizontal movements as a giant would have hollowed out material from an imaginary volume. Sanctuary as a cave? It is not unknown in the history of sacred architecture but here, it is thought-provoking.

Flores’ early design drafts for USC-LRC, at least one of them, presented the library as a cave, having been hollowed out from the hill – instead of building up volumes. Many stakeholders encountered the idea with anger. This might have been one of the reasons that although Flores created five design drafts for USC-LRC only the fifth version was realized.

Although SVD St. Michael Residence resembles a regular building, Flores hollowed its ramp into the mountain which gives not only a unique view but also a closer connection to nature which the ramp’s users necessarily encounter.

In his last design, the SVD cemetery close to the SVD St. Michael Residence on USC-TC, he could fully realize this “Hollowing Out” of an open-air place literally in a mountain so that it cannot be seen from outside. This design, although it also encountered much criticism, could be realized – although not fully in Flores’ sense.

In the history of architecture, artificial mountains were mostly designed to hollow out interiors as “underground

architecture". In the Abteiberg Museum, Mönchengladbach, Hans Hollein envisioned multidimensionality: the underground parts of the museum are completed by elevated wings. Artificial caves without external appearance are less frequent—although these are also parts of architectural history, in particular in museum extensions. Even the famous Louvre (Paris) reconstruction by I.M. Pei has significant underground parts.

Caves are mysterious places. Artificial caves take over the same impression, a discovery. The somewhat spooky and enchanted places created in the crevices of rock and compacted dirt are something that would be fantastic if they could be packaged up and taken home to investigate over and over again. Every jutting piece of volcanic rock, every crawl space, and every watermark should be discovered at leisure. Some architects have captured these moments and built magnificent spaces right into the walls of caves." (Brown)

Hence, cave architecture is mysterious. Even the second biggest church building in Germany, the Mariendom in Neviges, was inspired by a pilgrimage mountain. "Built on a hilltop where an image of the Virgin Mary had drawn pilgrims since the late seventeenth century, the church's concrete exterior was strikingly geometric, topped by jagged cubes and pyramids with angles that suggested the tiled roofline of the surrounding town. Inside, the church opened up like a concrete cave, illuminated by narrow skylights and windows high above the floor." (Blankenböhler, 2015) Arthur Drexler, architecture director at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, once described this church as "a brooding apparition, a ghost from the medieval past inexplicably materialized in the midst of a bourgeois townscape." (Smith, 2021) The Danish Maritime Museum's subterranean new home by Bjarke Ingels Group is a contemporary "hollowed-in-the earth" design. (Dinter, 2013) When Jean Nouvel revealed his cave hotel in Saudi Arabia's AlUla desert, according to him, the subterranean resort was informed by the nearby UNESCO World Heritage site where the remains of a Nabataean city can be found. (Ravenscroft, 2020) Caves and hollowing-out are inspirations even for buildings that are not hollowed in the earth.

Beyond these applications of cave architecture, Hans Hollein offers a deeper theoretical insight. He looks back to his experience with cave-like designs, like the already mentioned Abteiberg Museum in Mönchengladbach, Germany. In his essay "Digging and Piling Up" (2003), "digging" and "piling up" are two basic and dialectically contradictory tendencies of the building process that generate very different developments of space. While digging is associated with the "shelter" of the early humans, piling up is "house," the contemporary way of living. „The tendencies of *piling-up* led to the house, to the tower and further developed to cantilevering extensions and finally to the dynamism of the oblique. The tendency of *digging* - to descend to the center of the world with its treasures - led to subterranean structures of communication... This cloud-like hovering extension will have its dialectic counterpart in the limitless spatial extension and excavation into the earth, the rock, the lava

stream—a non-tectonic, non-rectilinear space making— independent from gravity." (Hollein, 2003)

Underground architecture, *without elevations*, seems to be absurd for those who are used to elevations and windows. However, it has been highly practiced, particularly in museum extensions. The interior is hollowed out with natural light streaming in from surrounding windows. There is no apparent geometry or rhythm apparent. Even its columns differ from structures above the land surface. While functional needs force this solution at places with little buildable space or strict regulations, Flores was rather led to the above-mentioned examples by organic form giving considerations. In other words, not because there is no place but because for him, *carving in* is a better unification with nature than traditional *building up*.

D. Green Roof

The previous design features would have been incomplete without the envisioned green roof. From the beginning on, Farlyd Architects planned a walkable green roof on the top of USC-LRC which seems to rise out of the earth, the mountain's natural surface. In Flores' understanding, the lawn area on the top should have been a place for students to study and to be socialized. On the top of the green roof, a small chapel was designed as a crown of the big green meadow and a place for spiritual support for students tired from learning.

The roof would have seamlessly reached the natural hill surface at the back of the library where, upon request of then-University President Fr. Roderick Salazar SVD, the University Museum and the University Theater would have been erected. The rooftop would have served as a spatial extension of these neighboring institutions.

Even the detailed planning of the green roof was carefully planned out with the help of Specserv Inc, a Philippine company specializing in green roofs, using a Singaporean green roof design. Unfortunately, the investor stopped the project. (Specserv, 2010) However, Flores and Farlyd Architects continued believing in the importance of this green roof. (Lanyi, 2012)

The Delft University of Technology, a strong former educational partner of the University of San Carlos, and the Nanyang University in Singapore (also a linkage of our University) were one of the prototypes for the inspirations of Flores. The researcher frequently heard him mention these buildings. The green roof of Delft was planned for physical and social sustainability. "With a grass-covered roof, high-performance glazed facades, and subterranean storage for heating and cooling, the building reaches high standards of sustainability. ... The university needed a campus atmosphere that included lawns with flowers and trees where students and professors could meet informally on broad stairs. Delft University originally designed its intensive green roof from 1993–1995, resulting in construction from 1996–1997. The roof is supported by slender, splayed steel columns in a huge hall enclosed with canted, fully glazed walls. The base of the slope to the west

is marked by a broad flight of steps leading up to a recessed entrance. Architects Mecanoo designed the library as a sloped plane, extending the grass from the ground to the very edge of the roof allowing people to walk to the top. The library is topped by a huge steel cone, giving the structure its unique, identifying shape. The cone houses four levels of traditional study spaces connected by a helical stair. Within the cone, a central void provides daylight from a glazed roof to the internal reading spaces. Extending forty meters above grade and floodlit at night, the cone acts as a beacon on the campus day and night.” (Velazquez, 2012) Many of these design ideas were incorporated into the USC-LRC design. Another successful application is the green roof of Nanyang Technological University in Singapore which was significant for Flores because he wanted to order green roof materials from Singapore.

E. Full-Glazed Elevation

Attached to the fully natural and so not executed green roof is the full-glazed elevation of USC-LRC. It is again an immaterial feature. Flores uses glass on the “cut” surfaces of the artificial hill. This is also applied, although with smaller glass panels, on the USC-NCC’s vertical surfaces.

The glass surfaces provide a shiny and glossy look, in contrast to the supposedly grass-covered earth surface of the roof. In Delft, the full-glazed side elevations also create a contrast between glass and grass. The Van den Broek & Bakema auditorium sits like a huge frog in the green grass. The vast lawn is lifted on one edge like a sheet of paper and shapes the roof of the new library. The grass roof is freely accessible for walking and lounging, creating a new amenity for the whole campus. Glass underlines this kind of transparency. (Library Delft University of Technology / Mecanoo, 2017)

F. Fake Structural Elements

In the USC-LRC interiors and the lighting courtyard we can see structural tree motifs with trunk and outbranching elements. In other buildings, these had load-bearing functions (for example in Stansted Airport, in London) but here they are rather sun-breakers. In the St. Michael SVD residence, we find reinforced concrete ribs and beams of exaggerated size which seem to be bigger than the pure structural need.

Fake structural elements in Philippine buildings would usually refer to imitations of foreign buildings. For Flores, they are rather interpretations of famous buildings from the history of architecture of which he was a teacher. While the structural trees of Stansted Airport (London) were integral parts of Norman Foster’s original design idea, in Flores’ use, they are a rather intelligent intellectual reuse of a loaned design feature.

G. Diagonality

Flores’ USC-NCC presents an elevation moving upward to a *glazed light strip on the rooftop*. On the floor plan, the light strip follows a strong diagonal axis, to which triangular side spaces are added in a basilical way. This diagonal light

strip on the ceiling and roof is very unusual in sacred architecture. This diagonal solution might originate from the fact that it had to be built at the corner of a huge football field. So the diagonal tries to get attention for the small chapel from the center of the huge area in front of it. Both diagonality and roof light strips used in a church are unique applications.

In sacred architecture, Kenzo Tange’s Saint Mary Cathedral in Tokyo might have been an orientation for Flores since that church contains diagonal elements with vertical/horizontal skylights. However, diagonality itself is an architectural trend. The *Phenomenon of Diagonality* refers specifically to the global, twentieth-century design development characterized by the deliberate, intentional, oftentimes asymmetrical use of the diagonal motif in architecture and in many other design disciplines. It also applies to the continuing use of diagonals in the twenty-first century. There is no other architect in the world who has had a more profound and lasting impact on the emergence of Diagonality in the twentieth century than Frank Lloyd Wright. From the start of his career to the end, Diagonality was a driving and sustained force. There are several factors that influenced Wright’s engagement and experimentation with the Diagonal motif: these include The Froebel Toys; Victorian architecture; Japanese Art; the Octagon Fad; and Cubism. The most impactful and the earliest influence was a gift from his mother, the Froebel Toys. (Diagonality)

According to the *Center for Diagonality*, Wright’s trend leads to our contemporary times through the Austrian architect *Günther Domenig (1934-2012)* to *Morphosis Architects*, a renowned contemporary international US-based architectural practice. (Center for Diagonality) Domenig is described as a talented, technically accomplished, ambitious architect when viewed through the filter of his troubled past and in the light of his very inventive works that are almost fiction. Thom Mayne, of the world-renown architectural firm Morphosis describes Domenig as an ‘intensely private and reserved with a hypersensitive snout for the disingenuous, yet disarming in his emotional openness and vulnerability, with a habit of reaching out and touching the person to whom he is speaking. His work is ultimately about a...place where ruin is a source of renewal...’ (Levinson) Psychologically, the presence of diagonal in the broken, amorphous, massive volumes of *Flores might indicate his sensitive, disappointed, and creative visionary character*.

H. Rooflight on Church

The rooflight/skylight on the top of the USC-NC chapel is again a unique motif. It can appear in malls and commercial structures. Although ceilings are always unique in sacred architecture but almost never seen in the form of skylights.

For this motif as well, Kenzo Tange’s Saint Mary Cathedral in Tokyo might have been an orientation for Flores since this church uses diagonal elements and both vertical and horizontal skylights. Here, “spaces and doors made with its high walls deviate from the model of a Japanese temple,

close to design a much more international diamond volume, although the skirts of the roofs may have evoked some of the traditional Japanese architecture and Buddhist temples or Zionists, with spacious roof falls. (Saint Mary's Cathedral, Tokyo) In the history of architecture, church ceilings are obvious signs of openness to God's heaven through the skies. (Hunt) However, usually, chandeliers, ceiling decorations, and paintings are used mostly. One of the rare contemporary references to a church with diagonals and roof light strip is a church extension: "The recently built front extension creates a new threshold for the church, encompassing a large multipart Flushglaze fixed roof light from Glazing Vision." (Multipart Flashglaze Skylight Church)

IV. Other Fields

A. Reconstruction / Adaptive Reuse

For the SJFFH, Flores masterly changed an old residential ancestral house that served as SVD Provincialate into a Formation House. With a good understanding of the required new function, he carried out the given task. The researcher himself spent ten years in this functional building. Flores employed here a variety of claddings. He grew up in an ancestral house in Dumaguete, he understood the logic of such houses. He maintained the core original structure and smartly inserted new rooms. The very beautiful upper windows were retained and even upgraded.

B. Landscaping

The SVD cemetery on the USC Talamban Campus is the last work of Flores. This researcher was commissioned by Flores to complete, these drawings according to his instructions since at this time he was already very sick. He was lying in his room and he even his draftsmen resigned. The cemetery is *hollowed* in a hill (see 2.3). It symbolizes an SVD logo. In the middle of the hollowed area, a circular space presents the Earth globe as an SVD missionary field. An outer circle is formed by circular walls formed by urns and graves, which embrace the globe with a rectangular corner at the place of the SVD logo's cross. These circles would have been emphasized by flowerbeds on their top. On the floor plan location of the SVD logo's cross, Flores planned a statue of the Risen Christ. Unfortunately, the flower beds leading to the logo's cross and the additional flower beds forming the cross in the floor plan were not realized. For this reason, the original symbolism is not any more observable. This time his proposal was accepted and executed but not fully in the intention of Flores.

C. Site Development

Flores was a master of controlling his building sites. In the reconstruction of SJFFH, a former ancestral house, Flores could not change the location of the existing buildings but he added new parts in a way that cleverly uses the lot. Moreover, once the neighboring area's new buildings changed the original surface of the lot, Flores successfully managed to adapt the lot to the new conditions and to keep away rainwater from the street.

He also had impressive site development visions. The USC Library's original site development was adjusted to a master plan of the USC Talamban Campus by Ar. O.M. Espina, FUAP. Unfortunately, the original site development was not realized. Since Flores' location for entrance followed that master plan, the entrance location in the present setting does not seem to be logical.

On the same campus, the St. Michael SVD Residence's site development is also debated by stakeholders because its ramp closes a possible continuous road – and so it creates a dead end from both sides where earlier cars could pass through. Is this intentional or not intentional? The researcher, who also lives in that house, is thankful for the peace the residents enjoy since traffic along the building was prevented.

V. The Acceptance Of His Architecture

Flores was definitely struggling between adjusting himself to the investors and influencing them: the more because he was a member of the Society of Divine Word (SVD) which usually commissioned him.

A. Hybrid Architecture

Probably this struggle caused Flores' architecture to be a hybrid one. Even on the same building, like USC-LRC, he brings in many formal elements: green roof, full-glazed elevations, and skylights of Delft University library are inspired by foreign visions. There are individual architectural ideas implemented like inner courtyards that make the wide and big building volume well illuminated. This mixture of different architectural understandings brings in a personal character. Although the investor had little sensitivity and knowledge of these trends, the hybrid character of Flores' architecture was frequently misunderstood and caused rather trouble than conviction.

B. "Don't Touch Nature"

Flores, as the researcher can remember very well, was always talking of "green architecture." We sometimes did not know what he precisely meant and if this was only a trendy phrase for him. But as the researcher checks the works of Flores, the conviction "do not touch nature" is obvious. Otherwise, why would he recommend just a "hollowing out" on the hill? For him, this means "Go inside the nature." This is very different from builders'/designers' usual attitude to build up, to show up (their own power).

Traditional architecture piles up, it does not hollow in the earth. However, architecture inspired by a hill expresses human humility and the religious message connected with the mountain Zion to which the Old Testament calls all people. Being hidden in nature might also reflect the walfish that swallowed Prophet Jonah. When Flores presented his original idea to accommodate the largest library in the Philippines inside the existing natural hill above USC-TC's Nursing Building, there were protests: confrères and stakeholders were scandalized. They did not

agree on carving in the hill but they agreed on an artificial hill. First, they also agreed on Flores' green architecture as well: green top, massing like a hill, untouched nature—but later the green roof was stopped.

C. His Consciously Provocative Architecture

Many people feel Flores' architecture was provocative and felt attacked by the amorphous forms. Flores received the suspicion that he would work for his own portfolio only. Although up to today, university students like his designs, in particular USC-LRC. The researcher believes that conscious provocation was nothing evil—instead, a part of his advocacy towards “out of the box” for those who prefer intellectual comfort. Flores himself was loyal to his religious congregation until the end of his life. He died as a member of the SVD congregation.

D. An Unrealized Concept: Individual Houses Instead of Traditional Monasteries

Flores' vision of residential buildings for his religious congregation, SVD, was also very different from usual monasteries. He always preferred a loose cluster of individual cottages for religious houses—precisely for closeness to nature and for fresh air. (Dr. Remedio, 2021) He already started this in 1989 when the idea came up to build an SVD Brothers Formation House on the USC Talamban Campus behind the existing General Services building. At that time the SVD Generalate accepted this idea. Br. Roland Pontevedra SVD, as an apprentice, was still working on this project. Since expenses for a road were not included in the application to the Generalate, these expenses appeared later and made the project impossible. His later design for SJFFH was an adaptive reuse of ancestral houses. Later he also tried to realize this vision for the SVD St. Michael Residence on USC's Talamban Campus. Here, Flores originally planned a settlement consisting of freestanding pavilions (or cottages)—but the SVD Generalate did not approve it with the explanation that this would not serve the community. Then Flores, again, adjusted the design to the superiors' wishes. (Br. Pontevedra, 2021)

This version was obviously not only an idea of Flores because even Alcosoba's design for Davao SVD Formation House's first draft also foresaw a settlement of small pavilions which even an SVD Provincial Superior of that time recommended. There are forerunners of this way of community residential structures. In the neighboring Mandaue City, the Eversley Childs Sanitarium contains such arrangements of clusters of cottages. SVD confreres accused Flores of a “different community understanding”—but even the SVD Philippine Southern Province (Frs. Lagura or Fabiosa) supported him. Some called the design a “village of eremites” as it contrasted with the traditional understanding of religious buildings. (Fr. Fabiosa) However, let us understand that even the leaders of the missionary religious community saw a new

hope in Flores' alternative thinking. Flores loved working on his own, he was not a team person.

E. His Readiness to Adjust Designs

Beyond very expressive designs Flores, there is a group of designs where he obviously adjusted himself to the client's instructions. Flores' first design, a church in Bunawan (Agusan del Sur) was also built upon the request of the local parish priest who wanted to “leave a statement” before moving to another place. As that priest had good taste, he oriented Flores to a good model, the Redemptorist Church in Davao. He adjusted his concepts—and still created a unique architectural work of high imagination. (Fr. Sales, 2021) The same experience recalls stakeholders in Ilocos where Flores (immediately after his residency in Agusan/Mindanao) built some small churches and designed the interior of the SSpS sisters' hospital chapel. Even in later phases of his life when he stood out through “extravagant” buildings in Cebu, in the more traditional Tagbilaran City (Bohol) he was ready to understand the investor Holy Name University's (HNU) needs. Such are buildings of HNU (Bastes Building, St. Gabriel Residence, and the University Hospital as well) but the research also counts here the SVD St. Michael Residence where he readily accepted the SVD Generalate's will.

These “adjusted” buildings also have a character, namely the one elaborated by the legendary architect duo Alcosoba-Klassen. Fr. Winand Klassen, SVD can be considered as Flores' predecessor as SVD architect in the Philippines. The following characteristics stated by Alcosoba and Fr. Klassen can be observed in these adjusted designs of Flores: round columns, linear building body, longitudinal building form, full glazing as far as possible, ramp, with long corridors, in an interesting way broken or bent hallways. Elegance is the dominant feature here. Many people get confused looking at these buildings and it is difficult to distinguish if the architect was Alcosoba/Klassen or Flores. Thus with flexibility, Flores was able to follow design features given to him by Alcosoba and Klassen.

F. Execution Of His Architectural Design

Although Flores was the official architect of the SVD-PHS Province and all his designs were originally accepted, it is striking to see how some major designs remained incomplete (even if they were turned over to the users). The architect's dreams were so frequently misunderstood thinking that he would look down on the client, the community. According to Brother Roland Pontevedra, it was a frequent problem from the beginning that Flores was a nocturnal person. (Br. Pontevedra, 2021) However, this research does not handle personal private problems or problems with SVD confrères.

VI. His Offices

A. President - UAP Rajah Humabon Chapter

Flores was three times chapter president (1997–1998, 2003–2004, 2007–2008). His last inauguration (June 2007) was witnessed by the researcher as well. He was beloved by the architects and the members of this Chapter. His background as a religious Brother helped him to become elected three times. His chapter mates describe him as a fun-loving, sometimes moody person with a high drinking capacity. (Ar. Lara, 2021)

B. Chairman – USC Department Of Architecture

After a teaching career, Flores was Department Chair for one triennium (2004–2007). Flores delegated many of his tasks simply to his assistant chair. The present researcher became his Administrative Assistant starting November 2009 and then his first successor in June 2010. Unfortunately, both changes were connected with Flores's strokes. (Lanyi, 2012)

C. The Person of Flores

Memories about his person should complete the reflection above to see the human background of his struggles and achievements. Former SVD Provincial Superior Fr. Eduardo Rocha wrote about him the following. For me, Br. Tony is:

- a collaborator: we had a very good working relationship supporting one another for the good of our respective offices and for the good of the University,
- a friend: we had wonderful moments sharing our personal problems and difficulties related to our work. More than that, Br. Tony was a genuine friend:
 - who knew how to listen,
 - who had the ability to feel and to sympathize, and
 - who knew how to encourage and to inspire." (Fr. Rocha, 2013)

During Flores' funeral, former General Superior Rev. Fr. Heinz Kulueke summarized the personality of Br. Tony as follows. He was demanding a lot of himself and this also characterized his work as a teacher and administrator, trying to get the best out of his students and his colleagues. ... I cannot remember that he ever declined a request when later on I asked him to help with designs for buildings for our SVD-owned institutions or for the building projects that our NGOs are implementing for the poor such as housing projects and rehabilitation facilities." (Fr. Kulueke, 2012)

VII. Findings And Conclusion

Flores' story is unfinished. We have not yet elaborated a clear statement on his lifework, his personality, and his influence. Emotions around Flores' person opened up the researcher's desire to see Flores' factual contribution. His unique and very personal, often truly provocative ideas, in the researcher's view, were helpful in the too-conservative and comfort-minded academic atmosphere of Cebu. But he could also adjust himself, to which those buildings witnessed where he adapted the SVD Campuses' usual style created by the talented architectural duo Klassen/Alcoseba.

A. Findings

Based on the research, the researcher could make the following general statements on Flores' lifework.

Flores' architecture, both in form and function, mimics a play with massive natural forms. This unusual, although justifiable approach, sometimes used to be misinterpreted as ignorance of architectural objectives as functionality and sustainability. This research, however, takes note of Flores's calculations and considers it rather as a new vision toward architecture.

Flores adjusted his forgiving and functional planning to the investor's wishes – however, he usually combined it with provocative advocacy toward preserving nature. While in the buildings of Holy Name University, he followed a rather traditional method, other buildings are inspired by foreign trends.

His success in his practice consists of frequent commissions. However, the research also takes note of various forms of unanswered criticism – even in fields close to his design advocacy: building sustainability and aesthetic form-giving.

His career and in particular the dialectic between his successes and failures draws up a pattern of the relationship between the entirety of the investor religious congregation and the architect member who is both part of the decision-making body and also its employee.

In fact, Flores' lifework deserves more attention as, through its out-of-the-box aspects, enwidens perspectives of Philippine architecture.

B. Conclusion

Flores enriched contemporary Philippine architecture with original and interesting design visions. These visions are connected with a high appreciation of nature and individual human qualities. His buildings don't fall in line with the usual features of contemporary Philippine religious, educational, or community architecture. However, with their thought-provoking character, they convey an orientation toward autonomous and self-conscious visions of buildings' form-giving and functionality. Although as a religious Brother, he was obliged to obey, Flores was an autonomous and creative architect who can be better understood in the spirit of dialogue.

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Annex

A. Other Illustrations: Major Works of Ar. Antonio Flores



Figure 3. Antonio A. Flores, SVD (Photo: Author)



Figure 4. Bunawan Church, Agusan de Sur, His first work (Photo: Rev. Fr. Jimmy Sales, SVD)



Figure 5. Chapel, North Campus, University of San Carlos, Cebu City (Photo: Author)



Figure 6. Chapel, North Campus, University of San Carlos, Cebu City (Photo: Author)



Figure 7,8. Details Joseph Baumgartner Learning Resource Center, Talamban Campus, University of San Carlos, Cebu City (Photo: Author)



Figure 9. Nursing Building, Holy Name University, Tagbilaran City (Photo: Rev. Fr. Semei Rebayla SVD)