

*Building Stronger Foundations in the Local Front:*

The Role of the Local Government Units in the Philippines In Preserving Built Heritage in Urban Landscapes

*Abstract*

The local government units in the Philippines are the logical and practical frontrunners when it comes to heritage protection and promotion. Being the most basic political units of government, they are in the ideal position to ensure that the cultural resources of the country are protected. One of the kinds of these resources is built heritage particularly those situated in established and emerging urban centers in the country. At present, it is common in the Philippines to see various structures along side each other with manifest aesthetic, historical, and even sentimental variance. Further, widespread infrastructure development and many private real estate ventures result in numerous demolition projects of built heritage sites, putting to naught efforts geared towards cultural property protection. It is submitted that given a strong and effective policy on cultural heritage protection and promotion at the level of the local government units these cultural atrocities can be discouraged, if not totally halted.

This study provides a grounded analysis of the state of the protection and promotion of built heritage sites at the level of the local government units in the Philippines. As a preliminary, the study provides a discourse on the current thrust of and the underlying policies behind Philippine cultural heritage laws by examining constitutional and statutory mandates pertaining to the protection and promotion of cultural property. It will then focus on the ideal role that local governments are expected to play when it comes to the protection and promotion of cultural heritage sites within their respective territorial jurisdictions followed by a discussion on whether or not this role is being realized. Finally, the study will propose possible legal and non-legal strategies to the local government units to ensure that these sites are not tendered as sacrifices in pursuit of perceived economic development.

Author: Marianne S. Aquino

Student, Juris Doctor Program

University of the Philippines College of Law

[mariannesaquino@gmail.com](mailto:mariannesaquino@gmail.com)

+639279948085