

GUIDELINES ON THE IDENTIFICATION AND RECOGNITION OF CULTURAL PROPERTIES AS HERITAGE HOUSES

I. BACKGROUND

The National Historical Commission of the Philippines (NHCP) is mandated by law through Republic Act No. 10086¹ to conserve, promote and popularize the nation's historical and cultural heritage and resources. Heritage houses with intrinsic historical and cultural value form part of our country's tangible heritage. This is underscored in Section 3(e) of R.A. 10086, which defines *heritage houses* as "houses of ancestry with notable historical, cultural, social, architectural and artistic value and significance as declared by the NHCP."

Page | 1

Heritage houses may be considered important cultural properties (ICPs) under Section 5(f) of R.A. 10066 or the National Cultural Heritage Act of 2009, which includes among ICPs "structures dating at least fifty (50) years old; and unless otherwise declared by the National Historical Institute (now NHCP)." This is for purposes of protecting cultural properties against exportation, modification or demolition. Given their significance.

Heritage houses, which may vary in form, function, magnitude, and architectural styles, are best kept for posterity to serve as representatives of their period.

II. VALUES ASSESSMENT OF HERITAGE HOUSES

- A. **Age value.** These houses are esteemed for their age and for having well withstood the ravages of time. These houses must be at least fifty (50) years old to qualify.
- B. **Site.** The area or territory where the heritage house is located. The site or setting may be urban, suburban, upland, lowland, or rural, and may be of environmental, historical, cultural, and/or artistic importance.
- C. **Architectural value.** These are houses which represent a particular period of architectural style, form, or milestone development, revolutionary technology, or relating to a significant historico-cultural experience of the Filipino people. In considering particular architectural characteristics of the period, the development of architectural styles should be taken into account:
 - i. Initial development/s
 - ii. Full development
- D. **Historical value.** These houses were venues for historical events or connected with a historical personage i.e., as the birthplace of a hero, as the meeting place of the Katipunan, etc.
- E. **Environmental value.** Houses that are organically built from natural materials found in the locality. Owing to the method of construction and materials that are not harmful but also keen to the conservation of its natural setting.
- F. **Authenticity.** The quality of being intact of the heritage structure, or of retaining its original features and character. The house should not have undergone any major modification or renovation that has altered its form, character, and style. A Heritage House, should have at least seventy percent (70%) of the original structure and materials.

III. CATEGORY OF HERITAGE HOUSES

¹ **Republic Act No. 10086.** An Act strengthening peoples nationalism through Philippine history by changing the nomenclature of the National Historical Institute (NHI) into the National Historical Commission of the Philippines (NHCP), strengthening its powers and functions, and for other purposes.

- A. Houses built in the Vernacular Tradition. These are houses typically located in rugged terrain, mountains, plains, riverbanks and seacoasts, inhabited by local and indigenous communities in the Philippines. These houses may include the *balay* and *binuron* of the Isnegs, the *bale* of the Ifugaos, the *afong* of the Bontocs, the *gunu bong* of the T'bolis, and the *torogan* of the Maranaos. The form and character of a vernacular house are suggestive of geographical setting, climatic condition and the availability of local materials.



A Torogan house in Marawi City

- B. Houses built during the Spanish Colonial Period. (1600s-1890s) These houses were erected during the Spanish rule and gave birth to a unique style also called *arquitectura mestiza*, undoubtedly Filipino in character but with Spanish, Mexican, Mudejar, Peruvian, Antillean, and Chinese influences. Houses during this period can be of various regional styles that display local craftsmanship. Typical construction is of stone for the ground floor and wood for the second floor. House of this period commonly referred to as *bahay-na-bato*, *bahay na kahoy*, and *bahay-na-tisa*. Other dwellings were made of wood and masonry such as adobe, bricks, *coquina*, limestone and river stones.



The bahay na bato of the Goco family in Taal, Batangas

- C. Houses built during the American Colonial Period. (1900s-1940s) These are Period style houses influenced by Art Nouveau, Art Deco, Beaux Arts and Neo-Classic movements, built during the American regime. House forms include chalets, bungalows, *bahay-nakongkreto* (reinforced concrete house), **Mission Style houses**, and two-storey houses built in the revival styles. Some of these houses may have been designed by renowned architects of the period, such as Andres Luna de San Pedro, Arcadio Arellano, Juan Arellano, Juan Nakpil, Tomas Mapua, Fernando Ocampo Sr., and Pablo Antonio among others.



The Natalio Enriquez Heritage House in Sariaya, Quezon designed by Andres Luna de San Pedro.

- D. Houses built after the Second World War or Post-war Period. (1945-1960s) These include houses built immediately after World War II up to contemporary times. Houses under this category include International Style, the modernist-styled buildings, and those designed by the major architects of the period, such as Federico Ilustre, Otillo Arellano, Pablo Antonio, Carlos Arguelles, Leandro Locsin, Jose Zaragoza, Felipe Mendoza, Gabriel Formoso and the Mañosa brothers, among others.



The Mira Nila House in Quezon City, exemplifies the revival of classical styles

- E. Houses of eclectic style or mixed design. (All houses more than 50 years old) These houses were originally conceived as mixed style or accumulated layers of style through addition. Such additions were usually undertaken in different periods of their development, and can still be found in the different parts of these houses. The history of such buildings can be appreciated through the successive traces of different periods.



Designated as a National Shrine, the historic Emilio Aguinaldo House in Kawit, Cavite, which transformed from the 1850s until the 1960s, but retained its harmonized architectural integrity, is a fine example of a house with mixed architectural styles

IV. PROCESS OF APPLICATION AND NOMINATION AS HERITAGE HOUSE

- A. The owner of the property subject to declaration as Heritage House must send a letter of intent and fill out the survey form (Annex A.) The information in the survey form will be the basis of NHCP history researchers and architects for further research. The request must also disclose the complete ownership of the property and be supported by proof (authorization) that the requesting party is authorized by all the owners to file the request for declaration.
- B. The NHCP history researcher and architect will conduct an assessment of the house, which includes: photo documentation, interview, and archival research to find out if the house merits declaration.
- C. The NHCP history researcher and architect will write a Complete Staff Work (CSW), once the data collection, photo documentation and site visit have been done. Following the values assessment criteria listed in Section III, the Historic Preservation Division shall recommend the declaration of the structure as Heritage House.
- D. Should the property fall short of the given values assessment method, the NHCP may refer the candidate to the Local Government where it belongs to be declared as a local heritage of the town/city.
- E. Should the candidate merit the criteria for the selection as heritage house, the Chairperson of the NHCP shall endorse the CSW to the NHCP Board for deliberation.
- F. If approved, a Resolution will be drafted and signed by the Board members, and the NHCP will inform the property owner of the declared Heritage House.

V. BENEFITS OF THE DECLARATION AS A HERITAGE HOUSE

The owner of a Heritage House is entitled to certain benefits. Such benefits or rewards are supported through legislation and should be coordinated and tied up with government finance agencies, such as the Department of Finance and the Bureau of Internal Revenue, and the Local Government Unit with jurisdiction over the city or municipality.

- A. **National Recognition.** The NHCP will write the owner/s of the declaration of their property as heritage house, followed by the formal unveiling of a cast-iron marker bearing the seal of the Philippine Republic with the distinction as “HERITAGE HOUSE” signifying its historical importance.
- B. **Tax Incentives.** These could come in the form of reduced realty tax or tax deductions for repairs and maintenance of the Heritage House as supported by the Local Government Unit where it belongs.

- C. **Government Technical Assistance.** Both the national and local government could help in the form of technical advice and assistance to respective owners concerning the repair or maintenance of a declared Heritage House.
- D. **Privacy and Public Access to the Property.** The owners still retain their privacy after the declaration of their property as heritage house though they may have the option to make their heritage house open for visitors at certain time. The NHCP encourages the home-owners to actively participate in the heritage promotion in their community by accommodating visitors for tourism and educational purposes.

VI. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE OWNER OF THE HERITAGE HOUSE

- A. **Preservation of Heritage Houses.** The declared house should be kept well-maintained and in good condition. There should be no major alterations, especially in the exterior and the immediate surroundings. Any repair, addition, alteration, renovation, restoration or reconstruction of its exterior must have written permission from the NHCP, and should make use of conservation or construction methods which are technologically accepted by conservationists and restoration architects. Furniture and interior architectural ornaments should likewise be well-maintained as they are important decorative components of the Heritage House.
- B. **Ownership of the House.** The owner retains private ownership of a house officially declared as a Heritage House by the NHCP. Should the property owner, or their heirs, opt to sell or rent the house, the new owner shall assume full responsibility in the preservation and protection of the Heritage House. The owner must also inform the NHCP regarding the change of ownership of the heritage house.
- C. **Access to Visitors.** Access to the Heritage House is only optional, and only upon the approval of the owner, so as not to intrude into the privacy of its occupants. Accommodation of visitors to the Heritage House may only be allowed as per the time of tour or visit scheduled by the owner. The local tourism officer may incorporate in their local tours a visit to heritage houses within the area, in coordination and with the permission of heritage house owners who will set a specific schedule for visitors.
- D. **Non-Agreement among the Legal Owners.** The NHCP suggests that in the case where one or more of the owner does not want to preserve the house, but wants to sell/dispose of the property for monetary reasons, the owner who wishes to retain and preserve the property may buy out the shares of the disagreeing party/ies.
- E. **Adaptive Reuse.** The owner of the Heritage House may repurpose the property from a place of abode toward other uses provided the owner preserves the important architectural and structural features of the building. Any alteration, renovation, addition, and demolition must be coordinated with the NHCP.

VII. MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT

A Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) shall be entered into by and between the Heritage House Owner and the Government, through the National Historical Commission of the Philippines, which will spell out the details of the arrangement concerning preservation and protection of the declared cultural property.

VIII. NON-COMPLIANCE

Any violation committed by the owner of the Heritage House such as alteration, demolition and inappropriate addition without prior coordination with the NHCP will result in legal actions provided under R.A. 10066 such as delisting of the house from the Philippine Registry of Historic Sites and Structures. The NHCP shall resolve heritage issues concerning declared Heritage Houses, in consultation with cultural agencies such as the National Museum (NM) and the National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA) through a Technical Working Council (TWC).