

Urban Conservation Planning Of Built Heritage In The Municipality Of Bantay, Ilocos Sur

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ABSTRACT

Bantay was once part of Vigan, a historic town uniquely preserved for its Hispanic colonial identity. Bantay's continuous urban growth development on its urban areas displaces the town from its tangible inherited assets resulting to unvalued and abandonment of historic structures. This study examines the preservation and mapping of built heritage sites and structures of the town engaging with the challenges concerning to the gradual loss of heritage buildings' recognition on the town's expanding urbanization along the stretch of its urban areas. The study aims to fully understand the historical heritage significances, identify built sites and locations with heritage significance, map potential immovable tangible-built heritage structures, create a comprehensive map with multi-layered geospatial information on the locations of heritage structures and evaluate social impacts on the community. The study applies a selection of techniques and strategies to make this possible to promote community involvement, site documentation, historical analysis, and feasibility evaluations of the inventory of built heritage sites. The result of this study highlights the demand of heritage preservation balancing adaptation of heritage structures, embracing modern urban fabric within the urban areas. The study provides answers to the challenges of how historically significant structures coexist harmoniously with swiftly growing urban developments. Heritage buildings play a key role in sustainable urbanization and development which fosters a more inclusive and diverse sense of place, promotes economic growth, and enhances town's spatial experience of its historical and cultural significance. The study contributes to the body of knowledge in the fields of urban planning and heritage preservation while proposing policy recommendations highlighting the importance of heritage preservation in forming cities.

Keywords: Built-Heritage Conservation, Heritage Conservation, Physical Mapping, Urban Conservations, Urban Design, Sustainable Urban Planning

I. Introduction

Bantay, Ilocos Sur, is situated just northeast as a gateway to Vigan City. The town of Bantay was formally founded as a duly recognized pueblo in 1593 because Bantay was formerly a part of Vigan. The municipality's urban area is separated from Vigan town proper by the Vigan River and the two municipalities have contiguous urban centers. Bantay, was formerly part of Vigan. The town was founded in 1593 by the Spaniard colonial government. It was originally part of the municipality of Vigan but was later constituted as a separate municipality in 1893. Like Vigan, Bantay also nests some of the preserved historical buildings found along its urban areas.

Vani Bahl, Architect, 2008 said that "A city without old buildings is like a man without memory". The importance of heritage conservation in urban areas through preservation of old buildings, cities and towns can help support maintain their cultural identity, create a sense of continuity with the past and provide opportunities for learning and education. The notion of cultural heritage relates to the way the past is viewed by contemporary

society. Our Cultural heritage reflects the past that continues to exist in modern times and helps shape regional identity and national stereotypes, (Boyd & Timothy, 2003). It helps comprehend the history of our predecessors and earlier generations. Conservation on the other hand are all the processes and measures of maintaining the cultural significance of a cultural property including but not limited to preservation, restoration, reconstruction, protection and adaptation or any combination thereof. Conservation is part of development and heritage conservation is a deliberate act of keeping culture and heritage from the present for the future.

Urban Design Lab, 2021, defined urban conservation as the preservation and protection of historic, cultural, and architectural resources in urban areas. This can include the preservation of buildings, streetscapes, and neighborhoods as well as the protection of natural landscapes within a city. Urban conservation initiatives also involve restoring and reusing historic buildings as well as creating laws and programs as guides in construction and development in a way that respects and improves the character of existing urban districts.

Built heritage can be referred to as part of a building, structure, monument, installation, or remnant that is linked to architectural, cultural, social, political, economic, or military history. Sharma, 2022 explained that urban heritage conservation stands for preserving and restoring a city's heritage buildings while allowing it to embrace a modern urban fabric.

Heritage that comes in tangible forms like sites and landscapes, and intangibles like memories and customs, is used for various purposes, from nation-building to marketing places. The use of heritage is utilized in various fields for political, cultural entrepreneurial, educational, and emancipatory purposes. It is an anthology that provides a comprehensive overview of heritage preservation, development and management from various theoretical perspectives and disciplines. On the other hand, cultural heritage refers to contemporary society's utilization of the past. Cultural heritage reflects the past in a contemporary or postmodern way, influencing regional identity and national phrases, (Nilson & Thorell, 2023).

Cities and urban areas are among the most often listed heritage categories on the World Heritage List. Globalization and other economic, social, and political shifts have forced nations to modify how they handle urban growth and conservation. Following the approval of the Vienna Memorandum on "World Heritage and Contemporary Architecture: Managing the Historic Urban Landscape" in 2005, the World Heritage Center started holding talks on this subject. The idea of a historic urban landscape—a metropolis with distinct economic and social characteristics and a history of ongoing change—was first presented in the Vienna Memorandum. Based on six years of contemplation and engagement, the Historic Urban Landscape suggestion provides insights into the changing circumstances and difficulties in spatial strategic planning and urban development connected to the protection of built environment and territories.

The legal basis for inclusion of cultural heritage can be found under section 15, Article XIV of the 1987 Philippine Constitution that mandates the State to protect our cultural heritage, expressly providing that it must *"conserve, develop, promote and popularize the nation's historical and cultural heritage and resources, as well as artistic creations"*. The National Cultural Heritage Act of 2009 (RA 10066) was enacted to "protect, preserve, conserve and promote the nation's cultural heritage, its property and histories and the ethnicity of local communities." This act also provides for the destination of heritage zones to protect the historical and cultural integrity of a geographical area. Republic Act No. 11961, entitled "An Act Strengthening the Conservation and Protection of Philippine Cultural Heritage Through Cultural Mapping and An Enhanced Cultural Heritage Education Program." Amends the National Cultural Heritage Act of 2009 and introduces new provisions aimed for the preservation and safeguarding of the country's cultural heritage. This includes the prohibition of renaming public spaces that have been sanctified by 50 years of usage, the recognition of place names as intangible cultural heritage, and the mandate for the teaching of Philippine cultural heritage and its integration into curricula of educational institutions.

UNESCO cited Vigan City as one of the best examples of local communities and the government working together to preserve history where local communities are also knowledgeable guardians of their cultural legacy. They play a key role in creating the action plan and vision for the city. The municipal government's Vigan Conservation Program works to improve the city's quality of life by involving and guiding all relevant parties in the preservation of a distinctive legacy.

Currently, the built-up areas along urban areas in Bantay are suitable and compatible in terms of major economic activities situated along national, provincial and barangay roads by administrative classification. The existing major urban core where municipal urban facilities and services are concentrated consists of adjoining

built-up and buildable portions as a major center of urban activities in the municipality consists of the eight (8) barangays consisting of Poblacion 1, Poblacion 2, Poblacion 3, Poblacion 4, Poblacion 5 and Poblacion 6, barangay Boquig and barangay Balaleng. The combined area of these barangays is utilized as agricultural and pastureland for underdeveloped areas and built-up areas as residential, commercial, and industrial uses.

Urbanization is an inevitable phenomenon in a developing town like Bantay. As a city begins to grow with infrastructure development projects, all spectators see is the glory of modernization, (Sharma, 2022) and often ignoring the old things allows us to obtain new ones. Rapid urbanization widens the gap between tangible inherited possessions and modern urban fabric. Bantay has been identified as a major growth area in the regional development plan as a satellite growth area- a “dormitory and the catch basin” of development overflow from Vigan City. The continuous urban growth development outshines the town’s inherited assets leading to unrecognition of significant heritage structures. The study highlights the demand of heritage preservation balancing the adaptation of heritage structures while embracing modern urban fabric. Heritage preservation in sustainable urbanization and development fosters a more inclusive and diverse sense of place and enhances town’s spatial experience of historical significance.

Objectives

The primary objective of this study is to conduct mapping or inventory of built historical structures in the urban areas with an integration of urban and heritage conservation and is the first step for the researchers’ study of working the heritage conservation plan of the Bantay. Cultural mapping or inventory of historical and heritage resources will be collected through site visits as the first step in the process of making the heritage conservation planning of the Municipality. The study aims to achieve the following specific objectives:

- a. To understand the importance of heritage conservation
- b. To identify and map structures along study area with possible heritage significance.
- c. Create comprehensive map with multi-layered geospatial information of heritage structures.
- d. Consider uniqueness of the town’s heritage conservation linked with the town’s vision and goals.
- e. Assess the vulnerability of cultural resources against the effect of climate change and natural hazards.

II. Methodology & Framework

The conceptual framework of the research shown in figure 01 involves identifying and evaluating possible structures with heritage significance, mapping heritage structures in urban areas to ensure proper care promotion of tourism and inclusivity of heritage structures in modern and fast-growing urban areas. A multi-discipline geographic information system is used to monitor and map heritage sites using impact techniques and field surveys to manage heritage site structures. This allows a comprehensive exploration of urban built heritage conservation that focuses on the heritage structures along the eight urban areas of the Municipality.

The data collection process involves gathering primary and secondary data. Primary data will be gathered through interviews, and on-site mapping. Additionally, data collection will be visualized using photos taken on the spot. This will be used to visualize data to easily understand and interpret. Secondary data will be sourced from historical records, articles and publications related to heritage conservation planning, built heritage conservation and urban conservation. This will help the researcher understand complex concepts, visualize data, and engage participants in the research process.

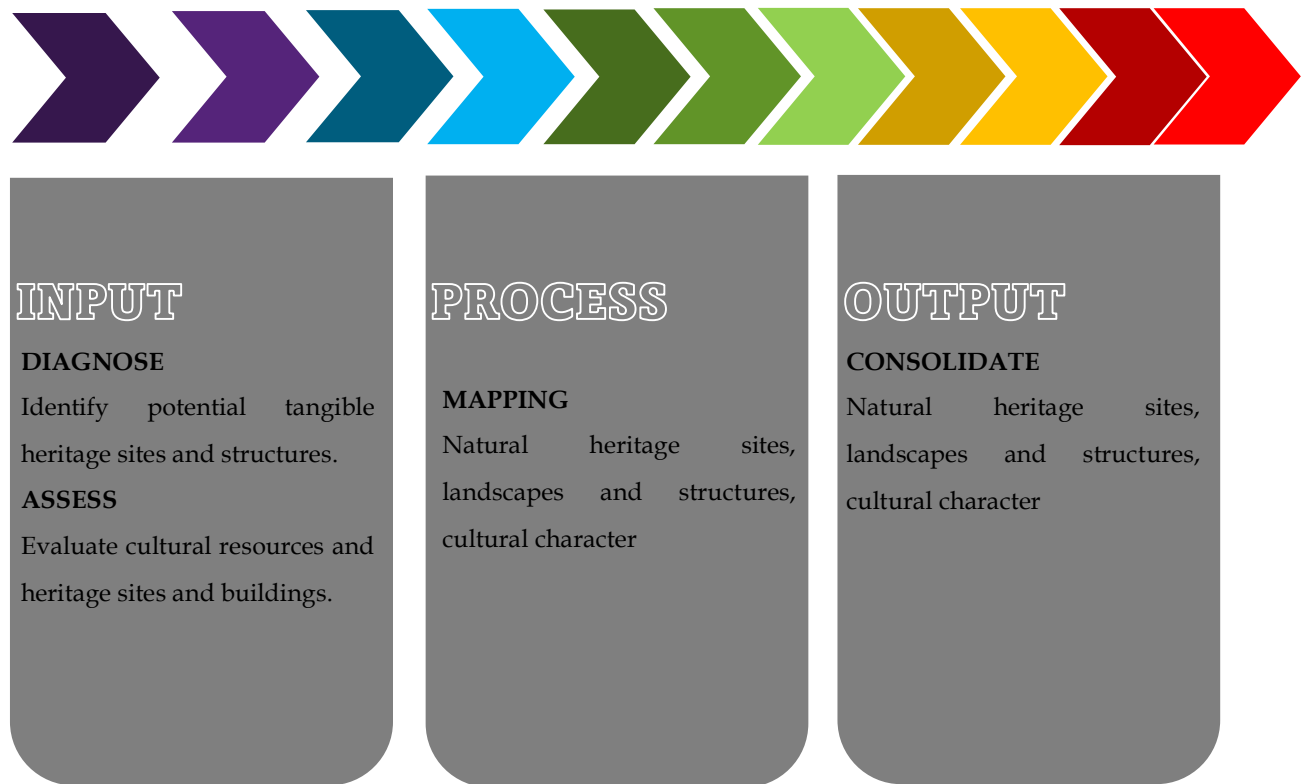


Figure 01 Conceptual framework of the research

III. Results and Discussion

A. Understanding Heritage Preservation and Significance

The población are the urban areas of the Municipality where most of the business districts are located. Identification and mapping of heritage structures is part of heritage conservation to help distinguish structures with possible heritage significance and to help preserve and conserve buildings amidst the growing urban areas. The study involves solutions on how historically significant structures coexist harmoniously with swiftly growing urban developments.

The importance of heritage preservation has not been included in the goals of the municipality for the last decades as stated by the United Nations of the Sustainable Development Goals that aims to make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable. The goal highlights the significance of preserving and protecting the world's natural and cultural heritage and strives for sustainable urban centers with universal green spaces.

Heritage buildings/ structures are part of heritage conservation to help distinguish structures with possible heritage significance to help preserve and conserve buildings amidst the growing urban areas. Understanding cultural heritage connects the past, learning from our history fosters a sense of place and community. Preservation aligns with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) through adaptive re-use by utilizing existing buildings and adapting it for new purposes while preserving natural resources, contributing to sustainability. Preservation offers economic benefits by creating jobs and increasing property values contributing to local economic growth. Community engagement is a crucial factor in empowering local communities, allowing groups and stakeholders to fully participate in social and cultural life.

The maps and pictures support mapping culturally built heritage houses along the población areas. Cultural mapping of physical built heritage is a useful technique in heritage conservation to understand the importance of cultural assets and resources. A tool in preserving cultural heritage, encouraging tourist and economic growth, and fostering community building. Community participation takes part in the process to

guarantee cultural treasures are well preserved and protected for future generation use.

B. Identification and Mapping Historic Buildings along Población Areas

Maintaining a geographic area’s historical and cultural integrity depends crucially on heritage preservation. It aids in the preservation and protection of significant cultural assets including historical sites, monuments, and traditional ethnographic artifacts. Preserving cultural heritage guarantees the continuity of regional customs, traditional celebrations, and socio-cultural practices and by designing heritage zones and establishing a Philippine Registry of Cultural Property, the government has made it a priority to safeguard, conserve and restore historical monuments and cultural treasures around the country. In addition to protecting the nation’s cultural legacy, preservation efforts enable next generations to value and absorb the wealth of their history.

The United Nations 2023 agenda for Sustainable Development (SDG) emphasizes the importance of heritage conservation in achieving social, economic as well as environmental goals with the integration of cultural heritage and creativity as a key enabler aligned with these goals. By fostering cultural resilience and fortifying linkages to the past, heritage conservation can improve communal cohesiveness. Preserving and enhancing cultural variety through heritage conservation promotes a more just and inclusive society also with protecting cultural heritage makes a substantial contribution for environmental sustainability. The preservation of cultural heritage may enhance an area’s appearance and ingenuity while advancing social and human rights. The process of heritage conservation has many facets for social, cultural, physical, and economic aspects. Heritage preservation is incorporated into sustainable development goals to ensure cultural and natural built heritage benefits the present and future generation to the greatest extent feasible.

The macro map of the Philippines shown in Figure 02 shows the Municipality of Bantay, the chosen town of the study. Bantay is the closest town to Vigan City-the capital city of Ilocos Sur and known for the well-preserved example of Spanish colonial town in Asia. The map also shows the location of the study area.

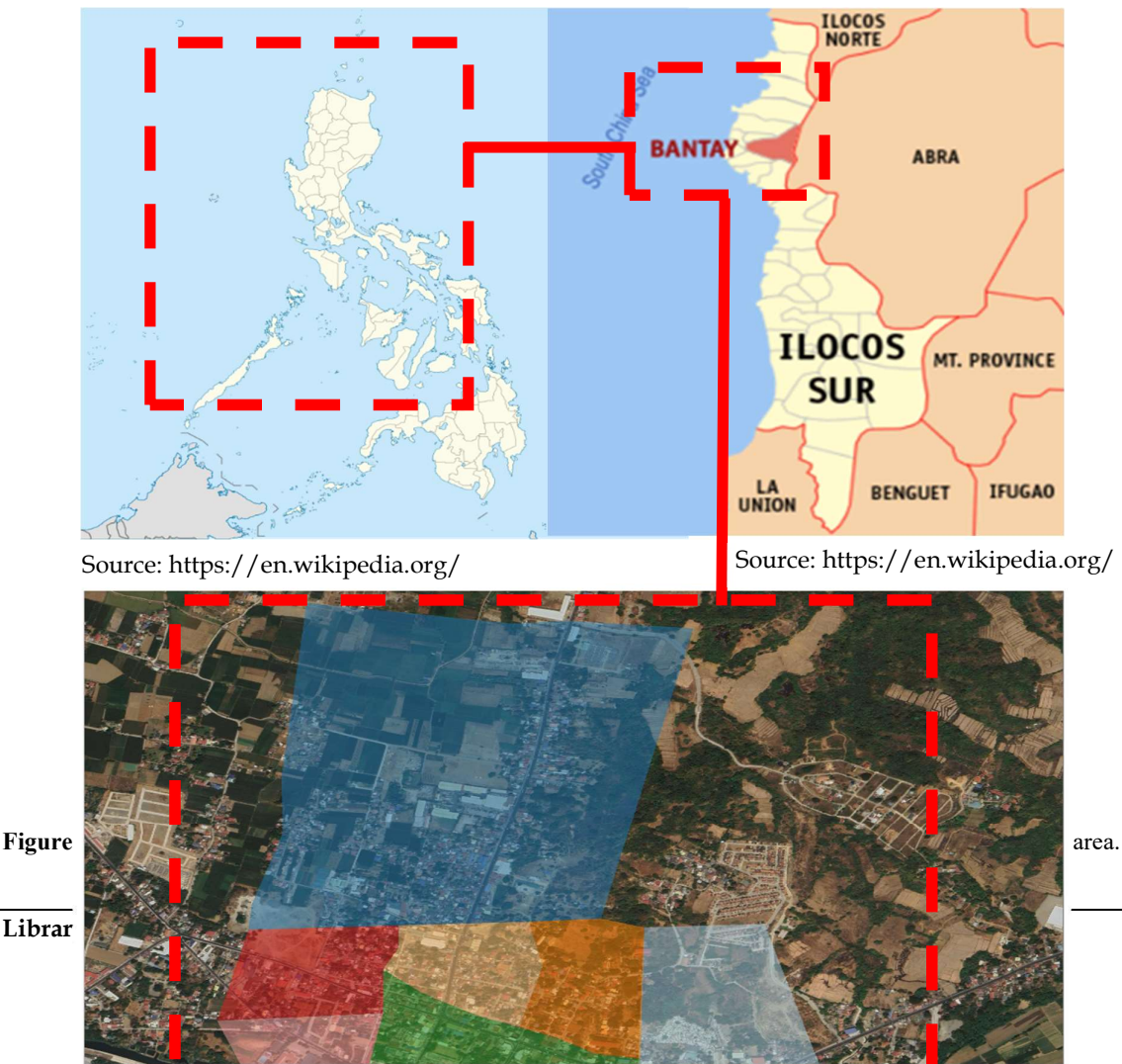
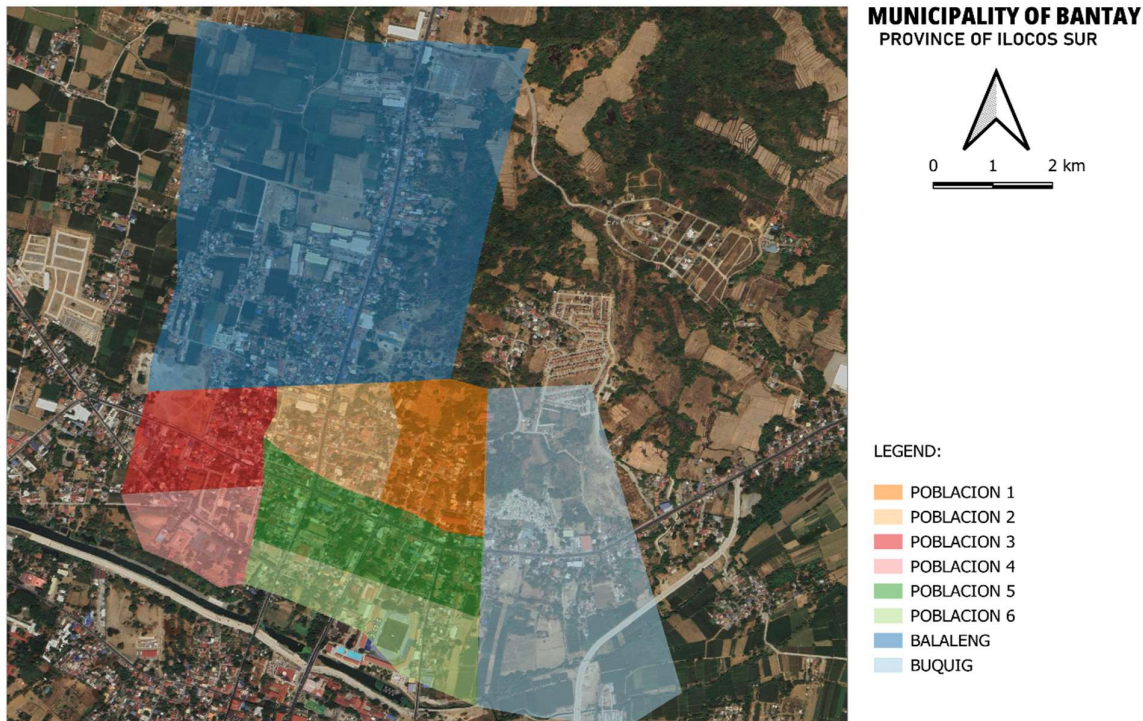


Figure
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area.

The scope of the study is within the urban areas of Bantay where progressive developments are present, specifically the contiguous built-up areas of Población 1,2,3,4,5,6, barangay Buquig and Barangay Balaleng.



4 with the highest total number with built heritage. Structures within this Poblacion have been classified according to its historical and architectural significance with over 50 years of existence. According to RA 10066, an act providing for the protection and conservation of the national cultural heritage, strengthening the National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA) states that a cultural property can be considered as an important property if structures have at least fifty (50) years old of existence.

BUILT HERITAGE OF BANTAY, ILOCOS SUR BY BARANGAY				
BARANGAY	NAME OF CULTURAL PROPERTY	YEAR BUILT	REMARKS	PHOTO
Poblacion 1	Mr. Victorino Sison	1942	Spanish inspired style built more than 80 years. Multiple renovation was done to conserve the house	 <i>Source: Owned by author</i>

Poblacion 1	Mrs. Jubita Pilien	1940's	Spanish inspired style built 80 years ago. Inherited by Donata Pilien, son of Mrs. Jubita Pilien	 Source: Owned by author
Poblacion 1	Mr. Jose Pilar	1591	Well preserved façade built during Spanish era. Adaptive re-use on the ground floor where done.	 Source: Owned by author
Poblacion 3	Natividad Gorospe	1951	Well preserved and well intact Spanish style house for over 70 years. Additional changes were done on the outside but spaces on the inside is untouched.	 Source: Owned by author
Poblacion 3	Sulpicio Almazan	1950's	The façade of the building is still intact except for some deterioration on the wood planks cladding on the 2 nd floor.	 Source: Owned by author
Poblacion 4	Amando Mendoza & Caridad Paa	1934	A Spanish-American style house owned by Amando Mendoza and Caridad Paa now inherited by the daughter, Ligaya.	 Source: Owned by author

Poblacion 4	Garcia family	1940	Original owner of the house was the Garcia family now owned by one of Juan Paz Children-Rev. Urbano Paz	 Source: Owned by author
Poblacion 4	Almazan Family	1934	A mixture of Spanish-American style house that was built on April 9, 1934. This house was later bought by the Valdez family.	 Source: Owned by author
Poblacion 4	Presencia & Francisco Paat	1929	A Spanish ancestral house during the pre-war and post-war. It was renovated a couple of times without altering the look of its façade from its original look.	 Source: Owned by author
Poblacion 4	Primitivo Valdez	1949	A Spanish ancestral house built in 1949. Façade were still the same except additional features were done in front. No major renovation was done yet.	 Source: Owned by author
Poblacion 4	Magda Peña	1934	A Spanish-American style house. Its ground floor was fully renovated and plastered with concrete cement and paints.	 Source: Owned by author

Poblacion 4	Domingo Dy	1950's	A Spanish house of well preserved and intact façade. Interiors were never renovated. Extension of the kitchen was made on the west portion of the house without destroying the authenticity of the house. This once host a refuge area of the Japanese soldiers during the American Japanese war.	 Source: Owned by author
Poblacion 4	Cipriano Almazan	1955	A Spanish ancestral house built around 1955. Extension was made in front that serves as a porch.	 Source: Owned by author
Poblacion 5	Bantay East Central School	1907	A Gabaldon school built between 1907-1946.	 Source: Owned by author
Poblacion 5	Bantay West Central School	1914	Gabaldon school was built in 1914, one of the oldest schools in the municipality. The site where the school is now located was once used as a garrison by the Japanese soldiers.	 Source: Owned by author
Poblacion 5	San Augustine Bell Tower	1572	Previously served as a watch tower for the town and nearby municipality, protecting both areas from pirate invaders.	 Source: Owned by author
Poblacion 5	San Augustine Parish Church	1590	The oldest and surviving churches in the region famed for its grand design inspired by Western and European cultures.	 Source: Owned by author

Poblacion 5	Diego Silang Park	1763	The memorial monument was built during Spanish reign to lend distinction and pay honor to Miguel Vicos, the Spanish mestizo who killed Diego Silang	 <i>Source: Owned by author</i>
Poblacion 5	Bantay Municipal Hall	1593	With the inception in 1591 of the Bantay Parish Church, which is made a requirement prior to the creation of a pueblo, Municipio de Bantay was officially founded.	 <i>Source: Owned by author</i>

Table 01 Lists of building/structures officially mapped along Polacion areas.

Figures 04 and 05 provide base maps of the Municipality, illustrating urban areas, roads, and boundaries, while figures 06, 07, 08, and 09 are pin structures to their respective barangays..

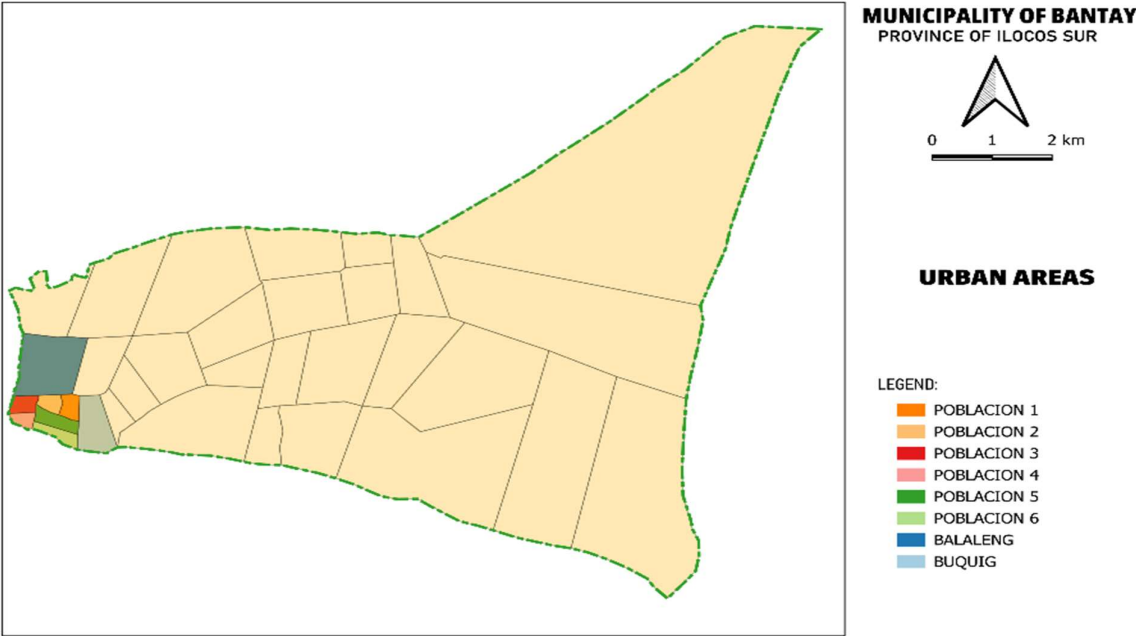


Figure 04 Map of urban areas showing the map of Bantay, Ilocos Sur. *Source: Owned by author.*

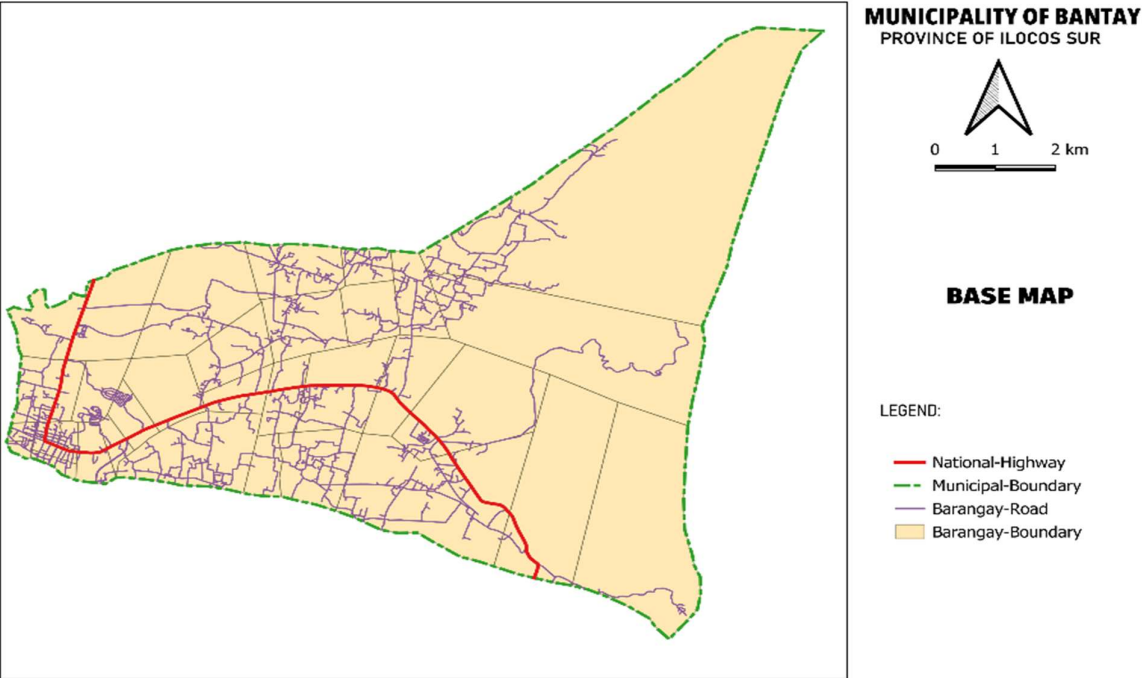


Figure 05 Base map showing roads and boundaries..Source: Owned by author.

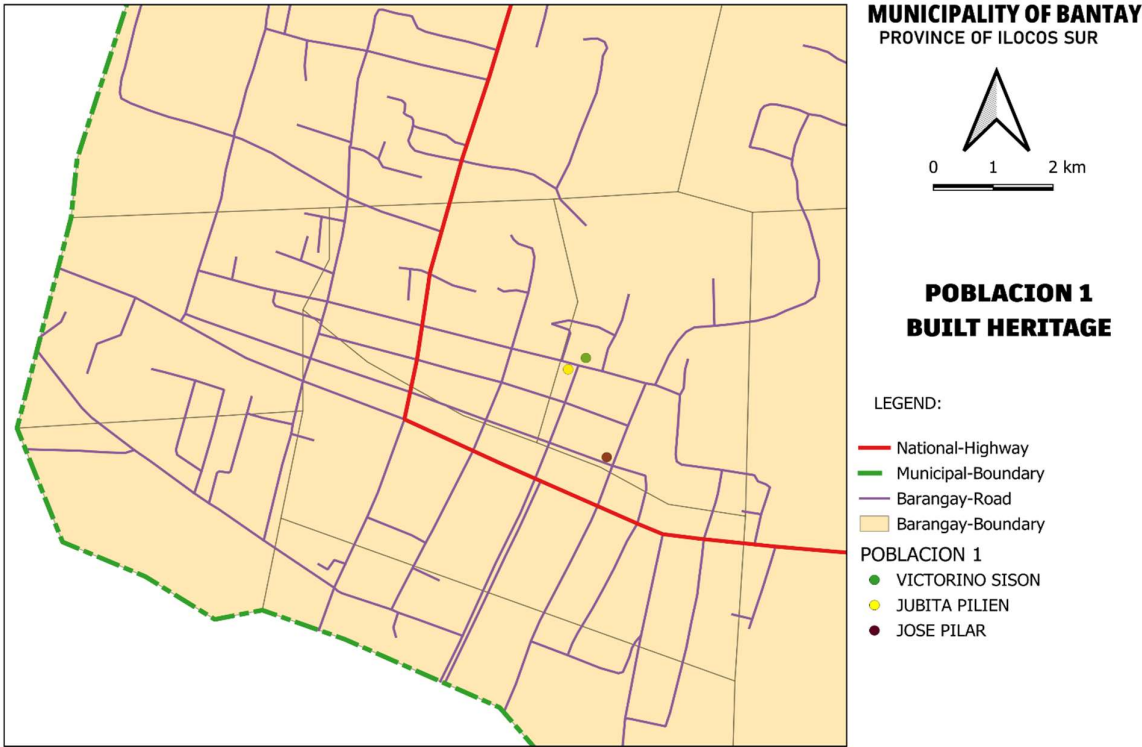


Figure 06 Map of built heritage at Poblacion 1. Source: Owned by author.

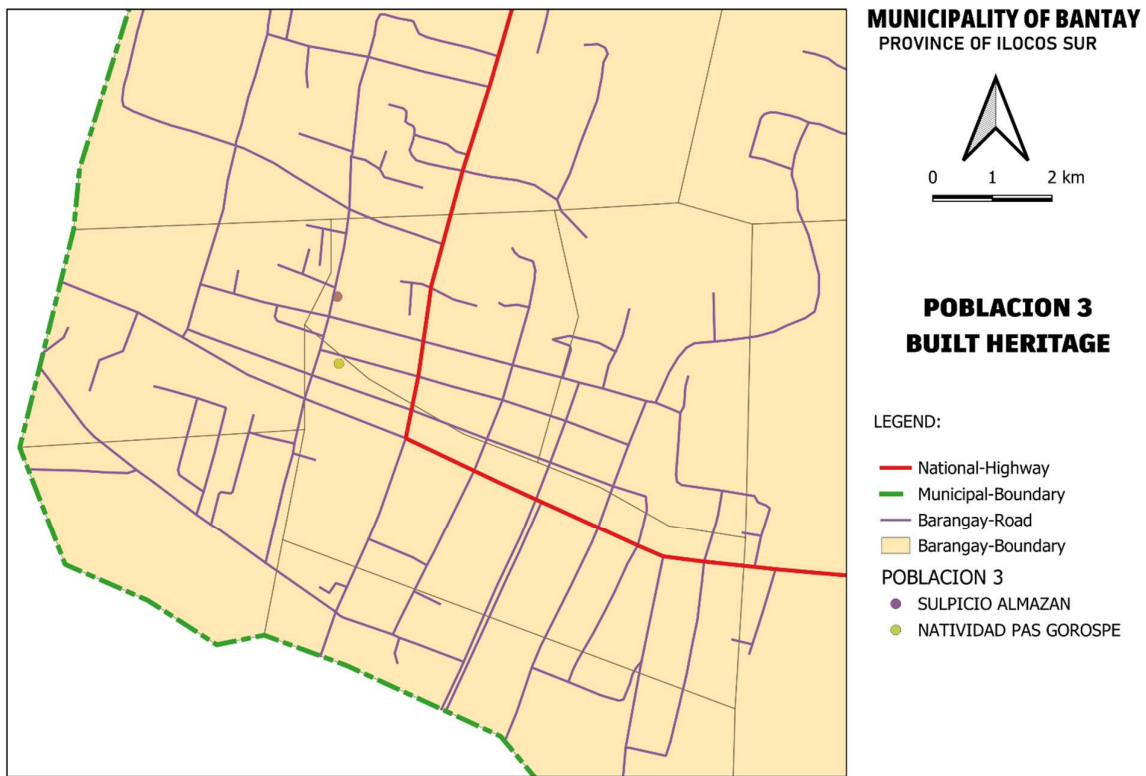


Figure 07 Map of built heritage at Poblacion 3. *Source: Owned by author.*

Figure 08 Map of built heritage at Poblacion 4. *Source: Owned by author.*

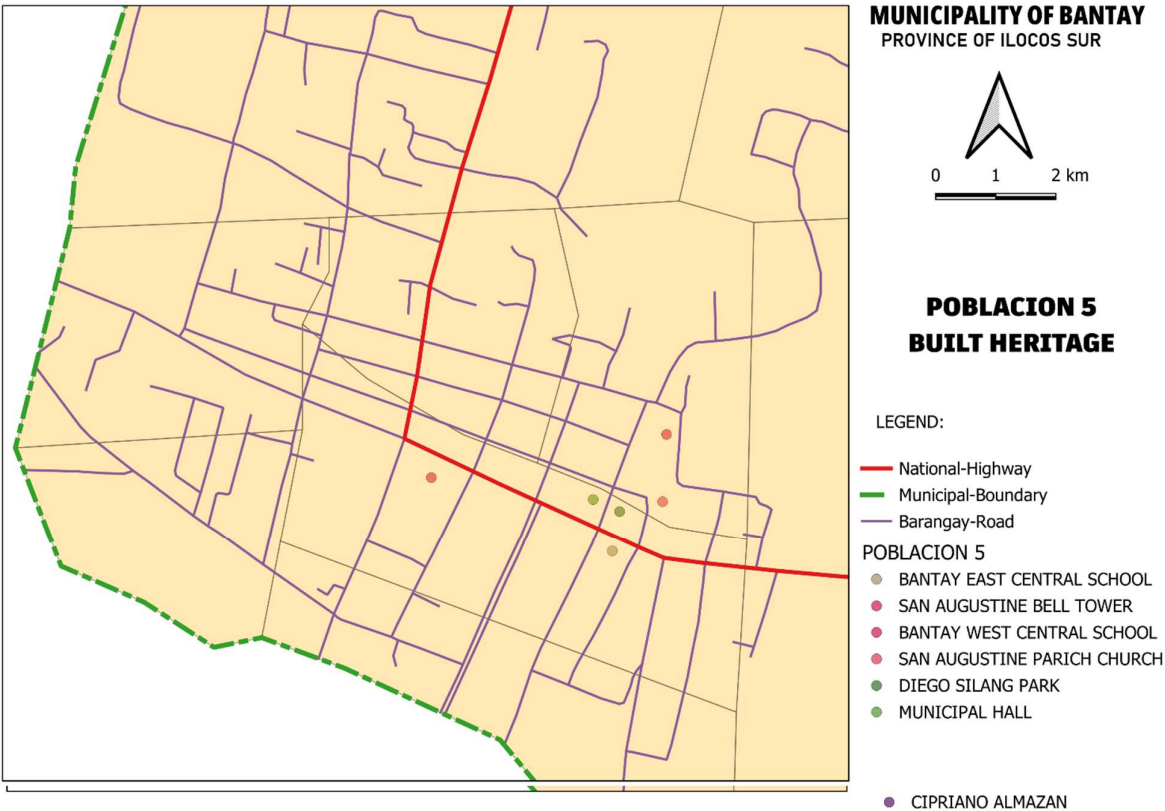


Figure 09 Map of built heritage at Poblacion 5. *Source: Owned by author.*

Table 02 and 03 presented below shows how structures are mapped according to their category. The basis for choosing the category is grouped according to parks, government, education, religion and ancestral houses- having the largest quantity of structures mapped. Other than the types of structures listed in the table below, no other kinds of structures were mapped to be designated with historical significance.

Category	Name	Area
Parks	Diego Silang Park	Poblacion 5
Government	Bantay Municipal Hall	Poblacion 5
Education	Bantay West Central School	Poblacion 5
	Bantay East Central School	Poblacion 5
Religion	San Augustine Parish Church	Poblacion 5
	San Augustine Bell Tower	Poblacion 5
Ancestral Houses	Victorino Sison	Poblacion 1
	Jubita Pilien	Poblacion 1
	Jose Pilar	Poblacion 1
	Sulpicio Almazan	Poblacion 3
	Natividad Paz Gorospe	Poblacion 3
	Amando Mendoza	Poblacion 4
	Garcia Family	Poblacion 4
	Almazan Family	Poblacion 4
	Presencia & Francisco Paat	Poblacion 4
	Magda Peña	Poblacion 4
	Primitivo Valdez	Poblacion 4
	Domingo Dy	Poblacion 4
	Cipriano Almazan	Poblacion 4

Table 02 Lists of building/structures officially mapped along Polacion area according to category.

CLASSIFICATION OF BUILT HERITAGE OF BANTAY						
Barangay	Churches	Public Building	Schools	Monuments	Ancestral Houses	Plaza
Poblacion 1						
Poblacion 2						
Poblacion 3						
Poblacion 4						
Poblacion 5						
Poblacion 6						
Balaleng						
Buquig						

Table 03 Lists of classification of built heritage of Bantay.

D. Consider the Uniqueness of the Town's Heritage in LGU's Vision and Goals.

The Municipality of Bantay mandates the municipal government to meet the priority needs and basic service requirements of its constituents through a proficient participatory, dynamic, and responsive local governance. To align the Vision of the town “a business hub with a rich cultural past inspired by great leaders and God-loving people” with Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) for sustainability and livability in urban areas strengthening the efforts to protect and safeguard the world's cultural heritage, objectives of the town's heritage conservation plan linked with the town's vision and goals shall be:

- Implement planned and balanced development in the town,
- Achieve visual quality, character, and overall quality of life in the town,

- c. Encourage measures that will make the heritage a haven of business opportunities, a sanctuary of progress based on God-fearing environment and governed by a stable government,
- d. Heighten residents' awareness and appreciation and pride of place and heritage in all ages, levels, and sectors of the society, and
- e. Protect and conserve the tangible and intangible cultural and natural resources of the town.

D. Mapping Vulnerability of Cultural Resources Against the Effects of Climate Change

The Figure 10 shows the assessment of the vulnerability of cultural resources against the effects of climate change and natural hazards based on flood, landslide, earthquake, tsunami, storm surge and erosion taken from Project NOAH (National Operational Assessment of Hazards) are the areas susceptible to flood, red being the highest and yellow being the lowest. To prevent disasters, project NOAH provides real-time weather data along with maps showing the risks of flooding, landslides, storm surges and debris flows. Through research, developing solutions and providing extension services, project NOAH anticipates reducing risks associated with disasters, encouraging adaptation to climate change and lessening associated activities.

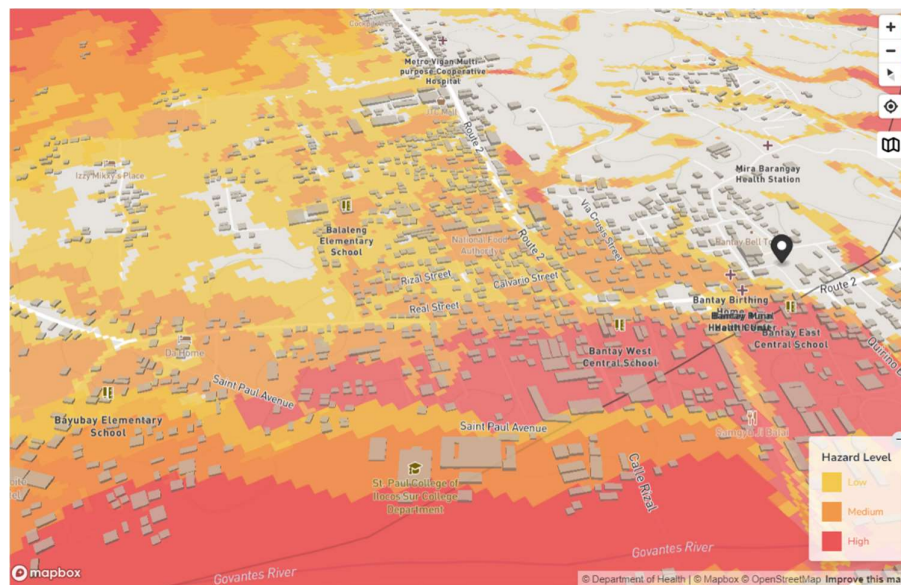


Figure 10 Hazard Map based on Project NOAH. *Source: <https://noah.up.edu.ph/know-your-hazards>*

IV. Conclusion

The important part of what gives a city character and sense of community is history by preservation of historic structures that can give a particular sense of architecture era with a representation of significant milestone of the town's history. Historic buildings are the concrete witnesses of the aesthetic and cultural history of the town, giving people a sense of place and attachment to the past. Heritage preservation aids in preserving important structures, landscapes as well as locations and maintains a tangible link to our heritage and ensures future generations can have greater appreciation and learning from the past. It helps foster a shared sense of identity and belongingness to a community. The maps and tables presented are diagnosed, documented, analyzed and visualized spatial data of heritage buildings. The tools used to conduct the research enable a comprehensive assessment of the condition and conservation needs of historic structures as well as the creation of digital maps that can be used for planning, management, and education purposes.

Bantay must set its standards high in considering uniqueness of the town's conservation that contributes to the town's cultural identity and legacy, an essential in preserving a sense of place and community. The town's distinctive past draws tourists and investors, preserving its rich legacy while also fostering economic growth. A town can support sustainable development by preserving its historic structures and landscapes allowing rooms for structures and cultural endeavors.

Future Developments

For the success of the study, research studies for future problems shall be identified in the early stage of heritage planning. These are some of the key points to further expand the study of the researcher's intent to conduct the heritage conservation plan of the town:

- a. Mapping of significant intangible heritage of the town
- b. Defining proposed heritage zone/district/ core of the town
- c. Key points for adaptive re-use, restoration, and vibrant heritage core
- d. Policy making and recommendations
- e. Adaptation and integration of international and local laws and regulations

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