World Heritage City of Vigan, Philippines
MESSAGE

The inscription of Vigan in the UNESCO World Heritage List of Cultural Properties in December 1999 marked a new high point in the lives of Bigueños.

We started to recognize our distinct advantage of being in a historic place which is unique and of a special character. We began to be aware of the socio-economic potentials in heritage conservation as a tool for building up community pride and sense of responsibility, improving our standard of living, developing cultural industries and creating livelihood opportunities. With its new international recognition, Vigan became a source of pride for its residents, a must-see destination for visitors, which in turn made homeowners want to take better care of their ancestral houses and give them new uses. Through consensus building, local legislations were enacted to define the boundaries of our historic core zone, development limitations and physical interventions to preserve structural integrity and authenticity.

The Heritage Homeowners' Preservation Manual is a useful component our heritage conservation program. It takes us a step further by making us understand better not only the significance of our place and its setting, but also the nature and special care required to maintain the various elements of our ancestral houses which make them unique, special and environment-friendly. This manual also helps us rediscover the genius and artistry of our forefathers, thus enhancing our pride of ownership and sense of responsibility. By making us aware of our distinct historic properties, this manual can stimulate us to make creative use of unutilized spaces within our properties, thereby encouraging investment, job creation, enhanced social environment. The publication also pays homage to our fiestas and festivals, traditional arts, crafts, and local delicacies. Without these cultural expressions, the story of Vigan would not be complete.

It is hoped that this manual will encourage active participation in heritage conservation and management among homeowners not only in the World Heritage City of Vigan but in other heritage sites in the Philippines.

We acknowledge the invaluable contribution of Richard Engelhardt, who inspired us to nominate our hometown for inscription in the UNESCO World Heritage List and who launched this book project; to my fellow Bigueño Ricardo Favis who supervised the project to its completion; and most especially to all the Bigueños whose perseverance and determination, steadfastly anchored on their valued legacy, enriched the contents of this manual. Without them, this publication would not have been possible.

Eva Marie S. Medina
Mayor
World Heritage City of Vigan, Philippines

FOREWORD

UNESCO is mandated to promote the conservation of cultural heritage, both tangible and intangible. To carry out this mandate, UNESCO has set standards and developed strategies for the preservation of our cultural heritage, including the 1972 Convention on the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage. Management tools have also been developed to encourage heritage preservation and management using local indigenous capacity.

The Homeowner’s Preservation Manuals have been developed within the framework of the UNESCO programme on “Integrated Community Development and Cultural Heritage Site Preservation in Asia and the Pacific” (LEAP Programme) which aims to encourage participation of local communities in the management and conservation of their sites in a manner that provides them with socio-economic benefits, while safeguarding the site and maintaining social and cultural traditions intact. The programme defines heritage preservation as a development activity that can bring economic opportunities, help alleviate poverty, create jobs and generate income based on traditional know-how.

The Heritage Homeowner’s Preservation Manual for the World Heritage Site of Vigan is the fourth of a series of manuals developed to sustain conservation of World Heritage Sites in Asia. This manual is designed as a practical and user-friendly management tool to guide owners and custodians in the maintenance, repair and adaptive re-use of their historic properties, thereby promoting responsible stewardship of their heritage. This manual transforms traditional building standards into guidelines that can easily be understood by homeowners and developers. It also encourages users to maintain their ancestral houses using time-tested methods adapted to their structures, using traditional materials and indigenous knowledge.

It is hoped that this manual will encourage active participation in heritage conservation and management among homeowners not only in the World Heritage City of Vigan but in other heritage sites in the Philippines.

Gwang-Jo Kim
Director
UNESCO Bangkok

Eva Marie S. Medina
Mayor
World Heritage City of Vigan, Philippines
# Table of Contents

**FOREWORD** ...................................................... III

**MESSAGE** ...................................................... III

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS** ........................................ IV

**INTRODUCTION** ................................................ 1

Why Preserve the Historic Houses of Vigan? ........................................ 3
What is the Status of the Historic Houses in Vigan? ................................ 5
What is the Homeowner’s Manual? ......................................................... 6
How to Use this Manual ................................................................. 7

**CHAPTER 1: CONSERVATION AND CONTEXT** .................. 9

1.1 Understanding the Historic and Social Context .................. 10
1.2 Understanding the Urban Context .................. 11
1.3 Understanding the Site Context .................. 12
1.4 Zoning .................. 13
1.5 Principles of Conservation ........................................ 18
   Minimum Intervention ...................................................... 18
   Preservation of Authenticity ........................................ 19

**CHAPTER 2: UNDERSTANDING THE VIGAN VERNACULAR
ARCHITECTURE** .................................................. 23

2.1 Evolution of the Vigan House .................. 24
2.2 Passive Energy Characteristics .................. 27
2.3 Classification of Vigan Houses .................. 28
2.4 Spaces .................. 36
2.5 Exterior Elements .................. 38
2.6 Interior Elements .................. 44
2.7 Documenting Your Home .................. 50
2.8 Next Step .................. 51

**CHAPTER 3: UNDERTAKING CONSERVATION** ............... 55

3.1 Evaluate Your Building for Historic Integrity ................ 56
3.2 Write a Statement of Significance ................ 56
   How to Write a Statement of Significance ................ 56
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.3 Map Your Building’s Present Condition</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4 Determine What to Save, Repair or Replace</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5 Plan Conservation Work</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.6 Formulate a Building Program</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.7 Prepare a Budget Estimate</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.8 Check Your Financial Capability</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.9 Next Step</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 4: REPAIR AND MAINTENANCE</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1 The House ‘Skin’</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2 The Clay Roof</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3 Brick Masonry and Lime Plaster</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4 Wood</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.5 Flooring Material</td>
<td>123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.6 Sheet Metal Works</td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.7 Iron Works</td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.8 Paints</td>
<td>132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.9 Ornaments</td>
<td>139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.10 Hardware</td>
<td>139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1 Typically Installed Ornaments</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>