

Care strategies to strengthen heritage structures as a community asset during the pandemic: the case of Bahay Nakpil-Bautista



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Abstract

With the ongoing pandemic serving as a challenge on local built heritage, structures like the Bahay Nakpil-Bautista (BNB) in Manila, Philippines have been greatly affected in two ways. One is the temporary closure of its museum and exhibition spaces to visitors. Revenue being made from the entrance fees was intended for its maintenance as a 108-year old structure. Second is the construction of a nearby building—when no one was around to challenge it—which will affect the architectural foundation of Bahay Nakpil-Bautista. The BNB is an important architectural and historical structure built in 1914. It was home to a family of Filipino artists, jewelry makers, musicians, philanthropists, and leaders during the revolution against Spain. The house had been adaptively reused as a heritage museum, providing community-based programs on art, culture, literacy, health, and wellness to marginalized residents. As a community asset, its closure was greatly affected by the pandemic as it relied on human traffic.

In this academic paper, the author aims to present the Care Strategies done in order for a heritage structure to survive the effects of the pandemic and remain in the public eye to create awareness of its cultural significance. The main objective of the care in design solutions was to strengthen the socio-cultural sustainability programs of BNB. The continued usage and support of its adaptively reused spaces should focus on both care and sustainability as a way to future proof the structure. First, it became the subject of a case study for the development of a socio-cultural sustainability index, including the assessment of its interior spaces for further adaptive reuse. Second, online fundraising activities for its maintenance were conducted. Third, public lectures helped raise awareness on the value of the adaptive reuse of historic spaces. As a result, the house is able to protect its status as a community asset by caring for its structural and intangible foundations in spite of limitations of the pandemic.