

Report on Construction of the De La Cruz Ancestral House

Cavite City, Philippines

I. Introduction

The DLC Ancestral House stands as a cherished local private museum nestled in the vibrant heart of Lopez Jaena Street in San Roque, Cavite City. This mid-century residence was constructed by Florentina Gomez of Funeraria Central, a notable establishment in the region. In 1960, it was acquired by José and Amparo de la Cruz, who repurposed it into the office and chapel for Funeraria Filipinas, a pioneering funeral home founded in 1953 and celebrated as the oldest operational facility of its kind in Cavite City. Over the decades, the house has evolved into a rich repository of cultural heritage, housing a diverse range of collections that showcase the flora and fauna of the Philippines, striking visual arts, and invaluable ethnographic materials. Moreover, the DLC Ancestral House serves as a vital space for the practice and preservation of Caviteño heritage, fostering a deeper understanding and appreciation of the region's history. In addition to its permanent collections, the museum hosts a regular program of seasonal exhibitions that take place both on-site and online, engaging the community and visitors alike in meaningful cultural experiences. Through these initiatives, the DLC House not only preserves the past but also actively contributes to the present-day cultural landscape of Cavite City.

However, in October 2024, the tranquility of Cavite City was shattered when two formidable typhoons struck the province: Typhoon Kristine (international name Trami) and Super Typhoon Leon. The local government swiftly declared a State of Calamity as the relentless storms unleashed devastating impacts across the region. While natural calamities are not uncommon in the Philippines, situated within the Pacific Ring of Fire, the ferocity and frequency of these typhoons in 2024 pushed the country's disaster response capabilities to their limits. In the wake of the chaos, the government, with support from various foreign aid organizations, has been tirelessly working to provide relief and initiate restoration projects. Yet, the magnitude of the destruction has made it increasingly challenging to meet the urgent needs of every affected individual. This crisis has underscored both the successes and shortcomings of the nation's resilience strategies and disaster preparedness measures.

Tragically, the DLC Ancestral House was not spared from this calamity. It sustained severe damage, particularly to its roof and ceilings, which are remnants from the postwar era in the Philippines. Preliminary assessments estimate repair costs to be around Php 100,000. Furthermore, some of the priceless collections housed within the museum were affected by water leaks, resulting in significant conservation challenges that demand immediate attention.

II. Activities Conducted

Following the devastating impact of the typhoons, a detailed survey of the affected areas was promptly conducted to assess the extent of the damage to the DLC Ancestral House. In light of the destruction, the museum was quickly closed to the public, and its operations were shifted to online exhibitions to ensure continued engagement with the community while safeguarding the integrity of its collections. A thorough evaluation of the museum's collections was carried out, revealing that some items had sustained damage requiring urgent conservation efforts. In response, the DLC began preparing for conservation activities, focused on preserving the cultural heritage and artifacts housed within its walls.

The DLC had planned a significant educational lecture and activity for November 2024, with support from ICOM DEMHIST, aimed at fostering awareness and appreciation of the region's rich heritage. Unfortunately, due to the extensive damage inflicted by the typhoons, the event could not proceed as scheduled. The curator of the DLC promptly informed the ICOM DEMHIST Secretariat of the cancellation and the reasons behind it. In a show of understanding and support, ICOM DEMHIST graciously converted the originally allocated grant into a special relief grant, dedicated to aiding the restoration efforts for the museum. Once the damage assessment was completed, restoration work commenced promptly. The first phase of construction took place over seven days, from December 1-7, 2024, focusing on the most urgent repairs to ensure the structural integrity of the house. A subsequent phase of construction was scheduled for December 21-24, 2024, to further address the damage and restore the museum to its former glory. These restoration efforts not only aim to repair the physical structure but also to rejuvenate the spirit of the DLC Ancestral House, reaffirming its commitment to preserving Caviteño culture and history. In the wake of adversity, the museum remains determined to rise again, stronger and more resilient, ensuring that it continues to serve as a beacon of heritage for the community. The support from local and international organizations, alongside the unwavering dedication of the crew, plays a vital role in this restoration journey, emphasizing the importance of cultural preservation in the face of natural challenges. As the DLC prepares for its eventual reopening, it looks forward to reinvigorated exhibitions and a renewed engagement with its audience, reflecting the resilience of both the institution and the community it serves.

III. Source of Funds

The restoration of the DLC Ancestral House has been primarily supported by a special grant from ICOM-DEMIST, of which the DLC Ancestral House is a proud member. This grant has provided crucial financial assistance for our ongoing efforts to preserve this historical site. In addition, we have supplemented our funding with allocations from the trust fund specifically designated for the maintenance and

restoration of the house. Despite these efforts, the total funding received has not been sufficient to cover the comprehensive costs associated with the restoration project. The complexity of the restoration process, which entails meticulous conservation and architectural preservation efforts, has led to an underestimation of the financial resources required.

To address this shortfall, we are actively engaging in a variety of fundraising activities. These initiatives are designed to raise awareness about the significance of the DLC Ancestral House and to garner support from the community and beyond. Our fundraising efforts include community events, online campaigns, and outreach to potential donors who share our passion for heritage conservation. We recognize the importance of continuous restoration and conservation activities to ensure the longevity of the DLC Ancestral House. Our team is committed to exploring additional funding sources, including grants from other heritage organizations, partnerships with local businesses, and collaboration with cultural institutions that value the preservation of historical sites.

In summary, while we have made progress thanks to the generous support from ICOM-DEMIST and our trust fund, ongoing fundraising is essential to complete the restoration of the DLC Ancestral House.

IV. References

Cavite Province Under State of Calamity. Retrieved from:

<https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1997177/cavite-province-under-state-of-calamity-due-to-kristine>)

Submitted and Prepared by

Rodolfo M. De la Cruz

De la Cruz Ancestral House Museum

San Roque, Cavite City, Philippines

PHOTO DOCUMENTATION



Roofing, Ceiling, and Electrical works



Collections that needs conservation attention

