

(RESEARCH ARTICLE)



## Bulacan capitol building: A reconnaissance survey of art deco heritage structure designed by Arch. Juan M. Arellano

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Global Journal of Engineering and Technology Advances, 2022, 10(03), 052–064

Publication history: Received on 11 February 2022; revised on 19 March 2022; accepted on 21 March 2022

Article DOI: <https://doi.org/10.30574/gjeta.2022.10.3.0056>

### Abstract

The Capitol building of the Province of Bulacan in the town of Malolos was erected in 1930. Bulacan Capitol Building is an Art Deco Style Architecture. The entrance of the building has Portico with Octagonal Concrete Columns with decorative concrete torch. It has three entrances of wooden frame door accentuated with wrought iron grills with design of rising Sun. Upon entering the lobby, you will be welcomed by Grand double return staircase. The façade of the building is of massive walls and columns with simplistic design painted with purely white color. The Bulacan Capitol Building was designed by Architect Juan Marcos Arellano. JUAN MARCOS ARELLANO (y de Guzman), one of the Philippines' founding fathers of architecture, was born in Tondo, Manila. Among his most famous works are Manila's Metropolitan Theater (1935), Legislative Building (1926) (now the National Museum of the Philippines), the Manila Central Post Office Building (1926), and Jones Bridge. The researcher utilized Reconnaissance Survey Methodology, an extensive study of an entire area that might be used for analysis. Its purpose is to eliminate those buildings or site elements which are impractical or unfeasible and to identify the more promising buildings or site elements. The result showed that one of the famous landmarks in Bulacan is its Provincial Capitol Building. The building, erected in 1930, was destroyed during the Second World War. It was rebuilt in 1950 with the assistance of the American government. During the administration of President Corazon C. Aquino, the building was renovated and expanded. The building is a Cultural Heritage Property.

**Keywords:** Capitol Building; Art Deco; Juan M. Arellano; Reconnaissance Survey

### 1. Introduction

The Provincial Capitol houses the Governor's Office and other provincial government offices. Its architecture was patterned after the Capitol in the United States of America. The main body is Grecian, while the columns are Ionic.

The Capitol building of the Province of Bulacan in the town of Malolos, erected in 1930. Bulacan Capitol Building is an Art Deco Style Architecture designed by Architect Juan Marcos Arellano. The entrance of the building has Portico with Octagonal Concrete Columns with decorative concrete torch. It has three entrances of wooden frame door accentuated with wrought iron grills with design of rising Sun. Upon entering the lobby, you will be welcomed by Grand double return staircase. The façade of the building is of massive walls and columns with simplistic design painted with purely white color. JUAN MARCOS ARELLANO (y de Guzman), one of the Philippines' founding fathers of architecture, was born on this day in Tondo, Manila (1). Juan Marcos Arellano y de Guzmán was born on April 25, 1888 and died December 5, 1960. Juan M. Arellano was a Filipino architect, best known for Manila's Metropolitan Theater (1935), Legislative Building (1926; now houses the National Museum of Fine Arts), the Manila Central Post Office Building (1926), the Rizal Memorial Sports Complex (1934), the Central Student Church (today known as the Central United Methodist Church, 1932), the old Jaro Municipal Hall (1934) and the old Iloilo City Hall (1935) in Iloilo, the Negros Occidental Provincial

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Capitol (1936), the Cebu Provincial Capitol (1937), the Bank of the Philippine Islands Cebu Main Branch (1940), Misamis Occidental Provincial Capitol Building (1935), Cotabato Municipal Hall (1940) and the Jones Bridge during the pre-war era (2).

The Art Deco style is one of the easiest to identify since its sharp-edged looks and stylized geometrical decorative details are so distinctive. The development of this architectural style was an intentional break with past precedents in an effort to embody the ideas of the modern age. It was the first American architectural style to look forward rather than back, as the case with the preceding revival styles. Some architectural historians refer to the Art Deco style as "Modernistic" leading to some confusion between Art Deco style buildings and Art Modern style buildings, both of which can be described as Modernistic. Since the Art Deco and Art Modern styles are distinctively different in appearance, each style is described separately in this field guide. Both styles were part of the Modern Movement in architecture in the early 20th century, a conscious break with past revival precedents in architecture. The Art Deco style first gained public attention in 1922 in a design competition for the Chicago Tribune Headquarters (3). Finnish architect Eliel Saarinen submitted an Art Deco design that was not chosen, but was widely publicized and embraced as an exciting new architectural style. In 1925 the Exposition des Arts Decoratifs in Paris further promoted the popularity of Art Deco style architecture, as well as Art Deco inspired jewelry, clothing, furniture and handicrafts (4).

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## 2. Methodology

The researcher utilized Reconnaissance Survey Methodology, a brief survey of the study area that can provide the assessment team with valuable information to help plan the field data collection. Undertake observation and documentation of: a.) Bio-physical characteristics b.) Socio-economic features c.) Issues, problems, threats and opportunities d.) Concerns not mentioned in literature or interviews. The reconnaissance survey is an extensive study of an entire area that might be used for analysis. Its purpose is to eliminate those buildings or site elements which are impractical or unfeasible and to identify the more promising buildings or site elements. Existing maps and aerial photographs may be of great help (5).

The reconnaissance survey must include all possible buildings subject of the study. The reconnaissance survey report should summarize all the collected information, including a description of each building or site, a conclusion on the economy of its use, and, where possible, appropriate maps and document photographs.

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## 3. Results and discussion



**Figure 1** Bulacan Provincial Capitol

1.) Year it was built: 1930 2.) Building width: 80 meters 3.) Building Length 108 meters 4.) Architect of the structure: Arch. Juan Marcos Arellano 4.) Under the administration of: Gov. Jose G. Padilla Jr. 5.) Owner of the structure: Provincial Government of Bulacan (PGB) 6.) Ownership: Public Ownership by Provincial Government of Bulacan (PGB)



Figure 2 Exterior of Bulacan Capitol Building



Figure 3 Bulacan Capitol Park

Table 1 Building Classification Checklist

I. Background Information	
A. Type:	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Capitol Building	<input type="checkbox"/> Observatory
<input type="checkbox"/> Municipal/City Hall	<input type="checkbox"/> Park
<input type="checkbox"/> Barangay Hall	<input type="checkbox"/> House
<input type="checkbox"/> Government Agency Building	<input type="checkbox"/> Bridge
<input type="checkbox"/> School	<input type="checkbox"/> Arsenal
<input type="checkbox"/> Hospital	<input type="checkbox"/> Other:
<input type="checkbox"/> Fortress	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Prison/Correctional Facility	
<input type="checkbox"/> Church/Religious Institution	
<input type="checkbox"/> Memorial Shrine	
<input type="checkbox"/> Historical Marker/Monument	

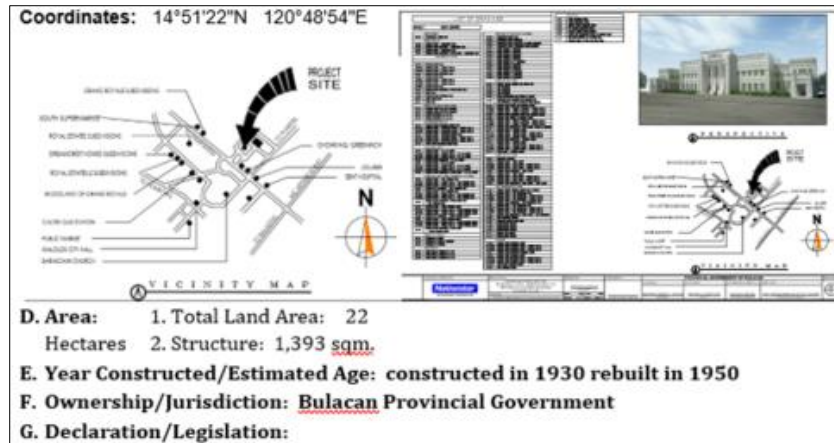
**B. Ownership**  Public  Private

**C. Address/Location/Coordinates (Longitude & Latitude):**

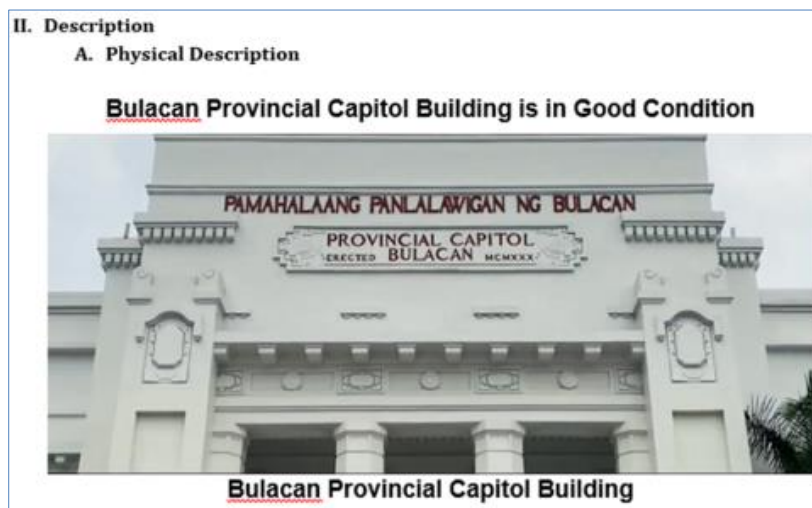
 A map showing the location of the Bulacan Provincial Capitol Complex. The map highlights the complex in blue and red. Surrounding areas include Bulihan, Alido Heights Subdivision, Guinhawa, Catmon, and Sumapang Matani. A red crosshair marks the specific location of the capitol building.
 

Bulacan Provincial Capitol Complex  
Seat of Government of the Province of Bulacan.  
Bulacan Provincial Capitol Building, Capitol Compound, City of Malolos, Bulacan.

Figure 4 Bulacan Provincial Capitol Comple Location Map



**Figure 5** Bulacan Provincial Capitol Comple Location Map



**Figure 6** Bulacan Provincial Capital Massive Facade

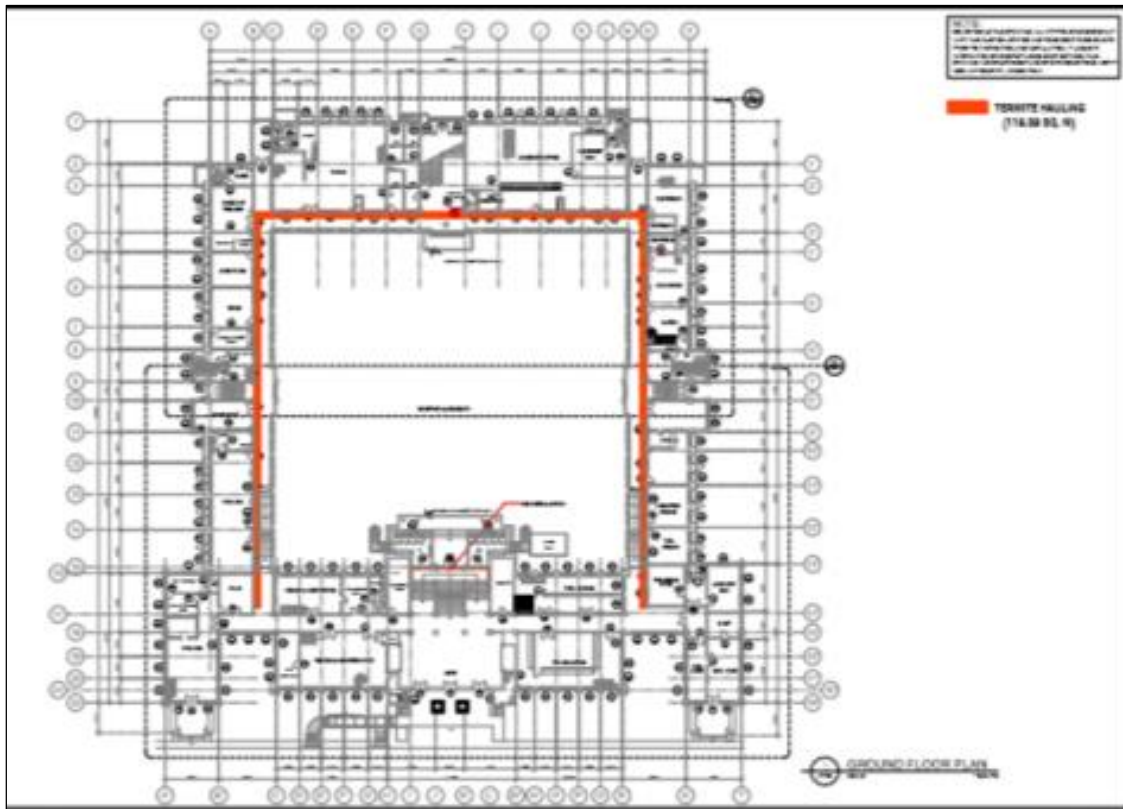


**Figure 7** Bulacan Provincial Capitol Architectural Art Deco Features  
source: "Ako Ang Kapitolyo" - SINEliksik Bulacan Documentary Special (Proyekto ng: United Architects of the Philippines Barasoain Chapter)



**Figure 8** Bulacan Provincial Capitol Mural located at the grand staircase

Source: "Ako Ang Kapitolyo" - SINEliksik Bulacan Documentary Special (Proyekto ng: United Architects of the Philippines Barasoain Chapter)



**Figure 9** Bulacan Provincial Ground Floor Plan

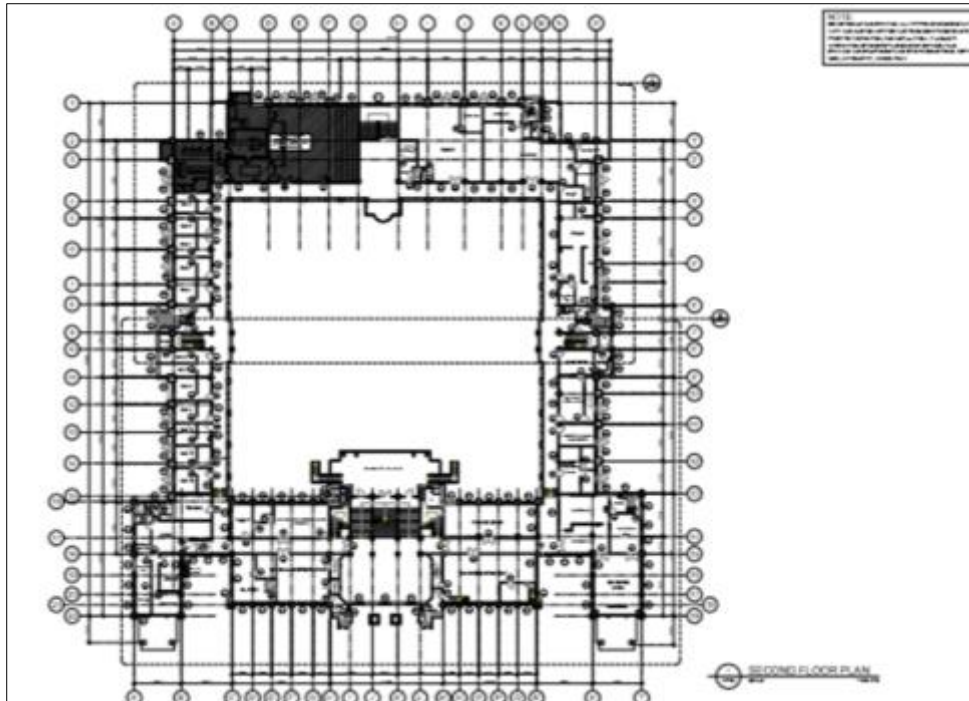


Figure 10 Bulacan Provincial Second Floor Plan

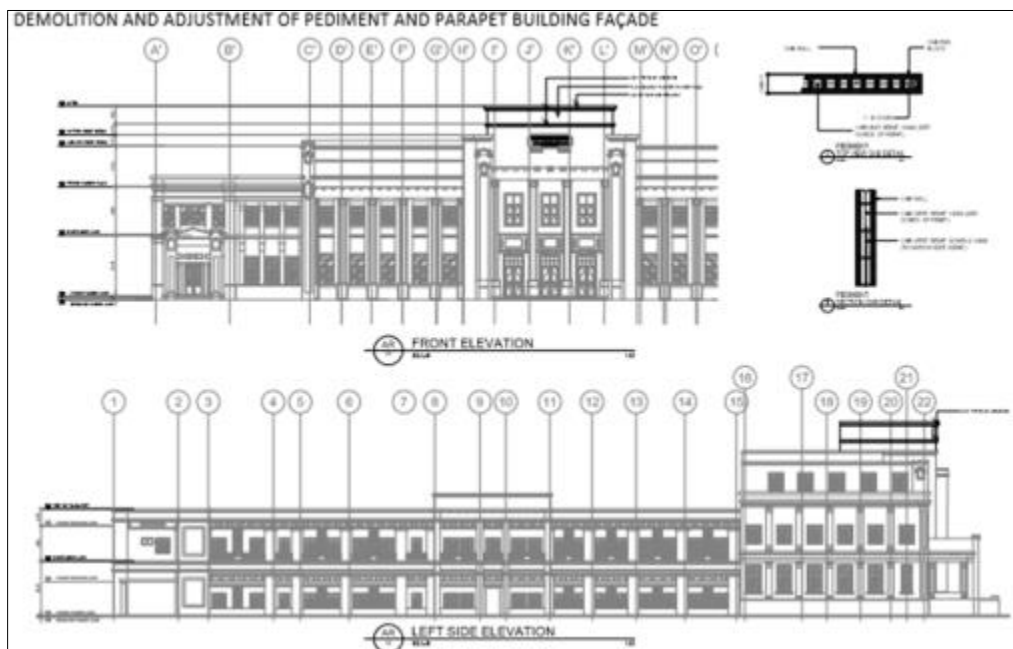


Figure 11 Bulacan Provincial Capitol Building Elevation

### 3.1. History of the Structure



Bulacan Provincial Capitol -- Malolos, Bulacan

Photo by Leo Cloma

The Capitol building of the Province of Bulacan in the town of Malolos, erected in 1930. Archival photo from Meralco Magazine, April 1958. Courtesy of the Tantoco Family Library and Archives. The caption reads: "The Provincial Capitol. A big cream-white edifice on the main highway, it houses the offices of the governor, as well as provincial administrative offices. The grounds around the building are very well kept. Malolos is one of the cleanest towns in the country."

**Figure 12** The Old Photograph of Bulacan Capitol by Leo Cloma

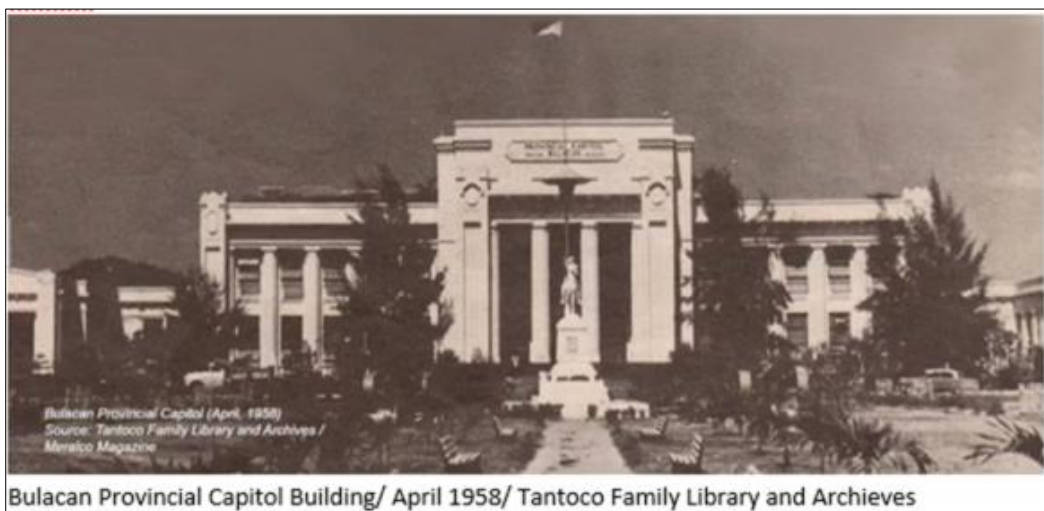


Bulacan Provincial Capitol Building taken in 1938 by Perfecto Martin/ American Historical Collection/ Ateneo de Manila University

**Figure 13** Bulacan Capitol Old photograph by Perfecto Martin



**Figure 14** Bulacan Capitol Old photograph by Eduardo de Leon



**Figure 15** Bulacan Capitol Old photograph by Tantoco Family



**Figure 16** Bulacan Capitol Old photograph (1991)





**Figure 17** Bulacan Capitol under renovation in 2017 (Photo credit: Melanio Martinez Jr.)

*3.1.1. Renovation of Juan Arellano-designed Bulacan Provincial Capitol criticized*

By: Edgar Allan M. Sembrano Philippine Daily Inquirer / 05:04 AM July 29, 2019

Bulacan heritage advocates have criticized the renovation of the provincial capitol building in Malolos, alleging it has violated the artistic vision and integrity of its original architect, Juan Arellano. The renovation was done during the incumbency of former Gov. Wilhelmino Sy-Alvarado, who is now vice governor. In letters to the National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA) last June and this month, Melanio Martinez Jr. criticized the conversion of the building's triangular pediment to a parapet and the addition of a LED billboard on top of the latter. Chair Virgilio Almario of the NCCA later informed Martinez that his letter had been forwarded to the commission's policy formulation and programming division "for appropriate action" (6).

**3.2. Significance**

*3.2.1. Architectural and Aesthetic Significance*

Bulacan Capitol Building is an Art Deco Style Architecture designed by Architect Juan Marcos Arellano. The entrance of the building has Portico with Octagonal Concrete Columns with decorative concrete torch. It has three entrances of wooden frame door accentuated with wrought iron grills with design of rising Sun. Upon entering the lobby, you will be welcomed by Grand double return staircase. The façade of the building is of massive walls and columns with simplistic design painted with purely white color.

*3.2.2. Conservation*

Status/Condition of Structure

- Excellent
- Good
- Fair
- Deteriorated
- Ruins

Remarks

The Art Deco Bulacan Capitol Building is in Excellent Condition, well maintained both in exterior and interior as well as in interior courtyard and surrounding parking areas and landscaping.

Integrity of the Structure

Altered; Unaltered  
Moved; Original Site



Constraints/Threats/Issue



- The construction of Malolos-Clark Railway Project (MCRP) is a proposed 53.1km-long railway line being constructed to connect Malolos to Clark economic zone and Clark International Airport (CIA) in central Luzon, Philippines. It is a potential threat as vibration and pollution can impact to the physical condition of the Structure.
- The sprouting commercial buildings may affect to views and vista of the Art Deco Building of the Capitol.

Conservation Measures

The Art Deco Capitol Building is well maintained and in excellent condition. It is being protected by the actions being expressed by the heritage advocates and by the presence of Bulacan Cultural Center that house the Provincial History, Arts, Culture and Tourism Office with the Department Head Dr. Eliseo S. dela Cruz History and Heritage Head May Arlene Torres, strong and effective Conservation measures are in place.

**Table 1** List of Significant Tangible Movable Heritage (within the premise of the built heritage)

No.	Name of Object	Photo	Year Produced or Estimated Age
1.	The Canon displayed in front of the Bulcan Capitol Building.	 <p data-bbox="632 1346 1023 1368"><b>Figure 18</b> The Spanish Era Canon</p>	<p data-bbox="1161 779 1407 837">Estimated to be an Spanish Era Canon</p> <p data-bbox="1161 891 1407 981">Displayed in Capitol Compound since 1930</p> <p data-bbox="1161 1070 1407 1128">Estimated years-150 years</p>
2.	The monument of Isidoro Torres, National Hero born in Bulacan	 <p data-bbox="587 1805 1010 1827"><b>Figure 19</b> Isidoro Torres Monument</p>	<p data-bbox="1161 1391 1407 1471">Displayed in Capitol Compound since 1930</p> <p data-bbox="1161 1570 1407 1628">Estimated years-150 years</p>

<p>3.</p>	<p>Monument of Marcelo H. del Pilar, National Hero born in Bulacan</p>	 <p><b>Figure 20</b> Gat. Marcelo H. del Pilar Monument</p>	<p>Displayed in Capitol Compound since 1930</p> <p>Estimated years-150 years</p>
<p>4.</p>	<p>Jose Rizal, Marcelo H. del Pilar and Graciano Lopez Jaena Monument in front of Bulacan Trial Court</p>	 <p><b>Figure 21</b> Jose Rizal, Marcelo H. del Pilar and Graciano Lopez Jaena Monuments</p>	<p>Displayed in Capitol Compound since 1930</p> <p>Estimated years-150 years</p>



**Figure 22** Other Heritage Structures at the Bulacan Capitol Compound



Figure 23 Map of other potential heritage buildings in capitol compound

#### 4. Conclusion

Bulacan Provincial Capitol Building is one of the Capitol Buildings in the Philippines that is Art Deco in Architectural Style and was built in 1930. Designed by one of the well-known Filipino Architects in the Philippines, Arch. Juan Marcos Arellano. Bulacan Capitol Building should be preserved in accordance with the proper conservation. The renovation in the façade of the Capitol Building by conversion of the building’s triangular pediment to a parapet and the addition of a LED billboard on top of the latter that was done during the incumbency of former Gov. Wilhelmino Sy-Alvarado should not be repeated anymore due to the lack of knowledge in the importance of the Capitol Building and ignorance the

proper conservation approach. Bulacan heritage advocates that demonstrated its strength as their petition calling for the alleged violation in the artistic vision and integrity of its original architect, Juan Arellano give way to stopped, removed and preserved the original design of the Bulacan Capitol Building through the help of National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA).

### *Recommendation*

The Bulacan Provincial Capitol Government Officials together with heritage advocates, architects, engineering and tourism offices must form a concrete guidelines and policy to safeguard and watch over the heritage structures within the Bulacan Capitol Compound as there are more structures needed to be conserved. The Provincial Capitol Building as Art Deco Style together with the Hiyas ng Bulacan Cultural Center known as Brutalist Style Architecture as well as the tangible assets located in the Capitol Compound must be properly secured for the future generations to enjoy and treasure.

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## **Compliance with ethical standards**

### *Acknowledgments*

This research will not be possible without the support of Dr. Cecilia N. Gascon, University President, Bulacan State University. Dr., Arch. Norma I. Alarcon of University of Santo Tomas and Bulacan Cultural Center that house the Provincial History, Arts, Culture and Tourism Office.

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