

# Cultural Mapping of Ancestral Houses in Lucena City

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## Abstract

This study traced the surviving ancestral houses in Lucena City through cultural mapping. The participants were limited to the houses that were built during the Spanish and American period. The ancestral houses gathered are the Gabatin Ancestral House, Queblar Ancestral House, Aquilino and Laureana Daleon Ancestral House, Zaballero Ancestral House, Mauro Salvacion Ancestral House, Dr. Eufemio Jara Ancestral House, and the Villanueva Ancestral House. By utilizing the historical analysis approach, the researchers used the historical thinking standards which helped analyze the identifiable similarities among the houses based on the descriptions and short narratives associated with them. Upon interviewing the owners/heirs/representatives of the seven ancestral houses, the study found most ancestral houses were built during the American Occupation and mainly situated in the poblacion areas, which are at the heart of the city. Furthermore, most of the ancestral houses were primarily built from wood and have a two-storey design. With this, owners were led to convert the house into commercial use for the financial consideration of the family and sustain the maintenance of the house. This study suggests a travel magazine to be developed not just feature each house but also promote the remaining ancestral houses in the City of Lucena. These historical tourism sites must be acknowledged by the people especially the residents of the city.

**Keywords:** *ancestral houses, cultural heritage, cultural mapping, Lucena City, Lucenahins, promotion*

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## 1. Introduction

Cultural Mapping is like tracing the roots of history. It helps know the story behind every place, thing, or object. It makes people appreciate the value of the past and see how the past influenced the present that could predict the future. According to Pillai (2013), cultural mapping examines the relationship between an individual and its environment, in doing so, it makes the invisible become visible. Cultural mapping maps out the cultural heritage of one place and sees the culture behind it. The cultural heritage is the totality of a cultural property preserved and developed through time and surpassed on to posterity (Official Gazette, 2010).

According to the Cultural Mapping Toolkit released by the National Center for Culture and the Arts (2019), residences should also be mapped, and the range may not be limited to houses built during the Spanish period, but extended to houses that is built during the American period until the 1960s. For instance, Lucena City has become the center of local maritime trade during the Spanish era (ca. 1571-1878). Considered as the “Gateway to the South” and melting pot city of Southern Luzon (Project Gutenberg Self-Publishing Press, 2021), many notable families of Spanish descent have settled and resided in the then municipality of Lucena to do business. The consistent growth of business and commerce in the locality have eventually led to its being proclaimed capital of Tayabas Province (now Quezon).

Classified as a highly urbanized city, a fast-paced change and development is inevitable. Many projects and infrastructures arise for the betterment and satisfaction of its citizen. But with these changes and progression, cultural heritage is more often than not neglected and compromised. Mallari (2014), quoting the local historian Cesar Villariba (1923 – 2013) specified that most antique buildings and residential houses in the city are now being demolished for financial consideration and some being rented out to become business establishment.

This problem of preserving old buildings in the light of technological advancements and progress have been a quintessential issue among historian and cultural conservationists. Cultural heritage is the identity, tradition, and lifestyle of a region and its people. In order to comprehend the present, we should enrich our knowledge of the past. The knowledge of cultural heritage connects the past not solely to the present but also the future (De Leon & De Leon Jr., 2014).

Conducting cultural mapping is a high-quality tool to exhibit ownership and resource usage in stimulating intergenerational and intercultural learning as well as the inventory of cultural heritage (Roxas & Huraño, 2016). As such, this study aimed to conduct cultural mapping

of ancestral houses through the process of interviewing the owners/caretakers/or representatives. Through the assistance of the Lucena City for Culture and the Arts, the primary research through observation in the area profiled the data. Identifying the ancestral houses of Lucena City would help in protecting its remaining heritage thus, it will uphold the identity of the local residents. Cultural mapping is a vital tool to achieve cultural awareness and appreciation because it digs out the culture and story behind every cultural asset and heritages. It is an indispensable tool for people to locate and preserve their cultural assets (Religioso, 2019). Promoting these ancestral houses also rebound to the development of tourism in the City of Lucena.

## **2. Literature review**

### ***2.1. Cultural Mapping and Cultural Heritage***

The National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA) view cultural mapping as a systematic strategy in identifying, recording, and classifying the cultural properties or resources of the neighborhood in order to describe, visualize and understand them (Longley & Duxbury, 2016). Conducting cultural mapping is a high-quality tool to exhibit ownership and resource usage in stimulating intergenerational and intercultural learning as well as the inventory of cultural heritage (Roxas & Huraño, 2016). It maps out the cultural heritage of one place and sees the culture behind it. The cultural heritage is the totality of a cultural property preserved and developed through time and surpassed on to posterity (Official Gazette, 2010). It can be places, objects, artifacts, or remains of the past. The word heritage, derived from the Latin word “*heri*” which means “yesterday” and “*tangere*” which means to touch (De Leon & De Leon Jr., 2014). It is the culture inherited from yesterday. According to UNESCO (2017), cultural heritage contains two main categories; the tangible cultural heritage (movable and immovable) and the intangible cultural heritage.

According to the 1987 Philippine Constitution, Article XIV, Sec. 16, “*All the country’s artistic and historic wealth constitutes the cultural treasure of the nation and shall be under the protection of the State which may regulate its disposition.*” All the cultural treasures and cultural heritage should be preserved for the future generation because how would they know and appreciate the history if the remains of the past are no longer visible. The “National Cultural Treasures” is defined by law as “*a unique object found locally, possessing outstanding historical, cultural, artistic and/or scientific value which is highly significant and important to this country*

*and nation*” (De Leon & De Leon Jr. 2014). The cultural properties that cannot meet the merit of the classification of “National Cultural Treasures” are called “important cultural properties”.

To amend the constitution a law was passed in 2009 which is the Republic Act No. 10066. The Republic Act No. 10066 or also called as “National Cultural Heritage Act of 2009”. According to Republic Act. No. 10066 (National Cultural Heritage Act of 2009) structures that are at least 50 years old as “important cultural property protected from exploitation, modification or demolition” (Official Gazette, 2010).

## 2.2. Conceptual framework

According to Freitas (2015), cultural mapping is an instrument for accumulating, locating, and systematizing data regarding the distribution of cultural expression within a territory. Cultural mapping is a vital tool to achieve cultural awareness and appreciation because it digs out the culture and story behind every cultural asset and heritages. It is an indispensable tool for people to locate and preserve their cultural assets (Religioso, 2019).

**Figure 1**  
*Conceptual Framework of the Ancestral Houses in Lucena City*

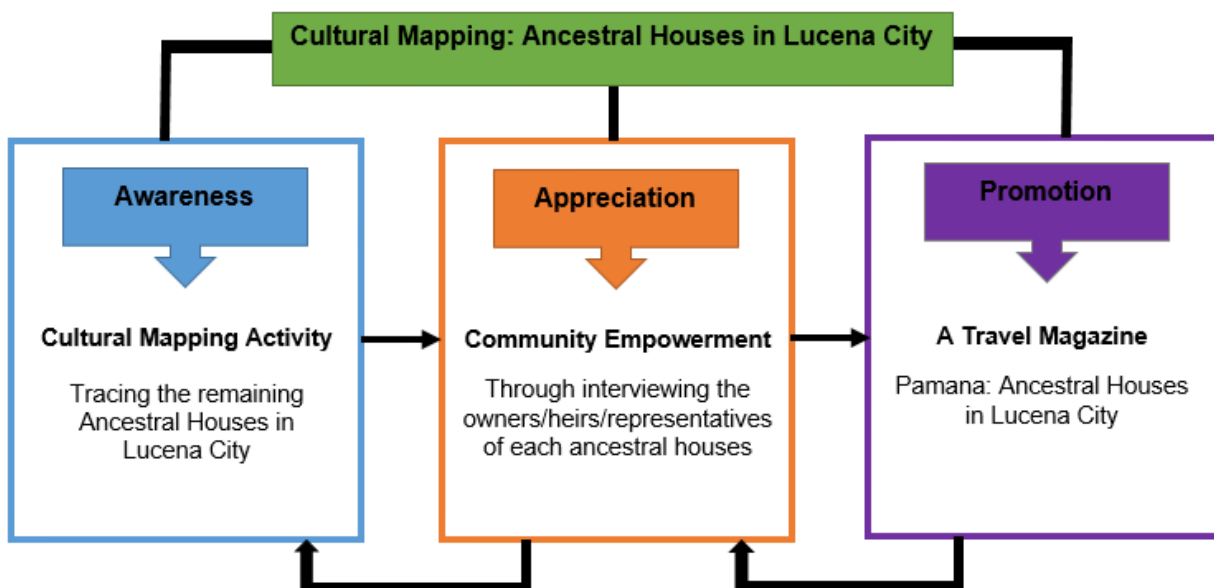


Figure 1 shows how cultural mapping would raise awareness, foster appreciation, and rebound to promote the remaining ancestral houses in Lucena City. The cultural mapping activity was conducted by tracing and identifying the ancestral houses in Lucena City that are built

during the Spanish and American occupation. This would raise awareness to the people of Lucena City and to the Local Government Unit of Lucena that Lucena City still has this kind of heritages. This would also lift community empowerment among the local residents through the process of interviewing the owners/heirs/or representatives of the seven ancestral houses. As people would be involved in this research, knowing the existence of a thing could boost self-awareness and makes one person appreciate it that would build community empowerment among the local residents. Heritage should be understood as the pride of local residents, and should not be forgotten. Instead, it should be preserved for the future generations. The promotion will be through the travel magazine that would feature each ancestral house that will lead to highlight the aesthetic designs of the houses together with the rich story behind the structure.

### **3. Methodology**

This study used historical narrative as the research design which is a type of qualitative study. It involves collecting and examining non-numerical data (e.g., text, video, or audio) to understand concepts, opinions, or experiences. It can be used to collect in-depth insights into a problem (McCombes, 2015). The historical narrative used is from the study of Firouzkouhi and Zargham-Borouieni (2015), which features four stages: gathering of data and analysis; second level of coding and determining the sub-categories; third-level coding and determining the main categories and connecting the main categories; and writing the narratives.

The data gathering involved two parts: tracing of the ancestral houses and the actual interview of the seven ancestral house owners/heirs/representatives. The shortlisting of the ancestral houses started from the two lead agencies: Lucena City Council for Culture and the Arts (LCCA) and the Office of the Senior Citizen Affairs (OSCA). There were two staff interviewed from LCCA namely Dr. Luzviminda G. Calzado and Mrs. Virna Villanueva, who were instrumental in the initial listing of the ancestral houses. However, the complete listing of the ancestral houses was not produced as the LCCA has yet to complete the cultural mapping. In order to complete the listing of the ancestral houses, there were five interviewees, who were originally raised in Lucena City, from the OSCA through the initiatives of the Miss Salome Dato, the head of OSCA. After the completion of the two sets of interviews, the final listing of the seven ancestral houses in Lucena City was completed. Each house was visited to personally interview the owners/heirs/representatives. The objective of the study was clearly explained and

the participants gave full consent to the interview. The accumulated data were organized in a case-by-case manner.

The data were analyzed using historical analysis from the study of Firouzkouhi and Zargham-Borouieni (2015). The interview results were transcribed verbatim. Through the historical thinking standard, the study enabled to compare and contrast different sets of ideas, analyze cause-and effect relationship and draw comparison in order to define enduring issues.

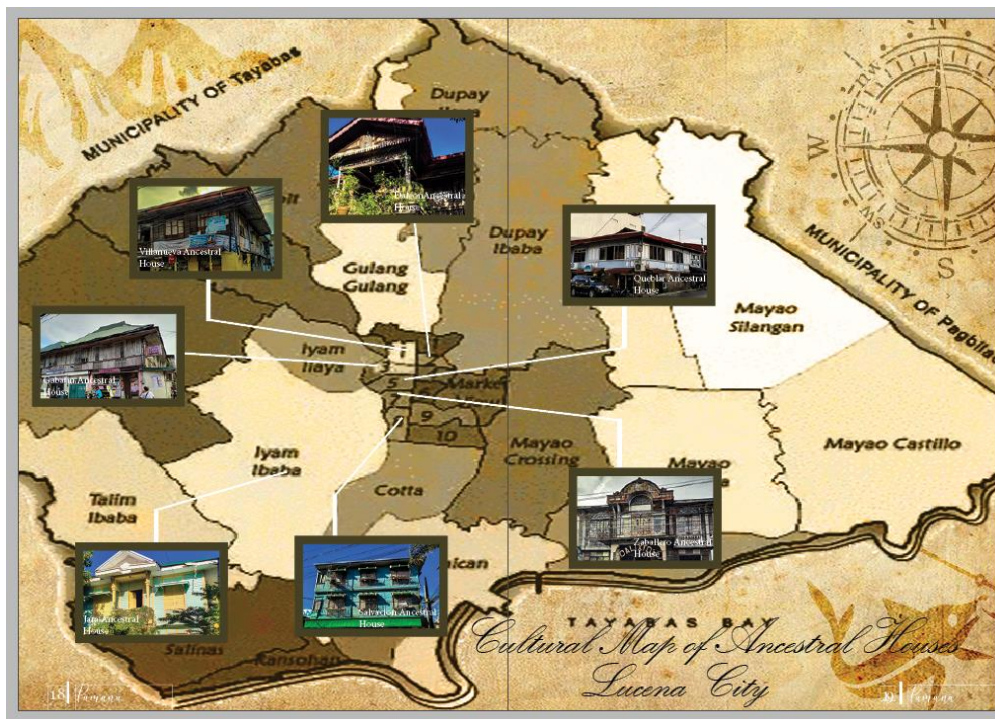
The participants in this study gave full consent on the interview and disclosure of pertinent personal data and information related to the ancestral houses for the purpose of cultural mapping and academic research.

For the synthesis, the researchers used a simple percentage to determine the identifiable similarities among the ancestral houses in Lucena City.

#### 4. Findings and Discussion

**Figure 2**

*Cultural Map of Ancestral Houses in Lucena City*



The Ancestral Houses in Lucena City are primarily built in the poblacion areas. According to City Government of Muntinlupa (2018), poblacion is a Spanish word that means a

populated place. It is also a community of a district or town that is an administrative center (Lexico Dictionaries, 2021). The poblacion area in the city of Lucena is composed of Barangay 1 to 11. Commonly, these ancestral houses are near to the Cathedral of the city.

The research is limited to the ancestral houses that are built during the Spanish and American occupation. The ancestral houses mapped were Gabatin Ancestral House (Barangay 3- Spanish Period), Queblar Ancestral House (Barangay 5 – American Period), Aquilino & Laureana Daleon Ancestral House (Barangay 2 – American Period). Zaballero Ancestral House (Barangay 7 – American Period), Mauro Salvacion Ancestral House (Barangay 8 – American Period), Dr. Eufemio Jara Ancestral House (Barangay Ibabang Iyam – American Period), and Villanueva Ancestral House (Barangay 1 – American Period).

**Figure 3**

*Gabatin Ancestral House*



Gabatin Ancestral House was built during the Spanish Occupation, even though the family does not know the exact year when the house was built. The house is now in the six-generation of the family. It is a two-story residential house, however, today only the second floor is used as residential by its current owner Patricia Gabatin who is now 79. Mrs. Patricia Gabatin

inherited the house from her husband, Alberto Queaño Gabatin. The house is in excellent condition and is fully maintained every day. The house has somehow changed in terms of its physical form as the ground floor is used for commercial establishments, but the second floor of the house stays as is; they added some metal grilles due to high robbery cases in the city. From the statement of Dr. Albert Gabatin, son of Patricia Gabatin (the house owner), many personalities wanted to use the house as a shooting location because of the aesthetic and originality of the house. However, the family holds the privacy conservation of their home.

**Figure 4**

*Queblar Ancestral House (also known as Winkelman-Torres' Ancestral House)*



Queblar Ancestral House was first known as Winkelman -Torres Ancestral House. It was the first post office in Quezon Province. It was converted into a house when Thomasites - Charles Winkelman acquired it, the post office was transferred then at the Quezon Province's Capitol. Charles Winkelman married a Filipina teacher Victoria Torres. Their marriage was the first inter-marriage between a Thomasite and a Filipina in the province. The child of Charles and Victoria died, so Victoria decided to adopt her niece Rosita Torres. Afterward, Rosita Torres married Amadeo Queblar. He is a doctor at Tayabas Quezon, who later became a city councilor. The couple also does not have children, so Rosita adopted her niece Velia Torres Queblar, the house's current owner.



The house does not have any historical marker yet, even though it has a significant value of being the first post-office in Quezon. Even though it was transformed into a house, it can still be seen in some parts being a post-office. The house is a "Bahay na Bato," and even though the house's ground floor was transformed into commercial use, the walls are still preserved, and according to Mr. Carlos Villariba, son-in-law of the current owner, the house is still 50% original. According to Banog and Baluyot (2014), Bahay na Bato is a combination of native architecture and medieval Spanish houses. Although the house was built during the American Period, the design of the house was from the Spanish style. Aside from the fact that the house was first a post office, the person who bought the structure and converted it into a house is Thomasite Charles Winkelman. According to Davis (2014), a group of 530 schoolteachers left San Francisco riding the ship USS Thomas bound Manila to establish a public school system based on the foreign model. The teachers on that ship are also known as the 'Thomasites.' The house was full of historical significance. The family is still trying to maintain and preserve the house because they wanted it to survive more years for future generations.

**Figure 5**

*Aquilino and Laureana Daleon Ancestral House*



The Aquilino and Laureana Ancestral House is one of the oldest and well-known ancestral houses in the City of Lucena. It is located in the heart of city, and because the house resides along the streets, it is unavoidable to see this two-storey house. In the upper part of the house, the people can see the exact date of construction, "June 15, 1918". The house has a historical significance as the family was one of the original clans of the City. According to Mr. Ferdinand Parañal (husband of one of the heirs of the ancestral house), the Daleon Family has a number of land areas. Some of those were contributed to the City of Lucena. Aquilino Daleon and Laureana Abadilla are the first owners and still the house's current owner as the house was still not divided to its respected heirs. The couple conceived eight children. The last children of Aquilino and Laureana Daleon, who is Ms. Pacencia Daleon contributed a lot to society. She is one of the founders of Luzonian College, and she became a principal at Quezon National High School. Thus, she also became a supervisor in Quezon. Unfortunately, the last living children of Aquilino and Laureana died last 2011. Miss Pacencia Daleon died at the age of 99 years old; her burial also happened in the house.

Today, the house is still in good condition. In terms of threats, termites are their number one problem, but the family treats it immediately. The house underwent several changes; they added a balcony and put metal grilles in the window because it was made of capiz and robbery in the city was inevitable. Aquilino and Laureana Ancestral House is one of the oldest ancestral houses in the City. Until today, the house is still occupied by its remaining family members, who maintained and preserved the house.

### **Figure 6**

*Zaballero Ancestral House*

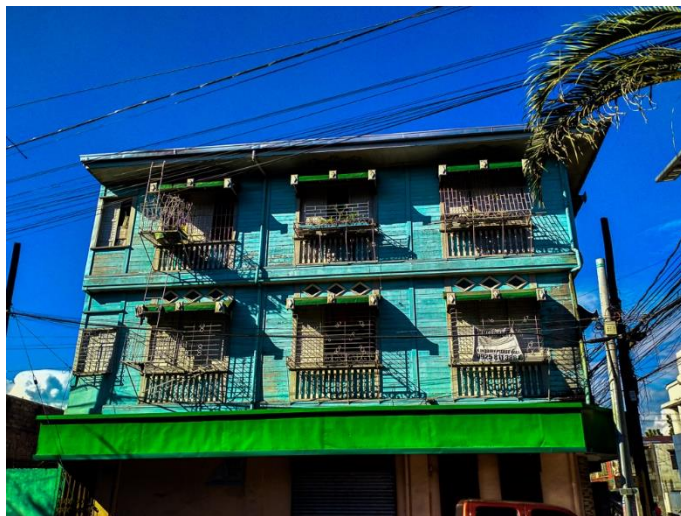


Zaballero Ancestral House is a two-storey wooden type of house. It was built during the American Occupation. The house was owned by Calixto Zaballero and Bernarda Flancia. They conceived seven (7) children who are the heirs of the house. Today, only two (2) are still alive: Gelen Zaballero-Orbeta (94 years old), the third in the siblings, and Ema Zaballero (86 years old) the youngest children. The house has a political significance as the people residing in the house were political persons. It cannot deny that politics run in the blood of the Zaballero Family. From the father of Mr. Calixto Zaballero (owner of the house), his father, George Zaballero, is a revolutionary leader under General Malvar. Calixto Zaballero was a former Vice-Mayor in Lucena City and thus, his son Cesar Zaballero also served as Mayor in Lucena City. Due to these instances, the house is used repeatedly during the campaign period and welcomes different people in high positions and ordinary people.

Today, the house is still in good condition. The only threats to the house are typhoons and termites because the house was built primarily by woods. The capiz windows are now fragile, so the family added a protector in times of calamity. The house is still preserved even though it was not used as a residential building. Today, the ground floor of the house is converted into a café restaurant (Calixto'z Café and Restaurant), and the second floor is private, intended for family gatherings. The interior and exterior of the house are still preserved from their original form.

**Figure 7**

*Mauro Salvacion Ancestral House*



Mauro Salvacion Ancestral House was built during the American Period. The house has three floors; upon entering the gate, there are concrete stairs that welcome every person who

would enter. This ancestral house was built on 1930 and was first owned by Mauro Salvacion, a businessman and a farmer. He married Basilya Aquila and conceived two children, Mauricio Salvacion and Remedios De Guzman, who inherited the house. It was used as a residential area until a fire disaster happened in the town of Lucena in 1964. Since then, the Salvacion Family transferred to Zaballero Subdivision. Since the house is big and has three floors, the family opened the house for commercial establishments. The house has economic significance as different establishments are renting including the Philippine National Bank (PNB) and the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI). Today, the house is just used for commercial purposes and is no longer residential. The ground floor is a law office, while Newsworthy Journal rented the second floor, and on the third floor by Assembles of God. The house is still in good condition, with some changed parts, primarily electrical wirings, roof, and pipes. The house has undergone several changes, most especially the ground floor. It was totally reconstructed for commercial use. In terms of threats, the owners are just more concerned about fire hazards because of many stores and establishments that rent the house. With that, the owner does not accept businesses like restaurants in particular.

**Figure 8**

*Dr. Eufemio Jara Ancestral House*



This ancestral house was named after Dr. Eufemio Jara, and thus, he still currently owns the house. The house was built in the late American period, but the family does not know the exact year when the house was constructed. The family just concluded that the house was built in 1937. The house has a historical significance because the Jara family is one of the oldest and original families of Lucena. Dr. Eufemio Jara contributed to the society as he became the director of what is today, Quezon Medical Center (QMC). One of their family's pride is that all the nine children of Dr. Eufemio Jara and his wife Tomasa Jara, a teacher, graduated from college and got a degree. Some of them became doctor, engineer, teacher, architect, and pharmacist. According to Mr. Romeo Jara (one of the heirs), they see it as the family's accomplishment as the married couple can send all their children to college, and they can gain a good life.

The house is still in good condition. It still has the same features as before as it has not undergone into extensive reconstruction as the family wanted to preserve the house's originality. In terms of threats, the house has some portion of termites, but they try to treat it immediately. The house today is still used as a residential home of the remaining family. The house was also used for shooting venues like commercials and pre-nuptials videos because of the house's aesthetic design. Moreover, last two years ago, the house was used as the shooting location of MMK (Maalaala Mo Kaya), a television drama anthology show under ABS-CBN.

**Figure 9**

*Villanueva Ancestral House*



The Villanueva Ancestral House is a two-storey wooden house built in the late American Period. According to Mrs. Bibiana Villanueva, one of the house owners, since their grandfather, Mr. Aquilino Villanueva Sr. just bought the house, they do not know the first owner of the house. In the Villanueva family, the house's first owner was the married couple Mr. Aquilino Villanueva Sr. and Candida Villanueva. They both studied at the University of Santo Tomas (UST), where Aquilino Villanueva Sr. became a judge, and Candida became a pharmacist. Afterwards, they conceived six children, but their youngest child Bienvinido Villanueva inherited the house. Today, the three daughters of Bienvinido is the current owner of the house; Bibiana, Brigida and Bernadita Villanueva. The family still used the house as residential. Today, the family of Mrs. Bibiana Villanueva-Castillo resides in the house together with her husband and children. The other owners, Brigida, and Bernardita Villanueva are both residing in the states. However, the first floor of the house is used for rentals and stores. The house is still in good condition, but it is not durable as before as their wooden floor is now fragile. The house also underwent several changes like some windows made of capiz are changed into jalousie, and there is an extension. Nevertheless, the family always maintains and preserves their ancestral house.

**Table 1**

*Identifiable Similarities among the Ancestral Houses in Lucena City*

Frequency of Identifiable Similarities		Frequency	Percentage
<b>Part I</b>	<b>Background Information</b>		
<b>a. Period</b>	Spanish	1	14.2%
	American	6	85.71%
<b>b. Ownership</b>	Public	0	0
	Private	7	100%
<b>c. Location</b>	Población	6	85.71%
	City Outskirts	1	14.2%
<b>Part II</b>	<b>Description of the Houses</b>		
<b>a. Physical Description</b>	Bahay na Bato	1	14.2%
	Wooden House	6	85.71%
<b>b. Status</b>	Occupied as Residential	5	71.42%
	Not Occupied	2	28.57%
<b>Part III</b>	<b>Conservation</b>		
<b>a. Physical Condition</b>	Excellent	1	14.2%
	Good	5	71.42%
	Fair	1	14.2%
	Deteriorated	0	0
	Ruins	0	0
<b>b. Integrity</b>	Altered	7	100%
	Unaltered	0	0
	Moved	0	0
	Original Site	7	100%
<b>c. Constraints, Threats, Issues</b>	Termites	7	100%
	Calamities	2	28.57%
	Fire Hazards	1	14.2%

Table 1 shows the frequency of identifiable similarities among the ancestral houses in Lucena City. In terms of the period the ancestral houses, 85.71% of the houses are from the American Period and only 14.2% from the Spanish Period. In terms of ownership, 100% of the houses are privately owned; no ancestral houses are owned by the government. In terms of location, 85.71% of the houses are located in the población areas and only 14.2% is based from the city outskirts.

Most of the ancestral houses are a two-storey building and in terms of physical description, 85.71% of the house is “wooden” and 14.2% is a type of “Bahay na Bato”. In terms of the status of the houses, 71.42% are still being occupied by the families as a residential and only 28.57% are not occupied as residential. Most of the houses are being rented for commercial used but still used it for residential and the 28.57% are fully used as a commercial and no longer used for residential.

In terms of the physical condition of the houses, 14.2% is on an excellent condition, 71.42% is on a good condition and only 14.2% is in the fair condition. Overall, these ancestral houses still maintained its physical condition. In terms of the integrity of the houses, 100% of the houses are altered. Although the ancestral houses undergone several changes and modification, the houses are still on its original. In terms of constraints, threat and issues, 100% of the houses are experiencing termite threats. The biggest threat among the ancestral houses are termites as 85.71% are all wooden houses but the family always try to control the pest to able to preserve the structure of the house. There are only 28.57% of the houses experiencing calamities problems because some of the parts are now fragile due to age and only 14.2% is more concern about the fire hazards due to wooden type and rented out for commercial used.

## **5. Conclusion**

This study conducted a cultural mapping of ancestral houses in Lucena City through the process of interviewing the owners/caretakers/or representatives. The findings showed that most of the ancestral houses are a two-storey building and it was either a wooden type or a Bahay na Bato “house of stone”, six out of seven are wooden houses and only one house is a Bahay na Bato. The windows of the houses are typically made of capiz but as time goes on, they added metal grilles because of high cases of robbery in the city. As the houses were commonly built during the American Period, two of the ancestral houses (Zaballero & Daleon Ancestral House)

used the steel that left by the American soldiers during the World War II which is called “Marston Mat or Pierced Steel Planking (PSP)”. These steel left by the Americans were used as a gate of these ancestral houses. Five out of seven of the ancestral houses were still used as residential but most of them the ground floor of the house was used for commercial establishments and for rentals. And the two of the ancestral houses were purely converted for commercial used only.

The ancestral houses have its own different stories to be told. But as the ancestral houses was built during the colonial period of Spanish and American, in times of war these houses were used for relocation or evacuation areas of the people during such times. Most of the ancestral houses has historical significance as the family resides in the house was one of the original clans in Lucena which contributed a lot in society like in the politics, business, education, and health services.

The ancestral houses were preserved by the families through generations to generations. They able to preserved the house into a good condition until today. But as time goes on, changes are inevitable. Most of the ancestral houses are undergone to several modification and transformation mostly because of commercialization. But still each family try to maintain their ancestral house in its original form. The biggest threat in these ancestral houses as these was made primarily of woods is the termites. But the family always try to control the pest to able to preserve the structure of the house.

This study recommends the development of a travel magazine to feature the ancestral houses. This will not only create awareness but also promote the remaining ancestral houses in the City of Lucena. As an input to the city tourism development, the travel magazine can be a starting point in developing and promoting historical tourism in the city.

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