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From power to architecture: an analysis on the identity transformation of Tagaytay people's park in the sky through edifice complex and democratization theory

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Abstract

The study of architecture in relation to the principles of political power places a different perspective in understanding how the built environs with heritage value were shaped in time and are being constantly shaped at the present. Its relevance cannot be understated, as in spite of its actuality, it is a side of the field that may still be considered sensitive to some. Architecture is never neutral. It corresponds to the patron's ideals, intentions, and ideological orientation, communicated by the designer through his technical knowledge in artistic articulation of forms. In a larger scale, architectural identity can therefore be affected by those possessing power and can serve as tactile channel in redirecting society. This study presents the case of People's Park in the Sky in the Philippines, a colossal brutalist mansion, originally named Palace in the Sky, situated at Mt. Sungay peak in Tagaytay City. Commissioned in 1981 by Imelda Marcos, the wife of authoritarian head Ferdinand Marcos, the palace was not completed and eventually transformed into a public urban park. Supported by the concept of Edifice Complex and Democratization theory, methodical assessment of the political links of the said architecture was executed in two parts: examination of historical accounts and first-hand site investigations. The findings of the analysis revealed that there is a present architectural crisis in the park, emerging from its long-time neglect since the 1986 transition years, and if not taken proper institutional action, its genuine identity and legacy could be forgotten and eventually lost in the near future.

Keywords Architectural identity, Authoritarian rule, Edifice complex, Democratization

Introduction

Architecture is defined as the art and science of designing and building structures, communities, or open areas, in keeping with aesthetic and functional criteria of assemblies built in accordance with such principles. Discipline is widely recognized as an essential response to current circumstances (Harris 2006; Ching 2007). These settings may be plainly imaginary in character; however, they may

be cast in the different ladders of social, political, and economic conditions. The act of creating architecture is an analytical or a construction in motion. Architecture cannot just be relegated as a background to political life because it is by itself a political force to reckon with. Politics serves a vital role of being one of the foremost pullers of strings, specifically with how elements of the built environment are synthesized together, as well as to what extent would see the light of day (Jacque and Walker 2017). The evolution of building typology is also dictated by discoveries of men brought about by their needs and wants. However, the changes and advancements of architectural styles are triggered by patrons of the architects. It may not be perceived immediately yet on a much larger

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scale, architecture has a definite connection to the political realm, therefore making architects partakers in the political field, whether intentionally or not. This distinct relationship serves as a standard for a society's rationalization, which is used to develop a visual image. Discernment of social and political linkages is an element of such architecturally based organic reasoning (Glenn 2003). The study of Antoine Picon elaborates on architecture being an instrument of dominating political power, by means of conveying its messages in fashion ranging from the simple placing of decorative elements to symbolic tactile compositions (Bell et al. 2020). Its resultant identity can be operated by those in power, like political leaders, to yield social effects, for instance, to compel, stabilize, or subdue (Sudjic 2006). As such, it can be argued that architecture and design are, and have always been, tilted on either side of the scale, as determined by the political purpose orientation, and that "it is never neutral" (Murphy and Sorkin 2016).

Absolutism, power, and architecture in retrospect

It is worthy of note the conversion of the Parisian Church of Sainte-Geneviève into a monument now known as the Pantheon to honor great individuals. These people were neither rulers nor clergy nor knights. They were not revered for their extraordinary courage or talent but for their firmness in the quest for social welfare during their lifetime. If architectural decorations are used as signages of a social class, their elimination could minimize the remarkable disparity of the people's social status (Ranogajec 2016).

The manner by which the revered Church of Sainte-Genevieve was transformed into a Pantheon may be regarded as a desecration of a house of worship by the whims and caprices of the men in power. The church was supposed to be a unifying edifice for France. However, the political upheavals led to a sudden change in the building's relevance in form and substance. Politicians decreed that the building should be transformed into a Temple of Great Men. It became a mausoleum, a repository of the ashes of the dead. To add insult to injury, the relics of St. Genevieve were banished from the building. Any symbol connected to the church's identity was intentionally removed. The fate of the building from a church to a secular temple could be regarded as a mark of instability. Its ever-changing use and character depended on who the ruler was at the time. Its destiny as a secular temple was stamped with finality when Foucault's Pendulum was installed at the center of the dome to demonstrate the earth's axial rotation.

Architecture has its essential political proportions—it is deeply connected to the dynamics of belongingness and estrangement; it is implicated in the creation of

subjectivity and intersubjectivity. The incorporation of concrete structures in general, rather than just individual buildings, is important for they are, at times, referred to as metaphors of the state or political system as a building, while other times, metaphors of the state or political system as a city. It is generally known that architects have designed both buildings and cities since ancient times. It is frequently pointed out that making a comparison between building houses and planning cities is erroneous due to the fact that buildings are what they are because of their location in the city, and cities are made up of buildings (Lindvall 2022).

Robert Greene, author of "The 48 Laws of Power," discussed the relationship between King Louis XIV and his finance minister Nicholas Fouquet. It was King Louis XIV who said the famous line, "*L'état, c'est moi*" which translates to "I am the state." By impressing and endearing himself to the king, Fouquet prepared a spectacular party to show off that he was famous and had powerful clout. The king was not impressed but instead was outraged with envy as it appeared that Fouquet was more popular than him. This boastful act spelled the doom of Fouquet who was ordered by the king to be arrested. He was imprisoned and stayed in solitary confinement until the last years of his life. King Louis XIV then appointed Jean-Baptiste Colbert, who was identified for his simplicity, as the new finance minister. Colbert ensured that all the collected funds were given to the king. Using his huge number of resources as well as to show that he is the most powerful and most popular, the king built the glorious palace of Versailles, which turned out to be more grandiose than the palace of Fouquet, by retaining the same architects, decorators, and garden designers. The king also hosted and spent more lavishly on parties. It is pointed out that the overzealousness of a subordinate to satisfy the whims and caprices of his superior may do more harm than good. The words of Voltaire aptly described it when he said, "When the evening began, Fouquet was at the top of the world. By the time it had ended, he was at the bottom."

Ch'in Shih Huang Ti, the first emperor of China had an empire more powerful than Alexander the Great. He lived in the most magnificent palace in the capital city Xianyang which had 270 pavilions connected by secret underground passageways. He also built the Great Wall of China. Machiavelli argued that in a strictly military sense, a fortress is a universal mistake. It becomes a symbol of power and isolation while being an easy target for the enemies of its builder. If a ruler retreats into a fortress, he loses contact with the sources of his power.

After the Great London Fire of 1666, Sir Christopher Wren promptly submitted to King Charles II a plan to rebuild the city with contemporary street grids and large

avenues lined with trees, as well as public areas with open vistas. However, fearful of an uprising, the king was hesitant to push forth the proposal, since he needed to assume authority over the lands required to carry out the plans. What was done was to quickly rebuild along old property lines which in the statement of Hawksmoor "...The city would then have been built in such a manner [as planned by Wren], as to have stood foremost at this day amongst the Wonders of the World, for Extent, Symmetry, Commodiousness and Duration, at much less Expense than the Citizens have been at in Rebuilding it in the confused irregular and perishable Manner is now left in" (Herbert 2018). Pierre Charles L'Enfant's plan for Washington D.C. was well received by American President George Washington amidst the interjection of disapproval of many. Nevertheless, L'Enfant was able to realize a majestic capital of spacious roads, plazas, and inspiring structures amid what was then a drab and ordinary forest when he designed the city literally from scratch.

Pierre Charles L'Enfant's plan for Washington is a novel one. The models derived from Europe's absolutism and despotism are now adapted by major democratic processes and shared into a social scenario that is unknown at the Versailles of Louis XIV. It is also important to note that, while the Washington plan materialized, Christopher Wren's city, for lack of managerial implementation, remained a societal concept.

Manuel L. Quezon, president of the Commonwealth government in 1935, backed the proposal to expand Manila. Quezon City was founded in 1939, initially named Balintawak City, but an amendment was filed changing the name following the surname of the former President. From 1948 to 1976 Quezon City was the Philippines' capital city. It has become a nominal seat of power, yet during the period its level of prestige or dominance never matched Manila (Pante, Micahel D. A Capital City at the Margins). As the capital of the Philippines, it was reinstated back to Manila through Presidential Decree No. 940 due to its historical significance as the seat of government of the Philippines since the Spanish colonial. However, there were difficulties in following the plans of Burham's "City Beautiful Manila". The propensity of naming structures and municipalities was strongly felt during the reign of Ferdinand E. Marcos, Sr. The term is a play on the "Oedipus complex" of psychoanalytic theory.

While earlier use of the term elsewhere in the world has been suggested, the term was invented by Behn Cervantes to oppose the construction of the Cultural Center of the Philippines during the buildup to the 1969 presidential election campaign, during which Imelda Marcos' husband Ferdinand Marcos was running for a then-unprecedented second term as President of the

Philippines. Benjamín Roberto "Behn" Holcombe Cervantes (August 25, 1938–August 13, 2013) was a Filipino artist and activist. The term "edifice complex" was coined in the 1970s to describe Philippine First Lady Imelda Marcos' practice of using public funds on construction projects as political and election propaganda. From Oedipus Complex Deyan Sudjic, in his 2005 book *The Edifice Complex: How the Rich and Powerful Shape the World*, hypothesized the term, spreading it beyond the case of Marcos and the Philippines. He writes: There is a psychological similarity between making a mark on the landscape with a building and the exercise of political power. Both depend on the imposition of will. Certainly, seeing their worldview confirmed by reducing an entire city to the scale of a doll's house in an architectural model has an inherent appeal for those who regard the individual as of no consequence. Architecture feeds the egos of the susceptible. They grow more and more dependent on it to the point where architecture becomes an end to itself, seducing the addicts as they build more and more on an even larger scale. The building is the means by which the egotism of the individual is expressed in its most naked form: the Edifice Complex (Lico 2003).

Leaders with a tendency to abuse their power are usually observed to utilize architecture as one factor to show off power and influence with the selfish purpose of perpetuating their memory through these concrete accomplishments. However, when the incumbent no longer holds the position or is removed by the upheaval of its constituents, there would be a semblance of democratization because the structure is reclaimed by the people. It is a common experience though that when another authority ascends with the same attitude as the ousted one, it is inevitable that he will claim or use the said structure again with the same sinister agenda, thus, such a phenomenon becomes a vicious cycle. It is essential to know such precedents and network of functions, for young architects, as well as the public, to understand how power influences the cartography of buildings before them and, more importantly, its implications for the identity of their own built heritage (Almajidi 2019).

The Philippines: identity and state craft

The identity of the Philippines as a full-fledged state, much as how it was the case during the time it was still under the Western powers, was crafted and powerfully shaped by architecture. While early structures in the archipelago may be considered permanent in their location, they can be classified as ephemeral in nature because of the materials (nipa, wood, and bamboo) whose parts need to be changed from time to time due to short life cycles. Exceptions include pre-colonial homes in the northernmost part of the country, particularly

the houses in the island group of Batanes, which are constructed with rocks, lime, and thatched roofs. The Spaniards, when they held dominion over the country, introduced the utilization of stones, hardwood, clay, and lime as building materials, allowing for the preservation of residences and other edifices of the local built environment. Intramuros, the “walled city,” is one of the complexes erected during this time that is still in existence and is a definite representation of how architecture becomes a manifestation of power, as it was the recognized seat of royal command. Later, the Americans demonstrated their power through several means, one of which was through urban planning—the City Beautiful plan of Daniel Burnham. Such a proposal was crafted to reorganize Manila’s urban environment. Burnham and his aide, Peirce Anderson, tendered the “Report on Proposed Improvements at Manila” to William H. Taft, the United States (US) secretary of war, in June 1905. The said document offered a series of architectural and spatial recommendations aimed to induce “progress” within the Philippine capital city (Morley 2018).

The culmination of the Second World War brought disastrous effects to the Philippines. With the capital city, Manila, being the staging ground for the battle of liberation between the Americans and the Japanese, it was effectively reduced to rubble and turned to be the second most damaged city in the world in 1945 (Porio 2009). With the grip of the colonizers gone and much of the 384 years’ worth of colonial architectural splendor wiped out, it seemed that the Philippines was found identity-less, thus the question, “What is the true Filipino identity?” was raised (Lico 2017). Despite being crippled, the post-war era had offered the archipelago a critical part in its independence—a blank slate to redefine and finally seek its identity (Lico 2003). The 1950s was quite an opportunity for statehood recognition, given that the Philippines, despite being relatively young in terms of independence, miraculously, in this time became one of the most economically advanced countries in Asia (Sicat 1967; Kind 2000; Cruz 2023).

The pursuit for a unified Filipino style began to surface as one of the means of breaking free from the social influence of the colonizers since the domestic touch in the built environment was only in terms of elements and parts and there was never truly an execution to a whole prior to the 1960s. It was imagined that the articulation of indigenous forms in a modern setting would also jumpstart the introduction of Filipino culture to the global scene (Ogura et al. 2002). Such a vision remained active in discussions; however, the true support for independent architecture, most specifically its supposed execution lagged. Few presidents inspired the public exercise of architecture in the country.

The first extensive architecture led by a Philippine president was the Quezon Memorial Circle. The project was initiated by President Sergio Osmeña in 1945 but the realization of the plan came only in 1951 under the control of President Elpidio Quirino. The 27-hectare park housed the monument designed by Federico Ilustre who won the design competition. The towering monument which is 66 m high is made up of three interconnected pylons each of the columns is adorned with three grieving bowed angels holding sampaguita (the Philippine national flower) wreaths, each representing one of the republic’s three major island groups, namely, Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao. Francesco Riccardo Monti, an Italian sculptor, created the said angel statues, with each of them dressed in traditional clothing representing one of the three island groups.

This national circumstance became the way of Ferdinand E. Marcos Sr., elaborated through his graceful political oratory, to rise to a position in 1965 (Zich 1986). It, however, culminated with a totalitarian orientation, especially with the imposition of Martial Law in 1971 (Proclamation No. 1081 1972), ruling the said country for a total of 21 years (from 1965 to 1986). Architecture became the key agent for Marcos Sr. in physically fulfilling his greatest goal to create a “New Society” (Lande et al. 1982) with a national identity that can be showcased clearly to the world (Lico 2007) which started in 1969, the construction of the Cultural Center of the Philippines. Traditional heritage models from all over the islands were conglomerated to become design inspirations and eventually form a single national architectural style (Lico 2017). This was solidified by the motto “*Isang Bansa, Isang Diwa*” (One Nation, One Soul) (Presidential Decree No. 1413 1978). Through a series of enacted legislations, buildings of an unprecedented scale which were considered unimaginable in earlier times were erected in full swing (Kusaka 2017).

Imelda R. Marcos, the first lady, became the primary mover of the administration’s ambition, even being branded as the “Patroness of Arts and Culture,” the “Foremost Social Worker,” as well as “the First in the Fight Against Pollution.” Mrs. Marcos was undeniably vital to the political plans of President Marcos, Sr., for she was the one responsible for forging ties and gaining favors with several national powers of the West and East, such as the United States, the Arab kingdoms, People’s Republic of China, and so on (Lin 1975). While her role may be comparable to that of the preceding first ladies, she was able to keep the public eye on her side by being politically active and in touch with the matters handled by her husband. She also took the level of her projects to a higher step by strategically anchoring them to the notion of cultural stewardship,

wherein a system of patronage in the cultivation of arts and regional traditions was formed (Baluyut 2004). Mrs. Marcos was also notable for being an honorary architect of the newly formed organization the United Architects of the Philippines (UAP) in 1975, as a matter of reciprocating her sponsorship of public architectural projects that, in turn, stimulated the profession (UAP, n.d.). In the succeeding terms, architectural and infrastructure projects in the country became heavily directed by the power of the Marcoses, eventually serving as a major channel to demonstrate the rule of a strongman. The utopian-like design of cities was emphasized by the First Lady to be a declaration of the identity of the Filipinos (Shatkin 2005).

By the second term and upon the imposition of Martial Law, the duo had already infamously dwelled upon a myth-based illusion, wherein they painted themselves as the archetypal Filipinos—the *Malakas* (Strong) and *Maganda* (Beautiful). They branded themselves as the pioneers of a new beginning in Philippine history (the New Society and the New Republic) which the masses would look up to (Rafael 1990). The idea of “edifice complex” was then termed to Mrs. Marcos, pointing out how the buildings she commissioned projected a facade of prosperity in the country, to the point of excessiveness, whereas the true reality of poverty, huge debt from foreign loans needed to sustain the projects, and unethical political movements were ignored and masked away through the visual attractiveness of the said colossal structures (Lico 2017). One of the most regarded products of this is the construction of the Palace in the Sky in Tagaytay City (Cawley and Chicago Tribune 1986).

Objectives and methodology

This study seeks to create a clear explanation of the evolutionary transformation of the architectural identity of People’s Park in the Sky in Tagaytay, by means of chronologically examining historical accounts and dissecting them into two parts accompanied by operating concepts, namely: part one, the Marcos years until the revolution (1965–1986), which would be inspected based on Edifice Complex concept, expounding how the palace was conceived using power and served as a physical manifestation of authority and excessiveness; part two, the post-revolution abandonment stage until reopening as a public park, which would be assessed alongside the principles of Democratization Theory, dealing with its return process to the public’s hands including the challenges that came with it. These were performed through the utilization of archival data, first-hand investigations, and methodically analyzing them from an empirical perspective. Overall, the work seeks to:

1. Distinguish the link between politics and architecture in the case of the Palace in the Sky
2. Analyze the social effects brought upon by the construction of Palace in the Sky on the people of Tagaytay City and the general public
3. Identify the socio-political factors in Philippine history that led to architectural problems and overall current conditions evident on the site

Democratization theory

Ideas on democratization are mainly concerned with the transition process of a nation together with its cultural, political, and social spheres towards democracy, and its subsequent effects, especially after undergoing an authoritarian type of governance (Yoo 2008). Encompassed in the subject are sub-theories like the “Waves of Democratization” promoted by Samuel Huntington in 1991. These are phases of political shift, often recognized as three waves, which transpired throughout the world in different time periods, with the third wave occurring from 1974 to 1991, affecting the countries in the Iberian Peninsula, Latin America, and Asia (Huntington 1993). The latter is critical to the context of post-Marcos Philippines, wherein democratization was achieved through stimulation by bottom-up agendas (Yoo 2008), however, it is complicated due to organizational collisions of the fallen regime’s remnants, namely: the state, political parties, and military (Slater 2006).

In the United States, specifically in Washington, D.C., government buildings are unconsciously perceived as personified augmentation for a glorified and strong democratic government, worthy of the people’s unqualified belief. American political scientist Murray Edelman said that such structures have a quest for transparency, direction, and consistency in an intimidating environment. On the other hand, such structures may be an especially important factor in intimidation. The enormity of the buildings also overwhelms the people possessing a power that occupies them whether as ordinary users or as beggars who are victims to capricious rejection or approval and such people are prey to unseen and unscrupulous officials who are barely known or understood. This impression may mutually send a wrong signal to these authorities in claiming that they own and control these structures. Consequently, this would result in the affirmation of the current order characterized by abuse of the extreme exercise of force, and the escalation of helplessness. Charles Goodsell’s analysis of the American city council chambers in 1988 presented a more promising observation where the council’s seating arrangement had been designed to enable them to communicate and interact with the people rather than communicating among

themselves. This design seeks to promote sovereignty and democratic rule.

In the Philippine context, the third wave of democratization took place during the time when people started to march to the streets to overthrow the Marcos regime. A series of protests happened everywhere from the plazas used by the masses to the financial capital of the oligarchs, Filipinos fought for good governance with the declaration of Martial Law, the rise of debt, increasing poverty, and issues of power. The continuous rallies and opposition against the government soon led to the EDSA People Power Revolution in 1986 which eventually caused the downfall of the so-called dictator. However, despite the ascendancy of Corazon C. Aquino to power as the new leader of the country, her leadership was in constant turmoil due to the several attempts to wrest power from by the several uprisings of some members of the military.

Scope and delimitations of the study

The specific historical case of an architectural edifice called People's Park in the Sky is the principal focus of the investigation. However, the same is supported by revisiting some remarkable architectures from the same era, particularly those that exhibit congruent architectural qualities capable of radiating effect to Philippine society. Since the original architectural plans of the structure were not available, a site development plan and schematic plans were drawn based on observations from satellite imagery and documentation during the first-hand site investigation. While other parts of the building, mostly interior rooms on the ground level, were not accessed since these were off-limits and obstructed by debris, the interpretation of the interior spaces was made possible by closely examining the openings and gaps on walls from the outside (Fig. 1).

Discussion

The marcos era from 1965 to 1986

Rise of marcos administration

Ferdinand Marcos Sr. started his political career at the end of the Second World War, as a congressman under the liberal party during the administration of then-President Carlos Garcia. He eventually gained votes in the Senate and was elected as its president in 1963. Marcos Sr. ran at the presidential level under the Nationalist Party against the outgoing administration of President Diosdado Macapagal, won, and eventually became the sixth president of the Philippine Republic. He swore his duties on December 30, 1965, at the Quirino Grandstand, and he said to the 200,000 people gathered before him that "The Filipino has lost his soul, his dignity, and his courage," as well as claiming that order in the country must be valued and restored, thus began his first term of office, and another tumultuous turning point in the country's history (Zich 1986).

Marcos Sr. would often mention in his public speeches his government's vision called "New Society" or the "Bagong Lipunan," which eventually formed the conservative umbrella party of his supporters called "New Society Movement of United Nationalists, Liberals, et cetera." In this vision, it was promised that Filipinos would eventually live happily, away from corruption, hunger, violence, and other societal dilemmas.

During the Philippine Presidential Elections in 1969, Marcos Sr. was re-elected as president after his challenging campaign. According to the records of the Philippine Official Gazette, his second term was marked by growing internal and external conflicts, with efforts in the Constitutional Convention having to hinder him from continuing in office in 1971. Such civil tensions continued with the exponential increase of protests and student demonstrations. The continued rebellions, protests, and unrest

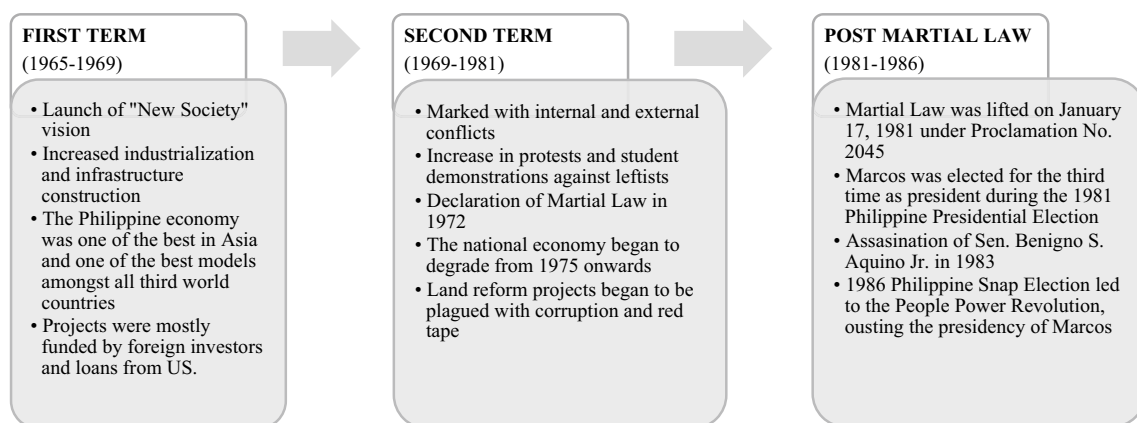


Fig. 1 General timeline of the Marcos era (1965–1986) (Source: Author, 2021)

of the people, especially the Plaza Miranda bombings, were used as justifications by Marcos, Sr. to sign Martial Law on September 21, 1972, through Proclamation No. 1081, s. 1972. It was evident, specifically in his personal diary entries, that such prior activist events were smartly used to install himself as the only central power figure of the country, masking it through the strict scope and virtues of Martial Law, which include the General Order No. 1, immediately put into place on September 23, 1972, wherein all government agencies were shut down, while the public utility and private owned properties were absorbed by the power of the president.

The constitution was replaced by Marcos Sr. in 1973 in order to adopt certain provisions for a supposed parliamentary-style government, however, it was manipulated into his favor, by means of further extending the executive power and delimiting any citizen who challenges the authoritarian government, such as in the appeals for habeas corpus that were filed to the Supreme Court against the unlawful arrests. With this new constitution that was validated and eventually went beyond the control of the Supreme Court, the presidential term of Marcos Sr. and his totalitarian control over the archipelago could last indefinitely (Javellana v. Executive Secretary 1973). Due to the global oil crisis in 1974, the economy degraded in the second term (Huntington 1993). While more foreign loans were borrowed, the sustained projects' success rates were below satisfactory, so the "New society" began to crack.

The Martial Law was lifted on January 13, 1981, due to the growing discontent in the Catholic church and in preparation for the state visit of Saint Pope John Paul II, however, the rule of Marcos Sr. continued as he won the first election after the lifting. The government after Martial Law was dubbed the "Fourth Republic" and notably during this period, the opposition leader Senator Benigno Aquino Jr. returned from his exile in the United States of America (USA) and was shot at the tarmac upon his arrival at Manila International Airport on August 21, 1983. The incident further stimulated public turmoil, specifically through the increase of public protests, and crumbled the support of the people to the government. Impeachment attempts were also made citing the president's graft and corruption, constitutional violations, and other crimes, however, these failed.

In 1985, Marcos Sr. called for a snap election amidst fading political popularity. The decision of Corazon Aquino, widow of Aquino Jr., to run as the opposition led to an alliance as the public favored her and her revolutionary platforms. During the day of the election, 30 Operation Quick Count (OQC) tabulators of the Commission on Elections (COMELEC) walked out from the Philippine International Convention Center (PICC) as

they were told to miscalculate the total votes of Mrs. Aquino. Marcos Sr. and Arturo Tolentino were proclaimed as the President and Vice-President, respectively, on February 15, 1986, by the Batasang Pambansa (Villegas 1987). The continued social unrest and distant support for the administration led to the four-day EDSA People Power Revolution in 1986, wherein Marcos Sr. was successfully ousted from power and the country's democracy was restored through Mrs. Aquino's presidency.

The "New Society" and Marcosian architecture

It was reported that the Philippines, despite being ravaged by the Second World War, was an epitome of economic advancement in the Third World when Marcos Sr. gained power (Overholt 1986). Marcos Sr. had high hopes for the country's modernization and national identity establishment, hence the installation of a "New Society" which promised that Filipinos would eventually live happily, away from corruption, hunger, violence, and other societal dilemmas. In line with this vision are the five promises of the government which include: one, to put an end to poverty and establish equality, by means of realigning the society based on socialist ideologies; two, addressing hunger and development, through further utilization of agricultural capability of the land; three, tackling corruption and solidifying justice, in restructuring the government; four, promotion of truth, by ushering the media and removing the control of "wealthy and powerful" to it; five, promotion of peace, as ultimately expressed in the declaration of the Martial Law (Marcos 1974a, b). In order to connect the country to the global scene and compete with foreign construction companies, Marcos Sr., in 1970, formed the Construction and Development Corporation of the Philippines (CDCP), which is a consortium of construction companies. Efforts resulted in public works like highways, schools, health centers, and cultural complexes (Overholt 1986). However, much of the finance was loaned from the United States of America (USA), while some were generated from foreign investors that brought their capital to the country.

Several architectures, most of huge-scale construction, were designed in urban centers throughout the archipelago. The most prominent architects in the era include Leandro V. Locsin, who believed in the synthesis of culture, especially the oriental and occidental that make Filipino architecture; Francisco T. Mañosa, who advocated neo-vernacular architecture and traditional forms; Jose Maria V. Zaragoza, who was a famous designer of churches, both before (like Santo Domingo Church) and after (like the reconstruction of Quiapo church) the Marcos era; Ildefonso P. Santos, Jr., a pioneer of landscaping design, through several urban plazas and centers like the Nayong Pilipino; Augusto Horacio M. Concio, for the

development of the area near the Elliptical Road, once known as Diliman Quadrangle, that resulted to the location's strategic clustering of public buildings which were then subsequently designed by Jorge Y. Ramos; and Froilan L. Hong, who designed the controversial Manila Film Center. The first four that were mentioned are regarded as National Artists for Architecture (Javellana 2018).

The most well-known architectures of the said era are mostly clustered in the National Capital Region (NCR), otherwise known as Metropolitan Manila. First is the Cultural Center of the Philippines (CCP) Complex, designed by Locsin and Santos, Jr., which comprises the Tanghalang Pambansa, Philippine Center for International Trade and Exhibition, Philippine International Convention Center, Philippine Plaza Hotel (Sofitel), Folk Arts Theater, otherwise known as Tanghalang Francisco Balagtas, and Manila Film Center. This center of culture was officially founded in 1969, enacted through the president's order, that aimed to preserve and promote Philippine culture in all its aspects, as it is an identity of the state. The complex was erected on an 88-hectare reclaimed parcel of land in an area known as Bay City, between Pasay City and Manila (Executive Order No. 30, 1966). In 1976, First Lady Imelda Marcos expanded the CCP, through the creation of a satellite, the National Arts Center in Laguna, now known as the Makiling Center for the Arts, to help aspiring young Filipino artists forge their talents.

The second cluster of architecture created under this administration was national health centers located near the Elliptical Road in Quezon City, composed of the Philippine Heart Center for Asia, now known as the Philippine Heart Center, the Lung Center of the Philippines, the National Kidney and Transplant Institute (NKTi), and the Philippine Children's Medical Center. Such were mostly designed by Jorge Y. Ramos to provide and pioneer state-of-the-art national centers to the public, especially for complex operations, that can compete with the Western medical field, with world-renowned specialists like Christian Barnard (the first cardiac surgeon to achieve human-to-human heart transplant), Denton Cooley (the first to transplant an artificial heart), among others, practicing inside its walls (Samonte 2015). The said health centers are still actively used today and were expanded to cater to the growing health needs of the Filipino people throughout the country.

Most of the structures in this era, especially the public government buildings like the examples stated, were designed in the brutalist style, and can be distinguished from the older and newer buildings that surround it through its evident rigid and sharp gray and white concrete. The unprecedented increase in architecture and infrastructure was said to be the largest even with the

previous independent years before Marcos Sr. combined (Arillo 2015; Samonte 2015; Sicat 2011).

Materialization of edifice complex

The Marcoses were able to rule jointly, as not only the President but also the first lady was considerably active in the political dealings of the administration. Mrs. Marcos was first given legal powers in 1963 when she was bestowed the top position of the then-newly formed National Parks Development Committee (NPDC), which was concerned with the development and maintenance of major leisure spaces in the country (Executive Order No. 3 1966). Mrs. Marcos became one step closer to her desire of being the usher of the supposed national cultural promotion, when she was appointed as the chairman of the board upon the establishment of the CCP in 1966, through her husband's promulgation—the Executive Order No. 30. When the three major cities and thirteen municipalities surrounding the capital city of Manila were clustered as a single entity called Metro Manila or the NCR, Mrs. Marcos gained another key position as she was installed as its first governor (Presidential Decree No. 824 1975). In the following years, another post was designated for her, specifically the Minister of Human Settlements, which significantly increased her influence or say in the architecture and urban planning of the country (Presidential Decree 1396 s. 1978). With such a position, she was also able to control the Intramuros Administration upon its formation, via Presidential Decree No. 1616, s. 1979, which placed the IA under the direction of the Ministry of Human Settlements. She also held a seat in Batasang Pambansa (National Congress) in 1978 due to the absence of opposition. By 1981, she was already concurrently holding multiple important roles in the government. According to other accounts, it was also said that she was ruling in President Marcos's stead amidst his rapidly declining health.

Architecture sustains its existence through patronage. This setup was outstandingly exemplified by Mrs. Marcos as she greatly supported the establishment of the UAP—the professional organization of architects in the Philippines, and the organization concerned with the propagation of the architectural profession in the country, after uniting the Association of Philippine Government Architects (APGA), League of Philippine Architects (LPA), and Philippine Institute of Architects (PIA), which were the three initial societies of architects in the country. It was notable that the original headquarters of the UAP was even located at the CCP Complex. It was an apparent give-and-take scenario as the architects were also politicking Mrs. Marcos for new opportunities, much like how she needed the patronage of architects for the physical realization of her projects. So-called favored

architects by Mrs. Marcos, mostly stated in Table 1, came into prominence and were able to propel their respective professional careers. One of these is Ar. Ramos, whom the people dubbed as the First Lady's exclusive architect due to having designed her numerous public and private edifices (Silvestre 2022). Nevertheless, these same architects successfully progressed Philippine architectural design for the better amidst the era of industrialization and the pursuance of a unified material identity.

During the succeeding terms of Ferdinand Marcos, especially now with Mrs. Marcos being a commanding political figure, it was observed that her architectural projects had reached a point of excessive extravagance that is most often for show. As such, a new term called "Edifice Complex," originating from "Oedipus Complex," was famously coined by director Behn Cervantes (Geronimo 2016) to the First Lady. These were much apparent in the capital city, often cited as a move to beautify Manila further and to create a utopian vision that she termed "a city of man."

However, these immediately became problematic for the following reasons: first, in the economic scenario, the national funds did not have the capability to sustain the projects, and despite such circumstance, they were still continued, by means of foreign loans that eventually blew up to \$US 28 Billion at the time of the revolution; second, the said projects, according to the Martial Law Museum, were often used as mask for overspending and corruption; third, some projects were evidently unreasonable in terms of scale, like the creation of the Coconut Palace in 1978, just for the papal visit of St. John Paul II, to which the pope actually disagreed to stay in, because of the said over-grandeur; fourth, being severely rushed, like the controversial disaster at the Manila Film Center, which buried 169 workers, but was still pursued after the incident just to reach Reagan's arrival, and so some of these large buildings were deemed unsafe and unstable; and fifth, the usage of these buildings as a tactile and huge face of strength and political propaganda (Lico 2003).

The structural footprints in the edifice complex serve as evidence of spatial power in history, as the massive structures would often dwarf its environment. Elevating enlarged forms was the method used by the regime to establish a sense of authority. In such context, Architecture was utilized as a weapon to advance the aesthetics of power in the built form, recognizing how the relationship between architecture and society could create an impact on the community. These buildings are notable examples of how the government exercises power through the built environment (Lico 2003). The monuments of the CCP Complex, while excellent examples of modern Philippine Architecture, can also be viewed as propaganda tools meant to show that many developments were finished

while the current government was in the seat of power (Quizon 2020).

The palace in the sky in Tagaytay city, Cavite

The edifice complex also extended beyond the borders of the capital region, through the creation of the Palace in the Sky in Tagaytay, a city 50 km south of Manila. According to historical accounts, Mrs. Marcos was impressed with the mountain peak she saw upon visiting the city. It was Mt. Sungay peak—the highest point in Cavite province, and so she decided to commission a mountain palace on top of it. With her husband being the president, the project was immediately commenced in 1981, and legislations were set to formally bound it along with the neighboring areas (Proclamation No. 2216 1982). Interestingly, the construction coincided with the supposed state visit of United States (US) President Ronald Reagan in November 1983, hence Mrs. Marcos's magnificent plan to make the palace his accommodation, upon arrival. Such exponentially increased the workforce, to make the site as elegant as possible. The palace eventually rose upon the flattened mountaintop, following several bombardments with bulldozers. Unfortunately, the trip was canceled, and suddenly the construction halted and was never resumed. With only the skeleton of the palace being completed, it was estimated that the project already cost US\$ 10 million (US\$ 27 million in 2021) (Cawley and Chicago Tribune 2018).

Site conditions

The palace is perched on top of the highest point of Mt. Sungay, 2500 ft above sea level. "Sungay" is a Filipino term for "horn," and was said to be the name of the mountain because of the steepness it once possessed likened to that of a horn. This area features commanding views of the Taal volcano and lake as well as the Cavite lowlands, enhanced by the famous cold climate of Tagaytay. With the national government claiming such a prime lot, more so utilizing it for a private mansion despite the unjustified need, it only symbolizes the proponents' personal wants, ambition, and eventual physical manifestation, by way of power. Based on historical accounts, this specific site was selected since it best fits the criteria for an unrestrained vantage point. If examined, this also strategically works the other way around, particularly for the other party who mainly observes it, as this specific site makes it so that the development sits on the highest pedestal possible and so that the development is physically asserted to the landscape through domination. It was recorded that a road was exclusively laid just for site accessibility. Currently, it is serviced by a single 8 m wide steep road. During the site visit, it was noticed that the journey from the gate to the structure itself was rather

Table 1 Matrix of most prominent architectures constructed during the Marcos era


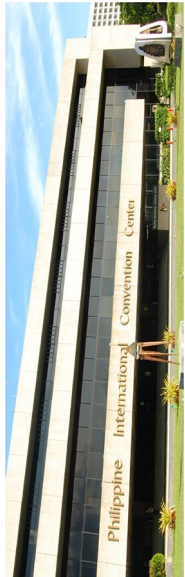


Illustration of Structure	Name of Structure	Year and Location	Original Typology	Architect	Description and Salient Features
	National Theater—Tanghalang Pambansa (Source: Nixwrites, 2012)	1969; CCP Complex, Manila	Cultural	• Leandro V. Locsin (National Artist)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The main piece of the CCP Complex, featuring several theaters inside• Architecturally notable for its seemingly floating effect despite being a heavy concrete mass; raised and has a ramp access• Well-preserved; active
	Philippine International Convention Center (Source: Lee 2008)	1976; CCP Complex, Manila	Cultural	• Leandro V. Locsin (National Artist)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A huge building for official events• This brutalist architecture emphasizes rigid horizontal lines through its low but long profile• Well-preserved and currently active
	Manila Film Center (Source: Kasingsing 2021a, b, c)	1982; CCP Complex, Manila	Cultural	• Froilan L. Hong	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A very controversial structure built for the 1st Manila International Film Festival• Dubbed as the “Parthenon of Asia” for its excellent brutalist articulation of the qualities of the Parthenon, specifically the symmetrical appearance of columns and thick architrave; raised by a crepidoma-like platform• Previously leased but now abandoned
	Folk Arts Theater (Source: Kasingsing 2021a, b, c)	1980; CCP Complex, Manila	Cultural	• Leandro V. Locsin (National Artist)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Previously known as the “Tanghalang Francisco Balagtas”• Consistent with the qualities of National Theater; known for its structural design and natural ventilation; floor level is raised through stairs• Currently closed

Table 1 (continued)



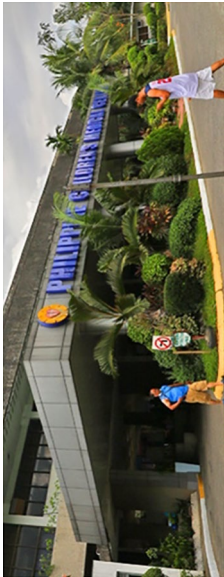

Illustration of Structure	Name of Structure	Year and Location	Original Typology	Architect	Description and Salient Features
	Coconut Palace (Source: Author, 2022)	1981; CCP Complex, Manila	Residential	• Francisco T. Mañosa (National Artist)	• Also known as "Tahanang Pilipino" ("Filipino House"), it is a huge mansion embodying extravagance • One of the best examples of Filipino vernacular residential design showcasing the material strength of coconut; hence its name • Active but has controlled access
	Softel Philippine Plaza Manila (Source: Author, 2022)	1976; CCP Complex, Manila	Hospitality	• Leandro V. Locsin (National Artist) • Ildefonso P. Santos, Jr. (National Artist)	• Originally called Westin Philippine Plaza then Hotel Philippine Plaza • It was commissioned to complement the development of the CCP Complex, specifically to serve as accommodation for foreign visitors during national events • Active and now a five-star hotel
	Lung Center of the Philippines (Source: DOH National Tuberculosis Control Program 2022)	1981; Quezon City	Healthcare	• Jorge Y. Ramos	• A tertiary center specializing in care for lung and other pulmonary diseases • A low-rise but sprawling architecture that is predominantly made of concrete • Active and has since been expanded
	Philippine Heart Center (Source: Kasingsing 2021a, b, c)	1975; Quezon City	Healthcare	• Jorge Y. Ramos	• A tertiary facility specializing in care for heart ailments • A brutalist architecture that strived to balance horizontal and vertical lines, with the latter being more pronounced, altogether forming a cross

Table 1 (continued)

Illustration of Structure	Name of Structure	Year and Location	Original Typology	Architect	Description and Salient Features
	National Kidney Transplant Institute (Source: Philippine Urological Association, Inc. 2020)	1981; Quezon City	Healthcare	• Jorge Y. Ramos	• A tertiary medical facility focusing on renal health • Another low-rise hospital similar to the qualities of the Lung Center of the Philippines
	Philippine Children's Medical Center (Source: Philippine Children's Medical Center 2016)	1980; Quezon City	Healthcare	• Jorge Y. Ramos	Two-story building designed with colorful interiors and visually attractive elements that are combined with nature to create a conducive healing environment for children,;
	Tanghalang Maria Makiling (Source: Sumangil 2010)	1976; Los Baños, Laguna	Cultural	• Leandro V. Locsin (National Artist)	• Part of the National Arts Center complex • Designed by National Artist in Architecture Leandro V. Locsin, it is an open-air theater perched on top of a plateau in Los Baños, Laguna that also exhibits the floating effect usual to Locsin's brutalist works

long. It even necessitates a shuttle to pick up visitors from the entrance and then drop them off in front of the palace at the top, because climbing to the top by foot is not that easy. It seems to be that this was the actual intention—that there would always be vehicles present that would drop the visitor directly to the palace itself. It was supposed to be a place where traveling on foot is heavily discouraged, thereby denoting the intended opulent experience of the user. This is also testified by the lack of landscape elements and other decorations starting from the gate up to the structure's point of approach. In the greater sense, this scheme reflects the reclusive quality of development akin to the aforementioned Qin dynasty model, while at the same time denoting an all-too-personal approach that the Marcoses wanted with President Reagan at the supposed time of his stay.

Building exterior

Although public records of the palace were lost in time either due to the turbulence brought about by the transition or simply by neglect, it was able to be confirmed through the next of kin that Ar. Ramos was the one responsible for designing the development. Furthermore, a retrospect of his works would reveal that he has fondness of employing vernacular forms as foundation of his design.

These include the Golden Mosque wherein he incorporated traditional Maranao forms, the Baguio Convention Center which also possesses semi-pyramidal roof adapted from the traditional *Fale* house in the Cordilleras, the Government Service Insurance System (GSIS) Complex—another massive development, which was hugely inspired by and thus architecturally expressed via the Banaue Rice Terraces, among others. Similarly, the main building of the Palace in the Sky—largest of the three defined parts in the development, was designed with the inspiration of the Bahay Kubo (Nipa hut), a traditional pre-colonial archetype in the Southern Luzon wherein the development is located. Ar. Ramos's Palace in the Sky also echoes the local architectural trends of the time, as the structure is also comparable to Locsin's pyramidal Maria Makiling Theater in Laguna, especially with the roof design and materials used.

The building was articulated in a brutalist style, featuring a huge semi-pyramidal roof supported by several semi-circular columns. As evidenced in the structural scheme, the design and construction of this portion were extremely well-thought-out. It can also be inferred that the final appearance was a higher priority than the layout of spaces because the roof required several columns, which in turn inconveniently consumed portions of the spaces. It successfully managed to attain the goal, however, as it produced a daunting effect from afar that is

further heightened when viewed directly from the main entrance of the building, as observed in Fig. 2. The deep overhang it creates can also be taken as a hat—noticeable on the outside due to its design but at the same time concealing what is within. This effect then acts as a final privacy buffer.

Split-leveling

Another articulation is the main approach through stairs, which is common to almost most Filipino and Southeast Asian pre-colonial houses. This was also a response to the gentle slope of the site. Since architecture has broken away from the simplicity of forms, this specific feature, albeit simple, also plays a part in creating the imposing effect. It can be observed that from the very point of entry to the site, there has been nothing but ascent. This ultimately terminates with the staircase of the main entry. The sense of being on a pedestal, all-seeing, and seemingly all-knowing, has then reached climax. As per pure concrete form, it contributes to the heaviness and rigidity of the palace—a matter of further marking itself to the context of the site. Concrete was favored, over the conventional utilization of natural materials, to strengthen its physical form. The face of strength and quality of being immovable can be a triumph to some, particularly to the patrons, but can also cause fear to others, especially if they are devalued by the demonstration of such firmness.

The schematic plans were illustrated to visualize the unfinished spaces inside the palace since the original architectural drawings of the site are not available anymore. As observed on the visit, the main entry starts from the north end of the third-floor level after the staircase. This immediately leads to the main viewing deck, with the panoramic view conveniently in front of the ascent. This entices or even forces the visitor to be curious and

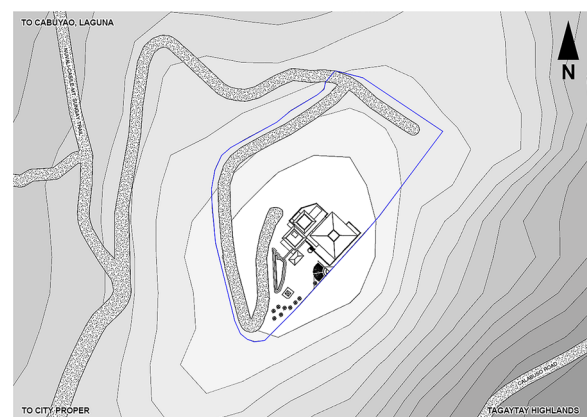


Fig. 2 Digitally drawn site development plan (Source: Author, 2021)

marvel at the sight. It produces a psychological effect that one has power because all can be witnessed. Power, in its usual essence, is the ability to perform unlimited things while being unhindered. In this case, since there are no obstructions and one can freely dive in and choose whatever he/she wants to see, the architecture indeed commands a sense of authority. Also, it is significant that the horizontal and vertical scales of this viewing deck are enormous; hence as far as proxemics is concerned, the architecture is capable of dwarfing the user while at the same time producing a distanced but protected effect. Further, it was revealed on the site investigation that the second floor was supposed to be the living area unfinished, but quite elaborate ceiling and wall designs were observed. If this is the case, then the deepest part of the building, the ground floor level, must then be the area for bedrooms. This also supports the case that most of the “tamed” or private areas are located to the west and north (adjacent to the retaining wall).

As per the annex buildings located on the west and southwest side, while most of the spaces, let alone structural portions, were not finished, it, however, suggests that this was intended for auxiliary functions like the garage, storage, and the like because other parts of it are actively used for similar functions and they look consistent to the original design. The religious shrine cannot be determined if it was erected during or after the construction phase of the palace. Similar stones on its retaining walls and the retaining wall of the palace were observed, yet this may be just salvaged debris on the site.

General spatial configuration of the palace

Main deck

A spacious open balcony wraps around the main building's third level, offering panoramic views in all directions. The huge roof was ingeniously constructed with tiered reinforced concrete, held by steel structural framing, then supported by compound tubular concrete columns by the building's core and another set of posts near the outer part.

Landscaping

Partially enclosed by the main and annex buildings is the open area or courtyard. This features a wide kidney-shaped pool that is now filled with soil, an amphitheater, gardens, a religious shrine, and some recently built souvenir shops. The landscaping was in harmony with the configuration of the main structure. It is oriented towards the cliff and is further contained by the retaining wall of the shrine. This again exhibits at one end the sense of privacy, and on the other end masked behind, is the sense of all-seeing.

The palace in the sky as an edifice complex

The palace, which was naturally raised by the mountain and artificially raised through structural means, clearly served as an edifice complex in the architectural sense, as it was forced to be erected at the highest point possible, in such a way that its physical presence would be declared to all even from afar. The building, like most other Marcosian structures, stands on a pedestal and successfully demonstrates the status of an edifice. It also symbolizes supremacy since, in hilly settings like these, the higher the position, the more desirable (and hence more costly) it is because the view is uninterrupted, and the structure itself can be shown in its full splendor. The structure itself was configured in such a way that it encourages the common people below to witness a spectacle not seen anywhere else in Tagaytay and subsequently be captivated in awe.

In a much broader sense, it also played a role in the ideological or social sense of this specific age since it was an obvious manifestation of the Marcoses' absolute authority and influence towards Tagaytay. This was physically channeled through architecture. A hierarchy and corresponding power were imposed as this excessive development was easily materialized because it was supported by the government, to the specific point that even laws were made to expedite its possibility. In connection to these, the height of the construction process of the palace is already, in itself, a manifestation of the edifice complex because the desires of those who were privileged enough to commission it compelled the local settlers in the area to comply and be displaced.

Democratization and its effect on the site

As the Marcoses were exiled to Hawaii, the restrictions to Mt. Sungay and the palace disappeared. It was reported that upon gaining information about the administration's end, curious citizens of Tagaytay went to the site and witnessed the unfinished skeleton of the palace along with its unique views that were shielded from the public years before. The first effect of democratization has finally swept the place as the new leaders of the Philippine government reclaimed it for the people, with its name appropriately changed to “People's Park in the Sky,” and its intention was transformed from being a secluded personal recluse to a place catering for people's leisure and enjoyment. Democratization may be seen to crush somewhat the edifice complex that the structure once embodied as the people were now able to penetrate the site and have for themselves the ability to witness the views. Such a momentous episode in Philippine history may seem optimistic; however, it would not end here.

The type of governance that Marcos Sr. demonstrated, which was described as “very personal” and can be compared to sultanism ruling in early Latin American and African times, produced a sharp and extreme conflict between political loyalists and opponents (Thompson 1996). This subsequently resulted in a political transition that was too unstable to fully control, added by the fact that no government was stable right after a revolution. It was figured that in the immediate democratic years, political friction was produced between the previous government’s military and the succeeding administration, specifically President Corazon Aquino’s, which resulted in democratic fragility and fear of possible democratic backsliding—a phenomenon also called “de-democratization,” or the misdirection of restored democracy towards another autocratic rule. Litonjua (2001) further argued that President Corazon Aquino was actually not intending to reform the government towards a different one but instead to just restore the pre-Marcos system including the setup of its public and private entities, with the latter notably favoring this move. The country was also too unstable for the total restructuring of political systems as well as investigations of all damages and atrocities done during the preceding era, especially with the tension between the revolutionists and the military party. This was demonstrated by the seven-coup d’état attempts of the latter as they intended to take over the new revolutionary administration (Grugel 1996). As such, they were observed to be the biggest threat to the post-Marcos political fragility.

It may be recalled that Barsh (1992) expressed that democracy can only survive if it can foster both the old and new. It can also only endure if it can pacify both the causes of the private and public sectors amidst the rapid economic change of the transition period. Again, failure to sustain this critical point could result in de-democratization. With this, it can then be realized that the government that President Corazon Aquino holds is too tight. It demanded the government to focus on more pressing issues such as those previously mentioned, while the left-over elements from the Marcos era, such as the exorbitant architecture like the park, were suspended in midair. Unlike structures that were built in the early part of the Marcos presidency, wherein architects were named and celebrated, unfortunately, there are no records showing the architecture of People’s Park in the Sky. This is because it was constructed in the concluding years of the said administration, at an already unstable point in time, and was never finished, hence its contribution to society, apart from being a physical manifestation of overindulgence, was then relatively unknown. This is then the second effect of democratization on the site—the ambiguity of its identity and value.

As democracy ensued, the significance of the development was uncovered—despite its dark past, it is still an inventive physical execution of Philippine identity through architecture. It contributes to nation-building by way of architecture because it cannot be denied being part of history and the presence of creations like these should not be forgotten. Plans resurfaced in 1996, when President Fidel Ramos revised the previous proclamation of Marcos, Sr. regarding the boundaries of the Mt. Sun-gay area, by means of converting it into a conservation zone and transferring the park’s operation to the tourism sector, specifically to the Department of Tourism (DoT), Tagaytay City Government, and Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) (Proclamation No. 740 1996). It was therefore clear that the path the government wants to take for the park’s future is inclined toward tourism. However, present first-hand investigations show that the revitalization plans for the park were still not properly crafted, after all these years.

During the site visit, it was confirmed that the concrete mansion had already been battling against the natural elements for a long time. Some parts, especially that of the annex building, were already being reclaimed by vegetation. Old pieces of rocks were still scattered everywhere, 40 years after the construction; most of the paint already faded. Besides the main deck and floor below, all other parts are sealed to the public and are either abandoned or occupied by illegal settlers or caretakers; most notably, several new non-conforming structures, like vendor shacks and communication towers, were built all around the mansion, thus destroying its original form and overall architectural harmony (Figs. 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10).

Conclusion

The intrinsic link between architecture and power was recognized in the study. The Marcos administration has utilized architecture numerous times to wield power over the people. It was presented that the ruler, through his supremacy, can order the creation of things such as buildings and can also ultimately order their destruction. It is still a matter of architecture and its patron; only this time, the patron is the government itself. The concept of the edifice complex made it apparent that the architecture of the palace suppressed the people of Tagaytay, by displaying magnificence and authoritarian ability through the architectural sphere, by means of its strategic site development plan, the configuration of spaces, and building form. The edifice complex expands further towards the social sphere, as the ruler’s support, which in the case of this development was made by enacting legislations, can create a sense of omnipotence, fear, and subjugation of the normal people. The principles of democratization theory revealed that the site was overlooked due to strict



Fig. 3 View facing south, with the Taal volcano on the left; view facing north towards Manila (Source: Author, 2021)



Fig. 4 Exterior of the main building (Source: Author, 2021)



Fig. 5 Wood-imitating concrete pergolas by the entrance; stairway entry approach (Source: Author, 2021)

institutional threats during the transition years, which then relates to its present identity dilemma. Democratization should not perpetrate the erasing of past memories, no matter how dark they are, because it cannot be denied that those turbulent times are still part of the nation's history. Even though structures built in this era were self-serving to the people in power, it is already here, and the people had already spent their money on it, thus, it should be improved for the democratic benefit and not masked away only to be wasted.

The architectural composition of the Palace in the Sky irrefutably represents the modern architecture during the late 70 s to the early 80 s in the Philippines. Preservation and conservation of our heritage should also focus on the cultural legacy of the concrete monoliths of brutalism, which is often neglected, especially in the Philippines due to the romanticization of the structures from the eighteenth century. These structures are undeniably sponsored by the conjugal dictatorship of the Marcoses due to their access to the wealth of the Philippine coffers.

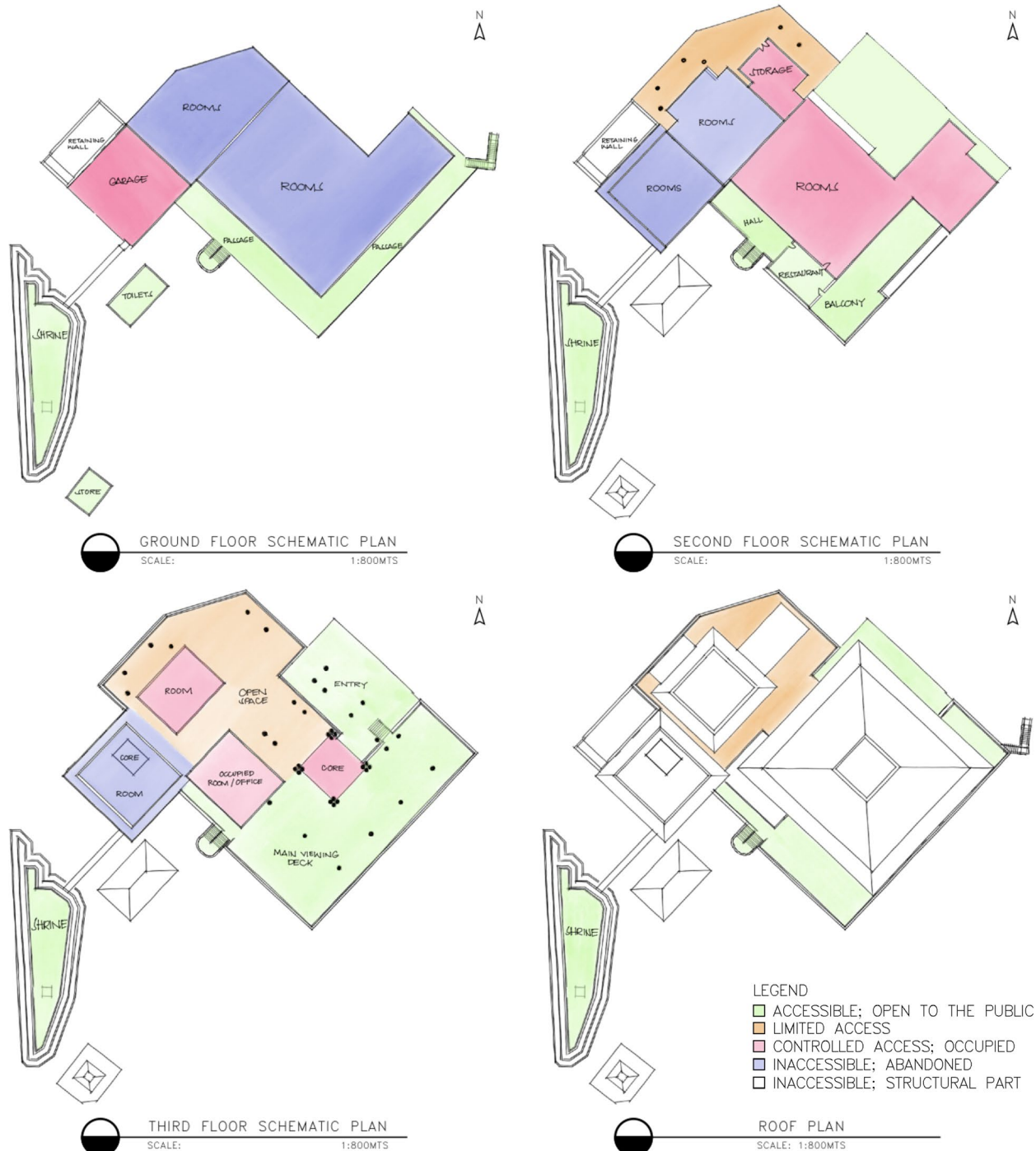


Fig. 6 Digitally-drawn schematic plans of Palace in the Sky (Source: Author, 2022)

Although general plans for change of use were set, there is still an adaptive reuse problem on the site, such that the actual building is reduced to a mere tool—an elevated structure upon which people stand and gaze at the surrounding views, also as a covered area for retailers. The

preservation and revitalization of the actual building's architectural identity are not considered, as it was apparent that no major restoration works were done, and only selected sites—those interacted with by the public, were maintained. The structure might seemingly democratize



Fig. 7 Main deck; structural framings of the roof (Source: Author, 2021)



Fig. 8 Panoramic view of the inner landscaping (Source: Author, 2021)



Fig. 9 The Palace in the Sky as seen from Tagaytay City area (Source: Akbermamps 2022)

because the people can now physically access the structure which was only penetrable visually to them at a distance. However, the fact remains that physical accessibility cannot be construed as a democratized structure because the level of ownership of the people is superficial. This is further bolstered by the fact that according to the Tourism Infrastructure and Enterprise Zone Authority (TIEZA), DoT, and even the Tagaytay government itself, no architectural drawings of the building have survived

to this day, let alone vital records including the name of the architect who designed it. The loss of all documents is highly suspicious because such data form part of the public records and should be easily accessible to the proper government agencies. It cannot be avoided to think that due to the controversies surrounding the construction of the building, any documentary evidence especially the name of the architect could have been intentionally hidden or even destroyed for purposes of protecting their identity from possible reprisal or from being ostracized. The rise of people to power is inevitable and while architecture addresses the needs of society it may also be used as a tool to perpetuate oneself and their benefactors. The formation of edifice complexes then their subsequent democratization is a cycle affecting the structures in the built environment and may not be avoided, however, society could exercise vigilance in documenting these architectural edifices to understand the past and learn for the sake of better preparation in the future. The community should be able to appreciate the importance of modern architecture beyond economic gains and despite of the pains of the memories.



Fig. 10 From left, the neglected annex buildings; several rooftop communications towers; overgrown plants by the lower level; damaged slab and corroded exterior of the annex (Source: Author, 2021)

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Author contributions

JBC and JARL conceptualized the research topic. JBC was responsible in the gathering of the materials for research. JBC and JARL has fully agreement and conformity in the final version of the research paper.

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Declarations

Competing interests

The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

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