

CASA MANILA

INTRAMUROS

Architecture in Philippines during
Spanish colonization



HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Casa Manila is a Spanish colonial house museum located in Intramuros, Manila, Philippines. It showcases the lifestyle of affluent Filipino families during the late Spanish colonial period. The house is part of the Plaza San Luis Complex, a cultural and historical site that recreates a traditional Spanish-Filipino neighborhood within the walled city.

Casa Manila stands near the San Agustin Church and is bounded by four streets—Calle Real, General Luna, Cabildo, and Urdaneta—situating it at the heart of Intramuros' historic core.

The house is actually a replica of the San Nicolas House located in Calle Jaboneros. It was built as part of the Intramuros Restoration Program, which aimed to reconstruct and preserve the architectural heritage destroyed during World War II, when much of Intramuros was reduced to ruins during the Battle between the Americans and Japanese in 1945.

The restoration program was spearheaded by former First Lady Imelda Marcos in the 1970s through the Intramuros Administration, an agency established to oversee the redevelopment of the walled city.

Casa Manila itself was designed by Architect José Ramon Faustmann, who carefully recreated the style and structure of Spanish colonial architecture, combining stone, wood, and capiz details to reflect the elegance and social status of the elite during the 1800s.

Today, Casa Manila serves as a museum that allows visitors to step back in time and experience the opulence and domestic life of the colonial era, preserving the memory of Intramuros' once-grand past.

DESIGN FEATURES



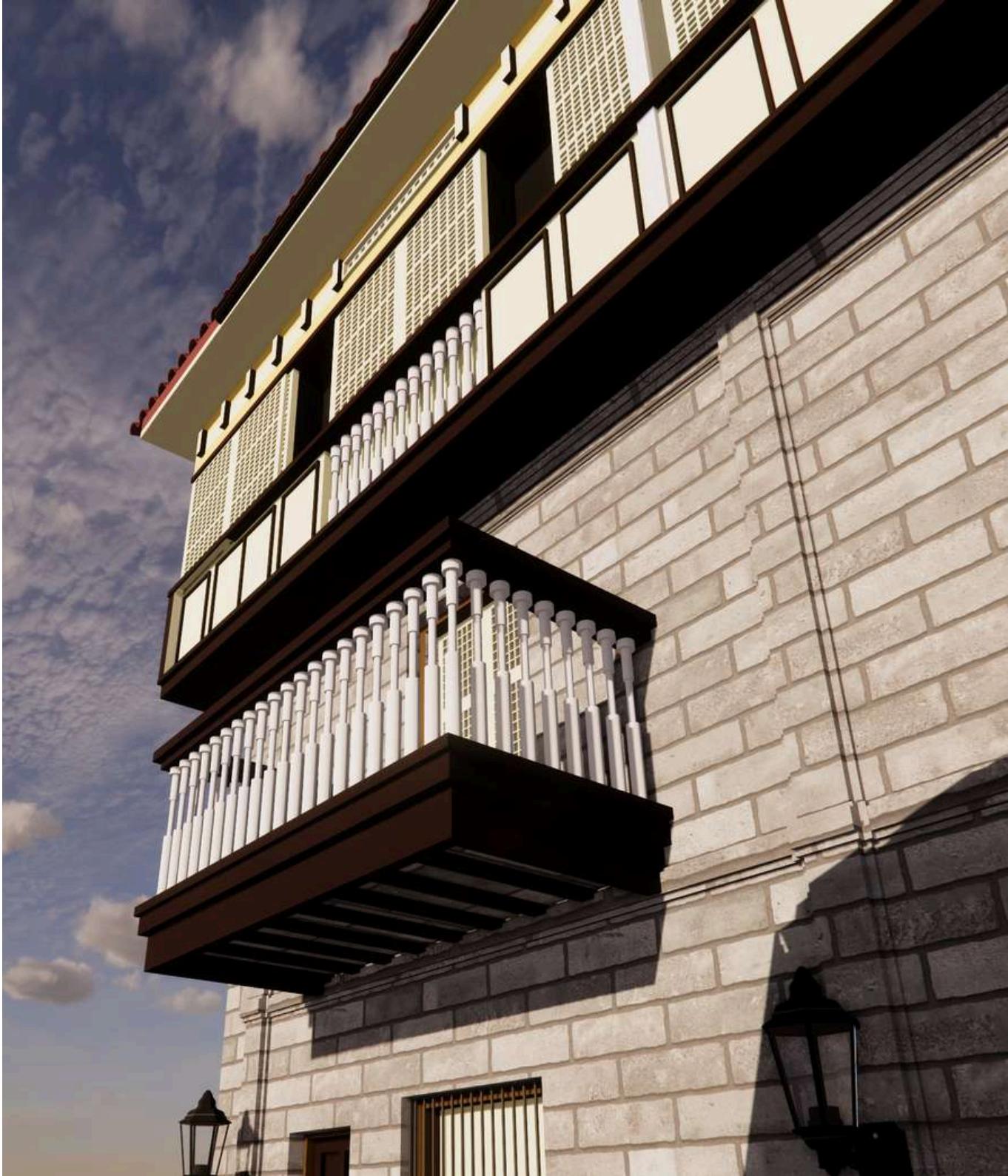
INTERIOR PATIO

The enclosed courtyard or patio is a common feature of Spanish colonial houses in Intramuros. The patio served to cool the rooms of the house facing it. At the far end is the caballeriza or stables where horses and carriages are kept.



BALCONY

The balcony of Casa Manila is a prominent feature that extends from the upper floor, overlooking the street. It is enclosed with capiz shell sliding windows and wooden balustrades, allowing residents to enjoy ventilation and observe outdoor activities while maintaining privacy. This design reflects the social and cultural lifestyle of the Spanish colonial era, where people interacted with the street from the comfort of their elevated homes.



RED CLAY TILES

Baked local clay tiles a vernacular material used for roofing of the Casa Manila



CAPIZ SHELL WINDOW AND VENTANILLAS

The windows use translucent capiz shells set in wooden frames, allowing soft natural light and ventilation while maintaining privacy. Located below the main windows, these small openings with sliding panels or grills allow extra airflow during hot weather.



MATERIALS

Casa Manila is built with a combination of stone, wood, and red clay tiles—materials typical of the bahay na bato style.

SPATIAL ORGANIZATION

Ground floor: Storage, carriage area (zaguan), and servant quarters.

2nd floor: additional bedrooms for guests and for extended family, office, library

3rd floor: Main living spaces such as the sala (living room), comedor (dining room), cuartos (bedrooms), Master Bedroom, and Kitchen

Ground Floor

The ground floor is made of thick adobe or stone walls for strength and protection,



Upper Floor

while the upper floors use hardwood such as Narra and molave for floors, walls, and decorative details.



Roofing

The roof is covered with red clay tiles







