

QC stops MRT 7 construction

The Manila Times · 20 Feb 2020 · A1 · FRANZ LEWIN EMBUDO AND LISBET K. ESMAEL

QUEZON City Mayor Josefina Belmonte has suspended the above-ground construction of the Metro Rail Transit 7 (MRT 7) Quezon Memorial Circle (QMC) station, citing discrepancies on the total floor area.

“We put a temporary stop to the construction of the QMC station because it would affect the landmark’s identity as a national heritage park,” the mayor explained.

City Building Officer Mark Dale Perral said the building plan was reviewed, and “It appears that the floor area significantly

exceeded the floor area as declared in the locational clearance.”

Environmentalists and historians had claimed that the station was “encroaching on the park’s integrity.”

The QMC is the city’s most famous landmark and a heritage site.

Belmonte clarified that the order would only cover the ground floor area and will not affect the construction activities being undertaken on the basement areas, which include the railway tracks

Based on the project’s permit and clearance, the contractor indicated 4,997 square meters as its floor area. But the proposed floor area was more than five times the approved figure.

The MRT 7 is one of the seven mass transit infrastructure projects of the Duterte administration. The P80-billion rail network would have 14 stations, linking North Avenue in Quezon

City to San Jose del Monte town in Bulacan province.

The Department of Transportation (DoTr) expressed hope that the problem would be ironed out.

“We will coordinate with the LGU (local government unit) of Quezon City as soon as possible to discuss and clarify this matter. We are certain that at the end of the day, we will be able to strike a balance and obtain a win-win solution,” Assistant Secretary Goddess Hope Libiran said in a Viber message on Wednesday.

SMC also said it was “hopeful” that the DoTr and the Quezon City government could settle the issue.

“The resolution of issues is really up to DoTr as main proponent, and the LGU. For us, while the order is a setback, we will do everything we can to make sure we keep to the timetable, and at the same time take into account the mayor’s concerns. This includes revisions to the design,” SMC President Ramon S. Ang said in a statement.