The Influence of Urban Public Space Patterns on Degradation of External Envelope of Urban Blocks: The Case of Nairobi Central Business District

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Abstract

A view through Central Business Districts (CBD) of most Kenyan cities show that some buildings have either been abandoned or been left unattended thus, enhancing dereliction and decay of the built environment. Since it is not whole city centres that are decaying, it is likelys that the spatial structure and hence the urban space patterns would be having something to do with social, economic and the environmental survival of these capital assets. This paper has empirically established that 33 urban space variables out of 436 variables significantly relate with dereliction and decay of built environment in the Central Business District of the city of Nairobi. This has been done by regressing indexes relating to abandonment, façade construction, completeness and exterior maintenance and cleanliness of buildings bounding urban space against urban space variables: spatial, social, cultural and economic. These established variables have been grouped into the following urban patterns: constitutedness of space, segregation or integration of space, distributedness of space, grain, land use, and density. The paper argues that most of these patterns have a lot to do with the presence and distribution of human in the settlements. The paper concludes that humanization of settlements is very important in curbing the decay of built environment.

Key words: Urban space, Building degradation, Space syntax, Nairobi, CBD.

The Challenges Associated with the Conservation of Historic Buildings and Collections: The Karen Blixen House *Ephraim W. Wahome & Anne-Marie Deisser

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Abstract

This paper is based on a condition assessment survey of a historic house and museum, Karen Blixen. The aim was to assess the potential risks that historic buildings are exposed to through external and internal forms of aggression. The study revealed that the building suffers structural problems that need urgent attention if it is to continue serving an important role as part of the Kenyan cultural heritage. It was further observed that some basic housekeeping policies should be instituted in order to control the rate of deterioration on the collections. This paper raises a series of conservation issues

Teaching History and Theory of Architecture Proposal for an Anthropological Approach.

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Abstract

The course in cultural anthropology taught to students of Architecture in University of Nairobi, has not proved sufficient to give students clear orientation in History and Theory of Architecture and therefore architectural design. As a consequence, the debate as to how History and theory of Architecture should be taught is still on. The paper attempts to highlight the pitfalls of traditional conception-perception duality where the architect conceives or generates design ideas and the critic perceives them through criticism. This argument produces the larger percentage of the reading material in architecture. The traditional role of the critic is to find out what architecture means largely from the intentions of the designer and as to whether the architecture, as an artifact, communicates them. In the African context, architects are continuously called to design for institutions which are new in the sense that they have only been articulated in a social or cultural form but not as buildings. This paper therefore attempts to sustain a debate on how architects can develop an architecture which is valid through its role in fulfilling social needs as well as conveying discernible meaning as artifacts.

The Nigerian "Fence Culture"

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Abstract

A fence is something with which virtually everyone is familiar. In everyday usage, the word is connotative of a barrier or at best, a delimiting phenomenon. More technically, it can be said to be a structure (of varying material options), that clearly defines territorial boundaries and imposes physical restrictions. Historically, landscape fencing is identified with one of the hallmarks of "civilized" existence i.e. animal domestication. In the same context, its property-delineating and security-imposing characteristics are as old as when the instinct to personalise space, on the one hand, and to defend his territorial integrity, on the other, first welled up in man. On the Nigerian scene, within the last thirty years (specifically since after the Civil War), the role of the fence has been undergoing subtle though definite metamorphosis. The fence has moved through the traditional roles, to an architectural "accessory" and, more recently, to a status symbol. In the process, "fence architecture" (an increasingly-important and highly-elaborated aspect of Nigerian architectural practice) has been created. The paper sets out to examine various issues relating to the phenomenon of fencing. The socio-political factors that have introduced a divergence in the generally-accepted roles of fencing vis-à-vis the Nigerian situation, are outlined. A panoramic view of some products of "fence architecture" is also presented. The economic, social and environmental implications of the contemporary practice are discussed, and it is submitted that though this fast-growing architectural culture is generally beneficial, it may account for as much as 20% of project cost.

Key words: fence, roles, implications

Market Valuation of Residential Investment Properties: The Case of Reversionary Freehold and Leasehold Properties in Uyo, Nigeria

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Abstract

Prior to the advent of inflation in the property market worldwide, property investment valuation was solely based on the logic of the conventional technique which relies on some assumptions that there is no growth in future rental value over present rental value and that rents are the early 1970s affected the property market resulting in increases in rents and introduction of rent reviews in leases. Since then, contemporary techniques have been proposed by property researchers for the valuation of property investments in times of inflation. This paper examines the market valuation of residential investment properties with particular focus on the valuation of reversionary freehold and leasehold properties in Uyo, Nigeria. The paper argues that in the context of Nigeria's Land Use Act which provides for payment of ground rent which is subject to reviews, coupled with the rental reviews on the building, the conventional valuation technique can no longer produce accurate and logical valuation of reversionary freehold and leasehold residential investment properties in Uyo, Nigeria due to the fact that it cannot handle the problem of rent reviews and complex rental gearing. The paper concludes that contemporary techniques of property investment valuation can handle these problems and shows the adaptation of one of these techniques to the Nigeria situation based on data from the property market.