

## INFLUENCE OF MUSEUM ARCHITECTURE ON HERITAGE PRESERVATION IN NIGERIA

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**Orhuah Ogheneyoma**

Department of Architecture,  
Rivers State University, Nkpolu Oroworukwo, Port –Harcourt

E-mail: [yoma.orhuah@gmail.com](mailto:yoma.orhuah@gmail.com)

### ABSTRACT

Nigeria is a heterogeneous nation with rich culture, history and heritage however with the advent of colonization, most ethnic groups have begun to lose their identities and pristine cultures. It is of great importance that this cultural heritage of our nation is preserved and promoted in order to give future generations a sense of belonging and a connection with the Past that could help conceive an ideal future. Museums can be said to breathe life into the past and are fabulous portrayals of the distinctive times of our social history as a country. This research work will give us a wider view on how museum architecture can positively create an enabling environment where our Nigerian Heritage can be preserved also help us appreciate our culture and identities additionally giving us motivations to be directed to safeguard them as we walk into our future, projecting to us the true Nigerian spirit of unity and faith, peace and progress (Nigerian Motto). Particularly in recent times where agitation and disunity, restructuring and all bids to break the nations unity is the new order of the day. It sets forth the importance of Museum in ensuring this task both on its functional and symbolic context. This Research work concludes that despite the impact of modernization we must as individuals, professionals, designers and researchers be cognizance of our cultural roots, thus harmonizing the traditional and modern

contemporary design concepts in our works as it is everyone's task to see the preservation of our heritage.

## INTRODUCTION

With the advent of colonization, globalization, new religious beliefs, the oil boom, government influences, community clashes, civil wars etcetera, our pristine cultures are fast disappearing and a new 'global' image is being adopted (Nwankwo,2011). This situation has created a vital need for a place that preserves our heritage. Every community needs a place to recall occasions, a place that offers how our a community became what it is today, a place that demonstrate to us our root and Identity, and a place that rouses us to keep our story going especially now the 'Computerized age' appear to assume control of realities. Hence there is high need for museums which gives us an opportunity to have awareness of the past, being fully aware that with the knowledge of the past, the Ideal Future can be conceptualized (Tanselle, 1998). By integrating museums that preserves our heritage, we would be sure that 'the labor of our heroes past shall never be in vain' (Nigerian National Anthem).

Structures, whether impressive public edifices or mud houses, are generally constructed in agreement with ways that represent cultural values and world-view of the builders (Kulthermann, 1963). The fact that cultural values of builders can be articulated in their architecture implies a possible affiliation between assembled structures and human self-awareness (World Bank 2010). This Research work therefore discovers the role of architecture as an embodiment of perception of the culture and identity of the Nigerian People.

## **Heritage and Museum Architecture**

Heritage is a critical piece of the present we live in and past we intend to keep. Heritage however goes beyond, saving, showing, or reestablishing a gathering of old things, It incorporates our acquired traditions, Norms and Values, Religion and Beliefs, Social Collectives, Language, Food, Music, Art, Literature , Traditional Marriages, Political Culture, Clothing & Dressing Culture and other elements that make up the way of life and identity of a people and how they distinguish themselves. (UNESCO 2003). With this Knowledge, it is well meaning to note that a Heritage museum could be a place committed to obtaining, preserving, study, show and instructive translation of all the above heritage attributes that a nation or society has had for a long time that mirrors an essential piece of its identity.

Heritage Museums reflects an Architecture with high Regard for harmony with nature and culture, It characteristically differ from most traditional museums as it typically features a high proportion of "hands-on" displays and live or realistic specimens and practical objects. In order to achieve the true essence of a heritage museum, it should address the issues of every conceivable guest, for example, The Explorers—who come since going to museums and having a decent information of their heritage benefits them and offers to their interest, The Facilitators—who come in light of another person. They may be bringing a companion or a gathering of individuals, conceivably youth or understudies, The Experience Seekers —who is scratching off a rundown of activities, regardless of whether as an individual or as a traveler. They need to see the thing that is famous of that place, The Professional/Hobbyist—This classification incorporates instructors, teachers, find the museum as a place of escape from all the world's

activities, and their visit is almost a mystical one. A fruitful visit for them will leave them with the sensation that they have gotten away (Identity and the Museum visitor's experience by John Falk).

### **Why is the subject of a Heritage museum important today?**

Museums show us our root and Identity, it is noteworthy that knowledge of our root and identity is a vital asset for peace and stability, and is a requirement for the realization of human growth (UNESCO, 2009) especially in these times of so much unrest and disunity in the country a more evident and actual inclusion of culture by its preservation in improvement agendas at local, national, and international levels is critical for sustainable development. Government ought to accomplish more to Promote culture-based undertakings: such that will build and strengthen culture, social enterprises and social tourism should be incorporated into respective and multilateral endeavors that help the nation in quest for her advancement goals.

Nigerians lack good preservation and maintenance culture, they need to have a sense of social responsibility in order to get this, we as a nation need to be aware of where we are coming from. Museums are one of those places that this knowledge can be acquired. Museums in preserving our history, is a fantastic representation of the different periods of our cultural history and they preserve the cultural values and heritage of a people thereby inciting the feeling of nationalism (World Bank, 2010).

The general concept of museums has over the years been diminished to a state of non-relevance; therefore, there is a need to rekindle it. Heritage Museums in its own way is important to the socio-economic growth of the communities, ethnic groups and the country at large.

This is expected to provide a deep sense of appreciation of the Nigerian culture by its people, provide infrastructural development, job creation, revenue generation and economic relevance to the country.

### **The Nigerian people and her response to cultural Heritage**

The Nigerian nation is of various socio-cultural structure and ideological inclination. The population figure is over 120 million people as projected by the 1993 census, the country is comprised of 36 states and a Federal Capital Territory, and it is sub-divided into six geo-political zones. The nation has about 400 ethnic groups, speaking over 300 local dialects with variation in social practices and concepts. Along religious lines, the north dominated by Muslim and the south is dominated by Christian; in both sub-regions, traditional religious practices also go on, side by side. However, Hausa, Yoruba and Igbo are the dominant cultural collection in the country.

Nigerians have their religious ways of doing things, according to Arthur Leonard (Mbiti, 1992). This implies that customary religious conviction is the center of the Nigerian Personality. Regrettably, the yearning for tradition started fading when the first European missionaries set feet on African soil. By observation it is obvious that the Nigerian media and scene adds to this loss of social personality by passing on both adverse and constructive esteems to emphasize western instead of conventional Nigerian esteems and this outsider culture propagates social division, accordingly undermining the quest for illuminated social improvement much wanted in the nation. The media has become the basis of modern culture, supplanting traditional sources of icons like painting, drama, music, and museums, even religion (Twitchell, 1997). However, Cesar Chavez opines that “the

preservation of one's own culture does not require contempt or disrespect for other cultures".

Strikingly, it is the duty of Nigerians to develop, save and advance their way of life with the different means accessible and one of these means is to have a heritage museum that would cover the social heritage and estimations of the nation, accordingly giving the world a look at her rich heritage.

### **Characteristic Features of a Heritage Museum**

- ❖ The Architecture of a Heritage Museum including its roads, buildings and landscape should make good utilization of naturally preserved spaces thus attaining harmony with nature. Also, the aesthetic Principles of the Nigerian people should be seen all over its structures. Its form should depict and represent the forms unique to the country.
- ❖ A heritage museum ought to create a place of social significance, which houses the historical backdrop of the nation or ethnic groups, the objective shouldn't be simply to outline a historical center but to showcase their heritage to the world. It should reflect an atmosphere of culture, beauty, strength, functionality, security and respond clearly to the culture of the people.
- ❖ A heritage museum should evolve an architectural concept that will be a true representation of the Identity and the way of Life of the Nigerian people. It should be built according to our cultural topographic theory, the design should also be constructed such that it conforms to the cultural principles of the Nigerian People
- ❖ A Heritage Museum could be a monument which plays the role of a symbol which Nigerian people can be proud of as their own

because it symbolizes their cultural heritage and is a timeless heritage showcasing and preserving their culture for generations unborn to imbibe.

- ❖ A Heritage museum should stand out such that it Ignite urban awareness of Art by placing it in an environment that can attract people and present it to them in an exciting and educative manner for all ages and culture, also offering ancillary services that would exhibit other aspects of the culture like food, dance and other activities thus enhancing the inflow of visitors.
- ❖ A heritage museum should be a place where History and Arts lovers and learners can convene to discuss and be educated, a place of vocational learning thus offering Art & culture as a possible non-oil based export for sustainable nation building and as a viable means of employment & wealth creation, and also re-building Nigeria's International Image.
- ❖ Heritage museums could be adopted from private residences of Royal families or palaces, within the museum, there could be a sacred shrine that is a sacred spaces that houses ancestral tablets of Notable kings and Queens.

### **Importance of Culture**

Culture is "the prevailing states of mind, values, standards, practices, convictions, workmanship, legacy, music, letters and inventive exercises that describe the working of a people". Basically, culture is "the lifestyle of a people. Culture influences what is of value in the society through the value accorded to cultural activities and through the effect of ethnic procedures on the qualities connected to the different parts of prosperity and highlights of a society (counting the relative weight given the prosperity of various people or gatherings).

The cultural benchmarks of a group give it its very own character; this is achieved because of the culture of its people. Culture is shared by the affiliates of a community. It is cultured and handed from the older generations to the newer ones. Culture is a link that ties the people of a region or community together. Social orders and groups are fortified by the traditions and conventions that the general population of a group take after, the celebrations they celebrate, and the sort of garments they wear, the sustenance they eat, and in particular, the social esteems they hold fast to. The cultural standards form the founding values of one's life. They inspire one's principles and philosophies of life. They influence one's way of living and thus effects social life. The fact that culture link between people and their value systems lies its significance. For a compelling handover of culture starting with one age then onto the next, it must be deciphered into images. Dialect, workmanship and religion fill in as the emblematic methods for exchange of social esteems between ages.

### **Architectural Influences on Cultural Degradation in the Nigerian Society**

Architects play a critical role in shaping the qualities of our environment; they work in collaboration with end users and their needs and ambitions, and they have the power to restore and promote our cultural heritage by incorporating dynamics of the past in their designs and constructed structures; not only to prevent the repetition of the same mistakes, but also to remain grounded and to understand where one's ideas sit within the wider framework of things. Traditional buildings across Nigeria's geographical zones are known to have demonstrated a thorough response to the climate, availability of natural materials, culture, taboos, local technology and socio-



economic factors in which they evolved, but in recent times these factors are no longer considered by present day Architects as there is a new push towards going contemporary. Other factors that has contributed to the loss of cultural identity in Nigeria are:

❖ **Slave Trade/ colonially aided factor**

After the middle of the 17th century, however, the demand of the Atlantic trade for slaves was practically insatiable, and was at its peak during the 18th century, each year about seven times as many slaves were leaving the western African coasts. Many Nigerians who were forcibly settled in the New World soon lost their identities. At the time when freed slaves returned to West Africa from the America, there appeared a new style of doing things which also affected their mode of designing and construction. This style emerged with a new architecture different from the traditional huts and colonial structures. It also fulfilled the need for a more distinguished form. Apart from the direct intervention of the British on the Nigerian built scape in terms of imposing their own archetypes, they were also responsible for creating the enabling environment for other influences to come into play.

❖ **Effect of Colonialism.**

The result of colonial masters brought about an impact on modernization. This impact led to the: Abandonment of old traditional settlement and villages for new state settlements and towns, Disruption and fragmentation of long standing extended family bonds coupled with increased personal freedom and decreased family sizes, Disappearance of large family compounds and introduction of new smaller nuclear family units. Architecturally, this impact led to: The change in the

physical appearance of settlements the form of different structures, The rejection of traditionally molded decorations on clay walls for modern paints, The rejection of thatch roof for corrugated iron sheets which resulted to curve-linear forms instead of rectilinear. In a related development, the new religion (Christianity) as well as modern education presented by colonials with its laws and written languages, had enormous impacts on the lifestyle of the Nigerian People.

#### ❖ **The Oil Boom**

With the discovery of oil in 1956 by Shell in Oloibiri in the hearth of the Niger Delta, an oil boom was responsible for the aesthetically-driven nature of building designs and life style of the average Nigerian. The oil boom, particularly, was responsible for the emergence of Nouveau riche Igbo who embarked on massive building projects to reconstruct the war-ravaged region and to exhibit new social status. With excess money in circulation at the time wealthy persons commissioned local architects to design and build “architecture of flamboyance this became an example of architecture through which a patron satisfies a social end. Notable chiefs, kings and other important residents in the society in a bid to showcase the level of their affluent often time preferred jettisoning traditional architecture for modern architecture over a substantial period.

#### ❖ **Ideas, values and religion.**

The advent of missionaries in the country had an enormous impact on the architecture and building practice and life style of the people. Also, the ideology of wars due to diversities in languages and cultures gave rooms for built areas especially for war formations

❖ **Climate**

One of the most significant influences on Architecture style in Nigeria is the macro climate of the area. Because of the climate, Buildings tend to be constructed of lighter materials in order to allow significant cross-ventilation through openings in the fabric of the building. Buildings take different forms depending on precipitation level leading to dwellings on stilts because of the frequent flooding or rainy monsoon seasons. Flat roofs are rare because of the high level of precipitation, However Modern designers tend to jettison these factors designing for aesthetic purposes not considering climatic factors and totally disrespecting Mother Nature, This has led to students of Architecture having little or no knowledge on the essence of climatic studies and how it affects designs

❖ **Theory of simple materials.**

Usage of natural and local materials is the main identification sign of Traditional architecture. These materials are used in their natural raw form or treated by natural techniques or technological process. What is important to keep in mind is that even more complicated technological processes were still using natural materials and just wisdom of our forebears and their hand led to sustainable materials without any significant footprints. Traditional building materials were typical for their region. In this context, the most common materials are stone, clay wood, straw and earth in form of fired bricks. These materials are still available although technology has made them more refined. Architects and designers should do more to use such materials so that they can be more appreciated by our little

ones who have a vague idea of how they can be used and still get an aesthetically pleasing outcome, with strength and stability.

## **RECOMMENDATION AND CONCLUSION**

The preservation of cultural identity is a significant factor for future success of a nation. Architecture in itself marks the history of civilizations and the development of people. It is hoped that with the knowledge of the importance of Heritage Museums, multiple cultures of Nigeria will be encouraged to embrace their roots and preserve their fast disappearing heritage even as our evolution as a nation continues.

This Research Work concludes that despite the impact of modernization in terms of the way we speak(Language), The Food we eat, The Names we give our children, our styles, materials, even in our method of designing and construction as it relates to Architecture we as individuals, professionals, designers and researchers should be cognizance of our cultural roots.

As Architects, we must be sensitive to the social-cultural and religious beliefs of our clients/users thus harmonizing the traditional and modern contemporary design concepts in our works. It is everyone's task to see the preservation of her heritage, Government should legislate and enforce statutes against the indiscriminate destruction of objects that depicts our cultures, incorporate more of our Local dialects in our school curriculums, and the mass media should publicize the relevance of our cultural artistic expressions through the usual television and radio- link-interactive programs. The printing press must likewise give this issue its imperative importance. The ordinary citizens of whatever religion should present artistic expression as donations to the museum rather than destroying them as a result of

their new religious stands. It is important to note that it is essential for Architects to integrate traditional form, ideas, expressions, materials into their modern/ recent designs and techniques. Thus, experts are advised not jettison our traditional inheritance expertise associated with design evolution and execution as It will be a great tragedy and a colossal loss if our traditional building styles and construction process disappear from the continent in a bid to go contemporary. The benefits derived from our indigenous methods and materials were enormous and needed to be propagated, while any inadequacy associated with the traditional approach could be modified as done by the vernacular designers this will go a long way in Preserving our culture and cultural principles both as Designers and as Nigerians

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