

Modern Architecture in Nigeria and It's Trends in Historical Buildings (Failure of modernist in Conservation and Restoration of Historical Buildings)

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ABSTRACT: Modern architecture has vital impact in Nigerian architecture even though there are some socio-cultural and religious factors and elements of traditional architecture and use of traditional materials and principles of design that still exist. This paper will be discussing on how modern architecture failed in the aspect of the conservation and restoration of palace buildings which are the focal points within the walled cities that is directly captured as significant historical buildings. Basically the palace serves as a whole administrative and non-administrative building based on its division into various functional spaces. Moreover, the palace building construction as well as changes and fortifications occurred overtime which is seen directly from the facades. This periods includes; vernacular pre-colonial and post-colonial period. Therefore the research illustrates how imported modern architecture affected the palaces of the country at large. For this paper two particular palaces namely; Hadejia and Kano emirs palace in the Northern region dominated by the Hausa/Fulani's will be used for the comparative and descriptive criticism. Relevant information will be collected from the buildings and then from the findings, analysis of the building based on some certain parameters such as; building location, period of construction, and materials used will be considered and most of all the criticism of the failure of modernist architects in terms of conservation and restoration of the two ancient palace buildings will be judged based on the final view point which will imply the trends of modernism in Nigerian historical buildings.

Keywords: *Modernism, Modern architecture, Conservation, Restoration, Regional identity, Palace, Pre-colonial, Colonial, Emirate, Zaure/Soro (Foyer)*

INTRODUCTION

According to Ada lous Huxtable (2010)“The perennial architectural debate has always been, and will continue to be, about art versus use, visions versus pragmatism, aesthetics versus social responsibility. In the end, these unavoidable conflicts provide architecture's essential and productive tensions; the tragedy is that so little of it rises above the level imposed by compromise, and that this is the only work most of us see and know”. Henceforth these tensions and conflicts coupled with the quest for social responsibility are all directly proportional with craving for social justice and freedom by people which became the parameters that lead to the French revolution in the 18th century which triggered massive industrialization, urbanization and rapid change and new dimension in infrastructural development globally. All of these factors were what gave birth to the Bauhaus were modernism

in architecture was established to flush away the adherence to the Vitruvian principle and approach of architectural design.

Modernism in architecture after its evolution in Bauhaus created the new principle which became a guiding parameter for modern architectural design so as to cope with the high technological advancement of industrialization, urbanization., Human adaptation to climate change, modernization and globalization. Furthermore, modern architecture provides the medium for criticism and differentiation between vernaculars, primitive and classical architecture of the renaissance period with contemporary architectural styles such as; postmodernism, high-tech architecture, regionalism, deconstructivism, sustainable architecture etc. based on the context involved. All of the above brought changes in the dimension of infrastructural development in both developed and developing countries which results to the physical transformation of rural areas into urban

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settlements. But it also came along with negative effects to some extent which involves the of failure of conservation and restoration of historical buildings caused by over dependency in the usage of modern building materials and techniques of construction in Nigeria and the lack fortification and usage of local building materials. Henceforth, the comparative and descriptive criticism of Hadejia and Kano emirs palace in terms of conservation and restoration displays a clear view of the damage that modern architecture brought to Nigerian palaces.

Literature Review

Federal republic of Nigeria is a nation comprising of the thousand years ancient old empires of the western and central African sub-Saharan region. This empires includes; the Bornu sultanate empire, the Hausa sultanates that were consolidated into the Fulani Sokoto caliphate, the Oyo and Benin Empire of the Yoruba's and the south eastern formidable domains of king Jaja. All these empires were amalgamated in 1914 by the British colonial government which lead to the indirect rule by the British to the people of Nigeria. The amalgamation of these empires into the northern, southern and western protectorate under the British colonial government became a turning point in the history of the people of Nigeria. These came along with changes in terms of infrastructural development due to the rapid change of construction of institutional and non-institutional buildings. The pictures below shows the map of the ancient sultanates and empires that were consolidated into what is present day Nigeria. (Fig. 1, 2 & 3)



Fig.1: Sokoto Caliphate in 19th century (Source: en.wikipedia, 2011)



Fig.2: Oyo Empire at its furthest extent (Source: en.wikipedia, 2013)

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The Basis for Comparative and Descriptive Criticism

The failure of many modern architects in Nigeria concerning conservation and restoration of historical buildings in ancient settlements have led to the neglecting of cultural heritage and values which have negative impact in socio-cultural and economic development because heritage which serves as an economic driving force. According to A Federal, Provincial and Territorial Collaboration (2010) historical sites and buildings represents places showing the outstanding achievements and legacies of every society in the past. Hence ensuring sustainable maintenance as well as conservation and restoration of the buildings will provide an opportunity of its usage by many generations to come thereby shielding and protecting their cultural heritage and values without compromise. Furthermore, the need for architects apart from acquiring information of environmental climatic and topographical factors of a project area it is necessary to know the socio-cultural context and diversity and regional identity of the people they are designing for. However negligence of modernist in adhering to regional identity when designing and executing projects led to the failure of conservation and restoration of historical buildings and most importantly leads to the deviation of particular people’s regional and cultural identity at large. Moreover, on the global perspective, it is all agreed that human ecosystem as a functional unit consists of the human habitation as its center of concentration which describes individual places into the larger concept of self-achievements and actualization for a person or the larger society in general Harold Proshansky (1978).

Scientifically and logically, we have to know our world and its environmental driving factors in all dimension to imbue intelligent designs that serve as models for the future generations to come. This stresses the need for the sustainability and building on a green agenda to be seen as a quest of survival instead of fashion .All of the above scientific architectural viewpoints provides the basis in which the analysis of this research will be criticized on the context of descriptive criticism and how it affects the Nigerian palace architecture which represents monarchial symbol of authority and also buildings representing the economic force of the Nigerian societies in full control of authority in the pre-colonial period and even in the colonial and post-colonial period whereby the all the monarchs in Nigeria serves as the ceremonial heads of governments presently.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Hadejia Emirs Palace

History and Geography of Hadejia and the Palace

Hadejia city is ancient Islamic state which has the motto: majestic town of stallions (Ginsau Birnin Doki) is formerly referred as Biram (Garun Gabas) which is one among the seven original Hausa states known as ‘Hausa Bakwai’ established by the exiled prince of Bagdad Abu Yazid (Bayyajidda) who came to the Hausa land and established the Hausa kingdoms according to mythological view point (Barth, 1857; Hallam, 1966). Moreover, Hadejia is the largest and relevant



Fig. 3: Map of Africa continent showing Nigeria (Source: worldatlas, 2015)

commercial town of Jigawa State of Nigeria. It is located along the latitude $12^{\circ}27'N$ and Longitude $10^{\circ}2'E$. The population of the people is over 450,000 people and the city is divided into 3 to 4 Local government areas. Majorly taken by Hadejia (southern part of the town, including the old walled city). The palace is located at the heart of the city and was constructed in 1808 during the reign of emir Muhammad Sambo Ibn Abdure whom was the flag bearer of the Sokoto caliphate in the region during the Fulani jihad of sheik Usman Ibn Fodio in 1804. Figure 4 and 5 below shows the external facades view of the palace while figures 6 and 7 shows the interior views of the palace foyers (Sorayen Fada), and the second gate of the palace.

The Kano Emirs Palace

History and Geography of Kano and the Palace

Like Hadejia, Kano is also one among the seven original Hausa states (Hausa Bakwai). The Kano palace was constructed during the reign of sultan Muhammadu Rumfa (Walker, 2006). According to Barau (2007) the Kano palace was constructed in the year 1479 to 1482. It is the largest palace in the sub-Saharan Africa (Nast 1996), and also serves as the oldest traditional seat of power and authority in Nigeria (Ado-Kurawa, 2008). The Fulani overtook the palace from the last Hausa ruling dynasty during the Fulani jihad in 1804. It lies on a latitude $11^{\circ}59'32.67N$ and Longitude $8^{\circ}31'06.02E$. The palace lies on a 33 acres land and walled by walls of 20-30 feet height from outside and average of 15 feet from within the palace complex (Archnet, 2010). The conservative nature of the palace over centuries makes it attractive for researchers across the globe. Figures 8 and 9 shows the exterior facade views of the palace.

Comparative Descriptive Criticism

Modern architects in Nigeria have failed by allowing Majority of the palaces in Nigeria to be overshadowed by effects of modernism to large extent. With the exception of Kano palace which was the reason behind selecting it as a model for comparative descriptive criticism. The Hadejia palace as one among the palaces affected by modernism was chosen for comparison. This effects happened overtime in both the pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial period.

From Fig. 8 and Fig. 9 It is clearly seen that Kano palace right of its period of construction in 1479 (pre-colonial) is with the adobe and tubal (stones) mud wall as the main building materials and its structural component while the roofing is the thatched roof with timber and palm leaves as the materials basically and the decoration and engravings of styles with colours. Although some few areas of the palace has elements of integration of traditional and modern architecture through the use of the cement, sand aggregate blocks for constructions in the colonial and post-colonial periods (1900 to date) was used, but the finishing are fully traditional and the elements of the modernity is not noticed. This is observed from Fig. 8 and Fig.9 illustration of the palace external facades and it is continuous and same for the other sections of the palace ranging from the "Sorayen Fada/Zaure" (foyer) to the whole residential and administrative spaces of the palace. This factors made the Kano palace fully conserved for centuries without allowing effects of modernity to exist at all. But reverse was the case in Hadejia palace. Because from Figs. 4, 5 and 7 illustrating the external facades of the palace which is purely constructed with modern building materials after its demolition from its original state of construction which is the pre-colonial period. Only some elements of integration of modern and traditional architecture left is portrayed in the upper portion of the first and second gates which is the "Dagi" and the engravings and traditional decorations done with concrete cement. All other parts of residential and administrative spaces in the palace went through total transformation in the colonial and post-colonial period (1906 to date) which lead to the total demolition of all the original traditional architectural structures, thereby living only the Sorayen Fada/Zaure (foyers) in its original state which is the only part conserved and restored overtime as seen in figure 6. Hence these two comparative descriptive critical



Fig. 4 & 5: Exterior facades of Hadejia palace



Fig. 6: Interior foyers (Sorayen Fada)

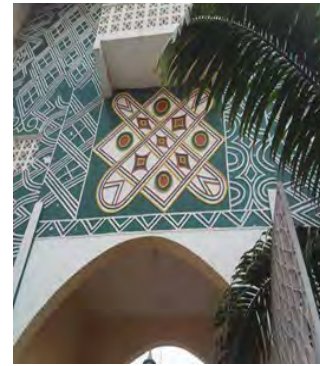


Fig. 7: The second gate of Hadejia palace



Fig. 8 & 9: Exterior facades views of Kano palace (Source: Archnet, 2010)

analysis of the two palaces shows the impact of modernity in Nigeria and failure of modernist in terms of conservation and restoration of historical buildings.

CONCLUSION

On a final view point, this research shows how the use of modern building materials possess as a threat which lead to the deviation of conservation and restoration of palace buildings as historical sites by modernist architects. Therefore, for reviving the need of conservation, restoration and, rehabilitation of palaces and other historical sites in general, the need to understand the original building materials used in building the palaces is necessary. Followed by timely assessments, testing and documentations of the materials usage in the traditional construction coupled with regular maintenance, monitoring of the process in its developmental stages. Then in the pedagogical context, architectural institutions of high learning should enhance the importance of conservation and restoration of ancient buildings which serve as the basis of heritage of people. And also the architectural practicing and relevant governmental bodies should provide policies for conservation and restoration of ancient buildings and historical sites and also provide and strict penalties for architects and all professionals that violate those rules and policies.

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