

HABITAT

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*The Future of Smart Cities
in Africa: Opportunities
and Challenges*

Top 10 African PropTech
Startups Transforming
Real Estate

**WE CAN'T REBUILD LAGOS.
BUT WE CAN REPLAN IT**

TEMIDAYO OLOYEDE

Co-Founder & CEO,
Edala Development Company Ltd

ARCHITECTURE | REAL ESTATE | LIFESTYLE

Vol. 03 No. 16

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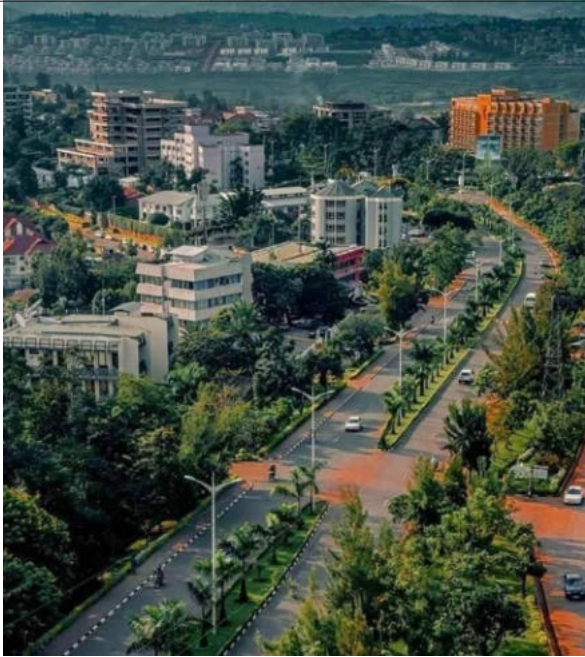
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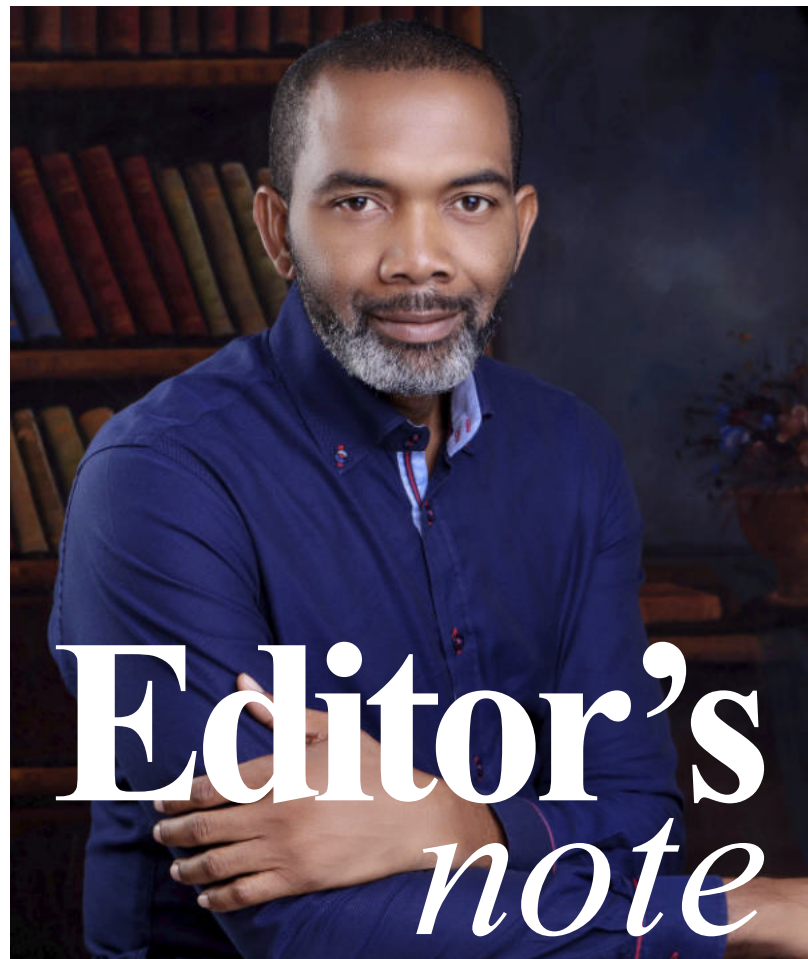
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Cities are humanity's greatest invention.

They are more than collections of buildings and roads. They shape how we live, how we work, how we connect, and how we dream. Every street, every neighbourhood, every park, and every building reflect our values and reveals the future we are creating.

At Habitat, we believe that great cities do not happen by chance. They are intentionally designed, thoughtfully built, and carefully maintained. They emerge when architects, developers, policymakers, investors, and citizens share a common vision of creating places where people can truly thrive.

That belief is at the heart of this sixteenth edition. Beyond showcasing remarkable

projects and inspiring design, we seek to spark meaningful conversations about the future of our cities and the role each of us plays in shaping them.

Africa is urbanising at an unprecedented pace. The choices we make today will determine the quality of life for generations to come. The future of our cities is not something we inherit, it is something we design.

Thank you for joining us on this journey as we continue to celebrate innovation, inspire excellence, and champion the ideas that will build better cities across Africa.

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Building better cities, together.

Peter Aleogena

Editor-in-Chief, Habitat Magazine

HABITAT

Magazine

At Habitat, we believe cities are humanity's greatest invention. They shape our health, our economy, our culture, and our future. Every building, every street, every park, and every public space tells the story of who we are and who we aspire to become.

Our mission is to inspire better buildings, champion better communities, and spark the conversations that will create better cities across Africa. Because the future is what we design.

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Building better cities, together.

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Building More Than Projects: THE VISION OF TEMIDAYO OLOYEDE AND EDALA DEVELOPMENT AT TWO

In every generation, a new wave of developers emerges to redefine what is possible. They do not simply construct buildings; they shape communities, create opportunities, and influence how people live and invest. Temidayo Oloyede, Co-founder and Chief Executive Officer of Edala Development Company Limited, represents this new generation of visionary real estate leaders.

As Edala Development marks its second anniversary, the company has already established itself as one of Nigeria's most ambitious and forward-thinking real estate brands. Built on a commitment to quality, innovation, timely delivery, and investor-focused developments, Edala has quickly evolved from a promising startup into a respected development company with an expanding portfolio across residential, commercial, hospitality, and mixed-use real estate.

What makes Edala's journey remarkable is not simply the number of projects delivered, but the philosophy behind them. Under Temidayo Oloyede's leadership, every development begins with a simple question: *How can this project create lasting value for both residents and investors?* That approach has positioned the company as a trusted partner for clients seeking sustainable returns and premium living experiences. Today, Edala has completed numerous projects, earned the confidence of over one hundred investors, and continued to expand its footprint with developments designed for long-term appreciation and recurring income.

Among the company's standout developments is **Dollar House**, a project that reflects Edala's understanding of the growing demand for high-yield investment properties on Lagos Mainland. Positioned as an accessible investment opportunity, Dollar House demonstrates that quality design, strategic location, and attractive returns can coexist. It embodies the company's mission of making premium real estate investments available to a wider market while delivering strong rental and capital growth potential.

Edala has also raised the bar with **The Marq**, an elegant development strategically located on Airport Road, Ikeja. More than



another luxury apartment project, The Marq has been conceived for today's globally mobile professionals and discerning investors. Its contemporary architecture, premium amenities, and proximity to the airport make it an ideal destination for short-let accommodation and executive living. The project exemplifies Edala's ability to identify emerging market trends and transform them into commercially successful developments that generate long-term value for investors.

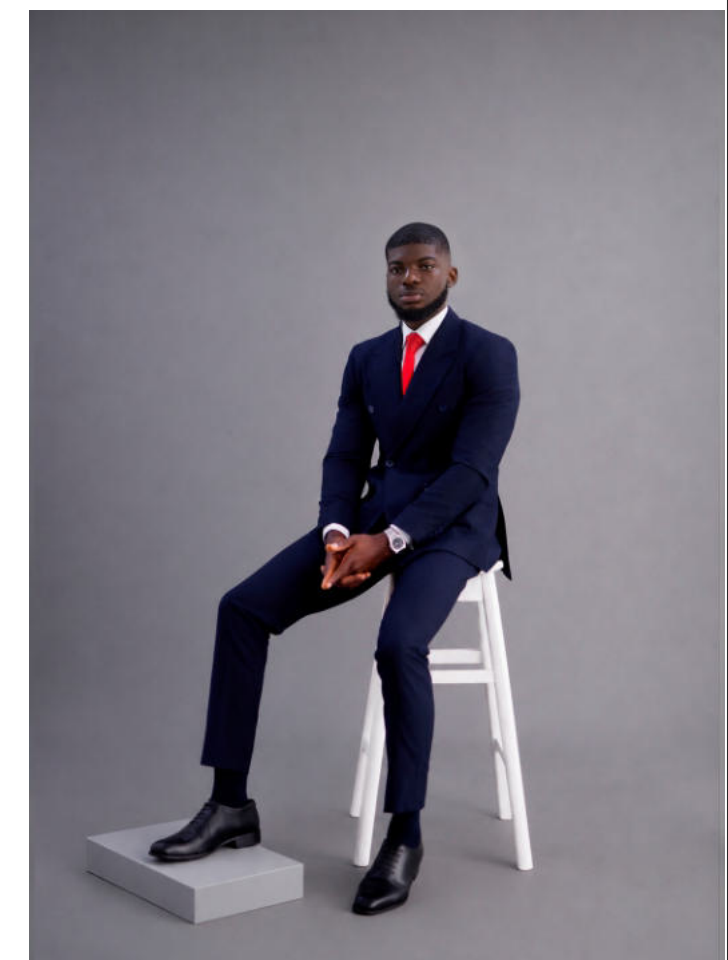
Beyond bricks and mortar, Edala Development has built an ecosystem that integrates development, property sales, investment advisory, and professional property management. This holistic approach allows investors to participate confidently in real estate while benefiting from professionally managed assets that generate consistent returns. It is a model that reflects Temidayo Oloyede's broader vision of creating wealth through intelligently designed real estate.

The company's achievements over the past two years are a testament to disciplined execution, strategic thinking, and an unwavering commitment to excellence. In an industry where trust remains one of the most valuable assets, Edala has earned credibility through quality delivery, innovative investment solutions, and a growing reputation for professionalism.

At Habitat Magazine, we celebrate organisations that are shaping Africa's urban future with purpose and innovation. Edala Development represents the confidence, creativity, and entrepreneurial spirit driving the next chapter of Nigerian real estate.

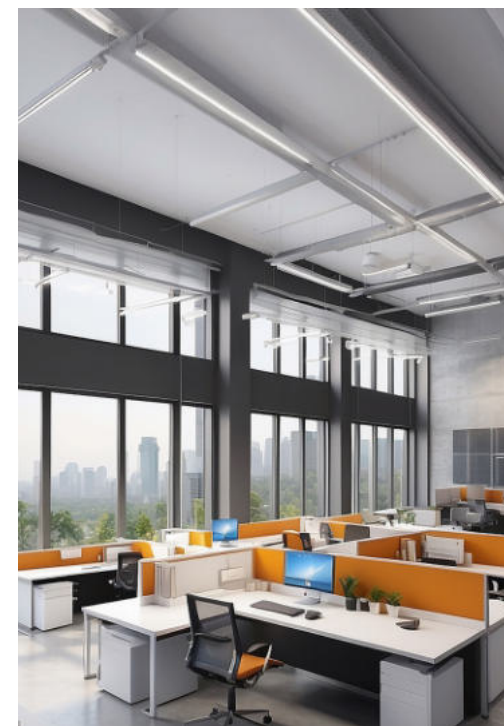
As the company celebrates this important milestone, we congratulate Temidayo Oloyede, his co-founder Samuel Olatunde, and the entire Edala team for what they have accomplished in just two years. Their story reminds us that great cities are built by visionary people who dare to think beyond today's skyline.

If the first two years are any indication, Edala Development's most significant contributions to Nigeria's built environment are still ahead.



DOLLAR HOUSE

Where Business Meets Opportunity



Located in the heart of **Sabo, Yaba, Nigeria's leading innovation and commercial hub, Dollar House is more than an office building; it is a strategic investment in the future of business.**

Developed by Edala Development, this premium commercial project is designed for entrepreneurs, corporate organizations, investors, and professionals seeking a prestigious business address with exceptional long-term value.

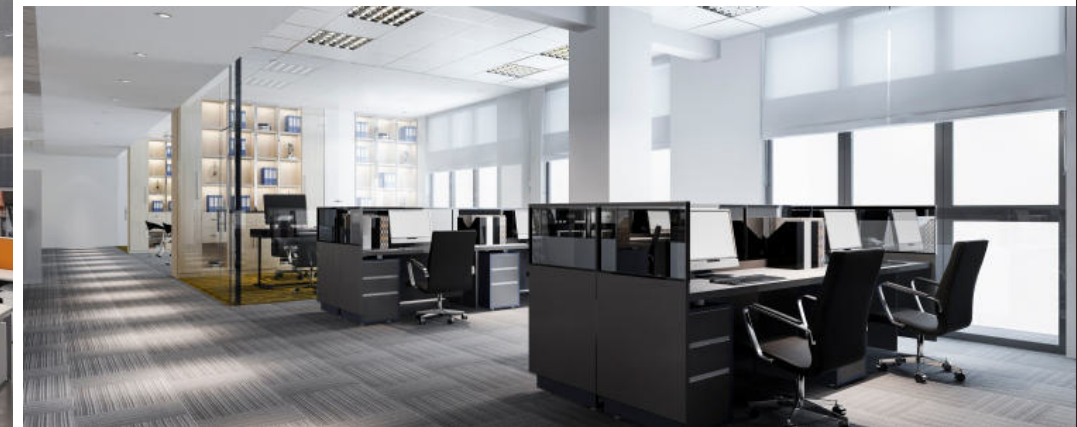
Positioned on **No. 3 McNeill Street, Off Commercial Avenue**, with seamless access to Third Mainland Bridge, Mobolaji Johnson Train Station and major commercial institutions, Dollar House places businesses at the centre of one of Lagos' fastest-growing economic districts.

Every office space has been thoughtfully designed to support productivity, flexibility, and growth. Available in **18 sqm, 120 sqm, and 240 sqm**

configurations, the development combines contemporary architecture with world-class infrastructure, including commercial-grade elevators, fibre-ready internet, dedicated power systems, smart access control, CCTV surveillance, fire safety systems, ample parking, and semi plug-and-play office solutions.

Beyond providing an exceptional workplace, Dollar House represents a compelling investment opportunity. Backed by Edala Development's commitment to quality and innovation, the project offers strong rental income potential, professional property management, and the opportunity to own premium commercial real estate in one of Lagos' most resilient office markets.

Dollar House isn't simply a place to work, it is a destination where businesses establish their presence, investors grow lasting wealth, and ambitious ideas find the environment to thrive.





The MarQ

WHERE MODERN LIVING MEETS SMART INVESTMENT

The Marq is a landmark residential development by Edala Development Company Limited, redefining urban living and investment opportunities in the heart of Ikeja, Lagos. Strategically located at No. 57 Old Ewu Road, just off Airport Road, this exclusive development places residents and investors within minutes of the Murtala Muhammed International Airport, Aviation Estate, and Lagos' major commercial districts, making it one of the city's most desirable addresses for both living and short-stay accommodation.

Designed for today's globally connected lifestyle, The Marq offers a carefully curated collection of fully furnished Studio

Apartments, One-Bedroom Apartments, One-Bedroom Loft Apartments, and Two-Bedroom Apartments. Every residence combines contemporary architecture, elegant interiors, and smart home technology to deliver comfort, convenience, and timeless sophistication.

Beyond beautifully designed homes, The Marq delivers a complete lifestyle experience. Residents enjoy an exceptional selection of amenities including a rooftop swimming pool, rooftop lounge, spa, fully equipped gym, restaurant, concierge services, smart locks, in-built speakers, uninterrupted power supply, complimentary Wi-Fi, and professional facility management by Lodge



& Loft, ensuring a seamless ownership and hospitality experience.

For investors, The Marq represents more than premium real estate, it is a high-performing asset positioned within one of Lagos' strongest short-let markets. Its proximity to the international airport, coupled with professionally managed rental operations and strong projected returns, makes it an attractive opportunity for those seeking long-term capital appreciation and consistent rental income

Scheduled for completion in **July 2027**, The Marq embodies Edala Development's vision of creating developments that seamlessly blend luxury, functionality, and lasting value. It is more than a residence; it is a destination where exceptional design, premium hospitality, and smart investment come together.





THE COURTYARD COMEBACK

Why Modern African Homes Are Looking Inward Again

By Ameh Destiny

"The future of African luxury homes may not lie in importing new ideas, but in rediscovering one of our oldest ones."

There is something quietly changing about the way architects are designing homes. For years, modern residential architecture seemed obsessed with looking outward. Expansive glass walls, oversized windows and open-plan layouts became symbols of luxury. The larger the view, the more desirable the home appeared.

Today, however, a different philosophy is emerging. Instead of designing homes that constantly reach outward, architects are beginning to design homes that embrace what lies within.

At the heart of this movement is one architectural feature that has existed for centuries but is now enjoying renewed appreciation: **the courtyard.**

Once considered a traditional feature associated with family compounds and historic homes, courtyards are making a remarkable return in contemporary architecture. From luxury villas in Lagos and Nairobi to boutique hotels in Marrakech and modern residences in Kigali, architects are rediscovering the beauty of creating homes around open, green spaces.

This is not simply a nostalgic return to the past. It is a thoughtful response to some of the biggest questions facing architecture today.

How can homes remain naturally cool?

How can cities become greener?

How can houses improve mental

well-being?

And perhaps most importantly: How can architecture make people feel more connected to nature without sacrificing modern comfort?

Surprisingly, the answer may have been sitting quietly in African architecture all along.

More Than an Open Space

A courtyard is often misunderstood.

Many people confuse it with a veranda or a backyard, but they serve very different purposes.

A veranda usually extends along the edge of a house. It acts as a shaded transition between the indoors and the outdoors.

A courtyard, however, becomes part of the home's very identity. It is an open-air space enclosed by the building itself, often surrounded by living rooms, bedrooms or corridors. Rather than being an "outside" space, it becomes another room—only without a roof.

In many traditional African homes, the courtyard was where life happened.

Children played there.

Families gathered there.

Meals were shared there.

Stories were told there.

Celebrations, conversations and quiet evenings all unfolded around this central space.

Far from being an empty void, the courtyard became the emotional heart of the home.

"The best courtyards do not separate people from nature—they bring nature into everyday life."

Africa Understood This Long Before It Became Fashionable Today, architects speak of

sustainability.
They discuss passive cooling.
They promote biophilic design.
They advocate natural ventilation.
Yet long before these became popular design concepts, many African communities had already mastered them.
Across Northern Nigeria, traditional Hausa compounds were organised around generous courtyards that allowed air to circulate naturally while creating privacy for family life.
In Morocco, riads—homes built around lush internal gardens—provided cool retreats from the intense desert climate.
Along the Swahili Coast, open internal courtyards moderated heat while encouraging natural airflow through surrounding rooms. These buildings were not designed with modern sustainability certifications in mind. They were designed with common sense. Architecture responded directly to climate, culture and daily living.

Perhaps this is why renowned architect Glenn Murcutt once observed:
"Touch the earth lightly."

Although speaking broadly about architecture, his philosophy reflects an idea that African builders have long understood: buildings should work with nature, not against it.

The Wellness Revolution Is Bringing Courtyards Back

The COVID-19 pandemic changed how many people viewed their homes. Suddenly, houses became offices. Schools. Gyms. Places of refuge.
People began paying closer attention to how their homes affected their emotional and mental health.
As a result, wellness has become one of architecture's fastest-growing priorities. Today's homeowners increasingly ask questions such as:
Does my home receive enough daylight?
Can I spend time outdoors without leaving the house?

Is there somewhere peaceful to read or reflect?
Can my children safely play outside?
The courtyard answers many of these questions naturally.
Instead of separating indoor and outdoor living, it gently blends them together. Researchers have consistently shown that access to natural light, vegetation and outdoor spaces can positively influence mood, reduce stress and improve overall well-being.
Perhaps luxury is no longer defined only by imported marble or oversized chandeliers. Perhaps true luxury is waking up to birdsong, filtered sunlight and the quiet presence of a garden just a few steps away.

"Luxury is slowly shifting from what impresses visitors to what restores the people who live there."

Designing With Nature, Not Around It.

One of the biggest trends in architecture today is biophilic design.
The phrase may sound technical, but the idea is beautifully simple.
People feel better when they remain connected to nature.
Rather than treating plants, water and sunlight as decorative additions, biophilic design makes them central to the experience of a building.
Courtyards achieve this almost effortlessly. A single tree planted in a courtyard can become the visual anchor of an entire house. A shallow reflecting pool can cool surrounding spaces while introducing gentle movement.
Climbing plants soften concrete walls. Birds and butterflies return.
The home begins to breathe.

As architect Frank Lloyd Wright famously said:
"Study nature, love nature, stay close to nature. It will never fail you."

Although spoken decades ago, those words feel increasingly relevant in today's cities.

A Natural Solution to a Warming Climate

Across Africa, temperatures are rising, and



energy costs continue to increase. This has encouraged architects to revisit passive cooling strategies. Unlike fully enclosed homes that depend heavily on air conditioning, courtyard houses naturally encourage cross ventilation. Across Africa, temperatures are rising, and energy costs continue to increase. This has encouraged architects to revisit passive cooling strategies. Unlike fully enclosed homes that depend heavily on air conditioning, courtyard houses naturally encourage cross ventilation. Warm air rises. Cool air moves through surrounding rooms. Shade from trees reduces heat gain. The result is a home that often feels noticeably cooler without relying entirely on mechanical systems. For countries experiencing hotter weather, this approach offers both environmental and economic advantages. Sometimes, the smartest technology is not technology at all. It is thoughtful design.

Privacy Without Isolation.

Modern cities are becoming denser. Houses sit closer together. Apartment buildings overlook neighbouring properties.

Finding privacy can be difficult. Courtyards offer an elegant solution.



Finding privacy can be difficult. Courtyards offer an elegant solution. Instead of exposing family life to the street, they create private outdoor rooms hidden within the architecture itself. Residents can enjoy sunlight, fresh air and gardens without sacrificing security or intimacy. This is one reason luxury architects increasingly favour inward-looking homes. Privacy has become one of the most valuable forms of luxury.

"The most exclusive view is sometimes the one that belongs only to you."

Courtyards and Contemporary Luxury

Walk through many of today's award-winning homes, boutique hotels and eco-resorts and a pattern quickly emerges. Internal gardens. Open-air lounges.



Reflecting pools.
Central courtyards.
Far from appearing old-fashioned, courtyards now symbolize thoughtful, timeless design.
Luxury developers appreciate them because they create memorable experiences.
Imagine arriving at a home where, instead of walking directly into a living room, you first pass through a peaceful courtyard filled with native trees, natural stone and soft light.
That journey changes how the entire house feels.
Architecture becomes emotional.
Not simply functional.

The Courtyard as a Social Space

Beyond beauty and climate, courtyards encourage something increasingly rare.

.Human connection
Families naturally gather there.
Children play safely.
Friends linger after meals.
Neighbours are welcomed.
In an era where screens compete for attention and schedules become increasingly busy, spaces that encourage conversation may be more valuable than ever.
Architecture cannot create relationships.
But it can create places where relationships flourish.

Rediscovering an African Idea

Perhaps the most exciting aspect of the courtyard's return is what it represents.
Rather than borrowing every design trend from abroad, African architects are increasingly recognising the value of local knowledge.

The continent's traditional architecture contains generations of wisdom about climate, materials and community.
Rediscovering those ideas does not mean rejecting innovation.

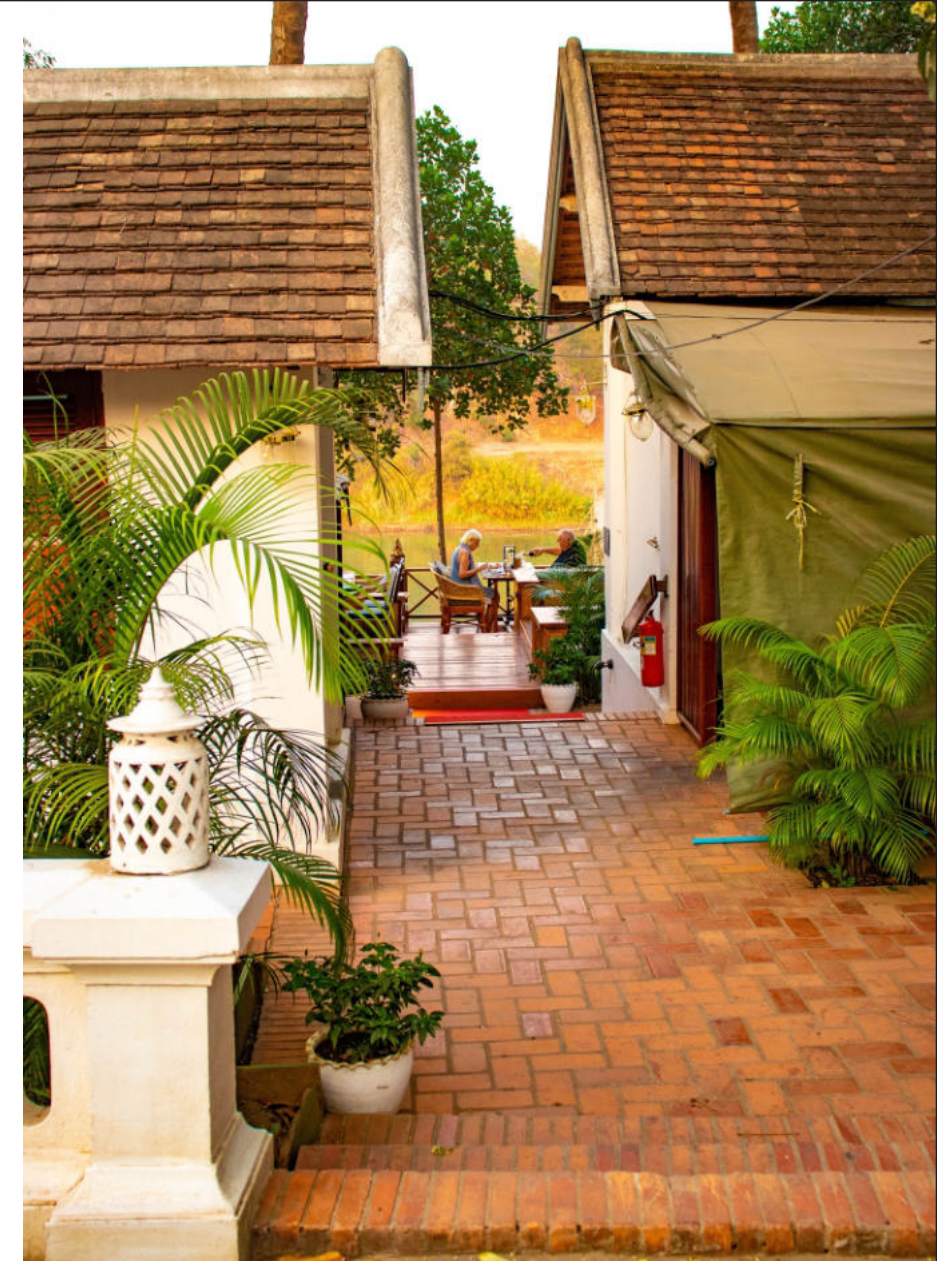
It means allowing tradition and technology to work together.
The courtyard reminds us that progress is not always about inventing something new.



Sometimes, progress begins by seeing familiar ideas with fresh eyes.

Conclusion: Looking Inward to Move Forward

Architecture is constantly evolving.
Materials change.
Technologies improve.
Cities expand.
But some ideas remain timeless because they respond to something deeply human.
The courtyard is one of those ideas.
It cools homes naturally.
It welcomes sunlight without sacrificing privacy.
It strengthens the connection between people and nature.
It creates places where memories are made.
As architects search for more sustainable, healthier and emotionally meaningful ways to design the homes of tomorrow, they may discover that one of Africa's oldest architectural traditions still has much to teach the modern world.
Perhaps the future of luxury living does not begin with building bigger.
Perhaps it begins with building around what matters most.
And sometimes, that starts with an open sky at the centre of a home.





The Rise of Biophilic Design in African Homes and Workspaces

By Charis Raji

There is a quiet shift happening in how people across Africa experience the spaces they live and work in. It is visible in office buildings that no longer feel sealed off from daylight. In apartments, balconies are becoming essential rather than decorative. In workspaces where plants, airflow, and natural materials are no longer aesthetic choices but functional ones.

This shift has a name: biophilic design.

At its core, biophilic design is about keeping people connected to nature inside the built environment. It prioritizes natural light, ventilation, greenery, water, and materials that feel alive rather than synthetic. In homes and workplaces, this translates into spaces that are cooler, calmer, and often more efficient to operate.

Across African cities, this approach is beginning to move from niche architecture discussions into mainstream residential and commercial development.

Biophilic design is not defined by decoration. In homes, it appears in courtyards that bring light and airflow into dense urban plots, in shaded verandas that extend living space outdoors, and in layouts that prioritize cross-ventilation over sealed, air-conditioned rooms.

In workplaces, it shows up in open atriums, planted interiors, shaded terraces, and large windows that reduce dependence on artificial lighting during the day.

Increasingly, it also includes materials chosen for thermal comfort, not just appearance.

While the term is relatively new in African construction, many of its principles are familiar. Older residential compounds across West and East Africa already used shade, vegetation, and airflow as core design tools long before they were given a formal label.

What is changing today is scale and intent.

These ideas are now being applied to high-rise offices, commercial developments, and planned residential estates.

From Climate Response to Design Strategy

Africa's interest in biophilic design is closely tied to climate and cost. In many cities, buildings depend heavily on mechanical cooling for comfort, which increases energy demand and operating expenses. At the same time, urban populations are growing rapidly, increasing pressure to build faster and at higher density.

Biophilic design offers a different approach: reduce the need for mechanical systems by improving how buildings naturally behave. Better shading reduces heat gain. Natural ventilation reduces reliance on air conditioning. Daylight reduces electricity use. Green elements can improve microclimates around buildings, especially in dense urban areas.

The result is not only environmental benefit, but economic logic.

South Africa: Early Adoption in Residential and Commercial Space

Some of the clearest expressions of biophilic design in Africa are emerging in South Africa, particularly in Cape Town and Johannesburg, where developers have begun integrating vegetation, water systems, and natural ventilation strategies into both residential and mixed-use buildings.

One notable example was The Fynbos in Cape Town, a mixed-use development that was planned to integrate extensive indigenous planting directly into its façade and terraces. Instead of treating greenery as landscaping added after construction, vegetation was part of the building's structure and identity.

Projects like that reflect a broader trend in (South) African urban development: homes and offices designed not only for occupation, but for environmental interaction.

East Africa: Nature-Integrated Workspaces and Public Buildings

In East Africa, particularly Kenya and Rwanda, biophilic ideas are increasingly visible in new commercial and civic architecture. In Kigali, new developments frequently prioritize outdoor circulation spaces, landscaped courtyards, and building forms that respond to the city's hilly terrain. Offices and hotels often incorporate open-air transition zones rather than fully enclosed internal corridors.

In Nairobi, commercial buildings are increasingly experimenting with green roofs, shaded communal terraces, and daylight-driven floorplates that reduce reliance on artificial lighting.

A key example of earlier influence in the region remains the Eastgate Centre in Harare, Zimbabwe. Although built before “biophilic design” became common terminology, its ventilation system (modelled on termite mounds) demonstrated how buildings can regulate temperature through passive environmental design rather than mechanical cooling.

Nigeria: Rapid Growth, Uneven Adoption

In Nigeria, the shift toward biophilic principles is happening, but unevenly.

High-end residential estates, new commercial towers, and mixed-use developments increasingly feature elements such as glass façades for daylight access, landscaped setbacks, indoor greenery, and improved ventilation strategies. Some newer office buildings are also incorporating energy-efficiency measures that overlap with biophilic thinking, even if they are not explicitly labelled as such.

However, many urban buildings still prioritize density and enclosure over environmental integration. As a result, there is a growing contrast between older

construction models and newer developments attempting to balance comfort, cost, and climate.

This tension is particularly visible in some cities, where high land values and rapid development often push design toward maximum buildable space rather than environmental quality.

Yet the direction is clear: developers are beginning to recognize that buildings that feel better to inhabit also tend to perform better economically.

Biophilic design is often framed as a wellness trend, but in African cities, it is increasingly becoming a performance strategy. Buildings that reduce heat gain, improve airflow, and maximize daylight can lower energy costs. Spaces that feel more comfortable can improve productivity and increase tenant satisfaction. Residential environments that incorporate natural systems can improve quality of life in dense urban conditions.

As African cities continue to grow, these factors are becoming less optional and more structural.

The Future of African Homes and Workspaces

The rise of biophilic design in Africa is not about importing a global aesthetic. It is about reworking familiar ideas for contemporary urban pressures.

In many ways, the most forward-looking buildings on the continent are rediscovering older logic: that architecture performs best when it works with climate rather than against it.

As more homes and workplaces adopt these principles, the distinction between nature and building may become less rigid, and the experience of African cities may begin to feel noticeably different because of it.



The Wall Is Not Empty: African Art, Nigerian Homes, and their necessary presence

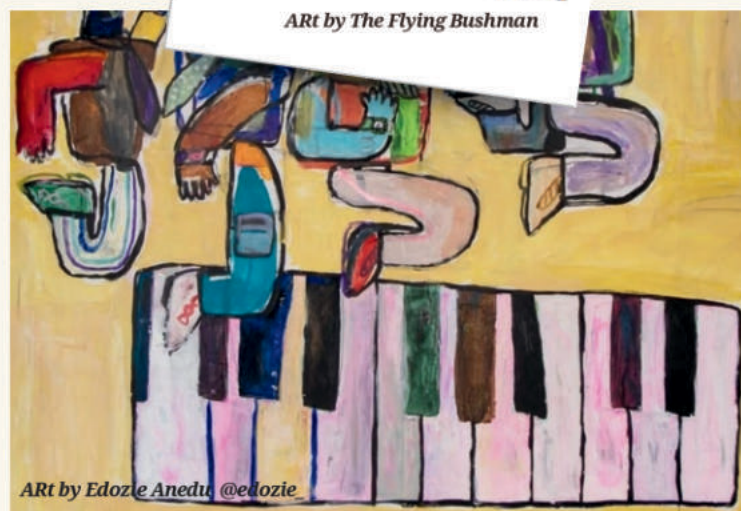
Article by Rei Obaigbo CIPS, GREEN, PSA, SRS, ABR®, ACIM, arpa.

Every property I walk through gives itself away in the first ten seconds. Not through the fixtures or the floor plan, through the walls. A blank wall in a Lagos property is not neutral. It is a missed statement. The room tells you what the owner values. Nigerian homes are catching up to what collectors elsewhere have known for two decades: African art is not decoration. It is heritage, equity, and design language, compressed into a single object you can hang on a wall.

So why do Nigerian interiors need art and not just furniture? Well designed homes are built around materials that age with dignity, clay brick, reclaimed wood, locally fired tile. Art belongs in that same category.



Art by The Flying Bushman



Art by Edozie Anedu @edozie

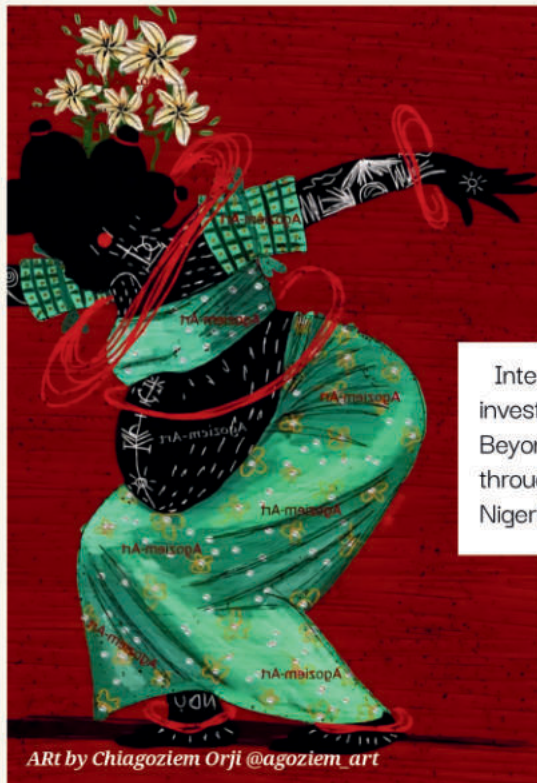
A painting rooted in Yoruba mythology or Nsibidi script does something imported prints cannot, it locates the house and its owner, in a specific place and a specific history.

Original paintings with texture, layered pigment, and hand-built surfaces hold their presence and fill the room, giving it presence, and distinction.

Interior designers working across Nigeria are specifying investment in original African art for exactly this reason.

Beyond this, there is a cultural and identity repair happening through the presence and appreciation of African art in Nigerian homes.

For decades, the aspirational Nigerian interior borrowed its aesthetic wholesale from Europe or America. That is shifting. African spaces are being built and styled to say something true about where they are, and contemporary Nigerian painting is the fastest way to make that statement without gutting a budget on architecture.



Art by Chiagoziem Orji @agoziem_art

We can't explore all the artists to adorn your walls with in one article, you can however explore art galleries around Nigeria and attend art events that are curated by reputable organizers. Here are three painters worth knowing right now.

Artist Arinze Stanley, now Stanley works in graphite and charcoal to produce hyperrealist portraits so precisely, they are frequently mistaken for photographs. His subjects carry the weight of Nigerian daily life and interior emotion rather than posed formality. For a home, his work reads as intimate and confrontational at once, the kind of piece that anchors a room and stops conversation rather than fading into the background.

Artist Tunji Adeniyi-Jones, Born to Nigerian heritage and trained between Glasgow and London, Adeniyi-Jones' works explores themes of cultural hybridity, mythology, and identity. His figures are fluid, saturated in color, and drawn from a visual language that merges Yoruba spiritual imagery with contemporary abstraction. His institutional trajectory, gallery representation and museum level placement, is exactly the kind of career signal that collectors watch before prices climb out of reach.

Artist Edozie Anedu, He is a self-taught, Benin City raised painter whose practice fuses, the human condition, socio political ideologies, and pop culture imagery. He is known for merging mechanical and human forms to talk about liberation and altered reality in an African context. His work is younger, rawer, and priced at a level where a first-time collector can still enter without needing an advisor.

Each of these three is doing something distinct: Stanley with technical precision, Adeniyi Jones with mythological reinterpretation, Anedu with unfiltered social commentary. The three artists above are not the only ones worth watching, but they represent three legitimate entry points into a market that is only going to get more expensive to enter. Others worth mentioning, and some of my personal favorite artists you should definitely look up like Chiagoziem Orji, with delicious, afro-reflective art, Aliu Olatunji with more abstract art pieces, Ademola Ojo, with facial tribal aesthetic features, the Flying bushman with surrealistic and realistic blend that celebrates melanated features, just to name a few.



Art by Arinze Stanley @arinze



Art by @tunjlaj



Art by @ademola_ojo1

Art is not a substitute for a diversified portfolio, and no painting should be bought purely as a financial instrument. That said, the market data on Nigerian and broader African contemporary art has been unambiguous over the last several years: pieces by Nigerian connected painters have moved from regional auction houses into major international sales, and price appreciation for early acquisitions by artists who later gained institutional recognition has outperformed most traditional decorative purchases by a wide margin.

The practical guidance for a buyer; Buy from artists with documented gallery representation or exhibition history, not just social media following. Get a certificate of authenticity and provenance documentation at time of purchase, this affects resale value more than almost anything else. Original works and limited, numbered prints hold value differently. Know which one you are buying. Track institutional attention. Museum shows, biennale inclusion, and gallery moves are leading indicators of future price movement. Treat early career acquisitions as long horizon holds. The appreciation curve for African contemporary art has historically taken years, not months.

A Nigerian home finished with a blank wall is an unfinished argument. Original art by Nigerian and African painters completes it, culturally, aesthetically, and in many cases, financially.



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15 Unique Architecture Buildings In Africa

By Charis Raji

Stand on Marina in Lagos, walk through the mud-brick streets of Djenné, or look up at the newest towers rising above Cairo, and a pattern begins to emerge: Africa's most compelling architecture is no longer trying to imitate anywhere else.

Across the continent, architects, engineers, and city builders are rethinking how buildings respond to climate, culture, rapid urbanisation, and local materials. Some are drawing lessons from centuries-old construction traditions. Others are experimenting with cutting-edge engineering, adaptive reuse, and sustainable design. Together, they are producing projects that challenge long-held assumptions about what African architecture

looks like and what it can achieve.

For Nigerians watching Lagos expand vertically, Eko Atlantic emerge from the Atlantic Ocean, and new cities take shape around the country's major urban centres, these projects offer more than visual inspiration. They provide practical examples of how design can respond to heat, density, infrastructure pressures, and cultural identity at a time when Africa is experiencing one of the fastest urban transitions in human history.

From historic mud-brick monuments and climate-responsive civic buildings to record-breaking skyscrapers and ambitious urban developments, here are fifteen architectural landmarks helping define Africa's built environment.



1. Great Mosque of Djenné, Mali

Long before sustainability became an architectural buzzword, the people of Djenné had already mastered it. The Great Mosque of Djenné, widely regarded as the world's largest earthen building, has stood at the centre of Malian life for generations.

It's constructed from sun-dried mud bricks and coated with mud plaster, and relies on an annual community replastering festival to withstand the rainy season. What makes the mosque remarkable is not merely its age or scale, but the fact that its maintenance is embedded in civic life. The building survives because the community actively participates in its preservation. In an era of expensive imported materials and energy-intensive construction, Djenné remains one of the clearest demonstrations that architecture can be simultaneously local, sustainable, and monumental.



2. Old Secretariat, Lagos, Nigeria

Few buildings tell the story of climate-responsive architecture in Nigeria as effectively as the Old Secretariat on Marina. Built during the colonial era, its deep verandas, generous arcades, and overhanging rooflines were designed to manage tropical heat long before air conditioning became commonplace.

Today, as Lagos grapples with rising temperatures and soaring energy costs, the building feels surprisingly contemporary. It serves as a reminder that some of the most effective solutions to climate challenges already exist within Nigeria's architectural history.



3. Eastgate Centre, Harare, Zimbabwe

The Eastgate Centre has become one of the most studied buildings in the world because it proved that commercial architecture does not need to depend on energy-hungry cooling systems.

Inspired by the way termite mounds regulate temperature, architect Mick Pearce and engineering firm Arup designed a ventilation system that dramatically reduced energy consumption while maintaining occupant comfort.

More than three decades after its completion, the building remains one of Africa's most

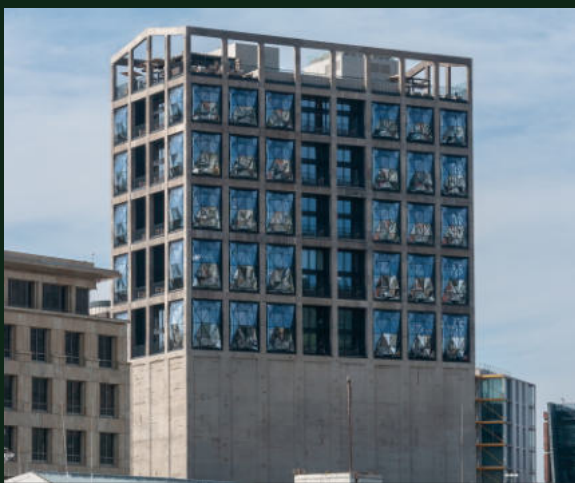
influential examples of biomimicry. For rapidly growing cities such as Lagos, Abuja, and Port Harcourt, it demonstrates how design can reduce operational costs while improving sustainability.



4. Hikma Religious and Secular Complex, Dandaji, Niger

Designed by Mariam Kamara and Yasaman Esmaili, the Hikma Complex challenges the assumption that modern architecture must rely on imported materials and international design languages. The project transformed a deteriorating mosque into a library and community learning centre while adding a new mosque built from compressed earth blocks sourced locally.

By combining education, religion, and community life within a single architectural vision, Hikma offers a model for development that is culturally rooted, environmentally responsive, and socially useful.



5. Zeitz Museum of Contemporary Art Africa, Cape Town, South Africa

Many cities demolish obsolete industrial infrastructure. Cape Town chose a different path. The Zeitz MOCAA transformed a disused grain silo complex into the largest museum dedicated to contemporary African art and its diaspora. Rather than erase the site's industrial past, designers carved galleries and a dramatic cathedral-like atrium directly from the original concrete silos.

The result is one of the continent's finest examples of adaptive reuse: a project that preserves history while creating entirely new cultural value.



6. Kigali Convention Centre, Rwanda

The Kigali Convention Centre has become synonymous with Rwanda's transformation over the past two decades. Inspired by the traditional royal palace, its illuminated dome has evolved into a symbol of Kigali's ambition to position itself as a regional hub for diplomacy, business, and innovation.

The building demonstrates how contemporary architecture can draw from cultural heritage without becoming nostalgic or imitative.



7. Bibliotheca Alexandrina, Egypt

Built near the site of the legendary ancient Library of Alexandria, the Bibliotheca Alexandrina is both a cultural institution and a statement about Africa's intellectual future.

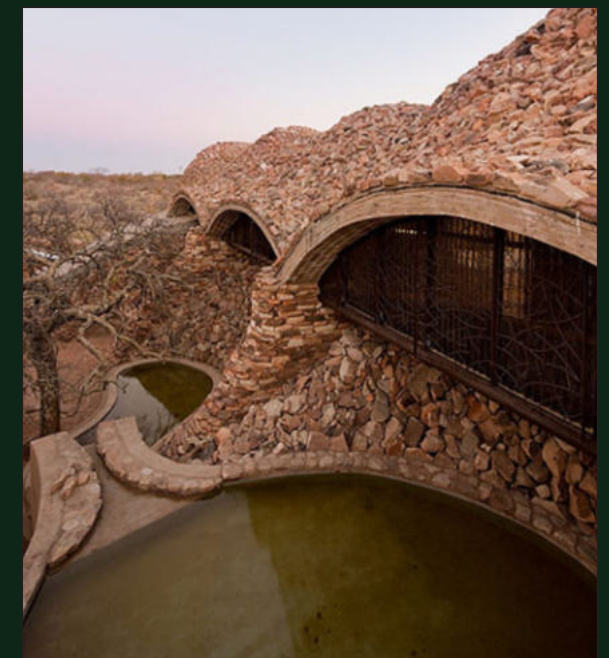
Its massive tilted disc appears to rise from the Mediterranean coast like a sun emerging from the sea, while its granite walls are inscribed with scripts from across the world's languages. Few modern African buildings communicate the continent's historical relationship with knowledge and learning so powerfully.



8. British Council, Lagos, Nigeria

Security architecture often creates barriers between institutions and the public. The British Council's Lagos headquarters attempted the opposite.

Instead of retreating behind solid perimeter walls, the building uses landscape design, transparency, and carefully managed boundaries to remain visually connected to the surrounding city. In a region where security concerns frequently dominate public architecture, it offers an alternative approach.



9. Mapungubwe Interpretation Centre, South Africa

Designed by Peter Rich, the Mapungubwe Interpretation Centre demonstrates how traditional construction techniques can produce architecture of extraordinary sophistication. Using locally made earth tiles and labour-intensive vaulting systems, the building celebrates indigenous knowledge while creating a contemporary visitor experience.

It has become an influential example of how architecture can support heritage conservation and local economic development simultaneously.



10. Eko Atlantic, Nigeria

Part city, part engineering experiment, Eko Atlantic represents one of the most ambitious urban development projects in Africa. Constructed on land reclaimed from the Atlantic Ocean and protected by the Great Wall of Lagos, it raises important questions about resilience, urban growth, and the future of coastal cities.

Whether viewed as a triumph of engineering or a controversial vision of urban expansion, it has already become one of the continent's most closely watched development projects.



11. Iconic Tower, Egypt

Rising above Egypt's New Administrative Capital, the Iconic Tower currently holds the title of Africa's tallest building. Yet its significance lies less in height than in what it represents: the growing willingness of African governments to pursue large-scale urban projects intended to reshape economic geography. Like Brasília in Brazil or Canberra in Australia, Egypt's new capital seeks to create a new administrative centre through planning and architecture.



12. Djamaa El-Djazair, Algeria

Completed in 2019, the Great Mosque of Algiers combines religious architecture with museums, research facilities, public spaces, and one of the tallest minarets in the world. It reflects a broader trend in contemporary civic architecture where major public buildings are expected to perform multiple cultural functions rather than serve a single purpose.



13. Britam Tower, Kenya

Nairobi's skyline has changed dramatically over the past decade, and Britam Tower has become one of its defining landmarks. The tower's distinctive form and incorporation of renewable energy technologies signal a shift toward more environmentally conscious commercial development. It is both a corporate headquarters and a statement about East Africa's economic ambitions.



14. Lekki Conservation Centre Canopy Walkway, Nigeria

Not every important piece of architecture is a building. Suspended above a protected wetland ecosystem, the Lekki Conservation Centre's canopy walkway offers a different way of thinking about infrastructure. Instead of replacing nature, it allows people to experience it. In a city often defined by rapid development and land reclamation, the walkway demonstrates how design can support conservation rather than compete with it.



15. NECOM House, Lagos, Nigeria

Before the glass towers of Victoria Island and the rise of Eko Atlantic, NECOM House was Lagos's defining skyscraper. For years it symbolised Nigeria's telecommunications ambitions and economic confidence.

Although it no longer dominates Africa's skyline, its significance endures. It marked the moment Lagos announced itself as a modern commercial city and remains one of the most recognisable landmarks on Lagos Island.

Nigeria is expected to add millions of urban residents over the coming decades, creating enormous demand for housing, infrastructure, public institutions, and commercial space. The question facing architects, planners, and policymakers is not whether Nigeria will build, but what kind of cities it will build.

The projects on this list suggest that the most successful architecture rarely begins with appearance. Instead, it begins with understanding place. Whether through the mud construction of Djenné, the passive cooling of Eastgate, the community-centred design of Hikma, or the adaptive reuse of Zeitz MOCAA, these buildings demonstrate that architecture becomes most powerful when it responds to local realities.

As Nigeria's skyline continues to evolve, the most valuable lessons may come not from copying Dubai, London, or Singapore, but from studying the ideas already emerging across Africa itself.

INSIDE AFRICA'S MOST INSPIRING BOUTIQUE HOTELS

Five Designs Every Homeowner Can Learn From

By Ameh Destiny

"The best boutique hotels don't simply give guests a place to sleep. They create places people remember long after they have checked out."

Think about the most memorable place you've ever visited. Perhaps it wasn't the biggest building. It may not have been the most luxurious either. Yet something about it stayed with you. It could have been the warm glow of natural light filtering through handcrafted wooden screens, the quiet courtyard where birdsong replaced the sound of traffic, or the effortless way the indoors flowed into the landscape outside.

That feeling is no accident. It is the result of thoughtful design. Across Africa, a growing collection of boutique hotels is quietly redefining what exceptional architecture looks like. Rather than relying on grand chandeliers, towering skyscrapers or excessive ornamentation, these hotels celebrate something more enduring: local craftsmanship, climate-responsive architecture, natural materials and spaces designed around human experience. Increasingly, architects and homeowners are paying attention.

Many of the design ideas now appearing in contemporary luxury homes—wellness courtyards, indoor gardens, textured walls, handcrafted finishes and seamless indoor-outdoor living—have long been perfected within Africa's finest boutique hospitality spaces.

As architect Peter Zumthor once observed, "Architecture is not about form. It is about many other things... light, atmosphere, use, structure and the emotional experience of space."

That philosophy is perhaps best understood through Africa's boutique hotels. Here are five remarkable properties proving that luxury is no longer defined by excess, but by thoughtful design.

1. Bisate Lodge, Rwanda Where Architecture Becomes Part of the Landscape

Nestled near Volcanoes National Park, Bisate Lodge has become one of Africa's most celebrated examples of environmentally responsive architecture.

Rather than dominating its surroundings, the lodge appears to emerge naturally from the hillside. Its distinctive dome-shaped villas were inspired by traditional Rwandan royal residences while being reinterpreted through contemporary design.

Large windows frame uninterrupted views of the volcanic landscape, while locally sourced materials create interiors that feel warm, authentic and timeless.

Perhaps the greatest lesson Bisate offers homeowners is this:

A building should respond to its environment instead of competing with it.

Rather than clearing nature away, the architects allowed the landscape to influence every design decision—from orientation and roof forms to material selection and spatial

layout.

As one visiting architect remarked, "The building never feels like the destination. The landscape remains the star."

That simple principle has become one of modern architecture's most valuable lessons.



2. Singita Lebombo Lodge, South Africa Transparency Without Losing Warmth

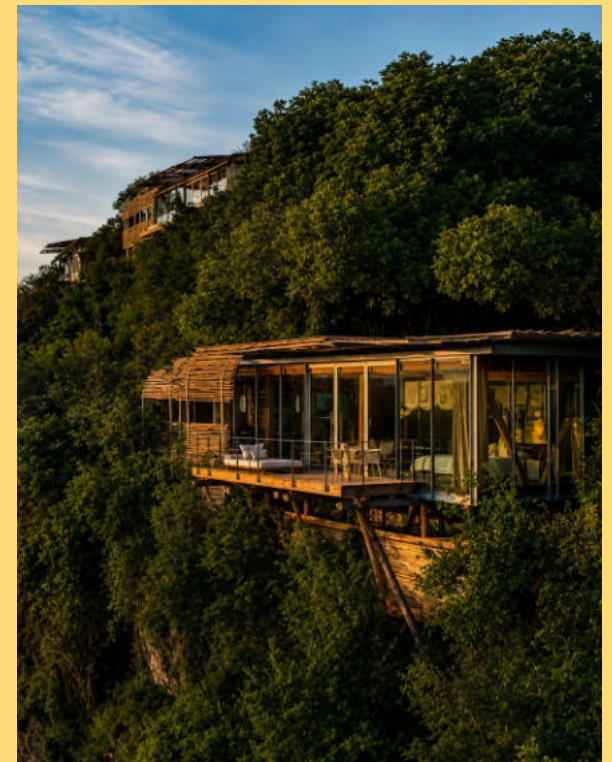
Many luxury homes today embrace expansive glass façades, yet too often they sacrifice comfort for aesthetics. Singita Lebombo Lodge demonstrates a different approach.

Perched dramatically above the N'wanetsi River in South Africa's Kruger National Park, the lodge combines generous glazing with carefully considered shading, elevated structures and natural ventilation. The result is openness without discomfort. Guests experience uninterrupted views while remaining connected to changing light, seasonal breezes and surrounding wildlife.

Architects increasingly describe this philosophy as designing with nature rather than against it.

One guest captured the experience beautifully:

"You don't feel like you're looking at nature—you feel like you're living inside it."
For homeowners, the lesson is clear: Glass should never be used simply because it appears modern. It should serve comfort, climate and lifestyle.



3. Zuri Zanzibar, Tanzania Luxury Begins With Simplicity

Many people mistakenly associate luxury with complexity. Zuri Zanzibar quietly proves the opposite. Instead of elaborate decoration, its architecture embraces restrained elegance. Thatched roofs, timber detailing, handcrafted furniture, woven textures and abundant natural ventilation create spaces that feel calm rather than overwhelming. Every room invites daylight. Every pathway encourages slow movement. Every garden becomes an extension of the living space. Interior designer Ilse Crawford once wrote, "The ultimate luxury is feeling comfortable." Few buildings embody that idea more naturally than Zuri Zanzibar.

Homeowners can learn an important lesson here:

Comfort often leaves a deeper impression than extravagance.



4. Miavana by Time + Tide, Madagascar Blurring the Boundary Between Indoors and Outdoors

One defining characteristic of many exceptional boutique hotels is the absence of rigid boundaries.

At Miavana, architecture flows almost effortlessly into the surrounding coastline. Sliding walls open entire living spaces to ocean views.

Outdoor lounges become living rooms.

Private courtyards function as extensions of bedrooms.

Swimming pools appear to merge with the sea beyond.

This approach reflects one of today's strongest architectural movements: biophilic design—creating buildings that strengthen people's connection with nature.

Environmental psychologist Stephen Kellert argued,

"People thrive when buildings reconnect them with the natural world."

That philosophy increasingly shapes not only hotels but also contemporary residential design across Africa.



5. Villa Monticello, Ghana Luxury Is Personal

Unlike very large luxury hotels, Villa Monticello demonstrates the power of intimacy in design.

Located in Accra, this award-winning boutique hotel has built its reputation not through size but through attention to detail.

Every suite has its own character, with carefully selected artwork, handcrafted furnishings, warm lighting and a layout that creates a sense of privacy and comfort.

Rather than overwhelming guests with grandeur, the hotel focuses on creating spaces that feel calm, elegant and deeply personal. This reflects one of the most important shifts in luxury residential architecture today. Many homeowners are moving away from oversized spaces filled with unnecessary decoration. Instead, they are investing in homes that prioritise quality craftsmanship, thoughtful lighting, natural textures and carefully curated interiors.

As renowned interior designer Kelly Wearstler once said,

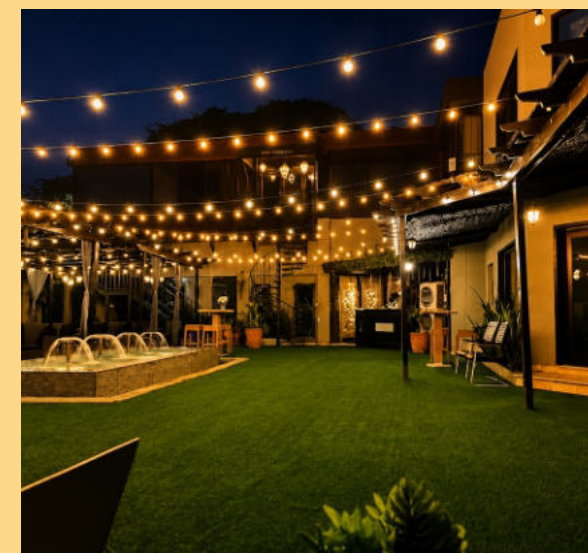
"Luxury is about creating an experience, not simply filling a space."

Villa Monticello quietly illustrates that

philosophy.

Its architecture reminds us that memorable homes are not necessarily the largest.

They are the ones designed with intention.



Beyond Beautiful Buildings

Although these five hotels differ in location, culture and architectural language, they share striking similarities.

They prioritise:

Natural light over excessive artificial lighting.

Local materials over imported finishes.

Landscape over hard paving.

Craftsmanship over mass production.

Human comfort over visual spectacle.

Perhaps most importantly, they remind us that memorable architecture begins with people, not buildings.

Every window exists for a reason.

Every courtyard encourages conversation.

Every shaded terrace invites pause.

Every carefully selected material contributes to atmosphere.

As architect Glenn Murcutt famously said, *"Touch the earth lightly."*

That philosophy resonates deeply across many of Africa's finest boutique hotels.

What Homeowners Can Learn

The influence of hospitality design is becoming increasingly visible in residential architecture across the continent.

Features once associated primarily with boutique hotels are now finding their way into contemporary homes, including:

private courtyards that improve ventilation and create peaceful retreats;
large openings that maximise daylight while maintaining comfort;

locally crafted furniture and finishes that celebrate regional identity;
landscaped outdoor living spaces that function as extensions of the home;
and thoughtful material choices that age gracefully over time.

Rather than chasing passing trends, these ideas focus on creating homes that feel welcoming, enduring and deeply connected to their surroundings.

A New Definition of Luxury

Luxury architecture is changing.

Across Africa, the most inspiring buildings are no longer those that shout the loudest.

Instead, they are the ones that listen—to climate, culture, craftsmanship and the people who inhabit them.

Boutique hotels have become some of the continent's most compelling classrooms for this new philosophy.

They remind us that truly exceptional design is rarely about excess.

It is about creating spaces that people remember—not because they were extravagant, but because they made them feel something.

And perhaps that is the greatest lesson architecture can offer: a beautiful building is not merely one that looks impressive. It is one that quietly improves the way people experience the world.



OWNERSHIP REIMAGINED

HOW AFRICA'S YOUNG PROFESSIONALS ARE
CHANGING THE PROPERTY DREAM

By Ameh Destiny



"The dream is still alive. It just looks different now."

For generations, the path to success across much of Africa followed a familiar script.

Graduate.

Get a job.

Buy land.

Build a house.

Raise a family.

That formula shaped the aspirations of millions. In many African societies, land ownership represented stability, achievement and wealth. A plot of land was not simply property; it was security, status and a legacy to pass on to future generations.

But something interesting is happening.

Across cities such as Lagos, Nairobi, Kigali, Accra and Johannesburg, a new generation is quietly redefining what ownership means.

Young professionals are still pursuing property ownership, but many are doing so differently from their parents.

Instead of saving for years to build a house on the outskirts of a city, some are choosing apartments closer to work.

Instead of prioritizing land first, others are investing in convenience, lifestyle and location.

Instead of asking, "How much land do I own?" they are increasingly asking, "How well does this property fit my life?"

The African property dream is evolving.

And developers, investors and urban planners are paying attention.

The Traditional Dream

For decades, owning land represented one of the safest investments available.

Unlike cars, electronics or many other assets, land typically appreciates over time.

Across Africa, stories abound of families who purchased plots decades ago only to see their value multiply dramatically. Land also offered flexibility.

Owners could:
build later
sell later

pass it on to children

use it as collateral

In many communities, land ownership became closely linked to identity and social standing.

As a result, the phrase:

"I bought land."

often carried more weight than:

"I bought an apartment."

But modern cities are changing the conversation.

The New Reality of Urban Life

Africa is urbanizing faster than any other continent.

Millions of young people are moving to cities in search of opportunities, education and careers. As cities grow, land close to economic centers becomes increasingly scarce and expensive.

This reality is forcing a new generation to rethink housing decisions.

Take Lagos.

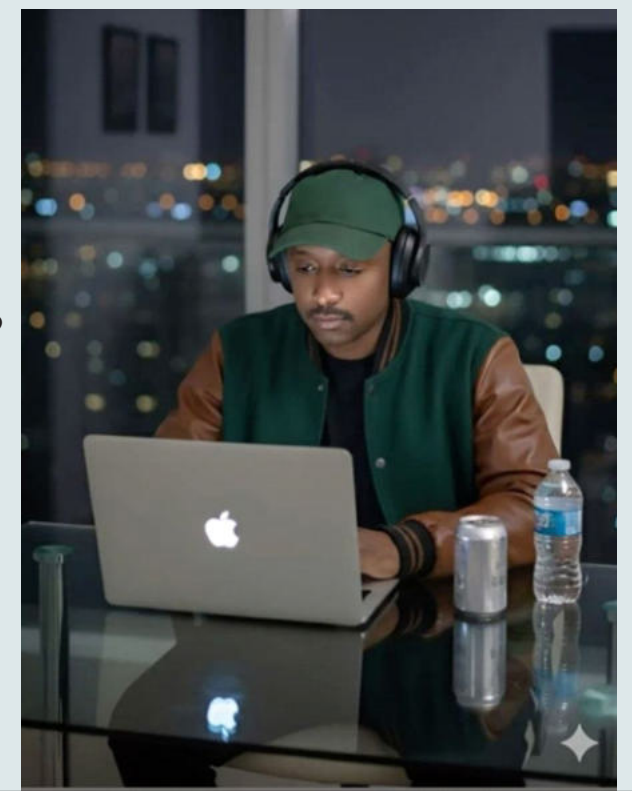
The city continues to attract thousands of new residents while housing supply struggles to keep pace. Rising rents and property prices have created affordability challenges even for working professionals.

The same pattern is visible across several African cities.

Young professionals are discovering that the traditional path to ownership is becoming more difficult.

Many face a difficult choice:

Should they purchase land far away from



urban opportunities?
Or should they invest in housing that supports their current lifestyle?
Increasingly, many are choosing the latter.

Why Apartments Are Winning

A 29-year-old marketing professional in Lagos recently described the dilemma many young Africans face:
"My parents keep telling me to buy land, but I spend most of my day in traffic. I'd rather live somewhere that gives me time back."
Similar sentiments are increasingly common among young professionals across major African cities. While previous generations often prioritized land ownership above all else, today's buyers are weighing convenience, flexibility and quality of life alongside long-term investment value.
A recent report from Kenya highlighted a growing trend among young professionals who are choosing apartments over land. Real estate experts point to lifestyle preferences, rental opportunities and proximity to amenities as major factors behind the shift. The reasons are practical.

Location Matters

For many young professionals, time has become one of the most valuable resources. Long commutes can affect:
productivity
family life
mental wellbeing
work opportunities
Living closer to employment centers often provides advantages that distant land ownership cannot immediately offer. An apartment in a well-connected neighborhood may allow someone to:
reduce commuting time
access better services
enjoy walkable amenities
maintain a healthier work-life balance
The value of convenience is becoming increasingly important.

Lifestyle Is Becoming Part of the Investment

For many first-time buyers, the conversation is no longer just about square meters. "I don't need the biggest house," says a young

tech entrepreneur in Lagos. "I need reliable power, good internet, security and a neighborhood where I can work, exercise and meet people."

That perspective reflects a broader shift in urban Africa, where housing is increasingly viewed as part of a lifestyle ecosystem rather than a standalone asset.

Previous generations often viewed property primarily as a financial asset.

Today's buyers often view property as both an asset and a lifestyle decision.

This explains the growing popularity of developments that include:

gyms
co-working spaces
rooftop lounges
security services
green areas
proximity to restaurants and shopping centers
Young professionals are increasingly interested in how a property supports daily life.

In other words:

The building itself matters.

The neighborhood matters.

The experience matters.

The Rise of Flexible Ownership

One of the most significant changes happening across Africa is the growing interest in alternative ownership models. Traditional mortgages remain difficult to access for many Africans.

According to reports, formal mortgage penetration remains extremely low across much of the continent, limiting access to conventional home financing.

As a result, developers and governments are exploring new approaches.

One example is rent-to-own housing, which allows residents to gradually build equity while making monthly payments. The model is gaining attention in countries such as Rwanda, Kenya and South Africa.

For many young professionals, ownership is no longer seen as a single event. Instead, it is becoming a journey.

Technology Is Changing the Search

Another major difference between today's buyers and previous generations is access to

information.

A generation ago, finding property often depended on personal networks and local agents.

Today, social media, property portals and digital marketing have transformed the process.

Potential buyers can compare:

prices
locations
floor plans
amenities
rental yields within minutes.

This transparency is making younger buyers more informed and more selective.

They are researching before buying.

Comparing before investing.

Questioning assumptions.

And that is changing the market.

The Rental Generation?

Perhaps the most surprising change is that many young professionals no longer view renting as failure.

"Growing up, renting felt like something you did until you could afford a house," explains a financial analyst in Accra. "Now I see it differently. Renting gives me flexibility while I build my investments."

Such views would have been unusual a generation ago. Today, they are becoming increasingly common among urban professionals balancing career growth, entrepreneurship and changing economic realities.

Some analysts argue that Africa may be entering an era where renting becomes more common among young urban professionals. Rapid urbanization, housing shortages and rising property costs are contributing to growing rental demand across major cities. But this does not necessarily mean young people have abandoned ownership. Rather, many are postponing ownership until they are financially ready.

Some are prioritizing:
career growth
entrepreneurship
mobility
investment diversification
before purchasing property.



Ownership remains a goal.
The timeline is simply changing.

A Different Definition of Success

Perhaps the most interesting aspect of this shift is how it reflects changing attitudes toward success

For previous generations, success was often represented by a standalone house on a large plot. Today, success can look different. It might be:
a well-designed apartment in a thriving neighborhood
a mixed-use development close to work
a property generating rental income
a flexible ownership arrangement
The symbols are evolving.
The aspiration remains.

What Developers Are Learning

Developers are already responding. Across Africa, new residential projects increasingly target:
young professionals
first-time buyers
urban renters
remote workers
Features that once seemed luxurious are becoming expected. These include:
high-speed internet
security
communal spaces
sustainable design
proximity to transport networks
Developers are beginning to recognize that younger buyers are purchasing more than square meters. They are purchasing experiences.

The Future of Ownership

Real estate professionals are beginning to notice an important pattern. Younger buyers are not necessarily less ambitious than their parents. In some cases, they may be even more intentional. They still want security, they still want assets, they still want wealth creation.

The difference is that they are increasingly unwilling to sacrifice today's quality of life entirely for tomorrow's investment. They want both.

The future of African housing is unlikely to be a choice between houses and apartments. Instead, it will involve a broader range of options.

Some people will continue to prioritize land. Others will choose apartments. Some will rent longer.

Others will embrace rent-to-own models.

What matters is that ownership itself is becoming more flexible and more personal.

The dream is not disappearing.

It is adapting.

Conclusion

The image of success in Africa is changing. For many young professionals, ownership is no longer defined solely by how much land they possess.

It is increasingly defined by how well a property supports the life they want to build.

A centrally located apartment.
A flexible ownership model.
A walkable neighborhood.
A home that balances work, wellbeing and opportunity.
These choices reflect a generation responding to new realities while still pursuing familiar ambitions. The African property dream remains powerful. But for a new generation, it is being reimagined. And in many ways, that may be exactly what the future requires.

As one young professional in Kigali put it:

"My parents dreamed of owning land. I dream of owning a life that works." And perhaps that simple shift explains why Africa's property story is entering a new chapter.





THE FUTURE OF **SMART CITIES** IN AFRICA

Opportunities and Challenges

By Charis Raji

For millions of Africans, urban life comes with a familiar set of frustrations: traffic that turns a ten-minute journey into an hour-long ordeal, unreliable power supply, overstretched public services, poor waste management, and neighbourhoods that have grown faster than the infrastructure meant to support them.

These are not simply inconveniences. They are the defining challenges of a continent urbanizing at one of the fastest rates in the world.

By 2050, more than 60% of Africa's population is expected to live in cities,

adding hundreds of millions of new urban residents within a single generation. The question facing governments, planners, and developers is no longer whether African cities will grow. It is whether they can grow intelligently.

That ambition lies at the heart of the smart city movement. Across the continent, governments and private investors are pouring billions of dollars into new urban developments and digital infrastructure projects designed to make cities more efficient, connected, and sustainable. Yet as Africa's smart city ambitions expand, so does an important question: what actually makes a city smart?

The term smart city often evokes images of futuristic skylines, autonomous vehicles, and gleaming skyscrapers. In reality, the smartest urban innovations are often the least visible.

A city becomes smart when technology improves how it functions. Traffic systems that adapt to congestion in real time. Digital platforms that allow residents to access government services without standing in queues. Utility networks that monitor consumption and detect faults automatically. Public transport systems that use data to improve efficiency and reduce travel times. Technology, in other words, is not the goal. It is a tool. The cities making the most meaningful progress are often those using digital systems to solve practical problems rather than simply building futuristic districts.

The Cities Leading Africa's Smart City Journey

Among Africa's urban centres, Kigali, Nairobi, and Cape Town are frequently cited as the continent's most convincing examples of smart-city development. Rwanda's capital has built a reputation for integrating digital governance into everyday life. Through platforms such as Irembo, residents can



access a wide range of public services online, reducing bureaucracy and improving efficiency

Smart metering systems, digital addressing initiatives, and technology-enabled waste management have further strengthened Kigali's reputation as one of Africa's most digitally connected cities.

Nairobi's progress has been driven by a different strength: innovation. As East Africa's technology hub, the city has become a testing ground for digital mobility solutions, fintech-enabled transport systems, and data-driven urban services.

The growth of Kenya's digital economy has given Nairobi an ecosystem capable of supporting smart-city initiatives beyond government programmes alone.

Cape Town offers yet another model. Rather than focusing primarily on new developments, the city has invested heavily in data-driven management of existing infrastructure, including utilities, energy systems, and municipal services. Its approach demonstrates that becoming smarter does not necessarily require building a new city from scratch.

Together, these cities suggest that successful smart-city development is less about creating entirely new urban centres and more about improving how existing cities operate.

Alongside these established cities, a wave of master-planned developments is attempting something more ambitious: building smart cities from the ground up.

Few regions in the world are experimenting with new-city development on the same scale as Africa.

- Nigeria's Alaro City and Eko Atlantic, Kenya's Konza Technopolis, and Egypt's New Administrative Capital represent some of the continent's most ambitious urban projects. Collectively, they are designed to

accommodate millions of residents while integrating digital infrastructure, modern transport systems, and advanced utility networks from the outset.

The appeal is obvious. Designing a city from scratch allows planners to avoid many of the constraints that hamper older urban centres. Roads, fibre-optic networks, drainage systems, power infrastructure, and zoning frameworks can all be planned as part of a single vision rather than layered onto an already congested environment.

- Egypt's New Administrative Capital is perhaps the most ambitious example. Located east of Cairo, the project is designed to accommodate millions of residents and serve as the country's new administrative hub. Nigeria's Eko Atlantic, meanwhile, is attempting to create an entirely new coastal business district on land reclaimed from the Atlantic Ocean. Alaro City, situated within the Lekki Free Zone, is positioning itself as an integrated industrial, commercial, and residential ecosystem. These projects represent some of Africa's boldest urban bets. Whether they become successful cities, however, remains a different question.



The Challenges Behind the Vision

The greatest challenge facing many smart-city projects is not technology. It is implementation. Across the continent, ambitious plans have often collided with familiar realities: financing gaps, infrastructure deficits, policy uncertainty, and affordability concerns.

Several highly publicized projects have struggled to move from vision to execution. Nigeria's Centenary City, once promoted as a transformational urban development outside Abuja, has experienced years of delays. Ghana's Hope City, initially conceived as a landmark technology district, similarly struggled to maintain momentum.

These examples highlight a recurring tension in smart-city development. Building advanced urban districts requires enormous capital investment, but the benefits must ultimately reach ordinary residents rather than remain concentrated among investors and high-income households.

Affordability remains a particularly sensitive issue. Critics of some large-scale developments argue that cities cannot be considered truly smart if they remain

inaccessible to the majority of citizens they are intended to serve.

There is also the challenge of digital inequality. In many African cities, residents continue to face inconsistent internet access, unreliable electricity supply, and limited access to digital services.

Under those conditions, sophisticated smart-city technologies risk serving

only a small portion of the population.

What Should Smart Urban Growth Look Like?

The most successful examples across Africa share a common characteristic: they solve specific problems before attempting to solve everything.

Kigali focused on digital government services. Nairobi leveraged its technology ecosystem to improve mobility and innovation. Cape Town invested in smarter infrastructure management. These initiatives may appear less dramatic than a brand-new skyline, but they have often delivered more measurable results.

The lesson for African policymakers is clear. Smart cities are not defined by architecture alone. They are defined by outcomes.

Residents care less about whether a city is branded "smart" than whether they can move through it efficiently, access services easily, and rely on the infrastructure around them. Africa's urban future will be shaped by both new developments and existing cities.

Master-planned projects such as Eko Atlantic, Alaro City, Konza Technopolis, and Egypt's New Administrative Capital will continue attracting attention and investment. Yet the continent's most important smart-city successes may emerge from less glamorous initiatives: digitized public services, smarter utility systems, better transport networks, and data-driven urban management.

As African cities continue to grow, the real measure of success will not be how futuristic they look. It will be whether technology helps make urban life more affordable, more efficient, and more resilient for the millions of people who call these cities home.





TOP 10 AFRICAN PROPTech STARTUPS TRANSFORMING REAL ESTATE

By Charis Raji

For decades, real estate across much of Africa has operated on a familiar formula: personal networks, paper documents, and a great deal of trust.

Finding a home often means calling an agent rather than opening an app. Determining what a property is worth can depend as much on local knowledge as on market data. Buying land frequently involves navigating layers of verification, uncertainty, and bureaucracy.

As Africa's cities expand and housing demand intensifies, that model is increasingly under pressure. A new generation of proptech startups is stepping into the gap. Some are making it easier to find and finance homes. Others are bringing transparency to property pricing, digitizing rental payments, or tackling long-standing problems around

ownership verification. Collectively, they are building the digital infrastructure that African real estate has often lacked.

Here are ten companies helping drive that transformation across the continent.



Nawy has emerged as one of North Africa's most influential property technology companies.

Founded in Cairo in 2019, the platform combines property discovery, brokerage services, financing tools, and developer partnerships in a single ecosystem. What sets Nawy apart is its focus on making

home ownership more accessible in a market where traditional mortgage penetration remains relatively low. Products such as fractional ownership and installment-based purchasing have helped broaden access to real estate investment for younger buyers. As Egypt's residential market continues to expand, Nawy has become an indicator for how proptech can scale in emerging economies.



2. Yakeey (Morocco)

Yakeey is attempting to solve one of real estate's oldest challenges: trust. The Casablanca-based company manages the entire property transaction journey, from listing and valuation to brokerage and financing. By bringing these functions together on one platform, Yakeey reduces the friction that often accompanies residential property transactions.

Its rapid growth reflects increasing demand for transparency and efficiency in Morocco's evolving housing market.



3. MeQasa (Ghana)

In Ghana, MeQasa has become one of the country's best-known digital property marketplaces. The platform connects buyers, renters, agents, and developers while providing market insights and advertising services. In a

sector where reliable information can be difficult to access, MeQasa has helped standardize how residential property is discovered and marketed online. Its success demonstrates how digital marketplaces can bring greater visibility to fragmented property markets.



4. Spleet (Nigeria)

Spleet was built around a challenge familiar to millions of Nigerians: annual rent payments.

In many Nigerian cities, tenants are expected to pay one or even two years of rent upfront. Spleet's model allows tenants to pay monthly while ensuring landlords receive their funds as expected.

The company has become one of the clearest examples of proptech addressing a uniquely local problem rather than importing solutions designed for other markets.



5. Estate Intel (Nigeria)

Unlike many proptech companies that focus on transactions, Estate Intel focuses on data.

The company has built one of Africa's most comprehensive real estate intelligence platforms, tracking property prices, occupancy trends, project pipelines, and market activity across multiple countries.

As institutional investors increasingly seek reliable information on African real estate, data platforms like Estate Intel are becoming essential market infrastructure.



6. BuyRentKenya (Kenya)

BuyRentKenya has become one of East Africa's leading online property platforms. Serving buyers, renters, and developers, the platform provides listings, market insights, and advertising services that help connect supply with demand in one of the continent's fastest-growing urban regions.

Its growth mirrors Nairobi's rise as a regional hub for both technology and real estate investment.



8. PayProp (South Africa)

PayProp represents one of Africa's most mature proptech success stories.

The platform automates rental payment processing and reconciliation for property managers, significantly reducing administrative overhead. Its expansion into international markets, including the UK, Canada, and the United States, demonstrates that solutions developed in Africa can compete globally.

PayProp's success also highlights an important reality: some of the most valuable proptech innovations are invisible to consumers.



9. DigsConnect (South Africa)

Student housing is becoming one of the most dynamic segments of African real estate.

DigsConnect has positioned itself at the centre of that trend by connecting students with accommodation providers across multiple markets.

As intra-African mobility and international study continue to grow, platforms focused on student housing are likely to become increasingly important.



10. HouseAfrica (Nigeria)

Land ownership remains one of the most sensitive and complex aspects of African real estate.

HouseAfrica is tackling that challenge through digital mapping, property verification, and blockchain-backed documentation systems designed to improve transparency and reduce disputes.

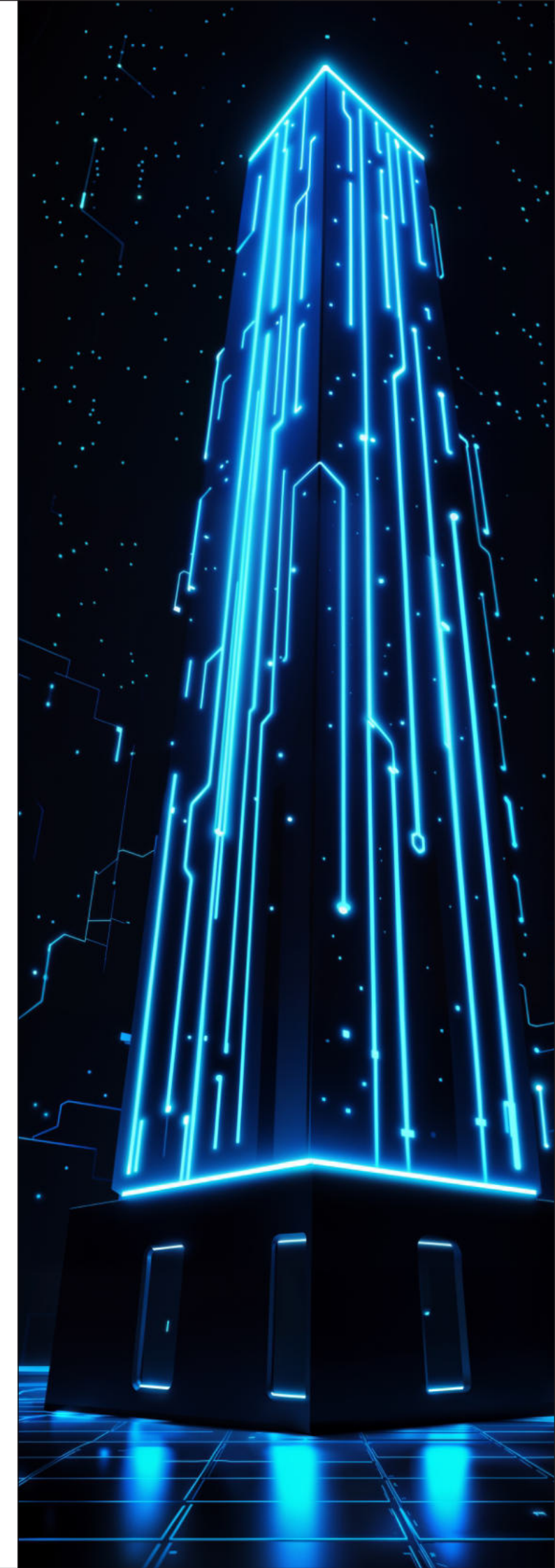
In markets where uncertainty around land records can discourage investment, innovations in verification may prove just as important as innovations in financing.

Africa's proptech sector is still young compared to fintech, but its importance is growing rapidly.

The companies on this list are tackling different parts of the property value chain: discovery, payments, financing, management, valuation, and ownership verification. Together, they are helping modernize a sector that has often lagged behind other parts of the digital economy.

Their success matters because real estate is more than a collection of buildings. It is the infrastructure through which people live, work, invest, and build wealth.

As African cities continue to expand, the startups that make property markets more transparent, accessible, and efficient may become just as important as the developers constructing the skylines themselves.





Sustainable Building Materials Gaining Momentum Across Africa

By Charis Raji

While architects and developers around the world search for ways to reduce the environmental impact of construction, many African communities are rediscovering something they never fully abandoned.

Long before sustainability became a global industry, homes across the continent were being built with earth, bamboo, stone, timber, and other locally sourced materials designed to respond naturally to climate conditions. Today, as the construction sector faces increasing pressure to lower emissions and reduce waste, those traditional approaches are finding new relevance.

The result is a growing movement toward sustainable building materials that combines indigenous knowledge, modern engineering, and circular-economy thinking. Across Africa, builders are increasingly asking a simple question: Can the materials of the future come from resources already available locally?

Why Construction Needs a Sustainability Reset

Construction remains one of the most carbon-intensive industries in the world.

Materials such as cement, steel, aluminum, and glass require significant amounts of energy to produce and transport. As urban populations grow and demand for housing rises, the environmental footprint of construction is becoming harder to ignore. This challenge is particularly significant in Africa, where rapid urbanization is expected to drive enormous demand for new homes, schools, offices, healthcare facilities, and infrastructure over the coming decades.

For many governments and

developers, sustainable materials are no longer simply an environmental consideration. They are increasingly viewed as an economic and practical necessity.

One of the most notable trends across the continent is the renewed interest in earth-based building systems. Compressed earth blocks, rammed earth construction, and stabilized soil technologies are gaining traction in multiple markets because they combine affordability with strong thermal performance.

In countries such as Nigeria, Ghana, Burkina Faso, and Rwanda, architects are experimenting with contemporary versions of traditional earth construction, creating buildings that remain naturally cooler while reducing reliance on energy-intensive materials.

The appeal is straightforward: Earth is often locally available, requires less processing than conventional alternatives, and can significantly reduce transportation costs. What was once viewed as a symbol of underdevelopment is increasingly being reconsidered as a sophisticated climate-responsive solution.

Bamboo is also attracting renewed attention across Africa. Fast-growing, renewable, and remarkably versatile, bamboo can be used for structural systems, flooring, cladding, furniture, and interior finishes.

Countries including Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, and Nigeria have invested in bamboo cultivation and processing as part of broader efforts to promote sustainable construction industries.

Because bamboo matures much faster than traditional timber, it offers a renewable alternative for projects seeking to reduce pressure on forest resources while maintaining design flexibility.

Perhaps the most innovative developments are emerging from the continent's growing circular-economy movement.

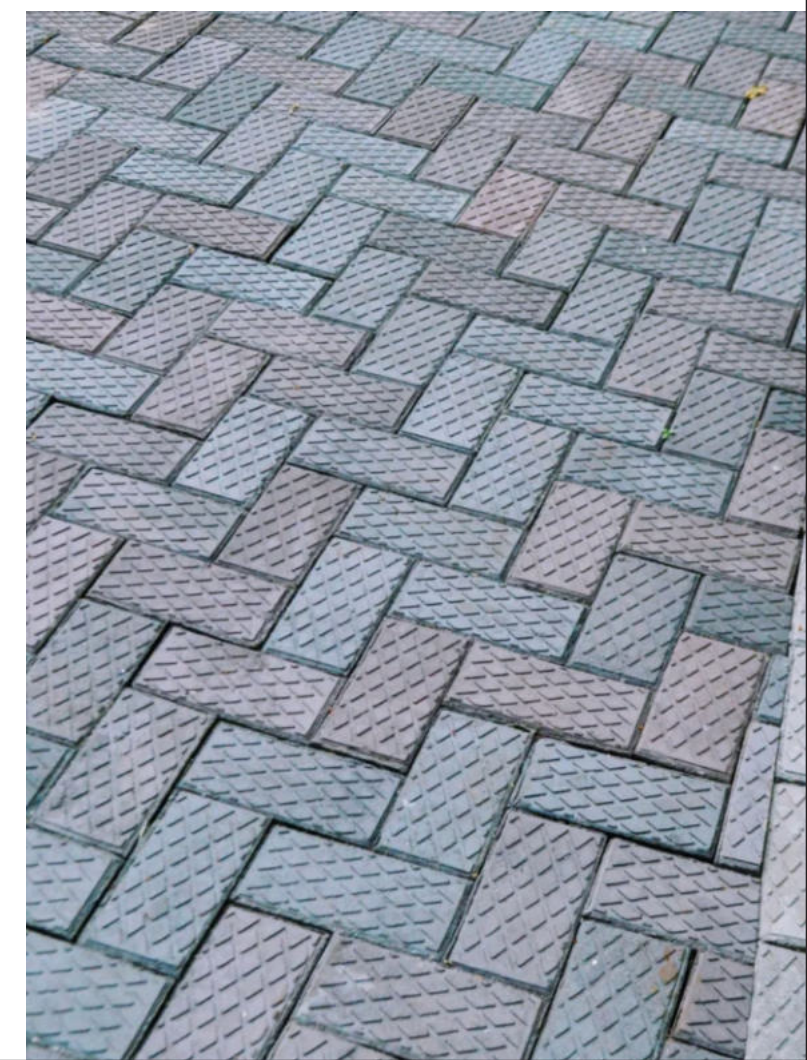
Across Africa, entrepreneurs are transforming waste streams into construction products.

In Kenya, Gjenge Makers gained international attention for converting discarded plastic waste into durable paving blocks and construction materials. The company demonstrated that one of the continent's most visible environmental challenges could also become a valuable resource.

Similar initiatives are emerging elsewhere. In Nigeria, companies are experimenting with plastic-based paving systems, recycled aggregates, and alternative construction products derived from waste materials. These innovations serve a dual purpose: reducing environmental pollution while lowering demand for virgin raw materials.

Innovation Beyond Traditional Materials

Sustainable construction is not limited to earth and recycled plastic. Researchers and manufacturers across Africa are exploring alternatives such as geopolymer concrete,





agricultural-fibre composites, recycled steel products, and low-carbon cement substitutes.

South Africa has emerged as a leader in green-building certification and sustainable construction technologies, while countries such as Kenya and Morocco are increasingly incorporating sustainability requirements into broader urban-development strategies.

Together, these efforts reflect a growing recognition that reducing construction emissions will require innovation across the entire materials supply chain.

Despite growing momentum, sustainable materials still face significant barriers to widespread adoption. Many developers remain more familiar with conventional construction methods. Supply chains for alternative materials are often less developed. Regulatory frameworks may not always accommodate newer building systems, while financing institutions sometimes view unfamiliar materials as higher risk.

There is also a perception challenge. In some markets, sustainable materials

continue to be associated with low-income housing despite advances in performance, aesthetics, and engineering standards.

Overcoming these barriers will require investment, education, and demonstration projects that showcase what these materials can achieve at scale.

The conversation around sustainable building materials is often framed as an environmental issue. In Africa, it is equally an economic and developmental one.

The continent faces a massive housing deficit, rapid urban growth, and increasing pressure to manage waste and reduce emissions. Sustainable materials sit at the intersection of all three challenges.

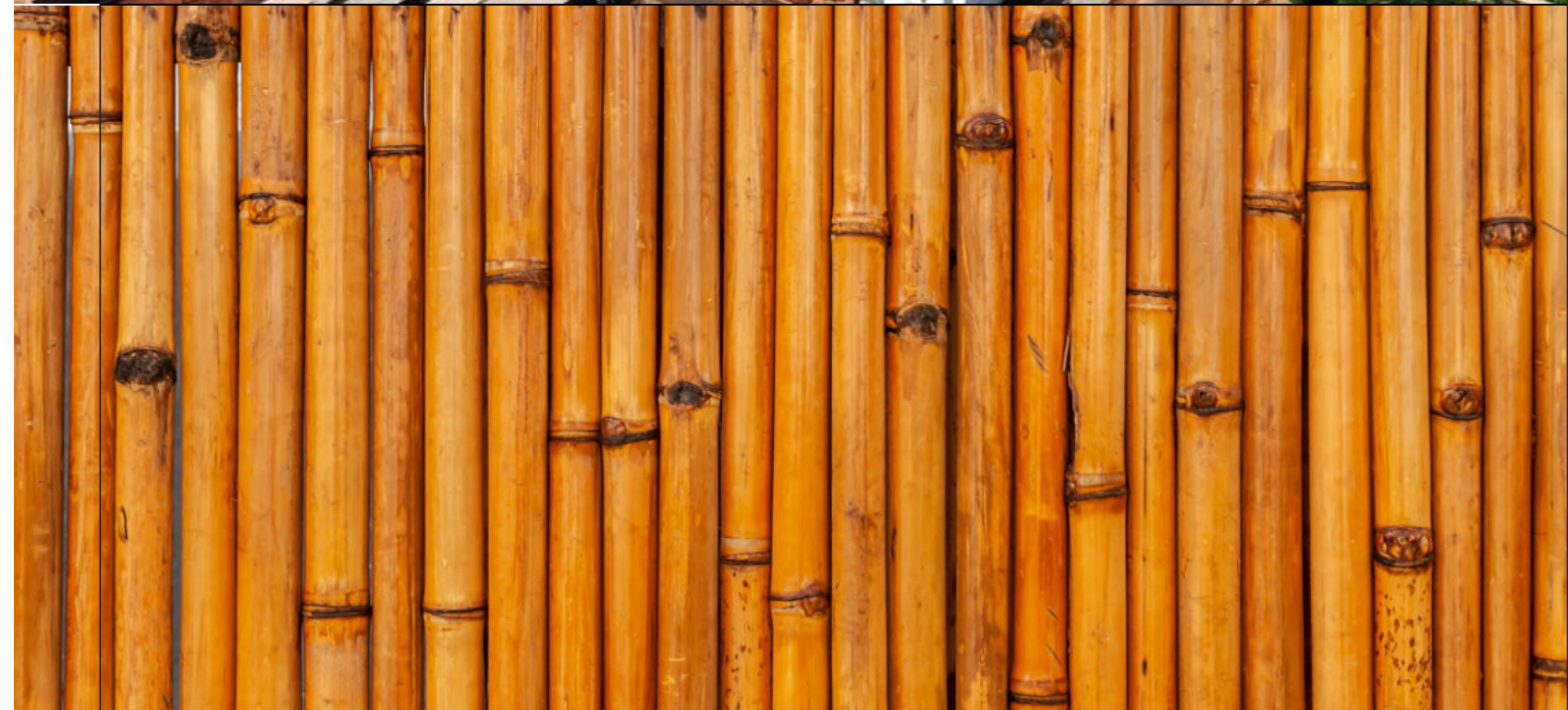
The strongest examples emerging across Africa share a common theme: they make use of resources that are already abundant locally, whether that means earth, bamboo, agricultural by-products, recycled steel, or discarded plastic.

Rather than relying solely on imported solutions, many African innovators are finding value in materials that already exist within their own environments.

The future of sustainable construction in Africa may not be defined by a single breakthrough material. Instead, it is likely to emerge from a combination of traditional knowledge, modern technology, and local resourcefulness.

As cities continue to expand and demand for housing increases, the most successful building materials may ultimately be those that are affordable, scalable, climate-responsive, and rooted in the realities of the places where they are used.

In that respect, Africa's construction future may depend less on inventing entirely new materials and more on reimagining the potential of those already at hand.





TOP REAL ESTATE DEVELOPERS SHAPING NORTH AFRICA'S URBAN FUTURE

By Charis Raji

North Africa's real estate sector is not built around fragmented developers competing for scattered projects. It is dominated by large, often state-aligned entities delivering entire cities, coastal districts, and master-planned urban zones at the national scale.

In Egypt and Morocco especially, property development is less about individual buildings and more about coordinated urban expansion, where developers operate alongside governments, sovereign funds, and infrastructure agencies.

The result is a regional property landscape defined by scale, capital intensity, and long-term state planning. Here is a list of North African key players (in Egypt and Morocco) shaping that future.

A. TALAAT MOUSTAFA GROUP (TMG) (EGYPT)



TMG is Egypt's most influential private developer and one of the largest in the MENA region.

Led by Hisham Talaat Moustafa, the group has built massive integrated communities across Cairo and beyond, with tens of billions in contracted sales and expanding regional ambitions into Saudi Arabia and Oman.

Its core strength lies in replicable master-planned cities; residential, commercial, and retail functions bundled into self-contained urban environments. TMG is less a property developer in the traditional sense and more a long-term urban systems operator.

B. ADMINISTRATIVE CAPITAL FOR URBAN DEVELOPMENT (ACUD) (EGYPT)

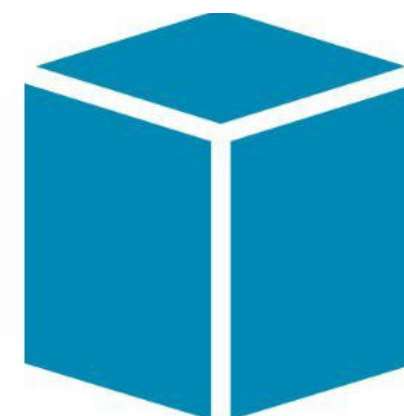


ACUD is not a developer in the private-market sense, it is a state urban delivery vehicle.

It is responsible for Egypt's New Administrative Capital, one of the largest planned cities in the world, designed to eventually house millions of residents and relocate key government functions away from Cairo.

With multi-billion-dollar annual investments and direct state ownership, ACUD represents a model where real estate development is inseparable from national infrastructure planning. It is the clearest example of state-led urbanism at a continental scale.

C. SODIC (EGYPT)



SODIC is one of Egypt's most established listed developers, known for low-density, master-planned communities across Cairo and the North Coast.

Its projects focus heavily on livability

(green space ratios, walkability, and mixed-use zoning), targeting upper-middle and high-income segments. Strategic partnerships with semi-governmental entities have increasingly positioned SODIC within Egypt's broader state-aligned development ecosystem.

D. PALM HILLS DEVELOPMENTS (EGYPT)



PALM HILLS

Palm Hills is one of Egypt's largest land-holding developers, with a portfolio spanning tens of millions of square metres. Its developments are defined by large suburban communities with a strong emphasis on landscaped environments and integrated residential-commercial planning.

The company has also expanded aggressively into Egypt's North Coast, reflecting growing demand for seasonal

E. EMAAR MISR (EGYPT)



Emaar Misr is the Egyptian arm of UAE-based Emaar Properties, best known for ultra-luxury developments and large-scale coastal projects. Its flagship developments set benchmarks for premium real estate in Egypt, particularly in gated communities and resort-style living.

More recently, it has shifted toward digitally integrated residential ecosystems, where property ownership is tied to service platforms and smart infrastructure layers.

F. ACUD-ADJACENT MEGA DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM (EGYPT)

Beyond ACUD itself, Egypt's urban expansion is driven by a network of semi-public development entities managing satellite cities such as New Alamein and Mostakbal City.

These projects represent a hybrid model: state-planned cities executed through public-private partnerships with large developers like SODIC and others.

Together, they form a coordinated national strategy of building entirely new urban centres outside historic Cairo.

G. GROUPE ADDOHA (MOROCCO)



Addoha is Morocco's leading mass housing developer and one of the most important players in North African affordable housing. Its business model is built around high-volume residential delivery targeting the country's structural housing deficit, particularly in rapidly urbanizing cities.

It plays a direct role in government housing objectives, making it less cyclical than purely market-driven developers.

H. ALLIANCES DÉVELOPPEMENT IMMOBILIER (MOROCCO)



Alliances operates across residential, tourism, and mixed-use segments, with projects distributed across Morocco's major urban centres.

Its performance is closely tied to broader national construction cycles, including infrastructure investment linked to Morocco's long-term tourism and sports-led urban strategy.

It represents the mid-tier institutional backbone of Moroccan real estate.

I. TGCC (TRAVAUX GÉNÉRAUX DE CONSTRUCTION DE CASABLANCA) (MOROCCO)



TGCC is one of Morocco's largest construction and development contractors, operating across residential, commercial, and industrial segments.

Unlike pure developers, it functions as a delivery engine for multiple public and private projects across the country. Its diversification makes it structurally resilient within Morocco's construction-heavy growth model.

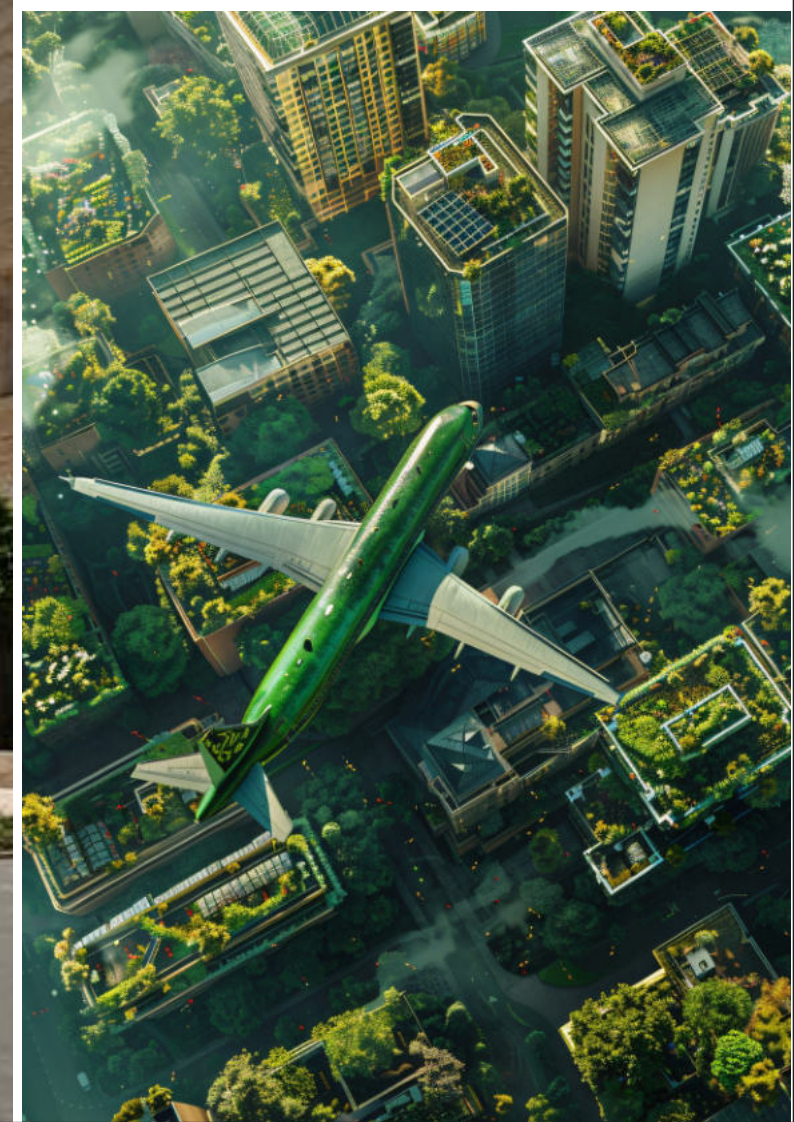
J. COASTAL MEGA-URBAN PROJECTS(MOROCCO (CASA MARINA / BAB AL BAHR)

Morocco's most important developers are often not single firms but state-coordinated coastal redevelopment platforms. Projects like Casa Marina in Casablanca and Bab Al Bahr in Rabat combine residential, commercial, hospitality, and public infrastructure into integrated waterfront districts.

These developments reflect Morocco's strategic choice: intensifying and upgrading existing cities rather than building entirely new inland capitals. North Africa's real estate landscape is defined less by competition between developers and more by alignment between developers and the state.

Egypt leads a model of new city construction at the national scale, while Morocco leans toward coastal urban regeneration and densification of existing cities. Across both systems, developers are not simply responding to demand; they are executing long-horizon urban strategies tied to government planning frameworks.

The result is a region where real estate development is not just an economic sector, but a direct extension of state-led urban transformation.





WE CAN'T REBUILD LAGOS. BUT WE CAN REPLAN IT

By Peter Aleogena

Every time Lagos experiences another flood, another traffic gridlock, or another infrastructure failure, the same question resurfaces:

“Shouldn't we just rebuild Lagos?”

It is an understandable reaction. But it is also the wrong question.

Cities are not buildings that can be demolished and reconstructed. They are living ecosystems, constantly growing, adapting, and evolving. Lagos is home to more than twenty million people, welcomes thousands of new residents every week, and

remains Nigeria's economic heartbeat. You cannot simply pause a city of this scale and start over.

The real question is far more practical and far more important:

How do we replan a city while it continues to grow?

The answer begins with a shift in mindset. For decades, much of our urban development has focused on approving individual buildings. Yet cities are not defined by isolated structures; they are shaped by the relationships between streets, transport,

public spaces, drainage systems, utilities, schools, hospitals, and the people who use them every day. A beautiful building cannot compensate for a dysfunctional neighbourhood.

A luxury estate cannot solve citywide congestion.
A wider road alone cannot eliminate traffic.

Great cities are planned as connected systems, not as collections of independent projects.

This is where Lagos has an opportunity to redefine its future. Rather than reacting to today's challenges, we must begin planning for the next fifty years. Every decision made today, where we build, how we move, how we manage water, and how we invest in infrastructure, will determine whether Lagos becomes a more resilient and prosperous city or a more congested and vulnerable one.

The future of Lagos should be built around people, not cars. Imagine neighbourhoods where homes, offices, schools, healthcare, parks, and retail are within walking distance. Imagine thriving communities connected by efficient rail, Bus Rapid Transit, ferries, cycling routes, and safe pedestrian streets, reducing the daily dependence on private vehicles.

Lagos is also a city defined by water. Yet for too long, we have treated wetlands, lagoons, and natural drainage channels as obstacles to development rather than assets to protect. As climate change intensifies and sea levels rise, restoring these natural systems is no longer an environmental ideal, it is an economic necessity.

Urban renewal must also become more strategic. Instead of attempting to transform the entire city at once, Lagos can identify priority districts for phased redevelopment, upgrading roads, drainage, utilities, public spaces, and housing while preserving the communities that give each neighbourhood its identity. Successful cities do not erase

their history; they improve upon it.

Technology will also play a defining role. Digital planning systems, geographic information mapping, smart traffic management, digital land administration, and data-driven infrastructure planning can enable government and private developers to make faster, smarter, and more transparent decisions.

Yet perhaps the most important change is one of philosophy. Developers should no longer see themselves as builders of isolated projects. They are city builders. Every new development should contribute not only apartments and office space but also the supporting infrastructure that makes urban life work; roads, drainage, public spaces, schools, utilities, and transport connections.

Likewise, government must evolve from simply regulating development to orchestrating it, ensuring that private investment aligns with a coherent vision for the city's future. The cities admired around the world today were not created by chance. They are the result of decades of consistent planning, bold leadership, and collaboration between the public and private sectors.

Lagos deserves the same ambition. The conversation is no longer about whether Lagos will continue to grow. It will. The question is whether that growth will be intentional or accidental.

At Habitat Magazine, we believe the future of our cities will not be determined by the height of our skyscrapers or the scale of our developments. It will be determined by the quality of our planning, the resilience of our infrastructure, and the courage to think beyond the next project and toward the next generation.

We cannot rebuild Lagos.
But together, we can replan it.

And perhaps, that is the greatest development project of our lifetime.

INSIDE KIGALI

The Neighbourhoods Building Africa's Most Thoughtfully Planned Capital

By Ameh Destiny

"Cities are remembered for many reasons. Some for their skylines. Others for their history. Kigali is quietly building a reputation for something different: intentional growth."

Ask almost anyone who has visited Kigali what they remember most, and chances are they will not begin with skyscrapers or luxury apartments. They will talk about the streets.

Clean.
Quiet.
Green.
Ordered.

These four words have become part of Kigali's identity.

Kigali is often described as Africa's cleanest capital, yet cleanliness alone does not explain why multinational companies continue expanding their presence there, why property developers increasingly see opportunity within its

boundaries or why professionals from across the continent are considering the city as both a place to live and a place to invest.

The answer is found one neighborhood at a time.

Unlike many rapidly expanding African capitals where growth often outpaces planning, Kigali has followed a different path. The city has invested heavily in long-term urban planning, environmental protection and organized infrastructure, creating a model that is attracting attention well beyond Rwanda's borders.

Its neighborhoods are not simply collections of houses.

Each tells a different story about how modern African cities can balance investment, community, sustainability and quality of life.

Nyarutarama Where Prestige Meets Purpose

Every ambitious city has one

neighborhood that quietly announces its confidence. In Kigali, that neighborhood is Nyarutarama.

Set across gently rolling hills overlooking parts of the city, Nyarutarama has become synonymous with luxury living.

Wide roads.

Tree-lined streets.

Beautifully landscaped compounds.

Modern villas.

Exclusive apartment developments.

It is often the first neighborhood mentioned when discussing Kigali's premium residential market—and for good reason.

Diplomats.
Business executives.
International consultants.
Senior government officials.
Successful entrepreneurs.

Many choose Nyarutarama because it offers something increasingly difficult to find in growing cities:

Space.

Not merely physical space, but breathing space.

The neighborhood is home to the Kigali Golf Resort, several international schools, embassies and high-end hospitality facilities, making it particularly attractive to expatriates and internationally mobile professionals.

Unlike luxury districts that rely on excessive grandeur, Nyarutarama projects confidence through restraint.

Homes are elegant rather than extravagant.
Gardens are mature rather than ornamental.
Security blends into everyday life instead of dominating it.

This quieter expression of wealth reflects a broader global movement often

described as "quiet luxury"—where quality, comfort and thoughtful design speak louder than obvious displays of opulence.

Perhaps more importantly, Nyarutarama demonstrates that luxury is evolving.

It is no longer defined solely by imported finishes or oversized homes.

Increasingly, luxury is measured by something much simpler:

Peace.

"True luxury is not having more space to show others. It is having more space to enjoy life."

Kacyiru Where Diplomacy Shapes Real Estate

If Nyarutarama represents prestige, Kacyiru represents influence.

Home to numerous embassies, government institutions and international

organisations, Kacyiru occupies a unique position within Kigali's urban fabric. Unlike purely residential neighbourhoods, its identity has been shaped by diplomacy. This has quietly influenced property demand for years. Embassy staff require secure housing.

International organisations seek quality office space.

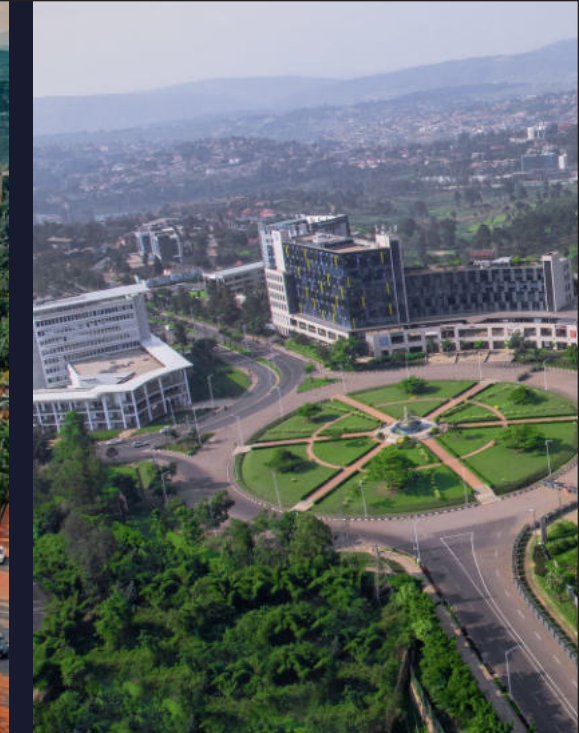
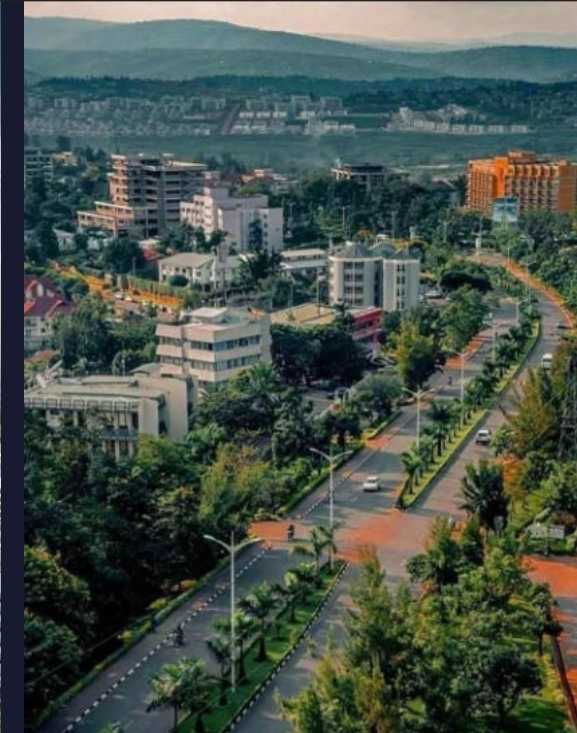
Consultants, development partners and visiting professionals often prefer accommodation close to their workplaces.

The result is a neighbourhood where stability has become one of its greatest investment strengths.

Developers understand something important.

Institutions rarely relocate overnight.

That creates long-term demand.





Walking through Kacyiru reveals an interesting balance.

Modern office buildings stand comfortably alongside residential streets.

Government facilities coexist with cafés, restaurants and

community spaces.

The neighbourhood feels professional without becoming impersonal.

That balance is increasingly valuable.

According to urban development experts, mixed-use districts often generate stronger long-term economic resilience because they support both residential life and commercial activity throughout the day.

Kacyiru illustrates this principle remarkably well.

Rather than separating where people live from where they work, it allows the two to complement each other.

For investors, this creates diversified opportunities across residential, office and hospitality developments.

For residents, it creates convenience.

And in modern cities, convenience has become one of the most valuable forms of infrastructure.

"Great neighbourhoods are not built around buildings. They are built around how people live, work and connect."

Kimihurura Where Business Meets Lifestyle

Cities evolve when business and lifestyle begin to share the same streets.

Nowhere illustrates that better than Kimihurura.

Once known primarily as a quiet residential neighborhood, Kimihurura has transformed into one of Kigali's most dynamic urban districts. It has become a destination where professionals can attend business meetings in the morning, enjoy lunch at a contemporary café, spend the afternoon in a co-working space and end the evening at one of the city's acclaimed restaurants—all without leaving the neighborhood.

That balance has quietly become one of its greatest strengths.

Rather than forcing people to choose between convenience and quality of life, Kimihurura offers both.

Its streets are increasingly lined with boutique hotels, cafés, restaurants, embassies, office developments and modern apartment buildings, creating a vibrant mixed-use environment that appeals to both residents and visitors.

For developers, this is particularly significant.

Mixed-use neighborhoods tend to create stronger, more resilient property markets because they remain active throughout the day. Residential demand supports commercial activity, while offices, hospitality and retail generate continuous movement and economic

vitality.

It is a model increasingly embraced by successful cities around the world.

Urban planners often refer to this as creating "live-work-play" communities—places where people can comfortably live, work, relax and socialise without depending heavily on long daily commutes.

Kimihurura is steadily becoming Kigali's version of that vision.

Its popularity among entrepreneurs, diplomats, international professionals and Rwanda's growing middle class reflects changing expectations about city living.

People no longer want neighborhoods that simply provide shelter.

They want neighborhoods that provide experiences.

As architect Jan Gehl wisely noted:

"A good city is like a good party. People stay because they are enjoying themselves."

Kimihurura embodies that philosophy remarkably well.

Its walkable character, growing hospitality sector and blend of residential and commercial spaces suggest that Kigali is increasingly designing neighborhoods around people rather than traffic.

For investors, this presents a compelling opportunity.

Where people choose to spend time, investment often follows.

"The most successful neighborhoods are not those with the tallest buildings, but those where life naturally unfolds."

Gacuriro The New Face of Family Living

If Kimihurura represents urban energy, Gacuriro represents urban balance.

Located in the northern part of Kigali, Gacuriro has become one of the city's fastest-growing residential neighborhoods, particularly among young families, professionals and returning members of the Rwandan diaspora.

Unlike older residential districts that evolved gradually over decades, much of Gacuriro reflects Kigali's modern planning philosophy.

The roads are organised.

Residential estates are carefully laid out.

Public infrastructure continues to improve alongside private investment.

Schools, healthcare facilities, supermarkets and recreational spaces are all within reasonable reach, making the neighborhood especially attractive to families seeking convenience without

sacrificing tranquility.

This is perhaps where Kigali's planning philosophy becomes most visible.

Growth is not simply measured by the number of new buildings.

It is measured by the quality of daily life those buildings support.

Increasingly, buyers are asking questions that previous generations rarely considered.

Is the neighborhood walkable?
Can children play safely?
Are green spaces nearby?
Will traffic dominate everyday life?

These questions are reshaping residential demand across Africa, and Gacuriro appears well positioned to respond.

Developers have recognised this shift.

Many new projects emphasise thoughtful layouts, landscaped compounds, shared amenities and a stronger connection between housing and community life.

Rather than building isolated structures, they are creating neighborhoods designed to grow with the families who call them home.

"The future of residential development is not simply building more houses. It is building better neighborhoods."

Kiyovu Where Kigali's History Meets Modern Prestige

Every great city has a neighborhood that tells its story.

For Kigali, that neighborhood is Kiyovu.

As one of the city's oldest and most established districts, Kiyovu has long been associated with prestige, history and quiet elegance.

Many of Kigali's earliest diplomatic residences, government officials and prominent business leaders chose to settle here, giving the neighborhood a legacy that continues to shape its identity today.

Walking through Kiyovu feels different.

Mature trees provide generous shade.

Older villas sit alongside carefully designed contemporary residences.

Boutique hotels and refined commercial spaces blend naturally into the landscape without overwhelming its character.

Unlike rapidly developing neighborhoods that constantly reinvent themselves, Kiyovu demonstrates that history can become one of a city's greatest assets.

Its enduring appeal reminds us that successful urban development is not always about replacing the old with the new.

Sometimes it is about allowing both to coexist beautifully.

This balance is increasingly important as African cities grapple with rapid urbanisation.

Preserving architectural heritage while embracing modern development is no easy task.

Kiyovu offers an encouraging example of how this balance can be achieved.

For investors, heritage often creates scarcity.

And scarcity, when carefully managed, tends to preserve long-term value.

That partly explains why established neighborhoods like Kiyovu continue attracting premium interest despite newer developments emerging elsewhere across the city.

"The strongest cities do not erase their history. They allow it to shape their future."

Five Reasons Kigali's Neighbourhoods Stand Out

Every city has something to teach.

Some teach resilience.

Others teach innovation.

Kigali teaches something equally valuable: That thoughtful planning is not a luxury—it is an investment.

Its neighborhoods are not perfect, nor are they without challenges. Like every growing city, Kigali continues to grapple with housing affordability, infrastructure demands and the pressures that come with rapid urbanisation.

Yet despite these realities, the city stands out tall.

1. Clean Streets

Cleanliness is often viewed as an environmental issue.

In reality, it is also an economic one.

The first thing many visitors notice about Kigali is not a landmark building.

It is the order.

The carefully maintained public spaces.

The absence of visible chaos.

These seemingly simple qualities shape first impressions, influence investor confidence and contribute to the city's global reputation.

For developers, perception matters.

People invest where they feel confident.

"Before investors buy buildings, they buy confidence."

2. Planning Comes First

Many rapidly growing cities struggle because development arrives before planning.

Roads are widened after traffic becomes unbearable.

Drainage is improved after flooding occurs.

Public spaces disappear as buildi

ngs compete for every available piece of land.

Kigali has sought a different approach.

Its long-term master planning has guided residential, commercial and institutional development with a stronger emphasis on organisation and sustainability.

That does not eliminate every challenge, but it provides a clearer framework for future growth.

Good cities rarely happen by accident.

They are planned long before they are admired.

3. Green Spaces Are Not Wasted Spaces

Perhaps one of Kigali's greatest achievements is resisting the temptation to build on every available piece of land.

Trees continue to frame many streets.

Parks and landscaped areas remain part of neighbourhood life.

Residential developments often incorporate generous outdoor spaces rather than treating them as afterthoughts.

Globally, urban planners increasingly recognise that green spaces improve public health, reduce urban heat, support biodiversity and enhance property values.

In Kigali, greenery is not simply decoration. It is infrastructure.

As landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted once observed:

"The enjoyment of scenery employs the mind without fatigue and yet exercises it."

That quiet relationship between nature and city life continues to shape Kigali's identity.

"The healthiest cities are often the greenest ones."

1. Mixed-Use Neighbourhoods Create Stronger Communities

Cities become more vibrant when they allow people to live, work and socialise within the same neighbourhood.

Rather than separating residential life from commercial activity, Kigali increasingly embraces mixed-use development.

The result is neighbourhoods that remain active throughout the day.

Coffee shops serve morning meetings. Restaurants welcome evening conversations. Residential buildings overlook thriving commercial streets.

Offices stand within walking distance of homes.

This diversity creates economic resilience while reducing unnecessary travel.

People spend less time commuting.

More time living.

Conclusion

Cities are remembered for many reasons.

Some for their skylines.

Others for their history.

Some for their economic power.

Kigali is quietly building a reputation for something different.

Intentional growth.

Its neighbourhoods remind us that successful cities are not simply collections of impressive buildings.

They are carefully connected systems where planning, sustainability, community and investment work together.

Nyarutarama demonstrates the value of thoughtful luxury.

Kacyiru shows how diplomacy can shape real estate.

Kimihurura proves that business and lifestyle can coexist.

Gacuriro reflects the aspirations of modern families.

Kiyovu reminds us that history remains one of the strongest foundations for the future.

Together, they tell a larger story.

A story of a city that believes growth should improve quality of life rather than simply increase density.

As developers, investors and urban planners continue searching for models of sustainable African urbanisation, Kigali offers an encouraging reminder that the future of the continent's cities does not depend solely on building higher.

It depends on building better.

Perhaps that is why, when conversations turn to the future of African real estate, more eyes are beginning to look toward Kigali.

Not because it is trying to become another global city.

But because it has chosen to become the very best version of itself.



The Biggest Real Estate Developments to Watch Across Africa in 2026

By Charis Raji

Africa's urban population is expected to double by 2050, and the scale of real estate development underway reflects that pressure.

But what is being built across the continent is not uniform. It falls into a small number of distinct models: entirely new cities, privately delivered satellite developments, tourism-led coastal economies, and infrastructure-backed urban corridors.

In 2026, these categories define where capital, policy, and population growth are converging most visibly.

NEW ADMINISTRATIVE CAPITAL — EGYPT



The New Administrative Capital remains the largest single urban development project in Africa.

Located roughly 45 kilometres east of Cairo, the city is designed to eventually house up to 8 million people and consolidate key government functions into a purpose-built administrative district.

With an estimated total cost of \$58 billion, the project is state-led but delivered through a growing network of private and semi-private developers. By 2026, multiple ministries have already relocated, and additional land allocations are expected to be opened to private developers.

The central question is no longer construction pace, but long-term affordability and occupancy.

ALARO CITY — NIGERIA



Alaro City represents one of West Africa's most advanced attempts at privately coordinated urban development. Located within the Lekki Free Zone, it is being developed by Rendeavour in partnership with the Lagos State Government as a fully master-planned city with independent infrastructure systems, including power, road networks, and fibre connectivity.

Early residential delivery has already begun, with industrial tenants such as manufacturing and logistics firms anchoring economic activity ahead of full population buildout.

Its trajectory is closely tied to the broader growth of the Lekki corridor, one of the fastest urbanising zones in Africa.

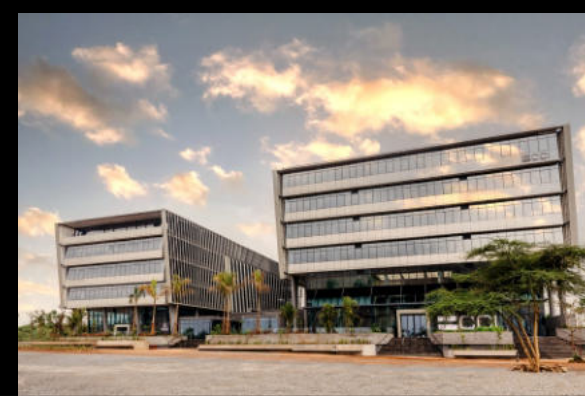
EKO ATLANTIC — NIGERIA



Eko Atlantic continues to serve as Nigeria's most visible coastal megaproject. Built on land reclaimed from the Atlantic Ocean and protected by an extensive sea defence system, it is designed to function as a high-density financial and residential district adjacent to Victoria Island.

While still under phased development, it remains one of the most internationally recognized examples of large-scale coastal urban engineering in Africa.

TATU CITY — KENYA



Tatu City is one of the clearest examples of a satellite city that has achieved measurable occupancy and economic activity.

Located outside Nairobi, it hosts a mix of residential communities, industrial zones, and commercial tenants, with thousands of residents and dozens of operational businesses already on-site.

Its development strategy has prioritized gradual absorption of demand rather than speculative build-out, making it one of the more stable new-city models in East Africa.

NEW ALAMEIN & MOSTAKBAL CITY — EGYPT



Egypt's second-wave urban expansion is concentrated along the Mediterranean coast and the eastern Cairo corridor. New Alamein is being developed as a coastal city combining residential, tourism, and government functions, while Mostakbal City in East Cairo has become a major site for large-scale residential partnerships between public entities and private developers.

Together, they extend Egypt's broader strategy of building multiple satellite cities to relieve pressure on Cairo.

CASABLANCA MARINA & BAB AL BAHR — MOROCCO



Rather than building entirely new inland cities, Morocco is pursuing coastal intensification. Casablanca Marina and Rabat's Bab Al Bahr project combine residential, commercial, tourism, and cultural infrastructure into integrated waterfront districts.

These developments reflect a different urban philosophy from Egypt: upgrading and extending existing cities rather than constructing entirely new administrative capitals.

ZANZIBAR COASTAL DEVELOPMENTS — TANZANIA



Zanzibar has become one of East Africa's fastest-growing tourism-led real estate markets. Driven by international hotel brands and resort developers, the island is seeing rapid expansion in beachfront villas, hospitality infrastructure, and mixed-use tourism estates.

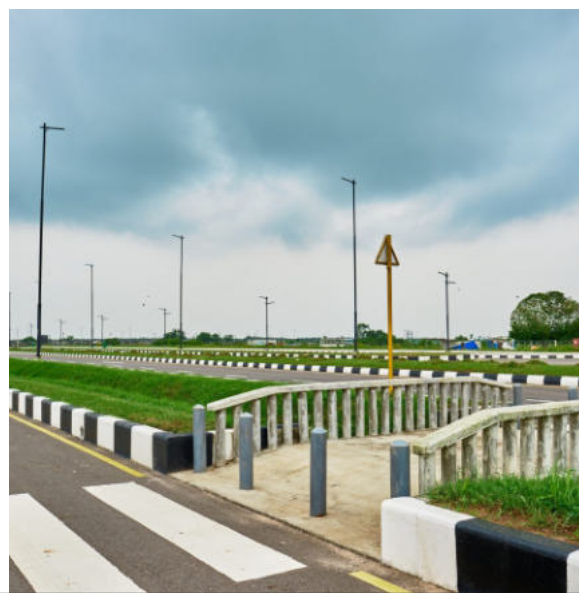
A key feature of this growth is the shift toward managed ownership models, where diaspora and foreign investors buy into professionally operated rental properties.

WATERFALL CITY & LANSERIA SMART CITY — SOUTH AFRICA



South Africa's most ambitious developments are concentrated around Johannesburg's periphery. Waterfall City continues expanding as a mixed-use commercial and residential hub, while Lanseria Smart City is planned as a large-scale urban expansion anchored around transport infrastructure and aviation connectivity.

Both reflect a broader South African trend of decentralizing economic activity away from traditional city centres.



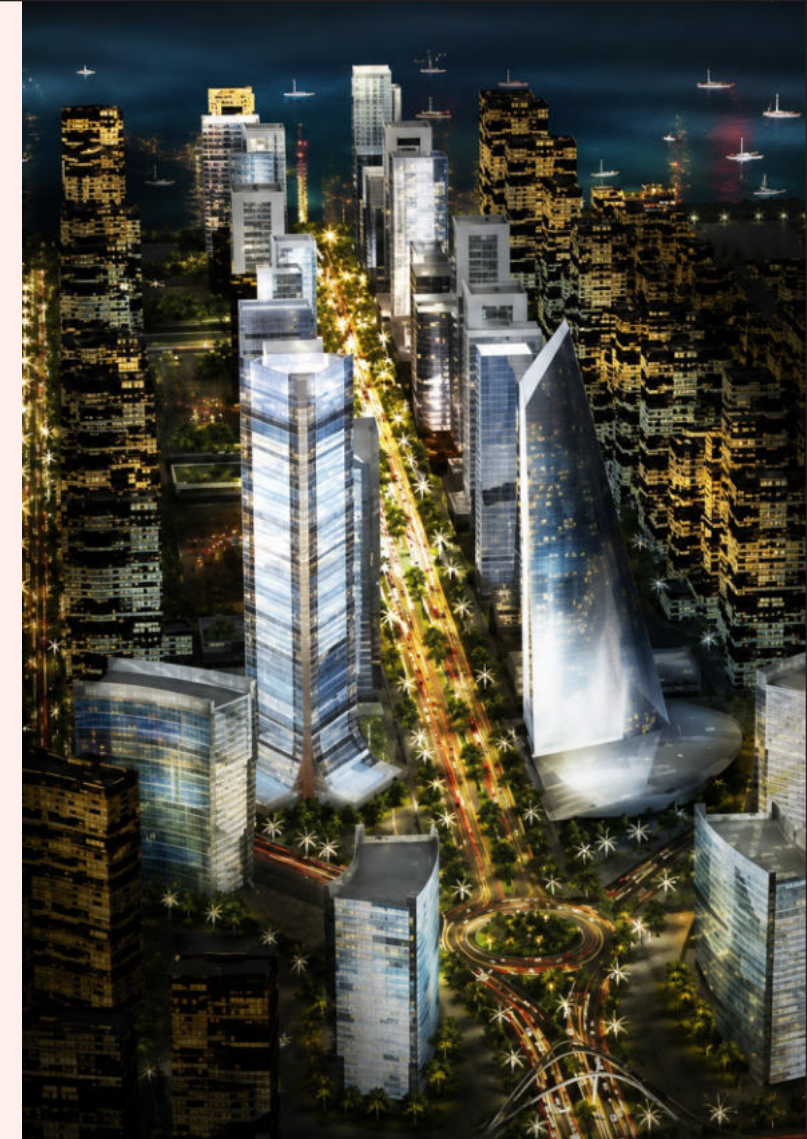
Across these developments, three models dominate:

- New cities built from scratch
Egypt (NAC), Nigeria (Alaro City, Eko Atlantic)
- Satellite cities absorbing urban pressure
Kenya (Tatu City), South Africa (Lanseria)
- Coastal and tourism-led urban districts
Morocco (Casa Marina), Tanzania (Zanzibar)

What unites them is not geography, but function: each is designed to solve a specific failure in existing urban systems - congestion, housing shortages, infrastructure gaps, or tourism demand.

But the underlying tension remains the same across the continent. Africa is building faster than it is populating. The defining question for 2026 is not how many of these developments will be completed; many will be.

It is whether they grow into fully lived-in cities and districts, or remain partially occupied assets built ahead of demand.



AFRICAN FASHION MEETS GLOBAL TECHNOLOGY:

STITCHES AFRICA EXHIBITS AT ATE2026

Lagos, Nigeria — June 2026

Stitches Africa, the pan-African fashion e-commerce platform connecting African designers with both local and global audiences, participated as an exhibitor at the Africa Technology Expo (ATE) 2026, held in Lagos, Nigeria. The two-day event, widely regarded as Africa's foremost gathering of technology innovators, investors, and business leaders, provided the perfect stage for Stitches Africa to demonstrate how fashion and technology are converging to reshape the African creative economy.

As the only fashion-tech platform at the expo, Stitches Africa stood out by bringing a distinctly cultural and economic conversation to a technology-driven space. The exhibition spoke to a dual opportunity that defines the platform's next phase of growth, serving the African consumer at home while simultaneously opening doors for African designers to reach diaspora and international markets abroad. Attendees explored the platform firsthand, experiencing its marketplace for bespoke and ready-to-wear African clothing and

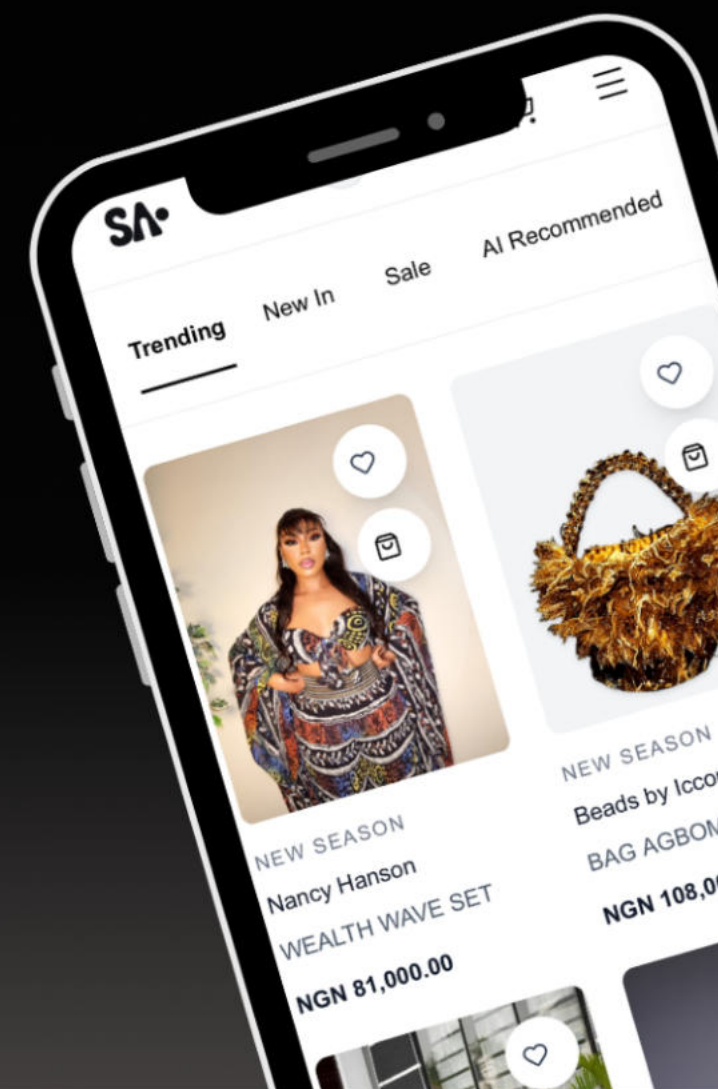
accessories. A standout feature was the platform's AI body measurement technology, which allows customers anywhere in the world to generate accurate body measurements using just their smartphone, raising the standard of the bespoke experience for both local and international buyers.

The expo also opened broader conversations around the opportunity Stitches Africa represents. The platform creates a structured, technology-driven marketplace where designers can grow their domestic customer base while earning in foreign currency through global sales, with end-to-end logistics support ensuring geography is no longer a barrier for African creative talent.

Stitches Africa leaves ATE2026 with renewed momentum, new partnerships on the horizon, and a clear sense that the future of African fashion is being built right here, for Africans everywhere.

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FLIPPING, HOUSE HUNTING AND RENOVATIONS:

Why Nigeria Needs Real Estate Shows On TV

By Tomisin Juliet Faoye

What happens when you mix the practical business of Real Estate with the glitz and glam of reality TV? Nine seasons and two spinoffs later, Netflix's hit real estate show, *Selling Sunset*, has proven to be a massive global hit and has fundamentally reshaped the luxury real estate industry.

House agents have turned into celebrities and social media influencers, skyrocketing their personal net-worth and giving an overall facelift to the housing industry as it relates to television.

House Hunters, the classic HGTV show, is another one for the books. The show, which has been on air for several years, follows individuals and families as they tour three different homes in a bid to buy one of them.

Property Brothers, another real estate show available on Hulu, follows twin brothers, one a real estate agent and the other a contractor, as they help couples buy and renovate homes. Love It or List It, another American real estate show, follows homeowners who have to choose between renovating their

current houses or buying a new one.

These shows and a long list of others make up the real estate genre of American TV. From home purchasing, to flipping, from luxurious mansions to old homes in need of fix-ups, there's a show for everything, and without a doubt, these shows have been a real booster to America's real estate economy.

Nigeria, however, can hardly boast of a single TV program dedicated to the real estate sector. This reality begs an intervention as shows like these prove to be invaluable to the industry for several reasons. First and foremost, real estate reality shows teach the public more about house hunting than anything else can. By watching these shows, people learn what to look out for in a property, how to choose the right

neighbourhood, etc. Furthermore, property owners gain massive exposure via these shows. One episode of a real estate show can gain a seller way more publicity than several ads can. Brand positioning is another major advantage of real estate shows as they enable firms to build consumer trust, showcase architectural designs and gain much needed visibility.

Wondering just how successful a real estate show can be? The possibilities are limitless. From multimillion-dollar personal brands for agents, to massive profits for producers and high sales for property owners, real estate shows are a stream many can tap from. Hollywood understands this and has tapped into the industry. In the near future, we hope to see Nigeria rise and take bold steps in the TV real estate genre. It is, without a doubt, very fertile ground.



NOLLYWOOD AND THE BLISS OF FAMILIAR STORIES: A REVIEW OF UCHE MONTANA'S MONICA

By Tomisin Juliet Faoye

The last few years have, without a doubt, been highly fortuitous for Nollywood actress Uche Montana. From a supporting role in the highest grossing Nollywood film of all time, to winning the Trail Blazer Award at the AMVCAs, to building a YouTube empire that is unusually successful, Uche Montana has proven to be one of the industry's finest; not just in her exceptional acting prowess, but because of her keen intellect for the business of the craft. The AMVCA proved that she was one to look out for, but the recent massive success of her movie, *Monica*, has proven that she is positively a threat to other filmmakers in the industry. *Monica* tells a familiar story.

But it does it so well that it pulls the audience in completely. The titular character is the first child and daughter of a struggling family and right from her earliest years, she is made to sacrifice everything for the good of her siblings; from her education, to her marriage prospects, everything is slain on the altar of doing what is best for her

family. But as the years go by, the family for which she has given everything becomes the greatest opposition to her happiness.

Monica's mother, played by Blessing Onwueme, is the detestable villain of this story. She proves to be not only cruel, but highly manipulative, and her actions damage the lives of each one of her three children. The role was so well played that social media had a field day discussing that particular aspect of the movie.

Monica 1 and *2*, both of which were released in quick succession, have each amassed nearly 25 million views in just over two months and audiences across the country have deeply identified with the film. The success of this film and a few others makes it essential to pay attention to the trajectory of Nollywood in recent years. A quick look at the most successful films, both in the box office or on YouTube, reveals that films centered on the family system have been topping charts. Funke Akindele's *Behind*



the Scenes which still remains Nollywood's biggest box office hit centered on a self sacrificing sister and her ungrateful siblings.

A Tribe Called Judah, another of Akindele's massive hits, also centered on siblings. Uche Montana's *Monica* trails this same siblinghood line and has proven to be a major hit. Other successful projects, such as Omoni Oboli's *Love in Every Word*, also told a simple, familiar story, albeit a romance. So did Bimbo Ademoye's *Where Love Lives* which also proved to be a huge success on YouTube. More recently, *Call of My Life*, written and starred in by Uzoamaka Power, has also proved to be one of the industry's biggest box office hits and it follows a simple rom-com narrative. What this proves is that as much as action movies and thrillers may be a

favourite of many, homegrown familiar stories are still Nollywood's biggest goldmine. What keeps the audience hooked to a film, oftentimes, is how much they can connect to the story. The feeling of identity that makes us forward a meme or reshare a post is the same one that makes us recommend a movie. If a film can tug at the heart of the viewer, then the filmmaker has succeeded. Uche Montana's AMVCA award made everyone pause and take note of what she has been doing, and with the massive success of the films she continues to put out, we can all agree that she deserves every accolade. She is building an empire and YouTube seems to be her chosen platform at present. We look forward to seeing the greater heights she is sure to attain in the coming days.



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Find all 10 hidden words.
Some words are very well hidden, so look carefully

T	H	J	E	M	F	C	N	O	L	G	F	I	I
A	S	G	J	O	K	L	T	L	F	H	N	U	J
M	R	N	I	Q	I	O	G	J	G	J	D	A	K
A	E	H	L	A	U	P	T	D	H	K	S	Y	M
R	W	G	A	Z	J	G	I	H	J	L	A	T	I
A	O	R	G	W	M	B	W	K	E	Z	P	R	S
N	T	W	O	S	N	O	T	F	K	H	I	V	S
T	Y	A	S	X	H	W	A	L	L	P	I	E	I
H	R	U	N	C	Y	U	N	J	D	A	L	V	R
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L	Q	T	V	U	D	M	F	O	N	B	P	H	N

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HOW TO PARTICIPATE

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