HABITAT

Magazine

RICHMOND DIEI

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ARCHITECTURE | REAL ESTATE | LIFESTYLE

Vol. 03 No. 18

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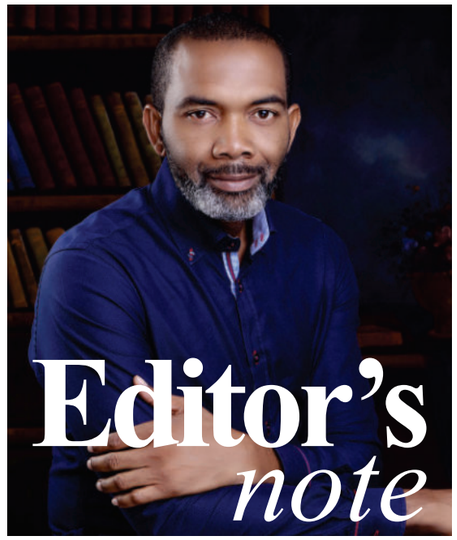

Editor's *note*

WHAT WILL THE NIGERIAN HOME OF 2035 LOOK LIKE?

For decades, we have measured the Nigerian dream home in square metres.

More bedrooms. Bigger living rooms. Larger compounds. More impressive façades.
But the home of 2035 may force us to rethink what "better" really means.

By then, the cost of running a home may matter as much as the cost of building it. Energy efficiency will become increasingly important. Solar power, battery storage, efficient appliances and intelligent energy management may move from desirable extras to essential features.

But the smartest home will not simply produce more energy. **It will need less of it.**

Good orientation, shading, natural ventilation and daylight will become as important as the technology inside the house.
And energy is only one part of the challenge. The environment in which our homes exist will demand an equally fundamental rethink.

Nigeria's future homes will have to respond to hotter conditions, intense rainfall and increasingly congested cities. Trees shaded outdoor spaces, courtyards, cross-ventilation, durable materials and better water management will become increasingly valuable.
Interestingly, some of the answers may already exist in our past.

Traditional African architecture understood how to use shade, airflow, courtyards and local materials to create comfort. The challenge is to reinterpret those principles for contemporary life rather than simply replicate the past.

But homes must also respond to the people living in them and the way our lives are changing.
A room may need to function as a home office today, a guest room tomorrow and a family space the next day. This means the future home may be less concerned with having *more rooms* and more concerned with having **better, adaptable spaces**.

Perhaps this is also where our definition of luxury will change.
The most desirable home may not be the one with the biggest entrance or the most expensive finishes. It may be the one that gives its occupants comfort, privacy, efficiency, reliability and time.

So, what will the Nigerian home of 2035 look like?
Perhaps the answer is not a particular architectural style, size or technology. It is a change in priorities.

For too long, we have treated the home as a statement of what we have achieved. The next generation may see it differently, as a place designed around **how we want to live**.

And that could be the most important transformation of all.

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.

Habitat Magazine
Building better cities, together.

team

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
PETER ALEOGENA

EDITOR
TOMISIN JULIET FAOYE

MARKETING
REI OBAIGBO

SOCIAL MEDIA MANAGER
DADI JULCHIT FATIMA

MEDIA PERSONALITY
DESTINY RICHY-BLANKSON

GRAPHIC DESIGNER
PRINCE KINGS

ADMINISTRATION MANAGER
STEPHANIE OSUNKWO

CONTRIBUTORS
TOMISIN JULIET FAOYE
LUMANZE CHIAMAKA
PETER ALEOGENA
MOJISOLA AFOLAYAN
CHARIS RAJI
PATRICK OGUNLEYE
AMEH DESTINY
CUTSTRUCT
REI OBAIGBO
NWANGWA SOLOMON UGOCHUKWU

PROOFREADER
ABIMBOLA OSODI

www.habitatmagazineng.com

TEL: **0803 321 2022**
EMAIL: **INFO@HABITATMAGAZINENG.COM**
INSTAGRAM: **@HABITATMAGAZINENG**

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Isabella Rodrigues
PROPERTY INVESTMENT CONSULTANT

+44 7449 889 621
isabella.rodrigues@flambardwilliams.co.uk
Floor 7, 30 Churchill Place, Canary Wharf, London E14 5RE

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BUILDING PROSPERITY, ONE PROPERTY AT A TIME

Richmond Diei is redefining the meaning of modern real estate development; combining global perspective, strategic thinking and a commitment to creating properties built for both living and lasting value

By Habitat Magazine

On October 4, Mr Richmond Diei marked another milestone in his life. For the Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of Richbel Estate & Realtors Limited, however, birthdays are perhaps best understood not simply as celebrations of the years gone by, but as opportunities to reflect on the journey, the lessons and the legacy being built along the way.

Mr Richmond Diei has established himself as a progressive voice within Nigeria's increasingly sophisticated real estate sector, driven by a clear philosophy: **helping investors build prosperity, one property at a time.**

It is a philosophy that recognises that real estate is much more than land and buildings. A successful development must respond to the way people live, work and invest. It must offer quality, functionality and a compelling reason for its value to endure.

That thinking has shaped Mr Richmond Diei leadership of Richbel Estate & Realtors Limited.

A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE, A LOCAL VISION

A graduate of Bowie State University, Maryland, USA, where he earned a degree in International Business, Mr Richmond Diei brings an international perspective to the Nigerian real estate market.

His background has contributed to an approach that combines strategic development, property investment and market expansion, while remaining firmly focused on the opportunities and realities of the Nigerian market.

Beyond Richbel Estate, Diei also serves on the boards of Brucad Investment Limited and Golden Key Property Nigeria Limited, where he contributes to investment strategies and sustainable business growth.

His journey reflects the emergence of a new generation of Nigerian real estate entrepreneurs, professionals who increasingly view property development through the lens of investment, lifestyle, technology and long-term urban transformation.

RICHBEL HEIGHTS: AN ADDRESS BEYOND THE ORDINARY

Perhaps the clearest expression of Richmond Diei's development philosophy is **Richbel Height**, the company's newly launched residential development in the heart of Victoria Island, Lagos.

Rising ten storeys above one of Lagos' most prestigious neighbourhoods, Richbel Height has been conceived for discerning homeowners and investors seeking more than a conventional apartment.

The development brings together refined architecture, smart technology and sustainable design to create a contemporary residential experience defined by comfort, sophistication, security and enduring value.

Its location is equally strategic.

Situated at 19 Saka Tinubu, Victoria Island, Richbel Heights places residents close to leading business hubs, premium retail, fine dining, entertainment, healthcare and schools.

It is an address designed around the reality of modern Lagos living proximity without compromise.

The development comprises just **31 residences**—twelve 2-bedroom apartments, sixteen 3-bedroom apartments, two 4-bedroom apartments and an exclusive 4-bedroom penthouse.

Each residence is complemented by a

private one-bedroom service quarter, adding functionality to the development's luxury proposition.

But beyond the numbers, the thinking behind Richbel Height is what stands out.

The project seeks to demonstrate that luxury residential development in Lagos can be simultaneously elegant, intelligent and purposeful.

From smart building features to carefully curated amenities and spaces designed around contemporary lifestyles, every element has been considered to create a residential experience that extends beyond aesthetics.

MORE THAN A BUILDING

For Mr. Richmond Diei, Richbel Heights represents more than another project in the Richbel portfolio.

It is a statement of intent.

It demonstrates a belief that the future of Nigerian real estate belongs to developments that understand their occupants and investors equally well.

The modern property buyer wants an attractive home but also wants functionality. Investors want returns but increasingly seek quality assets capable of retaining their appeal. And today's luxury market demands not simply expensive finishes, but thoughtful design, intelligent infrastructure, security and convenience.

Richbel Heights brings these considerations together within one vertical community.

In doing so, it offers a glimpse into the direction of Richbel Estate & Realtors Limited—and perhaps into the wider evolution of premium residential development in Lagos.

> **For Richmond Diei, real estate is more than the business of buildings. It is about creating assets that deliver both a superior lifestyle and enduring value**

THE LEGACY AHEAD

Every developer eventually becomes part of the city he or she helps to build.

The buildings remain long after the sales campaigns have ended. The streets evolve around them. Families live in them. Businesses emerge around them. Investments change hands. And, over time, individual projects become part of the story of a city.

That is why the responsibility of the developer extends beyond construction.

It is about understanding the future.

For Mr. Richmond Diei, that future appears to be one where Nigerian real estate can compete on the strength of design, innovation, quality and investment value.

As he celebrates another year, his story is therefore still being written.

Richbel Heights may be one of his latest chapters, but it is unlikely to be his final one.

At **Habitat Magazine**, we celebrate Mr. Richmond Diei for his vision, enterprise and leadership he continues to bring to Nigeria's built environment.

We celebrate a developer who is not simply building properties but building opportunities.

And we celebrate a man whose professional philosophy is captured in a simple but powerful ambition:

To build prosperity, one property at a time.

Happy Birthday, Richmond Diei.

May the years ahead bring greater vision, bigger possibilities and an even more enduring legacy.

Richbel Heights

Rising in the heart of Victoria Island, Lagos, Richbel Heights is a landmark residential development that redefines contemporary luxury. Designed for discerning homeowners and investors, it combines refined architecture, smart technology, and sustainable design to deliver an exceptional living experience in one of Lagos' most prestigious and connected neighbourhoods.

Perfectly positioned at the centre of the city's commercial, financial, and lifestyle district, Richbel Heights places world-class business hubs, premium retail, fine dining, entertainment, healthcare, and leading schools just moments away. It is an address that offers the convenience of urban living with the exclusivity of a distinguished residential community.

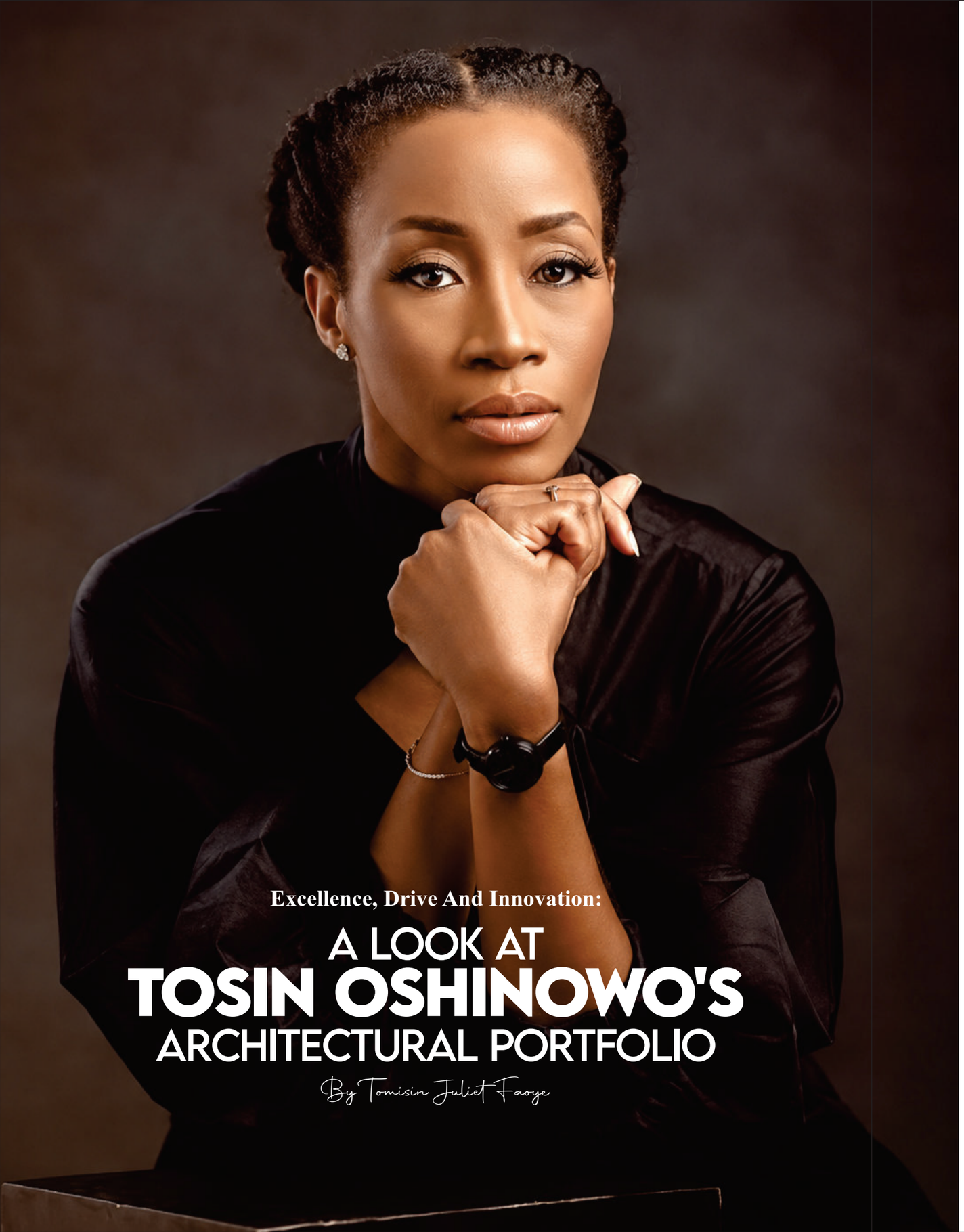
Richbel Heights

This elegant ten-storey tower comprises of just thirty-one meticulously designed residences, including twelve 2-bedroom apartments, sixteen 3-bedroom apartments, two 4-bedroom apartments, and an exclusive 4-bedroom penthouse. Some residents are complemented with one bedroom service quarters, providing additional comfort and functionality.

Thoughtfully crafted to promote healthy, modern living, Richbel Heights blends timeless architecture with premium amenities, intelligent building features, and beautifully curated spaces. Every detail has been considered to create a lifestyle defined by comfort, sophistication, security, and enduring value.

Three-bedroom
Residence

RICHBEL
HEIGHTS
19 Saka Tinubu, Victoria Island. Lagos



Excellence, Drive And Innovation:

A LOOK AT TOSIN OSHINOWO'S ARCHITECTURAL PORTFOLIO

By Tomisin Juliet Faoye

There is something about excellence; it speaks long before you walk into the room.

Nigerian architect, Tosin Oshinowo, has, over the years, built a stunning reputation for herself in the world of architecture, gaining recognition not just in Nigeria or Africa but around the world.

Based in Lagos, Nigeria, she is widely celebrated for her concept of "Afrominimalism"—a design philosophy that strips away excess to offer clean, modern lines while deeply embedding Yoruba culture, local craftsmanship, and climate-conscious solutions into every structure. She is the principal of Oshinowo Studio (formerly CmDesign Atelier) and the founder of the contemporary furniture line Ìlà Ìlẹ́.

Oshinowo studied at Kingston University London and the renowned Architectural Association School of Architecture (AA) before obtaining a Master's degree in Development and Planning from University College London (UCL). She spent her early career working at elite global firms including Skidmore, Owings & Merrill (SOM) in London and the Office for Metropolitan Architecture (OMA) in Rotterdam.

She and her architectural firm, Oshinowo Studio, have been responsible for some of the most amazing buildings in Nigeria, a testament in real time of her expertise. Some of her projects include:

1. **Maryland Mall (Lagos)**: Affectionately dubbed the "Big Black Box" by locals, this landmark features a unique, striking exterior wrapped in a massive digital billboard network.
2. **Lantern House (Ikoyi)**: A premier showcase of her climate-just approach, using patterned, open steel screens to maximize natural ventilation and light while bypassing heavy reliance on energy-draining air conditioning.
3. **Adidas West Africa Flagship Store:** A commercial retail marvel incorporating traditional African weaving patterns directly into an engineered, energy-conscious building facade.
4. **Homes for Ngarannam:** A major humanitarian initiative in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), rebuilding an entire community displaced by Boko Haram with respect for local Kanuri cultural layouts.

Beyond houses, Tosin Oshinowo has been involved in some amazing design and curation projects. Some of these include:

1. **Ìlà Ìlẹ́ (House of Lines):** A vibrant furniture line launched in 2017 that complements her minimalist architecture. Her chairs are handcrafted in Lagos using West African teak wood and brilliant, traditional Aṣọ-Òkè fabrics.
2. **Sharjah Architecture Triennial (2023):** She served as the lead curator for the second edition of this prominent global platform, centering the exhibition on "The Beauty of Impermanence" and alternative urbanism across the Global South.
3. **Lagos Biennial (2019):** She co-curated the second iteration of this critical arts and urbanism platform in Nigeria.

Oshinowo was the convener of Sho-n-Tell, an annual event series that created a platform for undergraduate and postgraduate students of the University of Lagos to share the same studio with practicing professionals in order to enhance their learning through exposure to the professionals' wealth of experience.

Some awards she has received across the span of her career include:

- Architect of the Year, 3rd City People Real Estate Awards (2017)
- Lord's Achievers Awards for Creativity (2019)Finalist,
- Diversity in Architecture Divia Awards (2023);
- Top Architect for Community, Monocle Design Awards (2024);
- Special Mention, 19th Venice Architecture Biennale for "Alternative Urbanism: The Self-Organised Markets of Lagos" (2025).

Tosin Oshinowo is one woman who is working to achieve groundbreaking success. Already an icon, Oshinowo continues on, not stopping, not relenting. With every new project, she proves that she can achieve everything she sets her mind to. And that, to the hundreds of young architects watching, is the greatest inspiration ever.

ZUHURA ZUHAIR:

ARCHITECT, INNOVATOR, RAMMED EARTH EXPERT

Tomisin Juliet Faoye

Architecture in Nigeria is becoming more diverse everyday. From design styles to the incorporation of smart technology, the options are broadening when it comes to how houses are constructed.
At the helm of one facet of this innovation is UK trained Nigerian Architect, Zuhura Zuhair. Known for thinking outside the box, Zuhura specializes in sustainable, affordable, and impact-driven design. She is widely recognized for her advocacy of rammed earth construction as a viable, eco-friendly solution to the housing deficits in Nigeria.
Zuhura Zuhair completed her undergraduate degree in architecture at Newcastle University and later earned her postgraduate degree from the University of Huddersfield. Following the completion of her degrees, she became a chartered architect in the United Kingdom, where she worked with Legal & General Modular Homes, the operator of Europe's largest factory at the time, which manufactured up to 3,000 modular homes annually.

She won 2nd place in the high-profile Home After Crisis design competition, an initiative organized by the International Organization for Migration (IOM / UN Migration Agency) and the Nigeria Humanitarian Fund (NHF). Her entry designed low-cost, modular, and incremental housing options for conflict-displaced communities in rural North-East Nigeria.
Returning to Nigeria to practice, she began implementing natural earthen architecture. Her modular housing layouts feature a structural blend of sandy soil, clay, gravel, and minimal cement. Comparing material costs, rammed earth can save up to 50% compared to block walls while providing passive indoor thermal cooling, bulletproof resilience, and long-term durability.

Zuhura's design philosophy is driven by the need to create a real, tangible and transformative impact on people and the environment. This led her to begin to research about more sustainable ways of designing, sparking in her an interest in climate responsive design and construction methods that are environmentally restorative and have holistic advantage.
When she began to research into alternative construction methods, Zuhura discovered the numerous advantages of rammed earth. These include its affordability, energy efficiency, thermal comfort and general superiority to conventional construction methods. Rammed earth is bulletproof, non-toxic, and regulates humidity. Upon making these discoveries, Zuhura began to practice all that she'd learned in theory about the technique.

Zuhura believes that rammed earth is not only durable. It also possesses aesthetic and cultural significance and is a return to indigenous materials, meaning it could potentially reduce dependence on importation.
Moving forward, Arc. Zuhura Zuhair aims to take her rammed earth advocacy a step further by organizing trainings and workshops to enlightenment developers about the boundless possibilities that are available in the Nigerian architectural space if rammed earth is embraced as an alternative construction method.

In a space where every innovation leans towards technology and the importation of global ideas, Arc. Zuhura, through her work, is pointing us back to our roots and proving beyond any doubt, that the possibilities are endless when we look inward and embrace homegrown materials and methods.

THE WINDOW PROBLEM IN MODERN AFRICAN HOMES

By Charis Raji

There is a particular image of modern luxury architecture that has become almost universal: enormous panes of glass, slim frames, expansive views and rooms flooded with natural light. It photographs beautifully.

But in much of Africa, the question is not whether a glass wall looks contemporary. It is whether the building can remain comfortable after the sun has been hitting it for six hours. This is where the modern African window has a problem. We often treat windows as visual features when, in a hot climate, they are also thermal infrastructure.

A window is an environmental machine. Windows determine how much daylight enters a room. They influence ventilation. They affect solar heat gain. They determine whether air can move through a building. They can also become one of the weakest points in the thermal envelope.

Research on tropical building design has repeatedly demonstrated that window glazing can allow substantial solar radiation into interiors, increasing indoor temperatures and cooling demand. A recent study from Nigeria comparing window and shading strategies similarly identified solar penetration through glazing as an important contributor to indoor heat.

This is why the “more glass equals more luxury” equation becomes questionable in tropical climates like ours. More glass can mean more view, but it can also mean more heat. And once that heat enters the room, the air conditioner has to remove it. The building first creates the problem, and the mechanical system then spends energy correcting it.

The obvious question is: what should our windows look like instead? There is no single answer because Africa contains multiple climate zones. A home in humid Lagos does not face exactly the same environmental conditions as one in dry Kano and other Northern states, high-altitude Nairobi or coastal Accra. But the principle is consistent: The window should respond to the climate rather than simply imitate an architectural aesthetic.

That means considering orientation. A window facing intense afternoon sun is not performing the same job as one facing a shaded courtyard. It means considering external shading. It means deciding whether windows need to open and how much. It means designing for cross-ventilation rather than assuming mechanical cooling will always be available.

Research conducted on low-income tropical housing in Kampala found that both building orientation and window type significantly influenced occupants' thermal comfort. Another recent field study in sub-Saharan Africa found that passive housing interventions can produce measurable reductions in indoor heat: cool roofs reduced the daytime heat index by approximately 3.3°C in the study's houses.

The importance of all these data is not for decorative details; instead, they are building-performance decisions.

There is a broader design question here. African architecture has historically developed sophisticated responses to heat: courtyards, shaded verandas, deep roof overhangs, screens, thick walls, high ceilings and controlled openings.

Contemporary architecture sometimes removes these features in pursuit of a cleaner international aesthetic. The result can be visually impressive but environmentally dependent on air conditioning. This is particularly concerning as electricity costs rise and extreme heat becomes more frequent.

A building designed around permanent mechanical cooling assumes that energy will always be available and affordable. That is not a safe assumption. The better approach is passive-first design. Use orientation. Use shade. Use ventilation. Use thermal mass where appropriate. Use vegetation.

Then use mechanical cooling to supplement what the architecture is already doing.

The future of African residential architecture may therefore require us to rethink what luxury means. Luxury is often associated with larger windows, which is very laughable. Perhaps it should be associated with better-performing windows. One that frames a beautiful view without turning the room into a greenhouse.

Or one that allows daylight without excessive heat gain. Another that can be opened when outdoor conditions permit and sealed when they do not. A window positioned to capture prevailing breezes rather than simply maximize a façade.

In other words, the best window that's suitable for our climate may not be the largest one. It may be the one that understands where it is. Because in a warming continent, architecture that ignores climate will eventually become expensive to live in. And the window is where that problem often begins.

THE NEW MEANING OF

GOOD LOCATION

By Charis Raji

You ask someone why they think a property is valuable, and their answer begins and ends with location. The property is close to the business district, a major airport, the island, a major landmark or a major road. But proximity is becoming an increasingly incomplete way of understanding location because a place can be geographically close and functionally far away. A scenario can be a neighbourhood being ten kilometres from an office district while requiring two hours to reach it. Another may be farther away but connected by a reliable transport corridor.

The second location may ultimately be more useful. This is a hint that the future of property location may be less about distance and more about access.
A property's address tells you where it is. Accessibility tells you what you can do from there. Can you get to work? Can your children reach school? Can you get to a hospital? Can you buy groceries? Can you meet friends? Can you walk somewhere? Can you reach public transport? Can visitors find you?
These are not secondary considerations. They are part of your routines and are increasingly part of the value proposition of a neighbourhood.

Research into the relationship between accessibility and property value has consistently found that transport access and neighbourhood characteristics can influence housing prices. One study of Shanghai's Pudong district, for example, found a positive relationship between accessibility and property values, although the strength of the relationship varied across neighbourhoods.

Research on commercial real estate has similarly found a "walkability premium": a 10-point increase in Walk Score was associated with higher property values across office, retail and apartment properties in the dataset studied.
The exact percentages cannot simply be transplanted to African cities. But the broader principle is useful: people value places that make everyday life easier.

Lagos can be a useful case study in this context. Consider how Lagos property conversations are usually framed around Ikoyi, Victoria Island, Lekki, Ikeja and Yaba. The neighbourhood name itself often becomes shorthand for value, but within each of these places, the experience of location can vary enormously.

A property in any of these aforementioned locations may be technically close to a supermarket or museum or landmark but impossible to reach comfortably on foot. A development may be near a major road but spend much of the day trapped in congestion. A residential estate may offer excellent internal amenities but have poor connections to the wider city.

This is why the next stage of African property development should perhaps think in terms of urban access rather than simply neighbourhood prestige. A prestigious address does not automatically produce a functional city.

When you buy a home, you are not only buying the building. You are buying a daily routine which includes routine and time it takes to get to work, where children go to school, where groceries are bought, where friends live, how often your car is used, whether an evening walk is possible and how easily guests can visit. These things create a hidden cost of location.

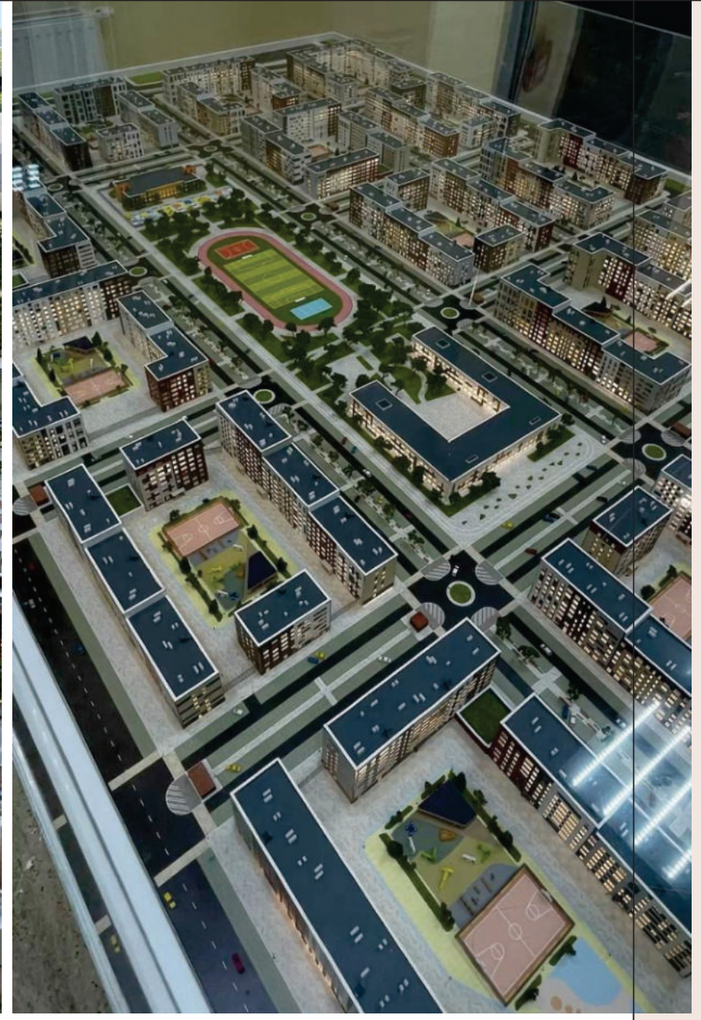
Two houses with identical prices can have radically different lifestyles if one requires an additional 90 minutes of commuting every day. Over a year, that becomes hundreds of hours. Over a decade, thousands.
The property with the shorter and more reliable daily journey may therefore be delivering a form of value that does not appear in the square footage.

The global conversation around the 15-minute city is essentially an attempt to formalize this principle: everyday needs should be accessible within a relatively short distance. Nigeria (and the rest of African countries) cannot simply import the 15-minute city as a planning slogan.
Its cities have different densities, infrastructure systems, income levels and spatial patterns. But the underlying question is highly relevant: How much of everyday life can happen close to home?
This matters for developers because neighbourhood amenities increasingly influence the attractiveness of residential property.

A 2025 Nigerian study of Awka (Anambra State) found that proximity to schools, healthcare, markets and public transport, along with infrastructure such as roads, electricity and water, were significant factors associated with residential property values. That is the practical version of the theory. People value access.

This could (and should) change how developers think about prime property. The best location may not always be the most expensive neighbourhood. It may be the neighbourhood with the strongest combination of: access + amenities + mobility + safety + environmental quality + economic opportunity.

That is a much harder thing to market than "five minutes from the airport"; but it may also be a more useful definition. Because cities are changing. Hybrid work is changing commuting. Newer transport infrastructure is changing accessibility. Climate change is making shade and walkability more important. Families are placing greater value on schools and healthcare. Younger residents increasingly value cafés, parks, cultural spaces and third places.
The location equation is becoming more complicated because life itself is becoming more complicated. The future of real estate may therefore belong to developers who stop asking:
"Where is this property?" and start asking:
"What kind of life can someone live from here?"
That may be the most useful definition of location yet.



The Investment Case For Mixed-Use Developments

By Charis Raji

A mixed-use development can sound like a simple formula: put apartments above shops. Add offices. Perhaps a hotel or two. Maybe restaurants, a gym and some entertainment. And call it a mixed-use development.

But the strongest mixed-use projects are not simply collections of different property types. They are small urban ecosystems.

And that distinction is important because the investment case for mixed-use development is not really about putting more things on one plot. It is about making those things more valuable by putting them together.

The conventional single-use property model is relatively straightforward. A residential building earns from residents. An office building earns from businesses. A retail centre earns from shoppers. A hotel earns from guests. Each depends heavily on one principal demand stream.

Mixed-use development creates the possibility of several streams operating within the same ecosystem. Residents can become customers of the retail component. Office workers create daytime footfall. Hotel guests create demand for restaurants and services. Retail workers benefit from nearby housing. Visitors create additional demand for hospitality.

The uses can reinforce one another. That is the theory. But does the financial evidence support it? The answer is more nuanced than the marketing language suggests.

One study examining mixed-use investment performance found that office and retail properties within mixed-use geographies had substantially higher market values and total returns than comparable properties outside those areas, although the effect was less clear for apartments.

In other words, mixed-use can create value, but it does not automatically create value for every asset within it. That distinction is important for investors. The real premium may be convenience. The strongest asset within a mixed-use development may not be the building. It may be time.

Some African cities are frequently characterized by long commutes and poor connections between housing, jobs and services. The World Bank identifies physical fragmentation and inadequate accessibility as significant constraints on African urban productivity.

A development that allows residents to live, work, shop and socialize within a relatively compact environment is therefore selling something more valuable than convenience.

It is selling fewer journeys. That matters. If a resident somewhere can walk downstairs or a few steps to buy groceries rather than sit in traffic for an hour, the retail component creates value for the residential component. If an office worker can eat lunch nearby rather than leave the district, the restaurant benefits from predictable demand.

If a hotel sits within a development that already has restaurants, entertainment and retail, the hotel has an ecosystem it would otherwise need to create itself. The development begins behaving like a city.

There is a major difference between mixed-use and mixed buildings. A development can contain residential, retail and offices and still be unpleasant to walk through.

This is particularly relevant in Lagos. Research examining pedestrian experience in mixed-use developments in Marina found that pedestrian satisfaction was influenced by factors including building spacing, lighting, route directness and surface conditions.

That finding is useful because it exposes an often-overlooked problem. The economic value of mixed-use development depends partly on whether people can actually move between the uses.

A restaurant hidden behind a car park is technically part of a mixed-use development. It is not necessarily part of a successful urban experience. The same applies to residential towers surrounded by roads with no comfortable pedestrian connections. Integration has to be physical, not merely contractual.

There is another reason investors should approach mixed-use developments carefully.

More uses mean more complexity. Different tenants have different requirements. Retail requires footfall. Offices require business demand. Hotels require hospitality operations. Residential buildings require long-term management.

Parking and infrastructure have to accommodate different peak periods. A project can therefore become more resilient through diversification, but it can also become harder to finance, build and operate. This is one reason mixed-use projects require unusually strong master planning. The question should not be: “What can we fit on this site?” It should be: “What combination of uses can support one another here?”

A neighbourhood with strong residential demand but weak retail demand may need a different mix from a business district with large daytime populations. The economics have to come before the amenity list.

Africa's urbanization makes the model particularly relevant. As cities grow, the cost of moving between disconnected land uses becomes increasingly expensive in both time and infrastructure.

Mixed-use development offers one way to increase the productivity of urban land while bringing everyday activities closer together. But the future may be even more integrated. Instead of a shopping mall with apartments attached, developers may increasingly create neighbourhoods where residential, retail, hospitality, healthcare, education, leisure and workspaces are planned as one system

The distinction between “real estate development” and “urban development” will become harder to maintain. That is where the real investment opportunity may lie.

The best mixed-use development is not the one with the most components. It is the one where each component makes another component more valuable. That is the difference between putting buildings together and building a place.

SHOULD YOU INVEST IN A CITY OR IN A PROPERTY?

By Charis Raji

The instinctive answer to a property investment question is usually another property question.

What is the rental yield? How much is the land worth? What is the expected capital appreciation? How much can the apartment be rented for in five years? But there is a question that often gets asked too late: What is happening to the city around the property?

A building does not appreciate in a vacuum. Its value is partly determined by what surrounds it: jobs, infrastructure, transport, population growth, businesses, schools, healthcare, retail, public spaces and the general economic health of the city. This distinction matters enormously in Africa, where some cities are expanding rapidly but not necessarily becoming more productive at the same pace.

The World Bank has described a persistent problem across African cities: urban populations are growing, but many cities remain physically fragmented, disconnected from jobs and markets, and insufficiently integrated into regional and global economies. The result is that cities can become crowded without becoming economically dense.

For a property investor, that should change the way the map is read.

Imagine two identical apartment buildings. One sits in a neighbourhood where roads are improving, employment is increasing, new businesses are arriving, public transport is expanding, and a growing population is competing for housing.

The other sits in a neighbourhood where land is cheap, but employment is stagnant, infrastructure is weak, and residents spend considerable time and money travelling to access jobs and services.

The buildings might have similar construction quality. Their investment prospects do not. This is the logic of agglomeration — the economic advantage created when people, businesses, skills and services cluster together.

A productive city gives property something valuable: demand.

Workers need somewhere to live. Businesses need offices. Visitors need hotels. Restaurants need customers. Retailers need footfall. Developers need land.

As the economic ecosystem becomes stronger, demand for physical space can increase.

The World Bank's research on African cities makes this connection explicit: cities generate economic advantages when firms can access larger markets, workers can reach jobs and businesses can benefit from clustering. But poor connectivity, fragmented land development and weak infrastructure can prevent those advantages from materializing.

This means an investor should not simply ask: “What is this property worth today?” They should ask: “What is happening to the economic ecosystem that gives this property value?”

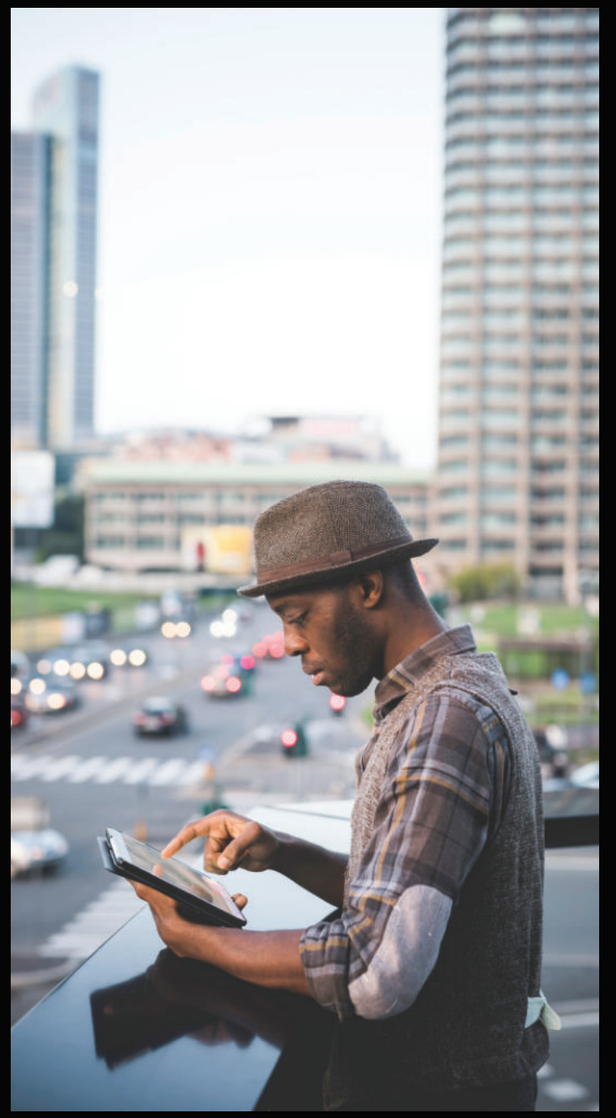
One of the easiest mistakes in property investment is confusing physical quality with investment quality. A beautiful house in a poorly connected neighbourhood is still a beautiful house. But beauty does not automatically produce liquidity.

If residents cannot easily get to work, if infrastructure deteriorates, if flooding becomes increasingly frequent, if

commercial activity moves elsewhere or if competing developments offer substantially better amenities, the property's relative attractiveness can decline.

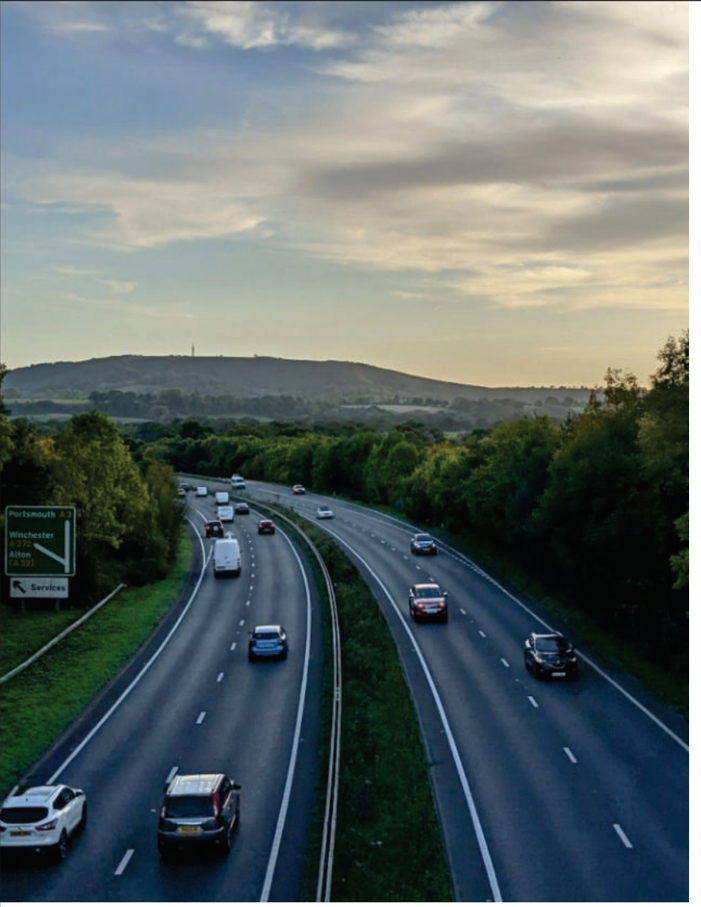
This is why location is more complicated than a postcode. A location is really a bundle of advantages and disadvantages. How quickly can residents reach their place of work or employment? How reliable is electricity? What is the road network like? Are schools nearby? Can residents access healthcare? What is happening to surrounding land? Is public infrastructure improving? Is the population growing because people are finding opportunities there — or simply because housing elsewhere has become unaffordable?
Those are investment questions.
A 2025 study of residential property in Awka, Nigeria, for example, found that proximity to amenities such as schools, healthcare, markets and public transport, alongside infrastructure including roads, electricity and water, were significant factors associated with residential property values.

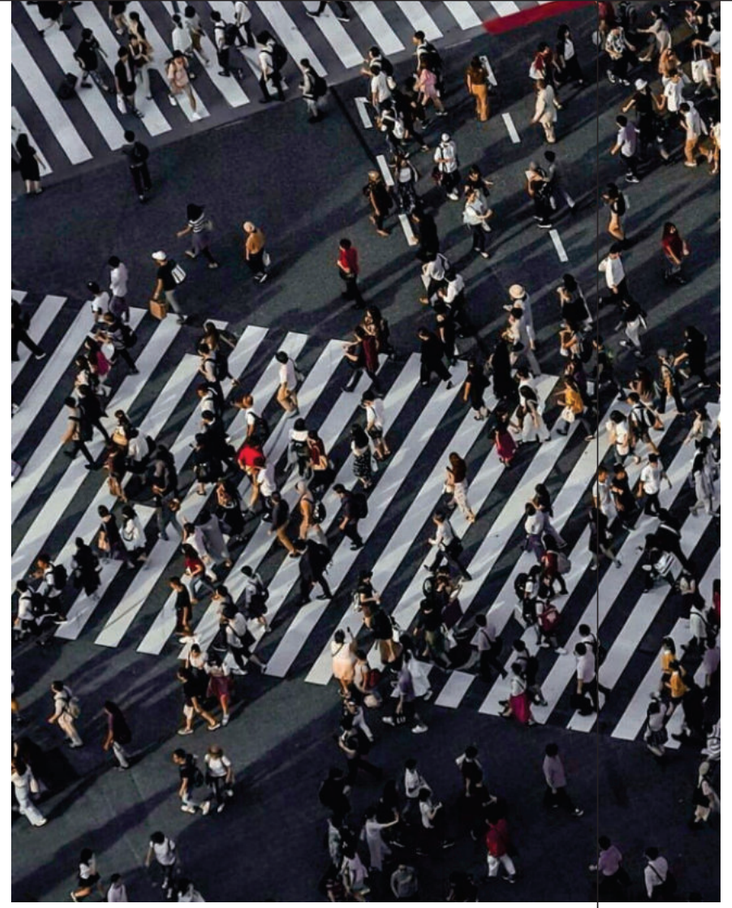
The lesson is straightforward: the value of a property is partly produced outside its boundaries.
So should you invest in a city? Not exactly. The better answer is that investors should evaluate both. A strong city does not guarantee that every property inside it will perform well. Poorly located, badly managed or overpriced assets can still be bad investments.
Likewise, an emerging city can contain exceptional opportunities. The point is to understand the relationship between the two.

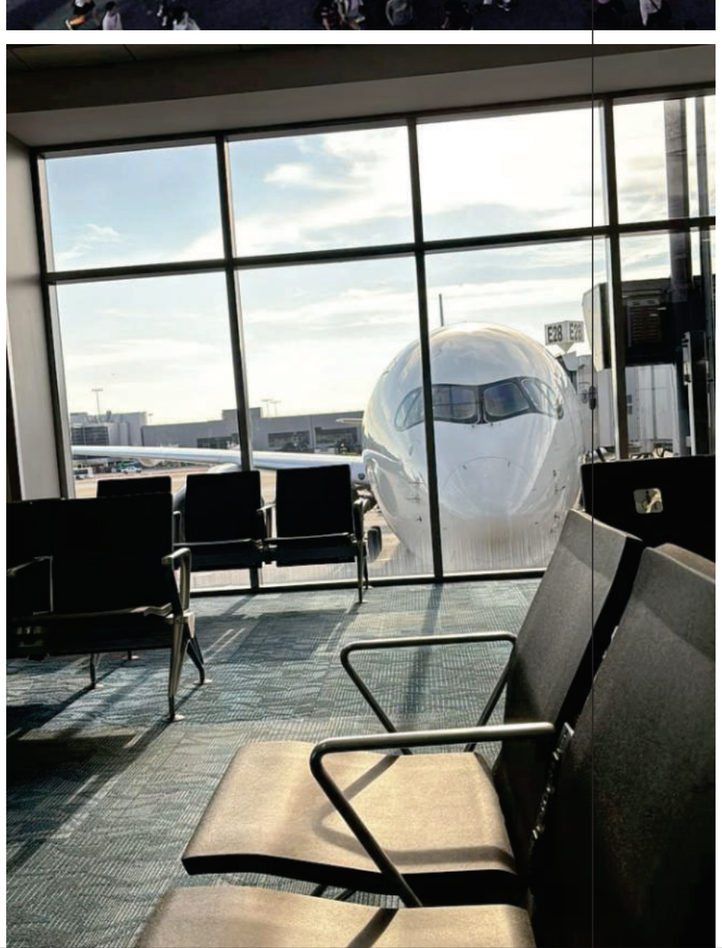


Before buying, an investor should study the city's trajectory:
- Where are jobs being created?
- Where is infrastructure being built?
- Where is population growth occurring?
- Where are businesses clustering?
- Which neighbourhoods are gaining accessibility?
- What new transport links are being planned?
- What is happening to land prices?
- What kinds of people are moving into the area?
- What kinds of businesses are following them?

The last two questions are particularly important. Population growth alone is not enough. Who is arriving, why are they arriving, and what are they bringing with them? A city attracting entrepreneurs, professionals, manufacturers, students, tourists and businesses has a different property trajectory from a city experiencing population growth without corresponding economic opportunity.
This way of thinking is especially relevant as our continent's cities continue to expand. The World Bank estimates that Africa's urban population will continue to grow substantially over the coming decades, creating enormous demand for housing, infrastructure and services. It argues that African cities need to coordinate land, infrastructure and urban development if they are to turn population growth into economic productivity.
That means future property investors may increasingly need to think like urban economists. They will need to understand not only buildings but urban trajectories. The most valuable information may not be on a property listing. It may be in a transport plan. A new university. A manufacturing zone. A technology cluster. A port expansion. A new road. A demographic shift. A change in land-use regulation. The building is where the investment sits.
But the city determines much of the environment in which that investment succeeds or fails. So perhaps the more intelligent property question is not: “Should I invest in a city or a property?” It is: “What is this city becoming; and is the property positioned for that future?”







WHY SOME AFRICAN CITIES ATTRACT MORE PROPERTY CAPITAL THAN OTHERS

By Charis Raji

Africa is urbanizing rapidly. But property capital is not following that growth evenly. That is one of the most interesting contradictions in the continent's real-estate story.

Millions of people may be moving into cities, yet investors do not automatically follow population. They follow opportunity. And opportunity is not distributed equally. It is tempting to assume that the biggest cities should automatically attract the most property investment.

After all, more people should mean more houses, offices, shops and infrastructure. But population creates demand; it does not necessarily create an investable market. For property capital to enter at scale, investors need some combination of economic activity, purchasing power, infrastructure, liquidity, legal certainty and confidence that demand will persist.

This explains why African cities can look surprisingly different from one another from an investor's perspective.

The World Bank's research on African cities argues that many urban centres are growing without achieving the economic density associated with successful urbanization elsewhere.

They are crowded, but disconnected from jobs and markets; fragmented, but expensive to navigate.

For capital, that distinction matters. An investor does not simply need people. They need an ecosystem capable of converting people into sustained economic demand.

Capital likes concentration. Businesses tend to cluster. Financial services cluster around financial centres. Technology companies cluster around talent and universities. Manufacturers cluster around logistics infrastructure. Hospitality clusters around tourism and business travel.

Property follows those clusters. This is one reason established economic centres continue to attract capital even when other cities have cheaper land. A cheaper plot does not necessarily compensate for the absence of customers, workers, infrastructure or supporting businesses.

The city itself becomes part of the investment proposition. Consider what happens when a new commercial district develops. The first wave may be offices. Then restaurants arrive. Then serviced apartments. Then hotels. Then gyms, supermarkets, schools, clinics and entertainment. Eventually, the area becomes an ecosystem rather than a collection of buildings. This is the power of agglomeration: economic activity reinforces itself.

But cities do not become attractive simply because they are already successful. Infrastructure can change the geography of opportunity. A new road can make a peripheral neighbourhood accessible. A new train connection can change commuting patterns. A port upgrade can strengthen a logistics corridor. An airport can increase business and tourism connectivity. A university can create an employment and student ecosystem around itself.

This is why property investors need to pay attention to infrastructure before it becomes obvious. By the time everyone agrees that an area is “prime,” some of the capital appreciation may already have happened.

The World Bank has repeatedly argued that African cities need earlier and better-coordinated infrastructure investment precisely because roads, transport and land development shape whether urban economies can generate agglomeration benefits.

But infrastructure has to be considered carefully. A road is not automatically transformative; its value depends on what it connects. A beautiful highway leading nowhere economically productive is less consequential than a modest transport improvement connecting a large labour force to a major employment centre.

The real question is not what infrastructure is being built. It is what economic relationships this infrastructure will make easier.

Property investors also need to look beyond physical infrastructure. Regulation matters. Land administration matters. Planning matters. Currency stability matters. Financing matters. The ability to enforce contracts matters.
These factors influence how comfortable investors are committing capital to assets that may take years to develop and decades to mature. The World Bank identifies land markets and institutional constraints as major factors affecting African cities' ability to attract investment and generate productive urban growth.
This is why a city with slightly higher land prices may sometimes be more attractive than a cheaper alternative. Cheap land is not necessarily cheap capital. If acquiring land is uncertain, infrastructure is unreliable, and planning approvals are unpredictable, the apparent discount can disappear through delays and risk.

Ultimately, property investors are not only buying buildings. They are buying a prediction about a place. They are betting that people will continue to want to live there. That businesses will continue to operate there. That infrastructure will improve. That incomes will support rents. That the neighbourhood will remain desirable. That the city will remain economically relevant. This is why cities with strong economic identities tend to have an advantage.
A city known for finance, technology, manufacturing, tourism, education, logistics or government has a clearer proposition than one whose growth is driven almost entirely by speculative land appreciation.

For emerging African cities, this creates a challenge and an opportunity. The goal should not simply be to attract property developers. It should be to develop an economic reason for developers to come. The next generation of African property markets will not necessarily be defined by population alone. Smaller cities with strong economic specializations could become increasingly attractive if they offer lower operating costs, improving infrastructure, good quality of life and clear routes into regional markets.

That suggests a different way of ranking cities. Not simply: Which city is growing fastest? But: Which city is becoming more productive? Which is becoming easier to move around? Which is attracting businesses? Which is developing specialized industries? Which is improving infrastructure? Which is becoming easier to invest in? And perhaps most importantly: Which cities are building the conditions that make future demand believable?
Property capital ultimately follows expectations. The cities that attract the most capital will therefore not necessarily be the ones shouting the loudest about their real-estate potential. They will be the ones quietly building an economic case strong enough that investors can see themselves there for the next twenty years.

CAN TECHNOLOGY MAKE CONSTRUCTION FASTER AND LESS WASTEFUL?

By Charis Raji

Construction has a strange relationship with technology. Almost every other industry has undergone dramatic digital transformation, yet construction remains heavily dependent on processes that would look familiar decades ago: drawings moving between teams, materials being ordered manually, workers coordinating across disconnected systems and changes being made on site after problems have already become expensive.

The result is an industry where delays, rework and waste are often treated as inevitable. They are not. Technology cannot eliminate every problem in construction, but it can make one of the world's most fragmented industries considerably more predictable.

Construction waste does not begin when a worker throws a damaged material into a skip. It begins much earlier, with inaccurate quantities, design changes, poor coordination, procurement errors or information that does not reach the right person at the right time.

A 2025 study examining construction waste in Nigeria identified numerous causes across a project's lifecycle and highlighted the potential of Building Information Modelling (BIM),

particularly during design and pre-contract stages, to reduce waste before materials reach the construction site.

That is one of the most important promises of construction technology: preventing mistakes rather than managing their consequences. If a digital model can reveal a clash between mechanical and structural systems before construction begins, the cost of correcting it is dramatically different from discovering the same problem after materials have been purchased and installed.

Building Information Modelling (BIM) is often presented as a sophisticated 3D model. That description misses the point. The real value of BIM is information. A properly developed model can contain data about dimensions, materials, systems and relationships between building components, allowing architects, engineers, contractors and other stakeholders to coordinate their work around a shared representation of the project.

This matters because construction is fundamentally a coordination problem. Hundreds of decisions have to align. A mistake in one discipline can create consequences for several others. Technology gives teams a chance to identify those conflicts earlier. The opportunity becomes even clearer when construction logistics are considered.
A recent 2026 study of Nigeria's construction industry reported average technology adoption at only 19%, compared with 89% in manufacturing, and linked low adoption to persistent logistics inefficiencies, material waste and project cost overruns. The study also identified power unreliability, currency volatility, skills shortages and regulatory gaps as barriers to technology adoption.

This is important because technology does not operate in a vacuum. A construction company can purchase sophisticated software and still struggle if suppliers are unreliable, electricity is inconsistent, or workers have not been trained to use the system. Digital transformation therefore requires more than buying licences. It requires changing workflows.

Construction procurement is one area where the change is already becoming visible. Digital platforms can make it easier to compare suppliers, track orders, monitor prices and document transactions.

In Nigeria, CutStruct has built a digital procurement platform around this exact problem, connecting developers and contractors with building-material suppliers and attempting to reduce some of the inefficiencies in a fragmented supply chain. The implications extend beyond convenience.

If developers can better predict material availability and delivery times, they can coordinate labour more effectively. If material quantities can be linked to digital project models, procurement can become more precise. If inventory can be tracked

digitally, unnecessary purchases can be reduced. If waste can be measured, contractors can begin to understand where money is being lost.

Technology turns waste from something that is simply thrown away into something that can potentially be measured and managed. AI could take this even further. Construction companies are beginning to explore AI for estimating, scheduling, document analysis, risk prediction, safety monitoring and project management. But the most valuable applications may not be the spectacular ones.

An AI system that identifies a recurring procurement delay could be more useful than an AI-generated building concept. A system that predicts when a project is likely to fall behind could be more valuable than a virtual-reality walkthrough. The question should always be: What expensive uncertainty are we trying to reduce? That question protects the industry from adopting technology simply because it is fashionable.

There is a danger, however, in assuming that digitizing a bad workflow automatically makes it better. Assuming a company has an inefficient procurement process and simply puts the same process online, it has created a digitally inefficient process.

If a project's information is incomplete, a digital model does not magically make it accurate. If a team refuses to share information, collaborative software cannot create collaboration by itself. Technology amplifies organizational capability. It does not replace it. This is particularly important in African construction markets, where technology adoption is often constrained by cost, skills and infrastructure.

The most interesting construction site of the future may not look radically different from today's site. There may still be concrete mixers, cranes, blocks, steel and workers in hard hats. The difference will be what happens around them. Materials will be tracked. Models will coordinate teams. Drones and sensors will collect information. AI will analyze schedules and risks.

Procurement systems will connect suppliers. Digital records will reduce information gaps. And decisions that once had to be made after a mistake occurred may increasingly be made before the mistake reaches the site.

That is where technology can genuinely make construction faster and less wasteful. Not by replacing construction with software, but by making the physical work more informed, more coordinated and less dependent on guesswork.

Why Trees Matter To Property

By Charis Raji

A tree rarely appears on a property valuation. A number does. The square metres of land. The number of bedrooms. The floor area. The location. The age of the building. The rental income.

But what if one of the assets contributing to the experience (and potentially the value) of that property is growing quietly outside the spreadsheet? The tree.

Trees are usually treated as landscaping. Increasingly, however, they should be understood as infrastructure.

Trees perform several jobs at once. They provide shade. They intercept rainwater. They help reduce urban heat. They filter pollutants. They provide habitation for animals. They influence how streets and neighbourhoods feel.

And in some markets, research suggests that these benefits are reflected in property prices.

A large meta-analysis of 21 property-value studies in the United States found a positive relationship between tree cover and residential property values, with neighbourhoods containing more than 25% tree cover showing a larger estimated elasticity than neighbourhoods with very low tree cover.

Another study found that tree canopy within 100 - 400 metres of properties was associated with higher house prices, with the effect varying according to neighbourhood context. These findings should not be copied directly onto Lagos, Accra or Nairobi. Housing markets are different. Tree species are different. Climate is different. Income levels are different. But the principle is difficult to

ignore: environmental quality can have economic value.

In African cities, the relationship between trees and property may become even more consequential as temperatures rise.

A 2025 study of Accra and Kumasi found that many residents perceived their cities as becoming hotter and that most respondents valued trees and green spaces for cooling urban areas. The study also measured a willingness to pay for increased urban greening.

Some conversations that happen on Nigerian Twitter have a few accounts complaining about the lack of trees in Lagos and some parts of Nigeria and how it stems from a lack of proper urban planning. This is significant because it gives a hint that people do not merely see trees as decoration. They understand that trees change the physical

experience of the city.

A shaded street is more comfortable. A shaded compound is more usable. A tree-lined neighbourhood can be more pleasant to walk through. A canopy can reduce direct exposure to solar radiation.

These benefits affect how people experience a place. And people make property decisions based partly on how they expect a place to make them feel.

While this has shed more light on the importance of trees, there is a complication. If green neighbourhoods become more desirable, their value can rise. That sounds like good news. But it can also create a problem.
Research on urban tree canopy has raised concerns that the property premium associated with greener neighbourhoods can contribute to gentrification, because wealthier households may be better positioned to pay for the environmental benefits trees provide.

This matters for African cities. If tree planting becomes part of urban redevelopment but is concentrated primarily in already wealthy neighbourhoods, cities could unintentionally create unequal access to cooling and environmental quality. The question therefore cannot simply be: “How do we plant more trees?” It should be: “Where are trees most needed, and who benefits from them?”

For property developers, this creates an opportunity to rethink landscaping and seek inspiration from our counterparts and property developments in other developed countries and climates. A mature tree should not necessarily be seen as something standing in the way of development.

It can exist as a piece of infrastructure. A development with established canopy has already acquired something that would take decades to reproduce. New developments can also treat tree planting as part of the performance of the site. Where should shade be created? Which routes will pedestrians use? Which areas experience the greatest heat? Where can vegetation help manage stormwater? Which species can survive the local climate?

These are design questions. They are also excellent investment questions. The future property market may increasingly distinguish between developments that simply look green and those that actually perform better environmentally.

And as heat becomes a more significant part of urban life, the tree may become something far more valuable than an ornamental feature. It may become one of the cheapest pieces of climate infrastructure a city has.

Perhaps it is time we stopped asking how much a tree costs to plant, and started asking 'how much value does a city lose when it has none?’

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THE FUNDING PROBLEM REAL ESTATE DEVELOPERS MAY BE SOLVING THE WRONG WAY

By John Oamen, Cutstruct CEO

Across Africa's construction and real estate markets, the conversation around development finance often starts in the same place: “Where can I find capital?” It is an understandable question. Construction requires significant upfront investment, while developers operate in environments where costs, timelines and market conditions can change quickly. But another question deserves to come first: “Is the project ready to assess finance?”

That distinction matters. A good project is not automatically a finance-ready project. A compelling location, attractive concept or strong market opportunity may create potential, but financing conversations ultimately require something more concrete: evidence that the company, project, costs, approvals, delivery plan and path to revenue can be understood and verified.

Developers are often told to prepare documents when they begin looking for financing. What is less often explained is why each document matters. The result can be frustrating: a long list of requirements that feels like another administrative hurdle between the project and capital. But the documents are telling a story.

A Certificate of Incorporation establishes that there is a legal entity behind the opportunity. Corporate records help establish ownership and control. Tax documentation and audited financial statements provide evidence about financial standing and history. Industry registration can provide an additional signal of professional standing. Evidence of completed projects helps demonstrate delivery experience. Then there is the project itself.

Approved architectural and structural drawings help establish what is being built.

. A current Bill of Quantities creates a structured view of materials, labour and quantities. Planning approval establishes the regulatory basis to proceed. Evidence of land title addresses the underlying asset position. A project cashflow and drawdown schedule connects the capital required with the stages at which it will be needed. Evidence of demand; such as offtake agreements, expressions of interest or pre-sales, helps answer what happens when the project is completed.

Seen this way, documentation is not bureaucracy. It is evidence. This was one of the principles behind ‘Cutstructs Developer Finance Readiness Tool.

We wanted to make the pre-screening process easier to understand by connecting each question to the reason it is being asked.
Consider a Bill of Quantities. A developer may see “Do you have a current BoQ?” as a simple yes-or-no question. But the underlying financing question is

about cost visibility. If the project does not have a structured cost baseline, it becomes harder to understand the capital requirement and how that capital will be deployed.

The same applies to approved drawings. The underlying signal is scope certainty: can the project be understood clearly enough for someone outside the development team to assess what is actually being built?
Cash flow is another example. Construction finance is not simply about securing a total amount. Timing matters. A project needs capital at particular stages, and drawdowns need to connect to the construction plan and expected expenditure.
Demand matters too. Offtake agreements, expressions of interest, and pre-sales provide evidence that there is a route from completed units to revenue.
Once developers understand these connections, the assessment becomes less intimidating. The questions stop looking like a checklist and start looking like a map.

One of the most important mindset shifts in financing readiness is this: a gap is not necessarily a rejection. Discovering a gap early can be valuable. Imagine a developer begins conversations with potential financiers and only later discovers that the project does not have a current BoQ or a properly prepared cash flow and drawdown schedule. The developer may have spent weeks pursuing capital before learning something that could have been identified at the beginning.

A readiness assessment changes that sequence. Instead of discovering gaps deep into a financing process, the developer can identify them earlier and decide what to do. That is why the result of a pre-screen should not be treated as a badge. The useful question is not simply, “Did I qualify?” It is, “What does this result tell me to do next?”
For Cutstruct, the outcomes are deliberately practical. An early-stage result indicates that the developer should begin with the basics and build credibility through verified documentation. A partially ready result indicates that there is potential, but the project needs structuring and a conversation with a financing advisor. A qualified result indicates that the project has met the pre-screen threshold and can move toward full

screening. The score is therefore a directional signal.

There is a broader implication for the construction finance ecosystem. If developers understand readiness earlier, financing conversations can become more productive. Developers can spend less time approaching capital with incomplete information and more time strengthening the fundamentals that make projects easier to assess. Financiers, in turn, can engage with better-prepared opportunities.

The ecosystem benefits when the distance between a developer's idea and a financeable proposition becomes easier to understand.

As construction becomes more data-driven, procurement records, project documentation, financial information and delivery milestones can increasingly be organised into systems rather than remaining scattered across emails, spreadsheets and conversations.

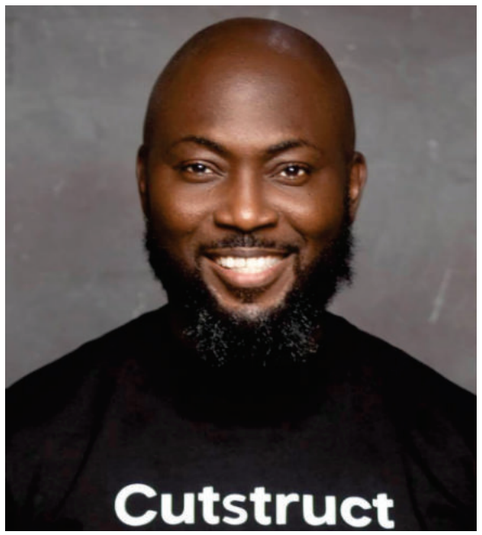
The objective should not be to create more paperwork. It should be to create more clarity.
A project should be able to tell its story: who is behind it, what is being built, what it will cost, what approvals support it, how capital will be deployed, and what evidence exists for demand. That is the foundation of financing readiness.

I do not believe every project needs to be perfect before a developer begins a financing conversation. But I do believe developers deserve to know where their project stands. That is the central idea behind the Cutstruct Developer Finance Readiness Tool.
The pre-screen takes about eight minutes and asks a structured set of questions across corporate and project readiness. The purpose is not to replace full diligence or promise funding. It is to provide an early, practical view of readiness and the next step.

For developers, that can mean greater clarity about what to fix. For financing conversations, it can mean better preparation. And for the broader construction ecosystem, it can mean fewer conversations built on assumptions and more built on evidence

The question should no longer be only, “Who will fund my project?” The better starting question is: “What would a serious financing conversation need to see, and how ready am I to show it?”.
That is the shift from seeking funding to preparing for finance. And in construction, better preparation is often where better outcomes begin.

Article CTA: Developers can take the free 8-minute Cutstruct Developer Finance Readiness pre-screen at apply.cutstruct.com.



WHEN THE CITY BECOMES A COMMUNITY

By Ameh Destiny

As African cities expand, master-planned communities are asking a new question: can a self-sufficient urban community remain connected to the city beyond its boundaries?

"Alaro City is planned and built with a focus on allowing residents to live, work and play without the burden of commuting into and across congested regions." — Yomi Ademola, Managing Director, Alaro City

What if the future of African cities is not simply about building more homes, but about building places where people do not have to travel far to live their daily lives? Imagine waking up and walking to work, your child's school is minutes away, the supermarket is around the corner, there is a restaurant for dinner, a park for an evening walk, a clinic when you need one and perhaps a gym, office or entertainment space within the same development.
You have not escaped the city, you have simply brought more of the city closer to you and that idea is at the heart of a growing generation of master-planned communities and new cities emerging across Africa. Instead of building residential estates and leaving the rest of urban life to develop around them, these projects attempt to bring homes, workplaces, schools, retail, healthcare, recreation and infrastructure into a coordinated environment. The appeal is obvious. In cities where traffic can turn a short journey into an exhausting ritual, proximity has become a form of luxury. But these developments raise a larger question that goes beyond convenience: If a community can provide almost everything its residents need, what should its relationship with the wider city be? That question is becoming increasingly important as African cities expand

The City Within the City
Lagos provides one of the continent's most visible examples, Eko Atlantic. It is being developed on reclaimed land beside Victoria Island as a new coastal city with its own infrastructure. Its master plan incorporates residential, commercial, retail, education, leisure and public-realm uses, while the development provides infrastructure including power, water, wastewater treatment, drainage and fibre connectivity. Eko Atlantic describes its vision as a "city within a city." At first glance, the phrase seems to suggest separation: a complete urban environment contained within the larger metropolis but Eko Atlantic's own plans reveal something more interesting. Its current retail proposition says the development is positioned to serve not only its future residents but also the broader

> **Alaro City is planned and built with a focus on allowing residents to live, work and play without the burden of commuting into and across congested regions."**
>
> YOMI ADEMOLA,
> Managing Director, Alaro City

Victoria Island community. Its retail material also anticipates customers from nearby Victoria Island, Ikoyi and Lekki.

That distinction matters because It suggests that a development can be designed to meet many of its residents' daily needs without necessarily becoming a sealed-off world. Eko Atlantic is therefore useful not because it provides a simple answer to the question of whether new cities isolate themselves, but because it raises a better one:

Can a city within a city still function as part of the city around it?

The same distinction can be seen in the difference between a residential estate and a city-scale development. An estate primarily answers: Where will people live? A city has to answer a much larger question: How will people live? That means considering not only buildings, but employment, commerce, education, movement, recreation, public space and the relationships between them.

The Luxury of Proximity
Perhaps one of the most overlooked luxuries in African cities is not marble, waterfront views or imported finishes; It is time. A home may be beautiful, but if getting to work takes two hours every morning and another two every evening, the quality of the home is only part of the story. This is one reason integrated urban developments have become so compelling.

Tatu City, on the outskirts of Nairobi, offers one of the clearest examples of the model at scale. The 5,000-acre development combines homes, schools, offices, shopping, healthcare, nature areas, sport and entertainment, alongside manufacturing and business districts. Its developers envision a population of more than 250,000 residents as well as tens of thousands of day visitors. Schools and businesses are already operating within the development.
The significance is not simply that there is a supermarket, a school or an office building inside the development; It is that these uses exist together.

A resident can potentially live near employment. A worker can access shops and services without travelling across the metropolitan area. A student can attend school within the same broader urban environment in which families live and businesses operate. This is where proximity stops being merely convenient and begins to become an urban strategy. The objective is not to eliminate movement but it is to make unnecessary movement less necessary.

From Housing Estate to Urban Ecosystem
That distinction becomes even more important when looking at Alaro City in Lagos.
Planned across more than 2,000 hectares within the Lekki Free Zone, Alaro City combines residential, commercial and light-industrial uses with offices, logistics and warehousing, schools, healthcare facilities, hotels, entertainment and 150 hectares of parks and open space. Its location also places it near major economic infrastructure, including the Lekki Deep Sea Port and the Lekki-Epe Expressway. This matters because cities have never been defined simply by the number of houses they contain. A city works because different activities happen within it. People live, work, study, trade, meet, rest, create businesses around demand and build relationships with people they did not know before. Master planning attempts to make many of these relationships intentional.

Roads are positioned according to anticipated movement. Parks can be protected before development consumes the land. Commercial districts can be planned alongside residential areas. Schools and healthcare can be considered part of the urban system rather than facilities added after the population arrives.
The ambition, at its best, is therefore not to create a prettier estate, It is to create a functioning piece of city.

What Happens Beyond the Boundary?
This is where the conversation becomes more complicated. A development can

become remarkably complete internally while still raising questions about its relationship with the urban environment around it. If people can live, work, shop, study and relax within one development, they may naturally spend less time travelling into older city centres.
That can be a benefit. Decentralising employment and everyday services can potentially reduce some of the pressure created when enormous numbers of people must travel towards the same commercial districts every day.

But the opposite question also matters. What happens if these new communities become disconnected from the people and places around them? A master-planned development does not exist in a vacuum. It sits within a metropolitan region. Workers may live outside it, customers may travel into it, businesses may depend on suppliers beyond its boundaries, residents may work elsewhere, children may attend schools outside it, public transport may determine whether people can access it without private cars and neighbouring communities may have economic relationships with it.
The boundary, therefore, matters just as much as what happens inside it.

Complete Does Not Have to Mean Closed
This is perhaps the most important distinction in the new-city conversation. A community can be self-sufficient without being isolated. It can provide schools, shops, workplaces, parks and healthcare while remaining connected to the wider metropolitan system. Eko Atlantic illustrates the question particularly well. Its “city within a city” model is built around extensive internal infrastructure and mixed uses, yet its own retail strategy explicitly looks outward to the broader Victoria Island community and nearby districts.

Alaro City similarly sits within the wider economic system of the Lekki Free Zone rather than existing as a purely residential enclave. Its plan deliberately connects residential life with commercial and industrial activity.

Tatu City provides another version of the model, combining residential districts with schools, businesses, retail, healthcare, manufacturing and recreation. Its developers describe the goal as moving away from a single-node urban model towards a more decentralised environment.

These examples are not identical, and they are at different stages of development.

But they point towards a common idea: **The strongest master-planned communities may not be the ones that make the outside world irrelevant. They may be the ones that make everyday life easier while remaining connected to everything beyond their boundaries.**

Designing the Connections
This changes what developers need to think about. It is no longer enough to ask whether a project has attractive apartments. The questions become broader: Can residents reach employment without crossing half the city?, Can people walk safely between homes, shops and public spaces?, Are schools located where families can realistically access them?, Are there places where people can gather without having to consume something?, Can public transport connect the development to surrounding districts?

These questions move the conversation beyond architecture. They are questions about urban relationships and that may be where the real value of master planning lies.

The City Is Bigger Than the Master Plan
There is nothing inherently strange about wanting a neighbourhood where the school is nearby, the workplace is accessible, electricity is dependable, a shop is within walking distance and a park is available for an evening walk. In fact, these are some of the things a well-functioning city should provide. The interesting question is what happens when private developers begin delivering many of these functions at city scale.
Will African cities gradually become networks of smaller, highly planned communities?, Will decentralised development reduce the pressure placed on traditional city centres?, Will people gain back hours that were previously lost to commuting? Or will the new boundaries between planned communities and older urban districts become one of the defining questions of African urban development?

There is no single answer yet.
Africa is still building, and that makes the decisions being made now particularly important.
The opportunity is not simply to build communities where people can stay, It is to build communities that allow people to live well, move easily, participate economically and remain connected to the larger urban life around them.
Because a city is not only the buildings inside its boundary, It is the movement between them.
It is the worker arriving from another neighbourhood, the customer who comes from somewhere else, the business that grows because people pass through, the public space where strangers become familiar faces, the school, market, workplace and street that connect lives that were never planned together.
A master plan can draw the framework but it cannot draw every human relationship that will eventually fill it. The future of African cities, then, may not depend on how completely we can build a city within a city, but on how well that city connects with the one already outside its gates.

How Cities Around The World Are Designing For

EXTREME HEAT

By Charis Raji

For much of modern urban history, heat was treated as something cities simply had to endure. Buildings were designed, roads were paved, air-conditioning systems were installed, and residents were expected to adapt. But as heatwaves become more frequent and temperatures rise, cities are beginning to confront a more uncomfortable reality: the way a city is designed can determine how dangerous heat becomes.
The challenge is larger than the temperature shown on a weather app. Concrete and asphalt absorb and retain heat, buildings can restrict air movement, a lack of vegetation removes natural shade, and poorly insulated homes can remain dangerously hot long after the sun has gone down. Research published in Scientific Reports in 2025, examining 1,563 of the world's largest cities, found that the number of cities projected to exceed a mean annual temperature threshold of 29°C could rise from 17 in the 2011 - 2040 period to 217 by 2071 - 2100 under a high-emissions scenario, potentially exposing up to 320 million people.
The response, therefore, cannot simply be to install more air conditioners. Cities are beginning to redesign the physical environment itself. Singapore offers one of the clearest examples of this shift. The city-state has recognized that keeping residents safe from heat cannot depend entirely on individual buildings and mechanical cooling, particularly as higher temperatures increase electricity demand and expose lower-income residents to greater vulnerability.
Its National Heat Resilience Strategy combines urban planning, building design, greenery, cool materials, ventilation and more efficient cooling technologies.
Singapore currently records an average of 21.4 very hot days a year, defined as days when daily maximum temperatures exceed 35°C; under a high-emissions scenario, that figure could rise to 129 days annually by 2050.

The interesting part is not any individual intervention but the fact that heat is being treated as a city-design problem. Trees are positioned not simply to beautify streets but to provide shade. Building orientation and massing are considered in relation to airflow. Researchers and planners are using simulations to understand how heat moves through neighbourhoods, while cool materials and district cooling are being explored as part of a broader strategy.
Singapore's Urban Redevelopment Authority now explicitly frames thermal comfort alongside flood and coastal protection as part of urban resilience.
This represents an important change in thinking: instead of asking how buildings can survive a hotter city, planners are asking how the city itself can become cooler.

India's Ahmedabad offers another important lesson, particularly for cities in the Global South.

Following a deadly heatwave in 2010, the city developed a Heat Action Plan that combined early warning systems with public-health interventions. The strategy has included measures such as heat alerts, training for medical professionals, access to drinking water, public communication and the expansion of cool roofs.

The significance of Ahmedabad is that the response did not remain inside the architecture department.

Extreme heat became a public-health issue, an emergency-management issue and a planning issue at the same time.
That is increasingly important because heat does not affect every resident equally. People living in poorly ventilated homes, working outdoors, lacking reliable electricity or living in dense neighbourhoods with little vegetation are more exposed than residents of air-conditioned, well-insulated buildings.
A heat-resilient city therefore cannot simply be one with more expensive buildings. It has to be one in which the people most exposed to heat have meaningful protection. Shade is infrastructure. This is where trees, parks and shaded pedestrian corridors become more important than their traditional classification as “green amenities” suggests. A shaded pavement is infrastructure because it determines whether a person can safely walk along that street.

A tree-lined bus stop is infrastructure because it affects how long someone can wait for transport in direct sunlight. A park can function as a cooling space. A reflective roof can reduce indoor temperatures. A courtyard can encourage air movement. A water body, wetland or other blue infrastructure can contribute to local cooling while also helping with stormwater management.
A 2026 review of urban heat adaptation published with support from the World Health Organization identifies urban greening and blue infrastructure, cool roofs and reflective pavements, shaded pedestrian and transit corridors, passive-cooling housing retrofits, cooling centres and heat-health warning systems among the interventions cities can combine to reduce heat-related risk.

The implication is significant for African cities because many of these interventions are not necessarily high-tech. They are design decisions. Extreme heat is also forcing architects to revisit principles that

modern buildings sometimes abandoned in favour of mechanical systems.

Orientation, cross-ventilation, shading, thermal mass, courtyards, deep overhangs and appropriate materials can reduce the amount of heat entering a building before air-conditioning ever becomes necessary.

Research on passive cooling in Nigerian architecture identifies solar shading, natural ventilation, thermal mass and other passive strategies as important approaches for reducing dependence on mechanical cooling in the country's hot climate.
Research focused specifically on affordable housing in Abuja has similarly examined passive design as a response to increasing heat exposure and energy demand.

This matters because air-conditioning is not a complete climate adaptation strategy. It protects the people who can afford and reliably power it, while simultaneously increasing electricity demand and, depending on the energy source, potentially increasing emissions.
The better building is therefore not necessarily the one with the most powerful cooling system. It is the one that needs less cooling in the first place.
The most interesting thing happening in cities responding to extreme heat is that the solutions are beginning to operate at several scales simultaneously. At the building level, architects are reconsidering orientation, windows, roofs, insulation and ventilation. At the neighbourhood level, planners are looking at trees, shade, surface materials, density and airflow. At the city level, governments are considering early warning systems, public-health responses, transport infrastructure and access to cooling.

This is the direction African cities should be watching closely.
The continent does not need to reproduce Singapore's model or copy Ahmedabad's Heat Action Plan exactly. Climate, budgets, urban form and governance structures differ

considerably. But the principle is transferable: heat should become a design parameter before it becomes a crisis.

For cities that are still building large portions of their future housing and infrastructure, this is particularly important. A road, estate, school or office building constructed today may still be operating in a much hotter climate several decades from now.
The question is no longer whether cities can afford to design for heat. It is whether they can afford to keep designing as though today's climate will last forever.

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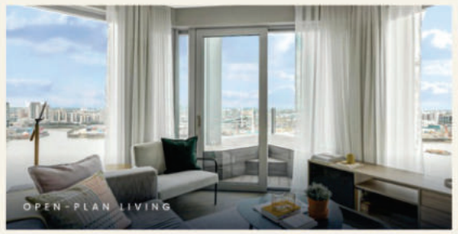
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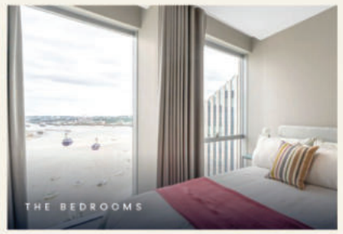
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+44 7449 889 621

isabella.rodrigues@flambardwilliams.co.uk

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*Why the Presidency Is Calling for Nationwide Expansion of **Electric Vehicle Initiatives** in Nigeria*

By Tony E. Omatseyin

Nigeria is taking a closer look at electric mobility as part of its broader effort to build a more affordable, efficient and environmentally responsible transportation system. In March 2026, President Bola Ahmed Tinubu approved the expansion of the Presidential Initiative on Compressed Natural Gas (PiCNG) to include Electric Vehicles (EVs), creating the Presidential Initiative on Compressed Natural Gas and Electric Vehicles (PiCNG & EV). The initiative is expected to coordinate the development of EVs, charging infrastructure and related investments across the country.

Reducing Transportation Costs

One of the major reasons behind the push is the need to reduce the cost of transportation. Electric vehicles can offer lower running and maintenance costs than conventional petrol-powered vehicles, although the overall economics depend on electricity prices, vehicle costs, charging availability and battery life.

The Federal Government is therefore looking at electric mobility alongside CNG as part of a broader strategy to provide Nigerians with alternatives to petrol-powered transportation. President Tinubu has also linked the transition to efforts to reduce transportation costs for households and businesses.

Strengthening Energy Security

Nigeria's dependence on petroleum products exposes transportation costs to fluctuations in global energy markets. Expanding alternative-energy transportation could help diversify the country's energy mix and reduce pressure on petrol consumption.

The government's EV policy is also connected to its wider energy-transition agenda, which includes expanding sustainable energy and attracting investment into green industries. In a January 2026 statement, President Tinubu highlighted electric mobility as part of Nigeria's efforts to improve energy efficiency, reduce emissions and stimulate green industrial development.

Creating New Business Opportunities

The nationwide expansion of EVs could create opportunities well beyond vehicle sales. Charging stations, battery services, vehicle maintenance, software, renewable-energy solutions, financing and EV manufacturing are potential areas for private-sector participation.

For Nigeria's growing real estate sector, this development could also influence the design of residential estates, shopping centres, hotels, office complexes and mixed-use developments. EV charging points could increasingly become an attractive feature for premium properties, particularly in cities such as Lagos and Abuja.

Supporting a Cleaner Urban Environment

Electric vehicles produce no tailpipe emissions, making them potentially useful in efforts to improve urban air quality. This is particularly relevant to densely populated cities where traffic congestion and vehicle emissions are major environmental concerns.

The Federal Government's broader sustainability programme includes a goal of achieving net-zero emissions by 2060, while its electric-mobility initiatives are intended to contribute to a cleaner transportation system.

Building the Infrastructure for the Future

For EV adoption to succeed nationwide, however, vehicles alone will not be enough. Nigeria will need reliable electricity, strategically located charging stations, technical expertise, financing options and clear standards for the industry.

The Presidency's decision to place EV development within the PiCNG & EV framework signals an intention to coordinate these areas while encouraging investment and wider participation.

What It Means for Nigerians

The push for electric mobility represents more than a change in the type of vehicle Nigerians drive. It could influence transportation, energy, manufacturing, technology and even the future design of Nigerian cities and real estate developments.

For consumers, businesses and property developers, the growth of EV infrastructure is therefore a trend worth watching. As Nigeria expands its electric-mobility ecosystem, the automobile and real estate industries may increasingly become partners in creating a cleaner, smarter and mrore energy-efficient urban lifestyle.

MOVIE REVIEW

NIYI AKINMOLAYAN'S

COLOURS OF FIRE

By Tomisin Juliet Faoye

Is Nollywood really ready for AI? This is the one question that comes to mind after watching Niyi Akinmolayan's fantasy flick, Colours of Fire. Known for thinking outside the box, Niyi Akinmolayan proved with this movie that the box has been completely knocked out of the park.
Set in a fictional world that draws from Yoruba mythology, the film centers around two rival clans, the Reds and the Blues (each distinguished by the beautifully patterned *adire* outfits of their respective clan colours). When a warrior from the Blue Clan (Uzor Arukwe) is sent to slay the beast which is supposedly of the Red Clan, he encounters a woman (Osas Ighodaro) instead of the beast. The two fall in love, thereby complicating the rivalry between the clans. This leads to unexpected twists, betrayals, and even more battles, both within each clan, and between both clans.

When the movie hit cinemas in December 2025, it generated quite some traction and when it won several awards at the AMVCAs in May 2026, including Best Lead Actor, viewers who didn't catch it in the cinema quickly picked interest. In August, the movie finally came to Netflix and social media has talked about it ever since.
Perhaps the most controversial thing about the film is the significant use of Artificial Intelligence. Several scenes, including major flashbacks, were visibly AI generated. There was no attempt to really humanize these scenes so they would blend in with the film. It was just raw AI animations. While some viewers may truly find this amusing, others have shared on social media and in formal reviews that it was in poor taste.

With Niyi Akinmolayan's reputation for adventurous film-making, he is in the best position to attempt this AI/Nollywood fusion and the reaction from viewers seem to prove that Nigerian audiences are still skeptical about the idea.

The movie however, is not without its strengths. True to its title, the film is a whole universe of colour. The sharp red and blue contrast is especially appealing to the eyes. The costumes, make up, setting and dazzling cinematography makes it nothing short of eye candy. The acting was also laudable. Uzor Arukwe and Osas Ighodaro delivered on their roles but the choice of their casting has however been criticized as neither of them are Yoruba or Yoruba speakers and could not carry on Yoruba-infused conversations as other characters such as Gabriel Afolayan, Ibrahim Chatta, Mercy Aigbe and Femi Branch did.

Another notable weakness of the film lies in the story telling itself. While the plot was strong, the pacing, the dialogue and character motivations failed to hit home. The romance between the lead characters was meant to be the hook, but the conversation between them failed to carry forth the depth of their affection for eachother. The overly distracting nudity and numerous unnecessary sex scenes did not drive home the romance as the director may have intended them to.
Overall, Colours of Fire was an ambitious film. Niyi Akinmolayan and his Anthills Studios are bringing a new angle to Nollywood and it is much needed. We can only hope for more refined outcomes in the future.

Contemporary Stilt Houses:

TIPS FOR BUILDING MODERN ARCHITECTURE IN SWAMPY AREAS

By Tomisin Juliet Faoye

One of the most egregious architectural errors there is, is building a good house in a bad location. From land texture to potential for expansion, there are factors that determine what structures are suitable for what location. When it comes to swampy or water saturated environments, avoidance is often the first resort. Developers and homeowners alike do not usually consider such locations to be gold. While any concerns raised are valid, that a piece of land is swampy does not necessarily make it an impossible challenge. Here are five tips for building great houses in swampy areas;

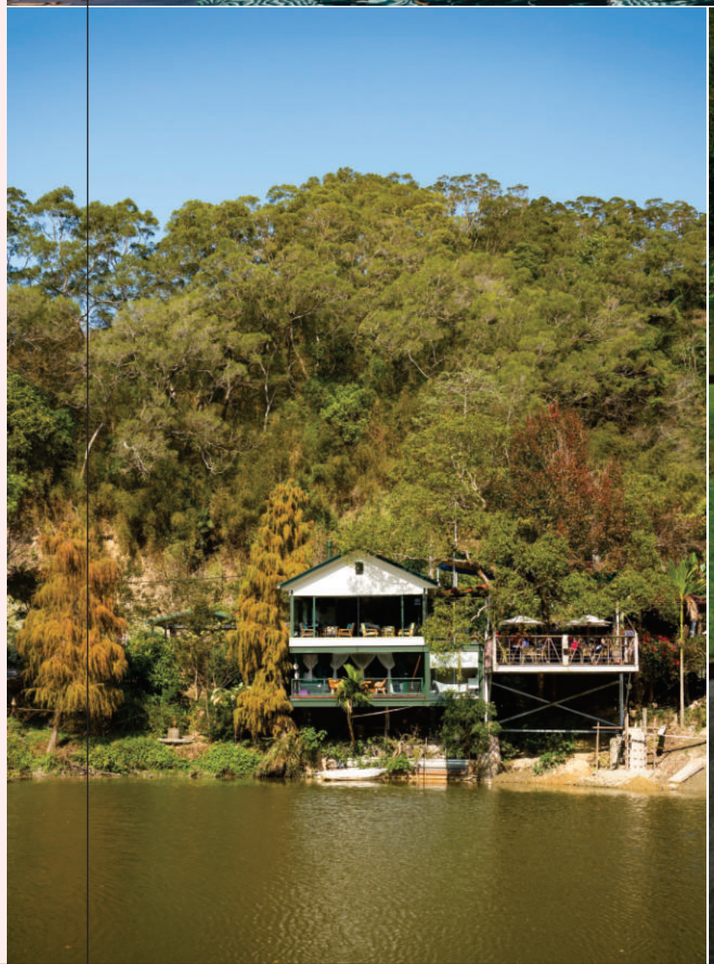
1. Invest in Quality Engineering Professionals:
Because of the dynamics involved in building for the swamp, it is essential to have a building team that understands your land and knows the techniques required to get the best out of it. These professionals can ensure proper focus on engineered foundation depth, structural load paths, and climate responsive materials; factors that are beyond essential for a favourable outcome.

2. Make Use of Deep Pilings:
This is an age old technique, but with a modern twist. In the past, and even today, in rural riverine areas, people build houses atop poles of bamboo sticks. That way, the house resides above water level. Today, bamboo sticks are being replaced by steel stilts or reinforced concrete piers. Doing this removes the risk of flooding damage as the house stands a few feet above the ground. If water level rises, the building is a safe distance above. While stilts used to be simply a thing of necessity, contemporary stilt houses lack none of the aesthetics of regular ground level houses. If designed right, they can prove to be functional, durable and aesthetically appealing.

3. Use Corrosion Resistant Materials:
When building in water saturated areas, it is essential to opt for galvanized or powder-coated structural steel and matte-black aluminium frames to resist rust in coastal environments. If you choose to use wood, choose options that are either naturally rot resistant or those which are pressure treated and coated with high grade pressure sealants to protect exposed exterior posts. These materials have higher durability and are able to withstand the effect of constant contact with water.

4. Work With Nature:
Rather than resisting the swampy nature of the land, it is essential to find ways to incorporate some of its features into the design of your building. Consider preserving natural ground contours and drainage paths on sloped terrains by minimizing heavy earthworks and retaining native vegetation. Develop these natural pathways in a manner that ensures smooth passage of water.

5. Test the Soil:
Nothing prepares you better for planting a good structure in a water saturated environment like testing the soil. It is essential to carry out comprehensive geotechnical soil testing before work commences on the land. This helps to determine load capacity and moisture profiles.
Locations with a high water table do not have to be a definite *no*. With proper testing, good research, expert input and durable materials, you can build a home that meets all your structural and aesthetic needs absolutely anywhere without raising major concerns.



Senegalese Fashion: The Brands, The Culture, And The Change Makers

By Tomisin Juliet Faoye

Fashion in Africa has evolved significantly over the last few decades, placing us on the map. While numerous Nigerian designers are at the forefront of this fashion revolution, it goes way beyond Nigeria. In Senegal, the fashion revolution is steeped in colour, embedded in culture, and drawing attention all over the world. Senegal's fashion industry is a vibrant and growing cultural powerhouse centered in Dakar, blending centuries-old textile traditions with bold, contemporary global design. The designers responsible for this thriving ecosystem are numerous, but here are three Senegalese fashion brands that are changing the game.

1. Tongoro
Tongoro is a 100% "Made in Africa" luxury fashion label founded by creative director Sarah Diouf in Dakar, Senegal, in 2016. Every Tongoro piece is designed and produced in Dakar, employing local artisans, thereby boosting the West African economy. When you think Tongoro, think sculptural silhouettes, bold geometric prints, and playful proportions blending modernism with African identity.

Tongoro has been worn by international superstars including Beyoncé, Alicia Keys, Naomi Campbell, and Burna Boy.

2. **Selly Raby Kane**
Selly Raby Kane is one of Senegal's most popular fashion designers. Born and raised in Dakar, her avant-garde designs and boundary-pushing art projects have earned her international acclaim. Her brand SRK, founded in 2012, is known for bold patterns, three-dimensional molded shapes, and unconventional materials like PVC. Her global profile skyrocketed in 2016 when Beyoncé wore one of Kane's signature designs. She has since dressed icons like Tiwa Savage, Erykah Badu, and Nai Palm.

3. **Adama Paris**
Adama Paris is one of Senegal's pioneer fashion designers. She is the founder and producer of the iconic Dakar Fashion Week, which celebrated its landmark 25th anniversary. She also created Black Fashion Week, hosted in cities like Paris, Prague, Bahia, and Montreal, as well as the Afrika Fashion Awards. In 2014, she launched the Fashion Africa Channel, the very first television network dedicated exclusively to African fashion.
While designers are at the forefront of the changing scene of African fashion, there are other innovators who are equally holding up the front. One innovation giving a new breath of life to the African fashion scene is the Kesaruva App. Kesaruva is an upcoming global shopping marketplace app designed to connect buyers worldwide with sustainable African and Black-owned fashion, art, and beauty brands. It brings together clothing, art, jewelry, and cosmetics from various African designers into a single app. The app is designed to help customers outside and inside Africa discover and buy directly from local artisans and creators. The Kesaruva App fixes the broken discovery process on social media where great brands are hard to track down. Set to hit app stores soon, the Kesaruva App waitlist is currently open. This app and many more are some innovative ways African fashion is getting a facelift.
Without a doubt, African fashion is taking the world by storm and the applause can only get louder!

NIGERIA THROUGH A TOURIST'S EYES:

THE UNTAPPED POTENTIAL IN NIGERIA'S TOURISM INDUSTRY

By Tomisin Juliet Faoye

With a population of over 250 million people, Nigeria is the black capital of the world. Our movie industry has gained global recognition, our music industry has solidified its reputation as an entertainment powerhouse, yet there remain areas in which Nigeria's potential remains untapped. Most prominent amongst them is the area of tourism.
Dutch adventurer and full-time digital nomad, Tom Grond, popularly known as TravelTom, grew very famous amongst Nigerian audiences recently when he made several posts sharing his experiences touring across Nigeria.
His videos generated notable traction, with many Nigerians stating in the comments section that they didn't know that some of the places he showcased even existed in the country. This raises a vital question: Is Nigeria blind to her own tourism potential?

With so much of the nation's resources invested in petroleum, agriculture, and other manual industries, tourism becomes a secondary concern, if not deemed completely irrelevant. But with the rise of social media over the years, attention is slowly being drawn to Nigeria's tourism potential. The question, however, is: will Nigeria step up? Northern Nigeria, with its pyramids and ancient history, holds stories the world is yet to hear. Kano's ancient city walls and the Kurmi Market show centuries of trade and craft. The Emir's palace in Zaria and the Durbar festivals in Sokoto and Katsina are displays of culture, colour, and royalty that tourists travel across continents to see elsewhere.

Then there is the Argungu Fishing Festival in Kebbi, a spectacle of strength, tradition, and community that happens once a year and deserves global attention.
Western Nigeria is a blend of history, spirituality, and coastal beauty. Lagos is the face most foreigners know, with Landmark Beach, Nike Art Gallery, and the nightlife that never sleeps. But there is more. The Olumo Rock in Abeokuta stands as a natural fortress and tourist site. Ile-Ife holds the cradle of Yoruba civilization with museums and sacred groves. Badagry carries the weight of history with the slave port and the Point of No Return, a place of reflection that international visitors seek out.

Eastern Nigeria offers green landscapes, water, and cultural pride. In Enugu State, the Awhum Waterfall and Cave is a natural wonder where water falls from rock into a cave, surrounded by forest and quiet. It is a place for peace and for photos. The Nike Lake Resort and the Ngwo Pine Forest add to the appeal. Further east, Calabar brings the Marina, the Slave History Museum, and the Calabar Carnival, an event that should be on every international calendar. The drill monkeys and rainforests of Cross River National Park show that Nigeria has wildlife and eco-tourism that can compete with any country.

Southern Nigeria is rich with oil, rivers, and culture. Port Harcourt has the Isaac Boro Park and a growing food scene. Bayelsa and Delta have riverine communities, boat rides, and festivals tied to water. The Niger Delta . mangroves are unique ecosystems that can attract nature tourists if properly developed

The problem is not a lack of places. The problem is packaging. Many of these sites have no proper roads, no websites, no guides who speak to international audiences, and no marketing outside Nigeria. A tourist from Europe or America cannot Google “things to do in Enugu” and get clear answers. That has to change.
Tourism can create jobs, bring in foreign exchange, and tell Nigeria's story on Nigeria's own terms. It starts with investment in infrastructure, training for hospitality workers, and telling the stories online where the world can see them. If a foreigner can make Nigerians proud of their own country with a phone camera, imagine what can happen with real support.
Nigeria does not need to copy Dubai or Kenya. Nigeria only needs to open the door to what already exists. From the waterfalls of Enugu to the pyramids of the north, from the beaches of Lagos to the numerous festivals, we already have a great selling point.
The world is looking for the next big destination. Nigeria has what it takes to bethat place.

HOW THE OLU OF WARRI IS REDEFINING MODERN AFRICAN ROYALTY

By Tomisin Juliet Faoye

Royalty has always been a part of Africa's historical appeal. Ancient kings from different regions have added a regal edge to the world's outlook of us. But in a rapidly changing world, one might wonder if royalty still holds such an important place. The current Olu of Warri, His Majesty Ògíam Atuwatsé III , is redefining what it means to be young and royal in this day and age.

Born Utieyinoritsetsola Emiko, His Majesty Ògíame Atuwatsé III is the 42 year-old who has been ruling the Kingdom of Warri since 2021. He became monarch upon succeeding his uncle, Ogiame Ikenwoli I, on the 21st of August 2021.

In August this year, His Majesty threw a 10-day celebration to mark his fifth year on the throne and culminated it in a grand thanksgiving service that saw some of the biggest gospel artistes from Nigeria minister live.

Five years on the throne, and His Majesty Ogiame Atuwatse III is proving to be a monarch like no other. The ruler has gained much popularity on social media, especially amongst the younger generation, because of his down to earth manner.

Many times, the Olu has been captured on camera riding his scooter through the streets of Warri. Whether it's the testing of a new road or a celebratory round, the Olu's scooter drive has become a not-so-rare, yet uncommon sighting that many look forward to.

The Olu carries the beauty of regality and merges it flawlessly with the cool confidence of the millennial that he is.

The Olu's wife, Olori Atuwatse III, has also been on the radar across social media. Praised for her fashion and graceful way of carrying herself, she is known as a celebrated speaker, writer, and philanthropist. Daughter of late Nigerian billionaire Captain Idahosa Wells Okunbo, Olori Atuwatse III holds an LLB from the London School of Economics, was called to the Nigerian Bar in 2010 and engages readily with lots of charitable organizations. She recently launched her book, a memoir titled *Redemption: An African Oueen's Story of Identity, Faith and Impact.*

Together, the Olu and the Olori are inspiring a younger generation of Nigerians. Where traditional African royalty was once associated with fetishes and voodoo,

they are bold in their Christian faith, proving that there's room for religious inclusion in every sphere. While traditional rulers were not typically thought of as *cool*, here we have a 42 year old Olu with a B.A. in International Studies and Political Science and an MSc in Management from Case Western Reserve University, who rides a scooter through the city and enjoys sports. He is also a serial entrepreneur and founder of Noble Nigeria Limited and Coral Curator Limited.

In 2022, he was conferred the honour of a Commander of the Order of the Federal Republic (CFR) by the late President Muhammadu Buhari. In that same year, the Olu was presented the Key to the City of Brampton, Canada. In 2023, he won the Most Impactful Royal Father of the Year. He went on to receive the Leadership and Community Development Award at the 14th African Achievers Awards (AAA), held at the Parliament house in the United Kingdom.

The Reputable Poll International (RPI) in collaboration with the Global Reputation Forum (GRF) named him one of the 100 Most Reputable Africans for 2025.

Ogiame Atuwatse III is not just royalty to the people of Warri. He is a clear image of modern day royalty to young people out there, proving that tradition and global impact don't have to be warring parties.

THE ART OF ENTERTAINING:

How Young People Are Designing Their Homes To Suit Their Social Lives

By Tomisin Juliet Faoye

Welcoming guests into one's home has always been a part of our social system. Today, however, young people are growing more and more intentional about making their spaces suitable for entertaining. In an age where social status, both online and offline occupies a place of utmost importance, more and more people are choosing homes that not only reflect their personalities, but work in line with the requirements of their social engagements. From location, to size, to decor, here are a few things to consider if you're looking to entertain guests in your home.

- Is your space big enough to host your circle? If yes, then you're off to a good start. A spacious places gives you room to even think of entertaining. Whether it's a movie night, a living-room music concert, a book reading or an indoor picnic, when you have the space, you have the most essential requirement. It might just need a little accessorizing.

- Set the tone for a great audiovisual experience. Color-changing lights help to set the mood or change it. With the right color of lights, a place could go from surreal to fun within seconds. Portable bluetooth speakers have also become necessary today as music has become an essential part of entertaining guests. Some homeowners go on to add in a mini-cinema to their space. That way, movie nights get a priceless update.

- The furniture you choose also has a great role

to play in making your home suitable for entertaining. It is necessary to choose furniture that is portable, and poses no restriction to movements around the house. Depending on how much space you have, you would want to choose smaller pieces. Some other options include; Lightweight cushions and couches that can easily be repurposed.

- Leverage on your outdoor space: This is priceless advice as your outdoor space is essential if you are looking to invite people over. From grill parties to barbecues, a good outdoor space with a couple of seats and maybe an outdoor dinning table, makes for a perfect hosting arrangement

- **Convenience/toilets:** A guest toilet is a necessary luxury while hosting guests as it allows for easy navigation rather than having someone go through the main house and sometimes through bedrooms to find a restroom. If you're looking to host guests at home, arrangements for an easily accessible restroom is necessary. From coffee bars, to outdoor furniture, to warm string lights hanging across your yard, the one goal is to make your home inviting and convenient for the people in your life. Whether it's a morning brunch or a late night barbecue, your space has the potential to become a beehive of activities in the best way possible. All you have to do is envision that perfect gathering, and make your home suitable to host it. The goal is not to make a house feel like an event center. It is to extend that homely feeling to accommodate a few more people and build a community.

GODAÏF

VILLAGE

Casa Asmarina 26B Turnbull Road Ikoyi, Lagos

VERIFIED DIRECT PROPERTY BRIEF

S/N	Description	Location	Rent
1.	Hotel building with 16 rooms on land measuring appox 1000sqm	Sinari Daranijo street, Victoria Island	**₦3,500,000,000.00**
2.	Six (6) Bedroom Semi-Detached House	Spring Bay Estate, Ikate	**₦300,000,000.00**
3.	Serviced 3 Bedroom Flat with a maid room	Madam Cellular Close, Agungi	**₦200,000,000.00**
4.	Serviced, Three-bedroom flat, second floor	Ardeva Estate, Beachwood Estate, Ibeju Lekki	**₦70,000,000.00**
	LEKKI		
1.	Four-Bedroom townhouse with One room bq each	Kusenla Road, Elegushi, Ikate	**₦13,000,000.00**
2.	Self Service 2-bedroom flat	Off Rahman Adeboyejo Street, Lekki Phase 1	**₦12,000,000.00**
3.	Well, maintained 3 Bedroom Apartment (First floor)	Dolo Oyekan Street, U3 Estate, Lekki Phase 1 Right	**₦13,000,000.00**
4.	Serviced 2-bedroom apartment	Araromi Agungi	**₦8,000,000.00**
5.	Two units of Four (4) Bedroom semi detached house with Bq	Ayinde Akinmade Street	**₦30,000,000.00 each**
6.	Serviced, 3 Bedroom semi detached house with one room Bq	Bunmi Olowude, Behind Pinnacle, Marwa	**₦15,000,000.00**
7.	Serviced, One (1) Bedroom Flat, on 2nd Floor.	Oriwu Estate, Elf, Lekki Phase 1	**₦10,000,000.00**
	ABRAHAM ADESANYA, AJAH		
1.	Serviced, Two (2) Bedroom Apartment with Bq, all rooms ensuite, AC fitted, open plan kitchen with common gym house, swimming pool, mini court yard & sit out area.	Treasure Estate, off Ogombo Road, Ajah	**₦7,000,000.00**
	SURULERE		
1.	Three (3) bedroom bungalow spacious bungalow for office use	Tafawa Balewa crescent, off Adeniran Ogunsanya road ,Surulere	**₦400,000,000.00**

Kindly Reach Out For Any Of Your Property Request Or Needs. **NO INSPECTION FEE.**

BRIGHT CHIJIOKE
Estate Surveyor and Valuer
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