

Valuing Heritage: A Study in Valuation of Colonial Heritage Buildings in Port-Harcourt, Nigeria

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Abstract: *This article examines the rather complex issue of valuing heritage, particularly as it concerns buildings with age, historical or cultural relevance, which are all qualities difficult to measure in financial terms. It also reviews some valuation techniques used in the recent field of heritage economics from relevant literature and how these techniques have been used in Valuing heritage. The study adopts a reconnoitering and actual market survey approach to explore the property development and valuation market as it concerns heritage buildings in two distinct locations in Port-Harcourt. It looks at how buildings that qualify as heritage property are valued in the current day property market in Port-Harcourt, what forces drive their current value and the potential forces that could possibly raise their heritage value.*

Keywords: Heritage Value; Port-Harcourt; Colonial; Heritage Buildings; Valuation

Introduction

Indeed, many historic and traditional sites in some countries of the world are lost due to perceived lack of value and Nigeria is no exception. The study location is the city of Port-Harcourt in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria, founded in 1914 by the British colonial administrators. The study focuses on certain heritage building sites, made up of the land and building within, found in two distinct locations within the Port-Harcourt metropolis. The first are the properties found in the former European quarters now known as the old Government Reserved Area (GRA) of Port-Harcourt which range from residential dwellings, offices, churches, industrial buildings and court houses, built between 1914 and 1960 by the colonial administrators. The second building types are found in the former indigenous workers area south of the European quarters. The area is known as old Port-Harcourt town within the Port-Harcourt Local Government Council. The second typology is predominantly of a residential nature. These two sets of structures combine to form a large part of the history and material culture of the city; in effect, the built heritage of the city.

However, over time several of the sites where these buildings are located have either been retrofitted or purchased by private developers and demolished to give way to new structures. This raises questions firstly, about the awareness of the concept of public goods in Nigeria. Egbenta (2017) maintains that historic or heritage buildings may be classified as public goods if they provide services as little as visual enjoyment to people in the area. He states that for instance, "a property owner who has a beautiful old building in his compound and some passers-by enjoy looking at and taking photographs of is exhibiting public good since the building is generating social benefit even though the owner may not receive any financial benefits from it.

Secondly, it raises questions about the existence and effectiveness of the building conservation policies and value for heritage buildings and properties in Nigeria. If these properties are being traded for their monetary landed values only, what about their heritage values? Using secondary data from past studies, this article examines if heritage can be valued and how and uses a case study approach to investigate how buildings or properties that meet the heritage parameters in Port-Harcourt are valued and why?

Literature Review

The concept of valuation takes into cognizance futuristic receivable income, discounted to the present and that gives the value of what is receivable today in lieu of the future income on such property. This principle is derived from the investment method of valuation though valuation is futuristic, but it takes into consideration location, demand, supply, the age and condition of the Property. This will guide the valuer in coming up with the economics of the property as well as the rate appropriate to adjust for depreciation which is a determinant of value. According to Olusegun (2013) the degree of physical, functional and economic obsolescence of a building affects the level of demand for it and ultimately affects its value. The age and mostly lack of maintenance of a property can contribute to the level of physical wear and tear.

Valuation has been defined by various professionals, as it shows the estimation of worth or value of interest in a property. For instance, Ifediora (1993) considers valuation as the art and science of determining, at some specific date, for a specific purpose or purposes and by one authorized, the monetary value of the property rights encompassed in an ownership; and the value so determined. But with valuation emanating from the root word value, which lucidly speaks of the worth placed on something, in this case a building property, it must transcend simplistic determinism by monetary value at some specific date and for a specific purpose only. Or futuristic receivable income discounted to the present in lieu of potential use or “shelf-life” of the building. It calls for a higher sense of import on both tangible and intangible parameters like rarity, age and uniqueness of style, cultural and historical relevance amongst others. This, in addition to the logical economics of contemporary valuation should either command a premium or a minimum depending on terms and conditions surrounding development of such property if it were listed.

When it concerns heritage buildings which embody parameters such as rarity, age, cultural and historical relevance amongst other things, the question still remains – how is value defined and subsequently measured? In this arena value is said to be subjective because of the difficulty of standardizing and pricing the sentimental and nostalgic feelings amongst other

things that a cultural and historic significance of a piece of heritage engenders. Nonetheless, if you were to value heritage, would you apply the same techniques used in conventional valuation? But if these techniques cannot suffice, what is the way forward?

Over three decades ago, these questions could not have been answered. Thorsby (2019) observed that it was not until the development of the field of heritage economics in the 1990s that led to three significant areas of research being highlighted, they include: the theory and application of economic analysis to heritage issues; evaluation methods and their suitability for assessing cultural value; and understanding the economic impact of heritage policy. For the purpose of this article, the focus will be on the second area which is evaluation methods and their suitability for assessing cultural value in built heritage. Also reflecting on the position that property is not in all cases held for monetary income but also can be held for prestige and other non-financial reasons.

As a priori to choosing suitable valuation methods for heritage buildings, Thorsby (2019) suggests the need to understand certain basic concepts such as cultural capital, cultural significance and cultural value. Cultural capital is assets that embody or give rise to cultural value in addition to its economic value. The concept of asset connotes worth and cultural capital can generate economic value (Thorsby 1999, Rizzo and Thorsby 2006). In the case of heritage buildings, cultural value goes hand-in-hand with cultural significance and although this is difficult to measure in financial terms, it is however not impossible. It all boils down to individual value or value society or establishment places on a piece of built cultural heritage. Cultural value is said to have a multifaceted, multi-dimensional character and to assess it requires breaking it down into its constituent parts which include; aesthetics, symbolic, social, historical, educational and scientific (Thorsby 2001). He observed that the identification of these constituent parts of the cultural value is a prerequisite to achieving comprehensive evaluation.

Sometimes maintaining both economic and cultural values involves a balancing act, while other times an outright tradeoff is required based on opportunity cost. It means that achieving both cultural and economic value may not necessarily be guaranteed at all times and it actually comes down to the individual or society. The question Thorsby asked to this effect is “in such cases, how much economic value are individuals or a society prepared to give up in order to secure a given level of cultural value and vice versa? (2019:205).

Furthermore, Thorsby (2019) identifies three ways individuals experience heritage and for which it can be valued economically; “they include Use, Non-Use, or Beneficial Externality” (pg 201). Use values accrues to what he terms as direct consumption of the heritage .i.e. living in it, renting it, owning it or for purposes of tourism. For this, the asset can be measured directly in monetary terms. Non-use has existence, option and bequest values which give rise to demand for heritage and this is also based on individual willingness to pay. Beneficial externality which is the third can be measured economically based on what is considered as positive spill-overs, “which are the potential significant value of heritage”.

Amongst all three techniques stated above, it is the non-use that apparently has a wider reach. Two methods are used to measure non-use values: these are Revealed-preference and Stated-preference. Revealed-preference is obtained from observed behaviour such as “the use of real estate prices to estimate whether the heritage qualities in a certain area have an effect on their sale price (Moorhouse and Smith 1994). It measures private individual benefit rather than wider public-good effects (Armbrecht 2014). Stated-preference involves the scenario where people are asked to pay essentially for what they perceive are the benefits they will receive or accept compensation for what they term to be losses.

Stated-preference uses contingent valuation or discrete-choice modeling (Navrud and Ready 2002, Thorsby 2019). Both of these techniques involve sample surveys of individuals, that is, either residents of an area (Cuccia 2011) or respondents from a random or other form of survey (Alexandros and Jaffy

2005, Willis 2009, Choi et al 2010). For residents from a selected area, the questions could include what they are willing to pay in terms of taxes or financial contribution to support the heritage site etc and for other respondents they could be asked to evaluate attributes such as accessibility, aesthetic quality, what it offers etc.

Another technique that has been suggested for valuing heritage buildings is the ‘Points System’ (Thorsby 2019). This is similar to listing criteria for buildings to be considered heritage structures or monuments as discussed in Brisibe and Osuku (2019). Each criterion can be rated and assigned a score which can be a numerical representation to rate a quality or a particular item on a given category, for instance, very significant, significant, and not significant. In Brisibe (2019), a ratings system on condition status of heritage buildings was used as a form of heritage value and stakeholder conservation effort ranking. It ranged from Not Identified and Neglected to Restored for Original or Other Use.

For this points system, if correctly executed has been regarded as a highly transparent means of assessment that can provide a common standard by which assessors can determine a numerical score. This numerical score can be assigned to responses allowing for aggregation of judgments, totaling to accumulation of points, with each point assigned monetary value or determining a percentage of the overall monetary value of the built heritage.

In addition, Navrud and Ready (2002) discussed yet another technique known as the ‘Benefit Transfer’. This is an environmental valuation technique that involves the application of values estimated at one site to policy issues at a geographically different but similar site. However, the reliability of this technique has been called to question. This is because environmental values and cultural heritage values are highly site specific. But for it to work, it must be between sites that are very similar in built form, the change in the building and the population holding the values (Navrud and Ready 2002).

Since the field of heritage economics is still relatively new, studies on valuing cultural heritage is relatively limited but even more limited are studies on valuing heritage in Nigeria. Notwithstanding, there are a few earlier works that have examined this issue within the Nigerian context (Ayangbile and Abiodun 2013) and others that have even applied non-market techniques such as travel cost analysis to valuing heritage in Nigeria (Egbenta 2017). This paper hopes to contribute to this discourse and existing body of knowledge by using actual market survey approach to explore the property development and valuation market as it concerns heritage buildings in Nigeria, with case studies from two Port-Harcourt. It looks at how buildings that qualify as heritage property are valued in the current day property market in Port-Harcourt and what forces drive these current values.

Study Locations

Port-Harcourt lies between longitudes 4° 49' 27" N, and latitudes 7° 2' 1" E. It is located within the Niger Delta region of Nigeria,

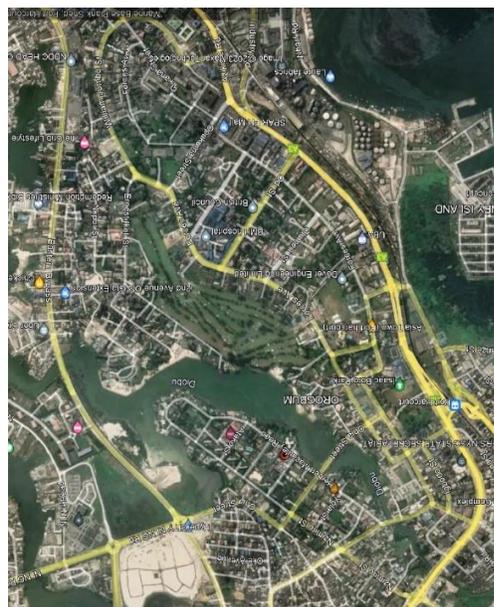


Fig 1 Google map of the Old GRA bounded by Eastern bypass on the right and Azikiwe road on the left

much of which is predominantly made up of tropical rainforests, with a bit of mangrove swamps. Port Harcourt witnessed planning and development of two major neighbourhoods which are the Old Port Harcourt Township and the European quarters that became known as Old GRA. These neighbourhoods are characterized by colonial styled developments which date back to the 1920's through to the 1950's.

The Old GRA is made up primarily of two neighbourhoods namely; Amadi Flats and Forces Avenue. The Amadi flats area is a later extension and addition to the old European quarters. It was referred to in colonial times as the outer circle in planning terms because the residences were built a bit further away from the colonial seat of power. The Forces Avenue was where all the key colonial elite such as the Resident, the District Officer, Provincial Engineer, Medical Officer and Magistrate amongst others resided. It was the area designated as prime property and was highly restricted to non-Europeans before independence. It boasted of the best infrastructure and access roads the government of the day had to offer.

The selected study areas at the Old Port-Harcourt Township are the areas built using the Public Works Department (PWD) approved prototype buildings, either bungalow type structures or one storey buildings. A lot of these buildings have survived over the years and are either nearing or even exceeded the 100-year mark. The locations or layouts where these heritage buildings still exist include Hospital Road, Victoria, Bonny, Potts Johnson, Bernard Carr, King Jaja and Bishop Johnson streets. The entirety of city blocks bounded by these streets constitutes our study location.



Fig 2 Creek Road layout - Mid-colonial era (1930s to 1940s)



Fig 3 New Layout Creek Road extension – Late colonial era (1940s to 1950s)

Valuation in the Port-Harcourt Real Estate Market

Over the years, there have been transition and transactions in developments and these activities necessitate valuation which reflects the value of the properties in its entirety. The act of valuation in professional practice is a reflection of demand and supply, location, neighborhood attributes, age and condition, quality, structural attributes and environmental factors.

However, evidence from practice in Port Harcourt shows a complete disregard for such parameters as age, historical and cultural values of any property as a component of determining value other than for judging depreciation to reflect condition of the property. The considerations for valuation especially in the Port-Harcourt real estate clime are purely economic, reflecting demand and supply hence valuation principles adopted are mainly the comparable method of valuation. Value indications on these properties are characteristics of location reflecting neighborhood values and exclusivity. Historic buildings are ignored in its form and are more often than not a subject of immediate demolition once a transaction and exchange has taken place.

In Port Harcourt, there are no records of listed buildings which may form the basis for which a piece of real estate may be held. Real estate may be held for reasons other than economic; it could be held for prestige and could bring pride and prestige for holding such real estate. The market in Port Harcourt does not clearly accept certain developed non-financial reasons for which real

estate is held. The gracious spaces allocated for a typical property in Old GRA is more or less seen as an outdated and unrealistic colonial garden city concept and in many case transactions, these spaces are arbitrarily distorted by subdivisions with no regulatory guidelines in place from the authorities to check and conserve the original form.

Valuation therefore, within the Port-Harcourt real estate context is purely a reflection of the economic principles of demand and supply and does not consider other or what would be termed as 'sentimental' factors such as cultural, historical or age.

Demolition of Heritage Colonial Buildings in Port-Harcourt

At the time of conducting field survey for this study, about 10 heritage buildings had been demolished in a space of 10years prior to the study. The buildings include; a prime example of Brazilian-styled residential building (Ilojo bar) in Lagos; one of the few surviving samples of a 1920s UAC office building at Amassoma, Bayelsa State modeled after the Ijo vernacular fishing huts on stilts; a good example of a 1920s UAC industrial warehouse building at the Yenagoa waterfront; and a total of seven 1920s to 1940s magistrate and appeal court buildings including the famous West Africa Court of Appeal (WACA) at Bomadi, Delta State.

All these were buildings of special architectural interest due to their age, rarity and uniqueness of style, cultural and historical relevance amongst others. Some like the Ilojo bar had already been listed as far back as 1956, while others although having fulfilled the required criteria for listing were yet to be listed. The buildings listed above have been identified mainly because they were mostly government buildings or had been owned by the government at some point.

In Port-Harcourt, the main casualties for demolition in recent years have been heritage buildings on privately owned property, most of which are residential dwellings previously housing colonial administrative officers in the Old Government Reserved Areas (Old GRA). There were numerous samples of 19th century English

styled residential buildings in Old GRA, and Gothic-styled churches at different locations of the city at some point. However, with the paucity of records at the State Ministry of Urban Development, the numbers of such buildings that have been either demolished or totally defaced through renovations are not available.

Osasona (2017) observed that a majority of the unlisted heritage buildings spread around Nigeria are privately owned, with the added problem of some of the owners or descendants of the owners not being around to maintain such buildings. Egbenta (2017) suggests that since some of these buildings are generating social benefits that accrue to the users as public goods but not to the owner, he or she may have no incentive to preserve the building and indeed may have no resources to do so. Yet with this observation, there seem to be even more responsibilities on the private owners to engage in conservation practices than is currently being bestowed on them. Osasona (2017) posits that for sustainable conservation practices to take root in Nigeria there needs to be an engagement from the grassroots. It means that private owners and the public at large should be convinced of the value of conservation itself. In effect, the concept of conscientization and not just enlightenment of the people is required for a sustainable heritage conservation programme to thrive. Without this, even if the government provides the initiative and funding, a lack of support from the people could hamper all efforts in sustainable heritage conservation (Osasona 2017).

Valuation of Property in the Old Government Residential Area

In stark contrast to the planning of the indigenous quarters, the European quarters was planned based on the British garden city concept. Planning and residential development in this area started in the 1920s through to the 1950s. With substantial plot allocations, buffer zones, amenities and infrastructure provided. Archival data contains reports detailing typical plot sizes

per allottee and all other amenities and security measures put in place to achieve a serene garden city development for the colonial elite. For instance, a building free zone of about 440m radius must be retained between the European Quarters and other features of the planning scheme. The other features neighboring the free zone is the proposed Police station or a school. Only after these can plots for indigenous African residences be considered. Land area allocated per plot to European housing are 6805m² at the Government Reserved Area. This is approximately ten times more than was allotted to the indigenous Africans in the township². Expansion of this prestigious layout was given such top priority that where shortages of plots arose for the increasing numbers of Europeans, further surveys were carried out, sand-filling done and even bungalows belonging to the Railway Corporation or temporary Army installations are condemned and demolished to make more land spaces available for the European colonialists. With the allotment of large square meterage, came the construction of equally large houses befitting their status. It was Agary (2006) that painted the real architectural picture of what the plot sizes were intended to contain, and hence their generous size.

The houses in their original state were imposing, redbrick, two-storey structures, usually with only two or three huge bedrooms on the top floor and large entertainment rooms on the ground floor. Large grounds surrounded the buildings, and a little distance behind the main house, a small bungalow usually stood, with two or three rooms in a row, a bathroom, and a toilet. This was the boys' quarters, where the maids and servants of the house lived. Close to the houses front gate stood a small porters lodge for the security officers (Agary 2006:55)

From an earlier study on the Old GRA buildings by Brisibe (2022), it was suggested that "the plots were expected to accommodate a mini estate based on the ideology of a small British manor; a

² (No. 1864/2 – Local Authority's Office, Port-Harcourt – 9/10/45)

similitude of the aristocratic life. The original concept for plot size creation for this cadre of citizenry was the provision of ample space to accommodate all the architectural design requirements in the residences and out buildings they may need, and with adequate provision for circulation and greenery. As such, during the standardization process for these plot sizes no building setbacks or percentage coverage areas were recommended or imposed on the Europeans by the Public Works Department (PWD) for approval purposes” (2022).

Over the years, these plots have increased in value rather exponentially, but while the value of the land is increasing, the same cannot be said of the heritage buildings which some of them carry. These buildings are apparently decreasing in value or are often times not even considered as part of the deal in the overall valuation package. One of the notable real estate firms in Port-Harcourt with a lot of trade deals under their portfolio in this location, that were interviewed in the course of this study, gave instances where some properties were slightly devalued due to the cost of demolition expected to be incurred on the heritage building originally sitting on the property. This is the extent to which such buildings have fallen or are currently valued in the real estate market in Port-Harcourt.



Fig 4 An example of a 1950s British styled one-storey residential building with chimney in Old GRA (Source: Utchay Okorji Associates)

For this study, valuation was obtained from three independent estate surveyors that ply their trade

in Port-Harcourt. Each of them came up with independent assessments of property costs in the study locations based on recent rates, recently concluded estate deals and projections in the estate market.

For property in Old GRA, the value recently received an exponential upward review at the time of conducting fieldwork for this study. This was due to the fact that a developer with immense financial capacity had recently come on the scene and made several offers to property owners in Old GRA, out bidding any competitor and driving the value of such properties sky high as a resultant effect. The offers were all similar across board regardless of whether buildings on landed property in that area possessed heritage value or not. The economic value for the property was calculated in terms of cost per square meters and converted to US Dollars based on the official exchange rate at the time of writing this article.

Table 1 – Price range for cost per square metres of heritage properties at Amadi flats and Forces Avenue

	Amadi Flats (Cost per m ²)		Forces Avenue (Cost per m ²)	
	Cost in Naira (N)	Cost in Dollars (\$)	Cost in Naira (N)	Cost in Dollars (\$)
Valuer 1	130,000 – 190,000	286 – 418	150,000 – 215,000	330 – 473
Valuer 2	130,000 – 150,000	286 – 330	150,000 – 170,000	330 – 374

The average traditional plot size in Port-Harcourt measures at 465m² and taking the price at the lower meniscus, the minimum value of a plot at Amadi Flats amount to just over 60 million Naira, which translates to approximately 132,000 US Dollars per plot. Originally, size of land allocations per individual was 6805m² or about fourteen and half plots, which would have meant each compound would be valued at 1.914 million US Dollars in the current property market. For land in the Forces Avenue area, 70 million Naira (154,000 USD) is the going rate per plot, which will amount to 2.23 million USD for fourteen and a

half plots taking the minimum cost per square metre of 150,000. However, most of the buildings currently sit on half their originally allocated land size or less as most lands are being cut up and sold with the proceeds used to develop the remaining land or other lands or invest in other ventures.

Valuation of Buildings in Select Neighborhoods in Old Port-Harcourt Township

As the population of Port-Harcourt grew after its establishment in 1914, part of the process in planning and creation of the administrative capital, was the establishment of new towns and layouts by the British colonialists, to cater for the growing number of residents and migrants flocking into the province. Robert Home's (1997) work on planning and planting of British colonial cities was an expository piece on both the shapers and the shaping of colonial settlements, followed up by insights on the transfer and mimicry of British patterned towns and garden cities (2007). Although, Port-Harcourt is one of such towns patterned after the British garden city concept, it was also developed based on racial segregation ideologies with distinct differences earmarked between the colonial settlement and the indigenous African settlements.

Although still planned along racial segregation lines as was observed in several other towns and cities in previously colonized Sub-Saharan African States (Njoh 2008, 2009; Alozie 2020), the major city expansion for indigenous residential settlements commenced in the 1920s through to the 1960s with the inauguration of the Port-Harcourt Township Board. During this period, four major residential schemes were developed namely; Hospital Road, Creek Road, Harbor Road and Diobu layouts. The study focuses on heritage building property in the hospital road, Creek Road and Harbor Road layouts, with emphasis on the hospital road, Victoria, Bonny, Potts Johnson, Bernard Carr, Bishop Johnson, and King Jaja streets.

Even with the establishment of these residential layouts, Indigenous African residents who

attempted to acquire plots for construction of dwellings in the Township were met with several bureaucratic bottlenecks that stifled and often frustrated the process. Firstly, the British administration of Port-Harcourt allowed no African freeholding of land rather resulted to giving leaseholds. Plots were demarcated by the office of the commissioner of lands and annual rents were charged. As early as 1917, plot sizes were 100ft x 50ft, 60ft x 30ft and 70ft by 30ft respectively.

A distinct courtyard residential archetype is prevalent in the old township area and they come in both bungalow and one-story models. These buildings constitute the largest form of residential development in the area and reflect the commonplace architecture of the masses, "the ordinary buildings for ordinary people", which more often than not is an agglomeration of ideas, borrowed and indigent. It became the architectural popular culture of the people of Port-Harcourt making up their indigenous building heritage.



Fig 4 Typical houses on Bishop Johnson Street in Old Port-Harcourt Township (Most have been renovated)



Fig 5 A 1930s Bungalow on Victoria Street, Old Port-Harcourt Township (Source: Lawson in Brisibe 2020)

By 1951 the authorities had settled on using the 100ft x 50ft plot sizes as the basis for the building prototypes they designed and the building plans they were more likely to approve in the Port-Harcourt Township. Figure 5 below shows the layout in some parts of old Port-Harcourt Township, using both the 100' x 50' and the 60' x 30' plot sizes. The 100' x 50' plot sizes were used along the King Jaja Street, while the 60' x 30' plots were used along the Bishop Johnson Street. The valuation of heritage property in the Old Port-Harcourt Township area has its peculiarities as well as variations according to streets, size of the land, whether it's a bungalow or story building and state of the building amongst other things. The 1930s and early 1940s bungalows along Victoria, Bonny and Churchill streets are valued at between 10 to 15million Naira (22,000 to 33,000 USD), while the buildings along Potts Johnson and Bernard Carr of similar years are valued at a slightly higher rate of 15 to 30million Naira (33,000 to 66,000 USD) based on the combined estimates of two valuers. All three valuers estimate the bigger one storey buildings on King Jaja and Bishop Johnson at a respectable 30 to 35million Naira or more depending on the age, structural integrity and land size. In this case, the age actually contributes to a reduction in value of the building and not the other way round.

	Hospital Road Pott Johnson Bernard Carr	Victoria Bonny Churchill	King Jaja Bishop Johnson
Value 1 (Naira)	N15m – N20m	N10m – N15m	-
Value 2 (Naira)	-	N12m – N30m	N30m – N35m
Value 3 (Naira)	N25m – N30m	-	N35m and above

Unlike the valuation of property in Old GRA, properties in this location are traded primarily for the value of the buildings and not necessarily the land due to their sizes. Even at that the buildings

are not highly valued. This may not be unconnected to the fact that the land comes with certain deficiencies or rather inadequacies, such as constricted land size with no room for longitudinal or latitudinal expansion; limited frontal offset with little room for off-road parking; and 50% building coverage which does not offer much space in terms of circulation within the compound. In addition, because of the restricted planning layout, there was controversy surrounding the space between buildings or adjoining plots. The minimum distance between two bungalows on adjacent plots is 6ft (1.8m); the distance between a one-storey building and a bungalow is 8ft (2.4m); while the distance between two one-storey buildings is 10ft (3.0m) or 12ft (3.6m) in some cases.

The Local Authority Officer in Port-Harcourt advocated for more spacing between buildings even though the plots were already too small. The following quote fully captures the problem and the dilemma both the authorities and the indigenous homeowners found themselves. "The real trouble is that the frontages of most of the plots in Port-Harcourt are too small, leading to houses been crowded together. But it is too late to do anything about that. Rule 5(2) practically prohibits the erection of storey buildings on small plots, where the need for them is greatest. I personally will like to see.... greater distances between buildings but this will be impossible due to the sizes of the plots" (Local Authority Officer Dec. 1943)

The unwritten proffered solution therefore, was to subtly pressurize the locals into constructing British-styled bungalow structures on the assigned plots but most of them however built one-storey buildings. Although, the more obvious solution to the space problem would have been the increase of the land sizes even up to just half the sizes allocated to the European quarters. Yet it appeared that providing ample or simply sufficient land space in an area not lacking any at that time, was a luxury the colonialists did not want to afford the indigenous African residents (Brisibe 2022).

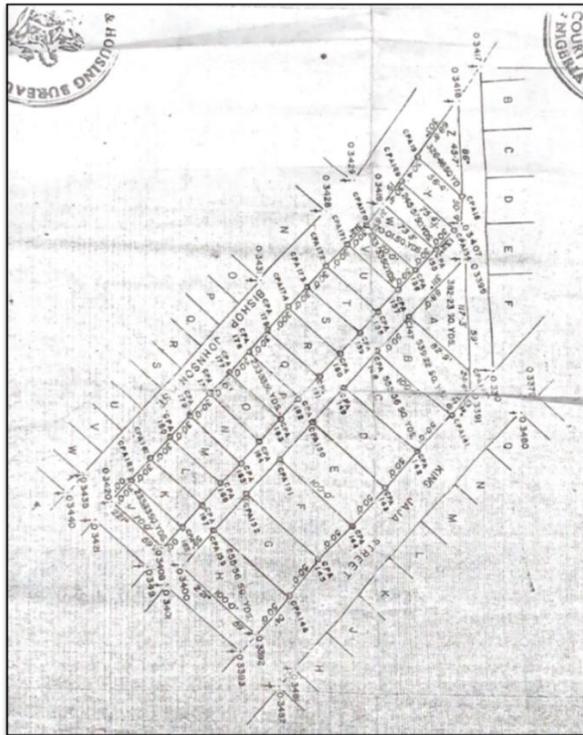


Fig 5 Layout plan of plot sizes along King Jaja and Bishop Johnson streets in Port-Harcourt Township (Source: Mr Winston Ngeri)

Discussion

From the study so far, one thing is clear and that is that although heritage value is subjective the underlying economics of heritage will always take centre stage as long as heritage buildings are concerned. With the wanton destruction of heritage buildings and the obvious disregard for their other values other than monetary in the property market in Port-Harcourt, certain urgent actions are required to salvage the situation and what is left of the heritage buildings in the colonial city. As most scholars agree, the identification of built heritage through the creation of inventories is the first step needed in developing not only long-term conservation strategies but also enhancing and sustaining their historic and cultural value.

Not much has changed in terms of listing of heritage buildings and declaration of national monuments in Nigeria since a series of previous studies were conducted on the subject matter

(Zubairu 2012, Brisibe and Osuku 2019). The abysmal 70 structures, totaling buildings, monuments and sites are still what constitute the total number of listed and declared national monuments in Nigeria since the inception of the National Commission for Museums and Monuments (NCMM). Even the celebrated map of historic sites by LEGACY Nigeria is yet to improve on its 129 historic sites of which only 47 are buildings. If Benhamou's definition of heritage building which states that these are "buildings and monuments inherited from the past, with a cultural or historical dimension justifying their preservation for future generations, but also modern monuments whose symbolic or cultural value is high" (2011:255) is anything to go by, then many more buildings ought to fit this bill and be valued as such. Hence, a city-wide identification of such buildings for documentation and inventory purposes should be carried out as a first step towards preserving their value.

As Osasona (2017) states that most heritage buildings are under private ownership, it is obvious that a lot rests on the individual and the society as it pertains to valuing heritage even when applying stated-preference and revealed-preference techniques. However, this has been the de facto position all this while even if the onus falls on the Government de jure. With the ensuing stalemate between the Government and the private sector, there is need for the introduction of another actor to help change the dynamics.

The Government has some influence in terms of policy over listed buildings and national monuments but this is limited as majority of the unlisted buildings with potential as heritage structures are privately owned. So, in addition, there is a need for heritage policies in valuation from the regulatory bodies or the Nigerian Institution of Estate Surveyors and Valuers and the Estate Surveyors and Valuers Registration Board of Nigeria (ESVARBON). Thorsby (2019) noted that "policy intervention is needed to control the behavior of individual and corporate owners of heritage to help regulate the market. Bakri et al (2015) also supported this view in their study that examined how experts, value built cultural

heritage based on criteria set by the regulating body in Malaysia amongst other things.

In Nigeria, the onus should fall on the shoulders of all built environment professionals championed by the Nigerian Institution of Estate Surveyors and Valuers (NIESV) and the Estate Surveyors and Valuers Registration Board of Nigeria (ESVARBON) who are saddled with the legal responsibility for valuation in Nigeria. Effectively, NIESV and ESVARBON should develop valuation methods and guidelines to stem the increasing free fall of the heritage value. An adoption of methods like the point system where numerical scores assigned to rating several values which could eventually translate to monetary values can be tested in addition to other methods. In the event that none of the previously discussed methods prove effective, new methods can be developed by the regulatory body specifically for the peculiarity and complexity of the Nigerian property market.

The Nigerian Institute of Architects (NIA) recently revived their committee on heritage buildings and conservation with renewed interest and financial support from a British/ Nigerian architect and past UIA and NIA president Olufemi Majekodunmi. Under the institute's bye laws, these buildings are considered as buildings of special architectural interest. Currently, LEGACY which is one of the only not-for-profit organizations concerned with conservation of historic buildings in Nigeria was founded and driven by architects the likes of the late Professor John Godwin. Even with all these laudable efforts from well-meaning architects, the impact so far barely scratches the surface as it concerns heritage value in the property market in Nigeria. Part of the reason this may be so is that those who ought to be the major drivers of this discourse which consist of the Government and other built environment professionals especially estate surveyors, are yet to create and publish guidelines and methods for valuing such heritage properties in Nigeria.

Thorsby (2019) is of the opinion that valuation and assessment on any heritage property carried out solely by an estate valuer will be grossly insufficient. His thoughts are that such

assessments be undertaken by a team consisting of valuers, heritage experts (Architects, Engineers or builders specializing in the study, conservation and restoration of heritage buildings), as well as economists. He based his conjecture on the multifaceted, multi-dimensional character of cultural value that may inevitably require a multi-disciplinary approach to assessment and consequently valuation, hence the need for a multi-disciplinary team of assessors. A similar concept could be adopted for the Nigerian system where a team of similar assessors headed by the estate surveyor and valuer uses methods developed from the field of heritage economics to provide the much-needed valuation and assessment of heritage properties in Nigeria.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on the issues highlighted that are currently bedeviling the heritage property market in Port Harcourt and the discussions above, a few recommendations have been made as follows.

Firstly, there is the need for regulatory bodies in Nigeria such as ESVARBON to step up to the plate and apply or develop methods to value heritage properties. As mentioned earlier, any of the methods developed under the recent field of heritage economics can be applied and tested to ascertain which one best suit the Nigerian property market. However, where the methods suggested are not apt, efforts should be made by the institute or regulatory body to develop region and market-specific techniques that will aid in valuing heritage in that area.

Secondly, in Nigeria, there is the need for re-education in the perception of value for built heritage professionals in relation to the age of a building. This re-education drive should cut across the fields of Architecture, Quantity Survey and Building Economics, Civil Engineering, Urban and Regional Planning as well as Estate Management. The issue here may be much deeper than simply a matter of difference in perspectives and understanding of cultural value, to one more fundamental such as core principles

of the disciplines requiring change and updating at the curricula level.

Currently, building value regardless of age, historic and cultural value for most built environment professionals is fundamentally tied to the economics of current and futuristic income. While there is nothing inherently wrong with that view, it is important however, to re-educate them not to see these values as tantamount to physical, functional and economic obsolescence, but as an increase in cultural, heritage and even economic relevance.

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