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About NIAJ

Journal of the Nigerian Institute of Architects (NIAJ) is an academic journal, which is coordinated by the Library and Publications Committee of the Nigerian Institute of Architects. The first issue of NIAJ was published in 1981. Before 2023 all copies of the journal were printed with ISSN 2315-8913, however since 2023, the journal is printed digitally.

The Journal of the Nigerian Institute of Architects, NIAJ publishes peer-reviewed, original and review articles on architecture and the built environment in an open access format. NIAJ is a comprehensive journal, accepting articles that span the full extent of the social, behavioural and environmental sciences as well as the humanities. NIAJ aims to be the leading journal in architectural

Research and practice matters. Through a rigorous review of relevant literature and evaluation of valid research methods in articles, the journal aims to be a publishing reference in the architecture field. While this journal is the flagship publication for The Nigerian Institute of Architects, papers are not restricted to the profession, rather multidisciplinary research is encouraged in line with global best practices.

NIAJ is calling for papers! All the manuscripts in architecture and civil engineering are welcome and appreciated. NIAJ publishes original research papers with high quality, and the submitted manuscript will go through peer-review process.

Editor-in Chief
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From the Chair, Library and Publications Committee

I am delighted to present the forthcoming Special Issue of the *Nigerian Institute of Architects Journal* (NIAJ): “**Adaptability and Resilience in Public Spaces: A Case Study of Freedom Park, Lagos**”, proudly featuring a lead paper and in-depth interview with the project's transformative architect, Arc. Theo Lawson, FNIA.

Freedom Park stands as one of Nigeria's most eloquent examples of architectural redemption. From the sombre walls of a colonial prison, it has emerged as a thriving cultural oasis that continues to adapt to the pulsating rhythms of Lagos whilst remaining a beacon of resilience amid rapid urbanisation, climate uncertainty, and shifting social demands. This special issue builds upon the growing body of scholarship in NIAJ and beyond – such as our earlier explorations of climate-responsive urbanism, regenerative public realms, and participatory place-making – and focuses sharply on how thoughtful design can enable

public spaces not merely to endure but to evolve meaningfully with their communities.

Alongside Theo Lawson's reflections on his original vision, the challenges overcome, the sustainable principles embedded in the design, and his aspirations for the park's future, the volume includes papers that examine design strategies that embed flexibility and robustness, the vital role of community participation in both creation and stewardship, the sustainable practices governing similar projects globally, and the transferable lessons for enhancing resilience in public spaces across Nigeria and around the world.

By placing these diverse scholarly voices in conversation with the architect's own account, the special issue offers both inspiration and practical guidance for practitioners confronting similar challenges nationwide. The scholarly contributions expressed in this volume will help shape the future of public space in our cities.

Arc Afolabi Adedeji, FNIA

Chair, Library and Publications Committee

Editorial: Crafting Resilient Urban Spaces

The Nigerian Institute of Architects Journal proudly presents this Special Issue entitled **“Adaptability and Resilience in Public Spaces: A Case Study of Freedom Park, Lagos”**. Freedom Park remains the unifying thread, yet the issue consciously extends its reach to engage parallel challenges in markedly different urban environments. The contributions examine retrofitting strategies in the historic core of Madinah, the radical re-g, cooling of the urban heat islands on Najran University campus. Najran through shaded multi-layer landscapes, and the struggle for meaningful public amenity within the vertical mixed-use developments rising along Victoria Island’s waterfront corridors. A closing theoretical paper reviews established and emerging frameworks of adaptable architecture, repeatedly returning to Freedom Park as a built paradigm that operates successfully across temporal, social, and ecological registers.

The issue opens with a lead article anchored in an extended interview with Arc. Theo Lawson, FNIA, the architect who orchestrated the park’s transformation from colonial prison to civic lung. His reflections on retaining historic fabric whilst inserting flexible programming, passive environmental systems, and enduring community governance establish the conceptual benchmark for all that follows.

Other papers distil lessons from the ongoing “smart Madinah” retrofitting programme, where traditional compact urbanism is being carefully augmented with sensor networks and subtle infrastructural upgrades; the parallels with Freedom Park’s respectful reuse of prison walls whilst opening new

pedestrian flows are striking. A second paper analyses the conversion of expansive parking lots in Najran – Najran University campus routinely exceeding 50 °C – into productive shaded terrains, demonstrating how phased landscape intervention can dramatically lower urban heat-island effects and offering pragmatic strategies applicable to Lagos’s own surfeit of impermeable surfaces. The third contribution remains in Lagos, presenting detailed case studies of mixed use vertical development globally on Victoria Island.

The final paper offers a scholarly synthesis of adaptable architecture theory and positions Freedom Park as a rare African project that simultaneously satisfies historical continuity, environmental performance, and social agency.

Collectively, these studies propose that true adaptability is not stylistic promiscuity but a deliberate socio-material condition achieved when memory, ecology, and governance are allowed to co-evolve with everyday occupation. Freedom Park is neither idealised nor treated as universally replicable; it is advanced as evidence that resourceful, context-specific solutions can emerge even under severe resource constraints.

At a time when public space across the continent is under unprecedented threat from commercial enclosure and climatic stress, the work published here offers both practical guidance and theoretical reinforcement for those committed to cities that remain livable, equitable, and culturally resonant.

Arc Prof E.O. Ola-Adisa, PhD FNIA
Editor-in-Chief

Guide for Authors

NIAJ is a comprehensive journal, accepting articles that span the full extent of the social, behavioural and environmental sciences as well as the humanities. NIAJ aims to be the leading journal in architectural research and practice matters. Through a rigorous review of relevant literature and evaluation of valid research methods in articles, the journal aims to be a publishing reference in the architecture field. While this journal is the flagship publication for The Nigerian Institute of Architects, papers are not restricted to the profession, rather multidisciplinary research is encouraged in line with global best practices. The articles must be original and should not have been published previously, and the manuscript will be double-blind peer reviewed. NIAJ is a unique open access publication that provides free full text download of all articles published in the journal through the platform (<https://niaj.org>) without any page charges or subscription requirements. Authors are invited to submit papers through the submission system. Once your article is accepted, you will receive an email from the submission system. The email contains a link to check the status of your article. Before you contribute to NIAJ, you should read the following contents

Types of paper

Contributions falling into the following categories will be considered for publication: Original

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- All references mentioned in the References are cited in the text, and vice versa
- Permission has been obtained for use of copyrighted material from other sources (including the Internet) and checked for plagiarism as NIAJ will not accept more than 25% of similar materials.
- Journal policies detailed in this guide have been reviewed

Publishing ethics

This journal operates a double-blind review process. All contributions will be initially assessed by the editor for suitability for the journal. Papers deemed suitable are then typically sent to a minimum of two independent expert reviewers to assess the scientific quality of the paper. The Editor is responsible for the final decision regarding acceptance or rejection of articles. The Editor's decision is final. The peer review process is following: Author submits paper to journal → Editor's initial evaluation of paper (go to next step if it meets the requirements of journal, otherwise reject and inform author) → Invite experts for peer review → Experts send comments to editor → Editor decides to accept (or reject and inform authors) → Editor asks author to revise → Author revises and submits revised paper → Editor and/or original reviewers re-evaluate to decide further revisions needed or reject or accept → Inform author

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